

## PROJECT ABSTRACT

Adventist University Of Africa

Theological Seminary

Master of Arts in Biblical and Theological Studies

Title: A STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SEVENTH-DAY  
ADVENTIST CHURCH IN NORTHEAST TANZANIA (1903-2023)

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Date completed: May 2024

This research, A Study of the Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Northeast Tanzania, is aimed at helping people know and understand the historical development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Northeast Tanzania, the major factors that led to its development, the interaction between the Pare and Adventism, the challenges and prospects of Adventism in Northeast Tanzania. This research is useful in determining the contributions of the pioneers and early Adventists in Northeast Tanzania and their influence on the development and stability of the modern church. It is important to discover that their efforts not only stirred the expansion of Adventism in Tanzania but also inspired the development of the nation

in education, health, and agriculture. The missionaries and early Adventists worked together as a team, but today racism, segregation, and disunity prevail in the Adventist church. This issue must be addressed and investigated, and find possible solutions to have a better present and future church. The founders of Adventism in Tanzania kept historical sites and artifacts safe for decades, but those who followed them dismantled the buildings that kept them and destroyed the precious equipment that could be helpful for church history. This issue also needs special attention and seriousness. This research will help present and future church historians.

This research uses the historical descriptive method, utilizing the available primary and secondary sources such as Seventh-day Adventist Church Archive materials, oral interviews minutes of meetings, and church history books. Few selected resource people are interviewed, especially those who were directly connected to Adventists in the past and those who were involved or participated in some events. Names are mentioned only by permission.

Adventism began in America in the 1840s during the Advent Movement, when people expected the coming of Christ, which was followed by the Great Disappointment. After this disappointment, Sabbatarian Adventists read the Bible diligently and discovered where they erred. They organized themselves and later formed the Seventh-day Adventist Church. From America, the Adventist message was taken to Europe, Australia, Africa, and Asia. Adventism was brought to Tanganyika by two German Missionaries Johannes Ehlers and Abraham C. Enns in 1903. They opened a mission station at Giti, Mamba.

Adventism in Northeast Tanzania faced several challenges including poor management of health centers, lack of total member involvement, polygyny, nature and retention of members, culture, and some dependent churches The pioneers spread

Adventism through social basic needs, schools, agriculture training, and health services. These methods have been proven even today, they work better than public preaching and other evangelism methods. To preserve historical sites and remaining artifacts, I strongly recommend that the Northeast Tanzania Conference take the responsibility of preserving remaining historical materials. The University of Arusha also has an active part to play in church history preservation. The Archives Department of the General Conference of the SDA Church should take serious measures to preserve history. Northeast Tanzania Conference should improve its supervision of schools and health centers so that the current situation can change for better services.



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A project

presented in partial fulfillment

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by

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## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all church historians

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background of the Study**

Christianity in Tanzania has deep historical roots. Zanzibar's history dates back to the early 15th century when the first Portuguese missionaries arrived. They were led by the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama, who arrived in 1499.<sup>1</sup> The Portuguese established a mission at Kilwa between 1505 and 1513. They planned to take complete control of the profitable regional trade. Apart from trade, the Portuguese were also motivated by the conversion of Muslim communities to Christianity.<sup>2</sup> There were many mission centers along the coast of Tanganyika. The missionaries used Zanzibar as a springboard into Tanganyika's interior. At this point, Zanzibar was free from religious competition, hostility, or distrust. Swahili language center was established in Zanzibar and missionaries completed their training there.<sup>3</sup>

The first Roman Catholic mission in Zanzibar was opened in 1499. The first Catholic Church in Tanzania was St. Joseph's Cathedral in Zanzibar, built-in 1860. They moved from Zanzibar to Bagamoyo in 1868.<sup>4</sup> In Bagamoyo, they built the Holy Ghost Mission. The oldest church on the mainland of East Africa is the Holy Ghost

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<sup>1</sup>Frans Wisen and Bernadin Mfumbusa, *Seeds of Conflict* (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 2004), 41.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Cartwright, "Kilwa," accessed 29 March 2019, <https://www.worldhistory.org/Kilwa/>.

<sup>3</sup>Lissi Rasmussen, *Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa* (London: British Academy Press, 1993), 30

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.

Church, built in 1872.<sup>5</sup> The missionary representatives that were present during the colonial rule included the Africa Inland Mission, the Augustinian Lutheran Mission, the Capuchin Fathers, the Church Missionary Society, the Italian Fathers, the London Missionary Society, the Moravian Mission, the Neunkirchen Mission, the Seventh-day Adventist church, the Central Africa Mission, the Benedictines, and the White Fathers.<sup>6</sup> Each represented major periods of missionary expansion and had a profound and lasting impact on Tanzania's economy, society, politics, culture, education, and religion. Introducing Christianity in Tanganyika was not easy because the missionaries met resistance and opposition from the Arabs who had already occupied most of the coastal areas.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church Congregation in Tanzania is part of the Global Church headquartered in Maryland, United States of America. The worldwide Protestant denomination dates back to the Millerite movement, which sparked a religious revival in various parts of North America. Through comparing scripture with scripture, William Miller concluded that the sanctuary message of Daniel 8:14 signified the cleansing of the earth with fire and that Christ would return at the beginning of the millennium of Revelation 20; however, he was hesitant to share his findings due to his fear of being wrong and leading others astray.<sup>7</sup>

Miller studied the Bible intensively for nine years and concluded that the coming of Christ would be on October 22, 1844. Miller won several ministers to his

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<sup>5</sup> Frits Vesteijnen, *Catholic Church in Bagamoyo* (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Desktop Productions, 2011), 6-7.

<sup>6</sup> Johannes Henschel, *25 Years of Catholic Missionaries in Bagamoyo (1868-1893)* (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Desktop Productions, 2002), 29.

<sup>7</sup> George R. Knight, *A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2004), 15.

view. One of them was Joshua V. Himes of the Christian Connexion. He traveled and preached in different places, far and near. Another preacher was Charles Fitch, who preached a sermon on Revelation 18, calling people to come out of Babylon.<sup>8</sup>

After Jesus did not return as expected, the Millerites were devastated and uncertain, leading to the formation of three splinter groups, with the smallest of these groups being led by Joseph Bates, James White, and Ellen G. White, who saw themselves as the “true successor” of the Millerite movement, and whose legacy is evident in the current SDA Church.<sup>9</sup>

The SDA mission in Tanzania began in the 19th century as part of a major global expansion.<sup>10</sup> By this period, the worldwide SDA Church had abandoned any association with the 1840s “shut door” view that barred any serious missionary effort. The denomination expanded into new parts of the world. Several factors contributed to this shift and the most obvious is that, following the “Great Disappointment,” some Millerite revivalists wished to join the Sabbatarian Adventist Movement. Theological re-examination led to a study of Rev 14, with a mission to proclaim the Gospel to all people before Jesus Christ’s actual return.<sup>11</sup>

The 1890s were a defining moment for Protestant missions, including Adventists. Hundreds of students responded to Moody’s appeal to volunteer as overseas missionaries during the 1886 student Bible conference. This prompted youth in Europe to volunteer for Foreign Missions, an interdenominational organization that

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 16-18.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>10</sup> Stefan Höschele, *Christian Remnant-African Folk Church: Seventh-Day Adventism in Tanzania* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2007), 47.

<sup>11</sup> George R. Knight, *Historical Sketches of Foreign Missions* (Berreïn Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2005), 440.

recruited student missionaries. Because it was such a revolutionary idea to recruit student missionaries, an estimated 20,500 students from both America and Europe joined the movement between 1886 and 1945.<sup>12</sup>

The Student Volunteer Movement influenced the formation of several global missionary movements further for Foreign Missions. Thus, Protestant missions had a significant impact on Adventist missions, with ripple effects reaching Tanzania.

During the first five decades of SDA presence in Tanzania, the growth was slow. By the end of 1961, the Tanganyika Union, founded in 1903 and reorganized in 1960, had only 13,103 members out of a population of over 13,000,000.<sup>13</sup> There are several reasons for the slow growth. Other religions in Tanzania have always hampered the spread of Christianity.

First, the missionaries' central mission was evangelization. Before evangelization, they opened schools in different parts of the country. These schools were strictly for Christians and others who were prepared to acknowledge the Christian faith. For this reason, Muslims avoided taking their children to Christian schools. Many indigenous Muslim elders declared that sending Muslim children to Christian schools was haram (forbidden). Muslim parents took away their children who were already registered in Christian schools.<sup>14</sup>

Another significant impediment was the German and later British governments' attitudes toward missionary efforts. Throughout much of their rule in

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 440.

<sup>13</sup>Tanganyika Union consisted of Tanganyika Territory and Zanzibar and Pemba islands; comprising the East Lake, Majita-Ukerewe, North-East Tanganyika, Tanganyika General, and the West Lake fields. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Office of Archives and Statistics (ASTR-GC), "Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook 1961," accessed 29 March 2019, <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/old-yearbooks>.

<sup>14</sup> J. Spencer Trimmingham, *Islam in Africa*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 103

Tanzania, the British and Germans frequently opposed or maintained a general apathy or neutrality toward all missionaries and their activities.<sup>15</sup> This made missionary work extremely difficult, particularly in Muslim-dominated areas of the country. They did not want to offend these communities, as it would jeopardize Tanganyika's rule. Despite this, Tanganyikans thought the missionaries were agents of the German and British colonizers. This mindset and attitude may have resulted from a long history of colonial imperialism, which fostered mistrust of Christian missionaries. The Tanzanian people refused to believe the missionaries and colonizers had nothing to do with each other, no matter what measures the British government took to alleviate their apprehension and fear. These missionaries found it difficult to carry out their medical missionary activities in such an unfriendly and sometimes hostile environment.<sup>16</sup>

By 1961, Adventism had established a missionary presence, even if the church remained numerically insignificant in comparison to the general population. Several missions, health centers, educational institutions, and other organizations have been established throughout the country. Amid the national political development, the church's prospects appeared positive and vibrant, but also uncertain and unknown.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Andrew Louth, "Tanganyika," *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 2022), 764.

<sup>16</sup> Höschele, *Christian Remnant*, 48.

<sup>17</sup> Höschele, *Christian Remnant*. Höschele, a Professor of Theology at Friedensau Adventist University in Germany, holds a Ph.D. from the University of Malawi (2005) and brings a wealth of African experience not only from his doctoral pursuits but also from his experience as a missionary for nearly five years in Tanzania. Apart from his integrated research to gain indigenous perspectives, he also mingled with Tanzanians and became eloquent in speaking Swahili. The monograph is an updated version of Höschele's doctoral dissertation. It is filled with almost everything a historian or missiologist would want to know about patterns of missionary activity in Africa. This study will complement what he started by covering a 120-year historical timeline (1903-2023) of mission and church growth in Northeast Tanzania. Höschele, who is a German, had access to the archives where the documents of the first missionaries to Tanganyika are kept as well as the documents from Tanzania Union of Seventh Day Adventist Church, so his citations are accurate.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Major historical events of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission work in Tanzania that could be mirrored to avoid or improve upon the work of the pioneer missionaries had not been investigated and studied, which this work tries to fill the gap. The SDA Church's historical position in Northeast Tanzania provides the potential to harness and preserve a rich Adventist history, but little is being done to encourage members to preserve and take on the mission challenge in the future. The following are a few examples of some events that deserve special attention but are not explored. The impact of the Agricultural Training Program opened by early Adventist Missionaries at Giti, Mamba, the structural and geographical progress of the church in North East Tanzania, the reaction of the missionaries to Sabbath breakers, the impact of music in evangelism, the jubilee celebration of 1993, the centennial celebration of 2003, and their historical significance, and recent activities in North East Tanzania are not studied.

The main research question this work tries to examine is: how did the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North East Tanzania develop? Other three questions that help in reflecting upon this topic are: What are the major factors that led to the historical growth of Seventh-day Adventism in North East Tanzania? What was the interaction between the Pare and Adventism in North East Tanzania? What are the challenges and prospects of Adventism in North East Tanzania today?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The goal of this research is to attempt to document and highlight the major significant contributions to the growth of Adventism and national development. This research aims to highlight significant challenges and opportunities that will affect and shape the SDA denomination's life in Northeast Tanzania.

### **Significance of the Study**

This work will be useful for church members, church leaders, scholars, and Church historians. It will also be useful to missionaries who want to open missions in new places. It will help many to understand the terrain they intend to work in the future. This research is useful in determining the contributions of the pioneers and early Adventists in Northeast Tanzania and their influence on the development and stability of the modern church. It is important to discover that their efforts not only stirred the spread and success of the Adventist Church, but also inspired the awareness and blossoming of the nation in education, health, agriculture, and home science.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There are two major limitations to this study. The first is geographical. The Tanganyika field, founded in 1903, consisted of a cluster of regions, including Tanganyika territory and the Zanzibar and Pemba islands. Although the history of Adventism in the Tanganyika Union is intricately linked with that of neighboring regions, this study is delimited to Northeast Tanzania. More research on the history of Adventism in each of these other regions will be required in the future. The second major limitation is that, as a broad historical study, there is a tendency to generalize

the history of several significant missionaries, Tanzanian mission workers, institutions, or entities.

### **Literature Review**

Three books that explain in detail the historical development of Adventism in Tanzania and East Africa were reviewed. The other three reviewed books focused on Lebanon, South America, and the Caribbean Islands. The book *Christian Remnant: African Folk Church Seventh Day Adventism in Tanzania 1903-1980* by Stephen Höschele, *The Development of Seventh Day Adventist Church in East Africa*, by Elineema Kangalu, and *Kanisa Safarini Tanzania 1903-2013* by Elisha Okeyo. The books are broad explaining the history of Adventism in Tanzania and East Africa, but the focus here is North East Tanzania. These books will briefly be reviewed in this section.

Stephen Höschele and Elineema Kangalu provide insights into the origins of Adventism in North East Tanzania. The challenges that the missionaries encountered are well explained and well documented. Some of the challenges that they encountered took a short time and some took decades, while others are still present today. In short, they encountered these challenges: The missionaries were viewed as colonizers and opponents of Pare traditions. Generally, people were not ready to accept Adventism. Elisha Okeyo introduced early Adventism in Tanzania and dealt much with Administrative issues.

The challenges faced by the first converts to Adventism include being rejected or abandoned by their families, and denied family rights. The missionaries took them to the mission center and taught them to work to sustain their life. The lives of many were changed and caused a positive attitude between the missionaries and the natives.

The Swahili book by Elisha Okeyo has information that is not found in the other books; this might be because he was the Tanzania Union Secretary and Education Director for fifteen years. His book is more reliable because he was one of the top leaders in some of the events that took place from 1961 to early 2000.

The work of these three writers is of great value to the modern church. Some of the information they referred to in their books of which some they saw physically are not available today and no one knows when and how they disappeared. This means that if they could not write, there would be no memory today. Their work is a challenge to the modern people who speak much and write not.

All three books have specific limitations. Höschele covered the history from 1903 to 1980. Much of the history of Adventism (1981-2023) is not yet explored. The books are not specific to North East Tanzania. Little is mentioned about the challenges that the missionaries faced as they introduced Adventism. Elisha Okeyo's book explains the history of Tanzania from 1903 to 2013. The book focuses on the success of Western missionaries without giving a clear picture of the challenges of introducing Adventism and its development. Kangalu's book on the History of Adventists in East Africa has no details about Adventism in North East Tanzania. In summary, although the books referred to in this study have those limitations mentioned in this brief review, they remain important sources for understanding this church in East Africa, and more especially, Adventism in Tanzania.

The book *The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lebanon* by Manoug H. Nazarian describes the beginning and development of Adventism in Lebanon and the Middle East in general. The Adventist faith was brought by Abraham La Rue, a missionary to China, who visited Beirut in 1897. Several international missionaries and evangelists visited Lebanon such as H.P. Holsen, and Ludwig Richard Conradi. In

1903, Malaka and Deir Demas were reported to have the first Sabbath keepers. In 1903, Malaka and Deir Demas were reported to have the first Sabbath keepers. All missionaries who went to Lebanon had different professions including builders, nurses, agriculturists, teachers, and other social areas. The missionaries worked together as a team and brought tremendous changes and developments.<sup>18</sup> Floyd Greenleaf gave the same information about the missionaries in South America: “The first missionaries in South America were hard-working and determined to bring development and changes in the church. This army of Christ’s soldiers scattered among millions of people over hundreds of thousands of square miles brought significant changes to the Adventist work in South America.”<sup>19</sup> The present Adventist Church should learn from these experiences to bring changes and development to their mission stations.

The missionaries put more effort into publishing ministries and translations of different books. The natives got the message in their language and understood it easily. This is recorded also by Noel Clapham. Seventh-day Adventists have historically viewed the dissemination of denominational literature as a highly effective means of spreading their beliefs, and during early missionary efforts in Australia, nearly every member of the team was involved in distributing Seventh-day Adventists.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Manoug H. Nazirian, *The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lebanon* (Beirut, Lebanon: Eastern Mediterranean Field, 1999), 11.

<sup>19</sup> Floyd Greenleaf, *The Growth of Seventh-day Adventist Church in South America* (Tatui, Brazil: Casa Publicadora Brasileira, 2011), 35.

<sup>20</sup> Noel Clapham, *Seventh Day Adventists in the South Pacific 1885-1985* (Warburton, Australia: Signs Publishing Company, 1987), 59.

