

ABSTRACT

THE CHALLENGE OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP RETENTION: A CASE STUDY OF KANYAMA

CENTRAL CHURCH IN ZAMBIA

by

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ABSTRACT OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

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Kanyama Central SDA Church (KCC) loses 33.26 % of its membership gains annually. Despite the membership loss incurred, very little work has been done to gain an understanding as regards the challenge of membership loss in KCC.

The overarching aim of this study is to gain an understanding of the challenge of church membership retention (CCMR) at KCC and propose a model for solving this challenge.

Out of multiple methods which could have been used, in this study, the major method which was used for data collection is the focus group discussion. Sample focus group participants composed of homogeneous members who were chosen according to their leadership and personal experience in the SDA church and KCC in particular.

According to the findings of this study, 2009 to 2012 statistical reports revealed that KCC incurred an average annual membership loss of 33.26% of all its gains. In 2009 alone KCC lost 92% of its membership gains. A physical check of the church membership records indicated that 39.60% more than people who were physically attending church was missing.

The guardianship program which was conducted during this study attracted 74.66% retention of the discovered missing members. This research shows that the challenge of membership retention is real in KCC. After implementing the programmes designed in this study, it was concluded that it is possible to reduce the loss of members in KCC if there is proper planning, commitment and dedication on the part of the local church leadership and the pastor.

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A CASE STUDY OF KANYAMA CENTRAL CHURCH IN LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

A project

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Imolo Nyumbu Clement

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This project is dedicated to all who helped me.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Adj - Adjustments

Cen – Central

Cop – Copper-belt

CCMR – Challenge of Church Membership Retention

CML – Church Membership Loss

CMR – Church Membership Retention

CZC - Central Zambia Conference

Eas - Eastern

LCC – Kanyama Central Seventh-day Adventist Church

Ltrs – Letters

Lua – Luapula

Lus - Lusaka

MR – Membership Retention

M/ship – Membership

Nor – Northern

NWE – North-western

PF - Profession of Faith

SOU – Southern

WES - Western

ZBUC – Zambia Union Conference.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

The 2010 national statistical records¹ show that Zambia's population stands at 13,279,336 people. The membership of the Seventh Day Adventist Church in the Zambia Union Conference on the other hand stood at 689,755 in the same year (2011). These statistical records translate into a ratio of one Seventh-day Adventist member for every 19 Zambian citizens¹. While it is a known fact by most Zambia Adventists that the Central Zambia Conference and Kanyama Central church are among the institutions which are witnessing one of the fastest numerical membership growths in the Zambia Union Conference of the SDA Church, there is also a challenge of membership losses.

This project considers the lack of commitment and theological understanding of membership retention as a hypothesis for the challenge of membership retention in Kanyama Central SDA Church (KCC).

¹ "Zambia Statistics," Central Statistics Office Report, 2010, <http://www.zamstats.gov.zm/census.php> (September 8, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Zambia losses about 15% to 22.7% of its total membership gain each year.² The Kanyama Central Seventh-day Adventist Church loses about 33.26% of its membership annually.

Despite an increase in membership losses, very little work has been done to gain an understanding concerning the challenge of membership loss in KCC. If membership loss in Kanyama Central Church is not addressed or treated with the seriousness it deserves, then membership growth will become foreclosed due to loss complications. This in the long run will make it difficult for the church to reflect a true and clear picture of membership growth of the church in Zambia.

Judging by the overwhelming statistics provided in the preceding pages on loss of members in the period from 2002 to 2009 it is imperative to find a way of solving the challenge of membership retention.

Purpose of the Study

The overarching aim of this study is to gain an understanding of the challenges of membership retention at Kanyama Central Church (KCC) and to propose a model for solving this challenge.

Research Questions

¹ The Zambia Union Conference Secretary's end of Quarter Statistical Report shows that Zambia Union had a baptized membership of 689,755 as at December, 31, 2010.

² Zambia Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, office of the Executive Secretary, *Annual Statistical Reports* (Lusaka: Zambia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2009), 28.

In order for the above aim to be achieved, the following questions were constructed and used as guiding questions in the project:

1. Is the challenge of membership retention real in Kanyama Central SDA church?
2. What are the main causes of membership loss in Kanyama Central SDA Church?
3. If it is real what have you done as a church to curb this challenge?
4. How has the steps you took to curb the challenge of membership retention (MR) helped the church to reclaim the missing church members?
5. What strategy have you put in place so that this challenge does not reoccur in future?

Methodology

Though there are multiple methods we could have used in this research exercise, in this project, the major method which will be used for data collection is the focus group discussion. Sample focus group participants composed of homogenous members will be chosen according to their leadership and personal experience in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and Kanyama Central SDA Church in particular.

Apart from focus group discussion, the project includes theological basis comprising the Old Testament and New Testament, Ellen G. White and Other Authors on the Church Membership Retention.

Limitations

During this research, the limitations experienced were as follows: time limitation, data inaccessibility, illiteracy levels among church members, and occurrences which were not anticipated.

Delimitation

This study was conducted in Kanyama Central SDA Church in Kanyama East Mission District of the Central Zambia Conference in the Zambia Union Conference. It took three years for his study to be complete. Kanyama Central Church was selected for this study because it is the oldest and has the largest membership in Kanyama East Mission District of the Central Zambia Conference.

Study Summary

This project was conducted as follows: the introduction provided the background information as to what motivated the study. The statistics and authentic sources needed were provided.

In chapter two the main focus will be on the theoretical foundation which will deal with reasoned prepositions, which are derived from three main sources: the Bible, Ellen G. White and other Authors on the topic of Membership Retention.

Chapter Three will deal with the description of local settings. The religious and national statistics of the country of Zambia will be put in perspective to establish the relevance and impact of Adventism in Zambia and later identify the needs of Kanyama Central Church.

Chapter four describes the program designed to solve the challenge identified in chapter 3 of the project. The major sections will include the following:

preparation for implementation, phase of implementation, and evaluation of the implementation.

Chapter Five will outline the recommendations that will result from the outcome of the project. Summary and Conclusion will be considered at the close of the project.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION: MEMBERSHIP RETENTION AS EVIDENCED FROM THE BIBLE AND SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

Introduction

This chapter is designed to champion the view that membership retention is a critical phenomenon in post-modern Christendom as much as it was in both the Old and the New Testaments. Membership retention was championed by Ellen White as well, as evidenced in her writings referred to as “Spirit of Prophecy” in Adventist doctrinal understanding. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the writings of Ellen G. White are considered inspired, thereby believed to be Spirit of Prophecy.¹

This study will seek to find Answers to questions such as; what is membership retention and what initiates and perpetuates member losses? The thrust of this research is to investigate in order to gain an understanding of the challenges of membership retention that threaten church memberships and what the church can do to reduce loss of members.

This chapter is divided into three distinct sections. The first section defines the concept “membership retention” according to both contemporary and some ancient scholars.

¹ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005) 255.

The second section will provide evidence from both the Bible and the Writings of Ellen G. White confirming the importance of membership retention.

The third section of this chapter will investigate what causes members to exit church congregations. In this discussion, appropriate contemporary theories combined with Biblical and Spirit of Prophecy writings will be advanced to explain factors that are contributing to the loss of members in the church.

Membership Retention (MR) Defined

Membership retention is a compound concept with two distinct words.¹ The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of the Current English defines membership as the state or condition of belonging to an entity, organization, group or movement.² Retention on the other hand is defined as the state of holding or possessing or the state of keeping something.³ Hornby further defines member as an individual, or person who is a part of a particular community or society.⁴ Therefore, membership retention implies the state of maintaining or holding individuals who belong to a particular group or organization. Therefore, membership retention implies the action of keeping members who belong to the church in such a way that they are not lost out of the membership. The researcher did not find any contrast of meaning from the ancient language experts.

¹ This is according to the author's understanding.

² A.S. Hornby, "Membership," *OALD* (2010), 1:925.

³ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

Membership Retention as Evidenced in the Bible

There is overwhelming evidence from the Bible to promote and sustain the concept of membership retention. In the first book of the Bible, Genesis, the Biblical narrative of the Fall of Man provides the first glimpse into the desire of God to keep His people within the hold. Eve was first deceived by the Serpent, who was said to be more cunning than any other creature on Earth.

After the woman succumbed to the alluring promises of knowledge of good and evil and the possibilities of reaching the level of the gods, Eve convinced Adam and he too fall victim. In the wake of this horrible act of disobedience, Adam and Eve became aware of their own nakedness and hence upon hearing the Lord God walking in the garden, they hid themselves from Him.

The Lord God is omnipotent and omnipresent. Even before calling out to Adam to ask where he was, God knew exactly where Adam and Eve were geographically. However, God created man with the power of choice, and hence this account demonstrates God's willingness for man to make independent decisions, and yet God still advances in humility to attract man. This account is drawn from scriptural texts in Genesis Chapter 2 and 3. The effort of looking for man is an evidence of retention on the side of God. God did not want to lose His people (Adam and Eve). He wanted them to remain in the fold.

While the problem of this research is the challenge of church membership retention, the above discourse argues for the loving nature of God and His unwillingness for mankind to be lost. When man disobeyed God, he separated himself from his Creator (Isaiah 59:2), but God looked for them (Adam and Eve). The Bible record indicates that in the cool of the day God came to the Garden of Eden

and when He did not find them where they were supposed to be, He called and said, “Where are you?” When God asked Adam where he was it was a way of showing concern for them. It signified the love of God for His people. God would have banished Adam and Eve the very instant they abrogated His law. He however made it a point to come and visit the first couple and see if He could conceive a restoration plan in order to get man back to Himself.

God therefore, in His infinite wisdom, conceived the plan of salvation for man, by declaring His only Son, Jesus, to be the “sacrificial lamb” for the sake of man’s redemption. The prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 49:8-19 argues that God would not forget His people like a woman would never forget her sucking child. “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.” Isaiah 49:15.

The Old Testament has therefore overwhelming evidence of God’s constant and unrelenting efforts towards retaining in His fold all those who He considers his own.

The New Testament is equally alight with evidence of efforts on the part of God, Jesus and the New Testament church leadership on membership retention. In John 3:16, God expresses His desire that no man should be lost, but that all those who will believe in His Son Jesus shall be saved from death and destruction. It is profoundly important at this juncture to define the concept “church”. The SDA Bible Dictionary states that “church” is term that emanates from the Greek root *ekklesia*. The word is an amalgamation of *ek*, meaning “out” and *kaleo*, meaning “to call.”¹

¹ *SDA Bible Dictionary* (1979) s.v. “church.”

Ekklesia in secular Greek language implies a gathering of the people, such as a regularly summoned political body, or an assemblage generally.

The term “church” in the New Testament implies a gathering of Christians. The Seventh day Adventist Elder’s Handbook¹ defines “church” as a group of Christians learning to love God and is called to reach out to the world to invite others into the church. The gospel commission in Matthew 28 admonishes church members to go out into the world to make disciples of unbelievers. This is evangelism. Xavier Leon-Dufour in the dictionary of biblical theology defines church as people who are united in faith and in cult.¹ This is a very interesting definition of the church because it restricts it to a gathering of Christian believers or a cult. The term church therefore refers to a group of people who are called out of the world, have the same belief system and belong to one congregation.

However Jesus gives three much related parables according to Luke 15. He first talks of the parable of the Lost Coin, then the parable of the Lost Sheep and finally the parable of the Prodigal Son. The essence in all of the three parables is about a lost cost, sheep and son and the effort each of the owners exert to ensure the lost are brought back.

In the gospels Jesus gave teachings which were related to the topic of membership retention. Jesus’ teaching of the parable of the lost sheep, lost coin, and the lost son illustrates the importance of the topic of membership retention. Jesus’ point in the three parables is that God will go to every length and will cover every distance to

¹ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, *Seventh-day Adventist Elder’s Handbook* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1994), 15.

bring back to the fold what belongs to Him. He was even audacious enough to allow for the sacrificial death of His only Son Jesus. Jesus suffered the most humiliating death in order for God to reclaim what is rightfully His. This demonstrates a strong drive for membership retention. This thought is authenticated by Roper.²

Membership Retention in the Spirit of Prophecy Writings

The Spirit filled writings of Ellen G. White promulgate the authenticity of God's desire that church members are retained within their congregations and that God is not eager that any should exit.

