

# Analysis of African Adventist Theology of Mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Analysis of African Adventist theology of mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century highlights theological African Adventist issues of concern. As an Adventist researcher, one is challenged by the growing anticipations and expectations that arise or are questioned in certain areas and sectors, including doctrinal issues in some grey areas. This research article probes those challenges that may be tabled by higher organizations or are just difficult to handle.

**Problem:** Analysis of African Adventist Theology of Mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century presents problematic, unresolved doctrinal issues and teachings upheld by the mother body, the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists. These issues are still debated in other circles and regions.

**Purpose:** To analyze the Seventh-day Adventists' beliefs as a lifestyle for the African Adventists in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and highlight some downsides that may hinder the mission's progress among Africans. Old and New Testament Scriptures guide, teach, and instruct a person to the esteemed life of Christ-like character. However, some scholars still argue that Christians and Adventists teach Creation Week. To an African, the belief in a creator God who shares space with His people has brought doubts to the very God who created everything in one week.

**Discussions:** An African Adventist Theology of Ministry for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century article presented communication, ways of ministry in diverse settings, the Biblical foundation for mission and ministry, and God's purpose for ministry. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a family of Christian believers united in mission, purpose, and belief. Adventists seek to follow Biblical principles of Christ-like living, communicating, disciplining, teaching, healing, and serving communities regardless of where they are.

Since God is the creator and owner of the mission, He has a purpose for His ministry and creation, which includes human beings. The purpose of God for his church is being revealed amongst His people through the publishing of literature, public evangelism, the gospel ministry, and medical missionary. As the mission owner (Missio Dei), God chooses how to direct the mission using His created world. All the people of different cultures and traditions are part of God's mission.

There are diverse ways of ministry, including reaching people in their homes, welfare ministry, friendship evangelism, Adventism, and God's mission. When spreading the gospel, theologians need to recognize different types of communication: secular, Christian, and Adventist approaches.

**Findings:** An analysis of African Adventist theology of mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century found that God's purpose for the ministry is to involve all means and people, regardless of creed, race, or ethnicity. God

would employ any method to spread the gospel all over the world. Finally, communication plays a significant role in God's mission.

## INTRODUCTION

We are passing through a period of disbelief, contempt, and political uncertainties. This article analyses an African Adventist Theology of Ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

According to Matthew 28:18-20, the mission of the church has three major inseparable components: 1) The mission should lead people to Jesus as their Saviour and Lord through conversion and baptism; 2) The mission is to incorporate a community of believers, the church, into an environment where they can grow in faith, knowledge, and the enjoyment of a universal fellowship of believers; and, 3) The mission is to nurture and train members as active disciples who recognize and utilize their spiritual gifts to assist in sharing the gospel.<sup>[1]</sup>

The following aspects shall receive special attention: Biblical Foundation for mission and ministry, God's purpose for ministry, ways to do ministry in diverse settings, the connection between Adventism and God's mission, and secular and Christian communication.

## BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR MISSION AND MINISTRY

God's mission begins and ends with God. In the Old Testament, God reveals himself in creation. Nature reveals who God is. Biblical texts in the Old Testament that explain God's mission and ministry are Genesis 1:1-31. These passages cover the creation week, and John 1:1-51 in the New Testament emphasizes that God remains the creator of the universe. As African Adventists, we are guarded by scriptures, the word of God, to understand our mission in the context of our time, the 21st Century.

The Old Testament and the New Testament form the Bible, commonly referred to as the word of God. "The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as the Holy Spirit moved them." The Seventh-day Adventist Church affirms their faith in the Bible. The mission and ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist find its meaning in the word of God, the bible. Accordingly, "The Bible should be recognized as the teaching instrument and source of authority to lead a person to Christ and a life of faith in a society where another religion is dominant."<sup>[2]</sup>

It is important to note what other scholars argue about God's creation week. Clayton and Simpson suggest that "God is as much the creator today as God was 13.7 billion years ago when the universe as we know it emerged from the singular state of the Big Bang."<sup>[3]</sup> This view is somewhat supported by Clinchy, who suggests that "Somewhere between 150,000 and 40,000 or so years ago, we began as part of our evolution into the modern species of homo sapiens to develop both spoken language and another form of thinking about these matters, the ability to develop abstract rules and "laws" to explain natural events."<sup>[4]</sup> This view does not align with the Biblical creation story in Genesis and John.

