

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: A STRATEGY TO ADDRESS THE FEAR OF THE DEAD AMONG THE BEMBA PEOPLE OF KASAMA EAST MISSION DISTRICT IN THE NORTHERN PROVINCE OF ZAMBIA

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Fear of the dead among some church members of Kasama East mission district is real and is expressed through death rituals they undergo after the loss of a loved one through death. A pilot program to address such fears was imperative among the people of the area so that they could be freed from these superstitious fears.

A survey was conducted among the four churches and six companies to ascertain some cultural beliefs and practices which may have been the source of such fears. Interviews were conducted among people of different status in the society so that information on what they know on these beliefs and practices and the consequences of not adhering to them could be obtained.

Under literature review, passages of scripture from both the Old and New Testaments about death and its rituals were investigated. The writings of Ellen G. White on the subject were explored and what others had to say on this issue were traced.

The program was implemented over a four weeks period with three sessions on the first and last Sabbaths and two sessions each in the afternoons of the two Sabbaths in between.

At the end of the project almost all members expressed their satisfaction on the program and their attitudes towards death and its rituals were not the same as before. This is supported by the responses obtained from members of Kasama main church at the end of the project. Question number 7 on the questionnaire, dealt with the issue of marrying or getting married to a known healthy widower/widow who was not customarily cleansed. During the general survey 296 of the total respondents were either unwilling or not sure and only 112 agreed to the proposal, but at the end of the program at this church 160 of 188 who attended the last session agreed to the proposal and only 28 refused. This shows that continued lessons on the subject can permanently change the attitude toward the dead and remove fear from the mind of church members.

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A project

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

by

Brighton C. Mwenya

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This document is dedicated to all those who love God and His word, who in no way would not like His word to be compromised, to those who take God at His word and rejoice in a “thus says the Lord.”

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Bemba people are found in the Northern Province of Zambia. They occupy much of the area in the province. However, there are other tribes such as the Mambwe-Lungu, Bisa, Namwanga and other smaller tribes, which speak dialects of the Bemba language. Although the Bemba people are scattered throughout the whole province, this study is confined to those living in the eastern part of Kasama mission district known as Kasama East Mission District.

Kasama is the provincial headquarters of Northern Province of Zambia. It is located 210km off the Great North Road and has a population of 231, 824. Out of this figure male are 114, 208 and 117, 616 are females.¹ Kasama East mission district has 12 churches and over 20 Companies and Branches. The Seventh-day Adventist church has almost spread everywhere in the district with only few pockets of the district remaining. In terms of rankings, however, the Seventh-day Adventist Church comes third after the Catholic and United church of Zambia.

Statement of the Problem

Some members of the Bemba Tribe within the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kasama east mission district still have fears of the dead as they participate in some cultural practices, which suggest that the dead live. Rituals such as sexual, herbal

¹ Zambia Statistical Office, *Zambia 2010 Census of Population and Housing: Population Summary Report* (Lusaka, Zambia: Central Statistical Office), 35.

cleansing and others are practiced on someone who has lost a spouse, one or both of the twins, or had a miscarriage. These practices contravene one of the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist church on the state of the dead.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the research is to come up with a pilot program, aimed at helping members of the Bemba tribe living in Kasama east mission district to refrain from spiritualistic practices, which are against the teachings of the Bible. This will be achieved through interviews and surveys which will help us organize effective programs for this targeted group in Kasama east mission district. Further this project will serve as an example for others to follow.

Justification of the Research

It is important that this research be undertaken in Kasama East mission District because some members of the church undergo certain rituals concerning the dead. One lesson on the topic that was presented during the camp- meetings of 2006 and repeated in 2008 raised concern and anxiety is the fact that among church members there are some who sincerely believe in life after death. This showed how deeply rooted some members are in spiritualism.

The research will be of help to Adventists who still hold on to cultural beliefs of sexual or herbal cleansing after losing a child or spouse. It will also help the whole church in North Zambia Field constituency not to harbor superstitious fears about the dead, which so often lead to eccentric behaviors. This research will also benefit pastors who may use the materials presented in this research to bring freedom to those who may be weighed down by these cultural and superstitious fears concerning the dead.

Definition of Terms

1. Spiritualism- ability to communicate with the dead.
2. Cleansing – a ritual performed to remove a “ghost” from someone who has lost a child or spouse.
3. Sexual cleansing— removal of a ghost by having sex with a close relative to the deceased.
4. Stillborn baby—a dead born baby believed to be responsible for jaw cancerous ulcers.
5. Induna—a chief’s advisor

Delimitations

The study is delimited to Kasama East Mission District of Northern Province. Although four churches and six companies will be surveyed, the program will be carried out at one Church namely Kasama Main Seventh-day Adventist church.

Methodology

The program development involves several methodologies including review of Biblical passages from both the Old and New Testaments on death and its rituals. The writings of Ellen G. White were also consulted to get her views on the subject. The views of other Christians and scholars on death and its ritual will also be looked at.

A survey was conducted among church members who attended church services on 5th and 12th September 2009. This was done through the distribution of questionnaire survey forms among members of 4 churches and six companies. The questionnaire forms were distributed randomly after every two persons.

Additionally, interviews were also conducted among the following categories of people: One Traditional healer, two headmen, one chief’s “induna” and one village

elder. All these were interviewed on who death rituals should be conducted and also what possible outcomes would be there should these be neglected.

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches of research were employed in this project.

Before the program was implemented, the North Zambia Field administration were informed to raise awareness on of what was going on in one of their churches in the territory. The pastor and elders were also verbally informed and were fully aware of the program.

The program began on the third Sabbath of the third quarter of the year 2009. This included a sermon at noon and two lessons in the afternoon. The second session was held on 26th September involving only two lessons in the afternoon. The same process was repeated on 3rd October 2009. The last session was held on 10th October 2009, with a Sermon and two lessons.

Overview

The Introduction, which is chapter one, gives an overview of how the project was conducted, while chapter two deals with what the Bible, Ellen G. White and others have said about death and its rituals. Chapter three gives a description of Kasama main church where the program took place and also contains survey and interview results. Chapter Four shows the preparation of the church, personnel and materials and ends with program implementation and evaluation which came as a result of what happened during the life of the project. The fifth and last chapter deals the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the project.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter literature dealing with death and its rituals were reviewed.

Death rituals cannot be divorced from the issue of death itself. Death rituals come as a result of death. Death rituals are closely related to beliefs certain cultures and traditions about the state of the dead. It must be pointed out here that there is no single culture with the best death rituals. It is only when these cultures and traditions are viewed in the biblical perspective that they are deemed good or bad.

This chapter also looked at the historical background of death rituals in both secular and Christian history; it further surveys biblical perspectives on death and its rituals, Ellen White's position on the same and what other writers' views are on the topic.

Historical Background on Death Rituals

In Secular History

Literature on secular history revealed that the subject of death and its rituals has been most perplexing among different cultures of the world since the earliest part of recorded history. At least every culture of the world has had some death rituals, whether good or bad.

One of the earliest groups of people recorded to have performed death ritual by mummifying the bodies of the dead are the Chinchorro who lived around 5000 B.C on the fertile coastal strip between the Pacific Ocean and Atacama Desert. This group

of people did not only mummify the bodies but also included burying them with food and some fishing materials. According to Davies, this strongly “suggests a sense of a future world where such things would be of use.”¹

This account the ritual of mummification and burying the dead with the inclusion of food/ fishing tools showed that for the Chinchorros there was some belief in life after death, as well as immortality of the soul which states that the dead do not die but continue to live in another form after dying. Hence the preparations made for the dead.

Another group of people recorded in ancient history who carried out the same rituals on their dead were the Egyptians of ancient times. The Egyptians mummification process, dated from 2500 to 1000 B.C, was also accompanied by rituals which had the overall purpose of preparing a soul for life forces of the deceased for a future existence after death.²

Among the Egyptians the belief of life after death had some very strong religious connotations. The rituals, connected to dead Kings were even more elaborate. Davies gives the following account on this belief in connection with the mummies:

The Egyptians practice was... related to a system of religious belief concerning life after death. The life of a person was reckoned to be made up not just of the physical body but of the three additional features. The *ka* was the life-force which left the body and came to an existence of its own at death, when it was thought to exist both in connection with the mummy and in a special chapel, often at a ground level, where it could be supported with food offerings. The *ba* was a kind of manifestation of the dead as a kind of combination of the *ka* plus the dead body. It could take a form of a bird with human face but needed to return to the tomb at night. Another dimension of the spirit was that of *akh*, which introduces a rather complicated idea into the Egyptian answer to death. The *akh* was part of the individual which had its

¹ Douglas J. Davies, *Death, Ritual and Belief* (London: Continuum, 2002), 92.

² *Ibid.*, 93.

existence amongst the stars, far removed from earthly involvement; in this sense it reflected a distant part of eternity. Between the three elements of *ba*, *ka* and *akh* the dead of the Egyptian possessed a set of different spheres of post-mortem existence. The first two related to the former way of life while the latter was far more transcendent, with all three together providing a broad working set of beliefs which could help explain the dead as nearer and more distant post-mortem being.³

These beliefs and rituals, most likely, gave birth to the massive pyramid buildings in which the kings were buried with articles which presupposed continuity of life after death. The Egyptians are known to have more elaborate rituals as evident in their writings; probably it could be true to all cultures of the world if there were documentations from all world cultures since “Funeral customs were as old as civilization itself” and “Every culture and civilization attends to the care of their dead.”⁴

These two groups of people cited are among the earliest recorded figures to perform death rituals, which presupposed life after death. Since those earliest dates, people of different cultures and of different periods of time in history have developed beliefs and rituals on the dead which have had connotations of continued life after death. This brings us to the historical background of death rituals among the Christian world.

Death Rituals among Christians in History

No written record was discovered during the investigation of literature which suggested that early Christians performed any rituals on the dead that presupposed the belief of consciousness in death. Like the Jewish people, early Christians only

³ Ibid., 94.

⁴“Death and Funerals.” Accessed on 19th June 2009, <http://www.spiritandsky.com/death-and-funeral-customs/>

mourned their dead and accorded them a decent burial in the hope of the resurrection. In the Jewish religion, from which Christianity emerged, God did not allow His people to have anything to do with the dead. If some Jews participated in ritual sacrifices to the dead, it was “because Israel was surrounded by peoples who worshipped and served creatures more than the Creator, and talked with demons who impersonated their dead.”⁵

The mourning ritual of the Jews then and now contains no elaborate element of presupposition of life after death. As matter of fact, “Eating, drinking, or performing mitzvot are prohibited near the body, as such actions would mock the person who is no longer able to do such things.”⁶ Therefore to the Jews the dead do not participate in functions of the living. Concerning their burials it is stated that,

“Bodies are buried in a simple linen shroud, so that the poor will not receive less honor than the rich. The body is wrapped in a tallit. A handful of earth from Israel is thrown in the casket with the body by a family member. These practices are intended to put the body in the closest contact with the earth as possible, and reflect the belief that the dead will rise in Israel in messianic age.”⁷

Therefore in early Christianity just like in Judaism there were no records of death rituals denoting the belief in life after death except that both groups believed in the resurrection of the dead at their appointed time.

⁵ Charles M. Snow, *On the Throne of Sin* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1927), 18.

⁶ Religion Facts, “Jewish Death and Funeral Rituals in Africa.” accessed on 19 June 2009, <http://www.religionfacts.com/Judaism/cycle/death.htm>.

⁷ Ibid.

However, in the medieval period the Christian church began to drift away from the truth about the state of the dead. Borrowing from the Greek philosophy of the separation of soul and body, and the soul being immortal, rituals in connection with the dead were performed. One of the church fathers, Clement, who had platonic line of thinking, is quoted as having summarized his convictions as follows:

It is conceded that the soul of man is the superior part of man and the body the inferior part. But by nature the soul is not good, nor the body bad. For these things which are neutral among these some are to be preferred and others to be given second rank. Therefore the constitution of man, which belongs to the tangible world, was necessarily composed of things that were diverse but not opposite, namely, of body and soul.⁸

However Pelican made very important and conclusive observations on this thought that gave birth to the death rituals, which presupposed life in death among Christians. He stated that:

Christianity has no doctrine of the soul; or more precisely, it has several. If Christian theology is to make sense of the references to the 'soul' in the Bible it needs a doctrine of the soul from some other source. This need prompts Christian thought to borrow from the speculation of several centuries of Greek thinkers regarding the distinction between body and soul... Either Christians are not to speak about the soul in any consistent and reasoned manner at all, or they, must be willing to learn about the soul from other places, in addition to their scripture.⁹

The author is suggesting that in Christian scripture the separation of soul and body is not clear and if Christians were to explain it better, then they needed help from other sources. There are a lot of difficult problems to be resolved on the issue of separation of the soul and body in Christian Scripture if it were to be treated as a Biblical doctrine. This borrowed thought of the separation of soul and body, might

⁸ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Shape of Death: Life, Death, and Immortality in the Early Fathers* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1961), 40.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

have led to the many unnecessary death rituals in the Christian world, as the soul is believed to survive death.

A lot of rituals concerning the dead were observed in the Christian world of which there is no scriptural injunction. Some death rituals included the preservations of dead bodies of saints, which were believed to have power to cure diseases and emit sweet fragrance to the living saints. Davies cites such an example:

The dead bodies of the saints were often believed to have power to cure illness, especially if their bodies had not decayed. St. Curthbert at the medieval Cathedral and monastery of Durham, for example, was said not to have rotted and it is told that his body even gave off a sweet smell when his coffin was opened in subsequent generations.¹⁰

Other rituals included celebration of the Eucharist at the cemetery, offerings to the dead and the ritual meal at the cemetery. Concerning these practices Chidester gives the following detailed account:

Besides gathering as a church for the weekly celebration of the Eucharist, Christians met at the cemetery for special religious activities that renewed relations with the dead. On the anniversary of the birthday or death day of the deceased, Christian friends and relatives celebrated a ritual meal, the refrigerium, held at the cemetery. Assembling at the burial site, they shared a meal of fish, bread, cakes, and wine. As part of the ritual, they poured a libation of wine over the tomb, inviting the deceased to share in the enjoyment of the meal. By eating and drinking with the dead, these Christians reaffirmed bonds of kinship and community that could not be broken by death. More than a ritual, therefore, the refrigerium was an occasion for speaking with the dead, for offering prayers or requesting assistance, in ways that suggested the continuity of a relationship. The ritual meal in the cemetery was devoted not merely to the memory of the deceased friends and relatives, but to their ongoing presence in social life.¹¹

These and more were the death rituals the Christian church devised, which have no Scriptural support as one of the early church fathers is quoted to have stated, ‘We make offerings for the dead on the anniversary of their deaths. If you look in the Scripture for a formal law governing these and similar practices, you will find

¹⁰ Davies, 40.