God's primary assignment to the church is to make disciples of all nations and ensure that the woody souls are retained within the church. This is the argument put forward by Ellen White's many writings. However, *Spirit of Prophecy* commences the discourse on membership retention by arguing that retention is a function of growth in one's direct union with Jesus Christ.³ She states that every member should start by having a moment by moment communion with Jesus.⁴ Spiritual growth, just as growth in the natural realm, has stages.

According to the *Spirit of Prophecy*, the older members of the church must adhere to certain fundamentals in order to ensure that members are retained in the church. The beginning point is to win souls into the church through evangelism as

¹ X. Leon-Dufour, "church" DBT (1988), 1:72.

² David L. Roper, "The Life of Christ, vol. 2" *Truth for Today Commentary* (Benton Searcy: Resource Publication, 2003), 2:113.

³ Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, (Harrah Oklahoma, Ok 73045:Mission Publishing Inc., 2002), 68.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 67.

Jesus commissioned in Matthew 28. This must be done through prayerful witnessing and evangelism.

Once the members are brought into the church, Ellen White¹ states that the work of discipling process then commences. Discipling is defined as helping people to grow in their knowledge of God and His holiness.² Ellen White argues that when members are won into the church, they come in with their imperfections and are below the standard of what a Christian ought to be. They have to be incorporated into a process of unlearning their worldly practices and thereby have to undergo a paradigm shift.³ Ellen White argues that new members and old members alike must be taught the entire doctrine of salvation. They must be taught that their presence in the church is critical and that the church has systems of support to ensure retention.⁴

Those who have newly come to the faith should be patiently and tenderly dealt with, and it is the duty of the older members of the church to devise ways and means to provide help and sympathy and instruction for those who have conscientiously withdrawn from other churches for the truth's sake and thus cut themselves off from the pastoral labor to which they have been accustomed.⁵

Ellen White states that faithful instruction is very crucial for the growth of the converts. The principles of the Christian life should be made plain to those who have

¹ Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages* (Wildwood, GA 30757: Family Heritage Books, 1990), 294.

² *SDA Bible Dictionary* (1979) s.v. "disciple"

³ Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, 294.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5 (California: Pacific Press Association, 1948), 426.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, (Washington, DC: R&H Publishing Association, December 19, 1910), 511.

newly come to the truth.”¹ Indeed people who leave their churches come into the church expecting a better Christian life than what they left. And if they do not find the life they expected, it will be hard to keep them in the fold.

After the teaching has been done, Ellen White argues for mentoring.²

According to Hornby mentoring is the practice of assigning an experienced person to a less experienced person for the purpose of helping the one with less experience.³

There is evidence in the Bible according to Acts 15:36-40. The Bible states the experience of Paul and Barnabas and how they made constant attempts to revisit the Christians they had evangelized to. This was done so that the new members are establish in the truth they were taught.

What Paul and Barnabas used to do is authenticated by Ellen White. The two early missionaries went to the converts so that they could mentor them and strengthen their faith. Paul and other disciples were missionaries who went out for mission and after establishing churches they made other trips to go back to those places so that they could see how new converts were doing.

Ellen White in her book “Evangelism” states, “The first effort of winning souls is not final but just the beginning of a very important job of keeping souls in the fold. The second time of highlighting the truth which the new converts heard is very important.”⁴ New converts need a lot of care. The work of wining souls, important as

¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6 (California: Pacific Press Association, 1948), 91.

²Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Heralds Publishing Association, 1974), 91.

³ A.S. Hornby, “mentoring”, *OALDE* (2010), 1:927.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, 91.

it is, is not enough; new believers need to be fed with the word of God in order for them to be established in their new found faith.

Furthermore, Ellen White argues for God's primary assignment to the church. She states that those who have been saved by the grace of God should not despise or neglect those whom Jesus is seeking to save.¹ So far it is clear from the spirit of prophecy that membership retention is a foundation of growth in one's direct union with Jesus Christ

What Causes Members to Exit?

So far, it has been demonstrated clearly from the Spirit of Prophecy that each member has a responsibility of caring for the new converts. Church members do not just leave the church for no apparent reason. The Spirit of Prophecy argues that there are some factors leading to church members leaving the church.

Upon all new converts should be impressed the truth that abiding knowledge can be gained only by earnest labor and persevering study. As a rule, those who are converted to the truth we preach have not previously been diligent students of the Scriptures; for in the popular churches there is little real study of the Word of God. The people look to the ministers to search the Scriptures for them and to explain what they teach.²

Some of the factors influencing membership losses according to the Spirit of Prophecy include the following: Companionship and Interaction; Person-Environment Interactional Experience; New Members' Involvement and Identity Development.

¹ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, April 16, 1895, vol. 3, number 16, 247.

² Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, 367.

Companionship and Interaction

According to the Spirit of Prophecy, the leading factor that influences membership losses is a lack of companionship within the group. In contemporary theory, Tinto in his theory termed as the “Interactionalist Theory” states that interaction through social communities helps people to be integrated into a particular group.¹ It is through interaction that one can know and feel the sense of belonging to a particular group.

Tinto and others² argue that in order for members of a particular group to grow in the belief system of the group they belong and contribute to its affairs, the new members and the older members must be free to interact within the group or organization.

In the Garden of Eden, God saw that it was not good that man (Adam) should be alone (Genesis 2:18). After creating Eve, Adam gave an expression of satisfaction of life. Christ also understood the essence and import of love and interaction. The Bible record states:

And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Matthew 9: 10-11 (KJV).

¹V. Tinto, *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993) 188.

² Christopher Chaves, “*Involvement, Development and Retention*,” www.reorbit.com/news/education/690279/involvement_development (12 October, 2006).

The new converts may leave the church because of missing the company of the friends and leaders of their former churches. Ellen White advises that the work of caring for new converts is a special responsibility given by God to the church.¹ If this work is neglected, then the church is being unfaithful to the trust which God has given to it.

Ellen White points out the duty of older members to the new converts: Those who have newly come to the faith should be patiently and tenderly dealt with, and it is the duty of the older members of the church to devise ways and means to provide help and sympathy and instruction for those who have conscientiously withdrawn from other churches for the truth's sake and thus cut themselves off from the pastoral labor to which they have been accustomed.²

Person-Environment Interactional Experience

The second factor leading to the challenge of membership retention in the church is the failure by the clergy and church members to create and continue teaching the new converts after they have joined the church. Ellen White's argument for the need to care for new converts states that after people have been converted to the truth, they need to be looked after.³

The Person-Environment Theory by Sanford is critical in the work of membership retention. According Christopher Chaves in his article, "Involvement,

¹ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, April 28, 1896.

² Ibid.

³ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*, Vol. 4. 68.

Development and Retention”,¹ the person–environment interactional experience includes three general concepts: readiness, challenge, and support. In order for any individual member to develop into one who is able to demonstrate maturity, there is a need for conduciveness in the environment that promotes spiritual nourishment and growth. This should follow a particular order of steps. A member needs to have a readiness of mind to receive the instructions. This can be achieved if the members understand the benefits of what is about to be done for them.

A program of helping that individual to see the need of the program to take place should be enhanced. When the mind is ready to receive instructions, then there should be someone who can pose a challenge to the new member. This can be achieved if the student (or disciple) is first shown the importance and the benefits of such a study.

After a student is challenged, there is a need of support from the instructor who is an experienced church member in this case. In this case the minister (or Pastor) is cardinal to this development. There should be a properly planned program for instructing students in the deep biblical doctrines of the church in order for the new believers to be able to defend their faith adequately.

Ellen White reiterates the point that confirms that the majority of ministers relax as soon as the measure of success in winning souls to the truth is attained.² This should not be so. New converts need encouragement and support from the

¹Christopher, Chaves, “*Involvement, Development and Retention*”, www.reorbit.com/news/education/690279/involvement_development (12 October, 2006).

² Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*, Vol. 4. 68.

church leaders and old members in faith, before and after their baptism. They also need nursing, watchful attention, and help in all areas of Christian life.

New Members' Involvement

The third reason as ascribed by the Spirit of Prophecy is the lack of education to new converts in regard to their duties and fellowship. Ellen White argues in favor of involvement when she wrote that new converts need to be given instructions to help them know their responsibilities in the church.¹

In attempting to define his Marginality Theory, Schlossberg quoted by Christopher defined "marginality", as "a sense of not fitting in".² According to Donald Smith³ in his book, "Keeping the Faithful..." physiological needs may be understood as physical requirement for human survival. When physical requirements are not met in life, human beings tend to find ways of satisfying them in one way or another.

The argument of Smith carries a lot of sense with it because this is seen even in the political realms. When a member of a particular political party feels his/her needs are not properly met, they usually defect to the parties they feel will meet their needs.

Ellen White reveals that the secret of Jesus Christ's spiritual power was from the relationship he maintained with His Father as the son of God, He strengthened

¹ Ibid.,58

² Christopher Chaves "*Involvement, Development and Retention*," [www.reorbit.com/news/education/690279/involvement_development](http://www.reorbit.com/news/education/690279/involvement_development_12) (12 October, 2006).

³ Donald P. Smith, *How to Attract and Keep Active Church Members* (Frankfort, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press), 15.

His faith by prayer and this communion with heaven helped Him to resist evil and minister to the needs of men.¹

The ministry of Jesus included ministry to human requirements and involving them in the work He was doing. The best example is found in the New Testament at the time when He was recruiting His disciples:

After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. Therefore said he unto them, the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. Luke 10:1, 2 (KJV).

The calling of the first disciples included theory and practical. After calling them, He trained them and later sent them into the field to do just what they saw Him doing. This type of training made the disciples who understood the plan of Jesus to get established in the truth. They also felt part of the Lord's ministry.

And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. Luke 10:17-20 (KJV).

This made some of the disciples to remain and stand for what they were taught until death. The commitment to the teachings of their Master gave them authority and power to accomplish the task they were given even after Jesus went to heaven.

¹ Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, 56.

According to Garry, denominations have shifted from doing programs which help membership retention to entertainment. Though Garry was commenting on what was happening in the Baptist Church, this seems to be the trend in almost all churches. Involving new members in the work of the church will help them develop a sense of belonging.

In the *Review and Herald* of June 25, 1895, Ellen White counsels that, “when souls are converted, set them to work at once. And as they labor according to their ability, they will grow stronger.”¹ This is where the secret of growing strong in faith lies. The above statement states clearly that members can be easily retained in the church if they are taught lessons which will help them know their responsibility as believers. This will help them exercise their faith.

Ellen White emphasizes the above point by stating that it is important for everyone who receives Christ to be trained to play a part in the great work of winning souls.² This counsel is very crucial. New converts should be given proper soul winning training if they are to be participants in God’s work. This will help them to develop a feeling of belonging and accountability.

Identity Development

The fourth factor for challenges of membership retention is the promulgation of heresy and misleading doctrines. The Spirit of Prophecy states that there is an increase in the number of new sects which are arising with doctrines contrary to

¹ E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, June 25, 1895.

² Ellen G. White, Letter 279, 1905.

Bible truth.¹ This should be a source of concern to everyone who seeks after Bible. New members cannot survive in such an environment if church leadership will not put measures that will help members from being misled. New members should be helped to develop a knowledge which will make them feel identified with the church at large.

This can only be achieved if the church takes the work of teaching the members seriously. Kolb's Theory of Experiential Learning is defined as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience"² This theory can be very helpful in educating new members in the church. The increase of sects which are using the Bible was not only prevalent during the time of Ellen White, but even the time of the apostles.³ White writes:

Paul lost his hold on the minds of those who had been deceived; but relying on the word and power of God, and refusing the interpretations of the apostate teachers, he was able to lead the converts to see that they had been deceived, and thus defeat the purpose of Satan. The new converts came back to the faith, prepared to take their position intelligently for the truth.⁴

The above passage clearly proves the fact that new converts can be deceived and be misled by wrong teachings. As Paul did, the church should make programs of indoctrinating new converts with the Bible truth; this should be done with the help

¹ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, 358.

² Christopher Chaves, "Involvement, Development and Retention," www.reorbit.com/news/education/690279/involvement_development, (October 12, 2006).

³ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, 358.

⁴ Ibid.

of well experienced teachers who will not only teach but develop ways in which members will be helped to apply the teachings in their lives.

This can help them be grounded in the truth so much that they are able to stand for the truth at all time and in all situations. The new converts should not be left alone after joining the church.

