

# Beaconsfield Seventh-Day Adventist Church: From First Church in Africa to Museum Status

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## Abstract

The first Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church building in Africa was erected in 1890 at Beaconsfield in Kimberley, South Africa. This article examines the history of the Beaconsfield Seventh-day Adventist Church from 1890 to the present. It highlights its growth, impact in the local community, and its eventual transformation into a museum. There are specific events and institutions of the church that will be examined in connection with this history. The article examines how mining, the siege, and the needs of the community influenced and shaped the church and its place in the religious landscape, both locally and globally. It also examines the various challenges and successes the church has faced over the years, both in its role in the global SDA context and in the lives of the local community. Finally, the article examines the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for the church building as it embarks on its new mission as a museum.

**Keywords:** Kimberley Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church, the siege in South Africa, heritage, museum, church history.

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## Introduction

The beginnings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in southern Africa may be traced back to the arrival of a diamond prospector, William Hunt in Kimberley in 1871. It was not until 1890 that the first church building was erected. This article first explores the developments of the Kimberley church from 1890 to the present, a period when the building was awarded the status of a national monument. The context in which the Seventh-day Adventist Church developed in Kimberley provides an important backdrop to the activities in which the church was involved.

## The Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Diamond Rush

Since the time when the first diamond was discovered in 1867 by Erasmus Jacob's children near the Orange River, the diamond rush in the Kimberley area attracted people from around the world, at least until 1921 (Giliomee, Mbenga and Nasson 2022, 221). After that first discovery, diamonds were found in the Wessels' farm in Benoudheidsfontein (Watts 1966, 11). Johannes J. Wessels owned the Olifantsfontein and Benaauwheidsfontein farms. A prospector, Henry Ward had interest on the farms as potential diamond mines. He later got into agreements with Wessels on the right to purchase the farms as well as the mineral rights dating back to 28 October 1887, with the most recent prior to the diamond discovery being on 10 January 1890 (Lunderstedt 2008, 40). The discovery was not only significant in establishing economic and political connections, but equally important in the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

This article firstly highlights the global efforts by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to prioritise education and welfare during the first hundred years since diamonds were discovered in southern Africa. Secondly, it addresses the decline of this first church as a place of worship and the possibilities of continuing its mission as a museum.

## The Church in the Mining Town

The beginnings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kimberley gave impetus to its rapid development in the region. The SDA Church in Kimberley connected with both the global SDA Church and the local community. The history of the SDA can be traced back to 1890 when the church was completed and opened for service in the mining town, Kimberly. By this time a major shift had just happened when more than 10 000 diggers of different nationalities and races were consolidated into a single company, De Beers (Giliomee, Mbenga, and Nasson 2022, 221). This resulted in a skirmish over ownership, control, and access to land between kings, imperialists and their subjects an unimaginable scale by the turn of the century. The impact of the discovery of diamonds on land ownership was demonstrated in Cecil Rhodes power (1853–1902)<sup>1</sup>. In a short

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1 Cecil Rhodes gave land to the Seventh-Day Adventists mission station in Matabeleland. This was a strong indication that the church that started in Kimberley was strong enough to spread its wings.

time, he became master of the diamond fields, prime minister of the Cape and owned land extending to where Zimbabwe and Zambia are located today (Giliomee, Mbenga and Nasson 2022, 223). His connections with Pieter Wessels and other wealthy members opened ways for a church that was a newcomer in the scene to grow both in membership numbers, institutions, and land ownership. This highlights the context in which the Kimberley SDA Church developed. Wealthy members did not think twice about financing the establishment of missions and the expansion of the church. The contribution toward the development of the church was from both wealthy and poor members of the congregation. The church accelerated in its growth in Kimberley in a very short time. The Boer War years tested its strength in community involvement and outreach during times of crisis. The philanthropy of the church is illustrated in an 1887 document that registered the collection of contributions and pledges for the erection of missionary tent. The record shows that Peter Wessels pledged and gave 20 pounds; Philip Wessels 50 pounds; William Hunt 2 pounds; and Erasmus “promised three shillings per week to meet tent expenses as long as he lives” (HR 25). They were giving based on their means and ability to contribute.