¹¹ David Chidester, *Christianity: A Global History* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2000), 72-73.

none.¹² The Christian church, by formulation of these death rituals, embraced spiritualism too as they tended to commune with the dead. Spiritualism which was practiced among heathen lands has now appealed, as Anderson observes, not only to “thinkers and influential leaders in many lands...now there is even Christian spiritualism.”¹³

With this in mind we can now turn to what the Bible says about death, the dead and rituals associated to them.

Biblical Perspective on Death and its Rituals

While there are a lot of texts in the Bible talking about or referring to death, there are a few texts dealing with death rituals themselves. It must be re-echoed here that death rituals in this paper refer only to those rituals that have connotations to the consciousness of the dead and failure to perform them would be offensive to them and may bring misfortune to the living.

A few texts on death rituals suggest that among the Israelites, they were not very common for the Lord had forbidden any form of spiritualism among His people. As earlier indicated since death rituals come as a result of death itself, let us begin by looking at death and the dead as the Bible speaks about them.

To help us understand death as the Bible depicts it, we need to begin by understanding life itself. The Bible records that “the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being” (Gen. 2:7, NKJV). Therefore man’s life composition was dust

¹² Ibid., 151.

¹³ Roy Allan Anderson, *Secrets of the Spirit World* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1966), 19.

and breath of life. This is what makes up life. Then it follows that death is the reverse of the same, the disintegration of dust and the breath of life. The Jews of the second century understood life and death this way: “Rather than a soul in a body, a human being was a mixture of materiality, symbolized by earth, clay, or dirt, and the animating breath of spirit. At death that mixture dissolves and the human person—as a nephesh, or living being—ceases to exist.”¹⁴

The general understanding of the dead is that they “know nothing,” and that “Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun” (Eccl. 9:5, 6, NKJV). The Psalmist adds that, “Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing” (Ps. 146: NKJV). Brown affirms that, “In the OT thought death means the final end of man’s existence (2 Sam 12:15).”¹⁵ Even Jesus Himself pointed out that the dead remain in the graves until the resurrection. Assuring His disciples He said, “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their grave will hear His voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned” (John 5:28-29, NKJV).

Paul consoling those who were worried about the dead in his day, had this to say:

For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with a trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever (1Thes. 4:16-17, NKJV).

¹⁴ Chidester, *Christianity*, 36.

¹⁵ Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), 1:433.

Immortality

The Bible ascribes immortality to God alone and not to human beings or any other created living thing. Charging the young minister Timothy and referring to God, Paul states, “Who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see,” (1Tim 6:16, NKJV). Elsewhere in his benediction he exalts Him, “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen” (1Tim 1:17, NKJV).

Describing the Old and New Testaments’ view on death and immortality,

Brown asserts:

The NT is in direct continuity with the old Jewish view. Hel. Influences of intertestamental Judaism have had scarcely any effect. For the most part a consistent view is maintained. Whenever the term *thnetos* (mortal) occurs, it indicates that the mortality of man is taken as a self-evident fact. Man lives in the shadow of death (Matt. 4:16; Isa. 9:1 LXX). God is the source of all life, is the only one to whom immortality belongs (1Tim. 6:16), whereas man has to live out his whole life in fear of death (Heb. 2:15). As in Judaism death is always seen as the death of an individual, and the possibility of relativizing death by reference to the continuing life of a community is foreign to NT thought.¹⁶

Some Christian writers due to their belief in the immortality of the soul strongly feel that, “Death is simply a transition to a different mode of existence; it is not, as some tend to think, extinction.”¹⁷ Ladd adds that, “Man like the universe, is a duality: body and soul. The body belongs to the phenomenal world, the soul to the noumenal (put in the right word). The visible body, is not considered evil in itself, but is a burden and hindrance to the soul”¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid., 435.

¹⁷ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Ada, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 1998), 1175.

¹⁸ George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1989), 36.

It is such thinking that has led to Christian spiritualism and the development of death rituals. Although this paper does not intend to go in details on the immortality of the soul, it briefly discusses how the soul is used and as perceived in the Bible. Literature that has been reviewed reveals that soul is used in the Bible in several ways, but in no way is it used to denote an independent inner being within a man. Van Gemeren gives the following detailed account on the usage of the term soul in the Bible:

(Nepes), breath, life, desire. Comparable roots in Ugar. and Akk, confirm the basic biblical meaning for nepes to be “breath” (as do the three verbal instances, Exod 23:12; 31: 17; 2 Sam 16:14). Care should be taken not to import a Greek paradigm of psychology to nepes; though at times in its over 700 appearances it refers to the inner person, it seldom denotes a “soul” in any full sense. Initially, it means the literal breath of both animals (Gen 1:20-30; 7:22, nesama) and humans (2:7; Ps 107:5; 1Kgs. 17:17, nesama). Since breath is tantamount to life itself, nepes essentially means “life” on numerous occasions, eg., Gen. 9:5, “I will require the nepes of man;” (also in 2 Sam 23:17). The relationship of breath and life is taken as a semantic step farther when nepes is used to denote the living being itself, eg., Lev 4:2, “If a person (nepes) sins...” (Josh 11:14, nesama). In this sense nepes becomes a synecdoche, representing the total person, both one’s physical and nonphysical composition. In fact, nepes is so identified with the whole person that ironically it can denote a non-breathing corpse! (eg., Lev 21:11 “nor shall he approach any dead nepes”). This identity of nepes with the entire person gives the word its frequent function as a reference to self, eg., Ps 7:2 [3], some cases nepes stands for the inner person rather than the entire individual, nepes represents the desire and inclinations of animals and humans. These desires range from the sexual drive of a wild donkey in heat (Jer 2:24), to the physical appetite (Prov 23:2; Eccl 6:7), to the holy preferences of those who love God with their “heart... nepes and...strength” (Deut 6:5).¹⁹

Writing on the same (the soul), Doukhan adds:

Another implication of the creation of man in Gen 2:7 is that man is conceived as a whole. Man became a living *nephesh* (soul). Thus it would be inappropriate to say that man has a soul; man is a soul. The Hebrew conception of man makes no room for a dualistic theory of man. The word *nephesh* which is commonly translated by “soul” implies in fact all functions of man, spiritual, mental, emotional, as well as physical. The *nephesh* can be hungry (Ps 107:9; Deut 12:20), thirsty (Ps 143:6), satisfied (Jer 31:14), enjoy good food (Isa 55:2); it can also love (Gen 34:3; Song 1:7), can be troubled

¹⁹ Willem A. Van Gemeren, ed., *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 3:133.

(Ps 31:9), cry (Ps 119:20), make research (Lam 3:25), know (Ps 139:14), be wise (Prov 3:22), worship and praise God (103:1; Ps 146:1).²⁰

From the foregoing two accounts it can be deduced that it is very hard to come up with the doctrine of the immortality of the soul because even the corpse could be referred to as soul in the Bible. As Van Gemeren above has warned, the immortality of the soul could only be imported from other sources and not the Bible. In the Bible immortality only belongs to God. In human beings there is no component which possesses immortality. Let us now turn to the Bible and hear what it has to say on death and its rituals.

The Bible and Death Rituals

The Bible condemns all death rituals which presupposed life in death together with all practices, which treated the dead as living in the hereafter. This does not necessarily mean that the Israelites did not completely practice some of those. Due to the influence of the surrounding nations as earlier alluded to, Israel sometimes practiced rituals on the dead contrary to God's command.

Mourning Rituals

Writing to the Israelites God through Moses commanded, "You are the children of the LORD your God. Do not cut yourselves or shave the front of your heads for the dead" (Deut 14:1, NKJV). God reminded His people that they were holy to Him and as such they were not to engage themselves in practices that suggested either fear or appeasement of the dead in their mourning rites. Commenting on this chapter and others in Deuteronomy, Hamilton states that, "The concern of this chapter

²⁰ Jacques B. Doukhan, *Hebrew for Theologians: A Textbook for the Study of Biblical Hebrew In Relation to Hebrew Thinking* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993), 210.

then is that Israel not only shuns blatantly wicked things (chaps. 12-13), but also the apparently more innocent and innocuous things: Showing respect for the dead via a particular gesture.”²¹ Such practices, are still practiced to this day in some African cultures with the same implications as in the days of Israel. “Some families follow a strict mourning ritual. Men may shave all of their hair from their head and face, symbolizing death and new life.”²²

Nichol compares the custom of hair shaving and cutting themselves for the sake of the dead to the worshippers of Baal (1 Kings 18:28). He states that, “This custom is attested also in the north Canaanite texts from Ras Shamra, the ancient Ugarit, where even the highest god, ‘El, gashed himself as a sign of grief and sorrow.”²³ These practices, strange as they might have been to Israel, had spread in the land that even in the days of Jeremiah he wrote on them in several parts of his book: “Both the great and the small shall die in this land: they shall not be buried, neither shall men lament for them, nor cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them: Neither shall men tear themselves for them in mourning, to comfort them for the dead; neither shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or for their mother.” Elsewhere he says, “That there came certain from Shechem, from Shilo and from Samaria, even fourscore men, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring them to the house of the LORD,” and

²¹ Victor P. Hamilton, *Handbook on the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1982), 423.

²²Charlotte Gerber, “Death Rituals in Africa,” accessed 19 June 2009, <http://www.dying.lovetoknow.com/Death-Ritual-in-Africa>.

²³ Francis D. Nichol, ed., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1978), 1:1000.

that, “Baldness is come upon Gaza; Ashkelon is cut off with the remnant of their valley: how long wilt thou cut thyself?” (Jer. 16:6; 41:5; 47:5, KJV).

The command forbidding Israel from indulgence in heathen death ritual practices was so cardinal that it was repeated elsewhere in the Pentateuch in a more similar manner: “Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the LORD” (Lev 19:28).

Ritual Sacrifices

Another ritual seen in scripture and condemned by God is that of ritual sacrifices. Again through the influence of the surrounding nations, Israel participated in ritual sacrifices of children. The scripture commanded “Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molech, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the LORD” (Lev 18:21, NKJV). Such ritualistic sacrifices were associated with the spiritualistic worship of the dead as depicted in the book of Psalms. A similar account is given here in which the Psalmist quoting Numbers says, “They joined themselves also unto Baalpeor, and ate the sacrifice of the dead” (Ps 106:28, NKJV).

Heathen worship in the days of Israel included the worshipping of the spirits of the dead. The Bible condemns such practices as associated with the dead. The Psalmist concludes that ritual sacrifices were not in actual sense offered to the dead, but by so doing they were sacrificing to “Demons” (Ps 106:37, NKJV). The Lord disdained offerings to the dead too. When Moses instructed Israel to be faithful to God and never take any portion of the sacred offering belonging to God under any circumstances, He urged them to be able to say: “I have not eaten any of the sacred portion while I was mourning, nor have I removed any of it while I was unclean, nor have I offered any of it to the dead. I have obeyed the LORD my God; I have done

everything You commanded me” (Deut 26:14, NKJV). In other words as Lutzer observes, “God considers all forms of occultism an abomination.”²⁴

Moses commanded:

Let no-one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or cast spells or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you. (Deut 18:10-12).

Lutzer further observes that, “The King James Version actually, translates the word medium as those who have ‘familiar spirits’ (Lev 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deut 18:11), suggesting the familiarity some demons have with individuals.”²⁵ Familiarity with demons which pretend to be the spirits of the dead and consultation of the same is strictly prohibited in the Bible: “When men tell you to consult mediums and spirits, who whisper and mutter, should not a people enquire of their God? Why consult the dead for the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn” (Isa 8:19-20). The law forbidding any form of communion with the dead was so severe in the Pentateuch that someone found involved in it was decreed to die: “Do not allow a sorceress to live,” (Exod 22:18).

Paul, in the New Testament, echoes the words of the Psalmist that sacrifices offered to idols by pagan worship are actually offered to demons. Writing to believers at the Corinthian church he states: “Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but sacrifices of pagans are offered to

²⁴ Erwin W. Lutzer, *One Minute After you Die* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1997), 18.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons” (1Cor. 10:18-20).

Biblical Ritual Cleansing

In the Bible there are a number of ritual cleansing on different issues which includes concerns for touching the dead bodies. In this study we are only interested in the cleansing which involves defilement that results from touching the dead bodies. It must be noted that the defilement caused by the dead body was not restricted only to human bodies. All carcasses of unclean animals, birds, insects or other living things were not to be touched or those involved would be deemed unclean for a specified period of time and were to undergo some ritual cleansing.

Referring to the dead bodies of unclean animals, the Lord through Moses commanded: “Every animal that has split hoof not completely divided or that does not chew cud is unclean for you; whoever touches the carcass of any of them will be unclean. Of all unclean animals that walk on all fours, those that walk on their paws are unclean for you; whoever touches their carcasses must wash his clothes, and he will be unclean till evening. They are unclean for you. (Lev 11:26-28, NKJV).

Concerning other small creatures, which were considered unclean, the command was: “But all other winged creatures that have four legs you are to detest.... Whoever picks one of their carcasses must wash his clothes, and he will be unclean till evening,” (Lev 11:23, 24, NKJV).

Regarding the dead body of the human being, the cleansing process was even more elaborate as found in the book of Numbers: Whoever touches the dead body of anyone will be unclean for seven days. He must purify himself with water on the third day and on the seventh day; then he will be clean.... Whoever touches the dead body of any one and fails to purify himself defiles the Lord’s tabernacle. That person must

be cut off from Israel.... ‘For the unclean person, put some ashes from the burned purification offering into a jar and pour fresh water over them. Then a man who is ceremonially clean is to take some hyssop, dip it in the water and sprinkle the tent and all the furnishings and the people who were there.... The man who is clean is to sprinkle the unclean person on the third and seventh days, and on the seventh day he is to purify him. The man being cleansed must wash his clothes and bathe in water, and that evening he will be clean” (Num 19:11-13, 17-19, NKJV).