Ellen White concludes:

Care should be exercised to educate the young converts. They are not to be left to themselves, to be led away by false presentations, to walk in a false way... Teach faithfully all that Christ has commanded... Upon all new converts should be impressed the truth that abiding knowledge can be gained only by earnest labor and persevering duty.¹

The new converts who join the church can be retained in the church if older church members make programs which will help meet the social, physical, emotional and spiritual needs of them.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 uses expository research. As evidenced from the Bible and Ellen White's writings, membership retention is a critical phenomenon in our post-modern Christendom. The major contributing factors leading to the loss of church members include the following:

1. Lack of companionship and interaction.
2. Lack of person-environment interactional experience.
3. Lack of new members' involvement.
4. And failure to develop or plan a program for identity developmental activities.

¹ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, 376.

The followers of Jesus (Christians now) are left with the same task of winning and keeping souls for God's kingdom (John 6:38-40).¹ While the theoretical foundations are laid from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, it is important to now consider the local settings of the place where this study was undertaken.

¹ "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:38-40.

CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL SETTING

Introduction

This chapter aims at describing the setting of the church under study. The statistical landscape of Zambia, commencing with the general population, tribal groups, and other related factors will also be considered. Furthermore, it will demonstrate the religious inclinations of the citizenry in Zambia specifically on denominational affiliation lines within the Christian religion. This is important as it shows the positioning and relevance of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) movement in the Zambian society.

After considering the national statistics, SDA church statistics will be postulated from the Zambian Union Conference all the way down to the local church from where this research assignment was conducted. The statistics of all these entities will be compared in order to establish the magnitude of the challenge of membership retention in these entities and ultimately in Kanyama Central Church. A brief report stating the population, tribal groupings, and religious statistics of the Republic of Zambia will be displayed in order to show the relevance of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Zambia.

Description of Zambia

This research project was conducted in Zambia. The major concern of this section is to ensure that a clear picture of the population of Zambia is displayed. Since the population and religion of any country is influenced by many factors, some of the factors which may influence the population of any country are tribes.

Human populations in specific communities are made of various ethnic and tribal groupings with each group having its own religious values.¹ As it is a common practice in Africa, most of the tribes if not all have tribal religions which are practiced during ceremonies.²

Zambia is a country situated in southern Africa between latitude 1500 degrees south and longitude 3000 degrees east. Zambia has a landmass totaling 752,614 square kilometers (290, 566 square mi).³ Zambia has one of the lowest populations to land ratios in Africa.⁴ According to Richard,⁵ Zambia is the 39th largest country in the world (after Chile) and slightly larger than the USA state of Texas.

¹ John S. Mbiti, *African Religious and Philosophy*, (Nairobi, Kenya: East African Publishers, 1990), 100, 101.

² Ibid.

³ "Zambia"
<http://www.cia.gov/library/publication/the-world-factbook/geos/za.htm> (14 October, 2011).

⁴ Richard Vaughan, and Ian Murphy, *Zambia* (Harare: CBC Publishing, 2000), 2.

⁵ Ibid., 47.

Though the country is so vast, almost half the size of Europe only 13, 881, 336 makes the total of its population. ¹Zambia covers three quarters of a million square kilometers as much as France, Switzerland, Australia and Hungary combined.

Zambia, on the map of Africa is one of the countries whose map is really beautiful.²

Zambia on the African map is shown as a huge, lopsided butterfly, lying across the heart of the interior plateau of South Central Africa. Since the plateau on which Zambia rests is over a kilometer above the sea level, the climate is warm but not humid, and amongst the most pleasant the world can offer.³ Zambia is one of the best countries to live in.⁴

The Population of Zambia

Zambia is one of the countries in Africa which has the fastest growing population. It is one of the most highly urbanized countries in the sub-Saharan Africa with 44% of the population concentrated in a few urban areas along the major corridors, while rural areas are sparsely populated.⁵ The challenges of

¹ "The Description of Zambia" <http://zamcom.smetoolkit.org/zambia/en/content/en/2642/zambia-profile> (February, 2012).

² Richard Vaughan, and Ian Murphy, *Zambia*, (Harare: CBC Publishing, 2000), 2.

³ *Ibid.*,58.

⁴ "Zambia Tourism," <http://www.zambiatourism.com/travel/hisgeop> (27th January, 2012).

⁵ "Thomas Brinkhoff," <http://www.citypopulation.de>

unemployment and underemployment in urban areas (Lusaka inclusive) are very serious problems, while most rural Zambians depend on small scale farming.¹

According to 2010 central statistics report on population census, the population of Zambia is growing at a very fast rate in urban areas more than it is in rural areas (see Table 1). The population data on table 1 which was retrieved from the UN Demographic year book of 1998 helps to illustrate the point that the population of Zambia is indeed growing at a very rapid rate in urban areas more than it is in rural places.

The population of Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia has the fastest population growth more especially from 1980 to the year 2010 (see table 2). Table 2 shows that from 1980 to 2010 the population of Lusaka alone has been growing at an average of about 50,000 people in every 10 years. Among the shanty compounds in Lusaka, Kanyama is one of them. Kanyama is the compound where Kanyama Central Church is located. It is at this church where this research project was conducted.

The information about rapid population growth in urban areas helps to understand why urban churches in Zambia have the highest membership compared to those in the country side. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) of Zambia's preliminary results of the 2010 census population indicate that the country's population has increased to Thirteen Million Forty Six Thousand Five Hundred and Eight (13, 046, 508) from Nine Million Eight Hundred and Eight Five Thousand Seven Hundred and Seven (9,885,707) recorded in the 2000 census of population in

¹ "NyumbaYanga: A Brief Description of Religion in Zambia," <http://www.nyumbayanga.info/> A brief – descript (31 January, 2012).

Zambia.¹ The population of Lusaka alone is about 2,198, 996 people according to the Zambia 2010 census.² Zambia has a good number of religious groupings which are identified with particular ethnic groups.

Ethnic Groups in Zambia

A brief look at the ethnic groupings in Zambia will help to answer some of the questions which may be related to the dynamics of population and religion in Zambia. This section may appear irrelevant, but it is very important because religion in Zambia and tribal culture seem to have some interaction at certain points. The population of Zambia comprises of approximately 72 ethnic groups, most of which are Bantu-speaking.³ Almost 90% of Zambians belong to the nine main ethnolinguistic groups: the Lozi, Tonga, Bemba, Tumbuka, Lunda, Luvale, Kaonde, Nkoya, and Nyanja-Chewa.⁴ Each of these ethnic groups is concentrated in particular geographic regions of the country. Most of the groups in these areas are very small and not as well known. However, all ethnic groups can be found in significant numbers in Lusaka and the Copper-belt provinces.⁵ The population of Zambia is composed of the above mentioned ethnic groups.

¹ 2000 census of population in Zambia.

² "Zambia" *World-Fact Book* (10 March, 2012).

³ "A brief description of Lusaka", <http://www.nyumbayanga.info> (16 February, 2012).

⁴ *Ibid.*,23.

⁵ Zamcom, "The Description of Zambia" <http://zamcom.smetoolkit.org/zambia/en/content/en/2642/zambia-profile> (16 February, 2012).

The information so far covered in this section provides a very clear picture of what the Republic of Zambia is. These ethnic groupings contribute a lot to the growth of the church in Zambia. The religious statistics in the following section will provide very helpful information.

Religious Statistics in Zambia

According to the 1996 constitution, the country of Zambia is officially a Christian nation.¹ Though this declaration was made by a political leader, statistics confirm clearly that Christianity has the majority of the population of the citizens of Zambia. Traditional religious thought blends easily with Christian beliefs in many of the country's syncretic churches.²

The Christian denominations include the following: Roman Catholic, Anglican Church, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Pentecostal Churches, new apostolic Church, Lutheran Church, Jehovah's Witness, Brahmanism Faith, and a variety of Evangelical denominations.³ Records indicate that the majority of the Christians are either Catholics or Protestants.⁴

Though the information from the above sources appear to be a composition of estimates, it is clear that the majority of the population of Zambians is dominated

¹ "Zambia" *The Constitution of Zambia*, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/3713564/constitution-of-zambia-1991amended-to-1996> (14 October, 2011).

² "Religion in Zambia, 2011," <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/religioninzambia> (31 October, 2011)

³ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

by Christians. All other religions when put together make only 15% of the population of all religious people in Zambia, while Christians make about 85%.¹

This information gives the reason why the Seventh-day Adventist church being one of the largest churches in the country is a factor in the growth of Christianity in Zambia. In the proceeding section, a brief record of the ZBUC statistics will be displayed.

Zambia Union Conference Statistics

In this section the statistical records of the Zambia Union Conference as they appear in the General Conference records of the Seventh-day Adventist church will be presented. This will help to show the growth rate of the church in Zambia and then trace the challenge of membership loses in order for us to be able to know what could be done to retain the church members in Kanyama Central Church which is in Central Zambia Conference territory.

Zambia Union Conference is one of the largest Unions in the General Conference with a current adherent membership of about 900, 000 members.² According to the General statistical information for 2002 up to 2010, the Southern Africa Indian Ocean Division is one of the fast growing Divisions in the world.³ This is as a result of the work done in the local territorial union regions.

¹ Ibid., 13.

² George Mwansa, "East African Division Membership Still at 1.6 Million, 1998" *Outlook*, vol. 16 of July to September 1998 of Number 3, 12.

³ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Office of Archives and Statistics, *Annual Statistical Reports* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2006), 28.

The Southern Africa Indian Ocean Division (SID) territory of SDA to which the Zambia Union Conference belongs is one of the fastest growing divisions of the General Conference of SDA. The general membership growth rate of the Seventh-day Adventist church worldwide has been very encouraging. The growth rate may be well understood by what is on table 4 on appendix A (see page 71) as adopted from the record of Archives, Statistics, and Research General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (December 19, 2011).¹ The General conference membership growth from the year 2000 to 2010 is about 4.23% per annum.

The table on appendix A (Membership Growth Rate) shows the church membership growth rate of the Seventh-day Adventist church worldwide and the changes in membership are as a result of changes in membership between the beginning and end of the year, shown as percentages.

The rates of growth indicated on table 4 on appendix A (see page 71) are as the result of changes in the membership between the beginning of the year and the end of year, shown as percentages. The Zambia Union Conference has also been for some time now doing very well in the area of evangelism and numeric church growth. As it is indicated on the graph on appendix B (page 72) the numerical church membership growth in the Zambia Union Conference has been very good.

The report which was given in the Outlook Magazine of 1998 by George Mwansa who was then the editor of the Outlook Magazine (EAD Magazine), quoting

¹ "Adventist Archives" *Rates of Growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* <http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/stats/Rates> (11 February, 2012)

from the presidential statistical report revealed that Eastern Africa Division did not reach its quarterly baptism goal of 40,000.

Only 30,218 were baptized, producing a short fall of 9,782. The report further indicates that 3,060 members were missing and 5,961 apostatized in a single quarter. It was also emphasized that the last quarter of 1997 24,817 members were either missing or apostatized.¹ In December 1997 Zambia Union scooped the second position by achieving 133.82% quarterly achievement on membership growth.

On the cumulative honor's roll Zambia Union remained in the first position with 152.24%.² This indeed is a good report but the loss indicated causes a great deal of heartache. Nevertheless, the situation is not a hopeless one as long as the church at the grassroots does something to help solve the challenge. It is really gratifying to discover that the Zambia Union Conference (Zambia Union Mission then) scooped the first position on the cumulative honor's roll of baptisms as far back as 1998. A cursory review of the statistical records in other union missions and conferences show that the statistics presented in the preceding paragraph starting from 1998 indicate that the church in Zambia is not only large, but one of the fastest growing churches in the entire Southern Africa Indian Ocean Division.³

The question that begs an answer is; why is the Zambia Union Conference failing to beat a membership close to one million membership mark looking at the

¹ G. Mwansa, 12.

² Ibid., 59.

³ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Office of Archives and Statistics, *Annual Statistical Reports*, (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2006), 28.

speed at which it is recruiting members from as far-back as 1998? It seems the membership losses still stand out as a big threat in this Union Conference. Nevertheless, the overall picture projected by the Zambia Union Conference (ZBUC) Statistical records leaves a lot of unanswered questions. From 2003 to 2009, the ZBUC Secretary's Statistical records¹ state that out of a total of 205, 465 baptisms, the Union Conference lost 45, 759 through deaths, apostasy and missing members. This record translates into 22.27% loss within seven years.

