

## PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Leadership

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Theological Seminary

Title: OFFSHOOT MOVEMENTS IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH OF RWANDA: A CASE OF RUBENGERA DISTRICT IN WESTERN RWANDA FIELD

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This study examined offshoots movements in the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Rwanda, a case of Rubengera District in Western Rwanda Field. It attempted to identify possible offshoot groups in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Rwanda, and highlight the reasons and causes behind the spirit of believers from the Church towards offshoot movement. The researcher examined the extent to which this offshoot occurs within the Seventh-day Adventist Church not only Rwanda but also in other countries as explained in the literature review.

In the third chapter the researcher gives details on the geographical situation of Rubengera church, and deals with the historical background, church membership survey and studied on church finances. The research method used was descriptive involving the distribution of questionnaires.

The fourth chapter deal with the program development, seminars and trainings, Biblical studies, visitations, evangelization campaign programs, implementation and evaluation

The fifth chapter bore the summary, conclusion and recommendation that motivated Rubengera church members who had regular biblical study for personal church spiritual growth that nurtured and retained newly converted members. Visitation had manifestations of love and cared to offshoots that were highly recommended.

The result was so positive that 48 backsliders had to be re-baptised and 87 new members were also baptised. Church members got motivation and pledged to participate fully in the great commission.

Adventist University of Africa

School of Postgraduate Studies

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CHURCH OF RWANDA: A CASE OF RUBENGERA DISTRICT  
IN WESTERN RWANDA FIELD

A project

presented in partial fulfilment of

The requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Leadership

by

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To my caring elder brother Madende N. Etienne

My beloved wife Florence

My children:

Filton

Wivine

Alain

I dedicate this project.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	viii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	10
Background of the Study .....	10
Statement of the Problem .....	11
Purpose of the Project .....	11
Specific Objectives .....	11
Significance of the Study .....	12
Limitation and Delimitation of the Study .....	12
Methodology and Procedures .....	13
Definitions .....	13
2. THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH AS FOUNDATIONAL IN DEALING WITH OFFSHOOT MOVEMENTS.....	14
Meaning of the Word “Church” and its Significance .....	14
The Church as “Ekklesia” .....	15
Images of the Church .....	16
Church as a Body of Christ .....	16
Church as a Temple.....	17
Church as a Family.....	18
Church as People of God.....	18
The Attributes of the Church.....	19
Church as People who are United .....	19
Holiness of the Church.....	20
Universality of the Church .....	21
The Apostolicity of the Church.....	22
The Remnant of the Church .....	23
The Assignment of the Church.....	25
The Coming of the Adventist Church in Rwanda .....	26
The Development of the Adventist Church in Rwanda .....	26
Church’s Tasks.....	29
Feeding.....	29
Teaching .....	29
Training.....	29
Discipleship.....	30

Paul against Doctrinal Deviations .....	30
John Discourages False Teachings.....	32
Reasons for the Loss of Membership.....	32
Discouragement.....	33
Doctrinal.....	33
Church Discipline.....	34
Lack of Follow up Program.....	34
Lack of Disciplining.....	35
Failure in the Leadership.....	36
Lack of Instructions.....	35
3. THE DESCRIPTION OF RUBENGERA CHURCH.....	36
Geographical Location .....	36
Growth of Rubengera Church .....	36
Problem of offshoot in Seventh-day Adventist Church .....	37
Decrease of Rubengera Seventh-day Adventist Church Membership ..	44
Rubengera Church Finance.....	45
The Questionnaire for Rubengera Church.....	46
Data Collection.....	44
Results of the Questionnaire .....	45
Assessment of the Church Membership Trend .....	46
Conclusion.....	47
4. PROGRAM DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION.....	49
Introduction.....	51
Preparation of the Program .....	50
Mobilization .....	50
Nurturing and Equipping Church Members.....	51
Implementation of the Program of Evangelism .....	53
Tools Material.....	54
Personal Evangelism.....	54
Public Evangelism.....	55
Requirement Essential for Making Visits .....	55
Types of Visits.....	56
Implementation of Intergroup Dialogue.....	58
Dialogue among Church Members .....	59
Dialogue among Offshoot.....	60
Factors Contributing for Retention of Membership.....	61
Candidate's Preparation for Baptism.....	61
Member's Visitation.....	61
Expend a Friendship Program.....	62
Church Activities Participation.....	62
Communication System among Believers.....	62
Consultation of the Church Clerk's Record.....	62
Program of Evaluation.....	63

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	64
Summary .....	64
Conclusion.....	65
Recommendation.....	66
APPENDIX.....	67
A. LETTERS.....	67
B. QUESTIONNAIRES .....	69
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	73
VITA.....	74



## LIST OF TABLES

1. Rubengera Church's Shrinkage in Membership.....	43
2. Decreasing of Rubengera Church Finance from 2003 to 2007.....	43
3. Factors Contributing to offshoot to Move out of the Church.....	46
4. Degree of Responses of Rubengera Church members.....	47
5. Training Calendar of Rubengera Church Members.....	52
6. Calendar of Evangelical Activities in Rubengera Church.....	57

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CHAPTER 1  
INTRODUCTION

**Background of the Study**

The Western Rwanda Province is composed of seven districts which are: Karongi, Rutsiro, Nyamasheke, Ngororero, Rusizi, Nyabihu and Rubavu. The South-Western part is covered by Nyungwe National Park made of a natural and several species of birds.

Western Rwanda Field is one of the oldest mission Fields of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Rwanda Union Mission. The Field is found in Western region of Rwanda. The West Rwanda Field was founded by a British named Matter in 1931. He started with much difficulty but at last this work was fruitful. He left 60 organized churches which have grown up to the 262 organized churches we have now.

From as early as 1985 West Rwanda Field has faced great challenges in Churches, but the most pressing one are Adventist members who move out of the church and the manner in which offshoots movements sow confusion among believers. Rubengera church has been suffering loss of membership from this problem, and many activities planned by this church do not succeed because they are hindered by these issues. These are unfortunately developments warrant on examination of the situation in order to establish the causes of proliferation of offshoots movement in Rwanda Union Mission. The specific place that was examined in this project is the area called Rubengera. The following section is the statement of the problem in Rubengera district

## **Statement of the Problem**

There is an unhealthy proliferation of Adventist offshoots movements in Rwanda Union Mission, and specifically in Rubengera district. The church in this area suffers from misunderstandings and tensions between members of the same Seventh-day Adventist Church and various offshoots have emerged. According to statistical records from 2007 to 2008, 37% of the members left Rubengera Church to join offshoot movement called “reformer” and claim that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is no longer teaching the correct doctrine. They were divisions in the church and these separations made some people to move away from the church because of disagreements. The question was so much interest on how these divisive disagreements on teachings were come about and what makes them persist. This leads us to the statement of purpose below.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study were to examined the nature and extent doctrinal deviation in Rubengera Adventist Church, to find out the causes of offshoots, and suggested the ways to curb the loss of our members to these offshoots.

This was serious problem between Seventh-day Adventist church members of Rubengera and offshoot members.

## **Specific Objectives**

This study sets three specific objectives as follows:

1. Identified possible offshoot groups in the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Rubengera, in the District of Rubengera, West Rwanda Field.
2. Emphasized the reasons and causes behind the spirit of believers from the Church towards offshoot groups.

3. Suggested possible solutions to the recognized problem.

### **Significance of the Study**

The envisioned strategy was to emphasize the nurture of the converts that were the result in the reduction of members leaving the church as a result of offshoot. The project may also serve as a model for the retention of converts in both Rubengera district in West Rwanda Field as a whole.

### **Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

Like any other research topic, the study was subjected to certain limits. The first one was the shortage of resources. This was mainly due to the fact that offshoots from the Adventist Church of Rubengera were composed mostly of peasants who were not able to produce books. With regards to data collection; a researcher have also limited by financial resources on the one hand and by the silent attitude often portrayed by these groups on the other hand, it was also worth to notice that there was the problem of lack of organization noticed in these various splinter groups. As for the scope of the subject, this study was confined to the outstanding approaches to the problem, namely: identification of different offshoots.

The realm of this study was limited to the Adventist Church of Rubengera in the District of Rubengera, Western Rwanda Field. Only one hundred and twenty seven current Adventists and sixty three former Adventists participated in this study in the form of surveys.

### **Methodology and Procedures**

The study was conducted in Rubengera church in West Rwanda Field. The study began by studying the background of the study and identification of the problem. Three steps which have been taken to pursue the study were follows: The

first chapter was introduction. It specifies the steps followed in pursuing the whole study and the methodology used.

Chapter Two was the foundational framework for the whole Project and it examined briefly the nature of the Church, the history of the church in Rwanda and the importance of doctrinal purity. After this theoretical foundation, a description of the church in Rubengera constituted Chapter Three. Chapter Four were the design of the strategy to curb the proliferation of offshoots in Rubengera, the implementation of the strategy was followed by evaluation. The final chapter was the summary, conclusion and recommendations

This study also involved interviews and collections of data from the church members through questionnaires in order to analyse the local situation. The following terms related to the study may not be familiar. So some operational definitions were given.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Offshoot:** Something which has developed from something larger which had already existed; especially a small organization separated and developed from a large one.

**Equipping:** To provide to someone the skills this was help him to find the need for a particular purpose.

**Nurture:** Describes the process of guiding converts to grow as disciples and Members of the Church, including the continuous spiritual growth of the ones who were already members of the church.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Offshoot Movements**

In this chapter, the nature of the Church was explained briefly in order to establish the characteristics of a true church, and how it was developed in doctrine and lifestyle. The information about the church has to come from the Bible because it is known; it becomes a protection from apostasy. The truth as it is from the Bible was the basis for maintaining unity among believers in Christ. The researcher will briefly explore the nature of the Church by examining the meanings of the term “church,” selected images of the church and the importance of pure doctrine.

#### **Meaning of the Word “Church” and Its Significance**

According to Adventists, the Church is a body of believers who “join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the word, for the celebration of the Lord’s supper, for service to all mankind, and for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel.”<sup>1</sup> According to this definition, the church were made up of people who worshiped, fellowshiped and worked together to accomplish God’s purposes. The Bible carried the message about essence and purpose for the church. In this section the nature of the church were briefly explored. It can be established from the Hebrew Bible that the church originated from God.

