

## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Doctor of Ministry  
Emphasis in Mission

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

**TITLE: A MISSIOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO SPLIT-LEVEL CHRISTIANITY  
AMONG SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHRISTIANS  
IN SOUTH ZIMBABWE CONFERENCE**

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Missionary activities in Zimbabwe can be traced back to the 1400s. Those activities led to the opening of the first Christian mission station in Inyati, in Matabeleland North, close to Bulawayo in 1859. This mission was established by the London Missionary Society. In 1894, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was established at Solusi, in Matabeleland South, 50 kilometers outside Bulawayo. Therefore, Christianity is almost two centuries old in Zimbabwe. In such a scenario, one would expect that, by now, Christians in Zimbabwe have outgrown challenges emerging from the African traditional religious worldview.

While the Seventh-day Adventist Church was established 123 years ago in the South Zimbabwe Conference territory, it is mind boggling to discover that some members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are still reported to patronize African traditional religious practitioners especially during times of crisis.

The concern of this paper was to find practical ways of addressing this problem. In this paper, this phenomenon is referred to as split-level Christianity, it manifests itself as syncretism or dual allegiance.

Therefore, to respond appropriately, the researcher set out to investigate the underlying causes of split-level Christianity among members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Zimbabwe Conference. A qualitative research approach was used to unravel the issues of concern for this research. Interviews were the main source of data collection.

In-depth interviews with three pastors, three elders and six church members were conducted. These interviews were complemented by focus group discussions and general observations. During the interviews, the respondents did not show any lack of Biblical knowledge or requirements regarding both dual allegiance and syncretism. It became apparent that they lacked the fortitude to remain faithful to God during times of crisis. They succumbed to fear and community pressure. Some revealed that they participated in witch-hunting rituals in solidarity with their community. Data significantly showed that a significant number of Seventh-day Adventist Christians visit or are inclined to visit traditional healers and diviners during times of uncertainty and crisis.

Respondents also indicated that the church lacked a systematic way of dealing with their needs, hence split-level Christianity. Resultant data was used to develop a worldview transformation program aimed at counteracting split-level Christianity. Consequently, this study culminated with a worldview transformation intervention initiative as a response to split-level Christianity. Several programs were conducted. On evaluating this initiative, there was evidence of a breakthrough. The respondents openly stated their areas of deficiency in their Christian experience as a result of the

worldview transformation initiative. Respondents exhibited an understanding of their condition in relation to God's revelation. They were now also able to identify reliance to God as their only option to a better life. Therefore, a worldview transformation program is recommended as a means of dealing with split-level Christianity in this study.

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A dissertation

presented in partial fulfillment

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by

Thamsanqa Ndlovu

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Dedicated to the Lord, my Provider, Inspiration, and Strength

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resilient and patient during the most difficult times in the research process. May God richly bless all who lent me their much-needed support.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Description of the Ministry Context**

In 2001, I was assigned to pastor one rural district in the then West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This district was one of the 38 districts in the Conference. Demographically, it had four organized churches, 18 companies and 12 Sabbath school branches. At the time, the district had 3,215 church members.

One morning a serving church elder from one of the organized churches in this district, came to inform me that they had encountered a challenge as a church. In his report, he recounted that five church elders including himself, and 52 other adult members of his church, had participated in their village's witch-hunting rituals and cleansing ceremony. The church had a total of 66 church members, and the elder's report revealed that only eight members had refused to participate in the witch-hunting rituals and cleansing ceremony.

The eight people that had not taken part in the rite comprised two elderly ladies and six young persons. While I was still under pressure to grasp this awkward situation, the elder further disclosed that for several years prior to this incident, the church members were living in fear because of suspected practices of witchcraft among themselves. In a way, church members had long wished for a day when they could find a solution to the problem of witchcraft in the church. For the majority of the members of this church, the coming of these rituals provided their greatest chance

for relief from witchcraft both in the church and village. It meant that witches and wizards would be totally removed.

Having listened carefully to the elder's narration I asked a few questions to find the reasons and circumstances that had led them to take part in a pagan ceremony. In his answer, the elder reiterated that prior to their participation in the ceremony, they had met as elders to deliberate on whether to take part or to stay away from the rituals. According to his narration, the decision to take part in the rituals was a conscious choice for which they had reasons. He re-emphasized that the elders were the ones who convinced the church members to participate in the mysterious rites. Consequently, 58 out of 66 members got involved in the spiritualistic activities. Those who took part represent 85% of the members who voluntarily joined in an unnatural ceremony.

Within a few weeks of this encounter all the members who had taken part in the cleansing ceremony were removed from church membership. This incident was catastrophic, it meant that from a church of 66 members, there were only eight church members left. As a result, this church was reduced to a Sabbath school branch. This incident represented an anticlimax in mission.

After that difficult experience, I assumed that the discipline and the other experiences of this church would serve as a deterrent for other church members around the conference. It was envisaged that seminars and lessons based on Seventh-day Adventist Church's fundamental beliefs would fortify members when such temptations came by in future. Regrettably, several other districts in the Conference have had similar challenges and even worse scenarios after this initial experience. A few examples of incidences of split-level Christianity are going to be given in the following paragraphs.

In 2015, a middle-aged man murdered his wife after accusing her of infidelity. At the time, this man and his wife were members of one of the Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Bulawayo. Their parents were respected, active members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The family whose daughter had been murdered demanded compensation for the crime as a condition for the burial of their daughter. To strengthen their demand for appeasement, they also warned their in-laws that failure to pay was going to attract mysterious deaths.

The family of the guilty son-in-law failed to pay. They sent mediators to apologize on their behalf but this also was not accepted. Before long, there were reports of mysterious deaths in the family of the man who killed his wife. A process was put in place by the church to try and reconcile the two families. When I heard this, one question that came into my mind was, “What powers were involved in the mysterious deaths?”

The second incident was a recent one, a retired pastor made a confession to the elders of his local church. In his confession, he disclosed that he used to visit diviners, and African medicine-men for assistance during his time as an active gospel minister. Incidentally, there are several claims and a general belief among both pastors and church members that some pastors are involved with mystical powers. One of the common topics before and during both local church and conference elections is that some pastors and church members visit traditional medicine men to get charms to help them get elected. The above -incidents led the researcher to informally ask some pastors whether they thought dual allegiance and syncretism were still a challenge in the South Zimbabwe Conference churches. This was difficult moment; most of the pastors were hesitant to answer the question. But nine pastors responded affirmatively

that dual allegiance/syncretism were some of the unsettled questions facing the church.

Towards the end of 2015 church members in one of the districts in South Zimbabwe Conference were involved in a witch hunting ceremony. This district had a total of 3,015 members. Over five hundred members were affected by this ritual in some way. By the time of writing this research, one hundred and twenty-eight members had been disciplined for participating in a witch-hunting cleansing ceremony. This challenge came out during a Conference organized zonal assessment meeting where six church districts were involved. Quarterly reports from this district showed an unprecedented stagnation in all areas of assessment.

The poor reports were queried, the panel of assessors and the rest of the participants suspected that there was a hidden challenge stalled work in this district. In the process of that assessment and interrogations, it became apparent that work in this district had been paralyzed by some members' involvement in the witch-hunting rituals carried out by Tsikamutanda. Their negative reports were a result of disengagement from work. They could not work because they were disoriented by their experiences during the rituals.

Since I had already started researching on syncretism/dual allegiance, I then made a request to do my study in this district. This request was meant to ensure that the research's envisaged intervention program would help to ground these church members in the faith.

It seems that discipling and nurturing of members are among the major challenges facing the Seventh-day Adventist Church in general. This difficulty can be observed by checking the number of people who are dropped from membership due to

apostasy. These Figures have consistently remained high. One of the contributory factors may be related to split-level Christianity.

### **Statement of the Problem**

A significant number of members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Zimbabwe seem to be involved in Split-Level Christianity. The South Zimbabwe Conference territory has been under the siege of witch-hunters known as Tsikamutanda. Some members of the church have been disciplined for seeking help from African Traditional Religion practitioners including participating in witch-hunting cleansing ceremonies. Consequently, the church is at the crossroads between authentic Adventism and split-level Christianity. Practices of this nature expose the fabric of authentic Adventism and the mission of the church to huge risks.

### **Statement of the Purpose**

The purpose of this research initiative was to formulate, implement and evaluate a worldview transformation program aimed at mitigating Split-Level Christianity. This study therefore investigated the underlying causes of split-level Christianity among members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Zimbabwe Conference. These findings will form the basis for the development of an intervention program to address this challenge.

### **Justification**

This research was motivated by the desire to find a practical solution to the puzzle of dual allegiance among members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Zimbabwe Conference. While there was evidence of dual allegiance and syncretism in South Zimbabwe Conference, there was no program aimed at solving it. This study was meant to be a response to that overwhelming need for a researched

strategy to pacify the evident difficulties posed by syncretism and dual allegiance in the church. Therefore, this study is of great significance for several reasons; it aims at contributing to the body of knowledge which will serve as a resource for ministry. Furthermore, people who fill the church pews every Sabbath have fears, burdens, expectations, and this work seeks to alleviate those apprehensions.

Since the church's mere presence in the community is figuratively a promise of hope, security and deliverance; this study seeks to provide a platform from which such hope and deliverance can be drawn. Policy makers and evangelists need guidelines for implementation of a wholistic discipleship program; this study will attempt to provide a context relevant template and materials for a discipleship program. Causes, reasons and excuses of dual allegiance and syncretism will be discovered in this study. Consequently, a basis for understanding the Seventh-day Adventist Church's structural short comings that relate to nurturing and discipling members will be discovered. This will help the church in Zimbabwe to realize its objective of building strong, healthy congregations. Therefore, this study will help in realigning church programs to attend to these real human needs.

The focus covered in this research qualifies as a ground breaking one for the entire Zimbabwe union. Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will benefit from the resources and life changing interactions drawn from this research upon successful completion of this project. The topic presents a chance for the researcher to learn new skills of serving in this specialized and demanding area of ministry. Furthermore, the research may raise a consciousness and an appetite for further research and development of similar programs dealing with related issues this study may not have covered.

## **Delimitations**

Although split-level Christianity may be a challenge among church members in South Zimbabwe Conference, this study will be confined and limited to Zone A churches in the Conference. The epicenter of this enquiry, program development and implementation will be done in this Zone where members participated in the witch-hunting rituals. Therefore, the research and its results will be confined to this one Zone. This will allow the researcher to spend more time, energy and resources in order to develop an appropriate program to address this challenge.

## **Methodology and Procedures**

Chapter 1 introduces the entire study. It begins with a description of the ministry context and proceeds to highlight the key sections of the dissertation. The statement of the problem and the purpose of study are presented in this chapter. In a way, this chapter is an overview of the entire research.

In chapter 2 a theological research was used to establish the biblical and theological foundations for this study. This also entailed an in-depth study of relevant words in a bid to clearly discover their significance on syncretism and dual allegiance. These theological foundations were sought in order to provide a framework, and instructional themes for an effective discipleship and nurturing program for church members. Ellen White's writings were also gleaned for theological insights on the topic.

Chapter 3 presented a comprehensive literature review on Split-Level religious practices. This literature review took a comparative study format. Different perspectives on dual allegiance and religious syncretism were investigated through allowing a discussion among authors. These different authors' theories, assertions, observations and conclusions were allowed to interact. It is from these discussions

among different authors that principles and conclusions about this subject were drawn. In this review, Adventist and other Christian writers' perspectives on this subject were covered. The contributions from these writers formed the basis of the crafting of an intervention program.

In chapter 4 a qualitative approach was adopted for this research. As a result, focus group discussions and individualized interviews were carried out among the selected interviewees from the three Zone A Churches. The aim of the focus group discussions and individual interviews was to expose the fundamental causes and prevalence of religious syncretism/dual allegiance in the subject population. Data gathered through the interviews and focus group discussions was carefully collated, analyzed and interpreted. This facilitated the establishment of the problematic areas that needed redress. After data analysis, an appropriate context related intervention program was designed. Relevant seminar materials were also produced leading to the implementation of the proposed worldview transformation program.

Chapter 5 has the full description of program implementation, evaluation and reporting. A comprehensive assessment of the program was done in order to ascertain the effectiveness of the proposed solution for dual allegiance. In this regard, post implementation focus group discussions and interviews were conducted in order to assess the impact of the program in addressing the challenge of religious syncretism. Finally, a summative evaluation, comprehensive report and recommendations were produced to conclude the study. In the final chapter, a review of the whole study, its processes, program, and results are summarized. A brief recap of the key discoveries, strategic failures and achievements are also highlighted. Chapter six culminated with a conclusion and a list of recommendations.

## **Expectations**

One of the major expectations was that this research would provide the participants with an opportunity to reflect deeply on their commitment to God. The grounding and reinforcement of biblical truth among the participants during the implementation of the intervention strategy was another envisaged outcome.

Participants in this research were also expected to be able to experience a new found freedom in Christ. It was further expected that the participants would be able to share their experiences and benefits of the program with their peers. This research was also expected to renew a sense of mission among members of Zone A churches. In spite of the negative feelings that might accompany the initial stages of the program in Zone A, it was expected that these members of the church would regain an assurance of being reconnected with God. Beyond benefiting the church as a resource for ministry, this research was expected to be of use to future researchers in this field.

Further, engagement in this research was envisaged to expand the knowledge and skills of the researcher. If successfully implemented, the research would serve as a framework for follow up work in pursuit of God's mission. The research findings were expected to impact and influence future evangelistic strategies and soul winning methodologies. The church's nurturing departments and those involved in discipleship programs were expected to find useful information and insights from this research.

## **Definition of Terms**

**Diviners:** Ritual leaders whose special position is to unveil the mysteries of the past and future. In so doing they pronounce what may be causing problems in the

family and community.<sup>1</sup>

**Isangoma:** A traditional diviner who uses some rituals to read hidden signs revealing events affecting an individual or community. They are often called upon to interpret community problems or disturbances

**Ngwali:** The high god of the Matopos, considered to be Zimbabwe's national high god and believed to be the highest of all the gods, responsible for rain, fertility and healing.

**Nkulunkulu:** The greatest oldest one.<sup>2</sup>

**Nyangas:** Traditional healers are those who use magic to bring health and success. They have extensive knowledge of medicinal herbs that they combine with knowledge of spiritual and mystical forces.<sup>3</sup>

**Paternalism:** A doctrine of cultural superiority

**Split-Level Christianity:** A situation where individuals profess faith in Christ for their salvation but live out their everyday lives using traditional practices to meet their problems of illness, misfortune and fear of the spirits.<sup>4</sup>

**Tsikamutanda:** A Shona name for a witch-hunter

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<sup>1</sup> Aloysius M. Lugira, *World Religions: African Traditional Religion Third Edition*, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Chelsea House, 2009), 84.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>4</sup> Hiebert, Daniel Shaw, and T. Tienou, *Understanding Folk Religion: A Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 90.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR RESPONDING TO SPLIT-LEVEL CHRISTIANITY

Split-level religious practices appear to be one of the perennial challenges that the church has always had to deal with. From the book of Genesis to Revelation there are numerous examples of these phenomena. Syncretism and dual allegiance are closely related, both are forms of split-level Christianity. Dual allegiance and syncretism are awkward distortions of the intended relationship between God and man. Both of these practices manifest a misunderstanding of God's power and saving grace. Therefore, split-level Christianity is evidence of a broken relationship with God. It represents an unpleasant state of affairs when it is reported among professing Christians.

Bible evidence indicates that God's relationship with humanity has always been covenant based. For a covenantal relationship to subsist, fidelity is foundational. In such a relationship, split-level Christianity would be anathema. Any of its forms would naturally be a transgression of the covenant. Inevitably, allegiance and loyalty remain central in the relationship between God and man. Consequently, this chapter presents Biblical and theological reflections on split-level Christianity, and how it is viewed in relation to the covenantal relationship between God and humanity.

The covenant motif in the Bible presents a viable paradigm through which split-level Christianity in the context of this study will be viewed. It is also important to note that the covenant concept has long been recognized as a vital framework of

interpretation within the Bible.<sup>1</sup> As a result of the prospects this motif provides, it will be used as a hermeneutical key for unraveling God's methods of dealing with split level Christianity in the Bible.

### **Split-level Christianity in the Light of God's Covenant**

Robert C. Sproul deliberated on the nature of God's covenant in the Bible and concluded that:

All human beings from Adam to the present are inseparably members of this covenant. People may refuse to obey or even acknowledge the existence of such a covenant, but they can never escape it. All human beings are in a covenant relationship with God, either as covenant breakers or as covenant keepers.<sup>2</sup>

The above statement has serious implications on everyone if its claims are valid. If all people are in a covenant bond with God, it follows that this should be a significant relationship. Furthermore, the Bible is replete with details of how God regards and responds to any shift of allegiance, syncretism and all forms of double loyalties. God consistently invokes the covenant in dealing with split-level religious practices among His people.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, a closer analysis of the covenantal nature of God's relationship with humanity is key to this study.

#### **The Meaning of the Covenant**

A few definitions will be necessary in this attempt of examining the nature, meaning and implications of the covenant concept. "A covenant is an agreement in

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon D. Fee and Robert L. Hubbard Jr., *The Eerdmans Companion to the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 141.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Charles Sproul, *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1982), 73.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. As Adam, they have broken the covenant; they were unfaithful to me there. Hosea 6:7

which one or both parties promise under oath to perform or refrain from certain actions”<sup>4</sup> It can also be conceptualized as;

A formal commitment made by one party to another or by two parties to each other; its seriousness is normally undergirded by an oath and/ or rite undertaken before God and/or before people.<sup>5</sup>

Though the above definitions of the covenant idea may not be exhaustive, they certainly capture important nuances and concepts that are implied by the covenant concept. The idea of the covenant as a commitment is also expressed by Weinfeld who explains that the word ‘berith’ implies ‘liability’ or ‘obligation.’<sup>6</sup> While further explaining ‘berith’ as a commitment, he also revealed that to make it solemn and binding, the covenant had to be confirmed by an oath.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the covenant kinship entails the breaking of all ties with other competing associations so as to totally give and live one’s whole life in perspective to the new precious relationship.

As a concept, the covenant is further understood to refer to, “an alliance, a standing contract between two partners.”<sup>8</sup> Several abstractions are invoked by the word ‘alliance’ but one of the key ideas is that of a coalition in the face of a common enemy. This word has a military connotation and it speaks to a situation where partners unite to gain an advantage over an enemy. They stand side by side and back to back in trust and unwavering loyalty in order to maintain peace or to defeat their adversary. It has relevance for both defensive and offensive purposes.

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<sup>4</sup> Fee and Hubbard Jr., *The Eerdmans Companion to the Bible*, 141.

<sup>5</sup> Admin, *Bible Dictionary, Common English Bible* (Nashville, TN: Adingdon Press, 2011), 93.

<sup>6</sup> M. Weinfeld, G. Johannes Botterweck, and Helmer Ringgren, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1975), 255.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 256.

<sup>8</sup> Howard Marshall et al., *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1996), 234.

In a sense where God cuts a covenant with an individual, nation or church the intention is to ensure victory against a known common enemy. Consequently, this kind of relation is averse to dual allegiance. Split-Level loyalty is total betrayal and would be treasonous. It is considered as treachery in Hosea 6:7.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Nature of the Covenant**

In the tribal cultures of the ancient Near East, all societal privileges and responsibilities derived from a person's familial relationships. The more closely related two individuals were, the greater the responsibility one to another, the more distantly related, the lesser their responsibility. If one wanted to create a relationship of privilege and responsibility with non-kin, a fictive kinship bond could be established by which both parties agreed to act like family. The ideological framework has profound implications for the old covenant's identification of Israel as God's "son" and the new covenant language of "adoption" and "marriage" as regards the church.<sup>10</sup>

One fundamental truth that permeates the whole of scripture is the holiness of God. This is one of God's attributes and serves as a basis for the demand of exclusive worship and allegiance. The Bible clearly advances the idea that sin led to humanity's loss of holiness. Loss of holiness led to a gulf between God and humanity. By deduction, if sin led to separation for the reason of loss of holiness it can be logically

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<sup>9</sup> Marshall et al., *New Bible Dictionary*, 234.

<sup>10</sup> Fee and Hubbard Jr., *The Eerdmans Companion to the Bible*, 141 Gordon D Fee and Robert L Hubbard Jr., 2011, 141. In the tribal cultures of the ancient Near East, all societal privileges and responsibilities derived from a person's familial relationships. The more closely related two individuals were, the greater the responsibility one to another, the more distantly related, the lesser their responsibility. If one wanted to create a relationship of privilege and responsibility with non-kin, a fictive kinship bond could be established by which both parties agreed to act like family. The ideological framework has profound implications for the old covenant's identification of Israel as God's "son" and the new covenant language of "adoption" and "marriage" as regards the church.

argued that on the very same basis, Christians who engage in sin separate themselves from God. Holiness has to do with being separated from the common, In Exodus 19: 5-6 God called out Israel to be his peculiar people, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

In the New Testament, the Christians are called to be a “chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people” (1 Pet 2:9). The key texts that advance this argument are Leviticus 19: 2 in the Old Testament and 1 Peter 1:16 in the New Testament. Several words can be used to explain the nature of a covenant, these words include but are not limited to the following; a covenant can be conceptualized as a ‘contract’, ‘bond’, an ‘alliance’, ‘league,’ a ‘friendship’. From this list of words, one can see the associations they create, all of them show that more than one person is involved in a covenant relationship.

In an extended sense, a covenant involves a coming together in a fellowship. Any meaningful relationship has either formal or informal rules that define roles for each party to that relationship. So, the covenant is that relationship where stipulated expectations, attitudes and behaviors are involved. These include the attendant benefits and sanctions (do this if you do not, such and such will happen).<sup>11</sup>

God’s covenant has always been conditional in nature, in Exodus 19. In v5 God declared “Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine.” This verse shows the conditional nature of the covenant, its blessings would remain in force and valid depending on their faithfulness. The same idea of conditionality can be seen in Deuteronomy 7: 9 where God says, “with them who love

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<sup>11</sup> William A. Dyrness, *Themes in Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1977), 114.

and keep my commandments.” Here the issue of commandments is raised, it is of great significance, it refers to the covenant stipulations and defined conduct within the covenant relationship.

Conditionality in the covenant motif is represented by the “if” clauses that are usually a part of the covenant making process. Sometimes the conditional clauses are explicit as exemplified in several cases such as listed on the referred footnote.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand there are some implicit conditional clause in the Bible such as the ones listed below that include the primary promise of salvation in John 3:16 which says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” A simple reading of the Bible including a casual consideration of John 3: 16 would seem to imply that salvation is without any conditions.

However, a careful reading and analysis of John 3:16 does conclusively give an idea that salvation is conditional. A closer reading reveals that the verse contains an "if" statement. This statement's contribution to the meaning of the verse is that: there is a possibility you will not perish, you 'may' have eternal life but only on condition. Therefore, salvation is conditional, the condition is expressed by the word “whoever” and that word implies the ‘if ‘you believe in Jesus. Salvation is a serious matter, sin is also a serious matter before God. It should be noted that split-level

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<sup>12</sup> “If you pay attention to these laws and are careful to follow them, then the Lord your God will keep the covenant of love with you, as he swore to your fathers,” (Deut 7:12.) “So if you faithfully observe all the commands I am giving you today—to love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul— then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil. I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied” (Deut 11:13-15). “If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer” (Matt 21:22). “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples” (John. 8:31). “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15). “If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my father’s commands and remain in his love.” (John 15:10). “You are my friends if you do what I command” (John 15:14) “...if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom 10:9).

Christianity may be rife because of a low estimation of sin and a cheap estimation of salvation.

God's covenant is conditional in nature. It is typified by a marriage relationship between husband and wife. The emotions and the attachment in this kind of relationship are strong and everlasting. This kind of relationship is intimate and exclusive. It is a companionship, fellowship and commitment to one another, it is a bond that has the value of life itself. As a result, when this relationship is violated consequences are fatal. Life is always at stake every time a covenant is flouted.

When Adam sinned, he did as an individual, but he simultaneously sinned in a representative capacity as the head of the human race. Adam's sin affected the whole of creation.<sup>13</sup> Romans 5:12 reveals that, "as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." By their nature, covenants gave the right and authority to clan or national representatives to covenant on behalf of their people. It is in this sense that Adam represented the human race. The Bible records Jesus as humanity's representative, this he did by assuming a place within the human family as the second Adam. His role was to come and save humanity from sin.

### **The Implications of the Covenant**

Walter Brueggemann, describes God's relationship with Israel as "a relatedness through covenant and pathos."<sup>14</sup> Here Brueggemann might have been referring to the intensity of the relationship, which is represented by the expressions

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<sup>13</sup> Charles Hodges, *Systematic Theology Revised Ed.*, ed. Edward N. Gross, Abridged Edition. (Phillipsbourg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reform, 1992), 269.

<sup>14</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Ausborg, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 297.

“God is a jealous God.”<sup>15</sup> It can be observed also that this conception of God in covenant relationship would demand enduring fidelity and mutual responsibility between God and His people. Within the covenant Israel’s life was to be rooted and shaped by their relationship with God. This would entail an exclusive regard of God as represented in the ‘shema’ in Deuteronomy 6:4.<sup>16</sup>

What does it entail for God to be bound by a covenant? A covenant always comes with a cost to the covenant partners. The covenant required from Yahweh a practice of faithfulness and steadfast love, and an enduring engagement with and involvement for Israel.<sup>17</sup>

Several ideas accompany this covenant concept. First, there is need to consider the standard formulation of the covenant, “I will be your God and you shall be my people.”<sup>18</sup> This implies that God was now identified as the God of Israel, that He had to be seen to with Israel and so whatever happened to Israel was part of the data that proved how powerful God was, how loving and how faithful he was. The Immanuel principle is also in view in the covenant.

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<sup>15</sup> Exodus 34:14

<sup>16</sup> Deuteronomy 6:4-9 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You Shall Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorsteps of your house and on your gates.

<sup>17</sup> Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy*, 297.

<sup>18</sup> Jer. 11:4; 24:7; 30:22, Ezek. 11:20 ; 14:11 ; 36:28

In the New Testament, it would be represented such texts as “Lo I will be with you always.”<sup>19</sup> The kinsman redeemer concept is part of the meaning and implications of the covenant.

The covenant is given within the context of a mutually beneficial relationship, it is not given in the context of hostilities. “The purpose of the covenant is to create new relationships, whereas the purpose of the law is to regulate the existing relationships fixing the conditions required to for maintaining an association” the purpose of the Ten Commandments as expressed in Exodus 22:20 “that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning”<sup>20</sup>

### **The Role of Law/Stipulations in the Covenant**

In the Bible, the law serves a normative role, Longman and Dillard indicate that the law was given as an expression of God’s will for his people’s corporate and individual life.<sup>21</sup> It was given in the context of a covenant to ensure the continuation of the relationship and fellowship between God and his people.

In Exodus 20:2 the Bible points out that prior to the giving of the law, God saved the Israelites from the bondage in Egypt. Longman and Dillard explain that the law of God has never been used as the basis or means of the divine human

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<sup>19</sup> Matt 28:20. There is abundance of references of this family of texts that are an assurance of Gods ever abiding presence among His People. God in covenanting promises to remain interested in the welfare of His covenant partners and the following references affirm His commitment. (Deut 31:6, 8 ; Josh 1:5, 9; 1 Chron 28:20; Ps 55:22; Isa 41:10-13; Rom 8:28; Phil 4:6-7; 2 Tim 1:7; Heb 4:16, 13:5-6; 1 Pet 5:7). All these verses show that God in covenant cannot be considered as absent or disinterested in humanity’s affairs, challenges and afflictions. He does not fit the deists’ description. This understanding of God should have a telling influence in the lives of believers, 1. They always live in His presence, 2. He is always available to give them aid in all situations and circumstances. Even in the darkest hours of peril He should be perceived to be present and actively involved and interested.

<sup>20</sup> Andrew E. Hill and John H. Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 119.

<sup>21</sup> Tremper Longman and Raymond B. Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 75.

relationship. They posit that it served as a guide for its maintenance and to show God's will for the lives of His people.<sup>22</sup> The Bible establishes that keeping of the law results in blessings and continued fellowship with God while transgressing the law leads to banishment, retribution and alienation with God.<sup>23</sup> Therefore the law was meant to express the covenant relationship and not to establish the bond between God and His people.

### **Double Loyalties in the Light of Covenant**

The first four of the Ten Commandments specifically prohibit any form of homage and honor affection and love given to any other object, person except God the creator and redeemer. The Ten Commandment were given to Israel by God as a basis of His covenant with them.<sup>24</sup> These commandments defined Israel's relationship with Him. They were to help them to retain their unique identity that's their because of their special relationship with God. This special relationship was their mark of distinction, they were to serve God exclusively without making images or attempting set up any other object of worship apart from God.<sup>25</sup>

Exodus 20:2-3 is the first of the Ten Commandments; this command prescribes what all people should regard as their first priority in life, the verse says, "You shall not have any other God's before me." This text resonates well with Mathew 6:33, "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you". Exodus 20:2 and Mathew 6:33 seem to establish a

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<sup>22</sup> Longman and Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 76.

<sup>23</sup> Marshall et al., *New Bible Dictionary*, 674.

<sup>24</sup> Fee and Hubbard Jr., *The Eerdmans Companion to the Bible*, 115.

<sup>25</sup> Francis D Nichol, ed., *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1 (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1978), 602.

principle that God should be considered ‘first’ in everything humans do. In essence, the verses indicate that God should be the reference point and the axis around which all of life rotates and find meaning.

God appeals to us to put Him before all else, to put him first in our affections and in our lives (Mat. 6:33). Mere belief will not do. We owe wholehearted allegiance and devotion to Him as a personal Being whom it is our privilege to know, to love, and trust and with whom we may have blessed fellowship. Dependence upon something else than God, whether it be wealth, knowledge, position or friends puts us in peril.<sup>26</sup>

The implications of Exodus 20:1-10 are that God demands exclusive worship.

A review of the preamble that God gave as an introduction for the Ten Commandments provides a key to understanding God’s claim on the children of Israel. God introduces Himself, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.” Apart from being the Creator God had also rescued them from bondage. God now had a double claim over the children of Israel. As their redeemer, He reserved the right to give them guidelines on how they were to live if they were going to continue enjoying His protection and blessings.

The two commandments in Exodus 20:1-10 are in fact a prohibition of idolatry. These verses disallow all sorts of inordinate attachments, reverence and devotions to anything else other than God alone. It could be sensibly argued that these commandments were intentionally designed to guide humanity to live a life of devotion and dependence on God.

### **Split-level Religion in the Old Testament**

The Old Testament is replete with cases of syncretism and dual allegiance. A review of some of these cases will be done in this part of the study in order to discover the possible reasons for split-level religion. Principles gleaned from various

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

selected representative cases will then be used to develop a strategy to counter similar practices in the current ministerial context.

### **The Paradigmatic Nature of the Fall: Genesis 3**

The Genesis story of the fall of humanity presupposes a specific probationary command given by God to humanity in the Garden of Eden. Within the creation story a specific prohibition addressed to Adam and Eve was given by God, namely the command forbidding them to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:17). God's giving of a regulatory condition shows that Adam and Eve had the capacity to obey or to disobey.

**The nature of the temptation.** For a closer analysis of this encounter that led to the fall of humanity into sin, Genesis 3:4-7 will be considered.<sup>27</sup> The conversation between the serpent and Eve “offset the balance of trust and obedience between the man, the woman and their creator.”<sup>28</sup> The Genesis creation account shows that Adam and Eve did not disobey because they had challenges with God's provisions. What is evident in this narrative is that they ate the fruit because Eve considered, aspired and embraced the promise of a new possibility, which amounted to a changed status she presumed they would attain.

In Genesis 3:4 the serpent declared: “You shall not certainly die”. This proposition was advanced as a direct challenge to God's word in Genesis 2:16-17; “you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat

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<sup>27</sup> Gen 3:4-7; “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” When the woman saw that the fruit was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then both their eyes were opened and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and coverings for themselves.

<sup>28</sup> John H. Sailhammer and Frank E. Gabelein, (*Genesis*) in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary with the New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 51.

from it you will certainly die.” This scenario seems to establish a pattern that is repeated throughout the cosmic conflict.

Split-level Christianity is therefore symptomatic of the cosmic battle that is raging in people’s minds and lives. “The serpent’s lie carries a promise, it is a claim about the future, a false covenant, because the serpent seems to promise life.”<sup>29</sup> This is a promise of presumed ease and instant success blindly assumed to have no negative consequences. A careful search of Bible evidence shows that “Satan’s lie always takes the same form.” and it “creates the illusion that there is a path to fullness of life other than obedience to God’s commandments.”<sup>30</sup>

This is the pattern of how the subtle enemy of God operates and yet Proverbs 14:12 admonishes that, “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is a way of death.”

In planning his deception, Satan mixes truth with error as he did with Eve in the Garden of Eden. He causes people to question the sanctions and promises of God. In this way, the devil opens a way for human beings to yoke themselves to him and become his slaves and at the same time to be enemies with God Adam and Eve consciously decided to eat the fruit of the tree in disobedience to God and joined themselves in fellowship with the serpent.<sup>31</sup>

In the creation story God used the word ‘beautiful’ to describe what He had created. John Sailhammer observes that this time; it is the woman who “saw the fruit

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<sup>29</sup> R. R. Reno, *Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible, Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2010), 88.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 88.

<sup>31</sup> Ian D. Campbell, *The Doctrine of Sin in Reformed and Neo-Orthodox Thought* (Fern-Shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 1999), 24.

was good” unlike in the previous instances where it was God who was declaring what was good.<sup>32</sup>

The serpent put forward a great proposal in which he presented himself as one who desired their good. He portrayed God as restrictive and selfish. This kind of self-projection by Satan is one of the hallmarks of his deceptions.

Quest for success apart from God could be among the major causes of this shift of allegiance. Adam and Eve did not plan to rebel against God’s authority. The Bible presents their disobedience as a “quest for wisdom and the good apart from God’s provision.”<sup>33</sup>

This desire for wisdom, power and higher status (being like God) led to sin. This allurements to succeed at all costs seems to be paradigmatic for those who practice dual allegiance among believers. People do not always sin because they set out to rebel against God. The desire for more power, health, riches, and happiness outside of God’s provisions could be the main cause for split-level Christianity. This controversy over allegiance has a direct implication on salvation and destiny of humanity. It involves the question of God’s power, authority and place in the lives of His creatures.

### **Moses Confronts Split-Level Religion**

One of the serious challenges that Moses had to deal with was split-level religion. The purpose of God’s mission in the call and promise first to Abraham and

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<sup>32</sup> Sailhammer and Gabelein, (*Genesis*) in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary with the New International Version*, 51.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 51.

then to Israel was for them to come out of paganism to worship him exclusively.<sup>34</sup>

The book of Exodus moves from slavery to worship, from Israel's bondage to Pharaoh to its bonding to Yahweh.<sup>35</sup> In Exodus 32, what was meant to be the consummation of Israelites' relationship with God at Sinai culminated as a sad moment of shame, guilt and death.

Exodus 32 is a classic example of how people may find themselves in a deep crisis of split-level religious experience. The Israelites had been in Egyptian bondage for years and God called Moses to partner Him as their deliverer. Apparently, God had seen their toil in Egypt and had heard their cries for deliverance (Exodus 3:6–8).<sup>36</sup> It should be noted that in the book of Exodus, God is presented as one who empathically hears the groaning and moaning of his people (e.g. Exod. 15:22-26; 17:1-7; 22:23; 22: 27).<sup>37</sup> When His people pray, he acts in love (covenantal faithfulness) to save them (Exod. 2:23-25).

