

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Masters of Arts in Pastoral Theology

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH AND ITS STRATEGIES TO COUNTER THE INFLUENCE OF NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN RANGWE CHURCH, KENYA

Researcher: Anuro Mark Ng'ong'a

Faculty Advisor: Eriks Galenieks, PhD

Date Completed: June 2016

The Seventh-day Adventist Church members were influenced to join New Religious Movements (NRMs) which had recent origin but were not part of Missionary churches that came from the Western World. Rangwe Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church faced the challenge of losing members every year as a result of the charismatic influence of these movements.

After a serious study of the factors that led to the wide spread increase of these movements, the researcher developed a strategy that would counter the charismatic influence of NRMs in Rangwe SDA Church.

The Bible, E. G. White sources, other Adventist and non-Adventist sources were also reviewed. One hundred and thirty-seven (137) Sabbath school members and one hundred and ninety-five (195) regular church members, both male and female adults of 26 and above years, and male and female youths of 17 to 25 years were

visited and interviewed in their homes. Questionnaires were used to collect data on the influence of the NRMs. The results showed that a majority of the members were not equipped with the tools for spiritual growth. Some regular church members also continued to practice traditional beliefs and customs.

The project was implemented to empower the church leadership for service to effectively guide church member. The project was evaluated after eleven months from its implementation and was found to have been successful. This study recommends therefore, that church leaders should develop a complete lifestyle for every area of the church and include strategies to counter the influence of NRMs by giving detailed prescriptions for the time scheduled, regular leadership training, and promotion techniques. Newly baptized members should be engaged in in-depth Bible study, discipleship, and nurture. This would help them become true Disciples of Christ.

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH AND ITS STRATEGIES TO
COUNTER THE INFLUENCE OF NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN
RANGWE CHURCH, KENYA

A project
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

by

Anuro Mark Ng'ong'a


June 2015

THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH AND ITS STRATEGIES TO
COUNTER THE INFLUENCE OF NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN
RANGWE CHURCH, KENYA

A project
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

by
Anuro Mark Ng'ong'a

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:



Advisor: Eriks Galenieks, PhD

Dean, Theological Seminary
Sampson Nwaomah, PhD



Reader: Rowland C. Nwosu, DMiss

Extension Centre: AUA Main Campus, Nairobi

Date: January 2016

Dedicated to our first born child, Darlene Sifiwe

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Study	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Study	2
Significance of the Study	2
Delimitation	2
Methodology of the Study	3
2. THE ORIGIN OF NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS	5
The Origin.....	5
Definition and Meaning of the Term New Religious Movement.....	6
Historical Background of NRMs	6
The Growth of NRMs	7
They Answered the Local People’s Needs	8
They Africanize their Worship Style	9
They Use Cultural Syncretism Approach	10
Causes of New Religious Movements	11
Religious Causes	12
Characteristics of NRMs.....	14
Charismatic Leader	14
Live Under Shadow of the Mother Church.....	14
Prophecy and Supernatural Experience	15
Faith- Healing	15
The Negative Influence of New Religious Movements.....	15
Healing the Sick through Prayers	16
Casting out Demons	17
Prophesying and Seeing Evil Deeds in People’s Lives	18
Maintain Traditional African World View	18
The Church to Counter the Influence of NRMs.....	19
The Role of the Pastor.....	20
Helping New Members to Stay on Board	23
Members to Care for Others	26
Home Evangelism.....	27

Hospitality Evangelism	28
Creating a Family-Friendly Church	28
The Role of the Adventist Church in Dual Allegiance	29
High View of the Scripture	30
Awareness	31
Information	32
Discussion	32
Education	33
Consultation	33
Evaluation	34
Decision	34
Conclusion	35
Scheduled Leadership Training	36
Leadership Seminars	36
Holistic Small Group Activities.....	37
Need-Oriented Home Evangelism	38
Inspiring Worship Service	39
Monitoring, Evaluation, and Results	40
Monitoring	40
Evaluation	41
Results of the Project	43
3. THE SITUATION OF RANGWE SDA CHURCH	48
Membership Register from January 2008 to December 2011	48
Analysis of the Church Business and Board Minute Books	49
Rangwe Church Membership by Home Visitations	52
The Church Board Questionnaire	53
The Questionnaire for Rangwe Church Members	56
Data Collection	56
Results of the Questionnaires.....	58
Assessment of the NRM with More Influence	58
Factors Contributing to the Influence of NRMs	59
The Response	60
4. PROGRAM DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION.....	64
Program Design	64
Empowering Leadership Program	65
Holistic Small Groups.....	66
Need-Oriented Home Evangelism	67
Inspiring Worship Service	67
Implementation of the Strategies	68
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	69
Summary	69
Conclusion	71
Recommendations.....	71

APPENDIXES	73
A. QUESTIONNAIRES	73
B. CORRESPONDENCE	78
BIBLIOGRAPHY	79
VITA	82

LIST OF TABLES

1. Church Membership Register Jan 2008-Dec 2011	48
2. Record of KLC Secretariat Membership Statistical Report.....	49
3. Membership Home Visitation per Group, April 2012	52
4. Members/Group having Bibles, Bible Study Guides and E. G. White Books.....	53
5. Factors Contributing to the Influence of NRMs	54
6. Church Activities to Protect Members from the Influence of NRMs.....	55
7. Commitment to the Study of the Bible	55
8. Factors Contributing to the Influence of NRMs	60

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank God for sustaining me this far as I was doing this study. All glory and honor goes to the Almighty. I also want to appreciate the support I got from my dear wife and our loving daughters Darling and Joyce. My sincere gratitude goes to my dear parents and my brothers for their material and financial support. Much thanks to my Advisor, Dr. Eriks Galenieks, and reader, Dr. Rowland C. Nwosu, for their prayers and encouragement towards the success of the project. Finally, my fellow colleagues: Sammy Adhiambo, George Ogodo, for the advice and material support and Mr. Ken Nyakiti for typesetting and proof reading the project work to make it a success.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The Seventh-day Adventist church in Rangwe District, Kenya Lake Conference consists of twenty congregations, which are located in Rangwe Division in Homa-Bay County, Kenya. It has been observed that membership of these churches has been declining whereas those of the New Religious Movement congregations were increasing in number.

The New Religious Movements that incorporated the African Religio-Cultural Heritage claim to have new approaches to spirituality, namely, they can heal the sick through prayers, cast out demons, see evil deeds in people's lives, and can foretell when death will come in people's homes. Consequently, it was observed that the charismatic influence of New Religious Movements led to the loss of 221 members (14.5 percent) in the entire district at the end of the year 2011.

The most affected church concerning the loss of its members was Rangwe SDA Church situated close to Rangwe urban centre. The church membership records showed that a total of 148 members were lost within a period of four years: 48 members (15.4 percent) were lost at the end of the year 2008; 39 (13.5 percent) at the end of 2009; 30 (10.3 percent) at the end of 2010, and 31 (10.9 percent) at the end of 2011.

Statement of the Problem

The challenge facing Rangwe SDA Church was that during a period of four years, the church had lost a total of 148 members (13.5 percent) as a result of the charismatic influence of New Religious Movements.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to develop a strategy for Rangwe SDA Church that would assist to counter the destructive influence of New Religious Movements and to reduce the apostasy from an average of 13.5 percent per year to 3.5 percent per year.

Significance of the Study

The strategy emphasized the importance of conversion and worldview change among church members. The advancement of the process desired that the church community would be well-grounded doctrinally, having discernment in spiritual matters, and fully equipped to resist the influence of any New Religious Movement. The strategy may also serve as a model to nurturing members not only in Rangwe SDA Church but also in Kenya Lake Conference as a whole.

Delimitation

Although the problem affects most churches in Kenya Lake Conference, this study only dealt with Rangwe SDA Church in Rangwe district, and as well as the New Religious Movements as: Roho Israel Church of God, Msanda Holy Ghost Church of East Africa, Msanda Christ Church of Kenya, Roho Fweny Maler Church, and Legio Maria.

Methodology of the Study

The study was conducted in Rangwe Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kenya Lake Conference. The study began by looking into the background of the church which in turn led to the identification of the problem. Then the program was introduced to the church board and church members. Likewise, the researcher wrote a letter to the Conference administration representatives to inform them of the strategy and to request them to place a global pioneer to help me in the district.

The development of the project involved the review of literature on: New Religious Movement churches, their impact on the Seventh-day Adventist church, counter strategies by the Seventh-day Adventist church, E. G. White sources, SDA and non-SDA authors, and the Bible. The version used in the paper was New International Version (NIV).

The researcher analyzed the church membership records for a period of four years (January 2008 to December 2011) both in the local church and in Kenya Lake Conference. The records were later compared to enable the researcher establish the process of how and why the members were received or dropped within that period.

Further, the researcher conducted a visitation in the church member's homes to establish the actual membership and also to find out whether they have; Bibles, Bible Study Guides, E. G. White books, and do they spend time reading them?

The study also involved the collection of data from the church board members and church members through questionnaires in order to understand and analyze the local situation. Moreover, the research developed a strategy for countering the destructive influence of New Religious Movement in Rangwe Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The strategy was implemented for a period of eleven months from November 2013 to November 2014, leaving out the month of August because of camp meetings. Then, the evaluation of the strategy and the whole program was carried out, summarized through observation and interviews with the church board and church members. In addition, the last home visitation was done in the month of December 2014.

Finally, the results of the project were obtained by comparing data at the beginning and at the end of the project. Then, the study was concluded by summary, conclusion, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

THE ORIGIN OF NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

This chapter explored the origin and the rise of New Religious Movements (NRMs). The intention was to unveil the history and motivation in the birth of New Religious Movements and subsequently dealt with the counterstrategies to the negative influence that was brought about by these churches. The chapter was approached in the following order: the origin, history, growth, causes, and the negative influence of the movements, then finally, the counterstrategies of the SDA church to these influences.

The Origin

N. Nyaundi suggested that the use of the term NRM has its origin in Europe and North American sociological studies, and since then it has spread throughout the Christian world. The usage of this expression became prominent because the groups which were mentioned earlier were new in a sense that stood in a sharp contrast to what was at that time established organizations.¹ Hence, it can be said that they have arisen not only partly as a result of the activities of the western founded missionary churches, but also partly from spontaneous initiative by charismatic African leaders.

¹ Nehemiah Nyaundi, *Introduction to the Study of Religion* (Kenya: Zaft Chancery, 2003), 231.

Definition and Meaning of the Term New Religious Movement

When a religious group comes with a new idea that is not held by another religious movement, then according to *Brahma Kumaris Info Encyclopedia*, it can be defined as: a religious, ethical, or spiritual grouping of fairly recent origin which is not part of an established religion and has not yet become recognized as a standard religious denomination.² Therefore, in order to form such a movement one must have its source as an individual or a specific group of religious people.

The term is currently used in the sociology of religion to refer to non-mainstream groups which differ from mainstream religious bodies. Hence, Nyaundi said, “the term NRM comprises a wide range of movements which range from loose affiliations based on novel approaches to spirituality or religion communitarian enterprises which demand a considerable amount of group conformity and separatism from mainstream society.”³

Historical Background of NRMs

Kenya is one of those East African countries that have many NRMs. The ones considered in this research are found in Western part of Kenya among the Luo community. F. Anekwe pointed out that “in their historical development, scholars tend to identify them in two stages: (1) the prophetic churches, (2) the healing churches.”⁴

² “Brahma Kumaris Info – The Truth about the BKWSU,” accessed 18 August 2012, brahmakumaris.info/w/index.php?title=New_Religious_Movement.

³ Nyaundi, 235.

⁴ Francis A. Oborji, *Towards a Christian Theology of African Religion: Issues of Interpretation and Mission* (Eldoret, Kenya: AMECEA Gaba, 2005), 142.

Together they are called *African Independent Churches* or *African Instituted Churches*—churches which have come out of mission churches, and have no link to mission neither locally nor abroad. In the background of Independent, Oborji states:

The term “Independent” came after Kenya’s independence in the year 1963, when great wave of independent churches arose in the country. There was widespread discontent among [Kenyans], who became convinced that they could take strong advantage of their ancestral history, and wanted to build for themselves a future that would be together, free and founded in their pre-colonial past. This paved the way for naturalistic associations and movements for independence to arise.⁵

Hence, many were formed and continued to grow in all parts of the country. Therefore, it can be said that the origin of the term Independent demonstrates the absence of missionary as it has been removed from the church formation context. The independence was seen in respect to church leadership and self-determination in terms of church formation and nature. This is due to the fact that these churches were founded by Africans within the African context.

An interview with a church elder confirmed that the growth and development of variety of NRMs started in the year 1985 in Rangwe District. They came with their new beliefs and operated according to their own philosophy apart from the existing dominant mission churches which were mainly represented by the Roman Catholic and Seventh-day Adventist churches.⁶

The Growth of NRMs

In Kenya it can be said that the growth of NRMs came as a result of failure of mission churches to deal with the problem originating from African culture. In the

⁵ Ibid., 143.