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<sup>1</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2005), 3.



When God called Abraham from his people He asked him to move out, enter a covenant relationship with Him so that Abraham may be used to accomplish God's purpose for humankind (Gen 12:3). When Jesus came, He established the church as we have it today. He was talking to Peter during a special encounter that he declared that "on this rock I will build my church..." (Matt 16:18). It is in this encounter that we come across the term "church" for the first time in the New Testament. What does the word church mean? We have to find out etymologically and also by exploring images that portray the entity called "church."

### **The Church as "Ekklesia"**

Etymologically, "Ekklesia" derived from the verb ek-kalein literally "to call out", which meant at the time of the NT, in general, "to call", "to summon". In the Septuagint (LXX) where we find the term, "εχχλεια", it was the translation of the Hebrew word "quhal" meaning "assembly" (Num 19: 20, Deut 9:10; 18: 16:23, 24), particularly in the expression "assembly of the Lord" designating Israel in its original assembly as a people of God" (Exod 12: 3).

In the New Testament we read about various aspects of the Church. In some passages it was revered to as 'the Church of God' (Acts 20: 28), "Body of Christ" (Eph 4:12), and sometimes "The Church of the Living God" (1Tim 3: 15). According to the New Testament ekklesia may design the whole the body of believers throughout the world.

First, it was used in some passages to refer to the whole body of believers (Eph 1:22; 3:10; 2 Cor 10:32 ; 12: 28; Phil 3:6; Col 1:5, 8, 24; Matt 16:18).

Second, "ekklesia" it was used to designate a particular local church such as the church at Corinth, Thessalonica, or Laodicea (2 Cor 16:1, Gal 1:1; 1 Thes 2:14).

Third, “ekklesia” it may use to designate any assembly of believers who gather at any place for the purpose of worship (1 Cor 11:18; 14:19, 23, 28). Fourth, “ekklesia” furthermore this word could refer to a group of believers in an individual’s home (1 Cor 16: 19; Col 4: 15; Phil 2). Fifth, “ekklesia” finally was used to designate a group of churches in a region (Acts 9: 31). With this understanding we can talk about the church of God in Rubengera which researcher gives more details to his project.

### **Images of the Church**

The New Testament used many images to describe the Church. In this subsection we explored selected images that portray the nature of the church .Among these images may be included body of Christ, family of God, people of God and God’s building project. However the next part researcher talk about how this body were connected each one on the same body.

### **Church as the Body of Christ**

The “Body of Christ” was the metaphor used by Paul to describe the unity among believers through his son Jesus Christ. It took him pain and torture in order to save the church. What the researcher would like to emphasis here was that the church was not a building but all human kind that has accepted Christ as their personal saviour. So those who have accepted Christ “have life”. According to Paul in the book of Corinthians which says, Christ was like a single body that has many parts which perform different functions but it was still one body, in the same way all of us, whether slaves or free, whether Jews or Gentiles, have been baptized into the one body of Christ by the same Spirit (Gal 3:26-28). And in the same body all people belong to him (1 Cor 12: 12-31).

However, once Christians have joined the church, they become part of the body of Christ. Just as the legs, hands, eyes, and so on cannot operate without the whole body, people cannot do anything without Christ.

Apostle Paul seems to use the metaphor of “the body of Christ” to express the oneness of the church with Lord. But, anyone who can divided the church were like separating Christ (1 Cor 1:13), this similar concept of the oneness of church were introduced by Paul when he dealt with the problem of Christians’ relations to one another. There was one body, with members which has different functions, yet all equally were honourable and necessary to the efficient working of the body as a whole. Believers were no longer on their own, but baptized “into” him (1 Cor 12:13); they were “in” Him and He was “in” them (Gal 2:20). Church can not only be a body but in addition as a temple.

### **Church as a Temple**

The church here was considered as people and not a construction, for example, the building cannot stand without proper compatibility, in the same way people cannot have a good foundation without Christ. According to message from the book of Acts God had erected his people as a sanctuary by choosing to dwell among them (1 Cor 6:16).

As a figure of the church this temple, though a single structure was seen as growing into “a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Eph 2:21, 22). However, the church was “a spiritual house”, “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone, in which individual believers were being built like living stones (1Pet 2:5), furthermore ,when people were jointly, they become exactly like family.

## **Church as Family**

The word “family” brings all kinds of things to mind, some people have amazing family and for others it may be painful to even think about family. Some families were happy, some families were described as dysfunctional; for whatever reason they can’t operate within relatively normal parameters and people were wounded. Families were always difficult because they were made up of people who have varied and often opposite needs.

The church was often called a family. The analogy of a family was important for us to consider when we think about the church. Things don’t always work as they were expected. Some people were very irregular and they were certain commitment to go forward, to work through the difficulties and make something out of those relationships. According to letter Paul wrote to the Thessalonians he says:

But we request of you brethren that you appreciate those who diligently labour among you and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. We urge you brethren to warn the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, and be patient with everyone. See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise Here Paul just gives the Thessalonians a number of requests, commands and he considers how this family of God should maintain and have relationship with one another. The same concept should be applied in Rubengera church. Prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil. (1 Thess 5:12-28)

Furthermore, when people extended their relationships among them, this could explained that they have a force which were functioning in them and which gives them to be people different from others and becomes the people of God.

## **Church as People of God**

After the image of body of Christ, temple and family of God, the New Testament adds the metaphor of the “people of God.” The idea of the people of God were frequently applied in the Old Testament to the nation of Israel, chosen and protected by God (Exod 15:13, 16; Hosea 2:23). In the New Testament the church was perceived as the continuation and consummation of God’s covenant community. Peter writes, “You are a chosen race...God’s own people” (1 Pet 2:9). In typical pattern of Old Testament fulfilment, the New Testament explained that the church as the true Israel. Paul writes, “God said, I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my People” (2 Cor 6:16).

So the church belongs to Christ because he redeemed it and obtained it with his own blood (Acts 20:28). He expected his church to have undivided loyalty, for Christ was eager to present it to himself “without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that he might be holy and without blemish” (Eph 5:27). Thus it is clear that it takes many images to portray what the church was supposed to be. Most images underline the connectedness of the church with Christ. Attributes also tell more about the church.

### **Attributes of the Church**

The attributes of God’s Church reflects the holy characters of Jesus Christ. Although the New Testament suggested a longer list which explained certain characteristics of the early Christians, the researcher was emphasized on four major issues: unity, holiness, Universality and Apostolicity of the church.

## **Church as People Who Are United**

Unity was the main characteristic of the church as depicted in the New Testament. Even though there were many congregations, but the church of Christ remains one body as Christ was the head. As apostle Paul says, this body has “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all” (Eph 4:4-6). However, there was visible unity as evidenced by Jesus prayer urging that his disciples to be one so that the world might know and believed (John 17:23, 21). Paul talks about this unity among race, class and gender. It was not by voluntary act that we unite but it was enabled by Spirit of God, so church has found oneness in Christ (Eph 5:2-15).

However, diversity of cultures, times, places, church, family, nation and tongue, all belong to one body, whose inner united seeks and acquired outward expression in the profession of the same faith (Eph 4:5,13-14). So no one should divide people of God because they have oneness in Him.

The former Seventh-day Adventist, World Church President, Jan Paulsen, encouraged church leaders and members in East-Central Africa region to remain united and take ownership of the church. He says, “Stay united, live peacefully and love one another, true unity is a result of the humble heart of God’s people, unity is possible when we are united in Christ, there is no true unity outside of Christ and it is possible when we respect each other.”<sup>2</sup> When they were unity among people and relationship with Christ, people of God were transformed and become holy, so the next part, a researcher tried to analyse how the church of God can become holy.

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<sup>2</sup>Bernard, Onditi “Stay United and Take Ownership of the Church”. Adventist Herald May 2010, 7

## **Holiness of the Church**

Holiness was another characteristic of the church's believers. In the New Testament, "Holy" means in Greek "ἅγιος" which means "belong to God", hence was "separate" from sin and consecration to God. However Paul says "you are not your own; you were bought with a price." (1Cor 6: 19, 20; 1Peter 1: 18, 19), so the holiness of the Christian community resides in its separation from the world in answer to God's call (2 Tim 1:9); Israel in the Old Testament was called to be a "holy" nation (1 Peter 2: 9).

The church is holy, set apart from the world, to reflect the holiness of God and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit in a fallen world. Those who are in Christ should consecrate themselves to Christ and making "holiness perfect in the fear of God" (2 Cor 6:14-18; 2 Cor 1: 2). Holiness was a growing and continuous experience in Christ, who loved the church and gave himself up for her...that the church might be presented before him in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing"( Eph 5: 25,26). However, this holy nation of believers was found in all nations because the love of God was addressed to all in universe.

## **Universality of the Church**

According to New Testament insists on the universality or catholicity of the church. And the word "catholic" refers not to a particular people or organization but for all people for everywhere. The church embraced all nations (Matt 28: 19; Rev 14: 6). Still the catholicity of the church does not lie in its worldwide outreach alone, but in the influence it exercises on all aspects of human life as well as in the church's possession of universal truth.

The church teaches universally and from first to last all the teachings Christ has commanded (Matt 28:20), it reached out to the whole world with the whole truth

as revealed by God (Acts 20:27). In addition, there were no difference teachings for Christian today comparatively to the period of apostles. Usually people don't remember that church of today was the continuation of line of faithfulness to the testimony for apostles.

### **The Apostolicity of the Church**

Bible says "We are built on foundation of the prophets and apostles but Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone" (Eph 2:20). On that account, some "Christians think of apostolicity as literal, linear and uninterrupted apostolic succession by the laying on of hands as evidence of such apostolicity, but it was a continuous line of faithfulness to the testimony of the apostles sustained by the Holy Spirit."<sup>3</sup> It was a reason why Paul admonished Timothy, and says "And what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2), and elders must be "an apt teacher", able to "care for God's church", to "hold firm to the sure word as taught." And "to confuse those who contradict" the apostolic doctrine (1 Tim 3: 2-7). So the continuing apostolate is still being sent (John 20: 21).

