A Contextual Ecclesiology of Dialogue:

The Self-Identity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Postmodern
Context of Mission

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Declaration and statement of authorship.

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis of which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma. No parts of this thesis have been submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

The professional advice of an editor was limited to formatting, grammar and punctuation revision.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics Committee (where required) or a relevant safety committee if the matter is referred to such a committee.

Signature:

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Sybil, my life companion of thirty-five years whose gifts of love and kindness have given me a glimpse of Jesus-Christ's self-sacrificing love for his Church.

'*It is precisely in that recalling of me to my responsibility by the face that summons me, that demands me, that requires me—it is in that calling into question—that the other is my neighbour.*' Emmanuel Levinas, Alterity and Transcendence, 25.

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Chapter 3

Methodology

Chapter 4

**Results of the Case Study: An Inductive Reflection
of the SDA Self-Understanding**

Chapter 5

Conclusion

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Abstract

The objective of this ecclesiological research is to explore the extent to which the SDA church's self-understanding as the remnant church is being transformed in the context of postmodern mission. The SDA church has described itself as the remnant church, based on its interpretation of apocalyptic Bible prophecies including the books of Daniel and Revelation. In the past 50 years, this interpretation has been the subject of various studies within the Seventh-day Adventist Church and has given rise to six main views:

1. The traditional and official position that the SDA church is God's faithful end-time remnant people of Bible prophecies.

2. God's remnant includes Adventists and non-Adventists.

3. There is a remnant within the remnant church, which means that only a minority of Adventists within the SDA church are faithful to the Gospel commission.

4 The Remnant is an invisible entity that describes God's chosen peoples rather than people.

5. The Remnant is not yet a reality and is still future.

6. The Remnant is to be understood as a movement for social resistance and justice.

Our literature review analyses primary sources, including the Fundamental Beliefs of the SDA Church, official theological statements and academic biblical theological research on the question of remnant ecclesiology. We observe that remnant ecclesiology in Adventism during the modern period (19th–20th century) has undergone a dynamic doctrinal development not without any theological and hermeneutical tensions, characterised by two divergent views of mission—*missio dei* and *missio ecclesiae*. We conclude that the body of literature on remnant ecclesiology under review has a lacuna because there is no actual research investigation that addresses the impact of the postmodern context of mission on remnant ecclesiology, both as a missional doctrine and as a core dimension of the self-understanding of the SDA community of faith itself.

We intend to address this lacuna and contribute to ecclesiological knowledge in the area of ecclesiological self-understanding and mission through a contextual ecclesiology of dialogue. This methodological approach seeks to mediate the theological meaning of remnant ecclesiology through a dialogue between the *past experience* of God's remnant people as witnessed in Bible stories and kept alive through faith traditions and the *contemporary experience* of the ecclesiological self-understanding of SDA believers in the postmodern context of Otherness. This is an inductive ecclesiological study that takes as its starting point,

the faith experience of the believers who belong to SDA churches and who are postmodern-sensitive in their mission outlook.

We will conduct an inductive exploratory case study involving a selected group of 34 participants from various missional church groups in Australia, Denmark, France, the United Kingdom and the United States. As an exploratory case study, it uses a mixed-mode approach for data collection consisting of an online survey using Survey Monkey and email interviews over a six-month period. The overall summary survey results show that the majority of participants have an inclusive ecclesiological self-understanding. In other words, God's remnant people comprises SDA and non-SDA. Furthermore, a deeper analysis of the participants' narratives shared during our interviews reveals that their self-identity as SDA is expressed and characterised by an asymmetric relationship of proximity and attachment, uniqueness and difference to their community of faith.

Consequently, in the light of our case study, we reflect on the theological meaning and implications of the inclusive nature of remnant ecclesiology. We propose that remnant ecclesiology is an ecclesiology of alterity anchored in God's difference from the creature, yet close and in proximity. Such an ecclesiology models on God's revelation through Jesus Christ, who bridges the distance between God and the human but is yet radically, absolutely different from humanity. It is an ecclesiology that is faithful to God's past revelation and his passion for dialogue with the human race in view of salvation and open to God's action in his faithful church today, calling a new generation of believers to hear what the Spirit has to say to the churches.[1]

Finally, we conclude that in the present postmodern cultural context of mission characterised by the turn to the Other, a contextualised remnant ecclesiology rooted in *missio Dei* and God's Revelation of *Otherness* is an ecclesiology of dialogue which is a sign of God's proximity and attachment, of difference and uniqueness with humanity through his son Jesus Christ—Immanuel, God with us—(Matthew 1:23).

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[1] In the epistles of Christ to the seven churches of Asia, the leitmotiv—'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches'—recurs seven times: Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22.

Abbreviations

SDA: Seventh-day Adventist

FB: Fundamental Beliefs

QOD: Questions on Doctrine

CSPS: Center for Secular and Postmodern Studies.

OT: Old Testament

NT: New Testament

Tables

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0: <u>Introduction: The Field of Study</u>

The field of this research is ecclesiology, generally defined as the study of the nature of the church.[1] However, it must be recognised that various nuances and emphases usually accompany the definition of ecclesiology.[2] As Neil Ormerod observes:

> Ecclesiology comes in various shapes and sizes. Compared with other theological topics it seems less clear what ecclesiology, and especially a systematic ecclesiology, seeks to achieve. . . . Some writers seem to despair of the possibility of any one systematic account of the Church, preferring to view the Church through the lenses of various models, while others view the current state of the subject as a clash of various root metaphors, each seeking dominance as the 'true' form of ecclesiology.[3]

The 'realitas complexa' of the church has been recapitulated in the four ancient words of the Nicene creed, *'Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam'*. These attributes "attest to what is proper to the church."[4] But how can we know that the church is authentic and faithful to its own self-understanding? The Protestant reformers answered this question by introducing the principle of the *notae verae ecclesiae*. "Although the Protestant Churches fully accepted the

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[1] For Nicholas Healey: "Ecclesiology can be defined as constructive theological enquiry into the Church's nature, function, organization, and/or practices. Full-blown theoretical treatments of the Church are uncommon prior to the nineteenth century, though ecclesiological concepts of varying complexity and depth have been operative throughout the Church's history. Many historical, cultural, political, sociological, economic, and other non-theological factors—often unrecognized or unacknowledged—have contributed to the Church's self-understanding."—Nicholas Healy, "Ecclesiology" in *Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology*, ed. Ian A. McFarland, David A. S. Fergusson, and Karen Kilby, et al. , (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), http://search.credoreference.com.ezproxy2.acu.edu.au/content/entry/cupdct/ecclesiology/0. No page indicated in online reference. Accessed on August 4, 2012.

[2] Nicholas Healy says ecclesiology is "… the kind of theological reflection that is centered upon the nature and function of the Christian church."—Nicholas M. Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life-Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology,* eds., Colin Gunton and Daniel W. Hardy, Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine (Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 2000), 1.
Stanley J. Grentz describes Ecclesiology as "The systematic articulation of the spirit's work among the corporate people of God is ecclesiology or the doctrine of the church."—Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Vancouver, BC: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company and Regent College Publishing, 2000), 461.
Roger Haight claims that "the direct object of ecclesiology is a finite reality, a social movement and institution that understands itself in faith as responding to God's grace."—Roger Haight, *Christian Community in History*, Vol. 1 (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc, 2005), 44.

[3] Neil Ormerod, "The Structure of a Systematic Ecclesiology," *Theological Studies,* Vol 63, No. 1 (March, 2002): 3.

[4] G. C. Berkouwer, *The Church* [De Kerk, 1 and 11] (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), 12.

creedal statement, they drew up their own marks by which to discern the true Church (*notae verae ecclesiae*)."[5] From this perspective, ecclesiology can also be taken as a study of the authenticity of faith communities[6] that claim to be church.

1.1: The SDA Church Self-Understanding

Our ecclesiological research compares and contrasts the SDA church's historical self-understanding and the actual self-understanding possibly developing among SDA missional church groups in the context of the postmodern Western world. The Seventh-day Adventist church has developed a unique descriptive—as well as prescriptive—mark for its ecclesial self-understanding. It understands itself as constituting—as well as being part of—the 'Remnant people of God'. The baptismal covenant that the SDA Church has adopted consists of three parts:

1. The 28 Fundamental Beliefs.
2. The baptismal vow.
3. The certificate of baptism and commitment.

Article 13 of the 28 Fundamentals Beliefs titled as 'The Remnant and Its Mission' reads as follows:

> The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of

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[5] For example, early Reformers established the marks as the preaching of the gospel, church discipline and administration of the sacraments: Nicholas M. Healy, "Marks of the Church" in *Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), http://search.credoreference.com.ezproxy1.acu.edu.au/content/entry/cupdct/marks_of_the_church/0. Accessed on May 5, 2012. No page # indicated in the online reference. Veli-Matti Karkkainen discusses other marks of the church adopted by radical reformers, Pentecostal or base ecclesial communities: Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical and Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2002), Chapters 5–6. See also William Madges and Michael J. Daley, eds., The *Many Marks of the Church* (New London, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2006).

[6] We will use 'faith communities or community' interchangeably with church to indicate the community or communion of believers. See Fritz Guy's discussion on church as a community of the faithful: Fritz Guy, *Thinking Theologically* (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1999), 33–36.

repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a part in this worldwide witness.[7]

In article 13 of the SDA baptismal vow, the baptismal candidate is asked: "Do you accept and believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy and that people of every nation, race, and language are invited and accepted into its fellowship?"[8] In the baptismal certificate—the third part of the baptismal covenant—the new believer is invited to testify: "I accept and believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy."[9]

The object of our ecclesiological research is limited to the SDA's self-understanding.[10] Abraham Heschel defines religious self-understanding as "an effort at self-clarification and self-examination."[11] Heschel sees *self-clarification* as "the effort to remind ourselves of what we stand for, to analyze the experiences, insights, attitudes, and principles of religion; to uncover its guiding features, its ultimate claims; to determine the meaning of its main teachings; to distinguish between principles and opinions."[12] And *self-examination* is "the effort to scrutinize the authenticity of our position. Is our religious attitude one of conviction or a mere assertion?"[13] Our theological point of departure is the Christian tradition as developed from within the SDA perspective. Roger Haight explains that:

> An individual envisions the whole church always from the point of view of some particular local church. No ecclesiologist directly belongs to the world-church, but shares, as it were, a dual membership and loyalty to his or her own confession and through the former, to the church as a whole. But the question goes well beyond matters of motives and loyalty. The point is that ecclesiologists cannot escape entirely from the church or confession in which they reside.[14]

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[7] *The Church Manual*. 18th ed. (Secretariat General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2010), 160.

[8] Ibid., 33.

[9] Ibid., 34.

[10] I will explain the limitations and delimitations of my research on pp.35–36. Here, I want to draw attention to what Roger Haight calls 'historical consciousness' which means "that all thinkers and their thought are historically situated, contextualized, and partially determined by their particular point of view."—Haight, *Christian Community in History*, 1, 41.

[11] Abraham Joshua Heshel, *God in Search of Man* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1955), 8–9.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Haight, *Christian Community in History*, 1, 41. Roger Haight also sees this 'part-whole' or 'local-universal' view of the church in dialectical terms. The two perspectives "always mutually interact and influence each other." Haight points out that the object of systematic ecclesiology is the universal church seen 'through the lens of a particular church' at least if it is carried by a single theologian. He sees here a danger: "It is here at this point that many ecclesiologies fail today. Even when they accept the principle that the church is larger than one particular confession and propose to study the whole church "in the light of" a particular tradition, in fact they simply portray a particular church. In that measure such an ecclesiology is systematically deficient, even though it may be useful as a denominational study."—Ibid., 42.

1.2: <u>Background to the Study</u>

There are different interpretations emerging in the SDA church regarding its self-identity, nature and mission as the remnant people of God.[15] Angel Manuel Rodriguez comments that "the diversity of views on this subject is significant and it is the best evidence we can use to demonstrate that there is indeed an erosion of the traditional position among some Adventists. In the spectrum of opinions, we find positions on the two extremes and others in between."[16] Rodriguez identifies six current trends of interpretation about the marks of the remnant, namely:

1. The traditional position that the SDA church is God's faithful end-time people.
2. God's remnant includes Adventists and non-Adventists.
3. There is a remnant within the remnant church that means that only a minority of Adventists within the SDA church are faithful to the Gospel Commission.
4. The Remnant is an invisible entity that describes God's chosen *peoples* rather than people.
5. The Remnant is not yet a reality and is still future.
6. The remnant is to be understood as a movement for social resistance and justice.[17]

1.3: <u>Self-Identity and the Church Mission: Past-Present-Future</u>

The proponents of these views are mainly SDA academics and theologians. But how do the SDA believers who are doing mission today and being church in a postmodern context define themselves? If they don't identify themselves with the 'remnant' self-image, can they still be named Seventh-day Adventists? Are these SDA missional communities authentic SDA churches? What does it mean to be an SDA church that is serving God's mission? Are postmodern-sensitive SDA missional churches and groups an emerging phenomenon in the SDA Church? Kwabena Donkor's document release by the Biblical Research Institute entitled 'The Emerging Church and Adventist Ecclesiology' looks at some key theological issues where the emerging church conflicts with SDA ecclesiology, namely in terms of its

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[15] C. L. Martines identifies four current theological views concerning remnant ecclesiology in the SDA church: 1. The traditional view; 2. The Developmental view; 3. The Change view; 4. The Rejectionist position.—Carmelo L.Martines, "El Concepto del remanente en la iglesia Adventista del septimo Dia: Razones subyacentes en el debate contemporaneo" (Universidad Adventista del Plata, 2002). This thesis will be mentioned in our literature section but because of its unavailability in a reliable English translation, we are limited in offering exact citations from it as we mainly rely on approximate Google translations.
[16] Angel Manuel Rodriguez, "The Remnant and the Adventist church," http://biblicalresearch.gc.adventist.org/documents/remnantSDAchurch.htm. Accessed on April 14, 2012.
[17] Ibid.

missionary outlook, as well as its soteriological and eschatological outlook.[18] Traditionally, the Seventh-day Adventist church has attributed its missionary motivation and zeal to its self-understanding as God's prophetic remnant church.[19] SDA church historian, George R. Knight writes that "The denomination's sense of prophetic identity and urgency has served as a motivating force to create one of history's most widespread mission enterprises, with established work in 207 of the 233 nations recognized by the United Nations."[20] For Moltmann, however, the question is not about whether the church has a mission "but the reverse: that the mission of Christ creates its own church. Mission does not come from the church; it is from mission and in the light of mission that the church has to be understood."[21]

1.4: The Tension between *Missio Dei* and the SDA Church Self-understanding

The fundamental issue behind this study is to determine the relationship between the institutional church's self-definition as the remnant church of Bible prophecy and the self-understanding of SDA missional believers who are postmodern-sensitive in their mission approach. Is it the church's self-understanding as 'remnant' that determines its mission? Or is it the understanding regarding the *missio dei* that shapes the church's self-understanding? Or are they in a dialectical rapport, a mutual correlation? This researcher agrees with Paul Minear's analysis that an individual or group's "self-understanding, its inner cohesion, its *esprit de corps*, derive from a dominant image of itself, even though that image remains inarticulately imbedded in subconscious strata."[22] But Minear makes a caveat and comments

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[18] Donkor concludes: "It is a movement that is attempting to change what it means to be and do church. Its implications are immense for all ecclesial traditions. But for the Adventist church, emerging ecclesiology strikes at the very reason for its existence."—Kwabena Donkor, "The Emerging church and Adventist Ecclesiology," (2011), https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Release_8_web_0.pdf., 26–30. Accessed on February 2, 2012.

[19] But P. Gerard Damsteegt observes that the remnant motif did not directly contribute to the "growth of SDA missionary consciousness, but it surely did indirectly by providing a positive argument for their uniqueness in the history of salvation as God's faithful remnant participating in its final rescue mission."—P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 244.

[20] George R. Knight, 'Remnant Theology and World Mission,' in *Adventist Mission in the 21st Century*, ed. Jon L. Dybdahl (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1999), 93. Knight warns that if the church loses its prophetic self-understanding, its mission will suffer: 'One of the greatest tragedies that could hit Adventism would be to lose its vision of itself as a people of prophecy. . . . To deny its prophetic heritage is a certain way to destroy what might be thought of as its missiological mainspring.'—Ibid., 94. But Damsteegt sees remnant ecclesiology as only an indirect contribution to the missiological impetus of the SDA church. See n. 19.

[21] Jurgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* [kirche in der Kraft des Geistes], trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press LTD, 1977), 10.

[22] Paul Minear, *Images of the Church in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 24.

that the self-understanding of a church is dynamic and stands in need of rediscovery in order for the church to be authentic:

> Our self-understanding is never complete, never uncorrupted, never deep enough, and never wholly transparent. In every generation the use and re-use of the biblical images has been one path by which the church has tried to learn what the church truly is, so that it could become what it is not.[23]

1.5: <u>Purpose of the Study</u>

This research aims to carry out a case study among a cross-cultural group of SDA believers that is postmodern-sensitive in their mission praxis in order to apprehend the determining lived experiences shaping their self-understanding as believers belonging to the SDA community of faith. Our research question seeks to understand whether the SDA church self-understanding as God's remnant people is being transformed through the process of doing mission in the context of postmodernity. *The main thesis is that the mission praxis of these SDA missional groups and faith communities are redefining what it means to be an SDA community in our postmodern Western pluralistic and secular society.*[24]

In order to verify the proposed thesis, we have chosen to carry out a case study of the lived church and mission experience of 30 cross-cultural missional believers living in Australia, Denmark, the United States and France, who are responding to the challenges of mission in a postmodern society. We will argue that believers involved in such a missionary experience are in the process of rediscovering the very being of the church, which is essentially its missionary nature[25] like God himself, whose mission desire unfolds through his son and the Holy Spirit. The postmodern context of mission is redefining what it means to be church.

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[23] Ibid., 25. Paul Lakeland using an inductive ecclesiological approach proposes the use of images like the church as 'Hospice' or as 'immigrant' that are non-biblical but still very appropriate as models for the Roman Catholic church self-understanding in the North American context.—Paul Lakeland, *Church-Living Communion*, ed., Tatha Wiley (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1996), 147–156.

[24] For the pluralistic condition of Western secular societies, see Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology* (London: SCM Press, 1977), 20–21. Also, Moltmann describes the main difference between an ecclesiological method 'from above'—which is deductive—and an ecclesiological method 'from below'—which is inductive. Moltmann proposes three solutions to this tension between believing the church 'credo ecclesiam' and our experience of the church.—ibid., 21–24. The Fundamental Belief 12 of Seventh-day Adventist Church defines the mission of the remnant church from a doctrinal perspective. Here, we are interested to see how the believers live out their missionary experience and how this experience is impacting their self-understanding as church. See also Chapter 4, 'Results of the case Study'.

[25] Both the Roman Catholic church and the World Council of Churches—Protestant and Orthodox— have come to the self-realisation that mission is not a task of the church but is rather the essential nature of the church

However, it is important to underline that the dynamic renewal of SDA ecclesial self-understanding in the postmodern context of mission is rooted in the faith experience of specific communities of believers 'from below', rather than the product of a written confession of faith or a doctrinal statement, which is prescriptive or descriptive 'from above'. Lesslie Newbigin explains that, in the context of Western Europe, the rupture that occurred between the Christendom society and the church as a result of the process of secularization "has helped older Churches of the western world to recover a missionary doctrine of the church itself."[26] Now, it would appear that the postmodern pluralist Western society is also causing newer churches to recover their missionary nature. The study on 'Mission and Unity—Ecclesiology and Mission' prepared in 2010 on the occasion of the celebration of the World Missionary Conference observes how Western churches have had to reinvent mission in order to face new challenges posed by secularization:

> As a result of radical secularization, active followers of the Christian religion have become a stagnating or shrinking minority in the Western/Northern world. Mainline, established historical churches are struggling with decreased membership, financial difficulties, and sometimes with a grave identity crisis. On the other hand, the end of the Christendom era offers a new opportunity for the churches in the West to find new ways of authentic discipleship.[27]

1.6: <u>Significance of the Study</u>

This study will contribute to the developing research literature on missionary ecclesiology from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective. Currently, there is no significant study that has investigated the relationship between the mission of the SDA church in the postmodern context and the impact of this relationship on the church's self-understanding. A recent publication by the Biblical Research Institute [BRI], entitled 'Message, Mission and Unity of

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itself. —Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove,Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2002), 151.

[26] Newbigin says that "The process of secularization, by which the sacral unity of the Christendom society has been broken and the church has been set in a new relation with society, has been the pre-condition for the recovery of a biblical, that is to say, a pre-Constantinian, understanding of the church as a missionary community."—Lesslie Newbigin, *Honest Religion for Secular Man* (London: SCM press LTD), 104. See also Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit,* 10.

[27] "Study Theme 8- Mission and Unity- Ecclesiology and Mission," http://www.edinburgh2010.org/en/study-themes/main-study-themes/mission-and-unity-ecclesiology-and-mission.html. 206. Accessed on July 4, 2011. The study also observes that, for instance, mega churches, emergent churches, house churches, are all part of the expressions of a 'renewed understanding and experience of Christianity.'—ibid. Accessed on July 4, 2011.

the Church' fails to address the question of the message and the mission of the SDA remnant church in the postmodern Western context.[28]

Given the ever-burgeoning forms of new approaches to being church in the contemporary context, it is important to know and understand the relationship between the church's nature and the *missio Dei* in the postmodern context. The BRI may have minimised any articulation of the challenges and issues raised by the postmodern movement for the unity and message of SDA mission but the Global Mission Center for Secular and Postmodern Studies [CSPS]—part of the Office of Adventist Mission at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists—organised a symposium on postmodern-sensitive mission at Andrews University from October 18-20, 2012, entitled "Revisiting Postmodernism: The Relevance of Adventist Mission in the 21st Century." According to the CSPS, the purpose of this symposium was to examine

> And critically engaged with themes and issues related to the challenges and opportunities of postmodernism to Adventist Mission in the 21st century. It was part of an ongoing investigation and debate on the development of mission efforts in postmodern contexts. The symposium was an open forum for exploring the influence of postmodernism from different perspectives in a broad variety of contexts. [29]

However, though it explains the amorphous paradigm of postmodernism,[30] its impact on propositional understanding of truth,[31] the mission approaches postmodernism necessitates[32] and its implications for the SDA church,[33] this symposium did not go as far as investigating

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[28] The BRI does, however, see it as a theological priority to address the issues of animism, spiritualistic and demonic manifestations that confronts SDA mission in the contemporary African context through the publication of a book *The Church, Culture and Spirits*. This book is an edited version of a collection of papers reflecting a series of theological dialogue between theologians and administrators in the West-Central African Division, East-Central African Division and Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division. Is the problem of 'spirits' more determining for the church's mission than the challenges raised by postmodernism in secular postmodern western societies? See Kwabena Donkor, ed. *The Church, Culture and Spirits* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2011).

[29] "http://www.secularandpostmodern.org/." Accessed on July 6, 2012. The actual content of the different papers presented can be accessed on videos. We will consider the papers that are relevant to our study in chapter 3 on methodology.

[30] David J. B. Trim, "" 'Watchmen' over the Flux of Thought:" Michel Foucault and the Historical Development of Postmodernist Philosophy," in *Revisiting Postmodernism: An Old Testament Debate on A New Era*, ed. Kleber O. Gonçalves and Bruce L. Bauer (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Department of World Mission, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary Andrews University, 2013), 1–25.

[31] Kathleen Beagles and Jonathan Beagles, "The Whole Truth and Nothing But : Discipleship in a Post-Chritsian Age," in Gonçalves and Bauer, *Revisiting Postmodernism*, 67–82.

[32] Simret Mahary, "Adventism Meets Postmodernism: Letting the Bible speaks in Postmodern times," in Gonçalves and Bauer, *Revisiting Postmodernism,* 315–324.

[33] Oliver Glanz, "Postmodern Mission in Amsterdam: A field Worker's Report about Method, Content and Limitations," in Gonçalves and Bauer, *Revisiting Postmodernism,* 327–324.

how an SDA ecclesiology from 'below' can emerge out of the postmodern phenomenon and how the SDA church's self-understanding is evolving in the postmodern context of mission. The symposium has not sufficiently explored the relationship between the postmodern context of mission and its impact on the SDA church's self-understanding. There are also a growing number of ecclesiological studies outside the SDA church which have been pointing out the church's missionary nature.[34] For example, Neil Omerod sees the missionary nature of the church as 'central to a systematic ecclesiology.'[35] Moltmann appeals for Western churches "to discover their missionary calling in their own country, using it to make the special form of the church in their own civilizations apparent."[36] According to a study presented at Edinburgh 2010 conference, the rediscovery of the church's missionary 'calling' is leading to innovative ways of being and experiencing the church in the postmodern Western context:

> New forms of Christianity are emerging in the West. Non-denominational communities, the so-called 'emergent church', 'mega-churches', networks of 'house churches', approaches like the Alpha-course, the Neocatechumenate movement, . . . are all expressions of a search for a renewed understanding and experience of Christianity. And forms of an anonymous 'cathedral Christianity,' reviving pilgrimage experiences . . . , the Taizé Community, and the presence of Christianity in 'cyberspace' are other examples of new, sometimes experimental forms of living as followers of Jesus Christ in the postmodern context of global Western civilization.[37]

An example of an experiential ecclesiological study focussed on a missionary ecclesiology written from below and seeking to understand the relationship between mission and self-understanding is the doctoral research by Cory Labanow on the Vineyard congregation, a local 'emerging' church in the United Kingdom. It is an example of how significant is the relationship between a church self-understanding and its mission. Labanow provides us with a theoretical understanding of such experimental churches, as well as a comprehension of the relationship between the self-understanding of a particular church and its mission. Labanow remarks that the Vineyard local congregation—a pseudonym—that he was studying was "trapped between the necessity of change (both internal and external) and the fear of losing

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[34] See "Study Theme 8: Mission and Unity- Ecclesiology and Mission," http://www.edinburgh2010.org/en/study-themes/main-study-themes/mission-and-postmodernities.html.: 210. Accessed on March 20, 2012. See also Vatican II, *Ad Gentes*, §9; cf. David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 372.

[35] Neil Ormerod, "The structure of a systematic ecclesiology," *Theological Studies,* Vol 63, No. 1 (March, 2002): 8-9.

[36] See also Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 8.

[37] "Study Theme 8—Mission and Unity—," 207. Accessed on Sept 20, 2012. see also Theme 3 'Mission and Postmodernities' of Edinburgh 2010 conference, 62-83. The SDA Church is involved in developing church communities that are postmodern-sensitive in their approach to mission. See csps.globalmissioncenters.org.

that which made them who they were."[38] The contextual theological question for the Vineyard church was: "What are our communally accepted and critically held criteria for reconstruction which result in relevance to ourselves and those to whom we are trying to credibly represent the Christian faith?"[39]

Equally significant is the inductive study by Shane Clifton: 'Pentecostal Ecclesiology: A Methodological Proposal for a Diverse Movement.' Clifton develops a concrete ecclesiological method to apprehend the multifaceted self-understanding of Pentecostal congregations or any other Christian church. He allies both theological and social science categories in order to investigate the narratives of Pentecostal congregations.[40] Labanow's and Clifton's inductive approach to an ecclesiological account points to the importance of considering the life and stories of believers as a valid theological source for developing a contextual ecclesiology relevant for the postmodern context of mission.

1.7: <u>An Inductive Methodological Approach</u>

Our purpose is to apprehend the life stories of SDA believers engaged in mission in the postmodern context through a contextual ecclesiology of dialogue. It is a dialogue between the postmodern context of mission and the lived faith experiences of the believers informed by their biblical hermeneutic tradition and the socio-cultural context in which they find themselves. Both horizons need to interface and become responsible interlocutors that respond to the other partner in dialogue.[41] Hans Guttierez calls for the necessity of the SDA

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[38] Cory E. Labanow, *Evangelicalism and the Emerging Church: Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009), 99.

[39] Ibid., 100.

[40] In his abstract, S. Clifton summarises the purpose of his study and states: "This paper is stimulated by the need to develop an ecclesiological method that is capable of describing and analysing the diverse self-understandings that characterize global Pentecostalism (or any Christian Church). It begins by observing the limitations of idealist approaches to ecclesiology, and instead proposes a concrete ecclesiological method. Concrete ecclesiology will include the narrative of particular Churches and movements, describe the explicit and implicit self-understanding that accompanies this narrative, and assess ecclesial transitions."—Shane Clifton, "Pentecostal Ecclesiology: A Methodological Proposal For A Diverse Movement," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology,* Vol 15, No. 2 (2007): 213.

[41] This approach is akin to Gadamer's fusion of horizons. For Gadamer, such "understanding is not a matter of forgetting our own horizons of meanings and putting ourselves within that of the alien text or the alien society' and therefore not a matter of 'detachment'; instead, it involves a *'rapprochement* between our present world . . . and the different world we seek to appraise'. The concept stands opposed to two ideas: a. that we can expect to understand and explain alien cultures and societies by imposing an external 'grid'; and b. that we can never hope to understand (or translate) such ideas. Rather 'truth' can be the outcome of such a fusion."—Julia Jary, ""Fusion of Horizons."" Collins,

community of faith to develop a social and cultural hermeneutics that will go deeper than a cultural analysis of mission that "limits itself to just a summarization or a list of what is more visible and apparent in a society in order to apply that information mechanically for immediate use in mission."[42] He proposes a 'double hermeneutic'[43] for doing theology today. "What is needed is a hermeneutics of the Scriptures but also a complementary serious hermeneutic of society and culture."[44]

The SDA community of faith has been opened and sensitive to a theological contextualisation of its mission and is critically engaged with the theological problematic contextualisation approaches raised in various mission contexts.[45] Social sciences have been used to understand the socio-cultural context of mission but they have had limited use for orienting a contextual ecclesiology of mission. Gerard Klingbeil privileged a biblical account of ecclesiology instead of a sociological reflection:

> Questions about ecclesiology, such as what constitutes the church and what type of organizational structures the church should adopt, have been addressed from various angles. One option is a sociological approach, which suggests that social change and cultural realities determine theological and ecclesiological realities. A better paradigm, which will be used as the basis for selection in this bibliographic review, is to evaluate and formulate ecclesiological principles with biblical exegesis and theological reflection.[46]

There are different types or constructs of ecclesiology[47] and one can say that historically SDA ecclesiology has been deductive in its approach and has overlooked alterity and 'Otherness'.

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http://search.credoreference.com.ezproxy2.acu.edu.au/content/entry/collinssoc/fusion_of_horizons/0 Accessed on August 5, 2014.

[42] Hanz Gutierrez, "Is the European Seventh-day Adventist Church Postmodern? Some Socio-Theological Remarks on Postmodernity and Multiculturalism in the Context of Mission," in Gonçalves and Bauer, *Revisiting Postmodernism,* 372.

[43] Ibid., 372. For a discussion on the problems of explanation and understanding that are central to the task of hermeneutics, and the relationship between text, discourse and action, see Paul Ricoeur: "... the problems of explanation and understanding so central to the task of hermeneutics confronts each other through the act of reading. The distancing of the text from its author is already a phenomenon of the first reading that, in one move, poses the whole series of problems that we are now going to confront concerning the relations between explanation and interpretation. These relations arise at the time of reading."—Paul Ricoeur, *From Text to Action* (Continuum International Publishing 2008), 105.

[44] Hanz Gutierrez, "Is the European Seventh-day Adventist Church Postmodern?" in Gonçalves and Bauer, *Revisiting Postmodernism,* 372.

[45] For example, see Bruce L.Bauer, "Avoid Comfortable Syncretism by Doing Critical Contextualization," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* Vol 1, No. 2 (Fall, 2005). 18–33. Also, Jerald Whitehouse's approach to contextualisation in Muslim cultures, particularly his concept that a remnant of God's people is found also among Muslims. See Jerald Whitehouse, "Communicating Adventist Beliefs in the Muslim Context," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies,* Vol 2, No. 2 (Fall, 2006): 69–88.

[46] Gerald A. Klingbeil, "Ecclesiology in Seventh-Day Adventist Theological Research,1995-2004: A Brief Introduction and Bibliographical Guide," *Andrews University Seminary studies,* Vol 43, No. 1 (2005): 11–12.

[47] Healey lists five key ones: "One is the attempt to encapsulate in a single word or phrase the most essential characteristic of the church; another is to construe the church as having a bipartite structure. These two elements are often combined, third, into a systematic and theoretical form of normative ecclesiology. A fourth

In other words, it is a meta-ecclesiology written *from above* that neutralises the social experiences and particular stories of believers in their daily social interactions. It is an ecclesiology of the 'same' in the sense that it reduces the believers' experiences to the same ecclesiological constructs—the doctrinal explanation of the church's nature, authority, liturgy and mission.

On the contrary, a contextual ecclesiology of dialogue envisages starting its ecclesiological account of what it means to be God's remnant people *from below*, that is, its starting point is found in the reading and interpreting of the local faith narratives of SDA believers involved in mission in the postmodern context.[48] In both cases, whether it is an ecclesiology whose point of departure is from 'above'[49] or 'below',[50] Jürgen Moltmann states that both ecclesiological approaches cannot ignore each other because they both relate to the same reality.

> No theological ecclesiology can ignore the fact that the creed speaks not only about a heavenly church but also about the church down the road. And no empirical ecclesiology can avoid seeing that the church down the road is—since it is the place of faith—also the object of faith. Creed and experience are related to the same object and they cannot, for all the tension between them, be distributed between different objects.[51]

But it can be argued that the experience of faith precedes and is prior to any theological explanation of faith. The oppression of the Israelites in exile in Egypt and their deliverance from oppression makes it possible for Torah legislation. The apostle Paul's early Christology is the result of his experience with the risen Lord and Christ. Fritz Guy identifies three orders

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element is a tendency to reflect upon the church in abstraction from its concrete identity. And one consequence of this is fifth, a tendency to present idealized accounts of the church."—Nicholas M. Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life: Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology*, eds. , Daniel W. Hardy and Colin Gunton, Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine (Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 2000), 26.

[48] The connection between belief in a doctrinal statement—for example, the remnant church—and its relationship with the daily, individual, living faith of believers can be hard to establish. David Yamane explains the whole problematic of conducting an empirical sociological investigation in order to find the proper connection between official teachings of a denomination and the individual beliefs shared by adherents of this particular denomination. "Even if we can identify specific teachings of specific religious bodies, it is methodologically difficult to study the connection between those teachings and individual beliefs."—David Yamane, "Beyond Beliefs: Religion and the Sociology of Religion in America," *Social Compass*, Vol 54, No. 1 (2007): 35.

[49] According to Moltmann this type of ecclesiology unfolds "the doctrine of the church as the object of faith in the framework of the confession of the triune God in the third article of the creed, . . . It can then move 'downwards', drawing conclusions from the church's faith for its experience and practice."—Moltmann, *A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology*, 21.

[50] An ecclesiology from below 'can work in the reverse direction, beginning 'from below': "It can describe the church as one empirical object among others, and then direct its thinking upwards in order to enquire into the theological significance of this object."—ibid., 21. For a description of the four aspects of an ecclesiology from below and its comparison with Roger Haight's 'historical ecclesiology', see Gerard Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity: Questions for the Church in our Time* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2007).

[51] Moltmann, *A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology*, 21.

of theological thinking whether this reflection is 'about religious experience or thinking about the language of faith.'[52] The *first-order language of religious experience* and activity is faith itself. The second order of theological thinking involves a reflection on the actual faith experience.[53] This is the stage of Torah development and Pauline Christology we referred to as examples of faith experiences preceding theological doctrines.

An understanding and explanation of the concrete experience of the believer's lived faith experience cannot ignore the fact that such religious experiences are also human experiences and, as such, have not only meaning but are also meaningful both sociologically and theologically. J. J. Mueller draws the distinction between meaning and meaningfulness and says that the former "points to what is true (e.g., Jesus died for me) and the latter pointing to the truth as it influences my life."[54] In other words, meaning deals with a belief system and meaningfulness speaks about the transformational power of any belief system. Understanding the fact that *meaning* is grounded in our theological confession, which also interprets one's faith, and that *meaningfulness* is expressed in the human garb of transformational experiences, so to speak, caution needs to be exercised so we are not trapped in what James Gustafson described as doctrinal and social reductionism. Doctrinal reductionism de-emphasises the human elements of church life or explains such elements using doctrinal language, whereas social reductionism limits the church reality to its social dimension. Gustafson observes that 'many theologians ignore part of their task in ecclesiology, i.e., to make theologically intelligible the human forms and processes that can be understood and interpreted from a social perspective.'[55]

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[52] Fritz Guy, *Thinking Theologically: Adventist Christianity and the Interpretation of Faith* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1999), 6.

[53] The second order of theological language is "the process and expression of thinking about the meaning of faith's personal experience, practice, and belief—explicating their content, assessing their appropriateness and adequacy, and exploring their implications."—Ibid., 7. For the third-order language, which is meta-theology, a reflection on how to go about the theological task.—ibid. Hans W. Frei shows the categorical intentionality of theological language when he distinguishes between theology as "first-level statements . . . made in the course of Christian practice and belief . . . set forth in creeds and confessions" and theology as "a given Christian community's second-level appraisal of its own language and actions under a norm internal to the community itself. This appraisal . . . has two aspects. The first is descriptive: an endeavour to articulate the "grammar," or "internal logic," of first-level statements. The second is critical: an endeavour to judge any given articulation of Christian language for its success or failure in adhering to the acknowledged norm(s) of Christian language use."—Hans W. Frei, *Types of Christian Theology*, eds., George Hunsinger and William C. Placher (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 124.

[54] John J. Mueller, *What Are They Saying About Theological Method?* (New York/Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1984), 37.

[55] James M. Gustafson, *Treasure in Earthen Vessels: The Church as a Human Community* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 107.

An understanding of faith that uses sociological reasoning presents theological problems that need to be recognised during the process of theological thinking.[56] Joseph Komonchak explains the methodological difficulty of a researcher who wants to integrate social sciences in an ecclesiological investigation may encounter:

> Something should be said at the end about the impression that might have been given that the task of integrating social theory into ecclesiology is a simple one. It is not and among the principal difficulties is the simple fact that an ecclesiologist who attempts it will not find himself before a unified body of social theory. Social theorists differ considerably from one another, and some of their differences are basic and methodological.[57]

Neil Ormerod has identified four methodological problems[58] arising in the attempt to develop a theological methodology that correlates theology and the social sciences. Generally speaking, the kind of possible relationship that have been developing between the disciplines of secular social sciences and theology can be identified in the following positions namely: 1. Interdependence; 2. Conflict; 3. Correlation; 4. Dialogue. Each position and approach has its own limitations and possibilities.[59] As Robin Gill observes, 'just as theologians must choose which of the many paths they will take in theology, so they discover that they must do the same in sociology.'[60]

Finally, a contextual ecclesiology of dialogue is an inductive approach to ecclesiology that draws insights from ethnography[61] and enters in dialogue with the text of Scriptures in order

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[56] For a conservative evangelical critique on the possibilities sociology offers to theology, see Dennis Hiebert, "Can we talk? Achieving Dialogue between Sociology and Theology," *Christian Scholar's Review,* Vol 37, No.2 (Winter, 2008): 199–214. For Hiebert, the Christian social scientist is justified in using the instrument of methodological naturalism based on the fact that God is the creator and sustainer of nature. On the contrary, for Bradley Seeman, the main flaw with the alternation approach between two accounts of reality, historical and theological—or in our case, social—lies in its inability to determine which is a true account of the data at hand.—Bradley N. Seeman, 'Evangelical Historiography Beyond the "Outward Clash": A case study on the Alternation Approach,' *Christian Scholar's Review,* Vol 33, No. 1 (Fall, 2003): 95–124.

[57] Joseph A. Komonchak. "Ecclesiology and Social Theory: A Methodological Essay," *The Thomist*, Vol 45 (1998): 281. http://www.thomist.org.ezproxy2.acu.edu.au/login.php. Accessed on March 6, 2011.

[58] He mentions these four issues as problematic:
  1. The methodological divergence within the social sciences.
  2. Social science is not theologically neutral.
  3. Social science knowledge is limited.
  4. Theologians tend to use social data uncritically.
  Neil Ormerod, "A Dialectic Engagement with the Social Sciences in an Ecclesiological Context," *Theological Studies,* Vol 66, No. 4 (2005): 832–833.

[59] We have developed a table that identified these four perspectives and their proponents: see Appendix G.

[60] Robin Gill, "Introduction," in *Theology and Sociology A Reader,* ed. Robin Gill (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1987), 2.

[61] Ethnomethodology is the outcome of the works of social phenomenologists like Alfred Schütz and Harold Garfinkel. Ethnomethodology is used in the social sciences and anthropology. Its use in theology is a 'more

to study the lived-faith practices of everyday believers in their context. Through this process of contextual dialogue, we remain focused on the interlocutor, on the 'other':

> [A]nd learning from people—their words, practices, traditions, experiences, memories, insights—in particular times and places in order to understand how they make meaning . . . and what they can teach us about reality, truth . . . . The aim is to understand what God, human relationships, and the world look like from their perspective-to take them seriously as a source of wisdom.[62]

As Meredith McGuire puts it, the study of lived religion is "expressed by ordinary people (rather than official spokespersons) in the context of their everyday lives."[63] It is a contextual study of actual lived-faith experiences because it is distinguished "from the prescribed religion of institutionally defined beliefs and practices."[64] A contextual ecclesiology of dialogue seeks not only to engage a conversation with believers' personal subjective experiences but also to understand how "people construct their religious worlds together, often sharing vivid experiences of that intersubjective reality."[65]

According to Emmanuel Levinas, such a reality may constitute the matrix of transcendental significance, a divine *élan*.[66] Through this dialogue with the lived daily context of believers—a dialogue made possible through the mediation of a contextual ecclesiological approach—one can make, as Gustafson recommends, (see p.23–24) "theologically intelligible" those lived faith experiences which "can be understood and interpreted from a social perspective." Lewis Mudge proposed that an ecclesial hermeneutic needs to bracket out the 'established institutional and conceptual forms'[67] of the church in order to see the lived faith experience of believers as 'text-like' and requiring different lived 'readings'. In Chapter 3, we will elaborate on the dimension of alterity that is constitutive of the lived faith experience of believers and is determining in our inductive methodological approach and ecclesiological reflection on remnant theology in the context of postmodernity.

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limited, kind of theological activity that uses a different process and yields a different product.'—Aana Marie Vigen and Christian Scharen, eds., *Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 214.

[62] Ibid., 16.

[63] Meredith B. McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 2008), 12.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

[66] "The surplus of truth over being and over its idea, which we suggest by the metaphor of the "curvature of intersubjective space," signifies the divine intention of all truth. This "curvature of space" is, perhaps, the very presence of God."—Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality And Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, Duquesne Studies Philosophical Series (Pittsburgh, PA.: Duquesne University Press), 291.

[67] Lewis S. Mudge, *Rethinking the Beloved Community: Ecclesiology, Hermeneutics, Social Theory* (Maryland: University Press of America, 2001), 147–148.

1.8: <u>Methodology and Method: A Distinction</u>

The distinction between methodology and method is necessary because the terms are often used interchangeably in ecclesiological reflection. One is never too sure whether it is the method or the methodology behind a specific discipline—for example, social sciences and theology—that is being decried. For example, E. Farley points out that 'the problem beneath the problem of theological *method*' has to do with "whether or not faith apprehends any distinctive realities at all."[68] By method, Farley here refers to historical criticism that in many cases tend to evacuate supernatural presuppositions in their analysis of the text of scriptures. Also, John Orme Mills has pointed out that the problematic of working with two distinct disciplines like theology and social theories lies in the fact that each has its own frame of reference. In other words, they work within specific worldviews.[69] Norman Geisler uses the terms *methodology* and *method* interchangeably when he discusses how one's methodology determines one's theology. As he states, "By doctrine we mean what one believes, and by method we mean how one arrives at this belief. The question, then, is this: Can one's ***method*** be contrary to his doctrine? . . . If so, then, would not the ***methodology*** he utilizes undermine or negate the theology he confesses?"[70] Hans Frei uses the term method in his 'Five types theology' classification when describing theological critical examination and philosophical assumptions.[71]

In contrast to the interchangeable use of methodology and method, Fritz Guy differentiates between the terms and takes theological methodology to "refer to the process of thinking about, reflecting on and critically evaluating the way in which one goes about doing

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[68] Edward Farley, *Ecclesial Man*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 8. Farley argues that this problem arises because classical theological criteriology, "the house of authority' like scripture-dogma and tradition which constituted the foundation of theological method has been put under question by the historical critical method resulting in the relativisation of the 'historical dimension of faith's references." —ibid. 7. He comments that "Faith being interchangeable with wisdom, common sense, and philosophical insight has no distinguishing content, it apprehends no distinguishing realities. Whatever distinguishes faith must, therefore, fall outside the spheres of cognition and reality. So goes the nasty suspicion."—ibid. see also 3, 8.

[69] John Orme Mills explains that "Sociology and theology are both concerned with the human condition, but they have different frames of reference. They belong to distinct universes of discourse. Questions raised in terms of one cannot be answered in terms of the other."— John Orme Mills, David Martin and W. S. F. Pickering, eds., *Sociology and Theology: Alliance and Conflict* (New York: Martin's Press, 1980), 1–2.

[70] Norman L. Giesler, "Methodological Unorthodoxy," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 26, No. 1 (1983): 88, bold italics in the text provided. The philosophical and epistemological assumptions determine the methods. Hence, the difference between qualitative and quantitative research methods rests on different set of epistemological assumptions.

[71] Hans Frei, *Types of Christian Theology*, ed. George Hunsinger and William C. Placher (London: Yale University Press, 1992), 28-55.

theology'[72] whereas theological method 'refers to the way in which one actually goes about doing theology.[73] John Swinton and Harriet Mowat distinguish between methodology and methods on the basis that the former deals with the philosophical and epistemological assumptions and the latter are "specific techniques that are used for data collection and analysis. They comprise a series of clearly defined, disciplined and systematic procedures that the researcher uses to accomplish a particular task."[74] Hans-Gunter Heimbrock makes a similar distinction when he states, "I employ the word "method" to indicate a process of concrete steps to do research, to collect data, and to draw conclusions from that data,"[75] whereas methodology is an "inquiry that addresses the question of why to do research in one way and not another way."[76] From the perspective of this study, methodology refers to paradigms, frameworks of beliefs and worldviews that are informed by specific theological and philosophical assumptions on the nature of reality, how we apprehend knowledge and what is the purpose of it all. Method is the *technique* or tool used to explore the lived data around us. Following Swinton and Mowat, Hans-Gunter Heimbrock and Fritz Guy, we understand methodology as the way we are going to think and reflect on our ecclesiological task and the philosophical perspectives undergirding such an ecclesiological account.

Our methodology is contextual ecclesiology that rests on the theological and philosophical presupposition that God's revealed passion for alterity and difference conditioned human encounter and gives the Other ascendancy over Self. In Jesus's thinking, the plea of the other interrogates the community of faith: 'I was hungry . . . I was a stranger . . . I was naked . . .' (see Matthew 25:35, 36). We use Emmanuel Levinas's concept of the 'Face of the Other' to explicate and delineate this methodology. By method, we understand the steps and process by which we are to collect data on the concrete daily experience of selected groups of missional SDA congregations.

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[72] Guy, *Thinking Theologically,* 8*.*

[73] Ibid.

[74] John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM Press, 2006), 74.

[75] Hans-Gunter Heimbrock, "From Data to Theory: Elements of Methodology in Empirical Phenomenological Research in Practical Theology," *International Journal of Practical Theology,* Vol 9 (2005): 275.

[76] Ibid. He continues and explains that methodology "explains research interests, the relation of methods with research objects, the meaning of basic concepts, and the implicit norms and expectations of a research design."—ibid.

1.9: <u>A Case Study and Method of Data Collection</u>[77]

This inductive approach in the field of ecclesiology begins with a case study of a cross-section of 34 SDA believers who live and do mission in the postmodern context. Our method of data collection will consist of survey questionnaires and the gathering of the stories and narratives of the believers in their lived context through email conversations. Our research method consists in doing an online survey using Survey Monkey, followed by a deeper analysis of the lived-church experience of participants via email conversations. This case study is exploratory in term of its focus because we believe that the believers' life experience and situation hide dimensions of the SDA church's self-understanding that is worth exploring.[78] These two methods of data collection—online Survey Monkey and email conversations—will enable us to narrate *a 'thick description' of the self-understanding* of the SDA believers.[79]

The online Survey Monkey is a non-experimental survey approach because "the key goal of non-experimental survey research is to collect data and describe the behaviors, thoughts, and attitudes of a representative sample of individuals at a given point in time and place."[80] As an online survey, it will be based on a non-probability sampling survey as against a probability sampling survey technique, which is more useful "when aiming to make statistical inferences about populations',[81] whereas a non-probability sample survey is more applicable to

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[77] See also *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, edited by Pete Ward. According to a book review comment: "The contributors to the volume converge on the practice of ethnography for a range of dogmatic and practical reasons, but they are united by a methodological common sense: that the concrete, social and historical shape of the church is theologically significant, and that ethnography (defined broadly as any form of qualitative social science) can help us attend to it."
—http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com.ezproxy1.acu.edu.au/content/journals/10.1163/17455316-01002009;jsessionid=52golvsr9d2q5.x-brill-live-02. Accessed on November 4, 2013.
[78] Robert Alan Stebbins describes exploratory research in the following way: "Researchers explore when they possess little or no scientific knowledge about the group, process, activity, or situation they want to examine but nevertheless have reason to believe contains elements worth discovering. To explore a given phenomenon effectively, they must approach it with two special orientations: flexibility in looking for data and open-mindedness about where to find them. Oriented in this way, the first step is to try to acquire an intimate firsthand understanding of the group, process, activity, or situation being observed. It follows that the most efficacious approach is to search for this understanding wherever it may be found using any ethical method that would appear to bear fruit. The outcome of these procedures, and the main goal of **exploratory** research, is the production of inductively derived generalizations about the group, process, activity, or situation under study."—Robert Alan Stebbins, *Exploratory Research. The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods.* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.).
[79] Clifford Geertz has explained how cultural gestures and behaviours have multiple layers of signification.—Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973). Robert Schreiter analyses the relationship between contextual theologies and provides insight in articulating the local church with its cultural and social context.—Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (New York: Orbis Books, 1985).
[80] Sema A. Kalaian, *Research Design. Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods.* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.), 728.
[81] Valerie M. Sue and Lois A. Ritter, "Sampling," *Conducting Online Surveys* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2007), 25.

exploratory studies.[82] K. Saumure and L. M. Given describes three types of non-probability sampling technique: a. The convenience sampling; b. The snowball sampling and c. The purposive sampling.[83] We will use a mixed sampling technique, namely convenience and purposive sampling because, on one hand, in the case of convenience sampling—'participants are selected because they are accessible and therefore relatively easy for the researcher to recruit'—and on the other hand, with purposive sampling—'participants are selected because they meet criteria that have been predetermined by the researcher as relevant to addressing the research question.'[84] In our case, all the participants are easily accessible through the churches and the criteria of selection have been predetermined: participants need to be SDA believers who belong to churches that are postmodern-sensitive in their approach to mission in the Western context. This group of participants is deemed relevant to answer our research question which asks: 'Is the SDA Church self-understanding as God's remnant people undergoing a transformation as a result of doing mission in the context of postmodernity?' In designing our online survey, we will follow the 10 principles offered by Claire Hewson[85] in implementing an internet survey, namely: [all the measures applied are mentioned in italics]

1. Collect information about participant demographics (gender, education, income, nationality, occupation, and frequency of internet use have been highlighted). *Our survey considers the demographics of our target church population. Those who will be surveyed online are specific-targeted church groups and thus offered a narrower sample as compared to the broad scope of internet users.*

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[82] Ibid., 32. "Non-probability samples do not employ random selection procedures and thus may or may not represent the population well. This is why most statistical texts advise against using non-probability techniques or suggest that they be reserved for exploratory research. While this advice is theoretically sound, in online survey research it is often impractical."—ibid. 32. David L. Morgan also remarks: "Because the goals of quantitative research typically include generalizing estimates to populations and conducting statistical tests, this leads to an emphasis on probability-based sampling with large **sample sizes.** In contrast, qualitative research emphasizes inductive theory building, subjective understanding, and detailed, holistic data, and these goals are often best met through intense investigations of small, systematically selected samples."—David L. Morgan, *Sampling. The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods.* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.), 798.

[83] Lisa M. Given and Kristie Saumure, *Nonprobability Sampling. The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods.* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.), 563. Instead of purposive sampling, V. M. Sue and L. A. Ritter uses 'volunteer-opt in panels' in addition to convenience and snowball sampling online surveys: "We present three nonprobability strategies that can be used for online surveys: convenience sampling, volunteer opt-in panels, and snowball sampling. The appropriateness of the chosen sampling method should be evaluated in light of the research objectives."—Ritter, "Sampling."25.

[84] Ibid., 563.

[85] Claire Hewson, *How to Design and Implement an Internet Survey. Internet Research Methods,* (London, England: SAGE Publications, Ltd, 2003), 81.

2. Aim for sampling procedures that allow measurement of sampling frame and response rates. *We have chosen the non-probability survey methods.*

3. Control access to the survey (for example, by use of passwords). *Once participants click the submit button in Survey Monkey, we have chosen the option that they no longer have access to their questionnaire.*

4. Send a preliminary request for participation prior to sending the survey itself. *We sent an email invitation to participants who responded to the research project through advertisement made in their particular congregations. The aim was to increase the response rate.*

5. Include an introduction to the survey that gives affiliation details, and aim to maintain a professional appearance. *Survey Monkey featured a professional short introduction to the e-surveys and has a disclaimer button for those who do not wish to receive e-survey invitations.*

6. Aim for simplicity and clarity in layout and presentation. *The survey consists of 29 mixed questions: multiple choice and open-ended questions that would take only 30 minutes to respond.*

7. Keep procedures and software requirements as low-tech as is possible given the nature of the study. *Survey Monkey is user friendly and relatively cost-effective.*

8. Undertake extensive piloting across different platforms. *Time as well as financial limitations make this recommendation not practical for us to carry.*

9. Maintain participant anonymity unless it is essential to the study to obtain participant identity information. *Confidentiality of participants will be respected and only their email addresses and first name will be required.*

10. Use server-side scripting (as opposed to the 'mailto:' command) in order to collect data if resources allow. *This principle does not apply as Survey Monkey has a different function for reply.*

The aim of our email interviews—'e-interviewing'—is to get participants to share what church means for them through their lived stories in order to gain deeper insights on how their lived church mission experience is shaping their church self-understanding and vice-versa. Through the use of email conversations, our purpose is to make a 'thick description' of faith taken to be the first-order of religious experience and activity. This reflective conversation will be directed at exploring and digging out the living faith narratives and experiences of the

church members expressed in words, actions, memories, insights, joys, pains, vision and dreams in the context of mission. Our email discussion focuses on two questions:

1. What does church mean for you?
2. What does it mean for you to be self-identified as the remnant church?

1.10: <u>Outline of the Literature Review</u>

This chapter presents a review of the literature and research on the biblical image of God's people portrayed as a remnant and the contributing biblical, theological, historical and socio-cultural factors that have led the SDA church to appropriate this particular minor[86] biblical image of the remnant as the core of its ecclesiological self-understanding. It also explores the community of faith as a hermeneutic community that has contributed to shaping the self-identity of the church.

The purpose of this review is to identify the continuity and discontinuity elements in the development of the SDA Church's self-understanding as the remnant church. In order to achieve this goal, we shall explore and observe the doctrinal development that has been taking place in the SDA church in regard to the doctrine of the church and how this doctrine has been framed within the context of the church missionary challenges and effort. We will follow Rolf Pohler's model of doctrinal development as a framework for exploring the doctrinal understanding of the SDA church as remnant.[87] We have identified five types of literature that have been developing within the SDA church in regard to the study of the biblical image of God's remnant people:

1. <u>Popular publications</u>—church magazines, brochures, leaflets and books. Digital resources: DVDs and online blogs: This type of data is apologetic in its intention and aims to harmonise apocalyptic Bible prophecies with the emergence of the Advent movement in 19th-century United States in order to give biblical foundation to the SDA church self-identification as God's remnant people.

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[86] Paul Minear distinguishes between major and minor images used in the New Testament as self-description of the church. He identifies the 'remnant' as minor image describing God's people.—Minear S. Paul, *Images of the Church In the New Testament* (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1946–1952), 80.

[87] Rolf J. Pöhler, *Continuity and Change in Adventist Teaching* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000), 196–223.

2.Official organisational publications: The objective is to show the biblical basis for the church self-understanding as well as clarifying theological misconceptions and providing a better theological articulation and expression of the doctrine of the remnant.

—Church Manuals (1932-2010) and the Fundamental Beliefs statement.
—Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine.
—SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 4, 7.
—Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology, Vol.12.
—Bible Study Quarterly Lessons, commonly known as Sabbath school lessons.