⁶ Solomon Odongo, First Elder Between 1983-1985, Rangwe SDA Church, interview by the author, Rangwe, 15 May, 2012.

beginning when the first missionaries came, they did not address the difference between African culture and European culture. In Paul Hiebert's view, Christian missionaries to Africa underestimated the problem: "Many missionaries saw traditional religions with their fear of spirits, witchcraft and magical powers as animistic superstitions, and assumed that these would die out as people accepted Christianity and science."⁷

Hence, it has been clearly noted that "mission churches failed to penetrate deep into African religiosity."⁸ What happened was that the Africans went back to their perspective of life which they understood best, so that their needs were met. Below are four major reasons for the growth of NRMs.

They Answered the Local People's Needs

The churches are able to draw a good number into their membership because they claim to address the people's needs which provide way out of the problems of daily life. This they claim by trying to contextualize and Africanize certain Christian teachings in order to suit them to the African context. In their attempt to contextualize, they accommodate rituals in the events of: planting, harvesting, birth, death, and in building a home which is unavoidable in every society.

Besides these rituals are other cultural practices such as polygamous marriages and widows inheritance. Behind many of these rituals is a belief that the dead are changed into spirit, hence can give troubles to members of the clan if they fail to

⁷ Paul Hiebert, "Anthropology of Religion," in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. A. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2000), 68.

⁸ John Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy* (London, UK: Heinemann, 1992), 233.

perform rituals to the dead. The SDA Church condemns these rituals and cultural practices and does not allow Christians to participate in them. However, the SDA Church at Rangwe may understand the rituals and cultural practices and replace them with acceptable Bible-based Christian practices. The Church can also be prepared to provide the basic needs to those who are in need and assist in times of sickness.

Many of Adventist church members get caught up in this belief because they forget what the psalmist said, “The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing” (Ps 145:15, 16).

These churches draw their new members from across every layer of society: male and female, young and old, rich and poor. Hence, N. Nyaundi makes the following conclusion, “the reason for women and youth patronage may be possibly because the groups promise success, prosperity, power, healing, and ideas which women are strangely, often in need of. And the youths are attracted to these movements because of novelty that is manifested in the music, dance, and some of the distinctive mannerism of the key functionaries.”⁹

They Africanize their Worship Style

This means that NRMs borrowed their worship style from African cultural ceremonies, where the greatest interest of enthusiastic members was to participate in some form of celebrations that are accompanied by singing, drums and dances that stimulate people. Thus, this style of worship became attractive, acceptable, and suitable for the Africans. They referred to the Bible where “King David wearing a linen ephod, danced before the Lord with all his might, while he and the entire house

⁹ Nyaundi, 236-237.

of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets” (2 Sam 6:14, 15). But E. G. White comments:

David’s dancing in reverent joy before God has been cited by pleasure lovers in justification of the fashionable modern dancing. . . . Amusements have a tendency to weaken the love for sacred things and lessen our joy in the service of God are not to be sought by Christians. The music and dancing in joyful praise of God at the removal of the ark had not the faintest resemblance to the dissipation of modern dancing. The one tended to the resemblance of God and exalted His holy name. The other is a device of Satan to cause men to forget God and dishonor Him.¹⁰

Marko Kuhn when referring to churches under study, except Legio Maria, found out that, “all these churches use drums, gongs, and dancing. Everybody is free to share before the pastor concludes.”¹¹

The SDA Church should not Africanize their worship services the same way the NRMs do. However, the SDA Church in Rangwe may create time for people to be free to share the word of God. Apart from Sabbath School lesson discussion, time may be set aside for sharing the word and giving testimonies. These times could be during the Sabbath afternoon and during midweek prayers.

They Use Cultural Syncretism Approach

Syncretism is the amalgamation of non-Christian and Christian practices. Syncretism refuses to break with traditional practices whether they agree with the Bible or not. It mixes all practices and calls them Christian. This is done locally by those with deep respect for cultures who do not want to let the Bible seem foreign to

¹⁰ E. G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1958), 707.

¹¹ Marko Kuhn, “From African Consciousness to Sub-Conscious Inculturation: A Study into African Independent Churches (AICs) in Nyanza/Kenya,” (MA Thesis, Sundgauallee Freiburg, Deutschland, 2001), 43, accessed 13 August 2012, http://www.comboni.de/literatur/kuhn_aic_in_nyanza.pdf.

them. Biblical interpretation here recognizes authority in both the Bible and the culture. The best example is the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:22, 23). From this parable, they infer that there is life after death.

When referring to the above approach, Hiebert said, “It overlooks the fact that sin can be found in the cultural practices of society.”¹² Hence, Z. Mathema points out the fact that “being syncretistic has enabled the churches to mushroom all Africa, and they continue to grow.”¹³ This is due to the fact that syncretism tends to accept everything done in African cultures and mixes them with what Christianity accepts without removing anything—whether sinful or not. Consequently, F. Anekwe also indicates that, there is a possibility for syncretism to arise because NRMs consider it impossible for Western-established churches to give valid answers to daily problems. This is the great challenge, which evangelization and enculturation of the Christian faith in Africa face today.¹⁴

The principle of contextualization that will help in the process is critical contextualization. This is the process the local Churches can use to critically examine every cultural practice in the light of the Bible before it can be rejected as evil or accepted as good.

Causes of New Religious Movements

In the Bible, Christ prayed for the unity of all believers, “that all of them may be one, Father just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the

¹² Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 185.

¹³ Zacchaeus Mathema, “The African Worldview: A Serious Challenge to Christian Discipleship,” *Ministry*, October 2007, 19.

¹⁴ Francis A. Oborji, *Trends in African Theology since Vatican II: A Missiological Orientation* (Kenya: AMECEA Gaba, 2005), 45.

world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one” (John 17:21, 22). Despite this prayer, NRMs, apart from splitting from mission churches, continue to split even among themselves. There are many and various causes for the separation, but here are mentioned only few of them:

Religious Causes

Among the religious causes, two main factors are to be considered:

Receiving Dreams and Visions. An individual may claim to have seen a vision or dream. Thus an individual has received the information concerning what to do and how to do it. John Kasyoka said this when he referred to Legio Maria:

Legio Maria of Africa church in a moment split from Roman Catholic Church in 1962. It sprang from devout devotee to the devotion to Mary the mother of Jesus, devotion referred to as the Legio of Mary. The two leaders associated with the group are Simeon Ondeto and Gaudensia Aoko. Simeon was a catechist before joining Legio Maria. It is said that one time Gaudensia Aoko started receiving messages from Jesus and our lady, in dreams and visions. The message was that she should start an African church to be called “Mary Legio.”¹⁵

The church continued to uphold Catholic sacrament and teachings. However, there are a few exceptions, like removing shoes when entering a holy place and casting out demons. They also offer prayers for the sick and those who have lost money or other properties.

Encounter with God. In this case a leader who was the founder of the church, claims to have had an encounter with God who told him what to do. The best example

¹⁵ John M. M. Kasyoka, *An Introduction to Philosophy of Religion* (Kenya: Kijabe Press, 2008), 125.

here was Roho Revelation which split from Msanda Holy Ghost church of East Africa.¹⁶

Leadership Wrangles. People tend to disagree when leaders are chosen. Sometimes in their meeting, the leaders may disagree on an issue, which results in division that prompts the other leader and his followers to leave the present church and start another one.

The best examples here are the following: Roho Israel church of God split from African Nineveh church, Msanda Christian church of Kenya split from Msanda Holy Ghost church of East Africa, Roho Fweny Maler church split from Roho Fweny church.¹⁷

The Bible Translation. This has been another source of confusion because people feel they could read and interpret the Bible in vernacular as the spirit leads them. Hence, all who can read will always get time to encourage the people with the word from the Bible. E. E. Uzukwu affirmed:

In the Independent churches, the translated version of the Bible has encouraged people not only to use African languages in their liturgical celebrations, but also to choose local liturgical hymns rhymed by the sound of drums, gongs and other native instruments; handclapping, rhythmic movement of the body and dance. ...Until now, these are the elements that have enlivened liturgy in the African sense of worship.¹⁸

Deprivation. This is a case when people think they are being ignored and not getting their personal reward, attention, respect, economically, socially, or even psychologically. Hence, they separate themselves from the church to form a NRM.

¹⁶ Kuhn, 43.

¹⁷ Ibid., 12, 30, 40.

¹⁸ E. Elochukwu Uzukwu, *Worship as Body Language: Introduction to Christian Worship: An African Orientation* (Collegeville, MN: Pueblo Book, 1997), 271.

This happens when there is division between higher and lower class of people. It also happens to individuals who feel they don't measure up to the standard in their present churches. Herbert and his counter parts support this fact when they said that,

Most new religions are born as folk movements among the oppressed and lower class people who see in them new avenues of hope. At this stage their movements must define their identity in the context of the larger community of which they are part, and they generally do so by attacking the older religion as dead, and by claiming to be the true religion.¹⁹

Characteristics of NRMs

Charismatic Leader

NRMs are dependent on the leader, who is charismatic, absolute, and authoritative who is the founder of the group. This leader starts his/her ministry using the prophetic healing kind of style. Based on this kind of ministry, the leader who also calls himself/herself a visionary (*jaulo*) leader, attracts people to his/her church and seeks recognition during public events. This leader also requires rich people to join the church by becoming its members.

Live Under Shadow of the Mother Church

The teachings, the way services are conducted, dress, and even the leadership roles are drawn from the mother church. The best examples are Roho Israel from Israel Nineveh and Msanda church from Roho Holy Ghost church. The only difference is the thing which made them come out.

¹⁹ Paul G. Hierbert, R. Daniel Shaw and Tite Tienou, *Understanding Folk Religion: A Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990), 333.

Prophecy and Supernatural Experience

Among the signs that prove that one has been called to be a prophet or a leader, is one's capacity to have visions, speak in strange language, have dreams, hear extraordinary voices and receive the power of healing and prophesy of the coming events. Hence, Ndiokwere indicated that,

The prophetic leader is respected by his/her followers because of his/her ability to manifest supernatural signs which go together with the phenomenon of a so-called "spirit possession." To his/her followers the prophet (ess)—leader is a man/woman of God. His/her oracles are authentic because God speaks through them. This is why in some of these churches members struggle to acquire or pretend to have these qualities of prophetic leadership.²⁰

Faith-Healing

Most of African Independent churches practice faith-healing. This is why they place stress on "faith" and its impact on the suffering person. "There is absolute faith in God because the ordinary African looks for the solution to almost all his/her problems in religion. Here too he/she absolutely depend on God as his/her final refuge."²¹

They also claim that once you have faith you can worship in any church, but in actual sense they mainly refer to their church. Therefore, they influence many people who need healing to join them.

The Negative Influence of New Religious Movements

It is true that most of the SDA church members, though still in the local church, uphold their traditional religion. They also believe that God is one, thus, He

²⁰ Nathaniel Ndiokwere, *Prophecy and Revolution: The Role of Prophets in the Independent African Churches in Biblical Tradition* (London, UK: SPCK, 1996), 77.

²¹ A. O. Iwuagwu, *The New Religious Movements: Their Dynamics and Psycho-Analysis* (Owerri, Nigeria: n.p., 1975), 20.

can be worshiped anywhere. Hence, they concentrate on searching for what is good, obtain practical and quick results, and protect themselves from evil. That is why some end up being influenced by NRMs.

Healing the Sick through Prayers

These churches are grounding their belief especially on Jesus' directive to the disciples, "heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons" (Matt 10:1, 8; Luke 10:19; Mark 6:7). Hence, their churches are made, both as prayer centers of healing and worship places. Oborji said, "Some scholars say that among the African, most illness are psychological and spiritual origin. . . . They also say that evil spirits are responsible for the problems within one's body, such as headache and stomach-ache."²²

Hence, some of the SDA members who fail to take their patients to a hospital rush to these churches to be prayed for. And when the sick gets healed, they are caused to join the NRMs. Unfortunately, too often they are Adventist believers who ignore a warning given by the church. E. G. White warned, "Satan will work miracles. He will make people sick, and then will suddenly remove from them his satanic power. They will then be regarded as healed. These works of apparent healing will bring Seventh-day Adventists to the test."²³

SDA Churches cannot be centered on prayers and healing where people come and stay for weeks or months to be prayed for. This is because illness and other human sufferings offer a privileged time of prayers for church members or

²² Oborji, 149.

²³ E. G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958), 2:53.

individuals. Members are to obtain God's grace, to be able to faithfully accept God's will and also to pray for healing.

This is not discerned by NRMs who believe in the African worldview that explains ultimate reality and life in terms of spirit rather than flesh. Hence, prayers and healing in these churches is a negative influence. The SDA Churches agree with the post-enlightenment worldview which is based on the belief that sickness needs a scientific proof and explanation as well as prayers in the church, hospital, or at home. This is what the SDA Church can teach church members as well as NRMs. What we can learn from the NRMs is how to constantly be close to our members especially in times of problems and difficulties.

Casting out Demons

According to Owusu-Antwi, Satan and demons are real supernatural beings and that demon-possession is also real.²⁴ Therefore, in the NRMs, there is a belief that Satan and demons live together with people, that is why they may be rebuked wherever they are. If someone is demon-possessed, the evil spirits may be driven out in the name of Jesus.