Ludwig Richard Conradi, the president of European Adventism, played an important role in Lebanon Adventism. He trained Wlter Ising and sent him to Lebanon to stress the indispensability of evangelism. Ising established the initial Seventh-day Adventist church in Lebanon with a membership consisting of 7 Arab individuals, 5 Germans, and 1 American, who joined the church out of their love for the truth rather than for denominational employment opportunities as the church lacked any institutions at that time.<sup>21</sup> Conradi also visited Brazil as a General Conference representative. He encouraged people to work hard and erect more buildings. As a result of his encouragement, the new brick buildings were erected.

Conradi did tremendous work in West Africa as well as East and West Africa. In 1913, L.R. Conradi, the leader of the European Division based in Hamburg, Germany, met with Adventist workers in Sierra Leone to divide the work in West Africa into three regions: Ghana, led by W.H. Lewis; Nigeria, pioneered by Babcock; and Sierra Leone, which had a total of 165 members, with 75 Ghanaians and the remaining 90 from Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and the Canary Islands.<sup>22</sup>

The growth of Adventism in Lebanon and the Middle East was impacted by the outbreak of World War I, causing some missionaries to fear for their safety and return to their home countries, while Ising was held captive for five years in Malta Camp. Ibrahim El-Khalid, a lay member, took over leadership and maintained communication with the American mission in Istanbul. Other writers also record the same effects in other parts of Africa. The vitality that characterized the most dynamic mission agencies in German territories was halted by this cataclysmic global

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<sup>21</sup> Baldur Pfeiffer, *The European Seventh-day Adventist Mission in the Middle East 1879-1939* (Frankfurt, Germany: Peter Lang, 1981), 70.

<sup>22</sup> Japhet Agboka, *The Beginning of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1975), 45.

confrontation. During World War I, Cameroon, Togoland, German East Africa, and German Southwest Africa were invaded and occupied by the Allied Powers, which unfortunately resulted in mistreatment towards both Catholic and Protestant German missions present in these regions. There was the arrest, imprisonment, and forceful deportation of missionaries deployed by German missions.<sup>23</sup> Ising was put in prison, but his thoughts and passion were still with his members in the mission he had opened. On his release, he went directly to meet them.

According to Floyd, the situation was not stable and calm in South America. They also suffered the consequences of World War 1. The war affected the rapid growth of Adventism in South America just as it was in other parts of the world. There was a decrease in financial income. More missionaries were needed but could not go. Contact with the General Conference was impossible. South America suffered financially because it was dependent on North America. When North America failed financially, South America followed the same trend. When people were involved in evangelism and other church activities, South America witnessed an increase in membership and financial stability.<sup>24</sup> The unity of missionaries and church members in South America is well documented. They faced challenges confidently. The unity of Adventists in South America was an important tool for the spread of Adventism in new areas. It helped them to overcome barriers and hardships.

South America Churches used small group ministries in evangelism and other church activities. A small cell of church members led by group leaders and sometimes by church elders assembled to study the Bible and pray for each other. Small groups

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<sup>23</sup> Richard V. Pierard, "Allied Treatment of Protestant Missionaries in German East Africa in World War I," *The African Journal of Evangelical Theology* 12 (1993): 4-7.

<sup>24</sup> Greenleaf, *The Growth of Seventh-day Adventist Church in South America*.

became evangelistic tools within congregations scattered throughout urban areas that were constantly furnishing candidates for baptism. Small groups helped in retaining and nurturing new members.

The writer displayed the unity of the ministers who worked in Lebanon. Although they came from different nations, cultures, and backgrounds, they united together in the word of God. Their lives were filled with total commitment to the work of God. They offered service to their members unconditionally and without any reservation. Their example was imitated by church members and created a united church in the whole of the Middle East. Our leaders today must know that whatever they do or say affects their members. The church in East Africa and specifically in Northeast Tanzania where tribalism, biases, and segregation prevail has lessons to learn from these ministers to shape the present and the future church.

The establishment and operation of schools and other church institutions in the Middle East differ from that of Tanzania to a great extent. In Lebanon schools grow and the number increase gradually while in Tanzania they languish and die. The records and beginning of each center are well documented, but in Northeast Tanzania, the records are missing including the centers that were opened in the early 2000s.

In his book *Seventh-day Adventist in Barbados*, Glenn Philips gives us an experience of Adventism in this Caribbean Island. The introduction of Adventism was opposed by other Christian denominations and other religions. Barbados Adventists overcame this opposition by powerful preaching and insightful Biblical teachings which captivated the hearts and jolted the minds of the Barbadians. The number of those who joined the church was small for decades, but those who joined the church remained faithful. The backsliding of members was rare. The Adventist lifestyle which included the prohibition of alcohol and tobacco, and strict observance of the

Sabbath attracted the society where they lived and convinced them to join the church. Their practical life and genuine industrious manner in society significantly reduced hostility.<sup>25</sup>

Glenn wrote an ex[perience] of how people who believed in the Adventist faith were persecuted and harassed in the society. Three young girls refused to bow down before the image of the Virgin Mary at St. Andrew Anglican Church and were expelled from school. When the issue was investigated, government officials decided that the girls be readmitted to the school without preconditions. It made the Adventist message known and respected.

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<sup>25</sup> Glenn O. Philips, *Seventh-Day Adventists in Barbados* (Bridgetown, Barbados: East Caribbean Conference, 1991), 14

## CHAPTER 2

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

This chapter presents a brief history of Seventh-day Adventism from its early beginnings to the present. The Church's development in North America and its global expansion are the main topics of focus. Finally, it highlights the historical contexts in which the SDA denomination began and evolved in Africa.

#### **The Historical Development of Adventism in North America**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church originated from various developments within the American Protestant world, with the most significant contribution coming from the Millerite movement (1831-1844). William Miller studied the Bible verse by verse and was converted to Christianity. He was convinced that Jesus would come in 1843. He got many followers, and it was called the Millerite Movement. Later he set a specific date of Christ's return on 22 October 1844. He joined the church that he despised for a long time; he was received with an open heart, but there was a group that held and looked at him as antagonistic. The individual assumed the role of a powerful speaker and expressed their willingness to share biblical insights about the arrival of the Lord if invited to speak publicly elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> James White, *The Life of William Miller* (Grand Rapids, MI: Stream Press, 1875), 83.

## **The Great Disappointment**

The great disappointment cannot be forgotten in the Adventist world. Many people sold their farms and houses and waited for their Master to appear. To their disappointment, Christ did not come on October 22, 1844. Many were discouraged and left the church. A great number blamed William Miller and insulted him bitterly. William Miller still stood firm. He confessed his error, and acknowledged his disappointments; yet he still believed that the day of the Lord was near, even at the door; and he exhorted his brethren and urged them to be watchful, and not let the day of the Lord come upon you unaware.<sup>2</sup> His firm stand led others to search the scriptures and discover that the prophecy was right and true, but the interpretation was wrong.

The great disappointment brought tears to those who were expecting the Lord to appear. They sold their properties and homes for God's cause. Some just offered their homes, farms, and other properties freely to friends; telling them that the Master was at the door. The words of Hiram Edson show how they were in bitter tears and reported that their fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping upon them than never experienced before. It seemed that the loss of all earthly friends could have been no comparison. They wept till the day dawn. We wept, and wept, till the day dawn.<sup>3</sup>

Those who were waiting for the Master's return gathered in churches, and homes, some on open air, singing joyfully, counting the hours as they eagerly and patiently waited. When time passed and Christ did not appear, their disappointment was beyond measure. No one was courageous enough to encourage others; everyone

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 374.

<sup>3</sup> Francis D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1945), 94.

was in deep disappointment and tears. Nichol said that the day arrived and ended, and as another night fell upon the world, a sense of disappointment washed over the Advent believers, akin to the sorrow felt by the disciples after their Lord's crucifixion. The passage of time brought with it a bitter disappointment.<sup>4</sup>

### **Sabbath Day Discovered**

The Adventist pioneers were not originally Sabbath keepers. They all came from different denominations. The Seventh-day Sabbath was discovered during the great Advent awakening. Fredrick Wheeler got the light from a laywoman- Rachel Oakes. This marked the origin and Sabbath keeping in the Seventh Day Adventist Church. In the early spring of 1844, Frederick Wheeler, a Methodist minister of Hillsboro, New Hampshire, started observing the seventh day as the Sabbath after being challenged by a Seventh-Day Baptist laywoman named Rachel Oakes to keep all of God's commandments, which led to the first permanent Sabbath-keeping Adventist congregation in Washington before the Great Disappointment.”<sup>5</sup>

Sabbath truth did not appear in a group, but one person after another discovered and kept it holy. By the summer of 1884 a well-known Adventist minister from East Weare, Hampshire, T.M.Preble, who had traveled with Miller himself, also accepted the seventh-day Sabbath. It is unclear whether he had learned of it from Wheeler or directly from Rachel Oakes.<sup>6</sup>

When the Sabbatarian Adventists discovered the Sabbath truth, nothing could hinder them from spreading the truth to others. They published articles, preached in

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>5</sup> Richard W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1979), 58.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 58.

churches and meetings, organized conferences, and spoke about the new truth boldly. In 1846, Joseph Bates, who had become the Sabbath Herald, James White, who was now a Sabbath keeper, and Hiram Edson, who had pioneered with the Sanctuary light, united the messages of the Sanctuary and Sabbath truths. At one of these early conferences, according to the record, "Bates took his new Sabbath tract out of his pocket and started reading it aloud. "In addition, Edson, the propagator of the Sanctuary truth, saying, "I am with you to keep it," was deeply moved.<sup>7</sup>

### **After the Great Disappointment**

In a letter to a friend William Miller wrote the following bitter words that the day passed, and the next day also passed. It seemed as though all the demons from the bottomless pit were let loose upon us. The same ones and many more who were crying for mercy two days before were now mixed with the rabble and mocking, scoffing, and threatening in a most blasphemous manner.<sup>8</sup>

The great disappointment made Miller study the Bible more carefully. He studied the prophecy of 2300 days carefully, and as a result, he laid the foundation, which we hold today concerning the prophecy of 2300 days. Although he was surrounded by enemies and scoffers, he did not give up. Miller waited and looked for the blessed hope, but Christ did not come. He was not disappointed twice but was not discouraged. Although he was surrounded by enemies and scoffers, his mind was perfectly calm, and his hope for the coming of Christ was as strong as ever.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Le Roy Edwin Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1971), 83.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 377.

Always God has people who can stand and encourage others during times of trouble. The disappointed group met together to examine what happened and find the way forward. They encouraged each other at that time of trial and anguish and remembered that they were commanded to be sober and hope to the end for that grace which was to be brought unto them at the revelation of Jesus Christ. They did not allow that event to disappoint or affect their hope. We know that Christ has not yet been revealed, and the object of our hope is yet in the future. William Miller said, “Therefore, if we believe in God’s Word, as we profess, we ought to be thankful for the trial of our faith.”<sup>10</sup>

God did not leave his people in darkness. He revealed His secret to Edson as they were on the way to comfort the disappointed friends. He saw a vision of the heavenly sanctuary and reported. “I saw distinctly and clearly, that instead of our High Priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly sanctuary to come to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days. He for the first time entered on that day the second apartment of that sanctuary, and that He had a work to perform in the Most Holy before coming to this earth.”<sup>11</sup>

Joseph Bates felt compelled to correct some of the errors his fellow Adventists were adhering to and to publish the new truths he had discovered. Partially in response to those spiritualizers who claimed that Christ had spiritually returned in 1844, he wrote a forty-page pamphlet titled *The Opening*

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>11</sup> Schwartz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 62.

Heavens in May 1846. A strong proponent of Crosier's Day-Star Extra, Bates thought that the place to be cleansed was in heaven.<sup>12</sup>

Ellen White was chosen by God to encourage the brethren. God sent her a vision that revealed His secrets, yet many did not readily accept or believe her. When someone professed to have received revelation from God, the pioneers were alert and circumspect. This helped to safeguard the early church because many people who claimed to have seen visions and dreams from God turned out to be false prophets when their claims were thoroughly examined and scrutinized.

### **From America to other Continents**

It is interesting to note that the first Seventh-day Adventist minister who traveled abroad to spread the gospel did so without the church's support. Nevertheless, his preaching led to the establishment of the first Seventh-day Adventist congregations in Europe. A decade later, the General Conference sent out its first overseas worker thanks to the success of these congregations. This pioneer was M. B. Czechowski, a former Polish priest who converted to Seventh-day Adventism.<sup>13</sup>

The passion of the Adventist pioneers was to spread the gospel from America to other parts. The General Conference discovered the great need to send people outside of America to other continents. A year after the proposal was made by James White, the General Conference decided that J.N. Andrews should travel to Europe as soon as possible. Elder James White was already contemplating the future and

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<sup>12</sup> R. Haddock, *A History of the Doctrine of the Sanctuary in the Advent Movement* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1970), 153.

<sup>13</sup> Schwartz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 142.

inquired about potential candidates for the position in England, asking if there was anyone better than Loughborough.<sup>14</sup>

In summary, John Nevins Andrews, who was born in Poland, Maine on July 22, 1829, had a deeply spiritual experience during the Advent movement when he was at the age of fifteen. He became one of the reliable writers of the Review when he was twenty-one years old. His gospel passion made him travel to different parts of America, bringing to them good news of hope. On May 14, 1867, he became the president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.<sup>15</sup>

The first missionary to Europe was Michael B. Czechowski<sup>16</sup>, a Catholic immigrant to America. When he got the Sabbath truth, he believed it, preached it in New York, and went to spread it in Europe. There was an awakening in Europe which made members write letters to the General Conference seeking more help. They also sent a representative (James Erzenberger), who stayed in America for 19 months.<sup>17</sup> The spirit of the pioneers is needed today, because the church membership has increased to millions, but most members are not involved in spreading the good news about their faith. The passion and zeal of Czechowski opened the doors for overseas missionary work.

On August 15, 1874, the General Conference Session voted for John Nevins to embark on a missionary journey to Europe in response to the events. Unfortunately, he was not welcomed or received intended cooperation in Switzerland. On this, Ellen

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<sup>14</sup> James White, "Progress of the Cause," *Review and Herald*, August 26, 1873, accessed 6 April 2019, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18730826-V42-11.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Everett Dick, *Founders of the Message* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1938), 304, 306.

<sup>16</sup> R.L. Dabrowski and B.B. Beach, ed., *Michael Belina Czechowski 1818-1876* (Warsaw, Poland: Znaki Czasu Publishing House, 1979), 53.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

White wrote to the Swiss brothers reporting that they received calls from Europe requesting assistance, and they promptly sent one of their most skilled team members to aid Europe. However, they felt that their efforts had not been acknowledged or appreciated. They hoped that the Europeans would welcome his guidance and support, but instead, he had been left to navigate the situation on his own while facing skepticism and criticism of his ideas and proposals.<sup>18</sup>

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was essentially an American church from its beginning to the time when the church sent an official missionary to follow in the footsteps of Michael B. Czechowski. Only slowly did a worldwide missionary perspective emerge, kept within the Western framework for a long time among European settlers in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Australia, South Africa, and America.

During the late 19th century, a man named Ludwig Richard Conradi became a prominent figure in the Seventh-day Adventist church in Europe. Born in Karlsruhe, Germany in 1856, Conradi's mother, a devout Catholic named Ulrika, encouraged him to become a priest from a young age. However, Conradi had other plans and as a child, he dreamed of becoming a missionary. He went on to work under the guidance of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in the United States and later, in 1886, was asked to serve in Europe. Conradi established his base in Switzerland but traveled extensively throughout Germany and Russia to spread the Adventist message.”<sup>19</sup>

Working in Communist Russia was not easy since preaching or teaching anything related to religion was considered political and was forbidden and was

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 319.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 66.

considered as teaching Jewish heresy. Conradi and other missionaries were accused in this matter several times. While he was in Russia, he and Gerhard Perk were accused of speaking and spreading Jewish heresy, and for 40 days they endured the rigors of a Crimean prison. “Miraculously released, Conradi went on to preach in Russia and Holland.”<sup>20</sup>

When he was in Europe, Conradi did a great and remarkable work and we see its impact in the modern church. He is considered as the father of German Adventism. He was strong and strict in his decisions, which made Germany and Europe experience more rapid growth than before and many years after. He opened the doors for Adventists in Europe. Ellen White describes him as a man who opened the doors for angels.<sup>21</sup> During the late 1800s, Conradi made a significant impact on the Adventist movement. In just a decade, he managed to grow the Adventist community in Europe from a mere 200 members to over a thousand, with 1,000 baptisms in Germany alone. Along with this, Conradi was also able to establish a seminary and sanitarium in Friedensau. His accomplishments were truly remarkable, even by today's standards.<sup>22</sup>

### **The Arrival of Adventism in Africa**

To understand the Beginning of Adventism in Africa, a summary of how Christianity came to Africa is required. Elizabeth Isichei gave the following comment: Christianity was introduced to South Africa by settlers, led by Jan van Riebeeck, in

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Brian E. Strayer, “Amazing Life of L. R. Conradi,” *Adventist Review*, January 18, 1996, accessed 6 April 2019, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH19960118-V173-03.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 66.

1652. Missionaries from the Dutch Reformed Church noted in 1658 that Khoikhoi slaves in the area were attending their services in great numbers. Over time, the religion took hold among the slaves, the Griqua of the frontier, and the Mfengu who fled their homes during the Mfecame. However, in Natal and Zululand, the number of Christians remained relatively low.<sup>23</sup>

In 1799, the Cape Colony received a significant number of missionaries from various societies, including the London Missionary Society. Among the four missionaries sent were J.T. van der Kemp and J.J. Kicherer, who later became a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, along with John Edmond and William Edwards. Other missionary societies that followed were the Glasgow Missionary Society, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, and societies from the United States, France, Germany, and Scandinavia.