This ceremonial cleansing came as a command from God. It had nothing to do with the spirits of the departed as is the case with cleansing death rituals for ancient civilizations and as it is practiced today. . With the heathens ritual impurity of the corpse, “in symbolic terms, may well be that the corpse is not only a boundary marker between the living and the dead but is also the vehicle through which the living individual now moves into the realm of the afterlife.”²⁶ Therefore, the cleansing death rituals also follow the same line of thought among its proponents.

To the contrary, the biblical restrictions to corpses could be, as Dederen suggests that, “the Bible draws a sharp line between life and death, between the living and the dead. The two sides are separate, no contact exists between them, and no attempt must be made to cross that line.”²⁷ Brown also shares the same view: “He who comes in direct or indirect contact with the dead is unclean, i.e. separated from

²⁶ Davies, 39.

²⁷ Raoul Dederen, ed., *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 323.

Yahweh. . . . All this marks off Israel's religion sharply from the cult of the dead and the oracles of the dead which are so common in the surrounding world."²⁸

The Bible condemns all death rituals, which presuppose life in death neither does it evoke any fear for the dead. It only assures life for believers in Christ at the resurrection. Paul encouraging believers at Corinth wrote, "Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound and the dead in Christ will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality" (1Cor. 15:51-53).

Having looked at the biblical perspectives on death and its rituals, let us now move on to what Ellen G. White has to say on the topic.

What Ellen White Says on Death and its Rituals

While Ellen White does not specifically address death rituals per say, she does, however, write extensively on the dead and their state. She, like the Bible, condemns all forms of spiritualism and practices presupposing life in death. She further links the art of communing with the dead as one of the greatest deceptions in the eschatological events.

The Great Deception

Ellen White views the dead in the light of biblical account that they know nothing (Eccl 9:5). According to her all that man does concerning the dead stem from the doctrine of man's consciousness in death, which she believes is unbiblical. She asserts that the concept of "natural mortality borrowed from pagan philosophy, and in

²⁸ Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), 1:444.

the darkness of the great apostasy incorporated into the Christian faith, has supplanted the truth, so plainly taught in Scripture, that the dead know nothing.”²⁹

Ellen White believes that all spiritualistic practices on the dead have their origin in what she terms as the ‘first lie’ as was told to our first parents in Eden. She observes that, “Modern spiritualism and the forms of ancient witchcraft and idol worship—all having communion with the dead as their vital principle—are founded upon that first lie by which Satan beguiled Eve in Eden: ‘Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof,... ye shall be as gods,’” (Gen 3:4, 5).³⁰ She refutes the familiar spirits, which seem to be the main basis for death rituals, as not being the spirits of the dead. “The familiar spirits were not the spirits of the dead, but evil angels, the messengers of Satan.”³¹

She views Israel’s apostasy by following the heathen worship of the dead and ritual sacrifices offered in their honor as being under the same deluding influence of the very first deception that the dead are not dead. Commenting on such practices she states:

The gods of the heathen were believed to be the defied spirits of departed heroes. Thus the religion of the heathen was a worship of the dead. This is evident from the scriptures. In the account of the sin of Israel at Beth peor, it is stated: ‘Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined herself unto Baal Peor,’ Numbers 25:1-3. The Psalmist tells us to what kind of gods these sacrifices were offered. Speaking of the same apostasy of Israelites, he says, ‘They joined themselves also, unto Baal Peor, and ate the sacrifice of the dead’ (Psalm 106:28); that is, sacrifices that had been offered to the dead.³²

²⁹ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1950), 551.

³⁰ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), 685.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 685.

³² Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 684.

Christian Spiritualism

Sections of Ellen White's writings reveal that this deception of the "living dead" is not only common among the heathen religions but also is popular in Christian lands. While ritual sacrifices performed in ancient times were directed to the dead with a view that they were conscious and could communicate with them, modern spiritualism has its roots in "The doctrine of man's consciousness in death, especially the belief that spirits of the dead return to minister to the living."³³ She further adds: "The belief in communion with the dead is still held, even in professedly Christian lands. Under the name of spiritualism, the practice of communicating with beings claiming to be the spirits of the departed, has become widespread. It is calculated to take hold of the sympathies of those who have laid their loved ones in the grave."³⁴

In an effort to justify spiritualism, some Christians ascribe the spirits of the dead to be angels. They interpret Scriptures to suit their line of thoughts concerning the dead and not as the Bible teaches. Ellen white points out clearly that, "Multitudes have come to believe that it is the spirits of the dead who are the 'ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."³⁵ Confirming this view Milton and Parker assert that those who die in the faith of Christ certainly go on developing in their faith and relationship with Jesus, and that they are aware of events among the living.³⁶ Weatherhead adds that, "Truth of great and permanent value may come through the channel of spiritualism, therefore Christians are not to shut any door

³³ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, 551.

³⁴ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946), 603.

³⁵ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, 551.

³⁶ Michael Milton and Russ Parker, *Requiem Healing: A Christian Understanding of the Dead* (London: Daybreak, 1991), 28-31.

through which truth may come.”³⁷ If the dead could be referred to as ministering spirits of God who are sent forth to assist His people and if truth of great importance could be obtained through communion with the dead, is it any wonder that even Christians of different faiths could either fear or reverence the dead by performing some ritualistic activities in honor of them?

All forms of spiritualism whether divination, sorcery or witchcraft is founded upon a belief in communion with the dead and Ellen White condemns these practices as being sinful. She views those who practice these as being under the delusion of the devil. She believes the prophecy of Isaiah 8:19 was made in reference to the custom of consulting the dead: “When they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto wizards that peep and mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? For the living to the dead?”³⁸ Even when King Saul consulted the medium (in 1Sam. 28) in order for him to consult the dead Samuel, Ellen White believes that the king did not commune with Samuel, “but through the sorceress he held intercourse with Satan.”³⁹

Other Writers’ Views on Death and its Rituals

Throughout human civilization “we are faced with two contrasting answers to our original question about the nature of death, both of ancient derivation, yet both widely held even today. Some say that death is annihilation of consciousness; others

³⁷ Leslie D. Weatherhead, *After Death* (London: The Epworth Press, 1956), 118.

³⁸ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 684.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 683.

say with equal confidence that death is the passage of the soul or mind into another dimension of reality.”⁴⁰

Generally, in African Tradition Religion, when people die they become spirits. According to Mbiti, “Man does not, and need not, hope to become a spirit: he is inevitably to become one just as a child will automatically grow to become an adult, under normal circumstances.”⁴¹ Due to such a belief, most of death rituals in the African context carry the connotation of appeasing the dead, as they are considered, as Mbiti calls them, to be the “*living dead*,”⁴² so long as they remain in memory of the living.

These spirits of the dead may become ancestors and act as “intermediaries between God and man, and human beings approach God through them or seek other help from them.”⁴³ Spirits of the departed do not only become ancestors but may even decide to be reborn and still partly remain in the realm of the spirits. According to Parrinder, “The moment when the ancestral spirit enters the child may be taken at the time of conception, or the quickening in the womb, or even as late as birth.”⁴⁴

Among the Yoruba it is believed that:

A soul of an ancestor may come into the womb of the grand child and be born again, at the same time he remains in the Spirit world. The living are satisfied that they do see part of their departed ancestors in the new born children, but at the same time, they are happy that they (the ancestors) are in the spirit world

⁴⁰ Raymond A. Moody, *Reflections on Life after Life* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1977), 10.

⁴¹ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Publishing, 1997), 78.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 25.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴⁴ Geoffrey Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion* (Watford, England: William Brendon & Sons, 1954), 139.

where they have greater potentiality and can be of great help to their children on earth.⁴⁵

This explains why most death rituals in an African context carry connotations of honoring the dead as though they were in full view of what is done on the day of their funeral and after funeral activities.

Purpose of Death Rituals

Davies describes ritual itself as “behaviour in which key values are expressed in symbols that are manipulated by the performer to achieve some benefit for individuals or society at large.”⁴⁶ This is true with death rituals as seen in this document, specialized people who could either be medicine men/women or other respected elderly people in society, perform death rituals with a view of averting misfortunes from the society. It is observed among some African cultures that:

A correct funeral in Africa begins with the removal of the body from the home. Previous to a person dying, a hole is made in the side of the home. When it is time to remove the body from the home, it is taken out of the house through the hole instead of the door, feet first. This is to keep the spirit from finding an easy way back into the home. As the body is being transported to the place of burial, thorns and sticks are placed along the way and a zigzag pattern is used to confuse the spirit. These precautions are taken so that the spirit does not bother the living.⁴⁷

All this is done to protect people from being attacked or haunted by the spirits of the dead. Another reason of death rituals is the “preparation of the spirit for its new

⁴⁵ Awolalu J. Omosade, “The Concept of Death and Hereafter in Yoruba Traditional Religion” (Anthology: West African Religion 18, Nos. 2 and 3, Adventist University of Africa, Solusi Extension Campus).

⁴⁶ Davies, 39.

⁴⁷ Charlotte Gerber, “Death Rituals in Africa,” accessed 16 September 2009, http://dying.lovetoknow.com/Death_Rituals_in_Africa.

existence. This may include provision of food...for the journey to a spiritual land.”⁴⁸

The author further gives two reasons for death rituals, one being that “Rituals structure the lives of those in mourning and provide for continuity of activity until the shock is past and they can adjust to the loss and again begin to function normally,” and secondly, “ceremonies associated with death frequently provide important occasions for reaffirmation of the beliefs and meaning attached by a culture to life.”⁴⁹

Death Cleansing Rituals

Death carries with it some ritual impurity as earlier observed under the section of the Bible and Death Rituals. Cleansing, therefore becomes an important integral part of the ritual. Different cultures have had different ways of carrying out the ritual throughout history. It is said among the Aryo-Indians and Iranians from whom was born the religion of Zoroastrianism that a person who came in contact with the dead body from which the devil has not been driven away by beasts or birds of prey, they themselves became possessed by the demon Nasu and therefore, needed to be purified by cow’s urine applied by aspersion.⁵⁰ Further “a woman who has had a still-born child or a miscarriage...is shut up in absolute seclusion for three days, without food or drink; then the Dakhama within her is disinfected by a draught of cow’s urine and ashes, after which small rations of boiled milk or gruel made in milk, or wine without water are allowed....”⁵¹

⁴⁸ Paul G. Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, 2nd ed., (Ada, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 1997), 169.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 170.

⁵⁰ George F. Moore, *History of Religions* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1971), 1:392.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 395.

In Zambia, according to the research done by Chuunga among the major tribes of the country, the Bembas inclusive, he concludes: “During my years of research on this subject, I discovered that there are many modes of cleansing, one idea is paramount in all. This is to drive away the spirit or ghost of the dead spouse from the widow(er).”⁵² The author observes that the cleansing ritual is so important that failure to carry it out on the widow/widower may result in him or her going mad and someone who desires to marry them may as well run mad, and that having sexual contact with “un-cleansed” widow/widower may transfer misfortunes to them.⁵³

The author further lists some modes of cleansing as follows:

1. Washing the widow/widower in some medicine.
2. The widow/widower is asked to pay a small amount of money and the following morning elders of the village throw white mealie-meal or white cotton wool at the widow/widower’s back or head.
3. Some cleanse the widow/widower by jumping household items like an axe, hoe, spear or a staff.
4. Some tribes prefer sexual cleansing. In this case a close relative to the deceased such as a brother, sister, niece, nephew or cousin have sexual intercourse with the bereaved spouse to provoke the ghost to anger, so that it does not come back to bother the widow/er or any who may thereafter get married to them.⁵⁴

⁵² Daniel Chuunga, *Tradition versus Truth* (Lusaka, Zambia: Zambia Adventist Press, 2008), 44.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 46, 47.

Conclusion

From the literature that has been reviewed in this chapter several conclusions can be drawn. To begin with it can be concluded that death rituals have been in existence as long as human civilization itself. Death rituals, as defined in this document, have evolved from views different cultures hold on the state of the dead. Those who hold on the idea that the dead continue to live in one form or the other, have developed rituals that do not only reverence them but that which appease or provoke them to anger so as not to come back to the living and cause them harm as is seen in the sexual cleansing ritual. Another conclusion is that the Bible condemns these death rituals as they are viewed in the light of the great deception the Devil perpetrated in the third chapter of Genesis, in which he stated that the dead would not surely die. It also turns people's mind from trusting and fearing God to having faith in the spirits of the dead and fearing them.

CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION OF KASAMA MAIN CHURCH

My project was held in Zambia, a land-locked country, located in South-Central Africa between latitude 15°00' S and longitude 30°00' E, and covering 752 614 square kilometers with a population of 862 740.¹ Zambia is a religious country with three major religions namely Christianity, Islam and Hindu. Christianity is the biggest religion with the following ranging between 50% - 75% of the population.² Due to the popularity of Christianity in the nation, the second republican president Dr. Fredrick Titus Chiluba declared it a Christian nation in 2001. Economically the nation thrives on copper mining and agriculture.

Historical Background

Kasama main church began as a small company of believers in the late 60s at Chiba village in Kasama. Historically it is one of the oldest churches in Kasama. The earliest members of the church originated from Luapula Province of Zambia who received the Advent message from Chimpempe mission station. Pastor Mulengela was the first to pastor it. It was organized into a church in 1970.

Through evangelistic efforts the church managed to open other branches and companies of believers, most of which have since been organized as fully fledged

¹Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook," accessed 19 June 2009, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/za.html>.

² Ibid.

churches. At the time this research was carried out the church had grown to the membership of 285 with Pastor Godfrey Kafuta as its pastor. The church is growing steadily along with other churches in the district. Like any other churches in the district and indeed in Zambia, 65% of the members are women and girls and about 35% are men and boys. At the time of research members in the baptismal class were 30. Economically the composition of the church is as follows: 10% are salaried workers, 40% are small scale business people, 35% are farmers on subsistence level and the remaining 15% are either children or unemployed.

Kasama main church may be referred to as a traditional church which has attracted members of different social, economic, educational and professional background. The lowly in society find it a safe refuge. Needless to say, it does not easily succumb to change. Like any other old churches, it rather sticks to its old-land marks.