Although apostolicity was a distinct mark of the true church, any notion of apostolicity that fails to engage in faithfulness to the gospel and to mission was a misconceived view. Apostolic part from general attributes; there was other special image of self-understanding that the Adventist Church, the image of "remnant" was significant to Adventists.

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<sup>3</sup>Raoul, Dederen, *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology Commentaries Reference Series*, 12vol, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 539.



## The Remnant Church

The term "Remnant" is used in the OT and the NT. This term often appeared when there was an advisory message announcing tribulations against the people of God, following the rebellion which required divine judgment. This remnant untouched by the judgement was an essential element of biblical hope.<sup>4</sup>

In the NT, the word "remnant" is applied to "faithful remnant," to a part of God's people who believed in Christ (Rom 11: 5). The theme of faithful remnant, only true Israel, underlies many of the NT texts: Matt 3: 9, 12; 22: 14, John 1: 11; Rom 2: 28 etc. The remnant is now the Church or the leftover of the saints (Isa 4: 2, 3). In Revelation 12: 17, we find the term "remnant" with the connotation of the Church.

Ellen White says, "The remnant church should have the gift of the spirit of prophecy and ten commandments as a hallmark of the true church of the last days."<sup>5</sup> This gift has appeared in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Speaking of this Church, she adds that Seventh-day Adventists, from their appearance, have courageously proclaimed the three angels messages (Rev 14:6-12) as the last call to address sinners to accept Christ, and they humbly believed that their movement was referred to as the remnant.

No other religious body has proclaimed the message and met the qualifications outlined in Chapter 12: 17 (of Revelation). That is why no one else has a scriptural basis for valuable claim to be the "rest" referred to in verse 17. However, she notes that Adventists do not claim to be the only children of God. Rather, they think that all those who sincerely love the Lord and conform to his will are potentially members of

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<sup>4</sup> Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia, rev. ed, (1975), s.v " Pitcairn."

<sup>5</sup> White G. Ellen. *Ellen White et le Don de Prophetie Prophetic* (Collonge, France: Edition Fides, 1966), 164.

the final "rest" referred to in chapter 12: 17 (of Revelation). And we still believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the visible remnant church and that the Spirit of prophecy is one of the identifying marks:

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teachings and experience must be tested.<sup>6</sup>

As Seventh-day Adventists, we are members of God's remainder Church. However, this recognition with the remnant church does not give us an exclusive status with God. Salvation is not guaranteed through church membership in any church, we are saved as individuals, not as a church. But being a part of God's remnant church means that we participate in proclaiming God's special end time message, the three angel messages which was expanded in the World. Yet to be Church member of Seventh- day Adventist church, People should pass through baptism and continue to live and imitate Jesus Character.

Finally, remnant church is the church united, universally and which is built on basis of apostles and prophets and fitting to all we have talked. However, this church has the mission which it should accomplish, this is the next part researcher describes.

### **The Assignment of the Church**

In the gospel of Matt 28:19, 20 and Mark 16: 15-16, Jesus commissioned his disciples to make disciples. The commission describes the mission of the church, which is evangelism accompanied with the teachings of converts. In Acts 2: 42-47;

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<sup>6</sup> White G. Ellen, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2 Vol (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 452.

4:31; 12:5, 12 the principles of the church growth are listed, “the apostle’s teachings, fellowship, breaking bread together and prayer.”<sup>7</sup>

The early Christians took the permission to follow the Lord’s directive in fulfilling its duty. The meetings that were held were accompanied by teaching and prayer. Jesus Christ prayed for the unity of the disciples and all those who will believe their message thereafter (John 17: 20-21). If the church will live in unity and to love one another (John 13: 35) then her mission will be fulfilled, preaching of the good news of the everlasting kingdom (Rev 14: 6, 7; Matt 24:14; Acts 1:8).

The purpose of preaching was to carry people into the faith, and to maintain them until the second coming of Jesus Christ. The new converts into the church were babies, since the experience of conversion and baptism was like a rebirth process. The statement “you must be born again” (John 3:3, 7) supports a family motive, which describes the process of becoming a disciple, and a member of the church. Therefore, as babies’ new converts need to be nurtured by the church making sure there is follow-up mechanism. James Cress wrote that “the Church must accept responsibility for new converts.”<sup>8</sup>

Additionally, the parable of the dragnet in Matt 13:47-49 all sorts of people are gathered into the church, both good and bad. They should not be separated until the end. It is God Himself who will do the harvest through His angels and therefore, the church should accommodate every person regardless of their character. The mission of the church is to nurture every member that joins the church. Despite the

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<sup>7</sup> Gnary Kore, “How Can the Church Grow,” *Ministry*, February 2001, 22.

<sup>8</sup> James A. Cress, *You Can Keep in You Care: Helping New Members Stay on Board* (Oshawa, Ontario, Canada: Miracle, 2000), 23-25.

fact that the work of the nurture of the converts is not to be limited only to the new converts but also to the old members because it is to continue until the end. Therefore, the church has a duty of ensuring that members joining the church are maintained. However, the next part, a researcher deals with how missionaries reached in Rwanda and how this country was evangelized.

### **The Coming of Adventists in Rwanda**

Just as Matt 28:19-20 talks about the great commission of Jesus to go to all nations and preach the gospel. So from 1919 the gospel was brought to Rwanda by three missionaries namely Delhove, Monnier and Matter.

They arrived in Cyangugu in Rwanda where they rested for a few days in the border with Congo from England. After that they moved from Cyangungu and went to Gitwe where the first Church was started. To evangelise in this area was a problem because of language barrier and other factors but they managed to adopt how they were living.

The place initially was called Nkomero but the name was changed to Gitwe which means a place full of cow heads which were slaughtered by the missionary in order to attract people, because of all other means of mobilization like giving clothes, and other materials had failed to work after which they realized the people of Nkomero liked cow meat hence the name “Gitwe.”

After mobilization using the slaughtering of cow method the people opened up to the missionaries and they got the chance to evangelise to them, after a month, six people were baptized.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Jerome, Birikunzira. *Histoire de l'Eglise Adventiste du Septième Jour au Rwanda* (Kigali, Rwanda: Press de l'Imprimerie Incuti, 2002), 67.

In North Rwanda the gospel reached there through missionary Mounnier who built a church on the mountain of Rwankeri where he did several campaigns which attracted a lot of people. In 1937 he had 102 members who were baptized and some of them became pastors, the missionaries work continued up to a place called Gisenyi and its surrounding area and Congo have been reached later.

In West Part of the country there was a missionary by the name Bwana Matter and Dr Sturges who came from Songa hospital at Democratic Republic of Congo. They reached a place called Ngoma where they started their missionary work by building dispensary for helping those who were sick and they did many evangelizations campaign which attracted many people, from 1933 Field was started in Ngoma. In 1938 they were 48 churches which had been started and 1954 the area of Sure had been reached by evangelization and this evangelization was organized by Pastor Semugeshi and many people were baptized and later on a church was built. In 1955 Rubengera district was started.

### **The Development of the Adventist Church in Rwanda**

The missionary continued from 6 people who were baptized when missionaries reached Gitwe and in 2002 most parts of the country had received the gospel. By this time the church records that they were 361,413 spread all over Rwanda. This work started to spread to Gitwe in Central Rwanda Field today. Member's hip gradually increased. Later four Fields have been organized. Kigali Field started in 1965 is called East Rwanda Field .The person behind the organization of this field was a Rwandan Baraburiye. In 1979, The Association of South Rwanda having with headquarters in Butare was also created. And North Rwanda Field had started in 1937 and the work of God continued on and on to the point of creation of schools. Today we have six Adventist secondary schools, one Adventist University of

Central Africa, 73 primary schools, two hospitals, 4 dispensaries and one clinic. And apart from Adventist institutions there are two universities run by lay Adventist people who also have secondary and primary schools. This explains that church is involved in various activities which help the church to grow.

Initially, as the church grows they were concerns about keeping the church doctrinally orthodox by educations and training leaders at Gitwe. Those who went to Gitwe were instructed in correct doctrines and sent out to lead others accordingly. The following section underlines the responsibility of the church to facilitate on gains maturity in Christ by feeding, teaching and training to all discipline and all believers.

### **The Church's Task**

The church has different tasks for accomplishment which are very important.

#### **Feeding**

The church cares for the member by feeding the flock. In John 21: 15-17, Jesus said to Simom Peter, "Feed my sheep," the phrase continued three times which gives stress to the feeding of the flock. Paul according to what he said to Ephesus church gave the same order to elders to care and feed the church of God (Acts 20:28).

#### **Teaching**

The Proclamation of the gospel includes the teaching of the disciples. In most of Paul's letters teaching was a major purpose, therefore, teaching is important to the mission of the church. The works of teachings of the converts in the responsibility of the church since disciples are called to make other disciples (Matt 28:19, 20). Paul says in Ephesus that the spiritual gifts given upon the church "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers," are for the perfection of the church, for the work

of the ministry and the edification of the church (Eph 4:11, 12). Then teaching has the same connotation to nurture for it involves spiritual feeding of the members.

Bible says in Deuteronomy that parents are to teach their children about God and what He has commanded (Deut 6:7).<sup>10</sup>

## **Training**

The work of training involves identifying and developing the spiritual gifts of the members. The ministry has the responsibility to develop the talents in the church. One of the Biblical examples is that of Timothy whom Paul commands to go from church to church building up churches in faith. The work of Timothy was to water and to nurture the seed already sown.<sup>11</sup>

Ellen G. White wrote that, the church is a training school for the Christian workers to equip the church members. The teaching should center on how to give Bible readings, how best to help the poor and care for the sick and how to work for the unconverted.<sup>12</sup>

## **Discipleship**

The main mission of the church is to make disciples for Christ. The early Christians worked towards their objectives,” that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the father, and his son Jesus Christ ” (1 John 1:3, NKJV). These

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<sup>10</sup> Richard Rice, *The Reign of God* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1995), 211.

<sup>11</sup>Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Publishing Association, 1942), 146.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

words sum up the work of the church, to make disciples and to nurture them until they maturity in Christ.