South Africa's first Protestant missionary, Georg Schmidt, arrived in the country on July 9, 1737, at the request of the Dutch church. He established the Moravian Brethren, the first Protestant mission in the country, paving the way for other missionaries who followed.<sup>24</sup> His work became a reference to other missionaries who came after him. He revealed to them his successes and failures so that they could not enter into the same trap and problems.

Seventh-day Adventists first entered Africa from its geographical extremes, Egypt in North Africa in 1878, and South Africa in 1887. Sierra Leon, in West Africa

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<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa: from Antiquity to the Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 100.

<sup>24</sup> Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions: The Pelican History of the Church* (Middlesex, England: Pelican Books, 1964), 182.

in 1888, and Tanganyika in East Africa in 1903.<sup>25</sup> Although the beginnings of Sabbath-keeping date back several years. Of course, the early spread of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa revolved around this starting point. The main concern was to stabilize the movement among the European settlers, English and Dutch. The fact that the incoming missionaries from the United States from 1887 onwards remained mostly in the Anglo-American culture somewhat hampered development among the Boers, then the most important group interested in Seventh-day Adventism.

### **Adventism in North Africa**

In the late 19th century, the Adventist Church made its first successful conversion in Egypt. William Harrison Anderson, one of the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church missionary in Africa, played a key role in the development of African Adventism. Anderson arrived in Africa in the early 1890s and was part of the American missionaries who were sent to open the first mission station (Solusi) among non-Christian people near Bulawayo in what is now Zimbabwe in 1894. As part of this mission, Anderson and his wife, Nora Haysmer, were among the first to establish a presence in the region.<sup>26</sup>

European Adventists first entered the northern part of Africa via Egypt around 1879.<sup>27</sup> As in South Africa, the mission here first met the European population, namely the Italians of Alexandria. Although the multicultural scene, as in South

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<sup>25</sup> *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1976), 1364.

<sup>26</sup> Ron Reese and Douglas Morgan, "William Harrison Anderson," *ESDA* August 19, 2020.

<sup>27</sup> Baldur Pfeiffer, *The European Seventh-day Adventist Mission in the Middle East, 1897-1939*, 49-61.

Africa, caused difficulties, the missionaries tried in vain to reach Egyptian society early on. After the Italian missionaries arrived in Alexandria, they were faced with challenges. Unfortunately, their mission came to an abrupt end due to the anti-Western uprisings led by Colonel Arabi Pasha. The leaders were killed, and the rest of the group was forced to flee. This event caused the slow growth of Adventism in North Africa to the present.

Later, the Middle East was also entered via Turkey and Palestine. This gave renewed hope for wider reach in Egypt, Adventists refocused on Egypt around the turn of the century. In 1901, during his visit to North Africa, the leader of this young mission established the first Seventh-day Adventist Church in Egypt. The Oriental Union Mission was then dedicated in 1902, marking a significant milestone in the mission's history. The first cornerstone for the future commitment in North Africa and thus also for East Africa. In Egypt, Conradi developed the idea of penetrating everywhere. It's interesting to note that Conradi, despite having a sharp sense of economics, appeared to be quite passionate about the Adventist work. He held different views in comparison to the American Adventists, as he believed that too much effort was being directed towards the development of Adventist work in the home regions, specifically in the establishment of institutions. Conradi thought that this approach would ultimately result in a situation where there would be nothing left to invest in foreign work further into Africa, as far as Ethiopia if possible.<sup>28</sup>

### **Adventism in South Africa**

William Hunt, a native of South Africa who was working in a mine in North Carolina, first brought Adventism to South Africa. He heard John Norton

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<sup>28</sup> Höschele, *Christian Remnant*, 44.

Loughborough during a tent meeting. When he went back to South Africa, he reported himself as keeping the Sabbath and requested a further supply of Adventist Literature. He distributed the tracts to his family. One of those who read and accepted the Sabbath truth was Peter Wessels. He wrote to his parents about the new light. They studied the Bible together and became a small group of believers. They request a minister. In 1887, South Africa dispatched D. A. Robinson, C.L. Beyd, and George Burleigh in response to their request.<sup>29</sup>

Consequently, a mission in South Africa was embedded in the above framework for some time. But even among the native African population, it gradually became a springboard for developments further north as missionaries became convinced that the mission should be extended to the other parts of Africa. This led to a mission in 1894 specifically aimed at the people of Zimbabwe. Under the authorization of Cecil Rhodes, the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, a mission was initiated in Matabeleland near Bulawayo, which later became known as the Solusi Mission 1892, the Cape Conference was organized, with headquarters in Cape Town. At Kimberley, a great industrial center was opened as a philanthropic enterprise, and conducted during the Boar War, and later was made into the Kimberley treatment rooms.<sup>30</sup>

### **Adventism in West Africa**

**Ghana.** Adventism in West Africa is broad and rich in its history. This is because much was written. This section highlights the beginning of Adventism in West Africa. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana has an interesting origin

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<sup>29</sup> M. Ellsworth Olsen, *A History of The Origin and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1925), 484, 485.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

story that can be traced back to a woman named Hannah More. While on furlough in Massachusetts, Hannah accepted Seventh-day Adventist doctrines and returned to West Africa to share her newfound faith through literature. From 1863 to the turn of the century, spreading Adventist beliefs and messages through literature was a popular practice beyond America. Hannah's efforts helped establish the church in Ghana and her legacy lives on through the literature ministry.<sup>31</sup>

The first baptism to the SDA Church was done on March 27, 1897, and was conducted by Dudley Upton Hale before his departure. Several individuals were baptized and went on to spread the teachings of Adventism in coastal towns of Ghana. Among those baptized were Francis I. U. Dolphijn, Fred and Isaac Dolphijn, and George Peter Grant. The new converts, G. P. Grant Dolphijn, and Dawson, were eager to share their newfound beliefs with others baptized were Francis I. U. Dolphijn, Fred and Isaac Dolphijn, and George Peter Grant. These new converts, G. P. Grant Dolphijn, and Dawson joined in propagating Adventism in the coastal towns of Ghana.

Christian Abraham Ackah played a pivotal role in the formation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana. He was responsible for the establishment of two churches and two schools, in addition to his work in literature evangelism. He was also the first Ghanaian to be ordained as a church elder and to serve on a union mission executive committee.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Kofi Owusu-Mensa, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism: A History* (Accra, Ghana: Advent Press, 2005), 11.

<sup>32</sup> Kojo Poley-Kwofie, "Ackah, Christian Abraham (1883–1912)," *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, first published December 2, 2020, accessed 6 April 2019, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=4B8F>.

One of the earliest believers on the Coast of West Africa was Francis I.U Dolphijn. In 1888, he began observing the Sabbath after receiving a roll of Seventh-day Adventist papers from the captain of a ship that was anchored in the harbor of Apam. This led him to adopt the Adventist faith without hesitation. During this period, Seventh-day Adventism started its missionary activity in West Africa, where American missionaries reached Ghana at the request of Ghanaians who had embraced Adventism through reading tracts of the International Tract Society. Unfortunately, this early start did not have continuous missionary engagement due to the withdrawal of the sick missionaries.<sup>33</sup>

James Hyatt, who had a zeal for spreading Adventism to other parts of the world, opened the work in Sierra Leon. James M. Hyatt, a dentist by profession, was the first Adventist missionary to work in Sierra Leone and the church's first black missionary to enter both the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) and Nigeria. His parents, Milton and Maggie Hyatt, gave birth to him in 1869 in Kentucky. On December 21, 1892, in Battle Creek, Michigan, he tied the knot with Marian E. Williams in 1867,<sup>34</sup>

According to Gabriel Masfa, the West African Mission, known at that time as the Gold Coast Mission, was organized in December 1913, in Freetown Sierra Leon, and was occupied by the British and the French. Among the pioneering missionaries who worked under the governance of British and French authorities included Karl G. And Mrs. Rudolph, Edward L. Sanford with his wife, D.V. Hale with his wife, George T. Kerr, and Mrs. Kerr, G.P. Riggs, James M. Hyatt with his wife, David Caldwell Babcock, T.M. French, C.E.F. Thompson, J.A . Fife, J.B. Kenny, and Ruben

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<sup>33</sup> Schwartz, *Light Bearers*, 225.

<sup>34</sup> DeWitt S. Williams, "James Hyatt," *Encyclopedia of Seventh – day Adventists*, first published January 1, 2021, accessed 6 April 2019 <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/search-results?term=hyatt>.

Bergstrom, among others.<sup>35</sup> Following is a summary of Adventists in some countries in West Africa. Adventism in each country entered in its miraculous way. This shows that God has many ways of doing things in different circumstances.

**Liberia.** In the late 1880s, Adventism made its way to Liberia through the efforts of Bro Gaston. The General Conference Daily Bulletin dated 24 October 1889 reported that he returned to his home country to spread the precious truth among his kindred. It's fascinating to see how far-reaching the Adventist movement has been throughout history.<sup>36</sup>

In 1924, three missionaries from the Northern European Division of Seventh-Day Adventists journeyed to Liberia to establish an Adventist Mission in the Republic. Pastors Helbig and Flammer arrived from Germany, while Pastor Linford joined from England. After scouting for a suitable location, they settled on Seahn as the ideal site to begin the mission.<sup>37</sup>

The mission was built and the work of God continued. Different evangelism methods were used and as a result, people accepted Adventism. On April 30, 1930, the first four Liberian adherents to the doctrines of Adventists were baptized at Seahn. The first staff of workers were Pastor Flammer the first Principal of the school and Pastor Karl F. Noltze the first evangelist.<sup>38</sup>

**Nigeria.** Many Historians agree in harmony that Christianity came to Nigeria as early as the 1400s at Edo-Delta when the first Portuguese visited Benin City for

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<sup>35</sup> Gabriel Masfa, *Seventh-day Adventism in Africa: A Historical Survey of the Interaction Between Religion, Traditions, and Culture* (London: Routledge, 2023), 56.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>37</sup> Ernest Edwards, "Golden Anniversary Reports," *West African Advent Messenger* 17, no. 5 (May 1963): 4.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

business purposes. The plan was to open trade centers.<sup>39</sup> While Christianity came as early as the fifteenth century, Adventism came as late as 1914, when D.C. Babcock an Adventist Missionary who worked in Sierra Leone since 1905 went to Lagos.<sup>40</sup> Although Adventism came late, the zeal of missionaries and lay people made the gospel spread like fire in dry grasses. Today we speak of Conferences and unions in Nigeria.

The history of the Nigeria Union conferences dates back to the conference held in Sierra Leone in December 1913, where the West African Coasts Mission was split into three fields including Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. The Nigeria Union Conference was originally known as the Nigeria Mission and was led by Pastor David Babcock. It might be helpful to provide a brief biography of Pastor David C. Babcock.<sup>41</sup>

The introduction of Adventism in Nigeria encountered many challenges including African traditional religions, belief in witchcraft, opposition from other Christian denominations, tropical diseases, and uncertainty about the future. Masfa sums it up in the following words: “West Africa presented a challenge to Western missionaries from the early 1800s. Blackwater fever along with other local diseases, killed many Christian missionaries in West Africa.”<sup>42</sup>

**Sierra Leon.** In 1892, Lawrence C. Chadwick, the president of the International Tract Society, went on a General Conference Field Trip that marked the

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<sup>39</sup> Eregan Orihentane Emmanuel, *An African Christian Church* (Lagos, Nigeria: Christ Coming Books, 2013), 18.

<sup>40</sup> Masfa, *Seventh Day Adventism in Africa*, 80.

<sup>41</sup> David O. Babalola, “Nigeria.” *ESDA*, (January 29, 2020).

<sup>42</sup> Masfa, *Seventh Day Adventism in Africa*, 37.

beginning of Adventism in Sierra Leone. He was the first official Adventist to visit Sierra Leon. The General Conference session of 1893 sent two black Americans, James Hyatt with his wife to be the first missionaries in Sierra Leon. In the same year, the General Conference sent David C. Babcock to Sierra Leon. Babcock also introduced the process of making concrete blocks in Sierra Leon.<sup>43</sup> He also opened a school for children with the first enrolment of 125 pupils<sup>44</sup>

Adventism delayed entry into many Western Countries as explained by Masfa. “Apart from Liberia, Sierra Leon, Ghana, and Nigeria, most of the countries in West Africa were penetrated by Adventist Missionaries later.”<sup>45</sup> Adventism in West Africa was disseminated through various educational institutions, including primary schools, secondary schools, colleges, and universities. The Seventh-day Adventist Church invites people from all nations, languages, tribes, and continents to attend education in its schools. As a result, these institutions are generally centers of evangelism. Educational institutions and health service centers have done great work in spreading the gospel to people of different religions and even to those who have no religion. It has proved to be one of the best ways of entering new fields.

The first evangelists in West Africa used the health service method. They believe that the work of health evangelism will not go beyond their environs when individual members are convinced of its importance.<sup>46</sup> According to them, the major emphasis at this point should be to make the members of the church health-conscious.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Olsen, *A History of The Origin and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 507.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Seth A. Laryea, “Methods of Health Evangelism in West Africa,” *Advent Messenger* 33, no. 3 (1979): 3.

The method they used in dealing with health services was the best because it included local churches and individual members. They encouraged local churches to organize cookery schools and lessons for the community. The responsibility of the conferences and unions was to supervise the churches to accomplish their mission. They believed in promoting health services through a practical lifestyle. “The best way to promote health evangelism is to practice what we teach. This is the only way we can finish the Work here in West Africa.”<sup>47</sup>

### **Adventism in East Africa**

It was at this point that Seventh-day Adventism had become a truly inter-European movement.<sup>48</sup> With the help of the European-American Adventists who had returned to Europe to serve in leadership roles in their church for three decades, the advancement of the mission could not be confined to the borders of Europe but had to be extended to Africa, Asia, and South America.

The idea of entering Africa from Europe was born in 1901 when Ludwig Richard was deeply impressed by the educational and medical activities of the various Protestant missions in Lower Egypt, Conradi was encouraged to extend his mission up the Nile as well, eventually reaching Sudan or even Ethiopia.<sup>49</sup>

After further consideration of entering Africa, the route to Ethiopia via Egypt was abandoned as the colonies of European nations presented themselves as a viable and easy way to get to the heart of that continent. So the choice fell on Tanzania, a German colony called Tanganyika. Since Adventism was then best established in

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Höschele, *Christian Remnant*, 47.

Germany, the first step naturally had to come from that country. The German Adventists were eager to turn their full attention to this country and carry out their mission. In 1903 this part of the world had suddenly become important for evangelism, especially because of the report of the explorers who came to East Africa.

But before the small church in Germany could even think of such a project, it had barely 2,900 members in the planning phase in 1902 and only 3,400 a year. Later, when the mission was formed, much effort and energy was required to build popular support within the church. With impressive skills, Conradi secured backing for this initiative from the church headquarters in Washington, D.C, USA, as well as garnering support from European church members. Notably, the German Reich government approved the project as well. Conradi first consulted the German Colonization Society, which referred him to the German Colonial Department in Berlin. (No one was allowed to begin any activity in Africa without the approval of the colonial authorities). Sometime between September 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, he made his first contact there. Fortunately, he was well-received from the start and encouraged to write a petition to the government. Noting that the government might respond favorably, Conradi was encouraged to meet the governor of German East Africa in person on his visit to Berlin that same year. On September 18th, 1902, a report was sent to W.C. Sisley, Treasurer of the European General Conference, from Hamburg. The author expressed hope for the bursary, positive government response, and a potential meeting with Governor Graf von Götzen. He reported from Hamburg on 18 September 1902 to W. C. Sisley, Treasurer of the European General Conference

hoping to get the bursary, the government to respond positively, and to meet the Governor, Graf von Götzen<sup>50</sup>

Conradi's petition must have been well received because the colonial department had already responded to the church's request even before Conradi was able to meet Graf von Götzen. Since the church as such in Prussia, (a German state located on most of the North European Plain) had no legal status, except the title of an educational and medical-legal association in Friedensau, which had been active since 1899, the German government asked the Free State of Hamburg for an assessment of the church's situation.<sup>51</sup>

According to its assessment, the colonial department of the German Reich government could only refer to its contacts with the church medical work in Samoa and praise its commitment to medical care. However, particular mention was made of the purely missionary spirit of the mission in its abstention from any political engagement. The Prussian government was well aware of Adventist non-interference in the delicate balance of power between American, British, and German interests in the Pacific.<sup>52</sup>

The Free State of Hamburg was also unable to provide any negative information about the church in its response. In their overall assessment, Adventists were found to differ slightly from Lutheran doctrine, with Sabbath observance appearing as the most striking difference. It was also mentioned that the church in Hamburg is recognized as the Association of Adventists in Hamburg. The fact that the

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<sup>50</sup>Gerald F. Sayers, *The Handbook of Tanganyika* (London: Macmillan, 1930), 43.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 23.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 24

association is self-supporting and occasionally receives financial support from its headquarters in the USA was also stated without comment.<sup>53</sup>

Finally, on December 17, 1902, Conradi met Count von Götzen in Berlin at the Hotel Bristol, Unter den Linden. The governor had been fully briefed on the Adventists' intentions and warmly welcomed their mission to Africa.<sup>54</sup> Since the colonial onslaught on Africa was still strong and based on national interests, the German government naturally sought to encourage the hosting of German missions and German personnel

Immediately after his initial contacts with the Colonial Department, Conradi recognized the need for some form of Legal Corporation to hold property in East Africa. It would be helpful to receive wills and legacies and to raise funds for missions within the Empire. This was not possible at that time and the mission was legally managed under the Association of Adventists in Hamburg. The legal status of the European Division of Seventh-day Adventist General Conference's mission reports has remained unchanged since their official publication under their auspices and printing by the International Tract Association.<sup>55</sup>

It is important to know that the process of getting permission to enter East Africa did not pass through easily. There was opposition from different groups that did not want Adventism to be carried to other nations where they had their missions already. Government officials were suspicious of Adventists and requested that Adventist Mission stations be geographically separate from the work of existing

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 263.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 262.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 264.

mission societies. Thus, the Colonial Department, appealed to the governor that this concern be made a condition for the admission of Adventists.<sup>56</sup>

There was one thing that was special from the government to the Adventists. This did not happen to any other religious group that was permitted to open missions in foreign lands. The German government conducted special training for Adventist missionaries before they left for missions in other continents. When Adventists arrived in Tanzania, they established themselves like other mission organizations on the continent. Bruno Ohme and Ernst Cotz underwent training at the Oriental Seminary as part of their preparations for their African mission. This training set them apart from previous missionaries sent from Europe and America<sup>57</sup>

Another peculiar event that did not happen to any religion except the Adventists was the fundraising that was done by the government to support the Adventist mission in Tanzania. It was organized and conducted by the government itself. This was opposed by other protestant churches as churches uniting with the state, but later they also accepted the plan.