The Zambia Union Conference experienced big loses almost every quarter through death, transfers out, apostasy; missing and adjustments. Around the year 2004 and 2005 a column called adjustment was introduced on the statistical report in the losses column of the report form. From 2004 to 2007, a total number of 3,483 members were lost through adjustment of the figures of reported achievements within four years.

According to the report which was given by the Executive Secretary of the Zambia Union Conference² to the author, the adjustment which is on the report form was introduced as a result of misinterpreted figure from local conferences' statistical reports.³ It is interesting to note that the Union(s) decided to correct figures by adjustments instead of dealing with the challenge by developing strategies to curb it.

¹ Zambia Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, office of the Executive Secretary, *Annual Statistical Reports* (Lusaka: Zambia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2009), 28.

² Ibid., 19.

³ Bedinical Ndatoya, Zambia Union Conference Executive Secretary, interview by author, Zambia Union Conference Office of the Executive Secretary, 17th October, 2011.

Table 3 on appendix A- (Evidence of Membership Loss) gives a summary of gains and losses of members in the Zambia Union Conference beginning from 2002 to 2009. The figures on table 3 in appendix A project an interesting picture on membership statistics. The losses are unbelievable, but they reflect the reality on the ground. Table 3 on appendix A (2000 - 2009 Evidence of membership loss in ZBUC) provides evidence that membership loss in the Zambia Union Conference is really a major challenge and it requires an urgent attention from all stakeholders.

The loss of members in this Union should be the concern of all stakeholders because the loss of members in one world territory affects the membership the whole world church in a very negative way.

Table 3 which is found in appendix A of this study can be retranslated as in Table 1 below.

Table 1: ZBUC loss percentage

Year	Gain	Loss	ZBUC Membership Loss percentage
2002	42,597	18,385	43.2%
2003	47,673	18,680	39.2%
2004	56,407	22,944	40.7%
2005	47,965	22,113	46.1%
2006	50,770	19,851	39.0%
2007	13,525	4,795	35.4%
2008	13,542	5,338	39.4%
2009	18,279	5,672	31.0%

Table 1 indicates that Zambia Union Conference loses more than 30% of the annual gains. The information of the Zambia Union Conference statistical records may not really provide information which could help us solve the challenge of membership loss. Nevertheless, the data can help us understand the magnitude of

the challenge of church membership retention. This data also helps us to understand the extent of the challenge of membership loss. The information about the Zambia Union statistical records may be of great help to those who may want to know more about the Zambia union statistical records.

In this case, the information which could help us draw near to finding a solution to the challenge of membership losses is that which comes from the grassroots (local church), because that is where all reports come from, but we cannot begin to discuss the issues related to the local church before we examine the records of the local conference. How is the conference affected by the challenges of local churches?

The Central Zambia conference Statistical Records

In this section a brief outline of the statistical records of the Central Zambia conference will be considered so that we establish the relevance of the church in Lusaka and Central provinces where central Zambia Conference is located. The Central Zambia Conference used to cover the areas in Central and Lusaka provinces of Zambia. It has its headquarters in a town called Kabwe (formerly called Broken Hill) which is in the immediate northern part of Lusaka the capital city of Zambia.

Central Zambia Conference was considered an urban or town conference with the majority of its members in the urban area because of its geographical positioning. The Central Zambia Conference statistical information is very important for this research. A conference in the Seventh-day Adventist church administration

structure is like a link between the local church and the Union.¹ It serves as a supervisory body of the local church. According to the experience of the author of this project who has worked as a district pastor for more than twenty years now, the local church can do much better if the local conference has good, clear and powerful programmes. Nevertheless, the local conference cannot achieve anything if local churches are not active to implement or follow the strategies laid by the conference.

Central Zambia Conference has been one of the fastest growing conferences in the Zambia Union Conference. A brief record below for 2010 proves that Central Zambia conference indeed has been doing very well in baptisms. From the time it was organized, it has never been beaten by other conferences on baptism achievements. Table 2 below shows the number of people baptized in 2010 and the position of each field/conference according to the number of baptisms.

The figures on this table were collected by the writer of this project from the General Conference of the SDA Church statistical Reports of 2010.²

Table 2: 2010 Conference/Field baptism statistics

Field/conference	Number Baptized	Position
Central Zambia conference	20,969	1
South Zambia Conference	18,580	2
Copper-belt Zambia Field	10,340	3
Luapula Zambia Field	5,368	4
North Zambia Field	4,216	5
West Zambia Field	3,476	6
East Zambia Field	3,186	7

¹General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Hagerstown, Maryland: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2000), 26.

² Ibid., 28.

The above table shows that the central Zambia conference was leading the whole union on the number of people baptized in the year 2010. According to the previous statistics, this conference has been one of the most evangelistic conferences for a very long time since its organization.¹

The Central Zambia Conference Growth Rate from 1996 has been very encouraging (see Graph 1 on appendix B)² and this fact is proved by the information on table 2 above. Table 2 above shows clearly that this conference has indeed been one of the fastest growing conferences in the Zambia Union Conference.

Nevertheless, fast growth has its own complications and challenges. Ellen White commenting on the growth of the Apostolic Church in the New Testament states the following:

The disciples of Jesus had reached a crisis in their experience. Under the wise leadership of the apostles, who labored unitedly in the power of the Holy Spirit, the work committed to the gospel messengers was developing rapidly. The church was continually enlarging, and this growth in membership brought increasingly heavy burdens upon those in charge. No one man, or even one set of men, could continue to bear these burdens alone, without imperiling the future prosperity of the church.³

There is still a need of examining the retention record of the Central Zambia Conference in order for us to ensure that the people who are baptized in this conference are retained. With this growth, the question which could be asked is how this conference has managed to retain the members who joined the church in

¹ Ibid., 26, 28.

² This graph was adopted as prepared by the office of the executive secretary of the central Zambia conference of the Zambia Union Conference.

³ White, Acts of the Apostles, 88.

such big numbers. The table below will help us attempt to make suggestions to the above question.

Table 3: Central Zambia Conference Membership Gains

Year	Churches	Membership	Number Baptized	PF	Ltrs Rec.	Adjustment
2000	238	103,135	16,137	313	4,116	-
2001	328	122,438	11,171	199	3,106	-
2002	313	112,840	12,133	138	3,208	-
2003	337	133,412	14,975	148	3,113	-
2004	621	144,558	16,553	153	3,410	-
2005	413	152,649	13,221	119	4,501	-
2006	470	163,949	14,547	18	4,896	607
2007	480	117,185	15,594	115	2,642	-
2008	532	192,863	19,712	66	3,686	-
2009	578	205,486	22,361	20	3,816	-
2010	603	224,040	20,969	153	4,423	-

The partial information about the Central Zambia Conference membership gain as indicated on the General Conference of the SDA church Statistics record from 2000 to 2010 is shown above. The column for membership on the above table is as at end of each year indicated.¹

The information on the above table is indeed a confirmation that the Central Zambia Conference is a growing conference. The baptism figures show that this conference has been gaining membership on an annual basis. Nevertheless, the previous question still remains unanswered. How are the retention programmes of this conference done if they are there? Is this conference really increasing its membership by these massive baptisms? While the Central Zambia Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church in the Zambia Union Conference baptizes so many people every year, the table below seems to indicate that about 20.3% of all the

¹Ibid., 28.

gains of 12 years is lost through adjustment, missing, apostasy and death. The loss through missing members appears to be the largest. The challenge of missing members should be well understood in order to bring it to a halt.

On table 4 below the information showing the losses of the central Zambia conference from 2000 to the year 2010 is displayed. The effort to find the reason why the column for adjustment was introduced proved futile.

Table 4: Central Zambia Conference membership loses¹

Year	Member-ship	No. Bap.	Ltrs Granted	Death	Dropped	Missing	Adj.
2000	103,135	16,137	3,848	385	1,312	319	
2001	122,438	11,171	3,030	519	1,449	2,135	
2002	112,840	12,133	2,861	524	1,089	983	
2003	133,412	14,975	2,962	537	1,541	2,122	
2004	144,558	16,553	5,144	739	1,784	1,323	
2005	152,649	13,221	5,623	764	2,202	1,421	
2006	163,949	14,547	6,593	634	1,533	8	
2007	117,185	15,594	3,014	570	1,540	1	
2008	192,863	19,712	5,534	558	1,657	17	
2009	205,486	22,361	6,694	553	1,763	-	4,554
2010	224,040	20,969	4,509	568	1,531	383	-
Totals	1,672,555	177,373	49,812	6346	16,101	8712	4,554

Table 4 above shows the losses of the Central Zambia Conference (CZC) from the year 2000 to 2010. A proper scrutiny of the above table indicates that CZC has been losing at least 12% of the baptisms in 2000, 36% of the total number of the baptisms of 2001, 21% of the baptisms of 2002, 13% of the baptism of 2003, 28% of the baptism of 2004, 33% of the baptism of 2005, 14% of the baptism of 2006, 13.5% of the baptism of the 2007, 11.3% of the baptism of 2008, 30.7% of the baptism of 2009, 11.8% of the baptism of 2010.

¹ Ibid., 28

Central Zambia Conference loses the average of 20.3% of all the baptized members each year. This has been the experience of the SDA Church in Zambia from 2000 to 2010. These losses do not include transfers. The annual average membership loss percentage (20.3%) in Central Zambia Conference of the SDA Church is very big to be ignored. Table on appendix A gives a summary of membership loss percentage in the Central Zambia Conference from 2000 to 2010.

Description of Kanyama Central SDA Church

Kanyama Central SDA Church is found in Lusaka the capital city of the country of Zambia. This project was done in Kanyama compound (Lusaka). Lusaka is located in the south central Zambia on a limestone plateau at an altitude of 1300m (4,265 ft) above sea level.¹ Apart from being a seat of the government of the Republic of Zambia with the National Assembly (parliament), the State House (Office of the President), and the High Court, Lusaka is also the political, cultural, and economic center of the country.²

It is within the city of Lusaka where Kanyama Central Church is situated. Kanyama Church, according to the 2012 3rd Quarter statistical report has a membership of 2,952 in record and out of this number only 1169 members are present in the church. This translates into 1, 783 members missing out of the church and not known where they are.³

¹ Ibid.,58.

² Ibid.,49.

³ This information was given to the researcher by the church clerk of Kanyama Central SDA Church on the 13 December, 2012.

According to what has been discussed in the previous section, Central Zambia Conference of the SDA church in Zambia Union Conference lose on average 20.3% of all the people baptized each year. The 20.3 loss percentage of the baptized members each year does not include losses incurred by transfer.

Despite an increase in the number of members who leave the church, little has been done to analyze the challenge of membership loss in Kanyama Central SDA Church. Though statistical records of Kanyama Central SDA church could not be traced at the time of research, the current statistical report of 2012 gives a very good picture of the reality of the challenge of membership retention in Kanyama Central Church.

If this issue of membership loss is not checked or treated with the seriousness it deserves, its increase curbed, in the long run it will be difficult for the church to reflect a clear picture of membership and the numerical growth of the church. The discussion so far clearly indicates that there is a lack of strategy for membership retention at Kanyama Central SDA church judging by the overwhelming statistics provided in the preceding discussion on the loss of Church members at Kanyama Central Church.

Methodology

Before going any further in this research it is important to discuss data collection. The methodology in a relative detail should be done by beginning from the type of study, and the type of data. After examining the type of data collected, sampling method will also be securitized. The last part in this very important section will discuss the data analysis method.

Type of Study

The type of study which was used in the collection of data was expository study and group discussion. The expository type of study was chosen because an investigation was needed to get some understanding of the reality and the causes of the challenge of membership retention in Kanyama Central SDA Church.

Type of Data

Data collection is vital for proper planning and working. The collection of views from people can help to clarify facts. "Data collection [in this sense] refers to the gathering of information to serve or prove some facts."¹ This study gathered qualitative data.

The qualitative data is necessary to be used because those who are to respond to the research instruments (Respondents) are supposed to explain in their perceptions and views on some of the challenges Kanyama Central church is facing in maintaining its membership. Quantitative data would have been restricted to the predetermined responses. It would not have provided a clear position as to what causes challenges in retaining members. The procedure which was used to collect information to study is sampling.

Homogeneous Sampling

Sampling procedure is one of the processes which researchers use to gather information for a particular study. The Sampling procedure is in many types, but in

¹ Donald Kisilu Kombo, and Delno L.A. Tromp, *Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction*, (Nairobi: Don Bosco Printing Press, 2006), 99.

this study, homogeneous sampling is used. The homogenous sampling is a non-probability type¹ of sampling in which respondents are chosen on the basis of certain characteristics, such as length of membership in the church, proximity to each other, position in church, and the exhibition of their understanding of the operation of Kanyama Central church since its inception.²

The respondents in this case were chosen because of their vast experience in church leadership, their current positions, gender, good and their regular standing membership in KCC, and clear understanding and interest in the subject of membership retention and evangelism.