## The Siege and the SDA Church’s Response

The growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kimberley was not without challenges. Among those challenges was the Boer War from 1899 to 1902 where the army blockaded the city. The locals described the siege as follows:

Kimberley knew no bounds, until it was cooled by the restraining influence of General Cronje. ... Accordingly, he and his army, well primed with coffee, lay entrenched around Kimberley, in the fond hope of starving us into submission (Phelan 1913, 7).

The siege lasted longer than anticipated, and the South African Republic forces were determined to bring the rich city to its knees. Besides the flying shells from the firing lines, there was an acute rise of food deprivation. As a result of the protracted siege, many resorted to eating horse meat and the lack of vegetables led many to suffer from scurvy. The account of the Methodist Church cited below highlights not only the dire nature of the situation, but the role the church played during this siege:

The congregations in the churches consisted chiefly of women and children, for the men were garrisoning the redoubts, which held back the foe. What was suffered by the inhabitants during the siege will never be known. When the men could not attend the services in the churches, the ministers carried the services to the men, and preached in the various redoubts and camps. The hospitals were regularly visited, and many a sick soldier was cheered by their ministrations. The Refugee Relief Committee consisted of all the ministers in Kimberley, but both during the siege and for some time subsequently the burden of the work fell chiefly on Archdeacon Holbeach, the Revs J. Scott and William Pescod, and Harris Isaacs, the Jewish Rabbi. For nearly two years they met weekly, and carefully investigated all cases needing relief. They gave food and clothing,

and helped to provide lodging; but their great difficulty was to find employment for the men whom the war had thrown out of work (Whiteside 1906).

The response of the Methodist Church was not uncommon for this crisis period. There were also individuals who kept record of the events of the siege that throw light on the life of the churches during this war. In his diary, journalist Sol Plaatjie described the siege in a humorous language at first as something that will soon pass. His mood changed as the impact of the war begins to take its toll on the civilians. He described a Sunday experience:

Boers came out of their trenches and sat in long rows on the embankment and gazed upon Mafeking with covetous eyes, and they marvel at our holding out so long after five weeks of continuous shelling. ... Distant howls in the Dutch Reformed Church said that they held service there for the first time today (Plaatjie as quoted in Comaroff (ed) 1976, 48).

## Service Institutions of the SDA Church in Kimberley

The Seventh-day Adventist Church had its unique way of responding to the needs of the community during the siege and beyond. There were ministries that were established that connected the church to the needs of the community. It was also through these ministries that the church was able to connect with the Seventh-day Adventist Church globally. Similar institutions were established in various parts of the country to meet the needs of communities. Some of the effective ways used were sanatoriums<sup>2</sup> and benevolent homes.<sup>3</sup>

## A Benevolent Home in the Kimberley SDA Church

Kimberley had a benevolent home for about 31 years from 1890 to 1921. This institution was a replica of what the church was doing in the United States. The Wessels brothers in particular visited the United States of America (USA) frequently and long enough to learn how these institutions were organised and how they functioned. They transplanted the concept into South Africa in strategic areas.

## Challenges in Running SDA Institutions in South Africa

The services rendered by the SDA institutions in South Africa were appreciated by communities. While this work was received well, it was not without challenges. The Seventh-day Adventist Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association was the main

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2 These were health institutions that provided care in both alternative and traditional medicine. Sanatoriums were especially popular at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Before modern medicine they specialised in the treatment of diseases like tuberculosis.

3 A benevolent home was a centre for helping the poor, unemployed and homeless people in the community. Many community members found themselves in this desperate situation during the siege and beyond.

body that helped coordinate the services to the community. These services were not exclusively for the Seventh-day Adventist members but were open to all who needed them. The efforts of reaching out to the community were not always rewarded by support. A court case in Cape Town is a case in point of how the body struggled to gain recognition for some of its subsidiary organisations. At the Supreme Court of South Africa before Honourable Mr Justice Buchanan who was acting chief justice and Honourable Mr Justice Maasdorp, a case was presented to the court on 14 June 1897, *Claremont Sanatorium vs The Municipality*. This threatened the work in Kimberley that was under the same body.