NRMs claim that Jesus drove out demons with a word or command (Matt 8:16, Luke 4:36, Mark 1:27); that He rebuked demons (Luke 4:41; 9:42; Matt 17:18); and that He also laid His hands on the victims of the demon-possessed after pronouncing the relief (Luke 13:12-13). Demons were obedient to the seventy disciples in Jesus name (Luke 10:17) and were driven out. The apostle Paul commanded evil spirits to leave the girl in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 16:18).

²⁴ B. Owusu-Antwi, "Demon and Demonic Activities in the Bible," in *The Church, Culture and Spirit: Adventism in Africa*, ed. K. Donkor (Silver Springs, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2011), 66.

Thus, the testimony of the Bible is clear on demon-possession and casting out demons.

Therefore, NRMs invite people who are demon-possessed to come and get healed. Some of the SDA members who have children or a relative who has sickness, resorts to these churches with a hope of getting healed quickly.

Prophesying and Seeing Evil Deeds in People's Lives

Messages which come in the form of vision and dreams are given prominence. More often they promise to be problem-solving avenues, because they address commonly known areas that trouble most people, for example, finances, health, relationships and spirituality.

The leaders of these churches refer to Paul who was warned by another prophet (Acts 21:10, 11). They tell people to bring their cares, worries, needs and aspirations to God. They prophesy what will happen in the future, see evil deeds in the life of one's neighbors or relatives and in other people's lives and testify to what they have done to others.²⁵ Because of these various manifestations some of our church members get influenced and join these churches.

Maintain Traditional African World View

These churches, Z. Mathema said, "By in-cooperating the African religion cultural heritage, have demonstrated that it helped to attempt to reach the traditional African at the core of their being."²⁶ At the core of every person's being lies the world

²⁵ Once a member confessed to the writer of this paper; that she one time killed a neighbor's cow through giving a polythene paper mixed with soap and kept it secret. But when her daughter was sick and went to be prayed for, the Prophet told her to go and confess to her neighbor that sin first and only then would she be prayed for.

²⁶ Mathema, 5.

view that constitutes what Charles H. Kraft writes about the “control box” of culture that determines thinking, acting or doing, and determining values.”²⁷

The concerns of these churches are the same, as in the traditional African belief system, hence Frans Verstraelen, came up with two basic points: “The first is to make life possible and to sustain it – which explains the concern about fertility and food. The second has to do with finding solution for that which disturbs life. Setbacks, illness, death, and all forms of suffering must be dealt with and powers to counteract these are necessary. Bad magic, demon possession, sorcery, and witchcraft are among the mystical powers that should be counteracted and overcome.”²⁸

It is easy to note that traditional Africans joyfully received the Gospel; however, they are not fully converted yet, their life relapses to the above traditional beliefs when life gets difficult, as they search for power to alleviate sufferings.

Sometimes it happens that one attends worship at NRMs churches on Sunday and again at SDA churches on Sabbath days. At times, when caught and disciplined, they rebel and fully join these churches to meet their needs.

The Church to Counter the Influence of NRMs

Although the Adventist church is one of the fastest growing denominations in Kenya especially in the Western part of the country, in the southern region of Lake Victoria, we also experience growth-related challenges such as a lack of a well-organized follow-up after public evangelism and pasturing. We have pastors

²⁷ Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity and Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 44.

²⁸ Frans J. Verstraelen, *Christianity in a New Key: New Voices and Vistas through Intercontinental Communication* (Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1996), 74.

shepherding fifteen, twenty, and even twenty two churches. Hence, when faced with problems, some members turn to their culture, traditional beliefs and worldview, and thus become easily influenced to join NRMs. The following counterstrategies must be put in place to curb the NRM influence.

The Role of the Pastor

A vital role of any pastor's work is shepherding the flock. This is done by doing the following: teaching church members how to pray, how to study the Bible, how to live for Christ, and how to share their faith. But with so many pressures from the conference leaders, so much administrative responsibilities, so much promotion, such heavy demands and his time limitations, a pastor with many churches may feel that at times shepherding may be omitted.

Many forget that their first calling is to nurture their own hearts and spiritual vitality as the foundation of both their life and ministry. As a result, they lose passion for ministry and easily feel disconnected from their calling. Since the pastor must not allow himself to break under the load, he can carefully evaluate this problem and try to solve it. John Rhodes gives this comment:

Many pastors have found...there are ways for a minister to do both his shepherding and promotion successfully. There are little thoughtful things a minister should do if he wishes to build up good relationship with his church members. However, some of these acts of thoughtfulness are worth almost as much if performed by proxy. For example, a visit by an elder may mean almost as much as one by the pastor, if the person visited knows it was motivated by a pastor's thoughtfulness.²⁹

Therefore, in larger districts, the pastor can empower leaders and ensure that they are focused on equipping believers for ministry. Since this leads to spirituality of

²⁹ John Rhodes, *Success Secrets for Pastors* (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1995), 95.

leaders and church members, the pastor would in turn check if the spiritual life of the church members is characterized by passion. He can also with the help of church elders see to it that holistic small groups are formed to address the life issues of their members. These are qualities that all growing churches have which lead to enhanced visitations to the members in all situations.

Pastoral Visitation. God has given pastors the responsibilities of shepherding His flock. Paul says, “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood (Acts 20:28). “Home visitation is important for both pastors and their people: for people because they need to know that their pastor care; for pastors because they need to know how their people live during the week.”³⁰ Nothing helps pastors understand their congregation than visits in their homes. It allows them to see firsthand the needs and pressures they face.

E. G. White comments,

Remember that a minister’s work does not consist merely in preaching and [chaining boards]. He is to visit families in their homes to pray with them, and to open to them scriptures. He who does faithful work outside the pulpit will accomplish tenfold more than he who confines his labor to the desk.³¹

Visiting the Sick and the Bereaved. The sick both at home and in the hospital needs visitation. Some of the church members who are not able to get to the hospital tend to visit traditional medicine men and others go to the NRMs for prayers

³⁰ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, *Seventh-day Adventist Minister’s Manual* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1992), 149.

³¹ E. G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 9:124.

and healing. Hence, Jonas Arrais said, “Visiting the sick is an important pastoral responsibility and privilege. In physically challenging moments, people are doubly blessed when [pastors] visit them.”³²

When visited before and after the funeral, the bereaved are helped to readjust to life’s problems. They also feel cared for by their fellow church members together with the pastor; especially when the church offered some assistance needed. In spite of some possible frustrations the members experience at times, visiting the bereaved can be a rewarding experience in ministry if well planned.

Visiting the New Converts. This is very important after public evangelism. It encourages the converts not to miss their happy class lessons and Sabbath services. After baptism it enables them to learn more of the word and stand firm in faith. Arrais said, “New members are in great need of direction and pastoral care. Frequent visit may be necessary to help disciple them. Time spent with them is never wasted.”³³

Visiting Missing Members. A well-planned program can be put in place right from Sabbath school action units and by the elders of small groups. Moses organized Israel into small groups of ten (Exod 18:25). Jesus chose a group of twelve and spent most of his ministry with them. Hence, those who are not regularly attending, no matter what is the reason, would be easily reached. These visits shows that we still care and can encourage some of them to return.

Pastoral Prayers. Pastors are leaders of God’s household. They should always remember what Jesus said, “It is written, my house will be called a house of

³² Jonas Arrais, *Wanted, A Good Pastor: The Characteristics, Skills, and Attitudes Every Effective Church Leader Needs* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Ministerial Association, 2011), 81.

³³ *Ibid.*, 81.

prayer” (Matt 21:13). He did not call it a house of preaching or a house of praise. He called it a house of prayer. “Preaching and praise can never really begin or have any effect without a foundation of fervent prayer. Preaching, praise, and worship must be preceded by prayer.”³⁴

As Paul prayed to the Thessalonians, “We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers” (1 Thess 1:2); the same way, every pastor needs a church directory to pray for. Several times a week, if not daily, he can go through the names and pray for each member. He may ask God’s guidance, protection, and blessing for each one. As Aiden Wilson once said, “As a minister, no man has a right to preach for a crowd that he has not prayed for.”³⁵

Helping New Members to Stay on Board

Conversion is a process, not an event. Therefore, assimilating new members into active participation in the life and experience of any congregation becomes a challenge. This can give another direction of including of such aspects as, the budget, nurturing new members and developing disciples. This is necessary before the work of shepherding is left to the pastor.

Nurturing New Members. The church must accept and fulfill responsibility for new believers. Billy Graham, when referring to Paul, said,

The apostle Paul spoke of his paternal relationship with the Corinthians. Paul had fatherly concern for them that others could not possess (1 Cor 4:14, 15). He mentioned an active communication with them, giving instructions about how they should live, serve, and teach in the church. As the human instrument who had led them into God’s family, Paul looked beyond short-term results to growth, maturity, and true reproduction in their lives. He also described his

³⁴ Ibid., 43.

³⁵ Aiden Wilson Tozer, *Tragedy in the Church: The Missing Gifts* (St. Peabody, MA: Wingspread, 1990), 62.

ministry to new converts as that of a nurse who affectionately, gently, and faithfully cares for her children. (1 Thess 2:7)³⁶

Jesus compares the expansion of the kingdom through human conversions to the process by which a seed is planted, germinates, sprouts, matures, and bears fruit. He said, “This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seeds on the ground. Night and day whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produce grains—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head” (Mark 4:26-28).

When referring to Christ’s explanation James Cress said, “This is process. This takes time. This moves beyond event and concentrates on eventuality. Not only the decision, but what will come out of the decision? What will the end result be? To an age that demands instantaneous results, the scripture demands long-term process.”³⁷

Therefore when budgeting for public evangelism, this process cannot be left to the pastor alone, especially those with many churches. It would be better if the budget for employing a global pioneer to nurture the new members two or three years is put in place. This is just for the sake of their spiritual development. Hence, J. Cress concludes,

Failure to view conversion as entire process which includes awareness and investigation, instruction and indoctrination, decision and baptism, and, perhaps most importantly, assimilation and discipleship, is a failure both to understand our Lord’s teaching and example.³⁸

³⁶ Billy Graham, *A Biblical Standard for Evangelists* (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1984), 110-111.

³⁷ James A. Cress, *You Can Keep Them If You Care: Helping Members Stay on Board*, (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, 2000), 25.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

The great commission stated in (Matt 28:19, 20) called the disciples to do what Christ had done. They were to make disciples. A commentator said, “This is the primary emphasis of Matthew 28:19. Making disciples is the main verb of the verse. The other verbs- going, baptizing, and teaching- are subordinates. The Greek word for ‘disciple’ is *matheteuo* meaning a follower, a learner. The disciples were followers of Jesus and learners from Him.”³⁹

Hence, it means more than mental acknowledgement of God’s supremacy or even more acceptance of Jesus Christ. It is a group work—the entire church. This means all members are to be involved in the walk of following their Master and learning from Him.

Developing Disciples. The apostle John said, “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the father and with his son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3). This means that the transformation of life into the image of Christ is personal but not private. It is individual, but always in the context of a community of faith. That is why G. Sweazey said, “a person who has decided to take Christ as Lord is not by lightning from heaven suddenly given the knowledge and habits that a Christian needs. Only the Holy Spirit can make a person a Christian, but the Spirit works through the church, both in calling and the establishing.”⁴⁰

Developing disciples as a method of caring for new members within the context of the congregation is therefore a distinctive feature of growing churches. You

³⁹ Myron S. Ausberger, “Matthew,” in *The Communicator’s Commentary*, ed. Lloyd J. Ogilvie (Waco, TX: Word Publishing, 1982), 330.

⁴⁰ George E. Sweazey, *The Church as Evangelist* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1978), 194.

will realize that churches grow when people demonstrate relevance of the church to the challenges of everyday life.

This is essential and that it must happen within the church. The church must consistently explore, describe, and demonstrate the relevance of the Christian faith for people. Hence, when emphasizing faith G. Barna said “unless adults understand in real ways how and why Christianity is meaningful to life today, they will not make the kind of commitment that faith requires.”⁴¹ And this would be reflected in the life of the young people.

Therefore, all are called to go and make disciples—not to wait; to preach—not to be quiet; and to teach—not to be inactive. Jesus emphasized that the church, and this means every single believer as part of the church, has been called to be a co-worker with Him, working for the redemption of people lost in their sins.

The church is called to bring individuals to belief and to discipleship—this is the bottom line. Similarly, Z. Mathema concludes: “People who accept Christ must be helped to grow in Him and to cherish His new values in ways that supplant aberrant spiritualistic tendencies. They must also be rooted in an authentic Christian spirituality and anchored from the solid Rock, Jesus Christ.”⁴²

Members to Care for Others

Once the church has completed its duty of discipling, every member should be able to find it necessary to be involved in the ministry. Hence, they may have different methods of labor, and find access to different hearts. Likewise E. G. White

⁴¹ George Barna, *User Friendly Churches* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1991), 72.

⁴² Mathema, 19.

said, “God’s workmen must be many sided men. . . . They are not to be one-sided men, stereotyped in their manner of working, unable to see that their advocacy of truth must vary with the class of people among whom they work and circumstances they have to meet.”⁴³ Therefore, apart from public evangelism, home and hospitality evangelism may also be encouraged among members.

