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A Strategy to Integrate New Members into the Life of the Local Church in Nyamira Conference

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ABSTRACT

A STRATEGY TO INTEGRATE NEW MEMBERS IN
THE LIFE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH IN
NYAMIRA CONFERENCE

by

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Adviser: Bruce L. Bauer

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: A STRATEGY TO INTEGRATE NEW MEMBERS INTO THE LIFE OF THE
      LOCAL CHURCH IN NYAMIRA CONFERENCE

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Problem

      Although there are good efforts in the local churches in the Nyamira Conference

to baptize new believers, about 50% of them stop attending church soon after baptism.

Method

      A seven-step mission strategy called the Spiritual Guardianship Plan (SGP) was

launched in two local churches in the Nyamira Conference. This is a plan to involve local

church members to care for fellow members, to help integrate new members into the life

of the local church, and to nurture new members into spiritual maturity. Mature members

of the church are assigned to new members to help them to be integrated into the faith

community and be nurtured into spiritual maturity.

Results

The project was implemented in two local churches for a period of six months. The project implementation changed five things in the life and mission of the two churches. First, a number of former Adventists rejoined the church. Second, the SGP provided opportunities for the members in both churches to participate in the life and mission of their churches. Third, attendance at church services and meetings in the two churches was improved. Fourth, the members of the two churches showed a willingness to be involved in evangelism and the spiritual nurture of the new members. Finally and most important of all, the Nyakoe Church was able to retain all 17 members they baptized in March for three months for the first time in their history. Before this plan was introduced in their church, many would stop attending church soon after baptism.

Conclusions

The SGP proved a success judging from the success realized in the two churches within a short time. This is because the task of integrating members into the life of the local church was left to church members. The SGP should be replicated in every local church in the Nyamira Conference. When all the churches implement the plan fully, the Nyamira Conference should become a model conference from which all other conferences in the East Kenya Union should learn.

Andrews University

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A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

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Dedication

To my

dear wife Alice Kemuma,

who has been such a faithful helpmate

for many years

to

my children Emmanuel Mayaka and Zipporah Nyanchama
who are celebrating their third anniversary this year

and to

my granddaughter Emmanuelle Osebe

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Nyamira Conference has established a

goal of 104,000 baptisms for the 2011-2015 quenniquennium. The local churches in the

conference have goals for their territories derived from the conference goal as indicated

by the conference evangelism plans for 2011-2015. The goal raises the question: Are the

local churches prepared to nurture and assimilate these new members? This does not

seem to be the case with the Nyamira Conference.

The East African Union (EAU) Secretary's Statistical Reports for the years 2006-

2010 indicated that for every two members baptized into the local churches in the

Nyamira Conference, one was removed from the church books. The membership growth

in the Nyamira Conference has not been stable and consistent either. In 2007, for

example, the membership was 103,480. This dropped to 101,677 in 2008 as a result of

these loses and by December 2010, it had risen to 104,881. This pattern was again

repeated in the first quarter of 2011. The conference secretary's report showed that 479

people were baptized and 325 (67.8%) were removed from the church books.

My interest in the integration of new believers developed when the General

Conference of Seventh-day Adventists introduced the Nurture, Retention, and

Reclamation initiative (NR&R). The NR&R initiative was adopted by the East African

Union Mission in the year end executive committee of 2009 and the implementation was

delegated to the office of the Executive secretary. As the EAU Executive Secretary, I

began to study the subject and prepare materials for seminars.

Statement of the Problem

Although there are good efforts in the local churches in the Nyamira Conference

to baptize new believers, about 50% of them stop attending church soon after baptism.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to discover the reasons for the loss of about half of

the people baptized in the Nyamira Conference, and then develop, implement, and

evaluate a Spiritual Guardianship Plan to integrate new members into the life of the local

church thereby reducing this loss to below 20 percent.

Significance of the Project

The emphasis of the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to preach the

gospel to the entire world, discipling those who join the church fellowship, and prepare

them for Jesus' second coming. If there is a high loss of members such as experienced in

the Nyamira Conference, then the mission has not been fully achieved. An intervention is

needed to prevent any loss, however small.

The church is a community of believers. It is therefore logical that those who

believe in Christ should be made part of that community as soon as they join that

fellowship by integrating them into the life of the local faith community. Failure to do

this causes new members to feel that they are non-members and unwanted. There is a

tendency for people who feel left out to find another community where they will be

accepted and made to feel welcome. Sometimes, and unfortunately so, the new church community is usually from another denomination.

God does not want anyone who joins a faith community to be lost, "And this is the will of Him who sent me, that I should lose none of all that He has given me, but raise them up at the last day" (John 6:39, NIV, used throughout). The church will be going against this will if new members are not integrated into their fellowship and as a result become lost.

People who are not integrated into the church community make the church weak because they do not contribute meaningfully to the life and mission of the church. Jesus wants that those who accept Him are immediately engaged in making other disciples. This is what Jesus told a man delivered from demons, "Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has had mercy on you" (Mark 5:19).

This project will help me as a church leader to understand better how to integrate new members into the life of any local church.

Limitations of the Study

There are two limitations to this project. First, there is the challenge that the loss of members from local churches is a challenge in all eight organizations that form the EAU. Because of time, resources, and logistics, I will implement my project in two churches in the Nyamira Conference. Second, nurture is a very broad subject. For the purposes of this project, I will limit myself to a first step in the process of nurture—integration of new members into the life of the local church.

The first section of Chapter 1 introduces the background of the project, the

problem the project proposes to solve, the purpose of the project, the significance of the project, and the limitations of the project.

In the next section I will describe my personal basis for ministry. This is useful because my personal analysis will reveals areas where my strengths will enhance this research and I will also discover weak areas where I will need help from other people.

Personal Basis for Ministry

Introduction

Self-awareness is an important basis for ministry. McNeal, in his book *Practicing Greatness: 7 Disciplines of Extraordinary Spiritual Leaders* has given five components of self-awareness:

> Self-knowledge (knowing who you are), self-mindfulness (understanding your motive for doing what you do), self-vigilance (knowing what makes you tick and what ticks you off!), self-consciousness (knowing how you come across to others), and self-alertness (maintaining your emotional, physical, and spiritual condition). (2006, pp. 10, 11)

Failure to develop this discipline will pose many challenges in one's ministry.

Another reason for needing self-awareness is that it is biblical. Most Bible characters show a high level of self-awareness. David reflects this in many of his Psalms such as Psalm 23, 51, and 139. Joseph knew it at an early age (Gen 39:6-15). Paul shows this awareness in the narration of his curriculum vitae in Phil 3:1-16.

The discipline of self-awareness is critical to a leader's life and ministry. McNeal says again, "Since leadership is mostly about managing relationships, this self-understanding proves crucial to leaders' effectiveness" (2006, p. 16).

General Background

I was born in Kisii, in the western part of Kenya on September 1, 1958. I was

born to Adventist parents, Richard Makori and Milcah Osebe, and in a predominantly

Adventist community. I lived most of my life in the countryside. I married Alice

Kemuma on August 20, 1984, and have been blessed with our only child, Zipporah

Nyanchama who was born on July 1, 1985. She was married in 2011 and through her we

have one granddaughter, Emmanuelle Osebe.

I went to Nyataro II Primary School between 1968 and 1975 where I attained two

primary school certificates, having repeated class seven. I joined Nyamonyo Secondary

School between 1975 and 1979 completing my ordinary level education. I however did

not receive a certificate because the results for our class were cancelled because some

students cheated in the national examinations. I had written a junior secondary school

examination (KJSE) and attained a certificate that helped me join a professional career.

I was admitted to Kamagambo Adventist College for a two-year teaching career

in 1980, and completed my Primary School Teachers' Certificate in 1982. In 1993 I

enrolled for a bachelor of theology degree at Bugema University, graduating in 1997. I

entered the Adventist University of Africa in 2006 and received a Master of Pastoral

Theology degree in 2009.

I began work as a teacher in 1982 in public schools and served the government for

eleven years until 1993 when I started my ministerial training. I worked as a church

pastor for eight and half years between 1997 and 2005, then served as a conference

president for one year in 2006 when I became union secretary, which office I served up to

December 2013. In 2014 I became the senior pastor of Nairobi South Church.

Dynamics That Have Shaped My Ministry

McNeal argues that spiritual leaders are shaped by a special divine work, the work of the heart. "Spiritual leadership is a work of heart. This truth escapes many spiritual leaders. Caught up in helping other people maintain their hearts, they frequently ignore or neglect their own. They suffer for this oversight" (McNeal, 2000, p. xi). This assessment is correct and I agree with him. This is the greatest need of both the pastors and the members in the church today. Paul seems to have understood this critical truth when he wrote to the Corinthians, "But I discipline my body and bring it under subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified" (1 Cor 9:27). Leaders are shaped by an interplay of six influences or subplots,

> Basic heart-shaping occurs in six significant arenas. These divine-human interchanges provide the six major subplots of the leader's heart-shaping process. The development and convergence of these story lines script the leader's life message. These six subplots are *culture, call, community, communion, conflict, and the commonplace.* (McNeal, 2000, p. xiv)

This was the case with all the biblical characters, with all leaders in history, and I can recognize it is my case. Below I discuss briefly how these six dynamics have shaped me as a minister of the gospel.