The disciples prayed together, fellowshiped and worshipped, and participated in the making of disciples (Matt 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8). In the process of the church trying to nurture its members it has encountered a number of difficulties. As the church grew numerically in Rwanda some aberrations arose as the result many among Church members got out of the Church. So a researcher chose the following subsection as the difficulties found in continuation of the great mission given by Jesus.

### **Paul against Doctrinal Deviations**

Denial started long ago in the Old Testament with Adam and Eve when they rebelled against what God told them and ate the forbidden fruit which meant that they denied God (Gen 2:16-18). The first cause of offshoot has been their failure to listen to God and his word.

In Galatians 1:6-10 Paul shows that the offshoots are an event that will come before the end of time. The so-called prophets are the major medium of offshoot. “Beloved, believe not every spirit but try the spirits whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1-3). Paul also warns people against false theories and pleasure that were going to occupy the great number of them in these words:

The above texts of scripture show that offshoots, is the greatest enemy of Christianity because it draws people away from their creator. The offshoots are just so many signs that the end is upon us, for the devil knows of no more effective way to hinder God’s plan than to attempt to tear down this organization that Heaven has built up in these last days. “Instead of being downcast by these desertions, we should lift up our heads and rejoice, for our redemption draweth high. Despite all the weaknesses and mistakes, but God still love and direct this Adventist Church.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1962), 49.



Relating to the problem of Galatians, Jesus proposed the solution to His disciples. They have to endure the trial they will face. They must understand the will of God as revealed in His word: “if someone is caught in a sin, you as spiritual you should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted” (Gal. 6:1). This training should be applicable to this period as He said to His disciples: “If your brother sins against you go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would treat a pagan or a tax collector” (Matt 18:15-17). As Paul talks about false teachings which will come until the end of the time, John too relates the same

### **John Discourages False Teachings**

Because many false prophets have gone into the world; this according to the writings of John said in 1 John 4:1. These prophets are seducing and misleading people to a great extent and the Church of God should pay a lot of attention to them, John used to see the gospel of Christ preached far and near, and thousands eagerly accepting his teachings. But he was filled with sadness as he perceived poisonous errors creeping into the church. Some who accepted Christ claimed that His love released them from obedience to the law of God. On the other hand, many thought that the letter of the law should be kept with all the Jewish customs and ceremonies in the same time, and this was sufficient for salvation without needing the blood of Christ. They heard that Christ was a good man like the apostles, but denied His divinity. John saw the dangers which the church would be exposed to. He had never

accepted their ideas and he opposed them with promptness and decision. He expressed it in this way: “Many deceivers have entered into the world, who confesses not that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. Look at yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whoever transgressed, and abided not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abided in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that bideth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 7-11).

While Paul in 2 Tim 3:2; militating against divine instructions is the cause of offshoot, Paul says “For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, and unholy.” According to many writers, reasons have been suggested that causes church members get out of the church.

### **Reasons for the Loss of Members**

#### **Discouragement**

One of the reasons why new converts go away from the church is due to the crisis they undergo upon joining the church. As stated in the minister’s manual, some of the crisis through which they undergo include, discouragement for failing to live up to the standards of the church, failing to replace friends they lost when they joined the church, neglecting study and family worship leading to compromising the Adventist life style, and loss of confidence in leadership especially after they are given responsibility as leaders they are disillusioned because of the imperfect inner working of the church.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Minister’s Manual* (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, 1992), 129-130.

Monte Sahlin wrote that, the members dropping from the church may comprise of newly baptized who are forced to work on Sabbath, poorly educated who get baptized emotionally after a brief Bible study was given and unable to quit former habits decided to join a more liberal sects, and young adults who have been divorced.

Most of those leaving the church attribute their departure to severed relationship with people and groups.<sup>15</sup>

### **Doctrinal**

The reason given by Conant J.E for the decline of membership is a “steady drift from the fundamentals of church membership.”<sup>16</sup> However, according to Monte Sahlin, only a few members leave because of doctrinal reasons. They leave because the church fails to meet their needs or because the church disappoints them.<sup>17</sup> But Sahlin does not state some of the needs people expect to be addressed while in the church, therefore, it remains that a drift from the fundamentals of the church could be one of the reasons members drop out of the church.

### **Church Discipline**

According to Richard Rymer, He states that minor offences are either ignored or are dealt with privately but grave offences are brought to open discipline resulting to either the acquittal or condemnation, which is the retention or expulsion of the accused.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Monte Sahlin, ” Dropouts-Who Are They?” *Ministry*, February, 1990, 4-5.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Richard Rymer, *A Visible Church and No Invisible Members* (London: Oxford University Press, 1861), 6.

## **Lack of Follow up Programme**

Lack of follow up program is most likely the major cause for loss of membership. In dealing with the issue, Thomas Rainer, states that, “if a church merely offers a new member class but neither requires nor expects people to attend, years.<sup>19</sup> The following programme described here mainly refers to new members who have come into the church and are left without being attended however the lack of follow up programme may also affect the old members of the church. This is especially common with members who have been faced with certain problems such as the death of a loved one or sickness. If such people are not followed they may drop from the church fellowship. Therefore, the church has been called a place of “healing of the body, or the healing of a broken life, or the healing of a broken relationship.”<sup>20</sup>

## **Lack of Discipline**

The church gives most seriousness to evangelism and brings members into the church, and after they do not follow them the same manner they did when they were looking for them through evangelism. The work of discipline does not just end the act of baptism but it is rather an ongoing activity. The process of discipline involves making the disciple of Jesus Christ, and then teaching more.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Thomas Reiner, *Religious Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 72.

<sup>20</sup> Owen Brandon, *The Pastor and His Ministry* (London: S.P.C.K, 1972), 98.

<sup>21</sup> Russell C. Burrill, *Recovering an Adventist Approach to the Life and the Mission of The Local Church* (New York: Hart Research Center, 1998), 17.

### **Failure in the Direction**

Milton Coater has put emphasis of loss of members on the leader's failure to retain existing members.<sup>22</sup> According to Ezekiel, he says: "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from men... and you do not speak out to dissuade him from his ways, that wicked man will die for his sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood."(Ezekiel 33:7-8). So leaders have to follow members, visiting them, sharing their problems, pray for them and encourage them. However, when they do not see their leader's interest to them, they move out where they could see the love.

### **Lack of Instructions**

The loss of church members is due to lack of instructions to the new converts before and after baptism. Roy Allan wrote that, there is danger to hurry to fields to evangelize before thorough instructions have been given to the converts. The converts should be given thorough instructions before baptism because that time they are eager to learn.<sup>23</sup> Their churches have come with various methods and programme to help the church overcome this challenge. However, the next chapter will explain more about this Rubengera and briefly description of the site where the researcher did his topics.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Geoffrey,Mbwana "Born to Serve" *Adventist Review*, July 5 2005, 24-25.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE DESCRIPTION OF RUBENGERA CHURCH

The third chapter, a researcher explains more the details of Rubengera church where he relates the description geographically, economically and socially and how church members were accepted many teachings which were destabilized them and some move them out of the Church. However, a researcher describes with more details of Rubengea area.

#### **Geographical Location of Kibuye**

The Adventist Church of Rubengera is located in the Republic of Rwanda, Western Province, Kibuye town, Karongi district, Kibirizi cell. Rubengera city is located at 18 km away from Kibuye town roundabout. The city lies on the eastern shore of Lake Kivu, about halfway down, and between Gisenyi and Cyangugu. It has become more popular with both local and international visitors as it is the most quickly accessible resort town from Kigali. It is known as a beach and the landscape around Kibuye. It is unexpected because numerous hills planted with pines and eucalyptus offer a pristine, almost Alpine and certain not tropical atmosphere. Kibuye can be accessed by boat and road and it is connected by an all-weather road to Kigali.

#### **Growth of Rubengera Church**

Rubengera is the big city in Kibuye district; usually many people from the rural areas come in search for job or business opportunities. Majorities of people are

farmers but there are also few workers employed in various businesses. So, in this section, we highlight the following areas. In 1991, Population of Kibuye city where Rubengera Church is found was 46.500 compared to year 2002 when the population jumped 48143 and this clearly explains the big challenges on population growth.

As far as Education is concerned, in Karongi where Rubengera church is located the level of Education is still low, whereby only 7% of the Population reached college level, after college many people leave for other places to look for jobs and 25% are at secondary school level which is a problem to the church and the government. Many members of Adventist Church of Rubengera are not educated which makes it easier for offshoots to convince them with their false teachings. So they can be easily deceived by what they are told.

Many Pastors and Elders in this area are not educated. So they too, can be misled by offshoots members because they have not read many books which can help them solve these problems. Many offshoot leaders read wrongly and misinterpret the Bible which further confuses church members. Many of these leaders read Ellen White Books but they misinterpret the message, so it is difficult even for them to correct the misled church members, which results in leadership problem. But today, there are changes in church because most of Pastors are educated and there are much trainings, seminars and other forums which overcome these problems.

### **Problem of Offshoots in Seventh- day Adventist Church in Rwanda**

Pastor J. Birikunzira, in his book “Amateka y’Itorero ry’abadiventiste mu Rwanda” presents four major difficulties that have characterized the Adventist work in the Central Africa region specially in Rwanda, He says, “These problems are primarily offshoots that are struggling against the organization and the leading group of the Church. Although they are not organized, they destabilize the Adventist Church on the pretext that this one has become lukewarm and needs a reform.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Jerome, Birikunzira : *Histoire de l’Eglise Adventiste du septième Jour au Rwanda* (Kigali, Rwanda: Edition Press de l’Imprimerie Incuti, Rwanda, 2002), 23.

Birikunzira cites among them Abagorozi (reformed), abasohoke, Abakusi, the Temperate, and recently, there is another group which has been born named “Justified” Then there is the problem of organizational system, the problem of unskilled leaders. Third it is a considerable loss of many workers who perished during the 1994 genocide, finally, the situation was worsened by the rebels who came from outside of country that disturbed and even killed people (Abacengezi) that took place around the years 1997-1998. Problems are so numerous that we cannot list them all. It needs to be noted that the case of poverty is almost common to the entire Rwandan population and that even affects the country’s economy in general. Poverty gives the offshoots the opportunity to gain ground by giving materials to those who are poor and this makes it easy to convince them.

