

UNDERSTANDING CHRIST'S MISSION IN A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

The initial focus of this paper is on the crucial importance of understanding Christ's mission in a South African context. It should be noted that the South African Seventh-day Adventist Church membership of +- 189 000 is worrying and concerning as compared to 1.2 million Seventh-day Adventist Church membership in Zambia and 1 million membership in Zimbabwe respectively. Evangelism apathy in South Africa is clearly a huge challenge, let alone secularism in the 21st century setting. Therefore, the Seventh-day Adventist Church problem with regards to slow growth is dual, namely, the misunderstanding of Christ's mission by pastors and the laity and the secular mindset of the most people of South Africa. Based on this problem, relevant interventions and strategies should be sought out, found, and implemented with immediate effect. The main focal point of this paper is to suggest and foster evangelism and mission methods, motivation for all stakeholders' involvement in mission to occur as opposed to the lack of mission drive and vision. Pastors and members should be encouraged to learn the secret of success of both Zambia and Zimbabwe regarding exponential membership growth.

Purpose: *The purpose of this article is to explore the impact of evangelism apathy to the Seventh-day Adventists in South Africa. Developing evangelism skills and strategies for the mission to thrive, and church growth moving forward.*

Findings: *An examination focused on recognition of slow South African Adventists growth in urban, peri-urban as well as rural areas is vital. Lack of involvement in both Christ's mission and evangelism should not be taken for granted. Probably, fiscal challenges affecting most conferences which cannot provide salary increments according to the South African Union salary scale, and also failing to employ most young pastors who are still looking and hoping for ministerial jobs may be resolved by the growth of membership.*

KEYWORDS: *Mission, Evangelism, Church Growth.*

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