3. Academic and scholarly sources: Their aim is to analyse the cultural, literary and theological meaning of the remnant from scriptures, and to articulate it with the actual historical and theological context of the SDA church. They are published usually in the forms of dissertations, journal articles and conference papers. This category can be subdivided in four specific types of research and studies:

A. Biblical and exegetical studies.[88]
B. Historical, theological.[89]
C. Missiological studies.[90]
D. Sociological studies.[91]

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[88] For example, Angel Manuel Rodriguez, ed. , *Toward A Theology of The Remnant- An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2009).

[89] These kind of studies generally focus chronologically on the theological and historical development of the mark of the remnant in SDA history.—Alberto Timm, "Seventh-day Adventist Ecclesiology, 1844-2001: A brief historical overview," in *Pensar la iglesia hoy: Hacia una ecclesiologia Adventista. Estudios teleológicos presentados durante el IV Simposio Biblico-teleológico Sudamericano en Honor a Raoul Dederen, ed. Gerald A. Klingbeil, Martin G. Klingbeil, et al. (Libertador, San Martin, Argentina: Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata, 2002), 283-302.* See also the following studies by Gideon Duran Ondap , "Diversity in the Remnant concept in the History of the Seventh-day Adventist church (1841–1931)" (M.A. thesis, Theological Seminary, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, 2003); Stephan Paul Mitchell" 'We are the Remnant': A Historical, Biblical, and Theological Analysis of Seventh-day Adventist Ecclesiological Self-understanding," (M.A. thesis, Loma Linda University, 1988); Samuel Garbi, *The Seventh-day Adventist Church as the Remnant: Various views over 150 years of Denominational history* (Term Paper, Berrien Springs: Michigan, 1994); Peter K. Chung, "Rise of the Remnant: The Formation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church from the Era of Slavery and the Civil War," (M.A. thesis, California State University, 2005).

[90] As we will see in Chapter 2, [section 2.4.2], this type of literature attempts not only to describe the various aspects of SDA mission but in some respect delineate the relationship between mission and the remnant self-identity.

[91] Studies that take a sociological point of view examine the image of the remnant in the light of the sociological formation of religious identity. They explain the sociological elements that have led the SDA community to identify itself as the remnant people of God. See Malcom J Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary : Seventh-day Adventism and the American dream* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2007). The book has a two-fold thesis regarding the SDA church. First, it proposed that the SDA church has developed an 'alternative social system' that provides an alternative way of achieving the American dream of

4. <u>Ellen G. White corpus of articles</u> known as the 'Spirit of Prophecy' writings that comprise her visions and messages to the early SDA churches, as well as her books. These writings, which are of an historical nature, provide first-hand materials of the development and understanding of the remnant concept in Ellen White's thinking, a key prophetic figure in Adventism.

5. <u>Digital literature</u>: Website and social media. Their aim can be all of the above or some combinations of the above.

We will focus mainly on the official publications, as well as on biblical studies and dissertations. We do recognise that the vast range of literature are significant in themselves, especially those of Ellen White, in shaping the self-identity of the SDA church but we simply acknowledge that these different types of literature are valid data if one wants to do an extensive review of the dynamic historical development of the ecclesiological doctrine of the remnant.[92] Our primary sources covering the literature of 'Official Publications' will be books, the SDA Bible Commentary and the Handbook of Theology. Biblical and exegetical studies will consist of books and theses. Our biblical and theological sources consist of two doctoral dissertations, one edited book *Towards a Theology of the Remnant* and the first Adventist symposium on postmodernity, edited now as a book entitled *Revisiting Postmodernism: The Relevance of Adventist Mission in the 21st Century*.[93]

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spiritual fulfilment and material prosperity. Second, contrary to the idea that the SDA church has evolved from a sect to a denomination, the authors contend that the church still fits the typology of sect. Another significant study is 'Ces protestants que l'ont dit Adventistes' by Fabrice Desplan and Eric Dericquebourg, (L'Harmattan, 2008). It deals with the various issues raised as a result of the adhesion of the SDA church adhesion to the French Protestant federation. Stefan Höschele traces the historical, theological and ecclesiological development of the SDA church in Tanzania (1903-1980) focusing on how a religious minority, sect-like group of believers has progressively become a religious majority and the various social tensions it encounters within the broader social context. Stefan Höschele, Christian Remnant—African folk church: Seventh-day Adventism in Tanzania, 1903—1980' (University of Malawi, 2005). See also, Maurice Verfaillie socio-historical analysis of the development of religious identity within Seventh-day Adventism, Maurice Verfaillie, *L'identité religieuse au sein de l'adventisme*, 1850–2006 (L'Harmattan, 2011).

[92]A major study in the field of doctrinal development in the SDA church is R. Pöhler's research 'Continuity and change in Adventist teaching.' He studied SDA doctrinal development using three available models on doctrinal continuity and change namely: 1. The Unvarying doctrine mode; 2. The Developing doctrine model; 3. The Transmutating model. On Pöhler's study of the development of the remnant doctrine, see Pöhler, *Continuity and Change in Adventist Teaching*, 196–223.

[93] Kleber O. Gonçalves and Bruce L. Bauer, eds. , *Revisiting Postmodernism: An old debate on a new era*, xiii vols., Andrews University Mission studies (Michigan: Department of World Mission, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 2013).

1.11: <u>Limitations</u>

This research is a case study. Therefore, it is limited to data collected mainly from SDA missional believers in the Western world context who belonged to postmodern-sensitive SDA congregations. A second limitation is that the target population includes young and middle-aged adults in the first world and leaves out young children, teenagers of primary and high school age, and senior citizens. This is not an ecclesiological investigation from 'above' but one being developed from 'below'. Therefore, the thesis will take as its starting point the experience of believers who are living church in a postmodern context. It does not take as its point of departure either an idealist biblical model of the church or a normative biblical description of what a church 'ought' to be but it starts from what the church means for actual believers.

Consequently, the thesis is further limited in the sense that a rich portion and diverse source of Adventist biblical interpretation of what church is and *ought to be*, will have to be laid aside. This is not because these materials are insignificant literary sources, but because we want to privilege a *lived text of creative experiences* of being church under the Holy Spirit's guidance that is not necessarily devoid of biblical truths and meaning. Finally, as a case study the results cannot be generalised to all SDA members belonging to SDA churches in the postmodern world.

1.12: <u>Delimitations</u>

As a case study, it is a small non-probability random sample of the SDA Church population in specific cultural and geographical areas of Western societies including Australia, Denmark, France and the United States. It will present adequate 'lived experience data' that can offer sufficient explanation on the self-understanding of postmodern SDA Church groups. I have also focused my research only on a group of missional believers who are taking a different approach to the missionary task of the SDA church in the postmodern context. But I fully recognise that there are many other SDA churches that could have been studied in terms of the goal of my research.

Churches which were selected for this investigation were approached because they are postmodern-sensitive in their mission approach. We visited the website of the 'Center for Secular and Postmodern Studies' [CSPS] in order to identify and gain information of SDA

churches which are engaged in postmodern outreach. From this site, we selected one church for our case study. Three other participating churches were chosen through personal networking with postmodern oriented and innovative SDA church leaders. A letter was sent to the church leaders inviting them to contact volunteer participants in their congregation for the study. The participants who responded to the invitation of their church leaders were sent a letter explaining the purpose of the study and also seeking their consent as participants. It is assumed that as SDA churches innovate in their missionary approach to the postmodern community, such innovation will not only be a strategic exercise in contextualising the gospel in forms postmodern people can understand but it will transform the self-understanding of the church itself. The church will be able to explain and understand what it means to describe itself as the remnant people of God in the context of postmodernity.

1.13: <u>Organisation of the Dissertation</u>

Chapter 1 introduced the goal of the research that is an ecclesiological study on the SDA church's self-identity in the context of postmodern and secular mission. The study looks at the missionary praxis of a selected group of 34 missional SDA believers who belonged to postmodern-sensitive SDA churches or groups. It outlines the purpose of the study, its significance, the methodology and methods framework, its limitations and delimitations, as well as the research question under investigation. The assumption is that the missionary praxis being adopted to face the challenges of postmodernism is transforming the group of believers' self-understanding as the remnant church.

 Chapter 2 reviews the literature and research that pertain to the SDA church self-understanding. It covers biblical studies, as well as theological and historical studies on the image of the remnant. Also, it looks at official publications that explain the SDA Church doctrinal position on ecclesiology. It analyses the literature within the framework of a doctrinal development model. We conclude that the body of literature on remnant ecclesiology under review has a lacuna because there is no actual research investigation that addresses the impact of the postmodern context of mission on remnant ecclesiology, both as a missional doctrine and as a core dimension of the self-understanding of the SDA community of faith itself.

Chapter 3: Therefore, in Chapter 3, under methodology we intend to fill this lacuna in continuity with the growing development of remnant ecclesiology and the postmodern context

of mission. This methodological reflection will be carried from the perspective of a contextual ecclesiology of dialogue. Such a contextual approach to SDA remnant ecclesiology seeks to mediate the theological meaning of the remnant concept through a dialogue between the *past experiences* of God's remnant people as witnessed in Bible stories— and kept alive through faith traditions— and the *contemporary lived faith experiences* of SDA believers in the postmodern context of Otherness. It is an inductive ecclesiological study that takes, as its starting point, the faith experience of the believers who belong to SDA churches, who are postmodern-sensitive in their mission approach.

Chapter 4: This chapter will show and interpret the results of the inductive exploratory case study which involves a selected group of 34 participants from various missional church groups in Australia, Denmark, France, the United Kingdom and the United States. As an exploratory case study, it uses a mixed-mode approach for data collection consisting of an online survey using Survey Monkey and email interviews over a six-month period. Data obtained through our case study is used to reflect on the self-understanding of the SDA community of faith from the perspective of a contextual ecclesiology of dialogue centred on the postmodern cultural context of Otherness. This chapter answers our research question and shows how a group of SDA believers are expressing their ecclesiological self-understanding in terms of a relationship of proximity and attachment, of uniqueness and difference.

Chapter 5: This ecclesiological research concludes by arguing that remnant ecclesiology is an ecclesiology of alterity mediated through a contextual ecclesiology of dialogue. It shows how the SDA church can critically engage in a missiological reflection on the question of otherness and deepen its relationship with the universal church and other non-Christian world religions. Such a reflection can start with a deeper understanding of the Sabbath as sign of Otherness and of global suffering as a mean of encounter with the religious other. In that sense, remnant ecclesiology can be inclusive and creative without denying the biblical source of the SDA church and its hermeneutic tradition.

<center>Chapter 2</center>

Literature Review

2.0: <u>Introduction</u>

In Section 1.9, we identified five categories of literature produced by the SDA community of faith that discuss, explore and propose different interpretations concerning the theological and missiological meaning of the remnant church.[1] The purpose of this present literature review is to understand the doctrinal development of remnant ecclesiology and the hermeneutical tradition that shaped it in the context of the SDA community of faith. We begin by exploring the overall historical foundation of doctrinal development in the SDA faith context. In the light of this hermeneutical tradition and given the role of the principle of '*Sola, toto scriptura*' within this tradition, we retrace in Section 2.2 the origin of the doctrinal development of the remnant concept in biblical literature itself. Then, we examine the doctrinal evolution of remnant ecclesiology particularly within the SDA faith hermeneutical and mission context, as well as within the broader context of doctrinal development using Rolf Pöhler's framework of doctrinal development 'Continuity and change in Adventist teaching'.[2] We shall engage in a critical reflection on the SDA church as an hermeneutic community of faith that has inherited and developed a tradition-conditioned hermeneutic of its own which we qualify as a '*postscriptural hermeneutics*', a terminology used by Edward Farley.

Given the divergent interpretations that remnant ecclesiology have engendered in the SDA community of faith, three distinct areas will receive our attention: the relationship of the remnant church with the universal church, the remnant church in the context of *missio dei*, and its role in the ecumenical context and witnessing to world religions.

For the purpose of this study, we will limit this present review to the examination of official church publications, as well as academic works like theses and conference papers. For our theological sources, we will cover the official SDA church publications including the

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[1] See section 1.2, p. 14, for a range of theological views regarding remnant ecclesiology in the SDA church.

[2] Rolf Pöhler discusses three main models of doctrinal development: 1. The unvarying doctrine model; 2. The developing doctrine model; 3. The transmutating doctrine model. See Pöhler, *Continuity and change in Adventist Teaching*. 196–223. Cardinal John Henry Newman's essay 'An Essay in the Development of Christian Doctrine' is an in-depth treatment of doctrinal development.—John Henry Newman, *An Essay in the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 6th ed. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989).

commentary *Handbook of Adventist Theology*, the book *Questions on Doctrine*, the SDA Bible Commentary, as well as biblical exegetical studies and theological reflection published by the Biblical Research Institute [BRI] in the form of a book *Toward A Theology of The Remnant*. We will reflect on the theological and missiological challenges posed by a remnant ecclesiology from the perspectives of Borge Schantz's PhD thesis 'The Development of Seventh-Day Adventist Missionary Thought: A contemporary Appraisal' and Bruce Moyer's thesis 'Seventh-day Adventist Missiology face the Twenty-First Century', as well as Stefan Höschele book *From the End of the World to the Ends of the Earth: The Development of Adventist Missiology*.

Finally, we propose that there has not been any study done in the SDA faith context that retraces the tradition-conditioned hermeneutic underpinning the doctrinal evolution of remnant ecclesiology. This review proposes to fill this lacuna and further expand on this tradition-conditioned hermeneutic to interpret and explicit the meaning of remnant ecclesiology in the context of postmodernity.

This chapter covers five main areas:

1. Doctrinal development and the SDA historical faith context.
2. The Remnant people of God and its biblical development.
3. Remnant Ecclesiology: Its development within the SDA hermeneutic tradition.
4. Remnant Ecclesiology: Attempting to clarify theological issues and responding to theological challenges.
5. Remnant Ecclesiology: The context of postscriptural hermeneutics.
6. Remnant Ecclesiology and the context of postmodernity.

2.1 Doctrinal Development and the SDA Historical Faith Context

First, we need to explain how the SDA community of faith has been defining what it means by doctrine. In its positive sense, the SDA Bible Dictionary defines it as instruction and teaching following the use of those terms in biblical sources:

> [Heb. Generally speaking leqach, "teaching," 'instruction"; Gr. Didaskalia, "act of teaching." "teaching," or "instruction," didache, "teaching," generally, the thing taught.] A common NT term that may denote the act of teaching (1Ti 4:13; 5:17) but more generally designates the content, or substance, of the information or ideas

transmitted . . . Disdaskalia is used in the active sense of instructing in Rom 15:4, hence translated "instruction."[3]

But it also defines it negatively, not necessarily in a pejorative way but in terms of what a doctrine is not. It is not a creed. The SDA community of faith has since its early formation distinguished doctrine and creed. For the SDA church, a creed is:

> A formal, official statement of doctrinal beliefs, as for instance the Apostles' creed or the Westminster confession. SDAs have no formal creed, though a statement of beliefs may be found in the denominational *Yearbook* and *Church Manual*. . . . SDAs consider the entire Bible to be their creed.[4]

On this matter of the Bible as the only rule of faith or creed for SDAs, the encyclopaedia presents the views of James White, an early SDA pioneer leader, who asserted that "the Bible is a perfect and complete revelation. It is our only rule of faith and practice."[5]

The SDA Encyclopaedia states:

> Throughout their history SDAs have affirmed that 'the Bible and the Bible only' should be the Christian's creed and that they have no creed but the Bible. However, over the years they have issued various statements of belief gradually moving toward the 22 'Fundamental Beliefs'[6]

The SDA Encyclopaedia outlines the doctrinal evolution of the SDA fundamental beliefs in three phases:

1. The Informal Phase: 1853-1874

In response to the secretary of the Seventh-day Baptist Central Association, J. C. Rogers who was instructed by his organisation to inquire about the Seventh-day Advent faith, James White, editor of the church periodical *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, responded on August 11, 1853 with the following explanation, which he qualified as not being an extended statement of the Advent faith:

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[3] Siegfried H. Horn, "Doctrine," in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary,* ed. Don F. Neufeld (Washington, D.C . Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1960), 273–274.

[4] "Doctrinal statements," in *Seventh-Day Adventist Encyclopaedia,*
ed. Don F. Neufeld (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1966), 312.

[5] Ibid. James White wrote this statement as early as 1847 in a church publication entitled 'A Word to the Little Flock.' Some have seen in the 'little flock' imagery an early metaphor precursor for the concept of the remnant understood in the early phase as a little group of believers separated from the larger Christendom. In 1849, the earliest SDA periodical, the *Present Truth*, made a similar statement notably: 'The Bible is our chart—our guide. It is our only rule of faith and practice, to which we would closely adhere.'—ibid.

[6] Ibid.,346. In 1966, at the time the SDA Encyclopaedia was published, there were 22 Fundamental Beliefs and it has increased since to 28.

As a people we are brought together from divisions of the Advent body, and from the various denominations, holding different views on some subjects; yet, thank Heaven, the Sabbath is a mighty platform on which we can all stand united. And while standing here, with the aid of no *other creed than the Word of God*, and bound together by the bonds of love—love for the truth, love for each other, and love for a perishing world— 'which is stronger than death,' all party feelings are lost. We are united in these great subjects: Christ's immediate, personal second Advent, and the observance of all of the commandments of God, and the faith of his Son Jesus Christ, as necessary to a readiness for his Advent.[7]

James White on December 13, 1853 in a series of four articles on church organisation entitled 'gospel order', put the case for church organisation based on the Bible as the rule of faith and not on a creed:

We go for order and strict discipline in the church of Christ. And while we reject all human creeds, or platforms, which have failed to effect the order set forth in the gospel, we take the Bible, the perfect rule of faith and practice, given by inspiration of God. This shall be our platform on which to stand, our creed and discipline.[8]

2. The Fundamental Principles Phase: 1874-1930

The 'Fundamental Principles' phase started with a publication in the first issue of the *Signs of the Times* magazine on June 4,1874, under the title 'Fundamental principles'. Twenty-five fundamental principles were listed as what the SDA church believed but with the following preamble:

In presenting to the public this synopsis of our faith, we wish to have it distinctly understood that we have *no articles of faith, creed, or discipline, aside from the Bible*. We do not put forth this as having any authority with our people, nor is it designed to secure uniformity among them, as a system of faith, but is a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by them.[9]

These 25 principles were subsequently reprinted in official church periodicals such as *The Review and Herald* and *The Signs of the Times*.[10]

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[7] James White, "Resolution of the Seventh-day Baptist Central Association," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, No.7, Aug 11, 1853, 52.

[8] James White, "Gospel Order," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, No.23, Dec 13, 1853, 180.

[9] "Fundamental Principles," *Signs of the Times,* ed. James White, June 4, 1874, 3.

[10] For dates and years of the reprinted articles of these 25 Fundamental principles, the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* and *Signs of the Times* magazines, see Neufeld, ed., "Doctrinal Statements." 346.

3. <u>The Statement of Beliefs Phase—1930 till Now: From 'No creed' to a Statement of Beliefs</u>

The third phase of this gradual doctrinal development led to a vote on December 29, 1930, by the committee of the General Conference of SDAs stating that a statement of beliefs be officially prepared by a committee of four members. The work of the committee was published in the church's official publications, including the 1931 Yearbook and the 1932 Church Manual. At the 1946 General Conference session, it was stipulated that the 'The Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists' can only be revised at the quinquennial session of a General Conference session. Since then, the Fundamental Beliefs have been published with *the same cautious preamble that it should not be read as a creed* but only as an expression of the principal characteristics of SDA beliefs reflecting the community of faith's understanding of scriptures in a particular historical context[11] and can only be revised at a General Conference session. For instance, the 2010 SDA Church Manual in its preamble to the 'Fundamental Beliefs of SDA' remarks that a doctrine can only be revised at a General Conference session if it can better express a biblical truth:

> Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word.[12]

The SDA church finds in the Bible itself legitimate grounds for doctrinal development, revision, reformulation or change. In the next section, we will explore the exegetical works of some SDA theologians and Bible exegetes that indicate that the concept of remnant theology was not static but was dynamically thought through and applied to the spiritual context of God's people. Remnant theology contextually thought through serves to promote the spiritual survival of God's people.

2.2: **The Remnant People of God: Its Biblical Development**

One of the aims of General Conference's Biblical Research Institute (BRI) is "to promote the study and practice of Adventist theology and lifestyle as understood by the world church."[13] *Toward A Theology of the Remnant* is an edited book by the BRI and is the first volume of a

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[11] The SDA church traditionally speaks of truth as 'present truth', meaning truth as God reveals at a particular moment of history.

[12] *The Church Manual*. 9.

[13] https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/content/about-us. Accessed on February 2, 2010.

series on the subject of Adventist ecclesiology.[14] We will consider seven articles in this book that explore the meaning of remnant terminology in the Old and New Testaments, as well as non-canonical Jewish apocalyptic literature:

1. 'The Remnant in the Old Testament'[15]

2. 'The Remnant in Non-Canonical Jewish Apocalyptic works'[16]

3. 'The Remnant in the Gospels'[17]

4. 'The Remnant in Pauline thought'[18]

5. 'The Remnant in the book of Revelation'[19]

6. 'The Remnant and God's commandments'[20]

7. 'Identifying Marks of the End-Time Remnant in the Book of Revelation'[21]

The exegetical, biblical and theological studies presented by the Biblical Research Institute under the title 'Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology—1' make explicit the lexical and the historical-cultural contextual meaning of the remnant throughout biblical and extra-biblical literature, but they also exercise suspicion in the sense that the exegetical studies demystify ideas that remnant theology is exclusive, is not grace-oriented, and is principally concerned with one's own group or community instead of being mission-oriented and open to others. In their methodological approach, these articles follow Gerhard F. Hasel's three-fold historical and theological development of the remnant idea and motif in Old Testament theology: 1.The Historical Remnant; 2. The Faithful Remnant; 3. The Eschatological Remnant.[22]

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[14] "This volume and others will provide materials that will be useful . . . to gain a better understanding of the Adventist movement and as they attempt to develop an Adventist ecclesiology."—Rodriguez, *Toward A Theology of The Remnant*, 17 (See Chap. 1, n. 88). The second volume, which is also a significant study in Adventist ecclesiology, will not receive a full review but will be referred to in certain sections of this chapter. For further studies of Volume 2, see Alberto R. Timm, "The Role of Ellen G.White in the Life of the Adventist Church," in *Message Mission and Unity of the Church*, ed. Angel Manuel Rodriguez (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute General conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, 2013).

[15] Tarsee Li, "The Remnant in the Old Testament," in Rodriguez, *Toward a theology of the Remnant.*

[16] Leslie N. Pollard, "The Remnant in Non-Canonical Jewish Apocalyptic Works," in Rodriguez, *Toward A Theology Of The* Remnant.

[17] Clinton Wahlen, "The Remnant in the Gospels," in Rodriguez, *Toward A Theology Of The Remnant.*

[18] Leslie N. Pollard, "The Remnant in Pauline Thought," in Rodriguez *Toward A Theology of The Remnant*.

[19] Richard P. Lehmann, "The Remnant in the Book of Revelation," in Rodriguez, *Toward A Theology of The Remnant*.

[20] Johaness Kovar, "The Remnant and God's commandments," in Rodriguez, *Toward a Theology of The Remnant.*

[21] Gerhard Pfandl, "Identifying Marks of the End-Time Remnant in the Book Of Revelation," in Rodriguez *Toward a Theology Of the Remnant*.

[22] Gerhard F. Hasel has explored the idea of the remnant in the ancient near east and has shown how this concept conveys the notion of survival in the context of natural, social or political disasters. Hasel's three-fold approach is fluid, dynamic and interactive.—Gerhard Hasel , *The Remnant: The history and theology of the*

The exegetical studies give careful attention to the Hebrew and Greek context in explaining the literal meaning of remnant terminology. The authors give evidence that, in both the canonical and non-canonical scriptures, the word 'rest' has multiple connotations and denotations.[23] We can say that the term 'rest' is polysemic. Paul Ricoeur describes the polysemic nature of the word in those terms: "Most of our words are polysemic; they have more than one meaning."[24] He argues that the literal meaning of a polysemic word is expressed through its 'set of possible contextual uses':

> By literal meaning, therefore, we do not understand the supposedly original, fundamental, primitive or proper meaning of a word on the lexical plane; rather, literal meaning is the totality of the semantic field, the set of possible contextual uses which constitutes the polysemy of a word.[25]

Consequently, because of the polysemic nature of the words 'remnant' or 'rest' in Scriptures, we will not focus on its literal meaning—or its 'lexical plane' to quote Ricoeur—but rather on its contextual meaning[26] as reflected in four areas of the biblical narratives context[27] namely:

1. The Context of Tension: The inclusive and exclusive movement.

2. The Remnant motif: Jesus and his missional[28] context.

3. The Remnant motif: Paul and the universality of grace.

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remnant idea from Genesis to Isaiah. Vol. 5, Andrews University monographs. Studies in religion (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1972).

[23] In 'The Remnant and the Gospels,' Clinton Wahlen states that among the LXX common translation of the Hebrew forms of remnant, which is '*leipa*' (to leave behind), '*loipos*' (other, the rest), '*leimma*' (remnant) and '*sozo*' (to save, to preserve), only '*leipa*' and '*loipos*' 'occur thirty-three times in the canonical gospels, never are they used in the technical sense of a "remnant" but rather in the more general sense of "leave" or the "others".'—Wahlen, "The Remnant in the Gospels," 62. He also discusses themes like chosen ones, seed and shepherd imagery, concepts of building and planting, quantifying terminology to say that 'while few of these terms of reference by themselves would be sufficient to consider that Jesus conceived of His followers as a "remnant," the multiplicity of expressions taken together are significant.' ibid., 73–75.

[24] Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 17. He further adds: "But it is the contextual function of discourse to screen, so to speak, the polysemy of our words and to reduce the plurality of possible interpretations, the ambiguity of discourse resulting from the unscreened polysemy of the words."—ibid.

[25] John B. Thompson, ed. *Paul Ricoeur Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* (Paris: Maison de Sciences de l'homme and Cambridge University Press, 1981), 169.

[26] Ibid., 169. The remnant vocabulary can be said to have metaphorical meaning in the way Ricoeur defines it: "metaphorical meaning is something more and other than the actualisation of one of the possible meanings of a polysemic word . . . nevertheless this metaphorical use must be solely contextual, that is, a meaning which emerges as the unique and fleeting result of a certain contextual action."—ibid.

[27] For instance, R. Lehmann observes that, in the book of Revelation, "Since the term by itself carries no necessary theological significance, it is important for us to pay particular attention to the context and to focus on the study of the *notion* or the *theme* of the remnant."—R.Lehmann, "The Remnant in the Book of Revelation," 8.

[28] 'Missional' is a term that involves a paradigm shift in our understanding of mission. Three characteristics can describe a community as missional: 1. The missionary nature of God and his church; 2. Making mission as incarnational; 3. Participating in the *missio Dei*. See http://missionalchurchnetwork.com/what-is-missional/. Accessed on March 5, 2012.

4. The Remnant motif: The context of continuity and discontinuity between the Old Testament and New Testament thinking.

For the purpose of this review, we are following a diachronic arrangement of the exegetical studies whereby we take 'a subject or idea and traces its development through one or more periods of biblical literature.'[29]

2.2.1: The Remnant Motif: The Inclusive-Exclusive Tension

For Tarsee Li, there is a tension in Old Testament literature between the inclusive and exclusive dimension of the 'remnant' community. The historical remnant includes both the faithful and the unfaithful members of the people of God, such as Noah and his family, who survive the flood but his son Ham, although unfaithful, was included in Noah's family. The same applies in the case of Lot, the faithful, and his unfaithful wife and daughters. The community of the remnant is an identifiable, visible group that includes the faithful and the unfaithful and it is only at the eschatological day of the Lord, as the prophet Malachi describes it (see Malachi 3:16-4:3), that exclusion of the unfaithful takes place. As Li puts it, "for it is only at the eschatological Day of the Lord that the remnant will only consist of the faithful ones."[30] The theme of an eschatological remnant is further developed during the post-exilic period, for instance, by the prophet Zechariah who includes also the other nations among those who will worship Yahweh (see Zechariah 8:22-23, 14:16), "thus hinting at the fact that the eschatological remnant will include individuals from outside the nation of Israel."[31] The book of Chronicles also indicates an openness to welcome those from the northern kingdom who desire to return to the Lord and worship him (see 2 Chronicles 30:7-8,

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[29] Guy, *Thinking Theologically- Adventist Christianity and the Interpretation of Faith*. 215. Fritz Guy distinguishes three approaches in doing biblical theology: synchronic; diachronic; focused. For examples, a synchronic approach "centers its attention on a particular part of scripture, perhaps a single document"—such as the Gospel of Luke—"and identifies and explains its most significant ideas" as they relate to classical theological themes such as God, nature of man, community, eschatology, etc.—ibid., 214. A focused approach—like systematic theology which can zero in "on a single locus or on an even smaller theological territory"—will concentrate "on a single topic and a single biblical document" like social justice in the book of Amos.—ibid., 215. Guy points out that biblical theology using these approaches are not "inherently "more biblical" in the sense of being more faithful to Scripture . . . or "less systematic" in its logical processes or organizational strategies."—ibid., 214. These approaches are simply a "more limited, kind of theological activity that uses a different process and yields a different product."—ibid.

[30] Li, "The Remnant in the Old Testament," 28.

[31] Zechariah is not unique in including the nations as part of the eschatological remnant—Isaiah also refers to it (see Isaiah 14:1-2).

11, 34:9), as well as the foreigners.[32] Li argues that, for Chronicles, the post-exilic community of Judah had both 'an exclusive and an inclusive self-identity.'[33] They were exclusive in the sense that they understood themselves as "the sole heirs of the long lineage of the faithful.'[34] Their inclusive mindset reflected itself at two levels: 'first, the existence of spiritual forefathers meant that their status was not unique in world history, and second, they were open to welcoming others who willingly joined the Lord."[35]

According to Leslie N. Pollard, contrary to the universalist thinking of the Old Testament, the Jewish apocalyptic sources like 1 Enoch, Jubilees, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch are characterised by exclusive claims and anti-gentile feelings. The Qumran community saw itself as chosen, elected, righteous, enjoying the special favour of God and—as Pollard observes, given the fact that the Qumran community saw themselves as living in the last days—"the term "remnant" is particularly appropriate for the exclusivistic self-understanding of the Qumran community"[36] and "this self-understanding of the Qumran covenantors is evident in the Damascus rule."[37] Pollard concludes his exegetical study of the remnant motif during the intertestamental period by pointing out that compared to the universalistic vision present in the Old Testament, the intertestamental literature—Jewish apocalypses and Qumran documents—are characterised by 'a very passionate sectarianism', 'narrow nationalism' and deep 'anti-gentiles sentiments.'[38]

2.2.2: <u>The Context of Grace: Jesus' Mission and Eschatological Judgment</u>

In the New Testament, the remnant motif is held in tension between the call to respond positively to Jesus' kingdom and Israel's restoration message, and be included in the new Israel —or face judgment— and exclusion from divine grace. C. Wahlen explains that there is a sifting process that occurs in the gospels: "there is evidence that Jesus' proclamation

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[32] Li, "The Remnant in the Old Testament," 39.
[33] Ibid., 39.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] N.Pollard, "The Remnant in Non-Canonical Jewish Apocalyptic Works," 56.
[37] Ibid., 56–57. For further discussion on the exclusivistic identity of the Qumran community, ibid., 56–60.
[38] Ibid., 60. Pollard also states in the conclusion of his exegetical survey on non-canonical Jewish apocalyptic literature: "The motif of the remnant examined in the Jewish apocalyptic works is basically nationalistic (i.e., Israel, not others), sectarian (i.e., our group, not theirs), restrictive (i.e., our individual adherents, not Jews in general), and territorialized (i.e., Israel, not Rome, Egypt, etc.)."—Ibid., 53. The same mindset is present in the Qumran community: "The remnant concept in the Dead Sea community operated along exclusivistic, sectarian lines. The Qumranites saw themselves as the remnant of Israel. . . . They affirm that they enjoyed special status with God because of their loyalty to the covenant."— ibid., 59.

anticipated more than simply a revival of the nation based on kingdom ethics—there would be an eschatological judgment and sifting, using language similar to what we find"[39] in John the Baptist's proclamation. Wahlen further remarks that the inclusive-exclusive tension is present in Jesus' call for discipleship because according to the gospel narratives there is a sifting which "already begins in a very real sense with the gathering of those who choose to follow Jesus, his spiritual "family" (Mark 3:31-35), and the exclusive disclosures to the Twelve in recognition that many were not accepting His gospel of the kingdom (4:11-12)."[40] He continues and concludes that an exclusivist remnant theology is implicitly present in Jesus' kingdom proclamation based on the fact that "Jesus' announcement of kingdom terms, centered on one's relation to Him and His teaching, implicitly excludes all who would reject Him and thereby effects, to a certain extent at least, not the restoration of all Israel but a division within it."[41]

2.2.3: The Context of Grace: Paul's Mission and a Borderless Community of Faith

Pollard shows how Paul in Romans 9-11 differentiates between a 'biological Israel' and an Israel of faith that constitutes 'a remnant according to grace' who serve as a witness not to their own faithfulness but "the remnant (i.e., Israel) will stand as the ultimate witness to the covenant faithfulness of God."[42] For Pollard, Paul wrestles with the question of Israel's unfaithfulness and rejection of the messiah and God's faithfulness. He explains that Romans 9-11 marks a development in remnant theology that matures in Paul's theological thinking, "a trajectory toward a borderless (versus territorialized) remnant evidenced in the Gospels matures in Paul"[43] He proposes that Paul is arguing in Romans 9-11 for an open remnant doctrine 'consisting of believing Jews joined by believing gentiles.'[44]

Therefore, he concludes that Paul defines the remnant of Israel as a dynamic not static community. It does not constitute an unchangeable minority but rather extends itself to include a larger eschatological community composed of all who believe. In that sense, one can understand Paul's affirmation that 'all Israel' will be saved in Romans 11:26, meaning not

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[39] Wahlen, "The Remnant in the Gospels," 70.
[40] Wahlen, "The Remnant in the Gospels," 71.
[41] Ibid., 72.
[42] Pollard, " The Remnant in Pauline Thought," 84.
[43] Ibid., 77.
[44] Ibid., 84.

the 'biological Israel' but the 'Israel of faith', those according to the promise (see Romans 9:6).

2.2.4: <u>The Context of Continuity and Discontinuity with God's Universal People</u>

Richard Lehmann indicates that "in Revelation the remnant people are directly related to the woman in chapter 12. The woman has been interpreted in different ways. . . . We will take for granted that the woman represents the people of God without distinguishing between the Old and the New Testaments."[45] Lehmann demonstrates how there is a continuity between the faithful people of God—represented by the woman—all through salvation history and the end-of-time remnant: "The eschatological remnant is not the only one that suffers persecution. The church, symbolized by the woman, had the same experience. There is continuity between the woman and the remnant."[46]

The remnant church is not '*another*' church, separate from the universal church, but is the '*Other*'[47] church, the one that is in the face of the universal church, interrogating the universal church. It stands in continuity and discontinuity with God's historical people. Lehmann goes on to say that:

> The reference to the woman helps us to clarify the theological notion of 'remnant' as a church. We can speak about a remnant that is identified with the ongoing church. It is heir to the promises of God and the object of the dragon's wrath throughout history. . . . But in contrast to the exclusivism found in the Qumran discourse that condemns those not of their own, Revelation is consistently inclusive. It is true that it divides humanity into only two groups, namely the redeemed and the lost, but the underlying message is that it is still possible for the unredeemed to make a choice. . . . Far from being the church on its own, the remnant is its dazzling face, . . . and the symbol of its distinctiveness.[48]

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[45] Lehmann, "The Remnant in the Book of Revelation," 104.
[46] Ibid., 105.
[47] 'Other' is the literal meaning of '*loipos*'. Lehmann explains that Revelation 12:17 is employed all the time in the plural and could be translated as a plural or a singular. In most cases, the noun refers to "the others" but it could express the idea of remnant.—ibid., 87-88. In his footnote[#12], Lehmann says that "If we want to keep the plural, we could translate it in some texts as "the survivors" "the rescued" (3:2; 9:20; 11:13)."—ibid., 88.
[48] Lehmann, "The Remnant in the Book of Revelation." 106. See our discussion on 'The word of the Other' in our chapter on methodology. Lehmann's insights on the remnant as 'the dazzling face 'of the universal church can be extended to say that the 'remnant church' stands as the 'face of the other' for the universal church.

2.2.5: <u>Conclusion: The Contextual Biblical Evolution of the Remnant Theological Motif</u>

The BRI exegetical biblical studies on remnant ecclesiology show that the SDA church is engaged with Scripture as a hermeneutic community of faith to better understand and clarify the concept of the remnant. In that process of dialogue with the biblical scriptures, the SDA church is in process of discovering that the notion of the remnant reflects the dynamic theological self-understanding of God's faithful people in Scriptures but this notion of the remnant is always in the process of being 'self-examined' and 'self-clarified'[49] in the light of its context.

The critical examination of the biblical texts related to the remnant shows that in line with biblical tradition it needs to hold the tension between being an inclusive missional, 'borderless' community opened to others and that of proclaiming an exclusive kingdom message that, like Jesus, did not stop with kingdom ethics and social transformation but as the 'Israel of faith' witnesses not to its own faithfulness but to God's gracious covenantal faithfulness. As P. Lehmann said, the remnant church is not a group on its own but the 'dazzling face',[50] the 'symbol of the distinctiveness' of the universal church.

Remnant theology in the Bible was never static in serving to justify the right of existence of particular religious groups, whether Israelites or early Christian communities. Rather, it was a theology that had to resonate with the specific context in which God's people found themselves and challenged the latter to rethink its mission in order to survive spiritually.

As such, we are now going to explore how the SDA community of faith has appropriated remnant theology and applied it to its missionary task and the challenges it faces in using this theological concept to identify itself as a church.

2.3: <u>Remnant Ecclesiology: Its Development within the SDA Hermeneutic Tradition</u>

This section will examine the development of remnant ecclesiology within the context of the SDA hermeneutic tradition.[51] We begin by examining the theological hermeneutical challenges with which the SDA church has been confronted and the answers it has offered to

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[49] See this study for Abraham Heschel's definition of self-understanding—13. Also Paul Minear's reflection that the church's self-understanding needs always to be re-examined.—16.
[50] Lehmann, "The Remnant in the Book of Revelation." 106.
[51] The SDA hermeneutic tradition has been strongly conditioned by evangelical spiritual tradition. For a better understanding of the evangelical spiritual tradition, compare with Ian M. Randall, *What a Friend We Have in Jesus: The evangelical tradition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005).

such challenges. Then, we compare how the doctrine of the remnant church has progressively evolved during the three specific phases of the SDA church history of doctrinal development. We conclude this section arguing that, though SDA remnant ecclesiology has biblical warranty, it is not *' Sola Scriptura'* because it has been influenced by the SDA community of faith's *system* of biblical interpretation, which in turn has been inherited from the protestant *post-scriptural* hermeneutical tradition.

2.3.1: <u>The SDA Hermeneutic Community of Faith: Facing the Hermeneutical Challenges</u>

In the early 1970s, in response to the modern challenge of historical biblical criticism, the SDA church organised an hermeneutical symposium led by SDA theologians and biblical exegetes to reflect on the relationship between the principles of hermeneutics and the *sola scriptura* principle. Gordon Hyde, then secretary of the Biblical Research Committee and a general field secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, in his preface to the edited book 'A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics', which mainly consists of the papers presented at the symposium, remarks that:

> Recent generations of the Church, however, in their quest for advanced education have had increasing exposure to the presuppositions and methodologies that have challenged the Protestant principle. This fact has led the Biblical Research Committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in recent years to concentrate its work in the areas of (1) revelation-inspiration—the ground of the Bible's authority, and (2) biblical hermeneutics—and the principles by which to derive the intended meaning.[52]

Under section 2, 'History of Biblical Interpretation', Don F. Neufeld retraced the history of biblical interpretation in the Advent movement as it unfolded during its Millerite phase, its advent phase and its Seventh-day Adventist phase.[53] Neufeld explains how William Miller in establishing his 'Rules of Interpretation' laid the foundation for Adventist hermeneutics. Neufeld observes two main trends and approaches that characterised SDA hermeneutics. The advent movement hermeneutic tradition was influenced by the historicist approach to the

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[52] The study papers covered the following areas: 1. Revelation, Inspiration and Hermeneutics; 2. History of Biblical Interpretation; 3. Inspired writers' Interpretation of Inspired Writings; 4. Principles of Biblical Interpretation; 5. Interpretation in Proclamation.

[53] Don F. Neufeld, "Biblical Interpretation in the Advent Movement.," ed. Gordon M. Hyde, *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics* (Washington, D.C.: The Review and Herald Publishing Association 1974), 109.

study of apocalyptic prophecies, as well as including more general principles of biblical hermeneutics. We agree with Neufeld when he observes that these hermeneutic principles constitute the hermeneutic tradition of Protestant orthodoxy and, therefore, are not inherent to the Millerite movement. In other words, Miller expanded and brought further insights to the study of apocalyptic prophecies. Like Neufeld explains:

> In other words, although initially independent, Miller and his associates actually built on the work of their predecessors, retaining much of what had already been developed by a methodology that had been practiced for centuries. Into the general pattern, which had already been established, they inserted a few unique ideas.[54]

Likewise, growing out of the Millerite and Advent movement, the SDA church has continued applying, to some degree, the historicist hermeneutical model in its interpretation of apocalyptic prophecies. Neufeld comments :

> In turn the Seventh-day Adventist interpreters later corrected and clarified earlier prophetic positions. So far as apocalyptic hermeneutical principles are concerned, Seventh-day Adventists introduced few if any new principles, though they enlarged and systematized the interpretation particularly of the two apocalyptic biblical books Daniel and Revelation.[55]

There are seven hermeneutical principles that Neufeld present as constituting the matrix of the SDA approach to biblical interpretation:

1. *Sola scriptura*

2. The unity of scripture

3. Scripture is its own interpreter.

4. Discovering the proper meaning of the Bible words

5. Attention to context and historical background

6. The literal interpretation of passages, unless a symbol is intended.

7. The typological principle.[56]

Neufeld further points out that all of these principles have been inherited from orthodox Protantism:

> Scripture interpretations were arrived at, certain principles were assumed or carried over from their Protestant denominational heritage. The nature of these principles became evident as doctrines were adopted and defended.[57]

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[54] Ibid., 117.
[55] Ibid., 113.
[56] Ibid., 117–121. Erick A. Mendieta Soza has shown how SDA hermeneutics and its doctrines are conditioned by typology.—Erick A. Mendietta Soza, 'Typology and Adventist Identity: Friend or Foe,' *Andrews University Seminary Student Journal,* Vol. 1, No.1 (2015): 53–59.

These principles inherited from orthodox Protestantism and appropriated by Miller and the Millerite movement have constituted the basic hermeneutical foundation of the SDA church, as attested by Neufeld:

> By the time the Seventh-day Adventist Church was organized in 1860 the over-all doctrinal system had been established. Since that time there have been clarifications and amplifications but no changes in doctrine. The same may be suspected concerning hermeneutical principles. These, inherited from a Protestant background, still serve the church today.[58]

Richard M. Davidson, professor of Old Testament at the SDA Seminary at Andrews University, contributes an article in the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* in which he gives a detailed analysis of biblical interpretation. Following Neufeld, he also referred to William Miller's rules but limits these to five and states that "these hermeneutical principles all built upon the historico-grammatical method of interpretation espoused by the reformers."[59]

Davidson does not privilege that Adventist hermeneutics has been constructed within the Protestant tradition of scriptural interpretation but instead he takes the position that the SDA hermeneutical approaches are biblically constructed. In other words, he posits an inner Bible hermeneutics guided by four key principles used as method by the Bible writers themselves to interpret scriptures.[60]

He describes and justifies the SDA position regarding biblical hermeneutics as follows:

> Seventh-day Adventists believe that just as we go to Scripture to find the doctrines of God, humanity, sin, eschatology, etc., so it is appropriate, yes, essential, that we should go to Scripture itself to discover the doctrine of Scripture, and in particular, to

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[57] Ibid., 117.

[58] Ibid., 124. He further adds: "When the church produced a commentary on the Bible (1953–1958) it was necessary to have a clearly understood system of hermeneutics as the base for the comments. Although this system was not formally stated except in part, various of its principles are appealed to and demonstrated in the various comments."—ibid.,124.

[59] Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," in *Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association 2000), 96. These five rules, a summary of Miller's approach are: 1. All Scripture is necessary and may be understood by diligent study by one who has faith; 2. Scripture must be its own expositor; 3. To understand doctrine, all the Scripture passages on the topic must be brought together; 4. God has revealed things to come by visions, in figures, and in parables, these must be studied together since one prophecy complements another. A word should be understood literally if it makes good sense; otherwise, one must discover from other passages its figurative sense; 5. A historical event is the fulfilment of prophecy only when it matches the prophecy in all details.—ibid. For a detailed discussion on biblical interpretation, see Davidson, ibid., 60–68.

[60] 1. The Bible and the Bible Only; 2. The Totality of Scriptures; 3. The Analogy of Scriptures; 4. Spiritual Discernment.

learn the Scriptural teaching on hermeneutics as a basis for constructing a theology that is hermeneutically faithful to Scripture.[61]

As he puts it: "The history of bible hermeneutics must begin with the way the Bible writers themselves interpreted antecedent Scripture."[62] This principle that Scripture contains its own hermeneutic principles is at the core of the SDA hermeneutic matrix. Fernando Canale in his article 'The Message and the Mission of the Remnant: A Methodological Approach' supports the view of a 'turn to scripture' as a typical Protestant move that, however, never challenges the Hellenised assumptions of the interpretative principles of Christian tradition.[63] Canale argues that the SDA remnant church emphasis on '*sola scriptura*' as the platform for the church system of theological teachings led to a 'biblical hermeneutical turn' that "replaced the "philosophical hermeneutics" embraced by Christian tradition."[64] Canale wants to show that the SDA identity "as the remnant church stands on more than the scriptural marks of the remnant and its distinctive doctrines. It primarily stands on Scripture alone (*sola*), completely (*tota*), and hermeneutically (*prima*)."[65]

He substantiates this claim by arguing that the early SDA community of faith appropriated their "newfound insights into the relationship between prophecy and the sanctuary as hermeneutical presuppositions that were needed to understand the entire Bible, the whole range of Christian doctrines."[66] He adds that:

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[61] Richard M. Davidson, "Interpreting Scripture According to the Scriptures: Toward an Understanding of Seventh-day Adventist Hermeneutic," Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Geneva, May 20-21, 2003, https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/interp%20scripture%20davidson.pdf. Accessed on April 13, 2012.

[62] Ibid., 87.

[63] He describes how early 19th-century restorationist movements in America contributed to the idea that the scriptures has its own method of interpretation. This movement to restore biblical Christianity was anti-tradition in its philosophical outlook and lay-based in terms of its social structure. As Canale comments: "Unlike the Magisterial Reformers (16th Century) and the English Puritans (17th Century), this search did not originate from clergymen or theologians, but from the laity. It grew from the basic, naive conviction that Scripture can interpret itself."—Fernando Canale, "The Message and the Mission of the Remnant: A Methodological Approach," in *Message Mission and Unity of the church*, ed. Angel Manuel Rodriguez (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2013). 266. For the hellenisation of the early church's hermeneutical matrix, see Canale, ibid., 262. He further states that "more precisely, mainline Reformers used Scripture to challenge doctrinal points in tradition, but never the hermeneutical and methodological basis on which Christian tradition stands."—ibid., 265.

[64] Ibid., 285. Norman R. Gulley gives a fuller discussion of Canale's view on the question of biblical inspiration. Norman R Gulley, *Systematic Theology Prolegomena* (Berrien Springs Michigan: Andrews University Press, 2003), 116–127.

[65] Ibid., 284.

[66] Ibid., 268.

when Adventist pioneers used their understanding of apocalyptic prophecies and the sanctuary as an interpretive paradigm, they effectively replaced the interpretive paradigm that Christian tradition had drawn from extra-biblical philosophical ideas.[67]

Other works witness to the hermeneutical questions raised in SDA contemporary theology and represent the kind of fertile hermeneutical theological activity underway in the SDA church.[68] In his article 'Another Look at Adventist Hermeneutics: A short review of the standard Adventist approach to biblical interpretation', George Reid captures well the nature of the hermeneutical tension which has been developing in the SDA faith community. Reid shows how the grammatico-historical method, which was the hermeneutical standard prior to the 1950s, was being questioned in the post-1950s era and more considerations given to the historical-critical method as hermeneutical possibilities.[69] As Reid expresses it, in contemporary Adventism, there are:

> two hermeneutics, one the historical Seventh-day Adventist approach with minor modification, the other a hermeneutic based on substantial modification, one involving modalities prominent in historical criticism but purging its most obvious humanistic presuppositions such as denial of the supernatural.[70]

Reid has the merit to explore and recognise the hermeneutical conflict present in the SDA church but offers limited theological resolution for the tension generated by those two approaches in the SDA community of faith, except that he invites the SDA community to consider the finality of any biblical hermeneutics in terms of its pastoral and transformational capacity to nurture and keep the spiritual vitality of the community:

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[67] Ibid., 268. Actually, Canale begs the question. Canale fails to distinguish between the horizons of the interpretive community and the doctrines that constitute this faith community. The sanctuary doctrine is part of the SDA church's belief system and, if it is taken as an interpretive paradigm, as Canale is suggesting, then a doctrine is used as a norm to interpret Scripture. This view runs against the SDA community of faith's hermeneutic traditional horizon. It is Scripture that is the norm for doctrine and not vice-versa. Following Canale's line of circular reasoning, we are led to conclude that the SDA church acting as an hermeneutic community have actually deemphasised the tradition of the philosophical Hellenistic conditioning of biblical interpretation but only to replace it by establishing another one: interpreting Scripture through doctrinal lenses. This approach defeats Canale's apologetic attempt to show that the SDA church hermeneutical system is purely *sola scriptura*.

[68] For a brief overview of an SDA interest in the history of hermeneutics, see Kwabena Donkor, https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Hermeneutics%20today.pdf Accessed on November 22, 2013.

[69] For a comparison, definition and objectives of these two hermeneutical approaches, see *Handbook of Adventist Theology*, 94-95.

[70] George W.Reid, "Another Look at Adventist Hermeneutics: A Short Review of the Standard Adventist Approach to Biblical Interpretation," https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/bible-interpretation-hermeneutics/another-look-adventist-hermeneutics. Accessed on November 20, 2013.

Ultimately a major criterion in deciding what hermeneutic should be followed lies in its fruits. Does our hermeneutic lead to a Christ-centered experience in which the word testifies of Him?[71]

Kwabena Donkor discusses the hermeneutical implications of views that regard scripture as either historically conditioned or constituted. The former stresses human history or the historical context as primarily responsible for the production of the Scriptures and therefore 'time' or 'culturally conditioned'[72] and the latter emphasises God's revelation in history as the primary cause of the message of scriptures though history and culture was the medium of divine revelation and in that sense is historically constituted. In the words of Donkor:

> Adventist thought, therefore, distinguishes 'conditioning' from 'constituting.' While the former implies a negative and even pejorative subordination of the cause of the Bible (God's revelatory act) to history, the latter sees history as the very zone or mode within which God causes revelation inspiration to take place. To say that the Bible is historically constituted is to say that its cognitive content is caused by God in the historical realm. Understanding the Bible as historically constituted causes the issue of historical conditioning to become a non-issue since the supposed gap between cause and condition is eliminated.[73]

Donkor discusses three hermeneutical implications that result from the view that history is historically constituted:

> First, it carries the implication that the interpreter wishes to hear the text on its own terms. Behind this first implication is a second concern, that the text has a fixed, definite meaning that should not be muffled. Closely allied to the second concern is a third, namely, that the text, when correctly understood reveals truth that corresponds to reality and, therefore, has transcultural significance.[74]

We conclude this discussion of the SDA hermeneutic of faith facing its hermeneutical challenges, firstly, by observing that the theological conversation of SDA theologians in regard to biblical hermeneutics, has an apologetic function in the SDA community of faith.[75]

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[71] Ibid., He further adds: "Does it produce a clearer grasp of what the word actually says? Does it point up the abysmal lostness of humanity and the magnitude of God's rescue, as well as a grander global understanding of His sovereignty over all? Does it build a strong sense of mission and desire for unity in the church, firing zeal for outreach to our neighbors? Does it lead to numerical and spiritual growth of the family of God and provide practical strength in meeting temptation? Does it lead to a resolve to be prepared for Jesus' early return? Such a hermeneutic carries the marks of being genuinely Adventist and will provide the framework for a growing understanding of God's will."
—https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/bible-interpretation-hermeneutics/another-look-adventist-hermeneutics. Accessed on February 2, 2013.

[72] For an Adventist perspective on the question of historical criticism, see E. Edward Zinke, https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/bible-interpretation-hermeneutics/historical-criticism. He outlines the genesis of historical criticism and its impact on bible interpretation. Accessed on February 2, 2013.

[73] Kwabena Donkor, 3.

[74] Ibid., 3. For a full defence of the position that scriptures is historically constituted, see Donkor, 1–4.

[75] Sometimes, appeal has been made to archaeology to either prove the accuracy of biblical data or illuminate certain biblical events or situations. In any case, the apologetic usage of archaeology was for sustaining the

This conversation has been generating theological arguments to support the traditional orthodox Protestant method of biblical interpretation, known as the historical-biblical method. As a matter of fact, there has been an ongoing critical conversation in the SDA community of faith between the historical-biblical method—defined as "the attempt to understand the meaning of biblical data using methodological considerations arising from Scripture alone"[76]—in contrast with the historical-critical method, understood as "the attempt to verify the truthfulness and understand the meaning of biblical data on the basis of the principles and procedures of secular historical science."[77]

Hermeneutical principles have had their impact on the SDA theological interpretation, especially its appropriation of Revelation 12:17, which identifies a "faithful rest who obey God's commandments and have the faith of Jesus." *Questions on Doctrine* recognises candidly this fact in those words: "While we believe that Revelation 12:17 points to us as a people of prophecy, it is in no spirit of pride that we thus apply the Scripture. To us it is the logical conclusion of our system of prophetic interpretation."[78]

Having described and explained the broader SDA historical hermeneutical matrix characterised by the tension between the historical-critical method—which does not deny supernatural divine activity—and the historical-biblical method or the conditioned versus the constituted approach to revelation, we now move to our next section where we will describe how the divergent views that have been emerging in the historical context of Seventh-day Adventism concerning remnant ecclesiology have been shaped by the tensions existing within the SDA hermeneutical tradition itself.

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reliability of Scriptures as a divine historical document produced in the human historical context. Lloyd A. Willis' doctoral dissertation 'Archaeology in Adventist Literature 1937–1980' shows that in pre-1937 SDA literature archaeology had an apologetic role and function: "It was not surprising that there was an increasing awareness among SDA writers of the potential of archaeology for the defense of the OT against the extreme positions' of higher criticism attack against the integrity of Scripture."—Lloyd A. Willis, "Archaeology in Adventist Literature 1937–1980" (Phd, Andrews University, 1982), 3. See also pp. 2–4, for different types of apologetics and its abuse.

[76] Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," 94.

[77] Ibid., 94. Davidson elaborates, compares and contrasts the two hermeneutical methods.—Raoul Dederen, ed. , *Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology*, Vol. 12, Commentary Reference Series (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 94–95.

[78] Georges Knight, ed. , *Questions on Doctrine*, Adventist Classic Library (Berrien Springs , Michigan: Andrews University Press, 2003), 162.

2.3.2: <u>Remnant Ecclesiology: Hermeneutical Tensions, the SDA Doctrinal Development Phases and the Remnant Doctrine</u>

First, let us consider the various interpretations, both historical and contemporary, that the SDA church as a community of interpreters have attributed to the meaning of remnant. Then, we will discuss the hermeneutical biblical-theological and non-theological tradition that has influenced the doctrinal development of remnant ecclesiology. As we have pointed out in Chapter 1, Section 1.2 'Background to the study', there is a plural understanding concerning the remnant doctrine in the SDA church today. Rodriguez identified six ways the community of faith interprets the remnant doctrine.[79] Carmelo. L. Martines's dissertation offers a comprehensive and complete analysis of the theological debate on the remnant doctrine that has been taking place within the SDA church since the 1950s.[80] Based on a Google translation of some key parts of his dissertation, we understand that he focuses on four current theological views regarding the meaning of remnant ecclesiology within the SDA church:

1. <u>The traditional view</u>:

a. It emphasises the prophetic origin of the SDA church as the eschatological remnant by the will of God. Its existence and mission are justified on the basis of the interpretation of apocalyptic prophecies like in Revelation 12 and 14. This is a theological reasoning that is prophetic and missionary in nature.

b. The prophetic ministry of Ellen G. White in the church is an evidence that it is the remnant. This is a theological-apologetic reason.[81]

2. <u>The developmental view</u>:

 a. It preserves the basic argument of the traditional position.