Another daunting problem of books filled with heresies, extremist interpretations, manipulation of Ellen G. White’s writings, also needs to be mentioned. Some offshoots members produced and circulate materials in the Adventist Churches in Rwanda. All these writings are presented under the guise of the Spirit of Prophecy and are passed off as true and very few of our Adventist brothers and even among the leaders are able to discover their erroneous character. What is worse is that, these messages are used by many of the old members of our churches in our country and the believers are buying them in increasing numbers. In the book written by Bikorimana Diogenes entitled “*Kugarura Itorero Ku Gitereko Ryikuyeho*” literally meaning, “returning the Church back to the seat from which it removed itself”, there is a striking example of manipulation of the writings of Ellen G. White. On page 3, specifically the third and fifth paragraph, he tries to find arguments to convince people that Mrs White predicted what they are living now as reformers.



It is worth noting that there is only one quotation from Ellen White that was fragmented in order to remove some points supporting their ideas.

The second example concerns the confusion of terms by Ntakirutimana Emmanuel in his book: "*Inyugushure Nira*." He takes his time to show how the Adventist Church has erred in ceremonial rites based on the ideas of Ellen G. White with which he deals in an extremist manner or out of context.

On page 31 of his book, he confuses the word "Creed" which he translates as *Indongozi Y'itorero* with the term "Church Manual", and considers them as synonymous. Of course Ellen White and James White condemned the "Creed." Instead, this term is translated as "*Impamyakwemera*," which is very different from the term "*Indongozi Y'itorero*."

In addition to the writings mentioned above, there are several others that are used in doctrinal study in many Adventist churches in Rwanda. A wise and effective intervention is necessary in this area.

For a long time there has been a problem of members of the church who went out because of the distortion of teachings, they accuse the Seventh-day Adventist Church of departing from the historic faith, because the church does not accept their interpretations of certain theological positions as the only valid ones. They claim:

- They accuse the denominational leadership of collusion in offshoot, because the leaders do not squelch teachings that the private organizations find offensive.

Whatever does not agree with their particular theology is termed "New Theology." Today numerous church members have lost their faith in church pastors and church

leaders, counting their silence as concerning offshoot, lowering of standards, and mistreatment of God's flock rampant among us.<sup>25</sup>

- They accuse the ministry of introducing worldly, and even immoral, practices into the Church and the denominational leadership for approval of these practices.

Undoubtedly the most telling blow against the value of the ministerial credential is its continued issuance to men who preach open apostasy, men who have been proved to be fiscally dishonest, and men who are known adulterers.<sup>26</sup>

After careful investigation in harmony with Jesus' counsel in Matt 18: 15-17 employees of the church, as well as church members, have been disciplined. No one should be disciplined unless the matter has been established beyond doubt, and Paul's counsel in Galatians 6:1 has been heeded, "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness."

So many movements that were born are still in existence even today. In Africa we can also find some of these movements, and many of them came in Rwanda, we have for example Davidians, Reformed Adventists originating in Europe, specifically Germany around 1914; the reformers of the last day, the Movement of the Coming of Christ, Hope International, Adventist reforms Polygamous, Adventist Reforms monogamous, Seventh-day Justified ....Most of the sects came from the broad, like Abarokore, Justified, Ijwi ryo gukomera kw'Imana. These sects have greatly affected the mother churches and members have fallen victim to their false teachings which have led to members leaving their churches. Furthermore most of the false teachings which Adventist people were facing among Rubengera Seventh-Adventist Church were:

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<sup>25</sup> Colin and Russell Standish, *The Sepulchers Are Whited* (Rapidan, OH: Hartland Publications, 1992), 4.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

1. Adventist church has become Babylon. They support themselves with references in Revelation 18:2-4; 14:8 and so they talk to move out of it.
2. The church is lead by Church Manual not the word of God (Bible).
3. Adventist church members are leading by a “creed”
4. It is not a problem to adopt polygamy but the Bible shows us many people who had many wives like Jacob, Solomon and others. What they say is that, polygamy is accepted in the Bible but Seventh-day Adventist says that one should have one wife.
5. Adventist is asking tithes and offerings while the Bible says all those sacrifices, offerings were ended by Jesus dying on the cross.
6. Hierarchy of the Church is not Biblical, because we have only one leader who is Jesus Christ. So no field, Union, Division and General conference this is about looking for the human glory.
7. The church has accepted modern life style like women plaiting their hair, computers, internet, teaching Bible and singing with megaphone and all other modern practices.
8. Adventist use the computer in Evangelism (projection of lessons) it is wrong way different as Jesus told and used.
9. Adventist get involved in election, some leaders in government politics are also leading the church. This means that they have become politicians while they are people selected to be holy.
10. Praying it's obligatory to kneel down; if not our prayers will not reach heaven. However Adventist does not always kneel to pray.
11. Drinking milk, eating eggs and meat will bar one from entering heaven.

12. God said he will write his commandment in our hearts while Adventist takes their pastors and their children to study theology .They ask why study theology? Since the church members do not know well Bible as our creed, some follow them and others become pagans.

### **Decrease of Rubengera Adventist Church Members**

Adventist church of Rubengera was organized in 1942 and the work of God continued well. In 2002 the church membership of Rubengera was 702 later on some people from DR Congo, Burundi and other different countries came with their false doctrines which were different from Adventist church beliefs. Many members have moved out of the church due to some problems, like teachings against church doctrines, and life style issues like drinking, adultery and all sorts of things that are against church standards. Some of them think that they know more than others and are always in opposition of the church. When they came to Rubengera, they visited church members, secretly teaching their false doctrine which influenced some who joined opposition and started asking many questions to disturb programs while some left the church.

Statistics of members lost through offshoots in the Adventist Church of Rubengera since 2004 until 2008 show that the Church experienced has gradual decrease and the task is still great. The report shows that the Church has degenerated even in the activities of evangelization due to these offshoots movements as shown in the table below: It has been remarked that members of Adventist Church decreased and they stopped praying and others left the church. Table 1 shows that Rubengera was decreasing in church members from 2004-2008. Another problem is caused by other surrounding churches which tend to mock and laugh at them because of the fighting within the church. Then the following table1 will illustrate how church

membership of Rubengera has decreased. In addition to the decreasing in church membership, the church Finances have also decreased dramatically, as explained in Table 2.

*Table 1. Rubengera Church's Shrinkage in Membership*

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Member statistics as at January 1 <sup>st</sup>	669	842	800	788	763
Baptized members	140	-	6	3	-
Members received through letters of transfer	41	2	9	-	-
Members received through personal viction	21	12	-	2	-
Members lost through letter of transfer	24	-	-	-	-
Offshoots	3	54	27	29	37
Deaths	2	2	-	1	-
Member statistics as at 31 December	842	800	788	763	732

### **Rubengera Church Finances**

With regard to finances of the Church of Rubengera, the cashbook shows how the budget for evangelism has been allocated since 2004 until 2008. After all these happenings, the church finance has decreased gradually because people do not offer, so there are insufficient funds which limit the work of God. Table 2 shows the decrease of church finance. The statistics show that the budget allocated to evangelism for each year is not sufficient even for a single evangelistic campaign

*Table 2. Decreasing of Rubengera Church Finance from 2003 to 2007*

Year	Francs
2003	50,000
2004	70,000
2005	34,000
2006	26,000
2007	32,000

## **The Questionnaire for the Rubengera Church**

Due to the current happenings in Rubengera, a researcher decided to issue out questionnaire to help him determine where the problem was exactly. Information or data used in this study was collected through self-structured surveys and interviews from both former and current Seventh-day Adventist church members. Both open and closed ended questions were used in questionnaires.

### **Collection of Data**

The respondents were divided into four groups as follows, adults female 30 (50 %), adult male 18 (30 %), youth female 6 (10 %), and youth male 6 (10 %). This gave a fair representation of all groups in the church, considering gender, and age. The 11 questionnaires that were given to members of Rubengera church were filled and returned; therefore (100 %) responded. The questionnaire given to offshoots 30 % filled and returned.

The assessment for the questionnaires 1-5 were used to collect information from the church members. The variables were 1 strongly agree, 2 agree, 3 disagree, 4 strongly disagree, and 5 unable to assess. The questionnaire was administered in order to get good results. Time was given for each respondent to study the questionnaire and ask questions where it was not clear. The exercise was conducted on Sabbath immediately after divine service for more participation.

The regular members of the church were asked to remain behind after divine service. The elders and deacons were used to do mobilization of the members. The members were put on separate groups per age and gender, both adults and youth. The members present were, 61 adults women, 39 adult men, 11 female youth, and 6 male youth.

Simple random sampling method was used to select respondents from each group. The adult females were arranged on a straight line and assigned number 1 and 2, there were two groups of 30 and 31 persons each. The group with more members was eliminated.

The same method was used for the rest of the groups, apart from the male youth who formed the required number 6 without elimination of any members. The respondents from the adult males were selected by the same procedure, but the first elder, the Head Deacon and the Adventist men leader did not participate; only they had interviews.

The selected participants were requested to sit together according to age and gender. Once they were seated the questionnaires were distributed to them with pencils and rubber for use in filling the questionnaires. Before the filling, the exercise was to read the questionnaire loudly for the participants to make sure that everybody understands what was required. Then, they were given time to ask any question or any area of the questionnaire that they did not understand. Finally, each participant took time to read and answer the questionnaire. After the exercise, all the questionnaires were brought back, put into the envelope and kept to wait for the process of analyzing.

### **Data Analysis**

The data obtained was analysed by synthesizing the two variables. Further the questionnaire was split into two main sections: The first section only dealt with the item number one on the questionnaire which dealt with the membership. The second section covering 12 questions which were handled together focusing on the factors contributing to offshoot to move out of the church.

### **Assessment of the Church Membership Trend**

The result of the questionnaire was that 39 respondents constituting (65 %) admitted the church membership was decreasing, 19 respondent constituting (32 %) disagreed and 2 respondents only (3 %) were unable to assess. It was presented in the Table 2, which supports all the sources consulted that there was a problem in the retention of members in Rubengera church. The results made it necessarily for the reasons advanced by offshoot that pushed them out from Seventh-day Adventist of Rubengera.