Data Collection Method

The method used in collecting data for this study was done by video recording of focus group discussion. The study was conducted in natural and relaxed settings, where a moderator did his best to coordinate the discussion. The moderator kept provoking the participants to talk and all of them participated effectively. A few guiding questions were selected to help give direction to the participants. The following are some of the questions used to lead the discussion:

1. Is the challenge of membership retention real in Kanyama Central SDA church?
2. What are the main causes of membership loss?
3. If it is real what have you done as a church to curb this challenge?

¹ Ibid., 99.

² This information was given to the author by the church clerk of Kanyama Central Church on the 28 December, 2012.

4. How has the steps you took to curb the challenge of membership retention helped the church to reclaim the missing church members?
5. What strategy have you developed to prevent the reoccurrence of the challenge of Church Membership Retention?

Though there were many other questions used by the moderator during the discussion, the above questions were major. During the discussion, the Moderator repeated most of the questions in order for him to get detailed information and explanation to the questions asked.

Data Analysis

Data analysis refers to the examination of the information collected in a survey and making deductions and inferences.¹ Data analysis involves unveiling underlying structures, extracting important variables, scrutinizing the acquired information and making inferences.² Since the qualitative approach was used in this research, the explanatory method is used to discover what the data seems to be saying. The thematic analysis method was used too.

Data that is collected through a video recording process was bulky and haphazard in the sense that the participants were providing their various views to each of the questions of discussion and the chairman also did not deal with the questions directly. Though the discussion covered a broader spectrum of the topic at hand, the responses were categorized into sections in order to have a clearer

¹ Ibid., 117.

² Ibid., 48

understanding of each reason given. The responses were grouped according to their similarities.

The discussion group revealed that Kanyama Central Sda Church do not emphasize the importance of quality of members during baptisms. During public campaigns, the church do not spend time to ground the baptism candidates into the biblical doctrines as taught by the SDA church, as a result candidates join the church without proper understanding of what is expected of them. This makes them feel discouraged when they find that the church restricts from certain things which they enjoyed doing before becoming Adventists. This fact was well articulated by one of the discussion participants (watch the DVD).

The other reason which comes out very clearly from the discussion group concerns the lack of proper planning. The Kanyama Central SDA church conducts most of its programs without proper planning. Most of the programs which are usually left out of the church plans include the youth programs. The youth are left to operate as an independent church within a church.

New believers are usually left without involving them into the church activities and without experienced mature members to make them get familiar with the operations of the church.

Little is known about the needs of the youth converts, as a result, most of them leave the church looking for solutions to the challenges they are facing as a result of belonging to the church. The discussion group revealed that some of the members leave the church going out to look for employment because they fail to find jobs which may not restrict them from attending church on Sabbath.

The church membership is too big to be managed by one pastor and a few elders. The pastor for Kanyama Central Church is a district pastor who is pastoring seven churches with a total membership of about 9000 people.

It was also reported that the visitation program in Kanyama Central church is very weak and most of the members who have been in the church for more than five years have never been visited by any of the church leaders.

The follow-up programs after every public campaign are not done and new converts get lost without the church knowing where they are. Some of the members are found drinking and still identifying themselves as members of the church (SDA).

The lack of material was one of the challenges which were identified by the discussion group. During the group discussion, participants indicated that most of the members do not have bibles of their own and hymn books. The reading culture even to those who owned Bibles was discovered to be very poor. The Spirit of Prophecy books are also very few among the leaders and old members of the church. This poses a big challenge to the new converts because they are led by uninformed leadership.

Chapter Summary

After assessing the similarities and differences between the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church in Zambia and the Population statistics of Zambia it clear that SDA Church plays a very great role in winning souls for the kingdom of God in this country. Though ethnic groups in the country affect the type of membership churches may have, the SDA church has a membership with a representation of all tribes found in Zambia.

The local settings as discussed in this chapter confirm that the challenge of membership retention is real and needs an agent attention from the local church leadership including the local church Pastors.

The challenges identified in this chapter include lack of proper planning for public campaigns, lack or little care programs for new converts, work overload for pastor, lack of employment which provides free time to worship on Sabbath (Saturday), large church membership against very few leaders, and more emphasis on quantity instead of quality during public campaigns baptisms.

Now that the description of the local setting is given, chapter four will describe in detail the program designed to solve the challenge of church membership retention in Kanyama Central church.

CHAPTER 4

PROGRAM DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION

Program Design

This Chapter presents the study design and methodology, the participants, and procedures used to gather data and analysis. The findings of the study emanating from the focus group discussions will also be considered. Furthermore, this chapter discusses what was done to solve the problems identified in chapter three. The model developed in chapter two is also considered. The time when the model was implemented and evaluated is included. The research process is described in this chapter as it was carried out; the findings are also discussed together with the recommendations from the findings.

Research Process

The research process used in this project was expository study. To expose is to show something that is usually hidden.¹ The word expository therefore means, “To explain or describe something.”² Ralph Mahoney³ explains the word “expository” as the art of expounding or explaining. In this sense, the expository method of study was used because an investigation of the various records from the

¹ A.S. Hornby, “expose,” *OALCD* (2010), 1:517.

² *Ibid*, “expository.”

³R. Mahoney, *The Shepherd’s Staff*, (San Fernando, CA: World Map, 1993), 152.

local church to the union level was needed. Since the purpose of this section is to assess the existence of the challenge of membership retention in Kanyama SDA church, (see chapter 1) the church was to be consulted before venturing into this exercise.

The first step the researcher took was to request the local conference to authorize the work to be done at Kanyama Central Church. The Conference Executive Committee through the secretary passed an action to authorize the research to be done at Kanyama Central Church (see appendix D).

With the help of the district pastor and local church elders, the church board members were all called for a meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to allow the work of this research study to be done in Kanyama Central Church. The chairperson called the meeting to order and introduced the researcher and the purpose of his visit. After the introduction, the Chairperson gave the floor to the researcher to explain the benefits of the project to the church-board members.

The church board decided to choose a small group of only five people – one woman and four men to discuss the topic of study and bring back the report after three weeks (see appendix D). Of the five, the church board recommended three men who were baptized in the early 90s, one man in the late 80s, and the woman also in the late 80s. These four men and a sister composed the discussion group which was to help the researcher to gather the data on the topic of the challenge of church membership retention in Kanyama Central church.

Findings

As earlier indicated in chapter one, there are five guiding questions which the discussion group dwelt on. In this section the researcher deliberates on the actual findings as in the responses to the questions related to the challenge of church membership retention. Concerning the topic at hand, it was found out that all the three entities of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Zambia experience membership losses annually.

Findings on Limitations and Challenges of the study

While this study had challenges which brought some difficulty to the researcher to complete the study, nevertheless, that did not make the results less conclusive. The major challenges were as follows:

1. Literacy levels.

Conducting the focus group discussions required participants who are able to articulate issues in the official language (English) and those who know the history and policies of the church. It took us almost six months to find church members who were willing and had enough time to participate in the discussion.

Finding the brothers and sisters in the above category was indeed a challenge which made the discussion results release to be delayed.

2. Venue

The venue for discussion became a challenge which almost discouraged other participants who did not anticipate having other free time. The place where the discussions were to take place was supposed to have

clear, natural, relaxed setting environment with appropriate space for proper sound and pictures.

3. Time constraints

The focus group discussion needs a great deal of time and effort. In Kanyama Central Church where the recording took place, most of the members who are educated and were ready to participate in the discussion are in a working class category and time is really a big for them. Out of the five participants, only one is self-employed.

4. Recording keeping

The church membership statistics could not be released because the church clerk was not sure of how the information was going to be used. It required the church board and business meeting to seat and authorize church clerk to release the information to me. That also took a lot of time before they could seat.

Delimitation of the Study

Though there are many churches in Lusaka City and Zambia at large this study was conducted in Kanyama central SDA church. Given the delimitation in respect of sampling process the findings of this study were not generalized to the broader spectrum of the church. This is because the qualitative research is conclusive since it is not countable, not complete, not predictable, not generalizable, not value-free and not impersonal.

Findings on Membership Retention

Brief findings concerning the challenge of church membership loss are as follows: According to the findings in this study, Zambia Union Conference lost about 22.27% from the year 2003 to 2009. The Central Zambia Conference lost 20.30% from 2000 to 2010. The Kanyama Central SDA Church lost 33.26% members of its gains from the year 2009 to 2012. Kanyama Central Church among the three entities has the largest membership loss percentage. This should bring concern to all soul winning lovers.

The years discussed previously to come up with the loss percentages indicated in the above paragraph are not the same because of the limitation of record keeping. It was the desire of the author of this project to deal with the same period from the ZBUC to Kanyama Central SDA Church.

Nonetheless, the information gathered from the stipulated years indicates the magnitude of the challenges of church membership retention in Zambia Union Conference, Central Zambia Conference, and Kanyama Central SDA Church.

It was also discovered that out of the membership of 2,952 in the records of KCC only 1,169 members are known to be present in the church and their whereabouts were well-known. This translates into 1, 783 members missing.

Findings on Strategy

With such overwhelming statistics of membership loss it is prudent to find out whether there is any step taken by the church to address the challenge of membership retention. The findings are that Kanyama Central Church did not do anything to address the challenge of church membership retention. Judging by the

overwhelming statistics provided in the preceding discussion on the loss of church members at KCC, the main cause of membership loss includes lack of proper membership retention strategy. In order to have a clear picture of Kanyama Central church the SWOT analysis was used.

Findings on Church Membership Strength

According to the findings, Kanyama Central church has potential leadership. Which could help the church achieve a lot if is tapped. The availability of long serving members of the church which possesses great interest of working for God is one of the untapped strength of Kanyama central church has. Members in this church are willing to learn and they love soul winning, but they have not been helped by the pastor to realize their potential and maximize it.

Good location is one of the strength of Kanyama Central Church. It is very difficult to find proper big land for church building in Zambia, but Kanyama Central Church has a big land in the heart or center of Kanyama central church.

Large membership base is a strength which the church has. The church has more than 1000 standing members as at 31 December 2012.¹

Good networking is also a strength which the church could utilize. Most of the members in Kanyama central church possess cell phones. If proper records about church members are maintained, cell phones could be one of the best ways of finding members when they are missing from church.

¹ This information was provided to the author by the church clerk for Kanyama Central church on 16 February, 2013.

Findings on church Membership Weaknesses

Kanyama Central church has the following challenge:

1. Lack of planning and failure to strictly follow church policies.
2. Illiteracy levels are also not very encouraging because that poses a challenge on the reading culture.
3. The culture of reading. Most of the members do not have the culture of studying the Bible and other Christian literature.
4. The lack of material (books) for the church. The church has no library and most members do not have money to buy books for themselves.
Poor/low spirituality and poor Sabbath keeping are additional weaknesses of this church.
5. Poor infrastructure and poor community service are some of the weaknesses.
6. There are no or poor home visitation programs among the local church members and the leadership.
7. Poor record keeping and communication between leadership and church members are also on the list of weaknesses.
8. Weak parenting, mentoring, and guardianship programs.
9. Too large church membership.

Findings on Church Opportunities

One of the opportunities which the church of Kanyama central has is to be in a country which is declared to be a Christian nation. The growing middle class of the population of Zambia is an opportunity which Kanyama central church has. Most of

the middle class of the population of Lusaka is growing at a very fast rate. Business opportunities are multiplying at a very fast rate. Health problems are also some of the opportunities which the church has. Health problems can be used by the church to arrest the attention of the community and win their favor. Availability of electronic and print media could be included on the list of opportunities.

The high poverty levels are opportunities which the church can take advantage of. The fair ratio of Adventists (demography) to non-Adventists is also an opportunity. A young and growing population in the country of Zambia also stands as an added opportunity for the church to reach out and keep the members.

Findings on Church Membership Threats

The findings on church membership threats are as follows:

1. Growing evangelical and Pentecostal movements stands as a threat to the church in Zambia.
2. HIV and AIDS also is one of the threats which claim a good number of our members.
3. The high levels of spiritualism among members of the community are a threat because most members though Christians still believe in tradition and cultural practices.
4. Lack of jobs is also a threat. Unemployed KCC members find it a challenge to find employment where they are permitted to worship God on the Sabbath day (Saturday) without interference. Because of the challenge of employment, unemployed church members leave the church and opt for employment in order to meet their physical needs.