Unfortunately, 21st-century religions believe in everything that appears spiritual. "Major theological differences are involved, emphasizing creation as given rather than a call for conversion and transformation, as apologetics for technology."

There is a lot of compromise in the doctrines of the Bible. "One of the most significant is a recognition that creation is a kenotic act on the part of the creator, a self-limiting of the exercise of divine power."<sup>[5]</sup> This view suggests a lot of doubts about the God of creation. However, elsewhere, scholars suggest that "The Christian concept of God is not one of a deity who is simply a compassionate spectator looking down on the

travail of creation.” The creator God of the Bible is different from what African people imagine. “In African Traditional Religion, the idea of a man sharing God’s creative action is not necessarily linked to a sophisticated understanding itself.”<sup>[6]</sup> These issues and many more can be addressed through contextual theology.

Jehu-Appiah suggests that “the indigenous churches, growing from the African soil, should go for authentic and indigenous theology, which emerges from the engagement of the African culture with the word of God.” When Africans respond to challenges directly related to their issues, their mission and ministry will take a different shape.

“While claiming originality and indigenous authenticity, the African Indigenous Churches are the fiercest critics of traditional religion, banning their members even from attending or taking part in national or community festivals, branding them heathen, without any scope for a dialogue.”<sup>[8]</sup> The churches have become the center of many disputes, including a sign of God’s favor. Scholars Clayton and Simpson noted, “Particularly in Africa, the Pentecostal churches proliferate through a kind of mitosis – they are always in pursuit of even greater devotion and ecstatic worship.” Pentecostal churches often compete to determine who is more favored by God. The results are catastrophic because if one falls short, they may need to change their denomination or God. These feuds grow from churches and end up in the workplace, families, and marriages. Sometimes, a couple separates and even gets divorced because they do not belong to the same church.

Hence, it is a just course for African churches to find themselves a religion or theology that cannot be shaken: an African Theology that propagates the word of God and preaches the Advent of Jesus Christ as taught by Scriptures. Such a theology emanates not from human reasoning but is anchored by Jesus Christ, the rock of the ages.

## **GOD’S PURPOSE FOR THE MINISTRY**

God has a purpose for His ministry. The Bible presents a God who operates with a purpose. Unlike people, God has a purpose. The good thing about God’s purpose is that we are included. Whatever God has in mind about this world now or in the future, we are part of that purpose in His purpose. Scriptures, Genesis 1:27-28 reveal that God created man for His ministry.

Further, God grants us according to our heart’s desire, and it is His purpose that he came for us. Further, it is recorded in the scriptures, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, who are called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestine to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren Romans 8:28–29.

Wright suggests that God’s mission is “all that God is doing in his greater purpose for the whole of creation and all that he calls us to do in cooperation with their purpose.” The purpose of God is better understood when we consider what scholars Clayton and Simpson suggest, “The notions of design and purpose are rooted in the description of our human actions. As humans, we set our purposes for the future that are different from our present situation. Then we look for means to realize our purposes in our action.”<sup>[9]</sup> According to our creator God, “God’s design has a two-fold purpose. First, He desires that through the Urban Centre of influence, people in the community will interact with his disciples and become connected to Him”<sup>[10]</sup>. Further, “Secondly, Jesus desires that his Spirit-filled believers have a place where they can grow in their understanding of Christ and exercise their gifts in practical ways.”<sup>[11]</sup>

In light of these, God’s purpose for ministry can be viewed in various fields. According to McAuliffe & McAuliffe, <sup>[12]</sup> “Ellen White outlines a three-pronged approach to mission work in general. Three types of ministries should always work together in concert: gospel ministry, medical missionary, and publication”

[13]. The ministry and mission of the church should always have the triangle approach. Efforts should be made to reach people with the gospel of Christ; the first wing to land should be the publications. While they are still captivated by the reading material, the people should be challenged by preaching the word, studying the Bible, and campaigning. After that, the medical missionary can prepare and heal them from physical and spiritual burdens. The triangle approach must continue in every center where ministry and mission exist.