The main issue at stake was an objection from the municipality in Claremont against the entitlement of these institutions particularly the Claremont Sanatorium to receive a tax exemption for the public contribution they were receiving. In these proceedings, the Kimberley Benevolent Home is mentioned and its connection to other institutions and the global network is explained:

Under the auspices of the Seventh Day Adventist Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association there exists, besides the Claremont Sanatorium, the following institutions in South Africa, namely:

- (a) The Diamond-Fields Benevolent Home in Kimberley, where 100 needy men were lodged each month supplied with food and clothing, and helped with employment.
- (b) The Plumstead Orphanage, where 25 children of all denominations were educated and supported.
- (c) The Cape Town Medical Mission and Free Dispensary in Roeland Street, Cape Town.
- (d) Baths, also in Roeland Street, Cape Town, where 660 cases have been treated (Buchanan 1899, 38).

Drawing from this provision, the institution is enjoined as “any forum” by section 39(2) of the Constitution to promote the purport and object of the Bill of Rights. The process, thereof, of transforming the institution is not an immediate and direct entitlement and responsibility but a progressive one that must be undertaken over a period. This is meant to bridge the gap that exists between men and women in succession to leadership positions that may be available within the institution. The provision of the above legislation then encompasses an “inclusive approach” to traditional leadership positions, including the throne, that may be extended to women to transform the institution. The principle developed in the *South African Police Services v Solidarity obo Barnard* judgment is of direct relevance regarding the transformation of the institution as the court held:

The presiding judge ruled in favour of the Claremont Sanatorium receiving an exemption.

The Kimberley Benevolent Home was developed to meet the community needs in Kimberley. In the Medical Missionary documents, a report from the Diamond Fields Benevolent Home formerly known as the Kimberley Benevolent Home is presented. The home had its own property in spite of all the challenges that these institutions were facing in as referenced in the Claremont case above. Reporting on the operations of the Kimberley Benevolent home, Ira J. Hankins writes:

On the first of December we took possession of our own property, and have since been making necessary alterations to better carry on the work of the society (Kellogg 1896, 56). The report highlights the needs that were met.... During our brief existence, we have provided over three thousand meals, and more than one thousand beds. Something more than sixty unfortunate men have been helped in the home, besides individuals and families outside who have received aid (ibid.).

## The Kimberley Baths

The Kimberley Baths was established in 1894, first as a benevolent home for the unemployed. It was closed down in 1899 as a result of the ongoing Boer War. It was reported that:

During the siege of Kimberley, a one 9-pound shell and two large 100-pound shells entered the house and exploded, tearing things to pieces quite generally. But the Lord in his mercy so ordered it that no one was hurt. We were under fire 124 days, and were very glad when the siege was raised, and no more shells came whizzing through the air at us. We were able to make a vegetarian soup during the siege, which was a very agreeable change to hundreds who had been subsisting on horse- and mule-flesh. At the close of the siege our pocket-book showed a gain of \$200 profit from this soup. We had a few hills of cucumbers in the garden, and it was marvellous to see how the Lord made those cucumbers grow. The ordinary ones sold for twenty-five cents, and the larger ones for fifty cents each. We also had a few rows of string-beans, and they bore beyond belief. A double handful brought twenty-five cents. The water for the baths was cut off; but we told the military that we *must* be allowed to bathe the soldiers who lay in the trenches day and night. As a result, they allowed us water for that, and every drop was saved after it had been used for baths, and used to keep the beans and cucumbers thriving (Willson 1909, 102).

When the siege ended, the bathrooms were renovated. On the property there were gardens connected with the work of the sanatorium. Many patients were referred to the institution by physicians (Willson 1909, 102). In the 1901–1903 Kimberley directory the address of the baths appears on an advert (Henderson 1902, 436). It shows a gents' entrance on 36 Old Main Street and a ladies' entrance on 7 Cheapside Street. The services were based on natural remedies particularly the hot and cold baths that Ellen G White advocated in her health reform counsels (White 1900, Par. 2). This connected the work of the Kimberley Baths to the global health reform principles promoted by the church. This natural remedy programme stood in, complemented the conventional medicine products and methods; and was not opposed to conventional medicine but was

critical of medical products that produced serious side effects and sought alternatives for those. Many of these medicines have been excluded from recommended medicinal products through medical research (Leonard Brand and Don Steward McMahon, 2005). The history of the early beginnings of the SDA church in South Africa is traced back to Kimberley. The next section of this article highlights a broader historical context how the church developed from Kimberley into its regional and global connections.