Culture

My Kisii culture has provided me with equipment that has made my life and ministry what it is today. First, it gave me the language which is foundational to carrying out my ministry. I lived in two cultures. There was my rural Kisii culture where I grew up, went to school, and worked as a teacher and a pastor for 18 years. Most of that time I worked with people who were not exposed to the English language. I therefore used the Kisii language most of the time. This was the basis of learning English in school. Then

there was the general city culture, which is a collection of cultures. Here I use English most of the time.

Second, my culture gave me the basic suppositions and worldview that have helped me to know God, myself, and others. Although some worldview assumptions were wrong, there was a positive side to this. My culture taught me responsibility. The first born boy in any home in my culture received the strictest and the best of discipline. Parents believed that if the first born was well disciplined, he would be a good example to his siblings. This is what I received as the first born in my father's family.

Third, my culture instilled in me a sense of social status. As the first born, I was brought up with the knowledge that I would be the head of the family when my father was away, sick, or when he would die. This helped me know that I was my father's assistant and ultimate successor. I was never allowed to work in the home because most of the home chores belonged to women and did not make a man responsible. I spent much of my time taking care of the family cattle. This trained me to be keen, patient, and responsible, virtues that have been valuable in my ministry.

Call

My call to pastoral ministry was gradual. I first trained as an elementary school teacher and worked as a teacher for 11 years. During that time my conference (South Kenya Conference) used to assign me preaching appointments during camp meetings, evangelistic campaigns, Bible conferences, and seminars. My friends and church members used to tell me that I was more of a pastor than a teacher. It was my deputy headmaster, a Catholic, who made a comment that finally encouraged me to go for theological training.

I was a successful teacher but I could not be promoted because I refused to bribe corrupt education officers. This happened for many years. My deputy headmaster called me to his office one day and told me to try theology since I had the interest and it was the only area I could be sure of not having to give a bribe. Whether this was a rebuke or a commendation I do not know. I immediately applied for ministry and was admitted. Since my graduation, I have worked as a district pastor, as a conference executive committee member, a conference president, and as a union secretary. I have also seen God leading and encouraging me in my spiritual growth.

Community

My home was the first community that shaped me in my tender years. I was born in an Adventist home. My father was and has been a church elder. The prayers conducted in my family with an emphasis on Bible study were important to me. My community was predominantly Adventist. Most of my playmates were Adventist and they provided good social and spiritual support. I was involved in church work early in life and served in almost every church department. This gave me an opportunity to know the Adventist Church better than some of my peers. I went to Adventist schools from primary to tertiary education, and have been associated with Adventists during all the stages of my life. When I became a pastor, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was a familiar community.

Communion

I was introduced to prayer and Bible study early in life. Although I did not own a Bible until I was 18 when I was baptized, I was required to memorize scripture to recite every Sabbath. I would borrow a Bible from my father and copy portions which I

committed to memory as I was in school. My friends would help me practice. They would take the piece of paper on which was the memory verse and I recited as they checked whether I had committed to memory the entire portion. I prayed every morning and every evening. This was after we had family prayer.

I began reading Ellen G. White books as soon as I mastered English. I would borrow copies from a teacher in my local church who had books and would read and take notes for future reference. This practice has been useful in gaining spiritual knowledge and nourishment, and I have followed this pattern of selecting a book written by Ellen G. White that I read alongside the Bible to the present.

Conflict

It is true as McNeal puts it, "The decision to serve as a leader signs one up for conflict" (2000, p. 155). The major conflict that I have experienced in my ministry started in 2001. After the quenniquennial session of 2000, the conference president approached me to serve as a promoter of a section of the conference that was working towards conference status. After six months, the region was doing better than the main conference. The president called me to his office one day and raised many issues about my methods of promotion and questioned my leadership style. I tried to explain the truth about the issue, but I could not convince him. This was the beginning of tension between me and the president.

In July 2001, that region was disbanded and I was redeployed as a district pastor, but I remained an executive committee member. The members of the area reacted sharply to the closure of the region, which was done without notice or consultation. They picked a quarrel with the president and blocked him from serving them as president. The

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president turned round and blamed me for this. He maintained that I incited them before I left the place. He convinced the majority of the committee members so I was sidelined for the entire period of his term in office. This led me to pray and fast almost every week, especially whenever I went to the workers' meetings or the committees. But during this time I decided to work hard and according to the will of God. The president threatened to sack me but he never brought it to the committee for consideration. I am sure he lacked any basis.

I saw the outcome of this conflict five years later. At the next session, in 2005, the constituency dropped him as president and I was elected to replace him. This was a miracle because it was the first time in our conference a pastor was taken directly from the district to be a conference president. After ten months, another miracle happened. I was elected union secretary. When I look back, I sense that God was preparing me for this high and sensitive office in extraordinary ways. When the time came, He again over ruled the normal procedures to have me move quickly into a leadership position, something I have not understood fully up to this day.

Commonplace

I did not know the extent to which the commonplace had shaped my heart until I read what McNeal had written about commonplace, "The discussion of the commonplace as a heart-shaping dynamic for spiritual leaders now focuses on you. The goal of this treatment is to raise your awareness of the sacredness of the ordinary" (2000, p. 178).

I have always kept company with people of low estate and have found things that I needed to emulate. One day, on one of my visits to the churches I picked a poor and unlearned young man that everybody passed by during the Holy Communion foot

washing service. After the service I asked him to offer the last prayer. I was surprised to hear him tell God that he was surprised to have his feet washed by not only a pastor but a union secretary. After prayer, he repeated the same words and said that I had helped him get rid of his misconceptions about pastors. He had all along thought that pastors only washed each other's feet. If two pastors were not present, he thought the lowest a pastor could stoop was to wash an elder's feet, especially the head elder. I have since then chosen people of low estate for association and I have seen the benefits of this. This is in keeping with what Paul told the Church in Rome, "Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion" (Rom 12:16).

I have also chosen to serve in rural camp meetings most of the time. I have visited local churches without buildings where members use logs for pews. At the end of all these experiences, I have come to realize that people of low estate in rural settings take their God seriously. These experiences have humbled me and drawn me closer to God.

Personal Assessments

Conversion and Assurance of Salvation

The need for conversion and assurance of salvation in the Bible is stated in a variety of ways. Jesus told Nicodemus, "Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). The rich young ruler came to Jesus inquiring, "Good teacher, what good thing shall I do so that I may have eternal life?" (Matt 19:16). John the Baptist who bore testimony that Jesus was the lamb of the world who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29) needed assurance when he was in prison. "And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his

disciples and said to him, 'Are you the coming one, or do we look for another'? (Matt 11:2).

The search for assurance of salvation is described in the conversion experience of Ellen White.

> As I knelt and prayed, suddenly my burden left me, and my heart was light. At first a feeling of alarm came over me, and I tried to resume my load of distress. It seemed to me that I had no right to feel joyous and happy. But Jesus seemed very near to me; I felt able to come to Him with all my griefs, misfortunes, and trials, even as the needy ones came to Him for relief when He was upon the earth. There was a surety in my heart that He understood my peculiar trials and sympathized with me. I can never forget this precious assurance of the pitying tenderness of Jesus toward one so unworthy of His notice. I learnt more of the divine character of Christ in that short period when I bowed among the praying ones than ever before. (1948, p. 17)

All these longings testify to the search in the human heart for an assurance of salvation. It took me 25 years to be sure of my salvation. I was born and brought up in an Adventist home. My community was predominantly Adventist. I did not stray from the Adventist faith any time, and was baptized at the age of 18. The teaching of the Christian life at that time was legalistic with an emphasis on keeping the Ten Commandments, attending church regularly; returning a faithful tithe, giving generous offerings, reforming one's diet and dress, and the list was endless. I tried all these but I was not sure I had a close relationship with Christ. Although I observed all the things we were taught in church, I lived in fear of being lost. I feared the sermons on the Second Coming because they filled me with uncertainty. I felt I was not good enough to meet God if He came the second time as the preachers emphasized.

I finally received assurance of salvation in the 1980s when Jack Sequera, the then EAU ministerial secretary conducted a series of seminars on righteousness by faith. His main emphasis was that we are saved not because we qualify but because of the grace of

God. He would come to our conference Headquarter church in April and December of every year and I attended all the seminars between 1982 and 1986. I purchased and read two books he had written. By 1984 I had gained the assurance of salvation which I still have to date. I have learned how to find assurance of my salvation since then from my devotions.

Time and Resources

It looks like people have faced burnout in all generations. Early in Bible times when one would think that life was relaxed, people showed signs of physical and emotional exhaustion. Elijah's experience is an example. "And came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, 'It is enough! Now, Lord take my life, for I am not better than my fathers!" (1 Kgs 19:4). Many of the psalms reflect this frustration resulting from physical and emotional exhaustion (Ps 69, 109, 137). John the Baptist was in a similar situation when he was in prison (Matt 11:2).

In modern times there are many demands that overburden people. One author has written, "THE CONDITIONS OF modern-day living devour margin. . . . Unfortunately— and unexpectedly—the pains of progress are now here to take their place. Prominent among them is the disease of marginless living (Swenson, 2004, p. 13). He talks of overloaded families, overworked wage earners, overstressed teachers, overtaxed farmers, overburdened pastors, overwhelmed mothers, and the list goes on (pp. 15, 16). The purpose of his book is to restore emotional, physical, financial, and time reserves to overloaded lives. In this section, I evaluate myself in relation to these four reserves.