Geographical Setting of Kasama Main Church

Kasama Main Church is within Kasama East Mission District of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Northern Province of Zambia. The mission district has 12 churches and 20 companies (a company is a group of believers in the Seventh-day Adventist Church who have not yet attained church status) with the membership of 285. It falls in the eastern part of Kasama and part of Mungwi political districts. Kasama is the provincial headquarters of the Northern Province of Zambia and lies 850km from the national Capital city - Lusaka. The town hosts the church's regional headquarters office namely North Zambia Field of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Other Christian Denominations

The Church is surrounded by other Christian denominations namely, Roman Catholics, United church of Zambia, Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptist church and Pentecostal group of churches. It is important to note that the presence of all these Christian denominations has a direct or indirect influence on the Advent people regarding death rituals. For example, Roman Catholics believe in the immortality of the soul and as such to them cleansing rituals on the part of the surviving spouse do not necessarily matter. Though Jehovah's Witnesses and United church of Zambia do not necessarily believe in the immortality of the soul, however, they do not take it as a serious offense in this area when their members are involved in death ritual cleansing.

Bemba Beliefs and Death Rituals

The following account is a report on Bemba cultural beliefs on death and its rituals. The account is as a result of the survey conducted among Adventists in Kasama East Mission District. Only four churches and six companies were involved in the survey. The researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative methods of research to come up with the finds. 500 copies of survey questionnaire were given out to respondents and only 464 were returned. The questionnaire sought to get statistics on how much members know about the dead and death rituals and how many participate in such rituals that instill fear in them so as to come up with a program, which would help them shun such rituals. These rituals presuppose consciousness in death hence contravene one of the Adventists' fundamental beliefs on the state of the dead.

The questionnaire was given to both genders and across all age groups ranging from 12 –75years old. The mode of distribution was done randomly after every two other persons. Most respondents attempted to answer all items on the questionnaire

and yet others did provide answers to some and left others unanswered. The collected information is as follows:

Survey Results

Concerning age groups in responding to the questionnaire, the researcher noticed that there was not much difference in knowledge and beliefs between the younger and older. Let us take for example, one item on the questionnaire, which clearly points to the fears Bemba people harbor concerning marrying customarily “uncleansed” person who lost their spouse and compare the responses of both age groups to the same.

Of the 109 youth who responded to this item, 44 indicated marrying such a person would bring misfortunes to oneself, 12 ticked on attracting blessings to oneself like any marriage does, 5 suggested that it would cause such a one to have bad dreams, 36 showed that such an act would lead to madness or death. This can also be expressed graphically as shown in Figure 1. Expressing this figure in percentage would be as high as 85.6% of the youth who expressed fear of the dead.

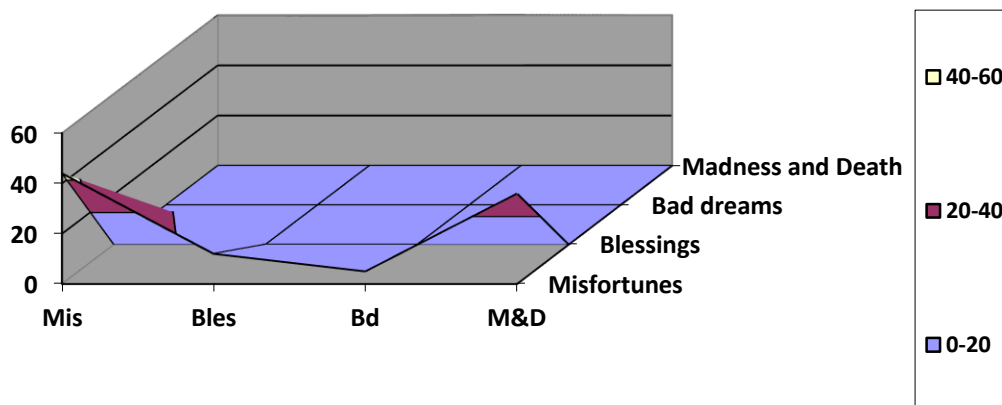


Figure 1. Youth Concerns about Results of Marrying an Uncleansed Widow/widower

Responding to the same item on the questionnaire the older members expressed it this way: out of the 334 adults who responded to this item on the questionnaire 165 indicated that marrying or getting married to a customarily “uncleansed” person would bring misfortunes to oneself, 72 ticked on attraction of blessings on oneself just like any other marriage does and 83 feared that such a move would bring madness or death. This data is expressed graphically in Figure 2.

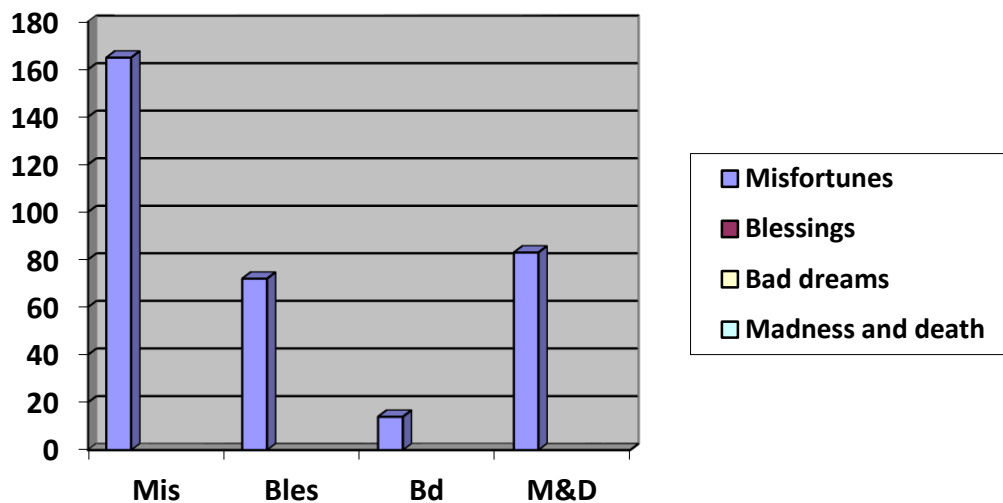


Figure 2. Adult Concerns about Results of Marrying an Uncleansed Widow/er

Like in the case of the youth, only with a bigger number of respondents, only 72 felt it was safe for them to marry or get married to the widower or widow who had not gone through ritual cleansing, but 262 adult respondents expressed fear in one way or another. Expressing this figure in percentage it would translate to 78% respondents who were afraid of the dead by taking cognizance of the importance of the death cleansing ritual.

From the above analysis there is only a slightly lower percentage of older folk (about 7.5% fewer) than youth who were fearful. Therefore, it can be concluded concerning the fear for the cleansing ritual that age does not really matter: all are affected.

Worth noting is the difference in percentage between men and women and that of girls and boys in the way they express the fear toward the cleaning ritual. 32 boys of the 49 who responded to the question feared getting married to un-cleansed widows as such an act would result in some misfortunes, whereas 51 girls out of 60 who responded expressed the same fear. This represents 65% and 85% respectively. While men scored 77.5%, women scored 79% of the respondents who expressed same fear.

This difference in scores of gender may suggest that women folk are more subjected to this practice by the custom and that they freely share it with girls, or that men are not keen on sharing customary issues with their boys and that boys probably get such information from their peers.

To the question “How long have you been an Adventist?” the researcher wanted to establish whether staying in the church longer had any effects to the understanding of the subject of death and its rituals. To determine this, item 12 on the questionnaire is used, which stated that “Neglecting the death ritual of cleansing after death has occurred in the family might have contributed to: _____” and responses are tabulated in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Concerns about Death Rituals and Length of Church Membership

Responses	Several Months	1—5years	6—10years	11—20years	21—50+years
Diseases	15	20	16	27	19
Bad omens	5	18	15	11	6
Premature deaths	20	12	3	7	2
Number of mad people in societies	15	10	5	6	6
Not applicable	17	25	31	38	40

The correct response of course, is the one at the bottom, “Not applicable.” The trend of those who got it right on the table above is that those who have stayed longer in the church scored a higher number. Probably the longer people stay in the church and the more they hear repeated lectures on the topic, the higher the chances of them grasping it fully. Needless to state, however, that from those who have stayed in the church for months those who have stayed longer than 21 years, there were those expressed fear through their responses that neglecting death cleansing ritual could be fatal. Therefore, it can be safely concluded that to all the new and old members of the church lessons on death and its rituals should be continually given.

To the question as to what church they belonged before becoming Adventists, respondents answered as tabulated in Figure 3 below.

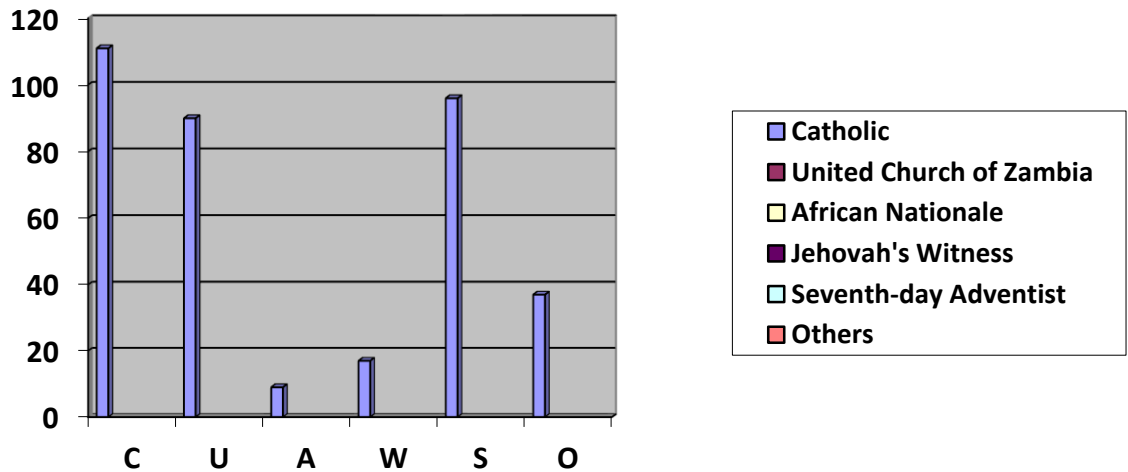


Figure 3. Former Denominations of Respondents

From Figure 3 above, the Roman Catholics topped the chart with 111, followed by the Seventh-day Adventists with 96, then United Church of Zambia with 90, other smaller churches with 37 and African Nationale as the least with 9. Totaling up all those that came from other churches, the number is higher than the indigenous Adventists. Actually it is more than double the number of those who had never worshipped to other churches apart from the Adventist church.

This gives the picture that most of the members in the district hailed from churches, which do not hold the same views on the dead and death rituals as Adventists. This has great potential to impact if not moderating the church's view on the dead and death rituals. The influence of the new comers to the Adventist faith in regard to the subject matter cannot be underrated. As we have seen above even those who have been long enough in the church some still harbor those fears of the dead and are likely to perform those rituals should death strike in their homes. One of the reasons to this is that they are surrounded by people whose faith does not forbid its adherents to such customs. Almost on a daily basis they attend such funerals and

watch what goes on there. Worse more is the fact that Adventists have more relatives who do not share their faith with them. When death strikes they are required by customary law to attend not only the funeral but also the aftermath meetings.

The question was asked, “When faced with a tough situation, where do you turn to for counsel?” Of the 453 respondents, Figure 4 shows how they responded.

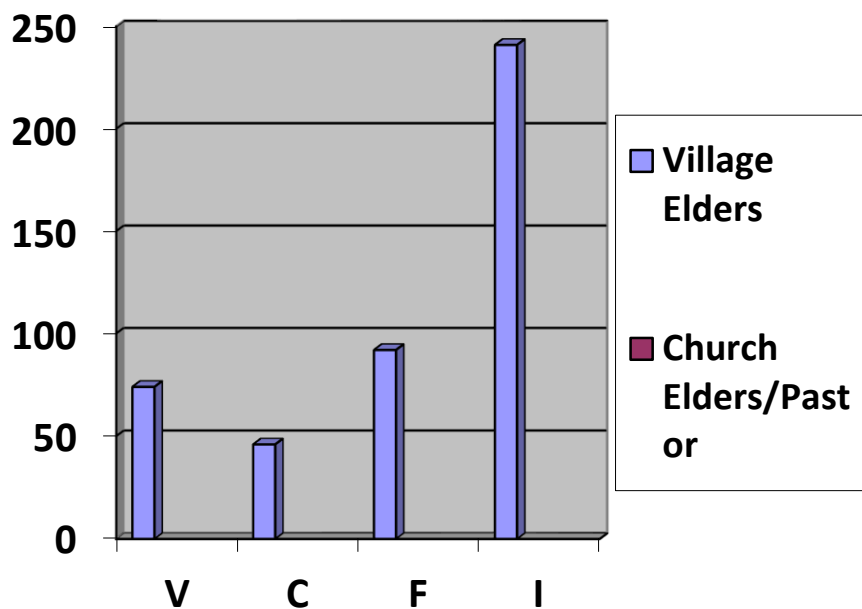


Figure 4. Where Counsel is Obtained in Difficult Situations

To this question the response was positive to a greater extent because when people seek counsel from their Elders and Pastors in most cases they are likely to get a godly counsel. However, we still have a total of 166 respondents who indicated that in tough times they mostly seek counsel from village elders and friends and this number as a percentage translates to 36.6% of the total respondents.

The problem of seeking counsel from village elders and friends is that those elders and friends may be ungodly and therefore, are likely to misguide them. Since as

seen above, the church in the area is surrounded with people who have taken seriously the issue of death rituals if consulted in an event of death, you are sure of being encouraged to undergo some ritual cleansing. This shows why even among church members the practice may be going on secretly. In view of the above there is a need for the intensified program to educate members on the danger of syncretistic behavior. This brings us to the next item on the questionnaire.