In 1913, during their missionary operations in Tanzania, Adventists in Germany participated in a fundraising effort called the "Emperor Donation." This effort was made to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Emperor Wilhelm's reign and raised 26,000 German marks. The money was given to the German government and then returned to the Adventists as a sum of 50,000 German marks. It's an interesting aspect of their interaction with the German government and their work in Tanzania.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Höschele, *Christian Remnant*, 46.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

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

## **Conclusion**

Adventism started in America with few people who were seriously reading the Bible and praying. They expected Jesus to come in 1844, but Jesus did not. The great disappointment did not discourage them but made them seek the truth more diligently. After receiving divine revelation, they were compelled to share it with others across America and beyond. Their message was so impactful that it spread to various parts of the world. When God revealed the truth to them, they did not keep silent but went to tell others in America and later to other parts of the world. As a result of their great work, today the membership of Adventism in the world is over 22,000,000 people.

Taking Adventism to other parts of the world was not easy. They encountered challenges such as diseases, dangers of robbers, wild animals, hard transport, and language barriers. These challenges did not discourage them or stop them from moving forward but became stepping-stones to their success. It's fascinating to see how the methods used in the past are still relevant today with minor adjustments to cater to the modern church. With the current world population of over 8 billion, there is an even greater need for us to put in more effort than ever before.

CHAPTER 3  
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH  
IN NORTHEAST TANZANIA

The history of Adventism in Northeast Tanzania can be divided into five distinct periods, as detailed in Höschele's centennial publication. These periods include the pioneering era, the early stages of growth, the onset of World War I, the pre and post-independence period, and the period of rapid expansion.

**The Period of the Pioneers (1903-1909)**

In 1903, the first SDA missionaries arrived in Tanganyika (formerly known as German East Africa), marking the beginning of the pioneer era. Hardly two years had passed between the first planning phase and entry into East Africa. In the summer of 1903, the departure of the first missionaries was announced at the general meeting of the German Union Conference. Johann Ehlers, a student at the Friedensau Seminary, and the German-American nurse Abraham C. Enns were selected for this expedition. On October 23, 1903, they departed from Naples and reached Dar es Salaam on November 12 of the same year.

On November 25, a mission was established in the Pare region by Johannes Ehlers and Abraham C. Enns. Although they were originally instructed to settle on the east coast of Lake Victoria, the governor of German East Africa suggested they move to the halfway point between the coast of Tanzania and Kilimanjaro. A telegram was sent to headquarters in Hamburg on November 27 to announce the establishment of

the mission.<sup>1</sup> The work began one hundred and twenty years ago with the arrival of the German Church in 1903. The first settlers, the Ehlers brothers and Enns arrived at Tanga that year. They used the newly constructed railway to travel sixty miles inland from Tanga. From Tanga, they walked another fifty miles until they reached the base of Pare mountains. From Pare, they followed the river Saseni in a north-eastern direction until they arrived at Giti in the Mamba region. It was at Giti that the first mission stations were built, named “Friedenstal”. The first mission station was built on a plot purchased from the chief at 100 rupees.<sup>2</sup>

The only means of transportation available back then was a small railway system that connected Tanga and Korogwe, spanning a distance of 53 The main reason for changing the original plan to settle near the shore of Lake Victoria was the problem of transportation. From Tanga inland, the Usambara Rail only took them as far as Korogwe, about 85 kilometers. From here, the missionaries had to continue on foot, but they found the way too inconvenient and consequently settled in the Pare Mountains. The governor of East Africa had already recommended this and also presented them with a letter of recommendation to the military stations giving them adequate protection, which of course influenced the decision. As a result, Ehlers and Enns were not too far from the regional colonial station Wilhelmstal (Lushoto).<sup>3</sup>

The path was so rough and stony that the missionaries were carried by the natives to their destination. To the natives, this was common because they used to be forced to carry the European colonizers. Such an event made no distinction between

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<sup>1</sup>W. Mueller, “*The Beginning of the German Advent Mission in Africa*,” Transl. “Der Beginn der deutschen Adventmission in Afrika,” *Advent-echo* 69, no. 20 (Oct. 15, 1970): 391.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>W. Mueller, *Im Herzen Afrikas* (Hamburg, Germany: Advent-Verlag, 1939), 24.

the European colonizers and missionaries. Langford reported that they spent two days there, while the boys brought them presents of food. Then they pushed on to Mamba. Fortunately, they had a hammock with them, but the man who helped them had hard work carrying his wife over the stony road. The country got more inviting as they went into the hills, as the dry land at Kihurio was not very inviting.”<sup>4</sup> Another report came from J. Harker, who witnessed and participated in the carrying of European missionaries. They were carried in stretchers. He said the journeying was mostly up and down steep hills, sometimes through -dense forests and over mountain streams; the scenery was often grand and impressive. Sister Maxwell and Myrtle went with them most of the way, riding in a hammock or on a donkey’s back, walking when the rocky path became too difficult for donkey or bearers.”<sup>5</sup>

In the end, settling in the Pare Mountains proved to be a wise choice. The decision to settle in the Pare Mountains turned out to be the right one in the long run. Having left Lushoto, their destination was Kihurio in Southern Pare, a region little visited by Europeans. Here land was available for a mission station, and the chief of Mamba sold a tract for 100 rupees. The first mission called “Valley of Peace” (Friedenstal) was established on this land. They later advanced further into the Pare region from Kihurio to Mamba-Gonja, Kisiwani, Ndungu, and finally Mamba itself.

It is important to know why the missionaries were given Giti (the Valley of Peace). It was the place where the Pare worshiped their god and offered their yearly

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<sup>4</sup> L. F. Langford, “What we Found in Tanganyika,” *The Missionary Worker* 25, no. 20 (Oct 26, 1921): 1-8, accessed 21 June 2020, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/MW/MW19211026-V25-20.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Solomon Wolde Endes, Retrieved,” *Mission* 73, no 4 (1983): 5-6, accessed 21 June 2020, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/MissionsQtrly/MQ19831001-V72-04.pdf>.

sacrifices. Here they offered sacrifices for peace, protection, blessing cursing enemies and evildoers. Among precious

Sacrifices that were highly honored were those of human beings. So the chief in conversation with his people, decided to give them Giti knowing that they would die there. But the missionaries thanked God for giving them such a wonderful place with big trees, flowing water, and cool weather.<sup>6</sup> Stefan Höschele also commented that after three days Chi, ef Mauya the local leader, granted them a piece of land. It was located in an area that was traditionally believed to be inhabited by spirits. Despite this, the two pioneers not only decided to stay but also built the first mission station.<sup>7</sup>

The pioneer missionaries began the establishment of the first mission through all sorts of hardships but endured and prevailed to the end. They did not get a clear picture of the results of their hardships and what the future church would be. Their purpose was to fulfill their duty and leave other things in the hands of God. Abraham Saleem Farag wrote that Abraham C. Enns and Johann Ehlers established the first mission station at Giti, high in the Pare Mountains near Mount Kilimanjaro. They called it the “Valley of Peace.” Little did they dream that they were beginning work that was destined to cover Tanganyika and extend to almost every country in Africa. Inscribed on the mission's church bells, still in use today, are the words (in German)

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<sup>6</sup> James Mbwambo, Church member at Sambweni, Same, interview by the author on December 20, 2022.

<sup>7</sup> Höschele, *Christian Remnant*, 53.

“They shall soon stretch forth their hand unto God” and “If you hear My voice, harden not your hearts.” Their work stands as an example today.<sup>8</sup>

Europeans were thrilled when they received the exciting news that the first mission station had been established in East Africa. Eager to maintain close contact with the Embryonic Mission, the Home base deployed its Mission Director, Conradi, to the Mission’s front lines the following year. He had been the driving force behind this missionary project himself and longed to see its development firsthand. In 1904 he visited the neighboring mission in the Middle East and continued his inspection trip to East Africa in the same year.

Close contact with the front mission was important not only to ensure its development or to keep the flow of communications with the home base but also to the financial commitment made it necessary to stay in close contact. Over time, the increasingly self-sustaining European mission developed a solid financial base. Failures could not be afforded and debts could not be incurred. The mission had to be set up on a cash basis. All European Adventists were therefore encouraged to support this project. Thus, the British Adventists presented all their Sabbath school donations collected during a year, and the Swiss Adventists gave a Christmas donation of 1,000 marks in 1902. The East Africa Mission was an inter-European missionary project.

When Conradi arrived in Friedenstal on his first sightseeing tour, the construction of the station was already well-advanced. With four missionaries (A. Langhof, Chr Wunderlich, Frieda Breitling, and J. Ehlers’s wife), including a

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<sup>8</sup> Saleem A. Farag, “Keeping History: The Bell,” *Adventist Review*, 17 December, 1992, 19, accessed 25 June 2020, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH19921217-V169-51.pdf>

technician and a teacher, he not only enriched the crew in terms of numbers but also helped to further develop the mission from the outset.<sup>9</sup>

Brother Conradi was a remarkable leader in Adventism and played a significant role in the global history of religion. During his tenure, the Adventist churches in Europe experienced unprecedented membership growth. Ellen G. White once acknowledged his missionary impact, stating that he opened doors for the angels to enter. While demanding hard work and commitment from his subordinates, Conradi also led by example.<sup>10</sup>

Towards the end of his life, Conradi departed from the Adventist Church after having worked with and converted numerous individuals. It was reported that after the 1888 General Conference session, many suspected that Conradi had rejected the message of righteousness by faith presented by A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner. And in 1931, growing deaf and increasingly bitter at being removed from office, Conradi declared, "I must go my way, although I do not want to go." The conclusion of Conradi's tenure as a church worker remains uncertain. The above details indicate that he was driven by the desire for a position, which ultimately led to his relinquishing of his ministerial credentials. The end of Conradi's life and ministry remains something of a mystery. Despite his decades of visionary and self-sacrificing service to the Adventist Church, in 1932 he voluntarily surrendered his ministerial credentials, negotiated a financial settlement with the church, and accepted credentials as a minister in the Seventh Day Baptist Church before he died in 1939.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Daniel, "Ludwig Richard Conradi," *Adventist Heritage* 12, Winter, 1987, 17. <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/ScholarlyJournals/AH/AH19870101-V12-01.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 67.

The early missionaries started their mission by focusing on the education of young children and teaching them basic skills. They utilized Christian schools as a primary tool for connecting with the locals but initially faced resistance due to cultural differences and language barriers. However, as time passed, the children began to embrace the teachings of the church on topics such as polygamy, smoking, and alcohol use. Finally, after five years of hard work, the missionaries achieved their first baptism with six new converts in Giti in 1908.<sup>12</sup>

The headquarters in Hamburg recognized the importance of providing additional training to the missionaries for better cultural understanding. To fulfill this need, two ministerial students, B. Ohme, and Ernst Kotz, were chosen from the Friedensau Seminary to attend the Oriental Seminary at the University of Berlin. Professor Carl Meinhof introduced Kotz to Kiswahili. During this one-year course and later played a key role in establishing Chasu grammar. Since the missions' capacity to provide such training to all their missionaries was limited, their seminaries in Europe offered little more than the basic courses needed by pastors most missionaries had to be content with the spiritual training already received for their outreach.

Immediately after he arrived in Africa, Kotz began his work with the Chasu language. Between 1906 and 1908 the Chasu grammar was prepared; it appeared in 1909 in the series *Archiv für das Studium Deutscher Kolonial Sprachen* (Archive for the Studium of German Colonial Languages) as Volume 10.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>K. B. Elineema, "Tanzania: A Triumph of Faith," *Adventist Review*, August 13 1981, 16-17, accessed 25 June 2020, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH19810813-V158-33.pdf>

<sup>13</sup>Ernst Kotz, *Grammatik des Chasu in Deutsch-Ostafrika (Pare Gebirge)*. *Archiv für das Studium deutscher Kolonialsprachen*, Vol. X, (Berlin, Germany: Verlag Georg Reiner, 1909), 7.

Upon his arrival in Africa in July 1905, he was tasked with working in the South Pare Mountains where the denomination had established one mission station and had plans to build others. Right away, he delved into the Asu (Southern Pare) language, showcasing his exceptional language skills, which were soon recognized by his colleagues. Consequently, language work became his focal point in 1909. From April 1910 onwards, he served as the director of the Pare field.

Kotz's literary work with the Pare enabled the mission early on to place its activities on an indigenous basis. By mastering the Pare language through the publication of the Chasu grammar, the translation of the Gospel of Matthew, and the printing of literature, the Mission made an important contribution to East Africa. Unfortunately, the First World War put an early end to this development. Kotz, like the other missionaries, was taken prisoner and detained by British forces in India and Egypt. The disruption to the mission was a hindrance to the otherwise natural progression of growth.<sup>14</sup>

Kotz's influence was not only felt in East Africa but also had an impact on Central Europe. Intercultural exchange was equally important for the home base and the mission. As the link between these two cultural worlds, the missionaries played an important role in relaying information to both sides. This became very clear in Kotz's mission reports, in which he answered expectations of success and at the same time described the realities of the mission field. He recognized the importance of reporting progress for home base inspiration, but at the same time was careful not to paint a false picture of East Africa by relaying an unrealistic view.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Ernst Kotz, *Sklaven* (Hamburg, Germany: Advent-Verlag, 1925), 208.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 32.

Generally, the missionary felt caught between three fronts: the expectations of the home community, the thinking and feeling of the world of Africans, and general public opinion of secular thinking in Europe and among the settlers in East Africa, who did not willingly support the ideals of the mission. Before all this, the missionary had to justify himself and his mission.

In addition, the missionary position did not always remain constant but was subject to constant change because of unexpected circumstances such as climate change and tropical diseases. This made his task even more difficult. It soon became clear that the world of missions was very different than expected. Kotz observed that the missionary's opinion and attitude to his task were constantly changing, going through a cycle from inner seclusion to full acceptance of the African and his culture.<sup>16</sup>

The missionary development was also presented in the church newspapers. With his problems and those of the mission, the congregation grew at the same time. Kotz found that this development was very important to the growth of the church at home. The diverse religious and ethnic problems enriched them in giving and receiving.<sup>17</sup>

The Pare Mission became the first major experience for European missionaries in Africa. They had many difficulties, in addition to the mistakes at the beginning. Thought to be white wizards, they were initially more feared than welcomed. Casual contacts aroused curiosity until the natives anticipated the true intentions of the missionaries. It was above all the command of the Pare language by the missionaries

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 35.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 162.

that finally secured a successful approach. Both sides learned to understand each other.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Ernst Kotz, *Im Banne der Furcht. Sitten und Gebrauche der Neger* (Hamburg, Germany: Advent-Verlag, 1922), 25, 225.

## **Challenges Faced by First Missionaries in Northeast Tanzania**

Northeast Tanzania has the following major tribes: Wamasai, Washambaa, Wapare, Wamang'ati, Wahadzabe, Wadigo, Wazigua, Wabondei, Wataita, Wambugu, Wambugwe, Wasegeju, Wanango, Wachagga, Assa, Wakwa'dza, Wadatoonga, Wabarabaig, Wairak, Wanguu, Wameru, and Wanguu. The beginning of Adventism in Northeast Tanzania (specifically in Mamba) was not simple. Although challenges will be discussed in detail in chapter four of this research, the ones outlined here are specific for the first missionaries.

### **Resistance to keep the Sabbath**

Generally, (even today) the Pare cannot do something that they do not understand well. They must be convinced beyond all doubt before they accept anything new. The good news is that when they accept it they never turn back. So accepting Adventism was very hard. It took 5 years to get the first fruits for baptism. The missionaries used force to make them attend worship and rest on Saturday. They followed them to their farms and asked them these questions in Pare language. “Hanini ukondanya msi wa Mfumwa?” -Why do you defile the Lord's Day? “Hanini wesizie he mtaso? -Why did you not come for worship? Then they punished them severely and commanded them to go to church. The father of the family got a double punishment, and it was done in public. After worship, they were gathered under a tree and punished again for going to the church unclean.<sup>19</sup> In that manner, the whole community worshiped on Saturday for fear of punishment. From that time to early 2000 there was no public activity on the Sabbath day.

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<sup>19</sup> Msifuni Mbazi, Church member at Mamba Myamba Seventh day Adventist Church, Interview by the author, April 12, 2022 in Mamba Myamba.

In 1986 when I was a student at Parane Secondary School, two of our fellow students escaped and went to Myamba Center to buy a few items on the Sabbath day. They went around to find if there could be an open shop. They even went to far remote villages and small shops but in vain. They came back to school after six hours and reported that they found no open shop. Today the situation is quite different from the past. I visited the same place in 2022 during my research and found 17 shops and other community services operating on the Sabbath day.