Emotional Reserve

I am generally stable emotionally. I grew up in a Christian home where love prevailed. The only scare I had from my childhood was a fear of failure. This was because my father and teachers in school punished me for both small and big failures with corporal punishment. I have not been adversely affected because it was the main mode of punishment in the community I grew up in. My temperament type is not stress prone and so I have been able to maintain good emotional health.

Physical Reserve

I have enjoyed excellent health. I have not been hospitalized, swallowed a tablet, or received an injection. This could be because of my good physical constitution, regular exercise, good diet, trust in God, and many other factors that promote healthful living.

Financial Reserve

I struggled financially for many years following my employment. I was the first born and neither of my parents was employed. I supported six of my siblings to help them receive a good education as well as providing for the basic needs of my family. After some time my wife entered school, which was at the same time our daughter was in college. I had the same financial challenges even when I entered ministry.

My daughter and my last born brother were the last to complete school in 2009. Since that time I have gained financial stability. I do not have any debt and I have enough money for my basic needs and for mission work to unentered areas. I have chosen the Maasai as my mission field.

Time Reserve

Time is where I have a problem. I have more to do than time available. The job

description at the secretariat office is demanding. I am also the Human Resource

Manager of the union supervising 32 workers. I sit on 12 committees, 4 of which I chair.

I also supervise the work of 8 executive secretaries. I visit all 8 organizations to conduct

seminars, perform evaluations, and supervise their work.

This activity-packed life has a negative bearing on relationships. My relationship

with God is affected because I hurry over my devotional time. I used to spend two hours

daily to read, pray, and meditate when I was working as a church pastor. That has now

been reduced to half an hour on the days I am on itinerary. There are days I go without

any devotional activity except prayer.

My family is also affected because I do not spend quality time with my wife. I

leave the house before seven and return at seven from Monday to Thursday. Although we

leave early from work on Fridays, I always work in the office until three o'clock in the

afternoon. I travel once a year to my rural home to visit my aging parents. I need to

regain margin in this area because my health and relationships may suffer for lack of it.

Spiritual Path

The spiritual life is a life of growth. Peter wrote to the believers in Asia Minor

and encouraged them by saying, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and

Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen" (2 Pet 3:18). This

growth is a process. Peter again gave a graphic picture of this process by adding, "But

also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue

knowledge, to knowledge, self-control, to self-control, perseverance, to perseverance

godliness, to godliness brotherly love" (2 Pet 1:5-7).

According to Jon Dybdahl,

The fact that it is a gradual growth process should make us patient in the Christian walk. We cannot expect instant maturity from ourselves or others when responding to God's call. The decision to seek God starts not ends growth. It is the introduction, not the conclusion. (2008, p. 126)

My spiritual journey has been smooth. My journey has been facilitated by my devotional life which consists of four main spiritual exercises. First, Bible study. I select a book of the Bible and read it through before I pick another one. I read it first thing in the morning. After the reading I engage in prayer for about fifteen to thirty minutes. I also read a portion from the Spirit of Prophecy books. I find time to read the Bible study guide and a devotional book daily. I also have morning and evening devotion with my family, which consists of a song, prayer, a reading from a devotional book or from a selected book of the Bible and a closing prayer. This has helped me to grow rapidly.

Worldview

Dybdahl has shown, through an inverted triangle, how worldview, which lies in the subconscious level of a human being, controls and determines the conscious world of values, beliefs, and behavior of a person (2008, p. 107). He has analyzed five types of religious worldviews prevalent in different parts of the world—(a) atheistic/agnostic, (b) deistic, (c) magical/mechanical, (d) medieval/mystic, and (e) Christian mystic. His argument is that Christian Theism facilitates the satisfaction of the deep seated hunger in the hearts of human beings. Therefore one needs to change one's worldview if it is not theistic. "For spirituality to flourish, we must return to a Christian theistic worldview" (Dybdahl, 2008, p. 106).

I was born into a magical/ mechanical worldview, a worldview that is predominant in animistic cultures. This worldview works on the basis of manipulating spiritual beings and powers to work in one's favor. This determined how I looked at and treated God, myself, others, the world, sin, and righteousness. Since I have chosen God as my Savior and Lord, I have checked and ensured that I have fully replaced my magical/mechanical worldview with Christian theism.

<center>Temperament</center>

There are many different temperament tests one can take to discover one's temperament type. I took the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) test to discover my temperament type. Dybdahl has summarized the four preferences of the test—E or I, S or N, T or F, and J or P which I have used to describe my temperament type (2008, pp. 112-114).

I am an ISTJ (I-introvert, S-sensing, T-thinking, J-judging) person. I am fairly balanced between extrovert and introvert, but leaning slightly more to the introvert side. This means that I am energized more by the inner world than the outer world. The things I enjoy are being alone, private prayer, and the inner spiritual journey.

As a sensing person I enjoy receiving information through my senses, being in tune with the world, working with known facts, and details.

I am a thinker. This means that I base my decisions on impersonal analysis and logic. In my teaching I emphasize God as righteous, just, faithful, and reasonable. I am logical, cool, and analytical. As a judging person, I prefer a planned, decided, orderly way of life. I have an easier time scheduling and following a regular devotional time and like doing what is already structured.

I appreciate the strengths of this temperament type and its preferences. I have also taken cognizance of the weaknesses of this temperament type. I have seen the need for seeking help when I face a situation that requires preferences that I am challenged in. I have also learned that there is no good or bad temperament. What I have is what God gave me to help me relate to Him, to myself, to others, and to the world.

Damage Factor

People are struggling with damaged emotions that require healing. Seamands writes,

> Whether through our own fallen temperament, willful disobedience, or as victims of the hurtful actions of others, many of us struggle with crippling emotions. The pain of such emotions is often present with us even though the incidents and relationships that caused the hurt may be long lost. (1981, p. 11)

In the preface of his book, he has shown the effects of these emotional scars, "The denied problems went underground, only to reappear in all manner of illnesses, eccentricities, terribly unhappy marriages, and sometimes even emotional destruction of their children" (p. 6).

My emotional health is good. I grew up in a stable home where both parents were Adventists and cultivated strong Christian values. This created a good environment for my emotional life. I also grew up as an Adventist who followed closely the church teachings. I did not slip into the worldly practices any time in my life. I studied in Adventist schools and took up ministry as my life work early in life. These factors have contributed to my good emotional health.

The only emotional challenge I face is the fear of failure. This came about because I was always given corporal punishment at home and at school for my failures.

This was the main form of punishment then. It was usually administered publicly to serve as a deterrent for others to keep them from committing the same mistake. This would embarrass me among my siblings and peers. I have however learned to overcome this, though gradually.

Spiritual Gifts

D. R. Dick and B. A. Dick, in their book *Equipped for Every Good Work: Building a Gifts-Based Church*, have described four tools that can help one discover and develop one's capacities. These are: Spiritual Gifts Inventory, Leadership/Interaction Styles, Task Type Preferences, and Spirituality Web. I took the first three of these tests.

After analyzing the spiritual gifts inventory score sheet (Dick & Dick, 2001, pp. 31-36), I identified my top three gifts as teaching, wisdom, and prophecy. This means that as a teacher I enjoy bringing scriptural and spiritual truths to others in a variety of ways. Wisdom is the gift of translating life experiences into spiritual truth and of seeing the application of scriptural truth to daily living. Prophecy is the gift of speaking the Word of God clearly and faithfully. The results from these tests I believe are true because these are the activities I enjoy most.

Leadership/Interaction Styles

The Leadership/Interaction Styles helps in appreciating one another as multidimensional and valuable. According to Dick and Dick, "while the Spiritual Gifts Inventory names the spiritual dimension of our relationships, the Leadership/Interaction Style tool points to the ways we behave with one another" (2001, p. 53). They have given four ways people interact with one another: Director, Dreamer, Pleaser, and Thinker.

I discovered that I interact with other people as a thinker. Some of the characteristics of this type include taking work seriously, doing whatever it takes to get the job done, being highly organized, relying on facts, information, data, and figures to make decisions, and looking at the issues from as many angles as possible.

Task Type Preferences

The Task Type Preferences explore four ways to gather together and do the work for which we are equipped. Dick and Dick describe four task types—Project, Work, Process, and Fellowship. I identify with the process type, enjoy doing the brain-work around the committee table with pen, paper, and planning. This group hands off work tasks to those who prefer to do things rather than plan things (2001, p. 90).

Conclusion

I have described specific personal assessments on conversion and assurance of salvation, time and resources management, spiritual path, worldview, temperament, and damage factor. I have also assessed myself in relation to others by taking tests on spiritual gifts, leadership/interaction style, and task type preferences.

I have a number of strengths that will enhance my project. First, my culture and worldview are the same as the people who live in the place where I am going to conduct my project. The Nyamira Conference is in Kisi land where I was born and brought up. I will easily connect with them using the local language. Second, my physical, emotional, and financial reserves are good. The project requires money, good health, and emotional stability. Third, my spiritual gifts—teaching, wisdom, and prophecy are all compatible with dealing with people in the integration of new members in the life of the local church.