Home Evangelism

First of all, this should encourage our mission in our homes. The first usage of the resources may be seen in our Christian homes as the means for the salvation of our families. Hence, members can be trained and encouraged to do home evangelism, first to their homes, then to other people’s homes, since the mission of the home extends beyond its own members. This would encourage commitment of living a Christian life in every home. The Christian home then becomes an object lesson, illustrating the excellence of the true principle of spiritual life. Such illustration will be a power for good in the community. When referring to such goodness, David and Vera Mace suggest,

[The] Christian home is, in fact, by far the most powerful evangelizing agency in the [community]. . . . It proclaims its message not by words, but by deeds. It does not tell others what they should be; it shows them what they could be. By their gracious influence, Christian homes win more converts than all the preachers put together.⁴⁴

When we have enough families reaching other families, very few would have a tendency to apostate; for churches can rise to the higher levels only as their homes do the same.

⁴³ E. G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1915), 119.

⁴⁴ David Mace and Vera Mace, *In the Presence God: Reading for Christian Marriage* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1985), 113.

Hospitality Evangelism

The importance of hospitality is evident throughout Scripture: Abraham and Sarah (Gen 18:1-8); Rebecca and her family (Gen 24:15-20, 30-33); Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-9). Hospitality meets another's needs for rest, food and fellowship. Jesus also attached theological significance to hospitality, when He taught that feeding the hungry and giving drinks to the thirsty were acts of service done to Him (Matt 25:34-40).

True hospitality comes from the heart of individuals who have been taught by God's love and long to give tangible expression to that love in action. Hence, E. G. White affirms, "Go to your neighbors one by one, and come close to them till their hearts are warmed by your unselfish interest and love. Sympathize with them, pray with them, watch for opportunities to do well, and as you can gather a few together and open the word of God for their darkened minds."⁴⁵

Therefore, hospitality need not be a gift which only few people possess. May God help His church to remove the barriers that often separate people from the families around!

Creating a Family-Friendly Church

This is a church that cares for every member: a church that makes ministry family-centered and church supported, a church where even the invalid, instead of constantly requiring sympathy, seek to impart it. A church where everyone acts together in support of a member who is in need or fall into sin.⁴⁶ This will fulfill what

⁴⁵ E. G. White, *Welfare Ministry* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1952), 64.

⁴⁶ A widow, who was once a regular church member but joined NRMs, testified to the writer that: she was a member of the SDA church in regular standing

Paul said to the Galatians, “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal 6:1, 2).

In like manner Isaiah points out, “Is it not to share your food with the hungry, and that to provide a poor wanderer with a shelter—when you see the naked, to cloth him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?” (Isa 58:7). The texts call for good deeds that are twice a blessing, benefiting both the giver and the receiver of the kindness.

Therefore, the church should be aware of the spiritual, emotional, physical and social needs of its members and others in contact with the church community, and seek to meet these needs where it is appropriate. It would also be a church that actively involves adults and children of all ages in the activity of helping others.

So while prayer is offered for the sorrowful ones, all may be encouraged to try to help those needier than themselves. By doing this the darkness would be dispelled from their hearts and people would forget self in their interest for others. Hence, there is a need to encourage all members of the congregation to have positive attitude towards each other.

The Role of the Adventist Church in Dual Allegiance

Dual allegiance referred to in this paper results in syncretism that allows for the blending of non-Christian or cultural beliefs and practices with the teaching of the

but it happened that her son became a thief. As time went by, the son was caught and jailed. This incident was known by everybody in the village but no church member came to see or to pray with her until she and her son’s wife left the church. Due to this experience, she believed that worshipping in Seventh-day Adventist church is better only when one is not going through a problem.

Bible. This symptom can be impacted through a more thorough grounding in the word of God, so that cultural issues facing the local people can be discussed and be impacted by Biblical principles. The Adventist Church, the researcher suggests can play its role through process of contextualization in the following ways:

High View of the Scripture

This view espouses the belief that “all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16). The Bible therefore is above every culture. It is supposed to speak to cultural practices and transform culture whenever necessary. The view of scripture examines cultural practices and lets the Bible speak to the evil practices in that culture, and change them for the better.

Bible believing Christians are therefore God’s representatives to transforms culture in every society they are found. Paul recognized this in 1 Thessalonians 1:9 and reveals that the gospel is to turn people to the living God. In Acts 26:17, 18 believers are sent with the gospel to open other people’s eyes and turn from darkness to light. Therefore, the gospel and God’s word stands to transform culture.

Pastors (Theologians) normally wrestle with cultural issues such as: Birth ritual, planting and harvesting rituals, building home rituals, widow inheritance, polygamy and others, a question to be considered is, does the Bible have authority to speak to these cultural practices? Is Scripture which is presented in the forms of ancient cultures applicable to our current African (Luo) culture?

To help us answer this crucial issue, the Adventist Church need to go back to the Scripture and see how the inspired writers in other cultures used God’s word written in different settings, and addressing different issues.

Paul in Romans 1:2 refers to the Old Testament as the Holy Scripture. He does not regard the Old Testament as out of date; he uses the term “it is written” meaning it has been written and stands true. The word of God still remains so even after the passage of time and change of culture.

Regardless of the passage of time and culture within which the Scripture was written, Paul quotes Scripture and applies it directly in its normal plain reading. Few examples would be enough. Romans 3:4 quotes Psalm 51:4; Romans 9:33 quotes Isaiah 28:16; Romans 8:36 quotes Psalm 44:22; Romans 11:8 quotes Isaiah 29:10. Although these quotations are separated by generations and cultural differences, Paul just as other New Testament writers recognized the fact that Bible is absolute and unchanging. The Bible is not relative in its source, what it says speaks to people in all cultures.

Awareness

This step in contextualization is the recognition that there is need to do something about the ritual or practice. This awareness may come as Christians face these rituals. To be aware of the need involves the participation and guidance of Church leadership. Awareness may come as people meet and interact with others from different cultures. It also comes from the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the human heart.

As people read the Bible, questions begin surfacing as they recognize passages that seem contradicting to their cultural practices or belief. Finally, awareness comes as preachers communicate the gospel, showing how man is “forever making mistakes

and committing sins at the level of group life."⁴⁷ The Adventist Church members must be aware of a need for change.

Information

This is the step where the Church leaders gather much information about the cultural practices as possible. This is to find the areas that need changing in that practice. To understand the rituals, the church leaders must call elderly people who are specialists in those cultural practices. These may describe the ritual and or practices in detail unveiling the belief behind every song, dance, widow inheritance, building a home, recitation or chant, etc.

The Adventist Church today is faced with perpetuating certain practices whose original meaning may have been forgotten only the practice which if not done is considered a taboo in the society. For example, a son building a home behind his father's home, was a taboo in the past but not considered as such currently.

Discussion

The purpose here is to understand the old ways by defining the meaning and function of each activity. Each described song, dance or recitation and others are now dissected for its meaning in the whole ritual and practice. At this point, there is still no criticism of the customary beliefs and practice. Church members feel free to openly talk about their traditional practices as they best know and understand them.

People understand issues differently and as the Church openly discussed the rituals, they harmonize their understanding of the practices. The best to reveal the

⁴⁷ Haskel M. Miller. *A Christian Critique of Culture* (New York: Abingdon, 1965), 10.

meanings underlying cultural practices are the older members. It is advisable to invite specialists to share their knowledge in the area of cultural issues.

Education

As the Church reaches this step, it must take the Bible as super cultural and to prove its validity as absolutely non-negotiable. The Church must understand that there are aspects of truth in the word that need to be accepted just as they are by any culture. For example, the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ being the sole source of Salvation must remain as it is in all cultures.

Consider that there are activities whose symbols and meanings go together and cannot be separated. Baptism with water, for example, has its symbol tied with the meaning and cannot be separated even in the process of contextualization.

During this step, a Bible study is organized and texts must be gathered that address the issues in consideration. The Pastor's knowledge is required in this step for proper exegesis of the texts. At this point, the principle that Scripture must interpret Scripture ought to be applied. Hence, the Church must clearly understand and accept what the Bible says in order for contextualization to be effective.

Consultation

Now that the people are able to see both what culture intends and what the Bible says, to avoid biases, the involvement of Christians from other cultures is recommended. This is because the Adventist Church is not a Church of people in one community. Sometimes the outsiders could make the local people be aware of what they could not see in their own culture, positively or negatively. Hence, people from other cultures can guide and probe for better clarity and understanding of rituals or practices.

Evaluation

The Adventist Church members need to go through the process of critically evaluating their cultural practices in the light of the Biblical understanding of the particular aspects of cultural activities. In order to evaluate cultural practices effectively, a high view of Scripture plays a big role. If one's presupposition is that certain passages of Scripture are culturally conditioned, then they may not be fully binding on all people of all ages.

Normally, biased human mind is at liberty to decide which sections are acceptable to one's culture and which ones are not. This is the opinion of man in authority than the inspired word of God in control.

Therefore, the process of critically evaluating cultural practices in the light of the objective truth of God's word and willingness to submit to God's leading is rewarding to the Church. The local people grow spiritually as they apply Biblical teachings to their own lives. This reduces backsliding of Church members and thus membership retention becomes effective.

Decision

Once evaluated, the Adventist Church now decide to discard the cultural activities they see as unbiblical and sinful, and keep the ones they perceive as all right. In making these decisions, the congregation might substitute symbols with new symbols borrowed from other cultures. These functional substitutes help fill up the vacuum left by the rejected unchristian symbols.

The Church members may decide to do what Hiebert said, "create new symbols rituals to communicate Christian beliefs in forms that are indigenous to their

culture⁴⁸ without compromising the Bible truth. Whatever decisions the members come up with, as long as it is theologically and culturally sound, the Pastors cannot discourage or disallow. The congregation may even modify the old practices to give them explicit Christian meanings. Finally, the new ritual is born and teaching believers begins. Then it extends to the community and new converts.

Conclusion

In cultural practices currently done in the community of Adventist Church, the local believers must be involved in the process of deciding the valid cultural practices. The participation of local believers is very important for it makes them understand the issues, and when the final contextualized practice is produced, they are able to support it as theirs.

This would prevent unwanted rituals from going underground that encourages the influence of NRMs. Instead it would strengthen believers spirituality and allow the Church to propagate and manage itself.

In all cultural practices, the local Church need not discard everything practiced, because this makes Christianity a foreign religion—which should never be. For example, while building a home, the position of the father's house, first born son's house and the second born son's house would just be the same as it is known in the entire community.

The local Church should not be afraid of keeping good the moral practices that the people would identify with. In every decision the Church will make, the Bible should have the final word. It is the degree of allegiance to the word of God that makes the Church strong and spiritual, or weak and irreligious. With this, the

⁴⁸ Hiebert, 11.

Adventist Church will emerge as a force unconquerable for the savior Jesus Christ.

The month of August 2014 was excluded because it was the month of camp meetings.

During the project implementation period, some of the activities were programmed to take place at the same time. However, time for each activity was planned in such a way that one activity did not conflict with the other.

Scheduled Leadership Training

The seminars for training church leaders were mainly conducted on Sabbath afternoons for two hours and on Sundays' morning hours and two hours in the afternoon. The rest of the hours were left for explaining areas that were not well understood and asking questions.

The weekdays were not convenient because some of the members went to their places of work while others were doing their home duties. However, on Friday evenings, Bible study seminars were conducted on topics that were dealing with cultural practices, traditional beliefs, and worldviews. The other Fridays were used to train members to study their Bibles following a systematic division of the Bible primarily meant for studying the Bible in a year.

Leadership Seminars

The church designed a program to conduct seminars for church leader's empowerment from the month of November 2013 to the end of January 2014. The pastor and the church elders agreed on the time to begin on Fridays evening and end Sundays in the afternoon. The church leaders also agreed to carry with them a packed lunch both on Sabbath and Sundays.

The program was started with the informative segment on how to explain complicated issues in cultural practices and traditional beliefs in Bible studies.

Leaders were free to talk about their cultural practices and traditional beliefs as they best know and understand them. Elderly people in the church were also given time to talk and reveal the meaning underlying cultural practices and traditional beliefs for the leaders to understand.

A number of people understood issues differently. Hence, as the church leaders openly discussed cultural practices, they were able to harmonize their understanding of their practices. The purpose was to understand the old ways by defining the meaning and function of each activity. Consequently, the Bible study was organized and the texts gathered to address the issues that were under consideration. Likewise, difficult passages that had been under debate such as polygamy and women's silence in the church were interpreted by the Bible rather than culture.

The training program also covered passionate spirituality for both leaders and church members. This was to enable church members to cultivate a form of spirituality that is based on the word of God, directed by the Holy Spirit, and preached in the world. The main aim was to help members to avoid getting involved in politics that obscured their spirituality and open differences during the election periods. The purpose of this training was to help members characterize their spiritual life by passion.

Holistic Small Group Activities

The church developed a program of small groups whereby the former church groups were divided into three. Hence, there were a total of 18 small groups. Small group activities were conducted throughout the program implementation periods even in the month of August. The groups were meeting on every Tuesday and Thursday because they were not full market days.

The groups started by encouraging members to have gardens in their homes that need to be fenced by well-arranged sticks and thorn tree branches. Then make sure they plant the following: vegetables of different kinds, onions, tomatoes, banana plant, keep the local breed of chicken, and also plant sweet potatoes in small scale in their farms during first planting season. Each group also organized to buy drugs for the treatment of chickens which were done at regular intervals.