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<sup>34</sup> Gen 12— Abraham was called out of his country to a new relationship with God (Covenant) and a new Land (Canaan), Exod 3—Israel called out of Egypt to a renewed relationship and a promised Land (Canaan).

<sup>35</sup> Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus: Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1991), 1.

<sup>36</sup> In verse 24, God hears and remembers. Hamilton explains that the word used for “hear” is (*sama*) which means not only to ‘hear’ but also to ‘obey’ and concludes that God is neither deaf nor indifferent. Hamilton also comments on God’s remembering of his covenant, he says that “He is a God who remembers.” this remembering is said to imply that He acts in fulfillment of His covenant promises. Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 41.

<sup>37</sup> Walter Brueggemann states that; “It is impossible to overstate the importance of the “cry~save” dialogue of Israel’s faith. The pattern recurs often in the narratives. It is... the dominant dialogic structure of Israel’s prayer practice in the book of Psalms. ... This pattern assures... that Israel is a fully entitled and fully empowered partner in exchange (dialogue) ... can take the initiative, on the other hand it assumes that God is readily and regularly drawn into an interactive relationship with Israel... (to rescue). The dramatic ... “cry~ save” provides grounds for the option of unresponsiveness and infidelity, for the possibility that YHWH may be absent, silent, and indifferent. Here YHWH is fully responsive and fully engaged in a way that causes decisive turn in history. Walter Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology: An Introduction* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008), 27.

**God appoints deliverers (co-workers “disciples”).** God then assigned Moses the task of deliverer. At that moment, it seemed that due to their long stay in Egypt, the Israelites had apparently begun to question the existence of their God, let alone His power to save. Consequently, Moses anticipated and feared that they would not be easily convinced that God had sent him (Exod 3:13). Names meant a great deal to the semitic minds, it was for that reason that Moses wanted God to introduce himself. God introduces Himself as (*ehyeh user ehyeh* and *ehyeh* -from verb ‘to be’- ‘*hayah*’) “I am that I am.” (Exod. 3:14).<sup>38</sup>

Commenting on God’s self-introduction Brueggemann observes that God remains “undeciphered and undomesticated.”<sup>39</sup> This self-revelation raises a few questions, it deals with ‘being,’ Cole asks, “could it mean that God exists as opposed to idols without being?”<sup>40</sup>

This could have been meant to help Moses and Israel to make a comparison between God and the many gods of Egypt and to see the worth of depending on Him. Yet this self-introduction of God, which can be understood as (I will be who/whatever, I will be, I am that/who I am) may have been meant to create an expectation of great acts commensurate with what his name promised.<sup>41</sup>

Bruckner puts a deeper emphasis as he highlights that God’s name is revealed as “an active verb, not as a noun, the implication being that He is not an abstraction,

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<sup>38</sup> James K. Bruckner, *Exodus: New International Biblical Commentary, Old Testament Series*, ed. Robert L. Hubbard Jr. and Robert K. Johnston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 44.

<sup>39</sup> Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology: An Introduction*, 27.

<sup>40</sup> R. Alan Cole, *Exodus: An Introduction and Commentary, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, ed. D.J Wiseman (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1973), 70.

<sup>41</sup> Bruckner, *Exodus: New International Biblical Commentary, Old Testament Series*, 45.

but a living acting being.”<sup>42</sup> It seems that God was intentional in giving His name in this enigmatic formula, it was incomprehensible at the beginning of Exodus, but gradually gained meaning in relation to what transpired between Him and Israel.<sup>43</sup> God’s self-introduction was a kind of discipleship, an apprenticeship for Moses.

God assured Moses that He was not only going to be present with him but that He was going to deliver (nasal) the Israelites with His own might.<sup>44</sup> There are five key verbs that God used in giving Moses his commission in Exodus 3:7-8; I have ‘heard,’ I ‘know,’ I have ‘come’ down to ‘deliver’ and to ‘bring up.’ Hamilton notes that at times God’s purpose towards Israel was to bring them ‘out’ of Egypt (‘yasa’, Hiphil), while in verse 8, it was to bring them up to a new land (‘ala’, Hiphil).<sup>45</sup> God was purposefully working out a comprehensive salvation for Israel.

It is interesting to note that both the Hiphil of ‘yasa’ and the Hiphil of ‘ala’ show God’s saving work as “saving/delivering ‘from’ and saving/delivering ‘to’—deliverance from bondage and an old life, and entry into freedom and a revolutionary new way of life.”<sup>46</sup> The above explanation of the saving work of God shows that God’s plan of salvation is to create a new community with a new life orientation, new relationships and a new status.

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<sup>42</sup> Bruckner, *Exodus: New International Biblical Commentary, Old Testament Series*, 45.

<sup>43</sup> Cole, *Exodus: An Introduction and Commentary, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, 70 suggests that God in giving his name in riddle form was meant to mean that God was going to be understood by and through His own subsequent acts and words in revelation. As one can note, In the subsequent history of Israel God was known as the One who brought them out of Egypt. In other words, this formulaic name was/is a call to the response of faith by Moses and Israel. Bruckner (2008,45) expresses the same idea that the transcendent and elusive “I AM” was rooted in an imminent historical and revealed God. Yahweh is both hidden and revealed; beyond us and near us. And remembering His name meant remembering His mighty acts of salvation and deliverance.

<sup>44</sup> Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary*, 53. The word ‘nasal’s’ basic meaning is “remove, rescue, get something out of the way”

<sup>45</sup> Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary*, 41.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 55.

**Great antecedents of Exodus 32.** Several great acts of God precede the paradoxical regression of Exodus 32. These precursors will be briefly outlined so that the proper context of Exodus 32 will be established. In a way there seems to have been no excuse for the making of the golden calf apart from Israel's failure to grow into a trusting faithful relationship with God. This should be considered especially in the light of the God's mighty acts that were meant to nature their trust and dependence on Him.

**Pharaoh's defiance.** As already noted in Exodus 3, the children of Israel retain a very limited knowledge of God. This knowledge was so flimsy that it could not help them to stand up against Pharaoh in the name of God. Therefore, it should be noted that although Joseph had been a great witness to Egypt, Pharaoh also retained no knowledge of God. This could be the reason why Pharaoh was obstinate, and is reported to have said "I do not know the Lord" (Exod. 5:2). Victor P. Hamilton interprets Pharaoh's not 'knowing' to mean "I do not acknowledge His authority."<sup>47</sup>

This confrontation and denial of God by Pharaoh coupled with Israel's distrust in God's ability to save from what they knew to be the mighty hand of Pharaoh set the stage for great signs and wonders in Exodus. Pharaoh's arrogance and defiance can be logically compared to the obvious and natural rebellion and defiance of God's arch enemy- the devil; who has made it his sole purpose to enslave, abuse and imprison God's children in every age. The pattern of Pharaoh's behavior seems to be normative for many leaders who are not loyal to God. But it is heart-warming to observe how God intervened in the case of Pharaoh and how He has continued to rescue His children in the history of redemption.

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<sup>47</sup> Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary*, 41.

**Moses' rod swallows the magicians' snakes.** God gave Moses a number of miraculous signs to help the Israelites believe in Him and convince Pharaoh that God existed and had power over everything. In Exodus 4, God demonstrated His power to Moses when he asked to throw down the rod which was in his hand. Moses' rod turned into a snake and when he was instructed by God to pick it up it turned into a rod again.<sup>48</sup> During Moses' confrontation with Pharaoh the same rod was used. When Pharaoh defied, the Egyptian magician's rods which had turned into snakes were swallowed by Moses' rod. In this act God demonstrated His unparalleled power.<sup>49</sup>

**The ten plagues.** The people of the Middle East were very religious, they worshiped many gods. It is generally believed that the ten plagues God brought on the Egyptians were judgments against specific gods they worshiped, and that this showed that the Lord was greater than all of them. Pharaoh's defiance was broken by the mighty power of God when the tenth plague struck Egypt.<sup>50</sup> Even Moses' father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian and a worshiper of the true God, was impacted by the religious pluralism of the people around him. When Moses and the people arrived at Mount Sinai, and Jethro heard of all God's works, he replied, "Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people" (Exod 18:11).

**The golden calf enigma.** Exodus 32 is treacherously anticlimax. It comes as a real conundrum especially when one reviews how God has led the Israelites from Egypt up to the Sinai. While Moses had gone up the mountain to receive the terms of the covenant, a great folly, the substitution of God was done (Exod 24:18). The

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<sup>48</sup> Exod 4:1-5

<sup>49</sup> Exod 7:10-12

<sup>50</sup> Exod 11-12.

people urged Aaron, their temporary leader, to make gods for them to follow. Since they were accustomed to having visual representations of gods, this was the natural result of their thinking. Aaron took their gold earrings, which they had brought from Egypt, and melted them down to make a golden idol. The idol he crafted for them was a calf, but Aaron maintained the name of the Lord in connection with it (Exod 32:5). He was merging the pagan practices they were familiar with and the worship of the God they were just beginning to be re-acquainted with.

Aaron called the people together and told them that the golden calf was the god who delivered them from Egypt. The people offered sacrifices and then engaged in pagan rituals, including orgies (Exod 32:25) to worship this new god. It could be worth noting that, the Israelite's prolonged familiarity with idol worship in Egypt primed them to revert to idol worship at the earliest convenience. Furthermore, the habit of merging their beliefs with those of the people around them seemed as though it was already engrained. This practice continued to plague the people of God throughout the kingdom years.

**Analysis.** Commenting on the golden calf incident, Terence E. Fretheim said, "It is Genesis 3 all over again."<sup>51</sup> J. Gerald Janzen makes similar remarks saying, "The exodus takes a calamitous turn. It is Israel's version of universal human turn in Genesis 2-3."<sup>52</sup> The similarities lie in the fact that in both instances God had bountifully and wonderfully acted on behalf of the human race. God had created; God had rescued, but the covenants of creation/redemption were broken in both cases.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Fretheim, *Exodus: Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, 279.

<sup>52</sup> J. Gerald Janzen, *Exodus* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1997), 226.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

Exodus 32:1-6 is not an account of the abandonment of God for other gods. It is an account of the transfer of the center of faith and authority from Moses and the laws and symbols he had announced to the golden calf, without laws or any symbols beyond itself.<sup>54</sup> As a result God disowned the children of Israel because of their split-level loyalty.

### **1 Samuel 28:1-30: Saul and the Witch of Endor**

1 Samuel is one of the strange accounts in the Bible. In this story the first King of Israel, a human monarch who had the privilege to lead the nation which up to his time had been under a theocratic government. King Saul decided to consult a witch (necromancer/medium) in disregard to God's requirements. It is odd that king Saul could consult a witch. Witches are thought to be able to work in magical ways through spiritual agencies other than God.<sup>55</sup>

**The nature of the temptation.** In 1 Samuel 28: 5 the Bible record indicates that king Saul was extremely afraid of the Philistines. Verses 4-6 ring a familiar note, this was Saul's third confrontation with the Philistines, and it brought back the unpleasant memories of the two previous fateful battles recorded in chapters 13 and 17. As the Philistines gathered, it reminded him of his unpleasant experiences and the shame he had suffered in the face of his perennial foes. That is why 1 Samuel 28:5

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<sup>54</sup> John I. Durham, *Exodus: Word Biblical Commentary*, ed. David Allan Hubbard, Glen W. Barker, and John D. W. Watts (Waco, TX: Word Book, 1987), 422.

<sup>55</sup> In witchcraft there is a diabolical pact or an appeal to the intervention of the spirits of evil. In this pact, the witch is believed to invoke supernatural power to achieve several goals these include bringing about the death of people...calling up the dead, and bringing calamity or impotence upon enemies or rivals." See Philemon O. Amanze, "Mystical Powers and How Some African Christians Get Involved," in *The Church, Culture, and Spirits: Adventism in Africa*, ed. J. Kayode (Silver Springs, MD: Bibilical Research Institute, 2011), 27-28.

says that when Saul saw the camp of the Philistines, he was terrified and “his heart trembled greatly.”

Faced with his greatest calamity, Saul decided to inquire from God regarding the battle. Ronald F. Youngblood commended Saul saying that it was understandable that he inquired of the Lord.<sup>56</sup> That seems like the greatest virtue for him to have sought God’s counsel.

In the ancient world defeat in battle was understood as defeat of the national god.<sup>57</sup> Consequently, God was consulted so that He could ensure victory for His own and His children’s sake.

In 1 Chronicles 10: 14 the chronicler states that Saul “did not inquire.” While the two records seem to be inconsistent, many authors seem to be agreeable with Youngblood’s assertion that “it may be correctly remarked that Saul’s attempts at inquiry were so unworthy that it would be a misrepresentation.<sup>58</sup> Since God could not accept Saul’s desperate, half-hearted and insincere requests, the normal modes of divine communication were silent.

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<sup>56</sup> Ronald F. Youngblood and Frank Ely Gaebelin, *1 & 2 Samuel in The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, with the New International Version, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 779.

<sup>57</sup> In the Near East generally war was a sacred undertaking in which the honour of the national god was very much at stake. The OT writers’ conception of Israel’s wars bears a superficial resemblance of this. The difference was that the God of Israel was transcendent and did not rise and fall with the fortunes of his people. For all that, he is the God of the armies of Israel, (1 Samuel. 17:45) and far more involved in the struggles of his people than Marduk or Asshur were ever thought to be (cf. 2 Chronicles 20:22). God himself is described as the “man of war” (Exod. 15:3 Is. 42:13) and one of his titles is ‘Lord of Hosts’. It was God who led the armies of Israel into battle (Judges 4:14) so the earliest account of Israelite triumphs was called ‘the Book of the Wars of the Lord’ (Numbers 21:14). Indeed, at every stage in the preparations for battle Israel’s dependence upon God was acknowledged. First, an enquiry was made as to whether this was the propitious moment for attack (2 Samuel 5:23-24); then sacrifice had to be offered. So vital was the latter preliminary seem that Saul in desperation arrogated the priestly privilege to himself, lest battle be joined before the favour of the Lord had been sought (1 Samuel 13:8-12) “War” .Marshall et al., *New Bible Dictionary*.

<sup>58</sup> Youngblood and Gaebelin, *1 & 2 Samuel in The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, with the New International Version, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel*, 3:779.

As the Bible records in verse 6, he did not get an answer from God, neither through dreams, the Urim, nor the prophets.<sup>59</sup> At this point, Saul was confronted with the sound of divine silence. This was a testing time for King Saul, he had to make a decision based on his past relationship with God. Notice that there is a thought provoking comparison in 1 Samuel 30:6-8, which indicates David's "great distress" because people wanted to stone him and 1 Samuel 28:15 where Saul had great distress because of the pending attack by the Philistines. The results of both men's prayers seem to be indicative of the efficacy of obedience and right relationship with God. When Saul found himself backed against the wall in battle, he resorted to illegitimate ways of dealing with his predicament.

The life and demise of Saul, is a representative example of dual allegiance in the Old Testament. He visited a medium in defiance to God; in this he committed an abomination in the form of necromancy. According to 1 Samuel 28, Saul acted in concord with God's laws. He had authorized the destruction of all those suspected of being mediums from the nation of Israel (1 Sam 28:9). So his visit to the witch of Endor was not one of ignorance of these laws of God.<sup>60</sup>

He was desperate and this was exacerbated by the fact that he had not remained faithful in his relationship with God. The King had through a series of wrong decisions proved unworthy of the authority and privileges entrusted him by

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<sup>59</sup> Saul sought ritual reassurance/ certainty rather than draw battle plans. He was ruled by fear and not trust. God does not answer. It is ironic that means of getting guidance from the Lord —through priest an ephod — has been lost to Saul by his own deadly violence against the priestly community at Nob, (22:6-23). Bruce C. Birch, *1 & 2 Samuel in The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes Vol. 2, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Introduction to Narrative Literature- Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 1183.

<sup>60</sup> Mary J. Evans, *1 & 2 Samuel: New International Bible Commentary, Old Testament Series* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 124.

God to be ruler of his people.<sup>61</sup> Saul had become an apostate, and according to Scripture, the Spirit of the Lord departed from him and an evil spirit was already ruling his life.<sup>62</sup>

**Shifted allegiance 1 Samuel 28.** In 1 Samuel 28:7-25 King Saul asked his servants to find a spirit medium so that he could go and ask for divination from her.<sup>63</sup> The king who banned witches and wizards from the land now demands audience with one. This was evidence of “his increasing lack of confidence in God’s desire or ability to protect him.”<sup>64</sup> Consequently, the King in disobedience to God’s word disguised himself and went to consult a woman with a familiar spirit. He presumed to communicate with a dead person against the counsel in Deuteronomy 18: 10-14 which expressly prohibits any form of divination. Birch stresses that “in anxiety and fear Saul goes beyond the faithful covenantal practices to seek out a medium violating his own prohibition.”<sup>65</sup>

The Bible condemns magical practices as an abomination before God and they are punishable by death. (cf. Exod 22:18; Lev 19:26, 31; 20:6; 2 Kgs 21:6; 23:24; Isa 8:19; 19:3; Mal 3:5). For instance, Deuteronomy 18:10-11 states: “There will not be

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<sup>61</sup> Paul A. Dosunmu, “A Missiological Study of the Phenomenon of Dual Allegiance in the Seventh-day Adventist Church Among the Yoruba People of Nigeria” (Dissertation Paper, Andrews University, 2011).

<sup>62</sup> 1 Samuel 16:14

<sup>63</sup> This word for divination used here refers to the “whole complex of illicit magical and divinatory practices in ancient Israel (e.g., Deuteronomy 18: 14; 1 Samuel 6: 2) The verb for bring up used here compares with the (Akk. *sulu*) which denotes the function of the Mesopotamian sun god Samas ... who has the power and authority to bring up (*sulu*) a ghost from the underworld. See 1 Samuel 2:6. In David Toshio Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel: The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 618.

<sup>64</sup> Evans, *1 & 2 Samuel: New International Bible Commentary, Old Testament Series*, 124.

<sup>65</sup> Birch, *1 & 2 Samuel in The New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes Vol. 2, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Introduction to Narrative Literature- Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel*, 1184.

found among you one who divines divinations, or one who divines by omens, or one who consults a necromancer or/ wizard, or one who inquires of the dead.”

Saul commanded the woman, "Divine, please, for me by necromancy and cause to bring up for me whomever I say to you!" (28:8). After Saul told her whom she was to bring up, the witch conjured Samuel (v. 11).<sup>66</sup> Eriks Galenieks observes that,

The fall of humanity started with the serpent, when Satan used it as a medium in his attempt to deceive Eve. Satan impersonated Samuel to deceive Saul. Just as Pharaoh's magicians were enabled to counterfeit the miracles of Yahweh by satanic aid (Exod 7:14-12:36), so the medium of Endor was able to call up an apparition of Samuel by drawing on exactly the same demonic powers of necromancy (see also Deut 18:10-11).<sup>67</sup>

Practicing necromancy is particularly reprehensible because it is divination that involves consulting with the dead. This is a direct contradiction to Leviticus 20:27 which condemns necromancers or wizards to death. "The Mosaic laws forbade as abominations mediums, wizards, and necromancers, who consult spirits of the dead."<sup>68</sup> It was unfortunate that Saul concerned himself with getting counsel regardless of the source. In every passage where necromancy is mentioned, the Old Testament clearly decries the practice and consistently condemns the practitioner.

The key to this passage is found in Samuel's earlier statement in 1 Samuel 15:23: "For rebellion is as the sin of divination." In Yahweh's eyes, Saul's

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<sup>66</sup> Youngblood and Gaebelien, *1 & 2 Samuel in The Expositor's Bible Commentary, with the New International Version, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel*, 3:779 Several questions arise here, was the woman actually able to raise up the righteous dead? (i.e., Satan having power over the saints) or was her craft one of mere delusion? Was Samuel resuscitated or was this a demon? Did Samuel appear due to the necromancer's craft or did God intervene and raise Samuel himself? what appeared was the apparition from the netherworld — the realm of the dead, page 781.

<sup>67</sup> Eriks Galenieks, Culture, Adventist Theology, and Mission in Africa A paper presented in the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Adventist Theology and Mission in Africa August 25-29, 2015.

<sup>68</sup> Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel: The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, 619.

disobedience was the equivalent of the sin of witchcraft. Because he had disobeyed and rebelled against Yahweh, his life was forfeited. Split-level religious practices lead to a breakdown of the covenantal relationship with God and ultimate rejection and destruction as a result.

### **Split-Level Christianity in the New Testament**

Syncretism and dual allegiance are not to be thought of as challenges of the Old Testament religion only. The New Testament religious teachers had their own share of challenges that arose from the practice of split-level Christian dispositions. Members of this young church were faced with the decisions relating to their past associations with temples, foods, etc. In their quest to keep their old alliances with their families and societies, these Christian converts found themselves in breach of their new faith.

#### **Prohibition of Split-Level Christianity in Acts Chapter 15**

Acts 15 is one of the key passages in the New Testament. In this chapter, the Apostles of Christ assembled in the historic Council of Jerusalem to settle questions about the practice of Christianity in the context of the new covenant. Acts 15 assumes significance in the history of the Christian church because of the importance attached to the issues and decisions the Council of Jerusalem faced and resolved. At this council, the apostles and elders met to “consider, primarily, the terms on which Gentile believers might be admitted to church membership.”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> F. F Bruce, *The Book of the Acts Revised Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1988), 282.

In the Old Testament, circumcision was a requirement for Gentiles who converted to Jewish religion. It was established as a national ordinance.<sup>70</sup> Abraham, though ninety-nine years of age, was circumcised on the same day with Ishmael, who was thirteen years old. Slaves, whether home-born or purchased, were circumcised (Gen17:12-13); and all foreigners were to have their males circumcised before they could enjoy the privileges of Jewish citizenship.<sup>71</sup>

Notably, the Jerusalem council discussion took place in the context of God's great work among the gentiles and the disputes regarding circumcision.<sup>72</sup> As the Gentiles were converting to Christianity, new challenges came up. It would appear that the background, customs and cultural inclinations of the Gentile believers presented the young church with real complications. They now had to deal with assimilating diverse people from all cultures. They had no precedents to learn from. In the old covenant circumcision and the whole Mosaic Law applied to any proselyte.

Three verses are key in this discussion because they show how the apostles viewed and dealt with split-level Christianity. For the purposes of this study Acts 15: 20, 28 and 29 are treated as essential, and they will be analyzed.

Acts 15: 20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled from blood. vs 28 For it seemed good from the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay no greater burden than these necessary things; vs 29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from

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<sup>70</sup> Genesis 17:10-27, and Exodus 12:48 says 'A foreigner residing among you who wants to celebrate the Lord's Passover must have all the males in his household circumcised; then he may take part like one born in the land. No uncircumcised male may eat it.

<sup>71</sup> Exodus 12:48

<sup>72</sup> Acts 14: 27, "And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that the God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the gentiles." and Acts 15:1, " And certain men which came from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." This council was convened to settle

things strangled, and from fornication: From which if you keep yourselves, ye do well. Fare well.

Note that the term ‘idol’ reflects the Old Testament critique of pagan religiosity which was subject of rebuke in the Decalogue.<sup>73</sup> Spiritual truths and moral guidelines for the Jews were embodied in the law, it was what ordered their lives and defined their relationships. Included in the Law were ceremonies such as circumcision, sacrifices and feasts. At the council of Jerusalem the circumcision which seemed to be the main issue was ruled out for Gentiles.<sup>74</sup> At the suggestion of James, who presided over the meeting, they sent an official letter to Antioch to avoid any misunderstanding. This meant that it was not necessary for Gentiles to be circumcised upon conversion to Christianity. With the circumcision issue laid aside, focus was shifted to what was considered to be the legitimate issue that of pollutions associated with idols found in Acts 15:20 and 29.

The decision recorded in Acts 15, reflects the understanding the apostles had concerning expected Christian conduct in relation to the issues that were raised. The apostles and elders at Jerusalem demanded that the Gentile Christians steer clear from four impurities that were associated with the pagan world.<sup>75</sup> First, they were to abstain from "things contaminated by idols." The word “things” is in the plural form and this could suggest that there were several practices that the council wanted to advise the new converts to heed. In view here was meat sacrificed to idols, in the worldview of

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<sup>73</sup> Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 642.

<sup>74</sup> Acts 15: 19, Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God; vs 28 ... to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

<sup>75</sup> Robert W. Wall, *Acts; Introduction to Epistolary Literature in The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes, Vol. X, Acts; Introduction to Epistolary Literature; Romans and 1 Corinthians*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 220.

most Jewish Christians, eating this food was tantamount to approving these sacrifices.<sup>76</sup> It has to be noted here that Christians cannot participate in associations or activities of an idolatrous nature and remain wholesome. Clinton E. Arnold suggests that the Greek word ‘aligema’ should not be limited to food, but should be understood to refer to any kind of contact with idolatrous practices.<sup>77</sup>

At this moment it comes out that the echoes of the covenantal prohibitions of Mount Sinai could be implied. The point here is that Christians need to exercise caution and use their discernment and prudence to avoid evil and any appearance of evil in whatever they do.

Robert Wall in his commentary on Acts insists that the items mentioned by James and approved by the council were injunctions against religious practices.<sup>78</sup> In the Jerusalem council religious practices that were contrary to God’s will were being disallowed, this act should be instructive for Christians in this generation. Steps have to be actively taken to dissuade believers from getting involved in dubious religious associations that may entail idolatry.

The Gentile converts were prohibited from participating in these practices because participation would render them contaminated.<sup>79</sup> Likewise, contemporary

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<sup>76</sup> Craig S. Keener, *Acts An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2014), 2270.

<sup>77</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, ed., *Acts: Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 144.

<sup>78</sup> Wall, *Acts; Introduction to Epistolary Literature in The New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes, Vol. X, Acts; Introduction to Epistolary Literature; Romans and 1 Corinthians*, 220.

<sup>79</sup> Craig S. Keener in affirming the conclusion of the Jerusalem Council says, “Certainly idol food and immorality were common temptations in pagan society (1 Corinthians 10:7-8; Rev. 2:14, 20); idol food had long posed a temptation to God’s people. Since people could belong to multiple associations, converts who continued in other pre-conversion associations would be confronted with these temptations as social demands. Public meetings and social dinner parties opened with a pagan rite, bequests began with libation. Roman families would expect participation in ceremonial meals at the grave of a deceased loved one; social obligations involving sacrificial meals were virtually unavoidable. How

Christians should be circumspect in living their faith so that there would be no suspicion of double loyalty or spiritual schizophrenia.

James' advice was that, "if you keep yourselves from these, you will do well."<sup>79</sup> As already noted in the covenantal articulation discussed in this paper, the conditional clause 'if' demands humanity's responsibility and accountability to the God of the covenant. Even in this instance it seems that the welfare of the Gentile converts would be guaranteed on account of their living up to an expected preset standard. A careful analysis of ruling of the council shows that the Decalogue was in view in two aspects as would be revealed in Exodus 20: 3, 4 and 13.

There are some significant observations in this passage of Scripture. Peter and Paul's narrations show that "God had visited the gentiles and took out of them a people for His name"<sup>80</sup> The phrase 'took out a people for His name' is a covenantal phrase. It implies that the gentiles who had been taken by God as His people were joining the covenant family. Therefore, gentile Christians were to acquaint themselves with the covenant stipulations. The Jerusalem council communique presented them with one of the key covenant stipulations, the exclusive nature of God's relationship with the converts.

### **Prohibition of Split-Level Christianity in 1 Corinthians 10**

The precursor to 1 Corinthians 10 in addressing the issue of food sacrificed to idols is 1 Corinthians 8. This chapter helps introduce the practices and worldview undercurrents in the Corinthian setting. Christianity met with the challenges of

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could Christians participate in society without seeming to sanction the idolatry that pervaded it? Keener, *Acts An Exegetical Commentary*, 3:2270.

<sup>80</sup> James in his summary of Peter, Paul and Barnabas's testimonies about the work of God was doing among the Gentiles, Acts 15: 14

syncretism at its infancy. The whole discourse about meats offered to idols should also be understood in light of the concept of sacrifice in Corinth at during Paul's time. This was a time when a communal meal was not for pacifying hunger, it expressed a desire to enter "into union with the mysterious power of the deities."<sup>81</sup> The challenge that faced the gentile converts at Corinth and elsewhere was, "how to live in a pagan (pluralistic) society and not participate in idolatry."<sup>82</sup> In essence, 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 are concerned with problems arising from participating in feasts associated with pagan sacrifices in Corinth. This challenge fits the description of split-level Christianity.

As part of the background of 1 Corinthians 10 may be gleaned from 1 Corinthians 9, where Paul seems to give ground rules for Christian living. W. Larry Richards, sees the final paragraph of 1 Corinthians 9 (vs. 24-27) as the beginning of Paul's discussion in 1 Corinthians 10.<sup>83</sup> In his discussion in chapter 9 Paul includes the idea of life as a struggle. He encourages his audience to learn self-discipline and to avoid pleasure seeking and selfishness.<sup>84</sup> 1 Corinthians 9 sets the tone of self-denial and self-control which seem to be the required attitudes in dealing with the challenges in 1 Corinthians 10.

At the conclusion of 1 Corinthians 9 and verses 26-27 in particular, Paul raises a serious and frightening prospect of disqualification from winning the prize. His fear of losing after putting in a great effort is given as the reason for his resolve to engage

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<sup>81</sup> Hemchard Gossai, ed., *Paul and the Lord's Supper: A Socio-Historical Investigation* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2005), 83.

<sup>82</sup> Geoffrey Wainwright, *Eucharist and Eschatology* (London, UK: Epworth Press, 1978), 65.

<sup>83</sup> Larry W. Richard, *The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier, A Practical Guide to Abundant Christian Living in the Book of 1 Corinthians: The Essentials and Nonessentials of Christians Living* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1997), 160.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

in self-discipline. Having raised the possibility of disqualification, Paul began chapter 10 by citing a historical precedence of those who were actually disqualified. In the use and reference to the Exodus story Paul exposes and explains the circumstances that led to the disqualification of the Israelite pilgrims from Egypt.

Arrogance is mentioned as one of the main contributors in having them condemned.<sup>85</sup> In giving this vivid warning Paul recounted that the forefathers had seen the power and salvation of God, but that this had not changed their life inclinations and attitudes. Consequently, they lost out on the promised destiny, they did not enter Canaan, they perished in the wilderness regardless of participating in the great miracles of God on their behalf. 1 Corinthians 10 can be seen as a warning meant to help the new believers to avoid complacency and arrogance so that they live up to their calling as Christians.

In real terms, 1 Corinthians 10:16-21 should be taken as evidence of Paul exhorting the believers against syncretism. A review of this chapter may provide theological insights that will be useful for a focused discipleship in the face of split-level Christianity. The context under which Paul gave this exhortation was a debate that the Corinthian church was engaged in. This debate involved “the question of how much contact with idol temples, entertainments, food, was permissible to Christians everywhere and at all times.”<sup>86</sup> As can be noted here, the question of delineating incompatible cultural practices from the gospel has always been part of the Christian mission. At this point, the Corinthian church was in a double bind between culture and the gospel.

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<sup>85</sup> Marion L. Soards, *1 Corinthians: Understanding the Bible Commentary Series* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 199.

<sup>86</sup> Francis D. Nichol, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary Acts to Ephesians*, vol. 6 (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1980), 745.

In this chapter the writer advances the logic that those who partake of the cup of the Lord become one with him. Partaking of the feasts of the idols was equated to becoming “one with the idols”<sup>87</sup> It is for this reason that Paul argued that it was incongruous to have those who were one with Christ, to be also one with the idol.<sup>88</sup> God is a jealousy God,<sup>89</sup> His church is likened to His bride, it is for this reason that the Bible views idolatry as adultery.<sup>90</sup> The sin of adultery is punishable by death and separation.

By inference, anyone who has communion with God through the Holy Communion emblems is one with Christ as in a marriage covenant. If this person then has fellowship with the idols, or any of its forms they are breaking this marriage bond and this would always result in immediate separation and eventual death. In this discourse Paul is unraveling the ineptness of trying to illogically practice Christianity concurrently with worship of other deities.

1 Corinthians 10 is a recapitulation of the great controversy theme. The juxtapositioning of the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils is a miniature representation of the cosmic conflict in the sense of what they both stand for. The cup of the Lord represents a consecrated life lived under the influence and will of God while the cup of devils symbolizes a life of disobedience, rule of sin and rebellion to the will of God.<sup>89</sup> Logically, there is no point of convergence between these two attitudes to life. An individual cannot have a double life, the Bible in this case will

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<sup>87</sup> Nichol, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary Acts to Ephesians*, vol. 6, 745.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Exod 34: 14 “Do not worship any other god, for the Lord whose name is jealous, is a jealousy God.” see Exod 20:5 ;Deut 4: 24; 5:9; Josh 24:19.

<sup>90</sup> Nichol, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary Acts to Ephesians*, 6:745.

advance the argument found in Mathew 6:24 which says, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; ...” The word ‘serve’ brings with it the ideas of belonging and allegiance, in this case it should be noted that God desires the entire life to be under His will and influence. If this is not possible then communion with God is not feasible.

To fully explain his concerns Paul used the imagery of the cup. Believers were wavering and participating in both feasts, whereas they needed to choose between them. Paul’s juxtaposed two levels of concern were — two loyalties and two powers.<sup>91</sup> The goal of Paul’s discourse is to encourage the Corinthian believers to be exclusively faithful to God. The Christianity advocated for in 1 Corinthians 10 does not leave room for any other affiliations except single-mindedness to God.

Allan Tippet discusses 1 Corinthians 10 in some detail. He also provides some insights on the concept of fellowship and its implications on syncretism based on this chapter. Writing on ‘Koinonia’ and ‘Koinonoi,’ Tippet describes the usage of these two words and concludes that as a concept they represent a prohibition of double loyalty.<sup>92</sup> In 1 Corinthians 1:9 the ‘koinonoi’ are “called the fellowship of His Son” In the above references of the word ‘koinonoi,’ Tippet argues that the fellowship embodied by ‘koinonoi’ as used in the cited passages is a product of an intimate relationship Christ.<sup>93</sup> This deep relationship is derived from and made possible by his grace and assurance of Salvation. According to Paul the ‘Koinonoi’ are those Christians who have a personal, intimate and permanent relationship with Christ, they

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<sup>91</sup> Soards, *1 Corinthians: Understanding the Bible Commentary Series*, 210.

<sup>92</sup> Allan R. Tippet, *Introduction to Missiology* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1987), 41.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, 41.

are expected through this fellowship to have been transformed into his likeness. This fellowship with him is like a marriage bond. Therefore the 'koinonoi' are expected to be in a relationship with Christ and their fellow disciples. This fellowship would exclude Christ's adversaries.

The other concept that comes to focus in 1 Corinthians 10 is that of 'koinonia'. In the *New Bible Dictionary* the words (belonging to the koin- family) are said to refer primarily to participation in something.<sup>94</sup> In 1 Corinthians 10 the preferred translation of koinonia is "sharing in or sharing with him" in other senses the word means participating in and at times it is translated fellowship or communion.

Deliberating about 'koinonia,' Tippet reasons that "participation in the 'koinonia' demands a rigorous commitment to the Lord."<sup>95</sup> 'Rigorous commitment' is explained as "faith and loyalty."<sup>96</sup> The terms that are used to interpret 'koinonia' embody great meaning. Fellowship, communion and union coupled with faith and loyalty express a deep relationship which can be logically equated with the relationship envisaged by the covenant. A closer look at the language and the import of the cited word seem to lend credence to the claim that this could be suggestive of covenant relationships. If the inference that is being made here is correct then the idea of the covenant relationship could still be considered as the rallying point of the bond between God and Christians in the New Testament.