Item number 6 on the questionnaire sought to find out what respondents would do in case of serious illness and medical Doctors were unable to come up with definite diagnosis, besides praying where else would they turn for help. The answers given are expressed on the chart below:

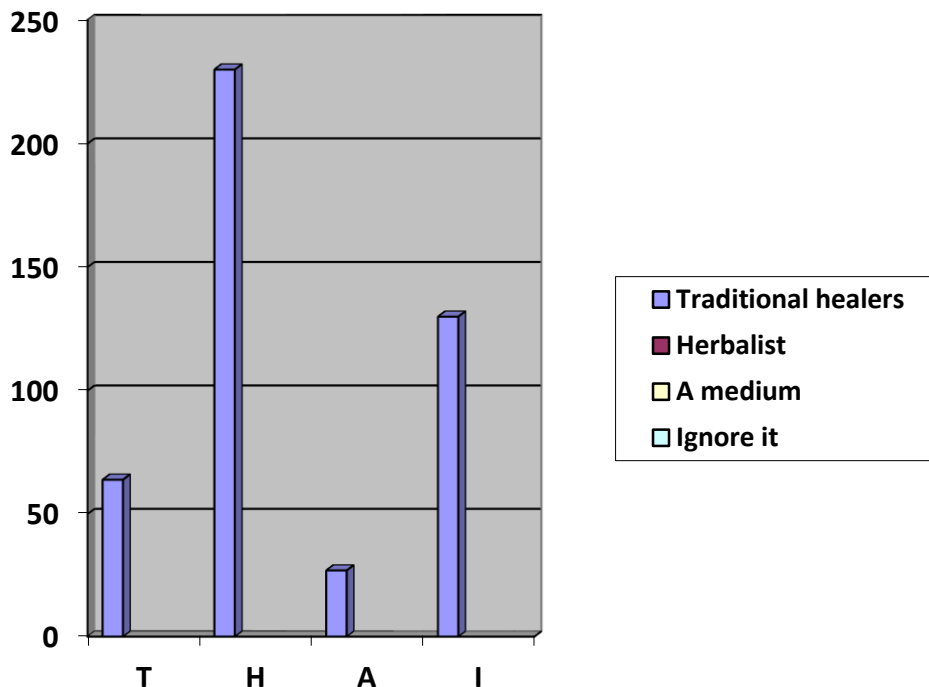


Figure 5. Consultants in Case of a Strange Disease

Of the 451 respondents 230 chose the Herbalist as the second best option. With the advent of herbal medicine on the market most people this may be the best alternative to conventional medicine. Those who felt ignoring the problem to be the second best option ranked second with the figure of 130, and then followed by those who thought of the traditional healers to be the second best option and lastly are those who opted to make the spirit medium to be their second best option.

A traditional healer has doubtful medicines as mixes herbs with remains of dead organisms. Traditional healers are closely linked to spirit mediums. One wonders why Adventists respondents can resort to consulting traditional healers and a medium. A medium in most cases claims to be shown medicines by the spirits of the departed ancestors.

From the above account, the researcher can safely conclude that syncretism among church members in the district is rife. If they can resort to the spirit medium, what can stop them from practicing death rituals in case of death in the family? Until church members are continually taught the dangers of venturing on the devil's ground, are likely to continue in their syncretistic behavior.

Item number 7 on the survey instrument sought to find out whether church members were comfortable marrying or getting married to widow or widower known to be healthy but who did not pass through customary cleansing. In this the researcher wanted to establish whether church members were free from superstitious fears of the ghosts and other supposed consequences. Their responses were as follows:

Of the 408 respondents 112 indicated that they would be very comfortable, 21 were a bit comfortable, 230 gave a resounding "no" to the proposal and 45 respondents indicated that they could only do that after consulting elderly people in their society. The data is expressed graphically in Figure 6.

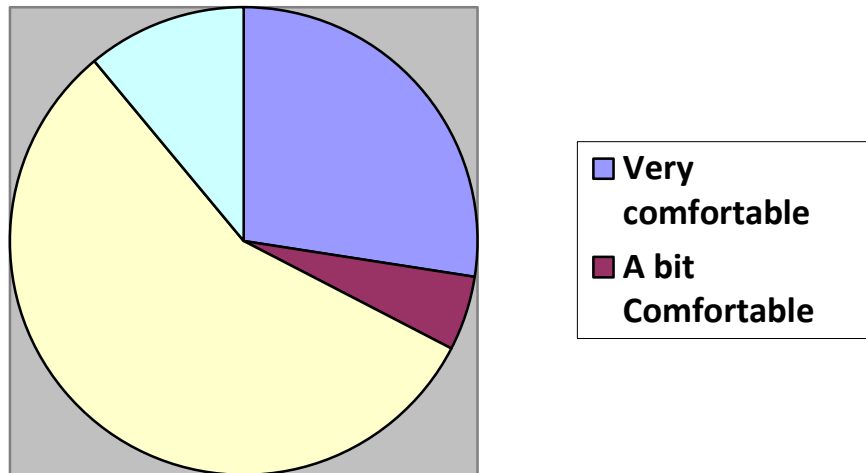


Figure 6. Views on Marrying a Widow/Widower

As it can be seen above in an illustrated form above, the largest percentage was for those could not just accept marrying an “un-cleansed” widow for the reasons best known to themselves, followed by those who accepted without any reservations. Then came those who would accept only after consulting with elders of the village or section elders of a locality.

Those who felt a bit comfortable marrying an “un-cleansed” widow/widower are not far from those who would do it after consultations. In other words it is only the 112 who did not believe in anything would happen to someone who married a widow/widower. This figure in percentage only represents 27% of the respondents. This leaves the 73% of the people surveyed who live in fear of the perceived misfortunes associated to marrying “un-cleansed” widow/widower. This really shows how deep rooted the issue is in the hearts of the people of the area.

If certainly such fear is left unattended to, the church is likely to continue living like any other churches regarding death rituals, which contradict what it believes in and is likely to pass on these syncretistic practices to the next generation.

Another item on the survey instrument sought to establish part of the reasons why people of the area harbor such fears. The statement was, “Getting married to the known ‘un-cleansed’ widow/widower may bring:” Responses to possible answers were as follows: Those that indicated that such a move would bring misfortunes were 116, those who felt it would bring them blessings as it is in any marriage relationships were 200, yet 48 respondents thought such an attempt might bring them bad dreams and 100 respondents feared madness. Graphically the responses were expressed in Figure 7.

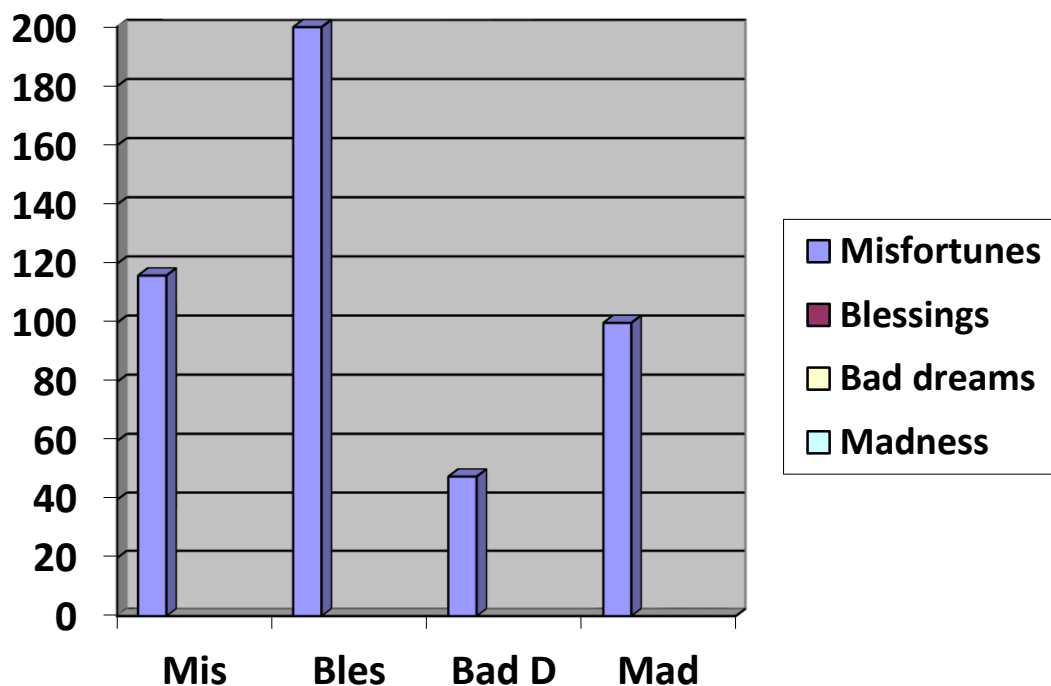


Figure 7. Beliefs on Marrying an Un-cleansed Widow/Widower

From these results those who considered it a blessing marrying a widow/widower who had not undergone cleansing ritual topped the chart with 200 respondents. However, putting together those who thought of receiving misfortunes, bad dreams and madness from such a decision, the number surpasses the 200 by 64.

Even here those who are positive about the position are fewer than those are negative about it.

From this analysis again it can be concluded that a greater number of the church members who responded regard cleansing ritual as a virtue never to be abandoned. The problem is real and should be addressed with the urgency it deserves.

Item number 9 on the survey instrument sought to establish statistics of those who had experienced ritual cleansing after losing the loved one in the family or for being found under the roof of the house where the mother had had a miscarriage. The following data was collected: Of the 464 respondents 141 responded with a resounding “yes” while 323 responded with an affirmative “no.” The number of those who responded with yes answer may appear small but this expressing it in percentage gives 30% of the total respondents. This is quite a big percentage if subjected to a bigger figure of the total membership of the district.

From the above statistics, it is clear that the researcher is not just trying to speculate about the fear people of Kasama East Mission district have concerning the dead and the related death rituals. There is a possibility too that some who might have experienced just shunned coming up openly for some reasons.

A follow up question to this came on number 15 on the questionnaire and the question read: “Have you known any Adventists who after having lost a spouse or had a miscarriage underwent some ritual cleansing of any kind?” 132 answered “yes” and 332 answered “no.” If the questionnaire was answered at one church it could be said that these might have been referring to the same ones who answered yes to question number 9, but since the questionnaire was answered by several churches and companies, the possibility is high that among the 132 some knew other people other than the ones who responded yes to question number 9.

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that there are members in the district who still hold on unto these customary death cleansing rituals.

Death rituals do not end with cleansing only but also include rituals when burying some figures in society such as twins. Number 10 on the questionnaire addressed that. The question read: “Have you ever lost a twin child in your family and where was he/she buried?” Responses to the question were as follows:

Of the 428 people of who responded to the question 38 said they buried them behind the hills, 56 indicated that it was at the crossroads, 45 marked at the general cemeteries but with some herbs, 107 ticked at the general cemeteries just like everybody is buried and it was not applicable to 218 respondents. The data is tabulated in Figure 8.

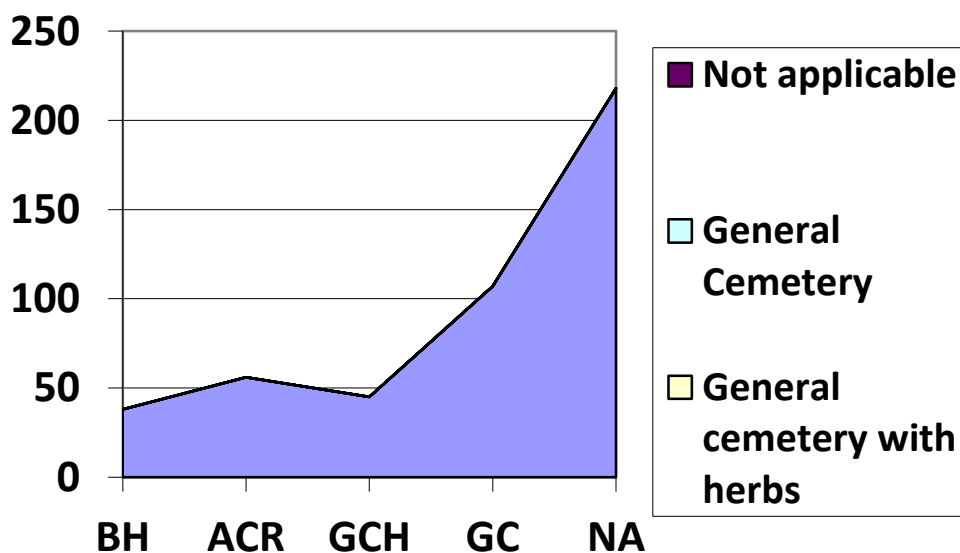


Figure 8. Burial Places for Twins

Those who indicated that it was not applicable were the largest group in Figure 8, and this is so because they did not have such a death in their families. They are followed by those who just buried at the general cemeteries with the number of 107. This is commendable because it shows great transformation in the families concerned. However, when we see the figures of those who buried their twins behind hills, at a crossroads or at the general cemeteries with herbs, the number comes to 139. This figure still shows that those who observe burial rituals are more than those who do not.

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that the district has a lot of members who need help to be liberated from the suspicious fears of the dead, which lead them to observe rituals concerning the dead. This can be also true to other members of the church in the nearby districts who share the same cultural value and beliefs.