These groups met to fellowship, study the Bible, learn, sing songs of praises, and prayed for each other's needs. They also encourage each other to read their Bible study guides every day and to study their Bibles using systematic division of the Bible that was given.

The small groups came up with a program to be used during times of death. The elder on duty normally involved the youths in all the groups when arranging the night program. The department of Women's ministry planned to involve all the women in the night program when a woman died. Likewise, the Adventist men organization was also involved in night programs when a man died.

This encouraged night attendance in funerals for there were well-coordinated activities like preaching, songs of praises from individuals, church choirs, youth choirs, and joined choruses sung by all who attended. After this, the matching lead by both senior and junior youths would follow until the day breaks. The main purpose of the holistic small group was to ensure that the life issues of church members were fully addressed.

Need-Oriented Home Evangelism

The Church organized herself for home evangelism during the month of September and October 2014. The church pastor and elders planned the visitation program by assigning each territory the period at which the visitation was to take

place. The visitation was covering all the 18 small groups in the homes of church members and non-members. The church made a prior announcement to the members indicating date and time of visitation to a respective territory.

Those who were not comfortable with time and date were to place a request for other dates and time that would be convenient to them. The visitation program took place for three days from Tuesday to Thursday in the morning hours. However, for non-members, visitation was conducted on any day from afternoon to the evening hours but visited any time on special request.

When visitation started, the emphasis was mainly on non-members who were identified by the church board as those who had been under the influence of NRMs and the non-regular members.

The leaders of the small groups were to identify members within their territory who needed special attention and then report to the elders the request for special visitation arrangements. Similarly, the leaders were to identify the homes with young chicks that needed vaccination in non-member's homes. They were to further identify the homes that needed the following: food, shoes, clothes, school uniforms, exercise books, a house to be built or repaired, and basic household needs. The purpose of this evangelism was to relate to the needs of those who the church was out to win and meet them at their point of their need.

Inspiring Worship Service

The training for inspiring worship service started in the month of December 2013. It climaxed in the month of April 2014 when the music Sabbath was organized. The training involved the elders and various departments, meanwhile, youth ministries department was given more time. This was to enable the department to

arrange age-related programming that would provide an environment for the development of spiritual gifts in the life of young people.

Children's ministries and youth departments planned to meet every evening after school in the church compound three days a week; Monday, Tuesday, and Friday. Children were taught how to memorize the Bible verses, Bible stories and how to sing simple songs of praises. Adventurers and Pathfinders were trained similarly and how to do matching. Senior youths and Ambassadors were trained to display their talents in music.

Those with varied talents were given time before the announcements and divine hours to presents their activities. Again, on special Sabbaths before the divine service, 15 minutes were set aside for encouragements. Three people were given time for a testimony about the good things God did to them recently. Finally, after wonderful encouragements, the song of praises was sung that leads to the opening of the divine service programs.

The young adults, senior youths, and Ambassadors were also trained on how to: conduct Bible studies, Bible study guide, preaching, read their Bibles throughout the year, and organize different singing groups apart from the church choir. The purpose was to turn the worship service into an inspiring experience for all the church members.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Results

Monitoring

The church board assigned a special committee of five people: a church elder, church clerk, personal ministries leader, community service leader, and education secretary. The committee was charged with a responsibility to monitor the programs of the church and to receive monthly progress reports of various group activities. The

reports included the following information: how many people attended each meeting, the number of meetings held, challenges faced, and the number of activities conducted. The committee, at the same time, monitored some of the things needed to improve the training sessions.

During home evangelism activities they also monitored with the help of group leaders such issues as who was to be given special attention? What was to be given out and to whom? So that the people are met at their point of need.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the program was based on training programs and the encountering of the negative influence of NRMs activities. The training covered mainly two major areas: the training of church workers and church members. The encountering of the destructive influence of NRMs activities covered such points as cultural practices in the light of the Biblical understanding of the particular aspects of cultural activities, small group activities, Bible study programs, need-oriented home evangelism, and inspiring worship service programs.

The process of critically evaluating cultural practices in the light of the objective truth of God's word and willingness to submit to God's leading was rewarding to the church. The local people grew spiritually as they applied Biblical teachings to their own lives, hence, they were able to resist the negative influence of NRMs.

The monitoring committee was the same committee that did the evaluation. However, in order to have positive and authentic evaluation results, each activity was assigned to various church leaders who were members of the board.

Since the program lasted for eleven months and the activities were taking place at different times, the evaluation was conducted on a monthly basis. The church

planned to have elders' council meeting every week to receive the reports before they were taken to the board for approval at the end of the month.

The church elected nurture and retention committee which included: first elder, treasurer, women's ministries leader, Adventist youth society leader, children's ministries leader, and Adventist men organization leader. The committee was to receive and report the progress of the planned activities since each leader was assigned to oversee a specific activity.

Consequently, each leader came up with a designed simple instrument for evaluation, which included the activities such as the number of houses visited, the number of members who joined NRMs per group identified, reconciliation done, any material assistance given, cases forwarded to the pastor, and cases forwarded to the church board for consideration.

The main objective of the study was to reduce the number of church members, who could easily yield to the charismatic influence of the NRMs. Hence, the visitation program per group was necessary after the project implementation period. This was done in the month of December 2014. The month was convenient since the students in secondary schools and colleges were at home for holidays.

The evaluation exercise was also done by interviewing church board members, who shared their personal observations concerning church attendance. It was, on the other hand, done through general observations, when considering attendance in midweek of prayer meetings, Friday evenings in welcoming the Sabbath, and other church services in the Sabbath afternoon programs.

Results of the Project

The results of the project covered the implementation strategies for encountering the negative influence of NRMs, the membership register audit, and the evaluation done at the end of the programs.

Leadership training programs were conducted from the month of November 2013 to March 2014. The four Sabbaths and Sundays were set aside for training while on the fifth Sabbath the reports were compiled by the respective leaders and reported on the fifth Sunday. In total, there were 22 Sabbaths and Sundays for training.

The training was mainly for elders and church leaders from different departments of the church. Since they were willing to attend the seminars, they agreed to carry with them packed lunch both on Sabbath and Sunday. In the course of the training, the church leaders, who could understand English were moved and asked to have church manuals and elders handbooks. They were also willing to buy the Spirit of Prophecy books. However, only those who were prepared were able to buy church manuals, Desire of Ages, and Steps to Christ that was readily given by the assistant publishing director.

Of those who could not understand English, were taken care of by the church pastor and first elder who moved them together with others in order that they would not stay behind. The leaders were moved to plan for the year and wanted to become enthusiastic and actively involved in church activities. Their focus was on equipping themselves for the ministry and likewise for serving the believers.

The training for the church members took place from April to June 2014. The meetings were conducted on Sundays, and with the help of church elders the members were divided into groups of ten for easier management of the situation and understanding. The report after this training showed that the majority of church

members responded to the need for change concerning cultural practices, traditional beliefs, and worldviews. However, some elderly church members (men and women) together with middle-aged widows could not grasp the Biblical teachings as the rest.

Hence, the pastor and church elders planned to have more time with this group. It was necessary in order to help them become Seventh-day Adventist church members, who have a true conversion experience that has changed their previous belief system, transformed, converted, and led them to a Biblical worldview.

The small group started to function immediately in the month of November 2013 and then it grew rapidly in the month of January 2014. The report indicated that all 18 groups were functional and the members in each group cared for one another.

The members in the 15 groups had small gardens in their home where they planted vegetables of different kinds, banana plants, onions, and tomato plants. They also kept a local breed of chicken and planned to give vaccination at regular intervals. The members of each small group were organized to care for one another during farming seasons. This took place especially at the time of planting, weeding, and harvesting. However, not all had grown sweet potatoes on small scale on their farms. Likewise, 3 groups did not start immediately, but later they were able to come together and followed the others.

The church had a total of 24 action units for adults, 6 classes for children, and 14 action units for the youths. This encouraged them to buy Bibles, Bible study guides, and songbooks. Since the group members meet only once a week, they also encourage one another to follow their Bible study guides. Again, they sing songs of praises and pray for one another's needs. Therefore, each small group addressed the life issues of their members, nurturing the "heads," "hands" and "hearts."

The Sabbath worship services were well planned according to the calendar of events. Hence, all the departments of the church were involved to include the participation of all church members. The church leaders made sure that the following Sabbath program was well planned for from morning to evening hours. The following were prepared earlier: members who were to participate in each program, songs to be sung, topics to be studied in Bible studies, and the time to begin and end each program.

Bible studies were well attended and the people were actively participating. This encouraged Bible reading every day, and most of the members were following their systematic division of the Bible study plan daily. Hence, worship services were an inspiring experience for all members.

The church conducted need-oriented home evangelism in the months of September and October 2014. Through appeal that was made during the camp meetings in the month of August 2014 by community service department, members contributed positively.

In all the 8 camp meeting centers in the district, the following items were contributed: clothes, a pair of shoes, bar soaps, maize, millet, beans, cassava-dried ones, exercise books, matchboxes, ball pens and pencils, paraffin, and money. The part of the money given was used to make uniforms for the pupils who were in need.

The part of the money was also used to buy drugs for vaccination of the local breed of chickens. The drugs were stored in one of the elder's shops that used to store and sell such drugs. Hence, the drugs were safe until the day of vaccination.

The month of September was used for visitation, sharing the Word, and identifying the needs of both church members and non-members. Then arrangements were made on how to provide the people identified with all that they needed.

On the first Sabbath of October, the announcements were made on how and when the people would be given all that they needed in each group. So each group was scheduled one day and on that same day in the evening, the chickens were also vaccinated. Moreover, all who attended the day for giving out clothes, uniforms and all that was needed by individuals in need, were promised to be prayed for in the last Sabbath of October 2014.

On the last Sabbath, the preaching was done by the pastor and lastly the call was made. Responding to the call, 18 people, who joined NRMs, came forward thus expressing their desire be re-baptized, and 15 people were newly baptized. Immediately after the baptism, the week of prayer followed the theme of which was "Called for the service of the Master." A number of visitations were done in people's homes, including primary and secondary schools, while sharing the word of God. In the last Sabbath of the week, another call was made after which 13 persons were re-baptized and 21 were newly baptized.

Consequently, the church was able to reclaim a total of 31 persons, who were dropped because they joined NRMs, and could welcome 36 newly baptized members in the month of November 2014. The results were astounding because the people were met at their point of need. All the members who were baptized were divided into 7 groups by the nurture and retention committee, six groups of 10 in each and 1 group of 7 people. This enabled the committee to take care for them easily and to continue teaching them the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

The final church membership register audit was done in the second week of December 2014. The end of December 2011 the church register had 202 members. In December 2012, the church dropped 4 who joined NRMs reducing membership to 199. In December 2013, 18 members were received by baptism and 3 dropped as a

result of death making membership be 211. In December 2014, the church received 67 members by baptism, 1 member dropped as a result of death, and 2 members by transfer.

Therefore, the church lost a total of 4 members who joined NRMs between January 2012 and December 2014. The average percentage loss was 2.0 percent. This indicated an improvement as compared to January 2008 to December 2011 when the church lost 148 (13.5 percent).

The first visitation done in December 2012 established that only 64 had Bibles, 41 members had Bible study guides and 6 E. G. White books. The last visitation in December 2014 established that 173 had Bibles, 167 had the Bible study guides, and 82 had E. G. White books especially the Desire of Ages and Steps to Christ. They were also studying their Bibles every day, following a systematic division of Bible primarily designed to enable one study the Bible the whole year given out by the pastor.

CHAPTER 3

THE SITUATION OF RANGWE SDA CHURCH

Membership Register from January 2008 to December 2011

Rangwe SDA Church experienced quite a number of membership losses as a result of the charismatic influence of NRMs during the period of four consecutive years, beginning January 2008 to December 2011. When the Church register and the Church clerk's statistical report sent to Kenya Lake Conference (KLC) secretariat records were compared, some differences were noticed. Both figures had the same record in the beginning of the year 2008 which was 405 members. However, some inconsistencies occurred that made the Church register to end with the record of 202 members, while the one sent to KLC ended with the record of 193 members in the year 2011. Hence, a difference of 9 members less in the statistical records sent to KLC was realized as presented in Table 1 and 2 below.

Table 1. Church Membership Register Jan 2008-Dec 2011

Year	Beg	Membership Added			Membership Dropped				End
		Baptism	Transfer	P. Faith	Transfer	Dead	Apostasy	Miss	
2008	405	0	1	1	0	0	48	0	359
2009	359	16	4	2	0	3	39	0	339
2010	339	21	0	1	109	2	30	0	220
2011	220	14	0	0	0	1	31	0	202

Table 2. Record of KLC Secretariat Membership Statistical Report

Year	Begin	Membership Added			Membership Dropped				End
		Baptism	Transfer	P. Faith	Transfer	Dead	Apostasy	Miss	
2008	405	0	0	0	0	0	48	0	357
2009	357	16	0	0	0	3	39	0	331
2010	331	21	0	0	109	2	30	0	211
2011	211	14	0	0	0	1	31	0	193

Since the end results of the statistics shown in both tables differ, it was essential to analyze other church records that were available. The alternative available records were the church business and church board minute books.