In 1 Corinthians 10:21 Paul says "Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and the table of devils". In this text Paul raises the point of exclusive fellowship with Christ. This can be explained as implying total fidelity in the relationship. The text is

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<sup>94</sup> Marshall et al., *New Bible Dictionary*, 218.

<sup>95</sup> Tippet, *Introduction to Missiology*, 41.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, 41

a prohibition of double loyalty which is not tolerable to God. As one reads 1 Corinthians 10:21 there are echoes of Mathew 6:24 which says, “No one can serve two masters.” These two verses are not declaring the impossibility of doing what they are prohibiting, but they are stating the fact of the unacceptability of the actions.

When Paul says, “Ye cannot” he is using an unqualified, final, categorical statement, and it serves as a boundary line beyond which there would be no fellowship with Christ. The import of the passage and verse 21 in particular, is that communion with Christ and true fellowship with His church are impractical when one still maintains fellowship and communion of devils. While it is possible to partake of the cup of devils, it should be noted that Paul is giving a warning that sharing in that table automatically disqualifies one from fellowship with Christ.

In summary, the theme of 1 Corinthians 10 is that ordinances (like baptism and the Lord’s Supper) cannot preserve anyone in themselves apart from faithfulness. Paul enunciated this by relating baptism of their forefathers in the sea and under the cloud. They all ate manna, drank out of that spiritual rock (Christ). Although their experiences were real, the forefathers died because they broke their covenant of fellowship with God. The obvious lesson is that fellowship with God requires faithfulness and total commitment to Him alone. In this sense, dual allegiance, syncretism and all forms of split-level Christianity are a dangerous proposition and those who practice them are simultaneously out of fellowship with God.

In the statement “I do not want you to become partners with demons!” Paul is reinforcing his earlier command where he told them to flee from idolatry. It should be noted though that as Paul indicated in chapter 8 that the idols were nothing, demons

or evil powers were and are still real.<sup>97</sup> It was to them that the sacrifices were offered according to 1 Corinthians 10:20.

Complacency regarding the existence of these powers could spell danger for a Christian. At the same time participating in feasts dedicated to them was open rebellion to Christ. Anyone who joined in these festivals undermined their union with Christ. His exhortation is a warning that by participating in the idol feasts the Corinthian believers actually become partners with demons; ... Christians cannot casually join in feasts honoring these deities that epitomize hostility to God... However innocent the Christians' intentions might be, the result is that they give assent to, collaborate with, and swell the ranks of demonic defiance of the sovereign God. ... In reality, they are joining a feast infested by Satan and forming an alliance with those who crucified the Son of God.<sup>98</sup>

The language used in this above narration is very incisive and has rough undertones. It also sounds like a recapitulation of the covenant lawsuit, alliance with the enemy of God is one of the messages from the above text. It also describes behavior that could be regarded as treasonous.

It should also be noted that drinking the cup of someone was understood as a means of entering into a communion relationship with that person to the point of sharing that person's destiny, for good or ill.<sup>99</sup> For this reason, Paul declares that drinking the cup of the Lord signifies covenant faithfulness and therefore that should always imply an exclusion of drinking the cup of demons. The Christians were confronted with an either/or — total devotion to God or compromise with the devil.<sup>100</sup> Paul's counsel is that they should avoid provoking God, but live in faithfulness to Him. In this chapter Paul forcefully puts forward the case of the exclusive nature of

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<sup>97</sup> Ivan T. Blazen, *The Gospel on the Street: Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1997), 75.

<sup>98</sup> David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians: Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 481.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Soards, *1 Corinthians: Understanding the Bible Commentary Series*, 211.

the Christian life. What Paul advocated for in this chapter should be incorporated in the teachings of believers.

Lessons that can be drawn from this analysis of 1 Corinthians 10 suggest the reasons why the Corinthian church participated in the pagan rituals. The reasons for syncretism in the case of Corinthian believers seem to have been due to their attitude that the idols were nothing.<sup>101</sup> For them, mingling and participating in those feasts did not matter. They had self confidence that participating would not harm them and they also presumed that it was not harmful to their relationship with God. In other words this fellowship would not constitute sin it was regarded as just a casual social interaction.

### **Call out of Split-level Christianity in Revelation 2:12-17**

Revelation is prophetic book. Prophets in the Bible were known as God's spokespersons. It is worth noting that when people violated the covenant stipulations the prophets confronted them with warnings of impending consequences. Sin in the biblical perspective of the covenant was always understood as an act of adultery (Jer 18-7-10). In case of infidelity the prophet assumed the role of prosecutor. He brought charges in a covenant lawsuit. The book of revelation seems to have a message of God's judgment for the violations of the covenant.

The overarching theme of the Book of Revelation is the cosmic conflict, this cosmic conflict is tangible in Revelation. It involves the battle of allegiance, it gives the best prospects of laying a solid theological base for understanding and responding to split-level Christianity. John's message presents a climatic convergence of all the

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<sup>101</sup> What say I then? That the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to the idol is anything? (1 Cor 10:19).

powers for a final showdown. True worship and allegiance are at stake in this book. The language that the author of Revelation uses is militarized while the tone is somber and at times animating. Primarily, Revelation stands in judgment of all kinds of false worship. In a way this book is a summary of the Bible revelation and teaching about God, His person, character and will.

Reading through it shows a portrayal of the devil's final assault on God's covenant people. Satan's call is that all people should worship the beast and its image. The representative symbol of Satan's armies is Babylon which stands against Jerusalem and Mount Zion.

In Genesis Satan appeared as a serpent but in Revelation he manifests himself as a great red dragon. The context is that Christ appears in Genesis as a dying lamb (Gen 4) and in Revelation He is the one sitting on the throne (Rev 4). Before the final showdown, God through John wrote a letter to the seven churches in Asia. One of those letters will be reviewed in an effort to glean some lessons about God's regard of split-level Christianity.

**The city of Pergamos.** Pergamos was the capital city of the Roman province of Asia. It was the epicenter of social, political, religious and economic life of the hellenistic world.<sup>102</sup> As a religious capital it was characterized by multiple shrines

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<sup>102</sup> Ranko Stefanović, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2002), 122. Stefanovic gives the following historical background and setting of John's message to the church at Pergamos —“In John's day Pergamos was the capital city of the province of Asia, it was located some forty miles north east of Smyrna. In addition to its political importance, it was celebrated as a center of intellectual life in the whole Hellenistic world. Pergamos was also a great and important religious center; it was famed for its magnificent temples erected to Zeus, Athena, Dionysus, and Asclepius. Forty feet high, stood on a projecting ledge of rock... which looked like a throne; and all day every day it smoked of sacrifices offered to Zeus. Near the city stood the immense shrine of Asclepius, the serpent god of healing.” (Researcher's comments —In Stefanovic's descriptions I see key indicators about the nature of the city of Pergamos, they show the difficulties which the infant Christian church faced. New converts were in a very difficult environment it would seem. Regardless of the setting and the environment God still expected his disciples in Pergamos to live out their faith, to be overcomer and to keep themselves pure and obedient to Him.)

dedicated to several deities and here, “religion became a major instrument of policy.”<sup>103</sup> The inhabitants of this city were expected to worship many idols including emperor worship which had become a “sacred duty of all citizens.”<sup>104</sup>

Great pressure was exerted upon the Christians to worship idols. When they withstood this, they were then forced to pay homage to the emperor of which resistance was considered treasonous.<sup>105</sup> Confessing Jesus Christ in such an environment; the Christians would naturally draw a sharp line between themselves and the idolaters among whom they lived. Whilst it would be uneasy to live as a Christian among their non- Christian family members and communities, God still expected and required the Christians in Pergamos to live a life of faith and obedience to Him.

While God required purity of faith from the believers at Pergamos as always, the setting here presented several challenges which may be of interest. This city was also popularly called the ‘citadel’ because it housed hellenic cults and the Roman emperor cult. Revelation 2:13 begins with the words; “I know where you dwell” and ends with the interesting words showing that it is also “where Satan dwells.” Sandwiched between these dwellings are very informative details of the context which is created by the Pergamos believers’ place of habitation and Satan’s habitation. The text does not only acknowledge Satan to only dwell in Pergamos, it

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<sup>103</sup> Colin J. Hener, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 81.

<sup>104</sup> Gregory K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 247.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.; Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: A Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1993), 123.

also points out that Satan's throne was at Pergamos. A little historical background may be helpful for a better understanding of this passage.

It has already been stated that Pergamos was a center of pagan religions in general, it has also been noted that there was an acropolis which looked like a great throne at Pergamos; a closer analysis of these features and the overwhelming domination of idol worship suggests that there was an authoritative personal presence of the power behind that worship. Several authors argue and concur that the throne like the altar of Zeus Soter (savior) which was so imposing typified Satanic heathendom.<sup>106</sup> While this argument is plausible others believe the reason for identifying Pergamos as the place where Satan's throne was could have arose from the emperor cult which exercised the power to persecute those who were not pliable to the cults. It should be noted that in the ancient world, a throne signified special authority and royal governance,<sup>107</sup> by implication, Pergamos was typically the locus of satanic power. Robert Mounce posits that, "Pergamos was one of the cities in which the church was most vulnerable to the excesses of the imperial cult."<sup>108</sup> It was in this city where the proconsul had the "right of the sword" which meant that he had the power to execute at will those who were perceived to be rebellious.

It appears that Religion was a key feature in Pergamos, it was determined by both culture and the laws of the city. Christians seem to have been a minority and their religion was undermined and criminalized. The church lived in a hostile

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<sup>106</sup> According to Grant R. Osborne the magnificent altar of *Zeus Soter* dominated the city. The legs of the giants in the sculpture were serpent's tails, aligned with Satan in Revelation 12:9 and 20:2. Both *Zeus* and *Asclepius* were called 'saviour,' that so many gods were special in that city presented a logical conclusion that it was where Satan's throne was.(241)

<sup>107</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 141.

<sup>108</sup> Robert Mounce, *The Book of Revelation Revised Edition: The New International Commentary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 78.

environment, and yet God expected in trust that they were going to retain their peculiarity and still worship him in truth regardless of their restrictive environment. Among the idols that set up as an alternative source of power were Zeus Soter and Asclepius soter. The word soter means “savior” as has been noted already, so in other words Zeus and Asclepius were an alternative for Jesus Christ the savior.

Asclepius was a god of healing and attracted the interest of countless people suffering from physical ills. His symbol was the snake, which still decorates medical emblems today. ... And in lieu of Asclepius’s healing, the Christians taught that Jesus was their great physician.<sup>109</sup>

Christians were being forced to worship these “saviors” and that was contrary to Christianity that is why some of them resisted to their death. Asclepius’ snakelike emblem brings to mind memories of the Garden of Eden, the serpent imagery in the Bible always raises the stakes in the great controversy. Satan’s presence in this form was always going to be a threat to Christians’ allegiance. Beale concludes that the use of the juxtaposed dwellings of Satan and Pergamum believers was contrasted “in order to accentuate the idea that light and darkness cannot dwell together in peaceful coexistence.”<sup>110</sup> Persecution was always going to be inevitable.

**Commendations for believers in Pergamos.** In Revelation 2:12-17 the message to the Pergamum church begins with a commendation for its “persevering witness in the midst of persecution”<sup>111</sup> and a reminder of who is speaking.<sup>112</sup> In

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<sup>109</sup> Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 127.

<sup>110</sup> Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 247.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Revelation 2:12b “These things Saith He who which hath the sharp sword with two edges;”

Revelation 2:12 the one speaking was said to have a sharp two-edged sword.<sup>113</sup> This sword must have had significance. The writers of The Seventh-day Adventist Bible commentary refer to Revelation 1: 16 to explain the significance of the sword. They conclude that the sword “typifies the punishment that would result from failure to repent”<sup>114</sup> Beyond this, the sword would be a reminder to the Christians that Christ was not only their judge but also of the evil powers they were reeling under their persecution. William Barclay stated that though the proconsul of Pergamon had the *ius gladii* (right of sword) Christians should never forget that the “risen Christ with his two-edged sword had power over the satanically powerful Rome.”<sup>115</sup> Christ presents himself as the ultimate judge who has power over life and death. The devil and the Roman governors were exercising temporary power over the life of Christians but Christ reminded them that he “the risen Christ” alone has power over life and death. Consequently, the symbolism of the sword might have been meant to give them courage to withstand the powers of Rome trusting in the dependability and overruling power of Christ.

It is astounding and yet reassuring to find out that some Christians in Pegamos lived out their faith amidst the rulers’ threats and the allures of idolatry and

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<sup>113</sup> “Two types of swords are mentioned in Revelation, — the long *rhomphaia* here, which was used for piecing and cutting(cf. 1:16; 2:16; 19:15, 21) and the short dagger - like *macharia*, which measured less than six inches (6:4; 13:10, 14) The Roman governor exercised *ius gladii* or right of sword,, from his bench of judgment in Pergamum. In the province he represented the authority of the emperor, who himself carried the sword or dagger as a symbol of his office. The governor’s power to render capital punishment gave him the right of life and death in his jurisdiction....By this epithet in the message to Pergamum, Jesus establishes his preeminence , even over the Roman governor.” In Mark W. Wilson and Clinton E. Arnold, *Revelation: Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 23–24.

<sup>114</sup> Francis D Nichol, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary: The Holy Bible with Exegetical and Expository Comment in Seven Volumes*, vol. 7 (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1980), 750.

<sup>115</sup> William Barclays, *The Revelation of John: The Daily Study Series*, Revised., vol. 1 (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1976), 90.

debauchery that surrounded them. Christ acknowledged them by saying, “you are holding fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.”<sup>116</sup> This text at first, raises the issue of holding fast to the ‘his name.’ Grant Osborne concluded that ‘holding fast to his name’ meant living up to the responsibility of their Christian identity, which implies that they kept on walking in the footsteps of Jesus.<sup>117</sup>

Secondly, the phrase “where Satan dwells” may also have referred to the fact that Satan was always present. Two possibilities of being tempted or being persecuted were always inevitable. Some believers in Pergamos seem to have had mastered the art of holding firmly to Christ’s name in the face of unprecedented hardship and persecution. This text should be inspiring for people who live in villages or homes where religious intolerance is normative. It should also be a source of challenge to those who easily trade off their faith for ease of life.

**Condemnation of compromisers in Pergamos.** Following the praise for their faith, Christ condemns the church for its idolatrous compromise. The Christians in Pergamum staunchly withstood external pressure from pagan governmental and religious authorities but permitted an apparently subtle compromise to develop within their ranks. This internal compromise is explained through reference to the compromising relationship Balaam had with Israel (Num 22:5-25; 31:8, 16). Israel was led to worship idols and commit immorality as a result of his deceitful counsel.<sup>118</sup> While the church at Pergamos was commended for their resilience under persecution, they were found lacking in stamina in the face of subtle internal allures to idolatry.

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<sup>116</sup> Revelation 2: 13

<sup>117</sup> Osborne, *Revelation: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 142.

<sup>118</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: A Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, 111.

Revelation 2:14 and 15 decries the church's toleration of those who held the teaching of Balaam and Nicolaitans. In a way this text appears to suggest that these were some members who held spurious views. The use of Balaam's name brings to mind his instigation of idolatry and fornication among the Israelites in Numbers 25: 1-6. On that account, their presence in the church "threatened to destroy the integrity and purity of the Christian faith and conduct."<sup>123</sup> It should be noted that both names, Balaam and Nicholas in the Greek language connote one who destroys the people.<sup>119</sup> The rebuke came because the believers in Pergamos tolerated the heretics to flourish in the church in spite of their views that contaminated the church with idolatrous teachings. God's remonstrance did not come because of their practicing but due to their allowing the presence of idolatrous teachers and heretics space within their ranks. This seems to suggest that when idolaters, fornicators and heretics are detected in the church they should be admonished and their teachings should be openly refuted.

The actual challenge that God identified in Pergamos was tolerating those who held the teachings of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.<sup>120</sup> These teachings encouraged the Christians to worship idols and commit sexual immorality with the

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid, Stefanovic posits that "Nicolas and Balaam seem to be parallel terms; Nicolaos is a compound Greek word (*nikao* and *laos*) and means "the one who conquers the people." Balaam can be derived from two Hebrew words—*am* ("people") and *baal* (from *bela*, "to destroy" or "to swallow"), meaning "destruction of the people." Thus Nicolaos could be the Greek version of the Hebrew Balaam, meaning exactly the same thing. So it could be that these two heretical groups were propagating the same error." p. 111.

<sup>120</sup> In this context the word "*porneo*" in the two contexts (balaam and here) seems to carry both a literal and metaphorical sense especially in the story of *Baal-Poer*, in which Israel both physically fornicated with foreign women and committed spiritual fornication with their gods. (Numbers 25:1-3) Here, however, John is emphasizing the broader spiritual nuance since (*porneo*) derives from its meaning from the Old Testament Figure of Jezebel, who influenced Ahab and Israel to adopt Baal worship. (sexual immorality was also part of Baal worship) Jezebel is mentioned to emphasize her efforts since she enticed Israel into syncretic idolatry. To commit adultery in Revelation 2:20-21 shows that a more general spiritual idea is included since (*moiheuo*) in 2:22 clearly refers metaphorically to believers married to Christ who are flirting with spiritual intercourse with pagan Gods (Ps 105: 39; Isa 47:10; Nah 3:1-4) Beale, 250.

temple prostitutes and eat food sacrificed to idols. These were done in violation of the Ten Commandments where God says; You shall have no other Gods before me; You shall not bow to them and worship them; you shall not commit adultery.<sup>121</sup> These people were teaching lawlessness and crude idolatry which were an abomination to God.

Barclay, Stefanovic, Osborne and several other scholars seem to converge on the point that the teachings of Balaam and that of the Nicolaitans encouraged compromise in relation to eating food offered to idols and fornication.<sup>122</sup> They taught this compromise in disregard of the word of God, it seems that they were misrepresenting Paul's writings and persuaded their fellow believers that there "was nothing wrong with prudent conformity to the world's standards in order to escape persecution."<sup>123</sup> This advice was a direct violation of God's word, when God calls people apart to be His, He expects them to be holy, separate from the world and its standards. This is found in Bible verses like;<sup>124</sup> John 17:15-16; 2 Corinthians 6:17, and related verses as indicated in our footnotes. There is a need for believers to reflect on what God has called them to. A call to be a Christian is a call to live a life of dedication and commitment of God.

The man who is not prepared to be different need not start on the Christian way at all. The commonest word for the Christian in the New Testament is *hagios* whose base meaning is - different or separate. The Temple is *hagios* because it is

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<sup>121</sup> Exodus 20: 3, 5, and 14

<sup>122</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: A Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, 123.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 125; William Barclays, *The Mind of Jesus* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1976), 92.

<sup>124</sup> Deut 7:6; 26:18-19; Exod 19:5-6; Lev 20:7-8, 26; Eph 1:4 ; 1 Cor

different from other buildings; the Sabbath day is hagios because it is different from other days; God is supremely hagios because He is totally different from men; and the Christian is hagios because he is different from other men.<sup>125</sup>

Everything about God, His character and attributes demand a holy people, those who worship him as Paul advocates in Romans 12: 1-4 and in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and many such other texts, should be holy and separate from worldliness. The idea is not to be out of the world but that of living a life that witnesses against worldliness. No compromise is expected among those who strive to be like Christ.

**Warnings to compromisers at Pergamos.** A stern warning is given to the compromisers, Jesus admonishes them to repent. Failure to repent was going to be met with judgment which was initially meant for the evil powers. Those who would not repent were going to be executed together with the pretentious powers and all idolaters and fornicators. The key word of warning is “repent” which is in the form of a Greek aorist imperative. In this form it suggests a decisive action of “turning around”<sup>126</sup> Barclay pictures this concept as “a man facing one direction—away from God—and in repentance he changes his direction — towards God. Repentance means a turning round and a facing in the opposite direction.”<sup>127</sup> God was admonishing the Pergamum believers to change their minds in regard to idols and fornication. They were to turn away from these, they were to turn to God in faith and allegiance with

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<sup>125</sup> Col 3:12 ; 2 Tim 1:9 ; 1 Pet 2:9, These verses express God’s ideal for his disciples. God through Jesus has set out to redeem humanity, His ultimate goal is for them to reflect His character part of which has to do with them becoming Holy. Sin and idolatry deforms their character and renders them defiled and unholy. In other words God’s invitation to humanity is an call to holiness, “But as he which has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for aim holy. And if you call on the father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here with fear.” 1 Pet 1:15-17

<sup>126</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: A Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, 123.

<sup>127</sup> Barclays, *The Mind of Jesus*, 43.

their whole hearts. This implies that they were to change their view about the worth of the idol from tolerance to intolerance while at the same time they were to change their view from distrust in God to total trust and allegiance to Him.

**Promises for overcomers in Pergamos.** Toward the end of the message Pergamum is encouraged to overcome the persecutions and idolatry. An outline of benefits for overcoming is given; by overcoming they would be in line for an “inheritance of the end-time fellowship and identification with Christ.”<sup>128</sup> Covenantal language appears in this letter, it is evident in the promises that are given to those who will overcome in Pergamos. The phrase “To him who overcomes, I will ... in Revelation 2:17, one can sense the overtones of the covenantal conditional clause “if” you obey my voice. The benefits of overcoming are stated as possible only on condition of overcoming.

God’s warnings and rebukes to the Pergamum believers were followed by bright promises of rewards. Every believer was encouraged to strive to be an overcomer. The Greek word “nikao” means “victory over hostile powers.” It would appear that in the case of the Christians in Pergamos, for one to overcome, it required a recognition that overcoming was dependent on personal choices, one of which involved turning to God in total obedience and trust. Robert H. Charles explains that the word overcomer as used in this chapter “implies that the Christian life is a warfare from which there is no discharge, in which even the feeblest saint can prove victorious”<sup>129</sup> Overcoming appears to be conditional on being in partnership or covenant relationship with Christ. It would be possible only in alliance with Him.

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<sup>128</sup> Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 245.

<sup>129</sup> Robert H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of Saint John 2 Vols. International Critical Commentary*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark, 1959), 54.

## **The Bible and Worldview Transformation**

Paul challenged the Corinthian church saying, “Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils.” (1 Cor 10:21) whose koinonoi are you- Christ’s or Satan’s? The Corinthian Christians were trying to pay homage to Christ and hold on to their former religious affiliations at the same time. At Corinth, the symbolic focal point was the “cup.” Christianity demands an undivided loyalty – there is to be no coexistence and no syncretism.<sup>130</sup> In the matter of split-level loyalty, Scripture has had a single voice from Genesis to Revelation.

God does not accept any rival god (Deut 6:14), turning to other gods is regarded as sin and is duly punished. Therefore the Bible has evidence of the destruction of heathen altars, God demanded it (Deut 7:5, 25; Exod 23:24; 34:13; 2 Kgs 23:4-20).

They had to tear down heathen altars while at the same time they had to rebuild the God’s altars (Judge 6:25-26). In Joshua’s cases a stone of witness was set up (Josh 24:26). One of the most animating experiences was the enactment of a competitive encounter of gods at Carmel (1 Kgs 18:18-39). Elijah represented God and defeated the prophets of Baal. He demonstrated the power of the God of heaven.

In her comment on this experience, Ellen White observed that when the people saw the Heaven-sent fire, they were convicted of their duty to acknowledge God to whom they owed allegiance.<sup>131</sup> The people cried out in unison and said “The Lord, He is God,” She further observes that in the Mount Carmel scene the character of Baal worship and its inefficacy was revealed. It stood as no match to God’s service or

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<sup>130</sup> Tippet, *Introduction to Missiology*, 83.

<sup>131</sup> Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1917), 134.

efficacy of His saving grace. In this momentous experience, the Israelites admitted that the God of Elijah was indeed above every idol.<sup>132</sup>

Worldview transformation happens when the believers are confident that the power of God is greater than that of their old gods. Believers need to have a new song, story and new narrative. This should always lead to a new, exclusive relationship with God.

The Bible instructs parents to inculcate a correct worldview in their children's minds. Several cases can be cited in this regard. In Deuteronomy 6:4 the Bible gives a formula for worldview formulation. This is further corroborated by Joshua 4:21-24 where it is said to the Israelites, "In the future when the descendants ask their parents, 'What do these things mean', then you can tell them, 'This is where the Israelites crossed the Jordan on dry'" The Bible emphasizes the witnessing of the believers where they relate their story about what God has done in their lives. The new Testament is a book of testimonies and witnesses. Therefore, the Bible is a book intended to effect worldview transformation in the world.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, it has come to light that God's relationship with humanity is covenantal. This covenant is regarded as a relationship of privilege, it is also conditional upon fidelity. Covenantal faithfulness, '*hessed*,' is binding and ensures '*shaloam*' - total peace and security. The covenant relationship entails the breaking of all ties with other competing associations so that one devotes their whole life to God in totality and live thereafter in the perspective of this special bond.

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<sup>132</sup> White, Prophets and Kings, 134.

This covenant bond is an alliance, a contract and a coalition for defensive and offensive purposes. Breaking it is considered as treachery, it is equivalent to adultery and attracts a death penalty.

God is presented as both a covenant maker and also one who renews his covenant. Adam broke the covenant and God renewed it. Israel broke the covenant several times and God renewed it. The Christians today break the covenant but God has been faithful to renew it. The plan of redemption has Christ as the mediator of the covenant, therefore the Christians today have a chance to be reconciled to God in a covenant renewal.

In this chapter, Bible evidence affirms God as the ultimate provider, healer, saviour, and defender of his covenant people. Where God is not relied upon for security, demise of life is inevitable as in the cited cases, Adam, Aaron, Saul and the Pergamon believers. Biblical data also revealed that God does not tolerate double loyalty. Divination, witchcraft, uses of charms/magic and all kinds of involvement with ungodly spiritual powers is abhorred and punished.

The devil's temptation strategy is exposed in the Bible, he is presented as a liar whose lies carry a promise of life and a false covenant. The description from Bible evidence is that Satan always creates an illusion that there is a pathway to fullness of life outside of obedience to God. This claim is in direct contrast to the word of God in Proverbs.

Finally, Biblical data shows that God is omnipotent, His power was demonstrated in the Egyptian deliverance of Israel and at Mount Carmel. In the book of Revelation, to the church in Pergamos, Christ is referred to as the ultimate healer, saviour, judge and victor. Christ is the supreme judge who has ultimate power over life and death. He has the heavenly 'ius gladii'. Therefore, the only way to fullness of

life and overcoming is conditional to being in the right covenantal relationship with Christ.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The preceding chapter dealt with the theological foundations and biblical responses to split-level Christianity. This chapter explores different literature that deals with syncretism, dual allegiance and other forms of split-level Christianity. It also gathers from the literature principles that help to counter tendencies towards syncretism and dual allegiance. The researcher investigates the causes of and possible solutions for split-level religious practices. Biblical positions regarding double loyalties as presented in chapter 2 will be considered and complimented in this literature review. Consequently, the chapter will conclude by outlining principles that will lead to a development of a strategic intervention program to tackle split-level Christian practices.

#### **Description of Split-Level Christianity**

Split-level Christianity can be described as the co-existence of two or more thought-and-behaviour systems which are inconsistent with each other.<sup>1</sup> Hiebert, Shaw and Tienou explain it as a situation where Christians profess faith in Christ for their salvation but live out the rest of their everyday lives using traditional practices to solve their problems of illness, misfortune and fear of spirits.<sup>2</sup> Several authors observe that many African Christians live in two distinct realms. These realms are identified

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<sup>1</sup> Jaime Bulatao, "Split-Level Christianity Part 1 of 2," *The Filipino Mind*, last modified March 2008, accessed August 19, 2015, <http://www.thefilipinomind.com/2008/03/split-level-christianity-by-frjaime.html?m=1>.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Hiebert, Daniel Shaw, and Tite-Tineou, *Understanding Folk Religions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 90.

as the world of modern technology and the world of traditional values.<sup>3</sup> One such author is Desmond Tutu who observes a dualism in the African's spiritual life. He refers to this as "a split in the African soul which leads to a form of religious schizophrenia."<sup>4</sup> These explanations show that split-level Christianity can present itself in two forms; syncretism and dual allegiance. As a result this paper attempts to understand split-level Christianity through investigating syncretism and dual allegiance.

### **Causes of Split-Level Christianity**

Split-Level Christianity is one of the major challenges in the Christian church. There are several causative factors for this phenomenon. Some of the key causes relate to worldview factors, incomplete conversion and failed contextualization. The causes of split-level Christianity will be researched mainly under these three aforesaid subsections. As early as 1974 David Bosch asserted that dualism in African Christianity was indicative of the failure of missions and churches to make Christianity fully relevant to its African recipients.<sup>5</sup> This is an indication of a misunderstanding of the traditional African worldview by missions and churches. Before the full treatment of the three main causative factors of split-level Christianity it is necessary to attempt to describe and explain the concepts involved in their order.

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<sup>3</sup> John Phobee, "The Church in West Africa," in *The Church in Africa 1977*, ed. Charles Taber (presented at the Miligan College, Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1977), 158.

<sup>4</sup> Desmond Tutu, *Whiter African Theology in Christianity in Independent Africa*, ed. Fashole Luke (London, England: Rex Collins, 1978), 366.

<sup>5</sup> David J. Bosch, *Het Evangelie in Afrikaans Gewwad Kampen* (Netherlands, UK: Christian Medical Commission, 1974), 18.

## **Worldview**

The term worldview refers to a mental framework within which individuals and groups interpret the nature of reality, the nature and purpose of human life and the laws governing human relationships.<sup>6</sup> Worldview may also be explained as a people's picture of the way things are, the people's concept of nature, of self and of society. It contains their most comprehensive ideas of order.<sup>7</sup>

In anthropological terms worldview may be seen as the foundational, cognitive, affective and evaluative assumptions and frameworks a group of people makes about their reality which they use to order their lives. It encompasses people's images or maps of the reality of all things that they use for living their lives. It is a cosmos thought to be true, desirable and moral by a community of people.<sup>8</sup>

In this regard worldview should be understood as the foundational principles that guide life. People defer to their worldviews when confronted with practical life situations they rely on these preformed mappings for hope, comfort and security. Their worldview is just a default mode which is a natural option in such circumstances.

### **Worldview Factors**

The African traditional worldview can be looked at under six sub headings which will be discussed in the next few paragraphs. The first of them is that it is a

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<sup>6</sup> H. B. Danesh, "Towards an Integrated Theory of Peace Education," *Journal of Peace Education* 3, no. 1 (2006): 55–78.

<sup>7</sup> Clifford Geertz and Paul Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 24.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

spiritual worldview. There is a deep belief in spiritual beings where spiritual beings are thought to be constantly in action in the world of humans.

This is a term for a view that life is more than what people can ordinarily perceive with their senses. Steyn defines this concept by saying, “The world interacts with itself, the sky, the spirits, the earth, the physical part, the living and the deceased all act, interact and react in consort.”<sup>9</sup>

These seem to be interdependent, existing with and for each other. This view of the world means that there are no clear boundaries between the physical and spiritual dimensions of life. Bediako expresses the same idea when he says man lives in a sacramental universe where there is no sharp dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual.<sup>10</sup> The physical world acts as a vehicle for spiritual power and is believed to be patterned on the model of the spiritual world beyond.

Richard Gehman collaborates with Bediako’s view by saying a person interacts with his community – both the living and the dead- to access natural and supernatural resources meant to assist him to fulfill or achieve his full potential in life.<sup>11</sup> Further, Gehman asserts that Africans are passionate lovers of life, they try to use the powers of the unseen world to enhance the enjoyment and fulfillment of life in this world.<sup>12</sup> In this view, nature includes both the impersonal or spiritual powers and spirit beings.

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<sup>9</sup> Philip M. Steyn, *Gods of Power: The Challenge of Animism Today* (Tacoma, WA: Evangelical Theological Society, 1989), 58.

<sup>10</sup> Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of Non-Western Religion* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 95.

<sup>11</sup> Richard J. Gehman, *African Traditional Religions in Biblical Perspectives Revised Edition* (Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational, 2005), 55.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 55.

Africans live in a mysterious world which is governed by a law of harmony. The goal is to maintain a state of agreement or peacefulness therefore the traditional African seeks to live in harmony and to balance his life in a harmonious and peaceful existence with his entire world.<sup>13</sup> This view of life is also known as holism.<sup>14</sup> Holism goes hand in hand with the law of harmony. Any distortion of or damage to this cosmic harmony has disastrous consequences in human suffering.<sup>15</sup>

Secondly, the African traditional worldview is anthropocentric. In this African worldview human beings are at the center of existence. The (ATR) interprets human life and experiences with human beings at the center of everything.

African religious behavior is centered on man's life in this world, with the consequences that religion is chiefly functional, or a means to serve people to acquire earthly goods (life, health, fecundity, wealth, power) and to maintain social cohesion and order.<sup>16</sup> The whole emphasis is centered on man gaining the power needed to live a good life. In the (ATR), life revolves around the man with his interests and needs coming first.<sup>17</sup> Magesa concludes that "African moral values and ethical behavior are therefore vitalistic, existential (dynamistic, wholistic), anthropocentric and relational.<sup>18</sup>" the same view is also expressed by John Mbiti who says that man is at the very center of existence and African people see everything else in its relationship to this

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<sup>13</sup> Yusuf Turaki, *Foundations of African Traditional Religion and Worldview* (Nairobi, Kenya: Word Alive, 2006), 33.

<sup>14</sup> Turaki, *Foundations of African Traditional Religion and Worldview*.

<sup>15</sup> Steyn, *Gods of Power: The Challenge of Animism Today*, 135.

<sup>16</sup> Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 51.

<sup>17</sup> Gehman, *African Traditional Religions in Biblical Perspectives Revised Edition*, 56.

<sup>18</sup> Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, 51.

central position of man. Mbiti continues to say that it is as if God exists only for man.<sup>19</sup> Therefore it is no wonder that the African person projects an existential outlook where survival is the most important thing.

**The concept of salvation and wellbeing.** Salvation is understood as wholeness in the African Traditional worldview. Gerrit Brand argues that evil is constituted by whatever detracts from wholeness.<sup>20</sup> The primary concern of (ATR) is to realize an ideal life. For in (ATR) healing and cleansing was meant to restore all kinds of broken relationships whether between the individual and the community or with the whole world of the spirits of which God is supreme.<sup>21</sup>

Mitchell argues that the object of life is to fulfill one's life's destiny in this life.<sup>22</sup> In the African setting the concept of salvation has to do with human well-being in this world. People always seek to have good life therefore when a crisis happens it is interpreted in the light of well-being. In the general sense it can be argued that all religions seek to answer the central question of well-being "all people seek a good life even though they define it differently"<sup>23</sup> but in the traditional African worldview this is a central question.

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<sup>19</sup> John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational, 1969).

<sup>20</sup> Admin, "Gerrit Brand Salvation in African Christian Theology : A Typology of Existing Ap-Proaches," *Exchange*, 1932.

<sup>21</sup> Veikko Munyika, *A Wholistic Soteriology in an African Context: Utilizing Luther's Theory and the Owambo Traditions to Overcome a Spiritualized and Privatized Concept of Salvation in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia* (Pietermaritzburg, Namibia: Cluster, 2004), 246.

<sup>22</sup> Robert Cameroon Mitchell, *African Primal Religion* (Niles, IL: Argus Communications, 1977), 46.

<sup>23</sup> Geertz and Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*, 133.

Existential concerns seem to be the preoccupation of many. Some of the major issues of concern have to do with health, wealth, status, offspring and what one becomes after this life.<sup>24</sup> Guaranteeing a good life is a challenge. In this context, several things threaten well-being. These include diseases, economic disasters, failure in exams, barrenness, and several other such life negating ills that include broken relationships with fellow beings and with the spirit world.

