

**ASPIRATION OF THE APPROPRIATION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM
BY THE MAASAI IN TANZANIA AS AN EFFECTIVE MEANS OF
CONDUCTING MISSION TO AN AFRICAN PEOPLE**

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ABSTRACT

Failure is the most likely outcome when an inappropriate approach to Christian mission is employed. This is often manifested in a lacklustre appreciation and propagation of Christianity by its adherents. The possibility of this occurring in the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church in Maasailand has prompted this study aimed at positing more effective methods and strategies for mission to the Maasai.

The study took a qualitative approach based on an ethnographic method. Interviews were conducted among purely pastoralist Maasai, Agro-pastoralist Maasai, and members of the Maasai business community. People of all age-groups and occupations, male and female were interviewed, and archives were accessed for the study of the history of missionary work. These primary sources were used to test claims made in recent academic research. The findings of this research are *inter alia* that the Maasai have rejected SDA Christianity because: (a) Maasai culture and traditional religion has been neglected by missionaries; (b) the SDA mission to the Maasai in Tanzania has not been a holistic one; and (c) the expropriation of Maasai land by foreigners has led the Maasai to doubt the motives of missionaries.

Consequently, in order that the Maasai may be attracted to Christianity, these reasons must be addressed and a more appropriate practical missiological model needs to be developed. Since none of the missiological models discussed by Bevans (2008) appears to have been effective for the Maasai, what I call an ‘appropriational’ model is proposed. The model puts emphasis on the Maasai appropriating Christianity as they engage with those who bring it to them, and on the practice of Christianity in accordance with the Maasai culture and environment. This model would encourage the Maasai to propagate Christianity as their own experience, rather than as something alien imposed upon them by missionaries.