### **Factors Contributing to Offshoot to Get out of the Church**

In the analysis of the factors that have contribute to offshoot to move out of the church in Rubengera church, there were a total of 20 suggested reasons. Therefore, the data that was taken to the questionnaires given to offshoot, the collective opinion were given and the results got are shown in Table 3.

*Table 3. Factors Contributing to Offshoot to Move Out of The Church*

No	Factors	Responses		
		Agree	Disagree	Unable to Assess
1	Lack of nurture	49	9	2
2	Poor direction	34	24	2
3	Poor church programme	23	27	10
4	No friendship	39	15	6
5	No seminars	35	19	6
6	Failure to occupy members	28	30	9
7	disobedience of Christian doctrine	41	41	9
8	No follow-up program	30	12	18
9	Lack of Unity	30	21	9
10	No Visitation	44	23	5
11	No Cancelling	37	41	7
12	No Contact with members	24	27	9



This variables were further summarized to get cumulative degree of responses as presented in Table 4, since the result indicated agree (49%), disagree (41 %) and unable to assess (10 %).

*Table 4. Degree of Responses of Rubengera Church Members*

Agree	Disagree	Unable to Assess
52%	40%	8%

Degree of responses presented as agree, disagree, or unable to assess the result indicate that the difference between two variables agree and disagree is minimal, only (8 percents). However, comparing the degree of response above (49%), those factors that contributed to the loss of members on the agree side were (57 %) while those that were on the disagree (36 %). This was further evidenced that retention of membership was an issue to be seriously considered. The assessment to determine the leading factors was that had above (40 %) the number of the respondents.

The number of questionnaires given to church elders that were supplied and returned were 30 and therefore, one factor was suggested more than (50 %), and that factor which was of high percentage was offshoots as explained on Table 3. And this was considered to be major cause of the loss of members in Rubengera .Other variables were under 50 % were considered as mingled reasons.

### **Conclusion**

The general observation showed that there was a problem of retention of the members in the Rubengera church that needed to be addressed. Therefore, it was necessary to develop the strategy for the retention of the members. The answers to the questionnaires submitted to church elders and members of the church clearly showed

that church members were not able to deal with their teachings because of lack of knowledge of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.

Given this situation, the next chapter discuss the strategies that may involve members in the knowledge of the Bible and the prophetic books, as well as strategies to join groups of prayer and evangelism with a viewed to curb the loss of members within Rubengera church and attracted majority from offshoot.

## CHAPTER 4

### PROGRAM DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

In this chapter the researcher was establishing the program design which was to implement and evaluate the strategy to address the challenges of offshoot groups in the Church of Rubengera. It was noticed that the Adventist Church of Rubengera would experience growth if Church members had participated actively in the study of the Word of God and the Prophetic Books of Ellen G. White.

The investigation into this Church has revealed that members are not informed about both public and individual evangelism, and even groups of prayers have been abandoned. There were no enough financial support for evangelical activities and that living conditions constitute a key factor to determine the growth of the Church, this project will bring to light the program involving specific strategies to adopt in order to prevent the loss of members within this Church, their implementation and evaluation. These strategies will involve all members of the Church in a thorough study of the books of Ellen G. White with the help of the Bible, and engage them in active participation in evangelism. Considering many other activities they are involved in during morning hours, the hours of afternoon may offer them the opportunity to engage in evangelization activities. So this was the big problem which the researcher had to analyze and make decisions.

So on 31<sup>th</sup> October 2009, a researcher participated in the Sabbath at Rubengera church all programs of the day were going well and he suggested that they come back

in the afternoon so he could mobilize them and motivated them to do the work of God.

### **Preparation of the Program**

In order to implement this program the researcher established the program design which was:

- -To mobilize church members to be engaged in and participate in church activities,
- -To promote church members and engage them in actively participate in evangelism
- -To conduct discussions within offshoot type reformers.

However, a researcher started by making mobilization of members to whom should help him in all activities he was to be engaged in.

### **Mobilization**

The researcher meditated with Rubengera church members these four verses John 9:4, and Ezekiel 33:7-9, Matthew 25:14 and Act 20:28-33. Then he was trying to answer in any planning process which he should follow, "where are we now, where do we want to go, how will we get there, how long will it take us and how will know when we get there."<sup>1</sup> As Marlene did. So after everything was done, he set a date to meet with each and every group. The researcher presented them the letter from his organization which was a proof that he was there officially to conduct the programme. It was his task to select leaders who will be going to help him, train them, encourage them and set leaders free to do greater things that they should accomplish. He was planning to spend more time by focusing on their spiritual gift. Otherwise

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<sup>1</sup> Marlene Wilson. *How to Mobilize Church Volunteers* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1983), 49.

this was the time to discover and assess their needs. He also presented them with the programme design below.

### **Nurturing and Equipping Church Members**

Nurturing and Equipping church members of Rubengera church, the researcher needed to develop the strategies and methods of reaching out to them. However, a researcher had started his activities, which were before to enable church members of Rubengera, a researcher was setting objectives which could help him focus on their needs:

1. The researcher needs those Rubengera church members to be known they gifts, talents for being usable to the work of God.
2. To increase 5% of members in Rubengera church to be baptized as the result of evangelism.
3. To obtain 2% among offshoot to be re-baptized and rejoin once more the church.
4. Taking decision and establish the measure together as members of Rubengera church for retention.

A researcher after setting objectives, from 3.00 pm to 6.00 pm that, he established a calendar which should involve all church members to be trained as you see below in Table 5.

*Table 5. Training Calendar of Rubengera Church*

Dates	Lesson	Trainees	Objectives
1/11/2009	Biblical foundation of the church	Church elders and Departments directors	To help them know the origin of the church and its development
4/11/09	Seventh-day Adventist doctrine	Elders, deacons and deaconesses	To enable them to understand the beliefs of SDA, and to equip them with the basic knowledge of how church runs.
6/11/09	The church to be aware of enemy	All elected church members	To create awareness about wrong teachings from the outside world
7/11/09	SDA Mission	Church elders and all choirs	To provide opportunities for members to know that each member has a mission that should be accomplished before the second coming of Jesus.
8/11/09	1 Cor 12:4-6: Each member have a gift given by the Lord	Youth members From( 15-30 Ages)	To enable them identify their gifts and how to use them in church to glorify God
10/11/09	How to combat false teachings	All members of the church	To enable them identify offshoots among the SDA
14/11/09	Offshoot in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and how to deal with their teachings.	All church members	To enable them know more about the Bible and to differentiate between false teachings and the real truth from the word of God
15/11/09	Relationship in Family	Men and women	To make them understand that preparation of heaven and our enemies don't like family, usually has the idea to destroy it.
17/11/09	How to support the church	Men only	To make them understand the importance of serving God in various ways e.g. Finances, offerings, self-volunteers and many other activities.
18/11/09	Leadership	All elected members	To equip them with good Leadership skills.
20/11/09	Public Evangelism	All church members	To equip members on how to reach out to other people and the procedure.
21/11/09	Homiletics	Rubengera church elder officers.	To show them how to preach effectively.
23/11/09	How to plan for evangelism	Church committee	To help them know what is needed when it comes to evangelism
27/11/09	Personal Evangelism and Oikos	All members	To enable members to develop individual evangelism and making friendship

However, in these teachings, people realised where they were and what they should do. 80% of church members were implicated and some members gave testimonies before the whole assembly and said they were sorry for what they have been doing; after this many propositions were given, some decided to sustain the evangelization campaign financially, others also committed their time to evangelism the work. After this programme, a researcher evaluated that they were improvements in this church in various areas such as:

1. The members of those who prayed had increased drastically and many volunteers were interested to read the Word of God , revival program in church, majority have come and involvement were about 39 percent to 62 percent.
2. Those who had abandoned to do the work in church came back and were fully committed to their work.

### **Implementation of the Program of Evangelism**

The researcher was the youth director of the West Rwanda Field, and Rubengera was the place where the strategies to limit offshoot movements should be implemented. And a researcher was a former Sure district leader nearly Rubengera church in Rubengera district. So it was easy for him to carry out the fieldwork as he knows this local Church well, because some were his family and others have connection and cooperation. The Seventh-day Adventist Church of Rubengera totalled 732 members, at the end of the third quarter of the year 2009. This meant of such size it was not easy to evangelize, since it would not be easy to know the gifts that God has assigned to each person as the audience is very large. To address this problem, a program was developed to help almost all church members to use and develop their spiritual gift in evangelism.

After three days, a researcher did a seminar that was intended for Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses, including members of the Church in different categories; a special seminar was held that brought together the volunteers who would serve as preachers during public evangelism campaigns and evangelism through DVD player. The Seminar took place from 27 to 31 November. On the first day of the week 60 volunteers were trained on theoretical framework, while the remaining two days were devoted to practice where they were engaged in equipment handling. The following was the tools used by a researcher when he was doing the evangelism.

### **Tools/ Materials**

During our seminars, a researcher used the following materials: set of 27 lessons for a Bible study. The Bible, books by Ellen White, like *Evangelism Ministry*, *Early Writings*, *Christian leadership*, *Testimony 1, 2, 3*, and *Christian Service*. We also used 100 books entitled *Biblical studies*, various prints, and sound equipment.

The actual meeting in which we discussed the types of field activities were scheduled for the afternoon from 2:00 to 6:00 pm. After spending a week in these activities, both ordinary members and Church leaders participated zealously and with great joy in prayer groups, evangelism and other meetings stimulating the interest of members. After having taken the decision to go to the field for the implementation of what was learnt, especially about all types of evangelism, a schedule for implementation plus guidelines were put in place. The two types of Evangelism, Personal and Public, were the means that were required to achieve the goal.



### **Personal Evangelism (oikos)**

Personal evangelism is simply forming a familiarity with a neighbour, a housemate, schoolmate, co-worker, etc. with a view to leading him/her to Jesus. This camaraderie starts with visits from house to house, at work or each place. During this visit an appointment can be made for the next visit for Bible study. Leaflets containing Bible lessons can also be distributed and these were prepared a public of evangelism.