## South Africa's Contribution to the Global Seventh-Day Adventist Church

Despite the challenging context, many developments occurred between 1871 and the turn of the century. The accelerated pace at which the work developed is clear evidence that those who had means were giving generously towards the development of the church. The Kimberley congregation having the first Seventh-day Adventist Church building in South Africa was at the centre of this development for a few years. Although the work started among the white farmers, to the time the first church was built, the missionaries began to reach the diverse groups of South Africa. Richard Moko and David Kalaka are two early African pioneers who are mentioned. Once converted, they translated Seventh-day Adventist literature into their mother tongues, IsiXhosa and SeSotho respectively, since they were both educated men. From Kimberley they returned to their respective home villages and towns as missionaries (Sokupa 2022. See also Futho 2021). Daniel Christian Theunissen (1873–1956) also took the newly-embraced faith that he was probably introduced to earlier as a worker in the Wessels' home (Du Preez 2010, 110).

The recognition of the roles played by Africans and people of colour in the South African Seventh-day Adventist historiography is a recent feature. This is noted in the perspectives presented by Iton Mpumelelo Buwa in his account of the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cancele Mission, Mouth Frere, South Africa. In this work, Buwa highlights individuals whose contributions are not previously recognised in any Seventh-day Adventist literature. Clifford Nhlapo's book, *Tears of the Black Pulpit*, recognises African development that was left in obscurity by earlier historians (Nhlapo 2010). Hlanga Mafani gives a good documented oral history, as he adequately covers the Cape where Richard Moko lived and worked for most of his life (Mafani 2011). Gerald Du Preez's work is a milestone in South African historiography. While his dissertation focuses on people of colour, he gives a survey of the entire field (Du Preez 2010). Passmore Hachalinga brings to the fore the entire history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the form of a survey of the unfolding of church events (Hachalinga 2022). The history of the significant buildings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has not been documented. Much ground has been gained in the literature surveyed above to recognise significant persons, particularly African and coloured persons. A brief discussion on the contribution of the South African Seventh-day Adventist Church to the global church is now in order.

## The Kimberley Church in the South African SDA Organisational Context

The impact of the way the Seventh-day Adventist Church was organised in South Africa was felt globally. When A.T. Robinson followed a group of missionaries that included his brother D.A. Robinson, he focused on the organisation of the church administrative structures. The Seventh-day Adventist Church polity was under heavy criticism from Ellen G. White, one of the founder members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church who also had a gift of prophecy. She advocated for a decentralised form of governance over the centralised approach where a few people were making decisions and taking charge of the big share of the work on their shoulders. White had guided the church in its early developments on the necessity of organisation. The church had now grown into a global movement that reached several continents. There was a need to review its functional structures without tampering with the mission and biblical-theological message that the church espoused. It was a re-organisation for mission focus that White was calling for. The non-credal approach to ecclesiology made this adjustment possible. Barry Oliver describes the developments happening in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa with the Kimberley church as a strong backbone for it, as follows:

The most far-reaching developments which would later culminate in the re-organisation of the structure of the denomination did not take place in North America. They took place in response to the needs of the church as it ventured into new situations in the mission fields. For example, towards the end of 1892 a most significant development occurred in South Africa. It came about as a result of demands being placed on the organisational structure of the church by the escalating internationalisation of the church (Oliver 1989, 73).

Upon examining the task of setting up organisational structures in this new field, Asa Theron Robinson thought about the structure of church organisation as it was designed in the constitutional and organisational guidelines of the church in practical terms. He soon realised that while the church was strong financially, he did not have the numbers to match it (Oliver 1989, 73).

The main problem was personnel, there were just not enough people to fill the needed auxiliary organisation positions, that were self-governing. Robinson had the task of organising boards that would manage such ministries and many more. He also organised an overarching administrative body which was the local conference. Later a union level of administration would be added and finally a division. These levels of church administration needed personnel. Conversely the auxiliary organisations were organised independently of this multi-layered administrative structure to foster ministries in multiple areas.

Oliver (1989, 74) summarises Robinson's proposal as follows:



To involve the available personnel in the administration of auxiliary societies and associations would mean that too few would be available for direct ministerial contact with the people to whom they were commissioned to minister. He proposed, therefore that the auxiliary societies and associations be concentrated under the executive control of the South African Conference which he hoped would be organised in the near future.