Since the purpose in this setting is to seek life, many have always sought ways that could ensure a full enhancement of life. Such solutions are always sought from other persons, ancestors and or God. In most cases if not all life force is the focus of the search.<sup>25</sup> It is also revealing to know that African religion is regarded by its adherents to have always provided spiritual resources that helped people overcome things that threatened their life destiny.<sup>26</sup> Those things that threaten destiny or the fulfillment of life are regarded as a religious problem. Sickness is both a religious and physical problem and physical resources to counter threats to life or salvation would include divination, ritual action and sacrifice.<sup>27</sup>

**African religious prayers.** These prayers are chiefly requests for material welfare such as prosperity, and protection from danger.<sup>28</sup> The position and function of intermediaries is central in African religious life. Intermediaries are the ones who are accepted as bridges between man and God.<sup>29</sup> In (ATR) all activities in life call for a

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<sup>24</sup> Mitchell, *African Primal Religion*, 46.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 65.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

form of worship which can take the form of prayer, libations, placing food on the ground, invocations, sacrifices and offerings.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, prayer expresses the faith, life work and the ruling motive of the religious belief. It is a sign of religion wherever it is alive.<sup>31</sup> For some, prayer is indistinguishable from verbal magic. The protective power with which prayer is credited is emphasized. African religious prayers are considered to have power to overcome evil and misfortune. The other view about prayer is that it provides a form of control over one's environment in the absence of an adequate body of empirical knowledge. For an African, religion is a reality or necessity to be lived, it goes beyond mere belief.<sup>32</sup>

**Community solidarity.** In Africa, the individual's life and the pursuit of life are not attainable in isolation and apart from one's fellows because life is communal and is possible only in a network of mutual interdependencies between an individual and his or her community hence life for an African is in pursuit of the maintenance of relationships.<sup>33</sup> People live in the context of a shared context of identity.<sup>34</sup>

Generally, life is lived in connection to those that are alive in the here and now, but also with an awareness of those who have died, yet who are also present in the here and now. It is worth noting that perhaps one the most original values in African religious tradition is the community sense of Africans. For life to be meaningful there must be community. From birth an African learns that I am because

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<sup>30</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 72.

<sup>31</sup> Aylward Shorter, *Prayer in the Religious Traditions of Africa* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1975), 1.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>33</sup> Simon Maimela, "Salvation As Socio-Historical Reality," *The Journal of Black Theory in South Africa* 1 (1990): 4.

<sup>34</sup> Mitchell, *African Primal Religion*, 77.

I belong. The basic community is the family which is made of the living, the living dead and those yet to be born.<sup>35</sup> Consequently, African religion functions more on a communal than individual sphere, its beliefs are held by the community.

It should also be remembered that African religion is an essential part of the way of life of the African people. Its influence covers all the way of life from before the birth of each person to long after he has died.<sup>36</sup> Since (ATR) belongs to its people no individual member of the society concerned can stand apart and reject the whole of his people's religion. To do so would mean to cut oneself off from the total life got from his people even if the individual is converted to another religion, this should not mean abandoning his African culture altogether.<sup>37</sup>

Another notable characteristic of (ATR) is that in (ATR) there is no separation of church and state. Adherents of (ATR) do not consider such separation as neither desirable nor possible. In this set up, religious beliefs inform every aspect of life including birthing, and death, marriage, family dynamics, diet, dress, grooming, health care, spending, saving, interactions with friends, neighbors and governance. In many African governments, even civil authorities still are not only arbiters of divinely appointed laws and religious leaders they are also believed to be semi-divine.<sup>38</sup>

**African traditional religion versus formal religions.** ATR has got a communal and local character. This local character of the (ATR) is the source of its grip hold its believers.<sup>39</sup> Typically each village has its own sets of priests for its cults,

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<sup>35</sup> Ikenga-Metuah, *African Initiated Churches* (Oxford, England: Lutheran World, 1975), 40.

<sup>36</sup> Mbiti John S., *Introduction to African Religion* (Heinemann Educational Books, 1975), 13.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>38</sup> Jacob Olupona, *African Religions a Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2014), 2.

<sup>39</sup> Mitchell, *African Primal Religion*, 18.

its own religious societies, its own diviners and its own communal festivals.<sup>40</sup> One of the notable characters of the (ATR) is that the African priests and their religious specialists live with and among the people. The people consult them whenever they have a need. Much of the worship in African primal religion does not even require the services of the priests.

This religion can be regarded as informal. Part of the responsibilities of African family heads is religious, which means that they perform priestly duties at certain times. Since the family's welfare depends on the right relationship between members and the spirits, especially the ancestral spirits, the family head presides over the family's worship of the gods and the ancestors. If misfortune strikes the family, it is the responsibility of the family head to go and consult a diviner to see what is causing the misfortune and what must be done to rectify it.<sup>41</sup>

**The logic of causation.** In African society, nothing is believed to happen by chance, especially if it involves what seems to be an unnatural misfortune.<sup>42</sup> All the events that happen are believed to have a cause. Therefore, when such negative effects take place, a search for the cause is most likely to be undertaken because it is believed that the cause of any occurrence can be proved. Divination is accepted as the means of proving causation in the African traditional worldview.<sup>43</sup> The search involves questions like "why did it happen?" "who caused it to happen?" as can be seen here. Several authors including Robert Mitchell agree that the search is for

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<sup>40</sup> Mitchell, *African Primal Religion*, 18

<sup>41</sup> Mitchell, *African Primal Religion*, 19.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>43</sup> Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, 197.

mystical rather than physical causation.<sup>44</sup> The relationship between and among created vital forces, just as that existing between God and creation is essential. It is thought to be causal and therefore causation is believed to flow in all directions to maintain life in the universe.<sup>45</sup> Causation in Africa answers to the question “who did it?” and refers to a person, divine or human.<sup>46</sup>

Any reversal of life with diminished health, wealth or status will always invoke fears of witchcraft hence there is great suspicion in every community that someone is engaged in witchcraft.<sup>47</sup>

**Dynamism.** Life is real and human experiences are real. As people interact with their environment they try to Figure out whatever they encounter. For them to explain life they resort to their worldviews.<sup>48</sup> For example traditional Africans have strong convictions that “human destiny is manipulated and controlled by unseen and mysterious powers.”<sup>49</sup> Consequently, traditional Africans are always bound to search for more potent and powerful spiritual agents. It is for this reason that the search for power is a strong driving force in the traditional Africans’ beliefs.

Power becomes paramount in this setup. Since the spirit world is impersonal, unseen and unpredictable, it is natural that a desire for power that will ensure security

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<sup>44</sup> Mitchell, *African Primal Religion*, 63.

<sup>45</sup> Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, 40.

<sup>46</sup> David Mutungi Kiminyo, *Spirituality, Personhood Development and Psychotherapy in African Societies* (Nairobi, Kenya: Educational Research, 2004), 70.

<sup>47</sup> Gehman, *African Traditional Religions in Biblical Perspectives Revised Edition*, 100.

<sup>48</sup> Charles Kraft, *The Evangelicals Guide to Spiritual Warfare: Scriptural Insights and Practical Instruction on Facing the Enemy* (Bloomington, IN: Chosen Books, 2015), 70.

<sup>49</sup> Turaki, *Foundations of African Traditional Religion and Worldview*, 18.

in a dangerous world is sought.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, life's "quest is to secure power and use it. It is generally thought that a life without power is not worth living. The reason for this belief is that power is seen as the means that offer man control over his uncertain world. As a result, the search for and acquisition of power supersedes any commitment to ethics or morality. Whatever is empowering is accepted as right."<sup>51</sup>

To obtain power one may resort to such things as ritual manipulation in the form of sacrifices, offerings, taboos, charms, fetishes, ceremonies, witchcraft, sorcery, laying on of hands. Power is also thought to be attainable through contact with persons of superior religious status. Here the most important thing is not how power is attained, however this vital force (power) must be acquired regardless of cost or consequences.<sup>52</sup>

This all-consuming need for power exerts an enormous influence on morality and ethics, and on the relations of humans and spirits. It also affects traditional Africans' assessment the potency of a new religion and its ritual practice. When dealing with traditional Africans, it would be worthwhile to note their inclination and belief that a powerless religion is valueless because man's needs cannot be met without power.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, since ATR places high value on power, there is a need for a theology of power to address the traditional African concept of power.

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<sup>50</sup> Turaki, *Foundations of African Traditional Religion and Worldview*, 35.

<sup>51</sup> Philip M. Steyn, *Gods of Power: A Study of the Beliefs and Practices of the Animists* (Houston, TX: Touch, 1990), 60.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. "Furthermore, it addresses the personal welfare of its devotees such that it reduces fear and anxiety. It is also the function of religion to help people access their daily physical needs through the invocation of supernatural powers so that they provide rain, fertility and health. It is religion that gives people identity and creates solidarity in the community. Through religion people are enabled to communicate with the supernatural realm and this gives them a measure of control over power sources.

The belief in mystical powers and forces in dynamism is not a source of comfort, it is a source of fear, in this set up everything is evaluated spiritually. The quest for meaning is rooted in expediency, existentialism and pragmatism rather than in any concern in moral behavior. Focus is mainly on achieving success for oneself, family and tribe. Steyn concludes that a preoccupation with spiritual matters may not necessarily be a sign of true spirituality, but rather, the pursuit of information to achieve a specific end.<sup>54</sup>

**The function of religion in the African traditional worldview.** In ATR worldview, religion addresses social and psychological needs. It is thus a source of meaning and usefulness for its adherents. Additionally, it provides a source of power beyond them, in the way it explains human life and provides satisfactory answers for difficult human problems.<sup>55</sup> ATR is always integrated with life and is practiced in concrete situations of life. Unlike other religions it is not primarily a belief but it is a lived religion.<sup>56</sup>

**Human destiny in the African primal worldview.** The primary object of life is to fulfill one's life's destiny in the Life. This includes attaining a respectable position in the community, having children, living to a respectable age, and dying of natural causes. In the African primal worldview, there are many threats to this destiny. African religion provides the spiritual resources that are necessary to counter these threats. These threats could be human enemies, witches, sickness, and death. As has been noted in the primal worldview sickness is a religious problem as well as a

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<sup>54</sup> Steyn, *Gods of Power*, 60.

<sup>55</sup> Turaki, *Foundations of African Traditional Religion and Worldview*, 18.

<sup>56</sup> Gehman, *African Traditional Religions in Biblical Perspectives Revised Edition*, 56.

physical problem.”<sup>57</sup> Therefore for a African Traditional person, sickness will need both a physical and a religious/spiritual solution.

**Life and sharing life are fundamental values in Africa.** Transmission of life is beives to be the essence of life. If anyone does not have children one is not considered to have achieved the goal of life.<sup>58</sup> In Africa, spirituality has strong prayer habits but has a very weak eschatology. This is influenced by two important African beliefs. In this worldview, the goal of existence is taken to be life enhancement. The flip side of it is the belief that life itself is spiritual combat.<sup>59</sup> These two fundamental values have profound implications for the individual and the Africa society.

In this situation, constant deaths and misfortune are signs of diminution of life. Quest for life becomes an obsession when it is linked with equally strong beliefs that life is a spiritual combat between the forces of good and the forces of evil. The mission of humanity is to ensure the victory of life over death by enlisting the support of the good spirits - god, the deities and ancestors - to overcome the powers of darkness.

African Christians would accept that worshipping the deities, consulting oracles and diviners and making charms is wrong, but they cannot be persuaded that the assumptions of life enhancement and life as a spiritual combat are wrong. This is why many Africans in the historic churches hold on to their charms and privately engage in rituals to the gods in times of crisis. This is also why African Christians easily fall for the spiritualistic churches because these churches accept the assumptions that life is a spiritual combat and that religion should ensure life

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<sup>57</sup> Mitchell, *African Primal Religion*, 46.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>59</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 92.

enhancement. They quickly assure the believers that they have the means of ensuring their safety once they give up their gods and charms, namely prayer, dreams, prophesy and the charisma of their leaders.

Furthermore, over emphasis on this world's goals makes one lose sight of both the spiritual dimension of religion and the eschatological dimension of spirituality. Selfish life enhancement cannot find lasting happiness.<sup>60</sup> In these traditions, man does not serve God; but God may be serving humans in coping with the unknown within their lives and the environment.<sup>61</sup>

ATRs typically strive for this worldly salvation-which is measured in terms of health, wealth and offspring. At the same time it tries to maintain close contact with the other worldly realm of the ancestors, spirits and gods. These are seen as having a strong influence on the events and people in the here and now.<sup>62</sup>

ATRs are communally maintained and routinely change in response to people's lived experiences and needs.<sup>63</sup> The emphasis is on the core beliefs-ancestors-deities, sacred myths- rather than uniform doctrinal teachings.

**Fear and security.** One of the major worldview themes found in folk religions is that of fear and the need for security.<sup>64</sup> Life is always under threat from different sources witchcraft, black magic, curses, angry ancestors and human enemies are some of the causes of this fear.

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<sup>60</sup> Ikenga-Metuah, *African Initiated Churches*, 39.

<sup>61</sup> Olupona, *African Religions a Very Short Introduction*, 2.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>64</sup> Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou, *Understanding Folk Religion: A Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices*, 87.

Belief in sorcery, magic and witches is another source of fear. All this means that in the village people cannot feel completely safe. It means that even the smallest experience of misfortune is blamed on the misuse of mystical power. Under these circumstances, people resort to medicine men and diviners to get protective power objects.<sup>65</sup>

From time to time each community takes time to smell out or hunt the sorcerers and the witches, punish them and counteract their activities. A good number of people spend large amounts of their wealth to obtain or to have access to power.<sup>66</sup> The spirits may not be real but their fear of the spirits is real. Each time bible teachers ask ATR adherents to surrender their charms for destructions, the same teachers should provide the new believers with adequate means of protection. To meet this need, the spiritualistic churches use holy water, candles, blessed oil, stickers, medals etc., photos of leaders, crosses, ribbons, hand bands, visions, prophecy, dreams, speaking in tongues and prayers.<sup>67</sup> It would be necessary for the rationalistic churches to consider the theology of power as means of ensuring the security of those who come from the Traditional African Worldview.

**The flaw of the excluded middle.** Split-level Christianity is indicative of an imbalanced understanding and teaching of the gospel, especially as it relates to the spirit world and power. This is evident as one reviews the concept of the excluded middle developed by Paul G. Hiebert. The concept describes the discrepancies

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<sup>65</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 201.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

<sup>67</sup> Ikenga-Metuah, *African Initiated Churches*, 39.

between the Western worldview and the non-western worldview.<sup>68</sup> It is the blind spot in the Western worldview Hiebert labeled the flaw of the excluded middle. He uses two dimensions to analyze it.

People understand the world around them through the lenses of their worldview. On the basis of this worldview they live out their lives based on the perception they have of their world. As a result, they “develop folk sciences to explain and to control it.”<sup>69</sup>

Heibert contrasts these folk sciences and the western science which seem to have divergent presuppositions yet he acknowledges that all people have folk sciences. The two dimensions are the seen-unseen and the organic-mechanic continuum.<sup>70</sup> People all over the world have developed ways and methods to construct a consistent system of understanding and explaining the world in order to deal with their everyday experiences. This is what Hiebert refers to as folk sciences through which they explain and control their cosmos.<sup>71</sup>

The first dimension involves the immanence transcendence aspect. In the seen dimension, there are theories about the natural world which include mundane things such as` how to build a house, how to plant crops, how to sail a canoe. It also extends to human relationships.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Paul Hiebert, “The Flaw of the Excluded Middle,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steve C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999), 416.

<sup>69</sup> Paul Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), 193.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 193–194.

<sup>71</sup> Hiebert, “The Flaw of the Excluded Middle,” 416, 417.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

The unseen dimension includes beings and forces that cannot be directly perceived or seen with the naked eye such as spirits, ghosts, ancestors, demons, earthly gods and goddesses.<sup>73</sup> These are thought to have a tremendous influence on the destiny of humanity. Though they are invisible they are known to exist in the world with humans and animals.

In the book *Understanding Folk Religions* it is argued that;

In many traditional religions there is no sharp distinction between the seen and unseen realities of this world. Spiritual beings and forces play a central part in the lives of the people. They inhabit the world of the shadows...each world affects the other. Angry or neglected ancestors can injure or kill the living and placated ancestors can bless them and their kingdom as a whole.<sup>74</sup>

Hiebert built his analysis from a two-dimensional perspective. The first dimension is that of three worlds or domains:

1. a seen world (that which is of this world and seen),
2. the unseen of this world (that which is of this world but not seen), and
3. an unseen trans-empirical world (that which pertains to heavens, hells, and other worlds).

The second dimension is that of two types of analogies people use to explain the powers around them:

1. an organic analogy (powers are personal, e.g., gods and spirits) and
2. a mechanical analogy (powers are impersonal, e.g., gravity and electricity).

Combining the seen/unseen/transempirical worlds and organic/mechanical analogies into ATR, Hiebert's model highlighted the difference between Westerners, who tend to see only two worlds (the seen world and the transempirical world) and

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<sup>73</sup> Mbiti John S., *Introduction to African Religion*, 75; Turaki, *Foundations of African Traditional Religion and Worldview*.

<sup>74</sup> Hiebert, Shaw, and Tite-Tineou, *Understanding Folk Religions*, 48.

many non-Westerners who recognize the middle world, comprised of unseen powers (magical forces, evil eye, mana) and spirits which are very much a part of everyday human life (e.g., a person is ill because of a curse or a spirit attack).<sup>75</sup>

Hiebert's second analytical framework is that of the organic-mechanical continuum that has two basic analogies that are particularly widespread: to see things as living beings in relationship to each other, and to see things as inanimate objects that act upon one another like parts in a machine.<sup>76</sup>

Organic explanations see the world in terms of living beings in relationship to one another. Like humans and animals, objects may initiate actions and respond to the actions of others. They may be thought to have feelings, thoughts and wills of their own. Often they are seen as social beings who love, marry and beget offspring, quarrel, war, sleep, eat, persuade, and coerce one another.<sup>77</sup>

In the mechanical analogy all things are thought to be inanimate parts of greater mechanical systems. They are controlled by impersonal forces or by impersonal laws of nature. For example, Western sciences see the world as made up of lifeless matter that interacts on the basis of forces. Gravity pulls a rock down to the earth not because the earth and rock wish to meet—neither earth nor rocks have any thought in the matter. In Western science even living beings are often seen as being caught up in a world ultimately made up of impersonal forces. Just as we have no choice about what happens to us when we fall out of a tree, so it is often thought we

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<sup>75</sup> Norman E. Allison, "Understanding and Teaching Religious Belief Systems in the 21st Century Missions," *OJS*, accessed September 29, 2016, <http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/article/view/72/211>.

<sup>76</sup> Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 195.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

have no control over the forces in early childhood that are believed to make us what we are today.<sup>78</sup>

Mechanical analogies are essentially deterministic and amoral. Human beings can study the laws involved in their interactions and then manipulate them for their uses. These forces are intrinsically neither good nor bad, so they can be used for both.<sup>79</sup>

The nineteenth-century missionary work took place when the Western worldview had long stopped believing in the existence of the forces operating in the middle zone. There was a growing acceptance of a Platonic dualism and of a science based on materialistic naturalism.<sup>80</sup>

The result was the secularization of science and the mystification of religion. Science dealt with the empirical world using mechanistic analogies, leaving religion to handle other-worldly matters, often in terms of organic analogies.<sup>81</sup>

Western Christians often explain causation in a mechanistic/natural way, while the African recipients of the missionary work view causation in a personal/spiritual way.<sup>82</sup> Although it has been suggested that this observation does not portray the total picture of the nature of these missionary expeditions, the observation

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<sup>78</sup> Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 417.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 417, 418.

<sup>80</sup> Roger K. Bufford, *The Human Reflex: Behavioral Psychology in Biblical Perspective* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1981), 30 quoted in Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 197.

<sup>81</sup> Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 197

<sup>82</sup> Rick Love, *Muslims, Magic and the Kingdom of God: Church Planting among Folk Muslims* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2000), 72.

still holds a great level of validity.<sup>83</sup> This means that the missionaries had stopped believing in the existence and activities of witches, spirits, gnomes, and pixies. With the advancement in science, the concept of germs, pathogenic bacteria, viruses, and fungi as causative agents of sicknesses and diseases had advanced.

The Enlightenment and secularization had affected almost all facets of life, including religion, and despite the biblical understanding of the existence of evil, spiritual powers, witches, wizards, and the spirit world had become excluded from most of the missionaries' worldview. Kraft also points out that Westerners, for example tend to categorize the spirit world along with fairies, elves, and other mythical beings [as things] we do not take seriously. This evaluation affects our attitudes toward spirit beings and tends to block our attempts to take angels and demons seriously, even though as Christians we claim to accept anything we find in the Bible.<sup>84</sup>

However, these forces and beings were still alive and active in the recipient cultures where Western missionaries lovingly took the gospel, albeit, devoid of the spiritual power which was its essence.

With this middle zone still deeply entrenched in the worldview of the non-Western recipients of the secularized gospel, Christian mission largely ignored spiritual powers and how to deal appropriately with them. Thus, it was only natural for the new converts to resort to the beliefs and gods of their forefathers for power and sustenance as well as for the resolutions of difficult questions for which they sought answers, which were not found in the now secularized outlook of the missionaries. The result was dual allegiance.

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<sup>83</sup> Charles H. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (Bloomington, IN: Chosen Books, 2014), 38.

<sup>84</sup> Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity with Power: Your Worldview and Your Experience of the Supernatural* (Ann Arbor, MI: Vine Servant, 1989), 196.

This concept of the excluded middle has contributed to an understanding of how dual allegiance occurs in the church. The overwhelming influence of secularization and the Enlightenment on mission spread all over the world, resulting in a gospel that often did not address the middle zone because that zone was excluded from the missionaries' worldview, while still exerting a great deal of influence on the lives of new converts. This caused some to secretly seek out help from the pre-Christian sources since this middle zone was not addressed by the missionaries.

### **Conversion**

The Bible gives four strong verbs to describe conversion "turning" to the Lord, repenting, confessing and believing. These action verbs refer to the "acceptance or rejection of the good news of salvation with eternal consequences."<sup>85</sup> Conversion is described as a change that occurs when an unbeliever accepts Christ as Lord of their life. It is further explained to mean a transformation where those who are dead in sin are made alive in Christ.

In the Bible, it is described as a situation where the old self is taken off and is replaced by a new self.<sup>86</sup> Therefore the concept of conversion denotes a change of life inclination from Satan's ways to God's way. Those who are converted are regarded to have been rescued from the dominion of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of God.<sup>87</sup> The above statements illustrate a radical change that occurs at conversion. Conversion as a concept represents a new birth, a change of ownership, a radical turning from self, idols, (ATR) and rebellion from God. It can be further un-

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<sup>85</sup> Tippet, *Introduction to Missiology*, 76.

<sup>86</sup> Ephesians 4:22-24, Colossians 3:9-10

<sup>87</sup> David F. Wells, *Turning to God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1989), 32.

derstood to be a turning to God through faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>88</sup> Therefore conversion represents a total change of worldview, a movement from one community into a new community.

### **Incomplete Conversion**

People interpret the conversion experience in several ways. At times when they are looking for evidence of conversion they consider change in behaviour and rituals. When converts give up alcohol, tobacco and other vices like these, when they also cease bowing down to ancestors, they are normally looked at as converted. Paul Hiebert believes that while these changes in behaviour and rituals are important evidences of conversion, they do not necessarily mean that underlying beliefs had changed.<sup>89</sup>

It is also considered possible that people may adapt their behaviour as a means of gaining advantage using their new found beliefs. Therefore it is necessary to consider conversion to encompass three levels, behaviour, beliefs and worldview.<sup>90</sup> A change of worldview is always a necessity in any case of conversion. Alan Tippert presents a model that represents the process of conversion and this model is shown as Figure 1 below.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Gailyn Van Rheenen, *Missions: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Strategies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 32.

<sup>89</sup> Geertz and Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*, 10.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 11

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 75

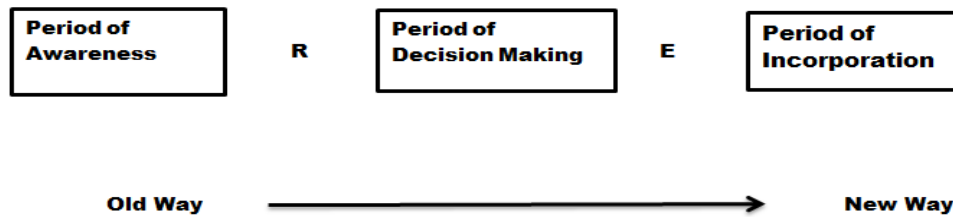


Figure 1. Dynamics of the Process of Conversion and Incorporation

Describing the experiential situation of conversion Tippet explains when people take their fetishes at a precise point in time and voluntarily cast them on the fire, (a thing they had not thought possible before)— they do this on the basis of a belief in a newly found power, this power is promised to be available in the one who has power over all powers (the exousia over the dunamis) so these people think and consider themselves to be now free new creatures.<sup>92</sup> At this point they are prepared to put themselves under Christian instruction in order to fully understand and receive the promised power and protection.

It is noteworthy that Tippet emphasizes that conversion is not the end of the trail but the beginning.<sup>93</sup> He suggests that the conversion experience has to be consummated. This is to be done in recognition that converts would have disconnected themselves from their old way and people, therefore there would be a need to find a new way and a new fellowship of the other believers.<sup>94</sup> The challenge of the church is that of helping a convert to move from the instant decision to be incorporated as a fully committed believer.

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<sup>92</sup> Geertz and Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*, 75.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, 77.

<sup>94</sup> Tippet, *Introduction to Missiology*, 77.

For converts, the movement from their old life is some kind of pressure on them. At this time they are still tender and do not yet know how to live their new faith, they do not yet know how to deal with crisis that comes. Family members, friends and the community will be asking difficult questions about their faith and this all puts pressure on them. It is important to always consider conversion as both an event and a process. When people are converted, this event has to be followed by the process of grounding them in their new faith. The challenge in most situations is that as soon converts accept the message many evangelists and bible teachers regard their converts to be mature Christians though Christian values can be transferred by infusion. As a result, the new converts are left to figure out the authentic Christian way for themselves without being systematically disciplined. It has to be pointed out here that the gap between conversion and incorporation is a dangerous one, it is one of the main contributors to lapses, regression, syncretism and dual allegiance. This process is illustrated by Allan Tippet in the following Figure.<sup>95</sup>

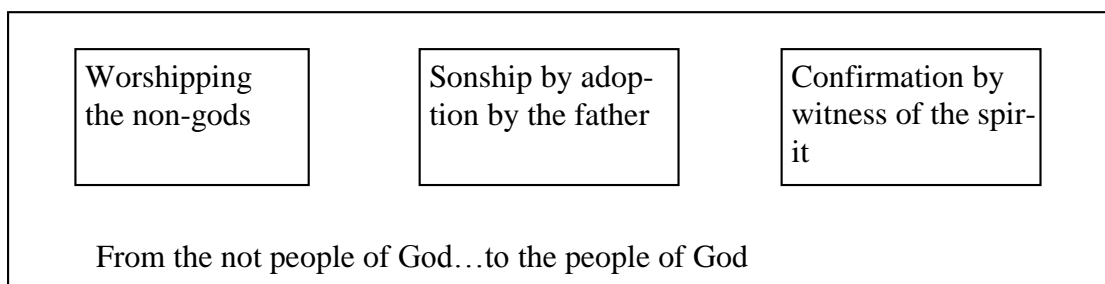


Figure 2. The Process of Conversion

Figure 2 represents the process of conversion from an animistic or African traditional background. There are six concerns that are raised in relation to conversion of animists.

<sup>95</sup> Tippet, *Introduction to Missiology*, 327.

**The problem of encounter.** Conversion is regarded as resulting from an encounter involving two diametrically opposite systems. Tippet notes that animists do not just drift into Christian faith. The spirit of God has to convict them so that they move from their old religious beliefs to Christian faith. In this experience, there should be a definite and clear cut act, a specific change of life, a coming out of something and an entry into something quite different,<sup>96</sup> a change of loyalty or in biblical analogy, a change of citizenship.<sup>97</sup>

In this discussion of conversion, Tippet brings forward the idea of conversion as both “an act of commitment and an act of rejection that is a spiritual encounter. The biblical equivalent of this can be found in Ephesians 4.<sup>98</sup> This movement from an old life to a new life is sometimes known as the rite of separation. At this point people may have to separate with their former religious paraphernalia such as fetishes, ancestral scarves and other religious articles. These are either burnt, buried, cast into the sea or rivers and for some eating forbidden meat or fish.

Where converts do not have this experiential encounter – the rite of separation- the challenge of syncretism or dual allegiance is always most likely to occur. One example could be of the Corinthian Christians as recorded from 1 Corinthians 10 who could not separate themselves from the heathen feasts.<sup>99</sup>

**The problem of motivation.** For evangelists, it is always good and counted as success to see people coming to Christianity. While this coming of non-believers to Christianity can be considered as positive growth, Tippet concedes that there are

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<sup>96</sup> Tippet, Introduction to Missiology, 328.

<sup>97</sup> Ephesians 2:12-13.

<sup>98</sup> Ephesians 4:22, 24.

<sup>99</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of the Lord

times when supposed converts misunderstand Christianity and the salvation it proclaims.<sup>100</sup> At some other time these people would have also misunderstood their own needs. One such example in the Bible would be that of Simon the Sorcerer that is recorded in Acts chapter 8. Simon had joined Christianity because he was envious of the power that the disciples displayed. In this present age healing ministries are also likely to attract those who may just come for the sake of healing and not for salvation. It is therefore the role of church leaders to help converts have correct view of Christianity which will help them to have correct motives for converting to Christianity.

**The problem of meaning.** There are times when people misunderstand the gospel message because of their worldview. In animistic societies where signs and wonders are a marvel there is bound to be confusion when the power of God is demonstrated. The animists may see this as part of what they already know.

The other challenge related to meaning may be encountered when the gospel is preached through the medium of foreign or denominational garment. The challenge of preaching the gospel on ethical perspectives may miss the needs of a power encounter oriented community.<sup>101</sup>

**The problem of social structure.** It is important to note that African traditional societies are basically communally oriented, people are most likely to act as a group. When one influential member of the society converts to Christianity the other members may just follow their example without understanding the implications of their new commitment. There are also examples in the Bible of such cases where total households were converted because a leader of a home had chosen Christ.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Tippet, *Introduction to Missiology*, 329.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 331.

<sup>102</sup> Acts 16:30-34, 18:8.

**The problem of incorporation.** The church is always known as a fellowship or a body of Christ. Christian witnessing is meant to bring individuals into a personal relationship with Christ. When that has happened, the work would not be complete until the new convert has been incorporated into the church.<sup>103</sup> When someone has not been fully integrated it may be difficult for them to live an authentic Christian life. This will render him or her vulnerable and hence susceptible to split-level Christianity.

**The problem of cultural void.** There are many African churches whose worship style is modeled after the Western worship style. In time, these churches become irrelevant in their communities. At the worst, the worship styles may even be meaningless to the adherents themselves. Such a state of affairs would most likely result in a meaningless or limited worship experience. The diminished worship experience may also be one of the main causes of formalism and regression.<sup>104</sup>

### **Contextualization**

The term contextualization was formally introduced by Shoki Coe in a presentation that was published in 1973 in *Theological Education*.<sup>105</sup> This term conveys the communication of the gospel in cultural thought forms that are meaningful to the real issues and needs of the recipients in a particular place and time.<sup>106</sup> In contextualization the gospel communicator is faithful to scripture and relevant to the community of believers in their particular set up and environment. Paul

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<sup>103</sup> Tippet, *Introduction to Missiology*, 333.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid*, 334-336.

<sup>105</sup> Charles H. Kraft, *The Development of Contextualization in Theory in Euro-American Missiology in Appropriate Christianity* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005), 22.

<sup>106</sup> Charles H. Kraft, *The Development of Contextualization in Theory in Euro-American Missiology in Appropriate Christianity*, 23.

Hiebert introduced the concept of critical contextualization. In this concept, he articulated the need for critically assessing the scriptural validity as well as the cultural appropriateness of each Christian practice.<sup>107</sup> This was meant to avoid the dangerous and unbiblical extremes of automatically accepting anything that was indigenous as worthy Christian practice.<sup>108</sup> In a fuller sense critical contextualization is making the gospel incarnate within the intended population.

According to Darrell Whiteman “contextualization captures in method and perspective the challenge of relating the gospel to culture”.<sup>109</sup> Further it is an attempt to communicate the gospel in word and deed such that the people make sense of the gospel in their local cultural context. In this way the gospel meets the people’s deepest needs and penetrates their worldview which helps them to follow Christ faithfully while they live within their culture.<sup>110</sup> In a sense critical contextualization helps the Christians to base their decisions on biblical revelation. They then discard or maintain cultural practices that are not in conflict with biblical revelation.

### **Failed Contextualization**

When Christianity came into Africa and Zimbabwe in particular it did not come into a religious vacuum. People had their traditional beliefs, practices and values. They had prayers, rites, and sacrifices. Professor Gordon Chavunduka reckons that for over a hundred years Christian missionaries have been attempting to destroy

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<sup>107</sup> Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 169.

<sup>108</sup> Paul Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Context: Anthropological Exploration for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 28.

<sup>109</sup> Darrell L. Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries, An Ethno Historical Study of Social and Religious Change in the South West Pacific* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002).

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

African religion and transplant a Christian faith with all its “European cultural background, imagery and orientation.”<sup>111</sup> He further asserts that the missionaries and Christian leaders did not see any value in African religion neither did they engage traditional religious practitioners and community leaders. Without deeper understanding of the nature of African traditional religion the Christian leaders set out to destroy shrines and places of worship and instructed people to shun and ignore their spirit mediums and their religious leaders. Consultation of African traditional healers was declared as sinful while witchcraft was regarded as a myth.

Chavunduka observes that the church failed to destroy African religion and culture. He reports that although some shrines were destroyed and became inaccessible many family shrines were left untouched. Therefore, these shrines exist and are being used up to this day. He also reveals that the authority of the ancestors and the spirit mediums survived to this day. All these have continued to conduct their religious services. Ultimately Chavunduka insists that many Zimbabweans who became Christians did not resign from their traditional religion neither did they abandon their African culture completely. He states that they have maintained a dual membership where they have continued to participate in traditional religious rituals, consult traditional healers, believe in witchcraft, participate and/attempt to practice witchcraft.

The reason Professor Chavunduka gives for Zimbabwean Christians to participate in dual membership in both Christianity and (ATR) is the nature of African traditional religion and culture. He indicates that both African religion and culture are

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<sup>111</sup> Gordon L. Chavunduka, “Dialogue Among Civilisations: The African Religion in Zimbabwe Today,” in *Crossover Communications Occasional Paper No. 1* (Harare, Zimbabwe: NP, 2001).

hospitable. They can embrace and accommodate other beliefs and practices and in the same process make religious and cultural adjustments.<sup>112</sup>

Missionaries saw no need to study these cultures neither did they see any good in taking them seriously. The western missionaries ignored African culture by labeling it primitive, animistic and uncivilized.<sup>113</sup> Science was one of the main reasons for ignoring African culture, medicine and religion.<sup>114</sup> This resulted in a mono cultural and mono religious approach, truth was regarded to be supra-cultural.

Therefore, African religious beliefs and customs hibernated and eluded efforts to eradicate them.<sup>115</sup> These beliefs were not dealt with consciously and therefore Hiebert reckons that they became part of the new Christians' hidden culture. New converts to Christianity kept their amulets hidden under their shirts, they continued visiting their village traditional healers and therefore there was an uneasy co-existence of public Christianity and private paganism hence split-level Christianity even to this day.<sup>116</sup>

The church and its evangelists have put a lot of energy in trying to stamp out African traditional religious beliefs and practices among its members. They have done this without critically addressing the foundational worldview factors and what the (ATR) represents.