I anticipate challenges with some of my weaknesses. First, my time is over committed. I will treat my project as part of my itinerary activities. I will schedule time to visit my project sites when I am on itinerary to the Nyamira Conference and other neighboring conferences—South Kenya, Ranen, and Kenya Lake. Second, my temperament type is not people oriented. I tend to work alone, being strict with time, and I value orderliness. I know there are people who may not like this weakness in me. Therefore, I will ask the assistance of the Executive Secretary of the Nyamira Conference, who is people oriented, to assist with some tasks.

Overview of the Paper

Chapter 1 provides the introduction to the dissertation. It deals with the background of the study, the problem statement, the purpose of the project, the significance of the project, and the limitations. Personal basis for the project is also presented.

In Chapter 2, a theological foundation for the project is developed from the Bible. An examination of how people were integrated into the Israelite community will be made from the Old Testament. What the New Testament teaches about integration and nurture will be examined from the Gospels, the book of Acts, and the Pauline letters. Literature will be reviewed to enable me to gain a reasonable knowledge on the subject. This will include books, journals, magazines by Christian writers, and sections of Ellen G. White's books that deal with nurture and the integration of new members.

Chapter 3 examines the political, social, and religious contexts of the Nyamira Conference where the project will be implemented. This analysis is important because it informs the choice of the methods, activities, and programs of the project.

In Chapter 4 the project implementation strategy will be described. The logframe and Gantt chart are two tools employed to track project activities and sub activities, and help in the monitoring and evaluation of the project. The Spiritual Guardianship Plan also will be described.

Chapter 5 will describe the implementation of the project. First, questionnaires and other data collecting tools will be developed to facilitate the collection of various data from the field. Second, a survey will be conducted to discover factors that contribute to the high loss of members and what methods are currently being used to integrate new members into the life of the local church in the Nyamira Conference. Third, materials for the project seminar will be developed. The focus of these materials will be to help local church leaders and members to better understand the task of integration and nurture. Fourth, implementation will be undertaken. Participants from two selected local churches will be taken through a series of seminars on the integration and nurture of new members. They will then apply the principles learned in their local churches for a period of six months. A monthly assessment of the project will be carried out. Fifth, the project report will be written. This will include analyzing the various reports, writing it up, and presenting the results to relevant stakeholders. Finally, the report will be shared with the district where the project is implemented, the Nyamira Conference executive committee, the East Kenya Union Conference, and the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton. This will afford the respective committees opportunity to take corrective measures to reduce the number of new believers leaving the church in Kenya.

CHAPTER 2

A STRATEGY TO INTEGRATE NEW MEMBERS

INTO THE LIFE OF A LOCAL CHURCH

Introduction

Integration, as used in this research, is the process of establishing a new member in the faith and in the fellowship of other believers in a local church. It is connecting newcomers and new members with the life of the church. Paul gave an accurate definition of integration when writing to the Colossian church: "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving" (Col 2:6, 7). Paul used three phrases that define well what integration is: "rooted in Him," "built up in Him," "established in the faith." Rick Warren defines assimilation as "the task of moving people from an awareness of your church to attendance at your church to active membership in your church where members have a sense of ownership" (1995, p. 309).

A new member, as used in this research, refers to a convert who has expressed faith in Jesus Christ, whether baptized or not. Other terms used in this research which express the same concepts as integration are assimilation, incorporation, establishment, settling, anchoring, stabilization, and actualization. In this chapter, I will deal with

integration methods and models used in the Bible, the writings of Ellen G. White, and the writings of Christian authors.

Integration in the Bible

The Bible records the life and mission of two faith communities, the nation of Israel and the Christian church. The Old Testament deals with the Israelite nation while the New Testament deals with the Christian church. These communities were not the same in structure. While the church in the Old Testament was one chosen nation, the church in the New Testament was a collection of individual congregations in different geographical locations. They both, however, give a picture on how new members were integrated into the life of that community.

Integration in the Old Testament

The birth of the Israelite nation is described in the first five books of the Bible, but its history is given in all the 39 books of the Old Testament. It was a nation born out of God's initiated call (Gen 12:1-3) and ratified by God's initiated covenant (15:1-21). The rest of Genesis records events and circumstances of Abraham becoming "a great nation" (12:2).

In Exodus, the Israelites were rescued as a band of slaves, and at Mt. Sinai, they were given the Ten Commandments and a host of other laws, as described in the book of Leviticus, which defined and regulated all aspects of their life and worship. The books of Numbers and Deuteronomy describe their desert journey and organizational structure. The book of Joshua describes the conquest and eventual occupancy of the Promised Land. The challenges they encountered with the inhabitants of Canaan are described in

the books of Judges, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Chronicles. The Old

Testament includes the prophets who were serving them before they were taken to

exile—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, and Nahum.

They were taken into exile in Babylon because of stubbornness, "but they mocked

God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the

Lord was aroused against his people and there was on remedy" (2 Chr 36:16). God was

with them in exile through the prophets Ezekiel and Daniel. The books of Nehemiah and

Ezra, Habakkuk, Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi describe life after the exile up to the

close of the Old Testament.

Commitment to the laws, commandments, and covenants caused the Israelites to

see other nations as outsiders, and later they branded them as gentiles. Free interaction

with these nations was forbidden.

Non-Israelites Among Israelites

People who were not Israelites lived among the Israelites. Caleb, Joshua's fellow

spy, is identified as a Kenizzite, "Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the

son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the God of

Israel" (Josh 14:14).

There were also the Midianite relatives of Moses who accompanied Israel into

Canaan and settled there, "Now Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite,

Moses' father-in-law. 'We are setting out for the place of which the lord said, "I will give

it to you." 'Come with us, and we will treat you well; for the lord has promised good

things to Israel'" (Num 10:29; Judg 4:11).

Ruth, a convert and widow of a Jewish husband was a Moabite. She identified

herself as a stranger. "So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, 'Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?'" (Ruth 2:10).

The integration of converts from outside Israel rarely occurred, but it did occur. On what terms did this integration take place? Did they lose their identity when they were incorporated into the community of Israel? What were the principles involved in this process of integration?

Principles of Integration

The evidence from Israel's practice suggests that converts were assimilated into Israel in many ways, but especially through circumcision and marriage. A man was required to be circumcised to be considered a full Israelite and participate in all aspects of Israelite life. A woman became integrated through marriage.

Native Israelites would participate in national celebrations such as the Passover, which showed their identity as God's chosen people. There was a provision for a foreigner who lived among the Israelites and wanted to participate in the festival.

> And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "This is the ordinance of the Passover; No foreigner shall eat it. But every man's servant who is bought for money, when you have circumcised him, then he may eat it. A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat it. . . . And when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to the lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then come near and keep it; and he shall be a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it. One law shall be for the native-born and the stranger who dwell among you." (Exod 12:43-45, 48, 49)

Num 9:14 repeats the principle, "And if a stranger dwells among you, and would keep the Lord's Passover, he must do according to the rite of the Passover, and according to its ceremony; you shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger and the native of the land."

Commenting on this, in the *Andrews Study Bible* one footnote states, "A resident alien was permitted to participate in the Israelite national festival of Passover, provided that the foreigner was male and he had received the covenant sign of circumcision (Exod 12:48; cf., Gen 17:10-14)." In this way, a "non-Israelite could be voluntarily incorporated into the community that worshipped the true God. This would partly fulfill the promise to Abram that through his descendants all peoples of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:3; 22:18)" (2010, pp. 179, 180).

The integration of women was through marriage. The instructions given to Israel regarding women captured in war show that the integration of women into Israel was simpler than that of men.

> When you go out to war against your enemies, and the Lord your God delivers them into your hand, and you take them captive, and you see among them a beautiful woman, and desire her and would take her for your wife, then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head and trim her nails. She shall put off the cloths of her captivity, remain in your house, and mourn her father and mother a full month; after that you may go into her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife. (Deut 21:11)

The *Andrews Study Bible* has this comment, "Resulting from the situation in Deuteronomy 20:14, such women could be assimilated into Israel through marriage. Captive women were to be treated with respect, not as sexual objects to be raped" (2010, p. 243).

Israelite Children

The Israelites did not assume that their children would naturally grow up as Israelites. They had a detailed home education program which helped children understand the Israelite heritage. This helped the parents to assimilate their children into the Israelite community. Deut 6:6-9 records, "And these words I command you today shall be in your

heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."

Gentiles Who Would Join Israel

Many prophets predicted a time when the Gentiles, who were considered outsiders would join Israel. Much of this prediction directs the attention to a future salvation. This presents an ideal rather than a practice. These would be part of Israel through expressing faith in the God of Israel rather than through circumcision and marriage.

Isaiah prophesied a time when Gentiles would seek God (11:10-16), draw near together (45:20), join themselves to the Lord to worship Him (56:8), and be gathered together by God to come and see His glory (66:18-21).

The inflow is from Israel's enemies—Egypt and Assyria (Isa 11:11), Canaan (Ezek 16:53), Edom (Amos 9:12), and Philistia (Zech 9:7). In other places the Gentiles are referred to in general terms as, "All the nations that are called by my name" (Amos 9:12), "The nations that are left round about you" (Ezek 36:36), and "all nations and tongues" (Amos 9:12).