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[79] See page 14 of this thesis where we identify the six main interpretations of remnant ecclesiology in the SDA church.

[80] As T. Veling explains, the community's sacred texts (for example, the Bible as word of revelation) are "familiarly present to the community as the tradition that constitutes their identity. Yet such texts also generate continual dispute, dialogue, and reform within the community."—Terry A. Veling, *Living in the Margins : Intentional communities and the art of interpretation* (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 27.

[81] L. Martines, "El Concepto del remanente en la iglesia Adventista del septimo Dia: Razones subyacentes en el debate contemporaneo." 107–108.

b. But it also moves beyond it and attempts to articulate a theology of the remnant in the light of the theological questions it poses to the SDA church. There are nine theological issues that have been evoked in relation to remnant ecclesiology.[82]

3. <u>The change view</u>:

It proposes a new hermeneutic and is missionary focused. Its hermeneutics favours historical-critical, social and anthropological method of understanding scripture, not excluding social and political categories of discourse. Thus, mission includes transformational social action. The position of change does not call for abandoning the remnant identity but invites a change in the focus of the remnant speech: from apocalyptic, eschatological and prophetic aspects to themes of ethics, interreligious dialogue and matters of social justice. [83]

4. <u>The rejectionist view</u>:

It rejects the view that the remnant church is the visible SDA church. It sees the remnant as still future and non-institutional.[84]

2.3.2.1: <u>The Doctrinal Development Phases and the Evolution of Remnant Ecclesiology</u>

At this stage, we will retrace the development of the remnant doctrine, its interpretation and its hermeneutical underpinnings as it evolved during the different phases of the SDA church's broader doctrinal development history as described in Section 2:1: 'Doctrinal Development: The SDA Historical Faith Context'. We will explore the theological interpretations attributed to the remnant concept during the informal phase (1853-1874), the Fundamental Principles phase (1874-1930) and conclude with the Fundamental Beliefs phase (1930-now).

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[82] 1. Answers to doctrinal crisis situation; 2. The uniqueness of its mission; 3. Race and intercultural relations;
 4. Concept of the church; 5. Eschatology; 6. Theology of a last perfect generation; 7. Remnant within a remnant; 8. Dispensationalism; 9. Attempts to systematise the theology of the remnant with other doctrine like soteriology.—ibid., 159–162.
[83] Ibid., 199–203.
[84] Ibid., 218–220.

A. Remnant Ecclesiology: 'The Informal or Experiential' Doctrinal Development Phase (1853–1874).

As a matter of fact, this plural understanding emerging in recent Adventist theological history concerning the remnant concept has historical antecedents in the context of Adventism, not so much in terms of a corresponding meaning but in terms of the diversity of theological interpretations it has generated in Adventist history. As a matter of fact, the remnant motif is traceable to the early Millerite revival movement. According to Stefan Höschele, this motif has gradually evolved and has been reinterpreted during the experiential phase of SDA doctrinal development. Initially, this motif had an anti-ecclesial, anti-sectarian connotation due to the early Millerites 'historicist-experientialist' eschatological hermeneutic that interpreted not only history coming to an end but church organisations as well. Then, the remnant motif was applied to sabbatarian Adventists and eventually to the SDA religious organisation as such.[85]Gidson D. Ondap's MA thesis 'Diversity in the Remnant Concept in the History of the Seventh-day Adventist church (1841–1931)'[86] provides a clear analysis of primary historical sources that demonstrate that sabbatarian Adventist believers (1841–1863) and the SDA church (1863–1931) held diverse interpretations as to what the concept of the remnant means. His thesis defends the idea that during this period there are no direct statements or historical data that can be interpreted as indicating that the SDA church understood itself to be 'part of the remnant' rather than 'the remnant'. Despite the various competing interpretations, the SDA church held the conviction that they were the remnant church—God's end-time people.

Ondap's study has the merit of describing the pluralistic interpretation of the remnant church by the community of SDA believers during the period (1841–1931). During the informal phase (1853–1874) or the Adventist Sabbatarian period (1841–1863) and the Fundamental principles phase (1874–1931), there are at least 11 sometimes-overlapping interpretations of the remnant concept that have emerged:[87]

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[85] Stefan Höschele, "From Apocalyptic anti-sectarianism to Eschatological Denominationalism: The Remnant Concept in Early Adventism," *Andrews University Seminary Studies,* Vol 51, No. 2 (2013): 268–269.

[86] Gidson Duran Ondap, "Diversity in the Remnant Concept in the History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (1841–1931)" (Master Thesis, Adventist International Institute of Advance Studies, 2003).

[87] 1. A remnant is a small, undetermined group of people who will undergo suffering but will ultimately be saved. The 'little flock' biblical imagery (Lk.12:32) is a common image chosen by early Adventists to characterise themselves; 2. The scattered remnant are those who are geographically dispersed; 3. The recovered remnant are those who are gathered together from the diaspora; 4. The remnant is identified with the 144,000 redeemed people described in Rev. 14:5. The remnant is identified as the

Following 1863, the year when the SDA church was officially organised and took the name Seventh-day Adventist, there was a development in the way the SDA community of faith used the term remnant. There were at least three views that became more prominent and added to the meaning given during the previous period:

1. The SDA church is designated as the 'remnant people', 'the remnant church', 'the last generation'. Terms like 'holy people' and 'peculiar' people were still connotations associated with the idea of the remnant during this period.
2. The commandment-keeping church.
3. The Laodicean church.[88]

From 1871–1931, some of the same meanings continued and other interpretations were attributed to the remnant concept, such as:

1. The Remnant of Remnant.
2. A Remnant outside the Adventist church.
3. The Advent movement.[89]

During this period, there were different ecclesiological motifs used by the early sabbatarians Adventists to describe their own spiritual experience as a group of Christian believers emerging from the Millerite movement. Gerard Damsteegt's doctoral dissertation, published as a book under the title *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission*, identifies two categories of motifs that were self-descriptors of SDA:[90]

    1. <u>The eschatological motifs:</u>
a. The remnant motif.
b. The Laodicean motif.

    2. <u>The typological motifs:</u>
a. Israel motif
b. The Elijah motif

Particular sabbatarian group but is also linked to other local sabbatarian companies; 6. The remnant is God's — peculiar, 'set apart', holy people.—ibid., 16–40; 7. The remnant is the true church. 8. The remnant is the last end of the church; 9. A people of suffering and salvation. For a detailed analysis of these interpretations and the historical sources of these periods, see "Diversity in the Remnant concept in the History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (1841–1931)" (Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, 2003), 15–72.

[88] Ibid., 39–52.
[89] Ibid., 65–70.
[90] P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of The Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* (Michigan: William B.Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 243–254.

c. Other types

According to Damsteegt, all these motifs contributed to shaping SDA mission and its self-identity:

> During 1850–74, a number of ecclesiological motifs developed which became a part of the SDA theology of mission. These motifs were of paramount importance for the improvement of the spiritual climate for mission work and for the understanding of the self-image of the religious body, which called attention to its unique role in the history of the Christian church.[91]

But Damsteegt points out that 'the Remnant motif does not appear to have directly contributed to the growth of SDA missionary consciousness, but it surely did indirectly by providing a positive argument for their uniqueness in the history of salvation as God's faithful remnant participating indispensably in His final rescue mission.'[92]

In his brief analysis on the remnant belief in relation to the question of 'continuity and change in distinctive Adventist beliefs', Pöhler makes a significant observation concerning early Adventist ecclesiological motifs. He observes that early Sabbatarians shifted from identifying their group as the Philadelphian church in the book of Revelation (see Rev. 3:13-17) to an understanding that their group was the church of Laodicea (see Rev. 3:14-22):

> Seventh-day Adventists have already once experienced a significant readjustment of their ecclesiology. For about ten years after 1844, they identified themselves with the 'Philadelphia' phase of the church (Rev. 3: 7-13) and described the 'nominal Adventists' as lukewarm 'Laodiceans.' As early as 1851, Ellen White reapplied the counsel to the Laodicean church . . . to Sabbatarian Adventists.[93]

The identification of the Advent sabbatarian group with the Philadelphian or Laodicean church was based on the historicist interpretation of Bible prophecy, which views the seven churches of Revelation as paralleling seven distinct periods in the history of the Christian church.[94] It is important to underline how the Advent community of faith felt at liberty to

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[91] Ibid., 243.

[92] Ibid., 244.

[93] Pöhler, *Continuity and Change in Adventist Teaching*, 108–109.

[94] The historicist interpretation of the seven churches is explained in the *SDA Bible Commentary*. See "Revelation," in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, ed. Francis D.Nichol (Washington , D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1957), 742–763. For an exegetical critique of the Philadelphia-Laodicean motif, see the same commentary under 'Additional Note on Chapter 3', ibid, 764. But commentators such as C. Mervyn Maxwell do not attempt to correspond the seven churches with any specific periods in church history in his commentary but he does recognise the alternative historicist position by simply providing a chart showing the possible parallels between the seven churches and church history: see C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares*, 2 vols., Vol. 2 (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985), 98, also 97–138. A more recent SDA New Testament expositor, Ranko Stefanovic allows for a double interpretation of the seven churches following the position adopted in the *SDA Bible Commentary*. Stefanovic has a nuanced position and does not see a direct correspondence here: "Yet it appears that the seven churches somehow typify Christian church

reinterpret the Philadelphia-Laodicea ecclesiological motifs in the light of their existential and eschatological faith experience.

During the informal doctrinal phase, the Sabbath as a 'lost' biblical truth that God wanted to restore in the Christian church became significant and meaningful for the early sabbatarians Adventists. For example, a prominent early Adventist Bible commentator, Uriah Smith, informed by an historicist method for studying Bible prophecies, interpreted Revelation 12 as pointing to the history of the Christian church in its apostolic, medieval, post-reformation and end-time phases. The end-time phase corresponds to the appearance of the final remnant people of God 'who obey God's commandments and hold to the faith of Jesus' (Rev.12:17). Like other sabbatarians and early Adventists, Smith applied this verse to the Adventist sabbatarian groups. Smith states that Rev.12:17[95]

> points to a Sabbath reform to be accomplished in the last days, for on the Sabbath alone as pertaining to the commandments, is there a difference of faith and practice among those who accept the Decalogue as the moral law. This is more particularly brought to view in the message of Revelation 14:9-12.[96]

The observance of the Sabbath as a worship day distinguished the Advent believers as God's remnant people and defined their mission to the world. Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart explained how, in early Adventism, Sabbath-keeping constituted the SDA locus of identity but the remnant concept had a descriptive function rather than a theological value. The early Adventists understood themselves as the remnant because of their theological position that Sabbath-keeping was still a valid doctrine for Christianity:

> As a body, the Adventists derived their sense of identity not from membership of a particular denomination but from a shared understanding of the significance of the Sabbath and the role of those who observed it. This was clearly demonstrated in the development of the concept of the 'remnant'. The term had been used in the 1840s more for its descriptive than for its theological value when the Sabbatarian Adventists felt themselves to be true remnant of the Millerite movement.[97]

Bull and Lockhart further point out that "the concept of the remnant, like denominational organization itself, was thus a secondary characteristic of a movement defined by its religious

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history, and it is quite possible to see a progression from Ephesus to Laodicea covering the major periods of the Christian church. The seven messages of Revelation 2-3 could very well be those of God to his people at different points in history, addressing their particular circumstances and needs."—Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 2009), 87.

[95] It is important to state that Revelation 12:17 was the motto of sabbatarian Adventist in the 1850s and appeared on their church publications. See, for example, *Signs of the Times* and *Review and Herald* of this period.

[96] Uriah Smith, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1944), 514.

[97] Bull and Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary : Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*, 44.

practices, most particularly by the observance of the Sabbath."[98] The Sabbath became not only a religious practice but also good news to be shared with others—indeed, a lost truth to be restored in Christendom. Therefore, it became the inspiring source of the Adventist mission.

Another study by Stefan Höschele—*From the End of the World to the Ends of the Earth: The Development of Seventh-Day Adventist Missiology*—shows that the Sabbath 'truth' was not the only determining factor in the construction of SDA self-identity. Höschele explains how the development of Adventist self-understanding is best understood in the light of its mission history.[99] Especially, in terms of the development of remnant ecclesiology, Höschele shows how the missiological context of post-Millerite Adventists and early sabbatarian Adventists was crucial in developing an interpretation of remnant theology. In the post-Millerite phase (1844–1850), there was no 'explicit missionary aspect' invested in the ecclesiological concept of the remnant. The early pioneers appropriated the text in Rev. 12:17 in order to emphasise "the identity of Seventh-day Adventism with God's eschatological people who "keep His commandments"—including the Sabbath—and "hold to the testimony of Jesus"[100] which was explained as meaning the "Spirit of Prophecy" based on Revelation 19:10." The early sabbatarian community of faith interpreted the prophetic ministry of Ellen G. White as evidence that their group possessed the spirit of prophecy.

During the mid-19th century, as the SDA mission shifted from the Millerites group to anglo-saxon Americans at large (1850–1870) and Western Christianity (1870–1890), "the Seventh-day Adventist movement connected the 3rd angel's message of Rev.14:9–12 with the task of the Remnant"[101] and applied the messages of the 1st and 2nd angels of Revelation 14:6–8 to the Millerite movement. During this period, "the Remnant began to be seen as an agency of both mission by example showing the world the character of God (Rev.14:4) and messengers

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[98] Ibid., 45.

[99] Stefan Höschele's book is an in-depth study of SDA theology of mission. It aims to understand a movement "that owes much of its identity to a unique missiology" by looking at "the most important aspects of this missiology as reflected in Seventh-day Adventist history as well as the present situation of this denomination."—Stefan Höschele, From the End of the World to the Ends of the Earth, (Nürnberg, Germany: Verlag für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft Gogolstr, 2004), 7. The study follows a definite trajectory as it retraces the beginnings of the SDA church from its Millerite origin and from there delineates all the phases of its mission in five phases: 1. Mission to the Millerites (1844–1850); 2. Mission to Caucasian Americans (1850–1870); 3. Mission to the Christian world (1870–1890); 4. Mission to the world: The everlasting gospel to all nations; 5. The Ends of the earth: Global mission and the unreached.—ibid.

[100] Ibid., 27.

[101] Ibid.

proclaiming a final warning to "Babylon"—the other churches."[102] This 'missionary hermeneutic turn' was significant because it was going to be a determining factor in the future doctrinal development of remnant ecclesiology. Suffice it to say, at this stage, that the ecclesiological identity of the SDA community, which was centred on the Sabbath, was being shifted toward a more missionary-focused identity.

B. Remnant Ecclesiology: 'The Fundamental Principles' Doctrinal Development Phase (1874 –1930)

It can be said that the publication of the 25 principles in the *Signs of the Times* magazine, June 4, 1874, marked a new phase in the process of identity formation for the SDA community of faith. We discussed under Section 2.1 'Doctrinal Development and the SDA Historical Faith Context' that sabbatarian Adventists emerged from the Millerite movement that took its roots from the free-church movements. The free churches generally advocated an anti-dogma position and claimed the principle of *sola scriptura* as their only rule of faith. It has also been pointed out in Section 2.1 under 'The Fundamental Principles Phase: 1874–1930' that the preamble to the 25 principles states that the latter is not a 'creed' or 'discipline' and its purpose is not to 'secure uniformity', or impose 'authority' on the people. It is simply a unanimous *synopsis* of the SDA faith.

But the publication of the 25 principles in the official church periodicals, *Signs of the Times* and *Review and Herald,* indicated that the SDA approach to defining itself was shifting. The significance of the publication of these principles meant that the SDA church would increasingly be identified more in terms of its set of beliefs, although future publications of the "25 Principles' in the following years would maintain in the introduction the disclaimer that 'SDA have no creed but the Bible."[103] So while the SDA community of faith identified and defined itself in terms of its interpretation of the Bible, it was also starting to establish its own tradition of interpretation of what it believed to be fundamental, timeless, and total unified divine truths of scriptures on key biblical teachings concerning salvation.

From the time the *Signs of the Times* published the '25 principles' in 1874 by an anonymous author, it was reprinted many times in official church periodicals and even revised and

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[102] Ibid.

[103] For details of the years the 25 principles were reprinted and the church magazine that published them, see *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopaedia*, s.v. "Doctrinal Statements, SDA."

expanded to 28 principles in the 1889 Yearbook. But during this period (1874–1931), the 25 principles make no reference to the remnant church and do not identify the SDA church as the remnant. It does, however, explain the *Sabbath doctrine* and *the mission of reformation as reflected in the three angels messages of Revelation 14*.[104] Those two elements would constitute the two main characteristics of the remnant doctrine in the future development of the SDA *principles* of faith, as the '25 principles' phase led to the constitution of the 1931 'Fundamental Beliefs' of SDA.

C. Remnant Ecclesiology: The *Missio Dei* and *Missio Ecclesiae* Phase (1931–1980)

As it has been previously commented (Section 2:1, 3), the years from 1931 to 1946 were key periods in the development of the SDA Fundamental Beliefs. In 1930, the General Conference committee officially voted for the first time for a committee of four members to prepare a statement of beliefs. This statement was printed in 1931 in the Yearbook and the Church Manual. But only in 1946 was it voted that this statement of belief could only be revised at a General Conference council in session. As from 1946, the Fundamental Beliefs could be considered to have derived authoritative value because they could now be revised or changed only by the authority of a church council whereas in previous phases, it was clearly emphasised that they *were not a creed and had 'no authority'*. The 1931 statement of belief makes no mention of the remnant doctrine but reiterates the same concepts as the '25 principles' regarding a mission of reform to be carried by the SDA church. The doctrine of the remnant first appeared in the 1942 'Fundamental Beliefs Statements', article 27. From 1942–1980, its appearance in the Fundamental Beliefs was inconsistent but whenever it was included in the fundamental beliefs, it was either to express an inclusive *missio dei* dimension or to define the identity of the SDA church as *ecclesia,*as a religious organisation. Let us

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[104] Principle 17 speaks about the mission of reformation: "That God in accordance with his uniform dealings with the race, sends forth a proclamation of the approach of the second advent of Christ; that this work is symbolized by the three messages of Rev. 14, the last one bringing to view the work of reform on the law of God, that his people may acquire a complete readiness for that event." And principle 12 speaks about the Sabbath: "That the fourth commandment of this law requires that we devote the seventh day of each week, commonly called Saturday, to abstinence from our own labor, and to the performance of sacred and religious duties; that this is the only weekly Sabbath known to the Bible, being the day that was set apart before paradise was lost, Gen. 2:2, 3, and which will be observed in paradise restored; Is. 66:22,23; that the facts upon which the Sabbath institution is based confine it to the seventh day, as they are not true of any other day; and that the terms, Jewish Sabbath and Christian Sabbath, as applied to the weekly rest-day, are names of human invention, unscriptural in fact, and false in meaning."—*Signs of the Times*, "Fundamental Principles of Seventh-day Adventists" (January, 1875), 3.
http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/ST/ST18750128-V01-14.pdf.
Accessed on February 22, 2011.

briefly compare the theological expressions of the remnant doctrine belief from 1932 to1980 using the following comparative table:

The Fundamental Beliefs Statement: Variation and Development of Remnant Ecclesiology.

Fundamental Beliefs: 1932, 34, 38, 40, 51, 59, 63, 71.	Fundamental Beliefs: 1942, 1967.	Fundamental Beliefs: 1980.
That God in the time of judgment and in accordance with his uniform dealing with the human family in warning them of coming events vitally affecting their destiny, . . . sends forth a proclamation of the approach of the second advent of Christ, that this work is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14 and that . . . the threefold message brings to view a work of reform to prepare people to meet him at his coming.[105]	In accordance with God's uniform dealing with mankind, warning them of coming events which will vitally affect their destiny. He has sent forth a proclamation of the approaching return of Christ. This preparatory message is symbolized by the three angels' messages of Revelation, and meets its fulfilment in the great second advent movement today. *This has brought forth the remnant, or Seventh-day Adventist church, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.*[106] [Italics supplied]	The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. It coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness.[107]

Table 1

The relationship established in the doctrinal expression of remnant theology between mission and the meaning of remnant ecclesiology reflects the different understandings of the SDA community of faith's reading of Scriptures at a moment in their faith history and development. As indicated earlier, we intend to understand the development of the Remnant doctrine using Pöhler's doctrinal model of change and continuity in SDA doctrinal thinking.[108] Based on Pöhler's explanation of the 'dynamic model' of doctrinal development,

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[105] The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, "Church Manual," The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, http://docs.adventistarchives.org/documents.asp?CatID=56&SortBy=2&ShowDateOrder=True. 1932–40, 183–184. Accessed on May 11, 2011.

[106] The sentence in italics were added to a statement already in existence in the '25 Principles'.—ibid., 86.

[107] Ibid., 12.

[108] See p.37, N. 2.

a doctrine can be revised or reinterpreted if they are not in harmony with biblical revelation or is inadequately expressed to meet the needs of contemporary humanity. It can be said that the changes in the various statements [e.g Table.1] on the remnant doctrine point to the dynamic theological reflection of the SDA community of faith that is attempting to clarify and at times is reinterpreting its understanding of remnant ecclesiology. Kwabena Donkor has explained that the Fundamental Beliefs "as the community's reading of Scripture points to one of its key roles, namely, as an indicator of the community's concern for hermeneutics."[109] According to Donkor, through a statement of belief, the church as a hermeneutic community is declaring 'this is the way we read scripture' and "we are not indifferent to any reading of Scriptures."[110] From Table-1, it can be observed that in the years 1932–40, 1951, 1959, 1963 and 1971, the SDA community of faith clearly describes itself in terms of God's mission. It is God who does the 'sending forth'. God is the 'sender'. It is *missio Dei*. The spiritual gifts are from God and serve to build up his church for mission.

In comparison with the Fundamental Beliefs of 1932–1940, the 1942 statement of faith marks a significant shift in the way the SDA community of faith chooses to interpret its theological understanding of God's mission and the existence of the SDA church. In 1942 and likewise in 1967, the SDA church sees itself as the product of the *missio Dei* of reformation symbolised in the three angels' message of Rev.14:6–12. The mission of reformation results in the emergence of the remnant church that is identified as the SDA church. The focus on spiritual gifts (1932–40) as the Holy Spirit's means to equip Christ's body for service shifts to one specific gift: the gift of prophecy exemplified in Ellen G. White's prophetic ministry, considered as a mark of the remnant church.[111]

The 1980 Fundamental Belief is entitled 'The Remnant and its Mission'. This statement builds and integrates previous theological expressions from the fundamental belief statements related to the church. It became a landmark in the SDA church's future self-understanding but it was voted and accepted not without any theological polemic.[112] Fundamental Belief 12 was

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[109] Kwabena Donkor, "Role of the Fundamental Beliefs in the Church," in *Message, Mission and Unity of the Church*, ed. Angel Manuel Rodriguez (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2013), 295.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Appendix F compares and contrasts the different expression of the doctrine of spiritual gifts and the prophetic ministry of Ellen G. White. It offers a more detailed description of the relationship between the gift of prophecy described as a mark of the remnant church.—Appendix F, 232–236.
[112] For further highlights on the theological, administrative and social issues surrounding the 1980 statement of Fundamental Beliefs, see Fritz Guy, "Uncovering the Origins of the Statement of Twenty-seven Fundamental Beliefs," in *Being Adventist in 21st Century Australia* (Avondale College 2002). And also Lawrence Geraty, "A New Statement of Fundamental Beliefs," *Spectrum,* Vol 11, No. 1 (1980).

an attempt to reach a theological consensus on previous areas of ecclesiological-missiological tensions. It is a landmark in the doctrinal development of the ecclesiological self-understanding of the SDA church because, for the first time in SDA doctrinal history, it elaborated an SDA ecclesiology.[113] Firstly, as compared to previous Fundamental Belief statements the notion of the 'universal' church is introduced and contrasted with the remnant church. This is an attempt to respond to theological challenges we will see in our review of 'Questions on Doctrine' concerning the relationship between the SDA church and the worldwide fellowship of other Christian churches. The universal church is constituted by all those who '*truly believe in Christ.*' The remnant church is called out of the universal church, not to constitute another *ecclesia* but for a mission of reformation within the universal body of Christ. Secondly, the initiator of mission shifts from God—*missio Dei*—to the remnant church that 'announces, proclaims and heralds' the gospel of salvation and judgment—*missio ecclesiae.*

Retracing the historical and theological changes and reformulation that have taken place within the SDA denomination concerning the doctrine of the remnant church, we can observe that over a period of 80 years (1932–2010), the SDA ecclesiological self-understanding has developed in a dynamic way and has reflected key theological tensions as to the proper relationship between God's mission, the role of the remnant in God's mission, the function and role of the Spirit of Prophecy in the church, and whether the prophetic ministry of Ellen G. White has constituted a mark of the remnant church.

First, there has been a tension between *missio Dei* and *missio Ecclesiae* and how to relate *missio Dei* to the calling of the remnant people of God and the latter's role in salvation history. We noticed that the following Fundamental Beliefs [abbreviated in square brackets as FB followed by the number of the belief: e.g **[FB#15-1932–40, #15-1951, FB#15-1959, 1963, 1971, 1976**] during the 1930s, 1950s, 1960s and 1970s did not directly identify the SDA church as the remnant church whose mission is to proclaim the three angels' message and did not link the proclamation of this message to the emergence of the SDA Church. The focus in those Fundamental Beliefs is primarily on God as the mission initiator who has a message of reform expressed in the three angels' message. Mission was expressed as God's initiative and

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[113] The church doctrine was expressed in three articles of Faith: Art. 11 is entitled 'The church'; Art. 12 'The Remnant and its Mission'; and Art. 13 'Unity in the body of Christ'.—*The Church Manual*, 12–13.

was not church-centred. Fundamental Belief 12 loses the focus on God as the missionary *par excellence* sending out a message of reformation. It is not *God* who proclaims an end-time message to his remnant people but *it is the church* that uses the self-descriptor of the remnant church and proclaims the reformed message to the world. There is a *shift from the missionary God to the missionary church*.

Secondly, the tension exists between the SDA church presented as the object of God's mission [**FB#27- 1942, 1967**] and also in [FB#12-1980] as the subject of the mission. Therefore, these statements express a significant sociological insight[114] that makes the SDA church both the object and subject of God's mission. The remnant SDA community interpret itself as the product and producer of mission. It is a remnant church produced by a remnant message of which God is the author.

Finally, there is a tension as to the proper relationship between the universal church and the remnant people of God. Are there two different churches? Is the remnant church an inclusive or exclusive community of faith? Fundamental Belief 12 attempted to clarify the particularity of the SDA Church's mission within the broader context of the universal church composed of all true believers. Thus, the SDA church was spiritually united with the universal church made up of all true believers in Jesus Christ but was at the same time *different by virtue of its mission* in which all true believers are invited to engage.

Therefore, the idea of exclusivism is absent in Fundamental Belief 12. It is an inclusive mission that defines the church's self-understanding. The dialectical relationship of *the Same-Other* is held in tension.[115] The remnant church is of the *same* spiritual nature as the universal

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[114] This sociological insight explains how an ecclesiological self-understanding can be shaped by society but also shapes society. In the case of the SDA church, its ecclesiological self-understanding is the product of social factors such as the body of believers, their cultural and social background and values, their understanding and reading of scriptures within the social-cultural context of their time but this ecclesiological self-understanding has also shaped society in terms of the SDA church's impact on healthy lifestyle in different population groups and their transformation of society through humanitarian development. For example, the Adventist Health and Education system and the Adventist Development Relief Health Development (ADRA) are the products of the theological proclamation of the three angels messages but are also produced by this message of spiritual reformation and restoration. See also Robin Gill, "Sociology Assessing Theology," in *Theology and Sociology A Reader*, ed. Robin Gill (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1987): 147–148.

[115] We will further discuss the dialectical rapport between the same-other in chapter 3, section 3.3,108–115. Zane Yi advocates that an Adventist mission that is postmodern-sensitive should favour an encounter with the other through genuine conversation in which both parties have 'recognized the limitations of their views' and 'are open to transformation.' As Z. Yi puts it: "It is in encountering others in conversation that we become aware of the assumptions and factors that shape what seems, at first, to be so obvious to us."—Zane Yi, "Through A Glass Darkly: Speaking Of Truth in Postmodern Times," in *Revisiting Postmodernism: An Old Debate in A New Era* ed. Kleber O. Gonçalves and Bruce L. Bauer, *Andrews University Mission Studies- XIII*

church but is also *different* because of its remnant message of reform within the universal church and the world.

The nature and meaning of the remnant church have been theologically understood from two hermeneutical perspectives informed by an established SDA hermeneutical tradition that, on one hand, sees the SDA church as the **remnant church** with a mission—the Ecclesiocentric Interpretation—and, on the other hand, the SDA church as light bearers having **a mission** to the world—the Missiological Interpretation. During the post-Millerite and formative phase of the SDA church, early Adventists believers lived a faith and mission experience informed by their understanding of the unified and total teachings of scriptures on what they believed to be key elements of salvation, such as the Sabbath as a day of worship and the priesthood ministry of Jesus Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. There was an awareness, a sense that they were God's remnant people of prophecy. Their faith experience can be considered as a 'first-order language of religious experience.'[116]

As they started reflecting on its various definitions in order to self-clarify their faith experience, they entered the second-order of religious activity, which is theology—"the process and expression of thinking about the meaning of faith's personal experience, practice, and belief-explicating their content, assessing their appropriateness and adequacy, and exploring their implications."[117] Such a theological process of self-clarification involved a critical reflection on doctrinal matters other than[118] a critical theological reflection on their self-understanding as God's end-time remnant people, which was simply assumed as 'truth.' From the 1950s, however, new questions were being raised about the remnant concept that necessitated a fresh theological understanding of remnant ecclesiology. During the *missio Dei-missio ecclesiae* phase—especially from the 1950s—the SDA community of faith started to reflect theologically on the meaning of the remnant concept, which was initially a spiritual, existential experience for the emerging mid-19th century SDA community.

(Berrien Springs, Michigan: Department of World Mission -Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary - Andrews University, 2013), 152–153.

[116] Fritz Guy identifies three orders of theological thinking. The first-order can be verbal or non-verbal. It includes language but is not bound to any linguistic expression as such. The first-order language "does not imply, however, that religious experience necessarily begins in language; for spirituality can be pre-linguistic as well as linguistic, just as it can be non-sensory as well as sensory."—Guy, *Thinking Theologically- Adventist Christianity and the Interpretation of Faith*, 6.

[117] Ibid.

[118] For discussion of other doctrinal matters in SDA church, see Pöhler, 'Continuity and Change in Distinctive Beliefs,' ibid., 70–105.

We can draw the following conclusions on the evolution of remnant ecclesiology during the SDA doctrinal development phases:

1. During the informal doctrinal phase (1853–74), there were plural views among early Millerites and SDA concerning the meaning of remnant. However, the early SDA communities attached a deep commitment to God's Ten Commandments and believed that the keeping of the Sabbath as a day of worship was a sign of their identity. Mission was not directly linked to remnant ecclesiology but it was only when they started during the late 19th century to evangelise American Anglo-Saxons and move in foreign mission fields that the idea of the remnant was linked to the proclamation of a universal gospel expressed in the three angels' mission of Revelation 14.

2. During the 'Fundamental Principles phase' (1874-1930), the remnant doctrine did not appear in the list of 25 principles but the understanding of *missio Dei,* of God who sends forth a people to proclaim the gospel message is evident in principle #15.

3. From 1930-Now, the doctrine of the remnant first appeared in Fundamental #27, 1942.

4. Remnant ecclesiology in the 20th century has been at the centre of theological polarisation because of the missiological tension between SDAs who anchored their identity in *missio Dei* and those who self-identified with *missio ecclesiae*. The former sees God's remnant people as an outcome of *missio Dei*, whereas the latter sees themselves as the remnant who are the special instruments for *missio Dei*.

2.4: Remnant Ecclesiology: Attempting to Clarify Theological Issues and Responding to Theological Challenges

Remnant ecclesiology raises theological questions both inside and outside the SDA church that necessitate some theological answers. This has resulted in a common working together between church officials and church theologians in order to articulate a theology of the remnant that is biblical and theologically coherent. Since the mid 1950s, there has been a progressive theological reflection in regard to this doctrine that is one among some specific beliefs that distinguish SDA churches from the evangelical Protestant school of thought.[119] We are now going to look at the results of this ongoing work within the perspectives of the

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[119] See Section 2.4.2, n.155, Julius Nam has evaluated the impact of 'Questions on Doctrine' on the SDA church's doctrinal development.

SDA church hermeneutic tradition of interpreting scriptures that, as we have observed, are the *orthodox Protestant historical-biblical method*, the *ecclesiocentric* outlook and the *missio Dei* perspective.

First, we need to identify the theological questions that have been raised in order to understand the theological responses. The questions can be classified under distinct categories:

1. <u>The meaning of the Remnant church:</u>

a. Does the SDA church need to think of itself as 'a' or 'the' remnant church?

b. What is the relationship between 'the' or 'a' remnant church and the universal church?

c. What are the scriptural views on the remnant concept?

2. <u>The Understanding of Mission:</u>

a. Is God the 'missionary' or is it the SDA church?

3. <u>The Ecumenical and World Religion Issues:</u>

a. How does the SDA church engage with the ecumenical movement and witness in the context of religious pluralism?

2.4.1: <u>The Theological Meaning of Remnant Ecclesiology</u>

We shall begin with addressing the theological 'Meaning of the Remnant church'. It has been shown how, in the early Advent movement, there were different meanings attributed to the understanding of the remnant but that it was not the dominant ecclesiological motif. But we observed that there was an existential consciousness and awareness that led the early Advent group to identify themselves with a particular group of believers identified in Revelation 12:17. The verse reads: "Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea" (NIV). This verse became

the foundational pillar of remnant ecclesiology. The *SDA Bible Commentary* has a double interpretation of this verse, which reflects the SDA community of faith's hermeneutic tradition. First, it gives a biblical and exegetical interpretation of the text itself, followed by an ecclesiological-centred exposition in an 'Additional Note on Chapter 12'.

There are four aspects with ecclesiological significance, which follow from the exegetical interpretation:

A. The remnant is part of the people of God and not separate from it.

B. The violence of Satan is directed against the Christian church as a whole and its climax is still future.

C. Remnant means 'those who remained'.

D. 'Those who remained' are identified as having the 'gift of prophecy', Jesus's medium to communicate to his church.

The additional note on Chapter 12 retraces the development of the remnant people of God throughout salvation history and aims at establishing the spiritual lineage of the SDA church based on an historicist interpretation of the '1260 days' prophecy in Revelation 12. According to this method of interpretation, Revelation 12 is a condensed version of the history of the church represented by the woman, an exposition with its own historical hermeneutical tradition.[120] According to this interpretation, the doctrine of the remnant church is traceable throughout the history of God's people.[121] A remnant in Israel coexists within the nation of Israel.[122] Hans K. LaRondelle rejects the dispensationalist view[123] that establishes a

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[120] The 12th-century abbot Joachim of Fiore was the first to introduce 'a new advance in the interpretation of this chapter—that the 1260 "days" as the period of the woman's flight symbolize 1260 years.'—"Revelation," in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1957), 117. Other commentators like the Jesuit Francisco Ribera has applied this period to the final end-time of church history where the church will be persecuted by 'anti-christ'.—ibid., 117. And during reformation and post-reformation period, 'all protestants consider the 1260 prophetic days . . . , as 1260 literal years.'—ibid., 117. For an history of the theological interpretation of the 1260-day prophecy and its hermeneutic and especially that of Joachim of Floris, see Le Roy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic faith of our fathers*, 4 vols., vol. 1 (Washington D.C: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946), 712–716. See also "Revelation," ibid., 114–117.

[121] To develop the doctrine of the remnant people of God, the *SDA Bible Commentary* applies the principle of the 'Unity of Scripture', according to which the different human authors are guided by one divine Author and scripture can be compared with scripture to arrive at its intended meaning on a specific teaching. There is also the principle that Bible truths are timeless and, though God used culture and history as vehicle of revelation, the message contains timeless truths that transcend cultural settings. The remnant people of God is a teaching that unfolds in both the Old Testament and the New Testament but it also transcends biblical times and is made applicable and continues during the Christian dispensation.

[122] 'The "remnant" of OT times is thus composed of successive generations of Israelites—God's chosen people. Again and again the majority apostatized, but each time there was a faithful "remnant" that became exclusive heirs to the sacred promises, privileges, and responsibilities of the covenant originally made with Abraham and

discontinuity between the nation of Israel and the Christian church. For LaRondelle, God's promises to the remnant of Israel are fulfilled in the early rise and formation of the Christian church. Since Pentecost, all the Old Testament prophecies "concerning the remnant of Israel had received their fulfillment in the formation of the apostolic church. More than that, the faithful church of Christ down through the ages . . . fulfills the remnant promises of the [Old Testament]."[124] But the Christian church has experienced periods of unfaithfulness to God during its history.[125] During those different periods of church history, LaRondelle argues that there have been many groups of faithful believers who could be qualified as belonging to God's faithful visible remnant church:

> Throughout Christian history different groups have arisen, in a sense remnant groups, with a burden to draw Christians of their day to a more scriptural faith. . . . Seventh-day Adventists differ from these groups in various respects regarding doctrine and practice, they have in common with them the image of the remnant in the sense of bringing their contemporaries to a faith closer to the Scriptures.[126]

The intent of this interpretation is to show that the remnant people of God emerge throughout salvation history each time God's people—his church—becomes unfaithful to God's covenant of love but the remnant people has no special merit, rather are chosen by God's grace. There is only one true lineage of the people of God throughout the first and second testaments, and this faithful lineage continues throughout the history of the Christian church. The SDA church sees itself as part of this long historical, visible group of God's people, not in the sense that it has special merits but in the sense that it has been called to proclaim a message of reform and restoration to the world through the proclamation of the three angels' messages of Revelation

confirmed at Sinai.'—"Revelation," 814. This remnant group was 'the appointed group to which God purposed to send the messiah and through which He proposed to evangelize the heathen.'—ibid.

[123] Raoul Dederen argues that the dispensationalist view is weak because it is based on a literal interpretation of Old Testament prophecies that portrays a more prosperous future for Israel as a nation. For Dederen, God does not have two different plans for Israel and the church but there is continuity between these two agencies of *missio Dei*: "Abraham's spiritual seed, his true spiritual children, are men and women of faith, whatever their ethnic background. The church has become "the Israel of God"."—Dederen, *Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology*, 545. For the remnant of Israel, ibid, 860–863.

[124] Concerning the theological meaning of the remnant in the New Testament, the *SDA Bible Commentary* explains that "aside from Rom 9:27; 11:5; Rev 12:17, the term "remnant" in the NT (Mat 22:6; Rev 11:13, 19:21) is not significant with respect to God's people." But the *SDA Bible Commentary* does explain that, because of the Jews' rejection of the messiah, the initial covenant responsibilities assigned to Israel have been passed on to the church. If Paul in Rom 9:27 mentions that a remnant shall be saved, "He is here applying the term "remnant" of Isaiah. 10:22 to Jews of his day who, as individuals, had accepted Christ as the messiah. But it was as members of the Christian church, and no longer as Jews, that they had a right to this title."— "Revelation," 814.

[125] The unfaithfulness of the Christian church to the gospel has occurred at different periods throughout the history of the Christian church but of particular interest for the development of the remnant doctrine is the segment of prophetic history known as the 1260-years prophecy found in Rev 12:6.

[126] Hans K. Larondelle, "The Remnant and the Three Angels' Messages," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 866.

14:6–12. In his theological interpretation of this pericope, LaRondelle carefully distinguishes a biblical literary, linguistic and exegetical interpretation of this biblical passage from an ecclesiological self-understanding and appropriation of this pericope by the SDA church for legitimising the purpose of its mission.[127] As such, it is not only a visible part of the faithful lineage of God's people but it is also the *last* and *loyal but not final* part of this lineage.

As we said earlier, a crucial question is to define the proper relationship between God's universal church and the SDA church's self-definition as God's remnant people. Is it 'a' remnant church or 'the' remnant church? Is it 'part' of or 'apart' from the universal church? Höschele observes that the Seventh-day Adventist church's self-description as the remnant church has been an ecclesiological problematic throughout the history of the denomination: "A particular question has been, in the history of Adventism, how the Remnant and the Seventh-day Adventist Church relate to each other."[128] He presents two theological responses of the SDA church to this ecclesiological problematic. First, there is the exclusive view according to which "*the* remnant' SDA church 'as an organization, constitutes the visible manifestation of the "Remnant", and often stick to the expression "Remnant Church" which is not found in the New Testament."[129] And in another sense it is considered to be '*a* remnant' and according to this inclusive view the denomination is 'part of a larger remnant.'[130] The exclusive view is considered to be the traditional position, while the inclusive view leans toward the developmental and change position.[131]

This tension is reflected in the *SDA Bible Commentary*'s treatment of Revelation 12, which rejects the exclusivist interpretation and states that the SDA church "repudiate emphatically and unequivocally any thought that they alone are children of God and have a claim upon heaven."[132] On the contrary, the SDA *Bible Commentary* points out that all those who "worship God in full sincerity, that is, in terms of all the revealed will of God that they understand, are presently *potential members* of that final "remnant" company mentioned in

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[127] In the introduction to his article "The Three Angels' Messages: God's End-time Message," LaRondelle says: "A true understanding of the prophecies concerning the church and the world in the end-time must be based, therefore, on a responsible exegesis of the theological core and literary center of John's Apocalypse: Revelation 12–14."—ibid.,857. For his exegetical study, see pp. 872-880. He further adds: "The Adventist understanding of Revelation 14 . . . emphasize certain truths revealed in the end-time prophecies as testing truths, which reflect their understanding and historical applications of the three angels' messages."—ibid., 887.
[128] Höschele, *From the End of the World to the Ends of the Earth*, 27.
[129] Ibid., 28. See Paul Minear's view on the remnant as a minor image in the New Testament.
[130] Ibid.
[131] As we discussed previously, Martines has identified four modes of interpretation of remnant ecclesiology, see 56–57.
[132] "Revelation," 815.

Ch.12:17.'[133] If there are 'potential members', this means that the actual, visible SDA community of faith is 'a' present remnant, part of a past and future spiritual lineage of the faithful people of God.

Raoul Dederen in *The Handbook of Adventist Theology*[134] explains that theological discussion around the question of how the SDA remnant church and the universal invisible church are related is polarised by those who regard "specific organizational structures as part of the true church"[135] and those "who stress the priority of one's direct relationship to God through Jesus Christ."[136] Dederen argues that these two positions are extremes and points out "that Scriptures refer . . . more exactly to the visible and invisible dimensions of the church."[137] He explains that "the church is bodily, visible, and tangible. It has a definite structure with differentiated parts or "members." It is actual, both local and universal."[138] He further comments that sinful believers, even those who are redeemed, cannot "adequately see the line that divides true and false believers, or identify who authentically belongs to the church or who does not."[139] As a matter of fact, "not all who are nominally members of the church are . . . in true and living communion with God."[140] But only *believers* who belong "within the visible church constitute the true church."[141] Consequently, using Jesus's parable of the wheat and tares (see Mat13:24–30, 36–43), it is possible to have people "within the visible church

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[133] Ibid. Italics supplied. Here it is to be noted that the *SDA Bible Commentary* underlines the fact that "the various Hebrew terms translated "remnant" do not connote the *last* of anything or group of people, except in the sense that in each instance, those who "remain" are temporarily, in their generation, the last existing link in the chosen line. Ever since the days of Abraham there has been "a remnant" according to God's grace."—814. It also emphasises the fact that "it is God's *last* "remnant" by virtue of the fact that it is the appointed herald of His final appeal to the world to accept the gracious gift of salvation (ch.14:6–12)." This attempt to emphasize that the remnant is not the 'last' but 'loyal' remnant need to be read in the context of a theological debate going on in SDA circles in the 1950s about the emergence of a last perfect generation existing on earth prior to Christ's second coming. This view was officially rejected and hence the emphasis that the 'remnant' is not a meritorious title obtained because of believers' spiritual achievement but the remnant is chosen by God's grace independent of the works of faith. See Knight, *Questions on Doctrine*, 164–165.

[134] The handbook was published in 2000 and was the direct outcome of a recommendation made by church leaders at the 1988 Annual Council of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nairobi, Kenya. The challenge facing the leaders and the delegates present at the 2000 Autumn Council was to preserve the global unity of the faith in the context of the global mission of the church. In view of this challenge, "the council authorized preparation of a volume to review carefully the biblical teachings undergirding the dynamic Adventist movement."—Dederen, *Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology*, ix.

[135] Ibid., 545.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid., 546.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Ibid.

[141] Ibid.

who are not true believers" and "conversely it is possible for some to be savingly related to Christ without belonging to the visible church."[142]

The gospel invitation goes to those who, in the visible church, are not faithful believers and to those who have a living relationship with Christ but are not connected with the visible church. In other words, the mission of the remnant church is to call out those who are disconnected with Christ in the church and those who are connected with Christ but who are outside the visible church:[143] "These are the focus of the gospel invitation to come out of Babylon and join God's visible church."[144] The visible church is described as the SDA church. It is an ecclesiocentric mission. Angel Manuel Rodriguez has pointed out that the distinction between the 'universal church' and the remnant church is significant for Adventist ecclesiology:

> The distinction is extremely important for the formulation and comprehension of an Adventist ecclesiology. How do we understand this 'universal church'? We have stated that it 'is composed of all who truly believe in Christ.' This definition is a practical rejection of denominationalism in that the church itself is described as transcending denominational borders. The 'universal church' is not embodied in any particular Christian organization, but it is diffused throughout the Christian world. We could state that, in a sense, the 'universal church' is a church in exile, in Babylon, scattered throughout religious world.[145]

Rodriguez further adds that "the remnant is the visible expression of the people of God, the church. One could even suggest that at the present time, the remnant is the visible church without being the totality of the expression of the church."[146]

In 1957, the SDA church published a document 'Questions and Doctrine' in response to a group of evangelicals who had some questions regarding some distinct SDA beliefs, among

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[142] Ibid., 546. On this question Michael Kinnamon's comment is enlightening: "Actually, a better way to make this point, consistent with Augustine and the Protestant Reformers, would be to say that there is only one church which is, at the same time, both visible and invisible. When Christians forget that there is an invisible fellowship known only to God, they are tempted to claim that their community is *the* church or that they know the church's true boundaries. An overemphasis on the invisible church, however, has also contributed to ecclesial divisions, with groups splitting from other parts of the visible body in the name of a true, if unseen, fellowship. The visible church, containing the faithful and the lukewarm, is not a perfect embodiment of the invisible church; but neither are the two separable."—Michael Kinnamon, "What can the churches say together about the church?" *Ecclesiology,* Vol 8 (2012): 296.

[143] The SDA church uses the term universal church instead of invisible church in the 1981 Fundamental Belief, article 12. For a full discussion of the relationship between the remnant and the universal church, see Angel Manuel Rodriguez, "Concluding Essay : God's End-Time Remnant and the Christian church," in *Toward a Theology of The Remnant*, ed. Angel Manuel Rodriguez (Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2009), 219–221. See also Rodriguez's challenging discussion regarding the common and unique elements between the 'universal church' and a 'visible remnant'.—221–224.

[144] Dederen, *Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology*, 546.

[145] Rodriguez, "Concluding Essay : God's End-Time Remnant and the Christian church," 219.

[146] Ibid., 221.

which was the question of the relationship between the SDA church and the universal church.[147] Question 20 is a three-fold question and reads as follows:

1. It is alleged that Seventh-day Adventists teach that they alone constitute the finally completed "remnant church mentioned in the book of Revelation. Is this true?

2. Or do Seventh-day Adventists recognize by the "remnant" those in every denomination who remain faithful to the Scriptures and the faith once delivered unto the saints?

3. Do Adventists maintain that they alone are the only true witnesses of the living God in our age and that their observance of the seventh-day Sabbath is one of the major marks that identify them as God's remnant church?[148]

In response, 'Questions on Doctrine' in the first place, clarifies the meaning of 'remnant' and points out that if it is assumed that the SDA church equates itself to the church 'invisible'[149] as the second part of the question seems to imply, then, "our answer to the first part is an unqualified No. Seventh-day Adventists have never sought to equate their church with the church invisible—"those in every denomination who remain faithful to the Scriptures.""[150] In its conclusion, it emphasises the fact that through all ages God's chosen people—'His elect'—has been distinguished "by their sincere obedience to Him in terms of all the light revealed to them. These constitute what may be described as the church invisible."[151]

As to whether the SDA church believe it is the 'only true witness' of God in the world, 'Questions on Doctrine' categorically rejects this view and states that, though the SDA church

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[147] 'Questions on Doctrine' was the result of the theological dialogue that took place between 1955-56 between some SDA official spokesmen and some Evangelical leaders, especially Walter Martin, consulting editor on cults to *Eternity* magazine. It was an attempt to clarify and provide key Adventist theological positions on nearly 40 questions presented by the evangelical Walter Martin. The full title is 'Seventh-Day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine: An Explanation of Certain Major Aspects of Seventh-day Adventist Belief. Prepared by a Representative Group of Seventh-day Adventist Leaders, Bible Teachers, and Editors.' In the 'Introduction to the Original Edition' published in 'Questions on Doctrine', it is stated that 'the replies were prepared by a group of recognized leaders, in close counsel with Bible teachers, editors, and administrators. The goal was to set forth our basic beliefs in terminology currently used in theological circles.'—Knight, *Questions on Doctrine*, xiii. For a critical analysis of Questions on Doctrine and its impact on the development of SDA theology, see Arthur Patrick, "The Questions On Doctrine Event: Contrasting perceptions, Their Impact and Potential," in *50th Anniversary Conference* (SDA Theological Seminary Andrews University, 2007).
[148] Knight, *Questions on Doctrine*, 157.
[149] The SDA church has opted to qualify the church as 'universal' rather than invisible. For a concise in-depth theological discussion of the historical genesis of the term 'invisible' and its theological underpinnings, see A. M. Rodriguez, "The Remnant in Contemporary Adventist Theology," in Rodriguez, *Toward A Theology of the Remnant: An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective*, 175–179.
[150] Knight, *Questions on Doctrine*, 159.
[151] Ibid., 164.

sees in Rev 12:17 a prophecy that finds its fulfillment in the historical emergence and birth of the SDA movement, this ecclesiological interpretation of Rev 12:7:

> does not imply in any way that we believe we are the only true Christians in the world, or that we are the only ones who will be saved. While we believe that the Seventh-day Adventist church is the visible organization through which God is proclaiming this last message to the world,[152]

Seventh-day Adventists also:

> firmly believe that God has a *precious remnant*,[153] a multitude of earnest, sincere believers, in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion, who are living up to all the light God has given them. The great shepherd of the sheep recognizes them as His own, and He is calling them into one great fold and one great fellowship in preparation for His return.[154]

2.4.2: <u>Remnant Ecclesiology and Mission</u>

It has been argued that this term 'precious remnant' has caused a shift in SDA ecclesiological self-understanding and causes for a revision of its traditional missiological *raison d'etre*.[155] This new perspective has sown the seeds 'of the first divergence from the Adventist Church's self-understanding as the remnant church.'[156] Frank M. Hasel presents the theological and missiological implications of this theological development for the SDA church:

> This shift in the understanding of the remnant could have far-reaching consequences for the Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiological identity and mission. If other Christians are already part of God's end-time remnant, on what ground is that determined and in what sense can the term be applied to them? Do they bear the marks of the remnant mentioned in Revelation? If so, why do we have to invite them to become part of God's (visible) remnant church?'[157]

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[152] Ibid., 162.

[153] Italics supplied because this reflects an ecclesiological-inclusive approach.

[154] Knight, *Questions on Doctrine*, 162–163.

[155] For example, Julius Nam in assessing the overall impact of 'Questions on Doctrine' on SDA self-understanding comments that the discussions have resulted in polarising SDAs: those who see themselves as within the evangelical mainstream and those who maintain a 'separatist' stance. The former views "Adventism within the larger flow of biblical Christianity and to regard themselves as evangelicals." And the latter "view Adventism as a movement that is to be deliberately separate from other groups such as evangelicals." He further concludes, "clearly, the debate over the self-understanding and mission of Adventism continues, and it remains to be seen if and how the two seemingly irreconcilable camps will achieve resolution of the issues and come to theological reconciliation within the household of Adventism." —http://qod.andrews.edu/docs/02_julius_nam.pdf, 4. Accessed on February 11, 2012.

[156] Quoted from Samuel Garbi in Rodriguez, *Toward A Theology of the Remnant- An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective*, 164.

[157] Frank M. Hasel, "The Remnant in Contemporary Adventist Theology," in *Toward a Theology of the Remnant*, ed. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2009), 165. See also Rodriguez, *Toward A Theology of The Remnant- An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective*, 21.

In other words, the essential question that an inclusive understanding of the remnant entailed is of a missiological nature.[158] Hence, the question "Why reach out for a co-existing remnant group of believers?"[159] In its intent, the 'Questions on Doctrine' document envisages the mission of the remnant to be non-ecclesiocentric because it is not so much about engaging believers to join the SDA denomination but it is *missio Dei* and 'ecumenical' by virtue of the fact that it is inviting all believers to join in God's final rescue operation of the human race as captured in the ultimate gospel message encapsulated in the three angels message of Revelation 14:

> We believe it to be the solemn task and joyous privilege of the *advent movement* to make God's last testing truths so clear and so persuasive as to draw all of God's children into that prophetically foretold company making ready for the day of God.[160]

To a certain extent, 'Questions on Doctrine' has reiterated and reaffirmed the traditional missiological understanding of the SDA church, while at the same time including the 'other' believers in this specifically defined *missio Dei*. Georges Knight, an SDA church historian, points out that the SDA church faces a dilemma in terms of its mission and its institutional identity. Does the SDA church as an institution need to think of itself as 'the remnant church' or does it need to think of itself as having a remnant message to people of all faiths?[161] This dilemma was reflected in a significant change made to the title of a denominational history textbook originally intended for Seventh-day Adventist colleges classes by Richard W. Schwarz entitled *Light Bearers to the Remnant*,[162] published in 1979. In 2000, a revised version co-authored by Schwartz and Floyd Greenleaf was published under the modified title *Light Bearers*.[163] No explanation was given in the preface for this revision but it does reflect a shift in the SDA denomination's self-understanding and mission. The mission was opened to

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[158] The early 19th-century Advent movement defined the mission as *missio Dei, a prophetic mission* willed by God. It is seen as God calling and sending a people to proclaim the gospel message in the end-time context of Revelation 14. But *missio Dei* shifted to *missio Ecclesiae*.

[159] 'Questions on Doctrine' has been a controversial document in the development of SDA theology. For the theological problems it addresses, as well as those it raised and its theological legacy for contemporary Adventism, see http://qod.andrews.edu/downloads.html. Accessed on February 11, 2012.

[160] Rodriguez, *Toward A Theology of the Remnant: An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective*, 165, italics supplied.

[161] Georges Knight, "Remnant Theology and World Mission," in *Adventist Mission in the 21st Century, ed. Jon L. Dybdahl* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1999). He further points out that "Adventism's ever-fuller comprehension of the three angels' messages has repeatedly broadened its understanding of mission." And adds that "whether one thinks of the church as the remnant or as having a message to the remnant, the effect has been largely the same. Seventh-day Adventists have been inspired to give their lives and property for the spread of the message of the three angels."—ibid., 94.

[162] Richard W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View , California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1979).

[163] Floyd Greenleaf and Richard W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2000).

the wider community and not limited to the remnant church. How would the church bear the light? To whom? With whom? Would this mission be a work of reform as light bearers within the wider community of Christian faith and world religions? Therefore, for the SDA church, the real missiological question it faces post-'Questions on Doctrine' is not: To whom is the SDA mission directed now that there is a precious and potential remnant in other faiths?[164] but '*With whom* is SDA mission to be carried?'

2.4.3: <u>Rethinking Remnant Ecclesiology: The Challenges of Ecumenism and World Religions</u>

Is SDA mission open to the ecumenical movement and how does it relate to world faiths and religious pluralism? Borge Schantz's thesis 'The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Missionary Thought: A Contemporary Appraisal' explores to some degree the question of the remnant mission in the context of the ecumenical age.[165]

For the purpose of our ecclesiological investigation, we shall consider one specific segment of this mission history, which deals with the problematic relationship between the SDA church's self-definition as the remnant of Bible apocalyptic prophecy[166] and the ecumenical movement.[167] Schantz explains:

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[164] Hasel has observed that including other believers as constituting the remnant raises questions for SDA mission. See n.157, p.79. Rodriguez has also indicated four unique elements the SDA remnant church (visible) have in common with the invisible, universal church: 1. A common future; 2. Openness to truth; 3. Faithfulness to Christ; 4. Exile in Babylon. He also points to the differences between the two groups of believers. He adds that the universal church is not to be identified with the eschatological, historical, 'visible entity with a clear identity' or marks portrayed in Revelation 12: 17: "One of the most definitive differences between both groups is that even though they are open to new light, the end-time remnant has been entrusted with a present truth that is relevant and indispensable for every human being, including those belonging to the "Universal church.""—Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, "Concluding Essay : God's End-Time Remnant and The Christian Church," in *Toward A Theology of the Remnant*, ed. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2009), 221–224.