5. The offshoots also take advantage of the ignorance of the members in this territory. Offshoots stand as a threat because they are like a fisherman who fish in a basket. The aim of the offshoots is to get members from the already established SDA churches.

The findings above were as a result of the discussion group which was put in place by the church. The discussion was recorded using a video camera. Due lack of funds, the researcher used unprofessional camera-man to do the recordings.

Group Discussion Results

On the 18th of March, 2011 the author working together with the district pastor of Kanyama Mission District called for a meeting where the church board meeting elected five people to compose a group of people to discuss the challenges of church membership retention. The people who were chosen formed the focus group discussion.

The discussion began with a prayer and self- introduction of all present group members. In trying to confirm the reality of the challenge of membership retention it was reported by the church clerk who was a member of the discussion group that more than 50% of the KCC membership is on the missing list. During the discussion it was realized that the challenge of church membership retention (CCMR) in KCC needs an urgent attention from its church leadership.

When trying to find out what has been done after realizing that the church is losing a lot of members by missing, it was discovered that the church has done very little to claim the missing members. It was also revealed that most of the members miss out of the church during their earlier months after baptism.

The discussion group accepted that the challenge of membership retention is real in Kanyama Central church. Though the discussion group could not state clearly what has been done to solve the challenge of church membership retention, they managed to clearly list what could be done to solve the challenge. The proposed solutions or recommendations as recorded on a DVD are as follows:

1. The causes of loss of members are lack of proper preparation for public campaigns. In order to solve this problem, the church should always plan for public campaigns well in advance so that every detail including taking care of new converts is well scrutinized.
2. Guardianship program should be introduced. Guardianship is a program where old members are paired with new members to help them grow spiritually.
3. New member involvement approach. This is a program which should introduce and aim at involving new members in church activities. A program of new members' involvement will help the new members to develop a sense of belonging.
4. A skills training program should be introduced in the church in order to solve the problem of unemployment.
5. The church should develop a program of teaching members on the subject of HIV and AIDS. HIV/ AIDS lessons will help members to understand how they can avoid acquiring this disease and avoid suffering from it.
6. When it comes to baptisms, quality and quantity should be well balanced when preparing candidates for baptism. The information in the Church

Manual concerning the work of preparing baptism candidate should be followed strictly. While it is good to baptize many people, it is imperative to ensure that those who join the church through baptism are properly instructed.

7. A visitation program should not be ignored. Visitation program should be for all members of the church not only leaders.
8. A handbook for youth marriage preparation should be developed. Though there are many books written on the subject of marriage, an official guide to help youth prepare for marriage should be prepared.
9. New members who join the church should be encouraged to form small companies of their own for training purposes and spiritual growth.
10. While ways of preventing membership loss were proposed it was agreed that a well-designed program should immediately be put in place by the local church to look for the missing members.

This program proposal was adopted by the church and the implementation was as indicated in the following section.

Implementation

Missing Member Identification

The task of implementation started with the presentation of the report of the focus discussion group. After three weeks the focus discussion group was ready to present the report to the KCC board. The report was presented through a video which was recorded during the group discussions. After watching and listening to the report, the church board decided to start implementing the recommendations which

were made by the focus discussion group. The discussion which took place indicated clearly that KCC experiences the challenge of membership retention on a very big scale. Apart from the information which was given by the discussion group, the researcher working together with the first church elder managed to have access to the record books of the church and the information has been converted into tables

The table below helps to confirm the challenge of membership loss in KCC.

The table below states that KCC baptized 14 people and lost 13 people through letters and death in the same period. This loss translates into 92% loss of members in the same period. The 92% loss which was incurred in 2009 has not properly been explained by the Clerk of Kanyama Central church. The answer she gave was that, “she does not know why there was such a big loss in 2009 because she was not the clerk then”. The table 5 indicates that more members leave the church through transfers.

Table 5: Kanyama Central SDA Church quarterly statistical report

Year	Qtr End.	Gain			Loss		Loss %
		Bap.	Ltr	Ltr	Death	Apostasy	
2009	3	14	-	12	1	-	92.85%
	4	45	12	14	1	1	28.87%
2010	1	-	13	13	3	-	123.07%
	2	68	9	9	-	3	15.58%
	3	19	5	3	3	3	37.50%
	4	8	8	8	2	2	75%
2011	1	36	6	7	1	3	26%
	2	64	7	13	5	6	33.80%
	3	11	6	9	1	-	58.82%
	4	13		-	2	-	15.38%
2012	1	-	7	2	1	3	85.71%
	2	105	9	15	2	-	14.91%
	3	-	10	11	-	-	110%
Total		383	92	116	22	20	33.26%

Table 5 was made from the statistics reports of Kanyama Central.¹ According to table 5 above Kanyama central church incurred an average membership loss of 33.26% every year from second quarter of 2009 to 2012. Table 5 also shows that there has never been a period where gains were made and no losses were incurred. Every gain in KCC is affected by particular loss percentages.

After collecting the statistics which appears on table 5 above, the overall picture indicated that Kanyama is doing well church membership retention. The author asked for the actual register and it was discovered from the information in the register that the names in the church record were by a very big margin of 39.60% more than the people who were physically attending church.

The total number of members in the register was 2,952 as at the end of 2010. Out of the 2,952 registered members, 1,169 had their whereabouts not known. These figures translate into 39.60% members missing and only 60.40% represents the existing membership in KCC.

After discovering the challenge of missing members, the church agreed to work with the author to begin making a roll call for members for two months. At the end of the two months (from April to May, 2011) it was discovered that out of 2,952 members in the church only 1,169 had their whereabouts confirmed. The discussion group confirmed that the challenge of membership retention is real because the church has conducted roll calls but ultimately it was discovered that 1,169 members were missing.

¹ This report was compiled together with local church clerk of Kanyama central church, Chafwakale Chimbipa on the 20th of November, 2012.

It was during the month of May 2011 that the KCC started implementing the recommendations which were made by the discussion group. Though the group sat again in 2012, the recommendations they gave were the same as on their first sitting.

Missing Member Establishment

Companionship and interaction

According to what has been discussed in chapter one the leading factor that influences membership loss is a lack of companionship and interaction within the group or church. Interaction is made possible through social communities. Social communities help people to be integrated into a particular group or society of believers. Social companion and interaction helps members to grow in their belief system and contribute to the group affairs.

In the Garden of Eden, God saw the importance of companionship and interaction (Genesis 2: 18). Christ also understood the essence and import of love and interaction (Matthew 19: 10-11). In order to satisfy the need of companionship and interaction among the new found members, a program of guardianship was introduced.

After identifying the missing members, the church asked for mature church members to volunteer to serve as guardians for the reclaimed brothers and sisters for at least six months. Later, 56 volunteers were identified and given the responsibility of taking care of the reclaimed members. The program commenced with a one week prayer program from 30th July, 2011 to 6th August, 2011 which was

followed by a three days seminar which was conducted by the researcher (see material on appendix E).

The group of guardians who were given three names of the reclaimed members each was divided into five sub-groups of ten persons each. The total number of names of the under-care¹ which were prayed for in the first week's program was 150. The outline of the prayer program and the material designed and used by the author is on appendix F. The program of companionship and interaction created a very good ground for the person-Environment Interaction experience.

Person-Environment Interactional Experience

This theory is very helpful in the area of church membership retention. With the work which guardians were doing for and with the under-care, the new members and those reclaimed needed to be helped to remain and develop a sense of ownership of the church they worship in.

After some of the missing members were identified, the researcher embarked on the program of teaching the church members to understand the importance of proper hospitality in the local church. In order to ensure that the environment of the church is conducive for visitors, church members were trained using the Sabbath school Handbook.² The Sabbath School Handbook, states that Sabbath school greeters should be recruited, trained, and be supervised to do their

¹ The term "under-care" in this study refers to the people who are given to be under the care of others. This term in this sense is coined by the researcher.

² General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Sabbath School Handbook: Guidelines for Sabbath School Personnel* (Silver Spring MD: Sabbath School Department of the General conference of seventh-day Adventists, General conference Sabbath School Department, 2005), 31

work. The Sabbath school handbook was followed and the results were very encouraging. In the month of June to September, 2011 alone, the church increased the number of baptism class members from 26 to 37 this translates into 40% increase without conducting any public campaign or door to door witnessing program. This was as a result of the welcoming environment experienced by visitors at Kanyama Central church.

New Members' Involvement

The New church members, who were claimed through earlier visitation program, were divided into small groups according to their residential areas. These groups were given experienced teachers who were chosen by the church to lead them. The results of this exercise showed that members are able to exercise their spiritual gifts freely in small groups. It also proved that members grow fast and get integrated into the church in small group life. The groups also helped new members to know each other and their leaders easily. Finally, the small groups managed to make new members learn a lot of things within a short period of time.

Identity Development

Kolb's theory of identity development states that the identity development is created by experiential learning. While learning is the process whereby knowledge is imparted through the transformation of experience, the program of identity involvement was coupled within the program of small group at the time of implementing the program of members' involvement. The winning souls to Christ program helped new members and some old members to get established as they prepared and got involved in the work of winning souls for Christ. In the same small

groups the new members were given responsibilities in order for them to develop their identity and a sense of belonging.

The program which started on 30th July, 2011 ended on 10rd September, 2011. During this period the guardians were assigned three days of visiting and fellowshiping with their partners by studying the word of God and sharing meals in the homes of the guardians and the homes of the under-care.¹ Two days of progress reporting was set aside. The 14th August and 10th September, 2011 were dates set aside as days for the guardians to give their progress reports to the church and be evaluated.

Evaluation

The evaluation is aimed at looking at the program of membership retention and how it was implemented. The results of the implementation, and the effect of the results to the study, and what to do to improve will also be considered.

The first evaluation report which was conducted on 14th August, 2011 revealed that 19 guardians out of 50 failed to perform their duties. Out of the 50 who volunteered to be guardians only 31 successfully reported to the church. The 31 reports which were given by the guardians revealed that 79 of the under-care members were actively attending church. All the 79 members were present in church when these reports were being given. Out of the 14 inactive under-care members only six did not respond by coming to church because two joined Sunday

¹ The under-care members in this study, as explained before refer to the new members who are under the care of mature and experienced members. They are under instruction to help them grow in their Christianity.

keeping churches and four could not give clear reasons for their failure to attend church.

The last session of reports on the 10th days of September, 2011 was very encouraging because out of the 19 guardians who failed to report in the previous session, eleven reported that their under-care members started attending church regularly.

During the discussion which was done by the church board members, it was agreed that after six months there should be an evaluation of the programmes taking place in the church. Some of the recommendations which were proposed by the discussion group were that the church should form small groups for fellowship, evangelism, and guardianship. Out of all these programs only the guardianship program was implemented. The above report indicates that 74.66% gain was realized from the above exercise of guardianship program. This report proves that guardianship program, if done well can yield very good results in church membership retention and reclaim

Chapter Summary

The outcome of the discussion in this chapter indicates clearly that the challenge of membership retention is real in Kanyama Central Church and needs an urgent attention from the church leadership.

While the church is doing so much to win souls for God's Kingdom, it is imperative to consider the challenge of membership retention as equally important and a need of the church in Zambia. Ignoring it may result in a negative effect to the church membership growth in Kanyama Central Church and Zambia Union

Conference as a whole. This program was designed to satisfy the needs of the members of Kanyama Central SDA Church.

In order to solve the challenge of church membership retention in KCC, it is imperative to use the four theories of Tinto, Sanford, Schlossberg and Kolb. This study clearly shows that there are many reasons why people become inactive and slowly drop attending church. Some of the reasons are failure to challenge them to use their spiritual gifts; they may have developed no reasonable devotional Christian life, married to unbelievers or experienced other marriage problems.

While members leave the church for various reasons, this study confirms that guardianship program can help to retain members if it is done in the right way.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Membership retention has been discussed in the previous chapters, and in this chapter, the suggestions on how the challenge of church membership retention can be curbed will be outlined. Each suggestion will be explained in order to help the reader have the proper understanding of what should be done to reduce the challenge of church membership retention.

The suggestions that will be highlighted in this chapter are those which have been tested in KCC and the hope of the researcher is that they will work in other churches or organizations also. The recommendations will be divided into three parts.