### Literature Evangelism

The early church was characterized by leaders who were writers; information was sent from one church to another by letter writing—this medium of communication dates back to the time of Hellenism and Roman worlds. A high development point at the time of Alexander's empire meant a cadre of semi-professional letter writers-maintained administration [14]. It is generally accepted that the Bible is among the first books to be written and translated into most languages. The Bible has also been translated into most African languages, bringing the Bible closer to the people. "To read the Bible in African languages means, in effect, to read it, hear it read, discuss it, wrestle with it, and use it in countless ways, all within cultures." [15]

Africans are accustomed to seeing, touching, and hearing. The experience of having the Bible in one's indigenous language helps people connect with the Bible, but most importantly, they develop a love of it. So, it will be well worth printing theological material, including tracts and pamphlets. Seventh-day Adventist policy, FP 55 05, it's recorded that "The responsibilities of the World Literature Ministry Coordinating Board (WLMCB) are: 1. General—a. Facilitate all phases of literature ministry, ... Serve as a central advisory, planning, mediating." [16] the literature ministry can be realized more quickly through this church wing.

### The Gospel Ministry

The gospel ministry, including preaching, teaching, and conducting Bible studies, is another wing of achieving God's purpose in ministry and mission. "The gospel ministry begins with a need for people who will go. This is clear in Jesus's final instructions to His followers on how to carry out the gospel work: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations." [17]

The instruction here includes overseas missions but is more comprehensive than going overseas. Here, going is about taking responsibility for being a vehicle of the gospel ministry. This may also include discovering your neighbor's needs, for it is through meeting each other's needs that God can meet our needs. Since the gospel commission invites all the believers, it calls for all and everyone who are Christ's followers to do something for someone, be it family, school, or clinics.

Wherever there are people, one Christian should find an opportunity to minister to the people. We are all sent, "The Latin term *missio Dei* captures this understanding – God is a missional God who acts missionary by preceding and then by shaping and sending the church into the world. Hence, by definition (theologically speaking), a church must be missional at its core. The mission is part of a church's essence." [18] Missional churches spend more on the community, being a salt to the community and providing the taste of a Christian service.

### Medical Missionary

The third wing by which Seventh-day Adventists continue to spread the gospel is the medical missionaries. White suggests that; "Medical missionary work is in no case to be divorced from the gospel ministry. The Lord has specified that the two shall be as closely connected as the arm is with the body. Without this union, neither part of the work is complete. The medical missionary work is the gospel in illustration." [19] This advice has strengthened the Adventist ministry to this day. Adventists are regarded as the most cautious

people regarding health and diet.

The earlier Seventh-day Adventist Christians believed in medical missionaries, “I wish there were one hundred in training where now there is one. It ought to be thus. Both men and women can be more useful as medical missionaries than missionaries without a medical education.”[\[20\]](#)

The combination of these ministries, especially in the 21st century, has proven to be the alternative approach to proclaiming the gospel. McAuliffe and McAuliffe substantiate this, “all ministerial work will be so seamlessly merged with the medical missionary work that they will become indistinguishable as separate entities.”[\[21\]](#) White first held this view, mentioning, “No line is to be drawn between the genuine medical missionary work and the gospel ministry. These two must blend. They are not to stand apart as separate lines of work. They are to be joined in an inseparable union, even as the hand is joined to the body.”[\[22\]](#) Today, the truth told in these messages cannot be over-emphasized. There will be a greater reaping of souls if the church heads the counsels.

### **Ways of Doing Ministry in Diverse Settings**

The 21st century brings the challenges of ministries in diverse settings. People’s residences have changed from rural settings to urban dwellings. More than that, people are more committed to their work environment than before. Added to this challenge is the communication mode used in our times. Therefore, this section will focus on reaching people with the gospel in their homes and workplaces and getting them through welfare ministry, friendship evangelism, and Adventism, God’s mission.

### **Reaching People in Their Homes**

One of the strange phenomena that comes with the dawn of this millennium, the 21st century, is the apparent seclusion of people. Societies are secluded from each other. No one knows what happens next door. Communities are gated. For one to enter through the gates, several questions must be answered. In some places, there is no security. You must know whom you are visiting to enter through those gates. However, the gospel has to reach those people in their secluded dwellings.

If opened in town, an urban center of influence may help reach those in secluded homes away from people. “An Urban Centre of Influence is a place where the Discipleship Group and Leadership Trainees can practice their spiritual gifts while being mentored and equipped for mission work.”[\[23\]](#) The center becomes an active organ of evangelism in urban areas or cities. This particular team of brothers and sisters can be trained in various fields of work; “The Urban Centre of Influence should also do exactly what its name suggests: it should influence the surrounding community in a way that brings the gospel into the lives of the people and effects change in them.” The Office of Adventist Mission at the General Conference has branded the “Centers of Influence” concept as “Life Hope Centers.” These life hope centers or centers of influence impact communities significantly. Lives are changed considerably.