In summary, the Old Testament depicts people, no matter what their faith was, in ethnic or national terms. The assimilation of converts from outside Israel occurred rarely, but it did occur mainly through circumcision, marriage, and education. The language of future salvation on occasion transcends ethnicity and nationalism.

Integration in the New Testament

The New Testament church is organized around the local church structure

familiar in the twenty-first century. People are called from the world through the gospel and join a local congregation. We can learn integration strategies by considering three models from the New Testament: the Jesus model, the Lucan model, and the Pauline model.

The Jesus Model

Mark 3:14 records Jesus's model of integration, "And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sickness, and to cast out demons." The passage gives two main approaches Jesus used to integrate the disciples into the cause He was starting. It was not a congregation yet, but He called it a church, "And I say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt 6:18). Jesus used personal contact to disciple and mentor them. He also involved them in the ministry He was calling them to do.

First, He said that He wanted the disciples to be with Him. He trained them on the job. They were with Him when He healed diseases, including exorcisms (Mark 1:21-45), when He was teaching (Matt 5-7), when He rebuked the Pharisees (Matt 23), when He washed their feet (John 13), and when He was arrested, judged, crucified, resurrected, and ascended to Heaven. During this time He built them up in the faith and prepared them for the commission He was about to give them.

Second, He involved them in the ministry He was about to give them. In Matt 10, He sent them on a ministerial practicum, "And when He had called the twelve disciples to Him, he gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and heal all kinds of

sickness and all kinds of diseases." Later He sent them to prepare His way among the Samaritans (Luke 9:51-56).

In the Great Commission He gave the disciples before He went to Heaven, He gave an outline of how it was to be carried out,

> And Jesus came and spoke to them saying, all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you ; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen. (Matt 28:18-20)

This commission describes a process that would lead to a full integration of new members into the fellowship of the faith community:

1. They had to preach the gospel to all the nations.

2. Those who accepted the gospel were to be accepted into the faith community through baptism.

3. The new members were to be taught all that Jesus had commanded the disciples.

4. The new converts had to be discipled throughout life in the community of faith.

This fourfold process constitutes the integration process in the New Testament. This model was followed by the young church as described in the book of Acts.

The Lucan Model

Acts 2:40-47 and 4:32-37 describe the model used to integrate new converts into the community of believers. The strategy is like that of Jesus but the activities were different. Principles of integration can be developed from these two passages.

1. There was the preaching of the gospel (2:40).

2.   Those who believed were baptized (2:41).

3.   The new converts joined a community of other believers (2:44).

4.   The new converts were taught the apostles' doctrine, which was the gospel (2:42).

5.   They enjoyed the fellowship of other believers, including the breaking of bread and prayers (2:42).

6.   There was sharing of the physical needs, which included possessions and goods (2:45; 5:32-37).

7.   They met in the temple regularly for the study of the word and prayer (2:42, 46).

8.   They visited each other from house to house eating food with gladness and simplicity of heart (2:46).

9.   Whenever they met there was singing and enjoyment of one another's company (2:47).

The Pauline Model

Paul followed the same pattern, but customized it according to the context. In the book of Acts and in his epistles, principles can be found that Paul used to assimilate new converts into Jesus Christ and into the life of the local church.

First, Paul organized believers in a locality into congregations with leaders over them. Every place he started a congregation, he organized it and chose leaders, "So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord whom they had believed" (Acts 14:23); he gave qualities to be considered in electing church elders, deacons, and their wives (1 Tim 3:1-15; Titus 1:9); and asked members to respect these leaders (Heb 13:7, 17; 1 Tim 5:15).

The work of these leaders consisted of teaching (1 Tim 5:17), watching over the souls of believers (Heb 13:17), shepherding the church (Acts 20:28), and maintaining law and order in a local congregation (1 Tim 3:14, 15; Titus 1:10-16).

Second, he taught the new converts through follow-up visits and by writing letters to them. For example he wrote letters to the congregations at Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae, Thessalonica, and to individuals who were taking care of churches like Timothy and Titus. The letters explained doctrine, lifestyle ordered by correct doctrine, and corrected errors that were creeping into the young churches.

He also visited the congregations personally and taught them, "And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in numbers daily" (Acts 16:4, 5). He did this in Thessalonica (17:1-4), Corinth (18:1-4), and Ephesus (19:8-10).

Third, he used mentorship to help young ministers to grow. He involved them in ministry by recruiting them as his ministry associates. A prime example is Timothy (Acts 16:1-5). This happened with other ministry associates such as Titus, John Mark, and Silas.

Fourth, he used believers to integrate and nurture other believers, especially the new ones. This was his most creative way to integrate converts given that Paul was an itinerant apostle. Even if he was with the congregation, the numbers were big and his gifts were limited. This seemed to be an old principle employed by God, "As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend" (Prov 27:17).

In Eph 4:11-16, Paul gives the reason why God gives spiritual gifts to believers in a local church.

> And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but speaking the truth in love may grow up into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Paul says in this passage that every member of the body (church) should take his/her part for the growth of the whole church. He challenged members in every congregation to help one another grow. The "one another" phrase is used to show what each should do to another. Paul wrote deep and long instructions that would engender community in the local congregation, if followed. This caring concern for others created a cordial atmosphere where new converts found a home where they grew into mature Christians.

> Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. Bless those who persecute you, bless and curse not. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind towards one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your estimation. Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. (Rom 12:9-18, NASB)

Russell Burrill argues that the "one another" admonitions are Paul's understanding of community.

> This single factor provided opportunity to establish each other in the new faith.

This is the heart of all the 'one another" passages in the New Testament. In this community real care for each other occurs. "Christians are not called to serve God singularly, but in community with other people, where they can care for each other, love each other, rejoice with each other, etc. These are the hallmarks of genuine Christian community" (Burrill, 1998, p. 112).

Paul gave admonitions to particular congregations with the "one another" phrases: In the Ephesus Church, he urged members to speak truth to one another (Eph 4:25), be kind to one another (4:32), and speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs (5:19), and submit to one another in the fear of God (5:21).

At the Colossian church, he asked members to bear with one another (Col 3:13), and forgive one another (3:13).

Thessalonians were urged to comfort one another (1 Thess 4:18). John also told the disciples to, "Love one another" (John 13:34) and Peter admonished his audience to, "Be submissive to one another" (1 Pet 5:5).

This quality of life was common among the believers of the first century church. It provided a climate where new converts were integrated into the life of the local congregation and ultimately grew up in the faith.

<center>Integration in Ellen White Writings</center>

Ellen White was concerned with new converts. Her writings suggest attitudes and strategies for establishing new converts in the faith. First, the new converts should be guided as children. She gave specific requirements for nurture to happen in a local congregation. Commenting on Matt 18:5-7, she wrote,

By 'little ones' Christ does not mean babies. Those to whom He refers are 'little ones which believe in me'—those who have not gained an experience in following Him, those who need to be led like children, as it were, in seeking the things of the kingdom of heaven. (White, 1948, p. 341)

This attitude gives the new converts time to adjust to the life of the church. This is necessary because the new converts were used to a different orientation outside the church.

We must never forget how long it takes to remove long-cherished errors from the mind of people, which have been taught from childhood. We must bear in mind that earth is not heaven, and that there will be discouragements to meet and overcome but forbearance and tenderness and pity should be exercised toward all in darkness (White, 1948, p. 341).

Second, White introduced the role of fellowship in establishing new believers. She wrote extensively about the social meetings as they were practiced in the early Adventist church. According to Burrill, "It appears that the early Adventists, many coming from Methodist roots, borrowed the idea of social meetings out of the Methodist prayer meetings as it was in transition from class meeting" (1998, p. 179).

Many of the early Adventist social meetings were held after a preaching service and provided opportunity for people to share personally what the sermon said to them. These meetings formed the heart of the early Adventist assimilation and nurture methods because this was a time when there were no resident clergy. "In the absence of resident clergy the early Adventists were sustained through the social meeting, the Sabbath school, and the Bible class" (Burrill, 1998, p. 183).

Ellen White encouraged Adventists to use social meetings as a method of retention. There are about 300 references in her writings to social meetings.

Perhaps no one has written about the early Adventist social meeting more than Ellen White. She not only participated in these meetings, but gave much counsel on how they should be conducted. "The nearly three hundred references in her writings to these meetings give us a fairly accurate picture of life in the Adventist church as regards the social meeting. (Burrill, 1998, p. 186)

Ellen White taught that the life of the local church is to be maintained not by preaching services only, but by relational social meetings.

Let everyone consider the value of the social meetings, and let not large or small companies of believers think that they cannot have enjoyable season unless they are entertained by a preacher. Where this dependence on the minister exists, people fail to obtain the vigorous religious experience which they so much need wherever their lot May be cast. If the minister alone does all the witnessing, then those who have newly come to the faith become dwarfed and sickly for lack of opportunity to use their spiritual muscle. They need to learn how to testify, how to pray, how to sing, to the glory of God: but failing to do this, they have only a one-sided experience. (Burrill, 1998, p. 191)

The third method, closely related to the social meetings, is the use of small groups. White argued that small groups provide a basis for ongoing nurture and care.