Analysis of the Church Business and Board Minute Books

The church business meeting held on 6th February 2008, according to Minute 08-03, voted to accept the membership at the beginning of the year as 405. It further voted, to accept one member by incoming transfer and another one member by profession of faith, thus, the confirmed membership was 407. In the same business meeting, under Minutes 08-07, voted to accept 18 members by removal from membership due to their involvement in postelection violence which took place in Kenya in the year 2007 after election results and joined NRMs. Hence, membership dropped from 407 to 389.

In the second quarter the church board, held on 27th June 2008, voted to approve the removal of eight members the church membership, under Minutes 08-015, who were once under a vote of censure, as a result of performing rituals for the dead. However, before their censure time ended, they were swayed to join NRMs. The same Minute contained a vote to approve disciplinary measures by removal from membership three members who had been talked to, but continued to manufacture and

sale alcoholic beverages. The total confirmed membership during the meeting was 378, but the record of the three members dropped was neither in the church register nor in the KLC statistical records.

Another business meeting held on 23rd December, 2008, according to the Minutes 08 – 034, voted to accept the removal from the church membership list, thirteen members who joined NRMs, because church members failed to support and attend the funeral of one of their family members. Similarly, in the same Minutes, nine members were removed from membership because they joined NRMs as a result of being censured due to disorderly conduct, which brought reproach upon the church in a school fund raising that was organized by the area member of parliament. Therefore, at the end of the year 2008 the confirmed total membership was 354.

On the 21st September, 2009 the church board had a meeting where one of its main points in its agenda was to evaluate church membership. In the Minutes 09-017 it was voted to recommend the welcoming of sixteen newly baptized members, four received by transfers, and two received by profession of faith. On the other hand, in the same Minute it was voted to recommend to the business meeting, to drop three names because of deaths and 39 names of those who joined NRMs; four members were to be censured since they organized and attended a funeral of a relative on a Sabbath day, and six members who were involved in performing rituals for the dead.

The business meeting held on 26th December, 2009, under the same board Minute, voted to accept the recommendations of the previous board decision. Hence, the year closed with membership of 219. The board meeting held on 18th December, 2011, under the Minute 011-012, voted to receive fourteen baptized members, removal of one because of death, and 31 members who joined NRMs. Hence, the year

ended with a total confirmed membership record of 313, but the register closed year with a record of 339.

The first board meeting that was held on 27th March, 2010, under Minute 010-03, voted to receive in church membership 21 persons through baptism and one person by profession of faith. On 21st June, 2010, under Minute 010-016, it was voted to call business meeting and recommend the transfer of 109 members to an ongoing company in order to organize that company into a new church.

The business meeting that was held on 16th December, 2010, under Minute 010-021, voted to confirm the above transfer and further voted to remove two members who were dead, 30 members who joined NRMs, and four members who grew tobacco as a cash crop and were no longer attending the church. The year ended with the membership of 219 and that was different from the record in the church register and KLC statistical reports.

The record for the year 2011 showed that the business meeting held on 7th April, 2011, under Minute 011-03, voted to confirm the total of 200 members. Meanwhile the church register closed the year with the membership of 220 and KLC statistical report with 193.

This clearly indicates that the records were not accurate. The church records of Rangwe church could not be harmonized with both the church membership register and the KLC secretariat membership records. However, it was noted that the only remarkable thing common in all the records available was that the membership decreased by 148 persons, as they joined NRMs within the period of January 2008 to December 2011. Since the records in place were not very clear, it was necessary to establish the actual membership of the church through home visitations of all church members.

Rangwe Church Membership by Home Visitations

In the month of April 2012, home visitations that took two consecutive weeks was conducted to establish the actual Sabbath school members, regular members who attend the Holy Communion services and those who were swayed to join NRMs. The month of April was selected to collect statistics because all baptized members were at home including students in colleges and boarding schools. The church was divided into six groups. The results of the visitation are represented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Membership Home Visitation per Group, April 2012

Groups	SS Members	Regular Members	Those Joined NRM
Rangwe Town	31	42	4
Rangwe South	24	32	39
Rangwe East	15	28	33
Rangwe West	22	31	26
Rangwe A	24	32	34
Rangwe B	21	30	26
Total	137	195	162

The church membership in April of 2012 was 195 members, Sabbath school members were 137 and the members that joined NRMs were 162. The data indicates that Rangwe Church continues to have a problem of being influenced by NRMs. The visitation also established the number of church members having Bibles, Bible Study Guides, and E. G. White books as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Members/Group having Bibles, Bible Study Guides and E. G. White Books

Group	No. of Bibles	No. of B.S. Guides	No. of E. G. W. Books
Rangwe Town	21	13	4
Rangwe South	10	8	2
Rangwe East	6	4	-
Rangwe West	7	5	-
Rangwe A	7	5	-
Rangwe B	5	-	-
Total	56	35	6

The number of church members having the Bibles was only 56, those having Bible Study Guides was only 35, and E. G. White books were only 6. This again indicates that the majority of Rangwe Church members were not equipped with the tools for spiritual growth. Hence, spiritually weak Adventists were easily swayed by NRMs.

The analysis of the available church membership records and the visitation of all groups in the church showed that there was a continuous loss of membership because of the strong influence by NRMs. The next step was to carry out a survey among the church board members to detect if they were aware of the destructive influence of NRMs. The survey would also help to discover the factors that contributed to the influence of NRMs.

The Church Board Questionnaire

An interview among the church board members was conducted by the use of questionnaire to establish whether the membership of the church was decreasing as a result of the charismatic influence of NRMs or another reason (see Appendix A). Twenty one questionnaires were prepared and given out to the board members, but only seventeen were filled and returned. The owners of other four could not

understand the language used. The seventeen respondents showed that the church membership was decreasing due to the influence of NRMs.

They also wrote some of the factors that contributed to the influence of NRMs. The response indicating the factors contributing to the decrease of church members that joined NRMs were represented by showing both the number of respondents and percentage as shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Factors Contributing to the Influence of NRMs

No.	Factors	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Special Prayers	8	47.1
2	Healing	9	53.0
3	Poor Attendance in Time of Death	7	41.2
4	Practice of Traditional Beliefs	8	47.1
5	Lack of Unity	2	11.2
6	Lack of Visitation	9	53.0
7	Lack of Teaching before/after Baptism	9	53.0
8	Failure to Visit the Bereaved	7	41.2

The next item in the questionnaire was meant to find out whether the church understood and was able to identify the destructive influence by NRMs and was doing anything about it. However, the board members were divided in giving the response. Some responded as if the church was at least doing something, while others felt that so far no serious action has been taken. Amongst the ones who thought the church had at least done something listed different activities as indicated in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Church Activities to Protect Members from the Influence of NRMs

Activities	Respondents	Percentage
Prayer offered to members	3	17.6
Involving leaders to help the weak	1	11.8
Involving members to do outreach	1	0.06
Evangelistic campaigns	3	17.6
Visitation	5	29.4
Seminars	2	11.8

The responses further revealed that the degree of commitment of the church members towards stopping the influence of NRMs was very low. Hence, none of the activities given managed to score 50 percent.

The last item in the questionnaire for the church board members was to answer how much time they spend in the study of the Bible. The result of the respondents indicates that only 6 of the respondents (35.3 percent) of the total number felt that they were committed in the study of the Word. The details of how the members responded are represented in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Commitment to the Study of the Bible

Time Spent	Number of Members	Percentage
More than one hour	6	35.3
From 45min – 1 hour	1	5.9
From 30min – 45min	2	11.8
From 15min – 30min	3	17.7
Less than 15min	6	35.3

Finally the information obtained from the literature review and the church board members were used to develop the questionnaire for the church members (see Appendix B). The analysis of the discovered facts presented a quite realistic picture of the situation of the church, regarding the influence of NRMs on the church members. The next step will analyze the questionnaire for the church.

The Questionnaire for Rangwe Church Members

The objective of the questionnaire was to establish why Rangwe Church members were influenced by NRMs though public evangelism and baptisms were conducted every year. To achieve this objective 80 questionnaires were prepared and given out to the church members. The number given out was based on (41 percent) of the church membership, which was 195 at the end of 2012 as the visitation results indicated in Table 3.

Data Collection

The exercise was conducted on a Sabbath immediately after the divine service. The regular church members were asked to remain while others were leaving. Then the elders and deacons divided those who stayed in separate groups per age and gender, both adults and youths. The members present per group were as follows; adult males 55, adult females 81, male youths 11 and female youths 18. The total population of members present was 165.

Hence, simple random sampling method was used to select responses from each group regardless of age, sex and educated or not educated. The adult males were first arranged in a straight line and assigned numbers 1 and 2. They formed two groups of 27 and 28 persons each. The same procedure was used concerning the adult females, apart from female youths where 2 people left giving chance to the first group

of 8, and male youths where 1 left leaving 5 members in the first group. The groups that fall in number 1 were the ones elected to represent each group.

This summarizes the division of participants into four groups as follows: adult males 27 (34 percent), adult female 40 (50 percent), female youths 8 (10 percent), and male youths 5 (6 percent). When considering gender and age, this gave a fair representation of all the groups in the church on that day.

The selected participants were requested to take their seats sits. Once seated, they were divided into three groups as follows: those who could read and understand the language, those that could read but do not understand the language properly, and finally those who could neither read nor understand the language.

The assessment tool used to get information from church members had in one section the reference to the knowledge of NRMs, as per their influence from the highest to the lowest mark. The second section from numbers 2 to 18 had the variables as follows: 1 agree, 2 disagree, and 3 not sure. The respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statements given. In order to be sure and to get a good result, the questionnaires were personally administered.

The first group of 38 participants was given the questionnaires together with a pencil and a rubber. Then enough time was allotted to study the questionnaire together and ask questions in case something was not clear. Consequently, they were allowed to do the exercise. Finally, each participant finished the exercise and all the questionnaires were collected.

Likewise, the second group of 24 participants received a questionnaire, pencil and a rubber. When all the preliminary details were done, we went through the questionnaire together. The questionnaire was audibly read to the participants in order to be sure that everybody understood it before doing the exercise. In some cases the

questionnaire was translated into vernacular to enable them answer correctly. They began the exercise by answering the questions of the questionnaires, which, after having been answered, were collected.

Finally, the last group of 18 participants were given time to do the exercise. First, they were given pencils and a piece of paper, and then taught how to put a tick on box drawn by a hand. A number of individuals found it easy with exception of a few, who seemed to struggle, hence, they were given an option of putting a dash (-). As in the previous cases, the exercise began, one question at a time was read in vernacular and all were answering at the same time. Then, after this group finished its exercise all the questionnaires were collected. However tiresome it appeared, lastly the whole procedure came to an end and all the questionnaires were collected in order to process and then analyze them.

Results of the Questionnaires

The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first one dealt with the question of which one among the five NRMs has influenced the church membership more than the others. The second section, covering questions 2 to 18, which were put together, focused on the factors contributing to the influence of NRMs.

Assessment of the NRM with More Influence

The results of the first section of the questionnaire showed that 29 respondents consisting of (36.25 percent) admitted that Roho Israel church of God had the strongest influence; it was followed by Msanda Holy Ghost church of East Africa, which had 18 respondents consisting of (22.5 percent). Then Msanda Christ church of Kenya and Roho Fweny Maler church, which had 15 respondents each consisting of (18.5 percent). The one that came last was Legio Maria with 13 respondents

consisting of (16.25 percent); 5 respondents consisting of (6.5 percent) were undecided.

The results indicated that not one but all the NRMs, that surround the area, had a strong destructive influence on the membership of Rangwe Church. Consequently, this supported the fact that there was a problem of losing church members. Hence, the results obtained pointed to the basic reasons that lead to the significant loss of members.

Factors Contributing to the Influence of NRMs

These factors were analyzed by means of a total of 18 suggested questions that were based on the previous records. It was modified the way it appeared in order to get a collective feedback from the church members. The summary of the responses given by the church members is represented in Table 8 below.

Table 8. Factors Contributing to the Influence of NRMs

No	Factors	Responses		
		Agree	Disagree	Not sure
1	Lack of sense of belonging	48	27	5
2	Lack of Christian hospitality	40	29	11
3	Members feel cannot measure up to standards	32	45	3
4	Failure to care for those in need	65	8	7
5	Poor attendance at night during times of death	40	38	2
6	Poor Sabbath worship services	50	23	7
7	Poor pastoral visits	59	18	3
8	Lack of unity	36	28	16
9	Criticism of leadership	29	43	8
10	Lack of involving members to the mission	40	30	10
11	Lack of Bible study	47	24	9
12	No seminars	56	17	7
13	Discipline when members perform rituals	38	41	1
14	Lack of nurturing new members	40	36	4
15	Belief that NRMs prophets prophesy realities	40	27	13
16	Belief that NRMs cast out demons in people's lives	46	26	8
17	Belief that NRMs provide healing through prayers	45	31	4
18	Traditional beliefs and cultural practices make life possible	44	32	4

The Response

The response indicated that 56 percent agree, 35 percent disagree, and 9 percent not sure. Therefore, the variables were summarized to get the cumulative degree of response as shown in circle graph in Figure 1 below.