The first part will deal with the recommendations for research. Secondly, suggested solutions which need the attention of the Seventh-day Adventist church leaders will be indicated. Thirdly, the recommendations will show the recommendations for improving future studies on the same topic.

Summary

The comparison of the population statistics of Zambia and membership of the Zambia Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists (SDA) church indicates that the church in Zambia plays an important role in winning souls for the kingdom of

God. Though ethnic groups in the country affect the type of membership churches may have, the SDA church has a membership with a representation of all tribes found in Zambia.

The outcome of the discussion group indicates that the challenge of membership retention is real in Kanyama Central Church and needs an agent attention from the church leadership. While the church is doing so much to win souls for God's Kingdom, it is imperative to consider the challenge of membership retention as equally important and a need of the church in Zambia. Ignoring the challenge of membership retention may result in a negative effect to the church membership growth in Kanyama Central Church and Zambia Union Conference as a whole.

Conclusion

The researcher concluded in this study that the CCMR is real in KCC and demands an urgent attention. However, this challenge can be curbed if the leadership of the church puts the proper strategy to solve it.

The reason why this challenge existed in KCC for this long is because of lack of local church leadership determination to solve this challenge.

The other reason why this challenge existed in KCC was that the church lacked proper planning for public campaigns and baptisms. It is clear at this point that the theoretical approach in church membership retention was non-existent.

Despite an increase in membership losses, very little work has been done to gain an understanding as regards the challenge of church membership loss in KCC. Judging by the overwhelming information in this study, it is evident that CCMR can

be avoided in future if a complete strategy of guardianship which will include small group ministry which is not included in this work will be formulated.

In conclusion, the church did very little to solve the challenge of church membership retention. Based on the findings, proposed recommendations were formulated.

Recommendations

1. Research recommendations
 - a. New members in the local church of Kanyama Central should always be involved in the local church programs by introducing those departmental programs e.g. women ministries, Adventist Men Organization, Children Ministries and Adventist Youth programs. Special classes should be created for the newly baptized members, encourage them to own bibles, hymn books, and Sabbath school study guides. The witnessing programs should also be introduced for them.
 - b. New members should be challenged and the church should create work assignments and opportunities for interaction and welcoming environment that promotes spiritual nourishment and growth should be created.
 - c. A well-organized guardianship strategy should be developed by the local church leadership with help of the local conference.

- d. New church members should be taught leadership skills and be given lighter leadership responsibilities in order for them to develop their identity and feel a sense of belonging.
2. Recommendations to the Seventh-day Adventist church leadership.
 - a. The Zambia Union Conference working together with the local conference and Southern Africa Indian ocean Division should develop four training handbook which will be used to help leaders have the skill of membership retention.
 - Local church leadership training handbook
 - Local church evangelism handbook
 - Local church marriage counseling handbook.
 - Local church guardianship training handbook.
3. Recommendations for improving this study in the near future.
 - a. Given the delimitations and challenges in respect of this study process, the findings and conclusions of this study cannot be generalized to the broader spectrum. This is because those who are to respond to the research instruments are supposed to explain in their perceptions and views on the topic at hand. Therefore, there is always room for follow-up research to clarify certain matters, authenticate others and dispute certain claims. Thus, in essence, this study stimulates further research to arrive at a more detailed, and systematic study involving more predictive, value-free approaches, such as statistical research and others.

- b. This study should be done on a higher level and include other Christian denominations and religion so as to determine the magnitude of the challenge of church membership retention.
- c. The strategy implemented in this study should be done for at least five years in order to determine its effect in curbing CCMR.
- d. A research which will be aimed at assessing the magnitude of church membership care in local churches in Zambia and deliberate inclusive steps to address the issue of CCMR should be undertaken.

Chapter Summary

If the above recommendations will be followed, the implementation may yield more definitive conclusions on the challenge of Church Membership Retention even in other denominations and religious groupings. Research studies of this nature calls for much more sample, time resources and should realize more meaningful, more conclusive and less subjective research results

APPENDIX A

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: 1980 to 2010 Provincial population of provinces in Zambia

(1980) UN Demographic yearbook 1988. (1990)(2000)(2010) Central Statistical Office Zambia (Web)							
Province	Abbr	Capital	A(KM2)	C1980-08-25	C1990-08-20	C2000-10-20	CP2010-10-16
Central	Cen.	Kabwe	94,394	511,905	771,818	1,012,257	1,267,803
Copper-belt	Cop.	Ndola	31,328	1,251,178	1,458,459	1,581,221	1,958,623
Eastern	Eas.	Chipata	69,106	650,902	1,004,693	1,306,173	1,707,731
Luapula	Lua	Mansa	50,506	420,966	564,493	775,353	958,976
Lusaka	Lus	Lusaka	21,896	691,054	991,226	1,391,329	2,198,996
Northern	Nor	Kasama	147,826	674,750	925,865	1,258,696	1,759,600
N/western	NWE	Solwezi	125,826	302,668	438,216	583,350	706,462
Southern	SOU	Livingstone	85,283	671,923	925,865	1,212,124	1,606,793
Western	WES	Mongu	126,386	486,455	638,756	765,088	881,524

Table 2: Total National Statistics as in table1 in Appendix A

Country	Abbr.	Capital	A(Km2)	C1980-08-25	C1990-08-20	C2000-10-20	CP2010-10-16
Zambia	ZMB	Lusaka	752,612	5,661,801	7,759,117	9,885,591	13,046,508

Table 3: The 2002 -2009 ZBUC Evidence of Membership Loss¹

Yr	M/ship	Gains			Losses					Totals
		Bap.	PF	Ltrs	Ltrs	Death	Apostasy	Missing	Adj.	
2002	381,585	34,566	494	7,537	7,478	1,660	4,969	4,278	-	408,303
2003	408,303	39,816	545	7,312	7,941	1,887	5,200	3,652	-	437,527
2004	437,527	47,901	420	8,086	10,582	2,180	5,359	3,910	913	471,095
2005	471,095	37,843	438	9,684	11,784	1,961	4,771	3,450	147	497,030
2006	497,030	41,443	272	9,055	12,624	2,046	3,899	578	705	530,165
2007	559,183	11,859	145	1,521	1,861	413	671	132	1,718	567,944
2008	604,440	11,232	31	2,279	4,413	360	535	30	-	612,644
2009	646,765	15,371	48	2,860	4,430	431	741	70	-	659,372

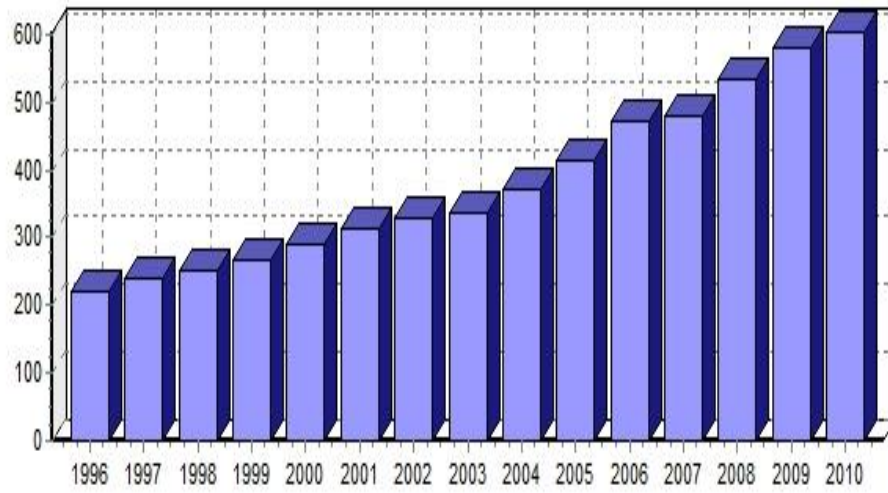
Table 4: SDA Church World Membership Growth

Rates of Growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church from 2000 to 2010	
Year	Percentage Growth Rate
2000	6.84%
2001	5.42%
2002	4.65%
2003	3.98%
2004	3.96%
2005	3.32%
2006	4.98%
2007	3.60%
2008	1.67%
2009	2.43%
2010	3.77%

¹ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Office of Archives and Statistics, *Annual Statistical Report* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2002 -09)

APPENDIX B

GRAPH



Graph 1: Central Zambia Conference growth rate (1996 to 2010)

APPENDIX C

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Introduction

Under the direction of the chairpersons who was chosen by the church, you are required to base your discussion on the questions below. The members of this group were chosen according to their experience in the church of Kanyama Central SDA Church and their interest in the subject of church membership retention.

The questions to consider are as follows:

1. Is the challenge of membership retention real in Kanyama Central SDA church?
2. What are the main causes of membership loss in Kanyama Central SDA Church?
3. If it is real what have you done as a church to curb this challenge?
4. How has the steps you took to curb the challenge of membership retention helped the church to reclaim the missing church members?
5. What strategy have you developed to help prevent the challenge of membership retention from reoccurring?

APPENDIX D

RESEARCH PROGRAM BUDGET

Date	Place	Amount Spent		Type of Expense
		K	n	
18 th March, 2011	Kanyama	150	00	Fuel
30 th April, 2011	Kanyama	150	00	Fuel
1 st May, 2011	Kanyama	145	00	Fuel
30 th July to 6 th August, 2011	Kanyama	250	00	Fuel
14 th August, 2011	Kanyama	350	00	Food and transport for respondents
10 th September, 2011	Kanyama	150	00	Fuel
11 th September, 2011	Kanyama	180	00	Fuel
12 th September, 2011	Kanyama	150	00	Fuel
	Total	K1,525	00	

APPENDIX E

WEEK OF PRAYER PROGRAM AND SERMONETTES

A 30 minutes Daily Prayer Program for Guardians

1. Opening Song – (4 minutes)
2. Opening Prayer – (3 minutes)
3. Devotion - (10 minutes)
4. Prayer session - (15minutes)
5. Closing song - (5 minutes)
6. Closing prayer - (3 minutes)

Topics covered included the following:

1. Jesus our example.
2. The calling of the disciples
3. The training of the disciples
4. Creating readiness of mind
5. Challenging a new convert to accept and live by the truth.
6. Supporting a new covert in the new found faith.
7. Getting started.

The book “Witnessing for Christ” was used in this program. The researcher just paraphrased some topics from the handbook used.

Devotion sermonettes

Sermonette One

Title: **Sowers' Responsibility**

Text: **Mark 4: 26-27** "And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how."

Introduction

The teaching and preaching of Christ when He was on earth was done in many ways. There are certain times he used proverbs, parables, stories etc. In Mark 4:26-27 Christ is using a parable to communicate the truth to His hearers. He compared a the work of spreading the gospel message to seed sowing.

The spreading of the gospel requires patience, just like a farmers needs it. In many occasions, preachers of the word do not know what happens in the hearts of the people they are when they are teaching the word. As a seed grows unnoticed and slowly in the ground, that is the same way the word of God works in the hearts of the hearers. Whenever the word is shared with others, a mysterious process takes place. This work is done by the Holy Spirit.

I. Like a farmer

In the passage under consideration, Jesus is making a picture of a farmer who goes out to his field and plants or sows seed. After the seed is planted, he/she goes back to his home and does not determine what is taking place to the seed in the ground. The farmer may water, weed

around it, loosen the soil, but he cannot determine what will happen to the seed. The task or work of the farmer is to plant the seed and take care of it but does not make it grow.

II. As the Farmer Does

Christians have been invited to the work of planting seed. The seed we should plant should be planted in the soil of the hearts of our fellow human beings. God calls His people for a particular purpose. He provides all needed material for them to succeed.

I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. Isaiah 42: 6-7 (KJV)

His commission is to be the joy of everyone called.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Matthew 28: 19-20 (KJV)

While the book of Matthew stipulates the commission, the book of Acts gives the commission and the needed secret of success.

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Mark 16:15 (KJV)

And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.
Acts 1: 13-18

The secret of a witness is the power of the Holy Spirit. The responsibility God has given to His people is great. We are commissioned to a lost and dying world about the love of God to mankind.

You and I have no excuse to make. You may not be gifted preach or teach, but as long as you are a saved child now, you should have a story to tell to those who are still in world. Tell them what the Lord has done for you. Christ demonstrated His love for sinners when He was here on earth. The blind man who was healed by Jesus gave his testimony when he was interrogated. "He answered and said whether he is a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

John 9:25 (KJV)

My brothers and sisters we have been called to be seed sowers. Jesus as men and women we read in the Bible were called God has called us to be His bearers in seed sowing. Paul thanked God for calling him to the ministry. 1 Timothy 1: 12-15; John 4:28-30.