The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort has been shown to me by the one who cannot err. If there is a large number of them in the church, let the members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church members, but for unbelievers. If in one place there only two or three who know the truth, let them form themselves into a band of workers. Let them keep their bond union unbroken, pressing together in love and unity, encouraging one another to advance, and gaining courage and strength from the assistance of the others. Let them reveal Christ-like forbearance and patience, speaking no hasty words, using the talent of speech to build one another up in the most holy faith. (1946, pp. 21-22)

The fourth strategy is the involvement of the new converts. It is evident that new believers were involved in works of ministry soon after accepting Jesus. This helped them to feel part of the community of faith. White wrote, "The greatest help that can be given our people is to teach them to work for God, to depend on Him, not on the ministers. Let them work as Christ worked. Let them join the army of workers and do a faithful service for Him" (1948, p. 19).

She further wrote that new members should be given something to do because this helped in the formation of their spirituality.

> Those who are most actively employed in doing with interested fidelity their work to win souls to Jesus Christ are best developed in spirituality and devotion. Their very active working formed the means of their spirituality. There is danger of religion losing in depth that which it gains in breadth. This need not be, if, in the place of long sermons, there is wise education given to those newly come to the faith. Teach them by giving them something to do, in some line of spiritual work that their first love will not die but increase in favor. Let them feel that they are not to be carried and to lean for support on the church; but they are to have root in themselves. They can be in many lines, according to their several abilities, useful in helping the church to come near to God, and working in various ways to act upon the elements outside the church which will be a means of acting beneficially upon the church. (1948, pp. 356, 357)

A fifth method Ellen White suggests in establishing new converts in the faith is to help them to study the Scriptures for themselves.

> Upon all the new converts should be impressed the truth that abiding knowledge can be gained by earnest labor and persevering study. As a rule, those who are converted to the truth we preach have not been previously been diligent students of the scriptures; for in the popular churches there is little real study of the word of God. The people look at the ministers to search the scriptures for them and to explain what they teach. (1948, p. 367)

A sixth strategy that White emphasizes is mentorship that arises from personal contact. Jesus provided this model in the recruitment and training of the 12 disciples. Commenting on this, Ellen White wrote the following counsel.

> For three years and half the disciples were under the instruction of the greatest Teacher the world has ever known. By personal contact and association, Christ trained them for service. Day by day they walked and talked with him, hearing His words of cheer to the weary and heavy-laden, and seeing the manifestation of His power in behalf of the sick and the afflicted. Sometimes he taught them, sitting among them on the mountainside; sometimes beside the sea or walking by the way, He revealed the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Wherever the hearts were open to receive the define message, He unfolded the truths of the way of salvation. He did not command the disciples to do this or that, but said, "Follow me." On His journeys through country and cities, He took them with Him, that they might see how He taught the people. They shared the frugal fare, and like Him were sometimes hungry and often weary. On the crowded streets, by the lakeside, in the lonely desert, they were with Him. They saw him in every phase of life. (1911, p. 18)

Paul's mentorship follows Jesus' example and provides a model for pastors and local church leaders today. Paul took young men and trained them on the job for ministry. Timothy and Titus are good examples on the use of this model. Writing on this method, Ellen White wrote encouraging words affirming what Paul did.

> This feature of Paul's work contains an important lesson for ministers today. The apostle made it a part of his work to educate young men for the office of ministry. He took them with him on his missionary journeys, and thus they gained an experience that later enabled them to fill positions of responsibility. When separated from them, he still kept touch with their work, and his letters to Timothy and to Titus are evidences of how deep was the desire for their success. Experienced workers today do a noble work when, instead of trying to carry all the burdens themselves, they train younger workers and place burdens on their shoulders. (1911, p. 368).

Integration in Other Christian Writers

Rick Warren in his book, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission,* has defined integration as the process of turning attenders into members. He says that it is the responsibility of the church to assimilate new members and that this process takes time (1998, p. 3). Different Christian writers have given methods and strategies that can be used by the church today to integrate believers into the life of the local church.

The first one is grounding new believers. McCallum and Lowery describe it this way: "Grounding new Christians means giving them basic orientation to the Christian life. When people meet Christ, your first concern is to see them 'rooted and built up in Him,' as Paul puts it (Col. 2:7)" (2006, p. 43). The role of the local church as a community of faith is challenged to take intentional steps to establish new converts into the faith and fellowship. They should develop structures and systems to ensure that this happens. Warren likens integration to an organ in relation to the body, "We need to

reclaim this image. Any organ that is detached from the body will miss what it was created to be; it will also shrivel and die quickly. The same is true for Christians that are uncommitted to any specific congregation" (Warren, 1995, p. 310).

The second method is the role of older members in helping the new to grow. J. A. Cress describes the relationship between mature and new members in the integration of converts to the life of the local church,

> Of course this brings us right back to the issue of friendship and involvement with new believers. People are no longer numbers when we love them, when we pray for and with them, and when we minister to them. Making friends becomes not only a much-needed and excellent method to assimilate new members, but also an effective evangelistic strategy. (2000, p. 64)

Another reason for the members of a local congregation to provide the extended family-like atmosphere is that new converts are babies in the faith. As a baby needs the input of the many members of the extended family to grow into a balanced person, members of the church are to use their gifts to help baby Christians grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet 3:18). Dick and Dick have said this clearly,

> The birthing and infancy of the life of faith is a stage of deep dependence and patience of others. Throughout this stage, we believe that the world revolves around us, and our primary motivation is comfort. This is a time of learning the stories of faith and absorbing the ideas and attitudes of the faith community. It is this in community that we grow as disciples of Jesus Christ and as stewards of the gospel. (2001, pp. 98, 102)

The third method is to utilize departments and ministries in a local church. Aubrey Malphurs writes,

> As I am using the term in this book, *assimilation* addresses how the church orders or arranges its primary ministries to bring people into the life of the church, keep them on to spiritual maturity. It relates to how your church moves people from outside the life of the church to become a vital part of that life. When a person desires to connect with your church, how does he or she do so? What activities, events, or relationships would he or she experience first, second, third, and so on? How have you arranged

these ministries to help a person come to faith and then move on to maturity? The answer reveals your assimilation process. (Malphurs, 2009, p. 75)

Four primary ministries in the Adventist church are directly responsible for integration: The Adventist Women's Ministries, the Adventist Men's Organization, the Adventist Youth Organization, and the Children's Ministries. The reason for this designation is that all people in any local church are men, women, youth, or children. These ministries give opportunity for new members to link up with one of their own, where they can feel secure and understood. If local churches immediately enroll new members into these ministries, there is a probability that they will join the church. The new converts will be integrated into the life of the local church quickly.

The fourth strategy is the involvement of the new believers.

The last thing you want to do is develop individualistic disciples who don't understand that Christian growth is a corporate activity that cannot be attained in isolation. They should be active in the body life at all needed levels—worship, group study, and small group fellowship—because only in small groups will they be able to develop relationships and use their spiritual gifts. (McCallum & Lowery, 2006, p. 292)

The fifth method is member care through small groups. The New Testament supports the small group principle.

The church established at Pentecost did not meet in a large group in one place. It immediately became a small group church, in obedience to the model of Jesus. It would have been impossible to be a Christian in the early church and not be a part of a small house group. The small group activities of the early church consisted of four things: study of the teachings of Jesus, which they learned from the apostles; fellowship; the breaking of bread; and prayer. These are small group activities. In the small group setting the early church did Bible study. With few people present, it was not one-way conversation, but dialogue, where the believers could ask questions. While, no doubt, didactic teaching occurred, it was in a strong small group setting. (Burrill, 1998, pp. 106, 107)

The sixth method used in the New Testament church is reverse mentorship. According to Earl Creps, "Reverse mentoring (RM) is cross-cultural in that it actually

uses the unlikely possibility of a relationship to benefit both parties through mutual learning from honesty and humility" (Creps, 2008, p. xvii). RM is becoming a popular way of mentorship. Another writer affirms this. "When the mentoring experience is consciously and conscientiously grounded in learning, the likelihood that the mentoring relationship will become a satisfactory learning relationship for both mentoring partners dramatically improves" (Zachary, 2000, p. xv). Jesus did not use this kind of mentoring because He is omniscient, but Paul used it in his ministry.

> Following Jesus' method, Paul invested in individuals to make disciples. He too had his sights on the multitudes, but he knew that solid transmission of the faith would not occur as readily through speaking to an audience. Paul encouraged Timothy to use a personal style to link the gospel to future generations when he exhorted him, "What you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well" (2 Tim. 2:2). Paul envisioned an intergenerational chain of disciples linked together through personal investment. We know Paul lived out this admonition, for his letters are filled with names of those to whom he gave himself. Paul replaced himself in the battle with soldiers like Timothy, Titus, Silas (Silvanus), Eudia, Syntyche, Epaphroditus, Priscilla and Aquila. They accompanied Paul on his missionary journeys, were entrusted with ministry responsibility and became co-laborers in the gospel. Paul attributed the change in their lives to the impact of the message of Christ in his life to them. (Ogden, 2007, p. 21)

The seventh model discussed by Christian writers to integrate new converts in the fellowship of the local church is the family motif. When Jesus described the conversion process to Nicodemus, He used the imagery of being "born again" rather than words indicating adulthood. "Jesus answered and said to him most assuredly, 'I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . . Do not marvel that I said to you, "You must be born again" (John 3:3, 7, NKJV). One writer has given an analogous comment on this:

> Furthermore, even among those words He could have utilized to speak of a new start, Jesus selected birth for a specific reason. Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus "fits" other biblical passages that support a "family motif" in describing the process of becoming a disciple and a member of Christ's church. (Cress, 2000, p. 23)

This gives a clear picture of what it takes to establish a new member fully. Although a baby is totally dependent upon adults for everything and even though the infant chooses generally annoying ways of expressing his/her needs, including crying, screaming, kicking, and rolling about, someone is always there ready to attend to his/her needs. If this attitude is transferred into the church and applied to the discipleship of new members then the church will retain most of the new members that join the church. Cress, in his book, *You Can Keep Them If You Care: Helping New Members Stay on Board* (2000, pp. 30, 31), has given eleven patterns in the life of normal newborns that are applicable to new believers.