The German colonizers used punishment and even killing in public to make people obey and do their will. The colonizers were carried by Africans to their destinations. Missionaries were also carried although there is no vivid evidence whether they also forced Africans to carry them or they carried them willingly. People considered the missionaries as colonizers because they used the same method (punishment). It took some years for missionaries to show the difference between the two groups.

### **The Challenge of Polygyny**

“The English word polygamy means many wives or many husbands. The technical term for many wives is polygyny... Polygynous marriages in Tanzania continue to follow traditional laws.”<sup>20</sup> In most African societies including the Pare, a man with many wives was respected and considered to have the ability to lead the society. It was also proof of wealth and wisdom. The leaders and pillars of the local community were often the men who had multiple wives and were capable of managing a large homestead with ease. Their social skills and maturity were evident in their ability to handle such responsibilities. It was the men with many wives who

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<sup>20</sup> Michael C. Kirwen, *African Cultural Knowledge* (Nairobi, Kenya: Maryknoll Institute of African Studies, 2005), 150.

were seen as the leaders and pillars of the local community. Their ability to manage a large homestead is a testimony to their social skills and maturity.<sup>21</sup>

The first missionaries found themselves in a dilemma when a man with more than one wife gave his life for baptism. It was hard for them to decide whether to baptize him or not to baptize him. In most cases, the wives were baptized but the man was not. On this crucial issue, the missionaries of all denominations including the Seventh-day Adventists have consistently refused to surrender their ground and stand on this issue. They have always maintained that acceptance of polygyny would be fundamentally contrary and inconsistent with the teaching of Christianity.

At the General Conference session, decisions were made regarding the challenge of polygyny in Africa and Asia. It remains a significant issue that requires attention from the world church. A subject to which careful consideration was given in the Missions Round Table at Milwaukee, and one which touches a problem that our missionaries in every Eastern country have to contend with, is that which came before us under the caption Polygyny and Marriage Relationships. At the time of the Session, certain resolutions were formulated regarding the subject. The General Conference Committee has since adopted these resolutions and we would like to provide our workers with the recommendations in printed form. The following General Conference Committee action has been voted to adopt the resolutions formulated as a result of discussions during the Conference session: It is recognized that the practice of polygyny on the part of many races for whom we are laboring challenges Christian

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

principles and constitutes a ground of compromise if permitted in the Christian church.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> A.W. Cormack, "Polygamy and Marriage Relationship," *Eastern Tidings* 21, no 17 (September 1, 1926): 1.

## **Tropical Diseases**

Tropical diseases such as malaria brought hard times to the missionaries in Northeast Tanzania. The missionaries suffered from these diseases and some feared death and returned to their homeland, but some were not ready to surrender even at the cost of their own life. Conradi became a victim of malaria and gave testimony that he was attacked by malaria six times and it almost killed him.<sup>23</sup>

## **Language Barrier**

Northeast Tanzania has 22 major tribes, which means 22 languages, excluding tribes with few people. The language was a challenge at the beginning, but later learned Pare and became fluent in it. After a few years, they translated the Bible and songbook into Pare <sup>24</sup> (Nyimbo zha Mtaso). Concerning those missionaries who could not speak the native language, an African Historian, Masfa, said the following. “The few missionaries who could not speak local languages made use of interpreters, and were often among the first converts.”<sup>25</sup>

## **Transportation and Communication Barrier**

Transport was hard especially from Korogwe to Giti. They had to walk on foot for several days. They encountered dangers on the way including wild animals and robbers, but God's hand was with them. They reached their destination safely.

Concerning the transportation of the first missionaries, Masfa said the following:

“Missionaries had to adjust to available African systems of transportation to achieve their goal of preaching to Africans. They had no choice but to travel many miles on

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<sup>23</sup> Daniel Heinz, “Conradi,” *Adventist Heritage* 12, no. 1 (Winter 1987): 3-4.

<sup>24</sup> Ernst Kotz, *Nyimbo zha Mtaso* (Kendu Bay, Kenya: Africa Herald Publishing House, 1967).

<sup>25</sup> Masfa, *Seventh Day Adventism in Africa*, 44.

foot to get to villages. Most towns and villages in the early twentieth century were linked by narrow footpaths.”<sup>26</sup>

### **Lack of Important Materials**

Africa is far from Europe and Giti, almost 8000 km. When the missionaries needed materials, they did not receive them on time. It took months and even years to get the required materials for the mission. Transporting the materials from Tanga to Giti was also a challenge. Transport from the harbor to the interior was hard and sometimes dangerous because there were robbers and wild animals on the way.

### **The Challenge of Pare Beliefs**

The traditional religious beliefs and challenges resemble those of many African tribes and cultures. The religious beliefs of the Pare differed so much from those of the missionaries and it is hard to explain them with few words. For instance, in Pareland, just like in some other African societies, the birth of twins was considered a curse or source of misfortune or harbinger of disaster in the society, in a few cases, however, it was considered a sign of power from the gods. During an interview at Mamba Myamba, Msifuni Mbazi said “The mother of the twins was commanded to breastfeed them to the full, and she traveled with selected clan elders to the waterfalls (a place called Mayeni). The water falls of Saseni river was used for this purpose. While the babies were in deep sleep, they put them at the edge of a stone and left them to roll down the waterfalls when they woke from their sleep or be eaten by wild creatures.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>27</sup> Msifuni Mbazi, church member at Myamba SDA Church, Interview by the Author on April 12, 2022 in Mamba Same.

Touched by compassion and passion to rescue the children, the missionaries at Giti used Paul Wambiru (a grandaunt from Friedenstal Evangelism Center) to collect and rescue children who were left to die at Mayeni. Wambiru collected these children and kept them at his home. It was a top secret. The children were called “Children of Wambiru.” Later, some evangelists did the same and many were rescued. The missionaries made sure that these children got the required education. The interviewer got this information from his mother-in-law.<sup>28</sup>

African societies have always held twins, triplets, and other multiple births in high regard due to the uncommon nature of such births. Previously, some cultures considered twins to be a bad omen and would either sacrifice one or both of them or even kill the mother. In other African regions, twins were allowed to live, but people believed they possessed special abilities from God.<sup>29</sup>

### **The Early Years of Growth (1909-1914)**

The Africans did not make it easy for the missionaries to arrive. Other and less developed cultural attitudes, especially from a Western perspective of hygiene, made the newcomer think of home. In the early 1900s, there was a significant gap between the Western and African worlds. Nevertheless, African people's eagerness to learn and adaptability were acknowledged from the start.<sup>30</sup> After all, it was not an adventurous urge or religious zeal that made the missionaries stay and risk their lives. According to Kotz, it was love for Africans above all else that encouraged the missionaries to continue despite the dangers of missionary service in its early days. Without devotion

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> John S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 1991), 95.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 32.

to the Pare people and a mutual response, missionary service would not be so rewarding.<sup>31</sup>

The missionary's wife especially felt the difficulties of missionary service. With her husband traveling alone for long periods, not to mention the single wife, she was forced more than anyone to match her family's needs to the available national resources. This became evident during World War I when most of the men were taken prisoners of war. The proximity to the mother tongue and culture proved to be particularly helpful at the time.<sup>32</sup>

Much attention has been paid to the cultural framework of the Pare. Their family structures, marriages, births, trades, and cults were of great interest. Cultural patterns must be taken seriously if the mission is to be successful, Kotz argued. He even felt personally enriched by studying them closely. Despite this positive voice in support of African culture, mistakes were certainly made and cultural values destroyed. This was undoubtedly a delicate matter, since the missionaries targeting fear touched a complex interwoven cultural system, eliminating some aspects of it while introducing the values of the Christian life.<sup>33</sup>

Kotz's open-minded approach to Pare culture was also inspired by his former teacher F. von Lus Chau, an anthropologist at the University of Berlin, who emphasized that cultures of different environments have their values. With this anthropological insight and his religious motivation, Kotz observed African culture. Consequently, he realized that the encounter with African cultures opened up rich

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 114.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 126.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 25, 225.

traditions of thought, which can be found above all in the diverse African proverbs and stories.

Kotz, also concerned about the wrongdoing of the European colonists, bemoaned the great gulf between their Christian teachings and practices. He anticipated future African retaliation, but this was delayed by the underdeveloped state of Afrikaners and their language divisions, allowing the colonial powers to rule unopposed. This tension contributed to the spread of Islam, he argued, and could not rule out a future holy war against whites. The proximity of Islam to African culture and skin also spoke in his favor; the teachings of Muhammad appealed to the African spirit. To counter this, Kotz recommended the study of African languages as the best way to reach African perceptions.<sup>34</sup>

Eventually, the Pare Mission was established with its respective churches and schools. The most important institutions were Friedenstal (Giti), Kihurio, Vunta, and Vwasu (Suji). This success did not come without sacrifice. Of the nine missionaries and their families, three had died in the Pare region, while another six lost their lives on the east shore of Lake Victoria. Of the many missionaries who worked in Tanzania, almost all went through the Pare Mission.

In 1909, the Adventist movement expanded 600 miles into the Lake province and established a new mission station. Eventually, the Busegwe station became the headquarters of the Tanzania Union in 1960 and is now the headquarters of the Mara Conference. Similarly, the Majita station opened that same year and experienced a decline after the war, but later regained its strength and showed the strongest response to Adventist services. In 1910, a school was built to hold 160 children, but 600 boys

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 219.

and 175 girls applied. Over the years, the Adventist work continued to expand, and three new districts were established. The pioneers' faith was so strong that they built a church with a seating capacity of 600 in Majita before anyone was even baptized. Furthermore, the Gospel of Matthew was translated into Chasu, a local language, and a hymnal was created with a compilation of Christian songs

In 1912, Dr. F.W. Vasenius from Finland became the first physician of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church in Tanganyika. The SDA Church's medical and educational programs were highly effective in reaching out to the local people, resulting in the largest baptism of 52 individuals in 1913. Upare had 26 SDA-operated schools with over 2,000 enrolled students in 1915, while Victoria Nyanza had 15 other schools with a similar number of students. During the German era in Tanzania, which lasted until 1916, a total of 400 individuals were baptized.<sup>35</sup>

The missionaries established another mission station at Kihurio, which was very important for the Giti, Vunta, and Suji missions. All missionary materials that were sent from Europe were taken from the railway station to Kihurio and then to the aimed destinations. Kihurio is located at the foot of the Pare mountains of Northeastern Tanzania. It provided the first German missionaries with their first converts in 1908. This station is like an oasis amid the desert. About 2 miles away from Kihurio there was a native in Lukuta village.<sup>36</sup> Kihurio is the second mission to be opened by missionaries, the first being Giti. It was opened for expanding Adventism. In March of 1904, a group of missionaries and builders arrived in Kihurio to start work on a dwelling house and school buildings. Among them were Langholf,

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 16.

<sup>36</sup> Lameck Mwamukonda, "By Prayer and Fasting," *Mission* 72, no. 4 (1983): 22-23, accessed 25 June 2020, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/MissionsQtrly/MQ19831001-V72-04.pdf>

Wunderlich, Mrs. Ehlers, and a lady teacher. Their preparations paved the way for Ohme and E. Kotz to arrive in 1905 and begin school work with 150 pupils.<sup>37</sup>

According to reports from the first missionaries, Kihuiro school has played a crucial role in the local education sector. It has produced numerous qualified teachers who have gone on to teach in several schools. At Vunta, five out of six teachers are Kihuiro alumni, while Vuasu and Friedenstal have three and two teachers respectively. Currently, seven Kihuiro graduates are teaching in the area. These facts are a testament to the quality of education provided at Kihuiro.<sup>38</sup>

Kihurio area was mainly dominated by Muslims for a long time. Introducing Adventism was hard when compared to other mission stations. Different ways were designed to discourage the missionaries' progress. During Enns' testimony, he expressed his belief that Islam is the strongest and most valuable religion to follow. In contrast, Christianity is often considered the religion of children due to our membership being primarily made up of young people. Attendance during Sabbath was solely comprised of youth and children, as our once-promising school of 165 students has dwindled to only 20 or 30 attendees.<sup>39</sup>

The third mission station was Suji. This mission plays an important role in Tanzania's Adventism history as well as the government education department. The mission was opened by the first missionaries. In 1906, a plot of land was purchased in Suji, and a mission station was established under the name Vuasu. The work was

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<sup>37</sup> B. M. Musgrave, "Jubilee Years at Suji Mission," *South African Division Outlook*, 51, 1953, 11, accessed 25 June 2020, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/SADO/SADO19530815-V51-15.pdf>.

<sup>38</sup> Abraham C. Enns, "Mission Station Kihuiro, East Africa," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, January 1913, 13-15. accessed 25 June 2020, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH19130109-V90-02.pdf>.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

started by Missionary Enns and later continued by Missionary Sander. Unfortunately, Sander passed away in 1908, and his successors were Brethren Poenig and Kunze.<sup>40</sup>

The missionaries at Suji focused on four responsibilities, working for people in the society, operating the school, health services, and evangelism training. In the beginning, people had no confidence in them; they considered them as colonizers or like other missionaries of other denominations. But later they gained the confidence of the people through their best services. The missionaries opened teachers' training colleges at Suji where both boys and girls were trained. The training was open to all denominations and religions. H. Robson once said the following: At our school, we offer training for boys up to the Government Grade II Teacher's Examination. We welcome students from all backgrounds, and we are proud to have students from various mission societies, as well as a few Mohammedans and heathens. Our goal is to prepare all of our students for successful futures.<sup>41</sup>

Students at Suji and other missions were trained to be independent in all fields of life. It was from Suji and through this training that the Pare are outstanding and the best shoemakers in Tanzania today. When he was at Suji, Bull wrote the following: Our educational program is designed to provide primary education in the local villages, with further specialized training available at our headquarters in Suji. Our female students receive instruction in sewing, motherhood skills, and local industries from Miss Clifford. We currently have a group of thirty-one young people working towards their Grade 11 Government teacher certification, and we are in the process of developing plans for an industrial school that will train self-sufficient evangelists in

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> H. Robson, "Our Responsibility at Suji," *The Southern Africa Outlook* XL, no. 15 (1942), 1, accessed 28 June 2020, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/SADO/SADO19420815-V40-15.pdf>.

tailoring and shoemaking. Our goal is to equip these students with the skills they need to support themselves while spreading the message to communities that have not yet been reached.<sup>42</sup>

Suji made a remarkable history in Tanzania. It was from here that the first female teacher in Tanganyika graduated. Her achievements encouraged other girls and women to pursue education. A letter was written by government officials to the church leaders. Beardsell writes: Our Mission in Tanganyika Territory has made history by producing the first female graduate who received her Government Certificate in July. Damari is the brilliant mind behind this achievement, and we are proud to have played a part in her success. The Director of Education for Tanganyika Territory commended our Mission for establishing this landmark in the progress of female education. This achievement garnered the attention of the government, and Suji College received government assistance in paying important expenses. We are thrilled to have contributed to the advancement of female education in Tanganyika Territory

The students at Suji participated fully in manual work and other physical activities that helped them to be independent and competent when they left the school. The natives also involved themselves in building churches instead of leaving everything in the hands of the missionaries. They did this in the absence of missionaries' supervision. It has been reported that the Pare Christians have been working hard for three years to build a magnificent church that can accommodate more than 700 people. The community has contributed their time and effort by treading clay, burning brick, and constructing the church as a freewill offering. Some

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<sup>42</sup> A. F. Bull, "East Tanganyika Mission," *The Advent Survey*, October 1929, 4, , accessed 28 June 2020, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/TASNED/TASNED19291001-V01-04.pdf>

individuals who were unable to physically participate have generously donated money to purchase necessary materials such as cement and iron. This showcases the dedication and generosity of the community to contribute in any way they can towards this project.<sup>43</sup>

In five years, four mission stations were established at Vunta, as other missionaries, including Drangmeister and Koelling, joined the mission. By the outbreak of World War I, there were 277 African Christians and 28 African workers. It's remarkable to see the growth of the mission stations during this time there were 6 schools in Vunta. Many teachers were natives of Kihurio and later they received teachers who graduated from Suji Mission. Teachers, workers, and church members at Vunta had a good missionary spirit. Together with working hard in church activities arrangements were made for them to have certain hours during the day to cultivate their farms and gardens.<sup>44</sup>

### **World War I Outbreak (1914-1918)**

The development of Adventism in Tanganyika, Africa, and other parts of the world faced significant challenges during World War I. In some areas, the work had a dominant presence for decades following the war. As Müller recounted, the outbreak of the war caused an abrupt and unforeseen crisis for Seventh-day Adventist Missions in East Africa.

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<sup>43</sup> G. A. Ellingworth, "Mission Work in Tanganyika," *Review and Herald* 114, no 10 (March 11, 1937): 10, , accessed 28 June 2020, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH19370311-V114-10.pdf>.