The change may be slow, but that community will always be different again. Through these centres, our trained people will continue teaching the people different lifestyles that will eventually be seen in them, even by those in gated communities.

### **Welfare Ministry**

In the 21st century, Africa has been hit by poverty. According to Gibellini (1994:156), “Poverty as we experience it today in Africa is indeed a political problem.” Political in the sense that Africa was colonized by turned colonies of European countries before diverse religions were introduced to Africa. History records show that most European countries divided Africa amongst themselves. Nolan says, “The gospel that first

came to our shores with Dutch and then British colonialism was a gospel that justified and legitimized colonialism, imperialism, and European superiority.” Hence, our people were subjected to poverty. They did not see themselves as first-class citizens because it was a crime. They were subjected to second and third-class citizenship while the colonizers were enjoying the benefits of staying in a country that offered them first-class treatment. So, the gospel took shape within the confinements of the colonizers.

Nolan further suggests, “But what makes the challenge urgent and demanding is the simple fact that the gospel has been, and still is, associated with a political system that is now regarded by almost the whole world as a crime against humanity.”<sup>[24]</sup> therefore, Africans must be able to interpret what they experience within culture, community, and language. Shorter’s analysis suggests that “Christianity has to come to terms with the theologies and systems of beliefs of the religion-based cultures of Africa if it is to be Africanized at all.”<sup>[25]</sup> For Christianity to be more accepted in Africa, it has to be presented in an African language and culture. In that way, the ministry for low-income people would be received gladly. McAuffe and McAuffe suggest that “a medical dispensary and vision nurse program, free baths, free laundry, and a one-cent lunch can effectively relieve poverty while teaching and spreading the gospel.”<sup>[26]</sup> The early Adventist pioneers used these measures, and undoubtedly, they can still work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century amongst our Adventist African brethren.

### **Friendship evangelism**

Friendship evangelism is opening up a friendship relationship to assist the people to be acceptable to the gospel message of our Lord, Jesus Christ. The world has yet to be fully evangelized, including Africa as a continent. Sahlin says, “Connect with people where you work or study, through sports and recreation, in the apartment building or in the neighbourhood where you live, etc.”<sup>[27]</sup> This method will attract those we pass by almost daily. Our family, friends, neighbours, colleagues, and all those we may not have an opportunity to evangelize. Scriptures (Matthew 5:13-16) Suggest the following;

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt hath lost its savor, what shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden underfoot by men. 14 Ye are the world’s light. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a close vessel, but on a candlestick: and it giveth light to all in the house. 16 Let your light shine before men so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father, who is in heaven.

When God’s children in Africa begin to share their Faith, the gospel will spread like wildfire. When each one wins one, the work will grow faster. When do we become intentional about who we befriend and what our friendship is for? When we begin to value relationships, we are now separating just a mere relationship and the mission of a relationship. Linthicum says, “Relationships are built through intentionally selecting the people with whom you wish to build these relationships and then investing time in those people.”<sup>[28]</sup> There must be a planned program to befriend these people. When there is an intentional objective, prayer must also be employed.

According to White, “Love to man is the earthward manifestation of the love of God. It was to implant this love, to make us children of one family, that the King of Glory became one with us. And when His parting words are fulfilled, “Love one another, as I have loved you” John 15:12; when we love the world as He has loved it, His mission is accomplished for us. When we consider one another essential and worthy of the kingdom, we will intentionally spend a reasonable time making friendships for heaven. This kind of evangelism is not expensive. It shows the willingness to evangelize our people.

### **Adventism and God’s Mission**

Adventism depicts the mission of God’s people who are propagating the coming of Jesus Christ for the

second time. Based on the scriptures, Adventism is a belief in God, but a God who is coming to redeem His people from this earthly world. According to scriptures, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so, shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” The belief in this event has to be lived in people’s lives. Verse 18 gives directions; “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” To live for this hope is a lifestyle. It calls for a committed life to live a life of faith continuously. We must acknowledge our sinfulness that started at creation in the Garden of Eden, Genesis 3:15, and the promise to redeem the nation through a promised seed.