1. Arrival of newborns completely upsets the status quo for the family. Established patterns of "how things ought to be" are quickly discarded.

2. Newborns utterly depend upon their parents for everything. Left alone, without their support, infants would quickly perish.

3. Newborns are totally self-centered, totally unaware of the fact that anyone else has needs, and totally expectant that their needs will be fully met by the family members.

4. Newborns usually express their demands in socially unacceptable methods—crying, kicking, and screaming uncontrollably—because this is their only available communication option.

5. Newborns will regularly produce horribly smelly messes which are simultaneously offensive to the rest of the family (the bad news) as well as an indicator that life is progressing normally (the good news).

6. Newborns need consistent monitoring by the family to assure that gains in growth are occurring as they should and that harmful things are avoided.

7. Newborns are incapable of discernment and may readily ingest something that could harm them as quickly as they would choose which is beneficial.

8. Although newborns will quickly recognize their own caregivers, it is equally possible for them to accept nurture—or to receive abuse—from others.

9. When newborns arrive prematurely, efforts are redoubled and heroic measures are taken to save their lives. Failure to do less or to properly nurture any infant is criminal.

10. Newborns will experience rapid but sporadic growth. Responsibility for providing appropriate nourishment and consistent nurture belongs to parents, not to the infant.

11. Maturity is a process of time, but does not automatically occur with the passing of time. Parents must teach even simple tasks repeatedly as they work toward teaching the children eventually to make their own decisions.

The irony is that old members know what is expected with a newborn at home but fail to apply the same principle to new members at church. The main reason is that people accept Jesus when they are adults and therefore they assume that the adult maturity will carry over to the spiritual realm. They do not understand the implication of the biblical teaching of the family and childhood of converts.

It is important that church leaders make teaching on integration clear to all members to position themselves for integration and nurture when new members join the church. Going back to the analogy, family members begin to prepare for the baby the day the good news of conception has been announced. This is normally seven or eight months before the child is born. It is useful for the church to prepare for new members all the

time because one cannot predict when there will be another new member.

Special preparation is needed when the church plans for evangelistic meetings because they can expect new believers. If there are no procedures, structures, or plans put in place ahead of time, then integration is going to be approached through trial and error. This kind of approach produces feeble members that can be seen in our churches in the East African Union.

The sixth factor accounting for sound integration of members is the lifestyle of old members. Children learn by copying the older members' behavior. When the members live exemplary lives, they give a correct picture of God and Christianity. Paul in the first letter to Timothy (4:12-16), wrote of the importance of an upright lifestyle.

> Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of hands of the leadership. Mediate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those hear you.

The life of the first Adventists in the Battle Creek community gives an illustration. R. W. Schwarz, in his book, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, says that life in the first community had degenerated to such a bad state that even an angel could not escape criticism.

> The increasing Adventist concentration in Battle Creek disturbed Ellen White. In later years she observed that some church members "seemed to think that when they reach Battle Creek they would not have temptations." Such a view was completely false; "They did not know that it was in Battle Creek that the enemy was working hardest." A large number of Adventists in one place increased temptation to pride, complacency, gossip, and criticism; and this congestion deprived other localities of the witness churches were called to give. The adverse effects on the spirituality of the church members accelerated. Gossip became particularly prevalent. "If an angel from heaven should appear in the streets of this place" a recently returned missionary observed, "I fear he would not escape evil remarks." (Schwarz, 1979, p. 300)

This bad lifestyle would have adverse consequences later. G. Knight has given an example of how Hannah More died a bitter worker because she was mistreated by fellow believers at Battle Creek. She was a brilliant lady who received the Adventist message through reading the Bible.

> Rejected by her former community because of her Adventism, she travelled to Battle Creek, Michigan, in the spring of 1867, hoping to find comfort and work among fellow believers. That is where the bad part of the story begins. Arriving in Battle Creek when the Whites were on travel itinerary, she was unable to find either a job or a place to live among church members. Rejected by Adventists, she eventually found a home with a former mission colleague in northern Michigan. Remarkably, given the way the Adventist community treated her, she did not give up the faith. The Whites, realizing the tragedy, began corresponding with Hannah, pledging to help her relocate in Battle Creek in the spring. But such was not to be. Hannah More became ill in February and passed to her rest on March 2, 1868. From Ellen White's perspective, "She died a martyr to the selfishness and covetousness of professed commandment keepers. (Knight, 2008, p. 20)

A critical element that is clear from all the models and methods discussed above is time. Assimilation takes time, patience, and understanding. Jesus told a parable that shows that growth takes time and that people grow in stages.

> And He said, the kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts the sickle, because the harvest has come. (Mark 4:26-29)

This process needs friends in the church to encourage the new member along the way. Stark and Wieland in their book, *Growing People through Small Groups*, have said that the local church should provide this help.

> Getting help to know God is a journey, not an event. A small group offers friends who come alongside, helping us to stay on the right path, encouraging us to persevere to the end. Being open to accepting where people are in their spiritual development is important, but it is only part of how God develops people in stages. . . . People are complex. They haven't become who they are overnight, and they won't become who they're going to be overnight. All the stuff of life gets mixed together on the road to

becoming like Christ. Taking time to understand the process of growth—spiritually and personally—makes the journey a little easier. (Stark & Wieland, 2004, p. 70)

This will require time to integrate converts and help them grow.

Summary

Integration is a key element of nurture. In the Old Testament it is rare but it is there. There were structures in the Israelite community that provided for the inclusion of foreigners into their community, mainly through circumcision for men and marriage for women.

Three main models were examined in the New Testament: (a) the model Jesus used, especially with His disciples and as contained in the Great Commission; (b) the Lucan model as described in the book of Acts, with the local churches in the early church providing a number of assimilation principles; and (c) the Pauline model which provides insights such as personal contact through pastoral visits, the letters Paul wrote, his gospel associates, and the local leaders he appointed in every local church he established.

Ellen White and other Christian writers have given additional factors important for the integration of new members. They include, but are not limited to: recognizing new members as children who should be brought up with care, the role of social meetings, small groups, study of the Scriptures, involvement of the new members in the life of the local church, and the upright lifestyle of the old members in the community of faith.

The common factors that came out in this investigation are the idea of community; love, understanding, and the fact that all who join a community of faith have a high value in the eyes of God who sent Jesus Christ to die for all humanity.

The next chapter will deal with the geographical, political, cultural, and religious

contexts. This will give a picture of the area where this project will be implemented. This is necessary because all these contexts hinder or enhance grounding of new members into the life of the local church.

CHAPTER 3

POLITICAL, CULTURAL, AND RELIGIOUS ANALYSIS

OF NYAMIRA COUNTY

Introduction

The East African Union is in the East-Central Africa Division of Seventh-day

Adventists. It has eight regional offices—six conferences and two mission fields, namely:

the Ranen Conference, the South Kenya Conference, the Nyamira Conference, the

Western Kenya Conference, the Central Kenya Conference, the Central Nyanza Field,

and the Kenya Coast Field.

The annual membership statistical reports for the ten years (2003-2012) show that

there has been a steady increase in the number of people who are dropped from church

registers in the union. The Nyamira Conference has recorded the highest percentage loss

during this period as indicated by the East African Union Secretary's Annual Statistical

Reports for 2003-2012.

A survey carried out to find out the factors for this loss revealed many reasons.

The prominent one was that local churches in the conference do not have a clear strategy

of integrating new converts into the life of the local church. This situation makes them

feel unwanted in a particular local church.

My strategy is to address this situation by developing a Spiritual Guardianship

Plan to be implemented in selected local churches of one multi-church district in the

conference. These will serve as model places for addressing this situation.

An analysis of the political, cultural, and religious contexts of Nyamira County will help me understand the region where the intervention project is going to be implemented.

A Geographic Description of Kenya

Situated astride the equator, Kenya is a country with fascinating features ranging from snowcapped Mt. Kenya, the Great Rift Valley, and the vast plains teeming with wildlife, to the sandy and sunny beaches along the coastline.

Nairobi, Kenya's capital city is situated at the heart of the country. Kenya covers an area of approximately 582,646 sq km. Only 19% of the landmass is of medium or high agricultural potential. Most of the population lives within these areas.