When we teach the word of God to others we have no control over the results. The results should not be our bother, but seed sowing. After we have done our part, all remains in the hands of God.

III. Worry Not .

When I was a child, my grandmother gave me some seed of maize to plant in my small portion of land of about 3 by 3 meters in size. I remember very well giving my grand tough time because I always wanted to keep checking to see whether the

seed is growing or not. Even after the plants were big enough, I was not patient enough to let the cobs mature, but always wants to open them so that I can see whether there were seeds in them. My Grandmother stopped me and said it is not my duty to see what is happening under the soil or in the maturing cob of maize. Checking to see what is happening may cause damage to the seed of the plant. The germinating seeds may break and die if they are disturbed.

Conclusion

The seed has unexplainable power which is put in it by God. A seed can remain dormant in the soil without germinating but as long as it is a good seed it will germinate. The farmer just needs faith and patience. The seed is the word of God. And the word of God is as powerful as the word of God which can penetrate and break all the bad habits cherished by men. It can break the heart of a sinner and qualify him for heaven.

Appeal

Do you feel inadequate to do this work which God has given you? Do you feel unlearned to fulfill the task you are given by the church? Just trust in the weapon in your hands, make use of it skillfully and you will never be discouraged. Our brothers and sisters will be revived again and start being active in the work of God. May God be with you as you plan to work with Him?

Sermonette Two

Title: **The Miracle of Revival**

Text: Mark 4: 27-28 “And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.”

Introduction

Revival is not what man does but what God does. People who need revival will never get revived. But those who seek the face of the LORD we get revived. Finding God will automatically result in revival experience. In this section we will continue with the message of seed sowing but considering the subject of the miracle of revival.

I. A Complete Mystery

After the seed is planted, there is something which happens which man cannot determine. The earth may appear dry without any life in it, until water drops on it. Immediately the ground is watered, the hidden seeds begin to sprout everywhere. The sprouting is in stages. First, the blade appears, then the ear is formed and eventually, if it is a field of maize there will be rows of green staff.

All these are mysteries to the farmer. The only thing a farmer has done is to plant the seed in the soil which may appear barren at first. The faith does all by faith. Faith gives the farmer the needed patience to wait. He works as if he has already seen the fruit of his crops born from the seed planted.

Science has made amazing discoveries in our lifetime. Scientists can make a seed that is an absolute imitation to seeds produced in nature. Outwardly, the two

seeds bear no difference. But the laboratory seed has a life span while a seed produced in nature can stay forever as long as the environment is kept dry.

Man can produce a seed but cannot put permanent life in it.

II. Unexplainable Mystery

No farmer, no agriculture scientist or philosopher can clearly explain how a dead, dormant seed can produce life when it is covered and watered in the soil. The surprising thing is that every seed dies in order for it to germinate or give life.

After planting most seeds begin to swell just after an hour. The outer husk of the seed begins to swell because it is drawing moisture. Within 10 hours, the chemical makeup of the planted seed begins to change. Some of the seeds send a tiny root downward and the beginning of a stalk in less than 24 hours. This is a puzzling mystery, yet the seed produces life within a short time.

III. How it works

In the same way, when the gospel seed is sown in the willing heart of a sinner, the same process takes place. The growth of the word of God in the heart of a sinner is a mystery. Its growth cannot be measured or accurately predicted. The time of its germination is just estimated. The visible and immediate results are usually not seen.

When the word of God is planted in the human heart, the Holy Spirit uses it to create proper understanding (John 16: 7-11). The practical example in the experience of Jesus on the day he was talking to the Samaritan woman. Jesus like a farmer planted the seed of the word of God by explaining the plan of salvation to

the women. As he was talking, the Holy Spirit convicted her of her sins – John 4: 7-26.

As Saul of Tarsus also as he was watched or participating in the killing of Stephen, he was convicted of his condition of sin (Acts 7:54-60; 9:1-6).

We cannot understand how the Spirit of God uses the word of God to convict the hearts of human beings.

Appeal and conclusion

The word of God is indeed powerful. It can break the stone hearts of sinners and reshape them for the kingdom of heaven.

In this task we are given to help our brothers and sister, what kind of an approach are we going to use to help them get established in their new found faith?

You and I are given this opportunity to work with the Lord again. The most important tool we should use is his word. What preparation are we making?

Sermonette Three

Title: **No Loss in the Lord's Business**

Text: Isaiah 55:11 "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Introduction

Even if we cannot understand properly how the growth of the seed of the word of God grows, we should just do our part. Let us plant the seed of the word of God and leave God to do his part. Paul put very clearly when he said:

I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. 1 Corinthians 3: 6-9 (KJV).

I. The Power of the Word.

The word of God has immeasurable power. It is never used without bringing back the expected results. Our text begins with words “so shall my word...” The bible is the word of God. It is not the word of man for him to determine how it works. God in Isaiah claims to be the owner of the word. The result of its word is debatable. The fruits or results of its work are an imperative- so shall my word be that goes...”

II. Results are certain

“It shall not return to me void.” The gospel will never be spread and give no returns. Let us spread the word with absolute confidence and faith and Lord will do his part. The word of God will not fail. Tough there are many things the word of God can accomplish, the bible says that at each and every time it is sent, it will accomplish only that it was sent for. It brings results according to the plan of God not man.

III. It shall prosper

There are certain times when we have been associating the word of God with failure. But our text today has good news to all of us. The news is that the word of God knows no failure. It shall prosper in the thing God has sent it for.

Conclusion and Appeal

God has given us a task of doing our part not everything. He knows what we can do and he has given us the work we can do. The result of the work is not within our powers.

God invites us to each do our part. Do you promise to do just that as long as remain alive? Stand with me for a word of prayer?

Sermonette four

Title: **The Parable of seed sowing applied**

Text: **Mark 4: 28-29** "For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."

Introduction

In the presentation of yesterday, we saw that there is nothing man can do to make grow. It is all in the power of God alone. The parable in Mark 4: 28-29 states the same facts.

Body

I. What is it?

The parable of the seed sowing teaches us many lessons which are related to the work of winning and keeping souls for the kingdom of God.

The work which may seem little but the results are great. Your witness and effort of evangelism are not in vain. Just as Noah preached for that long period but managed to save only his family. You and me should never give up in the work of nurturing

because is not a failure. There is a guaranteed success for you in this work. Never allow anything to deter you from doing God's will.

The people, who will be given to you as under-cares, need understanding and care. Keep telling them about Christ as the chief guardian. As you do this work, keep trusting and believing that God will His part only as you do your part also.

II. Do your part.

It is not our duty to know what these men and women will be in future. Our juxtaposition states the stages of a plant as it matures. First the blade – this may represent a tender new life of a new believer who is just coming back to the Lord and still needs a lot of encouragement. At first, the plant may look weak and promising nothing, but as it grows, the roots go deeper and grow stronger. New believers need care and understanding and proper nurture in order for them to mature. Just as a farmer has a part he/she needs to play, even us need to do our part and leave everything in the hands of God.

After the blade is the ear. The ear stage will one day bear fruit. The ear stage may represent the intermediate stage of a new believer. At this stage a new believer shows signs of commitment to the work of God.

After the ear there appears the full ear which gives a picture of potential for multiplication and growth advance. This is the mature stage of a plant. At this stage a plant is read to bear fruit. A believer who reaches this stage should be encouraged to take small assignments and play small roles in the work of God.

Conclusion and Appeal

Success is guaranteed for all those who will accept to partner with God in the work of winning souls. After this clear assurance, do you want to commit your life to the

Lord today and ask Him to have His own way in your life? Do you promise to persevere and continue doing His work and leave the results to Him? May you stand with me as we pray together?

Sermonette Five

Title: The Value of a Soul

Text: Luke 15: 8-10

Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Introduction

It is usually difficult to see the value of the smallest coin. Nevertheless, just as big things are made up out of small things; big notes of money are out of small coins. In other words, small coins are the foundations of big notes. Benjamin Franklin once said, "A penny saved is a penny earned."

Body

I. In the parable of Luke 15; Jesus is telling a story about a woman who lost her coin. That one coin made the woman leave whatever she was doing and spent all her time looking for that one coin.

The act of this woman in this parable is a good illustration of what God did for mankind. God sent His son to come and search for us sinners. John 3:16. Out of so many planets which did not rebel against Him he chose to come to us.

The demonstrated love of God gives us a big lesson which all Christians should illustrate in their lives. The children of God should love as God loves. Just as He came down to save sinners, we should also be concerned when one of us has gone astray.

II. The Love God does not select. The Bible in John 3: 16 indicates that whosoever believes should not perish. The word whosoever helps us understand the scope of our mission. In the work of saving souls, color and ethnic barriers do not count. A son or daughter of God who is admitted in God's mission will reach out to all people despite their background or ethnic groupings.

III. Salvation from God is without condition. The only thing God requires from His lost children is to believe. Though He wants all to enter His kingdom, He does not force anyone to enter His kingdom. What He requires is for each of His children to accept Him and His kingdom by choice. The choice each sinner should make is to be based on an informed background. Whosoever believes is the only clear condition. It does not require money or sacrifice of any kind. This has been the only condition God has given to His people since the creation of this world.

Conclusion and Appeal

“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son so that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

What is our response to this great love which God has so greatly demonstrated through the giving of His son?

Sermonette Six

Title: Every Soul Matters To God

Text: Luke 15: 1-7

Introduction

Just like a shepherd is interested in every sheep in his fold, God is more than interested in every soul. To God every soul matters. God will never be satisfied with many believers in the church while others who still need to be given a chance to decide are still outside the fold.

The gospel of Luke in chapter seven verses 1-7 confirms this truth.

Body

I. Searching Question

The searching question which we find in the above passage could be paraphrased as follows: what kind of a person or owner who will not be worried about one sheep which gets lost out of his many? This question shows the relationship which God has with His people.

The sheep may have wandered away by its own choice but the owner still loved it. Its wondering did not make it lose its value: Jeremiah 31:3; John 3: 16; Romans 5: 6-8.

There was only one sheep which got lost but the shepherd still left the many to look for that one sheep. Jesus came down to this earth to die for everyone because He loved us. Luke 19: 10; 15:7; John 10:3; Romans 10:13. Christ did it for all.

II. The search Result

Searching is not an easy task. Searching for something in the bush or wilderness is never without risk. The shepherd risked everything and that commitment bore result. The sheep was found. The search was not in vain. The shepherd went home rejoicing, because the lost sheep was found.

III. The Search Result Celebration

The search result brought a come-together function. It created an environment of interaction and integration. People who are brought back home after an evangelistic reclaim exercise should be given a good and warm welcome in-order for them to feel at home. A warm welcome to the new-found believers creates a sense of belonging in the lives.

The rescue of that one sheep brought joy to his friends and neighbors. Jesus made it very clear that heaven gets excited about the salvation of just one lost but found soul. How then will it be on that day when all the redeemed will be gathered before the throne of God.

Conclusion and Appeal

Just as it is indicated in this parable, God is interested in the lost souls. As the shepherd left 99 sheep and went after one sheep, we should dedicate our lives for the salvation of the lost. What commitment are you making for the lost souls?

APPENDIX F

LETTERS AND MINUTES

Letter From the Church-Board

From : Kanyama Central Seventh-day Adventist Church

To: Pastor C.N.Imolo

Subject: Request to do a Research

Dear Pastor

The church-board of Kanyama Central SDA Church which sat on the 13th April, 2011 voted to allow you to do your research in our church. The leadership of the church will avail you with the information and support you may need. You are free to start your work as soon as you are ready.

Yours Sincerely

CChafwakale

Mrs. Chimbipa Chafwakale

Kanyama Central SDA Church Clerk

The Church Clerk

Kanyama Central Seventh-day Adventist Church

Po Box

Lusaka. Zambia

Dear Madam,

Re: Request to do Research in Your Church

I greet you all in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

This letter serves to request your church to allow me conduct my research study in your local church. The topic I would like to research on is: The challenge of Membership Retention: A case study for Kanyama Central SDA Church. The date for me to start my research will depend on your readiness to accommodate me in your church. I wait to hear from you.

Yours

C. N. Imolo

Pastor C. N. Imolo

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