Currently there is an upsurge in Christian membership in Africa. At the same time, there is an alarming increase in the number of those who regularly utilize (ATR)

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid

<sup>113</sup> Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Context: Anthropological Exploration for Contemporary Missions*, 76.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 79.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 81.

provisions.<sup>117</sup> Adamo concludes that the missionary version of Christianity accepted by Africans can be described as hypocritical because many Christians still subscribe to (ATR) solutions especially in times of emergency.<sup>118</sup> Several authors are in agreement that the influence of (ATR) is still very strong especially in times of crisis. Lack of appreciation and understanding of the central themes of “African worldview, people’s problems, needs and aspirations”<sup>119</sup> opened the way for dual allegiance.

**Colonization.** During the time of colonization, the church was dominated by white missionaries and western education and civilization was the prevalent worldview.<sup>120</sup> The missionaries and the indigenous Christians were not working as equal partners neither was the African regarded as having prerequisite knowledge to help the church move forward. This led to a gap in knowledge and understanding of both African culture and religion.

European values and Europeanized religion also came in the name of modernization. With the coming of independence from colonization European pastors and missionaries started to withdraw from Zimbabwe. Further gaps could be detected, new explanations about the nature of the faith, healing, worship and religion started to come on board. There was a sense of renewal of the culture of the people and this could be one of the reasons for a resurgence of African traditional worldview. Paternalism was dispensed with as soon as independence was gained from 1980. A new attitude towards indigenous life became prevalent.

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<sup>117</sup> David T. Adamo, *Christianity and the African Traditional Religion: The Post-Colonial Round of Engagement* (Verbum et Ecclesia 321, 2011), 285.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 285.

<sup>119</sup> Charles Nyamithi, *Christ Our Ancestor: Christology from an African Perspective* (Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1984), 84.

<sup>120</sup> Chavunduka, “Dialogue Among Civilisations: The African Religion in Zimbabwe Today.”

**Hierarchical control.** Missionaries maintained tight control of the structure of the mission. Decisions revolved around mainly the white missionaries. They did not have the required cultural sensitivity, as a result the indigenous people did not have a full sense of belonging to the Christian church. The missionaries controlled the mission ecclesiastically, financially and legally like in the Melanesian case. <sup>121</sup>

**Advocacy and conversion into Christianity.** To communicate effectively the communicator has to do more than simply learn the language of the receptor. He must also be aware of the receptor's worldview and culture in which he is embedded.<sup>122</sup>“The Purpose of communication is to transmit a message in a way that substantially corresponds with the intent of the communicator.”<sup>123</sup> When taking the complexities of communication into account, successful communication should not be measured by what is said, but by what the receptor understands.

When evangelists fail to be receptor oriented in their communication, or refuse to transpose themselves into the frame of reference of their potential converts, they frequently are advocating a cultural conversion to a western worldview and life work not simply conversion to Christianity within their indigenous culture.

### **Cultural Axis**

This schematic field distinguishes Christianity as a meaningful message on the religious Axis (Pagan-Christian) from Christendom as a western cultural tradition on a cultural axis (indigenous–western). The missionary embedded in the Western Chris-

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<sup>121</sup> Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries, An Ethno Historical Study of Social and Religious Change in the South West Pacific*, 428.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 433.

<sup>123</sup> Kraft, *The Development of Contextualization in Theory in Euro-American Missiology in Appropriate Christianity*, 142.

tian quadrant must overcome religious and cultural barriers to encounter the non-Christian indigene embedded in the pagan-indigenous quadrant.<sup>124</sup>

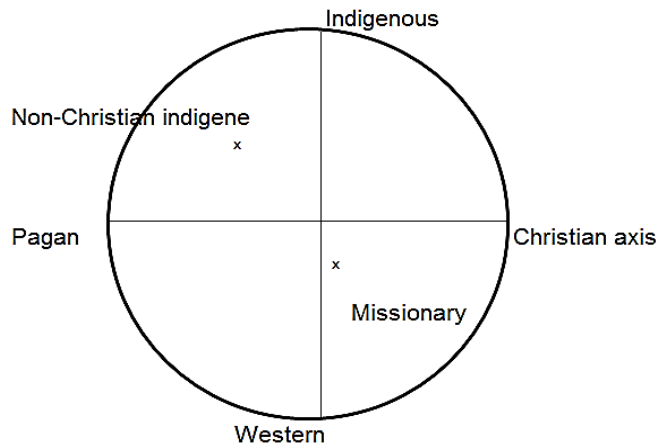


Figure 3. Religious Culture: ATR in Missionary – Indigene Interaction

If the goal of the missionary to plant an indigenous church (and many say this is their objective), then a missionary who is culturally sensitive and anthropologically informed, should communicate his message of the gospel in such a way that the converts move from the pagan-indigenous quadrant to the Christian-indigenous quadrant as diagramed below.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries, An Ethno Historical Study of Social and Religious Change in the South West Pacific*, 436.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, 437.

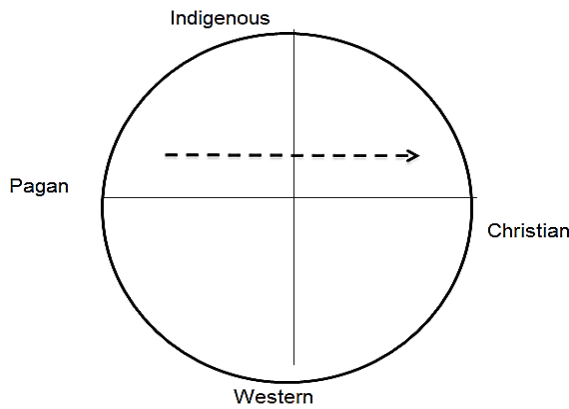


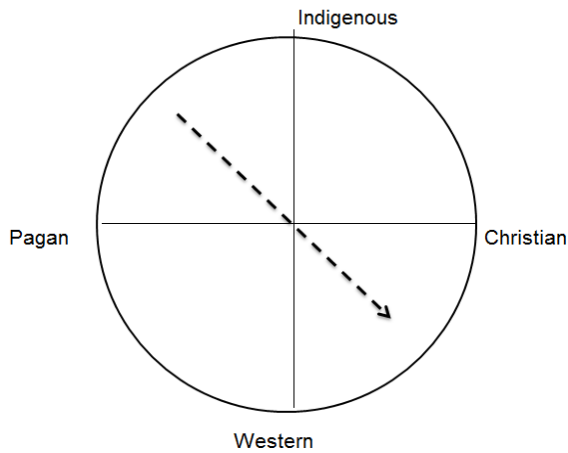
Figure 4. Cross Cultural Sensitivity in Missionary Advocacy

In the above approach, the missionary is receptor oriented in communicating with potential converts. The message is communicated in such a way that it is meaningful to the converts in their own culture. In this way, the message encourages the converts to respond to the gospel with the dynamic equivalency to the response the first century Christians made. In this way, new converts move from the Pagan to the Christian quadrant on the Religious Axis but remain within the indigenous sphere on the Cultural Axis. When this occurs, the adopted Christianity is more likely to be functional in the indigenous society and culture. Its formal expression may be quite different from that of the missionaries' expression, but they will nevertheless be Christians. They will be practicing a form of Christianity that is appropriate to their cultural context.

There are situations when the evangelists insisted that converts should move from the Pagan-Indigenous quadrant to the Western-Christian quadrant as diagramed below.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries, An Ethno Historical Study of Social and Religious Change in the South West Pacific*, 438.



*Figure 5. An Ethnocentric Approach to Missionary Advocacy*

In the ethnocentric approach to culture change, evangelists insist that to become a Christian the convert must also adopt the western cultural package, behave like the missionaries, work as they do and structure the church as they do. This approach discourages converts from expressing Christian meanings in the form that is biblically faithful and yet relevant to their culture. The result of this approach may be nominal Christianity or a drift to either Pagan-Western quadrant. They may drift to the Pagan-Indigenous quadrants which can be diagramed as follows.<sup>127</sup>

When the church is confused with culture, the church runs the risk of being perceived as a promoter of cultural imperialism. African Christianity is seen as an expression of striving after meaning.<sup>128</sup> Unless the introduced forms of Christianity meet the forms of the indigenous, they will make adjustments in either the direction as shown in figure six below.

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<sup>127</sup> Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries, An Ethno Historical Study of Social and Religious Change in the South West Pacific*, 438

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*, 417.

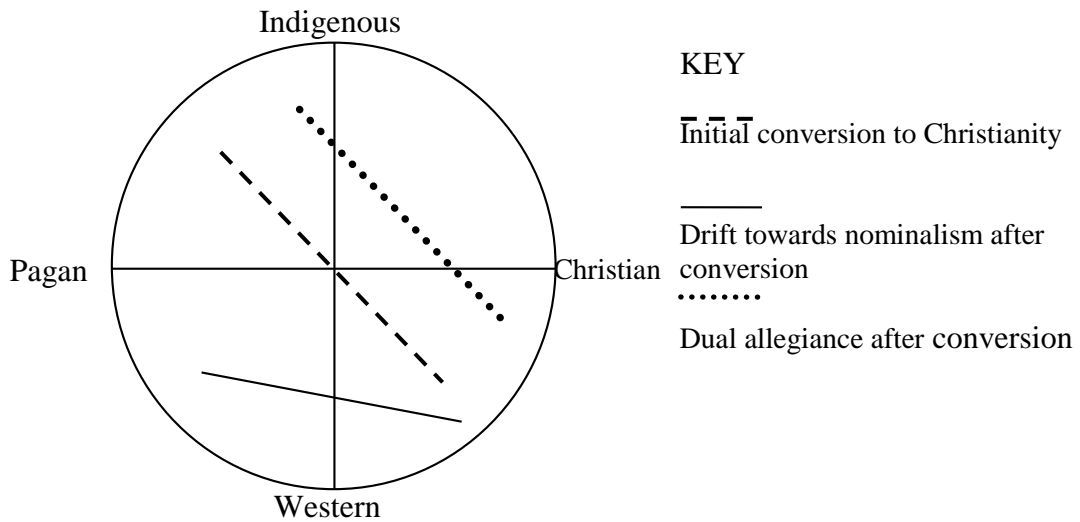


Figure 6. Possible Consequences of an Ethnocentric Approach to Conversion

Therefore, people use their worldviews to make judgments and decisions about life. Even in the Christian faith decisions are based on people’s worldviews. The people’s view of reality determines whether they follow Christ, Christian teachings or not. It is therefore essential to prioritize worldview transformation in advancing the work of mission so that converts may fully express their faith in an authentic biblical manner.

### Functions of Worldviews

As has been noted, worldviews are models of reality that explain the nature of things. They are also models of action that provide the mental blueprint that guides behavior. People’s worldviews help them to choose a course of action in the face of life’s experiences. According to Paul Hiebert, worldviews provide answers to people’s ultimate questions. They do this by way of providing basic assumptions through which people interpret and understand the world.<sup>129</sup> Worldviews also provide

<sup>129</sup> Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Context: Anthropological Exploration for Contemporary Missions*, 30.

emotional security. When people are faced with difficult situations they turn to their underlying cultural beliefs for comfort and security. Worldviews are foundational at all life's transitional situations and during times of crisis. They also provide psychological reassurance that the world is truly as people in a particular culture see it.<sup>130</sup>

### **The Three Dimensions of Worldviews**

Cultures are built on the foundation of worldviews. The worldview defines thought patterns, feelings and values for the cultural group. Paul Hiebert identifies three interrelated dimensions of worldviews namely the Cognitive, Affective and Evaluative.

#### **The Cognitive Theme**

Under the cognitive dimension the major themes are time and space. In time people experience different seasons of life, cycles of days, repetition and such things. It is under these cognitive themes that people have a concept of God, angels, demons, spirits and witches.<sup>131</sup>

#### **The Affective Theme**

Feelings that people experience no matter how deep or shallow are also shaped by their worldview. How they look at the world, their sense of appreciation is based on their concept and fundamental assumptions about reality. Who they worship

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<sup>130</sup> Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Context: Anthropological Exploration for Contemporary Missions*, 30.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, 50-59.

and how they feel about their object of worship is determined by the affective themes in their worldview.<sup>132</sup>

### **The Evaluative Themes**

People always use standards to make judgments. They use some form of criteria to differentiate between truth and error, likes and dislikes, right and wrong. In this sense the evaluative assumptions help people to maintain their social order.<sup>133</sup>

### **Worldview Transformation Model**

In the Old Testament, there are several examples of transformative rituals. Three times a year all adult males particularly heads of families who served as family priests were expected to go to Jerusalem.<sup>134</sup> They gathered as pilgrims in great festivals of regeneration. Festivals and even crusades played an important role in the medieval church. In America the evangelistic crusades, revival meetings, mission conferences were annual events on the calendar of many churches. Currently church revivals and crusades have been replaced by camps and week end retreats. These play an important part in personal renewal.

At the core of the worldview transformation is the human search for coherence between the world as we see it and the world as we experience it. Humans seek means by looking for order pattern, symmetry, coherence, unity and non-contradiction.<sup>135</sup>

### **Domestic Religious Practices**

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<sup>132</sup> Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Context: Anthropological Exploration for Contemporary Missions*, 59-63.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 63–65.

<sup>134</sup> Exodus 23:15-17

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 65.

Religious education has its main locus in the home. Every household is a mini church or religious center. It is in the home where the initial, impressionable religion is learnt, genuinely and fully practiced. The mode of teaching religion in the home is mostly through practice. Some religious instructions are orally given. Religious shrines, artefacts, symbols, rituals and songs are part of the mode of practicing and disseminating religious education. Any transformation of the people's religious inclinations should deal with the household religious phenomenon. The expression and religious practices in individual homes is referred to in this study as domestic religious practices.

Domestic religious practices can be defined as religious conduct within a household setting. In this setting, it is understood that every household is a religious center with a complete religious system and a priesthood. There are others whose role is to prompt others to worship and those who are mainly participants in worship. It is possible that every member may contribute to who, what and how to worship. What is normative though is that the parents, specifically the father who is head of the family, is responsible for most religious duties.

Religious conduct or practices within a home setting provide an outlet for expressing and addressing the concerns of everyday life. It is within the home environment that people learn about things they should strive for and things to fear. Taboos, proverbs, stories of heroes and villains are part of the curriculum at home. These are not formal, but they are learnt orally. They are lived experiences and this makes them to be cemented and reinforced in the lives of family members. They develop and are preserved as family treasure.

The home is a space where the intentions and agents of individuals and families might transform everyday objects and spaces into sacred ones and it is here

where worldviews are formed and transformed.<sup>136</sup> Therefore, destruction of shrines, abolition of artifacts which were formally used in worship and acceptance of a new faith, should only be regarded as a starting point for worldview transformation. This should logically be accompanied by changed stories and a new interpretation of events. It is essential that the home environment becomes the main battlefield for worldview transformation because most life challenges are more felt in the home by individual families. This is where the major decision about the course of action to resolve problems are made.

In (ATR) libations, invocations, sacrifices, offerings, prayers, were always meant to pacify or appease ancestors or deities. In every home people subscribe to some beliefs and they have certain religious practices within that household. Those religious practices help them to find an anchor and place of refuge. In this way religion becomes relevant, it shows itself to be both personal and communal.

Therefore, a change in domestic religious practices would eventually be one of the major factors that may influence worldview transformation. Transformation should engage all the elements of culture, behaviors, ritual beliefs and worldview. When a person comes to faith it is merely the beginning of a transformation which continues throughout their lives. A believer's life undergoes changes at a moment of conversion, but this by no means implies that the believer's actions and thoughts from that point forward are fully part of a thoroughly Christian worldview.

Transformation is a process of profound or significant change that leads to a new and higher level of consciousness, resulting in greater insight and integrity in

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<sup>136</sup> Rubina Raja and Jorg Rupke, *A Companion to the Archeology of Religion in the Ancient World* (Oxford, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 210.

one's character, choices and behavior.<sup>137</sup> The home environment is indispensable in this process of transformation.

### **Processes of Renewal**

Transformational rituals are found in all regions of the world, including Christianity. They include such practices as pilgrimages, camps, and retreats, special revival services, festivals, mass rallies and in many countries, religious fairs.<sup>138</sup> On the level of the individual and family they include rites of passage associated with birth, marriage, death and other transitions of life. In the early and medieval church, transitional rituals played an important part in the lives of the people. Only in recent years, in Western Protestant churches in secular urban settings, has these rites lost much of their significance.

### **Rituals of Transformation**

If rituals of restoration are characterized by a high degree of structure, rituals of transformation are characterized by a high degree of creativity and anti-structure.<sup>139</sup> They often reject the normal structure of an institution and seek to create a new one. They cut through established ways of doing things and restore a measure of flexibility and personal intimacy to the organization.

In crucial ways, transformative rites are the opposite of restorative rites. First they are characterized by what Victor Turner calls liminality.<sup>140</sup> This is the state of being in limbo - of being torn out of the familiar settings and relationships in which

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<sup>137</sup> Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 166.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid, 169.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

we live our lives. For instance, the pilgrim leaves familiar territory to travel to a strange place where everything is new. There is a structure, but it is totally new and characterized by flexibility, creativity and change rather than the reinforcement of an existing order. The result is an openness to change, for the ties to everyday life that draw us back into existing structures are broken.

Furthermore, transformational rituals are not characterized by *communitas* rather than community. *Communitas* connotes a lack of formal roles and relationships. In *communitas* there is no rigid social structure and no hierarchy. Participants are all equals. In the presence of God, human distinctions become meaningless. This sense of *communitas* bonds participants into a single group and opens them to change.

*Communitas* is a short-lived state of affairs. One cannot live in it for long without beginning to transform it into a community.<sup>141</sup> Therefore it is just like the mount of transfiguration. Rituals of transformation are associated with a high sense of focus and expectation. Outside matters are left behind. In transformation rituals, it also includes a complete geographic separation that makes disengagement from the world complete.

The goal of transformative rites is to bring out change. The combination of liminality, *communitas*, high expectations and anti-structural creativity makes deep and lasting changes possible in short periods of time.<sup>142</sup> Changes in fundamental beliefs are often reinforced by strong emotions and commitment to act upon the new convictions. These transformations are often called conversions, dedications and new commitments.

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<sup>141</sup> Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 169.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid*, 170.

## Truth, Power, Allegiance in Worldview Transformation

Many Christian leaders forget that believers may still be captives to their former worldviews even after conversion. It is part of leadership to remember that people need freedom and that Christ came to give them that freedom as spelt out in Luke 4. This therefore requires that the teaching of the gospel is done in a balanced way. Charles Kraft suggests three critical dimensions that may be used to achieve this balance. The truth allegiance and power dimension that he advances seem to have the capacity to ensure freedom and a meaningful Christian experience. Allegiance anchors the relationship while power assures in case of fear. The truth dimension keeps the faith perspective and expectations in their correct place. These dimensions are demonstrated in the figure seven below.<sup>143</sup>

*Table 1. Dimensions of the God-Connected Life*

TRUTH (KNOWLEDGE)	Leading to	UNDERSTANDING
POWER (SPIRITUAL)	Leading to	FREEDOM
ALLEGIANCE (COMMITMENT)	Leading to	RELATIONSHIP

**Truth dimension.** The truth dimension basically refers to knowledge about God. Knowledge is regarded as an antidote for ignorance or error. Truth has to do with the understanding of all the cognitive aspects of Christianity. It represents doctrinal and theological purity. This is involved with mere transmission and reception of information.

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<sup>143</sup> Kraft, *The Development of Contextualization in Theory in Euro-American Missiology in Appropriate Christianity*, 91.

This dimension is not complete on its own because it is possible for those well trained in doctrine to have had knowledge about issues such as relationship and spiritual power and yet without experience in those areas. Although this is the case truth and knowledge are still valid means to effect worldview transformation. “Jesus spent a proportion of his time and energy in the teaching of truth.”<sup>144</sup> In Jesus teaching both truth and knowledge were not simply cognitive but also experiential. Satan thrives through lies and so under this dimension, the lies counteracted and people are disciplined as a result. Thus, worldview transformation is achieved.

**Power dimension.** The power dimension is less common among the Evangelicals yet it is a crucial one for worldview transformation. The mission of Christ as reflected in Luke 4:18, was to free the captives hence he worked in the power of the Holy Spirit to liberate those who were under Satan’s captivity. The power dimension facilitates worldview transformation and that when people are released from demonic captivity, are healed from sickness, are released from the fear of magic and witchcraft it is easy for them to have a transformed worldview. When people aware of the power of God to deal with their fears, they are more likely to have a worldview transformation.

**Allegiance dimension.** Allegiance begins at conversion. It is reinforced as the converts continuously grow in their commitment and relationship to God. This is a defining activity of Christians. Without it one is not a Christian.<sup>145</sup> In this relationship allegiance entails a replacement of former loyalties. Charles Kraft regards this one as the most important of the three dimensions because it is the one that establishes a

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<sup>144</sup> Kraft, *The Development of Contextualization in Theory in Euro-American Missiology in Appropriate Christianity*, 107.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

saving relationship with God. It is focused on replacement of other allegiances and involves continuous growth in relationship with God. A person who is totally committed to God or one who seeks to commit their life to God in a saving relationship to God is most likely to experience a total worldview transformation. This dimension includes practicing all that the Bible teaches.<sup>146</sup> The desire to align oneself to full allegiance to God is a catalyst for worldview transformation.

### **Spiritual Warfare**

Spiritual warfare is indispensable in the Christian faith. Many people have challenges that are a direct result of the devil's attacks. So "in the overwhelming evidence that Christians can be demonized,"<sup>147</sup> It becomes necessary to engage in a spiritual war to counter these forces. Spiritual warfare involves engagement in spiritual disciplines to help counterchallenges that people face.

These spiritual disciplines fortify believers and help them gain ground against the devil's schemes. The victories that are gained in this spiritual combat are key aids for worldview transformation. Spiritual warfare is where the Christian faces tribulation suffering and danger. It necessitates the use of spiritual resources. It is a point where people are at risk of reversion to traditional means of defense. Where people have assimilated the Christian methods of warfare to counteract the negative effects of droughts, bareness, illness and suffering, any positive results from those prayers is a sure way to enhance a worldview transformation.

Spiritual warfare is both offensive and defensive. It is therefore some kind of resistance where one assumes a defensive posture and in proclamation, one takes an

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<sup>146</sup> Kraft, *The Development of Contextualization in Theory in Euro-American Missiology in Appropriate Christianity*, 107.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, 136.

offensive posture to fend away the wiends of the devil.<sup>148</sup> It involves God's power to rescue or protect people from the devil's attacks. Prayer, faith, Bible study and spiritual disciplines are the primary weapons for spiritual warfare.

### Chapter Summary

In this chapter, several things are notable, the persistence of African traditional worldview among professing Christians, the continued neglect of a contextualized ministry to meet people's needs and fears and the blind overestimation of perceived conversions of massive numbers of people into Christianity.

Literature reveals that Africans have always had a religious worldview, but huge elements of this worldview do not conform with an authentic biblically shaped worldview. The African cosmology consists of a belief in spirit beings where the world is densely populated by several categories of spirit beings. It is also known to have impersonal powers (*mysterium tremendum*) that can be used for good and evil. Therefore, the theory of causation is a logical result of this perception of the world.

People in Africa live in community with the maxim "I am because we are." there is a spirit of solidarity that makes everyone to want to live in a way that will ensure harmony with fellow human beings as well as the invisible forces.

The greatest value in Africa is to attain fullness of life, this is understood to mean having children, gaining wealth, living to old age and even dying and being buried in an honourable manner. This being the case life preservation is the pre-occupation within the African traditional worldview.

Several methods and different spiritual powers may be enlisted to preserve life. Any diminishment of life by illness, misfortune, failure to have children and

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<sup>148</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, *Powers of Darkness: Principalities and Powers in Paul's Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1999), 154.

poverty may lead to a serious search of the cause of the problem. In seeking answers to this problem, diviners and various religious specialists are the reference point.

Christianity therefore has to be equipped to meet the African person at the level of worldview. Any serious attempt to Christianize African believers cannot be done without reviewing the impact of the discipleship initiatives on the worldview of the African converts.

## CHAPTER 4

### DESCRIPTION OF THE MINISTRY INITIATIVE

The foregoing chapter dealt with the various facets of Split-level Christianity as presented in the reviewed literature. Actually, it should be noted that this chapter is built upon materials from chapters one, two and three. In those chapters, different authors' opinions, assertions and conclusions regarding the nature, causes and consequences of dual allegiance and syncretism are represented.

When the views of these authors were compared, contrasted and summarized, they built a foundation that lead directly into the development of the intervention initiative presented in this chapter. This chapter further adds the dimension of the state of affairs in the subject population with regard to split-level Christianity. The state of affairs presents itself in the form of data from the interviews that were conducted in the subject population. As a reminder, dual allegiance and syncretism individually and collectively constitute what is referred to in this paper as split-level Christianity.

The overarching purpose of this study is twofold; first, it investigates the factors that promote split-level religious practices among the Seventh-day Adventist Church members in South Zimbabwe Conference. The data from the respondents constitute the rallying point upon which the intervention strategy focuses. Secondly, it develops, implements and evaluates an intervention program aimed at addressing this challenge. The focus here is the interpretation of data from surveys and the presentation of an appropriate strategy that is consequentially developed to help

resolve and counter the enigma of split-level Christianity. Before unveiling the proffered intervention initiative, it is needful to understand the context in which the research is to be implemented. This assists in evaluating the relevancy of the intervention measures. The context is elucidated under three categories, the macro, micro and the prevailing state of affairs among the subject population in relation to split-level Christianity.

## **Country Analysis**

### **Geography of Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe, a landlocked country in southern Africa, is bordered by Botswana on the west, Zambia on the north, Mozambique on the east, and South Africa on the south. Its total land area is 390,757 square kilometers.<sup>1</sup> It is situated between 15 and 22 degrees south latitude and 28 and 34 degrees north longitude.<sup>2</sup> Much of the country is high plateau with a higher central plateau forming a watershed between the Zambezi and Limpopo river systems.<sup>3</sup> Climatic conditions are largely sub-tropical with one rainy season between November and March.<sup>4</sup> Rainfall reliability decreases from north to south and from east to west and its climatic regions have been classified into five natural regions based on annual rainfall.<sup>5</sup>

Zimbabwe's economy is agro-based; the majority of the rural people depend on agriculture for their livelihood. About 80% of the rural population is in Natural

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<sup>1</sup> J. Gambiza and C. Nyama, "Country Pasture/Forage Resources," *FAO*, accessed August 12, 2015, <http://www.fao.org/ag/agp/agpc/doc/counprof/zimbabwe/zimbabwe.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> This material incorporates public domain materials from websites or CIA World Factbook.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Public domain websites.

Regions 3, 4 and 5 where rainfall is erratic and unreliable.<sup>6</sup> Since the majority of the people live in these poor land regions many of the households are not able to grow enough food for home consumption largely due to poverty and inadequate land.<sup>7</sup>

In the demographic profile of 2014 Zimbabwe's population was estimated to be 13,771,721. The population growth rate was around 4, 36%. Birth rate was around 32, 47% per 1000 people while death rate was reported to be around 10, 62 % per 1000. Health and sanitation facilities are a big challenge in Zimbabwe.

Access to sanitation facilities stands at 39,9% which means that over 60% of the population have no access to proper sanitation. The lack of sanitation facilities may be the reason why the following major diseases are reported to be a high-risk challenge. These diseases include food or waterborne diseases, vector borne diseases, water contact diseases and animal contact diseases. Additionally, there is a shortage of hospitals and medication. The hospital bed density is 1, 7 beds per 1000 people. Physicians density is 0, 06 physicians per 1000 people.

### **History of Zimbabwe**

The land's earliest settlers are reported to be the Khoisan, dating back to 200 B.C. After a period of Bantu domination, the Shona people ruled, followed by the Nguni and Zulu peoples. By the mid-19th century the descendants of the Nguni and Zulu, the Ndebele, had established a powerful warrior kingdom.

The first British explorers, colonists, and missionaries arrived in the 1850s, and the massive influx of foreigners led to the establishment of the territory Rhodesia, named after Cecil Rhodes of the British South Africa Company. In 1923, European

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<sup>6</sup> Public domain websites.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

settlers voted to become the self-governing British colony of Southern Rhodesia. After a brief federation with Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Nyasaland (now Malawi) in the post–World War II period, Southern Rhodesia (also known as Rhodesia) remained a colony when its two partners gained their independence in 1963.

The history of Zimbabwe has a bearing on the strategic planning for this project. People are shaped by their environment to some extent, their past experiences and their present circumstances have a relationship. One of the contributions of history to a people is that it defines who they are. It also provides them collective identity and interdependency. History reminds them of their joys and their fears thus providing them with a narrative of how they should live.

### **Economy of Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe's economy is on the decline.<sup>8</sup> Unemployment is unprecedented in Zimbabwe. Therefore, many people are competing for very limited resources and the very few employment opportunities. The total age dependency ratio is 84.1.<sup>9</sup> This ratio is interpreted to mean that 84 unemployed people are dependent on one employed person. This raises the stakes and the need for people in Zimbabwe to get employment or means for survival.

This economic decline has eroded livelihood capacities of both urban and rural populations. According to Masunungure this decline has translated to socio-political

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<sup>8</sup> Admos Chimhowu, *Moving Forward In Zimbabwe: Reducing Poverty and Promoting Growth* (Brooksworld Poverty Institute, Manchester: University of Manchester, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> Public Domain websites

decay.<sup>10</sup> It is estimated that the economy shrank by 30% since 2000. This is believed to have led to the collapse of social services delivery. Prior to the economic decline primary health services and education were offered for free in Zimbabwe. The immediate social outcomes of the economic decline were experienced in social service delivery where user fees at health centers and school fees began to be charged. Further there has been a widespread shortage of medical supplies such as drugs, gloves and medical personnel.<sup>11</sup> There is evidence that many Zimbabwean women give birth at home despite the obvious dangers.

### **Religious and Cultural Context**

Zimbabwe is a deeply religious country; 84,5 % of the population attends Christian churches.<sup>12</sup> “While there is no reliable statistics regarding the percentage of the Christians population that is syncretic, many Christians also associate themselves with traditional practices.”<sup>13</sup> These practices by Christians are reported to be on the increase.<sup>14</sup> According to Kumbira in Ndebele and Shona religion God is regarded as the Supreme Being and known as the creator and sustainer of the universe in almost the same manner as in Christianity.<sup>15</sup> In Ndebele culture uNkulunkulu is believed to be active in the everyday lives of the people. In Ndebele and Shona Traditional

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<sup>10</sup> Elder V. Masunugure, *Civil Society, Land Reform* (Contested Terrain: Land Reform and Civil Society for Contemporary Zimbabwe, Pietermaritz-burg: S & S, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Not Eligible: Politicization of Food in Zimbabwe,” *HR*, last modified October 23, 2003, accessed October 23, 2015, [www.hr.org/en/reports/2003/10/23/not-eligible](http://www.hr.org/en/reports/2003/10/23/not-eligible).

<sup>12</sup> United States Department of State, “Zimbabwe 2015 International Religious Report, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour,” *State Organization*, last modified March 4, 2016, <http://www.state.gov/organisation>.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> J. Kumbira, *Kurova Guva and Christianity*, in Bourdillion, M.F.C., *Christianity South of Zambezi* (Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 2000).

religion, people generally communicate with God uNkulunkulu/Mwari through the amadlozi (Ndebele) vadzimu (Shona).<sup>16</sup> These are the deceased ancestors and Chavunduka asserts that these are believed to constitute a community within the community of the living, always around the descendants, caring for them and participating in their joys and sorrows.<sup>17</sup> In the Zimbabwean indigenous religious thought health and wellbeing are indispensable family and community values.

Professor Tabona Shoko analyzes the traditional views about the causes of illness and diseases, mechanisms of diagnosis at their disposal and methods they use to restore health.<sup>18</sup> In his book Shoko spells out that the centrality of health and wellbeing is not only confined to traditional religion but is now part of the new religious systems manifest in the phenomena of independent churches.<sup>19</sup> In general the illnesses and diseases are thought have supernatural causes such as witchcraft, curses and such things as punishment by ancestors. In this case diagnosis would generally require diviners while restoration to health would also need medicine men and spiritualists. Traditional medicine is the source for primary care for many Zimbabweans.<sup>20</sup> Izinyanga (traditional healers) are consulted for their healing, religious, political and social powers. The izinyanga (traditional healers) have organized themselves into a registered association known as the Zimbabwe National

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<sup>16</sup> David Lan, *Guns and Rains- Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe* (Harare, Zimbabwe: House, 1995), 237.

<sup>17</sup> Gordon L. Chavunduka, "Dialogue among Civilizations: The African Religion in Zimbabwe-Ans Today. Occasional Paper No. 1 Cross over Communication," *EWFI*, last modified 2001, accessed October 23, 2015, <http://www.ewfi.de/Text/African%20Religion.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Tabona Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religion in Zimbabwe* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 57.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 57.

<sup>20</sup> Chavunduka, "Dialogue among Civilizations: The African Religion in Zimbabwe-Ans Today. Occasional Paper No. 1 Cross over Communication."

Traditional Healers Association (ZINATHA). This organization is officially recognized by the government. It has a constitution and has approximately 55, 000 members who pay annual fees.<sup>21</sup> ZINATHA officials estimate that 80% of the population consults traditional healers during each year. Herbal remedies are used. Most of these traditional healers say that they are possessed by a healing spirit which they invoke in order to treat their patients.<sup>22</sup>

Tabona Shoko suggests that religions in Africa share a preoccupation with healing.<sup>23</sup> African religions are pragmatic they seek tangible salvific goods in this life only.<sup>24</sup> The central African concern is that unseen beings should take care of their wellbeing, remove misfortune, protection against those who cause it. As a result indigenous religions of Zimbabwe persist in their own right and in a complementary way alongside western medicines and Christianity. Shoko further suggests that indigenous religions perpetually resurface in new forms and under new conditions and therefore they continue to play a central role in the lives of African people.

There was mutual influence between the Khalanga and Ndebele in terms of language and cultural traits. The Ndebele were influenced in terms of the religion of the Ngwali cult at Matojeni.<sup>25</sup>

Shoko also submits that religion and healing are intertwined in African religions. He further contends that the centrality of health and wellbeing are not only

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<sup>21</sup> Chavunduka, "Dialogue among Civilizations: The African Religion in Zimbabwe-Ans Today. Occasional Paper No. 1 Cross over Communication."

<sup>22</sup> Lugira, *World Religions: African Traditional Religion Third Edition*, 51.

<sup>23</sup> Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religion in Zimbabwe*, 57.

<sup>24</sup> Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, 69.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 57.

confined to religious traditions but reflects its adaptive potential in new religious systems manifest in the phenomenon of independent churches.<sup>26</sup>

One of the traditional beliefs in Zimbabwe is based on the uNgwali religion. The center for this religion is the Mambo hills north east of Bulawayo popularly referred to as the Njelele Shrine. It is 35km South of Bulawayo in the Matopo Hills. This is one of the most famous places of religious pilgrimage. It is regarded as the main rain making shrine and rain making dances are performed for the Ngwali spirit. Every year towards the beginning of the rainy season the chief who is custodian of the religion sends a delegation of Amahosana (people with rain making spirits) to Njelele to ask for rains from Ngwali on behalf of the community. UNgwali is believed to be the spirit that brings rains (a spirit speaking from a rock). Communities around the country send their seeds for blessings as their representatives go to the shrine to ask for rain and blessing of crops, bumper harvests and protection of yields from pests.<sup>27</sup> Some people also visit the place for healing. This research is being conducted within this kind of environment.