Question number 11 on the questionnaire sought to find out if there could be a safe method of cleansing for Christians. Hence the question read: “Which one of the cleansing methods could be safe for a Christian who loses a spouse through death?” The answers chosen on the five alternatives supplied were as follows: Those who chose herbal cleansing were 27, sexual cleansing were 13, to be smeared with some white powder were 14, just paying something to the family of the deceased to obtain a blessing were 213 and 190 indicated that none was applicable. Responses are further illustrated on the chart below:

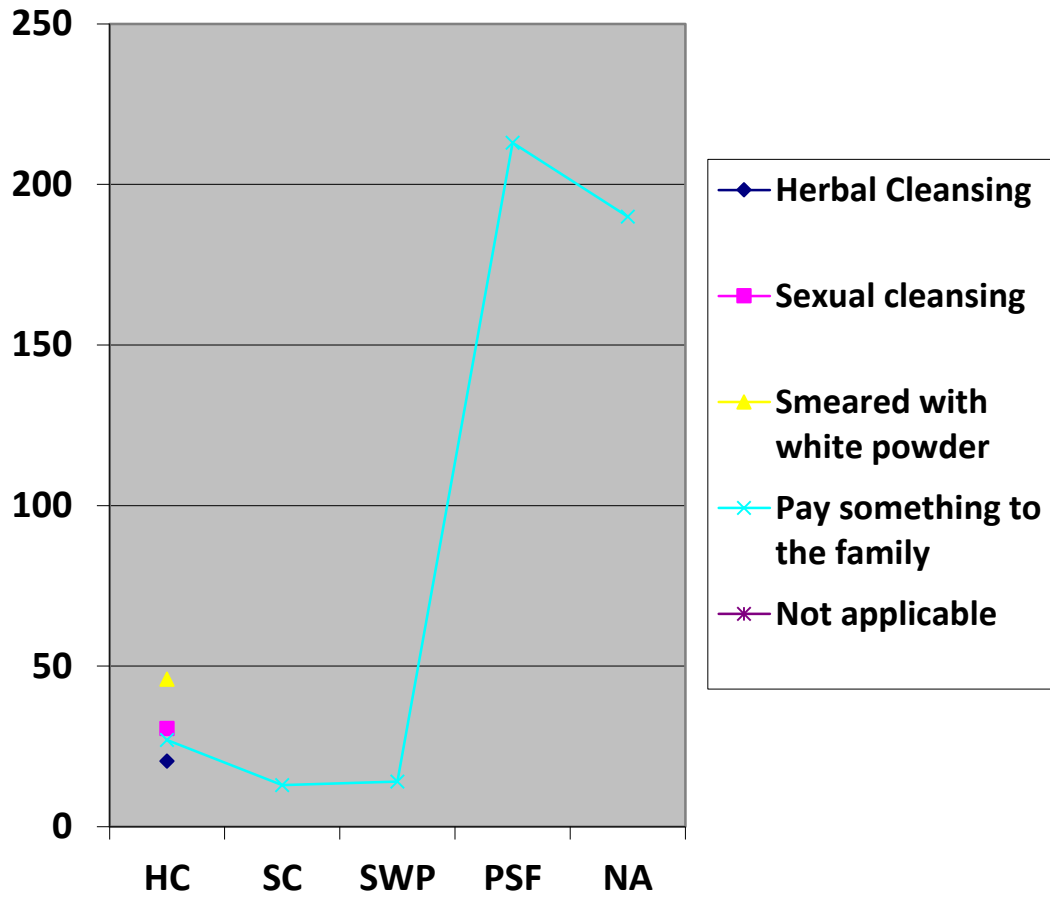


Figure 9. Ritual Cleansing Methods

Of all respondents only 190 felt that there was nothing to do after one had lost a spouse through death. The rest of the respondents felt at least something need to be done in order for them to be free. 213 felt that at least they needed to pay something to the family of the deceased so as to receive a blessing. In other words without paying something to the family of the deceased one would still remain with some “ghost” hovering around them, which would make it difficult for them to remarry.

With the advent of HIV/AIDS one would expect sexual cleansing (having sex with a relative to the deceased in order to be customary cleansed from the ghost of the dead) to come to an end. To the contrary 13 people, which translate to 2.8% of the

total respondents, would still need sexual cleansing. Probably this shows how serious the issue is among the Bemba people of the area under discussion.

Item number 13 on the questionnaire was a statement on stillborn babies, which are the other sources of cleansing rituals. The statement was: “Generally, stillborn babies are more deadly if nothing is done about it than the death of elderly people.” The statement carried only two optional answers yes or no. Of the 464 respondents 120 ticked on yes and 344 on no. Here the response was fairly good with more people disagreeing to the statement. However, 120 people affirmed the statement. Those represent 25.8% of the total respondents. On this statement respondents did not deny the deadliness of stillborn babies but the comparison between stillborn babies and the death of the Elderly people. The 120 respondents believed that the consequences for neglecting cleansing rituals on stillborn babies were far more deadly than those of elderly people’s death.

The researcher wanted to know how much members of the church know about the state of the dead so as to establish whether that contributes to the practicing of these rituals. Item number 14 on the survey instrument stated that, “Sometimes dead people come in dreams to their beloved who are still living and instruct them get money or any other valuables from where they had put them while they were alive. Upon waking up, those instructed in the dream find it to true, this shows that:” Four optional answers were given and the responses are as shown in Figure 10 below.

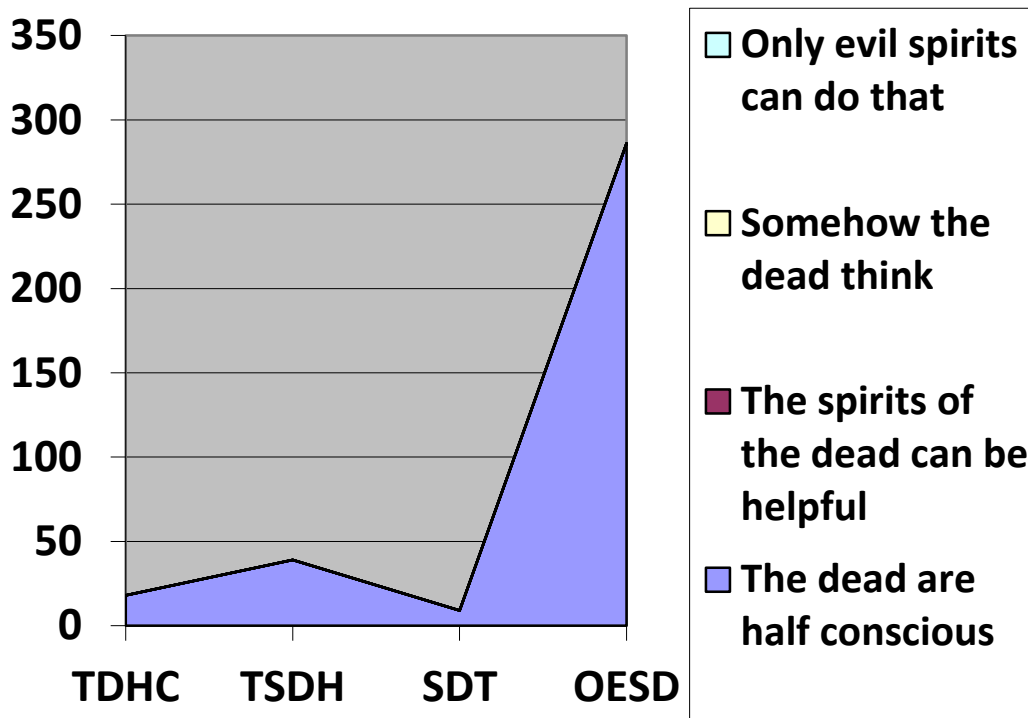


Figure 10. Views on the State of the Dead

The results as displayed on the chart shows the high positive response where 286 did not believe the dead could do anything. They felt the statement described nothing but the works of evil spirits. Even if we combine those indicated that the dead were half conscious and that the spirit of the dead can sometimes be helpful to us and that the dead think, the number still fall far below those who stated that the dead could not do anything. From the above analysis, it can be concluded that most of those who responded to the questionnaire had no difficulties understanding the state of the dead. However, the total of 66 respondents thought that the dead were half conscious, or that the spirit of the dead could sometimes be helpful, or that somehow the dead thought. These cannot be overlooked as performing death rituals partly could be attributed to lack of understanding about the state of the dead. Yet to most of the respondents performing death rituals could be attributed to either fear that culture has

implanted in them or they just have mere knowledge about the state of the dead but do not believe in it.

Death Rituals among the Bemba People and Consequences of Failing to Follow Them

Interview Results

Using the same instrument the researcher wanted to find out some death rituals exercised among the Bemba people of Kasama East Mission District and consequences of failing to follow them. The following account is the report of responses obtained from different people in the society. Death rituals are performed on deaths of the following people: The death of a spouse, the death of a baby, the death of twins, stillborn babies, and the death of someone known to have suffered from epilepsies, and the death of a leper. Answers given by interviewees were very similar and no difference was noted, below are brief accounts on each of them.

The Death of a Spouse

When someone loses a spouse, he/she is normally kept in a house with some elderly people to comfort them. Usually a widow/widower does not take a bath until after burial of the late spouse. There are no notable rituals performed during the funeral procession until burial. After burial and after a few days is when some rituals have to be performed. The main ritual in this case is the cleansing of the surviving spouse. As we saw in literature review section of this document, there a number of ways in which such ritual can be done. One can be made to wash in some herbal medicine, wear a thread of white beads around the wrist or get smeared with some white powder on the forehead. Sometimes one is given another woman in the family to marry or to just have sex with her and it ends there. Others are just made to pay

money to the bereaved family so that they secure a blessing from so as to remove the ghost of the spouse off their body.

All these are done so that the widow/widower may be free from the supposed ghost of the departed spouse. Failure to undergo such cleansing processes may affect someone in a number of ways. The society will consider him as un-cleared person of the ghost hovering around him/her and as such cannot remarry in the same area. It is believed too that such a one may be experiencing bad dreams and can even go mad and eventually die.

The Death of a Baby

The death of a baby is considered a taboo in this society and as such some rituals have to be performed to avoid such an experience in the future. After the burial of the baby, the couple is confined to the room for some time in order to perform such rituals. The ritual may include bathing in water containing some herbal medicines. The couple that has lost the baby has to undergo some cleansing ritual before they come together in marriage again or they risk another loss in the near future. This may mean that eventually such a couple may not have a child.

The Death of a Twin

Twins are considered as strange children in society who hailed from some strange land somewhere and as such their death is treated differently. Since no one knows where they come from they have to be buried at the crossroads so that they decide for themselves which route to take back to where they came from. Alternatively they are to be hid behind a hill or to be buried at general cemetery with some charms. No one is allowed to mourn or weep over a dead twin child or the surviving one too will die. When burying a twin, a pole is put on the coffin vertically

and it goes out of the grave. As they bury, someone shakes it so as to create a hole from top to bottom. Finally the pole is pulled out and the hole remains to allow the evil spirit that may bring misfortunes or diseases to the family to escape into the atmosphere. The same is done when burying someone known to have suffered from epilepsies and asthma.

Stillborn Babies

These are considered as a misfortune in the family and as such great care needs to be taken in their disposal and the aftermath rituals must be observed without fail. Only elderly women handle these cases, men are not allowed to bury these. The burial is done secretly and the couple concerned is not supposed to cook or eat with anyone until some ritual cleansing has been performed on them. Failure to observe these means that people who may eat with them may develop some cancerous tumors on their cheeks.

The Death of Someone Known to Have Suffered from Epilepsy

When a person known to have suffered from epilepsy dies, it is believed they can only be buried with some charms or herbal medicines from some diviner. All those involved in the burial, which in most cases is attended by only a few people, are to be cleansed, and failure to do so may result in the deaths of children in those families.

The Death of a Leper

When a leper dies he or she is buried in a different grave yard normally created just for them. The funeral procession is just like for any other person except they are not buried. The grave is dug out and the coffin lowered but no burial takes place. On top of an open grave a booth of tree branches in leaf is erected that is what

covers the grave and is left like that until the time of bush fire which comes and burns the booth and the coffin below. Those involved in the burial wash their hands in some medicines. Failure to comply would perpetuate the disease among family members concerned.

Conclusion

From this chapter it can be concluded that some church members of Kasama East Mission District do not only fear the dead but also participate in death rituals that presuppose life after death. This fear and consequent involvement in death rituals is not without reasons. Culture has imparted this fear in the mind of people, which without some external power they cannot overcome. This brings us to the next chapter of program development implementation as an intervention against this fear.

CHAPTER 4
PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT,
IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

This chapter has three parts. The first part deals with the preparations of the church where the project took place. The preparation was in three areas namely personnel, material and spiritual. The second part deals with the implementation of the project and finally the evaluation of the whole project.

Personnel Preparation

Since at the time of the program development and implementation I was at the Field office as one of the directors, with no church to take care of, I decided to conduct the project in one of the churches in Kasama where I stay. Before starting the program, I sought permission from both the Field office and the district Pastor in whose territory the church falls. After obtaining permission, the Pastor, Godwin Kafuta suggested to me that the project be carried out at Kasama main church since it was the oldest church with fairly representation of all age groups suitable for the project. After the elders had passed the issue in the church board and business meetings and was approved, I met them on 4th September 2009 and discussed with them on the importance of the program and their role as the organizers of the people.

Material Preparations

The preparation of materials took substantial amount of time, and energy. Good amount of time too was spent in personal devotions and prayer as part of

spiritual preparations. Since the meetings of the program were to be conducted in the church, which was then incomplete and had no power, materials were to be prepared in a hard copy form only. Few handouts were made available to some members according to the meager resources available and of course to those who were able to read. The handouts contained lessons on how to overcome fears about the dead so as not to get involved in cultural cleansing rituals.

Implementation

The implementation of the project began on 19th September 2009. Due to other programs the church had, only four Sabbaths were allocated to me. The first and last Sabbaths were full. We began with a sermon at eleven hours and then we conducted two lessons in the afternoon while on the other two Sabbaths in between only afternoons were given to me in which lessons were presented. Question and answer time was also provided.

On the first Sabbath the sermon was preached and in the afternoon before the lessons were presented, the presenter distributed a slip of paper among members. All sermons and lessons presented in all four sessions are tabulated in the Tables 1-5 below.

Table 2. First Sabbath Program

Date	Sermon	Lesson	Lesson
19/09/09	A Distortion in God's Creation	Spiritualism In Eschatological Events (E. G. White's Views)	Spiritualism Continues/Discussion
Attendance	240	186	186

Table 3. Second Sabbath Program

Date	Lesson	Lesson
26/09/09	One of the Reasons God Drove out Canaanites	Continues/Discussions
Attendance	130	146

Table 4. Third Sabbath Program

Date	Lesson	Lesson
03/10/09	The State of The Dead (Soul)	Lesson Continues/Discussions
Attendance	156	148

Table 5. Fourth Sabbath Program

Date	Sermon	Lesson	Lesson
	Faith is an “Arm for Laying Hold on to Divine Power”	Traditions/Customs	Discussions on some customs
Attendance	270	190	188

Evaluation

This section looks at how the program impacted members of the church positively and also looks at some weaknesses of the same program.

Observed Strengths

To begin with elders confessed that the attendance during afternoon sessions was commendable as usually the attendance is low during Bible studies. This may indicate that people were interested and wanted to learn more on the subject matter. During the discussion periods the number of participants was overwhelming as compared to the way they participate in other studies.

One elderly person in the church came to the author privately and said, “I have been in the church for a long time but I have never heard anybody talk about these

dirty death rituals and yet they are very much “alive” among members of the church. Thank you Pastor and God bless you.”