<sup>44</sup> W. E. Read, "Itinerating Among the Pare Hills, East Africa," *Review and Herald* 102, no. 50 (December 10, 1925): 5-6. , accessed 28 June 2020, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH19251210-V102-50.pdf>

During the early phase of the war, some German missionaries were allowed to remain in their mission compound. But as the severity of the war began to be felt in Africa, too, the colonial government even drafted missionaries into the colonial army. During this period some missionaries served in a position from which they could still keep contact with the mission where their families resided under perplexing circumstances. Another loss that was caused by the war and which could not be corrected or regained was that some important documents and Bible translations that were kept by German missionaries were burned or lost forever. Many missionaries and civilians died or were injured brutally. According to Strachan Hey, the war had a significant impact on Africa. He believes that it disrupted the traditional patterns of authority, caused economic activities to crumble, and pushed Africans toward seeking independence. The aftermath of the war led to the growth of nationalistic activities, and movements such as the National Congress of British West Africa emerged. Moreover, diseases like dysentery, typhus, smallpox, malaria, and cholera had devastating effects on the African army.<sup>45</sup>

The enmity and bitter relationship between the Germans and the British during the time of war is well explained by Masfa in that in East Africa, the British and the Germans were involved in a bitter struggle. Even among the Seventh-day Adventist missionaries, not everything was admirable. The Germans were evicted from the mission fields they had established. The British authorities made sure that all Germans were held captive; as long as they were Germans, it did not matter to their captors whether they were missionaries or not.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Strachan Hey, *The First World War in Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004), 6

<sup>46</sup> Masfa, *Seventh Day Adventism in Africa*, 42.

In the course of all events, all German missionaries were assigned some duties by their colonial government. There were also losses of life and the mission stations in western Tanzania were heavily damaged, either in war actions or by pillage by the suffering population. But once the war had tipped in favor of Great Britain, British Adventist missionaries, at least, could make sure their work was not destroyed. As for the German mission stations, British missionaries could not take care of them before the war ended, and not until 1922, when the German colonies were divided between England and France and some sort of normal life returned to East Africa.<sup>47</sup>

The Germans who were in Tanganyika during the time of war lived in hardships. They suffered a lack of clothes to the extent that “some had no clothes and were forced to make animal leather clothes. Some used ashes instead of soap.”<sup>48</sup>

After the war, the British missionaries found the German mission stations, except those in the Pare region, in a very desolate condition. Those within the battle zone had been devastated. Others had lost their members in the absence of any spiritual leadership. Certainly, World War I became a testing ground for the spiritual strength of the African Adventists. The older missions survived the ordeal much better as evidenced by Pare Mission. There the African Adventists carried on the mission for many years without either foreign leadership or any incoming mission funds. Where the mission had become indigenous enough, the war could not dislodge it.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>H. F. mSchuberth, “Das Tanganjikagebiet (Deutsch-Ostafrika),” *Der Advent-bote* 39, no. 6 (March 15, 1933): 81-82.

<sup>48</sup>Elisha A. Okeyo, *Kanisa Safarini Tanzania: Historia ya Kanisa 1903-2013*. (Morogoro, Tanzania: Tanzania Adventist Press, 2014), 46.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 60.

In the early 20th century, the SDA church faced a period of transition in Tanzania. With the outbreak of the First World War, the majority of foreign missionaries left the country and the work was entrusted to the local African population. This shift in leadership led to important milestones for the church, including the publication of a translation of the New Testament in the Pare language in 1922. Additionally, a few years later, African ministers were ordained as SDA ministers for the first time. However, the SDA education system faced a significant challenge when the Tanzanian government declared that school attendance was no longer mandatory. As a result, the strictness of the church was lost and attendance dropped drastically from around 2,000 to just 100 students.<sup>50</sup>

### **The Seventh-day Adventist Church during Pre and Post-Independence Period (1918-1961)**

Over the course of less than 40 years, the SDA church in Tanzania flourished, expanding its membership to over 3,000 individuals, and establishing various educational institutions and a medical facility. As a result of this notable growth, the church underwent a change in classification from a mission to a recognized church union. The church's publishing and colporteur ministries also saw success, with record-breaking sales of magazines and books. A man known as Simon of Zanzibar shared with an SDA Pastor that he was moved to observe the seventh-day Sabbath after reading the book "Wasomaje. (What Readest Thou?) published by Advent Press six years prior. The printed word played a crucial role in the growth of the SDA church in Tanzania, as more literature evangelists were trained and sent to previously unexplored areas.

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<sup>50</sup>Elineema, "Tanzania," 16.

The new converts were filled with joy upon receiving the letters of encouragement from their leaders. The leaders made a heartfelt plea to send more books quickly as the people were eagerly waiting for them. The literature evangelists' work spread far and wide, leading to a new challenge for the church: building new churches to accommodate the increasing number of believers. Elineema suggested that free land was available from the local authorities, but a building had to be erected within a year. This required financial assistance from the parent organization as the local church leaders expressed concern about losing new believers to other "mission societies" due to the lack of worship places in their area.<sup>51</sup>

By 1960, the SDA church in Tanganyika and Zanzibar had a membership of more than 13, 000 and was organized to a union. The main reason for this organization was to better facilitate the administration of the rapidly enlarging membership and to meet the changing territorial conditions.”<sup>52</sup> The new organizational structure divided the region into five fields namely: “North East Tanganyika Field (Suji, Tanga, Arusha, and Kilimanjaro regions), Majita-Ukerewe Field (Majita, Ukerewe, and Ururi). West Lake Field (Ntusu, and the region south and west of Lake Victoria). East Lake Field (part of North Mara; Utimbaru), and Tanganyika General Field (the southern half of the country). The last named field included all areas not allocated to the other four fields, and also Zanzibar and Pemba.<sup>53</sup>

In 1967, the SDA church acquired a property in Arusha, Tanzania from another denomination that had ceased its operations. This, along with other facilities

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 62.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 60.

in various Tanzanian cities, confirmed the spread of the SDA work throughout the country. 1970 was a significant year for the SDA church in Tanzania as it witnessed the first Maasai baptisms into the SDA Church on February 15th. Three women were the first candidates to be baptized in the historic event that took place in Suji, in the Pare Mountains. Kisaka mentioned that this harvest was the result of six years of hard work in Masailand. During this time, the church's Tanzanian General Field Headquarters and Radio Department relocated to Morogoro, where a building was constructed that provided ample space for the Bible Correspondence School and a radio studio. As the SDA church's work expanded in Tanzania, so did the training of African leadership. In 1979, John Kisaka became the first Tanzanian SDA pastor to receive a doctorate from Andrews University, Michigan, USA. The same year, he was appointed the first principal of the reorganized Tanzania Adventist Seminary and College, and only a year later, Yohanna Lusingu became the first African Tanzania Union President.<sup>54</sup>

### **Adventism Goes to the Masai**

The Masai are found in Kenya and Tanzania. In Tanzania, they are found mainly in the Rift Valley, Arusha, Tanga, Pwani, and Morogoro. They do not have permanent abode because they depend on where there is pasture for their livestock. They hold fast to the belief of their ancestors that all livestock in Africa belonged to the Masai, God gave others the work of farming and other activities. So according to them when they take others' livestock it is not stealing but returning their properties.

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<sup>54</sup>Höschele, *The Christian Remnant*, 257.

Because of this, they had long-time fights with the Pare as they went several times to take livestock, especially cows.<sup>55</sup>

Taking the gospel to the Masai was not easy because the Pare and the Masai were bitter tribal enemies who fought frequently. Going to the Masai for any reason meant going to face death. In February of 1964, eight young missionaries answered the call to go to Masailand. Despite concerns from church members about the traditional enmity between the Masai and Pare peoples, the Missionary Volunteers said goodbye to their loved ones and embarked on their journey. The devoted youth preached a gospel of love to the nomadic Masai and opened three branch Schools, which they left in the care of Nyari, Juma, and Mndima. John Kisaka witnessed this remarkable display of faith and courage and was moved by the steadfast devotion of these young missionaries.<sup>56</sup>

In 1964 John Kisaka who was a teacher at Majita near Lake Victoria decided to take the Adventist Message to the Masai. He went to Terite and stayed there for seven years without baptizing a single person. Later, other evangelists joined the work. They were John Nyari, from Mamba, who worked at Termite and Mnazi, John Mndima from Chome worked at Mferejini, and Ruvu, Stephano Juma from Tae went to Makanya and Zihirwani Rajabu of Kilangare went to Hedaru.

The Masai believe in people who are faithful to what they profess. John Nyari Mweta who was a believer in the African traditional religion, and a native of Mamba Myamba narrated the following testimony during the interview in 2022. He said he believed the Adventist message in 1948 and was baptized on 11 November 1951. He

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<sup>55</sup> Okeyo, *Kanisa Safarini Tanzania*, 75.

<sup>56</sup> John Aza Kisaka, "The Historic Masai Baptism: An Event of Great Significance," *Trans-Africa Division Outlook* LXVIII, no. 6 (June 15, 1970): 5-7, accessed 10 July 2020, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/TADO/TADO19700615-V68-06.pdf>

preached to his father and was also baptized in 1965. In 1964, he went to the Masai Land with his fellow evangelists for evangelism purposes. They were given a small room that had no window, but a small door. At night they sent two girls to test their faithfulness. The girls climbed and slept next to them but the evangelists did not touch them for the whole night. In the morning, the elders announced them to be true servants of God and invited them to their meetings and other village activities.

John Nyari visited Suji, Chome, Kihurio, Myamba, Bwambo, and Vunta to promote evangelism to the Masai, but people did not believe what he said. He brought 22 Masai during the Tanzania Union special Masai camp meeting at Ndungu. People believed and decided to join him in his mission to the Masai. John Nyari met two Moran in the night as he was riding his bicycle back home from visitation. They were well equipped with Masai traditional weapons. They blocked the way and asked him, “Do you have permission for the work you are doing?” raising his Bible, he replied, “Yes, this is my permit”. They got out of the way and let him go.<sup>57</sup>

In 1966, the first Masai was baptized. His name was Mathayo Njake. He was taken to study ministerial courses at Ikizu Seminary and late health courses at Heri Hospital. Mathayo Njake was the first Masai-ordained minister. In 1990 Njake a representative of the Masai culture from Tanzania participated in a mission pageant during the General Conference session. As a result, a new car, a Land Rover, was given for the mission to the Masai.<sup>58</sup> The gospel news spread and another Masai

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<sup>57</sup> John Nyari Mweta, Interview by the Author on April 12, 2022 at Mamba Myamba.

<sup>58</sup> Okeyo, *Kanisa Safarini Tanzania*, 76.

joined the church (Godwin Lekundayo), who became the second Masai Seventh-day Adventist Church Pastor.<sup>59</sup>

In 1999, the Tanzania Union organized the Masai Camp Meeting which took place at Handeni on 16-22/8/1999. The guest of honor was Abdallah Kigoda, Tanzania's Government Minister for Energy and Member of Parliament. The church officials were Dr. L.D. Raelly, (the president of the Eastern Africa Division), and all union, conference, and field officers. The attendees were 1140, and at the end, 81 people were baptized, 71 being the Masai.<sup>60</sup>

During centennial celebrations at Tanzania Adventist College in 2003, a representative from Germany announced in public that the German Church (Friedensau) would sponsor 5 students to study theological studies at Friedensau University. There were conditions and qualifications to be met by the prospective students. The first condition was that they must be Pare from Mamba. When the Tanzania Union Committee sat, it sent 1 Pare and the other 5 from different tribes. When the students arrived in German, it was not discovered that only one was a Pare. They were given a Pare Hymn(Nyimbo zha Mtaso) during worship as a memory of the great work of translation that was done by the missionaries. Only the Pare was able to sing the song. Others were returned to Tanzania because they did not meet the requirements.

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<sup>59</sup> Solomon Wolde-Endreas, "The Kutasa Nkoma," *Reaching the World with the Gospel Mission*, October-December 1991, 6-7, accessed 10 July 2020, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/MissionsQtrly/MQ19911001-V80-04.pdf>

<sup>60</sup> Northeast Tanzania Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Centennial Report," (Arusha, Tanzania: NTC, 22August 2003), 12.

## **Rapid Growth of SDA Church in Northeast Tanzania (1961-2023)**

During this period, various SDA conferences and mission fields emerged throughout the country, and other organizations such as ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) and the International Health Food Association (IHFA) began operating in Tanzania. ADRA's activities aided the acceptance of the Adventist message in remote areas where conventional evangelism methods were ineffective. Today, the SDA Church is responsible for numerous entities within six regional conferences/fields in the Tanzania Union Mission, including educational institutions, medical facilities, media outlets, churches, and others.

In 1925 a missionary by the name of Bull sent 5 evangelist teachers from the Suji Mission to Usambara. Zakaria Sekidio and Abraham Msangi were sent to Malindi, Yohana Makanta was sent to Bumbuli, and Paulo Kilonzo and Jeremiah Izungo went to Gare. Adriano Kilenda and Ebinezari Fue went and opened the work at Mabogini Moshi in 1952<sup>61</sup>

Philip Werner, who was at first detained by British soldiers during the time of war at Oldean was unable to take the Good News to Mbulu, so he requested the leaders at Suji to send evangelist teachers to open the work at Mbulu. His request was granted and 4 evangelists were sent to preach at Karatu for one month. Their names were Yohana Makanta, Stphano Kajiru, Simeoni Izungo, and Nikundiwe Mauya. The first converts were baptized in 1946. They were Yohana Siay, Musa Magula and Abraham Nade. Later, the mission committee sent Yonazi Salehe to be the pastor at Karatu. Philip Gare was taken to Suji to be prepared for the work at Mbulu. The Adventist message was taken to Daudi (west of Mbulu) by Eliamani Kilonzo. The

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 62

work was not easy because the pastoralist tribes ( Masai, Iraqw, and Barabaig) frequently fought to obtain livestock.<sup>62</sup>

Arusha town delayed receiving the Adventist message until 1954 when church members of Moshi church who lived in Arusha decided to open a new company in Arusha. The company leader was Misheto in his house at Kaloleni and later was transferred to Mianzini. The company members were the family of William Senkoro, William Kuga, and Mbonea Kiondo. The company increased in number until the time when C. Bender was sent by the Tanzania Union to conduct a public evangelism campaign. In 1967, the Tanzanian Union purchased the Dutch Reformed Church located in Burka. This church later became known as the first Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Arusha.<sup>63</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The pioneers who brought Adventism to Tanganyika and the North East Tanzania Conference were determined to achieve their goals. From the very beginning of their arrival, they encountered challenges that were enough to make them go to their homeland, but they went forward and established a mission center at Giti (Friedenstal). For each challenge, they found a way out.

From the time of the first missionaries, the church witnessed much development. Few people who were committed to the work of God brought the church to where it is today. They left marks that remain in our history. Sadly, only a few things of their work were documented

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 28-30.

<sup>63</sup> Okeyo, *Kanisa Safarini Tanzania*, 73.

## CHAPTER 4

### CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF ADVENTISM IN NORTHEAST TANZANIA

This chapter focused on some major challenges that the church faced from its beginning in 1903 to the present. Important Documents and interviews of a few people were used. Suggestions of solutions to those challenges were addressed then prospects of the future church were highlighted. The following are some of the challenges of Adventism in North East Tanzania.

#### **The Challenge of Culture and Customs**

Each tribe has its own culture and customs. The culture from one tribe to another differs tremendously. When they are converted to Adventism, they come with most of their culture and traditional practices and want them to be allowed as part of church items. This can be revealed during funerals and burials when the elders of the deceased insist on some of the things to be allowed in church programs. One can imagine the kind of Babel that occurs in such a situation. Sometimes church leaders find themselves in a dilemma. When Zabuloni Shemahonge (a Shambaa) who was baptized in 1996, was asked if he was ready to abandon those practices that are contrary to the church, he replied: “We can abandon whatever the church says, but not our holy practices.”<sup>1</sup>

When commenting on post-burial rites, Masfa wrote the following: Some post-burial rites are not compatible with the Biblical teaching and are not to be

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<sup>1</sup> Zabulon Shemahonge a Teacher at Kana School, Interview by the Author, Maramba, Tanga, April 16, 2022.

practiced. This includes cleansing rituals that perpetuate the belief that, if the cleansing is not performed, the spirit will return to haunt the surviving spouse or other relatives; those involving sex with a clan relative to remove the evil spirit; and the smearing of white powder, or similar acts for protection.<sup>2</sup>

Amazingly, even the people who were taken and lived with missionaries for decades in missions were not wholly converted. They were Adventists when they were at the mission but participated fully in their traditional religions which most of them were contrary to Biblical teachings when they joined their families. This is not the challenge of North East Tanzania only, it is the challenge of all parts of Tanzania and some parts of Africa. What Katoke said is true that the converts became Christians only for the daylight hours and went back to their traditional religion when in private.<sup>3</sup> Zacchaeus Mathema once wrote that Christians are tempted to consult medicine men so that they may gain power to counteract their enemies' powers. Unfortunately, even among professed Christians, the same practices are expected of the community.<sup>4</sup>

The challenge has taken a new phase today. Some tribes (a good example is Wachagga) travel each year from all regions of Tanzania and other parts of the world to their homeland-Kilimanjaro to attend rituals, offer yearly sacrifices to their gods, and pray for blessings for the next year. To hide this, they say they are going for the Christmas holidays.

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<sup>2</sup> Masfa, *Seventh Day Adventism in Africa*, 199.

<sup>3</sup> Israel K. Katoke, *Christianity and Culture, An African Experience* (Los Angeles, CA : Sage Publishers Ltd. 1984), 8.

<sup>4</sup> Zacchaeus Mathema, "The African Worldview: A Serious Challenge to Christian Discipleship," *Ministry*, October, 2007, accessed 21 June 2021, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2007/10/the-african-worldview.html>.