At some point in time a sangoma (medicine man) duped the Zimbabwe cabinet into believing that she could conjure petrol to ooze from a rock.<sup>28</sup> Njelele also known as Matojeni is a prominent rain making shrine located on the fringes of the Matopo National Park in Khumalo Communal Area approximately 100km south of Bulawayo. Ngwali is believed to have lived in Njelele. The personal presence of

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<sup>26</sup> Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religion in Zimbabwe*, 55–57.

<sup>27</sup> Msilisi Dube, “Disrespect of Tradition, Culture Practice Kills Njelele Shrine’s Sacredness,” *The Chronicle Newspaper*, November 4, 2013.

<sup>28</sup> Oketch Kendo, “How Diesel Sangoma ‘fuelled’ Mugabe Cabinet Shame,” *Standard Media*, accessed August 23, 2015, <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2000019716/how-diesel-sangoma-fuelled-mugabe-cabinet-shame>.

Ngwali at Njelele was indicated by his voice and so people believed that Ngwali was the highest and final authority behind their ancestors. The secret behind the respect accorded to sacred areas and their environs lies in the taboos that are associated with them. The people believed that the spirits resided in forests, mountains, caves, hollow tress and pools and therefore closely linked in tangible aspects of the heritage with the tangible places. People would only visit these places in the company of an official priest/priestess.

This Njelele cult was also consulted during times of illness and death, domesticated animal diseases, during agricultural seasons of sowing and reaping, succession disputes, natural phenomena such as rainfall failure, and even in times of politics and war.

Consultation of the oracle at Njelele in political matters is documented from at least the late 19th century. Daneel argued that the interest of the Ngwali cult in ethnic group politics dates back to the time when the Rozvi begun to use the cult as a “centralized service” and as a means of consolidating their own dynamic rule over the surrounding ethnic groups.<sup>29</sup> These political uses of the oracle continued after the arrival of early Europeans in the southwestern part of the country in the early 19th century, and Njelele was consulted during the 1896/7 uprisings, which responded to colonial land appropriation.<sup>30</sup> The consultation of the Ngwali cult during the 1896/7 uprisings played a significant role and was the forerunner to its use in modern politics and war some decades later.

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<sup>29</sup> Marthinus L. Daneel, *The God of Matopo Hills* (The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton, 1970).

<sup>30</sup> Nobbs E. A., *Guide to the Matobo* (Cape Town, South Africa: T. Maskew Miller, 2008), 167.

Njelele appears to have assumed new values at the height of the protracted liberation struggle of the country when prominent political leaders and liberation war soldiers in the land consulted the oracle for guidance and security.<sup>31</sup> For example, in 1954, Matonjeni was consulted in connection with a proposed strike by a group of Trade Unionists from the city of Bulawayo. In 1965, the late Vice President's wife consulted Njelele to have her husband released from Gonakudzingwa, a war time restriction camp situated in the south of the country where he was incarcerated. Njelele continued to be invoked and consulted in matters of politics and war as the protracted liberation struggle continued until the country's independence in 1980.<sup>32</sup>

Mambo Hills is one of the sacred sites north east of Bulawayo, it is also referred to as Intaba Zikamambo. It has both religious and political significance and it is another shrine of the Ngwali cult.<sup>33</sup>

Spirit mediums are the ones who directly communicate with ancestors on behalf of the people. The ancestors are also believed to guard and protect their descendants. However like most former European colonies, Christianity is often mixed with traditional beliefs. Besides Christianity ancestor worship is the next most practiced religion. Under 1% of the population is Muslim.

Mission schools' education promoted the growth of Christianity in Zimbabwe, war of liberation led to black majority rule. Since Christianity was closely associated with colonialism there has always been a tension between Christianity and traditional

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<sup>31</sup> Terrance O. Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, 1896-7* (London, England: Heinemann, 1967), 56.

<sup>32</sup> Simon Makuvaza, "Why Njelele, a Rainmaking Shrine in the Matobo World Heritage Area, Zimba-Bwe, Has Not Been Proclaimed a National Monument," *Heritage Management*, 2008, 167.

<sup>33</sup> Marieke Clarke, "Mambo Hills Historical and Religious Significance," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 40, no. 1 (2010): 96–97.

religion. African traditional religion has been included in the current schools' curriculum by the Ministry of Education.

### **Description of Micro-Context**

Three provinces constitute South Zimbabwe Conference. There is one city and three towns, the rest of the conference territory is rural in nature with some dotted growth points. The majority of the members of the church who live in communal lands are mainly dependent on agriculture for subsistence. These communities are led by chiefs, sub-chiefs, kraal heads and councilors who also serve as custodians of culture and traditional religion. Some of these chiefs, sub-chiefs, kraal heads and councilors are members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. At times these people are required to fulfill their role as custodians of culture and there is a higher temptation to dual allegiance.

South Zimbabwe Conference sits on climatic regions 4 and 5 which are characterized by draughts in most parts. Cattle ranching and farming is the main source of livelihood while crop farming is complementary except in places where irrigation is offered. Communities desire to uphold those values and taboos that would help them to not offend the Ngwali cult. Church members find themselves caught in such a set up. The Njelele shrine is located within the conference territory and the communities visit it during times of illness and death, domestic and animal disease, and during agricultural seasons of sowing and reaping, among other things due to its proximity. Hence susceptibility to syncretism and dual allegiance is prominent.

There are two major public referral hospitals in Bulawayo and two other hospitals in Gwanda and Plumtree respectively. The rest of the communities are serviced by some small clinics and health centers. As has been noted in the macro context, there is a strain on the health facilities in the whole country. The health

facilities within this conference are not an exception. There is a huge temptation for people to search for other viable options during times of illness and the spiritual route offers alternatives. In this environment, people have to make a choice between orthodox Christianity, (ATR) and spiritualistic faith healing movements. Under this kind of environment there is a greater temptation for dual allegiance.

The major shrines of the Ngwali religion are found in South Zimbabwe Conference and the priesthood is drawn from the Khalanga and Venda communities which are a significant part of the population in the conference territory. The influence of the Njelele, Mambo, Zhilo and Dula cult shrines is very prevalent in the conference. There are many people in this territory who embark of pilgrimages for rain making, healing, consultation, come to Njelele and other surrounding shrines for healing, rain making ceremonies and consultation for sources of power. The background of our converts is shaped by the influence of this prevalent traditional African religion, its taboos and customs.

There has been a huge excitement from the recent past to current about prophets-cum-healer charismatic preachers raising churches. Both the private and public print and electronic media are giving these faith healers-miracle workers-cum-prophets a lot of publicity. Their method of work is similar to those of the traditional diviners (isangoma) and so this creates a challenge for Christians when it comes to differentiating Christianity from traditional religion.

### **Research Design**

This research utilizes the Logical Framework Matrix and the Gantt chart to organize its materials and to schedule times for the various activities, procedures and processes. The nature of the problem requires a qualitative approach because of the need to get personal information that necessarily includes personal experiences.

Therefore, population and sample selection follows the qualitative slant. Data will be collected through interviews and focus group discussions. The objective of this research is to find out the major contributory factors to split-level Christianity in South Zimbabwe Conference, discovering the causes of split-level Christianity will lead to the development of an intervention strategy that will help mitigate this challenge.

### **General Methodology: Logical Framework Matrix and Gantt Chart**

This study uses the logical framework and the Gantt chart as a general methodology for planning and implementing the intervention strategy. The log frame helps in the outlining of steps to be taken in the strategy formulation and implementation. On the other hand, the Gantt chart provides the frame work and time line for scheduling events and activities for better management of the intervention program.

#### **Logical Framework Analysis**

The logical framework matrix will be useful in the development and presentation of the intervention strategy to address split-level Christianity. It is a tool that makes planning, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of the project feasible and easy to follow.

In this project, it will enhance structuring of the main elements of the project and highlighting linkages between the main ideas. It is commonly used by development project specialists and was developed by US Agency of International

Development in the 1960s, to assist in improving its project planning and evaluation.<sup>34</sup>

The logical framework helps to clarify the purpose and justification of the project. It defines key elements of a project by identifying the information requirements, integrating stakeholders and identifying how the success or the failure of the project should be managed.<sup>35</sup> It also provides a visual presentation of the entire intervention as well as makes it easy to point out areas of strength or weakness. Therefore, it makes it easy to revise and select the best possible solutions. In this case one may be able to change course as the project is developed.<sup>36</sup> The log frame is not magical; it only helps to clarify ideas and presentation of plans for easy project implementation. This encourages the discipline of clear and specific thinking about what the project aims to do, how it is expected to unfold and it also highlights critical aspects upon which success depends.<sup>37</sup>

There are four columns and four rows in the log frame. In these columns selected aspects of an activity are summarized. The summary is a description of the objective, activity and the results. It further projects planned results and takes note of

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<sup>34</sup> Milica Delvic, "Guide to the Logical Framework Approach: A Key Tool for Project Cycle Management, A KTPCM," Belgrade, Serbia: Republic of Serbia government European Integration Office; Global print, *European Integration Office*, last modified 2011, accessed August 25, 2015, <http://www.evropa.gov.rs/Evropa/ShowDocument.aspx?TPE=Home&id=525>.

<sup>35</sup> NORAD, *The Logical Framework Approach (LFA): Handbook for Objective-Oriented Planning*, 4th ed. (Oslo, Norway: Norwegian Agency for Development, 1999), 9.

<sup>36</sup> W. K. Kellogg, *Foundation. Logic Model Development Guide* (Battle Creek, MI: W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004), 5.

<sup>37</sup> BOND, "Networking for International Developments; Logical Frame Analysis," *GDRC*, accessed September 5, 2016, <http://www.grdc.org/ngo/logical-fa>.

assumptions. Finally, it spells out how achievements will be monitored, measured and evaluated.<sup>38</sup>

**Objectives.** The first column is designated for objectives. It defines the project structure, goal, purpose, outputs and activities.<sup>39</sup> Objectives are targets to be achieved. They define the mission of the project. They are specific and are basic to strategic planning. They also help in the evaluation process.

**Verifiable indicators.** Column two (verifiable indicators), shows whether or not the objectives were achieved thus providing an appropriate monitoring system. What is critical in the verifiable indicators is the value and not the type of achievement and therefore all indicators used should be measurable, qualitatively or quantitatively. Under the verifiable indicators are all the necessary resources for the project. These include funds, personnel, materials and services meant to achieve the projected output.<sup>40</sup>

**Means of verification.** This column highlights the standard of recording and measuring completed tasks/activities or project performance. It has to do with how the indicators will be qualified and assessed.<sup>41</sup> This clearly shows the sources of information for the purposes of assessment. They therefore act as the basis for project evaluation. These are ways of measuring progress to see whether the objectives have been achieved.

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<sup>38</sup> Aus Guideline, *Activity Design Three. Three Logical Framework Approach* (Sydney, Australia: Commonwealth of Australia, 2005), 3.

<sup>39</sup> Greta Jensen, "The Logical Framework Approach How to Guide," *DOCHAS*, last modified July 2010, accessed August 13, 2015, [http://www.dochas.ie/Shared/Files/4/BOND\\_logframe\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.dochas.ie/Shared/Files/4/BOND_logframe_Guide.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> BOND, "Networking for International Developments; Logical Frame Analysis."

<sup>41</sup> Admin, "Layout 1," *Making Prspinclusive*, accessed September 9, 2015, [http://www.making-prspinclusive.org/fileadmin/\\_migrated/content\\_uploads/Logical-Framework-Approach.pdf](http://www.making-prspinclusive.org/fileadmin/_migrated/content_uploads/Logical-Framework-Approach.pdf).

**Assumptions.** The fourth column (assumptions) describes the (external factors which could influence the success of the project) underlying the project goal, purpose, products and inputs. These may include situations, events, conditions or decisions that could be necessary for project success. They may be beyond the control of the project management.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> D. A. Barau and J. O. Olukosi, "Logical Framework Analysis (LFA): An Essential Tool for Designing Agricultural Project Evaluation," *AJOL*, accessed August 17, 2015, <http://www.ajol.info/index.php/njbas/article/viewFile/73891/64569>.

*Table 2. Logical Framework (DFID model)*

Objectives	Measurable Indicators	Means of Verification	Important assumptions
GOAL: Wider problem the project will help to resolve	Quantitative ways of measuring or qualitative ways of judging timed achievement of goal	Cost-effective methods and sources to quantify or assess indicators	(Goal to supergoal) External factors necessary to sustain objectives in the long run
PURPOSE: The immediate impact on the project area or target group i.e. the change or benefit to be achieved by the Project	Quantitative ways of measuring or qualitative ways of judging timed achievement of purpose	Cost-effective methods and sources to quantify or assess indicators	(Purpose to Goal) External conditions necessary if achieved project purpose is to contribute to reaching project goal
OUTPUTS: These are the specifically deliverable results expected from the project to attain the purpose ACTIVITIES: These are the tasks to be done to produce the outputs	Quantitative ways of measuring or qualitative ways of judging timed production of outputs	Cost-effective methods and sources to quantify or assess indicators	(Outputs to purpose) Factors out of project control which, if present, could restrict progress from outputs to achieving project purpose
	INPUTS: This is a summary of the project budget	Financial out-turn report as agreed in grant agreement	(Activity to output) Factors out of project control which, if present, could restrict progress from activities to achieving outputs

Source: DFID's "Guidelines on Humanitarian Assistance", May 1997

DFID describes the Logical Framework as "a tool to help designers of projects think logically about what the project is trying to achieve (the purpose), what things the project needs to do to bring about (the outputs) and what needs to be done to produce these outputs (the activities). The purpose of the project from the DFID viewpoint is to serve our higher-level objectives (the goal)".

NOTE: The two boxes in the center of the "Activities" row are not used for Measurable Indicators and Means of Verification as the progress and success of the

Activities are measured at the Outputs level. Remember, the Activities are carried out to achieve the Outputs. These "spare" boxes can therefore be used to provide any useful additional information such as Inputs and Budgeting requirements.

### **Gantt Chart**

The Gantt chart is mostly used in project management to provide a graphical illustration of a schedule that helps to plan, coordinate, and track specific tasks in a project. By so doing it embraces the importance of time and timing.<sup>43</sup> The chart shows the activities that must be done to complete the project, the time frame they must be completed in, and the team members who are assigned to each task. As the project progresses, bars are shaded to show which of the activities have been completed.<sup>44</sup>

A Gantt chart is a useful tool in scheduling and monitoring activities within a project as well as communicating its plans and status. An example of a Gantt chart is given in Figure 8. It shows the schedules of activities to be carried out, the time frame and the people that are expected to do each activity.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Joana Geraldi and Thomas Lechter, Gantt Charts Revisited: A Critical Analysis of its Roots and Implications to the Management of Projects Today, *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, vol. 5 Iss. 4, 578-594.

<sup>44</sup> W. Durfee, *Project Planning and Gantt Charts*, accessed 18 August 2015, [http://www.me.umn.edu>proj\\_planning](http://www.me.umn.edu>proj_planning)

<sup>45</sup> W. Durfee, *Project Planning and Gantt Charts*.

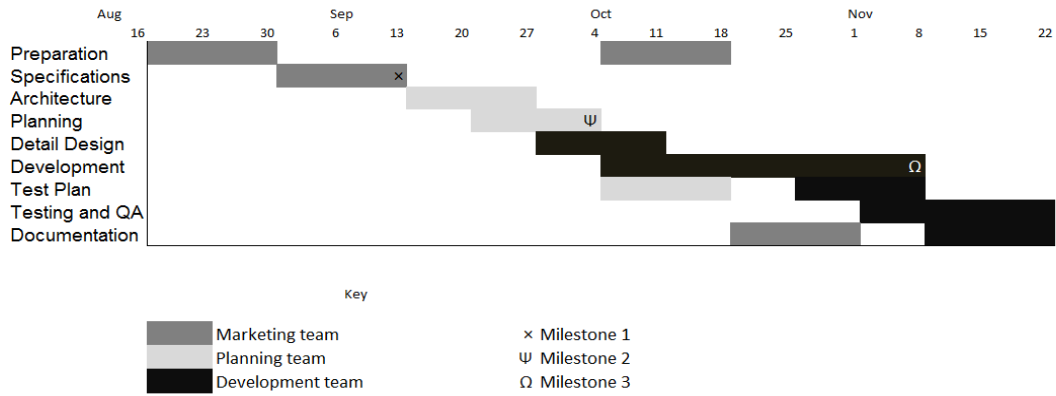


Figure 7. Gantt Chart Sample

### Description of the Mission Intervention

This section is an outline of the ministerial response to split-level Christianity. It draws insights and valuable resources to deal with this challenge from the literature review. This part of the paper will further develop linkages with the previous chapters in the development of intervention initiatives. Split-level Christianity is a complex challenge, resolving it requires a multiple faceted approach and intensity of application.

Therefore, the most crucial areas of focus that were likely to mitigate this challenge were selected in responding to the challenge. Areas of training, demonstration, information sharing were part of the responses meant to help church members in Zone A of South Zimbabwe Conference to break loose from split-level Christianity. The logical framework matrix is used to present various activities that were undertaken as means to respond to the challenge of double loyalties.

*Table 3. Application of Logical Framework Matrix*

Objectives	Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Goal: Reduce Incidences of Split-Level Christianity in Zimbabwe Union Conference Territory	Worldview transformational curriculum adopted by South Zimbabwe Conference by November 2016	A handbook with detailed study Areas	Conference administration is supportive of the project
Purpose:			
Develop a Contextual Model to Respond to Split-Level Christianity in South Zimbabwe Conference	Handbook for Training 4 pastors and 30 lay leaders produced by May 2016	Handbook	Pastors and lay leaders will participate in the training program.
Outputs			
Training handbook is developed	Handbook available by end of April 2016	Handbook received and signed for by the trainees	Availability and the willingness of pastors and lay leaders to participate in the training program
Pastors and lay leaders trained in worldview transformation curriculum	4 pastors and 30 lay leaders from Zone A churches will participate in theory and field training in May 2016	Attendance list, photos, videos	Pastors and leaders' willingness to participate
Evaluation training conducted	Evaluation forms available to trainees and field recipients of initial practical training by June 2016	Evaluation instrument and records	
Further/follow up training conducted	Training review and in-field training by 15 September 2016	Attendance register, photos of the training review conducted	Participants will be willing to attend follow up training
Conduct intensive worldview transformation workshops in Zone A with 4 Pastors and 30 lay leaders	4 worldview transformation workshops conducted in Zone A in September and October 2016	Conference, Executive Committee, Administrative Committee minutes, record of training from churches and photos	Support of the conference administration in corporation of Zone A churches
Conduct Split-Level Christianity Symposium	Split-level Christianity symposium conducted by end of November 2016	Videos, attendances register, evaluation records	Support from the conference administration, facilitators and participants

*(table continues)*

*Table 4 (continued). Application of Logical Framework Matrix*

Objectives	Verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
Activities:			
Research and data collection Gathering information from library sources Developing interview questions Gathering information from respondents	Inputs: Develop, administer and analyze data		Cooperation of all the stakeholders where the study is being conducted
Developing training material and curriculum Develop curriculum Compile handbook based on curriculum , Print handbook Materials are compiled into a training handbook following curriculum			
Prepare for training Secure training venues Schedule training dates and make invitations Start training and avail training materials			
Evaluation of training Produce evaluation instruments Conduct evaluation Analyze evaluation data			
Worldview transformation workshops in Zone A Secure venue and invite participants Conduct workshops using handbook use focus groups and other various groups set up during training			
Conduct Split-level Christianity Symposium Select topics, invite facilitators and give them topics to present Secure venue and invite delegates Conduct split-level Christianity symposium Make final evaluations and write project report			

For the log frame to work properly it is best to complement it with a Gantt chart. The Gantt chart facilitates the breaking down of activities into monthly, weekly and daily activities. The provisions of the Gantt should not be regarded as a rigid schedule, they help to regulate the flow of activities by providing time frames.

*Table 5. Application of Gantt Chart for year 1, 2 and year 3*

Task name	2014		2015				2016					
	June	1st quarter	2nd quarter	3rd quarter	4th quarter							
	15-Sep	15-Oct	15-Nov	15-Apr	15-May	15-Jun	15-Jul	15-Aug	15-Sep	15-Oct	15-Nov	15-Dec
Research topic selected, library research begins and continues	[Gantt bar spanning from June 2014 to November 2015]											
Planning, Data collection & Analysis	[Gantt bar spanning from June 2014 to October 2014]											
Program Development	[Gantt bar spanning from June 2014 to April 2015]											
Program Implementation	[Gantt bar spanning from June 2014 to July 2015]											
Program Follow up Activities	[Gantt bar spanning from June 2014 to October 2015]										[Gantt bar spanning from November 2015 to December 2015]	
Program Evaluation and report writing	[Gantt bar spanning from June 2014 to October 2015]										[Gantt bar spanning from November 2015 to December 2015]	

### Methodology

This study is in the social science category. In this type of study, the qualitative research methodology provided a viable option. In-depth interviews were considered optimum for collecting data on individuals’ personal perspectives, and experiences.<sup>46</sup> This research involved exploration of sensitive personal information, hence the use of the qualitative research methods which is most suited in such a case. Focus group discussions were used because they are considered to be effective in extracting data on the cultural norms of a group and in generating broad overviews of issues of concern to the cultural groups or subgroups represented.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Allan Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 399.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

## **Rationale**

With qualitative research, a deeper engagement with respondents provided access to data that was based on the participants' own categories of meaning.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, it did not require many respondents and this eased financial constraints. This methodology also presented the researcher with the chance to conduct cross-case comparison and analysis of the respondents' understanding and description of split-level Christianity. These respondents were privileged to present their experiences from the insider's viewpoint.

The qualitative approach was also useful in providing details about human behavior, emotion, and personality characteristics. In this case, the researcher was able to observe and document behaviors, opinions, patterns, needs, pain points, and other types of information which was helpful in perceiving things regarding split-level Christianity among the respondents. This data was subject to interpretation resulting in interesting discoveries. Qualitative research was especially helpful in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations.<sup>49</sup>

## **Population**

In this research, the word population refers to a "universe of units from which the sample was selected."<sup>50</sup> Further, population is "an aggregate of all objects,

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<sup>48</sup> Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 399.

<sup>49</sup> Natasha Mack et al., *Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide Module 1 Qualitative Research Methods Overview* (Durham, NC: Family Health International, 2005), 1.

<sup>50</sup> Allan Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), 186.

subjects or all members that conform to a set of specifications.”<sup>51</sup> The population for this study comprised of twenty-three districts of South Zimbabwe Conference churches. Since it was impossible to study the whole population, a representative sample was selected. Purposive sampling was used to identify the three districts within the population and further to identify the three churches.

The districts and the churches had to meet the following criteria to be included in the sample. They first should have had cases of syncretism or dual allegiance (split-level Christianity) reported. Secondly the pastors had to be willing to participate in the research and finally, the districts themselves had to be willing to participate in the research. As a result three pastors who belonged to these districts were selected. The elders who had had some experience or participated in some way in dealing with some form of split-level Christianity were selected using snowballing sampling. In such a case the district pastors identified the potential respondents for the researcher.

The rationale for selecting these districts was based on the evidence of split-level Christianity within the area. The other reasons for selecting these districts was the pastor’s willingness to participate in the research. Finally, the interest shown by some members of the district in participating in the study was also considered.

Recruitment of the sample population was done in consultation with each individual church’s leadership. The church board’s permission was sought and obtained from all sampled churches. Those members who could read and write were preferred but some who could not read and write were also specifically selected because of their experience and their knowledge of customs and culture. Those members who had participated in the witch-hunting ceremonies were asked to

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<sup>51</sup> Denis Polit, Bernadotte Hungler, and Denise F. Polite, *Nursing Research: Principles and Method* (Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 1999), 37.

participate and those who consented were selected. Some of the church elders identified some individuals who were volunteering their information especially with regard to witch-hunting ceremonies and so verbal consent was sought and voluntarily granted by each participating member.

### **Ethical Considerations**

In every research, there are ethical considerations since the research deals with human subjects. Collection, use of data and communication of the results of the research has a potential to infringe on the rights of the participants. The following ethical considerations were drawn and used for the safeguarding of the respondent's rights.

The research objectives were clearly explained verbally and in writing, in a language the participants were familiar with so that they are clearly understood by the participants (including a description of how the data collected was going to be used and how the church was going to benefit from the results of the study). Furthermore, verbal permission to proceed with the study as articulated was sought and granted from the respondent. The risks of sharing personal information were discussed and safeguards to psychological stress and possible ostracism from peers were also discussed. Participants were free to withdraw from the study without fear of victimization.<sup>52</sup>

Added to that, the respondents were informed of all data collection devices and activities. Verbatim transcriptions and written interpretations and reports were made available to the informants if they wanted them. Also the respondents' rights, interests and wishes were considered first when choices were made regarding

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<sup>52</sup> Mega Sewel, "The Use of Qualitative Interviews in Evaluation," *University of Arizona*, accessed August 28, 2016, <http://www.cals.arizona.edu/sf.cs/cyfernet/cyfar/intervu5.hotmail.htm>.

reporting the data collected so as to ensure confidentiality. The respondents held the final say with regards to their anonymity.<sup>53</sup>

## **Sampling**

Sampling is the process of selecting respondents to represent the population of interest.<sup>54</sup> After studying the sample, outcomes of that study may then be fairly generalized to the population from which the sample was selected. In this research the respondents were recruited through purposive sampling. Sampling was influenced by some characteristics and peculiar experiences in the subject population, therefore it was logical to use purposive sampling.

Three out of twenty-three districts were selected. From the three districts three churches were sampled. Participants were drawn from the three churches. It is worth noting that all the selected churches could participate in the research.

Respondents for this research comprised three pastors, in addition three elders were also drawn out as participants. There were also six church members who were interviewed as individuals. The last segment of interviews comprised three focus groups. Each focus group had eight members and was drawn out from each of the three sampled churches. This was a kind of maximum variation purposive sample which was meant to provide a diverse range of insights on Split-Level Christianity.

## **Instrumentation**

Interviews were used for data collection. These survey interviews included open ended questions, in-depth individual and focus group interviews. These oral

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<sup>53</sup> John W. Creswell, *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2009), 198.

<sup>54</sup> Geri LoBiondo Wood and Judith Haber, *Nursing Research: Methods and Critical Appraisal for Evidence Based Practice* (St. Louis, MO: Mosby, 2009), 250.

surveys were used in order to get opinions, impressions as well as experiences of the respondents. They were used with the intention to extract data on cultural norms and practices as they related to the topic of study. Oral surveys were also chosen because they afforded a chance for the interviewer to answer questions from the participants as a way of clarifying the questions. They gave a chance for probing for more detail even to ask complex personal questions. It also afforded the interviewer a control over the response rate because people were visited and spoken to face to face.<sup>55</sup>

### **Data Collection**

Data in this research should be understood as information obtained in the course of study. The purpose of the study was to formulate, implement and evaluate a worldview transformation program aimed at mitigating Split- Level Christianity among members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Zimbabwe Conference. The interviews that were carried out were meant to capture relevant data for the study's objectives and research questions.

Data was mainly collected through interviews. David Gray identifies five categories of interviews which are “structured, semi-structured, non-directive, focused, and informal conversational interviews.”<sup>56</sup> In this research documents, semi-structured, informal conversational interviews, individual as well as focus group discussions were used as the sources of data. Semi structured interviews were used because of their allowance for the collection of dense data. Gray adds that semi-structured interviews give flexibility because questions are not rigid since they are

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<sup>55</sup> Admin, “Survey Research Writing@CSU,” *Colorado State University*, accessed December 5, 2016, <http://www.writing.colostate.edu/guides/guide.cfm?guideid=68>.

<sup>56</sup> David E. Grey, *Doing Research in the Real World* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2009), 371.

non-standardized; hence they are useful for qualitative analysis.<sup>57</sup> In this case the interviewer had the opportunity to modify and add questions because the original question served as a guide.<sup>58</sup> This allowed free flow of information which was analyzed later from notes and recorded interviews. The notes that were taken during the interviews together with the recordings were done with the approval of the interviewees.

Additionally, focus group interviews were conducted. These provided the interviewer a chance to gain more information by way of seeking clarifications on issues raised. It also helped the interviewer to observe the different dimensions and perspectives brought about by the dynamics of the group. This on its own helped the respondents stay on the theme. Therefore, focus group discussions were used because they were considered to be effective in extracting “data on the cultural norms of a group and in generating broad overviews of issues of concern to the cultural groups or subgroups represented.”<sup>59</sup>

When using semi-structured and focus group interviews there was a challenge of internal and external validity which needed to be addressed. One way of validating the information which was employed in this research was the transcription of interviews and then taking them back to their respective respondents for confirmation and approval.<sup>60</sup> Ranjit affirms that validation of information by a respondent is always

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<sup>57</sup> Grey, *Doing Research in the Real World*, 373-374.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, 376.

<sup>59</sup> Ranjit Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step-By-Step Guide For Beginners*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005), 222.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*.

important when collecting data through semi-structured interviews since it reduces interference of the researcher.<sup>61</sup>

Gray advises that data should be analyzed as they are collected until it becomes clear that perspectives were being repeated which proves data saturation.<sup>62</sup> A total of eleven people were interviewed as individuals. These were three pastors, three elders and six lay church members. Three focus groups were established each comprised of eight members. All these interviewees fairly represented the three selected churches. These steps were done as an attempt at triangulation so as to achieve reliability as well as checking data saturation.

The aim of the interviews was to discover the causes of split-level Christianity which present themselves in the form of religious syncretism and dual allegiance among church members in South Zimbabwe Conference. They were also structured to find the underlying causes for members' participation in witch hunting rituals. These questions also sought to understand what they thought could help them live in total allegiance to Christ. Focus group discussions were used to explore values, perceptions, experiences, and understandings of the respondents with regard to syncretism and dual allegiance.

Interviews of consenting respondents were recorded using a video camera and a smart phone and were then transcribed verbatim. The age range of the participants was between 21 and 75 years old. The interviews were conducted in the homes of respondents; some were conducted at church while others were conducted at the conference boardroom. All the three focus group discussions were conducted at church. The major part of the interviews and focus group discussions were conducted

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<sup>61</sup> Kumar, *Research Methodology*, 222.

<sup>62</sup> Grey, *Doing Research in the Real World*, 376.

as from the 15th of September 2014 to April 2016. Other subsequent interviews and focus group discussions were conducted during the implementation of the program as a way of seeking more clarity on particular issues and as a way of evaluating the intervention initiative. These locations were suitable for conducting these interviews since they provided a quiet, neutral and non-intimidating atmosphere for the participants.

### **Data Presentation**

The sources of qualitative data for this research included audio recordings and transcripts from in-depth individual and semi-structured interviews, oral survey questions containing substantial open comments, transcripts from focus group discussions, documents; reports, phone messages and church board minutes. These different methods of data collection ensured reliability of data through triangulation.

All interviews began and ended with prayers. To make the interviewees comfortable and relaxed the interviewer ensured that introductions were made. The subject of research was also introduced and its objectives were explained.

The qualitative data was presented under seven themes. Under each theme several questions were clustered. The starting point was the question on the witch-hunting ceremony which was already common talk among the members and the villagers.

This section was introduced by the following preamble. A child disappeared in your village; there was a common agreement to call a witch hunter by the villagers ... Narrate how the church members reacted to this. In response to this question, the interviewees indicated that there was generally no objection from the church members to this call for a witch-hunter. They also highlighted that households paid the required \$1 that was meant for the upkeep of the witch-hunter.

The follow up question was “state the reasons for your participation in the witch hunting ceremony, regardless of the teachings of the Bible and the church” In answer to this question several elements came up. The common response from interviewees was that there was pressure from the community for everyone to participate.

They also cited pressure from fellow church members who encouraged participation claiming that church members needed to exonerate themselves because the common talk was that the one who did not go for the witch hunting knew something or was involved in the disappearance of the missing child. Members who had already participated in the ritual are reported to have started finger pointing and accusing those who did not participate saying they were hiding something and so they feared to be exposed. It also came out very clear from the interviewees that the community looked down on them saying that the services in the church excluded personal prophecies. So, the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church attend church as a way of hiding from being exposed for who they were. On further probes, the respondents brought up the following,

I participated out of fear that something mysterious was going to happen to me if I did not, since were several threats from the witch-hunter who said that those who did not participate would soon be the victims since their homes would not be protected.

One cited pressure from the community leaders as the reason for participation in the witch hunting ceremony by saying,

I participated because of the pressure from the community leaders who threatened to banish us from the village.

Another respondent, on the same question replied,

I participated because of the pressure from the church members who were saying those who do not participate had something to hide so I wanted to exonerate myself.

Yet another had this to say in response the same question,

I participated because I wanted the witch hunter to help me get rid of my traditional charms.

In the focus group discussions the group said it would be better for the conference to direct members to go get cleansed by the witch hunter after which members would be baptized since they would be clean. The group strongly believed in the cleansing power of the witch-hunter. On probing about the capacity of the church leaders to deal with witchcraft and other supernatural challenges, the focus group expressed doubt in the capacity of the church leaders, pastors included, to help in these areas especially helping a witch out of witchcraft and insuring protection against witchcraft.

### **Community Pressure**

*AmaSabatha yiwo acatshisa umntwana* because in their services they do not prophesy. (The Seventh-day Adventist Church members are the ones responsible for the disappearance of the missing child because they do not prophesy in their church services).

It was surprising to notice that members who participated in the witch-hunting ceremony also started finger pointing and accusing those who did not participate saying those who did not participate were culprits- their non-participation was a way of hiding because they feared to be exposed. Some went to the diviner or witch hunter to exonerate themselves

### **Observation: Community Worldview**

The interviewer visited the community three times to attend to their funerals and observe their practices. The speakers in those funerals spoke about the disappearance of the missing child. Each one of them attributed this disappearance to

acts of witchcraft. The three funerals that the researcher attended in the villages where the research was being conducted had as common practice. When the speakers who happened to be community leaders addressed the people, they attributed the deaths to acts of witchcraft.

Funeral 1 was for an old lady who died as 77. The second funeral was that of a managed 46 he was diabetic, had a wound which could not heal. The third one was a 52 year old who had been hospitalized several times. The chief who is a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and other relatives of the deceased, in all three cases spoke about witchcraft being the cause of death. The chief at one point said “You people refused the services of the diviner witch-hunter. See now you are dying. These witches will finish all of you”

### **Interviews**

The table below provides an overview of the responses from the interviews with church elders.