[165] Borge Schantz, "The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Missionary Thought: A Contemporary Appraisal" (PhD Thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1983), ix.

[166] B. Schantz argues that an SDA theology of mission needs to properly explain and articulate its understanding of the relationship between the eschatological preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to the whole world— *sola gratia*—and the doctrinal teachings specific and particular to the SDA church: "What is meant by the gospel of the kingdom? Is it the message of salvation in Christ alone? Or is it salvation in Christ alone plus the SDA distinctive?"—ibid., 735. For a discussion on how the SDA church has avoided in their mission approach the pitfalls of eschatological and apocalyptic extremes, as mentioned by missiologist and theologian like Bosch, Bavinck, see B. Schantz discussion, ibid., 86–90.

[167] Bert B. Beach, who has been the general secretary of the Religious Liberty Department at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, remarks in his paper "Seventh-day Adventist and the Ecumenical Movement": 'The General Conference Executive Committee has never voted an official statement regarding the Seventh-day Adventist relationship to the ecumenical movement as such.'—Bert B. Beach, "Seventh-day

The remnant concept in SDA theology, as well as the SDA conviction regarding the special calling of the church to be a reform movement throughout the world, has given the SDAs a unique attitude toward other Christians. They have, on the one hand, a tendency to withdraw in aloofness in order to preserve their sense of purity and distinctiveness. And they have, on the other hand, a sense of obligation to be involved in order to bear witness to their faith and thereby bring light to the nations.[168]

Schantz identifies two main reasons why the SDA church holds back its full unconditional participation in ecumenical councils like the WCC:[169]

1. Theological.[170]
2. Practical.[171]

The theological argument rests largely on what we may coin a 'prophetic-missionary hermeneutic of suspicion,'[172] which interprets[173] specific apocalyptic prophecies[174] as referring to historical mega religious movement with religious-political aspirations and ambitions. The 'prophetic-misssionary hermeneutic of suspicion' has been largely defined by the SDA hermeneutic tradition, which takes its roots in the free church, anti-organisation movement of early 19th-century America. Schantz explains that, historically, the group of Millerites who were disfellowshiped from the mainline Protestant churches of mid 19th-century America 'did not regard themselves as the founders of a separate church. They, rather,

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Adventists and the Ecumenical movement," https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Beach, 1. Accessed on April 3, 2011.

[168] Among some issues in need of theological clarification and rethinking, B. Schantz mentions: the validity of non-SDA religious experience, the nature of the church as Christ's body and the expression of its essential unity, does or doesn't the New Testament kerygma requires doctrinal purity.—Schantz, "The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Missionary Thought: A Contemporary Appraisal," 734.

[169] The SDA church participated in the early phase of the ecumenical movement. For example, three SDA officials represented the church at the 1910 Edinburg conference.—ibid., 152–53, 389.

[170] B. B. Beach discusses six areas of concerns for the SDA church in regard to the ecumenical movement as represented by the World Council of Churches.—B. B. Beach, "Seventh-day Adventists and the Ecumenical Movement," Ibid., 3–10.

[171] Schantz, "The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Missionary Thought: A Contemporary Appraisal," 163.

[172] "The "masters of suspicion", as identified by the French hermeneutical philosopher Paul Ricoeur, are Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. All three thinkers have taught us that there are hidden meanings behind the obvious ones or meanings that are consistent with, or opposed to, those intended by the author."—Chris Lawn and Niall Keane, *Gadamer Dictionary* (London, GBR: Continuum International Publishing, 2011), 69–70. See also Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation.Terry Lectures* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970).

[173] The prophetic-missionary hermeneutic of suspicion, when applied to apocalyptic texts such as Daniel 7–8 and Revelation 12–14, sees the church not only as being oppressed by world non-Christian powers but sees the church within itself being caught in power struggles.

[174] The *SDA Bible Commentary* in its outline of the "History of the Interpretation of the Apocalypse" says that "the book of Revelation is clearly the complement, the completion, and the unveiling of the prophecies of Daniel. . . . The Apocalypse outlines the great conflict between the true church and the false in the entire Christian era."—"Revelation," 103. The apocalyptic prophecies in the book of Daniel and Revelation especially Daniel 7 and 8, and Revelation 12–13 are the biblical sources that serves as a framework for the SDA church's 'prophetic-missionary' interpretation of suspicion.—ibid., 103–130.

conceived of themselves as a "remnant church". SDA ecclesiology and mission outreach must be viewed against this remnant concept.'[175] For Schantz, within the present ecumenical context and given the historical origins of the SDA movement, it is more appropriate to understand the latter not as "a separatist movement that has withdrawn from other Christian bodies, but rather a remnant made up of "called out" members from all Christian denominations."[176]

Bert. B. Beach, who served as secretary of Religious Liberty at the General Conference of SDAs, represents within Adventism the 'prophetic-missionary hermeneutic of suspicion' school of thought. Beach comments:

> Drawn from this SDA interpretation of the apocalyptic prophecies is that any ecumenical movement whose aim is not to bring the churches back to the Word of God could conceivably eventuate in the fulfilment of these prophecies. SDAs are *suspicious* that today's various ecumenical movements are not only concerted efforts to unite the world and secure peace and security by joining together the churches but are also seeking the enlistment of the power of civil governments. This religio-political crusade will seek to eliminate all dissenters as all church-state alignments have sought to do in the past.[177]

The suspicion is that what appears to be a lofty ideal for church unity may eventuate in a totalitarian system of politico-religious organisation[178] where political and social issues dominate the agenda at the expense of an authentic obedience and faithfulness to God's word and where religious freedom may be curtailed especially for religious minority groups.[179]

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[175] Schantz, "The development of Seventh-day Adventist missionary thought: A contemporary appraisal," 171.

[176] Ibid., 173. Following the logic of the historicist hermeneutic of apocalyptic prophecies, Schantz argues that early Adventists understood themselves as leading an inter-church gathering. It can be said that "they regard themselves as the true ecumenical movement described in Revelation 14 and 18. They began their historic mission by calling Christians to leave their fallen churches. They then exhorted them to join a united, world-wide movement characterized by the "faith of Jesus" and by keeping the commandments of God (Rev 14:12)."—ibid., 165.

[177] Ibid., 170, italics added.

[178] Given the historical precedence of religious persecution, especially in European countries where Protestantism and Catholicism were the state religions, the SDA church sees it as the mission of the remnant to invite all Christian churches to avoid totalitarian deviation of the past and to unite on the foundation of God's word. For the question of apostasy and unfaithfulness in the church, B. J. Oropeza explores in-depth the whole question of apostasy and defection during the New Testament church formation. In as much as apostasy in the church is often a source of division, ecumenical ecclesiology cannot or should not avoid its discussion. See B.J.Oropeza, "In the Footsteps of Judas and Other Defectors: Apostasy in the New Testament Communities," (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011); "Jews, Gentiles and the opponents of Paul: *Apostasy in the New Testament Communities* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock pub, 2012); "Churches under siege of Persecution and Assimilation: Apostasy in the New Testament Communities," (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2012).

[179] B. Beach expresses this suspicion in the following terms: "The New Testament presents a qualified church unity in truth, characterized by holiness, joy, faithfulness, obedience, and evangelism. "Ecumenthusiasts" (to coin a word) seem to take for granted the eventual organic unity and communion of the great majority of the churches. They emphasize the "scandal of division," as if this were really the unpardonable sin. Heresy and apostasy are largely ignored. However, the New Testament shows the threat of anti-Christian penetration

Beach argues that in some instances, ecumenical organisations have downplayed the question of religious liberty, which the SDA church advocates as being the pillar of all liberties.[180]

For Schantz, the 'prophetic-missionary' hermeneutic of suspicion limits, restricts and explains the SDA Church's partial engagement in the ecumenical conversation:[181]

> The message of this 'remnant church' is to 'come out' from the confusion of apostate churches and join God's remnant, the true ecumenical movement. It is obvious that such a self-understanding, with its dominant remnant motif generates no desire in the SDAs to be part of what they traditionally believe is 'Babylon the great' (Rev 18:1-5), seen as manifested in the WCC. The Adventist attitude is: renewal, yes; association, no.[182]

This position demonstrates that SDA self-identity for historical reasons has been interpreted within a tradition of differentiation,[183] in terms of its difference with the universal church. As it has been asked by Hasel and Rodriguez, Moyer also raises the question as to the purpose of SDA existence if it is not 'the remnant' church: "If the Seventh-day Adventist church is not the "remnant church", then by what right does it continue to exist? . . . "What is it that is unique about the Seventh-day Adventist church, to justify its existence apart from and in competition with other Christian denominations?""[184]

Such an isolationist approach toward ecumenical dialogue is refuted by Bruce Moyer in his doctoral dissertation, 'Seventh-day Adventist Missions Face the Twenty-first Century.'[185] He

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within "the temple of God" (2 Thess 2:3, 4)."—Beach, "Seventh-day Adventists and the Ecumenical movement," https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials?field_document_categories_tid_i18n=233. Accessed on February 4, 2011.

[180] Beach criticizes the WCC for attributing less importance to the question of religious liberty by closing its secretariat because of lack of funds and by considering religious liberty to be one of the human rights rather than the foundation of all rights.—ibid., 9. The SDA church is a strong advocate of religious liberty in the world. The advocacy activities of the International Religious Liberty Association is available on http://irla.org/. Nevertheless, B. B. Beach recognises the contributions of ecumenism to the Christian world.—ibid., 1.

[181] For further in-depth discussion on SDA and ecumenism, see John Graz, "Is the General conference involved in Ecumenism?" https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials?field_document_categories_tid_i18n=233, 1– Accessed on February 1, 2012. See also Angel Manuel Rodriguez, "Adventist And Ecumenical Conversation," ibid., 1–5.

[182] Schantz, "The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Missionary Thought: A Contemporary Appraisal," 173.

[183] SDA 'suspicion' of ecumenism' can be explained from the early Millerite experience of rejection from mainline protestant denominations. "In understanding the Adventist attitude toward ecumenism and other mainline churches, it is helpful to remember that the early Advent Movement (characterized by the Millerites) had ecumenical aspects: it arose in many churches. Thus, Adventists came from many denominations. However, the churches generally rejected the Advent message. Adventists were not infrequently disfellowshipped."—Beach, "Seventh-day Adventists and the Ecumenical Movement," 2–3.

[184] Bruce Moyer, "Seventh-day Adventist Missions Face the Twenty-First Century" (PhD Thesis, San Francisco Theological Seminary, 1987), 124.

[185] Moyer discusses the whole question of kingdom theology and argues that the church is the instrument of God's kingdom, which holds the tension between present and future reality.—ibid.,79-80. Kingdom theology

argues that the SDA church must move away from an 'isolationist or sectarian' approach to a 'catalyst approach' to mission in the context of global economic disparity. He identifies two diametrical views attributed to the meaning of the remnant church and the latter's *raison d'etre*: 1.The **isolationist or sectarian** approach[186] which emphasises 'the dissimilarity of Adventists to other Christian groups'[187] and insists on doctrinal purity and prophetic interpretation as developed in the early phase of Adventist historical theology. It has been pointed that one of the central problem encountered in inter-church theological dialogue is the SDA community of faith's particular understanding of eschatology and interpretation of biblical apocalyptic prophecies. Nevertheless, dialogue with the WCC has been fruitful at various levels.[188]

2. **The catalyst approach**[189] sees the SDA church "as a denomination, alongside other denominations, but with a unique message which must be shared."[190]

Moyer argues the case for a catalyst and reformist approach for SDA mission in the global context of exploding world population and economic disparity. In the context of the challenges facing the Christian community at large, Moyer advocates for a revision of the SDA church's exclusivist self-understanding:[191] "where it may have been helpful, at one

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understood as 'experienced eschatology' informs the praxis of the church in the global context of economic disparity.—ibid.,93.

[186] In his review, he mentions Adventist authors like Jack Blanco whom he qualifies as taking the isolationist separatist view concerning the remnant when he asserts that SDA has a composite eschatological message (Sabbath, pre-advent judgement, second advent) that is unique to SDAs. Moyer argues that such "a perspective undergirds a separatist attitude vis-a-vis other Christian groups, . . . there is little room for cooperation or even dialogue. Information flow with such a "remnant" would be almost exclusively one-way."—ibid., 126.

[187] Ibid., 161.

[188] B. B. Beach and Lukas Vischer, "The World Council of Churches/Seventh-day Adventist conversations and their significance," *The Ecumenical Review,* Vol 22, No. 2 (April, 1970): 165–168.

[189] The catalyst perspective is present in positions taken, for example, by Robert McAfee Brown who proposes the idea of a plural or diversified remnant messages, Allan Keiser who uses a textile imagery to emphasise the similarity of the remnant with the rest of the bolt rather than stressing its difference, Charles Teel Jr who proposes that the evolution from sect to denomination is inevitable and that the tension between the two can be held in healthy balance through creative dissension leading to a remnant—'the institutional church' within a remnant, 'the dissenters'—and Jack Provonsha who opts for the terminology 'prophetic minority' in line with Old Testament prophetic tradition instead of remnant church and advocating for a final end-time remnant that is non-institutional. For a detailed discussion of these views, see Moyer, ibid., 127–131. Also Rick Ferret shows from a Weberian perspective that the SDA church struggles for its self-understanding and the sociological and theological role Ellen G. White played in that quest for self-identity.—Rick Ferret, "Charisma, Sectarianism and Institutionalisation: Identity Issues in Seventh-day Adventism" (PhD Thesis, Sydney College of Divinity, 2006). Another sociological study on SDA ecclesiological self-understanding is Andrew G. Mustard, "Implications of Troeltsch's Church-Sect Typology for Seventh-day Adventist Ecclesiology" (Term Paper, Andrews University, 1978).

[190] Moyer, "Seventh-day Adventist Missions face the twenty-first century," 162. For example, such distinctive teachings like the seventh-day Sabbath as a memorial of creation and redemption, the second Advent of Jesus Christ, the body as a single wholistic entity comprising a spiritual, physical, mental, emotional dimension.

[191] Angel Manuel Rodriguez, then-director of the SDA Biblical Research Institute addressed the question of exclusivism and remnant ecclesiology and responded to the charges from five different levels and perspectives:

point, to be separate enough to develop its own self-image, it may now be more helpful to re-evaluate that self-image and reconceptualise its purpose in the current historical context. Should it not identify itself as an openly reformist agent in the larger Christian community?"[192]

He underlines that a more proactive attitude toward ecumenism will be worked out at the level of praxis: "in the meeting of human needs and sharing of Christ's love, in the streets of the cities and in the refugee camps, rather than the more isolated halls of academia or administrative offices."[193] This remnant as a catalyst reformist current within the broader circle of the Christian community can not only be a 'kingdom' prophetic voice whose concern for the poor and oppressed are evident but can also act "as a source of renewal for those with only nominal regard for their covenantal obligations."[194] The SDA church needs to differentiate between sectarianism and uniqueness and understand that being God's remnant people participating in the *missio Dei* "is a responsibility to be exercised in community rather than a privilege to be relished in isolation."[195] The SDA church lives an ambiguous situation toward contemporary forms of emerging ecumenism: it withdraws and critiques, as well as engages and participates in interfaith events at grassroots and academic level.[196]

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1. The Remnant as a particular group; 2. Spiritual Crisis and the Remnant; 3. Inclusivity and the Remnant; 4. Message of the Remnant; 5. Common threats for all Christians.—Angel Manuel Rodriguez, "God's End-Time Remnant and Charges of
Exclusivism and Triumphalism ". 1–2.

[192] Moyer, "Seventh-day Adventist Missions face the twenty-first century," 168.

[193] Ibid., 163. For further discussion on the issues surrounding globalisation, its significance and impact on ecumenism in the postmodern context, see Gesa Eslbeth Thiessen, (ed.), *Ecumenical Ecclesiology: Unity, Diversity and Otherness in a Fragmented World* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2009). For example, the Adventist Development Relief Agency International (www.adra.org) is involved in many local community development projects on an international scale. It is rated as a four-star charity organisation by Charity Navigator: http://www.charitynavigator.org

[194] Moyer, "Seventh-day Adventist Missions face the twenty-first century," 169. In regard to SDA interfaith relations at grassroot levels, ibid., 205. In regard to the relationship between a remnant ecclesiology and non-Christian religions, Moyer has an interesting discussion where he differentiates between uniqueness and sectarianism—the former "maintains its identity, its doctrines and values in a manner that is relevant to the real world, and in supportive harmony with spiritually compatible communities," whereas the latter "is the preservation of faithfulness to a particular set of doctrines and values without risking those doctrines and values in the actual encounter with other Christians and the realities of their understanding and faith."—ibid., 206–209.

[195] Ibid., 210. See pages 206–209 for a discussion on the difference between sectarianism and uniqueness.

[196] B. Schantz, "The development of Seventh-day Adventist missionary thought: A contemporary appraisal," 149-152. Schantz remarks that the relationship between Adventist mission and ecumenism is a sore spot because SDA feels that their unique mission could be jeopardised by ecumenism: "It is interesting to recall that as ecumenism was a child of the mission field, so this growing attitude of openness and preparedness to cooperate and relate with other denominations is also a phenomenon associated, primarily, with her foreign mission."—Ibid., 156.

The catalyst reformist approach is reflected in the ways some Adventist missiologists conceive SDA mission in the context of world faiths. Höschele has retraced the development of Adventist mission from its Millerite origins to the global mission to all nations and the unreached.[197] Jon L. Dybdahl has indicated that the SDA church has paid more attention to doctrinal challenges and has shown less interest in mission theology. Dybdahl argues that one of the key questions for the SDA church as far as mission theology is concerned "is the question of non-Christian religions."[198] Gottfried Oosterwal observes that SDA mission has been conditioned and inspired by a view of the end-time that "conceived of the world at the time of Christ's return as an apostate Christian world, embroiled in a conflict with a small remnant of true Christians: those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus (Rev.14:12)." Oosterwal points out that this particular SDA worldview of mission has undergone a paradigm shift and that SDA are more deeply conscious of the challenge of world religions, that "the living world religions are not just isolated pockets of heathenism. To the contrary, they constitute . . . the most formidable challenge to Adventist mission in the twenty-first century."[199]

A missiological response to the challenges of world religions is to redefine the mission of the remnant. For J. Whitehouse, a deeper faith commitment to Jesus is more desirable for the Muslim who wants to follow Isa than an adherence to an institutional church. In that context of mission, "how we as Adventists perceive ourselves is very important. It has proven better to conceive of Adventism as a world end-time movement, calling people in all people and religious groups to a deeper faith and dedication through a belief in Jesus in the context of the three angels' messages. This enables us to focus on the spiritual growth process rather than institutional identity."[200] For Whitehouse, Muslim believers who have acknowledged Jesus as their personal Lord and Saviour should be identified as a Hanif, one who is a true follower of Abraham and exhibits full submission to God. The concept of Al Hanif has "served the need in some places of both new believers to communicate an accurate message in their community and to identify them with the worldwide body of the remnant. . . . The expression is a fitting identity for one of the remnant preparing for the end of time."[201] This concept has proved

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[197] See p.62.

[198] Jon L. Dybdahl, "Adventist Mission Today: Taking the Pulse," in *Adventist Mission in the 21st Century* ed. Jon L. Dybdahl (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Published Association, 1999), 23.

[199] Gottfried Oosterwal, "Adventism Faces the World Religions," in *Adventist Mission in the 21st Century*, ed. Jon L.Dybdahl (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Published Association, 1999), 45–46.

[200] Jerald Whitehouse, "Reaching the Muslim World," in *Adventist Mission in the 21st Century*, ed. Jon L.Dybdal (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1999), 197.

[201] Ibid., 197.

beneficial for new believers who are identified in their religious community as "those who have taken a step toward deeper faith'[202] and not denying or switching 'to a different faith."[203]

 J. Whitehouse concludes saying that SDA mission in relation to Muslim should envision "the establishment of bodies of believers in Jesus in the context of the three angels' messages—God's end-time people within the Muslim community."[204] Such contextual mission position toward Muslims marks a shift in the SDA church's understanding of who and how the remnant church is constituted. Höschele observes that 'transitional organizational structures' or 'contextual Adventist communities' have an "underlying theological concept that the "Remnant" is not necessarily a visible organization although its main manifestation may be in it."[205]

This inclusive approach to SDA mission toward Muslims has been questioned by Carlos J. Martin. Martin argues that such a missiological position does not take into consideration the nature of Christian biblical inspiration and revelation especially in regard to Christ's claim to divinity. Martin cautions against new forms of syncretism.[206]

2.5: <u>Remnant Ecclesiology: The Context of Post-Scriptural Hermeneutics</u>

Rolf Pöhler draws our attention on the relationship between a community of faith hermeneutics and its beliefs and shows how the historic development of SDA doctrine attests to this fact. "It appears that a number of changes in the Adventist body of beliefs have become possible or even mandatory because of some hermeneutical readjustments on the part of the leading Bible expositors in the church."[207] Kwabena Donkor recognises that doctrinal beliefs are "the collective principle of interpretation for the community in organizing the disparate data of Scripture."[208]

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[202] Ibid.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid., 192.
[205] Höschele, *From the End of the World to the Ends of the Earth*, 28.
[206] Carlos J. Martin, "Questions on C-5," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies,* Vol 1, No. 2 (Fall, 2005): 34–41.
[207] For a full discussion on how specific changes and modifications in Adventist teachings were conditioned by a revision of hermeneutic principles within the SDA faith community, see Pöhler, *Continuity and Change in Adventist Teaching*, 112–123.
[208] Donkor, "Role of the Fundamental Beliefs in the Church," 295. For further discussion on the function and role of the Fundamentals Beliefs in the SDA faith community, its descriptive and prescriptive function, its authority in relation to truth and how a statement of belief acts like 'norma normata', a rule that is ruled by Scriptures, read Donkor—ibid., 296–300.

Remnant ecclesiology was shaped, processed, deepened, clarified and missiologically adapted within the specific hermeneutic tradition framework of the SDA community of faith. The first hermeneutical turn in the SDA community of faith was to take a critical approach toward a theology which has been shaped by the church creed and to adopt a theological stance where creed is subservient to Scriptural authority. Such a position followed the Christian Connection churches' hermeneutical standpoint, a movement that was an anti-organisational, anti-creed fellowship of churches that among other beliefs took Scripture as the only source of authority in matters of church doctrine. Bert Haloviak has shown the direct linkage between the Christian connection churches and the Seventh-day Adventist in the following three areas: 1. Organisational structure; 2. Social attitudes; 3. Theology.[209]

In terms of organisational structure, he explains that "since the Bible and the Bible alone was the basis for all, there was suspicion of non-Scriptural names and organization. A strong opposition to creeds."[210] He also points out that the advocates of doctrinal freedom and beliefs among Christian connection were led into a spiritual pilgrimage into the Advent faith due to the 'No creed principle': '"No creed but the Bible" eventually led many Christians into the Seventh-day Adventist faith.'[211] Other evangelicals shared the 'No creed' principle and the use of Scriptures as a rule of faith for all fundamental beliefs[212] but the challenge with an evangelical hermeneutic is to maintain faith in the authority of the 'fixed', 'static' writing of Scripture and its interpretation and to be involved in a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and the living God who inspired these writings.[213] Scripture and its interpretation are about

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[209] Bert Haloviak, "Some Great Connexions: Our Seventh-day Adventist Heritage from the Christian church," (May, 1994), 1–22. http://documents.adventistarchives.org/conferences/Docs/UnspecifiedConferences/Some GreatConnexions.pdf. Accessed on February 2, 2012.

[210] Ibid., 1.

[211] Bert Haloviak, "A Heritage of Freedom: The Christian Connection Roots To Seventh-Day Adventism," (May 1994) http://documents.adventistarchives.org/conferences/Docs/UnspecifiedConferences/AHeritageof Freedom.pdf. Accessed on February 11, 2012.

[212] For example, Mark W. Karlberg, in his assessment of the theological task facing the evangelical community in regard to the issue of doctrinal development in Scripture and tradition, remarks that the orthodox Protestant theological tradition in the 19th century maintained that the church's dogma had to be judged continually in the light of Scripture. It was necessary that the teachings of the church conform to biblical revelation, not to churchly creeds, councils or tradition. Accordingly, Scripture alone was regarded as the final standard for faith and practice.—Mark W. Karlberg, "Doctrinal Development in Scripture and Tradition: A Reformed Assessment of the Church's Theological Task," *Calvin Theological Journal,* Vol 30, No. 2 N (1995): 401–418, https://web-b-ebscohost-com.ezproxy1.acu.edu.au/ehost/results?sid=e1b82934-f836-4e9a-9370-e1d58b04514. Accessed on March 14, 2012.

[213] As Kevin J. Vanhoozer has rightly pointed out: "The challenge for an evangelical theory (doctrine) and practice (interpretation) of Scripture is to hold fast to the gospel fixed in writing while engaging the living God who is its author and attending to the great salvation that is its subject matter."—Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Scripture and Hermeneutics" in The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology, ed. Gerald R. McDermott, (2011):

discovering how to develop a deeper relationship with the living Christ (see Jn 5:39).[214] The Christ-centred method of interpretation resulted from the influence of the revivalist and pietist traditions in evangelicalism: "Believers guided by the Holy Spirit, prayer, and scripture no longer felt bound either by the traditions of the church's teaching office or the authority of the king."[215]

But within the SDA community of faith, the prophetic ministry of Ellen G. White contributed significantly to veer the church toward a Spirit-oriented interpretation of Scriptures and a Christ-centred approach compared to its earlier rationalistic Millerite origins. In his doctoral dissertation 'A Feast of Reason: The Roots of William Millers' Biblical Interpretation and its influence on the Seventh-day Adventist church', Jeff Crocombe demonstrates how William Miller's hermeneutical principles had a rationalistic orientation because it was mediated from beliefs and practices present in other social rationalist thinking movements like deist-rationalism, Christian revivalism, Scottish common sense philosophy and freemasonry.[216] In a recent paper 'A Feast of Reason: The legacy of William Miller on Seventh-day Adventist Hermeneutic', Crocombe states in his conclusion:

> Miller's rules have had a profound effect in shaping how the Seventh-day Adventist church has approached the biblical text throughout its history, and their underlying rationalistic focus still impacts how many Seventh-day Adventists interpret the biblical text in the twenty-first century.[217]

//www.oxfordhandbooks.com.ezproxy1.acu.edu.au/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195369441.001.0001/oxford hb-9780195369441-e-3.,1. Accessed on October 10, 2012.

[214] "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me" (Jn 5:39, New International Version). Lk 24:29 also points to the Christ-centred approach in interpreting Scriptures.

[215] Leanne Van Dyk retraces the historical roots of evangelicalism and shows that evangelical ecclesiology or its lack of it can be retraced to historical factors like the 16th and 17th religious wars which has created an antipathy toward church structure and triggered a trend "to find the "true" faith behind or within all the confessional hostilities that had so devastated Europe. . . . If the church is deemed the problem, then the solution, clearly is a deep anti-church attitude."—Leanne Van Dyk, "The church in Evangelical Theology and practice" in *The Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology*, eds. Daniel J. Treier and Timothy Larsen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 126. Pietism, free-church movements resulted in a rejection of "hierarchical ecclesial structures and liturgical forms. Individualism and experientialism were two early markers of the evangelical ethos that have persisted to the present day."—ibid., 126.

[216] Jeff Crocombe, "'A Feast of Reason': The Legacy of William Miller on Seventh-day Adventist Hermeneutics," https://www.academia.edu/7162761/. 89–138. Accessed on February 3, 2013.

[217] Jeff Crocombe, "'A Feast of Reason': The Legacy of William Miller on Seventh-day Hermeneutics," in *Hermeneutics, Intertextuality and the Contemporary Meaning of Scripture*, eds., Ross Cole and Paul Petersen (Cooranbong, New South Wales: Avondale Academic Press, 2014), http://www.academia.edu/7162761/. 420. Accessed on November 28, 2014.

Crocombe's comment has the merit of showing how the SDA hermeneutic community of faith matrix develops within the Millerite interpretative horizon. Miller's rationalist framework, however, "does not invalidate his hermeneutics approach. It does, however, reminds us that any biblical hermeneutic is inescapably grounded in the culture and time of the interpreter."[218]

Just like the SDA community of faith has integrated the protestant and evangelical *sola scriptura* principle in its hermeneutic matrix, it has also gradually adopted a *postscriptural* hermeneutic tradition. In his critique of the 'house of authority' as a the criteria of theological method, Edward Farley analyses how Protestantism, despite its claims to the absolute *sola scriptura* principles and its complementary aspect of the self-interpretation of Scripture, has nevertheless developed what he calls a *postscriptural* key for understanding the Scriptures:

> These free-church Protestants generated for themselves a specific tradition of interpretation on such things as baptism, church order, the use of Scripture, and the Christian life. And this tradition functioned as their postscriptural hermeneutical key to Scripture.[219]

For Farley, the Protestant thesis is that dogmas/fundamental beliefs or the official assemblies of church councils are valid source of authority so long that they are legitimated by a faithful and correct interpretation of Scripture. He observes that "the church, gathered in official assemblies, could discern and declare the very communication of God. The condition of this discernment, of course, was the anchoring of its claims in Scripture."[220]

Despite the fact that the SDA community of faith rejects explicitly the authority of creed and church councils in asserting correct beliefs, it has developed within its hermeneutic tradition what Farley describes as a '*postscriptural hermeneutic*.' For instance, the quinquennial

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[218] Ibid., 421.

[219] Edward Farley, *Ecclesial Reflection: An anatomy of theological reflection* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 124. He argues that the authority of symbols or confessions is closely related to the concept of fundamental beliefs or articles of faith. They function as dogma, objective propositions of beliefs essential for the knowledge of the truth of salvation. Therefore, God not only communicates and reveals the truth of salvation through Scriptures but "he has further provided the church with a clear apostolically originated consensus about the meaning and essential contents of Scripture, the knowledge of which is necessary for salvation. These contents are definitively formulated in the early ecumenical creeds and are present again in the confessions of Protestant Christianity. Scripture has a postscriptural literature which is its hermeneutical key, the confessions of the church."—ibid., 124.

[220] Farley describes how the teaching office of the church itself has acquired within Protestantism and its various branches "a qualified or quasi-doctrine of infallibility' by virtue of the importance ascribed to church councils and assemblies which 'means that the voice of God is heard not only in Scripture but in the formulations of church assemblies. To reject or disobey these practices and pieties is to reject or disobey what God himself requires."—ibid., 126–127.

session of the General Conference of SDAs is a forum where Fundamental Beliefs can be recommended, approved or revised.[221] The SDA Church affirms that the quinquennial session of the General Conference is the highest authority of the church[222] so long as its decisions are biblically validated. The authoritative status of the General Conference in deciding on doctrinal matters was voted at the 1877 session:

> Resolved, that the highest authority under God among Seventh-day Adventists is found in the will of the body of that people, as expressed in the decisions of the General Conference when acting within its proper jurisdiction; and that such decisions should be submitted to by all without exception, unless they can be shown to conflict with the word of God and the rights of individual conscience.[223]

The SDA Church Manual in its preamble to the Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs remarks that the only creed of the SDA church is the Bible and draws attention to the fact that revision of the Fundamental Beliefs:[224]

> may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy word.[225]

Like other Protestants and orthodox evangelicals, SDAs rest their Fundamental Beliefs or doctrine on the sole authority of Scriptures rather than confession of faith and creeds.[226] However, the SDA hermeneutical matrix has been conditioned by its post-Scriptural

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[221] In the literature review (2.3.2.1), we have retraced the development of the Remnant doctrine and how it has been theologically reformulated and generally incorporated in the doctrine of the church at different General Conference sessions until it was expressed as a doctrine on and of its own at the 1980 General Conference session.

[222] Norman R. Gulley, in his prologemena of Adventist theology, speaks about the authority of the church as 'derivative from scripture'. Gulley has not produced an SDA ecclesiology yet, but his prolegomena indicates that biblical data will be foundational to his ecclesiological understanding of the SDA church. As a matter of fact, in his discussion on the question of Scripture as authority in the church, he clearly states that "only the church based on Scripture and, hence, on Christ is the true church. At best the authority of the church is derivative from the authority of Scripture. And that is possible only when its authoritative claims are in harmony with Scripture."—Norman R Gulley, *Systematic Theology Prolegomena* (Berrien Springs Michigan: Andrews University Press, 2003), 369.

[223] *The Church Manual*, 1–2.

[224] It was at the 1946 General Conference session that the Fundamental Beliefs, as well as any 'other portion of the *Church Manual,* should be revised only at a General Conference session.'—"Doctrinal statements," 347.

[225] *The Church Manual*, 9.

[226] For example, such a position is expressed by Mark W. Karlberg who writes from a reformed Calvinist perspective: "Scripture, however, is the primary norm in theological interpretation. The authority of churchly doctrine rests upon Scripture alone; it is, accordingly, derivative in nature."—Karlberg, "Doctrinal Development in Scripture and Tradition: A Reformed Assessment of the Church's Theological Task," 415. Karlberg is representative of the orthodox Protestant interpretative tradition that asserts that all church doctrines are critically evaluated by scriptures: "church's dogma had to be judged continually in the light of Scripture. It was necessary that the teachings of the church conform to biblical revelation, not to churchly creeds, councils, or tradition. Thus accordingly, Scripture alone was regarded as the final standard for faith and practice."—ibid., 413.

hermeneutical tradition that consists of the Millerite rationalist and historicist approach to the understanding of Bible apocalyptic prophecies, the anti-creed influence of the Free church movement, the orthodox evangelicals *sola scriptura* and 'self-interpretation principles', Ellen G. White's prophetic ministry,[227] church councils like the quinquennial General Conference sessions and the apologetic necessity to defend the authority of Scripture against the historical-critical method suspected for its more humanist orientation.[228] Therefore, the SDA hermeneutic community of faith progressively established a post-Scriptural hermeneutical tradition that became its *interpretative horizon* through which the SDA church seeks to understand and interpret Scriptures.

According to Leanne Van Dyk, the praxis of tradition as an hermeneutic tool in the evangelical community is often denied precisely because of the historical Protestant position of denying tradition as a source of theological authority in matters of Scriptural interpretation. This may appear contradictory but, as Leanne Van Dyk comments, "it is ironic that an original denial of ecclesial traditions is the establishment of a certain tradition of denial. . . . The "tradition" of denying traditions has had an impact on evangelicalism's ecclesiology, giving it a certain *ad hoc* character."[229]

2.6: <u>Remnant Ecclesiology and the Context of Postmodern Mission: Responding to the Missiological Challenges</u>

Remnant ecclesiology is a doctrine that has been developing in the SDA community of faith within the latter's hermeneutical matrix, which can be described as a *post-scriptural* hermeneutic tradition. The SDA community of faith has been engaged in a theological reflection on the dialectic of remnant ecclesiology within its own *post-scriptural hermeneutic tradition.*[230] The dialectical question involves theological clarification, as well as justification

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[227] For hermeneutical issues related to Ellen G. White's prophetic ministry in the SDA church and its relation to the authority of Scriptures, see http://ellenwhite.org/issues-and-answers.

[228] Doctrines do not develop in a historical-experiential vacuum. Peter Toon explains that there are at least four approaches to doctrinal development in Christian church history.—Peter Toon, "The development of doctrine: an evangelical perspective," *Reformed Journal,* Vol 23, No. 3 (March 1, 1973): 8.

[229] Van Dyk, "The church in Evangelical Theology and practice," 127.

[230] Malcom Bull and Keith Lockhart have pointed out how the 19th Century SDA community of faith used authoritative sources of guidance to maintain church unity and to respond to new dilemmas. These sources "have been found through using, in varying proportions, the Bible, the writings of Ellen White, the power of human reason, and the authority of the church."—Malcom Bull and Keith Lockhart, Bull, *Seeking a Sanctuary : Seventh-day Adventism and the American dream*. 93.

of two contradictory propositions that, on one hand, states that the SDA church as an ecclesial organisation is the remnant of God's people and, on the other hand, affirms that the SDA community of faith is at the same time part of the universal church that consists of all God's people. Theological answers have tended to be ecclesiocentric and exclusive, focusing on the SDA church as the remnant of God's people and deemphasising its relationship with the universal church. At times, they have been mission-focused and inclusive, stressing rather the mission of the remnant, open to all who respond and join God's final appeal, as well as emphasising its relationship with the universal church in terms of a message of reformation it bears to the latter and extended to all world religions.

What theological challenges do the postmodern context of mission present to the exclusive-inclusive tension which has characterised the SDA remnant ecclesiology until now and how can the SDA church respond to these challenges within its *post-scriptural hermeneutical* tradition matrix? The literature we have investigated has not addressed this key question and this constitutes a lacuna in contemporary SDA ecclesiology. In our next chapter, we intend to discuss this lacuna in the context of postmodernity where an emphasis on *Otherness* and *alterity* often predominates.

Chapter 3

Remnant Ecclesiology: An Inductive Approach
for the Postmodern Context of Mission

3.0: <u>Introduction</u>

In Chapter 1, we stated that the goal of this research is to find out how the praxis of mission in the postmodern context is transforming the self-identity of the SDA faith community as the remnant church. In Section 1.8, we distinguished between methodology and method and pointed out that the former deals with the process of thinking critically about the task of doing ecclesiology and the latter shows the steps taken to gather data that is significant for the ecclesiological task. It was explained that our ecclesiological methodology is a critical reflection on the SDA church's self-understanding in its present postmodern context of mission. This inductive methodology has its roots in God's revealed passion for alterity and we called it contextual ecclesiology. Our method described in Section 1.9 draws insights from the social sciences such as qualitative sociology and ethnography, especially in terms of the use of interviews techniques and surveys as tools of data collection. We take our methodology to be a faith stance and our method to be a rational stance.[1]

In our concluding remarks in Chapter 2, we stressed the fact that there is no existing theological literature that indicates that the SDA community of faith has had a creative theological response to the impact of postmodernity on remnant ecclesiology as a doctrine.[2] In this present chapter, we propose that the SDA hermeneutic community of faith needs a contextual ecclesiology of dialogue centred in the experience of 'Otherness' in order to respond to the challenges that the postmodern context of mission poses to remnant ecclesiology. We describe the postmodern context as the cultural context of otherness because of its concern for difference and non-assimilation. A contextual ecclesiology of dialogue is in continuity with the post-scriptural hermeneutic tradition of the SDA community of faith and

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[1] Thomas G. Guarino retraces the history of correlation between faith and reason in both Catholic and Protestant theological thinking and remarks that "Reason, then, possesses a legitimate independence-but it only proceeds properly when it heeds the truth offered by revelation."—Thomas G. Guarino, *Foundations of Systematic Theology* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2005), 269–301. The '*Credo ut intelligam, intelligo ut credam*' is an ongoing theological reflection in Christian theology.

[2] There is an extensive literature both in SDA academic circles and in the popular sphere that discusses the challenges and opportunities that the postmodern mindset and attitude present to SDA mission but none on the question of self-identity and postmodern context of mission.

the self-interpretation principle of Scriptures, which both assert the dynamic contextual evolution of doctrine. As we explained in Section 1.7, our methodological stance takes for its point of departure and its theological source the experience of the believers belonging to the SDA community of faith and is consequently inductive in its epistemological intent. Here, we will reflect from a postmodern perspective on the question of alterity, which is constitutive of our inductive ecclesiological approach.

In order to develop a remnant ecclesiology of dialogue founded on the experience and epiphany of 'Otherness' within the postmodern context of mission, we first need to apprehend the socio-cultural context of postmodernity itself and the postmodern mindset and attitude.[3] Then, we will explore and discuss the ecclesiological and missiological challenges that the postmodern context of mission poses to the SDA theological self-understanding as the remnant church. For this purpose, we shall explore three of the papers presented at the 'Symposium on Postmodern-Sensitive Mission—Andrews University, October 18-20, 2012' and published in the book *Revisiting Postmodernism: An Old Debate on a New Era*[4] because these papers affirm the ecclesiological necessity of considering the 'Other' in terms of the latter's importance to the mission of the church. This symposium is equally significant because it raises contextual missiological hermeneutical questions and invites the SDA community of faith to a new reading of the Scriptures if the latter wants still to be faithfully responsible and relevant in its task of communicating the gospel in the context of postmodernity. However, it is limited to the extent that it overlooks the transforming effect of the postmodern context of mission on the SDA believers' themselves and their self-understanding as the remnant church with a mission.

Consequently, we shall further explore the theme of 'Otherness' in the light of Emmanuel Levinas's philosophical insights and perspectives on alterity and the face of the other. Otherness is our ecclesiological starting point for developing a remnant ecclesiology of dialogue that critically engages the Other, celebrates plurality, affirms differences in the sinful condition of humanity and in the context of 'Otherness' as a gift of saving grace. It is an ecclesiological account that is inductive and is from below due to the importance it attaches to

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[3] Fundamental Belief 12 in the SDA Fundamental Beliefs is titled 'The Remnant and its mission'. In 1980, as we have discussed, the General Conference session approved a three-fold doctrine of the church—Fundamental Beliefs 11 to 13. The new title of Fundamental Belief 12 aimed at the remnant is to be defined in terms of its mission to the world.

[4] We shall examine the papers of Abigail Doukhan, Zane Yi and Kleber de Oliveira Gonçalves in section 3:2. The *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* issued a special edition that dealt with the challenges postmodernity poses to Adventist mission. See *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies,* Vol 2, No. 2 (Fall, 2006): 3–105.

the immanent and transcendental experience of the 'Face of the Other'. Paul Lakeland reflects on an inductive ecclesiological account and observes that though the final 'product of all ecclesial reflection is to arrive at some generalizable sense of what the Church is, inductive method approaches that point through reflection upon a definite local context.'[5] An inductive ecclesiological approach looks at the local context but, as we will point out in Section 3.3, it is also about the *contextual experience* of the community of faith that is dynamic and always developing in history.

This methodology will undergird our case study (see Chapter 4) whose objective is to explore the lived narratives of SDA believers engaged in mission in the context of postmodernity. This approach is built on the understanding that the experiences of the 'Other' are critical in developing a remnant ecclesiology of dialogue. The 'Other' as a reality in dialogue is present to us and speaks to us in the form of the lived stories and the meaning believers derived from being church in mission. The narratives of the 'Other' determine and frame what it means to be the remnant church in the context of postmodernity.

3.1: Postmodernity and the Postmodern Context of Mission

Postmodernity as a novel socio-cultural condition and the postmodern thought that underpins it is a landscape with multi-coloured contours. At the outset, we need to avoid the possibility of either giving any procrustean definition of the postmodern movement or turning the whole movement in a nose of wax. Either way, anyone attempting to define the postmodern interpretation of our lived world feels like facing Charybdis and Scylla. Hanz Gutierrez discusses how the concept of postmodernity has been disputed by European sociologists and terms like 'metamodernity', 'Ultramodernity', 'second modernity', 'late modernity', 'hypermodernity' and 'radicalized modernity' have been preferred. For Gutierrez, all these terms share two common elements: "first, the admission that something new has happened in Europe; second, that that newness is not necessarily to be seen and read as something beyond but rather as something in continuity with modernity."[6] Paul Lakeland recognises the difficult task of denoting the reality reflected in the word *postmodern* but nevertheless stresses "the

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[5] Paul Lakeland, *Church, Living Communion* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2009.), 121.
[6] Gutierrez, "Is the European Seventh-day Adventist Church Postmodern? Some Socio-Theological Remarks on Postmodernity and Multiculturalism in the Context of Mission," ibid., 373. For a discussion on how the marks of modernity such as 'individualism,' 'democracy', 'free market', 'techno-scientific development', have not been erased but radicalised under postmodernity. ibid., 373–375.

need to address the reality to which the word refers, even if we detest the word itself."[7] Therefore, like Lakeland says, even if we cannot have a "formal or extended taxonomy of the postmodern phenomenon, we must of necessity begin by acquiring a sense of the range of interpretive possibilities."[8] David J. B. Trim pointedly and succinctly addresses the problem: "What is "postmodernism"? Appropriately, perhaps, there is not one answer to this question, but multiple perspectives."[9] The Edinburgh 2010 conference Study Theme 3 on 'Mission and Postmodernities' remarks:

> The term 'postmodernities' is an ambiguous and elusive concept, in this perhaps mirroring the nature of what it is used to describe. The ambiguity is underscored by the lack of consensus on which term it is proper to use: should we talk of 'postmodernity', or does the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon demand the use of the plural, 'postmodernities', or perhaps it is better simply to use 'postmodernism'?[10]

Lakeland prefers the term postmodernity and postmodern thought instead of postmodernism. Lakeland justifies his choice on the basis that postmodernity is a

> purely descriptive term to evoke today's world. While most of what makes our world is inherited from the past, that which renders it postmodern is novelty. Postmodernity is then constituted by the interplay between the given and the novel.[11]

And he describes postmodern thought as all writings in the forms of cultural criticism, social theory or contemporary philosophical inquiry, which reflect and engage "these novel cultural developments."[12] In contradistinction, with 'postmodernism' which is justified in the context of visual arts but can be misleading because it connotes "a school or theoretical movement", "postmodern thought, on the contrary, mirrors in its multiplicity of forms, ideologies and agendas the playful eclecticism of postmodernity itself."[13] Gerard Mannion identifies key features that characterise postmodern societies and exemplify the novelty aspect inherent in postmodernity, namely:[14]

1. Relativism and emotivism;

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[7] Paul Lakeland, *Postmodernity: Christian Identity in a Fragmented age, Guides to Theological Inquiry* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), ix.
[8] Ibid., x.
[9] David J. B. Trim, """Watchmen' over the flux of thought: "Michel Foucault and the Historical Development of Postmodernist Philosophy," in Gonçalves and Bauer, *Revisiting Postmodernism,*1.
[10] "Theme Three, Mission and Postmodernities," *Edinburgh 2010 —Witnessing to Christ Today,* 64.
[11] Paul Lakeland, *Postmodernity: Christian Identity in a Fragmented age*, Guides to Theological Inquiry (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), xii.
[12] Ibid., xii.
[13] Ibid., xiii.
[14] Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity: Questions for the Church in our Time*, 16–24.

2. Moral fragmentation;

3. Meaninglessness and a new context for theodicy;

4. Consumerisation of the church and religion;

5. Crises of legitimation;

6. Globalisation: a "new" grand narrative.

Roger Haight describes postmodernity as a context distinguished by a set of 'experiences', 'ideas', 'values' and 'symbols', and these experiences include:

> A historical consciousness that is deeper and more radical than that of modernity; an appreciation of pluralism that is suspicious of all absolute or universal claims; a consciousness of the social construction of the self that has completely undermined the transcendental ego of modernity and, ironically, encouraged a grasping individualism; a sense of the size, age, complexity, and mystery of reality that modern sciences never even suspected.[15]

Given the challenges to circumscribe the postmodern phenomenon, we will follow Lakeland, Guttierez and Haight and speak about postmodernity as a novel phenomenon[16] but this newness is in continuity and not necessarily beyond modernity,[17] and in this present thesis like in that of Roger Haight's work *Christian Community in History*, "postmodernity remains a context out of which the work is written; it is not explicitly addressed."[18] In other words, our purpose is not to address specifically the theological and philosophical problems pertaining to postmodernity *per se* but to explore how, through a contextual ecclesiology of dialogue, the SDA community of faith can critically self-examine and self-clarify its self-understanding[19] as God's remnant people in the context of postmodernity.

3.2: Postmodernity and Postmodern Thinking: An SDA Response in the Context of Mission

In our literature review, we observed how SDA ecclesiology lived in tension between *missio Dei* and *missio Ecclesiae*, and how this dilemma has been expressed during the late half of the 20th century through questions like these: Is the SDA church the remnant church of Bible prophecy or does it have a remnant message to the world? In other words, is the remnant identity about focusing on God's mission to the world or is it about affirming and

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[15] Haight, *Christian Community in History*, 1. 57.
[16] See Lakeland, n. 11, 97.
[17] See Guttierez, n. 6, 96.
[18] Haight, *Christian Community in History*, 1. 57.
[19] See Abraham Heschel on the dynamics of self-understanding, Chapter 1, n. 11.

consolidating the religious identity of a minority religious Christian group? Could it be both? Is remnant ecclesiology exclusive or inclusive of other Christian faiths and world religions?

The Symposium on Postmodern-Sensitive Mission held at Andrews University, October 18–20, 2012 and the later-published book does not *per se* deal with these key theological and hermeneutical questions, which are significant for the doctrinal development of remnant ecclesiology in the context of postmodern mission. But three of the presenters consider and discuss the theme of 'Otherness' and its theological significance for the SDA church's mission in the cultural context of postmodernity. 'Otherness' has theological relevance for remnant ecclesiology when we consider aspects such as exclusiveness-inclusiveness, self-identity and alterity, God's mission and the church's calling in a plural context. Their discussion on 'Otherness' shall be considered in the light of the eighth question that was first studied by the 'Nordic Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research' (NIME) in preparation for the Edinburgh Conference in 2010[20] and it reads: "How do we tell the biblical story to those who embrace postmodern relativism and are suspicious of all?"[21] But we would like to modify this question and ask: How can the biblical stories which narrate in various genres and *sitz im leben* God's passion for the 'Other' be life transforming for those who embrace postmodern relativism and are suspicious of all metanarratives? In what follows, we discuss the papers of Abigail Doukhan, "Christianity for Postmoderns: From Metanarrative to Storytelling", Zane Yi, "Through a Glass Darkly: Speaking of Truth in Postmodern Times", and Kleber de Oliveira Gonçalves, "Witnessing to Christ in a Secular, Post-Christian, Postmodern Context".

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[20] Prior to this conference, there were eight key issues and questions on the theme of 'Mission and Postmodernities' that were the object of reflection for this study group.

[21] The other seven questions that the study group discussed were:

    1. What do we mean by postmodernity/ies, and in what contexts do we see its/their influence?

    2. What is the relationship between postmodernity, globalisation, and neo-colonialism?

    3.How does postmodernity affect understanding of the basis of Christian faith, and hence of Christian mission; particularly in and from Europe?

    4. What are the promises and potentials of postmodernity/ies for new understandings of mission?

    5. What is the relationship between believing and belonging, both with regard to Christian discipleship and to the agencies of mission?

    6. How do we understand and engage with postmodern patterns of community, including virtual communities on the Internet?

    7. What have been the effects of postmodernity on Christian mission in Europe and in other regions? What is similar from region to region? How is postmodernity perceived by churches in the South? How will present and foreseeable developments affect churches and their mission in all regions? What response needs to be made? —http://www.edinburgh2010.org/en/study-themes/main-study-themes/mission-and-postmodernities.html. Accessed on March 3, 2012.

In her paper "Christianity for Postmoderns: From Metanarrative to Storytelling", Abigail Doukhan deals with the issue of communicating Bible truths to those who have embraced postmodern relativism and are suspicious of metanarratives. Doukhan is assistant professor of Philosophy at Queens College, New York City and president of the Society of Adventist Philosphers. She argues that an alternative way of communicating Bible truth is through stories because though postmodernist thinking questions metanarratives with legitimating intention, it does not exclude 'other forms of communication such as "stories."'[22]

Doukhan criticises metanarrative on the basis of "its allergy to otherness. . . . the metanarrative erects itself as the sole way or orientation to progress, happiness, or truth, it by the same token, neutralizes any alternative project."[23] Following Jean-François Lyotard's critique of metanarratives, Doukhan further develops the idea that metanarratives consist of a three-fold structure. It is universal and all-encompassing and tends to be "universally binding to all people, regardless of their cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds."[24] In as much as its claims is universally binding, "it will not tolerate any resistance to its scope."[25] Finally, taking the Marxist interpretation of class struggles as an example of an overtly simplistic metanarrative, Doukhan charges that the latter are simplistic because they exclude the possibility through a one-size-fits-all explanation "that there might be alternate models of reality, other struggles worthy to be mentioned which do not fit under its simplistic proletariat-bourgeoisie model."[26]

In its ultimate form, because of its suspiciousness of otherness, metanarrative may degenerate "into the actual extermination of that otherness—as incidentally, the history of Christian missiology has shown."[27] She further indicts Christian missiology, informed by the modern paradigm, which has promoted an all-encompassing, universal way to salvation through Jesus Christ, at times using coercion and manipulation to force people into the kingdom and making an "over-simplification of its truth, thereby neutralizing any trace of doubt, uncertainty, and problems in its discourse."[28]

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[22] Abigail Doukhan, "Christianity For Postmoderns: From Metanarrative To Storytelling," in Gonçalves and Bauer, *Revisiting Postmodernism,* 48.
[23] Ibid., 47.
[24] Ibid., 46.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid,, 47.
[28] Ibid,, 46–47.

She invites the SDA community of faith to revise its reading of the Scriptures and not to continue reading it in the light of the modern paradigm of metanarratives but to enter into the 'intelligence' of Bible stories that are antecedent to modernity. Although stories differ from metanarratives to the extent that "they have no recourse to a "legitimizing function," that is to say they do not erect themselves as a universal truth"[29], they can speak to the concern and respect postmodern thinking attributes to 'Otherness' without reducing and relativising the truth content of scriptures. For Doukhan, storytelling is an alternative way of communicating Christian truth in a way that "does not fall into the structures of a metanarrative, and as such, erects itself as universally binding, coercive, and simplistic."[30]

Doukhan presents Bible stories as non-universalitic, non-coercive and realistic. For example, the stories of Abraham, Jacob, Isaac and Jesus' encounter with a variety of interlocutors is for Doukhan evidence that the power or legitimising ground of these stories lie "in the profound humanity of the stories and the uniqueness of each approach to God."[31] Rather than attempting to "pave out a single way seeking to encompass everyone,"[32] the Bible stories "narrates a pluralism of ways of approach and walks with God, that, inasmuch as they are so diverse, are bound to appeal to a diversity of interlocutors."[33] She justifies the fact that Bible stories are non-coercive because unlike the modern project that necessitates a foundation or appeal to reason to legitimate the truth content of its ideology, Bible stories emerge from a *sitz im leben* where the truth content was given out through the retelling of the stories. The latter do not insist on proving anything on the basis of human reason but

> simply *testifies* to an event that took place at a given time in history. As such, the story is profoundly non-coercive, leaving it to the Spirit's promptings or to its interlocutor's discretion to decide as to the validity of the lessons narrated in his or her own life.[34]

Finally, for Doukhan, the telling of Bible stories contrary to metanarratives are not all-encompassing. They do not hide human frailty but the Bible characters show up with their weaknesses, doubts and frailty. They are not oversimplified but portray "reality in all of its complexity, twists, and turns."[35] From such a perspective Bible storytelling can be contrasted

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[29] Ibid., 48.
[30] Ibid., 47.
[31] Ibid., 49.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid., 50.
[35] Ibid.

with its own "authenticity and realism versus the inauthenticity and deception often contained in the promises of a rosy future of metanarratives."[36]

Doukhan defends the view[37] that the "biblical narrative, itself structured as story telling",[38] constitutes a valid approach in communicating the gospel truth in a way that "escapes the pitfalls of metanarrativistic discourse and the relativistic/subjectivist trap of postmodern story telling."[39] Her storytelling approach to Scriptures opens the way for the foundation of an hermeneutic of 'Otherness'. This hermeneutical approach to Scriptures "recognized the supreme value of diversity and otherness."[40] It is non-coercive because it does not seek cognitive justification 'of the foundations of one's faith' but allows the Spirit to convince the interlocutor of the truth content of Bible narratives.[41] Such an open-ended approach, which recognises and affirms the other, removes the suspicion that religious discourse "results from a will to power on the part of the religious institution, applied in a coercive manner in order to secure established religious structures."[42] The hermeneutical approach of 'Otherness' does not attempt to explain away all doubts, questions and interrogations of the Christian faith through the voice of human reason but allows for the mystery of faith "as a truth both above and beyond the limitations of human reason".[43]

Our purpose here is not to engage in a critique of Doukhan's paper, which needs further exploration,[44] but to recognise the theological treatment she gives to the question of

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[36] Ibid., 50.

[37] It is not our purpose here to engage in a critique of Doukhan's paper but suffice it to say that though her approach presents some generalisations, it does have the merit to point to a greater appreciation of the 'Other' in biblical literature.

[38] Ibid., 48.

[39] Ibid., 48–49.

[40] Ibid., 51.

[41] In his paper "Framing the Gospel for the Relational Context of Postmodernism", Stanley Patterson invites the SDA church to follow a collaborative model instead of a competitive model in presenting the gospel in the context of postmodernity.—Stanley E. Patterson, "Framing the Gospel for the relational Context of Postmodernism," in Gonçalves and Bauer, *Revisiting Postmodernism.*
. He argues that Christ's incarnational model is non-authoritarian. Within the context of this model, he challenges the church to abandon a 'truth-driven but adversarial journey' ibid., 57, where "those who are right are pitted against those who are wrong" ibid.,57. The church needs "to edit the language of the gospel to minimize the competition between right and wrong" ibid., 64, which does not imply negating the "truth-driven approach but simply attends to the "spirit" side of the spirit/truth equation of John 4:23."—ibid., 58.