During his time at Parane Secondary School, Dr. John Kisaka underwent a name change during his baptism. Luckily, one of his names, Aza, remained the same. To further his education, his parents sent him to Suji Mission Station where he learned to read and write. His parents were so impressed with his transformation that they sent him to the Adventist secondary school at Parade Mission Station. It was during his baptism at this school that he changed his name to John.<sup>5</sup>

As reported by some members of the church, some individuals identify with witchcraft and ancestor worship. Aza, for instance, witnessed this firsthand. The practice of ancestor worship persists in different forms in many areas of the division, and it remains a challenge to promote the gospel of Christ. Potential church members, like John, often undergo baptismal classes for up to two years. Missionaries had to be patient in teaching these students about the Christian faith since they were only familiar with various forms of worship from their homes. While some argue that such practices are ingrained in the local culture and should not be changed, it is a new argument of Satan that does not benefit people's well-being in any way, socially, morally, or spiritually.<sup>6</sup>

Another challenge that the modern church is facing in North East Tanzania is the state of the dead. This is not only in North East Tanzania, but also in most parts of Africa. All deaths are considered to be caused by some external forces. Some rituals must be conducted to avoid more death consequences. At this point, most Adventists find themselves in a dilemma, whether to participate or not to participate; of which many give in to traditions. In African societies, death is viewed as an unnatural and

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<sup>5</sup> John A. Kisaka, *Reaching the World with the Gospel Mission*, (Berreïn Springs, MI: Church Ministries Department, 1991), 7.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

extraordinary event. The belief is that an evil force or person is causing the death, and measures have to be taken to ward off the evil to avoid more deaths. This then calls for the performance of certain rituals to cast death and evil spirits away from the living.<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, there were some cultures and traditions that were good and could be incorporated and used to know much better about God and worship Him with awe, but unfortunately, the missionaries termed all African traditions bad. Having convinced themselves of the “true” condition of Africa, the missionaries set out to convert Africans both spiritually and culturally. For the missionaries, success was measured when the Africans left everything and adopted Western culture.<sup>8</sup> Research has shown that there were unnecessary conflicts between the first missionaries and the Pare, which came as a result of a misunderstanding among the two groups. They condemned the Africans without thorough investigation. The natives also blamed the missionaries and condemned them as bad people who destroyed their culture.

The missionaries considered all African names ungodly and sometimes demonic. People were required to choose a new Christian name before baptism this brought unnecessary quarrels between the natives and missionaries. I am a living victim of this. When I was baptized in 1983, I was forced to choose a new name which can be found in the Bible. I was caught unprepared. I choose Paul, the name I never used from that day until now.

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<sup>7</sup> Michael C. Kirwen, *African Cultural Domains*, 208.

<sup>8</sup> Gwinyai H. Murzorewa, *The Origins and the Development of African Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985), 29.

My young brother from the Muslim religion (Swahibu Issa) accepted Adventism in 2002 and was required to choose a new Christian name but he refused. The help came from a professor from the University of Arusha, then he was baptized without a new name. The old-time challenge continues today. Katoke said that the church should study the cultural context so that it can use in Christian practice things from a culture that is not inconsistent with Biblical teachings. For example, in some African Societies, a child is given a name by its grandfather shortly after birth. This practice could be continued as it is not inherently contradictory to the Bible.<sup>9</sup>

### **Preserving History**

Another challenge that needs special attention is the preservation of historical facts. North-East Tanzania, specifically Giti, where the first missionaries settled, was rich in Adventist history in Tanzania. Unfortunately, the historical facts were not preserved. Generally, the field/conference and the church have rejected the responsibility of preserving the historical facts including the Giti area where the missionaries began the work of evangelism. It was from Giti that Adventism spread to other parts of Tanganyika, Zanzibar, and Uganda. But if you visit the place today, you can hardly leave without shedding tears.

As students of Parane in 1986-1990, we went several times camping at Giti with Pastor Elias Kasika, former Tanzania Union Youth Director who was a teacher by that time. There were flowing streams of clean water, there were 12 iron sheet huts that were used as hostels for students who attended agriculture training. The tree under which missionaries punished Sabbath breakers was evergreen for decades. (Its shade was used for worship during camping). The missionaries' graves were visible

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 8.

and descriptions were very clear. The first baptismal pool was well preserved. There were also materials such as hoes, carpentry equipment, horse/donkey carts, and others that were locked in a house for historical purposes. Above all, the field headquarters employed a person to keep the place and the land safe. The land was 60 acres.

In 2022 when I went to research I was shocked when I found only 1 hut was remaining. All other materials mentioned above were nowhere to be found, and the house that kept them was demolished. Only a small part of the pool is visible. The streams of water dried up. The tree was cut down by villagers to obtain charcoal. The current information is that the land remaining is 32 acres; the other 28 were taken by villagers. There is no one taking care of the place.

Before World War 1, Kihurio was the main station. All supplies and materials for the missions from Europe through Tanga harbor were brought from the railway in a wagon drawn by 10-12 donkeys. The wagon was there in 1962 (after independence), but now is missing. Other materials which were left by the missionaries do not exist.

During 100 years of Jubilee of Adventism in Tanzania (1993), John Samwel Malechela, the former Prime Minister of Tanzania, and the guest of the event, planted a memorial tree at Giti. It grew and was evergreen throughout the years. In 2018 a young man hanged himself and died. Parents and relatives of the deceased (who are Adventists) went and cut down the tree secretly, for the belief that if they did not do so the curse would continue and cause many young people to follow the same trend. The church made a fence around the stump of the tree and watered it frequently. The tree sprouted again, but they went and poisoned it and it dried up. The dry stump is still there today.

### Decline in SDA Church Growth in Northeast Tanzania

The report below is extracted from the Seventh Day Adventist General Conference Statistics website<sup>1</sup>

*Table 1. Decline in SDA Church Growth in Northeast Tanzania*

YEAR	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Churches	58	59	60		70	72	73	76	76	82
Companies										
Beginning Membership	9,072	9,408	9,854	10,402	11,852	12,958	13,767	14,395	15,394	15,908
Baptisms	599	708	807		1,729	1,133	1,006	1,229	597	2,337
Net Growth	336	446	548	1,450	1,106	809	628	999	514	1,452
Ending Membership	9,408	9,854	10,402	11,852	12,958	13,767	14,395	15,394	15,908	17,360
Growth Rate	3.70%	4.74%	5.56%	13.94%	9.33%	6.24%	4.56%	6.94%	3.34%	9.13%

Conference	North East Tanzania Conference									
YEAR	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Churches	250	265	277	286	293	300	314	320	321	329
Companies	209	196	236	228	252	245	246	244	257	266
Beginning Membership	62,025	66,343	69,859	71,595	74,347	77,122	76,925	80,306	65,603	52,381
Baptisms	5,054	4,408	2,791	3,288	4,562	3,270	4,290	4,095	5,460	5,818
Dropped	517	343	412	532	383	339	384	681	293	398
Missing	0	342	470	0	713	0	76	17,059	176	739
Ending Membership	66,343	69,859	71,595	74,347	77,122	76,925	80,306	65,603	52,381	56,968
Growth Rate	6.96%	5.30%	2.49%	3.84%	3.73%	-0.26%	4.40%	-18.31%	-20.15%	8.76%

<sup>1</sup><https://adventiststatistics.org/>

Conference	North East Tanzania Conference								
YEAR	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Churches	342	370	398	409	417	448	462	330	337
Companies	235	236	244	235	260	282	285	167	169
Beginning Membership	56,968	53,884	59,418	64,772	70,564	78,136	84,761	89,898	61,377
Baptisms	5,427	6,378	6,246	7,082	7,924	6,825	5,995	3,215	4,207
Dropped	839	222	317	523	567	669	597	475	424
Missing	7,294	122	111	8	0	58	0	0	0
Ending Membership	53,884	59,418	64,772	70,564	78,136	84,761	89,898	61,377	65,692
Growth Rate	-5.41%	10.27%	9.01%	8.94%	10.73%	8.48%	6.06%	31.73%	7.03%

## **Analysis of the Charts from 1978 – 2021**

There are issues to be discussed from the above charts that were challenges in the past but today the challenges have grown into problems. The increase of churches and is slow, the membership increase is also low. The number of people dropping out of the church and those missing is terrifying. The church is in danger and solutions are highly needed. The following are the reasons for those challenges and possible solutions.

### **Lack of Mission Spirit**

The missionaries who brought Adventism to North East Tanzania had a responsibility to do a mission to accomplish. That spirit of our forerunners is missing today. Burrill gave the following statement. Since the modern church is no longer evidence of the mission characteristic of the early church, there must be something seriously wrong. What is wrong is the absence of a mission mentality. Today's pastors attempt to involve people in the ministry of the church and are met with reluctance and apathy. Many then try to apply guilt tactics, yet people remain in Laodicean slumber. What is needed first is the development of a mission mentality; otherwise, the church is forever doomed to noninvolvement.<sup>1</sup>

### **Having settled Pastors**

The pioneers at the beginning of Adventism discouraged having settled pastors. There were no church or district pastors. The primary job of the pastor was to open work in new fields and to train members for the mission. The pioneers felt that not having settled pastors was advantageous and biblical. They could have chosen to

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<sup>1</sup> Russel C. Burrill, *Recovering an Adventist Approach to the Life & Mission of the Local Church* (Halbrook, CA: Hart Research Center, 1998), 25.

place pastors in churches, but for biblical reasons, they did not. When young men showed promise of being preachers, they were encouraged to preach in the churches. They were to prove their calling by going forth and raising new churches. Church planting was the supreme test of a call to clergy function. Salary was only paid to those who raised independent churches.<sup>2</sup>

The pioneers believed in the soon appearance of the Master so had no time to stay at one station and preach to one another. They obeyed the command of their Savior and went to seek the lost sheep. “Another reason for not having settled pastors was that time was short and there was a great work to be done. The hope among the Adventist pioneers of their Lord's imminent advent influenced through organizational development and gave it much missional emphasis.”<sup>3</sup> In many places, Pastors taught their members to take care of themselves in the absence of pastors.

As the church moved into the past century, there appeared smooth change in the pastor's job description. Those who understood the clear and unique biblical role of the Adventist pastor could not keep silent but stood up firm and gave a warning if the church should copy the mode of other Christian denominations. When A.G. Daniells (General Conference president for the first twenty years of the twentieth century) was asked about having settled pastors, he replied they had not settled our ministers over churches as pastors to any large extent.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew G. Mustard, “James White and the De James White and the Development of Se elopment of Seventh-da enth-day Adventist Organization, 1844-1881” (PhD diss., Andrews University, Michigan, 1987), 142-143.

<sup>4</sup> A. G. Daniells, *Ministerial Institute Address*, Los Angeles, California, March 1912. <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH19120411-V89-15.pdf>

Thus the role of the Adventist pastor has changed in this century from evangelist and raiser of churches to primary caregiver in the local church. The modern problem is compounded by the fact that many conferences still expect the pastor to perform both functions, but the needs of the local congregation force the pastor to neglect the evangelistic mandate. Only as a ministry is restored to the people can pastors move away from being primary caregivers. As long as pastors continue in their present role, the people will be robbed of the ministry entrusted to them by God, and the North American Adventist Church will continue to stagnate.<sup>5</sup>

Ellen G. White, like A.G. Daniells, continues with a clarion call for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to maintain its New Testament organizational structure and not move back to the Middle Ages paradigm of pastor dependency. Having established pastors in our churches is unnecessary; instead, the transformative power of truth should inspire each member to actively engage in missionary work in their respective areas. The church, as an instrument of God, should be equipped and empowered to serve effectively. The members should be committed Christian workers dedicated to the Lord's work. There should not be a call to have settled pastors over our churches, but let the life-giving power of the truth impress the individual members to act, leading them to labor interestedly to carry on efficient missionary work in each locality. As the hand of God, the church is to be educated and trained to do effective service. Its members are to be the Lord's devoted Christian workers.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> H. M. S. Richards, *Feed My Sheep* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958), 156

<sup>6</sup> Ellen G. White, "The Work in Greater New York," *Atlantic Union Gleaner*, January 8, 1902.

Some may wonder how the Adventist church, with its strong stand in the inspiration of Ellen White, could abandon the teaching and warnings and desire to have a settled pastor.

In the last fifteen years of Ellen White's life, there were continual calls for settled pastors. Ellen White resisted, but when her voice was stilled by death, slowly a chain occurred. It needs to be remembered that even in the first twenty years of the twentieth century, pastors were being placed in churches despite Ellen White's protest. These pastors were... Primary caregivers—that came later, just as in the early church without her protest, nothing could stop the change. No official actions were changing the role of the clergy. In 1925, an editorial appeared in the *Review and Herald* which contained a veiled protest against the changing role of clergy:<sup>7</sup>

According to the chart above, the growth rate is very slow and in some years it was negative. During this research, I discovered that there were no measures taken to study the reasons that led to this situation and the possible solutions, so the problem continued for decades. This is a serious issue that needs closer and special examination. The following discussion examines the reasons and possible solutions.

People have neglected and sometimes rejected the great commission to go and make disciples. In many churches, the focus is dealing with internal church programs. Burrill gave the following comment: What the church does internally with no intention of impacting the world is not the mission. What we too often forget, however, is that it makes no sense for evangelistic proclamation to be made by Christ's disciples only to Christ's disciples within the confines of the local church. The proclamation is only kerygmatic when it is intentionally addressed to those who

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<sup>7</sup> W. Wilcox, "Danger of a Diverted Ministry," *Review and Herald*, vol. 102, no. 1 (May 21, 1925).

have not accepted Jesus as Lord. The church cannot be fully the body of Christ, the people of God unless it ministers to the world.<sup>8</sup>

Mhina Nzinyangwa, a church elder of one of the churches at Same listed some excuses as to why they do not focus on the outreach mission. For the sake of this research, only one point will be discussed. He said, “To have rapid church growth there is a need to review the great commission since it was given over 2000 years ago.”<sup>9</sup> He is not the first one to give such comments or such discussions. On an occasion when Costas was asked such questions, he replied, “When growth does not occur, the fault is not God’s commission, it is peoples’ omission. When the living organism, the church is not healthy and growing, it is because the people have failed to follow the Master. Church growth occurs when the church of God turns away from omission to commission.”<sup>10</sup>

The same commission that was given to the disciples is also given to us. Just like in the past, we are called to uplift a crucified and risen Savior to those who do not know God or have hope in the world. The Lord is calling for pastors, teachers, and evangelists to spread the message of salvation from house to house. The good news of forgiveness through Christ is to be shared with every nation, tribe, language, and people. The message should not be delivered in a dull or lifeless manner but with clarity, decisiveness, and passion. Many people are waiting for a warning to save their lives. The world needs to witness Christians living out the power of

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<sup>8</sup> Burrill, *Recovering an Adventist Approach to the Life*, 30.

<sup>9</sup> Mhina Nzinyangwa, An Interview by the Author, December 12, 2022 Kiranga, Same, December 12 2022.

Costas Orlando, *Liberating news. A Theology of Contextual Evangelization* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 81

Christianity. Messages of mercy are not just needed in a few places, but all over the world.

The transition from the missional model of the early Adventist Church to the traditional model of modern Adventism did not happen through any specific definitive action but rather occurred gradually over several decades. Starting in the 1920s, Adventist pastors were gradually assigned to care for a district of churches while also carrying out their evangelistic duties. By the 1950s, the district assignment plan was fully implemented. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, more pastors were added to churches, leading to most churches of significant size having their pastor.<sup>11</sup>

### **Dependent Churches**

Many churches are dependent socially, financially, and spiritually. 98% of district pastors lead more than 3 churches. Here are a few examples: Hydom district has six churches, Kiomboi five churches, Mitundu district five churches, Mkalama seven churches, and Hedaru six churches. Bethlehem has eight churches, Lugwana has five churches, Same has five churches, and Kilangare has six churches. Ndungu six churches, Mpinji six churches, Bwambo five churches, and Kihurio six churches. Rombo Five churches, Mombo seven Churches, Korogwe eight churches, Muheza six churches, Handeni eight churches, and Saweni seven churches. Some of these churches have more than 500 members.<sup>12</sup>

For a pastor to work successfully in such a situation, special attention and plans are required. Unfortunately, churches are dependent on pastors. Many things and programs become inactive in the absence of a pastor. When churches cannot

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<sup>11</sup> W. Wilcox, "Danger of a Diverted Ministry."

<sup>12</sup> Filbert Joseph Mwanga, North East Tanzania Conference Executive Secretary's Report during Year End Committee, *North East Tanzania Executive Secretaries Report*, December 2022.

operate because the pastor is not present, that is leadership failure. These were rebuked and discouraged by the pioneers and the early church. In a powerful statement made in 1901, Ellen White emphasized the importance of churches having a regular pastor. She expressed concern that churches were in decline and in need of someone to preach to them. White believed that congregations should be encouraged to give a faithful tithe to God to receive His strength and blessings. Additionally, she advocated for churches to be organized and functioning properly so that they may receive the guidance and spirit of God. White also stressed the importance of teaching members to be self-reliant in their faith, suggesting that if they cannot stand alone without a pastor, they should undergo a spiritual renewal and baptism. Overall, White believed in the necessity of spiritual renewal and rebirth for churches to thrive.<sup>13</sup>

Only smaller churches shared a pastor. With financial difficulties in the late 1980s and early 1990s, local conferences took a step back from the continual addition of pastors and instead began to increase the size of districts. Some conferences now have districts of five or six churches with one pastor. However, even in these the pastor's role continued to be that of primary caregiver.<sup>14</sup>

### **Lack of Total Member Involvement**

The task is left to pastors and a few committed members. The pioneers and forerunners of Adventism were few, but did a tremendous job; because everyone was involved. Today we have church departments such as Youth, Women, Children, Dorcas Club, and others which sit quietly in churches while people are dying in the

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<sup>13</sup> Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, 381. (Originally appeared as Ms 150, 1901).

<sup>14</sup> Wilcox, "Danger of a Diverted Ministry."

darkness of sin. There were no roads, but they traveled far. There were dangers on the way but they did not fear/People did not know how to read, so they opened schools. But today, with tarmac roads, airplanes, high-speed ships, and boats, the work is very slow. It was also proved that some members who appeared to be very active in church activities stayed in the church for more than 10 years without bringing a single person to Jesus.