The women folk who seem to be oppressed by these cultural beliefs and practices, showed great appreciation at the end of the program and pledged by God’s grace not to indulge themselves in these practices. Some asked the presenter if these lessons could be presented to all nearby churches and beyond.

At the end of the program members were asked if they were still afraid of the dead and death rituals, and the grave yard. The response by the whole church was “no”. A small piece of paper containing question number 7 on the questionnaire was distributed among those who attended the last session. The question sought to find out if church members were willing to marry a known healthy widow/widower. This time they were asked to simply answer yes or no to the question. 160 out of 188 indicated “yes” and only 28 wrote “no”. This shows that the people heard and appreciated the content of the program. While this response may not necessarily mean that all had lost fear at once, it may be the beginning of change of attitude toward such superstitious fears and with continued studies on the subject permanent change is likely to take place.

Weaknesses

The project met several setbacks. To begin with when I began it I was at the office serving as Personal Ministries Director and within three months I was moved to another district with a distance of over 500 Km. Due to financial constraints, I could not continue with it. I began another one which focused on the Bisa people of Mpika district, also in the Northern Province of Zambia but to the east of the province. Several months later I was moved to Kasama where I began it again with the Bemba people of Kasama. This proved to be costly and time consuming.

During the time of program implementation some members were disturbed by funerals and some church groupings like church choir members would move out to go and minister to other sister churches and this made them miss some lessons.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This chapter gives an overview of what is contained in the preceding chapters composing this paper. It also draws a conclusion and gives recommendations based on the findings. In chapter one a statement of the problem has been given, which comes out of a realization that some Bemba church members of Kasama East Mission district harbor the fear for the dead as they participate in death rituals, which presuppose life after death or at least consciousness in death. The purpose, significance, delimitation and methodology of the project and definitions of terms all appear in the first chapter aimed at elaborating on the same topic of discussion.

Chapter two deals with what the Bible, circular history, Ellen G. White and other authors say about death and its rituals. Chapter three gives the background to Kasama main church where the project and program is implemented. It also deals with the description of the local setting. Survey and interview reports are also included here. The fourth chapter deals with program development, implementation and evaluation. The fifth and last chapter gives the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

Conclusion

The findings of this project reveals that quite a number of church members have fears about death and its rituals and this is seen by the numbers that are involved in

practicing these rituals after losing the loved one in the family. It also suggests that a thorough knowledge on the subject can minimize and finally eradicate this fear thereby liberating members from these devilish practices.

The project further suggests that the only effective way of helping members shun fears of the dead and death rituals is by teaching them continually until they get a thorough knowledge and truth about death. They need to be taught that the antidote to these fears is their practical faith in Jesus who is the author of life and who has promised the same life when He comes back to create all things new again.

Recommendations

I would like to make some recommendations to those who wish to undertake similar projects, to the Field officers and at the same time to the local churches.

1. Someone undertaking such a project needs time and resources in order to cover a large portion of the area and also the people.
2. For someone conducting a similar project he or she should be provided with enough time in the same place without transferring them to other places unnecessarily.
3. Local churches should not allow auxiliary groupings to go out during the implementation of the program.
4. The Field office should ensure that the issue of death and spiritualism is always included on camp-meeting lessons.
5. Local church leadership should ensure that when someone loses a spouse or a little child he or she should be isolated during the funeral and also after burial so as to encourage them not to fall a prey to death rituals that contradict Biblical teachings.

6. Pastors should ensure that members are protected from this deception by repeating lessons about the state of the dead and the futility of death rituals in all big gatherings and also on pulpits and Bible study sessions.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE CHURCH MEMBERS AND OTHERS IN SOCIETY

Dear Church Member,

You are kindly, invited to participate in a survey. The results of this study are intended to help us know how best to minister to our churches in the district and beyond especially in the area of death rituals. Your sincere response to this questionnaire will make the study a success and relevant. Please do not indicate your name on this questionnaire. Thank you for participating, Pastor Brighton C. Mwenya.

Please, tick () in the space provided as a response to your questions.

1. Male Female
2. Age group
 12—20years, 21—35years, 36—50years, 51—75years+
3. How long have you been an Adventist?
 for several months, 1—5years, 6—10years, 11—20years,
 21—50years+
4. Which church did you belong to before joining the Seventh-day Adventist church?
 Roman Catholic, UCZ, African National, Jehovah's Witness,
 Others (specify) _____
5. When face with a tough situation who do you turn to for counsel?
 Elderly people in my village/location
 My church Elders/ Pastor
 My friends
 I just pray about it
6. When you have a disease that cannot be diagnosed by medical Doctors, apart from praying to God, the second best option is to:
 Consult African traditional healers
 Consult Herbalists
 Consult a medium
 Ignore it
7. If you were single
Would you be comfortable getting married to the known healthy widow/widower who has not been customarily cleansed?
 Very comfortable
 A bit comfortable
 Not at all

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE CHURCH MEMBERS
AND OTHERS IN BEMBA

Kuli ba Church Membala,

Mukwai mwaipushiwa ukwasuka ifipusho fyamwipapala ili. Ifikafuma muli uku kufwaililisha fikatwafwa ukwishiba ifyakusambilisha muma chalichi yesu muno mu district nama district yambi muno citungu cesu ca North Zambia Field pamulandu wantambi shicitwa pamulandu wabaafwa. Ukwasuka kwaciine palicila cipusho cikalenga ukufwaililisha pali uyumulandu kukabe ukwampofu. Mukwai, tekwasha ukulemba ishina lyenu pepapala ili.

Namutotela sana pakwiibimbamo kwenu mukwasuka ifipusho mulili pepapala, Pastor Brighton C. Mwenya.

Mukwai, congeni (.....)pacishilwa icipekanishiwe ngo kwasuko kufipusho.

1.ndi mwaumendi mwanakashi.
2. Imyaka yandi yaba pakati ka:
.....12—20,21—35,36—50,51—75+.
3. Myaka inga mukwete muchilonganino?
.....Imyeshifye,1—5,6—10,11—20,21—50+.
4. Chilonganino nshi mwalepapakilo ilyo mushilaba bakalolela?
.....Katolika,UCZ,Africa nationale,
.....Watchtower,Yambi ayashala
(lumbuleni).....
5. Ilyo mwakumanya ifyakosa nibani mwipushako bumpandamano?
..... Abakalamba mumushi
..... Ba church Elder/Kampani Leader
..... Ifibusa fyandi
..... Mpepelapofye
6. Ngacakuti mwakwete ubulwele ubo ba Shing'anga ba mucipataala bafililwe ukubusanga, ukulunda pamapepo, abacibili mwingamona nibani?
..... Bashing'anga bacikaya
..... Abafwaya imiti yafilengwa na Lesa
..... Bashing'anga bakubuka
..... Kusulakofye
7. Ngacakuti tamwaupilwe nangu ukupwa, bushe kuti mwaupa nangu ukuupwa ku muntu uwaishibikwa nga mukamfwilwa uwabumi ubusuma lelo ushapyanwa nangu ukuwamishiwa mumusango uli onse?
..... Ukwabula nokuposa inshita naupa nangu kuupwako
..... Teti ngeshe nokwasha
..... Limbi panuma yakwipusha ifikolwe
..... Ifyo cimo no kuikulika
8. Ukuupwa nangu ukuupa uwafwilwa ukwabula ukuwamishiwa nangu ukupyanikwa kuti kwaleta:

- Ishamo
 Amapaalo
 Ifiloto ifibi
 Ukupena
 Nangu ukufwa
9. Bushe mwalipitapo muntambi shakuwamishiwa panuma yakufwilwa icilundwa calupwa lwenu nangu ukusangwa mu ng'anda umo bamayo bapelelwe umwana uwafwa?
 Ee,Iyo
10. Bushe mwalifwilwapo Mpundu mulupwa, ngefyo, ashikilwe shani?
 Kunuma yaculu
 Pamasansa ya nshila
 Kumanda ya bonse, lelo kwali ukubomfya umuti
 Kumanda ya bonse pamofye ngefishikwa umuntu onse
11. Ninshila nshi palishi pesamba iyingawamina umwina Kristu ukuwamishiwamo nga apokwa umwina mwakwe?
 Kusambafye umuti uwaduma kumiti
 Ukupelwa umwaume nangu umwanakashi umbi
 Ukusubwa ulupemba nangu ukufwikwa akalungu
 Ukulipilako ifyo wapingulwa nokupoka ipaalo kulupwa lwamuyashi
12. Ukusula ulutambi lwaku wamishiwa atemwa ukupyanwa muli shino nshiku kuletele:
 Amalwele ayengi
 Ishamo kubantu abengi
 Ukufwa bwaice bwaice
 Ukufula kwamashilu
13. Ilingiline akapopo kalibipishapo ngatapali icicitilwepo ukucila ne mfwa yamukalamba.
 Cishinka, Cabufi
14. Limolimo abafwa balesa kutulo twabaatuntulu mufiloto no kubalanga icuma bafishile ilyo bali abatuntulu, ilyo abacilota babuka basanga ukuti ifyo baloota fituntulu. Ici cilelangafye ukuti:
 Abafwa tabafwililika
 Imipashi yabafwa limo ilafwilisha
 Munshila imo neinankwe abafwa bala tontonkanya
 Imipashi ya Ciwa eyingacitafyefyo
15. Bushe mwalishibapo bamo bakalolela abo bapishishe mulutambi lwakuwamishiwa panuma yakupokwa abena mwabo nangu panuma yakukwata umwana uwafwa (akapopo)?
 Ee,Iyoo

EMPELA

APPENDIX B

SERMONS

Title: A Distortion in God's Creation

Introduction

According to the Bible the genesis of human race was an excellent one. Fresh and new from the hand of his creator, mankind was without sin. He was placed in a pollution free environment full nice fragrance emanating from beautiful flowers of the garden. The genesis account records that “And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.”(Gen. 1:29, first part.) Until the third chapter, things continued in their beauty. Man sinned in the third chapter of Genesis after sin entered our planet that is when our first parents experienced fear and shame (Gen. 3:10). The consequences which followed were unpleasant.

1. A SENSE OF SHAME

After man sinned out of guiltiness came the sense of shame. When God wanted to talk to him as usual he hid himself from His presence. He sewed the garment out of the leaves. Since then mankind has always devised defensive mechanism to hide himself from the shameful acts coming from his disobedience to God's commands. This sense of shame sometimes leads us to commit other shameful acts as a way of cover up. It was shameful indeed for Adam and Eve to have sewed leaves together, which would quickly dry up and fall off. Thank God who provided them with a better garment to cover their shame (Gen. 3:21).

Brothers and sisters, after sin entered our earth the only safe place of refuge is Jesus our Redeemer and Saviour. Only he is able to cover our shame through the forgiveness of our sins and impute us with his righteousness.

2. FEAR

Sin brought about fear. Adam and Eve could no longer speak to their Creator as they used to due to a distortion of sin in between. They were afraid to face their Saviour and the fear of death was upon them. Every creature was stricken with fear, “And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hands are they delivered,” Gen. 9:2.

Since that time man has been afraid even of his own shadow has it has been generally said. This fear has evoked in man a sense of trying to save himself. Anything that promises him good life and comfort, he goes for it. Is it any wonder that man listens to the deception of the enemy who promised him life in disobedience? He said to him “Ye shall not surely die,” (Gen. 3:4).

3. MAN’S ONLY HOPE

Immediately man sinned the promise was enshrined in a curse, for God made a promise of crushing the serpent’s head by the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15). The hope is there Jesus died us thereby granting us the removal of a distortion in God’s creation at the end of time. The deception, shame and fear no longer hold on God’s children “who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit” (Romans 8:4). God’s children are washed in the blood of Jesus, which has covered their shame and completely remove the fear. God’s children can no longer move in fear for Jesus overcame the world. For them “to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). Since death is the most dreaded thing and Jesus overcame it, his children have been

liberated from all forms of fear including fear for the dead. They know that their being alive is to preach Christ and him crucified, and to die is the finishing of the race, resting as they await the soon appearing of our glorious Lord and savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).

Conclusion

The victory of Jesus on the cross and his resurrection from the dead has inspired his followers not to fear anything for they know that this world is not their home but are just passing through. Fearing death and its rituals may mean demeaning the death and resurrection of Jesus about 2000 years ago. God has already provided an antidote to that fear that had befallen man and beasts after the fall. To God's children there is a hope even beyond the grave. Since we cannot save ourselves, trying the tricks of the devil to earn more days on this earth is a sheer waste of time and distrust in God.

I for one I do not want to live in fear for Jesus is on my side and if God be on my side, who can be against me? Do you believe Jesus is able to dispel your fears for the dead and to give you power to live above fears? If you do stand with me as we dedicate ourselves to God.

Sermon 2

Title: Faith is an “Arm for Laying Hold on Divine Power”

Text: Mark 4: 36-40; 1 John 5:4

Introduction

Since the fall of man, fear has characterized his pilgrimage on this planet. Man is anxious and afraid of his future, security, education of his children, health and above all he fears death more than anything else. The story of Jesus and his disciples on the lake illustrates this fear well.

1. THE STORM

Jesus with his disciples was crossing on the other side of the lake and Jesus fell comfortably asleep on the stern of the boat as the storm broke out. His disciples, like any other human beings, the initial response to the situation was to do all they could to save themselves.

The disciples in the face of a storm, got threatened exhausted all their skills in evading the storm. Having failed they remained with no other alternative but to shout for help from Jesus.

It must be noted here that their appeal to Jesus was not prompted by faith in him but out of fear that probably he may do something at least to help them overcome the storm. This is true especially when we view it in the light of Jesus' answer: “why are you so fearful? How is it ye have no faith?” verse 40.

The threat was real and death seemed to seal their fate. Humanity had nothing to do to avert the looming calamity. Hence the shouted for help without faith!

2. LACK OF FAITH CALLS FOR SELF SALVATION

The disciples spent a lot of time trying to save themselves for the lack of faith in Jesus. Ellen White puts it right, “Absorbed in their efforts to save themselves, they had forgotten that Jesus was on board” (Desire of Ages p. 334).

In the absence of faith fear occupies the vacancy. When overwhelmed with fear, human tendency is to look for ways of saving oneself.

