Title: Toward a wholistic strategy to reach the Ethiopian Orthodox people with the Seventh-day Adventist message: a case study

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Abstract:

The case study addresses the issue of how to reach Ethiopian Orthodox people in suburban/urban areas with the Seventh-day Adventist message. The main purpose of this study is to develop a workable strategy to reach these people with the gospel message. The study is based on the following two questions: (1) How will the Orthodox people be reached with the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) message, and (2) What is the most workable strategy to open the heart doors of these people? Amenech’s case has been chosen for this study to illustrate the situations of both the Ethiopian Orthodox believers and the Adventist work in Ethiopia. The study involves the following four procedures: (1) description, (2) analysis, (3) biblical theological interpretation, and (4) action plan.

Part I: Description

The case in chapter 1 revolves around amenech whose background was strongly Orthodox and bound to the traditional understanding of Orthodox Christianity. Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity is perceived by the members as the original, oldest, and only true Christian religion on earth. The case reveals two major problems: (1) the negative attitude of the
Ethiopian Orthodox people toward other Christians and 92) the lack of new approaches and the misunderstanding of varied approaches by the pastoral office in the SDA church in Ethiopia.

Part II: Analysis

This part of the study examines the problems by reviewing the historical literature and analyzing the economical, sociocultural, and religious dynamics of the Ethiopian Orthodox people. The analysis indicates that these dynamics have strongly influenced the Ethiopian Orthodox people who are bound to their “old religion” and maintain their unfavorable attitude toward other Christians. The study also indicates that there are a number of hindering factors to the Ethiopian Orthodox background motivates Pastor A to work out a practical solution to evangelize the Ethiopian Orthodox people.

Part III: Interpretation

The biblical/theological interpretation based on both Scriptures and the writings of Ellen G. White reveals a wholistic ministry as a practical and workable way to address the problem included in the case. The wholistic ministry is shown and illustrated in the Old and New Testaments. The wholistic aspect of man as an indivisible entity has been explained in the word study. The original words translated as “body,” “soul,” “spirit,” and “heart: express the wholeness of man. Jesus’ ministry on earth teaches the essence of a whole ministry to the whole man. This wholistic ministry concept has been inherited and used by the Seventh-day Adventist church since its inception. Various missiological views also encourage a wholistic approach for a competent evangelism.
Pastoral strategies are reached through both biblical and theological interpretation and the survey analysis of the problems revealed by the case. The end result of this study reveals a wholistic approach is the best and workable method to win the Orthodox people. Six strategic entry events are suggested and organized in the form of seminars and workshops for the pastoral action. The study concludes underlining the conception of the church members as God’s chosen instruments to do the work of evangelism. Equipping them and delegating responsibilities to them are duties the pastor needs to fulfill.