The life of Jesus Christ was an assurance that this lifestyle, Adventism, is possible. Jesus had no sin; He refused to sin. Matthew 4:1-10 summarizes how Jesus continuously resisted temptation. Jesus proved to humanity that Adventism is possible in this life. Adventism is also known for upholding their consciousness and being vocal on “civil rights and anti-slavery stance, religious liberty, health, and temperance reform, leadership in the prevention of alcoholism, and drug dependency, anti-tobacco lobby, education, welfare, aid and development, and so on.”[\[29\]](#)

Other Adventism doctrines attest that “Adventists believe in the Holy Trinity, the deity of Christ, the virgin birth, the sinless life and atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross, and the bodily resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father.”[\[30\]](#) It is, therefore, not a secret that Adventism believes that they are further resounding the spirit of the Reformation. Most of the reformers came from a poverty-stricken background. Loughborough states, “The reformer Zwingli emerged from an Alpine shepherd’s hut; Melancthon, the theologian of the Reformation, from an armorer’s shop; and Luther from the cottage of a poor miner.”[\[31\]](#) Even though the reformers came from such poverty, they were not hindered from doing God’s work.

Bosch attributes God’s mission primarily to the *missio Dei* (God’s mission), that is, God’s self-revelation as the One who loves the world, God’s involvement in and with the world, the nature, and activity of God, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church is privileged to participate. *Missio Dei* enunciates the good news that God is a God-for-people.”[\[32\]](#) This revelation of God is in the scriptures and what God has created. The mission of God has been revealed to men through various agencies. Men are now involved and working with God to achieve the purpose of God’s mission.

White suggests that “the church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning, it has been God’s plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and sufficiency.”[\[33\]](#)

The concept of *missio Dei* has been more accepted and researched in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Recent research records that “the concept of *Missio Dei* that emerged in the mid-twentieth century as an organizing structure allowed several biblical insights from the early part of the century to be gathered together into a new unifying framework for mission.”[\[34\]](#) The mission of God or God’s mission and purpose is more than we can imagine, it is beyond what we can comprehend. According to Bosch “our participation in God’s mission as a reality that will, one hopes, transform the world’s people to open their hearts to see and participate in God’s reign.”[\[35\]](#) The people of God are to embrace and acknowledge the mission of God in all its totality. Seeing God in all the needy and desperate people. Scholars state, “Our embrace of missional ecclesiology is an affirmation of the basic tenants we have noted – that we are to participate in the *mission Dei* and that a church needs to attend to and engage the peoples and structures of its context.”[\[36\]](#) Considering the people’s values, beliefs, and culture, this approach reaches people through the gospel. Studies have proven that people are more open and welcoming to anyone when their culture is respected.

Goheen further clarifies, “God’s purpose in Christ for creation is expressed above all in the magnificent “Christ hymn” of Colossians 1:15-20. Echoing the wisdom traditions of the Old Testament and Hellenistic

Judaism, these lyrical passages form the theological backbone of the word ‘all’ (*panta*) and redemption (1:18b-20).”[\[37\]](#) All as in our traditions, cultures, and values. We need to surrender everything about us and lift the name of Jesus. When men lift the name of Jesus, all other things become useless.

## COMMUNICATION

There are principles of communication that have been classified accordingly.

Clarity: when one communicates, he does so to clarify details.

Credibility: when communication occurs, the message being transported must be faithful and accurate.

Content and communication must occur within a relevant context to fit the environment, culture, and age.

Continuity: there must be a flow of messages and coherence. Capability: effective communication needs good preparation, and the message prepares you as the speaker. Channels: when communication occurs, the following channels are used: voice, envelope, or internet. Further, communication can be viewed in three phases: secular, Christian, and Adventist.

Christian communication entails relationship and communication with God. Wright records that “the work of the gospel’ Philippians 2:22, then, seems to refer primarily to this task of making the good news known by all means of communication possible and to all cost.”[\[38\]](#) Christian communication is a process that happens when the gospel is being spread. In this world, communication occurs within a cultural context. Further, scholars agree that “communication in the social world is an environment of regulative speech (imperatives and intentions) that shapes and embodies norms.”[\[39\]](#) When the two discourses engage in objective or subjective communication, how close and open the two would want to communicate or address their issues is a matter of choice.