[42] Ibid., 51.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Doukhan's theological point of departure for communicating with postmodern thinking is from an hermeneutical standpoint of Scripture that is pluralistic, non-coercive, particularistic, authentic, unassuming and realistic. From this hermeneutical standpoint, she succeeds in showing how the Bible narratives can be communicated to the postmodern audience precisely because of their pluralistic, particular and non-coercive orientation. However, she is unclear as to how a subjectivist/relativistic reading of the text can be avoided on the basis of her own postulates that the interlocutor can interact with a diversity of stories and decide which

'Otherness'. She invites the Christian community of faith to discover 'Otherness' as being at the heart of Christian revelation through storytelling, which is the key structure of the Bible text. The latter does not propose a single, all-encompassing, coercive approach to God that dispels all doubts, questions and mysteries. As an hermeneutic opened to the other, the storytelling approach invites the community of faith to read Scriptures' own diverse, pluralistic, non-coercive and realistic horizon, and to correlate it with our own postmodern situation.

The next perspective on 'Otherness' we will now consider is Zane Yi's paper entitled "Through a Glass Darkly: Speaking of Truth in Postmodern Times". Yi is assistant professor of Religion at Loma Linda University and did his doctoral research entitled "The possibility of God" at Fordham University. Yi studied and explored Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor's positions on theism and its implications for contemporary Western cultures. His perspective on 'Otherness' is important because it addresses areas where the community of faith has been neglectful and oblivious of the Other in its mission. In other words, Yi places the 'Other' as the centre of Christian mission and not the institutional power behind the mission. On the contrary, Yi claims that a consciousness of the 'Other' will lead the church to see others as ends-in-themselves.[45]

Yi's responsibility for the Other arises from his understanding of God's revelation. In his paper, he aims at reconciling the tension between the claim that God revealed his own self [46] through Jesus Christ witnessed by Scriptures and "that our understanding of that revelation, … is inaccurate, partial, incomplete, and provisional."[47] In other words, if the community of faith's understanding of revelation is partial because of the limitations of human reason, the community needs to remain humble in its interpretation of Scriptures. Yi's conclusion is that the church's understanding, reception and interpretation of God's revelation through Jesus

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story is more relevant and applicable for his or her life 'leaving it to the interlocutor to make his or her final decision.'—ibid.,51. Furthermore, Doukhan overlooks some faith confession present in Christian communities that have metanarrative, universalistic, all-encompassing overtones like 'God so loved the world that he gave his only son so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life' (John 3:16) or 'Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved' (Acts 4:12). These faith assertions are weaved in the narratives of the early Christian communities and are contained in the historical faith tradition of Christian churches. Also, Moses's worldview structured around the mosaic laws has a coercive intent and shows no space for difference without the risk of being expelled from the community.

[45] Ibid., 152.
[46] Zane Yi, "Through a Glass Darkly : Speaking of Truth in Postmodern Times," in Gonçalves and Bauer, *Revisiting Postmodernism,* 148.
[47] Ibid., 148.

Christ as testified in Scriptures is "shaped by our expectations, desires and ambitions",[48] which implies that when the church declares it has received revelation, it must be

> open to the possibilities that our understanding of that revelation, even at its best, is inaccurate, partial, incomplete, and provisional. The truth about the truth is that none of us have it. We see through a glass darkly (1 Corinthians 13:12).[49]

Understanding the limitations of human reasoning in grasping the fullness of God's revelation impacts the community of faith's consciousness of the Other because it leads the church to a position of humility. First, Yi states that we move from approaching the 'Other' 'as an object to be manipulated for our own ends'[50] to the position where we see the 'Other' as an end-in-themselves.[51] We can adopt a position of humility in our understanding of revelation[52] only when we understand that our best "interpretation is provisional and partial; it is one of other possible meanings and interpretations. . . . Christians should be willing to learn from others."[53]

It is through the conversation with the 'Other' and listening to how our interlocutor's interpretation of the same passage of Scripture might differ from ours that we are brought to realise how much our interpretation "is shaped by various contingent factors, perhaps pointed out to them by their interlocutor, and this can lead to a better understanding of one's self, others, as well as Scripture."[54]

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[48] Ibid., 156.

[49] Ibid. Cf. Trim's discussion on how Foucault's endeavour to detach the power of truth from the hegemony of socio-economic and cultural forces testify to Foucault's stand that truth does indeed exist and "that each person needs to consider truth-claims carefully- to be, in fact, a watchman over the flux of thought."—Trim, "'Watchmen' over the flux of thought:" Michel Foucault and the Historical Development of Postmodernist Philosophy," in Gonçalves and Bauer, *Revisiting Postmodernism,* 24.

[50] Ibid.,152. Here, Yi refers to target marketing techniques used as a method of evangelism that often approach the other as a religious consumer.

[51] Ibid., 152.

[52] R. Scott Smith criticises the epistemic position of humility as an easy way out for some evangelical scholars: "If we cannot know things as they are objectively, then this position leads to humility in our knowledge claims, and in the postmodern climate in much of academia, this is an attractive position to take. In short, the post-conservative view takes off pressure to have to prove to challengers that our theological claims (such as that Scripture is inerrant) are certain."—R. Scott Smith, "Post-Conservatives, Foundationalism, and Theological Truth: A Critical Evaluation," *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 48, No.2 (2005): 351. Smith is responding to the critique of evangelical philosopher Nancy Murphy who questions the foundationalist position of evangelical faith and proposes an epistemological replacement. We note that Yi gains insights from Murphy's 'Web beliefs' approach to relativism. It is paradoxical that Yi finds in Murphy, who holds an anti foundationalist position toward Scripture and truth, a supportive voice for defending basic Scriptural truth, beliefs and certainties against postmodern relativism.—Yi, "Through A Glass Darkly: Speaking Of Truth in Postmodern Times," 148–150.

[53] Ibid.,153.

[54] Ibid., 153.

"Rather than mistakenly claiming to possess God's perspective,"[55] Yi asks the community of faith to interrogate itself regarding "the tradition bound nature of their perspectives and beliefs."[56] Realising how one's community of faith's interpretation is conditioned by its own tradition should make the community more appreciative of tradition as well as critical of it: "Acknowledging tradition allows for constructive conversation."[57] This implies that one would also be more understanding about the tradition of the 'Other'. Conversation with the 'Other' is a celebration of commonalities instead of an affirmation of differences but this does not mean that "distinctions are denied or abolished, only relativized in importance. Together, we should learn to embrace mystery."[58] A conversation in which each one acknowledges the limitations of their views has potential power to transform the interlocutors. It is this transformational capacity that transpires in an Other-centred mission.[59]

Yi has contributed to our theological understanding of the 'Other' by calling us to realise the limitations and frailty of human reason. Human reason is limited in its understanding of revelation[60] and the community of faith's best interpretation remains always partial and incomplete because of our diverse horizons, including our tradition. This realisation calls for humility when we approach the 'Other' in mission.[61] We enter a conversation where we are opened to change and transformation. Truth appears in a real exchange with the Other.

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[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Yi states that "this ironically, in the end, will make mission more effective, not less. Dogmatic pronouncements sound shrill and naive to those that consciously and unconsciously accept the legitimacy of the postmodern critique. In a genuine conversation, both parties, acknowledging the limitations of their views, are open to transformation."—ibid., 153.

[60] Yi does not address the issue as to whether it is the scriptural truths per se that are partial or our understanding of them. There is a difference between the interpreting community of faith's limited and varied human understanding of Scriptures and the Scriptures as an autonomous text with its own voice making certain absolute truth claims concerning our life world and its meaning. Are these Scriptural truth claims 'inaccurate', 'partial', 'incomplete' and 'provisional'? Or is it our understanding of them that is inadequate and partial?

[61] Félix H. Cortez, an associate professor of New Testament at Andrews Theological Seminary, observes that postmodern thinking criticises three key problems that characterise modernity: 1.The problem with foundations; 2. The problem with totalities; and 3. The problem with objectivity. Postmodern thinking 'wanted to humble modernism, to show its fallibility without attempting to replace it.'—Félix H. Cortez, "Reading Psalm 23 Through Postmodern Eyes: Insights and Lessons for Missiologists," in Gonçalves and Bauer, *Revisiting Postmodernism,* 113. He states that "postmodernists, on the contrary, value humility. They are willing to hear those who recognize their own fallibility."—Ibid., 113. He suggests that from this 'humbling program' of postmodernity, the church can draw some useful lessons which will serve its mission: 1. Humility in our ability to listen to our interlocutor; 2. Humility in embracing a diversity of people as well as scriptural texts; 3. Humility in allowing the gospel be our own critique—to swallow our own medicine; 4. Humility to accept our partial understanding of truth.—ibid., 113–115.

Now, we are concluding this section on 'Otherness' in Adventist missiological thinking in the context of postmodernity with Kleber de Oliveira Gonçalves's paper "Witnessing to Christ in a Secular, Post-Christian, Postmodern Context". Gonçalves is the director of the Center for Secular and Postmodern Studies (CSPS) and also a mission-practioner in the area of ministry to postmodern society. His paper contributes another dimension to the theme of 'Otherness' as compared to Doukhan and Yi. For the former, in order for the church to be really inclusive of the 'Other', it must communicate gospel truths through the pre-modern 'story telling and Bible narratives' style, as opposed to a propositional all-encompassing, coercive, over-simplistic reading of Scriptures that tends to erase the 'Other'. As for Yi, we come to realise the fullness of the 'Other' in mission when we are humble by the consciousness of the limitations of human reasoning and that our understanding of revelation and our interpretations are always conditioned by factors that generally shape all human reasoning, be it historical, psychological, economical or linguistic.[62] The Other appears when the all-knowing self is humbled.

Gonçalves proposes that the 'Other' is rooted in the biblical history of salvation itself and the condition for doing mission in the context of postmodernity requires the community of faith to "realize that human life must reflect a more adequate balance between the individual and social aspects of human existence. This perception, however, requires a deeper understanding of otherness."[63] First, an understanding of 'Otherness' that is biblically shaped is conscious of the oneness in humanity. The Bible teaches that the human family is one, 'one all-inclusive family made in the image of God (Gen 1:26).'[64] Next, consciousness of the oneness of the people of God points to the fellowship of the people of God with one another. Believers are the new Israel "in Christ' and their communal experience overcomes 'human constructed differences in gender . . ., race . . ., and social class."[65] Finally, it is about being aware of the oneness of God's grand story of salvation for the human race. Gonçalves argues that metanarratives are indeed worldviews that "present different ways of facing life at the deepest level. Everything else, beliefs, values, and behaviors will flow out of this assumption."[66] Only

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[62] Yi, "Through a Glass Darkly : Speaking of Truth in Postmodern Times," ibid., 147. He further remarks that "the affirmation that God has revealed universal and timeless truths does not entail that I have a universal and timeless understanding of what has been revealed."—ibid., 147.

[63] Kleber de Oliveira Gonçalves, "Witnessing to Christ in a Secular, Post-Christian, Postmodern Context," in Gonçalves and Bauer, *Revisiting Postmodernism,* 127.

[64] Ibid., 128.

[65] Ibid., 129.

[66] Ibid., 131.

when we understand the grand story of God's plan of salvation for humanity can "we comprehend the importance of otherness in God's plan for human beings."[67]

Gonçalves's approach to build a biblical theology of 'Otherness' grounded in the oneness of the human race, the oneness of God's people and the oneness of God's great plan of salvation is communal in its theological intent. He describes the experience of Otherness in terms of immanence—experiencing community life at the level of society (the oneness of the human family), the church (the oneness of God's church through fellowship) and transcendence—God's grand story of salvation[68] of the human race, which testify to the "communal and relational nature of God within himself (Gen 1: 26–27; Matt 3:16–17; 28:18–19)." However, Gonçalves, on one hand, stresses the communal dimension[69] of 'Otherness' but, on the other hand, he de-emphasises the notion of difference. For oneness not to be assimilated with sameness, a theology of Otherness needs to be inclusive of difference in human society, affirming the existing diversity of our congregations and the divine grand story of *missio Dei* that has plural actors—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In conclusion to this section, we would like to highlight two striking elements that result from the SDA Symposium on Postmodern-sensitive Mission. First, the interest and concern for the theme of 'Otherness' to be an integral part of an SDA theology of mission. Next, the context of mission is arousing among the SDA community of faith a richer and deeper contextual missiological conversation[70] with postmodernity in terms of its theological problematic, specifically when it comes to hermeneutical questions of multiple interpretations, historical conditioning of texts,[71] meaning mediated by language and culture,[72] the linguistic

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[67] Ibid.

[68] Simret Mahary discusses the importance of the biblical concept of a meta story and comments that "this big *salvation story* picture provides a perspective through which individuals can perceive themselves from a wider perspective than just from that of their own singular stories. They can see themselves as participants of a greater story that is written by God and his people."—Mahary, "Adventism Meets Postmodernism: Letting the Bible speaks in Postmodern times" in *Revisiting Postmodernism: An Old Debate On A New Era*, in Gonçalves and Bauer, *Revisiting Postmodernism,* 322–323.

[69] Stanley J. Grenz explores the community dimensions of the church and engages an ecclesiological reflection which is anchored in a Trinitarian narrative of salvation.—Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Cambridge, United Kingdom : William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000).

[70] Bruce L. Bauer provides contextual mission practices to reach out to the postmodern generation focusing on their worldviews.—Bruce L. Bauer, "Conversion and Worldview Transformation Among Postmoderns," in Gonçalves and Bauer, *Revisiting Postmodernism,* 88–98.

[71] See David J. B. Trim discussion on postmodernists approach to text, history and language.—David J. B. Trim, ""'Watchmen' over the Flux of Thought:" Michel Foucault and the Historical Development of Postmodernist Philosophy," 20–22.

[72] For a practical initiation of the hermeneutic of suspicion at work from a postmodern perspective interpretation of a biblical passage, see Cortez, "Reading Psalm 23 Through Postmodern Eyes: Insights and Lessons for Missiologists," 109–112.

conditioning of the text of Scripture,[73] the contingent nature of truth, relativism and anti-foundationalism.[74] It is important to underline that it is the mission context itself that necessitates a deeper theological reflection on the SDA theological self-understanding as a community of faith. In the next section, we shall pursue our reflection on Otherness, building on the insights received from the works of Doukhan, Yi and Gonçalves but focusing mainly on Emmanuel Levinas's understanding of Otherness as the 'Face of the Other' and exploring the possibility that 'Otherness' offers for constructing a contextual remnant ecclesiology of dialogue and alterity.

3.3: <u>Otherness: Ecclesiology in its Missionary Cultural Context</u>

Otherness is a prominent characteristic of the postmodern cultural context[75] to which the church is called for mission. In this section, we examine how the postmodern context of Otherness and Emmanuel Levinas's understanding of the 'Face of the Other' can interface with each other in view of developing a contextual ecclesiology of dialogue.

David Tracy indicates that "the real face of postmodernity, as Emmanel Levinas sees with such clarity, is the face of the other, . . . the face that insists . . . do not reduce me or anyone else to your grand narrative."[76] He further argues that the postmodern turn is in fact less than a turn from the modern autonomous subject or even to language but it is more about "the quintessential turn of postmodernity itself—the turn to the other. It is that turn, above all, that defines the intellectual as well as the ethical meaning of postmodernity."[77] The return of otherness has led to the return to biblical Judaism and Christianity "to undo the complacencies

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[73] Karl G. Wilcox discusses the limitations of language and Jacques Derrida's objection that a perfect linguistic account of truth can be accomplished. Wilcox invites pre-modern reading of the text of Scriptures where the modern concept of absolute rational objectivity was absent. See Karl G. Wilcox, "Postmodernism and the Re-Birth of Christian Literacy," in Gonçalves and Bauer, *Revisiting Postmodernism,* 162–163, 176–177.

[74] For an apologetic reaction and response to relativism and anti-foundationalism, see Aleksandar S. Santrač, "The Influence of Postmodern Philosophy and Culture on the Development of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, Education and Mission," in *Revisiting Postmodernism : An Old Debate on A New Era*, ed. Kleber O. Gonçalves Bruce L. Bauer (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Department of World , Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 2013), 248–256.

[75] Miroslav Pujic's description of the main characteristics and core values of postmodernity explains the contours of the dynamic and ever-fluctuating cultural context of postmodernity.—*Journal of Adventist Mission*, Vol 2, No.2 (Fall, 2006): 6–8.

[76] David W.   Tracy, "Theology and the Many Faces of Postmodernity," Theology Today, Vol 51, No. 1 (April 1, 1994): 108.

[77] Ibid.

of modernity, including modern theology."[78] Tracy mentions 'God's shattering otherness', 'the neighbor's irreducible otherness' and 'the othering reality of revelation' as expressions of otherness that requires the "serious attention of all thoughful theologians."[79] Lakeland has drawn attention "to the indubitable importance of the category of "the other" for an understanding of postmodernity."[80]

Let us now turn to Emmanuel Levinas's perspectives on the 'Face of the Other' and explore its insights for a contextual ecclesiology of dialogue. Actually, the term 'Other' is "intended to circumscribe other human beings, and their differences from me (or us). The otherness of other people can be underplayed, leading to charges of privileging the self or selves from whom they are supposed to be not so different, or overplayed."[81] Levinas's examination of the relationship with the 'Other', which he elaborates in his works using the terminology of the 'Face of the Other', offers deeper insights for developing a remnant ecclesiology that is situated in the everyday lived experience of SDA believers engaged in mission in the context of postmodernity.

In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas explains that "being is exteriority",[82] which he uses interchangeably with alterity: "Exteriority, or, if one prefers, alterity".[83] He criticises the premises of ontology for its proclivity to suppress the Other alterity for the profit of the same within a grand synthesising project qualified as totalitarian by Levinas. A totalising project involves a "universal synthesis, a reduction of all experience, of all that is reasonable, to a totality wherein consciousness embraces the world, leaves nothing outside of itself, and thus becomes absolute thought. The consciousness of self is at the same time consciousness of the

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[78] For a discussion of the theological implications of otherness for doing theology today, see Tracy, 109–114.

[79] Ibid., 108.

[80] Lakeland, *Postmodernity: Christian Identity in a Fragmented age*, 32. Lakeland leads a cogent argument on the political implications of Otherness and how it plays out in the approach taken by radical postmodernists and late as well as nostalgic modernist. For the former, 'freeing of the Other is readily discernible in the rejection of metanarratives.' Whereas, the late modern commitment to albeit a 'thin' metanarrative "to a totalizing explanation that their "responsibility to otherness" is endangered.'—(Ibid.,33). He adds that 'the late moderns are pro-modern in their continued attention to metanarrative, postmodern in their willingness to accept its historicity and fragility."—ibid.,33.

[81] Simon Blackburn, "Other, the" in *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 2008), http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199541430.001.0001/acref-9780199541430-e-2279. Accessed on March 27, 2012. Blackburn further discusses the problematic of Otherness which may lead "unfortunately to just the same charge, as when women are thought of as failed men, orientals as failed Europeans, etc. Levinas insisted that the Other can never be an object of consciousness, but must be encountered ethically; Derrida wondered in turn whether putting the matter in those terms already implies a privileged status for the self or the home point of reference."—ibid.

[82] Levinas, *Totality And Infinity*. 290.

[83] Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo,* trans. Richard A. Cohen, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985), 75.

whole."[84] The project of the 'Other' and the project of 'totality' are competing frameworks of belief for understanding reality or the world context in which 'being' inhabits. Charles Taylor has shown the importance of the framework of belief in apprehending reality.[85]

Totality views the world through its own self and in order to survive 'in' the world, the self embarks on a mission that Levinas calls 'the way of the same': "The possibility of possessing, that is, of suspending the very alterity of what is only at first other, and other relative to me, is the way of the same."[86] According to the 'totalitarian' framework of belief, the 'Other' is viewed as a part, a fraction of the whole and Levinas interrogates whether the 'antagonism' between the 'Same' and the 'Other' cannot be intelligently thought "otherwise than by the reduction or conversion of the Other to the Same in terms of the Other who lends himself to the Same."[87] He offers an alternative way of rationally conceiving the relationship between the Same and the Other where we do not have to think of alterity in the context of human multiplicity as "only the logical otherness of the parts—some vis-à-vis others—in a divided whole whose strictly mutual relationships are commanded exclusively by the unity of that Whole, that One that has degenerated into its parts"[88] but the 'Other' can also be approached

> in an irreducible fashion, with an otherness and a separation that resist all synthesis, prior to all unity, in which the possible relationship between me and the other (the otherness of an undesirable stranger)—in which sociability is independent of all previous recognition and all formation of totalities? An ethical relationship![89]

Such a relationship unfolds and reveals itself in the encounter with the 'Face of the Other': "The otherness and this absolute separation manifest themselves in the epiphany of the face, in the face to face",[90] which is "quite different from the synthesis, it initiates a proximity different from the one that presides over the synthesis of data, uniting them into a "world" of parts within a whole."[91] This relationship is characterised not only by the 'self' recognising the difference of the 'Other' but also the self being disabled, so to speak, in its indifference to the 'Other'. T. A. Veling describes the relation with the other as a non-relation: "Everything between you and me hinges on your uniqueness and difference from me rather than my

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[84] Ibid.

[85] Charles Taylor has reasonably argued and explained the influential role of our framework of beliefs in shaping reality especially in relation to our understanding of the phenomenon of secularization and modernity.—Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

[86] Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 38.

[87] Emmanuel Levinas, *On-Thinking-of-the-Other entre nous*, trans. Michael B.Smith and Barbara Harshav (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 184–185.

[88] Ibid., 185.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid..

[91] Ibid., 186.

identification with you."[92] It is a relationship marked by recognising the difference of the Other, as well as manifesting a non-indifference to the Other:

> The 'thought' awakened in the face or by the face is commanded by an irreducible difference: thought which is not a thought of, but, from the very beginning, a thought for . . . a non-indifference for the other breaking the equilibrium of the equal and impassive soul of knowledge.[93]

The face of the Other resists the totalitarian and imperialistic aspiration of the ego or self to seize, grasp and possess it through the *thinking-self*, because the face precedes and is prior to any conceptualisation or phenomenological description. But as Michael L. Morgan discusses, it is difficult "to say what Levinas's disclosure of the encounter with the face of the other person is supposed to amount to."[94] On one hand, the face is more than an ordinary phenomenological experience in Levinas's thought but, on the other hand, it is doubtful whether it has "empirical or episodic character" or is "an extraordinary or anomalous experience."[95] Given those doubts, "one is tempted to give it a different status altogether."[96]

Then, what is the content of the 'Face of the Other' that distinguishes it from mere perception and knowledge of the 'Other'. But asking about the meaning of the face, as Bernhard Waldenfels remarks, is probably to miss the point because "if the Other's face transcends the ontological reign of more or less defined entities we are able only to say *what it is not,* or more precisely: we can only show *that it is not something at all.*"[97] Waldenfels is helpful in showing us how Levinas uses certain methods belonging to theological traditions to explain the face of the other: "by the double way of *via negationis* and of *via eminentiae.* In his view the human face is *not* simply what it seems to be, and it is much *more* than that."[98] Morgan underlines how Robert Bernasconi distinguishes between the empirical and transcendental

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[92] Terry A. Veling, ""For You Alone": A Reading of Transcendence and Relationship in Emmanuel Levinas," *Australian eJournal of Theology* Vol 14, No. 1 (2009), 3.

[93] Levinas, *On-Thinking-of-the-Other entre nous*,186.

[94] Michael L. Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction to Emmanuel Levinas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 47.

[95] Ibid., 47.

[96] Ibid. Morgan describes the difficulty in those terms: "If encountering the face is to be explored, then, that exploration will have to require a shift of perspective from the everyday to something else. But does this mean that the face-to-face itself cannot occur in the everyday? Surely not. But if the exploration is *like* phenomenological examination but not exactly a case of it, then it might be that neither it nor its exploration are everyday matters."—ibid.

[97] Bernhard Waldenfels, "Levinas and the Face of the Other," in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, ed. Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi (Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 66–67.

[98] Ibid., 64.

interpretation of the 'face to face relation' in Levinas's understanding.[99] This dialectic tension between the phenomenon of the face as concrete reality and that of the face as an *epiphany*— 'as more than that'—is empathetically expressed by Levinas himself :

> The best way of encountering the Other is not even to notice the color of his eyes! . . . The relation with the other face can surely be dominated by perception, but what is specifically the face is what cannot be reduced to that.[100]

The face-to-face relation is a concrete reality but what is not disclosed, hidden to the imperialism of the ego, is the 'Otherness' of the Other. The reality of the Other is prior to our thinking and all forms of conceptualisation. It eludes "the intentions of subjective thought and . . . the form of the look, totalitarian as presence—eluding the transcendental synthesis."[101]

The 'Face', its revelation or epiphany opposes and resists totalitarian thinking and its infinity as 'Other' "is manifested in the absolute resistance which by its apparition, its epiphany, it opposes to all my powers."[102] It resists and opposes, on one hand, and, on the other hand, it calls, commands and appeals for us to be responsible for the 'Other'. "The Other is superior in that sense it orders and commands: Man as Other comes to us from the outside, a separated— or holy—face. His exteriority, that is his appeal to me, is his truth."[103] This appeal to be responsible for the Other,[104] even if it is not reciprocal,[105] is the prologue to language and communication:

> But it also calls upon me from a strange authority—imperative, disarmed—the word of God and the verb in the human face. Face, already language before words, an original language of the human face stripped of the countenance it gives itself. . . . An original language, already an asking. . . . The language of the inaudible, the language of the unheard of, the language of the non-said. Scripture![106]

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[99] Michael L. Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction to Emmanuel Levinas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 41–42.

[100] Emmanuel Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht/ Boston/ Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987), 54.

[101] *Alterity and Transcendence*, trans. Michael B.Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 4.

[102] *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 55.

[103] *Totality And Infinity*, 291.

[104] For a critique of the problematic of responsibility, see *Treanor Brian, Aspects of Alterity: Levinas, Marcel, and the Contemporary Debate* (Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press, 2007), 128–129.

[105] For Levinas, the intersubjective relationship that is a key theme in *Totality and Infinity* "is a non-symmetrical relation. In this sense, I am responsible for the Other without waiting for reciprocity, were I to die for it. Reciprocity is *his* affair. It is precisely insofar as the relationship between the Other and me is not reciprocal that I am in subjection to the Other." Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity.* 88.

[106] Levinas, *On-Thinking-of-the-Other entre nous*, 198–199.

Actually, our social interaction and meaning in the world is prefaced by the face-to-face relation. To be responsible for the Other is, as a matter of fact, a response to the 'Other' who 'orders' and 'ordains' me:[107]

> From behind the bearing he gives himself . . . in his appearance, he calls to me and orders me from the depths of his defenseless nakedness. . . . It is in the personal relationship, from me to the other, that the ethical 'event,' charity and mercy, generosity and obedience, lead beyond or rise above being.'[108]

For Levinas, calls such a response 'saying' as distinguished from the 'said':[109]

> But the *saying* is the fact that before the face I do not simply remain there contemplating it, I respond to it. The saying is a way of greeting the Other, but to greet the Other is already to answer for him.[110]

The face and discourse are knotted in the sense that "the face speaks. It speaks, it is in this that it renders possible and begins all discourse."[111] The 'Other' is understood through what we may qualify as a 'saying relationship': "The other is not first an object of understanding and then an interlocutor. The two relations are merged . . . addressing the other is inseparable from understanding the other."[112] Rather than language being supplanted by the phenomenon of being, we must see "the function of language not as subordinate to the *consciousness* we have of the presence of the other, or of his proximity, or of our community with him, but as a condition of that conscious realization."[113] Morgan explains that Levinas's attempt to show how language and discourse are transcendentally grounded in meeting, greeting and even invoking[114] the face of the Other is based on a two-dimensional argument, a regressive and progressive mode of reasoning.

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[107] Levinas explains that the face 'orders me as one orders someone one . . . , as when one says: "Someone's asking for you."'—*Ethics and Infinity,* 98.

[108] Ibid., 202.

[109] For a further exploration of Levinas's analysis of the 'saying' and the 'said', see Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being Or Beyond Essence* (The Hague/Boston/London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1981), 5–6.

[110] *Ethics and Infinity*, 88. "The meeting with the other needs to be expressed because Man is the only being I cannot meet without my expressing this meeting itself to him. That is precisely what distinguishes the meeting from knowledge. In every attitude toward the human being there is a greeting—even if it is the refusal of a greeting."—ibid., 7.

[111] Emmanuel Levinas**,** *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo,* trans. Richard A. Cohen, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985), 87.

[112] Levinas, *On-Thinking-of-the-Other entre nous*, 6.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Levinas describes this response to the face as an invocation; in its deepest discourse, it is a prayer: "The relation to the other is therefore not ontology. This bond with the other which is not reducible to the representation of the other, but to his invocation, and which invocation is not preceded by an understanding, I call religion. The essence of discourse is prayer."—ibid., 7.

The regressive argument moves from discourse and language to its basic foundation: "discourse requires two interlocutors in relation to one another; their relation . . . involves the face-to-face encounter, and what that face-to-face reveals is the other's need, plea, … self's responsibility."[115] From this greeting, this 'Here I am'—*me voici*—the invocation of the Other, Levinas progressively argues that one makes "of what is mine common, to the universal, to conceptualization, and then to language, community, and thought itself."[116]

Morgan remarks that, in Levinas's thinking, "we live in society and communicate with one another, and the latter is made possible because of the former."[117] The features of language, its commonality and universality are grounded in the ordinary experience but what is hidden from perception is the nexus of the Other plea, command and one's responsible response to it. As Morgan says:

> Only because of this nexus or event is the world ours and not mine; only because of it is there you and I and not just me. This condition is by itself not sufficient for language—we do need words, syntax, and so forth—but it is necessary.[118]

Finally, we can ask ourselves how is God related to the face-to-face ethical relationship Levinas describes?[119] He uses religious and theological vocabulary like epiphany, revelation and height to delineate the religious dimension of the face of the Other but this does not necessarily mean that God in any sense refers to the face. The encounter with the face is meeting someone who is beyond my own thinking, the 'thought of the unequal', an 'absolute other'. It only evokes the idea of God: "Is not the face of one's fellow man the original locus in which transcendence calls an authority in a silent voice in which God comes to the mind?"[120] The distance and at the same time the proximity between the self and the other, the difference and inseparability contained in this relationship depicts for Levinas "the surplus of truth over being and over its idea, which we suggest by the metaphor of the "curvature of

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[115] L. Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction to Emmanuel Levinas*, 73.
[116] Ibid., 73.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid., 74.
[119] Brian Treanor compares and contrasts the views of Levinas and Gabriel Marcel on the relationship to the other. He shows how their comprehension of the 'status of the otherness of the other' is influenced by their understanding of God. Levinas's insistence on 'absolute otherness' and Marcel's persistence on 'relative otherness' leads to a relationship with the other characterised by 'justice'—responsibility in Levinas—and 'love'—understanding in Marcel. Treanor says that "while their different emphases on justice and love prove to be manifestations of different ways in which otherness per se is understood, this understanding is itself directly related to the way in which each thinker characterizes the otherness of God."—Brian, *Aspects of Alterity: Levinas, Marcel, and the Contemporary Debate*, 128–129.
[120] Levinas, *Alterity and Transcendence*, 5.

intersubjective space," signifies the divine intention of all truth. This "curvature of space' is, perhaps, the very presence of God."[121]

How then does the SDA community of faith reflect on its own self-understanding in the present cultural context of Otherness in which the community of faith finds itself doing mission? This can happen through a dialogical hermeneutic where the truth of one's own horizon and that of the text's horizon "are both preserved in a new stage of the tradition and cancelled as adequate positions of their own."[122] The dimension and scope of this kind of dialogue is the subject of the following discussion.

3.4: Remnant Ecclesiology: The Postmodern Context of Otherness

This section aims to explain the process and intent of contextualising remnant ecclesiology. This methodology seeks to mediate the theological meaning of the remnant through a dialogue between the *past* experience of God's remnant people as witnessed in Bible stories and kept alive through faith traditions, and the *contemporary* experience of the ecclesiological self-understanding of SDA believers in the postmodern context of Otherness. In that sense, this ecclesiological methodology is inductive in its essence because it takes as its theological point of departure the local contextual experience of believers. Lakeland comments that

> Although the end product of all ecclesial reflection is to arrive at some generalizable sense of what the church is, inductive method approaches that point through reflection upon a definite local context.[123]

According to Stephen B. Bevans, the task of contextual theology[124] consists of interacting with two realities. First, the contextual theologian takes into account "*the faith experience of the past* that is recorded in Scriptures and kept alive, preserved, defended—and perhaps even

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[121] *Totality And Infinity*, 291.

[122] Veling, *Living in the Margins : Intentional communities and the art of interpretation*, 65.

[123] Paul Lakeland, *Church-Living Communion*, ed. Tatha Wiley, Church Living Communion (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1996), 121. Lakeland also discusses the differences between an ecclesiology from 'above'—or 'idealized' ecclesiology—and that from 'below'—or empirical. The former tend to be exclusive, whereas the latter tend to be more inclusive.—ibid., 121.

[124] Bevans has identified six models of contextual mission. For a succinct description of the six models, see Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 141–143. Olugbenga Olagunju offers an insightful summary and critique of the weaknesses and strengths of the six models of contextual theology as proposed by Bevans, namely: 1. The translation model; 2. The anthropological model; 3. The praxis model; 4. The synthetic model; 5. The transcendental model; 6. The countercultural model.— Olugbenga Olagunju, "An evaluation of Bevans' models of contextual theology and its contributions to doing theology in the 21st century church," *Ogbomoso Journal Of Theology,* Vol 17, No. 2 (2012): 5–49.

neglected or suppressed"[125] in the church's tradition. And next "is the *experience of the present*, the *context*,"[126] which consists of one or more of at least four elements: personal or communal experience, 'secular' or 'religious culture', social location and social change.

If we describe our present postmodern cultural context as the culture of Otherness, what are the distinct traits of this culture? In the context of postmodernity, the experience of 'Otherness' is distinguished by a resistance to any ideology of assimilation, as well as an insistence on a social relation typified by difference: "The other is the holy one, the infinite, transcendence—a "non-relation"—and yet, a non-relation that maintains a relation."[127] First, the Other is privileged and elevated in postmodern thinking against the modern temptation to exclude the Other, at times negating its very existence and creating a situation of alienation of the Other in favour of the Same. All this reduction of the *other* to the *same* was practised indiscriminately whether it was done by secular or sacred powers. Christendom has its metanarrative of 'Salvation *through Christianity*' and the secular world voiced 'Salvation *through absolute reason and science*.' The former metanarrative was a powerful ally of colonial and neo-colonial powers in the history of Christian mission[128] and the latter grand story reached its nefarious apogee at Auschwitz. Otherness manifests itself in the context of postmodernity as a resistance of the 'face' to the totalitarian project of the self and one can remain suspicious[129] of the latter's ambition to bring all reality to the same through the explanatory medium of metanarratives.[130] It is resistance to an ideology of assimilation that has given birth to pluralism. One must remain suspicious, however, that pluralism is not another form of a 'master' story, which brings all reality to itself.

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[125] Ibid., 5.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Veling, ""For You Alone": A Reading of Transcendence and Relationship in Emmanuel Levinas," 13.

[128] David J. Bosch provides a critical analysis of mission and colonialism—both Catholic and protestant mission-during the middle ages and in the wake of the enlightenment. See David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission-Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 16 vols., Vol. 16, American Society of Missiology Series (Maryknoll , New York: Orbis Books, 1990), 226–230, 302–313. The issue cannot be narrowly treated "as simply a matter of the relation of mission to colonialism and overlook the fact that this relationship is but an integral part of the much wider and much more serious project of the advance of Western technological civilization."—ibid., 312. Referring to D. Schellong, Bosch observes that since the enlightenment 'good' means what is good for others and to impose it on them.—ibid., 313.

[129] Such a suspicious attitude can be turned toward postmodern thinking itself and even Otherness as a sign of this culture. Tracy observes: "Postmodernity also needs not merely affirmation but also critique and suspicion. Many forms of thought announcing themselves as postmodern fully merit the suspicion that others cast upon them."—David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), 107.

[130] Like Lakeland states, "possessed of a metanarrative, any one at all, everything is accounted for in a supreme exercise of the comprehension of reality . . . a textbook exercise of power in which the Other is only perceived in and through the metanarrative."—Lakeland, *Postmodernity: Christian Identity in a Fragmented age*, 32.

Next, Otherness is not only an expression of resistance to modernity's ideology to exclude and efface the 'face of the other' but it is at the same time a critical consciousness of an asymmetrical social relationship where social relationship is marked by difference and separation rather than mutuality and reciprocity. The other is not assimilated in the same. Terry Veling clearly argues that contrary to other philosophers of dialogue and intersubjectivity,[131] Levinas focuses on the asymmetrical encounter in our daily social relationships with one another. Levinas values a social relationship nurtured by difference.

To quote Veling:

> I am 'connected' by this inseparability that binds me to you, but this connection is never one of fusion, identification or assimilation. Rather, it is marked by a separation, or a difference, or an asymmetry between you and me.[132]

Veling raises an important question in terms of Levinas's emphasis on difference and alterity:[133] "What could it mean to speak of a relation that is marked at one and the same time by a separation and inseparability? Or, what could it mean to speak of a relation between you and me that is also a non-relation?"[134] It means that separation is not necessarily negative but it has a positive dimension: "Separation is important in the encounter with the other because it preserves the other from assimilation or fusion."[135] Separation and inseparability also has religious significance. Veling explains how Levinas interfaces God with the language of relational encounter and how the name God:

> evokes in an exemplary way the experience of relation/non-relation or inseparability/separability. Levinas ties the word God to the word transcendence (or infinity). Transcendence, however, should not be read as the 'more than' of the numinous or other-worldly (out there or behind-there somewhere) but as the 'more than' of relation. Relation is driven by what exceeds relation, which Levinas calls 'desire.'[136]

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[131] Veling cites as examples Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel and Luce Irigaray. As Veling puts it, 'what is distinctive in his reflections, however, is that inequality and asymmetry, rather than equality or mutuality, play a pivotal role in the relational encounter.'—Veling, ""For You Alone": A Reading of Transcendence and Relationship in Emmanuel Levinas," 1–2.

[132] Ibid., 3.

[133] Veling points out in our daily social rapport, 'we hold in great esteem words like "mutuality," "reciprocity," "equality," "inclusivity," "one-ness." Maybe we need to also pay attention to words such as "separateness," "asymmetry," "difference," "otherness." Not as words of negativity (that is, contrary to all those "positives" previously named), but as words of excess and beyond, words of "excedence" and "transcendence," more than and other-than—words that transcend the self-same quest for unity and sameness, words that open a gap, rift, rupture that signal the other's refusal to be tamed by all-encompassing concepts such as oneness, identity, participation, totality.'—ibid., 5.

[134] Ibid., 3.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Ibid., 8. For further discussion on the spiritual transcendental dimension of otherness, ibid., 7-13.

Therefore, the cultural context of otherness is understood as a cultural resistance to assimilation and an insistence on an intersubjective social relation framed by difference and inseparability. It is within such a cultural context that a contextual ecclesiology of dialogue mediates the theological meaning of a remnant ecclesiology. A contextual ecclesiology of dialogue is a conversation that takes place between the God of revelation, who is passionate for the other, and the culture of otherness in which the SDA community of faith is called to fulfill the *missio Dei*. A contextual ecclesiology of dialogue is rooted in an understanding of biblical revelation as witnessing to God's passion to humble himself and be responsible for the other. It contains and refers to the community of God's people's memory and reflective experiences on what it means to worship the God who is humble and responsible for the 'Other'. This divine passion for the other has been narrated in various genres of Bible stories and contextualised in specific *sitz im leben* in order to resonate to the truth of human life and nature.

The truth of 'Otherness' is truthful not because it is found in the Bible but rather, because it is a truthful human experience, it is embedded in biblical stories. Roger Burggraeve in inviting Bible readers into a meaningful, 'existentially engaged relation to the Bible' text of Scriptures where "the Word gives rise to thinking and in which our entire existence can live so that we can come to the truth",[137] at the same time reminds us that "it is not the case that what the Bible says is true because it is in the Bible, but rather that it is in the Bible because it is true."[138]

As we discussed in our literature review, the SDA community of faith has privileged a modern hermeneutic tradition that holds in high view the historico-grammatical interpretive approach to scriptures, excluding a section of SDA academic scholarship that follows the historical-critical approach without denying the supernatural dimension of revelation. SDA Remnant theology and ecclesiology have been framed within this modern hermeneutical approach to Scriptures.[139] Burggraeve explains that classical historical-critical, philological and grammatical exegesis "are an abiding expression and realization of the modern turn of Western rationality."[140] Burggraeve proposes that we move away from the 'dissecting', 'fact-

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[137] Roger Burggaeve, "The Bible Gives to Thought: Levinas on the Possibility and Proper Nature of Biblical Thinking," *The Face of the Other and the Trace of God: Essays on the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas*, ed. Jeffrey Bloechl (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 165.
[138] Ibid., 166.
[139] In section 2.3.1, 49–55, we discuss the hermeneutical challenges and issues facing the SDA community of faith.
[140] Burggaeve, "The Bible Gives to Thought," 162.

finding', 'instrumental' approach to the Word to a more 'founding word', a Word supporting 'the modality of human existence' which is not necessarily 'anti-historical' or anti-philological' but trans-historical and trans-philological:

> as 'founding Word,' as a word whose inner truth founds and supports my very existence. Such a founding Word is more than edifying or pious; it puts me in relation to what grounds my existence, gives breadth and depth to it, guides it and holds it open.

A contextual ecclesiology of dialogue grounded in Otherness recognises that God relates to humankind in a way that runs contrary to any selfish intention of assimilation and indifference to difference. It values the experience of the Other in its 'Otherness' as a gift of oneself that is not above, of or against culture but which is transcultural. As the yeast goes through, across and beyond the flour to raise it, to grow and elevate the dough, so the gift of Otherness elevates one's culture and places it on a new height. Leaven in Jesus's parable (see Mat 13:31; Lk 12:18) is a metaphor that speaks about the relatively small beginning of God's kingdom but which grows and have far-reaching results like the yeast fungus that, though small and dormant, produces a significant amount of dough for bread when mixed with three measures of flour.

The gift of Otherness is the face of God's kingdom, small and hidden in the midst of our social interactions but which nevertheless has tremendous growth potential, not in order to invade, domesticate, possess or control the culture of otherness itself but to place it on a high mountain. Paradoxically, from this new cultural height, the culture ordains and calls us: Do not kill me. Do not destroy difference and neutralise non-assimilation. Respond responsibly like God, who became responsible for Abel. The first biblical story witnesses the tragic drama of the totalitarian project of assimilation and exclusion of the other. Abel is eradicated because he is not respected for his otherness. He succumbs to Cain's totalitarian project, who is angry because God looked differently at Abel's offerings. That different look was not a look of favouritism but God *gazed with interest*[141] at Abel's offering. Why did YHWH looked with interest to the extent of being *nonplussed*[142] at Abel's offerings? Could it be that this

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[141] The Hebrew verb transliterated as *Sha`ah* is used in Genesis 4:4 to describe the way YHWH considered Abel's sacrifice. It has been translated in various Bible translations as 'The Lord looked with favour on Abel and his offering' (NIV); YHWH 'approved of Abel's offerings' (Orthodox Jewish Bible); the Lord 'had regard for' (New Revised Standard Version—Catholic Edition). We used 'gazed with interest' following Strong's Concordance 'Hebrew and Aramaic Dictionary of the Old Testament' definition of *Sha`ah*: 'to gaze at or about, to inspect, consider, compassionate, be nonplussed.'—James Strong, *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), 146.
[142] This is another meaning for *Sha`ah*.

sacrifice refers to the meaning of Abel's name—'vapour, emptiness, nothing'?[143] Is there the possibility of an analogy here? Abel's sacrifice is like himself mortal, vowed to death and nothingness.[144] In other words, it contains Abel's own destituteness and misery, his experience of finitude and mortality. When God faced Abel's misery, he responded with respect[145] to Abel's position of height, which in Levinas's thinking is really a position of destitution. Veling explains, "Yet height is not power, as in "the high and mighty". Rather, height is encountered in the other person's lowliness and destitution that nevertheless rises above me with an ethical demand."[146] Could it be that Abel's sacrifice was *other than* and not *the same as* Cain, his brother?

In this chapter, we have explained our methodological approach which is an inductive ecclesiological study that takes as its starting point, the faith experience of the believers who belong to SDA churches and who are postmodern-sensitive in their mission outlook. This inductive methodology seeks to mediate the theological meaning of remnant ecclesiology through a dialogue between the *past experiences* of God's remnant people as witnessed in Bible stories and kept alive through faith traditions and the *contemporary* ecclesiological self-understanding of SDA believers in the postmodern context of *Otherness*. This inductive approach intends to apprehend how postmodern mission is having an impact on SDA believers' ecclesiological self-understanding. There is no specific study—like we stated

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[143] Strong's Concordance defines *hebel* as 'emptiness, vanity, something transitory.'—Strong, *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible,* 33.

[144] "Ethical thought after Heidegger has become increasingly concerned with the significance of the death of *others,* other persons, rather than with one's own death. At the forefront of this ethical thinking are Emmanuel Lévinas (1906-1995) and Jacques Derrida. In a lecture course given at the Sorbonne in 1975–1976 and published in 1993, Lévinas defined mortality in terms of "the visage of the Other" whom we encounter. He defined death itself as a "nonresponse" that announces to me in the most commanding way my responsibility toward the Other. No doubt, this is a strange "responsibility," for it is one of which I cannot acquit myself; it is a responsibility without debt and without possibility of fulfillment—an *infinite* responsibility. Death is not annihilation of existence (in Lévinas's view, such annihilation is murder rather than death) or some sort of passage into nonbeing or ascent to a higher form of life; it is rather the experience of the survivor, who remains "without response" from the Other and yet is infinitely responsible for him or her. Instead of what Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) called the "consolation prize" of survival, the consolation in his view being essential if "successful" mourning is to resist melancholia, Lévinas invokes the "culpability of the survivor." This is not "survivor guilt," as it is usually invoked in discussions of Jews (like Lévinas and Derrida) who survived the Nazi Extermination, but the indeterminable (*infinite* in the sense of incalculable) and unacquittable responsibility that I experience in the face of other mortals— including those deceased mortals who, like Enkidu, have demonstrated to me their mortality in this most scandalous way. To be sure, my culpability is not "rational"; it is emotional; it moves me; it is a matter of my "disquiet" in the face of something unknown and unknowable."—David F. Krell, "Mortality," *Encyclopedia of Ethics* (London: Routledge, 2001), http://search.credoreference.com.ezproxy1.acu.edu.au/content/entry/routethics/mortality/0. Accessed on June 14, 2012.

[145] The New King James Version translates *Sha`ah* as 'And the Lord *respected* Abel and his offering.'

[146] Veling, ""For You Alone": A Reading of Transcendence and Relationship in Emmanuel Levinas," 10.

previously— that addresses this problematic and therefore we intend to fill this lacuna and thus contribute to contemporary SDA ecclesiological knowledge. Through a contextual ecclesiology of dialogue, remnant ecclesiology can exercise a critical theological reflection on the past experiences of God's remnant people in salvation history, as well as being opened and faithful to the present and future calling of the SDA community of faith, which identifies itself as God's remnant people.

In our next chapter, we will examine the results of our case study on the lived experiences and faith narratives of the participants to this study. We will explore their local church experiences in terms of *Otherness* and describe how the relationship with the *Other* is redefining the self-understanding of the SDA community of faith in the postmodern context of mission.

Results of the Case Study: An Inductive Reflection
of the SDA Self-Understanding

4.0: <u>Introduction</u>

The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on the self-understanding of the SDA community of faith in the light of the results of our case study. This reflection will be carried from the perspective of a contextual ecclesiology of dialogue. As it has been explained in Section 3.4, this contextual approach to SDA remnant ecclesiology seeks to mediate the theological meaning of the remnant through a dialogue between the *past experience* of God's remnant people as witnessed in Bible stories and kept alive through faith traditions, and the *contemporary experience* of the ecclesiological self-understanding of SDA believers in the postmodern context of Otherness.

As we mentioned in Chapter 1, self-understanding involves the action of self-clarification and self-examination. The former is the effort on behalf of a religious community to remember what its tradition stands for, to be critically conscious of the 'experiences', 'insights', 'attitudes', 'principles', 'its ultimate claims' and how its principal teachings mediate meaning in the community. The latter is the endeavour to validate the authenticity of one's religious position, to establish whether it is based on a 'religious conviction' or on 'mere assertion.'[1] Minear indicates that a group self-understanding results 'from a dominant image of itself' which is often embedded in its subconscious. It is 'is never complete' and therefore each generation has to revisit its self-descriptors in order not to only learn what the 'church truly is' but in order for it to become 'what it is not.'[2]

In the following section, we outline the tools we used for our exploratory case study, the type of questions that informs the survey and the e-interviews, as well as the criteria for the selection of our participants and the average participation of respondents. Next, we will present the results we obtained from our case study on the self-understanding of a small cross-section of SDA believers, who are engaged in the postmodern context of mission. Finally, we will answer our main research question which seeks to understand the extent the SDA church

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[1] We referred to Heschel on p.13 of this dissertation.
[2] We discuss Minear's insights on pp.15–16 of this study.

self-understanding as God's remnant people or a people having a remnant message is being transformed through the process of doing mission in the context of postmodernity. Based on the results of our survey, we will justify our main thesis which consist in demonstrating how SDA believers engaged in mission are redefining their present self-identity. We will argue that our survey and interview results reveal that the lived experience of this specific group of SDA believers show that their SDA identity is experienced in terms of an asymmetric relationship of proximity: attachment, uniqueness and difference to their own SDA church and the universal church.

4.1: <u>The Case Study: A Description</u>

 The case study aims for simplicity and clarity in its layout and presentation. It consists of two main sections:

1. An online survey using Survey Monkey as our internet tool.[3]
2. E-interview through email conversations.[4]

The online survey is composed of 29 questions in mixed mode: multiple choice and open-ended questions that take about 25 minutes to complete, increasing the rate of response because it is time saving. Thirty-four participants took part in the survey with an average response of 31. The questions were subdivided under three categories of church life.

Section 1: Church Experience—13 questions that include demographics and level of church attendance satisfaction.

Section 2: Mission Experience—eight questions related to involvement in church outreach activities, level of commitment to community services and financial support.

Section 3: Church Self-understanding—eight questions containing theological questions: images of the church, interfaith and interreligious relationship, and the concept of the remnant.

The e-interview engaged in a reflective discussion in order to explore and dig out the living faith narratives and experiences of the church members expressed in words, actions, memories, insights, joys, pains, vision and dreams in the context of mission. Our email discussion focuses on two questions aiming at a deeper analysis and a thick description of

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[3] The summary of the overall survey results is found in Appendix A, pp.166–201.
[4] The narratives and scripts of the e-interviews are put in Appendix D: 10, pp.225–230.

church as an experience. Fifteen participants out of the initial 34 respondents took part in the e-interview. The email conversations focused on two dimensions of the meaning of church for the believers:[5]

1. What does church mean for you?
2. What does it mean for you to be self-identified as the remnant church?

We collected data over a period of six months for this exploratory[6] case study. Our data sources were SDA believers from selected churches. The common criterion for their selection was that all the believers belonged to church congregations in the Western world who are sensitive to the postmodern and secular context of mission. This criterion was used because the purpose of this research is to find out to which extent mission determines and shapes the self-identity of SDA church communities, especially in the postmodern Western context. One church community was selected from the Center for Secular and Postmodern Studies' website and three other churches were contacted through personal networking with SDA church leaders who are intentional in developing SDA congregations which are relevant for mission in the context of postmodernity. Participants who responded to the invitation of their pastors to volunteer for this investigation were sent a formal letter seeking their consent and describing their responsibility in filling a survey and completing an online email interview. The participants are from faith communities in countries including Australia, Denmark, France, and the United States. The study is delimited to the post-Christian Western cultural context.

During the initial stage of selecting participants, we faced a few hurdles, namely: the difficulty of gathering a group of participants to participate in the project, mainly because participants were slow to respond to invitations to participate in the research project. Though it was initially planned to carry field observations and to conduct face-to-face interviews to collect lived data experience, we had to abandon the initial plan because participants were not willing to commit time to this process. We found out that computer-mediated research online using instruments like surveys and e-interviewing helped to resolve the time constraint that both the researcher and participants were facing. This experience makes us agree with other online researchers as to the benefits of the internet, though we recognise that this type of research is not applicable to all projects. As it has been observed, 'like all research

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[5] See Appendix D: 10 for the email scripts and narratives, pp.225–230.
[6] See Section 1.8 for method of data collection.

methods, online survey research has benefits and drawbacks; the method works well for some research projects but is by no means an appropriate data collection tool for all projects.'[7] In the next section, we will present the results we obtained from surveying and interviewing a small cross-section of SDA believers about their self-understanding. We will start with the overall survey (Appendix A)[8] followed by the online interviews.[9]

4.2: <u>Survey Data: A Cross-section Analysis of SDA Believers' Self-understanding</u>

This section presents the results of the data we gathered from the online Survey Monkey survey and the email interviews. We discuss the results of the participants' understanding of the idea of the remnant church in terms of such factors like age, gender, mission involvement, interfaith relationship, self-identity and the meaning of church. We used Rodriguez's six views of the prevailing notion of the remnant concept in contemporary Seventh-day Adventism to determine which notions were the dominant ones[10] Details of the overall and comparative results are placed in the appendices A, B, C, D: 1–9 and the email interviews in Appendix D: 10. We will indicate the appropriate cross-referencing in square brackets during the course of our analysis—for example, [Appendix A: Q.1].

4.2.1: <u>Age and Church Self-Understanding:</u>

We compare[11] the overall survey answer to Q.23[12] to Q.2,[13] which is related to gender. We wanted to find out the degree of variation in self-understanding across generations. The following results were obtained.

A. <u>Overall Survey Answers to Q. 23 [Appendix A:Q.23]:</u>[14]

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[7] Valerie M. Sue and Lois A. Ritter, eds. "Sampling," 2.

[8] Appendix A, pp.166–201.

[9] Appendix D:10, pp.225-229.

[10] We listed those views in Section 1.2 "Background to the Study," p.14.

[11] We use Survey Monkey tool's 'comparison' rules to cross-tabulate data.

[12] Q.23 deals with the six current existing interpretations about the remnant concept. See Section 1.2, p.14. For the results, see Appendix A, Q.23, p.195.

[13] Appendix D: 1, p.210.

[14] p.195.

83.33% responded that God's remnant people included both SDAs and non-SDAs and 13.33% says that the remnant is an invisible entity that describes God's peoples rather than people.

B. Comparing Age group and Self-understanding: Q.23 : 2 [Appendix D:1][15]

- 100% aged 21-29 sees God's remnant people as including both SDAs and non-SDA.
- 88.87% aged 30–39 also describes God's remnant as inclusive of SDAs and non-SDAs.
- 80% aged 40–49 says that God's remnant people include both SDAs and non-SDAs.
- 100% aged 50–59 answers that God's remnant people comprise SDAs and non-SDAs.

There was no major variation across generations and one can say that the self-understanding of the believers is definitely inclusive, not centred on the SDA church itself as being the remnant church.

4.2.2: Gender and Church Self-Understanding

Overall Survey answers to Q.2: [Appendix A: Q.2][16]
A. 50% of the respondents were female and 50% were male.
B. Comparing Female Gender and Self-Understanding: [Appendix D:2][17]
- 80% of female sees God's remnant people as including of SDAs and non-SDAs.
- 13.33% answers that it is an invisible entity that describes God's *peoples* rather than people.
- Female respondents also have an inclusive outlook on who constitute God's remnant people and some attaching a plural connotation to it when using the term 'peoples' instead of '*people*.'

C. Comparing Male Gender and Church Self-understanding: [Appendix D:3][18]

- 86.67% males answer that God's remnant people include SDAs as well as non-SDAs.
- 13.33% sees the remnant as invisible entity that describes God's peoples rather than people.
- 13.33% says it is not yet a reality and is still future.
- 13.33% describes the remnant as the SDA church, God's faithful end-time people.

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[15] p.210.
[16] p.167.
[17] p.212.
[18] p.214.

The male perspective is similar to the female population and also tends to be inclusive and pluralistic. In contrast, a smaller percentage describes it in terms of an eschatological future reality. Therefore, it does not apply to the SDA church now. In contrast to the female respondents, where none adheres to the traditional exclusive position of the SDA church being God's only remnant people, a minority of male respondents (13.33%) accepts the exclusive perspective that has dominated SDA hermeneutical historical tradition

4.2.3: <u>Mission Experience and Church Self-Understanding</u>

In order to understand the correlation between the believers' lived experience in mission and their church's self-understanding, we first apply Survey Monkey text analysis[19] to explore the key thoughts and words or phrases of our respondents' answers to Q.14, which is an open-ended question [Appendix A:Q.14].[20] Then, we categorise these key thoughts under seven distinct categories, each category represented by a specific colour [Appendix D:4],[21] namely: 1.Bible Teaching; 2. Community Services; 3. Friendship Evangelism; 4. Kid's Outreach; 5. Mission Overseas; 6. Prayer Ministry; 7. Worship and Singing.