*Table 6. Interviews with Church Elders*

Elder profile	Participated/ did not participate in the witch-hunting ceremony	Reasons for participation/non- participation/other issues
1: 40 years in the church, 13 years as elder, educated to O'Level and has a professional Hunting Certificate	Did not Participate	He was not around, had visited a sick relative. During the death of his father, participated in African Traditional Religious practices associated with burial i.e. standing at the head of the grave, holding his father's knobkerrie, spear, shield... he also said "I gave permission to my siblings to take my father to traditional healers during time of his illness." He claims he was rebuked by other church members for his actions at his father's funeral which were at odds with biblical teachings
2: 15 years in the church, 5 years as an elder, literate	Participated	Series of unfortunate events, i.e. he was widowed twice, loss of a child from a hemorrhaging growth which he considered to have been mysterious. Had previously consulted traditional healers, and a prophet from the Apostolic Faith Church. Strongly believed that his mother was bewitching him. Wanted to understand the reasons behind his misfortunes. He was seeking for help since he had been told that he has a (ithunzi) 'shadow/spirit' following him around and caused him to be stopped from work. He wanted to prove to the community that he was clean because the community had said "if you don't go what are you hiding?"
3: 52 years in the church, 15 years as an elder, educated up to Diploma level	Participated	<p>Loss of his son after what he considered to be a freak accident. His son was scrapped by a mini bus door and the wound got swollen mysteriously according to his assessment and would not heal</p> <p>Attributed the death of his son and his diabetic condition to witchcraft</p> <p>His sister, also a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church went to the witch hunters to exonerate herself "because people said I had a hand in the death of my brother's son"</p> <p>The elder's other sons consulted the witch hunters where they were told that church members were responsible for their brother's death.</p> <p>He said when he heard this from his sons, he decided to visit the witch hunters to hear for himself and to get their help in protecting his home.</p> <p>He insisted that these witch hunters were God's instruments also. They would help cleanse the church and then church members would come and get baptized.</p> <p>He had strong convictions that there were a lot of witches and wizards in the church.</p> <p>He also expressed a strong belief in the power of the witch hunters to a point of claiming that the church had no means of dealing with issues of witchcraft and protection from witchcraft.</p> <p>When asked about the diabetic condition of his son, the elder acknowledged it but insisted that the mysterious swelling and the eventual death was a result of witchcraft.</p> <p>Comment This man seemed distraught and inconsolable</p>

Table 6 gives a summary of the interviews with church members.

*Table 7. Interviews with Church Members*

Church member profile	Participated/did not participate in the witch-hunting ceremony	Reasons for participation/non- participation/other issues
1 : 74 years old, 5 years in the church, deacon, village headman, literate	Did not participate	<p>He said “<i>okwami ukukholwa akungivumeli ukuhlanganyela</i>” meaning (my faith does not allow me to partake in such rituals)</p> <p>When asked about the basis of his statement he recited bible text “You shall not have any other gods beside me” When further asked about how do you rate the church’s programs in dealing with challenges/crisis related to the spirit world? He indicated that the church leaders seemed not to have ready answers or solutions for the challenge. He gave this as his reasons for the answers. “The pastor and elders were told to address the challenges facing the church. They did not make a decision or help. We are still waiting to hear from them”</p> <p>Comments</p> <p>When asked what his general impressions about the church and witchcraft were, he said “there could be members who are involved in witchcraft but I have no proof. ”</p> <p>-He was ostracized for not participating.</p>
2: Young adult, 27 years old, not married	Did not participate	<p>Only households were required to attend the ritual</p> <p>Further reveals that there was pressure from the community and the church all were supposed to participate</p> <p>Further points that the church members were finger pointing and accusing each other for not participating. Also revealed that there was now hatred among church members.</p> <p>When asked how do you rate the church’s programs in dealing with challenges/crisis related to the spirit world? He revealed that the church is ill-prepared or unable to address the challenges. He elaborated, “church leaders took it lightly and at some point they advised members to decide whether they were going to participate or not in the witch hunting ceremony.”</p> <p>Apart from the witch hunting ceremonies what other spiritualistic challenges have you encountered and what have you done?</p> <p>Joblessness</p> <p>Other church members had been encouraging her to seek help from traditional healers to wash away the misfortune</p> <p>How has the church addressed these challenges “There is nothing that has happened in that direction, except if I missed it”</p>
3: 57 years old, 24 years as a member of the church	Participated and returned to be baptized	<p>One day a preacher came to church and said those who went are better than those who did not go because “<i>balahla</i>” which means they were cleansed.</p> <p>This member further states that these statements hurt many members and she was also hurt. The reason she gave for her being hurt besides this statement is that the elders did not challenge the preacher. The preacher is said to have further said “do not fear censure or church discipline because those who will sit to discipline you have ‘things’, they are sinners. So you go and return and get baptized and all will be well.</p>

(table continues)

*Table 8 (continued).* Interviews with Church Members

4. 12 years in the church, 40 years of age	Participated	<p>She went because “I have never had a child. I am a church office treasurer hoping to be helped to get a child.</p> <p>The other reason for going; fear that if she had gone, others were going to get cleansed and those who had not been cleansed will face problem upon the departure of the witchcraft</p> <p>On other reasons; she says there were reports, wonders performed by the witch hunter</p> <p>So what has changed? Nothing much has changed but it feels that something changed. Just the relief that I went and was cleared gained.</p> <p>She had a strong feeling that some members had evil charms so she wanted some protection.</p>
5 : 48 years old, 11 years in the church	Participated	<p>Fear. “If I don’t go I would be attacked since I would be the only person without protection”</p> <p>Other family members went first, they got water bottles, salt and other unknown substances, they sprinkled them at home.</p> <p>“The challenge was not the coming of the witch hunters. It is what we always do when we have a challenge at home.” She also mentioned a number of people in her church who go to witch doctors, prophets and diviners; when these people go to these practitioners they cease coming to church for some time. When they eventually return to church, they just insist on getting baptized. When asked why they were no longer attending church they would reply “ngisalungisa okomuzi wami” (I was sorting out my household issues)</p>
6 : 54 years old, 38 years as a member of the church, educated to Diploma level, business woman	Did not participate	<p>Was away on business.</p> <p>When asked for her view on the situation of the witch hunters, she expressed concern that other church members were pressurizing her to participate to exonerate herself since they suspected her of using power objects to bolster her business.</p> <p>Asked if she had any personal challenges relating to dual allegiance, she narrated that every time she gave birth she would always go for child protection rituals and she also practiced them on her own daughters</p>

### Summary of Focus Group Interviews

Expression of fear was one of the recurring ideas during the focus group discussions. 20 out of 24 members of the focus groups expressed fear of witchcraft. Their consensus on the issue of witch hunting and participation was that the church should have allowed people to participate and then just re-baptize them without any prior discipline. Their main argument was that there was distrust and suspicion among members. In all the focus group discussions the respondents were convinced that

some members of the church were involved in witchcraft. It was also indicated that this was a common belief among church members and within the community. Focus group members expressed their belief in the power of the witch hunter. However, they were doubtful that the pastor could deal with matters of witchcraft, both in exorcising it or providing people with protection against it.

### **Pastors' Interviews**

The pastors were given a chance to describe their experiences related to their churches' participation in the witch hunting ceremony and also to relate in general fared in the area of dual allegiance. The researcher explained to the pastors the concept of split-level Christianity and asked them to narrate their experiences around that topic in their ministry contexts. Pastor A indicated that his church including its leadership was caught off guard and this led to a lot of confusion. Pastor B indicated that he and his church were not prepared for such a crisis and so it paralyzed the church system. Pastor C claims that when the witch hunting ceremonies were terrorizing his church, he consulted with one of the conference leaders. After consulting, he claims that the advice was ambiguous to him so he could not act. Members were confused and some continued to consult whilst some continued coming to him for advice for a period of 9 months and he had no solution to give for these challenges in his district. When Evangelistic Efforts came, the church had lost credibility in the community hence they failed to baptize anyone for a full quarter.

How do you rate the church's programs in dealing with challenges/crisis related to the spirit world?

No clear position as to censure/remove from membership. While these are disciplinary issues there is no clear program helping members to deal with these practical life-threatening situations. When asked to elaborate the pastor cited the

church members claim to have been coerced, at some point they claim to have been pressured to participate.

Church members still, even after being taught continue to believe in and fear some powers and fear witchcraft. The pastor also narrated that one of his members a deacon was even courageous enough to be the usher for the witch hunter.

The pastors also indicated that the challenge did not only exist in their districts where there were these witch hunters. They insisted that from the several districts that they had pastored in the past, had clear incidents of members visiting or patronizing traditional healers, prophets, diviners, faith healers. At some point one of the pastors revealed that in one place they had challenges in electing members to church office because some members feared to be bewitched if they accepted certain positions. The other pastor concurred to having similar challenges.

One of the pastors expressed fear of the spiritualistic manifestations including witchcraft. The pastors concurred that the subject of spiritualistic manifestations including witchcraft was one of those subjects that was not commonly taught and related to the background and anyone who would attempt to teach along those lines was likely to be stigmatized or implicated. At some point it was also revealed that teaching about witchcraft and spiritualistic manifestations was likely to attract the wrath of the practitioners, therefore, silence was considered as a virtue.

Apart from the witch hunting ceremonies, what other spiritualistic challenges are apparent in your territory?

What came out in the discussion was rituals related to rain making. Praying for rain was one of the community driven initiatives that was inter-religious and inter-denominational. Some of the members were saying that they participate in some of these rituals. Members were found to be participating in the rain making rituals that

included submitting seeds to the rain making priest to take them to the shrine for blessing before returning them to be mixed with seeds to be planted.

### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative data analysis is hereby summarized. The respondents were generally asked orally in interview set ups and the questions were semi-structured. The responses revealed that church members had no objection to participating in the witch hunting ceremony. This is evidenced by their willingness to pay the \$1 which was meant for the upkeep of the witch hunter. While members claim that they participated because of pressure from family and the community, their responses show that they actually went volitionally. Further probing revealed that up to 83% of the members were inclined to participate in these rituals even without any external pressure. A common expression was that church members were encouraging each other to participate in these idolatrous practices.

A deeper analysis shows that some members, including some church leaders have a challenge in their understanding of the gospel and its implications on allegiance. During interviews it was apparent that members did not lack the knowledge of biblical requirements on them. What came out clearly was that though they knew what the Bible required they lacked the stamina to stand by it. Of the three elders who were interviewed only one had participated in witch hunting yet he still had his own challenges in the area of allegiance. Therefore, among the elders 3/3 which is 100% had challenges that can be described as split-level loyalty.

Church members showed their vulnerability and inclinations towards the ATR provisions for their security in this life. In the event of child birth, need for home protection and healing, the members resorted to ATR solutions more easily than to God. Some of the ideas they expressed were that they wanted to be exonerated from

witchcraft suspicions. Part of their reasons for patronizing African traditional religion practitioners were motivated by their fear of witchcraft, spirits and misfortune. During the interviews it appeared as though they were more concerned with the preservation of their lives, their families, their relationships with their families and the community at the expense of their relationship with God.

From all the interviews the data shows that the church in South Zimbabwe Conference lacks a systematic way of dealing with split-level Christianity. The members feel vulnerable and helpless while the leaders also feel inadequate when faced with split-level Christianity phenomenon.

### **Intervention Initiative**

After interpretation of qualitative data, a contextually relevant intervention program was designed. Data exposed several issues that were foundational to the designing of the intervention strategy. First the data uncovered that many members still fear witchcraft, spiritualistic manifestations and their results. This insecurity leads them search for alternative power sources of protection. Split-Level Christianity is the logical result of this search for power and security.

African traditional religious power sources and Pentecostal charismatic Christianity would seem to provide the alternative sources of help. What seems to be the fundamental challenge is that the African traditional worldview still holds sway in the lives of many professed believers. Finally members feel helpless in the face of crisis and some kind of distrust of what the church can do in the face witchcraft and spiritualistic manifestations. They feel the church is inadequate and has no capacity to help them deal with spiritualistic manifestations, and they feel the church does not measure up to the challenge of witchcraft and spiritualistic manifestations. Essentially

what the data revealed indicated that many professed Christians in the sample population practice split-level Christianity.

Consequently, training and workshop materials were produced in response to this data in an attempt to help the members overcome tendencies towards split level Christianity. The nature and magnitude of the challenge revealed the need for a worldview transformation program. A step by step intervention plan as outlined in the log frame matrix was followed together with the timeline as indicated in the Gantt chart in the above sections of this chapter.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has highlighted the context related factors that evidently provide a rich environment for Split-Level Christianity. The importance attached to health and wellbeing which is coupled with a natural disposition towards finding the cause of misfortune is apparent. This is further compounded by the overwhelming availability of diviners, African Indigenous and charismatic churches whose operations closely resemble those of the African traditional diviner. Beyond this, this chapter has also highlighted the prevalent community belief in the power of the Ngwali religion. Several shrines within the South Zimbabwe Conference territory make it highly tempting for the people to want to revert to the easy and commonly accepted means of praying for rain.

Qualitative research has been used to unravel the problem this research is dealing with. The Logical Framework Matrix and the Gantt chart were used to help in plotting the important steps in this research.

Individual interviews and focus group discussions were used to gather data. Respondents comprised three pastors, six church members and three focus groups.

This approach was used as an attempt to get a maximum variation purposive sample.

Semi structured interviews were used to collect data.

Data revealed that church members in South Zimbabwe Conference are vulnerable to split-level Christianity. Fear of spirits, ancestors and witchcraft is a present danger to members' spiritual integrity. The narratives from interviews and focus group discussions indicate that split-level Christianity is a major challenge among members of the Seventh - day Adventist Church in South Zimbabwe Conference. As this chapter concludes, a worldview transformation program is preferred as the antidote to help resolve the challenge of split-level Christianity.

## CHAPTER 5

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERVENTION

The previous chapter focused on the Zimbabwean context which revealed the nature of the society and the factors that contribute to split-level Christianity. This analysis of the macro and micro context provided cues that helped in the development of the intervention strategy. It also highlighted available opportunities and possible challenges for doing ministry in the South Zimbabwean context. Apart from the contextual issues the previous chapter also dealt with the survey part of the research. The data that was collected was examined and interpreted. In this data, it became apparent that split-level Christianity was a major challenge in South Zimbabwe Conference. These findings from the survey informed the development of the program. They also served as pointers that assisted in the structuring of the intervention.

Consequently, this chapter is concerned with the implementation of the intervention initiative. As a reminder, the purpose of the initiative is to facilitate a worldview transformation curriculum to help the church members overcome split-level religious practices. A step by step outline of the program which follows thematic areas addressed is presented. Seminars and workshops to address split-level Christianity were conducted with the help of four pastors and seven selected lay members who were part of the initial training in the preparatory worldview transformation workshops.

A setting to conduct a worldview transformation program was organized where each of the three churches had a schedule of two meetings. These meetings were in the form of seminars and workshops and they all began and ended with devotional messages where a call to full allegiance to God was always made. When all the churches had been met separately, a weekend camp out was held at Sigola Primary School from 6 – 9 October 2016 to reinforce and consolidate what had been done with individual churches. At the peak of this program a worldview transformation symposium was conducted at S.O.S Primary School from 10 – 13 November 2016 where the whole of South Zimbabwe Conference constituency was represented. Every level of implementation was followed by an evaluation and at the end of the program a comprehensive evaluation was done.

Appropriate evaluation instruments were designed for every level of implementation to help in monitor and properly evaluating the program. Post implementation interviews were conducted with the participants in order to assess the participants thinking about and inclinations towards syncretism and dual allegiance. The intensive part of the program implementation was done within a space of seven months from May 2016 to November 2016. A summative evaluation and a comprehensive report is presented towards the end of this chapter.

One of the most determinative factors in African culture is its communal nature. People share their lives with each other. They live for one another. This program was designed intentionally to fit the communal context of the respondents. Spiritual growth within the community is always bound to be enhanced or retarded by influences and rhythms of that community. Hence this program was implemented in a workshop, interactive, discursive format to fit in the cultural ways of exchange. All the sessions were designed to foster a friendly environment where people would be

free to express themselves even when required to disclose sensitive personal information.

### **Program Implementation**

Phase one of program implementation involved the training of trainers who were going to help the researcher in the implementation program. The training of trainers was done in three sessions in May on three consecutive Sundays which were 15, 22 and 29 May 2016. After the Trainer of Trainers training, these mentors were given materials which they were supposed to continue familiarizing themselves with whilst waiting for the intensive implementation program in the selected churches in the month of September. The trained facilitators were given a handbook and were given the task of organizing those functional substitutes.

Each of the teams had a leading pastor, the researcher did key presentations and one other pastor did the logistics of the program. In each of the presentations there were eleven key members. There were three presenters whilst the rest of the team members would help out in the breakaway session during workshops with discussions, testimonies, question and answer sessions. All the discussions were based on the presentations made. Each day would have three presentations, with breaks in between sessions and discussions after each presentation.

The program set up was such that the presentations were 1 hour each, followed by a breakaway session of testimonies, question and answer sessions, discussions lasting an hour as well. Each church visited under this initiative had a total of 6 hours per visitation, making it a total of 18 hours for the implementation program.

During the first phase, 30 individuals were trained, although the focal group was eleven members comprising of the elders, church members and pastors who were

part of the researcher's team for program implementation. The training was conducted as a pilot study of the implementation program. Initially the program was intended to train about 15 individuals. The researcher had fears that respondents were not going to be found because some had threatened boycott the training. One pastor declined to participate when the program was being introduced. When the program picked momentum, the pastor who had initially declined to participate had a change of heart and became very resourceful. At the end, 30 individuals who comprised of the elders, pastors, and lay members joined the trainers' team. The advantage was that all these people had some knowledge on the phenomenon under study.

### **Objectives of the Church Visitations, Weekend Campout and Symposium**

It was envisaged that by the end of the program, participants would be able to clearly demonstrate understanding of ATR primal worldview, its resilience, how it keeps showing up in the church and how it paralyses the church and affects God's mission. Secondly, they would be able to show their understanding of the great controversy theme in the light of ATR worldview as well as the responsibility of Christians to live in allegiance to God under difficult life circumstances. Lastly members were expected to be able to clearly articulate their understanding of how to overcome as well as help others to overcome the challenges presented by African traditional primal worldview through Worldview transformation. These above outlined objectives are an expression of the three themes that anchor this intervention program namely African traditional worldview, biblically-based worldview and transformation from African traditional worldview to biblically-based worldview.

Embodied in these objectives was the intention for the participants to be in a position to apply and demonstrate the principles espoused in the worldview

transformation curriculum. Where applicable some of these people were expected to part with ATR paraphernalia to demonstrate their trust in God and also give testimonies fearlessly without fear of retribution and to study the spiritual discipline of prayer and reading their Bibles. Overall, each of the topics presented in both workshops and seminars was meant to address the issue of worldview transformation.

The implementation of this program was aimed at reducing incidences of split-level Christianity and to create an awareness of the ever-present help from God. With this understanding of God’s presence, it was envisaged that members would be fortified from fear of evil spirits, ancestors and witchcraft. Presentations and practical activities were employed for instructional purposes. The activities included the following:

*Table 9. Implementation Presentation and Activities*

Presentations	Functional Substitutes
Workshops	
Sermons	Child dedications
Bible studies	House dedications
Seminars	Prayer for rain
Discussion Lessons	Dedication of farming inputs
Testimonies	Praying and anointing the sick
Questions and Answer sessions	
Symposium	

In phase two there were three steps in the implementation of the program. The first step was local church visitations. The first step was conducted in the selected local churches. The second step was a weekend campout for the participating selected churches. It was conducted on the 6th – 9th of October 2016 at Sigola Primary School. This was later followed by The Split-Level Christianity Symposium which

was the third and final step. The symposium was held from the 10th – 13th of November 2016 at S. O. S Primary School in Bulawayo.

All the above-mentioned activities required facilitators to assist the researcher. Therefore, there was an initial period of selection, and training of facilitators. Where expertise was required there was need for invitation of specialists.

Worldview transformation is not and split-level Christianity are not commonly discussed concepts in the church. They could be part of a curriculum for mission students but the local church is the one that needs worldview transformation. This realization led to the invitation of two professors who were considered to have the requisite knowledge, experience and expertise to address both concepts. Professor Bruce L. Bauer who is the Chair of Department of World Missions at Andrews University was invited to be one of the facilitators. The second specialist facilitator was Doctor Kelvin Onongha Director of Doctor of Ministry program and Master of Arts Missiology program at the Adventist University of Africa. Both these professors were selected because of their knowledge and their familiarity with the subject. The specialists were given the curriculum and a selection of topics they were to address during the symposium. They were also apprised of the objectives of the symposium.

### **Training of Facilitators**

Split-level Christianity was a kind of a new concept of study within the conference territory. By its nature it meant that some people would be selected and trained separately to have a buy-in from the church community. The idea was to start off with a few people who would be able to have the time, capacity to comprehend and to present when required to. This concept of initially working with a smaller group was to incubate the program before rolling it out to the three churches and further to the rest of the conference. This incubation was done because it was realized that

people had a lot of reservations and were raising a lot of questions about it though they were not denying that it exists. They would acknowledge that people were involved in patronizing traditional healers, diviners and prophets.

There was tangible resistance towards the subject. Some members were even raising ethical concerns especially with regards to how the interviews and the implementation were going to be done. The program was almost failing to take off because of the resistance from every quarter so this incubation idea was the only way of setting it off. There was total silence in terms of activities meant to address the challenge relating to split-level Christianity yet there a lot of talk about people living a life of double allegiances. This small group was initially thought along the lines of a focus group though it ended up being larger than a focus group<sup>1</sup>. The researcher allowed it to be larger because of the initial resistance when people started coming in, it was a positive sign and therefore they could be not be barred from the program.

### **Training on Sermon/Bible Studies, Seminars and Workshops**

On sermons and Bible studies the training focused on how to plan and conduct presentations on split-level Christianity without offending others. These sermons were to be preached periodically even if there was no known case of dual allegiance. Bible studies that deal with issues of fear of the spirits, the power of God, the victory through Christ, the power of prayer in the face of the spirit world were to be frequently taught because of the persistent suspicions of the practices of dual allegiance and consistent numerical growth of the church. In this training sample sermon outlines was discussed and the participants were tasked with coming up with their own sermon outlines to be sampled and discussed in the following Sunday

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<sup>1</sup> Focus group

session. The researcher prepared a training manual for this program which was used in training the facilitators. This program was done as on table 8 below.

*Table 10. Training of Trainers Program*

Date	Time	Topic
15/May/2016	0830-0900hrs	Devotion
	0900-1000hrs	African primal worldview, its resilience and effects in the life of the individual and church
	1000-1100hrs	Discussion- related case reviews, testimonies, taboos, folktales, songs, rites, and discussion closed by prayer session
	1100-1200hrs	Split-level Christianity- spiritism, witchcraft, divination in the light of biblical revelation
	1200-1300hrs	Discussion- related case reviews, testimonies, taboos, folktales, songs, rites, and discussion closed by prayer session
	1500-1600hrs	Domestic religious practices
	1600-1700hrs	Discussion- related case reviews, testimonies, taboos, folktales, songs, rites, and discussion closed by prayer session
22/May/2016	0830-0900hrs	Devotion
	0900-1000hrs	Understanding of the Great Controversy theme in the light of ATR worldview
	1000-1100hrs	Discussion- related case reviews, testimonies, taboos, folktales, songs, rites, and discussion closed by prayer session
	1100-1200hrs	Covenant and the broken relationship
	1200-1300hrs	Discussion- related case reviews, testimonies, taboos, folktales, songs, rites, and discussion closed by prayer session
	1500-1600hrs	Suffering in the light of biblical revelation
	1600-1700hrs	Discussion- related case reviews, testimonies, taboos, folktales, songs, rites, and discussion closed by prayer session
29/May/2016	0830-0900hrs	Devotion
	0900-1000hrs	Overcoming challenges of African primal worldview - Worldview Transformation
	1000-1100hrs	Functional substitutes
	1100-1200hrs	Discussion- related case reviews, testimonies, taboos, folktales, songs, rites, and discussion closed by prayer session
	1200-1300hrs	Spiritual power, spiritual warfare, spiritual disciplines
	1500-1600hrs	Discussion- related case reviews, testimonies, taboos, folktales, songs, rites, and discussion closed by prayer session
	1600-1700hrs	The three dimensions - truth, power and allegiance

These topics presented here are on table 5 above are broad outlines of what was detailed in the handbook. All the trainee facilitators were taken through these topics in a contextualized and simplified way. They were expected to be able to present them at their own level. Presentations were sometimes reinforced with practical activities, testimonies and discussions where question and answer sessions were scheduled. Below is a brief description of how the training was conducted.

### **Lessons Presented**

On the 22 May 2016 – introduction, definitions, split-level Christianity, dual allegiance all presented under the topic ‘Traditional African worldview, demonstrate understanding of (ATR) primal worldview, its resilience, how it keeps showing up the church and how it paralyses the church and affects God’s mission. Secondly, they would be able to show their understanding of the great controversy theme in the light of (ATR) worldview as well as the responsibility of Christians to live in allegiance to God under difficult life circumstances. Lastly members would be able to clearly articulate their understanding of how to overcome as well as help others to overcome the challenges presented by African traditional primal worldview through worldview transformation.

### **Church Visitations**

The researcher moderated in all presentations, helping to clarify hazy issues, reinforcing the key points and asking probing questions. The researcher presented on African primal worldview, its resilience and effects in the life of the individual and church and split-level Christianity. Some of these presentations included spiritualistic manifestations, witchcraft and divination in the light of biblical revelation. The assistant facilitator presented a Bible study on Conversion, its meaning and implications. On the second week, the researcher presented on ‘Domestic Religious

Practices' and overcoming challenges presented by African traditional primal worldview - worldview transformation, while two assistant facilitators presented on Spiritual power, spiritual warfare, spiritual discipline and on Understanding of the Great Controversy theme in the light of African Traditional Religious worldview respectively. The co-facilitators were mainly involved in the breakaway discussion sessions.

There were three separate presentations which were an hour each followed by a discussion session which lasted 1 hour as well. The cumulative total was three hours spent on presentations and three hours spent on discussion sessions. This workshop format gave members an opportunity to ask questions and very where they were not sure.

The first week, in Church A, 125 people turned out for the meetings. This was more than the usual church membership as word had gone out that a representative from the Conference was coming to deal with the issue where members had attended the witch hunting ceremony. 72 members, attended the meeting from Church B, and only 17 members from Church C For week 2, Church A had a total number of 76 out of a total of 108, representing 70,37% of the total number of members who attended. Church B had 102 from a total of 168 members, which translates to 60,71% of the total members attended the meetings whilst church C had 34 members attending out of a total of 42 members, which translates to 80,95% of the total number of members attended the meetings.

During the last session of the meetings, the researcher met with the focus groups whilst the other members attended other sessions. They had two 1 hour sessions with the researcher to minimize costs and so that they could interact with the rest of the church. This meant that during the general meetings with the rest of the

church the focus groups could interact with the church and thereby help them get a broader understanding during the focus group discussions. The schedule for workshops which were conducted during church visitations was as presented on tables 9 and 10 below.

*Table 11. Church visitations workshops-Week 1*

Time	Topic
0845-0900hrs	Song service
0900-1000hrs	African primal worldview, its resilience and effects in the life of the individual and church
1000-1100hrs	Discussion- related case reviews, testimonies and prayer
1100-1200hrs	Sermon based on Isaiah 20:1-22
1200-1230hrs	Call, testimonies, Prayer session,
1330-1430hrs	Split-level Christianity- spiritism, witchcraft, divination in the light of biblical revelation
1430-1530hrs	Bible study on Conversion, its meaning and implications
1530-1700hrs	Discussion- related case reviews, testimonies and prayer
1700-1730	Vespers and prayer session

*Table 12. Church Visitations Workshops-Week 2*

TIME	Topic
0845-0900hrs	Song service
0900-1000hrs	Domestic religious practices
1000-1100hrs	Discussion- related case reviews, testimonies and prayer
1100-1200hrs	Sermon on Joshua 24:1-16
1200-1230hrs	Understanding of the Great Controversy theme in the light of ATR worldview
1330-1430hrs	Discussion - related case reviews, testimonies and prayer
1430-1530hrs	Overcoming challenges presented by African traditional primal worldview - worldview transformation
1530-1700hrs	Spiritual power, spiritual warfare, spiritual discipline
1700-1730hrs	Child dedication, testimonies and prayer
1730-1800hrs	Vespers – living in the presence of the divine

## Weekend Camp Out

On the 6th to the 9th of October 2016 there was a weekend camp out at Sigola Primary School. This was a form of a ritual of transformation. People were to leave their places of comfort and their normal living environment. This experience of coming apart away from the community and day to day chores was aimed at creating some sort of vacuum in their lives. Such a vacuum would need to be filled in, this need for meaning of life and desire to have something meaningful was meant to create a good atmosphere for worldview transformation. The table below shows the daily schedule of activities.

*Table 13. Weekend Campout Program*

Times	Topics
Thursday	
1800-2000hrs	Introduction: What is split-level Christianity
2000-2030	Prayer
Friday	
0800-0900hrs	Morning devotion
0900-1000hrs	The African traditional worldview and the Christian faith
1100-1200hrs	The Bible and the unseen world
1230-1330hrs	The great controversy and the victory of Christ
1430-1530	Conversion and Christian growth
Saturday	
0800-0900hrs	Morning devotion
0900-1000hrs	Spiritual power, warfare and disciplines
1100-1200hrs	Domestic religious practices
1230-1330hrs	African culture and transformation
Sunday	
0800-0900hrs	Morning Devotion
1000hrs	Departure

### **The Split-Level Christianity Symposium**

The final intervention program was the split-level Christianity symposium. It began on the evening of the 10th and ended on the evening of the 12th of November 2016. It was held under the theme ‘Worldview transformation a priority for safeguarding mission gains’. The delegates were drawn from across the conference territory. Official delegates were meant to be 250 and 222, representing 85% of the total number of delegates, attended. Over and above this on Sabbath the number of attendees was more than doubled. There were 4 facilitators; 2 professors of Missions, 1 conference president who was also a Doctor of Ministry student in Leadership and the researcher. The schedule of topics is presented as table 12. This symposium was intended to work as a ritual of transformation.

*Table 14. The Split-level Christianity Symposium Program*

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Time	Activity
10 November 2016	
19:00-19:30	Devotion and Prayer session
11 November 2016	
07:50 - 08:00	Music Program
08:00 - 08:30	Devotion
08:30 - 08:50	Welcome and Opening Remarks
08:50 - 09:00	Special Feature and Music
09:00 - 09:50	African Primal Worldview: Its Resilience and Effects in the Life of the individual Christian and the Church
10:00 - 10:50	Split-Level Christianity: The Phenomena, Meaning, Forms, Cases, Examples, Effects and Dangers on Mission
10:50 - 11:30	Round Table Q&A – Discussions
11:40 - 12:30	Spiritual Disciplines and their Value in our Spiritual Journey
12:30 - 13:00	Group Reflections and Prayer Session
14:00 - 14:50	Worldview Transformation: A Response to Split-Level Christianity
14:50 - 15:00	Testimony / Prayer
15:00 -15:50	Domestic Religious Practices
16:00- 16:50	Biblical Response to Spiritism, Witchcraft, Divination
16:50 - 17:00	Music & Prayer
17:30 -18:20	Special Service / Devotion
12 November 2016	
08:30 - 09:00	Sabbath School Feature and Lesson Summary
09:00 - 09:50	Discipleship For Worldview Transformation
10:00 - 10:50	The Covenant: A Sacred Bond and an Alliance
11:00 - 11:50	Divine Service and Call
11:50 - 12:00	Special Prayers
14:00 - 14:50	Spiritual Warfare ( The Great Controversy)
14:50 - 15:00	Testimony /Special Feature & Prayer
15:00 - 15:50	The Three Dimensions: Truth, Power and Allegiance
16:00 -16:50	Suffering in the Light of the Cross (Theology of Suffering)
16:50 - 17:00	Testimonies, Q & A Session, Filling in of evaluation form by participants Devotion, Prayer, Dismissal

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**Environmental setting.** Weekend campouts were set up out in the manner of rituals of transformation. Participants were divided into smaller groups in order for them to pray, worship and have communal meals together. This fostered the spirit of brotherhood and created an environment for learning. It was like a reenactment of the early church although the period was very short. This set up was helpful in breaking down barriers that could have hindered free flow of information.

**Spiritual setting.** The fact that people came out for a unique program that dealt with deep issues that pertain to life and spirituality helped to create an atmosphere of solemnity. A setting like this was created in order to foster a rich spiritual environment. Spiritual growth does not happen haphazardly, it has to be intentional on the part of the believer. The spiritual environment was set up to make it natural for believers to want to pray and be involved in other spiritual disciplines. The heightened spiritual atmosphere was to facilitate transformation since the nature of the presentations was intense and touched on very sensitive subjects. At the end of the lessons participants were going to be asked to make serious commitments to God.

Several exposures were given to the participants to enable them different environments and more opportunities for learning. These exposures were intended to help in facilitating transformation. At the climax of this program it was seen fit that there be an all-encompassing symposium.

### **Intervention Outcome**

Program implementation was done at two levels. The first level involved the sampled churches in the selected districts while the second level attracted additional participants from all over South Zimbabwe Conference. At both levels, the researcher took notes on everything that would help identify signs of transformation. On the first level of implementation there were two intensive schedules of activities namely

Church Visitation Workshops and a Weekend Camp Out. The second level was The Split-Level Christianity Symposium which was the final program for this research.

Each of these levels had several activities and presentations which were subject to evaluation. Several observations were recorded for the purpose of final evaluation. There were also some notable events that were significant. These were recorded for the purposes of making recommendations on how to deal with the challenge of split-level Christianity.

### **Split-Level Christianity**

During program implementation, it became apparent that split-level Christianity was a major challenge in South Zimbabwe Conference. All participants reported incidences where they were once personally involved in dual allegiance and syncretism. They also acknowledged that they had evidence of other members of the church that were openly practicing double loyalty. Consulting diviners, participating in witchcraft, seeking for protection from traditional healers, using power objects were some of the stated violations of the covenant with God. The other major challenge that was reported was that of fearing the spirits which led to appeasement of ancestors. Several presentations coupled with practical activities were carried out to mitigate the said challenges.

**Workshops.** The intervention involved workshops that were designed to help people in smaller manageable groups to interact among themselves and in the context of information on dual allegiance and syncretism. During these open and candid discussions people voluntarily confessed that they always took for granted their relationship with God. The facilitators were able to gather very important details relating to how these church members involved themselves in African Traditional Religious practices. When analyzing the information from several workshops it

became very clear that the church has a lot of work to do in the area of helping members detach themselves from their previous allegiances.

The workshop method provided conditions that allowed for questions and answers during these sessions. People were led through different passages of scripture, selected passages from Ellen White's writings and at times general quotations from commentaries and books that address issues of dual allegiance. These readings coupled with the discussions and prayers seemed to lead the people to a higher level of commitment. This was evidenced by their testimonies at the end of the workshops. Some of the testimonies were given during the general sessions where all the respondents were meeting for the final combined session. So, the workshops were seen to be very effective in addressing the challenge of split-level Christianity.

**Sermons.** Every time there were meetings for program implementation, a time for devotions was allocated at the beginning and at the end of the sessions. Devotions were given in sermon format. These sermons were crafted with the objective of leading people to trust in the power of God and to understand that God abhorred idolatry, syncretism or any form of double allegiance. The leading texts were always to include the discussion on the Ten Commandments especially the first four.

During church visitations sermons were also meant to break the barriers to help people to come out from being very secretive about their African traditional religion associated challenges. Since there were altar calls after the sermons people were assisted by these to open up and to confess at some point. Some were even strengthened to the point that they were able to give testimonies related to their experiences and their fears. Testimonies and all the personal experiences that were given were very useful in helping direct and redirect the intervention in order to meet

the people's challenges and fears. One of the major contributions that sermons gave was to bolster people's confidence in the power of God.

**Bible studies.** One of the notable weak links that seemed to have been contributing to the people's lack of total commitment to God was their knowledge of scripture and its application to their lives. The Bible study sessions were designed to narrow this knowledge gap. During Bible studies, it was eye opening to realize that some of the members of the church seemed to be surprised to discover some Bible texts and passage that spoke direct directly to their situations and fears.

The Psalms, the book of Revelation, and Ephesians were some of the books that were very helpful during the Bible study sessions. The Bible studies were conducted in such a way that the participants managed to write several verses and passages of scripture which they were to refer to when they were under pressure or fear of spirits, witches and such other related stress inducing threats. This section of getting texts appeared to be very beneficial to the participants. Some of them compared this to being given ammunition for self-defense. Some of them were even joking about it saying they had been immunized.