When Oliver investigated whether this proposal was new, or it had been actioned before in some level of the church structure, his investigation showed no prior evidence of such action.

Robinson's proposal was sent to the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This is a body that manages the work of the church globally. Ole Andres Olsen (1845–1915) was the president of the General Conference at the time when Robinson sent this proposal. There is evidence that Olsen consulted extensively to ensure that 'no mistake be made' on this matter (Olsen 1892, 1).

There was a misunderstanding on the part of Olsen regarding William C. White's position. He thought he was against the proposal. The proposal was also sent to the Mission Board, where it met a lot of criticism and opposition. By the time Olsen sent the final recommendations to A.T. Robinson, the proposal was already implemented. Robinson reported later that the "work of the South African Conference went along quite smoothly, under the new plan of organisation" (Oliver 1989, 81).

## The Seventh-day Adventist's Contribution to Education

In 1892, Robinson wrote, regarding the school system in South Africa: "The school system is not nearly as good here as it is in America" (Robinson 1892, 123). The pioneering work of Seventh-day Adventist schools in South Africa is traced back to the contribution of Sara Elizabeth Peck (1868–1968). In 1893, she was appointed to go to South Africa as a missionary. She worked in Cape Town and Kimberley (Bolinger 1968, 15). The Seventh-day Adventist education philosophy was developed under the prophetic guidance of Ellen G. White. The basic idea foundational to Adventist education is a balanced development of the mental, physical and spiritual aspects of life. This is unpacked in her numerous statements throughout her writings. The introduction of *Education, a book written* by Ellen G. White is as follows:

The motivating objective of the author in her extensive writings upon the subject of education was that youth on the threshold of life might be ready to take their place as good citizens, well prepared for the practical experiences of living, fully developed physically, God-fearing, with characters untarnished and hearts true to principle... Concerned as it is with great guiding principles, and not with details of curriculum or the merits of differing educational systems, the influence of this volume has been worldwide, with editions published in a number of the leading languages of other continents (White 1952, 8).

This philosophy of education undergirded the educational system whose foundation was implemented by Sara Peck in both Cape Town and Kimberley. There is evidence that the philosophy of education based on the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White, was imported into South Africa, through the American missionaries. However, the school in Kimberley may not have been a big school from the available evidence.

## Kimberley as a Tourist Destination

There are over 200 heritage buildings in Kimberley listed by the South African Heritage Resource Agency. These range from residential to public buildings. They are not all places that one can visit. Many are private buildings that have reached a stage in age where they are designated as heritage buildings. There are museums that do mention names like Wessels and De Beers because they were such important names in the history of mining in Kimberley. The history of Kimberley has been told and appreciated by visitors from museums that tell it from political and social perspectives. There is a need for the story of the influence and contribution of the Seventh-day Adventist Church members in Kimberley to be told.

The oldest church in the city of Kimberley is St Martin's located at the Big Hole. This Lutheran Church building was inaugurated in 1875. Its building materials were imported from Europe, came by boat into South Africa and were assembled in Thompson Street Kimberley. The original church building was purchased by the De Beers Mine Museum and transferred there in 1964. (McGregor Museum, 2021). The second oldest surviving original building is most likely the Kimberley Seventh-day Adventist Church at the corner of Blacking and Dyer Place. It was built in 1890 and still stands in the original site. In 1967, the Kimberley SDA Church was declared a national monument and later a provincial monument (The South African Heritage Resources Agency SAHRA – 1040).<sup>4</sup> Over the years, the membership declined due to the added number of SDA churches in Kimberley. Currently the church is not in use for worship services because of the current state of the building. It is, however, desirable that it could be both a church building with regular services and a museum at the same time.