### **Public Evangelism**

Public evangelism was intended to take place from 14-28/9/2010 and after personal evangelism. People were concerned to follow this campaign, because they have been visited and stimulated. For two weeks prayer, the date of the program, choirs and other groups visited the site daily to sensitize the local population on the imminent meeting. Some topics used were: We can believe in God, We can believe in Bible, Does My life really Matter to God? A plan for your life, Bridge to a Satisfying life, a second Chance to my Life, Know your Future, Mysterious Power in My life. And people reached the place at 3 PM, many choirs were singing and the preacher started at 4 pm.

### **The Requirements for Making Visits**

Before starting and take on in personal evangelism, we briefed the Church members on qualities required for making visits as follows:

- accessibility
- Loyalty and respect to Church authority: It is important to work collaboratively and transparently with the Group leader and Church Elders.
- Humility to ask for help from someone more experienced when dealing with a thorny case.

- A spirit full of sympathy and feel affection for people.
- Aptitude to offer witness related to personal and family life.
- Confidentiality: Avoid shouting from the rooftops what people have confided to you.
- Being free from impurity, especially when dealing with the opposite sex.

### Types of Visits

As a Pastor, the researcher made visits ranging from 4 to 6 per day, while visits by Elders were four hundred thirty six (436) and thanks to them, 238 new members were gained and baptized. Afterwards, the calendar for evangelism as methodologies activities was created as shown in the following Table 6.

*Table 6. Calendar of Evangelical Activities in Rubengera Church*

Date	Activities	Number of participants	Observation
From 2 to 8 November 2009	Visits among the Elders of the Church	15	The visit was 100% successful
	Visits between Deacons and Deaconesses	72	The visit was 89% successful
	Visits between Church Directors of Departments	21	The visit was 100% successful
	Visits between the rest of Church celebrants	45	The visit was 80% successful
From 9 to 22 November 2009	Visits between ordinary members of the Church	847	The visit was 75% successful
From 23 to 28 November 2009	Sub-zone meetings for self-assessment	96	The meeting was held
29 November 2009	Church meeting for visits evaluation	30	The meeting was held
Afternoon			
30 November 2009	Start of action Cells meeting	750	The meeting of each Cell was scheduled once a week

Table 6. (Continued). Calendar of Evangelical Activities in Rubengera Church

Date	Activities	Number of participants	Observation
December 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ Meeting of continuous action Cells.</li> <li>▸ Action Cells evangelical activities</li> <li>▸ Visit to non-Adventists and distribution of handouts</li> </ul>	765	Planned activities were realised.
27 December 2009	Baptism	87	The Baptism was realised
January 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ Meeting of continuous action Cells.</li> <li>▸ Action Cells evangelical activities.</li> <li>▸ Visit to non-Adventists and distribution of handouts</li> </ul>	781	I visited 89 families
31 January 2010	Communion within the Church	1367	We shared a meal with our guests
From 1-21 February 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ Visit to non-Adventists from house to house</li> <li>▸ Inviting them in the evangelism campaign of 22-29 February 2010 scheduled to take place in 14 sites</li> </ul>		Aresearcher visited, 78 families
22-28 February 2010	Evangelism within home Cells	700	The evangelism campaign targeted 15 sites by means of DVD Player, but only 14 were visited.
01-13 March 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ Visit to non-Adventists from house to house</li> <li>▸ Inviting them in the evangelism campaign of 14-28 March 2010</li> </ul>	258	A researcher visited 72 families.
14-28 March 2010	Public evangelism campaign within Rubengera Adventist Church	230	All Church members Guests who attended the evangelism campaign, and new guests were present
28 March 2010	Baptism	161	The baptism was realised.

This calendar explains how the work of evangelism was started, whole month of November was for visiting Adventist members and non-Adventist members, this was personal evangelism, among non-Adventist were distributing a handouts, this visiting was successful, because 87 were baptized. People were involved in these activities on big number, as you see in this table 7. After, we had 28 places and these were divided in two kinds according to date, one have started on 22-29 February 2010 with 14 places and second one was on 14-28 March 2010 with 10 places.

### **Implementation of Intergroup Dialogue**

The second program was to conduct discussion in church which was expected at the Church for equipping the members with little knowledge about the offshoots type of reformer. After a training done as you have seen on Table 6, researcher needed some people to whom he should share the problem among Rubengera Church members and understand really problem of offshoot and find a solution. However the writer has presented these issues among people who were followed by seminars regularly and some of them were interest to deal with this problem. However people were selected as; someone who knew well writing and reading , people who knew our beliefs and understand well more 15 doctrines, who have knowledge about Ellen White books ,people who have done more one evangelization campaign and who have a heart to save people. The writer found about 22 people who were interested and who were responding to those four criteria, so the next step it was to train them and give some requirements needed to start this type of evangelization. And some people were invited in this training and those were coming from offshoots type of reformer and who knew well about their teachings. Objective of this Training: To know well Adventist Beliefs; read deeply Ellen White books. After two weeks of training which

was done from 13-27 December 2010, people were able to start and implement what they have learnt.

### **Dialogue among Church Members**

Since most of the members were illiterate, the researcher established an adult learning centre helped by District pastor of Rubengera, so that they could now be able to read their Bibles, this program started from December 2010 until now and it has been interesting people even among non-Adventist. However, in the church we have initiated a program of Bible study about Adventist doctrine comparatively with Ellen White books, so this study was opened, questions asked were responded to. We have started with (10 percent), but after two weeks the number was elevated up (35 percent). This program was done two times a week from 3 PM up to 6 PM.

A researcher picked interest in illiterates, having Bibles and the Bible librarian was around the church, and it was put before them to their needs.

### **Dialogue among Offshoots**

A researcher also conducted a discussion outside of the church among offshoots where they started by visiting the offshoot members in groups of two by two so as to reach them in a friendly manner and this took us a month to complete and he proposed to them to have a discussion together with them on some topics, which they gladly accepted and we agreed on the venue which was the Rushikiri church on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2010. The writer had invited three people from the offshoot team reformer who left them two years ago and who knew about these teachings to join us in the discussion. Before they start, they could set rules which they should follow and time and after one among offshoot started to preach by saying the reasons reformer working out of the church. Discussions were going well, since we were limited by

time and it was also getting dark we were not able to complete all questions so we carried forward the discussion for another day.

Even though, Ellen G. White did not support this method and interest the Adventist members to avoid it, but sometimes the discussion could not always be avoided. Ellen white says:

You have loved to debate the truth and love discussion but these contacts have been unfavourable to your forming a harmonious Christian character. . . . Discussion cannot always be avoided in some cases. The circumstances are such that of the two evils the choice must be made of the least, which is discussion. But whenever you can avoid, they should be, for the result is seldom honouring to God.<sup>2</sup>

The Apostle Paul used this method where he found a group of epicurean and Stoic philosophers who began to dispute with him about his teachings, he says: “For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, i even found an altar with this inscription: To unknown God. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you... A few men became followers of Paul and believed.”(Acts 17:18-24, 34) After, this hard work which was done, a researcher was invited by church elders of Rubengera and discussed on what we learnt through this features involvement of members and this should become a learning experiences. Together, they were taken by the strategies on how they should limit members for not rejoining again offshoot team; these points decided as Factors Contributing for limitation of Loss of membership.

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<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. white, *Testimonies to the Church*, 3 vol (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 424.

## **Factors Contributing for Retention of Membership**

### **Candidate's Preparation for Baptism**

The baptism was an ordinance recommended by Jesus, when he sent his disciples on the work he says “Go, then to all people everywhere and make them my disciples, baptize them in the name of the father, the son and the Holy Spirit and teach them to obey everything... (Matt 28:18-20); this should be an experience for teachings from their master. Each candidate should understand that acceptance to be a member of this family is to be member of heaven. The candidates should be given the opportunities to be prepared and visited with intention to teach them the fundamental truth for the clarification. However, this brings them the strengthen decision which will comfort them.

### **Member's Visitation**

The visitation program was the method of teaching by Jesus, when Jesus chose his disciples, they went not only one but two by two, this was to re-comfort each other on this work. He communicated to them the instruction they should follow as he says “heal the sick, bring the dead back to life heal those who suffer from dreaded skin disease, drive out demons ...” (Matt 10:8). This visitation was medically for bringing a health spiritually and physically to those who are suffering.

### **Expand a Friendship Program**

Early Christian had a spirit of love among them which was moving people into victory. This enabled them taking time together builds a loving relationship. However, keeping on loving each other as brothers, give opportunities for witnessing and bringing people to be holy. The Bible is saying remember those who are in prison as

if you were their fellow-prisoners, and those who are ill-treated as if you yourselves were suffering”(Heb 13:1-3).

### **Church Activities Participation**

Participation of church activities, people who had refused the work of God were encouraged and their attendance in spiritual program were increased and rebuilt. People were revived and involved in different activities.

### **Communication System among Believers**

This was the method used by Jesus when Nicodemus met Jesus in the night and Samaritan; He was passing the city to the city, village to the village, he communicated to them his message, and they were interested to hearing him and become members of the body of Christ. Additionally to equip them were an effort to become strong in faith.

However, this method for people who need to know the truth can bring the good result, because it reaches a big number but in contrary it can destroy many. Finally the strategy done have been evaluated and it has given the good result as you see below.

### **Consultation of the Church Clerk’s Records**

These should have the names of all baptized members and these who may not have been baptized, this should be visited each quarter and know if there is any missing., we have to remember that all members are not the same and must be seen as individuals, will help the leadership team keep up with what is happening and who is being visited.



## **Program Evaluation**

In Rubengera Adventist church it was now evidenced that people had a transformed and renewed mind towards the church as there were no more moving out of members to other churches, members have become faithful and have repented before God and the greatest thing was to see people are now reading the Word of God and eager to follow what it says.

For the outside church discussion most people got blessed in this discussion for they did not know the truth which was revealed to them in the discussions, by using of Ellen White books which they supposed unknown by Adventist members and this convinced them. However, the results from this discussion 48 among offshoots decided to come back to church while others are still struggling with the truth, and a researcher believed that, discussions will continue to change more and more people by the grace of God. Another amazing thing is that the offshoot community were convicted by the word of God in front of their followers and church members. And a researcher gives thanks to God for such a breakthrough.