We then compared their mission narratives with their understanding of what it means to be God's remnant people [Appendix D: 5].[22] Those who are more involved in mission, such as community services, mission overseas, Bible teaching, friendship evangelism, were also more likely to have an inclusive interpretation of God's remnant people. They answered that God's remnant people includes SDAs and non-SDAs [Q.23:2, Appendix D: 5].

This is in continuity with a strong trend within the SDA hermeneutic tradition that has been emphasising the *missio Dei* dimension of remnant ecclesiology.[23] Actually, in the overall survey summaries, the majority of respondents (83.33%) answered that God's remnant people includes SDAs and non-SDAs in contrast to 6.67% of those who hold to the *missio ecclesiae* view and consequently interpret that the SDA church is God's faithful end-time people [Appendix A, Q.23].

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[19] https://www.surveymonkey.com/blog/en/blog/2011/02/01/text-analysis/, Accessed on December12, 2013.
[20] pp.182–183.
[21] pp.216–217.
[22] p.218.
[23] We refer to our discussion on the doctrinal development of remnant ecclesiology and the statement on *Questions on Doctrine*, [Section 2.4.2, pp.78–80] which explain how remnant ecclesiology has been hinging on a tension between two views of mission: *missio Dei* and *mission ecclesiae*.

4.2.4: Christian Affiliation, Personal Faith Identity and Church Self-Understanding:

Q.25 asks the participants 'Which Christian denomination best describes your church? (Please Choose only one answer.)' 46.88% identifies their church uniquely to the SDA Christian tradition and 21.88% their church with the SDA and Protestant tradition as well [Appendix A:Q.25].[24]

Comparing answers of Q.25 to the position of those who view that God's remnant people includes Adventists and non-Adventists [Q.23:2, Appendix A],[25] 43.48% link it to the SDA organisation and 17.39% connect it with both SDA and Protestant [Appendix D: 7].[26] Also, 26.09% of those who identify with Q.23:2 'God's remnant including both SDA and non SDA' describe their denominational identity as SDA and evangelical [Appendix D: 7].[27] On the contrary, those who view the SDA church only as God's remnant identify themselves uniquely as SDA, as well as evangelical and SDA. But though it gives us a 50% result, it is insignificant because it represent only one response [Appendix D: 6].[28]

Q.26 seeks to understand how the participants describe themselves, rather than the SDA organisation, as in Q.25. It asks the following question: 'Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as an SDA, a Protestant, an evangelical Christian, a nondenominational Christian or something else?' [Appendix A, Q.26][29] 76.67% say they are SDA, 10% perceive themselves as Protestant and 6.67% as nondenominational Christian. When we compare their answers to Q.26 with how they view the remnant church, among those who view it as including SDA and non-SDA [Appendix D:6],[30] 76.19% self-identified with SDA and 9.52% connect with Protestant and for those who linked God's remnant people with SDA only, 100% identified themselves as SDA. Interestingly, when asked, 'Do you identify with any of the following religions?' [Q.29—referring mainly to World religions—Appendix A],[31] the majority responded 'Christianity'—74.19%.

We observed that the majority of our respondents describe their church as the SDA church and not Protestant or evangelical, though there is a minority leaning in this direction. On a

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[24] p.197.
[25] p.195.
[26] p.220.
[27] Ibid.
[28] p.219.
[29] p.198.
[30] p.219.
[31] p.201.

personal faith level, the believers mainly consider themselves SDA. In both cases—organisational or personal—even those who see God's remnant people as including SDA and non-SDA still self-identified themselves as SDA. Overall, in terms of the world religions, the majority identify themselves with Christianity rather than the specific traditions within it.

4.2.5: <u>Scriptures and Self-Understanding:</u>

Given the fact that the SDA church has articulated its self-understanding as the remnant church based on its prophetic hermeneutical system,[32] we compare the participants' interest in prophetic scriptures and their views on remnant ecclesiology. The overall survey shows that 42.42% were moderately interested and 24.24% were very interested in Bible prophecies from the books of Daniel and Revelation [Appendix A, Q.28].[33] Comparing Q.28 and Q.23:2, we observed that among those who describe the remnant as including SDA and non-SDA, 25% were very interested and 50% moderately interested in the apocalyptic prophecies from the books of Daniel and Revelation [Appendix D:8].[34] No specific conclusion can be drawn from this fact except that it indicates that those SDA believers who are more or less interested in Bible prophecies also hold to an inclusive self-understanding of the SDA church.

4.2.6: <u>Views on the Remnant, Images of the Church and Self-Understanding</u>

In Q.24 [Appendix A, Q.24],[35] we gave participants choices on the best image they think would better describe their church.[36] 39.39% likens it to the body of Christ, 21.21% says it is a group of great and committed friends, 18.18% prefers the communion of all God's faithful people from all Christian churches, and 3.03% to the faithful remnant people of God.

Then, we proceed to compare the answers of Q.24 to Q.23:1 and Q.23:2, which asks about their views on the ecclesiological notion of the remnant. Among those who choose to answer that the remnant includes both SDA and non-SDA, 40% prefer to describe the SDA church as the body of Christ, 24% identifies it as a communion of all God's faithful people from all

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[32] As we observed in our literature review, the hermeneutic community of faith played an important role in interpreting the biblical motif of the remnant. *Questions on Doctrine* states that the views on the remnant were a logical result of the SDA prophetic system of interpretation, especially the interpretation of the pericope of Revelation 12–14. See p.55, cf. n. 78.

[33] p.200.

[34] p.221.

[35] p.196.

[36] Q.24 is multiple choice with 'Other' as an option. For those who gave other descriptions of the church, see Appendix A, Q.24 under 'Other'.

Christian churches, 20% perceives it like a community of friends and 4% to the remnant people of God [Appendix D:9].[37]

For those who indicate that the SDA church is God's faithful end-time people, 50% says that the SDA church is God's faithful end-time people, and 50% compare it to a caring and loving family.

Overall, participants who had an inclusive self-understanding of the ecclesiological concept of the remnant also used more open church images to describe their community of faith such as 'the body of Christ' or 'a communion of all God's faithful people'.

This leads us to further inquire on the deeper meaning of church for our participants.

4.3: E-Interview Results: A Small Cross-Section Data Analysis of SDA Believers' Self-understanding

Therefore, we engaged in email conversations over a two-month period to dig out their personal stories and scripts seeking to narrate a 'thick' description of their self-understanding.

We ask two questions to 30 participants who responded to the survey and received only 15 responses in return. The questions were:

1. What does the church mean for you?
2. What does it mean for you to be self-identified as a Seventh-day Adventist?

The 15 participants' complete e-interviews scripts and stories are found in Appendix D: 10 and we will be referring to each story in the course of our analysis. Each story will be cross-referenced in square brackets and marked as, for example, [Appendix D: 10, N.1:1or 2] where '[N.1:1 or 2]' refers, for example, to the narrator 1's [N.1] answers to question 1 or 2. When we compare their stories with some specific questions answered in the survey, we will cross-reference these as [Appendix C, N.1:Q.23–26] to explain and show how Narrator 1, for instance, responded to Q.23–26 related to the SDA church self-understanding in the survey. The overall survey results and its specific related question will be indicated like the following example: [Appendix A, Q.1]

We privileged those stories and want to encounter them as the truthful experiences of SDA believers' description of their self-understanding and of the meaning they derived from their

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[37] p.229.

community of faith. This brings us to our next question: How do these narrators relate the meaning and reality of church and self-understanding in their scripts on their church experience? We will approach this question from the perspective of alterity, especially Levinas's analysis on 'otherness'. Veling has shown how, for Levinas, alterity plays itself and unfolds in an asymmetric relationship of attachment/proximity and difference/uniqueness.[38] It is in the light of this 'asymmetric' relationship that characterises alterity that we will consider the narratives of the participants' self-understanding and meaning.

Though seemingly fragmented, disconnected and with diverse orientations, these experiences and personal scripts are woven in the single story of alterity and proximity. They are plural yet with a singular common theme: *the inseparability of difference*. There is no project of assimilation, a desire to turn the *other* into the *same* but on the contrary to assume difference—contradictory as it may seem—as constituting the deepest meaning of church unity and what it means to be self-identified as an SDA.

As we said in our introduction, self-understanding is a continuous process of self-clarification and examination for a religious group that involves a critical awareness of its 'experiences', 'attitudes', 'teachings and principles'. It is through such a process of critical examination that the community of faith ascertains the authenticity of its claims and aspirations. Let us now consider how this relationship of attachment/proximity and difference/uniqueness manifests itself in three specific dimensions of church life: 1. The relationship between the local and universal church; 2. The pastoral life of the church; 3. The mission of the church.

4.3.1: The Local and Universal Church: Proximity and Attachment/Uniqueness and Difference

Narrator 1 speaks of the local church as a community of believers and for him to be identified as God's remnant people means to be connected to a worldwide family (Attachment/Proximity) who despite their different interpretations about the meaning of the remnant still remain his family (Difference) [Appendix D:10,N.1:Q.2].[39] Comparing his script with the answers, he gave to Q.23–26 in the survey [Appendix C, N.1:Q.23–26],[40] we find that he identifies with the Adventist Protestant tradition but defines himself as an SDA. He is,

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[38] Veling, "'For You Alone': A Reading of Transcendence and Relationship in Emmanuel Levinas." See our discussion of Veling's arguments on p.117-118 of this thesis.

[39] p.225.

[40] p.206.

however, not concerned with being self-identified as the remnant church. On one hand, we can see his attachment to a local community and his proximity to a global family but, on the other hand, his difference and uniqueness in relation to this local community and global family: He is both Protestant and SDA and feels disconnected from the self-description of remnant.

Narrator 2 also describes the reality and meaning of his self-understanding as an SDA believer in terms of the two poles of proximity/attachment and difference/uniqueness. The local church is a place where he can be accepted for himself (uniqueness) and being an SDA means belonging to a global community (Attachment/Proximity) [Appendix D: 10, N.2: Q.1&2].[41] Like for Narrator 1, when Narrator 2's script was compared with the survey [Appendix C, N.2: Q.23–26],[42] it is shown that he considers himself to be an evangelical and SDA (difference/uniqueness) and describes the SDA church as a communion of all God's people from all Christian churches—attachment/proximity. His views of the remnant was both inclusive and exclusive and shows the tension of proximity and difference because his answers [Appendix C, N-2][43] indicate that God's remnant people pointed to the SDA community of faith but was at the same time was *other than* and not the *same as* the SDA church.

For Narrator 6, church means to be part of a 'grace-based multinational' gathering of culturally relevant worshippers—Proximity/Attachment and to be identified as an SDA means to distinguish oneself by the hope in Christ's second coming and a spirit-filled lifestyle—uniqueness in belief and difference in lifestyle—[Appendix D: 10, N.6:1&2].[44]

Comparing his story to his answers in the survey [Appendix C, N.6, Q.23–26],[45] he describes the SDA church as 'protestant and SDA'—difference in Christian tradition and uniqueness—but also 'a communion of all God's faithful people from all Christian churches' (proximity and attachment to the larger body of Christ).

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[41] p.225.
[42] p.206.
[43] p.206.
[44] p.226.
[45] p.207.

4.3.2: The Pastoral Life of the Church: Proximity and Attachment: Uniqueness and Difference

How do the believers live their Christian life in terms of fellowship, worship, service and teaching of the word? Here again, we observe the interplay of the asymmetric relationship of Proximity/Attachment and Uniqueness/Difference. Church life is expressed through friendships, togetherness, fellowship, a sense of belonging to a family and worship. The language of mutuality and reciprocity is predominant in the scripts as well as phrases and sentences that conveyed difference and uniqueness: 'different denominations', 'my choice', 'different people being together', 'understanding one's place in society.'

Narrator 9 finds meaning in church where he meets with friends he identifies as fellow believers [Appendix D: 10, N.9].[46] It is a relationship of affinity that corresponds to his description of the SDA church as the body of Jesus Christ [Appendix C, N.9].[47] He understands himself as an SDA adhering to the biblical teachings of the church [uniqueness] but recognises that God's people is not the same as the SDA community: 'God has his people in many corners of the world under many different denominations, walks of life and names' —Difference—[Appendix D:10,N.9:Q.2].[48]

Narrator 5 finds meaning in the fact that the church is the 'collective body of all believers in Jesus Christ' [Appendix D: 10, N.5:Q.1][49] who are 'like minded'—Proximity-attachment— but he distinguishes himself by his choice to be an SDA based on the experience he describes as 'Adventist beliefs most closely align with my understanding of Scripture' [difference] [Appendix D: 10, N-5:Q.2].[50]

Narrator 4 succinctly brings forth the rapport of mutuality and difference that is woven in the daily interactions of church believers when she says that the meaning of church for her 'is a place where very different people are able to be together' (Proximity/Difference). Being an SDA is to be connected with others and not feeling 'alone'—Attachment— [Appendix D: 10, N.4].[51]

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[46] p.227.
[47] p.208.
[48] p.227.
[49] p.226.
[50] p.226.
[51] p.225.

Comparing her narrative with Q.24 in the survey [Appendix A, Q.24],[52] we notice that she describes the church as the body of Christ and the remnant church as inclusive [Appendix A, Q.23:2].[53] The concept of attachment is implied in the way some narrators identify themselves as part of and belonging to a caring family. For instance, Narrator 8's script [Appendix D: 10, N-8],[54] as well as his answers compared to Q.23–26 in the survey [Appendix C, N.8:Q.24],[55] points to the church as a caring family. He feels close to this 'family' but through this 'family experience' he comes to understand his own uniqueness in society. His self-understanding as an SDA rests on this sense of uniqueness in the world, it 'means I understand my place in the world and how I identify with the Adventist family'—uniqueness— [Appendix D: 10, N–8].[56]

For Narrators 11 and 14, worship is a time of proximity and attachment, uniqueness and difference. Narrator 11 is involved in a meaningful way in leading out in music as part of the worship services of his community of faith and through his music ministry 'ministers to others in a way that is touching and effective' for the believers. In this way, he is close to the people and in this way stays involved—proximity—[Appendix D-10, N–11].[57] Despite his struggles and weaknesses—difference—worshippers accept him for his uniqueness, for who he is. 'I am human,' he says. His own weaknesses and shortcomings evoke in others a desire to serve God 'just as we are'. He identifies with his church by being a model of service despite his shortcomings. Narrator 14 is confronted with the reality of the Holy Spirit preparing her to lead worship at church. She feels connected and close to the presence of the Holy Spirit and invites her worship team to pray and seek the Holy Spirit's guidance. Worship is to be in proximity with the Holy Spirit. Her self-understanding is rooted in her relationship with God who changes her life and is not necessarily linked to a church organisation [Appendix D: 10, N.14].[58] Her religious self-description in the survey (Appendix A) as being a non-denominational person—appendix A: Q.26[59]—corroborates with her answer when the latter is compared to Q.23 [Appendix C, 10, N.14].[60]

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[52] p.196.
[53] p.195.
[54] P.227.
[55] P.208.
[56] p.227.
[57] p.228.
[58] p.229–230.
[59] p.198.
[60] p.209.

4.3.3: <u>Mission Experience: Proximity and Attachment: Uniqueness and Difference</u>

Some narrators reflect on their self-understanding and describe what church means for them in relation to the mission of the church. For instance, for Narrator 3, the church has meaning for him because it is the embodiment of Jesus Christ for effectuating change in the world. As he puts it, 'the church is God's change agent in the world.' He gives an example of what it means to be church in mission through a video clip he shared with us. The video clip is a song by Casting Crowns entitled "Does anybody hear her?"[61] One of the lines says: 'Does anybody hear her? Can anybody see?' The lyrics of the song translate the narrator's consciousness that mission is about the 'face of the other' interrogating the ecclesia. The church is in proximity to the needs of the 'other' but the latter with his/her needs is unique and different. The meaning of the church is not contained in the church's self-thinking but on how the face of the 'other' prompts the ecclesia to think about itself in the light of the other. Through his story and experiences he engages us in reflecting on the meaning and self-identity of the church in the light of the 'Other', in terms of attachment and difference [Appendix D: 10, N-3].[62]

Narrator 7 focuses her meaning of church on a personal encounter with God: 'God, I want to see you; God, I want to hear you'. This God-experience engages the whole of her body and draws her in a relationship of proximity and attachment with the divine, an experience comparable to Narrator 14's intimate fellowshipping with the Holy Spirit. At the same time, she is driven to encounter others through transformational mission: 'Jesus called us to be a movement that impacts others' [Appendix D: 10, N-7].[63] This conviction is also reflected in her understanding that among others 'the remnant is to be understood as a movement for social resistance and justice' [Appendix C, N-7].[64]

Narrator 13 invites the church to focus on the needs of the other and not on 'do's and don'ts' because 'we can overshadow our primary mission with do's and don'ts . . . stuff!' For him, the mission of the church has priority over the church's own agenda. He shares a song by Brandon Heath with us called "Jesus in disguise".[65] The song is all about the church failing to recognise the face of Jesus in life's seemingly trivial events or happenings. The song has similar resonance with Jesus' words: 'I was hungry, I was thirsty. I was naked . . .' (see Matthew 25:31-46). The uniqueness and difference of the needs of the other escape the

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[61] See Appendix E for the full script of the song, p.231. We include this script to demonstrate how believers experience otherness and how such an experience influences what it means to be church.
[62] p.225.
[63] p.227.
[64] p.207.
[65] See Appendix E for the script of the song, p.231.

control of the ecclesia, of its 'do's and don'ts'. On the contrary, it is the other—'Jesus in disguise'—who ordains and commands the ecclesia. As Levinas reflects, the other '[f]rom behind the bearing he gives himself . . . in his appearance, he calls to me and orders me from the depths of his defenceless nakedness'[66] [Appendix D-10,N-13].[67]

Narrator 15 explains that her self-identity is best expressed in the connection she has with her church family. She entertains a relationship of attachment and at the same time stresses her uniqueness and difference from the church family. The difference is expressed in this way— 'Even when I may not agree with every member of my family I still love them.'— and the proximity is reflected in the following sentence, 'It means connection. . . . In every part of the globe there are people my heart connects with' [Appendix D: 10, N.15].[68] In her email interview, she refers to a YouTube video that shows that for her the church means mission and discipleship. It is the mission that defines what church really means.[69]

4.4: The Challenge to Contextualise Remnant Ecclesiology.

This exploratory case study that looks at how a cross-section of SDA believers define themselves and the meaning of church in the context of postmodern mission first reveals that the majority of respondents [83.33%, Appendix A,Q:23][70] adhere to the inclusive view that God's remnant includes Adventists and non-Adventists. Also, 39.39% use the image of the 'body of Christ' to describe the SDA church, 21.21% depicts it as a group of 'great and committed friends' and only 3.03% identifies it with the image of God's remnant people in the Bible [Appendix A, Q:24].[71] Next, while reflecting further on their deeper understanding of the meaning of church and what it means to be self-identified as an SDA, we find out that they self-examined and self-clarified their identity as SDA in terms of an asymmetric relationship of proximity and attachment, uniqueness and difference. In our lived observation of these believers, we came to the conclusion that both in the survey and the online interviews, these believers—regardless of age and gender—describe their self-identity in regard to three expressions of church life (the local and universal life, the pastoral life and the mission life) in terms of a relationship of proximity and attachment, of uniqueness and difference.

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[66] *On-Thinking-of-the Other entre nous*, 202.
[67] p.229.
[68] p.230.
[69] The web link for the You Tube clip is also found on p.230.
[70] p.195.
[71] p.196.

Therefore, the ecclesiological task for the SDA hermeneutic community of faith is to be able to articulate a remnant ecclesiology that resonates with God's remnant people's experiences in the past as testified throughout Scriptures and the self-understanding of believers in the present postmodern context of mission expressed in an asymmetric relationship of proximity and attachment, of uniqueness and difference. As we discussed in Section 3:4, contextualising remnant ecclesiology means mediating the theological meaning of the remnant through a dialogue between the past experiences of God's remnant people witnessed in Bible stories and kept alive through faith traditions, and the *contemporary* experience of the community of faith's self-understanding in the postmodern context of Otherness. This process of contextualisation of God's message of salvation involves the important task, as Olagunju reminds us, of adapting "God's eternal message without changing the core essence."[72]

The core essence of remnant theology in the Old Testament refers to the Israelites who suffered major natural disasters and wars but who survived, even when on the brink of extinction.[73] In the New Testament, the usage is more restricted but, in Romans 11:5, Paul uses it to refer to a spiritual remnant saved by the gospel of grace and who 'survive' the spiritual apostasy of Israel.[74] Lehmann in his exposition on chapter 12 of the book of Revelation interprets the woman to represent the church: "the woman represents the people of God without distinguishing between the Old and the New Testaments."[75] He comments that the 'rest' mentioned in Revelation 12:17 is an eschatological remnant who is connected with the larger history of the suffering woman or the surviving church: 'The eschatological remnant is not the only one that suffers persecution. The church symbolized by the woman, had the same experience. There is continuity between the woman and the remnant.'[76] He comments that, in the context of Revelation, the remnant church is not a separate, exclusive community but the "dazzling face' of the church itself 'its main attraction, and the symbol of its distinctiveness."[77]

The ecclesiological and hermeneutical task for the SDA community of faith is to contextualise the inclusive and exclusive dimensions of the biblical interpretation of God's remnant faith communities in the postmodern cultural context of otherness, distinguished by proximity and difference. This is the role and function of a contextual ecclesiology of dialogue that seeks to

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[72] Olagunju, "An evaluation of Bevans' models of contextual theology and its contributions to doing theology in the 21st century church.".41.

[73] *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 199.

[74] Ibid., 522.

[75] Lehmann, "The Remnant in the Book of Revelation," 104.

[76] Ibid., 105.

[77] Lehmann, "The Remnant in the Book of Revelation," 106.

articulate the faith experiences of God's remnant people in the past with the SDA believers' self-understanding in the present context of mission. This will be the subject under consideration in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.0: <u>Introduction</u>

In Chapter four we analyze the results of our case study of a cross-section of SDA believers engaged in mission in the postmodern context specifically in Western countries in order to apprehend their self-understanding as SDA believers. This study was initiated because the SDA church describes itself as God's remnant church and believes that its self-understanding as God's remnant people of prophecy is the catalyst for its mission in the world. Our objective was to find out if this particular self-description has been undergoing a transformation for SDA believers doing mission in the postmodern context.

Therefore, in the first place we reviewed official denominational and academic sources in order to better understand the SDA community of faith's understanding of remnant ecclesiology. Retracing the doctrinal development and hermeneutical history of remnant ecclesiology in Seventh-day Adventism, we reach the conclusion that the SDA community of faith as an ecclesial organisation gradually came to identify itself to the eschatological remnant people of God described in Revelation 12:17. The doctrine of the remnant church appeared in later fundamental beliefs of the SDA church organisation as late as 1942, nearly 80 years after the church was officially organised.[78] Even then, in some post-1942 doctrinal statements, the reference to the SDA organisation as God's remnant people did not appear.[79]

Following the doctrinal development of remnant ecclesiology, we observe that this doctrine was linked to an implicit ecclesiological understanding of mission. Sometimes the SDA hermeneutic community understood mission as *missio Dei* and, at times, it was expressed as *missio Ecclesiae*. When mission referred to the former, the doctrinal statement on the church's mission did not refer to a remnant group or people but, when mission was interpreted as the *missio Ecclesiae*, the term remnant appeared indicating that God is accomplishing his mission through the remnant church. As it has been shown, at least six different theological interpretations of remnant ecclesiology have become apparent during the second half of the

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[78]See Appendix F 'Doctrinal Development' chart (pp.232–236) and also pp.62–65 for a discussion on the progressive inclusion of the remnant concept in the statement of Fundamental Beliefs of SDA.
[79] For example, FB# 1930-1940, 1951. See Table:1, p.65.

20th century.[80] These different interpretations have been categorised under four positions by Martines.[81]

The fundamental theological question that remnant ecclesiology raises for the SDA community of faith is the following: Is it an inclusive or exclusive ecclesiology? If God's remnant people include all of God's faithful people, if there is a *potential*[82] and *precious* remnant as *Questions on Doctrine*[83] mentions among all different Christian church organisations[84] and even in other world religions, as Adventist contextual missiologists are claiming,[85] how should the SDA church as an ecclesial body defines its mission? An inclusive remnant ecclesiology is considered to have "far-reaching consequences for the Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiological identity and mission. If other Christians are already part of God's end-time remnant, on what ground is that determined[?] . . . If so, why do we have to invite them to become part of God's visible remnant church?"[86]

In the light of the missiological problematic that a remnant ecclesiology implies, we investigated a cross-section of SDA believers who were passionately involved in a specific context of mission, namely the postmodern context, but not indifferent to global mission. We carried out a six-month case study surveying and e-interviewing the 34 participants in the study. We find out that a majority of participants has an inclusive ecclesiological self-understanding expressed in an ambivalent relationship characterised by what we called a relationship of proximity and difference. Their inclusive attitude had no negative effect on

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[80] See Manuel Rodriguez, Section 1:2 "Background to the Study". Rodriguez identifies six views and claims that these different interpretations are indicative of the 'erosion' of the traditional belief that the SDA church is the remnant church.

[81] Martines has categorised the various views on the remnant under four positions: 1.The traditional view; 2. The Developmental view; 3. The Change view; 4. The Rejectionist view. See this dissertation, 56–57.

[82] *The SDA Bible Commentary* on Revelation 12:17 (a key text for remnant ecclesiology) has an inclusive interpretation of this verse and speak about God's potential remnant present in all Christian communities.— "Revelation," 71.

[83] *Questions on Doctrine*, 73–74. QOD is believed to be the catalyst of an inclusive approach to remnant ecclesiology. See in this study, J. Nam, n.155, p.78. Compare the comments of Frank M.Hasel, "The Remnant in Contemporary Adventist Theology" in Rodriguez, *Toward a Theology of the Remnant* , 164–165.

[84] Ibid., 164–165.

[85] For a provoking debate on contextualisation and Muslims as remnant, see Whitehouse, "Communicating Adventist Beliefs in the
Muslim Context": 75, 77–78.The debate on Contextualization Model-5 was engaged between Carlos J. Martin, on one hand, and Jerald Whitehouse and Jon Dybdahl, on the other hand.—J. Martin, "Questions on C-5": 34–41.

[86] Hasel, "The Remnant in Contemporary Adventist Theology," 165. Hasel explains that the SDA hermeneutic tradition has not been excluding other sincere Christians from the fellowship of God's remnant people. "In as much as these genuine Christians authentically live their faith to the best of their knowledge, the concept of the remnant does not automatically preclude the salvation of anyone or even everyone who is not part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church."—ibid., 165–166.

their involvement in mission.[87] Actually, the case study only confirms the inclusive understanding of remnant ecclesiology that has significantly characterised to a certain extent the SDA hermeneutic community of faith.[88]

In the light of this case study, as well as on the ecclesiological tension between *missio Dei* and *missio Ecclesiae* evidenced in our literature review, we want now to reflect on the inclusive nature of the self-understanding of the SDA community of faith. This reflection focuses on the unity in the body of Christ and the mission to world religions. It addresses the question of the relationship between the SDA church and the universal church from the perspective of interfaith relations and the contextualisation of faith in its mission to world religions. This critical reflection[89] on church unity and mission to non-Christian religions is pursued in the light of an ecclesiology of alterity. Remnant ecclesiology is an ecclesiology of alterity mediated through a contextual ecclesiology of dialogue. It is a dialogue that takes place between God's revelation of himself through scriptures and the context of mission. Through contextual dialogue, the community of faith seeks to critically engage the world in which the church cohabits (the church's present condition) with the text and tradition (the past experience) that have shaped it. Therefore, in the following sections, we shall look into the nature of revelation in relation to alterity, the significance of revelation and otherness for a

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[87]See their answers to Q.14, which relate to their engagement in missionary activities. Appendix A:Q.14, 182–183.

[88] For example, the SDA hermeneutic of faith has since its early Millerite emergence referred to God's invitation to his people to come out of 'Babylon'—a metaphor that referred to syncretistic religion. *Questions on Doctrine* and the *SDA Bible Commentary* have built on the early notion that God has a people of his own in all syncretistic faiths to describe this people as 'precious' and 'potential' remnant.

[89] André Birmelé has pointed out the inherent difficulty with ecclesiological reflection and research because the church is both the subject and object of its research. It has both a material dimension and a spiritual one. Any reflection and account of the church can reduce one of the church's dimensions to the other. "Seen from the standpoint of the theory of knowledge, ecclesiology belongs to a distinctive genre. The church is, generally speaking, both the subject and the object of its research, since the special preserve of ecclesiological research is the church itself. The main problem arises however from the difficulty of defining the church as an object of research. The same term *church* commonly denotes a spiritual entity as well as a number of very different realities: from matters of worship to ecclesiastical structures and authorities, from the local community to national and international organizations, from the worldly mission to sociological data, or even the simple designation of buildings. . . . If ecclesiological research limits itself to topics visible and accessible to human logic, namely the institution and forms of the institutional church and its history and sociology, it risks losing sight of the unique characteristic of the Church (as community of believers throughout time), its link with the divine reality of grace that is its true foundation. If research is focused on this last aspect, it can no longer resort to its usual scientific approach, and must instead employ images and analogies —just as, for example, Scripture and tradition emphasize conceptions of the Church as "God's people."'"—André Birmelé "Ecclesiology," *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology*, ed. Jean-Yves Lacoste (Routledge, 2004), Routledge Religion Online. Taylor & Francis. http://routledgeonline.com:80/religion/Book.aspx?id=w102_w102b239.2. Accessed on March 2, 2012.

critical foundation of unity in the body of Christ and, finally, the way an ecclesiology of alterity can engage the SDA community of faith in the intercultural context of mission.

5.1: <u>A Contextual Ecclesiology of Dialogue and Revelation</u>

What is alterity? What is revelation? Revelation is alterity. Revelation reveals God in his difference from the creature yet close and in proximity. He is the creator who is different from the creature who is different from him. God is other than and more than his created world, just as he is other than and more than the text of scriptures. Idolatry counterfeits God's revelation as other because it makes the creature's creation the object of his own desire. Any ideological master project for humanity's own salvation is motivated by the object of its own desire and ultimately has no space for otherness. Romano Penna distinguishes between a gnostic type of salvation where human salvation is simply understood as man "becoming aware of himself and his own original divine identity"[90] and salvation as God's historical intervention "to establish a new dialogical relationship with man; and in this relationship, man remains fully himself in the face of a God who is distinct from him."[91]

God's move and initiative to meet the other in Jesus Christ is the singular and particular mark of the Christian community of faith and the gospel proclamation. The biblical account of revelation explains what the otherness of the other means. It means the absolute infinite God who in Jesus Christ approaches us as the infinite other. Alterity is not dissolved or diluted through this encounter. Distance and proximity is maintained each in relation to the other. Justice and love is kept at equidistant. Through the atonement of Christ, humanity's mercy seat,[92] as the apostle Paul teaches, God demonstrates his eschatological justice "so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus Christ" (Romans 3:25-26). As Treanor comments, Christianity understands otherness through the Christ event: 'Qua Christ,

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[90] Romano Penna, "Salvation," *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology,* ed. Jean-yves Lacoste (Routledge Religion Online: Taylor & Francis, 2004), no page indicated in the actual reference.

[91] Ibid, no page indicated.

[92] The Greek word used here '*hilasterion*' means the propitiatory. It means cover or lid. It was used to designate the cover of the ark of the covenant or mercy seat, which in Hebrew is *kapporeth*. Its theological meaning points to the atonement and Paul uses it to describe Christ's expiation for sin or the cover for the sins of the human race. For a fuller explanation of these words, see W.E.Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words,* eds. Merrill F. Unger and William White (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 405.

God is both man and God, both profoundly like me and utterly unlike me; that is relatively and absolutely other.'[93]

Christian revelation offers a model of alterity anchored in Christ's ultimate dispossession on the cross. This model informs the orientation of a contextual ecclesiology of dialogue. The problem for all models of contextualisation hinges on the following dilemma: How does the gospel as a foreign and sometimes 'second' or even 'third' language be communicated to the recipient culture without reducing the gospel message (syncretism) or imposing it (religious imperialism)? How does the community of faith read the *gospel* through the cultural lens and how does it read the *culture* through the gospel lens while avoiding the pitfalls of either religious syncretism or religious imperialism?

The response of a contextual ecclesiology of dialogue to the core problematic of contextualisation theories is that it is possible to avoid either syncretism or religious imperialism by engaging the gospel and the culture in a continuous reciprocal-non-reciprocal, symmetric, non-asymmetric conversation. A contextual ecclesiology of dialogue is typified by an alterity that has its source in Christ's 'dispossession'[94] on the cross. The Christ who bridges distance between God and Man—Emmanuel, God with Us—was yet radically, absolutely different from humanity, without sin: "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Cor 5:21, cf. Heb 4:15).

Culture and gospel are in proximity, always approaching the other with mercy and love, seeking for mutual respect but they are also different from each other. They are unique and cannot be fully grasped by each other. Neither can the gospel fully understand the culture nor can the latter totally apprehend God's complete revelation in Jesus Christ. On one hand, for the church in mission, demographics study or sociological, anthropological, ethnographic and cultural market analysis lead the church in proximity to culture and help bridge the distance between gospel and culture, to better contextualise its mission but they can never master the 'otherness' of culture. On the other hand, God's revelation of love through the gospel of Jesus Christ can neither be seized through cultural paradigm and sources alone. For Christian believers, the gospel provides a peace that 'transcends all understanding' (Phil 4:7, cf. Eph

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[93] Here Treanor is attempting to compare and contrast Levinas's Jewish approach to God's alterity with Marcel's Christian approach: "It is easy to see that the religious orientation of Christianity differs from the biblical religions with respect to the absolute or relative alterity of God. The Christian belief in the incarnation of God as Christ immediately introduces a sense of non-absolute alterity into the otherwise absolute alterity of God."—Brian, *Aspects of Alterity: Levinas, Marcel, and the Contemporary Debate*, 163.

[94] An early Christian liturgical practice where the community of faith celebrates Christ's dispossession is the Philippians hymn: Phil 2:5. Christ did not seek to 'grasp equality' but divested himself—*kenosis*. Paul exhorts the Philippian community to have the same attitude as Christ (Phil 2:5).

2:14-17). No doubt Paul is referring to the peace Christians obtained freely from being justified through faith with God through Jesus Christ (see Rom 5:1). Paul prays that the believing church will only grasp the 'width', 'length', 'height' and 'depth' of the love of Christ but not the love itself, which he calls the 'unsearchable riches of Christ' (Eph 3:8). For unbelievers, such 'crucified love' is foolishness: 'For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing' (1 Cor 1:18). The 'foolishness of the cross' lies in the voluntary act of Jesus who 'did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing' (Phil 2:6-7). Christ's action of not being the 'same' as God but different in his self-emptiness or *kenosis* is remembered and celebrated by the early Christian community of faith in this early Christian liturgical hymn. The early Christian communities' self-understanding was framed within this relationship of alterity between God and Christ. The slave-servant is different from the God of power, authority and height but he is not absolutely different because as servant he remains in proximity and approaches the master with humility and 'humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross' (Phil 2:8).

Contextual ecclesiology mediates the task for an ecclesiology of alterity that has its source in Christian revelation and which takes for model the ultimate symbol of Christian revelation, the incarnation ministry of Jesus Christ. It is from the perspective of an ecclesiology of alterity mediated by a contextual ecclesiology of dialogue that we are going to undertake our goal of clarifying and examining[95] the SDA self-identity in relation to the universal church and world mission.

5.2: <u>The Ambivalent Nature of SDA Ecclesiological Self-Understanding: Its Missionary Origin</u>

An exclusive self-understanding of the biblical and theological remnant motif has contributed to the SDA church's ambivalent ecclesiological explanation of the nature of the church. On one hand, Fundamental Belief 11 describes the universal church[96] and Fundamental Belief 12

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[95] As we mentioned, self-understanding according to Abraham Heschel involves the task of clarification and self-examination.

[96] Fundamental Belief 11 describes the universal church: 'The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world to join together for worship, fellowship, instruction in the Word, the celebration of the Lord's Supper, service to all mankind and for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. The church derives its authority from Christ—who is the incarnate Word—and from the Scriptures, which are the written Word. The church is God's family. Its members live on the basis of the new covenant. The church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head. The church is the bride for whom Christ died that He might sanctify and cleanse her. At His return in triumph, He will present her to Himself a glorious church, the

explains the relation of the mission of the remnant church within the universal church: "The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days—a time of widespread apostasy—a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."[97] We attribute these two ambivalent ecclesiological descriptions of the church to two different visions of the mission of the church characterised by the tension between m*issio Dei* and *missio Ecclesiae* within Seventh-day Adventism.[98] Furthermore, this tension is translated in the 'hermeneutic of suspicion' the SDA church has applied in its interpretation of interfaith relations and the ecumenical movement.[99] The remnant church sees itself having a specific mission—*missio Ecclesiae*—within the broader universal church. Despite the fact that it remains critical toward interfaith relations and ecumenism, there is continuous humanitarian and spiritual collaboration between the SDA church and other Christian faiths.[100]

At the same time, the rise of religious pluralism in the Western context, migration movement from the south to the north, as well as the phenomenon of globalisation, have created a deeper awareness of openness of God's mission for the other—*missio Dei*.[101] For example, many SDA ethnic churches have been opened in Australia, Europe and North America during the past three decades. During the same period, the global mission of the SDA church has opened religious centres in different parts of the world to learn and study world religions in order to understand how to contextualise the gospel in those religious settings.[102] Furthermore, the congregational profile of local SDA churches, whether in Australia, Europe or North America, increasingly reflects the cultural pluralism present in these societies.

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faithful of all the ages, the purchase of His blood, not having spot or wrinkle, but holy and without blemish. (Genesis 12:3; Acts 7:38; Ephesians 4:11-15; 3:8-11; Matthew 28:19, 20; 16:13-20; 18:18; Ephesians 2:19–22; 1:22, 23; 5:23–27; Colossians1:17, 18.)'—http://www.adventist.org/en/beliefs/church/the-church/Accessed on April 4, 2012.

[97] Ibid.

[98] For a discussion on the tension between *missio Dei* and *missio Ecclesiae*, see Section 2.4.2, 78–80. This tension is implicit but it has not been expressed in those terms in the SDA literature we reviewed.

[99] In Section 2.4.3, we elaborate on the question of the hermeneutic of suspicion toward ecumenism.—p.80-83. Here, we point out that the hermeneutic of suspicion has its roots in the ambivalent ecclesiological interpretation between the universal church and the remnant church and its mission. The two diametrical approaches to mission—*missio Ecclesiae* and *missio Dei*—are evidenced in the doctrinal development of remnant ecclesiology and expressed in the Fundamental Beliefs.

[100] For the type of critique toward ecumenism and the kind of collaboration that is ongoing with other Christians, see Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 442–453.

[101] This does not mean that mission toward world religions is new. As early as 1887, the SDA church started to send missionaries to foreign lands. But it does mean that the SDA church is becoming deeply aware of contextualising its mission. For an overview of the beginning of SDA mission in historically non-Christian societies such as India and the Far East, see ibid., 223–224.

[102] For the different religious centres, visit https://am.adventistmission.org/global-mission-centers.

In our next two sections, we will consider the role that an ecclesiology of alterity can play in matters of interfaith relations and mission to world religions.

5.3: <u>Unity in the Body of Christ: Difference and Proximity</u>

The crucial theological divide in matters of interfaith dialogue and ecumenism is the importance the SDA church attaches to Saturday as the day of worship compared to the rest of Christianity which sees Sunday, the day of the resurrection of our Lord, as the day of worship. Katsumi Higashide has indicated in his doctoral thesis that an interfaith dialogue is possible on matters of Saturday-Sunday worship based on the historical antecedence of the coexistence of Saturday-Sunday worship practices in early Christianity.[103] Seventh-day Adventist Christianity legitimates Saturday as a universal day of worship for humanity based on the Genesis creation account, the authority of the Decalogue and the continuity of Sabbath-day worship among early Jews and Gentiles converts to Christianity during the formation phase of the Christian church in New Testament times. Traditional and historical Christianity claim that early Christian tradition supports Sunday as the day of worship because of Christ's resurrection, the Lord's Day. In various contemporary Christian traditions, the spiritual practice of a day of rest is being explored for its spiritual benefits.[104]

For SDA Christianity, the Sabbath identifies them as the remnant church. The SDA believers derived their profound sense of religious identity not from an affiliation with a religious organisation *per se* "but from a shared understanding of the significance of the Sabbath and the role of those who observed it."[105] As the 'other' Christian church within the larger Christendom, the SDA church has singularised itself in keeping the Sabbath rest and has been concerned that Sunday worship could be imposed on them ultimately.[106] This explains their fearful suspicion toward any mega ecumenical religious alliance that may acquire totalitarian intention and consequently aim at wiping away all differences within Christianity, especially

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[103] Katsumi Higashide, "Meanings of the Sabbath for worship in the Seventh-day Adventist Church" (PhD Thesis, Boston University, School of Theology, 2009).

[104] For example, see the studies of Marva J. Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Holy* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. Eerdmans Publishing, 1989); Ellen F. Davis, "Slaves or Sabbath-keepers: A biblical perspective on human work," *Anglican Theological Review,* Vol 83, No. 1 (2001); Arthur H. Becker, "Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting," *Lutheran Quarterly,* Vol 7, No. 3 (September 1, 1993); Thomas G. Long, "Receiving the day: Christian practices for opening the gift of time," *Theology Today,* Vol 58, No. 1 (April 1, 2001).

[105] Malcom Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*, 44.

[106] Schwarz observes that 'Adventists constantly reminded themselves that while the Protestant Reformation established the legitimacy of dissent it did not presuppose religious freedom or even toleration in the sense of free religious diversity in a single society.'—Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 445. For an analysis of Sunday legislation, see ibid., 444–450.

minority Christian groups. For them, religious liberty became a key issue in interfaith and ecumenical dialogue. It even explains why interfaith and ecumenical dialogue have never had any theological or missiological treatment but have always been explored and discussed by the church's department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL).[107] Being the essence of SDA self-identity, the Sabbath should be reflected upon within an ecclesiology of alterity and compassion, rather than suspicion and exclusiveness. The Sabbath should be reflected at the level of its deepest theological meaning. Catholic theologian André Wénin explains that the Sabbath is a sign of alterity:

> Consenting to limits of power and the profits and prestige it produces and recognizing the Other seem to be central elements of the sabbath symbolism. They are the two essential parameters of all covenants. Thus, it is no surprise that the sabbath is presented as the sign of the covenant between Israel and YHWH.[108]

Wénin shows that the relationship between the fourth commandment about Sabbath rest in the Decalogue (see Exodus 20:11) and the creation account of rest in Genesis 2:2-3 testifies to the fact that:

> The Creator stopped working and assumed a limitation, showing that his power is gentle by mastering his own mastery. And by withdrawing, he liberated a space for that which is other—the universe and especially mankind. In this sense, the sabbath is the day when man shows that he renounces his illusions of superpower and makes room for alterity and the possibility of justice in relations.[109]

The SDA community of faith can engage in a fruitful ecumenical project that can bring different ecumenical partners to reflect on the deeper meaning on how Sabbath can be a project for developing just and loving relationships within a vision of difference and proximity, an asymmetric-symmetric relationship. From the perspective of alterity, *the Sabbath is made for the other and not the other for the Sabbath.*[110] It is a vision that liberates

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[107] For example, it is the Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) that deals with interfaith relations at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: 'The PARL Department has the task of representing the world church to other religious bodies. This includes representation at the conference of secretaries of the Christian world communions and other inter-church and interfaith meetings. The PARL Director is also the secretary of the General Conference Council for Inter-church and Interfaith Relations and has the responsibility of the logistic for dialogues or conversations with other churches or faiths and meetings with religious leaders. While these conversations and relationships are important, they should not be misconstrued as compromising Adventist doctrines or practice.'—http://www.adventistliberty.org/more-about-parl. Accessed on May 3, 2012.

[108] André Wénin, "*Sabbath*," Vol. 3 of *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology,* ed. Jean-yves Lacoste (New York: Routledge, 2005), http://routledgeonline.com:80/religion/Book.aspx?id=w102_w102b724.1&searchterm=alterity. Accessed 12 May 2013. No page is indicated.

[109] Ibid.

[110] This is a twist on Jesus famous reinterpretation of the Sabbath: 'The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath' (Mk 2:27, NIV). In recent years, the church's department of SDA Youth has launched the Global Youth Day initiative, which aims at inspiring SDA youth for mission and service in the community on

the 'other' from the grasp of the 'same'. Digging deep and drinking from the waters of its own spiritual self-identity and in continuity with biblical revelation and Judaism, the SDA community of faith can move from an hermeneutic of suspicion toward ecumenism to an hermeneutic of compassion and responsibility toward the 'other' in the Christian faith. Living together in the body of Christ deepens fellowship and accentuates difference—the Sabbath being a symbol that preserves the memory of *difference* and resurrection Sunday pointing to the *unique*, new Christian identity acquired freely in Christ. A Christian Saturday-Sunday dialogue can enrich Christian self-identity in an act of remembering the two poles that constitute our deepest human identity: difference and uniqueness. These two dimensions of our humanity constitute the humanity of Christ himself, who being different and sinless was also unique in his proximity to our human needs, weaknesses and sufferings. Through an ecclesiology of alterity built around a contextual ecclesiology of dialogue, one can come to the critical realization that for the SDA community of faith, worshipping on the Sabbath day differentiates the SDA community of faith from other Christian churches. In making the Sabbath day a sign of the SDA identity, the SDA church can be drawn in proximity to other Christian communities through the act of remembering what constitutes the bipolar dimensions of human identity: difference and uniqueness.

The remembrance of the Sabbath has been for the SDA community of faith the mark of the church, the sign they have been choosing to signify the SDA identity as God's remnant people in a traditionally Western Judeo-Christian culture. In a post-Christian context the Sabbath like a distinct ecclesiological sign may still be understood albeit like a 'second religious language' by other Christian churches accustomed to a shared spiritual tradition, history and religious language and even for the postmodern mindset which privileged difference, the Sabbath may still be communicated as a sign of 'religious Otherness' even if understood as one understands a 'second language'. Saturday is a distinct sign of SDA Christian identity and can be a starting point of dialogue with other Christians but when it comes to SDA mission encountering the world religions for whom the Judeo-Christian cultural and historical language is a foreign language altogether, it is not so clear how the Sabbath can be a theological vehicle in the process of faith dialogue and the communication of the gospel to world religions outside of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Saturday. Behind the mere community activities is the SDA global church's intention to present the Sabbath day as a social sign for human investment. See http://gcyouthministries.org/EventsProjects/GlobalYouthDay.

5.4: Encountering World Religions in Mission: The Suffering Remnant, a Sign of Difference and Proximity

Where are we to look for the sign of difference and uniqueness of the SDA community of faith in the context of world mission? And how will this sign be in continuity or discontinuity with the Sabbath as the historical signifier of SDA identity in traditionally Christian and post-Christian western societies? The Global Mission Center has taken positive initiatives toward effective communication of the gospel in the context of world faiths such as developing the Global Religious Center, whose main objective is to facilitate conversation and build relationships with non-Christian religions. Also, guidelines that act like parameters to the process of contextualisation have been elaborated as safeguard against syncretism.[111] However, how can remnant ecclesiology stand for an inclusive, non-intrusive, non-syncretistic gospel power and witness that is culturally immanent and transcendent in the context of its mission to world religions? In looking for a sign to mark its identity in an inclusive way, the SDA community of faith should repent—in the sense of a turn—and look at the deeper meaning of the remnant that signifies 'survivors', those who have suffered and remain after a catastrophe. Suffering is the core human experience that the community of faith shares with other human beings. In the context of global natural disasters, war, calamities and economic oppression, which result in great human suffering, often in regions with non-Christian religious worldviews, remnant ecclesiology can be contextualised to take the form of an ecclesiology of suffering. Who is the *religious other* to whom the church is called to witness? The *religious other* is the face of the Muslim war refugee, the persecuted Hindu dalits crying for human rights, the young Hindu child engaged in forced child labour, young girls caught in sex slavery in Buddhist countries of south-east Asia. These people groups are 'survivors' of injustice, oppression, the rage of inhumane social structures and even religious persecution.

In that context, the SDA missionary community identifies itself with Christ in his suffering, the suffering servant who 'humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross' (Phil 2:8). The self-understanding of the church as God's remnant people takes a new dimension in the sense that, in this context, it fulfills the *missio Christi*. The SDA community of faith can engage with the 'religious other' in suffering and become one with the suffering

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[111] The Global Mission Issues Committee has developed guidelines for biblical contextualisation. See http://www.adventist.org/en/information/official-statements/guidelines/article/go/0/engaging-in-global-mission/

Christ: 'I was hungry . . . I was thirsty . . . I was naked . . . I was in prison' (see Mat 25:35-36). The SDA hermeneutic community of faith has traditionally read Revelation 12 in the light of the history of the suffering church symbolised by the woman who is persecuted and finds refuge in the wilderness. Revelation 12:17, which speaks about the rest of the posterity of the woman, has been identified as God's remnant people who bears the fury of Satan. According to the hermeneutic tradition of the SDA community of faith and its reading of Revelation 12, God's eschatological remnant (Revelation 12:17) and the faithful universal church (the woman) participate in a common history of suffering that is their distinctive sign: they remain faithful and obedient in the ruthless war waged against them by the devil. The question of suffering, persecution and martyrdom has been the object of thoughtful theological consideration and analysis in church literature.[112] The church suffers not to be saved but because it is saved through Christ. The Pauline interpretation of apostolic suffering reflects this reality of faith: 'For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body' (2 Cor 4:11, NIV).

In addressing the 'religious other' as the 'suffering other',[113] the suffering community of faith identifies itself with the broken, the weak, the survivors, the sufferers of all non-Christian faiths and when the SDA church carries the *missio Dei* by living in the midst of the 'religious other', the church discovers the full meaning of redemption through Jesus Christ. In the context of the 'suffering other', the 'religious other' is included in the fellowship of the suffering remnant that constitutes the fellowship of all the suffering children of God. It is a Christological and incarnational inclusion by virtue of its identification with Christ's suffering who through his death on the cross includes the community of all sufferers. Hence, the suffering remnant church (see Phil 3:10, 1 Pet 4:13, Col 1:24).[114] This inclusive contextualised approach centred on the 'religious other' as the 'suffering other' is non-intrusive and is respectful of cultural differences and is immanent because one is present in

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[112] For example, Dean Zweck discusses the arrival of early Lutherans as religious refugees in Australia and the question of suffering as a mark of the church.—Dean Zweck, "Suffering and persecution as a mark of the church: A perspective from Australia," *Lutheran Theological Journal,* Vol. 47, No. 3 (Dec, 2013): 162–172. Harold D. Hunter and Cecil M. Robeck Jr look at the phenomena of Christian persecution from an ecumenical perspective in the context of a theological conference on Pentecostals and Charismatics.—Harold D. and Cecil M. Robeck Jr (eds), *The Suffering Body: Respondingto the Persecution of Christians* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006). See also, B. J. Oropeza, "Churches under siege of Persecution and Assimilation: Apostasy in the New Testament Communities: The General Epistles and Revelation."

[113] On the question of theodicy and social theory, see W. S. F. Pickering in *Sociology and Theology-Alliance and Conflict*, eds. John Orme Mills, David Martin and W. S. F. Pickering (New York: St Martin's Press, 1980), 77–78.

[114] The SDA church is providing concrete answers to the social problem of human suffering through building of hospitals, respite care centres, medical research, humanitarian aid and a militant advocacy for healthy living. It has also adopted a position of noncombatancy and encourages its youth to provide medical assistance and chaplaincy in war situations. See http://healthministries.com/; http://www.adra.org.

the midst of the suffering culture but it also transcends it, pointing to the 'otherness of suffering'. One can never fully grasp the suffering of the other. His/her suffering is always different from my look, my interpretation of it. Suffering remains unique in the life of each person. The Christian's believer interpretation of the meaning of suffering will possibly exclude a Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim perspective on the question. But the Christian faith will seek to give meaning to human suffering in the light of God's revelation and solidarity in history through the incarnation of Jesus Christ who through his resurrection painted hope on each human tear, cry, grief and death. It is interesting to point out that John in his eschatological interpretation of the end of all suffering that 'there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain'[115] precedes it with a language akin to the incarnation—'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them' (Revelation 21:3)—language that echoes Matthew's 'Emmanuel God with us' (Matthew 1:23).

Remnant ecclesiology can be the beacon for this kind of hope that survives 'the old order of things.'[116] Like Christ, the suffering remnant is in solidarity and responsible for the face of the 'naked, the thirsty, the hungry, the prisoner'. The suffering remnant church does not attempt to answer the meta question of 'Why is there suffering in the world?' but rather tells the small narrative of 'Where is Jesus?' Jesus comes close to the experience of the 'Other' sufferer—in proximity but beyond the latter. Jesus provides mental, physical, social, emotional and spiritual freedom to all those oppressed by all types of sufferings. In the context of world religions, the Sabbath day stands both as a sign and a signifier of freedom and liberation for the 'religious other' who suffers. As a mark of SDA self-identity, the Sabbath is a sign of proximity and attachment to both the Christian 'Other' and the Religious 'Other' who is part of suffering humanity.

5.5: <u>Conclusion: Remnant Ecclesiology: Alterity and Inclusion</u>

The main thesis of this present study is that the mission praxis of SDA missional groups and faith communities in the postmodern Western pluralistic and secular society is redefining the self-identity of the community of faith. The purpose of this study was to find out to what extent the self-understanding of the community of faith as God's remnant people was in the process of transformation and change in the postmodern context of mission. We did a small case study on the self-understanding of a cross-cultural section of SDA believers who were

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[115] Ibid. See Revelation 21:4.
[116] The apostle John testifies to the eschatological day when God 'will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away' (Rev 21:3–4).

engaged in mission in the postmodern context. The overall results show that the majority had an inclusive self-understanding of the SDA church. For them, the SDA church is like the body of Christ, a global family and from this perspective they describe God's remnant people as including both SDAs and non-SDAs. Their inclusive ecclesiological understanding was not a deterrent for engagement in mission.[117] The majority described the meaning they derived from their church experiences in terms of a relation of alterity—Proximity/Attachment and Uniqueness/Difference.

The inclusive approach to the concept of the remnant is not in itself a new ecclesiological reality. On the contrary, the SDA community of faith has been struggling between an exclusive and inclusive self-identity throughout its history. Maurice Verfaillie in his doctoral thesis has shown how SDA religious identity is in tension between an 'identity-project' which is dynamic and opened to a deeper understanding of the Gospels for contemporary society and a 'withdrawal–identity' which emphasises separation, differences and religious elitism.[118] This struggle is reflected in an ambivalent description on the nature of the church expressed in Fundamental Beliefs 11 and 12 of the SDA Fundamental Beliefs. These ecclesiological statements differentiate between two understandings of the Church: *the universal church*, which is constituted of all true believers in Christ, and *the remnant church*, whose mission is to call for radical faithful discipleship in the midst of apostasy and unfaithfulness.

These two views about the constitution of God's authentic church correspond to two different understanding of mission: *missio Dei* is God sending out the universal church to proclaim the Gospel; and *missio Ecclesiae* is about God choosing the remnant church to carry out his mission. The difference between the two approaches is one of emphasis. Who is the author of mission? Is it God or the remnant church? As we observed in Table 1 'The Fundamental Beliefs Statements: Variation and Development in Remnant Ecclesiology',[119] the historical development of remnant ecclesiology has been constantly shifting back and forth between those two different understandings of mission. When SDA mission is thought in terms of *missio Ecclesiae*, it results in an exclusive understanding of remnant ecclesiology. The SDA church gathers God's remnant people from all 'tribes, nations and languages'. However, if mission is thought in terms of *missio Dei*, the outcome will lead to an inclusive universal

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[117] Q.14 in the survey asks participants to comment on their mission engagement: 'Since you have been to this church or fellowship group what types of missionary activities have you been engaging into in the past year or more?'

[118] Maurice Verfaillie, "L'identité religieuse au sein de l'adventisme : étude historico-sociale de son évolution et de ses dimensions dans le contexte du religieux en ultramodernité"
(PhD thesis, Summa Cum Laude, Université de Fribourg, 2009).

[119] See Table 1, p.65.

understanding of remnant ecclesiology. God gathers his remnant people in the faithful universal church. *Questions on Doctrine* has been a landmark theological conversation in the doctrinal development of SDA faith[120] that, among other doctrinal clarification, attempts also to clarify the meaning of remnant ecclesiology by indicating that God has a precious remnant among other Christian faiths. It initiated the first theological reflection in matters of SDA ecclesiological doctrine for the possibility of an inclusive remnant ecclesiology. But more importantly *Questions on Doctrine* has the merit to be the first theological conversation that points the way to a faithful attachment to the SDA biblical heritage and hermeneutic tradition, while keeping the way open for the SDA community of faith to reflect creatively on their present theological challenges in the light of the past biblical and mission heritage.