**Seminars.** Some of the presentations were in seminar format. Formal presentations were given to the attendees. Organized small group discussions were also arranged. This set up allowed for interaction in response to presentations. The small group set ups seemed to give people more freedom to discuss deeper things as compared to the larger group set up. As an example, one attendee revealed that her Adventist family gave her charms and objects when she was getting married. They claimed that these charms were going to strengthen her home. The seminars and discussion groups were a rich atmosphere for dealing with the perceptions and attitudes surrounding (ATR) practices. These seminars were able to foster openness

and vulnerability among the attendees. This provided a positive atmosphere for worldview transformation especially biblical texts were introduced and referred to. Some of the testimonies given were helpful sources of information as well as sources of encouragement for the participants.

**Testimonies.** During program implementation testimonies provided the needed environment and atmosphere for worldview transformation. At the beginning of the sessions it was difficult to get anyone to give a testimony. After several presentations, discussions, sermons and prayers people started to volunteer to give their stories. After a few stories, more participants were now willing to say something about their own experience. As people gave their testimonies it became apparent that they needed practical help with particular events around their lives. The researcher then resolved to follow up on such needs and therefore some children, houses and fields were dedicated to the Lord.

**Child dedications.** Since there were specific needs that were expressed by participants each area of need was attended as part of program implementation. The very fact that people came out and openly revealed their fears and asked for help suggested that people were starting on their pathway to allegiance. During program implementation 11 families requested for a child dedication service. The researcher took time to visit each of these families in order to discuss the dedication service in their homes.

These visitations were an essential part in the education of these members and their close relatives. After the visitations, a dedication service was organized at Church B. Another educational lesson was given during the dedication service. The parents of the children together with their relatives were made to make a vow of allegiance to God in the way they were going to raise these children. The church was

also challenged to commit itself to making a positive contribution in nurturing these children.

**House dedications.** Two families asked for their houses to be dedicated. The services were conducted in the presence the invited friends and family members. In both case the researcher was presented another to educate the participants about God's power to protect those who trust in Him. For the researcher, these requests were interpreted as cues that the participants were moving from wrong allegiance to right allegiance.

**Prayer for rain.** In Zimbabwe and in Matabeleland south in particular there are several rain making shrines. The non-church communities in Matabeleland South conduct some cleansing ceremonies and engage in some traditional rituals in preparation for the rains. These practices are part of their normal routine before going to the shrines to ask for rainfall. Some of the church members in South Zimbabwe Conference are caught up in these practices.

There are two reasons for their involvement. Firstly, there are those who participate willingly because they have not yet fully grasped the essence of the gospel. Secondly there are some who participate due to community pressure. During these ceremonies people are required to participate in the cutting down of certain trees and removing the skulls of dead animals from the bush. Program implementation was done during the time of the year when solicitations for rain from the shrines were being done in the traditional ways.

To be within the context of the community expectations and to help the members to know how to relate with these community rituals the researcher organized a day for conducting prayer for rains. On the day for the prayers the community was also invited to church A where a service was conducted and a prayer for rains was

offered. 1 Kings 18:1-46 was read and analyzed in the hearing of the participants and the community. An appeal was made admonishing the people to trust in the Lord who gives rain. A prayer session was conducted to conclude the service. The church members were animated by this passage while some community members started to express their confidence in the power of God to bring rain.

**Dedication of farming inputs.** Following the prayer for rain the researcher asked the church members to bring their seeds and a few of their farming implements to church. This was done on a Sunday at Church C; the non-Adventist communities normally take their seed to Njelele shrine for blessing before planting is done. This service was conducted as a functional substitute for the seed blessings that is normally done through the shrine priests. The church members expressed their gratitude for this service.

**Praying and anointing the sick.** The researcher took time to visit some participants who had sick relatives at home. After discussing Bible passages where healing was done, the researcher also deliberately read a passage on anointing from the book of James.<sup>2</sup>

Out of five people that were visited, three asked for an anointing service. The researcher invited two senior pastors to assist him with these services which were conducted in the individual homes of the sick. Members of the church were present to give support in song. Anointing services are not very common in the church in South Zimbabwe Conference. Most people associate the anointing with a prayer to prepare

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<sup>2</sup> James 5:13-16 Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. <sup>14</sup> Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup> And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup> Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

someone for death and so they are scared of it. The researcher did these services as part of the worldview transformation strategy. The sick who were prayed for gradually recovered after a few weeks. Their recovery which was gradual was used by the researcher to allay fears that members usually associate with the anointing service.

**Destroying of power objects.** In situations of dual allegiance, it is common in South Zimbabwe Conference to find people with different traditional paraphernalia regarded for its protective value. In the process of teaching and during some sermons calls were made for people to surrender their power objects to be destroyed in order for them to remain with God as their only source of strength. Some of the participants gave up some beads that were tied around their wrists. A few gave up some rings and earrings. The most common items were some fabrics and cloths. A few calabashes and some fearful looking articles with animal skins and skulls were also part of the objects which were brought forward for destruction.

Every time these items were presented for destruction the researcher asked those who brought these items how preferred them to be destroyed. In all the cases those who brought the items preferred the use of fire. The researcher would then call upon the deacons to make up a fire and then instructed the people who were bringing their objects to personally cast them into the fire while the rest of the people were singing. The different experiences with these power objects and the traditional items destroyed provided a window of escape for the members. Those who brought their items expressed relief, one of them even compared it to being released from a prison.

**Symposium.** The symposium was conducted as a formal meeting. It was packed with presentations. The atmosphere in the symposium was subdued to a point where even the presenters thought that there was communication breakdown. The researcher had to find out from the participants why they were so quiet and seemed

lost. Responses indicated that the people were deeply touched by the presentations and they were also remorseful how they had betrayed God. After several presentations there was an opportunity for questions, answers and testimonies. This time the participants opened up and spoke strongly about their experiences of split-level Christianity within the church. They unanimously confirmed that split-level Christianity is a heavy under-current which had the potential to totally destroy the church. They also expressed their gratitude for the program.

### **Worldview Transformation Priority**

The researcher deliberately emphasized worldview transformation as a priority for every Christian. This was a key theme of the intervention initiative. All the presentations were crafted with the underlying objective being worldview transformation. The ATR worldview was identified as a barrier for many Christians in their quest for allegiance to God. Therefore, the whole dissertation was focused on and emphasized worldview transformation as an antidote to split-level Christianity.

### **Final Evaluation**

Evaluation of the program was done at two levels. The first level of evaluation was done among the sampled churches in the three selected districts. The second level was done with participants from churches all over the South Zimbabwe Conference during the Split-Level Christianity Symposium and follow up meetings.

### **Research Instruments**

Research instruments were discussed and explained broadly in chapter four. In this section, a brief description of the instruments used for data collection for final evaluation will be given. This project was entirely based on a qualitative method of study; therefore, the final report was also based on qualitative survey instruments. The

researcher used direct observations during and after presentations. The members' activities, expressions/reactions and their comments were all subject to observation. A semi-structured interview protocol was also administered to the respondents.

The researcher used an inductive method of evaluation to make conclusions on collected data. The inductive approach was used because it provided the following advantages. It allowed the compression of extensive and diverse raw data into a brief, summary format. The inductive method also helped to establish strong links between the research goals and the summary conclusions resulting from the raw data. Finally, it helped the researcher to develop a model around the underlying structure of the experiences which were evident in the collected data. This method helped the researcher to use frequently reported patterns in data analysis.<sup>3</sup> Therefore this allowed research findings to “emerge from the frequent, dominant themes inherent in raw data.”<sup>4</sup>

### **Sample Selection**

Semi-structured questionnaires were administered at three different times to groups of participants who were present during the final presentations during the church visitation programs, at the workshop and at the symposium. These semi-structured questionnaires were administered to all the participants at the end of the final presentations at each level. Beside the questionnaires, evaluation interviews were also carried out. The sample for these interviewees was selected through

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<sup>3</sup> David R. Thomas, “A General Inductive Approach for Qualitative Data Analysis,” *School of Population Health University of Auckland, New Zealand*, 1, accessed December 16, 2016, [http://www.frankumstein.com/PDF/Psychology/Inductive%20Content%20 Analysis.pdf](http://www.frankumstein.com/PDF/Psychology/Inductive%20Content%20Analysis.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

purposive sampling. Purposive critical case sampling is used when the researcher is looking for;

A decisive case that would help make a decision about which of several different explanations is most plausible, or is one that is identified by experts as being a particularly useful choice because of the generalizations it allows.<sup>5</sup>

Purposive sampling was chosen because it allowed the researcher to make judgments as to who could provide the best information to achieve the purposes of the study.<sup>6</sup> This sampling method enabled the researcher to select respondents that were most likely to share the information they already had. Kumar states that, “this type of sampling is very important if one wants to construct a historical reality, describe a phenomenon”<sup>7</sup>

After the church visitations six people were interviewed. A further six were interviewed after the final presentation during the weekend campouts and finally, six people were interviewed after the last presentation at the Split-Level Christianity Symposium. Therefore 18 people were interviewed at different levels, places and at different environments. This was done as an attempt at triangulation and also to ensure validity.

## **Data Presentation**

Data is presented in the form of a narrative inquiry since this research uses a qualitative approach. Data will also include the interviews and reports from casual conversations that were notable to the researcher. In this narrative report descriptions will be given rather than statistical information. In this report, a detailed evaluation

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<sup>5</sup> Palys T., “Purposive Sampling in L. M. Given,” *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008), 697–8.

<sup>6</sup> Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step-By-Step Guide For Beginners*, 179.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 179

will be given covering all aspects of data that was collected. From this narrative report conclusions will be drawn from the data presented in a narrative format.

Evaluation question number one was, “Give your general impression about this Split-Level Christianity program” For all the evaluations done in the three different levels 100% of the respondents appreciated the program. In their appreciation, several particular things came out namely the general organization of the program itself, the content especially the depth of research, the timing and what they described as its life changing nature. Some of the comments that kept emerging were; “it came at the right time when the church was struggling with the issues it addressed,” “it showed me that I was travelling on two roads which will not take me anywhere,” “this program helped us to see that it is wrong to fuse our customary beliefs with Christianity.” These are some of the comments that were captured directly from the respondents during evaluation of the initiative.

During the symposium, there were certain statements that were also captured. These compared very well with those of the weekend campout program. A few notable ones were directly quoted to give us an overall picture of the responses from participants. Some of the key ones were, “If members take heed of this matter salvation is certain,” “this program addressed one of the most crucial issues in the church,” “it was life challenging and relevant, it encouraged us to do away *sangomas*.” One of the most profound statements that was directly quoted and referred to the symposium was,

I thank God for calling me to the Adventist Church. Secondly, to be still alive to attend this spiritual event, it happened at the right time when I needed the strength for my spiritual life I have been so impressed.

Question number two said “What did you gain/learn/discover from this program.” In this section respondents narrated what they believed were the benefits of

this program to their spiritual life. Thematic statements that came out were, “I learnt to trust in Jesus, I learnt that He has all the power we need,” “I learnt how to overcome fear as well as to accept suffering as part of life,” “I learnt that double allegiance is breaking God’s covenant and that it is dangerous.” One respondent whose profound statement summed up the discoveries and learnings said, “I have been uplifted and transformed, I discovered that it is possible to rely on the power of God alone.”

Question number three said “List if there are any things you think you may need to change as a result of this program.” The respondents were very forthcoming in response to this question. The representative ideas were, “My prayer life and the way I was reading my Bible and inspirational books.” Among the list of things to be changed the participants indicated that they needed to change from “fear of the spirits, witchcraft, and ancestors” to trusting in Jesus who they now said, “has never lost a battle.”

The other recurrent idea was that of changing of fear of suffering to accepting it as part of the life experience. One of the most frequent themes from the responses pertained to time people take before they get baptized. The suggestion was that, the time for baptismal classes should be longer and that candidates should continue their classes after baptism.” Some of the statements were though the participants were in a confessional moment. The representative ones are, “I need to change my behavior by living a clean life of not consulting the spirit mediums and get rid of objects of evil spirits,” “I need to stop going to the false prophets and trust only to Jesus He has everything on our lives” Those who were in church leadership seemed to unanimously concur that they needed to change their teaching approaches.

Question number four said “Has this program dealt with issues that are central for the Seventh-day Adventist Church conference wide or where you came from?” All the participants responded affirmatively to this question. The representative statements for all responses were, “Yes it dealt with central issues in urban and non-urban areas.” The reason that was given for the affirmative response was that, “People are still visiting (*sangomas*) diviners.” The other reason that was given was that, “it addressed issues where many members are struggling.” There were outstanding responses that captured the thoughts and feelings of the participants and one such response was, this program has “dealt with the things that are both central in the Seventh-day Adventist Church conference wide and where I come from, it is real we have been unknowingly practicing these things at the same time calling ourselves Christians.”

Question number five said “After attending this program what do you think should be done?” The frequent phrases were, “this program must be done in the whole union,” “it must be taken to all the churches within the conference,” “there must be follow up seminars,” and “pastors should conduct these seminars in all their churches.” The conclusive statement on this one was that, “more programs of this nature should be carried out.”

The second part of question five said “And who should do what you have suggested?” The respondents were able to identify people who were to carry forward the work of educating the church on the issues and dangers of split-level Christianity. Those who had attended the program, pastors, conference leaders, the trained facilitators and the facilitators themselves were cited.

Question number six said “What is your advice to the organizers of this program?” The major idea was that the program should not be an event. Respondents

kept on saying, “keep organizing these programs and continue enlightening the church on issues that affect us.” Some of the highlights were, “run the program more often,” “write a book,” “produce leaflets, pamphlets and resources.” The respondents were emphatic on the need for Split-Level Christianity programs to be included in the church’s yearly calendar.

Question number six asked, “What are you going to do with the information that you got from this program?” Respondents committed themselves to positively use the information gained from Split-Level Christianity programs. Some of the regular statements were, “I will change my ways and teach others,” “I am going to organize a feedback meeting with my district,” “I will live without fear and I will trust in the Lord,” “I will incorporate it into my sermon preparation.” These statements show the range of respondents that it included general membership. All these participants committed themselves to make necessary life adjustments.

### **Data Analysis**

The general impression the respondents had about the Split-Level Christianity intervention initiative based on the responses could be summarized as beneficial and transforming. One regular theme is captured in the following statement, “It showed me that I was travelling on two roads which will not take me anywhere,” The preceding quote from one of the respondents indicates that the program was helpful and therefore it can be considered to have been successful in meeting its objectives.

The study found out that the respondents were convinced the program was educative, transformative and faith building. One of the responses was, “I have been uplifted and transformed, I discovered that it is possible to rely on the power of God alone.” This response reflects a change of attitude which could be interpreted as an inclination towards worldview transformation.

The Split-Level Christianity intervention initiative's objectives were to work towards worldview transformation which would result in a change in the way Adventist Christians in South Zimbabwe Conference live and practice their Christianity. The following representative statements indicate such a change. "My prayer life and the way I was reading my Bible and inspirational books," "change from "fear of the spirits, witchcraft, and ancestors" to trusting in Jesus who they now said "has never lost a battle." The above statements of intent are evidence of a process towards worldview transformation.

The responses to question number 4 showed that Split-Level Christianity is a widespread challenge in the South Zimbabwe Conference territory. Statements such as "it addressed issues where many members are struggling" and "people are still visiting (sangomas) diviners" from the respondents validated the project as relevant to the people's needs.

The feeling of the participants was that this program should be kept on the church calendar. They said, "More programs of this nature should be carried out" and they should be "taken to all the churches within the conference." Apart from validating the program these kinds of remarks gave a challenge to the researcher as they revealed the wider need which should be followed up.

The respondents advised that this program should be "run the program more often," and that materials such as leaflets, pamphlets and books should be produced to assist the church avoid double loyalties and syncretism. The participants committed themselves to be messengers of the worldview transformation initiative to counter split-level Christianity among their peers and in their churches. This data shows the importance of this program and how it influenced the participants.

## Chapter Summary

Split-level Christianity is a complex phenomenon. It required a multi-faceted approach and buy-in from several stakeholders. The overall goal of the project was to ensure that the proposed worldview transformation curriculum was adopted by South Zimbabwe Conference as one of its tools to mitigate split-level Christianity. This objective was achieved because the South Zimbabwe Conference administration through their executive committee voted to itinerate the worldview transformation program. Consequently, two programs are earmarked for 2017, one will be held in April and the one in July.

Further it was envisaged that each District was going to establish Committees to further the work of worldview transformation. On this score, district pastors have generally embraced the worldview transformation program as part of their nurturing strategy. The only challenge is that they still use the researcher in most of their programs which is somehow straining.

While the researcher had aimed at having at least five districts running Worldview Transformation and Split-level Christianity Workshops by the end of November 2016. It can be reported that by the end of November there were eight districts that had formed committees to organize worldview transformation programs. This surpassed the original expectations by three districts.

Therefore, the worldview transformation programs will continue to be held around the South Zimbabwe Conference territory after its positive reception by conference administration, pastors and the generality of church members. The results of the initial program were positive and promising. Based on the above it can be safely concluded that worldview transformation initiative to mitigate split-level

Christianity was successfully implemented and adopted in South Zimbabwe  
Conference.

## CHAPTER 6

### EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary for the whole paper. The whole work is evaluated. Highlights from the different chapters will be cited. Lessons that were learnt will be underlined as a measure to help identify those areas of research that may need future adjustments and improvements.

The first chapter of this project introduces the whole paper. It describes the ministry context in which the project was carried out. It also presents the problem the study is intended to solve. The purpose of the study was to formulate, implement and evaluate a worldview transformation program to help reduce Split- Level Christianity. Chapter 1 also describes the methodology employed in this research.

Chapter 2 presents the biblical and theological reflections on split-level Christianity. It also reviews the Bible with the intention to find out how this phenomenon presented itself and how it was dealt with in the Bible. Some key concepts of the biblical view of split-level Christianity are highlighted. The covenant motif is also reviewed in relation to split-level Christianity.

Literature is reviewed in chapter 3. Relevant works are compared and cited. Major authors in the area of ATR and worldview transformation are consulted and insights underscored. The researcher also analyses the contributions of these authors and makes conclusions that inform program development for this project.

In chapter 4 the main task is the narration of the development of the intervention strategy. This chapter also describes the ministry context in reasonable detail.

Chapter 4 also details the research design, instrumentation as well as the rationale for selection of the design. More details are given regarding the methodology in this chapter. Interview protocols and the designation of the intervention are also a part of this chapter. The log frame and the Gantt chart are also provided, explained and used in presenting the goals and schedules for the program. Data collection, presentation and analysis is outlined in this chapter.

A concise narrative of the implementation of this research is provided in chapter 5. Apart from this narration a comprehensive evaluation of the intervention program is done in order to facilitate conclusions and recommendations. The chapter gives a summary and a final evaluation of the study.

Chapter 6 is the final and conclusive narrative of the whole process. It takes note of the processes carried out in other chapters as well as conclusions. This leads to an outline of lessons learnt and recommendations. In a nutshell chapter 6 recaps the whole study, makes recommendations for future studies and serves as a conclusion of the whole study.

### **Theological Reflections**

Biblical evidence indicates that split-level Christianity is way out of step with God's expectations for those who profess to be Christians. Throughout the Bible there is a consistent reference to the need for faithfulness. Two main biblical themes show the need for fidelity. These are the covenant motif which is reflective of the relationship between God and humanity as well as the great controversy theme, both of which show the exclusive nature of the relationship between God and humanity. Under these two themes, split-level loyalty is regarded as abominable and a great betrayal in the eyes of God.

## **Major Concepts from Reviewed Literature**

In the literature review, there were several major discoveries. One such discovery was the possibility of a pseudo Conversion which results in dual allegiance or syncretism. The other challenge that was brought up was the issue of failed contextualization of the gospel which made it difficult for people to relate with their new faith in a meaningful way. This also was seen to contribute to split-level Christianity.

Finally, worldview factors appeared to be the main causes of Split-level allegiances. The main worldview challenge involved the question of well-being. It was discovered that the primary concern of (ATR) worldview was for man to realize the ideal life. This pursuit of the ideal life is threatened by a host of evils resulting in a constant state of fear among African Christians.

Consequently, many African Christians have as their main preoccupation a search for power to overcome evil, misfortune and ensure security. The result of this pursuit of power apart from God is total reversion or split-level Christianity.

## **The Intervention Initiative**

The intervention initiative was informed by the theological reflections, literature review and data from the respondents of this study. The initiative assumed a worldview transformation approach due to the nature of the data and the presenting challenge- split-level Christianity. A systematic approach was seen to be necessary and this necessitated the use of the logical framework matrix and the Gantt chart. The two above mentioned planning tools provided the needed organizational framework and ease of program management.

### **Insights from Data**

Before data collection the researcher had a lot of fear because of the possibility of respondents being reluctant to give what would have seemed to be sensitive personal information. During the initial stages of data collection these fears were almost confirmed with several attempts during this process valuable information was given to the point of saturation.

The researcher was overwhelmed by the amount and the quality of data that was given. In some cases, respondents gave testimonies openly and with reference to actual events, dates and places where those events took place. There was no doubt that the information was authentic. Church leaders in different areas where this project was carried out confirmed and validated some of the data.

### **Program Implementation**

Program implementation was very engaging, vigorous and at times challenging. The respondents cooperated and participated with genuine interest during this phase of the project. There were times when there were heated emotional discussions yet at the end people were able to engage in prayers where reconciliation with God and fellow human beings was sought. The context of program implementation involved a situation where people had exchanged witchcraft accusations. This accounted for the intense emotions during this level of program implementation.

The Weekend Campout program and The Split-Level Christianity Symposium were the climax of the program implementation. They were organized in the form of rituals of transformation. Being a new way of dealing with challenges in the church at a local level, a surprise element was thus introduced. This contributed to a positive

atmosphere that facilitated intense emotions, a solemn spiritual atmosphere and also made it possible to collect data for evaluation in a much easier way.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this research was to respond to and mitigate the challenge of Split-Level Christianity. The research was motivated by experiences that showed an apparent contradiction in the life of Christians in respect of Matthew 6:24 and related texts whose thrust is that no one can serve two masters. During theological review on this topic, the Biblical revelation conclusively revealed that God does not tolerate half-hearted commitments from those who profess to worship Him.

Cases were cited from Genesis to Revelation and it seems the whole Bible teaches that God expects total allegiance. In the Genesis account, God abhorred the breaking of the covenant by Adam and Eve while in Exodus the highlight was the rebellion at Mount Sinai. In this rebellion Aaron and the Israelites ascribed their deliverance from Egypt to the golden calf. This prompted God to decide to wipe them out of the face of the earth. Saul patronized a witch in Endor in defiance of God's law and this attracted God's wrath. In the New Testament, the key phrase was no one can have a part with the idols and simultaneously have fellowship with God.

Some of the discoveries in literature review had to do with the purpose of prayer in the ATR worldview. The purpose of prayer was to control one's environment and also serves as verbal magic. Life is lived in community which includes the living, the living dead and the world of spirits. In this set up people have to strive for harmony so therefore they are always alert not to offend within this complex community. Whenever there is a challenge the people always seek to know the source and also seek to pacify potential problems, therefore power is indispensable.

Christianity has to address the needs of the African convert within the context of their worldview. The researcher discovered that while many Africans convert to Christianity there is a need for a deliberate, systematic transformation educational program in order to incorporate the new converts into an authentic Christian experience. Spiritual disciplines are indispensable in this adventure.

### **Recommendations**

Split-level Christianity is an enigma in the church. It cannot be allowed to remain unchallenged. In South Zimbabwe Conference, it was discovered that Split-Level religious practices are still a major challenge. Since the church exists to make disciples for Jesus Christ, its work is already cut out therefore recommendations were made as a follow up process of mitigating Split-Level Christianity. It is hereby recommended that:

The South Zimbabwe Conference creates a platform for in-service training for all ministers in order to empower and prepare them to effectively minister in the context of Split-Level religious practices. This will help the ministers to share ideas, and experiences that will help build their confidence to deal with spiritualistic manifestations and related phenomena.

The Conference sets up a research unit whose role will be to review how the gospel was conceived in South Zimbabwe Conference. This unit will further observe how the adherents live out their faith in the context of their cultures. These researchers should be given the mandate to suggest valid ways in which the gospel could be appropriately contextualized in order to be accessible to all the members of the church regardless of their level of education.

The Conference should consistently evaluate methods of evangelism, timeframes for baptizing converts as well as the length of the post baptismal class for new converts. This should be coupled with a worldview transformation curriculum.

The South Zimbabwe Conference adopts and maintains the worldview transformation framework and curriculum as one of their main nurturing initiatives for both new and old members. This will ensure that the people's needs and fears are met and allayed without delay. The pastors and church leaders in South Zimbabwe Conference constantly communicate positive messages that have the power to sustain the biblical worldview among its members.

Finally, there should be more studies in South Zimbabwe Conference in the area of culture and Christianity and how Christians can live authentically within their cultures. The study was eye opening and enjoyable it provided a platform for learning. Throughout the time of study many discoveries were made. When one looks at people attending a church service they are bound to think all is well and people are at peace. This study showed that many Christians need help in the church and therefore church leaders should always be diligent and apt in teaching and upholding the doctrines and standards of the church. This should be coupled with deep empathy and zeal to serve God's people. This research was an educative and worthy endeavor.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### INTERVIEW GUIDES

#### Guideline for in-depth Individual Interviews

(those who participated in the witch hunting ceremony)

#### Questionnaire

You have been selected to participate in an academic research conducted by Pastor Thamsanqa Ndlovu a Doctor of Ministry (Missions) student from the Adventist University of Africa.

The purpose of the study is to formulate, implement and evaluate a worldview transformation program aimed at mitigating Split- Level Christianity among members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Zimbabwe Conference. Participation in this research is voluntary. Your responses will be treated with confidentiality.

There will be no monetary benefit to you, however, your participation could be valuable in helping in the understanding of the subject of the study. The results of the findings will be available to you on request.

#### Membership and responsibilities

For how long have you been a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

What church offices have you ever served in?

What are the shared experiences, failures and successes in relation to church members' responsibilities to one another?

New members and their integration into church life

What are the most common methods of gaining new members into the church?

Describe the process of integrating new members into the church

What is your perception about the effectiveness of the methods of gaining new members and integrating them into church life?

Impact of customs and cultural practices on church members' allegiance to God

What cultural practices and customs do you find most difficult to deal with as a member of the church?

How have these cultural practices affected you in your Christian life?

What are the cultural practices or rites that are done during life's transitional period in your community?

How do church members generally relate to these?

How have you related to these as a member of the church?

What do you understand the standard expectations of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be regarding:

Witchcraft? \_\_\_\_\_

Divination? \_\_\_\_\_

Visiting faith healers? \_\_\_\_\_

Perceptions on the church's capabilities to deal with members' felt needs that relate to wellbeing.

From your experience as a church member, how has the church addressed the challenges of Witchcraft? \_\_\_\_\_

Divination? \_\_\_\_\_

Healing? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the life threatening situations which the church has not addressed?

Where have the members been getting help from when these life threatening situations arise?

What have you personally done in times of these crises?

If there was a chance to advise church leaders and pastors in relation to Split-Level religious practices, what would you propose they change/improve in their church teaching curriculum?

Community solidarity and allegiance

A child disappeared in your village, there was a common agreement to call a witch hunter by the villagers...Narrate how the church members reacted to this

State the reasons for your participation in the witch hunting ceremony, regardless of the teachings of the bible and the church

How did church leaders respond to the witch hunting and to your participation?

How do you rate the church's programs in dealing with challenges/crisis related to the spirit world?

Impact of the economic and socio political environment on church members' allegiance to God

How does the economic situation affect your practice of faith?

How does the economic situation affect you fellow church members' practice of their faith?

Impact of crisis/life threatening challenges on church members' allegiance to God

What are the sources of help that you have resorted to during times of crisis such as illness, failure to get a job, crop failure, barrenness?

How have other church members dealt with these kind of life crisis?

What you say about the general attitude of church members during such times especially when the crisis persists?

What is the most common advice that church members give to one whose condition does not change after several prayer attempts?

### **Guideline for Focus Group A & B Interviews**

(those who participated in the witch hunting ceremony)

#### **Questionnaire**

You have been selected to participate in an academic research conducted by Pastor Thamsanqa Ndlovu a Doctor of Ministry (Missions) student from the Adventist University of Africa.

The purpose of the study is to formulate, implement and evaluate a worldview transformation program aimed at mitigating Split- Level Christianity among members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Zimbabwe Conference. Participation in this research is voluntary. Your responses will be treated with confidentiality.

There will be no monetary benefit to you, however, your participation could be valuable in helping in the understanding of the subject of the study. The results of the findings will be available to you on request.

#### **Membership and responsibilities**

For how long have you been a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

- What church offices have you ever served in?
  - What are the shared experiences, failures and successes in relation to church members' responsibilities towards one another?
- New members and their integration into church life
- What are the most common methods of gaining new members into the church?
  - Describe the process of integrating new members into the church
  - What is your perception about the effectiveness of the methods of gaining new members and integrating them into church life?
- Impact of customs and cultural practices on church members' allegiance to God
- What cultural practices and customs do you find most difficult to deal with as a member of the church?
  - How have these cultural practices affected you in your Christian life?
  - What are the cultural practices or rites that are done during life's transitional period in your community?
  - How do church members generally relate to these?
  - How have you related to these as a member of the church?
  - What do you understand the standard expectations of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be regarding:
- Witchcraft? \_\_\_\_\_
- Divination? \_\_\_\_\_
- Visiting faith healers? \_\_\_\_\_
- Perceptions on the church's capabilities to deal with members' felt needs that relate to wellbeing.
- From your experience as a church member, how has the church addressed the challenges of Witchcraft? \_\_\_\_\_ Divination? \_\_\_\_\_
- Healing? \_\_\_\_\_
- What are the life threatening situations which the church has not addressed?
  - Where have the members been getting help from when these life threatening situations arise?
  - What have you personally done in times of these crisis?
  - If there was a chance to advise church leaders and pastors in relation to Split-Level religious practices, what would you propose they change/improve in their church teaching curriculum?
- Community solidarity and allegiance
- A child disappeared in your village, there was a common agreement to call a witch hunter by the villagers...Narrate how the church members reacted to this
  - State the reasons for your participation in the witch hunting ceremony, regardless of the teachings of the Bible and the church
  - How did church leaders respond to the witch hunting and to your participation?
  - How do you rate the church's programs in dealing with challenges/crisis related to the spirit world?
- Impact of the economic and socio political environment on church members' allegiance to God
- How does the economic situation affect your practice of faith?
  - How does the economic situation affect you fellow church members' practice of their faith?

Impact of crisis/life threatening challenges on church members' allegiance to God

- What are the sources of help that you have resorted to during times of crisis such as illness, failure to get a job, crop failure, barrenness
- How have other church members dealt with these kind of life crisis?
- What you say about the general attitude of church members during such times especially when the crisis persists?
- What is the most common advice that church members give to one whose condition does not change after several prayer attempts.

### **Guideline for Focus Group C Interviews**

(Those who did not participate in the witch hunting ceremony)

#### Questionnaire

You have been selected to participate in an academic research conducted by Pastor Thamsanqa Ndlovu a Doctor of Ministry (Missions) student from the Adventist University of Africa.

The purpose of the study is to formulate, implement and evaluate a worldview transformation program aimed at mitigating Split- Level Christianity among members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Zimbabwe Conference. Participation in this research is voluntary. Your responses will be treated with confidentiality.

There will be no monetary benefit to you, however, your participation could be valuable in helping in the understanding of the subject of the study. The results of the findings will be available to you on request.

#### Membership and responsibilities

- For how long have you been a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?
- What church offices have you ever served in?
- What are the shared experiences, failures and successes in relation to church members' responsibilities towards one another?

#### New members and their integration into church life

- What are the most common methods of gaining new members into the church?
- Describe the process of integrating new members into the church
- What is your perception about the effectiveness of the methods of gaining new members and integrating them into church life?

Impact of customs and cultural practices on church members' allegiance to God

- What cultural practices and customs do you find most difficult to deal with as a member of the church?
- How have these cultural practices affected you in your Christian life?
- What are the cultural practices or rites that are done during life's transitional period in your community?
- How do church members generally relate to these?
- How have you related to these as a member of the church?
- What do you understand the standard expectations of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be regarding:

Witchcraft? \_\_\_\_\_

Divination? \_\_\_\_\_

Visiting faith healers? \_\_\_\_\_

Perceptions on the church's capabilities to deal with members' felt needs that relate to wellbeing.

From your experience as a church member, how has the church addressed the challenges of Witch-craft? \_\_\_\_\_ Divination?

Healing? \_\_\_\_\_ What are the life threatening situations which the church has not addressed?

Where have the members been getting help from when these life threatening situations arise?

What have you personally done in times of these crisis?

If there was a chance to advise church leaders and pastors in relation to Split-Level religious practices, what would you propose they change/improve in their church teaching curriculum?

Community solidarity and allegiance

A child disappeared in your village, there was a common agreement to call a witch hunter by the villagers...Narrate how the church members reacted to this

State the reasons for your participation in the witch hunting ceremony, regardless of the teachings of the Bible and the church

How did church leaders respond to the witch hunting and to your participation?

How do you rate the church's programs in dealing with challenges/crisis related to the spirit world?

Impact of the economic and socio political environment on church members' allegiance to God

How does the economic situation affect your practice of faith?

How does the economic situation affect your fellow church members' practice of their faith?

Impact of crisis/life threatening challenges on church members' allegiance to God

What are the sources of help that you have resorted to during times of crisis such as illness, failure to get a job, crop failure, barrenness

How have other church members dealt with these kind of life crisis?

What would you say about the general attitude of church members during such times especially when the crisis persists?

What is the most common advice that church members give to any one whose condition does not change after several prayer attempts

APPENDIX B

SPLIT-LEVEL CHRISTIANITY SYMPOSIUM  
EVALUATION FORM

Kindly answer the following questions:

Give your general impression about this symposium

.....  
.....

What did you gain/learn/discover from this symposium?

.....  
.....

List if there are any things that you think you may need to change as a result of this symposium

.....  
.....

Has this symposium dealt with issues that are central for the SDA church conference wide or where you came from?

.....  
.....

a) After attending this symposium what do you think should be done?

.....  
.....

b) And who should do what you have suggested?

.....  
.....

What is your advice to the organizers of this /symposium?

.....  
.....

What are you going to do with the information that you got from this symposium?

.....  
.....

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Date of Birth: 05/07/73

### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

2017 - Current Stewardship Director  
South Zimbabwe Conference  
2016 Education, Stewardship, PARL & H. R. Director  
South Zimbabwe Conference  
2015 Education, Communication, PARL, & H. R. Director  
South Zimbabwe Conference  
2012-2014 District Pastor - Bulawayo City Centre  
2008-2011 District Pastor - Magwege North  
2009 Adjunct Lecturer - Solusi University  
2006-2007 District Pastor - Solusi (SAHS)  
2001-2003 District Pastor - Gwayi (Sipepa)  
1997-2000 School Teacher - Luveve High  
1995 School Teacher - Falcon College

### EDUCATION

2013 – 2017 DMin Missions  
Adventist University of Africa, Kenya  
1996 – 2009 MA Pastoral Theology  
Adventist University of Africa, Kenya  
2003 – 2006 BA Theology  
Soluti University  
1994 – 1995 Diploma in Education  
Hillside Teachers' College (UZ)  
1987 – 1992 High School Student  
Mpopoma High School

### PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

2012 – Current Executive Committee Member  
South Zimbabwe Conference  
2015 – 2016 University Council Member  
Soluti University  
2015 – 2016 Board Member  
South Zimbabwe Conference Schools