### Secular Communication

“Communication is important in all kinds of industries, from traditional service-oriented areas such as travel, hospitality, real estate, and sales to highly technical fields such as medicine, design, and engineering.”[\[40\]](#) Secular communication is more business-oriented. Here, one communicates to gain something. The first communication over or through an electric line came on May 24, 1844, as a surprise to a couple, Alfred Vail and Samuel Morse, who were then in Washington, DC, and Baltimore. “Not long after the development of electronic computers, inventors saw that computer uses could be enhanced if these machines would communicate with one another.”[\[41\]](#)

Communication at this level is profit-bound and engages only for commercial uses. Communication between two companies is meant to benefit both companies; the other may benefit financially, while the other benefits kindly or by contributing knowledge or human skills. “In 1969, the Department of Defence commissioned its Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) to develop a data network. From a few nodes located at academic institutions, ARPA net has grown into the Internet, humanity’s largest cooperative venture ever undertaken.”[\[42\]](#) Communication in our age has turned to be secular.

In secular communication, six levels could be summed up: relationship and interpersonal, mediated, intergroup, creativity and entrepreneurial, nonverbal, speaking and listening communication. In our day, communication has taken a spiral turn by which; “Facebook, Twitter, and other social networks are ingrained in popular culture and can be used as avenues to put truth into people’s hands and homes. Churches are beginning to discover the usefulness of these outlets as well as other models of communication.”[\[43\]](#) Today’s youth use most of these avenues to communicate; others are starting and



running projects, businesses, and companies using social networks.

McAuliffe and McAuliffe mentioned, “What makes texting and social media such powerful avenues for literature evangelism is their accessibility and immediate influence.”<sup>[44]</sup> A group of athletes has been started in our area, Gauteng, and other provinces in South Africa through WhatsApp groups. Today, this group runs hundreds of athletics that perform in small and big competitions, the biggest of which are in South Africa, the Comrade Marathon, Soweto Marathon, Two Oceans, and others. It just proves that communication using social media can be used as well as an evangelistic tool.

### **Christian Communication**

Humanly speaking, communication is a two-way language. When two people exchange information, they are communicating. Communication is a two-way process of reaching mutual understanding in which participants exchange information, feelings, news stories, etc., and create and share meaning. According to Bell, “the Biblical creation story presents itself fundamentally as a work of communication.”<sup>[45]</sup> So, during creation week, God revealed himself as a communicator. This type of communication involves the creator, God. God is communicating with our world. The great communicator was God, and our world and nature listened, as in Genesis 1:14-18.

And God said, let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and days and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made the two great lights; the more excellent light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: [he made] the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth, rule over the day and night, and divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

### **Adventist Communication**

The Seventh-day Adventists have established an acceptable way of communication amongst Adventist communities worldwide. It is essential to mention here that the Adventist way of communication is rooted in the Word of God, the Bible. This kind of communication continues to further the mission of God and His people.

As such, “communication ministry calls for the support of every layperson, Church employee, and Church institution. The communication department promotes using a sound program of public relations and all contemporary communication techniques and media to promulgate the gospel.”<sup>[46]</sup> The church has long adapted to using all forms of communication to spread the gospel.

The church has accepted the admonishing by our pioneers that in the last days, “We must take every justifiable means of bringing the light before the people. Let the press be utilized, and let every advertising agency be employed that will call attention to the work.”<sup>[47]</sup> The 21<sup>st</sup> century has brought with it all the ways of communication, including the media. Louw reckons, “Whether used for communication, navigation, research, entertainment, or social media, many of us cannot imagine living in the twenty-first century without the internet.”<sup>[48]</sup>

While this truth about using media, the Internet, and other forms of communication cannot be quickly challenged, church members may need to be extra cautious about involving too much of it instead of allowing God to take charge.

Even so, the church accepts using AI (artificial intelligence) in other sectors. Louw further acknowledges that “an AI chatbot might be able to produce a sermon outline that looks like a sermon. Still, it cannot replace

the Holy Spirit's guidance, theological understanding, emotions, and insights into the Christian experience.” [49] Without reservations or bias, the church should use technology cautiously to spread the gospel. My advances are that we use that tool that does the job effectively and expeditiously.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, African Adventist theology of ministry for the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a theological analysis that addresses the challenges and submissions to some issues. The presentation is based on Biblical foundation as recorded in Genesis 1:1-31 and the creation week. It also includes the purpose of God for ministry.

E.G. White recommended that the triangle approach covers literature, gospel, and medical missionary work. It covers ways of doing ministry in diverse settings, welfare ministry for the poor, friendship evangelism, Adventism, and God's mission.

Finally, this analysis focuses on the African Adventist theology of ministry. The article presents the Biblical foundation for mission and ministry and God's purpose for the church. It also presents communication, secular communication, and Christian and Adventist communication as ways of spreading the gospel in Africa.

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