## The Current Role of the Museum

There were several phases of the Seventh-day Adventist occupation of the museum for worship. There is a caretaker at the property who keeps the keys to the church. No

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4 Proclamation 1040 of 14 July 1967, has three parts: (1) Proclamation of a Monument which reads by M Viljoen acting minister of education: 'By virtue of the powers vested in me by section 8(1) (a) of the Natural and Historical Monuments, Relics and Antiques Act, 1934 (Act No. 4 of 1934), as amended, I hereby proclaim Erf. 1681 in the Municipality and Division of Kimberley, with the buildings thereon, to be a monument. (2) Description: First Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Kimberley... (3) Historical interest: This church is the original church in the Republic of South Africa of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.' <https://sahris.sahra.org.za/sites/default/files/gazettes/1788-1040.pdf>

organised tours are currently done, except for Seventh-day Adventist groups who do their own tours by arrangement with the head office in Bloemfontein. The church building remains a place of great potential as a place of worship and museum at the same time. There are a few artefacts of interest in this building. The type of school desks that are in the back room of the church was once imported from the USA. There is an informative display unit at the back of the church. More can be done to update information as research progresses. The museum serves only the Seventh-day Adventist church at the moment. There are, however, many ways in which the Seventh-day Adventist Church connected with the rest of the Kimberley community. It is therefore important to extend the educational role of the museum to serve a wider audience who may find the connections insightful and helpful for research, or personal enrichment.

## The Ideal Role of The Kimberley Church Museum

Since 1983, the Seventh-day Adventist Church established Adventist heritage ministries in the USA to identify and acquire property that is of historical value to Seventh-day Adventists. This ministry has thrived in the USA. A lot of careful work is done to furnish the homes with original or replica furniture. Some of the properties acquired go back to the eighteenth century. Some buildings are shared between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and another denomination. The William Miller chapel, in Whitehall New York, for example, is shared with the Advent Christian Church. The home of William Miller, in the same location on the other hand, is under the full ownership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Alan Mabin makes suggestions that are worth considering, in his study on museums in Kimberley. In his research on a heritage site, Pilgrim Rest, he proposes the following:

In the absence of the resources to create more Pilgrim Rests and more Kimberley Open Mine Museums, one thing that could be done is to create the materials, which would assist visitors to campaign for their accessibility (Mabin 1992, 15).

Mabin is not clear on the type of materials he is referring to, but in the context of his proposal, one may glean that he is referring to resource materials such as artefacts and written materials. The more writing is done on a particular institution the more people would like to know about it and see the original or replica of the building. For the Kimberley Church Museum, the end ideally should not be the building itself, but the stories of God's leadership in the lives of individuals who have passed through the church as members.

The second suggestion offered by Mabin in his study of museums in Kimberley is about networking. He suggests:

The simplest level of extending the experience of the museums would be to 'cross reference' to other museums – thus in the Kimberley Mine Museum case, clear connections to materials and displays at McGregor and Duggan Cronin (which

hopefully will have the resources to finish some stages of redoing in the near future) could prove very effective (Mabin 1992, 15).

In the case of the Kimberley Church Museum, there is a close connection with the Kimberley Mine Museum that goes back to the Wessels family and the De Beers mining company to cite one example.

The third and final proposal shared by Mabin suggests a production of materials that are interpretive in nature. He claims: “But there is clearly a need for interpretation to go beyond these simple steps. A range of interpretive materials is most vitally necessary.” This opens opportunities for research around these museums. *Studiae Historicae Ecclesiasticae* (SHE) a church history journal in Southern Africa which has focused on the history of the church in Southern Africa for the past fifty years. SHE is one of those avenues where this stimulating engagement should begin. Papers and articles in the area of church museums may encourage more collaboration between historians, archivists, and curators of various church museums in Kimberley. The Seventh-day Adventist church building in Beaconsfield could be one of those tourist destinations where the community and visitors can learn about the history of the city from a faith perspective.

This is where SHE connects with these museums with a specific focus on African church history. The interpretation of historical information in connection with the local context is important to the understanding of the development of the Kimberley Church Museum. The organisational structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church connects the museum to the sisterhood of church museums around the world.

## Conclusion

This article traced the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kimberley from the time it was populated with members to the present when it is not in use for worship activities. The connections the church had with the community and the global Seventh-day Adventist Church have been explored and shown. There is a lot more research that needs to be done to fill in all the gaps that currently exist. Some of these gaps relate to Seventh-day Adventist heritage sites in Kimberley that are yet to be identified by location but are known only by name. There is a need to connect historical names from the Kimberley church with their contribution to the community. The museum status of Kimberley Seventh-day Adventist Church has extended its lifespan and potential mission. It is hoped that with more hands on the deck, the next generation will benefit from the story of the beginnings of Seventh-day Adventism in South Africa.

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