Timothy was asked a question, “Why do members avoid involving themselves in evangelism?” He said. “ it is because of their life in the society. They don’t live what they preach.” This agrees with what Timothy said, “It is not helpful to try and deny that there are hypnotics in our churches.”<sup>15</sup> Many, especially new members backslide when they see the life of professed Christians whom at first they considered as holy as angels.

Ellen G. White was very much concerned about church member involvement to be healthy Christians and overcomers of sin. She strongly recommended that ministers who do not assist their members to be involved should be fired. Ellen White’s view of a healthy church was one in which ill members were actively engaged in ministry. Not only did such a view carry missional overtones, but clearly in her mind it resulted in healthy Christians. She was so emphatic as to assert that only this model of lay ministry could result in church members being overcomers. Ellen White strongly believed that clergy should focus on training and equipping others for ministry, rather than being the sole performers themselves. She went as far

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<sup>15</sup> Timothy K. Beougher, *Challenges and Encouragements for Evangelism Today* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Books, 1981), 65.

as suggesting that pastors who prioritize performing ministry over teaching members should be fired.<sup>16</sup>

Small groups have played an important part in reformation and revival. Howard Snyder maintains that “virtually every major movement of spiritual renewal in the Christian church has been accompanied by a return to the small group and the proliferation of such groups in private homes for Bible study, prayer and discussion of the faith.”<sup>17</sup>

In recent years, many Christian churches around the world have experienced significant growth both in terms of numbers and spiritual advancement. Small groups have been consistently recognized as playing a vital role in fostering this growth. Small groups also have a significant role to play in our new life in Christ. There are three important reasons why we need small groups in our churches. These reasons include: a) They help build a Christian community b) They empower members for ministry c) They complement large groups.

Successful churches in the twenty-first century and beyond will need to learn how to listen to people, establish a culturally relevant philosophy of ministry, and adapt ministry strategies to meet their evolving needs. A pastor from a large American congregation puts it differently when he says. We can only be a large church because we know how to be a small church.

Sabbath School Action Units in the Southeast Tanzania Conference have been highly successful and effective, serving as a prime example of their impact. These units initiated branches which developed into church companies and eventually

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<sup>16</sup> Ellen G. White, “An Appeal to Our Ministers,” *General Conference Bulletin*, Vol. IV, April 16, 1901, Extra No. 12.

<sup>17</sup> Howard Snyder, *The Problem of Wineskins* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1975), 164.

became fully organized churches. They focused on helping those in need and providing care for the sick. Additionally, they regularly held public evangelism meetings on an annual basis.

### **Poor management of Education and Health Service Centers**

During the time of the missionaries and early native pioneers, there were more than 56 church schools in Northeast Tanzania alone, but after 100 years there are only 6 church schools. The academic performance is not convening and cannot compete with other schools. Number of students enrolled in these schools is declining every year. Most of the teachers and staff members are not competent and courageous enough to face modern academic challenges. This research has discovered that there is no orientation and important instructions for the new employees. This challenge is not for schools in Northeast Tanzania but for all church schools in Tanzania.

The only seminary in Tanzania was opened officially in 1975. Unfortunately, the seminary advanced in changing names but remained stagnant and dormant for decades. In 1975 it was Arusha Adventist Seminary. In 1980 the name changed to Tanzania Adventist Seminary and College. In 1993 it was known as Tanzania Union College. After one year (1994) it became Tanzania Adventist College, and from 2006 to the present it is known as The University of Arusha. The quality of education which was offered by missionaries and early Adventists helped students to face the reality of life. Hundreds if not thousands of graduates from the University of Arusha are going around the nation with their certificates seeking jobs. The teachers' college at Suji that made Suji known by the world church does not exist.

The missionaries gave health ministries high priority and believed that the words of the pen of inspiration were right and that Medical missionary work is the

right hand of the gospel.<sup>18</sup> The early Adventist leaders also understood the importance of medical ministry that they even supported financially the dispensaries and hospitals that were under the Seventh Day Adventist Church and used them as a center for evangelism. As years went on during the 1990s the 8 dispensaries that were almost becoming hospitals were closed by conference leaders. The buildings were abandoned and later utterly destroyed. Today there are only three dispensaries, Parane Suji and Makanya, which cannot operate independently. The system that made the health services reach this point needs special attention and investigation.

### **The Challenge of Polygyny**

This is one of the greatest challenges that Adventism faces in North East Tanzania. The first missionaries faced the same challenge, it continued during the time of the first African pioneers and it is still a major problem today. All 22 major tribes that live in this geographical area do practice polygyny. Many people do not join the Adventist Church or leave the church because of polygyny. It has deep and strong roots in all Northeastern Tanzania societies.

In many African ethnic groups, polygyny, the practice of having multiple wives at the same time, is not only culturally approved but also considered the best way to establish and support a family. Men with multiple wives are viewed as the authoritative figures and foundation of the community... Monogamy, which is being married to only one spouse, is considered a preliminary stage before acquiring additional wives and is associated with young individuals or those lacking the means to have a second marriage.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church. 9 Vols.* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1924), 50.

<sup>19</sup> Kirwen, *African Cultural Knowledge*, 150.

Among the reasons that make polygyny hard to abolish in Northeast Tanzania is that women support and entertain it. In some tribes, like the Masai, the first woman will not consider herself respected if the husband does not marry another wife. Kirwan once mentioned that in the eyes of many women, a second wife is seen as someone who can help with household chores, cooking, looking after the children, and farming. In certain situations, a first wife may pressure her husband into marrying another woman, who could even be her sister or best friend. This often leads to the first wife gaining control and authority over the second woman. Some scholars suggest that one of the main reasons polygyny is still prevalent in Africa is because it allows women to exert social and economic dominance over other women.<sup>20</sup>

While polygyny is encouraged in African traditions, it is not Biblical. Here Adventists collide with culture. It is discovered that most church members involve themselves in polygyny secretly. “Christian families are discarding polygyny today but men or women can have five to six spouses secretly.”<sup>21</sup>

### **Biasness, Segregation, and Tribalism**

Although Adventism entered Pare in 1903, the neighboring regions and districts remain with very few Adventists or no Adventists. A good example is the Tanga region which borders Same considered an un-entered area to the present. Those who took Adventism from Pare to Shambaa (Lushoto), went to evangelize at places where Pare immigrants were found. As a result, Adventism was known as the religion of Wapare in the early 1990s.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 160.

There was also bias in education. As I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter North East Tanzania has 22 major tribes, but education was focused on the Pare Adventists. Another piece of evidence is that although the Pare and Shambaa are very close and even met together on many occasions including business in local open markets, the Shambaa were not considered in education. Today, there is only one Shambaa Seventh Day Adventist Church pastor (Sadikieli Shehemba), while the Pare pastors are over 100. All church schools are built in one district (Same) and the distance from one school to another is one day or a few hour's walk.

Mussa Erasto Nzumbi, Northeast Tanzania Conference of the SDA Church President, was interviewed on 28/09/2028 and gave important and reliable information. The interview lasted for 40 minutes and it was exhaustive. In answering this question on challenges and prospects of Adventism in North East Tanzania, Mussa Nzumbi provided five reasons which are the current challenges and their way forward.

### **New Mission Areas**

The New Mission Areas are currently a daunting challenge. According to official statistics, there are 1992 villages, but only 552 have not been reached, meaning 72% of villages have not been reached or have no Adventist church planted. Seeing that the work started in this place in 1903, up to now it is 120 years. Moreover, the conference has 17 administrative districts. Out of these districts, Same, the birthplace of Adventism has 150 churches, while Pangani district (a stronghold of the Islamic faith) has only 4 churches. The study argues, that under all circumstances this is underperformance. Therefore more work needs to be done to advance God's work.

## **Stewardship**

The second challenge facing North East Tanzania in terms of growth is related to the financial aspect of stewardship which relates to tithes and offerings. Pr. Nzumbi said that the church has 76,000 church members but only 20% offer tithe and offering consistently. So in this view, only 15,200 are true and consistent in returning tithes and offerings. Pr. Nzumbi added by saying that tithes and offerings are used to support paying salaries, mission work, day to day-to-day operations of the church at the local level and conference level. In essence, the offering, he said is not sufficient. The study argues again this is inadequate not only in North East Tanzania but is a worldwide issue that only 20-30% return tithes and offerings consistently. More needs to be done to bring the church members and pastors close to Christ to solve this problem.

## **Uparenism**

This term is coined to mean Adventism being a denomination dominated by the Pare. These are the natives of the North East Tanzania Conference. The church members are constantly evangelizing amongst themselves by biological growth and also by evangelistic methods. It should be noted that many surrounding tribes need an Adventist message. These tribes which in number exceed the Pares are, Chagga, Maasai, Shambaa, Zigua, Datoga, and the Mbugu. The study contends that these tribes have co-existed with the Pare for 120 years, but very little significant reaching has been done. More needs to be innovative to solve this matter. (The names of the interviewees are preserved).

## **People of High Class**

According to Pr. Nzumbi, this is a prevailing challenge, and church members tend to focus on 'easy catch,' meaning to reach low-class people. One more time since the independence of Tanzania in 1961, the middle class and high class have been growing steadily. This group, according to Pr. Nzumbi has very potential to support God's work both financially and morally. As we can notice from the early Church wealthy women and people like Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus supported God's work in its infancy.

## **Nurture and Retention**

This is another challenge that is facing church growth in the North East Tanzania Conference. Here many people tend to be baptized, but due to poor nurturing, many tend to leave. Mussa Erasto Nzumbi added that for every 10 members we baptize, 4 leave the church for reasons related to the economy. The economic reason is especially for men, they see not working on the Sabbath as a daunting challenge, and some are afraid of losing their jobs.

The other reason is connected to marriage. This largely affects young women who see they cannot wait to be wedded properly in the church, so they choose either to be married by a non-Adventist or simply get pregnant. The last crucial reason is that the local church has no consistent strong strategies for the follow-up of newly baptized members. If there could be a strong program, the economic and marriage-related issues could be addressed using the Biblical text. The study contends that it is not doctrinal issues that are at stake, but social and economic aspects. The study

further champions that socioeconomic aspects need to be blended into the mission strategies.<sup>22</sup>

### **Prospects**

The progress of the church in Northeast Tanzania promises a bright future. The conference has a strategic plan for 2020-2025. Most of the following prospects are found in the strategic plan. When Musa Erasto Nzumbi the president of Northeast Tanzania Conference of SDA Church was questioned concerning the prospects of the Church in North East Tanzania, he had the following to say:

#### **Dispatching Local Missionaries**

This mission, according to Mussa Nzumbi, has been conceived by the conference and it has been in operation for the last 5 years. This mission aims to make Adventist Faith available beyond the Pare and to reach more districts with fewer Adventist members like Pangani which has only 4 churches as contrasted with Same, which has 150 churches. This ongoing mission of sending local missionaries from each church will ultimately bring the Chaggas, Masai, Zigua, Datoga, and Sambia into the Lord's flock.

#### **Big City Seminars**

To reach middle-class and high-class people, the conference has been running two seminars a year, in the cities of Tanga and Moshi. These seminars are usually conducted in big hotels. The seminars normally touch socioeconomic realities facing Tanzania. These topics are usually presented using an Adventist background. So the process according to Mussa Nzumbi appears to have no immediate baptism impact,

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<sup>22</sup> Mussa Erasto Nzumbi, an interview by the author on 28 September, 2023 at Same, Kilimanjaro.

but it has been building good relations with the church, which in the long run will culminate into baptisms.

### **Music Ministries**

The first missionaries regarded music as an important tool for evangelism, which is why Kotz translated the songs into Pare Hymnal (Nyimbo zha Mtaso). The church in Northeast Tanzania has been an example of the best church music for many years. We thank God that there are people who were taught by the Germans still alive and teaching music today. Samwel Matata said: “It was a tough experience which needed one to devote himself fully to the cause. We started a big group, but only a few graduated. Today I can play any trumpet after a struggle and passion to reach my goal.”<sup>23</sup>

In 1988, during the Youth Congress at the University of Dar es Salaam, the Mamba Myamba Muungano choir, led by Samweli Athumani Matata, achieved success and was recognized as the best choir in Tanzania. The church in North East Tanzania has short and long-term plans to improve and use music in evangelism.

### **Mihadhara**

Mihadhara refers to Adventist-Muslim dialogue on points of contentions using the two Holy Books. These are the bible and the Quran. Each year Mihadharas have been conducted, according to Nzumbi. It is interesting to note, there has not been violence in these meetings. One more time, Nzumbi noted that the Mihadharas have no immediate impact on quick baptisms, but these are like planted 'seeds,' which will finally germinate into baptisms.

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<sup>23</sup> Samweli Athumani Matata, a music teacher at Mang’a SDA Church, interview by the author, Mang’a, Same, April 22, 2022.

## **Mission Schools**

This conference has the privilege of being the first to establish Adventist schools in the country. These operating schools include Giti Primary School, Parane Secondary School, Same Adventist English Medium School, Suji Secondary School, Chome, and Cana Primary School. These schools have been engaging in evangelist campaigns. According to Pr. Nzumbi, in this year alone, 106 souls were led to Christ. But of special significance, is Cana Primary School which is in the heart of Tanga City—one of the strongholds of Islamic Communities in Tanzania. Cana Primary School has 90% of Muslim children. But they sing Adventist songs, pray like Adventists, and feast on Adventist doctrine daily. This is a very innovative approach to reaching Islamic families in Tanga City.

The church has plans to empower church members, pastors, lay pioneers, teachers, and health workers and send them to unrented areas. Local churches, families, local church departments, church clubs, individual church members, and church institutions will be assigned specific un-entered areas and sponsor lay evangelists in those places. Each church is encouraged to have its strategic plan in consultation with the conference. The city and town churches will be given a specific area and required to buy land, sponsor a lay evangelist, build a church, and prepare it to be organized as a church. There will be many new churches within a short time.

North East Tanzania was divided to form Tanzania Rift Valley Field to speed up the work of God. Great changes and progress have occurred within a short time. Each conference has a plan to open a new school by 2025.

The strategic plan shows the expected increase of tithe and offerings, buying, studying, and distributing spirit of prophecy books. The church program of making

each church member a sponsor of Voice of Prophecy students will bring success in church growth.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Summary**

To summarize the findings, the history of Adventism in Northeastern Tanzania as written in this thesis is of great importance to the present and coming generations and for the wellbeing of the church. The beginning of Adventism in Tanzania and North East Tanzania in particular, show that God was and is in control of his Church. In comparison with the present church and pastors, the missionaries were few but their work was great and successful. The missionaries in Northeast Tanzania experienced great dangers, sufferings, threats, and discouragements, but they stood firm because they had goals to reach and a mission to accomplish. They did not allow anything to prevent them from going forward. They began their work with social needs that is schools and hospitals that opened the way for the natives to accept Jesus and be baptized.

The small church in Germany, which had only a few members sent missionaries to Tanzania and other parts of East Africa as part of accomplishing the great commission. Such spirit is needed in the modern church to spread the Good News to people who are in darkness all over the world. After sending missionaries to Tanganyika and other parts of East Africa, Conradi, the leader of the German church, devoted his time and went to see the progress of the work and encouraged the missionaries and the new converts. He did not rely on report papers. If there was a time that such leaders were needed it is now. Most of the leaders in the modern church are office-oriented.

The missionaries and those who took leadership after independence preserved church historical sites and facts with zeal and passion. Unfortunately, in the early 1990s, leaders and church members who did not value historical memories participated in the destruction of historical sites and artifacts. Instead of preserving them in a better and modern way, they utterly destroyed them; and made them disappear from the earth forever. As it was revealed in this research, there is slow church growth, especially in recent years which is caused by some cultures, lack of mission spirit, missing members, having settled pastors, dependent churches, and unfaithful church members. The solutions were clearly explained.

### **Conclusion**

Today, in Northeastern Tanzania, the church needs the same courageous spirit that the missionaries and African pioneers had the willingness to face challenges and even death. The church needs to have individuals who are willing to go out into the field, rather than spend excessive time in the office.

To preserve history, historical sites, and factors in this area, the leadership of the North East Tanzania Conference and the New Field (Tanzania Rift Valley Field) should take serious measures to preserve church history. There should be a special project for this job. The church should employ a person for this job. The University of Arusha should take purposeful measures to preserve church history, especially in this area where the church started. By doing so the remains will be kept safely and those scattered collected in one safe place. Although the churches in North East Tanzania are facing many challenges, there are ways out; if the churches follow God's instructions, they will grow rapidly and the name of God will be glorified.

## **Recommendations**

I strongly recommend that the Northeastern Tanzania Conference take the responsibility of preserving the remaining historical materials. Giti Seventh-day Adventist Church where Adventism began and where some remaining historical artifacts are still found should be educated and involved in taking care of those materials around their church instead of destroying them. Since Giti is a conference property, the office should build a fence around the entire area to avoid doing whatever they want to do at any time. The University of Arusha also has an active part to play in history church preservation. They should make class theories practical. The Archives Department of the General Conference of the SDA Church should take serious measures to preserve history in this area and other parts of the world. A special committee of professional church historians should be assigned to search for historical sites and artifacts around the world so that places like Giti may be known worldwide and receive immediate help and attention.

Northeast Tanzania Conference should improve its supervision of schools and health centers so that the current situation can change for better services. Conference education directors and health directors should go to the field personally to see what is happening instead of working with reports that are sent to them monthly. The researcher believes that this research will bring changes to the church of Northeast Tanzania, and the world church.

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