The 48 new members were enrolled into a training program which would equip them with knowledge of the true word of God. About involvement of church ministry activities through evangelism, this was done. And this was successfully because after whole months from November 2009 to March 2010, 238 were baptized and now there are several campaign programs that are going on and church members of Rubengera are motivated and know how to deal with people who are outside of the church. However, a researcher suggests, the next chapter as a Summary, Conclusion and some Recommendations.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Summary**

The purpose of this project was to develop and evaluate a strategy to halt the exodus of some Rubengera church members and to reclaim those who have already left. The study also endeavours to find the reasons responsible for the negative factors which hinder the members to give support the work of God.

In chapter one, the paper mainly focused on the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, limitation and delimitation of the study, methodology and procedures were established.

Chapter two focuses on the Nature of the church as fundamental in dealing with offshoot sects, it also deals with the meaning of the image of the church, attributes of the church, the Seventh-day Church and its mission and how this mission reached Rwanda. This chapter also talks about the growth of the church in Rwanda, problems encountered, reasons for the loss of members and concludes by analyzing some solution that can assist in retention of church members.

The third chapter analyses the local situation of Rubengera church, geographical location, growth of Rubengera church and its population, speaks about offshoot in Rubengera and their false teachings which led people to move from the church. In this chapter the issue is being used of questionnaires and interview, the questionnaire for the church members was administered to 60 respondents constituting 30 percent of the present membership. The responses from the

questionnaire also showed that the membership was decreasing. The respondents also gave reasons that contribute to the loss of the membership which were divided into two groups leading reasons scoring above (50 percent) and main factor was offshoot scores above 50 percent.

In chapter four the paper focused on program design, implementation and evaluation. In implementation it tries to address the issue by giving out what needs to be done like training church members, by mobilization, evangelism, conduct dialogue which helped in bringing back members together. The research did not only reclaim to lost members but it also increases the membership of the church by bringing in new members who found the church active and friendly due to the reforms brought by this research, which also states some recommendations that will help retain church members and keep them together.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to develop a strategy to assist the Rubengera church in the retention of the members. The strategy was implemented for a period of eight months and at the end of the period there were good results. The loss of membership through offshoot was reduced from an average of (8 percent) per year to an average of (1.5 percent). Besides, the church was able to reclaim 48 members who had been removed from the church to offshoot type reformer, coming back.

### **Recommendations**

The study came up with the following recommendations which may be helpful both to the Rubengera church and other congregations in the West Rwanda Field.

1. The researcher recommends Rubengera church to continue with the implementation of a comprehensive strategy for the retention of the members.
2. Sharing the strategy with the West Rwanda Field administration and asking them to consider sharing the strategy to the pastors within the field.
3. To the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Rwanda, especially Rwanda Union Mission, researchers suggest that the pastoral school of Gitwe in Central Rwanda Field resume its activities. This was the school which trained pastors and church elders. If this school was given the opportunity to get off to a good start, it would bear good fruits.
4. The publishing Department and Administration of RWANDA UNION MISSION need to organize the distribution of books of Ellen G. White to all workers. While these books are hard to access, they remain the essential tool that all kind of offshoots use to slander the Church and sow confusion among believers. The translation of these books from English vs Kinyarwanda would be helpful.
5. District pastors must remain vigilant against the evil that is spreading around every corner. They should endeavour to step up their knowledge by reading the Bible and the writings of Ellen White so as to respond effectively to the needs of the flock.
6. All pastors in RUM should deal kindly with offshoots. In his mercy and long-suffering, God bears patiently with the perverse and even the false-hearted. Among Christ's chosen apostles was Judas the traitor. So, it is no cause for surprise or discouragement that there are false-hearted ones among His people today.

7. Finding time for dialogue: The Church must find time for dialogue with offshoots, whenever the opportunity arises to clarify issues. The church must listen to them so as to understand them and respond effectively to their objections.
8. The church members should develop the good character and must be beyond reproach and in keeping the unity among them; this will discourage offshoots who may use such details to attack the church

## APPENDIX A

### LETTERS

#### LETTRES DE DEMANDE DE PERMISSION

Le 15 Juin/2009

Monsieur le président de l'Association  
de l'Ouest du Rwanda (ARO).

B.P. 63 Kibuye

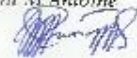
Objet : Octroyer une autorisation de l'implémentation  
d'une stratégie de retention des apostates dans l'église.

Monsieur le Président de,  
J'ai l'honneur de  
m'adresser auprès de votre haute responsabilité, en vue de solliciter l'autorisation de faire  
une recherche en implémentant une stratégie de croissance de l'église, au sein de l'Eglise  
Adventiste du Septième Jour de Rubengera.

En effet Monsieur le  
Président, je voudrais vous informer que pour l'obtention de diplôme du programme de  
maîtrise (M.A) en Leadership, il nous est demandé de faire une implémentation du  
programme de recherche de notre projet de thèse sur une période de six mois. Ainsi, je  
voudrais commencer ce programme à partir du 2 juillet 2008 au 2 février 2009.

Espérant une suite  
favorable à ma requête, veuillez agréer Monsieur le Président, l'expression de mes  
sentiments distingués.

l'étudiant de l'Université Adventiste  
D'Afrique (AUA), M.A in Leadership  
*Pasteur Yufurahi M. Antoine*



C.P.L.A :

- Monsieur le Directeur du département de  
l'Evangelisation dans l'Association de l'ORO.
- Monsieur le Pasteur du District de Rubengera.

EGLISE ADVENTISTE DU SEPTIEME JOUR

West Rwanda Association (Exode 20 :10,11)

15 Septembre 2008  
West Rwanda Association  
B.P 63 Kibuye  
Tel:0788805702  
Kibuye-Rwanda.

Pasteur Tufurahi Madende Antoine  
Etudiant de l'Universite Adventiste  
D'Afrique(A.U.A)  
NAIROBI, KENYA

Objet : Implementation du Programme  
De Recherche sur la methode de  
Ramener les apostates Adventiste.

Monsieur le Pasteur

Suite a votre lettre du 27 juin 2008, J'ai l'honneur de vous informé que vous etes autorise, comme souhaite, de mener une recherche sur la croissance de l'eglise et l'implementation meme a l'eglise de Rubengera, appartenant à la station de Rubengera de district Karongi. A partir du 19 octobre 2008.

En outre, Monsieur le Pasteur, nous vous souhaitons une tres bonne sante, de la prosperite et du succes aucours de votre travail de recherche. Nous vous attendons pour le service de Dieu.

Pasteur Josuc Rusine

President de L'association des Eglises Adve  
ntiste du Rwanda Ouest.

CC :

- Officiers de WRA
- Pasteur Tufurahi M.Antoine
- Comite de l'Eglise de Rubengera.



APPENDIX B  
QUESTIONNAIRES

Offshoot type reformer questionnaires

Kindly circle the right number according to your own assessment. The answers are assigned numbers as follows: Yes or No; some needs details

1. When was your very first contact with the Seventh-day Adventist Church? :  
Yes/ No

2. Before you became a Seventh-day Adventist church member, what was your Religious background?

1. No religious background
2. I was raised a Seventh-day Adventist
3. Protestant (specification of denomination)
4. The charisma of the minister/evangelist

3. Would you mind telling me the factor which most attracted you to the Adventist message?

-----  
-----

4. Thinking back to the time before you became an Adventist, was there one thing that happened in your life which especially caused you to think about spiritual matters?:

Yes/No

5. If you were a student within the Seventh-day Adventist school system, please tell me the number of years you attended on each level:

1. I never attended Adventist school
2. Elementary grade
3. Academy graded
4. College/University



6. How would you describe the kind of instruction you received before joining the Adventist church?

-----  
-----

7. How long did you study and evaluate the teachings of the Adventist Church before you became a member?

-----  
-----

8. For what length of time did you remain a member?

: -----  
-----

9. How important was each of the following factors in your decision to leave the church?

-----  
-----

10. Did you have any of these feelings at the time you left the Adventist Church?

-----  
-----

11. What effort did the church make to reclaim you between the time you stopped attending and the time your name was actually removed from the membership list? (What effort has the church made to bring you back into full fellowship)?

-----  
-----

12. Did you join a church of another denomination?

Yes /, No

13. What are the chances that you might again become a Seventh-day Adventist someday?

-----  
-----

16. What are the reasons that have pushed you out of the church?

-----  
-----

17. What are your Religious (sect) denominations?

-----  
-----

18. Where do you gather for worship?

-----  
-----

19. How many are you in your group.

-----  
-----

20. Do you have other groups with whom you share the same faith in the country or outside of the country?

-----  
-----

21. What your fundamentals Principles

.....

22. What are the reasons that have pushed you out of this Church?

- The church has become Babylon
- Mismanagement of church proper
- Leaders ignore and oppose new lights
- They believe partially in the Spirit of Prophecy
- Others reasons

23. What is your religious denomination?

- |                          |                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Abarokore           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Temperate           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Abakusi             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Reformers           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other denominations |

Questionnaires for Rubengera church elders and some members selected  
among Rubengera church type of “Yes”or “No”

1. Do you have in your District offshoot Adventist believers or those who have this tendency?  
Yes/No
2. Do you find this tendency of offshoot as a handicap to your service?  
Yes/No
3. Do they practice proselytism?  
Yes/No
4. If they do, will they succeed?  
Yes/No
5. Have you tried to contact them and discuss together their problems?  
Yes/No
6. Are there other groups of the same faith they collaborate with?  
Yes/No
7. Do you have another group with whom they share the same faith within the country or outside?  
Yes/No
8. Do you think it is possible to reconcile with the offshoot type reformers?  
Yes/No

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### **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**

2006-2010- Adventist University of Africa (AUA), Master's Degree in  
Leadership

1997-2000- Adventist University Central of Africa (AUCA), BA in  
Theology

### **WORK EXPERIENCE**

2000-2001- West Rwanda Field Auditor

2001-2006- SURE district Pastor

2006-2010- Youth, Education, Communication and Chaplain Department, in  
West Rwanda Field.

2011-2012 - Mugonero district leader and WRA Office secretary

2012-2013 - Ngoma station Leader (12 districts)

2013- 2015- Evangelism, Sabbath School, Global Mission and Lay Activities  
Department