In the light of *missio Dei*, the SDA community of faith needs to hear afresh the call of God. For the SDA church, the specificity of their particular mission is to stress the liberating vision of the Sabbath day of worship as a sign of alterity, the symbol that preserves the memory of difference and which signified God's intention to liberate humanity from the grasp of the same: 'the Sabbath is made for the other and not the other for the Sabbath.' But it is also a calling out to stand in solidarity with the suffering other. It is a call to be where Christ is. This means to meet Jesus among the small, local narratives of the 'naked, the poor, the hungry and the prisoners'—*the face of the other.*

Finally, this ecclesiological study from 'below' has shown through a concrete case study that the inclusive notion of God's remnant people has been in constant tension with an exclusive self-understanding—a 'withdrawal identity'[121]—in SDA ecclesiological development. However, a contextualised remnant ecclesiology rooted in the alterity of God's revelation can open the way for a rich dialogue within the universal body of Christ and offers the theological potential to be a borderless theology[122] that can encounter the other non-Christian faiths in terms of the common human and global suffering. Ultimately, a contextualised remnant ecclesiology rooted in *missio Dei* and God's Revelation of *Otherness* is an ecclesiology of dialogue which is a sign of God's proximity and attachment, of difference and uniqueness with humanity through his son Jesus-Christ— Immanuel, God with us (Matthew 1:23).

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[120] See our discussion on *Questions on Doctrine* in Section 2.4.1.

[121] See Maurice Verfaillie's doctoral thesis, referred to on page 152, footnote #118.

[122] Hachalinga Passmore argues that remnant ecclesiology is not limited in its application to organisational entities. The SDA church needs to adopt an inclusive, open, universal understanding of the remnant concept.— Hachalinga, Passmore, "Seventh-day Adventism and the Remnant Idea: A Critical and Analytical Study of the Seventh-day Adventist Ecclesiological Self-Understanding" (M.Th, University of South Africa, 1998). http://search.proquest.com/docview/304470365?accountid=8194. Accessed on August 12, 2012.

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Appendix A

Survey Results

Q.1 In what type of area/zone is your church located?

Answered: 34   Skipped: 0
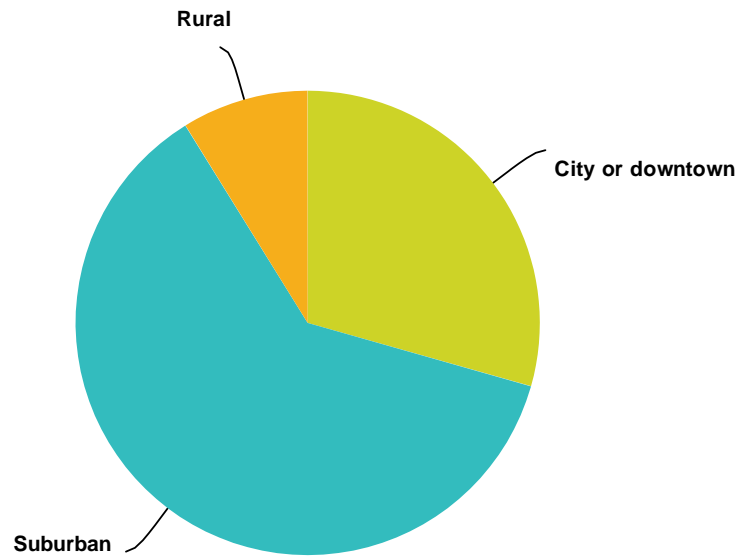
Answer Choices	Responses	
City or downtown	**29.41%**	10
Suburban	**61.76%**	21
Rural	**8.82%**	3
Total	**34**	

Q.2 Are you male or female?

Answered: 34   Skipped: 0
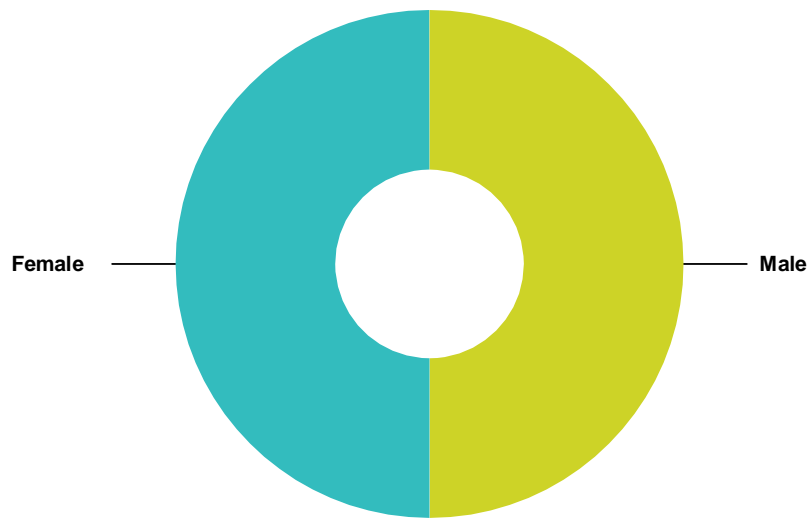
Answer Choices	Responses	
Other (please specify)		Date
There are no responses.	50.00%	17
Male		
	50.00%	17
Female		
Total		34

Q.3 Which category below includes your age?

Answered:34 Skipped:0
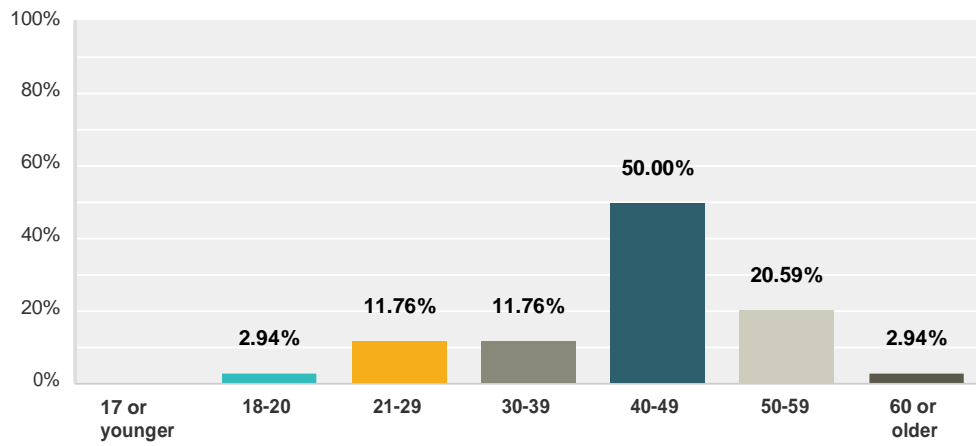
Answer Choices	Responses	
17 or<	**0.00%**	**0**
18-20	**2.94%**	**1**
21-29	**11.76%**	**4**
30-39	**11.76%**	**4**
40-49	**50.00%**	**17**
50-59	**20.59%**	**7**
60+	**2.94%**	**1**
Total		**34**

Q.4 How often do you attend and participate in church activities or events?
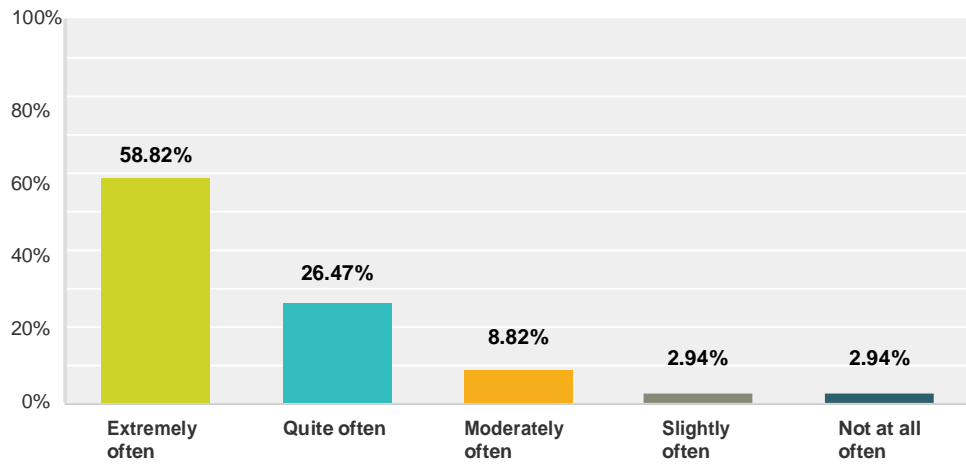
Answer Choices	Responses	
Extremely Often	58.82%	20
Quite Often	26.47%	9
Moderately Often	8.82%	3
Slightly Often	2.94%	1
Not at all Often	2.94%	1
Total		
#	Other	
1	Every Week	

Q.5 How strong is your sense of belonging to this church fellowship?

Answered: 34 Skipped:0
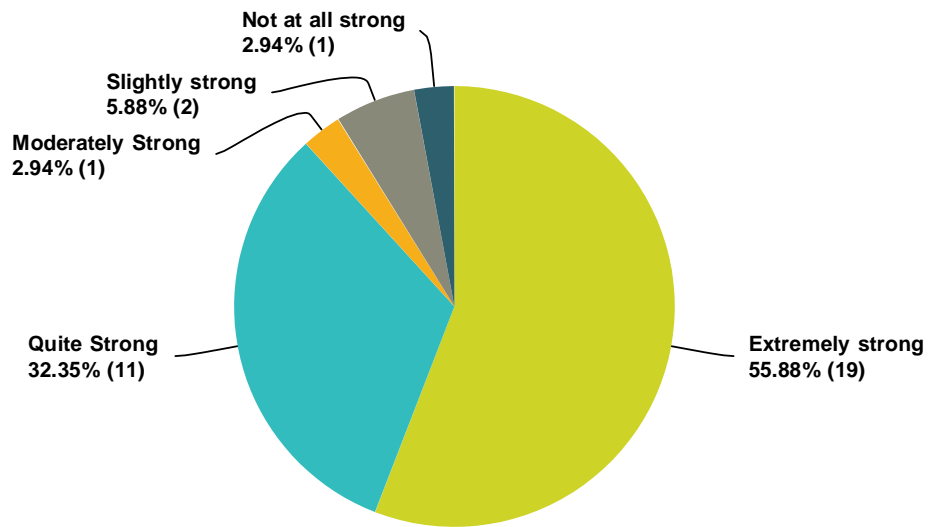
Answer Choices	Responses	
Extremely Strong	55.88%	19
Quite Strong	32.35%	11
Moderately Strong	2.94%	2
Slightly Strong	5.88%	2
Not at all Strong	2.94	1
Total		34
# Other (please Specify)		
		0

Q.6 About how long have you belonged to this particular
church plant, church fellowship?

Answered :34 Skipped :0
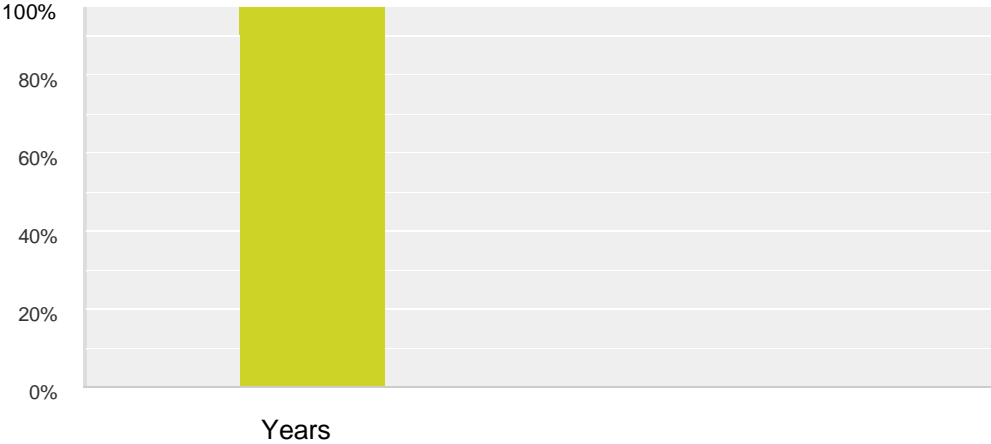
Answer Choices	Responses	
Years	97.06%	33
Months	2.94%	1
Total		34

Q.7 What do you like most about your church or fellowship experience?

[Please choose only one answer]

Answered :34 Skipped :0
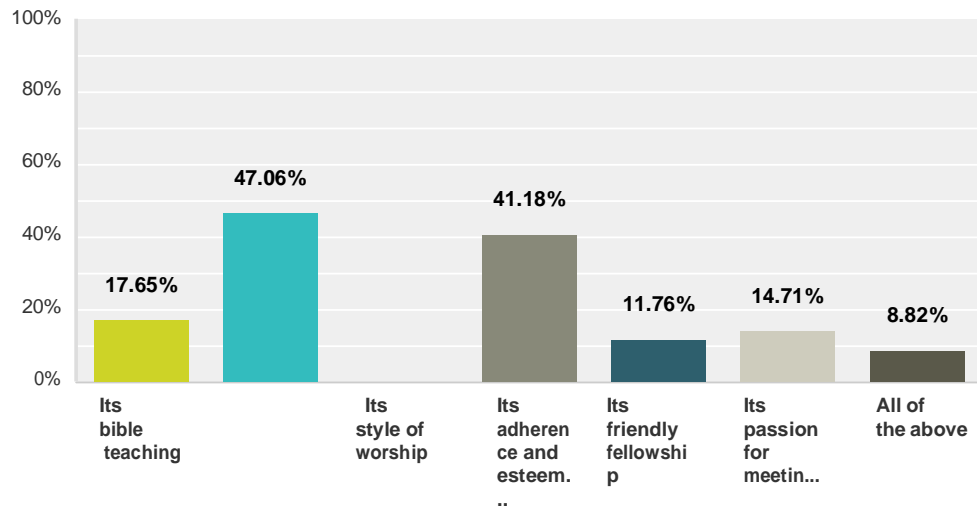
Q.8 How inspiring is your actual church experience?

Answered: 34 Skipped : 0

Not at all inspiring 2.94%

Slightly inspiring 2.94%

Moderately inspiring 11.76%

Extremely inspiring 29.41%

Quite inspiring 52.94%
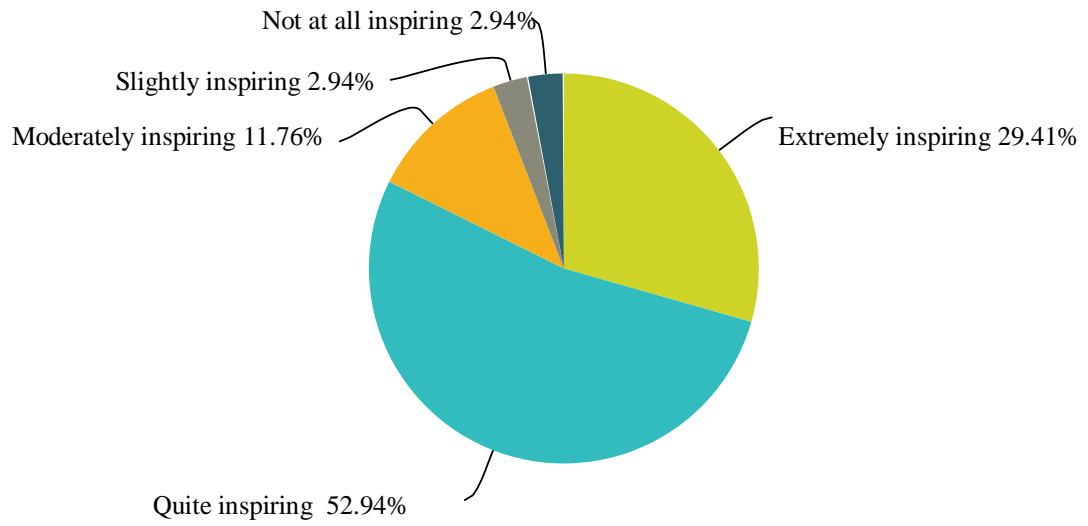
Q.9 Overall, are you satisfied with your current experience in this church, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with it, or dissatisfied with it?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 0

Q.10 What do you like least about this church?

Answered:34 Skipped :0

#	Responses	Date
1	While acting we forgot to look after our vision. Today it is quite hard to review and practice. Some habits are strong and heavy.	8/1/2014 9:33 PM
2	Probably the praise dancing.	7/30/2014 11:03 AM
3	It is too large. Because of its large size, few close relationships are formed. Church is mostly about the worship service.	7/30/2014 8:06 AM
4	Very big and sometimes too generalized. Occasionally forgets the outlier segments.	7/30/2014 7:42 AM
5	n/a	7/30/2014 7:39 AM
6	Sometimes it's a bit too casual, but I still prefer it over a formal church because it's so relevant.	7/23/2014 5:29 AM
7	No room for parking sometimes	7/22/2014 10:08 AM
8	Nothing	7/22/2014 8:07 AM
9	politics, but those are everywhere	7/22/2014 3:50 AM
10	Nothing	7/21/2014 3:02 PM
11	They are very slow to reimburse people and/or pay their bills.	7/21/2014 12:50 AM
12	Flakie people	7/18/2014 11:12 PM
13	it is a commuter church. People drive a long distance to attend - which hinders events and gatherings during the week.	7/18/2014 12:49 PM
14	We are out of class room space again!	7/18/2014 9:46 AM
15	The transitive nature of the congregation	7/18/2014 6:24 AM
16	gossip	7/18/2014 12:41 AM
17	there is no sense of community. Its basically a place where adventists go to church so that they can say the went to church. Like going to a 2 hour movie but instead its church. Almost 95% of the people who come don't do anything besides the 1.5 hours on Saturday. You can have 700 people in church and if you ask for volunteers it	7/18/2014 12:36 AM
18	Some of the music.	7/18/2014 12:10 AM
19	we're a commuter church, so it's hard to get together during the week with others	7/17/2014 11:43 PM
20	The building isn't ours so we often struggle to get access to the location for the various events we hold.	6/20/2014 5:31 PM
21	its flippancy	5/31/2014 3:24 AM
22	The adult Sabbath School classes don't suit me.	5/30/2014 8:26 PM
23	The clique feeling there is when you arrive as an outsider	5/30/2014 6:13 PM
24	Small in number, so difficult to achieve everything that we have a vision for.	5/19/2014 11:17 PM
25	Lack of physical facilities to use 24/7	5/16/2014 12:32 AM
26	That there are too few that invest in taking action	5/14/2014 11:05 PM
27	It can be hard to get people involved and take responsibilities in the church.	5/11/2014 9:44 PM
28	Mess. lack of organisation	5/8/2014 5:39 AM
29	The church members are shy and doesn't share much in terms of their Christian lives	5/7/2014 9:24 PM

30	Fears that form barriers to people fully experiencing church	5/7/2014 5:11 PM
31	Worship Wars - people trying to control how and what I sing	5/7/2014 11:03 AM
32	There are a lot of people involved in ministry. It would be nice if there were more though. More who have energy and passion.	5/7/2014 10:52 AM
33	Not sure	5/7/2014 6:10 AM
34	It is hard to get in to the group of people	5/7/2014 3:25 AM

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Q.11 What do you like most about this church?
Answered :34 Skipped :0

Responses	Date
1 .How it was at the beginning.	8/1/2014 9:33 PM
2. commitment to family and ministry	7/30/2014 11:03 AM
3. Attitude of acceptance (non-judgmentalism), and its focus on connecting with secular / postmodern people.	7/30/2014 8:06 AM
4. Very flexible and strives to be inclusive.	7/30/2014 7:42 AM
5. grace oriented and open style of worship	7/30/2014 7:39 AM
6 .It's so relevant. It puts away stereotypes of what church should be. Actually, though, it's probably a very mainstream Protestant church, even though many in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination may think it's edgy.	7/23/2014 5:29 AM
7. The Praise, the Community Outreach, and the Biblical foundation.	7/22/2014 10:08 AM
8. Cultural diversity and worship	7/22/2014 8:07 AM
9. laid back, grace oriented, forward thinking, contemporary	7/22/2014 3:50 AM
10. The acceptance and love for all people irregardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, membership and where you are in you journey and relationship with God. All are welcome	7/21/2014 3:02 PM
11. Very diverse congregation. Excellent music. Excellent preaching. Lots of ministries.	7/21/2014 12:50 AM
12. Mission focus/community focus	7/18/2014 11:12 PM
13. grace orientation	7/18/2014 12:49 PM
14. The warm friendly, outward focus.	7/18/2014 9:46 AM
15. Friendly atmosphere, style of worship and genuine love for God from the pulpit.	7/18/2014 6:24 AM
worship	7/18/2014 12:41 AM
16. The children's program. They have kids church every week which the kids love, and the really seem to understand what families need from a church.	7/18/2014 12:36 AM
17. The diversity	7/18/2014 12:10 AM
18. openness to all people, it's multi-ethnic and generational mx	7/17/2014 11:43 PM
19. The church was planted with a vision to be a church for people who weren't perfect, for those people who we're searching for God but who were exhausted from trying to be perfect and fit into a specific Christian view of perfection before being accepted.	6/20/2014 5:31 PM
20. the emphasis on relationships with the unchurched	5/31/2014 3:24 AM
21. The ability for everyone to be involved.	5/30/2014 8:26 PM
22. The teachings and the way they worship. And not least the fact that it is in the afternoon	5/30/2014 6:13 PM
23. Friendly and mission focussed - less worried about the rules, and more worried about having Jesus in people's lives.	5/19/2014 11:17 PM
24. focus on mission - making disciples of unchurched people	5/16/2014 12:32 AM
25. our worship and prayer life and the preaching is really good	5/14/2014 11:05 PM
24. The fellowship and the willingness to do church differently to reach out in another way.	5/11/2014 9:44 PM
Honesty	5/8/2014 5:39 AM

29. The friendships and sense of being part of a bigger family	5/7/2014 9:24 PM
30. Strong Focus on God and loving each other through Him	5/7/2014 5:11 PM
31. Strong written Process - Style of worship; Meeting Community Needs	5/7/2014 11:03 AM
32. The motto - Changing and growing lives with Jesus Christ. It is wonderful to see this happen.	5/7/2014 10:52 AM
33. Friendly	5/7/2014 6:10 AM
34. It is Close to my home	5/7/2014 3:25 AM

## Q.12 Why did you choose to belong to this church community?

Answered :33 Skipped :1

#	Responses	Date
1	I chose it because we wanted to be closer to the people that are far from God.	8/1/2014 9:33 PM
2	It feels like home.	7/30/2014 11:03 AM
3	I joined this church because of its contemporary style and its potential to reach unchurched people.	7/30/2014 8:06 AM
4	Good mix of races, ethnicities	7/30/2014 7:42 AM
5	grace oriented and open style of worship	7/30/2014 7:39 AM
6	Some friends brought me here the first week I moved to the area.	7/23/2014 5:29 AM
7	This is truly an international community that seeks God.	7/22/2014 10:08 AM
8	It's alive and refreshing	7/22/2014 8:07 AM
9	The style of worship and the acceptance and love I feel there.	7/21/2014 3:02 PM
10	Initially because I like the music and the style of worship.	7/21/2014 12:50 AM
11	They have allowed me to do ministry	7/18/2014 11:12 PM
12	I was called to pastor in this church	7/18/2014 12:49 PM
13	This church community is culturally relevant, yet biblically faithful and it strives to share the advent message with a grace orientation.	7/18/2014 9:46 AM
14	The Senior Pastor @ the time was engaging and sought us out specifically asking us what are areas of interest were for getting involved in our church community.	7/18/2014 6:24 AM
15	family	7/18/2014 12:41 AM
16	we have a lot of relatives that go there and so the kids get to see their cousins often.	7/18/2014 12:36 AM
17	They make me feel welcome	7/18/2014 12:10 AM
18	job brought me here	7/17/2014 11:43 PM
19	Because this is where I found God and came to understand that His love is greater than my perceived imperfections. God wanted me just the way I am, a sinner who struggles daily but just	6/20/2014 5:31 PM
20	I thought I could play a part in its mission.	5/31/2014 3:24 AM
21	I believe in it's philosophy of reaching out to the community.	5/30/2014 8:26 PM
22	The young and not so old fashioned pastor and the fact that it's in the afternoon	5/30/2014 6:13 PM
23	Close to home, less formal approach to worship and life.	5/19/2014 11:17 PM
24	wanted to make disciples of unchurched people	5/16/2014 12:32 AM
25	our worship and prayer life and the preaching is really good and it is not so traditional. People are authentic, show their true emotion, pray personal prayers, dare to worship God in singing, they don´t	5/14/2014 11:05 PM
26	The church is close to home which makes it easier to be more involved, the fellowship and the way church is organized.	5/11/2014 9:44 PM
27	I choose this church because I was welcomed and seen and because I felt it was honest worship and not duty	5/8/2014 5:39 AM
28	See above	5/7/2014 9:24 PM
29	Family initiative; "culturally" appropriate for inviting friends	5/7/2014 5:11 PM

30	My children loved it	5/7/2014 11:03 AM
31	Our children enjoyed being there.	5/7/2014 10:52 AM
32	I never felt judged, but accepted as me	5/7/2014 6:10 AM
33	It correlates with my picture of god	5/7/2014 3:25 AM

Q.13 If you think of yourself as an SDA, would you call yourself
a strong SDA or a not very strong SDA?
Answered : 30 Skipped: 4
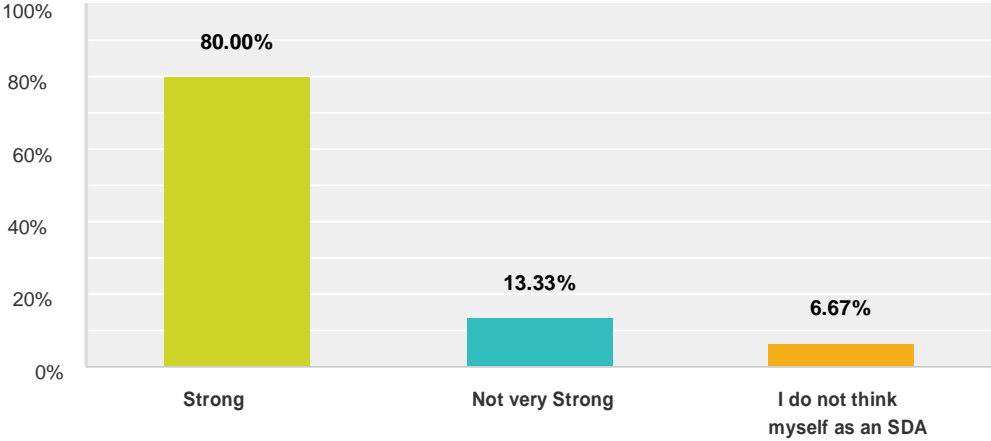
Q.14 Since you have been to this church or fellowship group, what types of missionary activities have you been engaging in in the past year or more?
Answered: 31 Skipped: 3

#	Responses	Date
1	evening events where we can invite non-christian friends and where we can eat, have fun and talk to the friends of our christian friends. Evenings where we eat together with people who want to come and specifically speak about God and the Bible.	8/1/2014 10:03 PM
2	I work with the middle school ministry. I believe that one can be missionary without having to leave the country.	7/30/2014 11:06 AM
3	I have facilitated a Dave Ramsey Financial Peace University course at this church. I also facilitate a Sabbath School class oriented toward unchurched people and disenfranchised former Adventists	7/30/2014 8:13 AM
4	First Impact, Small group leadership, choir, food for seniors.	7/30/2014 7:47 AM
5	none	7/30/2014 7:41 AM
6	Photography, elder/laypastor	7/23/2014 5:31 AM
7	Volunteered at a battered women's shelter, Volunteered supporting a homeless men's shelter, Supporting the needs of Seniors in the community.	7/22/2014 10:15 AM
8	I have been the director of the video ministry for the past 4-5 years. I also helped out with Winter Haven where the homeless stayed at the church for a week. I wanted to participate in more mission trips etc, but because of certain circumstances was not able to.	7/21/2014 3:07 PM
9	Play on a praise team. Overseas mission projects. Food drives.	7/21/2014 12:57 AM
10	Homeless shelter, community garden, neighborhood bible study	7/18/2014 11:18 PM
11	local initiatives: homeless shelter; food for senior residents; community gathering events; large scale seasonal programs geared specifically for the community; involvement with community organizations	7/18/2014 12:52 PM
12	1. Mission trip to build school in Mahotas, Mozambique. 2. Sponsoring students at New Hope school in Mahotas, Mozambique. 3. Sabbath school class international mission team leadership for building classroom in Masailand, Kenya. 4. Sabbath school class quarterly provision and serving food to low income families. 5. Christmas caroling around the church community.	7/18/2014 10:01 AM
13	Haiti mission trip	7/18/2014 6:26 AM
14	food drive, feeding homeless, and prayer meeting	7/18/2014 12:50 AM
15	sabbath school, kids church, easter program, adventurers, music ministry, sports programs, outreach, homeless shelter, couple ministry	7/18/2014 12:41 AM
16	in vied others, been part of a couple of outreach events	7/17/2014 11:45 PM
17	I support our church choir which has strong links to our local community. I'm also working with the team developing outreach materials for people in London	6/20/2014 5:36 PM
18	workshops at church in non-spiritual activities outings with churched and unchurched people parties with non- spiritual themes bible studies	5/31/2014 3:29 AM
19	Kids' Church programs, locally, nationally, internationally. Personal connections with unchurched friends.	5/30/2014 8:38 PM
20	None	5/30/2014 6:14 PM
21	Pathfinders and adventurers, friendship days.	5/19/2014 11:20 PM
22	breakfast club for local primary school 5 days a week, church members giving bible studies, church members involved in local community clubs and charities	5/16/2014 12:35 AM

23	singing public places for unchristian people. Having concerts for them. We have had children days where they are invited to come a play, we have had xmas concerts, charity concerts...	5/14/2014 11:09 PM
24	Ski trips, worship "concerts" on the street, Christmas packages to single parents, cell groups	5/11/2014 10:03 PM
25	Leader of childrens church Member of leadership team	5/8/2014 5:49 AM
26	Children's day	5/7/2014 9:25 PM
27	Serving local community groups through gardening, sponsoring children, encouraging overseas missionaries through letters and financial aid. Christmas shoe-boxes. Games nights introducing friends to Christians and then Jesus. Supporting individual ministry areas such as Prison	5/7/2014 5:15 PM
28	Worship; Foster Children; Community involved 4x4 driving; Family and Mens Outreach	5/7/2014 11:07 AM
29	Community Services - food parcels, cooking meals, supporting drug addicts, hospital visits, helping people problem solving, advocacy, bible studies, fostering.	5/7/2014 11:01 AM
30	Celle-group, prayer group,	5/7/2014 6:16 AM
31	None	5/7/2014 3:30 AM

Q.15 What types of other mission/outreach activities
would you like to participate in if they were available in this
church community?

Answered: 33 Skipped: 1

#	Responses	Date
1	I'd like us to get ready for another group in one of our villages	8/1/2014 10:03 PM
2	There are more than enough opportunities at our church.	7/30/2014 11:06 AM
3	- Service projects to the local community. - Felt-needs programs for unchurched community members (on finances, relationships, or other felt needs) - Music outreach events for the unchurched community	7/30/2014 8:13 AM
4	I'm scaling back my involvement due to outside commitments	7/30/2014 7:47 AM
5	none	7/30/2014 7:41 AM
6	Not sure.	7/23/2014 5:31 AM
7	I would like to go on an international mission trip ... they are available, I just have not been able to go for various reasons when they came up.	7/22/2014 10:15 AM
8	mission trips	7/22/2014 8:09 AM
9	Feeding the homeless and giving them clothes and necessities.	7/21/2014 3:07 PM
10	Christian music concerts (Saturday night)	7/21/2014 12:57 AM
11	Public evangelistic series	7/18/2014 11:18 PM
12	to have a thrift shop for low income families	7/18/2014 12:52 PM
13	N/A	7/18/2014 10:01 AM
14	Family mission trip, feeding the homeless	7/18/2014 6:26 AM
15	bible studies, women's community groups	7/18/2014 12:50 AM
16	none	7/18/2014 12:41 AM
17	Inner city	7/18/2014 12:11 AM
18	geographical small groups	7/17/2014 11:45 PM
19	Any activity focused on our local community such as local health days, etc.	6/20/2014 5:36 PM
20	conferences outdoor games	5/31/2014 3:29 AM
21	Book club	5/30/2014 8:38 PM
22	None	5/30/2014 6:14 PM
23	Social events, community service.	5/19/2014 11:20 PM
24	having a retreat property for people with addictions to go and detox and refocused	5/16/2014 12:35 AM
25	the same type as above...	5/14/2014 11:09 PM
26	More with the worship team	5/11/2014 10:03 PM
27	Have no other desires	5/8/2014 5:49 AM
28	Do not know	5/7/2014 9:25 PM
29	Due to the open nature of the group, any initiative we wish to begin can be explored.	5/7/2014 5:15 PM

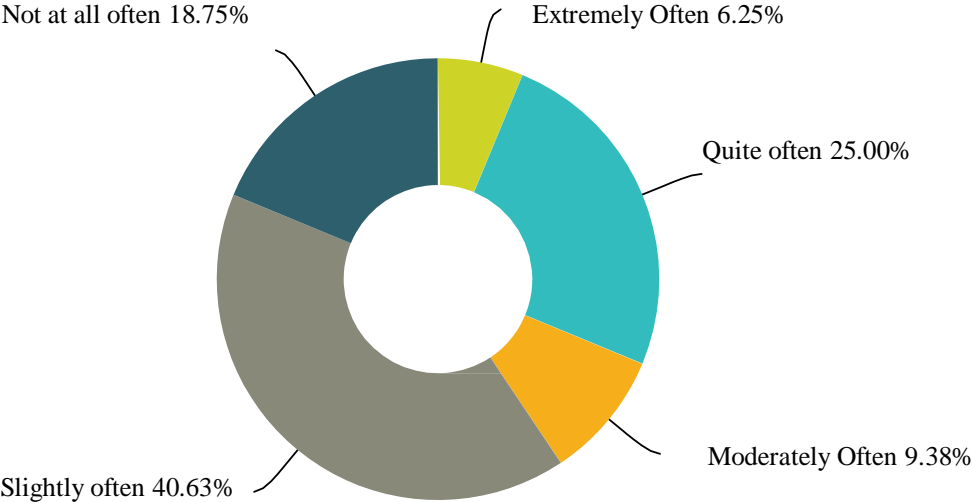| 30	Family and Mens Outreach	5/7/2014 11:07 AM
31	Developing a larger community service team to be available for people in the community. Would love to have a small bus do a trip to the methadone clinic each day, support workers for people struggling in community.	5/7/2014 11:01 AM
32	?	5/7/2014 6:16 AM
33	No idea	5/7/2014 3:30 AM

Q.16 How often do you participate in mission activities in this church?
Answered: 32 Skipped: 2
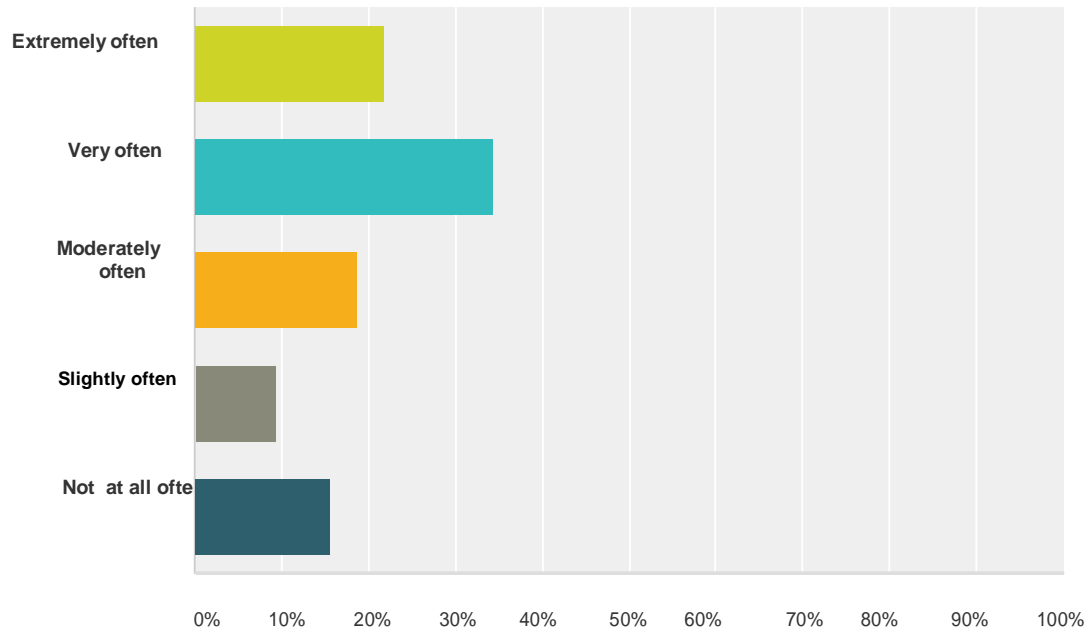
Q.17 How often do you participate in community events organized
by community organizations other than your church?
Answered: 32 Skipped: 2

Not at all often 18.75%

Extremely Often 6.25%

Quite often 25.00%

Moderately Often 9.38%

Slightly often 40.63%

Q.18 What do you like least about this church's mission-outreach activities?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 9

#	Responses	Date
1	we are too often with the same people and I believe nothing move very much	8/1/2014 10:03 PM
2	Outreach activities to not seem to be a major focus of the church. The worship service is the main outreach effort. Fortunately, the worship service is seeker sensitive.	7/30/2014 8:13 AM
3	n/a	7/30/2014 7:41 AM
4	Not enough overseas activities anymore.	7/21/2014 3:07 PM
5	Everything is fine	7/18/2014 11:18 PM
6	Need more	7/18/2014 12:52 PM
7	N/A	7/18/2014 10:01 AM
8	Nothing	7/18/2014 6:26 AM
9	organization where the money goes from the local church	7/18/2014 12:50 AM
10	the outreach programs are great and the church does wonderful things. I think the organizers are able to really use the church - for example instead of asking for volunteers, they ask church members to bring in grocery bags filled with supplies (which falls into that 1.5 hour block) so they get a good response. If there was a criticism its that they might be trying to do too much considering the church we have, but individuals are able to really make programs a success.	7/18/2014 12:41 AM
11	mostly focused on less fortunate	7/17/2014 11:45 PM
12	Sometimes there's so many different things to do, it's hard to accept that they can't all be done.	6/20/2014 5:36 PM
13	the lack of follow-up	5/31/2014 3:29 AM
14	Would like more crossover with other community organized events.	5/30/2014 8:38 PM
15	Since I don't believe I belong with SDA I don't feel like it would be right to mission for me	5/30/2014 6:14 PM
16	Sporadic and not well planned.	5/19/2014 11:20 PM
17	not enough time to do what I would like to help	5/16/2014 12:35 AM
18	too few participate and come	5/14/2014 11:09 PM
19	I would like us to more mission outreach	5/11/2014 10:03 PM
20	takes a lot of effort	5/8/2014 5:49 AM
21	Follow-through can be limited	5/7/2014 5:15 PM
22	Not totally organised - based on the enthusiasm of some people and if they stop the ministry stops	5/7/2014 11:07 AM
23	There is no staff except the pastors and if there were full time workers, more time could be allocated to spend with people who are struggling.	5/7/2014 11:01 AM
24	I think there Are only good outreaches	5/7/2014 6:16 AM
25	It is too focused in the bible instead of just to be good to people	5/7/2014 3:30 AM

## Q.19 What do you like most about this church's mission-outreach activities?

Answered: 33 Skipped: 1

#	Responses	Date
1	creativity	8/1/2014 10:03 PM
2	Plenty to choose from	7/30/2014 11:06 AM
3	All activities (including outreach ones) are sensitive to the mindset of unchurched people, and are intentionally non-judgmental in nature.	7/30/2014 8:13 AM
4	They meet real identified needs of the community	7/30/2014 7:47 AM
5	the consensus of the church is that we do want to focus outside of just the church	7/30/2014 7:41 AM
6	They're relevant and not to hard to participate in. They vary.	7/23/2014 5:31 AM
7	When I see members come together and pray for a mission outreach.	7/22/2014 10:15 AM
8	Helping outside our church walls	7/22/2014 8:09 AM
9	That they have a garden that provides food for others. I loved the fact that the church supported an orphanage in Haiti and had a trip to Mozambique.	7/21/2014 3:07 PM
10	Lots of different opportunities to be involved	7/21/2014 12:57 AM
11	They are done freely with out any ulterior motives.	7/18/2014 11:18 PM
12	Relevant outreach	7/18/2014 12:52 PM
13	Perhaps due to the congregation's high multi-ethnicity, outreach activities often look like a United Nations gathering.	7/18/2014 10:01 AM
14	Our focus is outward instead of inward like most Adventist churches	7/18/2014 6:26 AM
15	getting the congregation involved in making a difference in the community	7/18/2014 12:50 AM
16	see previous answer	7/18/2014 12:41 AM
17	it's focused	7/18/2014 12:11 AM
18	creative and sustainable	7/17/2014 11:45 PM
19	The activities meet people where they are and seek to break down negative stereotypes of church.	6/20/2014 5:36 PM
20	the fact that everything is designed so as to be accessible to unchurched people.	5/31/2014 3:29 AM
21	Very people focused and needs focused.	5/30/2014 8:38 PM
22	Since I don't believe I belong with SDA I don't feel like it would be right to mission for me	5/30/2014 6:14 PM
23	Everyone gives 100% energy and effort!	5/19/2014 11:20 PM
24	so outwardly focused	5/16/2014 12:35 AM
25	it is quality and personal	5/14/2014 11:09 PM
26	Everyone can come up with ideas to outreach activities and the church is very supportive.	5/11/2014 10:03 PM
27	Engagement from the church	5/8/2014 5:49 AM
28	N/a	5/7/2014 9:25 PM
29	Prayer based. Collaborative.	5/7/2014 5:15 PM
30	We are aimed at the Community not ourselves	5/7/2014 11:07 AM

31	People give of their time freely with love, when they can.	5/7/2014 11:01 AM
32	Good children s activities , the ski trip every year, ADRA concerts	5/7/2014 6:16 AM
33	N/A	5/7/2014 3:30 AM

Q.20 Are you satisfied with the missionary-outreach activities in this church, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with them, or dissatisfied with them?

Answered: 33 Skipped: 1
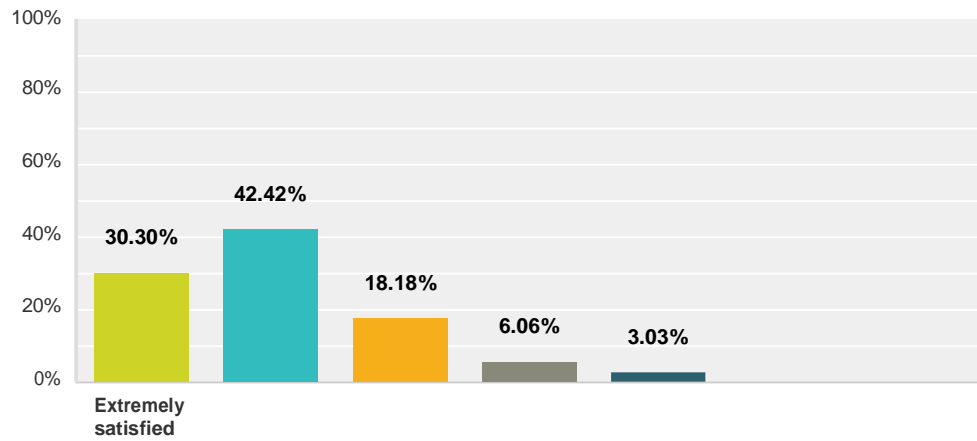
Q.21 If you do not participate in missionary-outreach activities in this church, why not?

Answered: 33 Skipped: 1

#	Responses	Date
1	I do participate whatever I think because we never know how God is able to reach people	8/1/2014 10:03 PM
2	We participate in the churches children and middle school ministries.	7/30/2014 11:06 AM
3	n/a	7/30/2014 8:13 AM
4	I participate	7/30/2014 7:47 AM
5	age and energy	7/30/2014 7:41 AM
6	not sure.	7/23/2014 5:31 AM
7	Sometimes there are multiple outreach activities, you cannot be involved in all of them.	7/22/2014 10:15 AM
8	Involved in lots of ministries within the church	7/22/2014 8:09 AM
9	I would have at the time, but due to circumstances was not able to participate.	7/21/2014 3:07 PM
10	I do participate	7/21/2014 12:57 AM
11	I participate	7/18/2014 11:18 PM
12	I participate in missionary-outreach activities often	7/18/2014 12:52 PM
13	N/A	7/18/2014 10:01 AM
14	I do	7/18/2014 6:26 AM
15	I participate in missionary outreach activities in the church	7/18/2014 12:50 AM
16	I participate	7/18/2014 12:41 AM
17	n/a	7/18/2014 12:11 AM
18	I do	7/17/2014 11:45 PM
19	I do participate	6/20/2014 5:36 PM
20	I do participate.	5/31/2014 3:29 AM
21	I did participate.	5/30/2014 8:38 PM
22	Since I don't believe I belong with SDA I don't feel like it would be right to mission for me	5/30/2014 6:14 PM
23	n/a	5/19/2014 11:20 PM
24	I do participate	5/16/2014 12:35 AM
25	i doooo participate always...	5/14/2014 11:09 PM
26	Lack of time	5/11/2014 10:03 PM
27	I participate	5/8/2014 5:49 AM
28	N/a	5/7/2014 9:25 PM
29	I do participate	5/7/2014 5:15 PM
30	I do	5/7/2014 11:07 AM
31	N/A	5/7/2014 11:01 AM
32	I'm having some time of[f]	5/7/2014 6:16 AM

| 33 | There is none explicit outreach activities | 5/7/2014 3:30 AM |

Q.22 How often do you contribute financially for the outreach and mission of your church?

Answered: 32 Skipped: 2
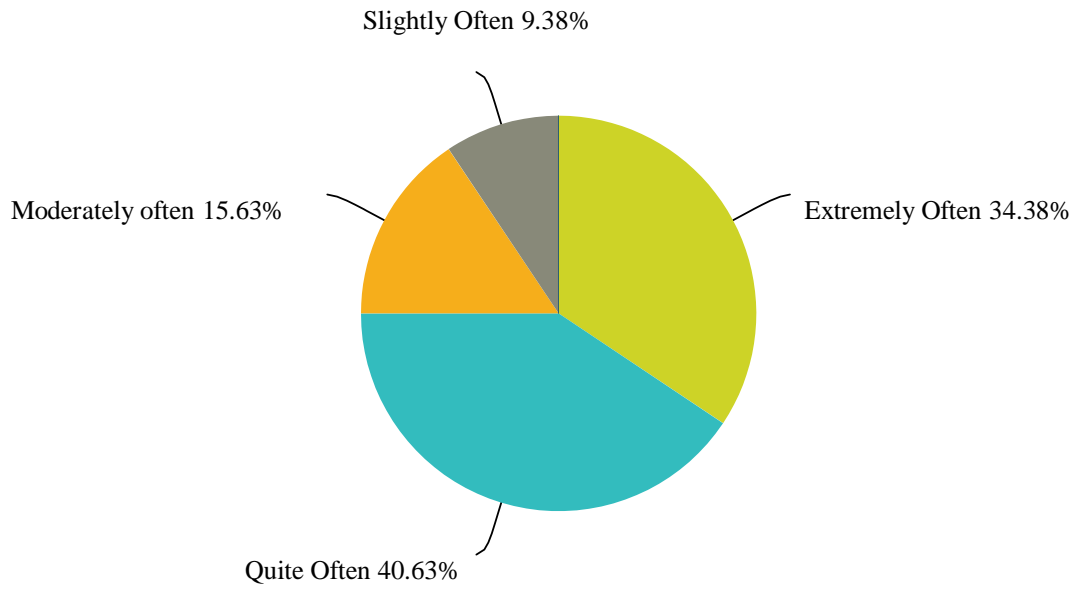
Slightly Often 9.38%

Moderately often 15.63%

Extremely Often 34.38%

Quite Often 40.63%

Q.23 The Seventh-day Adventist church officially understands and describes itself as the remnant church of Bible prophecy. There are at least 6 viewpoints that have emerged in terms of what it means to be the remnant church. To which viewpoint do you tend to identify the most in terms of your actual church or mission experience?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 4
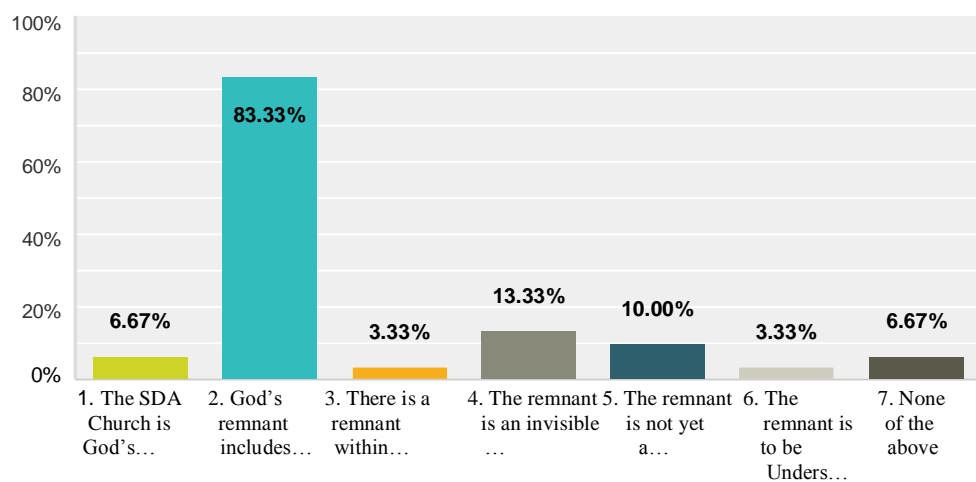
Q.24 Which of the following church's self-description would you prefer to compare the SDA church? [Please choose only one answer]

Answered: 33 Skipped: 1
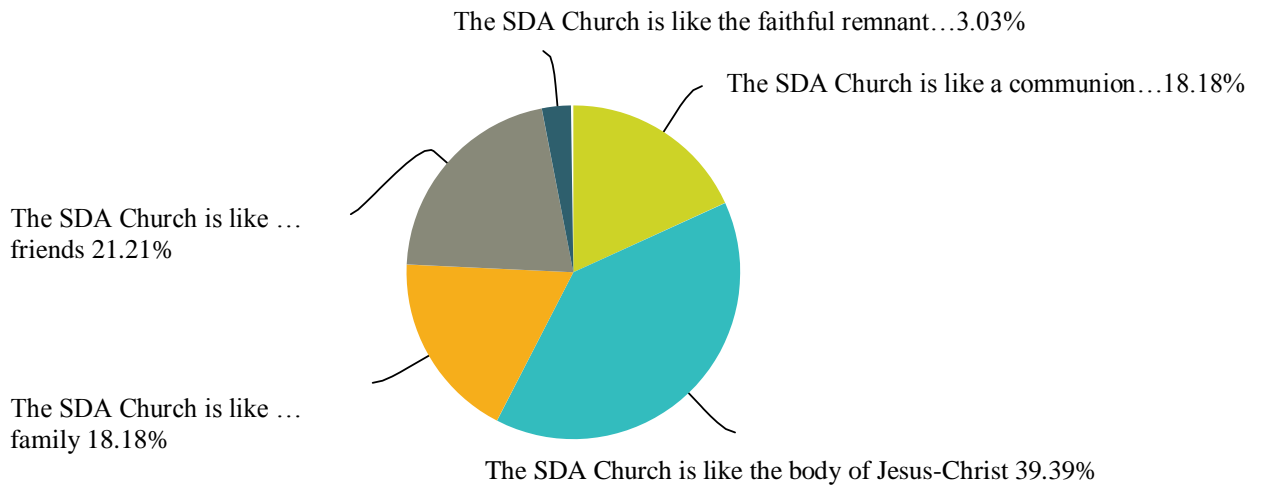
The SDA Church is like the faithful remnant…3.03%

The SDA Church is like a communion…18.18%

The SDA Church is like … friends 21.21%

The SDA Church is like … family 18.18%

The SDA Church is like the body of Jesus-Christ 39.39%

Q.25 Which Christian denomination best describes your church?

[Please choose only one.]

Answered: 32 Skipped: 2
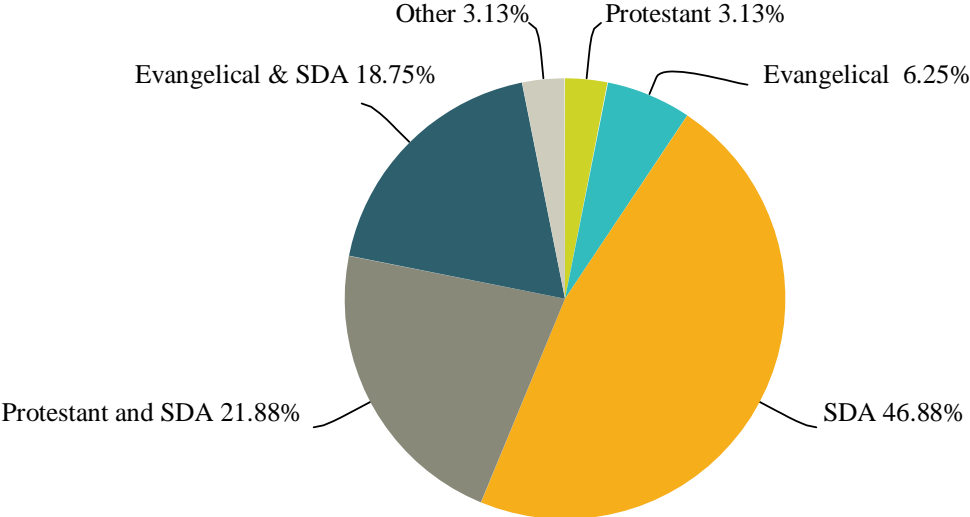
Q.26 Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as an SDA, a Protestant, an evangelical Christian, a nondenominational Christian or something else?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 4
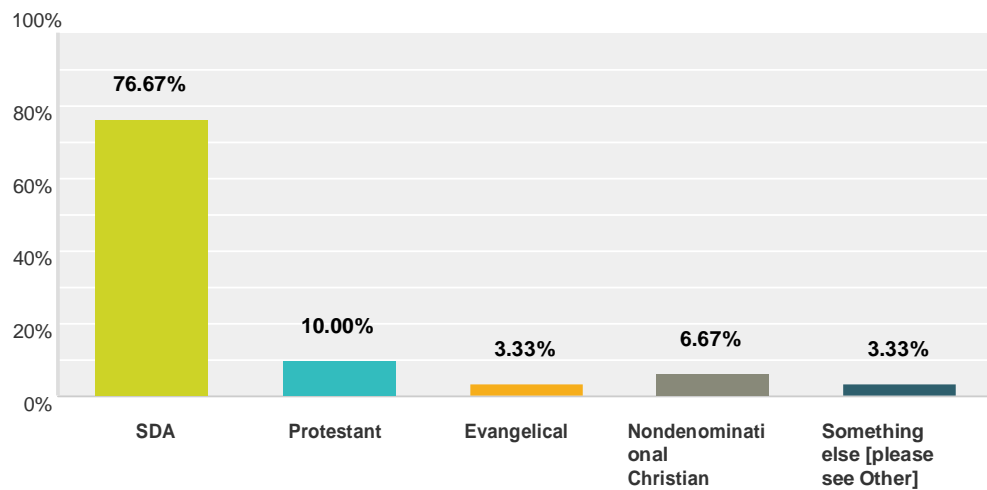
Q.27 How concerned are you about end-time Bible prophecies?

Answered: 33 skipped: 1
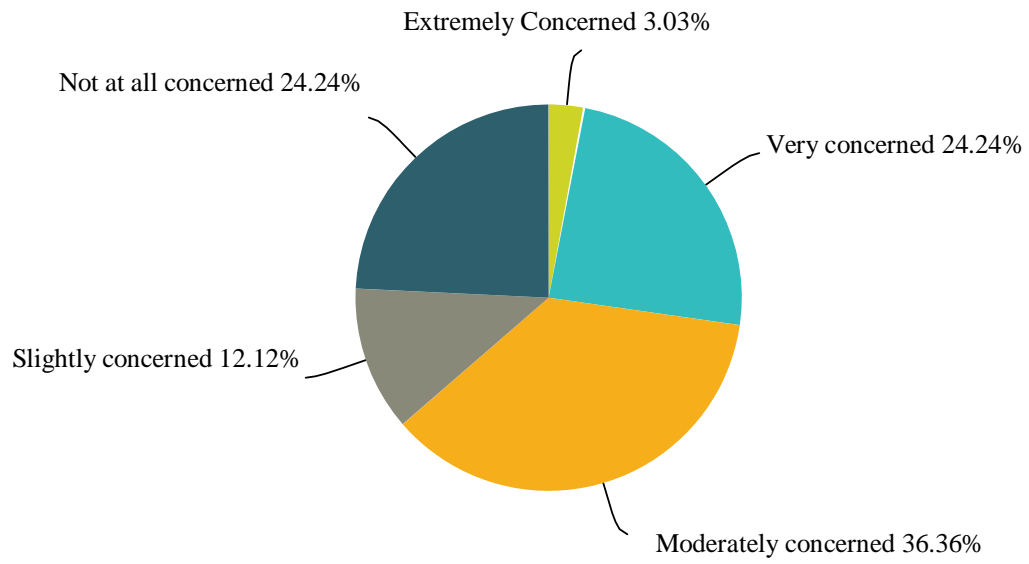
Extremely Concerned 3.03%

Not at all concerned 24.24%

Very concerned 24.24%

Slightly concerned 12.12%

Moderately concerned 36.36%

Q.28 How interested are you in the study of Bible prophecies such as in the books of Daniel and Revelation?