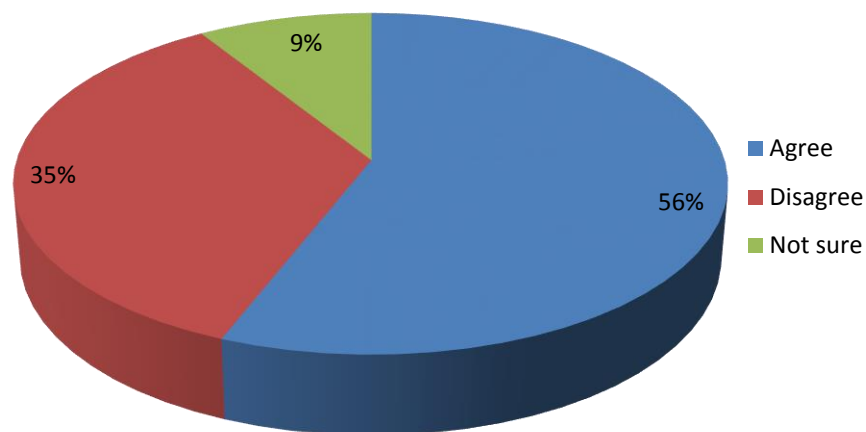


Figure 1. Response Rate by Respondents

The result of the response shows that the difference between two variables is 21 percent. However, when comparing response on the “agree” side, factors that contribute to the influence of NRMs above (50 percent) were 9. At the same time on the “disagree” side factors above (50 percent) were 3. Hence, this was further evident that the influence of NRMs was an issue to be considered.

The number of questionnaires that were given and returned was 80; hence, any factor which was suggested by more than 40 respondents had a score more than (50 percent). Therefore, the scale used to determine the leading factors was the one that was above (50 percent).

The leading factors that contributed to the influence of NRMs were represented in percentages as shown in Figure 2 below. At the same time, the factors that had little contribution to the influence of NRMs were represented in percentages as shown in Figure 3.

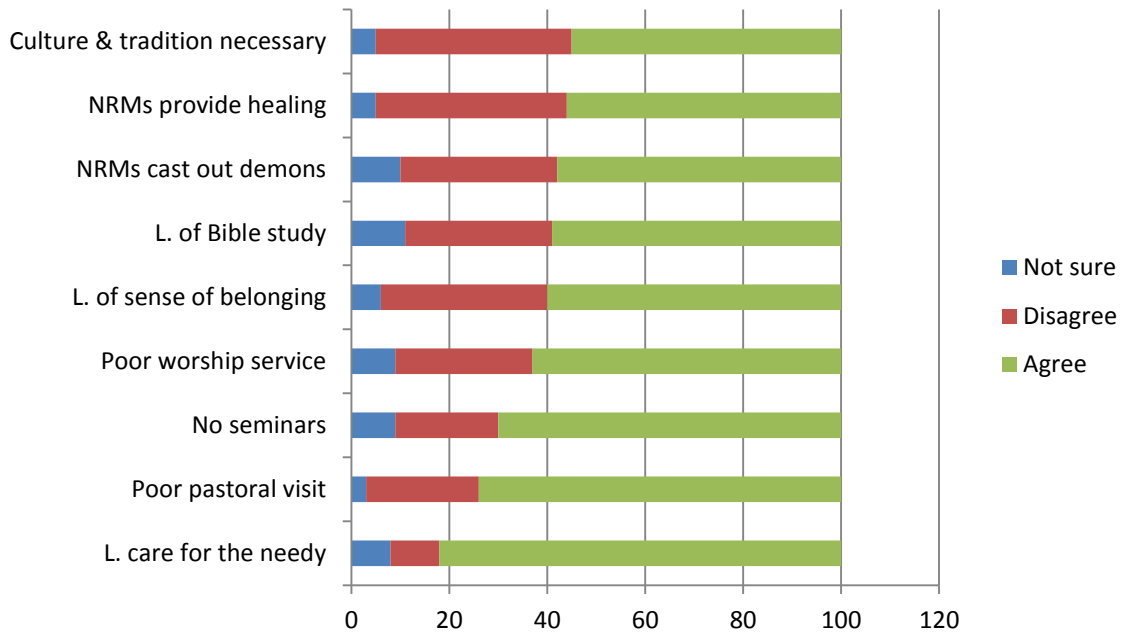


Figure 2. Leading Factors that Contribute to the Influence of NRMs

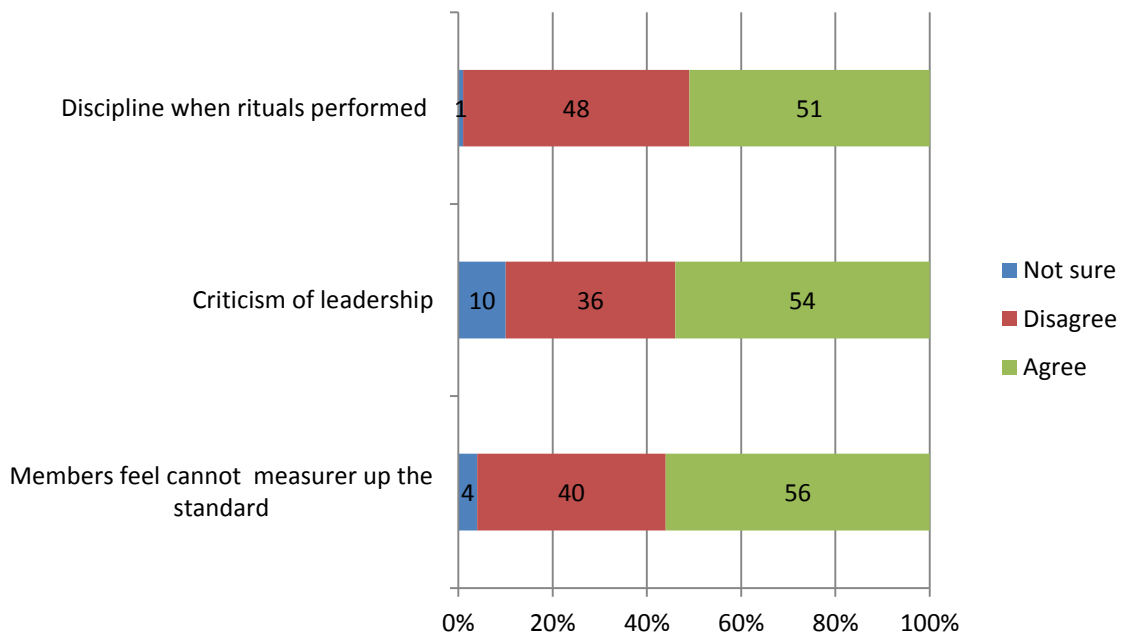


Figure 3. Factors that had Little Contribution to the Influence of NRMs

The main objective of the questionnaire was to assess the factors, which lead to the influence of NRMs. Hence, the comparison of the data in both Figure 3 and 4 was necessary. The comparison clearly contains the information that made it possible to assess the weakness and the strength of the church as far as the influence of NRMs was concerned.

The result also showed that failure to care for those in need have the highest response. This means that apart from the physical needs our members needed prayers. Hence, they rush to NRMs with a convinced belief that God is one and can be worshiped in any church.

The general observation showed that the church did not realize that the members were heavily influenced by NRMs. Hence, it failed to solve the problem. Therefore, it was necessary to develop a strategy to counter the influence of these churches. The next chapter mainly discussed the counterstrategies to the influence of NRMs to the Rangwe Seventh-day Adventist Church.

CHAPTER 4

PROGRAM DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

This chapter contains the description of the program design to encounter the influence of NRMs, implementation of the program, evaluation and the analysis of the obtained results.

Program Design

In the development process of the program of the counterstrategies against the negative influence of the NRMs, the focus is directed to the areas that scored highest during the data analysis and presentations. The leading factors that contributed to the influence of NRMs were: lack of care for the needy (82 percent), poor pastoral visitations (74 percent), no seminars for leaders (70 percent), poor worship services (63 percent), lack of sense of belonging (60 percent), lack of Bible study (59 percent), belief that NRMs cast out demons (58 percent), belief that NRMs provide healing through prayers (56 percent), cultural practices and traditional beliefs that make life possible (55 percent).

The strategies were designed in a way that all the factors were handled though applying biblical – based principles that are essential for growth. This gave room for the factors to be handled together. For example, when dealing with poor pastoral visitations, one will find out that it also involved failure to care for those in need and lack of sense of belonging. This was necessary because one factor affects the other directly or indirectly.

Empowering Leadership Program

This strategy was divided into two parts: first to enable the church leaders to have a quality approach in the areas of explanation, motivation, liberation, and to bring the three dimensions into balance. Consequently, church leaders were to have the ability to explain complicated realities to members in Bible studies, teaching or in sermons to enhance conversion. Likewise, give members a new explanation of reality that sets up tension within their worldview and causes them to reassess what they think and believe.

The training also focused on equipping leaders for the service to members and motivating them to do the will of God. Hence, liberating the members from their African traditional belief system and worldview, by which they were controlled in some way; thus, to enable them become converted and fulfill their God given mission.

The second part involved training of both leaders and church members to live out their faith with passion, commitment, and enthusiasm. In the training of church leaders, "IICM LCL 101, *Christian Leadership Principle and Theory* by Gabriel Maurer was used as a source book."¹ More emphasis was given to Chapter 1, *Spiritual Dimension in Christian Leadership*. The topics covered included: *Priority of Faith, The Role of Mission, and Spirituality in Christian Leadership*.

The other source book used was "Spirituality and Leadership"² in Chapter 6, Key topics were: How Does a Spiritual Leader respond to the need for change? How Does a Spiritual Leaders Best Use Team Members? How Do Spiritual Leaders

¹ Gabriel Maurer, leadership seminar notes for IICM LCL 101 Christian Leadership Principles and Theory, Kwoyo Kochia Secondary School, Kochia, Kenya, 21-27 April 2013.

² Alan E. Nelson, *Spirituality and Leadership: Harnessing the Wisdom, Guidance, and Power of the Soul* (Colorado Springs, CO: Nav Press, 2000), 125-137.

Develop New Leaders? How Do Spiritual Leaders Care for the Spirituality of Members? And How Do Spiritual Leaders Create a Culture That Nurtures the Soul?

The church likewise developed a program for teaching the church members the fundamental doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In the teaching, Chapter 12 and 13 in the Seventh-day Adventist Church manual was used together with the whole book of “Seventh-day Adventists Believe... Doctrines.”³ The purpose of the teaching was to enable members to have a conversion experience that goes deeper than the observable behavior, belief system, and is fully committed to the service of the Lord.

Holistic Small Groups

The church developed a system of small groups where individual church members consequently found intimate community, practical help, and spiritual interaction. The programs included: Bible study and prayer groups, fellowship groups, Sabbath school study guide groups, and support groups among others. In these groups, church members were not only discussing Biblical texts and listened to their leaders interesting explanations but they also applied biblical insights to the questions the participants had about their cultural practices and traditional beliefs.

In the meetings the members were also encouraged to have gardens in their homes where they plant vegetables, onions, tomatoes, banana plant, and keep the local breed of chickens. They were also to plant sweet potatoes in their farms in small scale during planting seasons. The small groups also encouraged members to work together in their farms especially during planting, weeding, and harvesting.

³ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe: Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines* (Silver Spring, MD: Pacific Press, 2005).

Therefore, the holistic small group-ministry was to develop the head, hands, and hearts of the participants. The head was to stimulate the group with arguments and facts, hands to encourage the group to participate in a corporate activity, and the hearts to make a deliberate effort to share God's blessings. This encouraged members to prepare their own programs and to meet regularly in order to share their challenges and special needs.

Need-Oriented Home Evangelism

The church developed a program to share the gospel in a way that answers the questions and meets the needs of both the believers and none-believers. The program mainly focused on visitation, sharing the Word of God among church members until all became exposed to it, and then they were equipped to turn to none-members.

Likewise, identify the needs of those visited and get organized to meet the needs.

This was necessary because not all members have their families as members of the church, have the same faith, understand the church, and participate in church activities. Hence, everyone has a different starting point and needs a different guidance.

Inspiring Worship Service

The church designed a well-outlined program of worship service that involved the participation of all church members, which encouraged a sense of togetherness. The programs were well scheduled and spread on the whole Sabbath day. Different departments were involved including children ministries department.

The programs encouraged the leaders to train children with different creative and inspiring activities to meet the needs of children and motivate church members.

The Adventist youth society which included: Adventurers club, Pathfinders club,

Ambassadors club, and senior youths were also trained in various activities. The activities included: Songs of praise and Bible readings for senior youths and Ambassadors, memory verses for Adventurers and Drill programs for Pathfinders. Hence, the involvement of both children and youth department enhanced lively and healthy worship services every Sabbath day.

When all strategies for encountering the negative influence of NRMs were put in place, the results of the survey were shared with the members of Rangwe SDA Church. After sharing the information of the local situation, the researcher organized to meet all the church members of the district. Since the district was large, two Sabbaths were scheduled for the meeting, first for the upper region and then for the lower region of the district.