In our case when faced with the death of the loved one, fear drowns our faith, we want to save ourselves from the supposedly ghosts of the departed by ritual cleansing. We forget that the Lord is on board with us even in the face of trials or death of the spouse. We further forget that Jesus overcame death. He who had power over death itself, has surely, power over demons and any disguising spirit of the dead! Trying to save ourselves leads us nowhere in no more than it did to the disciples. The more we cherish fear in our hearts, the further away we stray from faith and trust in the one who is the resurrection and the life.

It is the fear to die that lead us to accepting ritual cleansing so that we may not die. Little do we realize that the more we shun death by trying to save ourselves, the more we die both physically and spiritually. John urges us that this is the victory that we have even our faith! Jesus asked his disciples, “Do you still have no faith?” Only faith gives us victory over our obstacles and fear!

3. EXAMPLE OF A VICTORIOUS FAITH

2 Kings 4: 8-37 records of a Shunamite woman who lost a son under unbelievable circumstances. When the husband wanted to find out what had happened she responded that all was well. The woman had peace in the face of tragedy; simply because she had faith in the God of Elisha who had caused have a child. Even when Gehazi asked her about her child she still responded that it was well,

because she wanted to disclose her problem to the Lord's messenger who would not fail her faith.

It was well with her because of faith. Her faith finally paid her high dividend; the child was restored to health. If she was overwhelmed by fear, she could have lost it out altogether!

CONCLUSION

The only way of reaching the divine power to put off our fears is by Faith! Like the disciples, Ellen White makes an analogue: "Living faith in the Redeemer will smooth the sea of life, and will deliver us from danger in the way that He knows to be best" *Desires of Ages* p. 336. By faith we are more than conquerors in Jesus. It is my desire that I embrace such a faith, don't you?

APPENDIX C

LESSONS

Spiritualism in Eschatological Events (E. G. White's Views)

Ellen G. White views the issue of spiritualism, which is the ability to commune with the dead, as one of the great things the devil will make use of in deceiving people for the last time in the history of humankind. Therefore any cherished thought that the dead can do the living harm or good may be very deceptive to the soul.

SATAN'S DEMONIC PAROUSIA

In revelation 16:14, we read of the three demonic Spirits, which go out “performing signs.” In Revelation 13 also we read about “great signs, even making fire come down from heaven.” And in 2Thess. 2:9, 10, the Apostle Paul warned that before Christ’s coming the “lawless one” would come with “pretended signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception.”

When Jesus was on earth He too worked signs and wonders. His motive was to help us believe in Him, and believing have eternal life (John 20:30, 31). To the contrary the demonic spirits work miracles to persuade us to worship the beast and gather us to Armageddon to make war. Ellen White says that beyond causing fire come down from heaven, we do not know what other miracles the demons will perform. Of course their purpose is known it is to lie.

Christ himself warned that, “False Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect,” Matt. 24:24.

SATAN BIGGEST LIE

Ellen White points out that Satan’s biggest lie in the Garden of Eden was, “you will not die” Gen. 3:4. He used it to prove that Eve did not need to obey God. Christ’s greatest miracle was to resurrect Lazarus. She poses a question, “Will one of the demons appear to resurrect the dead, to prove that he is the Christ? Will he appear to talk to the dead, to prove as the Serpent taught, that people don’t really die?”

She concludes this way, “If so, belief in spiritualism is poor preparation for Satan’s final delusions. So too is acceptance of any other concept of the natural immortality of the soul,” Great Controversy p. 444.

Ellen White is trying to put it across that if we cherish any thought suggesting that the dead live in one way or the other, then we are vulnerable to the greatest deception coming our way. Death rituals as defined in this document is just one those means the devil is preparing people for the final deception.

The only one who promised Adam life in disobedience was the great deceiver. And the declaration of the Serpent to Eve in Eden—“ye shall not die” was the first sermon ever preached upon the immortality of the soul. Yet this declaration, resting solely upon the authority of Satan, is echoed from the pulpits of Christendom and is received by the majority of mankind as readily as it was received by our first parents. G.C. P.533.

We cannot but wonder at the strange infatuation which renders men so credulous concerning the words of Satan and so unbelieving in regard to the words of God...Satan bade his angels make effort to inculcate the belief in man’s natural immortality. Ibid. 533, 534.

SATANISM AMONG ALL CLASSES OF PEOPLE

Ellen White warns that this deception knows no boundaries. People of all ranks and status in society are being prepared for the lie. The following quotations address just that.

The prince of darkness, who has long bent the powers of his mastermind to the work of deception, skillfully adapts his temptations to men of all classes and conditions. To persons of culture and refinement he presents spiritualism in its more refined and intellectual aspect, and thus succeeds in drawing many into his snare. An example to this is by honouring the dead with costly and fancy funerals among some “refined” cultures. According to Mayers, one of those writers quoted in this document,

Among the Saibai of Australia, the ceremony of closing the tomb with an elaborate tombstone has produced serious problem in the society, when a person dies all family efforts are turned to saving for the size and style of the tombstone that the family feels will most adequately honor the dead. Young people frequently are forced to put off marriage because of this expense. Some of the young people dutifully wait, hoping that no more deaths will occur before the wedding. Mayors, p. 145. He adds that,

In America, the ritual of death has developed to such a degree that it is vying for second place in competition with the marriage. The funeral is more elaborate than ever with the undertaker handling more and more details, the cost is also increasing. Inner spring mattresses and silk pillows are often included in the preparations for interment.” Mayers .pp. 144-145.

Hamilton commenting on Deut. 14 concludes that “the concern of this chapter is that Israel not only shun the blatantly wicked things (chaps. 12—13), but also the apparently more innocent and innocuous things; showing respect for the dead via a particular gesture...” P. 423.

Ellen White further states that, “It is true that spiritualism is now changing its form and, veiling its objectionable features, is assuming a Christian guise” G.C. p.557.

She concludes it this way,

Those who take refuge in the lies of Satan that, ‘those making covenant with death and an agreement with hell, who renounce the truths which heaven has provided as a defense for the righteous in the day of trouble, and accept the

refuge of lies offered by Satan in its stead—the delusive pretensions of spiritualism’ are included in Isaiah’s prophecy recorded in Isaiah 28:15, 17, 18.

Conclusion: Spiritualism is one of the tools the devil is going to use to deceive many in the closing moments of time. If we are to overcome this deception, we need to not pay attention to his small lies today concerning the dead.

LESSON

ONE OF THE REASONS GOD DROVE OUT CANNANITES

Introduction

God forbade all forms of occultism. He did not allow his children to participate in the worshipping of the dead, neither offering sacrifices unto them. In their journey to the promised land, time and again the children of Israel were tempted by the people they found on the way to worship the occult of the dead. God repeatedly warned them of such an indulgence. Let us consider some of those texts from the Bible.

RITUAL SACRIFICES

The scripture commanded “Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molech, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the LORD” Lev 18:21. Such ritualistic sacrifices were associated with the spiritualistic worship of the dead as depicted in the book of Psalms. A similar account is given here in which the Psalmist quoting Numbers says, “They joined themselves also unto Baalpeor, and ate the sacrifice of the dead” Ps 106:28.

The Bible condemns such practices as associated with the dead. The Psalmist concludes that ritual sacrifices were not in actual sense offered to the dead, but by so doing they were sacrificing to “**Demons**” Ps 106:37. The Lord disdained other

offerings to the dead too. When Moses instructed Israel to be faithful to God and never to take any portion of the offering belonging to God under any circumstances, he urged them to be able to say: ***“I have not eaten any of the sacred portion while I was mourning, nor have I removed any of it while I was unclean, nor have I offered any of it to the dead.*** I have obeyed the LORD my God; I have done everything you commanded me” **Deut 26:14**. In other words as Lutzer observes, “God considers all forms of occultism an abomination.”

Moses commanded: Let no-one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or cast spells or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. ***Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you. (Deut. 18:10-12).***

Lutzer further observes that, “The King James Version actually, translates the word medium as those who have ‘familiar spirits’ (Lev. 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deut. 18:11), suggesting the familiarity some demons have with individuals.” Familiarity with demons which pretend to be the spirits of the dead and consultation of the same is strictly prohibited in the Bible: “When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people enquire of their God? Why consult the dead for the living? ***To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn,***” **Is. 8:19-20**. The law forbidding any form of communion with the dead was so severe in the Pentateuch that someone found involved in it was decreed to die: ***“Do not allow a sorceress to live,” Ex. 22:18.***

Paul, in the New Testament, echoes the words of the Psalmist that sacrifices offered to idols by pagan worship are actually offered to demons. Writing to believers at the Corinthian church he states: “Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who

eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? *No, but sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons” 1Cor. 10:18-20.*

LESSON

THE STATE OF THE DEAD (SOUL)

Introduction

One of the reasons why people are so confused about the issue of the dead is failure to understand their state. Mankind was created out of the ground and God breathed in his nostrils the breath of life and he became the living being. Therefore death is the disintegration of the body (soil) and the breath of life (pneuma). Neither of these can exist on their own as an entity and be aware of its existence. Out of the ground God created mankind (Gen. 2:7).

What is so confusing to most people is the issue of the soul. Does a soul exist on its own? Does it reason like a human being? In today’s lesson in the next two periods we want to consult the experts of the Hebrew language to help us understand.

The general understanding of the dead is that they “know nothing,” and that “Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun” (Eccl. 9:5, 6). The Psalmist adds that, “Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing” (Ps. 146:3). Brown affirms that, “In the OT thought death means the final end of man’s existence (2Sam. 12:15).

SOUL

Let us look at how VanGemeren considers the usage of the term soul in the

Bible:

1. (Nepes), breath, life, desire. Comparable roots in Ugar. and Akk. Confirm the basic biblical meaning for nepes to be “breath” (as do the three verbal instances, Exodus 23:12; 31: 17; 2Sam. 16:14).
2. Care should be taken not to import a Greek paradigm of psychology to nepes; though at times in its over 700 appearances it refers to the inner person, it seldom denotes a “soul” in any full sense.
3. Initially, it means the literal breath of both animals (Gen. 1:20-30; 7:22, nesama) and humans (2:7; Ps. 107:5; 1Kgs. 17:17, nesama). Since breath is tantamount to life itself, nepes essentially means “life” on numerous occasions, eg., Gen. 9:5, “I will require the nepes of man;” (also in 2Sam 23:17).
4. ***The relationship of breath and life is taken a semantic step farther when nepes is used to denote the living being itself, eg., Lev 4:2, “If a person (nepes) sins...”*** (Josh 11:14, nesama). In this sense nepes becomes a synecdoche, representing the total person, both one’s physical and nonphysical composition.
5. ***In fact, nepes is so identified with the whole person that ironically it can denote a non breathing corpse! (eg., Lev. 21:11 “nor shall he approach any dead nepes”).*** This identity of nepes with the entire person gives the word its frequent function as a reference to self, eg., Ps 7:2 [3], “or they will tear me (nepes) like a lion”; Lev 26:11, “I (my nepes) will not abhor you.”
6. In some cases nepes stands for ***the inner person rather than the entire individual, nepes represents the desire and inclinations of animals and humans***. Perhaps the panting breath that is associated with intense desire is the reason for this nuance in nepes.... ***These desires range from the sexual drive of a wild donkey in heat (Jer 2:24), to the physical appetite (Prov 23:2; Eccl 6:7), to the holy preferences of those who love God with their “heart... nepes and...strength” (Deut 6:5).”***

Writing on the same (the soul), Doukhan adds:

Another implication of the creation of man in Gen 2:7 is that man is conceived as a whole. Man became a living nephesh (soul). Thus it would be inappropriate to say that man has a soul; man is a soul. The Hebrew conception of man makes no room for a dualistic theory of man. The word nephesh which is commonly translated by “soul” implies in fact all functions of man, spiritual, mental, emotional, as well as physical. The nephesh can be hungry (Ps 107:9; Deut 12:20), thirsty (P143:6), satisfied (Jer 31:14), enjoy good food (Isa 55:2); it can also love (Gen 34:3; Song of songs 1:7), can be troubled (Ps 31:9), cry (Ps 119:20), make research (Lam 3:25), know (Ps 139:14), be wise (Prov 3:22), worship and praise God (103:1; Ps 146:1).

Conclusion:

The concept of dualism therefore, came with Greek philosophy and cannot be confused with the Clear Word of God. In the Bible man is conceived as a single entity comprising of clay and the spirit of God. So long as the two remain together man is a living soul. The disintegration of the same result in death and neither of the two can stand alone.

LESSON TRADITIONS

Introduction

Jesus had tough times with people of his day. They held onto traditions at the expense of God's divine law. In most cases if unchecked traditions tend to take the place of divine law. In the book of Matthew 15:3, Jesus answered the leaders of his day, "But he answered and said unto them, why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" Jesus was answering to the question leaders asked him concerning traditions of elders.

TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS

Each race holds some traditions and customs normally passed on to them by their elders. These if they are in harmony with the revealed word o God, do not pose any danger but if they contradict God's word, then they need to be discarded. There are these traditions and customs which have no biblical support, which lead people to dishonor their God.

Let us cite some of these traditions and customs: Here members to mention a few of these.

Then on the list we can as well include death rituals as defined in this document. They have no Biblical support and yet they receive massive support by the people. Jeremiah in his day referred to such customs as “Vain”. ***Jeremiah 10:3***. The fact that some custom has been in practice for a longtime does not necessarily mean that it is a valid one. In His day Jeremiah, people used to curve out of the trees their gods and simply because they did this for a long time did not turn those idols into real gods. These rituals are customs of the people who are actually heathens and as such are vain. The truth is God’s word has a test all these. The prophet Isaiah pointed that whatever people believe and do should be tested ***“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,” Isaiah 8:20.***

CONCLUSION

Traditions and customs should always be in line with God’s law otherwise they don’t deserve our recognition. Traditions even in the days of Jesus were the source of conflict between him and the leaders of the people of his days. The customs of the people in most cases are of pagan origin and as such contradict God’s law. Those who have been liberated by God’s grace need to move by faith and not by sight.

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- 1998 August—2002 June..... Theology Student Solusi University
- 2002 June—2004Pastor for Kasama Mission District
- 2005—2007 FebruaryNorth Zambia Field Personal Ministries Director
- 2007 February—JulyPastor for Mpika Mission District
- 2007 July—2009New North Zambia Field Stewardship Director
- 2010—2014Pastor for Mbala West Mission District
- 2015—Pastor for Kasama East Mission District