Answered: 33 Skipped: 1

Not at all interested. 12.12%

Extremely Interested. 6.06%

Slightly Interested 15.15%

Very Interested. 24.24%

Moderately Interested 42.42%
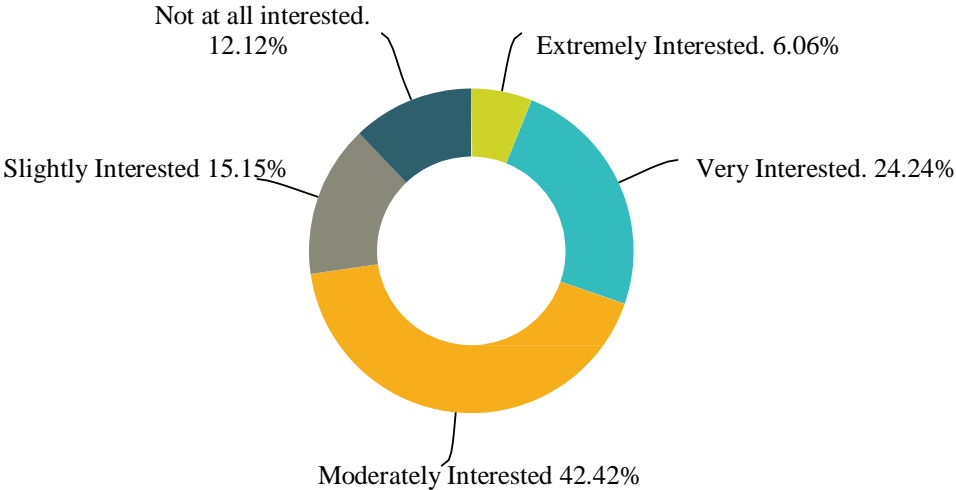
Q.29 Do you identify with any of the following religions?

(Please select all that apply.)

Answered: 31 Skipped: 3
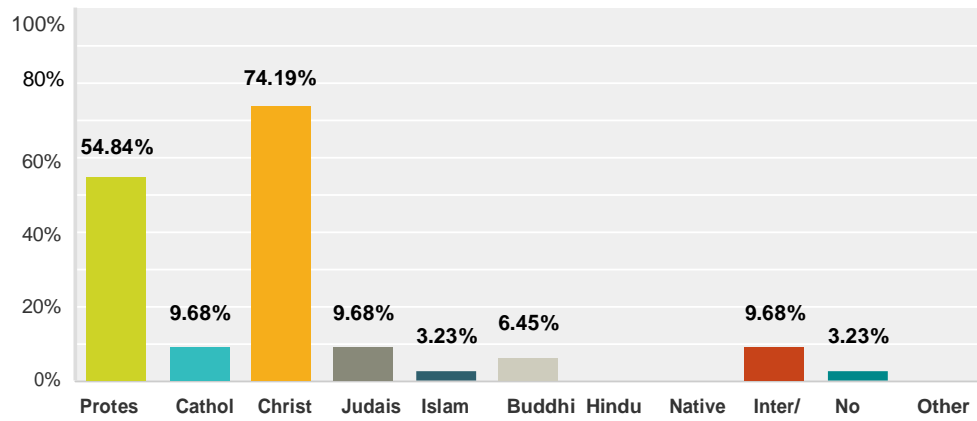
Appendix B

A Cross-tabulation:Images of the Church and Self-Understanding

Q24 Which of the following church's self-description would you prefer to compare the SDA church? [Please choose only one answer]

Answered: 30   Skipped: 0

Legend:
- The SDA church is like a communion of all God's faithful people from all Christian
- ch... The SDA church is like the body of Jesus Christ
- The SDA church is like a caring and loving family.
- The SDA church is like a group of great and committed friends.
- The SDA church is like the faithful remnant people of God in the Bible who trust in Jesus...

	The SDA church is like a communion of all God's faithful people from all Christian churches.	The SDA church is like the body of Jesus Christ	The SDA church is like a caring and loving family.	The SDA church is like a group of great and committed friends.	The SDA church is like the faithful remnant people of God in the Bible who trust in Jesus and obey his commandments and are only SDA.	Total
Q23: 1.The SDA is …faithful end-time people.	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2
Q23: 2. God's… Remnant people includes Adventists and non-Adventists	24.00% 6	40.00% 10	12.00% 3	20.00% 5	4.00% 1	25
Q23: 3. There is a Remnant within the remnant	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1

Q23: 4.The Remnant is an invisible entity which describe God's chosen peoples rather than people.	**25.00%** 1	**50.00%** 2	**25.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	4
Q23: 5. The Remnant is not yet a reality and is still future.	**66.67%** 2	**33.33%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	3
Q23: 6. The remnant is to be understood as a movement for social resistance and justice.	**0.00%** 0	**100.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	1
Q23: 7. None of the above	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**50.00%** 1	**50.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	2
Total Respondents	6	12	5	6	1	30

Other		**Total**
Q23: 1. The SDA church is God's faithful end-time people.	0	0
Q23: 2. God's remnant includes Adventists and non-Adventists	4	4
Q23: 3. There is a remnant within the remnant church which means that only a minority of Adventists within the SDA church are faithful to the Gospel commission	0	0
Q23: 4.The Remnant is an invisible entity which describe God's chosen peoples rather than people.	0	0
Q23: 5. The Remnant is not yet a reality and is still future.	0	0
Q23: 6. The remnant is to be understood as a movement for social resistance and justice.	0	0
Q23: 7. None of the above	2	2

Q23: 1. The SDA church is God's faithful end-time people.	Date
There are no responses.	
Q23: 2. God's remnant includes Adventists and non-Adventists	**Date**
The SDA Church is a community of people encouraging one another in their faith relationship with God.	7/30/2014 8:18 AM
The SDA church is club with conservative rules and membership	7/30/2014 7:45 AM
SDA is a corporate entity with a distinct mission that some people may partner with in their personal pursuit of God.	7/18/2014 11:25 PM
I dont know	5/7/2014 6:21 AM
Q23: 3. There is a remnant within the remnant church which means that only a minority of Adventists within the SDA church are faithful to the Gospel commission	**Date**
There are no responses.	
Q23: 4.The Remnant is an invisible entity which describe God's chosen peoples rather than	**Date**
There are no responses.	
Q23: 5. The Remnant is not yet a reality and is still future.	**Date**
There are no responses.	
Q23: 6. The remnant is to be understood as a movement for social resistance and justice.	**Date**
There are no responses.	
Q23: 7. None of the above	**Date**
(you don't have other as a choice, so my selection doesn't really matter). It really is None of the	7/18/2014 12:43 AM
The SDA church is like my extended family, my local church my immediate family, and the wider church my further extended family and close friends.	5/7/2014 5:23 PM

Comparing Narratives and Q.23-26

Narrator 1:

Q,23 that 'I couldn't care less. I just want to be a good Protestant Christian . . .' When asked in Q.25, 'Which Christian denomination best describes your church? (Please choose only one.)', he answered: Protestant and Seventh-day Adventist. When asked to answer 'Q 26: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as an SDA, a Protestant, an evangelical Christian, a nondenominational Christian or something else?' the answer was: SDA.

Narrator 2:

In [Q.24], he describes the SDA church 'like a communion of all God's faithful people from all Christian churches.' And as for the meaning of the remnant church [Q.23], he chooses four viewpoints among the six viewpoints given, namely:

1. The SDA church is God's faithful end-time people.

2. God's remnant includes Adventists and non-Adventists.

3.The Remnant is an invisible entity which describe God's chosen peoples rather than people.

4. The Remnant is not yet a reality and is still future.

Q26: He answers: SDA. But when answering Q.25**,** his answer is: Evangelical and Seventh-day Adventist.

Narrator 3:

He defines himself as an SDA [Q.25 & 26] and the remnant church as inclusive of SDA and non-SDA [Q.23].

Narrator 4:

She does identify herself exclusively as SDA in the survey [Q.25 & 26] but defines God's remnant church as including both SDA and non-SDA.

Narrator: 5

He views the SDA church as including SDA and non-SDA [Q.23] but cautions against using the term remnant in an exclusive way when doing mission in the postmodern context. He further identifies his church as SDA [Q.25] but describes himself as Protestant [Q.26].

Narrator 6:

As for who constitutes the remnant people of God, he says that it includes SDA and non-SDA [Q.23]. The SDA church is like a communion of all God's faithful people from all Christian churches [Q.24]. He describes the SDA church as 'Protestant and Seventh-day Adventist' [Q.25] but he himself as an SDA [Q.26] perhaps because of his belief in the soon coming of Jesus Christ and how this is impacting his daily life experience.

Narrator 7:

In the survey, she describes herself as Protestant [Q.26], the SDA church as Protestant and Adventist [Q.25], and the SDA church is like the body of Jesus Christ [Q.24]. As for the SDA church being the remnant church, she gives three answers [Q.23]:

1. God's remnant includes Adventists and non-Adventists.

2.The Remnant is an invisible entity which describe God's chosen peoples rather than people.

3. The remnant is to be understood as a movement for social resistance and justice.

Narrator 8:

This description of the SDA church as 'a caring and loving family' is also reflected in [Q.24]. For him to be self-identified as an SDA means that he 'understands his place in the world but also that he is part of the Adventist family', which he considers to be the remnant church, God's faithful end-time people [Q.23]. He describes the church as 'SDA' [Q.25] and thinks of himself as an SDA [Q.26].

Narrator 9:

For him, God's remnant people include SDA and non-SDA [Q.23]. He compares the church to the body of Christ in his answer to Q.24.

Narrator 10:

She describes herself as an SDA [Q.26] and believes that God's remnant people include SDA and non-SDA. For her, church means community and the SDA church is compared to the body of Jesus Christ [Q.24].

Narrator 11:

He compares the SDA church to a communion of all God's faithful peoples from all Christian churches [Q.24] and the remnant church as including SDA and non-SDA [Q.23]. He describes himself as an SDA and the church as both SDA and evangelical.

Narrator 12:

He describes the SDA church as the body of Christ [Q.24]. In survey Q.26, he describes himself as an SDA and, in survey Q.25, he prefers to choose the option 'Protestant and Adventist' to describe the SDA church. As far as who constitute God's remnant people, he includes SDA and non-SDA [Q.23].

Narrator 13:

In her answer to survey Q.26 where she describes herself as a nondenominational Christian and the SDA church as evangelical [Q.25], she chooses to describe the SDA church 'like a communion of all God's faithful people from all Christian churches' [Q.24] and the remnant church as including SDA and non-SDA.

Narrator 14:

She compares the SDA church to a family [Q.24]. Concerning the remnant church, she comments [Q.23]: '7. None of the above. (Other (please specify)' **and** she comments, 'Christ only knows what people/s comprise this.' She prefers to describe the SDA church as 'Non-denominational, strongly affiliated with Seventh-Day Adventist church' [Q.25] but sees herself as an SDA [Q.26].
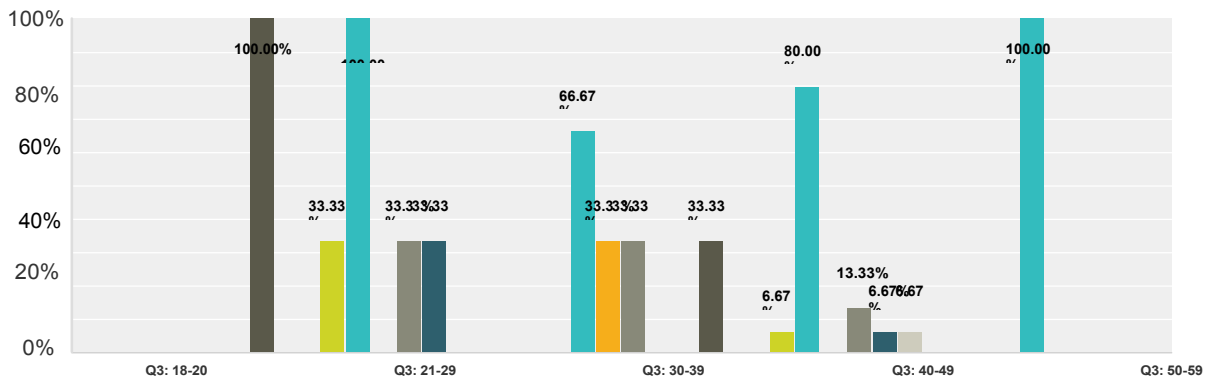
Narrator 15:

He compares the SDA church to a communion of all God's faithful peoples from all Christian churches [Q.24] and the remnant church as including SDA and non-SDA [Q.23]. He describes himself as an SDA and the church as both SDA and evangelical.

Comparison of Age and Church Self-Understanding

Q.23 The SDA church officially understands and describes itself as the remnant church of Bible prophecy. There are at least 6 viewpoints which have emerged in terms of what it means to be the remnant church. To which viewpoint do you tend to identify the most in terms of your actual church or missionary experience?

Answered: 30   Skipped: 0

- 1. The SDA church is God's faithful end-time people.
- 2. God's remnant includes Adventists and non-Adventists
- 3. There is a remnant within the remnant church which means that only a minority of Advent... 4.The Remnant is an invisible entity which describe God's chosen peoples rather than peopl...
- 5. The Remnant is not yet a reality and is still future.
- 6. The remnant is to be understood as a movement for social resistance and justice.
- 7. None of the above

	1. The SDA church is God's faithful end-time people.	2. God's remnant includes Adventists and non-Adventists	3. There is a remnant within the remnant church which means that only a minority of Adventists within the SDA church are faithful to the Gospel commission	4.The Remnant is an invisible entity which describe God's chosen peoples rather than people.	5. The Remnant is not yet a reality and is still future.	6. The remnant is to be understood as a movement for social resistance and justice.	7. None of the above	Total
	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1
	33.33% 1	100.00% 3	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6
	0.00% 0	66.67% 2	33.33% 1	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	5
	6.67% 1	80.00% 12	0.00% 0	13.33% 2	6.67% 1	6.67% 1	0.00% 0	17
	0.00% 0	100.00% 7	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7
	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2
	2	25	1	4	3	1	2	30

	Other (please specify)		Total
Q3: 18-20		1	1
Q3: 21-29		0	0
Q3: 30-39		0	0
Q3: 40-49		1	1
Q3: 50-59		0	0
Q3: 60 or older		0	0

Q3: 18-20	Date
The Remnant are—those who keep God's commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus. Christ only knows what people/s comprise this.	5/7/2014 5:20 PM

Q3: 21-29		Date
	There are no responses.	

#	Q3: 30-39	Date
	There are no responses.	

#	Q3: 40-49	Date
1	Identifying ourselves as an exclusive "remnant" will turn postmoderns away strongly. Even if we are, in fact, the "remnant" of Bible prophecy, we need to de-emphasize such teaching when reaching out to postmoderns.	7/30/2014 8:16 AM

#	Q3: 50-59	Date
	There are no responses.	

#	Q3: 60 or older	Date
	There are no responses.	

Appendix D-2
Female Gender and Self-Understanding
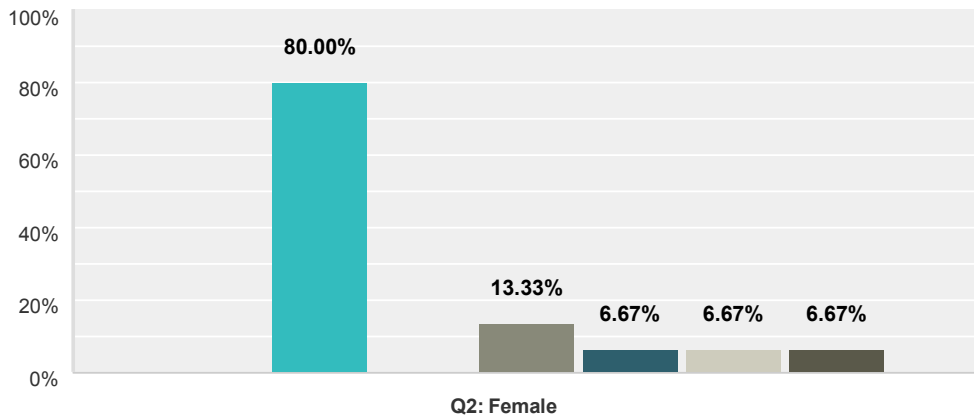
Answered: 15   Skipped: 0

- 1. The SDA church is God's faithful end-time people.
- 2. God's remnant includes Adventists and non-Adventists
- 3. There is a remnant within the remnant church which means that only a minority of
- 4.The Remnant is an invisible entity which describe God's chosen peoples rather than peopl...
- 5. The Remnant is not yet a reality and is still future.
- 6. The remnant is to be understood as a movement for social resistance and justice.
- 7. None of the above

	1. The SDA church is God's faithful end-time people.	2. God's remnant includes Adventists and non-Adventists	3. There is a remnant within the remnant church which means that only a minority of Adventists within the SDA church are faithful to the Gospel commission	4.The Remnant is an invisible entity which describe God's chosen peoples rather than people.	5. The Remnant is not yet a reality and is still future.	6. The remnant is to be understood as a movement for social resistance and justice.	7. None of the above	Total
	0.00% 0	80.00% 12	0.00% 0	13.33% 2	6.67% 1	6.67% 1	6.67% 1	17
	0	12	0	2	1	1	1	15

	Other (please specify)		Total
Q2: Female		1	1

Q2: Female	Date

The Remnant are --those who keep God's commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus. Christ only knows what people/s comprise this.	5/7/2014 5:20 PM

Male Gender and Self-Understanding

Q 23: The Seventh-day Adventist church officially understands and describes itself as the remnant church of Bible prophecy. There are at least 6 viewpoints which have emerged in terms of understanding what it means to be the remnant church. To which viewpoint do you tend to identify the most in terms of your actual church or missionary experience?

Answered: 15   Skipped: 0
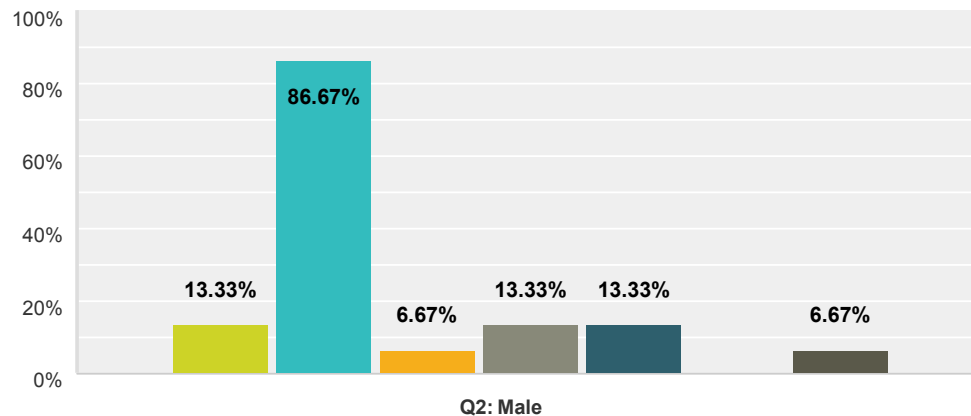
Q2: Male

- 1. The SDA church is God's faithful end-time people.
- 2. God's remnant includes Adventists and non-Adventists
- 3. There is a remnant within the remnant church which means that only a minority of Advent... 4.The Remnant is an invisible entity which describes God's chosen peoples rather than peopl...
- 5. The Remnant is not yet a reality and is still future.
- 6. The remnant is to be understood as a movement for social resistance and justice.
- 7. None of the above

	1. The SDA church is God's faithful end-time people.	2. God's remnant includes Adventists and non-Adventists	3. There is a remnant within the remnant church which means that only a minority of Adventists within the SDA church are faithful to the Gospel commission	4.The Remnant is an invisible entity which describe God's chosen peoples rather than people.	5. The Remnant is not yet a reality and is still future.	6. The remnant is to be understood as a movement for social resistance and justice.	7. None of the above	Total
	13.33% 2	86.67% 13	6.67% 1	13.33% 2	13.33% 2	0.00% 0	6.67% 1	21
	2	13	1	2	2	0	1	15

	Other (please specify)		Total	
Q2: Male		1		1

Q2: Male	Date
Identifying ourselves as an exclusive "remnant" will turn postmoderns away strongly. Even if we are, in fact, the "remnant" of Bible prophecy, we need to de-emphasize such teaching when reaching out to postmoderns.	7/30/2014 8:16 AM

Mission Commitment and Self-Understanding

Q.14 Since you have been to this church or
fellowship group. what types of missionary activities
have you been engaging into in the past year or
more?
Answered: 9   Skipped: 0

|	Since you have been to this church or fellowship group what types of missionary activities have you been engaging into in the past year or more?	Total
Q23: 1. The SDA church is God's faithful end-time people.	0.00% 0	0
Q23: 2. God's remnant includes Adventists and non-Adventists	100.00% 7	7
Q23: 3. There is a remnant within the remnant church only a minority of Adventists within the SDA church are faithful to the Gospel commission	100.00% 1	1
Q23: 4.The Remnant is an invisible entity which describe peoples rather than people.	100.00% 2	2
Q23: 5. The Remnant is not yet a reality and is still future.	100.00% 1	1
Q23: 6. The remnant is to be understood as a resistance and justice.	0.00% 0	0
Q23: 7. None of the above	100.00% 1	1
Total Respondents	9	9

Q23: 1. The SDA church is God's faithful end-time people.	Date
There are no responses.	

Q23: 2. God's remnant includes Adventists and non-Adventists.	Date
Community services Volunteered at a battered women's shelter, Volunteered supporting a homeless men's shelter, Supporting the needs of Seniors in the community.	7/22/2014 10:15 AM
Bible teaching Community services Homeless shelter, community garden, neighborhood Bible study	7/18/2014 11:18 PM
Community services Mission overseas 1. Mission trip to build school in . . . Mozambique. 2. Sponsoring students . . . , Mozambique. 3. Sabbath school class international mission team leadership for building classroom in . . ., Kenya. 4. Sabbath school class quarterly provision and serving food to low-income families. 5. Christmas caroling around the church community.	7/18/2014 10:01 AM
Community services Worship singing outreach I support our church choir which has strong links to our local community. I'm also working with the team developing outreach materials for people in London	6/20/2014 5:36 PM
Bible teaching Community services breakfast club for local primary school 5 days a week, church members giving Bible studies, church members involved in local community clubs and charities	5/16/2014 12:35 AM
Community services Kids Outreach Worship; Foster Children; Community involved 4x4 driving; Family and Men's Outreach	5/7/2014 11:07 AM
Bible teaching Community services Community Services - food parcels, cooking meals, supporting drug addicts, hospital visits, helping people problem solving, advocacy, Bible studies, fostering.	5/7/2014 11:01 AM

Q23: 3. There is a remnant within the remnant church which means that only a minority of Adventists within the SDA church are faithful to the Gospel commission.	Date

`Community services` `Worship singing outreach` support our church choir which has strong links to our local community. I'm also working with the team developing outreach materials for people in London	6/20/2014 5:36 PM

Q23: 4.The Remnant is an invisible entity which describe God's chosen peoples rather	**Date**
`Community services` local initiatives: homeless shelter; food for senior residents; community gathering events; large scale seasonal programs geared specifically for the community; involvement with community organizations	7/18/2014 12:52 PM
`Community services` `Worship singing outreach` support our church choir which has strong links to our local community. I'm also working with the team developing outreach materials for people in London	6/20/2014 5:36 PM

Q23: 5. The Remnant is not yet a reality and is still future.	**Date**
`Community services` `Kids Outreach` Worship; Foster Children; Community involved 4x4 driving; Family and Men's Outreach	5/7/2014 11:07 AM

Q23: 6. The remnant is to be understood as a movement for social resistance and justice.	**Date**
There are no responses.	

Q23: 7. None of the above	**Date**
`Community services` `Friendship evangelism` Serving local community groups through gardening, sponsoring children, encouraging overseas missionaries through letters and financial aid. Christmas shoe-boxes. Games nights introducing friends to Christians and then Jesus. Supporting individual ministry areas such as Prison ministries and youth ministries.	5/7/2014 5:15 PM

Appendix D-5

Comparing answers to Q.14 with Q.23:2:

'God's remnant people includes SDA and non-SDA'
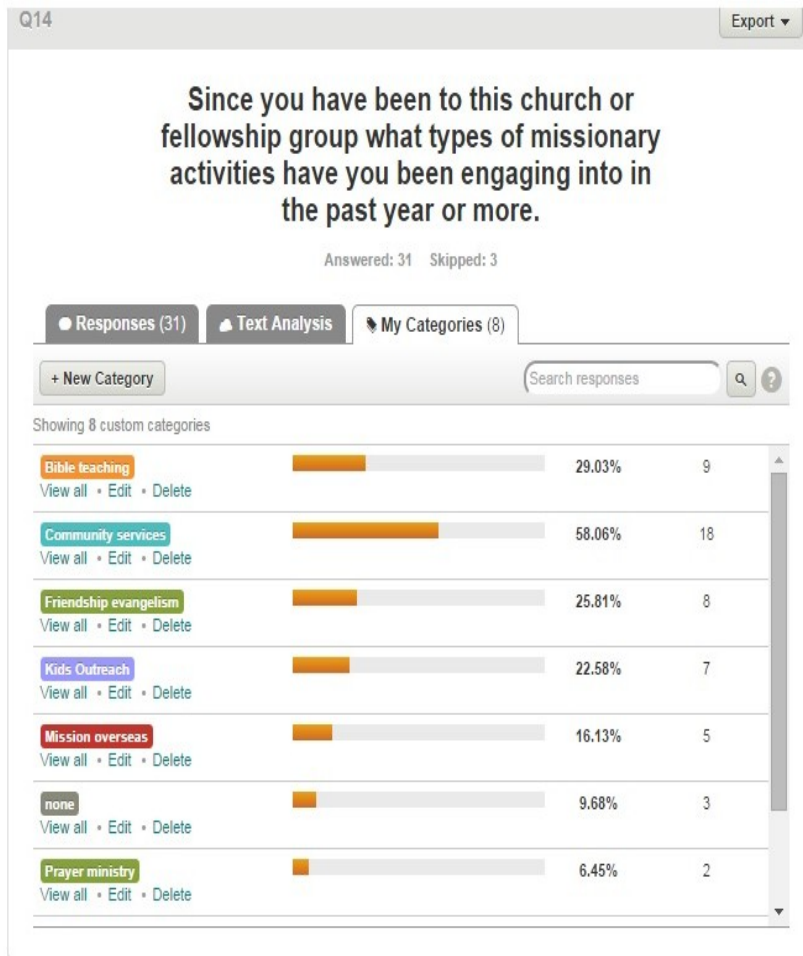
**Christian Organisation, Personal Faith Identity and Self-Understanding
Comparing religious affiliation and self-understanding: Q.26 and Q.23:1,2.**

Q26. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as an SDA, a Protestant, an evangelical Christian, a nondenominational Christian or something else?

Answered: 22   Skipped: 3
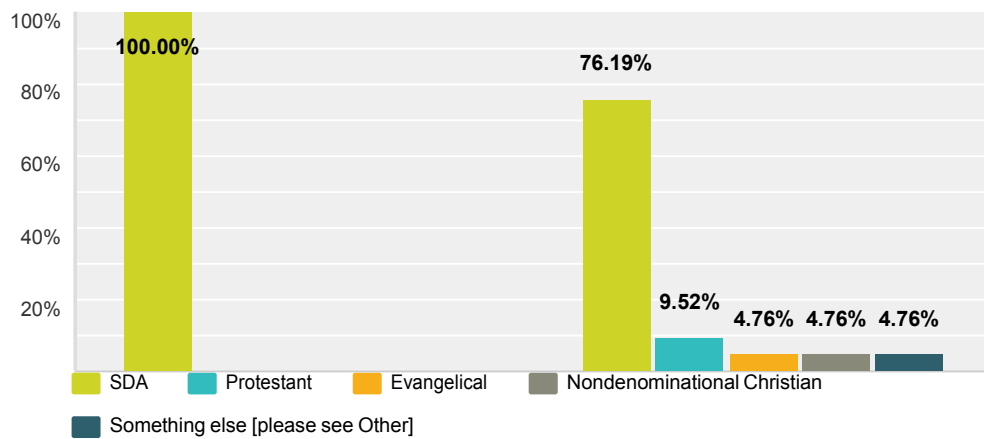
	SDA	Protestant	Evangelical	Nondenominational Christian	Something else [please see Other]	Total
Q.23:1	**100.00%** 2	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	2
Q.23:2	**76.19%** 16	**9.52%** 2	**4.76%** 1	**4.76%** 1	**4.76%** 1	21
Total Respondents	17	2	1	1	1	22

	Other (please specify)	Total
Q23: 1. The SDA church is God's faithful end-time people.	0	0
Q23: 2. God's remnant includes Adventists and non-Adventists.	4	4

Christian affiliation and Self-understanding

Q.25 Which Christian denomination best describes your church? (Please choose only one.)

Answered: 24   Skipped: 1
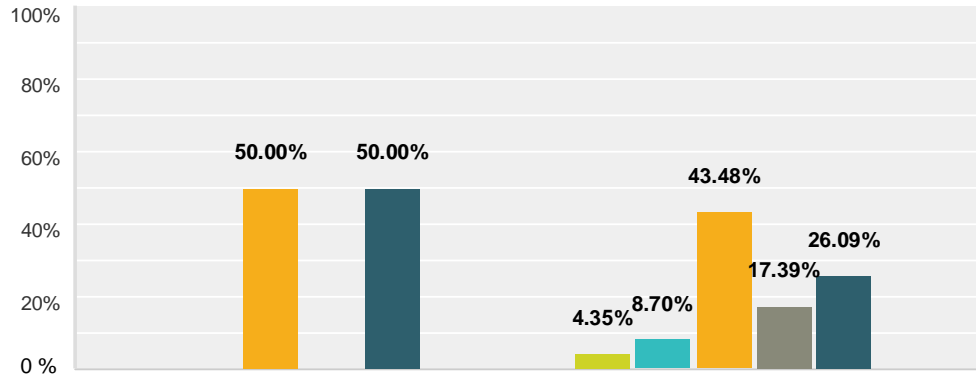
- ■ Protestant
- ■ Evangelical
- ■ SDA
- ■ Protestant & SDA
- ■ Evangelical and SDA
- ■ Other

	Protestant	Evangelical	SDA	Protestant and SDA	Evangelical and SDA	Other (please specify)	Total
Q23: 1. The faithful end-time people.	0.00 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	2
Q23: 2. God's Adventists and non-Adventists.	4.35 1	8.70% 2	43.48% 10	17.39% 4	26.09% 6	0.00% 0	23
Total Respondents	1	2	11	4	6	0	24

Interest in Biblical Prophecies and Self-Understanding

Q28 How interested are you in the study of Bible
prophecies such as in the books of Daniel and
Revelation?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 0
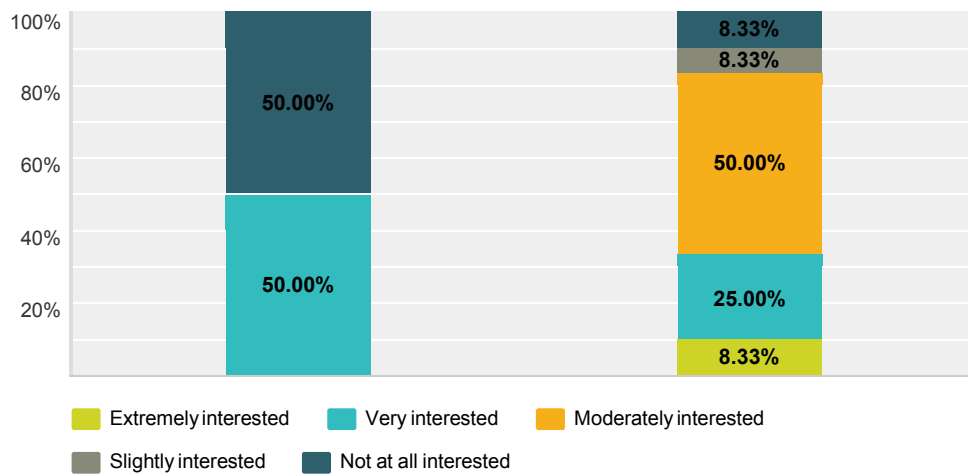
	Extremely interested	Very interested	Moderately interested	Slightly interested	Not at all interested	Total
Q23: 1. The SDA church is time people.	0.00% 0	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 1	2
Q23: 2. God's remnant includes non-Adventists	8.33% 2	25.00% 6	50.00% 12	8.33% 2	8.33% 2	24
Total Respondents	2	7	12	2	2	25

Appendix D-9

Images of the Church and Self-Understanding

Q24 Which of the following church's self-description would you prefer to compare the SDA church? [Please choose only one answer]

Answered: 30   Skipped: 0

Q23: 1. The SDA church i...	50.00% / 50.00%
Q23: 2. God's remnant...	24.00% / 40.00% / 12.00% / 20.00% / 4.00%
Q23: 3. There is a remnant...	100.00%
Q23: 4.The Remnant is a...	25.00% / 50.00% / 25.00%
Q23: 5. The Remnant is n...	66.67% / 33.33%
Q23: 6. The remnant is t...	100.00%
Q23: 7. None of the above	50.00% / 50.00%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

- The SDA church is like a communion of all God's faithful people from all Christian
- ch... The SDA church is like the body of Jesus Christ
- The SDA church is like a caring and loving family.
- The SDA church is like a group of great and committed friends.
- The SDA church is like the faithful remnant people of God in the Bible who trust in Jesus...

	The SDA church is like a communion of all God's faithful people from all Christian churches.	The SDA church is like the body of Jesus Christ	The SDA church is like a caring and loving family.	The SDA church is like a group of great and committed friends.	The SDA church is like the faithful remnant people of God in the Bible who trust in Jesus and obey his commandments and are only SDA.	Total
Q23: 1. The SDA faithful end-time people	**50.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**50.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	2
Q23: 2. God's Adventists and non-Adventists	**24.00%** 6	**40.00%** 10	**12.00%** 3	**20.00%** 5	**4.00%** 1	25
Q23: 3. There is a Remnant within the...	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**100.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	1

Q23: 4.The Remnant is an invisible entity which describe God's chosen peoples rather than people.	**25.00%** 1	**50.00%** 2	**25.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	4
Q23: 5. The Remnant is not yet a reality and is still future.	**66.67%** 2	**33.33%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	3
Q23: 6. The remnant is to be understood as a movement for social resistance and justice.	**0.00%** 0	**100.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	1
Q23: 7. None of the above	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**50.00%** 1	**50.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	2
Total Respondents	6	12	5	6	1	30

Other

		Total
Q23: 1. The SDA church is God's faithful end-time people.	0	0
Q23: 2. God's remnant includes Adventists and non-Adventists	4	4
Q23: 3. There is a remnant within the remnant church which means that only a minority of Adventists within the SDA church are faithful to the Gospel commission	0	0
Q23: 4.The Remnant is an invisible entity which describe God's chosen peoples rather than people.	0	0
Q23: 5. The Remnant is not yet a reality and is still future.	0	0
Q23: 6. The remnant is to be understood as a movement for social resistance and justice.	0	0
Q23: 7. None of the above	2	2

#	Q23: 1. The SDA church is God's faithful end-time people.	Date
	There are no responses.	
#	**Q23: 2. God's remnant includes Adventists and non-Adventists**	Date
1	The SDA Church is a community of people encouraging one another in their faith relationship with God.	7/30/2014 8:18 AM
2	The SDA church is club with conservative rules and membership	7/30/2014 7:45 AM
3	SDA is a corporate entity with a distinct mission that some people may partner with in their personal pursuit of God.	7/18/2014 11:25 PM
4	I dont know	5/7/2014 6:21 AM
#	**Q23: 3. There is a remnant within the remnant church which means that only a minority of Adventists within the SDA church are faithful to the Gospel commission**	Date
	There are no responses.	
#	**Q23: 4.The Remnant is an invisible entity which describe God's chosen peoples rather than people.**	Date
	There are no responses.	
#	**Q23: 5. The Remnant is not yet a reality and is still future.**	Date
	There are no responses.	
#	**Q23: 6. The remnant is to be understood as a movement for social resistance and justice.**	Date
	There are no responses.	
#	**Q23: 7. None of the above**	Date
5	(you don't have other as a choice, so my selection doesn't really matter). It really is None of the above	7/18/2014 12:43 AM
6	The SDA church is like my extended family, my local church my immediate family, and the wider church my further extended family and close friends.	5/7/2014 5:23 PM

Appendix D-10

Email Interviews

Narrator 1:

1. A community of believers. Not everything about that community happens just on
   Saturday morning.
2. A worldwide family. I can go anywhere and I will have family. In many parts of the
world they will have an interpretation of this question that frustrates me and is conservative
and repressing than I think is appropriate, but it's still my family.

Narrator 2:

1.What does church mean for you?

   It is a place where I can come with all I am with no need to hide anything. Everyone in
   the church understand what I come from, and who I am. They know my values and why
   I have them. I do not need to explain them all the time.

2.What does it mean for you to be 'self-identified' as a Seventh-day Adventist?

The main thing is a global community. Otherwise SDA does not mean much, since I mainly
think of myself as a Christian, not a SDA. The reason is that I do not agree with some of the
common SDA things, and have a hard time accepting GC's decisions

Narrator 3:
What does church means for you?
1. I believe when done right the church is God's change agent in the world. It means
everything to me because it is Christ's body, and His fullness.
I want church to be a place where the girl in the video clip by Casting Crowns "Does
Anybody Hear Her," would find a loving, accepting and forgiving home.

2. What does it mean for you to be 'self-identified' as a Seventh-day Adventist?
Means a lot. I am proud to be a Seventh-day Adventist Christian but also feel that
sometimes I have to explain what that means as many who have heard the name have a
negative understanding of what it means. I see my Adventist church as a Christ loving and
honouring church that is the best avenue I know for lost people to find or be found and grow
as a disciple of Jesus Christ

Narrator 4:
Hi Lindsay!
What does church mean for me? Good question. . . A place where very different people are
able to be together because they believe in the grace of God for everyone.
I became like Seventh-day Adventists without knowing they even existed. To be "self
identified" as one of them was a relief! I was not alone anymore . . .

Narrator 5   7:14 AM (57 minutes ago)

1.What does church mean for you?

To me "church" is the collective body of all believers in Jesus Christ. A local congregation is a gathering of like-minded believers for all related spiritual purposes - worship, service, fellowship, edification, growth, etc.

2.What does it mean for you to be 'self-identified' as a Seventh-day Adventist?
I would never use the phrase "self-identified" to describe my role as a Seventh-day Adventist. That being said, I would say it means that I am an Adventist by choice (not by birth, or family tradition, or by expectation). I choose to be a Seventh-day Adventist because Adventist beliefs most closely align with my understanding of Scripture.

Narrator 6

2:01 PM (16 hours ago)

1.What does church mean for you?

A grace-based multinational gathering of believers in Jesus Christ who are committed to worshiping God in a lively, culturally relevant, biblically faithful way.

2.What does it mean for you to be 'self-identified' as a Seventh-day Adventist?

One whose belief in the soon coming of Jesus Christ enables me to live each day fully as the day Jesus might come without the fear-driven attention to the next "sign". My daily desire is to be so filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ that those around me may hunger and thirst for the same experience.

<u>Narrator 7</u>
6:57 AM (15 hours ago)

Q.1 What does church mean to me?
God, I want to see you; God, I want to hear you. This simple act of surrender each Sabbath prepares my eyes to see Him. I expect my ears to hear Him, my mind to perceive Him, and my heart to experience God.

Q.2 What does it mean to be self-identified as a Seventh-day Adventist?

 Jesus called us to be a movement that impacts others, not a people that impresses others with knowledge.

<u>Narrator 8</u>

1.What does church mean for you?
Family

2.What does it mean for you to be 'self-identified' as a Seventh-day Adventist?
It means I understand my place in the world, and how I identify with the Adventist family.

<u>Narrator 9</u>

Q.1 What does Church mean for you?
Church to me is when I meet with my fellow believers and friends who love God. It is special because it is wonderful to enjoy, share, praise, learn and journey with people who love God and have same or similar beliefs as I do too.

Q.2What does it mean for you to be 'self identified' as a Seventh-day Adventist?
Though I identify as a Seventh-day Adventist as a denomination and believe in the Bible teachings for the most part, my heart just wants to belong to God. The teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist church are logical and give me a safe boundary. I believe also that God has His people in many corners of the world under many different denominations, walks of life and name

Narrator 10:

1) Community

2) something to relate to- that describes close what I believe in

Sendt fra min iPhone

Den 01/09/2014 kl. 15.23

Narrator 11:   1:12 PM (9 hours
                                                                                          ago)

1.What does church mean for you?
Church is a group of people who are actively believing and behaving as Christ's followers everywhere they go, on every day of the week.

2.What does it mean for you to be 'self-identified' as a Seventh-day Adventist?
I believe in the same fundamental beliefs as other Seventh-day Adventists around the world, mainly that the Sabbath is the seventh day, Saturday, and that there is soon to be a second coming of Jesus. It means I am part of a bigger whole, able to gain support and offer support on a grander scale.

--- Sep 3 (2 days
Narrator 12:   ago)

1. What does church mean for you?
Church for me is a place where I can be involved in a capacity that allows me to be involved in a meaningful way. God has given me the gift of music, to be able to minister to others in a way that is touching and effective for those in attendance. It is my way of staying involved, because involvement is key for maintaining one's interest.

2. What does it mean for you to be 'self-identified' as a Seventh-day Adventist?

For me to be self-identified is for me to be recognized as one who can help to lead others to the throne of God though my act of worship (leading out in music). People in my church know my personal struggles (alcoholism), yet they know that I lead, not because of my "worthiness" to do so, but because they recognize that I am human, just as they are, but that I serve a God who loves and heals and forgives me, in spite of my weaknesses and shortcomings. It allows others to see and realize that each of us can serve God "just as we are" . . . that we don't have to first be "good enough" to be involved in church and be active in whatever capacity God has gifted us
----

Narrator 13:

1. The SDA church, as a whole, is a family that I can relate to on a fundamental level through our God and 27 beliefs. My local church is a place where I can minister to others, support the community, and worship our God. (In a word, LIFE)

2. As far as being self identified SDA, I identify myself more as Christian first and SDA next. I love my church for what it stands for, but we can sometimes overshadow our primary spiritual mission with do's and don'ts . . . stuff! The song "Jesus In Disguise" comes to mind when I see us focused on the wrong things.

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

--

Narrator 14:

6:39 PM (5 hours ago)

Church for me is a place where I can be totally free of judgment and confident in being seen and accepted.
It is a place where I can be WITH God - meet GOD - and be inspired by the HOLY SPIRIT in prayer, in songs, in testimonies.

When I am preparing myself for leading the worship songs on Saturday, I will start asking the Holy Spirit to led me to songs that I should pick for the Sabbath. I also ask the Holy Spirit to give me ideas of what to share or say while I lead the worship.

Then I sit down and find the songs, texts and start to play them. I play the songs throughout my week and use it as my "Time with God" the whole week. I use it as my worship of God, and I pay attention to the inspirations I get throughout the week doing this. This may lead me to intuition of: Fx: This song I should repeat this passage 4 times, or, This place I feel the holy spirit strongly, here I will pray. The theme of my prayer I will try to write down through this inspiration.

Then on the day, that I am to lead the worship, I meet with the group and we pray and go through the songs together. I will often tell them the theme I felt inspired to have in the songs. I pray with them, that the Holy Spirit will use us all, and if someone feels inspired to pray or share a testimony in the middle of our worship session, they are free to do so. So we are ONE body, ONE head, Jesus, and we ask him to leads us all, so that we can make a place for Gods presence to come.

While I lead the worship I still pay attention to intuitions on the way, and I pray a lot during the songs.

I have total confidence in being used by God, and I am totally thankful for his intervention in my life!!! I see how he chanced my life, and now he is changing my friends and colleagues life too, for the better - hallelujah!

My identity as an Adventist: I think we have a lot of important knowledge and wisdom about God, but I am not very strongly connected to the fact that I am Adventist. I AM GODS . . . so to speak. I love God - and I am sure he´s there for me no matter what "label" I have. I could have been a Baptist or Adventist - I don´t think that is the MOST important. The important is that I DO HAVE A healthy God-loving church, where I can attend - and where I am a part of "His body". I think we can learn from other Christians, and they can learn from us (fx the Sabbath on Saturday aso) I have learnt a lot from other Christians, such as HAVING A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD - not just TALK ABOUT God - but talk WITH God - BE WITH God. That has changed my life totally. The other thing I have learnt is intercessory prayer and grace and I have learnt to trust that there IS A PLACE for ME in heaven. LIFE CHANGING!!!

Narrator 15:

1.What does church mean for you?
This video speaks a lot of what Church means to
me: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJWkQ9UP_m8

2.What does it mean for you to be 'self-identified' as a Seventh-day Adventist?
It means family. Even when I may not agree with every member of my family I still love them and would give of myself for them. It means connection. In almost every part of the globe there are people my heart connects with, people who love me as their own despite not having met me.

It means rest and hope. I am reminded to rest (Seventh-day/Sabbath) in the grace and wonder of my God and fervently, passionately, actively hope in the day of His return (Adventist). "Seventh Day Adventist" is less a 'label', and more a 'last name', less a 'category' and more a 'catalyst'.

Appendix E

Script of Songs

Does anybody hear her?

She is running
A hundred miles an hour in the wrong direction
She is trying
But the canyon's ever widening
In the depths of her cold heart
So she sets out on another misadventure just to find
She's another two years older
And she's three more steps behind

Does anybody hear her? Can anybody see?
Or does anybody even knows she's going down today
Under the shadow of our steeple
With all the lost and lonely people
Searching for the hope that's tucked away in you and me
Does anybody hear her? Can anybody see?

[Casting Crowns]

Jesus in Disguise

Ever get something in your head?
It's nothing you heard
Or something you read.
Ever had a cut but you never saw a blade?
Brought you to your knees
But you never prayed
Jesus in disguise
Jehovah passing by
The burden of a tear hanging in your eye
Jesus in disguise
A scar across the sky
You were looking for a king
You would never recognize.

[Brandon Heath]

Doctrinal Development of Remnant Ecclesiology: 1932-1980:

Missio Dei:Missio Ecclesiae Tension

From 'No Creed' to '25 Principles' to 'Fundamental Beliefs'

FB #15 [1932,34,38,40.	FB#19- The Spiritual gifts	Comments
Mission-Church-God That God in the time of judgment and in accordance with his uniform dealing with the human family in warning them of coming events vitally affecting their destiny, . . . sends forth a proclamation of the approach of the second advent of Christ, that this work is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14 and that . . . the threefold message brings to view a work of reform to prepare people to meet him at his coming.[1]	That God has placed in his church the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as enumerated in 1Cor 12 and Eph 4. That these gifts operate in harmony with the divine principles of the Bible and are given for the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ.	This doctrinal statement clearly expresses mission as *missio Dei.* It is God who does the 'sending forth'. The spiritual gifts are from God and serves to build up his church.

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[1] The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Church Manual*, The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, http://docs.adventistarchives.org/documents.asp?CatID=56&SortBy=2&ShowDateOrder=True.1932-40, pp.183-184.

FB#27 [1942]	FB#20- The Spirit of Prophecy	COMMENTS
In accordance with God's uniform dealing with mankind, warning them of coming events which will vitally affect their destiny. He has sent forth a proclamation of the approaching return of Christ. This preparatory message is symbolized by the three angels' messages of Revelation, and meets its fulfilment in the great second advent movement today. *This has brought forth the remnant, or Seventh-day Adventist church, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.*[2] [Italics supplied]	The church is to come behind in no spiritual gift, and the presence of the gift of the spirit of prophecy is to be one of the identifying marks of the remnant church. Seventh-day Adventist recognizes its manifestation in the work of Ellen G. White.[3]	In comparison to the fundamental beliefs of 1932-1940, there has been a significant shift in the way the SDA church chooses to express its theological understanding of God's mission and the existence of the SDA church. In 1942, the SDA church sees itself as the product of the *missio Dei* of reformation symbolised in the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12. This mission of reformation results in the emergence of the remnant church equated with the SDA church. The general focus on spiritual gifts [1932-40] shifts to one specific gift: the gift of prophecy exemplified in Ellen G. White and is considered a mark of the remnant church.

1951[4]	FB#19, 1951	Comments
Mission-Church-God It is exactly the same wording as FB#15[1932-40].	It follows the same wording as FB#19, 1940 but adds to it: That the gift of prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church . . . They recognize that this gift was manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White.'[5]	In 1951, the mission of reformation as portrayed in the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 was not stated as the catalyst that led to the emergence of the remnant church. Also, the emphasis is on the 'spirit of prophecy' as 'one of the marks' of the remnant church.

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[2] Ibid, p.86.
[3] Ibid, p.84.
[4] Ibid, pp.33-34.
[5] Ibid, p.34

FB#15, 1959[6]	FB#19, 1959	Comments
Church, Mission, Emergence of the Remnant: FB#15,1959 has a similar expression of the theological understanding of mission and church as FB#15,1932-40.	Spiritual Gifts: Spirit of Prophecy FB#19 uses similar expression as FB#20,1942 to emphasize that the gift of prophecy as manifested in the work of Ellen White is a mark of the remnant church. It does not use ' *the work'* but rephrases it and states '...*in the* **life** *and* **ministry** *of Ellen G.White.'* just as in FB#1951.	We observe two theological changes here: 1.The emergence of the remnant church is not linked to the proclamation of the reformation message of the three angels in Revelation 14.Just as in FB#1932-1940. 2. There is an attempt to personalise the 'spirit of prophecy' by using the words '*life and ministry'* in connection with Ellen G. White, as in FB#1951.
FB#15, 1963 Church-Mission and Emergence of the Remnant church. It receives the same theological expression as FB#15,1932-40.[7]	FB#19, 1963 Spiritual Gifts: Spirit of Prophecy It follows the same wording as FB#19, 1951.[8]	Comments FB# 1963 conveys the theological idea that the prophetic gift is a mark of the remnant church but does not associate it with Ellen White.

FB#15, 1967[9]	FB#19, 1967[10]	Comments
Church-Mission and Emergence of the Remnant church. FB#27 expresses the relationship between mission and the emergence of the remnant church, as in FB#27, 1942.	Spiritual Gift-Spirit of Prophecy It follows closely FB#1959 [see under comments].	Again, as in 1942, the emergence of the SDA church is connected to the reformation message as encapsulated in the three angels' messages of Revelation 14. Secondly, the general emphasis on the teaching of spiritual gifts as presented in the New Testament is abbreviated compared to

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[6] Ibid, pp.33-34
[7] Ibid, p.33.
[8] Ibid, p.34.
[9] Adventists, *Church Manual*, p.36.
[10] Ibid, p.37.

		previous statements and the focus is on the prophetic gift, which is a mark of the remnant church and personified by the ministry and life of Ellen White.
<u>FB#15, 1971[11]</u> <u>Church-Mission and Emergence of the Remnant Church.</u> It uses similar theological expression as the period of 1932-1940, 1951, 59 and 63.	<u>FB#19, 1971[12]</u> Spirit of Prophecy: <u>Mark of the Remnant and E.G.White</u>. The same theological description as FB#1951 is used. The Spirit of prophecy is a mark of the remnant church.	<u>Comments</u> It is God who initiates the reformation mission characterised by the three angels' message of Revelation 14, not the remnant church. The 'spirit of prophecy' is the mark of the remnant church and not the work, life and ministry of Ellen G White unless the two are equated, as in 1942.
FB15,1976 The theological doctrinal statement is the same as FB:1932-40, 51, 59, 63, 71	FB#19, 1976 There is no difference with FB#1971, 51.	<u>Comments</u> See comments for FB#1971.
FB#12, 1981 <u>Mission-The Universal Church-The remnant Church.</u> FB#12 reads: The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. It coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this	FB#16 &17[14] <u>Spiritual Gifts-Gift of Prophecy Tension.</u> FB#16 explains the teaching of spiritual gifts as understood by the New Testament churches. FB#17 focuses on the spirit of prophecy and the ministry of Ellen G. White.	<u>Comments</u> FB#1981 is a landmark in the doctrinal development of the ecclesiological self-understanding of the SDA church. Firstly, as compared to previous FB statements, the notion of the 'universal' church is introduced and contrasted with the remnant church. This is an attempt to explain, as we will see in our review of '<u>Questions and Doctrine'</u>, the relationship between the SDA church and the worldwide fellowship of other Christian churches. The universal church constitutes of all those who '<u>*truly believe in Christ*</u>.' The remnant church

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[11] Ibid, p.36.
[12] Ibid, p.37
[14] Ibid, pp.39-40.

worldwide witness.[13]		is called out of the universal church, not to constitute another 'ecclesia' but for a mission of reformation within the universal body of Christ. Secondly, the initiator of mission shifts from God-'*missio Dei*' to the remnant church, which 'announces, proclaims and heralds' the gospel of salvation and judgment—*missio-ecclesia*. This is a backward theological step in light of current theological-missiological understanding. Previous FBs, as we showed [1932-40,51,59,63], express end-time mission as '*missio Dei*'.
FB#12 1986, 1990, 1995[15] In the last decade of the 20th century, the church kept the same expression as FB#1981	FB#16 &17.[16]	Comments In the past 34 years, the worldwide church has kept the same theological understanding in regard to the universal church's relationship with the remnant church, as well as its understanding of the rapport between the teaching on spiritual gifts, the gift of prophecy, Ellen G. White and the mark of the remnant.
FB#12, 2000, 2005, 2010[17] It remains the same as in the 1990s.	FB#16&17.[18]	The ecclesiological tension evidenced in the past 50 years prior to 1981 reached a consensual resolution with the 1981 FB #12.

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[13] Ibid, p.12.

[15] Ibid. [1986], p.26. [1990],p.26. [1995], p.11.

[16] Ibid. [1986],p.27-28. [1990],p.27-28. [1995],p.12-13.

[17] Ibid. 2000,p.13. [2005],p.13. [2010],p.13. [2010],P.13.

[18] Ibid.2000,P.14-15.[2005], P.15. [2010], P.15.

Appendix G

Comparative Views on Theology and the Social Sciences.

Adapted from Ian Barbour[1]

Approaches	Description	Proponents
Interdependence	Faith and social sciences are autonomous using distinctive methods.	Peter Berger[2]
Conflict	Faith and social science conflicts.	John Milbank[3]
Correlation	Faith and social sciences can be correlated.	Robin Gill[4] Tracy
Dialogue	Faith and sociology are mutually critical.	W. Pickering, John Orme Mills[5]

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[1] This chart has been adapted from Ian G.Barbour's book 'When Science meets Religion'.Barbour discusses four different approaches which describe the kind of existing relationship between Science and Religion. We use these four approaches to describe possible similar relationship between theology and the social sciences. See Ian G.Barbour, *When Science meets Religion* (San Francisco: Harper, 2000), 11-34.

[2] 'Questions raised within the frame of reference of an empirical discipline'—like social theory—'are not susceptible to answers coming out of the frame of reference of a non-empirical and normative discipline'—like theology—'just as the reverse procedure is inadmissible.'—Peter L. Berger, "Sociological and Theological perspectives," in *Theology and Sociology: A Reader*, edited by Robin Gill (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1987), 94.

[3] In developing a Christian theory of society, Milbank argues that the church constitutes a society within its own rights. The church offers 'a "reading" of other human societies, it becomes possible to consider ecclesiology as also a "sociology".'—John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond secular* reason, 2nd edition (Oxford,UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2006), 382.

[4] Robin Gill proposed a correlation, which can happen at three levels: 1. The social context of theology; 2. Theology itself as a social construct; 3.Theology as an independent variable which not only is shaped by but can shape society.—Robin Gill, "*Introduction*" in *Theology and Sociology a Reader,* edited by Robin Gill (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 2008), 147-148.

[5] J. Mills remarks that despite theology and sociology belonging to different universes of discourse, the 'sociologist and theologian can and do affect each other and sometimes . . . they will take better sense if they overhear one another or . . . are aware when they are overhearing one another.'—John Orme Mills, David Martin and W. S. F Pickering (eds), *Sociology and Theology: Alliance and Conflict.* (New York: Martin's Press, 1980), 2.