The purpose of the meetings was to inform members of the district about the strategy and the implementation plan of the Rangwe Church. Whereby the members were requested and agreed to collect Food, Clothes, Shoes and household needs in the month of August 2014 for the implementation of need-oriented home evangelism. This was necessary because, after the meetings, the rest of the churches allowed the researcher to spend more time with Rangwe Church during the period of the project implementation.

Implementation of the Strategies

The strategy for encountering the negative influence of NRMs on the Seventh-day Adventist church began to be implemented in the month of November 2013 after the election of church leaders and it continued up to the month of November 2014. The month of August 2014 was excluded because it was the month of camp meetings.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The Rangwe Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kenya Lake Conference experienced a drop in church membership between January 2008 and December 2011, from 405 to 202 members. The majority in the register—that adds up to 148, who were dropped—were negatively influenced by false teachings which led them to join NRMs. Therefore, the purpose of the project was to develop a strategy to encounter the destructive influence of NRMS.

Chapter one focused on the introduction, the problem, the purpose of the study, the delimitation, and the methodology of the study. Chapter two of the research conducted a review of the literature on NRMs and their influence on the Seventh-day Adventist church while researching the Bible, the writings of E. G. White, and other Adventist writers as well as protestant writers.

The focus in chapter two was on the church background and its responsibility of encountering the negative influence of NRMs on the church members. The mission of the church is to make disciples – something that is not instant. Hence, it needed a lot of activities put in place to maintain the members in the fellowship until maturity was attained. The church's responsibility included the following: care for the members, helping them to stay on board, developing the disciples, and involving them into the ministry.

In Chapter three, analysis of the local situation was done by comparing records in the church register and the KLC secretariat membership records from January 2008 to December 2011. The Figures that were obtained were not the same, but the general indication was a rapid decrease in membership because of a strong influence of NRMs to which they had joined. The same data were discovered by the survey that was conducted among the church board members.

In order to establish the actual membership that was influenced to join NRMs, home visitation was done for two weeks. Moreover, questionnaires for the church members were also administered to 80 respondents (41 percent) of the membership. Home visitations and response from the questionnaires both reflected the strong influence on the membership to join NRMs. The respondents also agreed with some reasons that contributed to the destructive influence of NRMs.

Chapter four focused mainly on program design, implementation, evaluation and the result of the project. The program designed focused on the leading factors that contributed to the negative influence of NRMs on the Adventist church.

The results of the implementation period, which lasted for eleven months, showed that the problem of the destructive influence of NRMs had reduced from an average of (13.5 percent) per year to (2.0 percent).

The final home visitations likewise showed that church members had Bibles, Bible study guides, E. G. White books, and were studying their Bibles every day. The members were active in church programs and had inspiring worship services. More members were added in the register than were dropped.

Therefore, the activities of the project not only reduced the members that were influenced by NRMs but also assisted in reclaiming some of those who were influenced. Again it enabled the church to receive 36 newly baptized members.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to design and implement a strategy to help Rangwe Seventh-day Adventist Church in encountering the negative influence of NRMs. The implementation that lasted for eleven months showed successful results. The role of the church in the decline of membership has been minimized. The negative influence of NRMs was reduced from the average of (13.5 percent) per year to (2.0 percent). Moreover, the church reclaimed 31, who were dropped and influenced to join NRMs and was able to welcome 36 newly baptized members.

However, it is possible that whereas many say “yes” to the baptismal commitments, many elderly people hardly experience conversion and separation from their worldview, assumptions, and values. Therefore, a hard self-examination will help the church and her leaders. With watchfulness and prayers, their weakest points can be so guarded as to become their strongest points, and they can encounter their former way of life without being overcome. Every follower of Christ should daily examine him/herself, that he/she may become perfectly acquainted with his/her own conduct.

Recommendations

The study yielded the following recommendations that may be useful to Rangwe Church members and even to other church members in Kenya Lake Conference:

1. Large districts can be divided to meet the objectives of pastoral calling, which is mainly ministering to persons. If the pastoral calling does not communicate the fact that the pastor cares, it will not be able to communicate God’s abounding love.

2. District pastors may develop a complete lifestyle for every area of church and include counterstrategies to the negative influences of NRMs, giving detailed prescriptions for the time scheduled, leadership training, and promotion techniques required to execute the program.
3. There can be community service centers for the district, which are organized and function on the church level, to store goods and gifts given by members for use during evangelism outreach programs to meet people at the point of their need.
4. A serious time frame of two years can be given to newly baptized candidates to be spent in extended Bible study, discipleship, and nurture after their baptism. This would help them have a clear understanding of biblical principles that would lead them to conversion and radical change of their worldviews and values.
5. Rangwe Church is recommended to keep on with the implementation of church lifestyle strategy and its design in order to stand against the charismatic and, at the same time, destructive influence of NRMs to the Adventist church which finds her location in their influence zone.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRES

THE CHURCH BOARD QUESTIONNAIRE

Answer all the questions

1. Due to the influence of NRMs, the membership is decreasing

True

False

2. If your answer in No 1 is true. List some of the factors that contribute to the decrease?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Is the church doing anything to show that the membership is retained?

Yes

No.

4. If your answer is yes, what do the church do to return the members?

.....

.....

.....

5. On the average, how much time do you spend each day in personal, private Bible study and reading?

() More than one hour a day

() From 45 minutes to one hour a day

() From 30 – 45 minutes a day

() From 15 – 30 minutes a day

() Less than 15 minutes a day

QUESTIONNAIRES TO CHURCH MEMBERS

Answer all the questions

1. The listed New Religious Movements are the ones situated around Rangwe SDA church

- Legio Maria
- Roho Israel Church of God
- Msanda Holy Ghost Church of East Africa
- Msanda Christ Church of Kenya
- RohoFwenyMaler Church

True

False

2. If your answer is true in question 1, rank them from the highest to the lowest in the order of how they influence SDA Church Membership.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. The following factors contributed to the influence of NRMs despite baptism conducted. You are requested to tick in the box options given

(i) There is lack of sense of belonging

Agree Disagree Not Sure

(ii) There is lack of Christian hospitality

Agree Disagree Not Sure

(iii) Some members feel they cannot measurer up to the standards

Agree Disagree Not Sure

- (iv) Failure to care for those in need
 Agree Disagree Not Sure
- (v) Poor attendance at night during times of death
 Agree Disagree Not Sure
- (vi) Poor worship services
 Agree Disagree Not Sure
- (vii) Poor pastoral visits
 Agree Disagree Not Sure
- (viii) Lack of unity in the church
 Agree Disagree Not Sure
- (ix) Criticism of leadership
 Agree Disagree Not Sure
- (x) Lack of involving members to the mission
 Agree Disagree Not Sure
- (xi) Lack of Bible study
 Agree Disagree Not Sure
- (xii) No seminars for church leaders
 Agree Disagree Not Sure
- (xiii) Discipline when members perform rituals
 Agree Disagree Not Sure
- (xiv) Lack of nurturing new members
 Agree Disagree Not Sure

(xv) Belief that NRMs prophets prophecy realities

Agree Disagree Not Sure

(xvi) Belief that NRMs casts our demons in people's lives

Agree Disagree Not Sure

(xvii) Belief that NRMs provide reality through prayers

Agree Disagree Not Sure

(xviii) Traditional beliefs and cultural practices make life possible

Agree Disagree Not Sure

APPENDIX B

CORRESPONDENCE

Seventh-day Adventist Church Rangwe
P.O Box 91
Rangwe.
18. 07. 2011

The Executive Secretary
Kenya Lake Conference
P. o Box 43
Kendu-Bay.

Dear Sir,

RE: RESEARCH PROJECT FOR MA IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY

May through your office, the Executive Committee be informed that I am doing a project as a requirement for the above course in Adventist University of Africa. The topic of my research is **THE SDA CHURCH COUNTERSTRATEGIES TO THE INFLUENCE OF NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT CHURCHES.** Therefore, I request the office to post a Global Pioneer in Rangwe District to help me during this period. I also need the records of statistical reports from January 2008 to December 2011. Your assistance to the requirements will be helpful in facilitation of my project.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Pr. Anuro Mark Ng'ong'a

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arrais, Jonas A. *Wanted, A Good Pastor: The Characteristics, Skills, and Attitudes Every Effective Church Leader Needs*. Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Ministerial Association, 2011.
- Ausberger, Myron S. "Matthew." In *The Communicator's Commentary*, ed. Lloyd J. Ogilvie. Waco, TX: Word Publishing, 1982.
- Barna, George. *User Friendly Churches*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1991.
- "Brahma Kunaris Info – The Truth about the BKWSU." Accessed 18 August 2012. Brahmakumaris.info/w/index.php?title=New_Religious_Movement.
- Cress, James A. *You Can Keep Them If You Care: Helping Members Stay on Board*. Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, 2000.
- General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association. *Seventh-day Adventist Minister's Manual*. Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1992.
- _____. *Seventh-day Adventist Believe: Biblical Expository of Fundamental Doctrines*. Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, 2005.
- Graham, Billy. *A Biblical Standard for Evangelists*. Minneapolis, MN: Worldwide Publications, 1984.
- Hierbert, Paul. "Anthropology of Religion." In *Evangelical Dictionary of World Mission*, ed. A. Scott Moreau. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2000.
- _____. *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985.
- Hierbert, Paul G., R. Daniel Shaw and Tite Tienou. *Understanding Folk Religion: A Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990.
- Iwuagwu, A. O. *The New Religious Movements: Their Dynamics and Psycho-Analysis*. Owerri, Nigeria: n.p., 1975.
- Kasyoka, John M. M. *An Introduction to Philosophy of Religion*. Kijabe, Kenya: Kijabe Press, 2008.

- Kraft, Charles H. *Christianity and Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005.
- Kuhn, Marko. "From African Consciousness to Sub-Conscious Inculturation: A Study into African Independent Churches (AICs) in Nyanza/Kenya." MA Thesis, Sundgaullee Freiburg, Deutschland, 2001. Accessed 13 August 2012. http://www.comboni.de/literatur/kuhn_aic_in_nyanza.pdf.
- Mace, David and Vera Mace. *In The Presence of God: Reading for Christian Marriage*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1985.
- Mathema, Zacchaeus. "The African Worldview: A Serious Challenge to Christian Discipleship." *Ministry*, October 2007, 19.
- Maurer, Gabriel. Leadership Seminar notes for IICM LCL 101 Christian Leadership Principles and Theory. Kwoyo Kochia Secondary School, Kochia, Kenya, 21-27 April 2013.
- Mbiti, John. *African Religion and Philosophy*. London, UK: Heinemann, 1992.
- Miller, Haskel M. *A Christian Critique of Culture*. New York: Abingdon, 1965.
- Nelson, Alan E. *Spirituality and Leadership: Harnessing the Wisdom, Guidance, and Power of the Soul*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2000.
- Ndiokwere, Nathaniel. *Prophecy and Revolution: The Role of Prophets in the Independent African Churches in Biblical Tradition*. London, UK: SPCK, 1996.
- Nyaundi, Nehemiah N. *Introduction to the Study of Religion*. Kenya: Zaft Chancery, 2003.
- Oborji, Francis Anekwe. *Towards a Christian Theology of African Religion: Issues of Interpretation and Mission*. Eldoret, Kenya: AMECEA Gaba, 2005.
- _____. *Trends in African Theology since Vatican II: A Missiological Orientation*. Kenya: AMECEA Gaba, 2005.
- Odongo, Solomon. First Elder Between 1983-1985, Seventh-day Adventist Church Rangwe. Interview by the author, Rangwe, 15 May 2012.
- Owusu-Antwi, Brempong. "Demon and Demonic Activities in the Bible." In *The Church, Culture and Spirit: Adventism in Africa*, ed. K. Donkor. Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2011.
- Rhodes, John. *Success Secrets for Pastors*. Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1995.
- Sweazey, George E. *The Church as Evangelist*. San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1978.

- Tozer, Aiden Wilson. *Tragedy in the Church: The Missing Gifts*. St. Peabody, MA: Wingspread, 1990.
- Uzukwu, Elochukwu E. *Worship as Body Language: Introduction to Christian Worship: An African Orientation*. Collegeville, MN: Pueblo Book, 1997.
- Verstraelen, Frans J. *Christianity in a New Key: New Voices and Vistas through Intercontinental Communication*. Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1996.
- White, Ellen G. *Patriarchs and Prophets*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1958.
- _____. *Selected Messages*. Vol. 2. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958.
- _____. *Gospel Workers*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915.
- _____. *Welfare Ministry*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958.
- _____. *Testimonies for the Church*. 9 Vols. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948.

VITA

Personal Identification

Name: Mark Ng'ong'a Anuro

Date of birth: June 24, 1964

Marital Status: Married

Address: P.O Box 43 – 40301 Kendu-Bay

Education

2016 – Masters in Arts in Pastoral Theology, Adventist University of Africa

2008 – B.A. in Theology, University of Eastern Africa, Baraton

1993 – Diploma in Ministerial Training, Kamagambo Adventist College

1987 – Ordinary Level, New Kisumu High School

Work Experience

2015 – Station Coordinator, Bondo Station

2011 – Station Coordinator, Rangwe Station

2007 – Station Coordinator, Wangapala Station

2004 – District Leader, Mbita

2001 – Station Coordinator, Dudi

1995 – District Leader, Gogo