The climate varies with altitude. The coastal strip is hot and humid with temperatures varying between 20 and 32 degrees Celsius. The inland, with heights above 5,000 feet, the temperatures are between 3 and 27 degrees Celsius. There are two rainy seasons. The long rains run from mid-March to mid-April while the short rains run between mid-October and mid-December. This facilitates double cropping, which is critical to Kenya's predominantly agricultural economy (Galgalo, Owich, Ogomo, & Mwaniki, 2009, pp. 6-12).

The 2009 census in Kenya placed its population at 38.6 million. This population is spread across 43 different ethnic groups. The languages spoken are: English, Kiswahili, and several indigenous languages.

Kenya is divided into 47 counties. Figure 1 below shows the political map of Kenya with its neighbors: South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, and Tanzania.
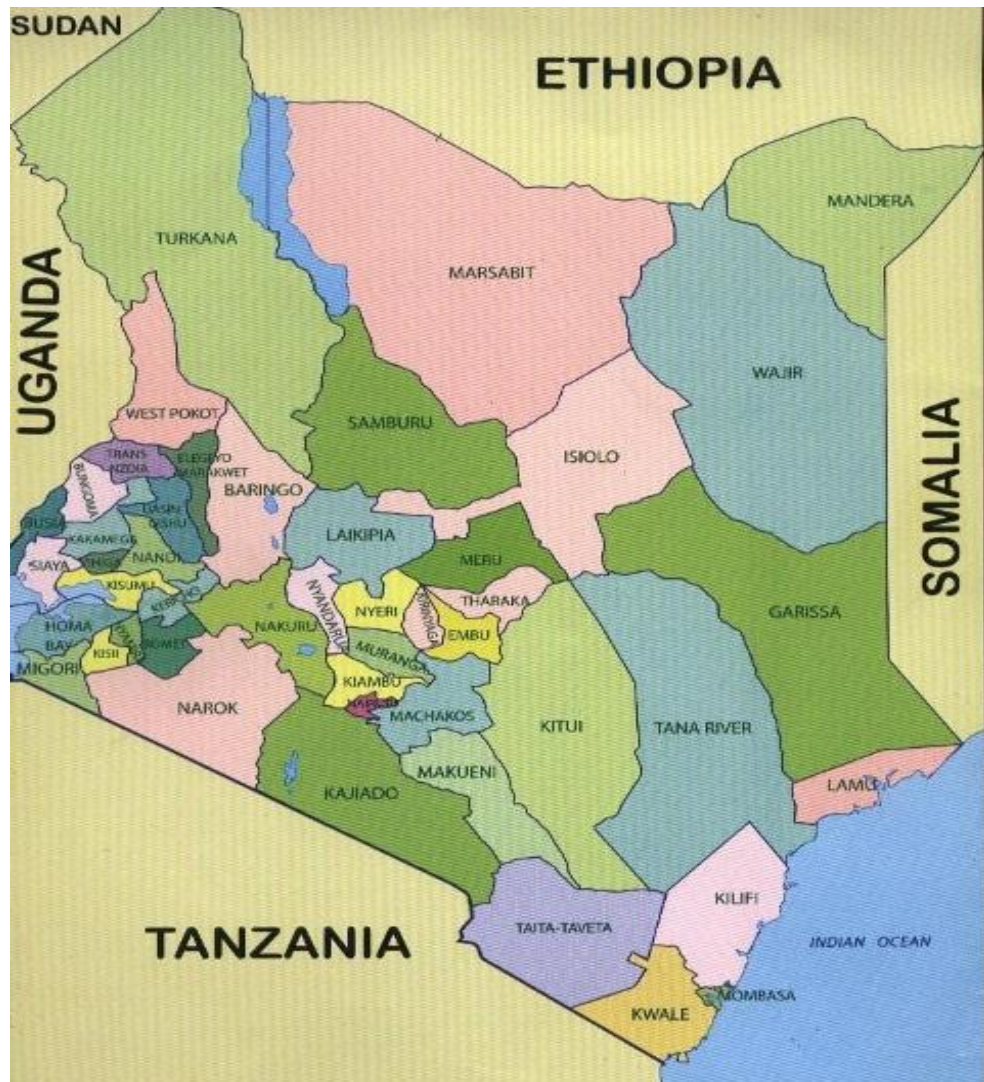
Figure 1. The political map of Kenya. Taken from Kenya, http://softkenya
.com/map/files/2012/03/Kenya-County-map1.jpg

A Geographic Description of Nyamira County

Nyamira County is a mountainous and fertile in most parts. It supports both

livestock and arable farming. It borders the Trans Mara section of the Narok County to

the South, the Buret section of Bomet County to the South-East, the Belgut section of the

Kericho County to the North East, the Kitutu section of the Central Kisii County to the

West, and the Rachounyo section of the Homa Bay County to the North. Figure 2

summarizes the above information.

A Historical Description of Nyamira County

Nyamira district was carved from Kisii district and became the second district of

the Kisii people in 1989. This was in response to the presidential initiative of taking

government services closer to the people.
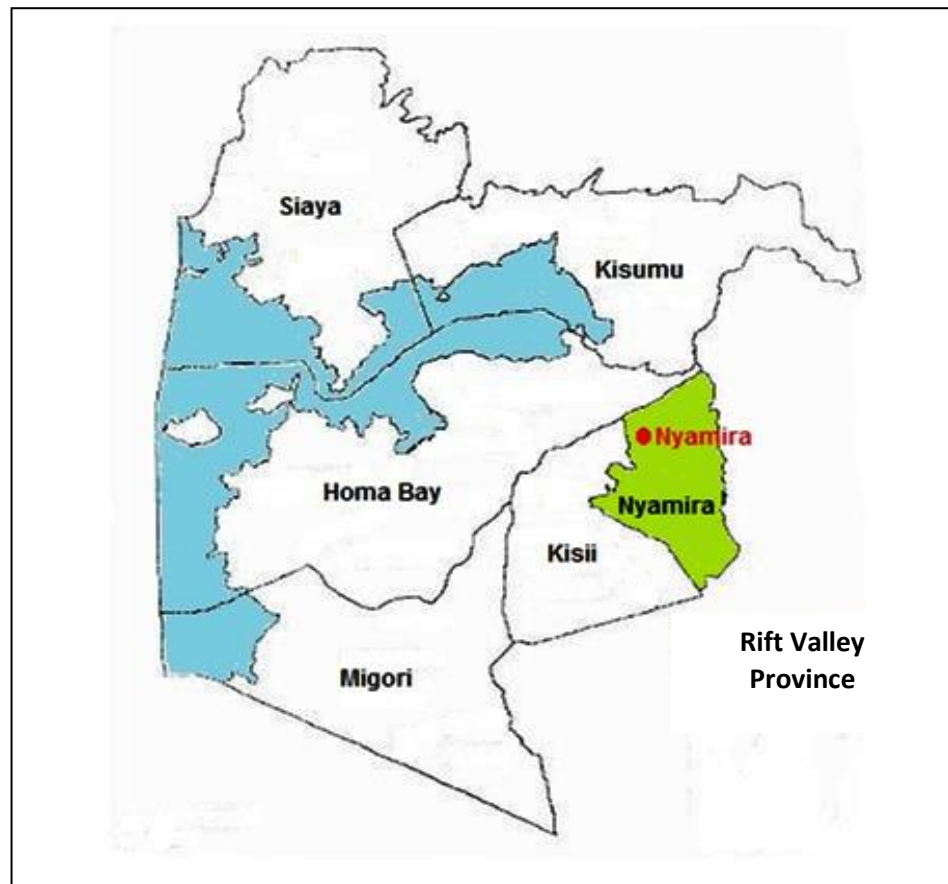
Figure 2. A map of Nyamira County. Retrieved from Nyanza Counties–
Nyamira, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nyanza_Counties_-
_Nyamira.jpg

In 2008, it was again reorganized into four districts, namely: the Nyamira district, the Manga district, the Borabu district and the Masaba district. Each of these was sub-divided into several divisions, locations, and sub-locations each headed by a division officer, a chief, and assistant chief respectfully.

Nyamira County was formerly known as the Nyamira district until 2010 when all the districts in Kenya were reorganized into forty-seven counties under the new constitution dispensation of 2010. Nyamira County now comprises five districts, four that were formally carved out of it (Nyamira, Manga, Borabu, and Masaba), and the Ekerenyo district that was organized from the Borabu district in 2009. (D. Galgalo, the Nyamira District Officer, interview, November 2, 2012.)

Demographics

In this section, the population of Kenya and that of Nyamira County are analyzed.

The Population of Kenya

A population is a complete count of the country's population. Kenya carries out this exercise every 10 years. "United Nations recommends that countries conduct censuses every 10 years. Kenya is one of the few Sub-Saharan African countries that adheres strictly to the decennial periodicity requirement" (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2009, p. 1).

The latest census carried out in Kenya was in 2009. The result of this census placed the population of Kenya at 38,610,097. Of these, 19,192,458 were male and 19,417,639 were female. There were 8,767,954 households (KNBS, 2009, p. 25).

The Population of Nyamira County

According to the 2009 national census, Nyamira County has 720,322 people of whom, 344,701 are male and 375,621 are female. There are 157,171 households. The population density is 668, which makes the county one of the most densely populated counties in Kenya (KNBS, 2009, p. 26). Most of the people in this county live in the countryside: 561,659 of the 720,322 (78%) live in the country side, while the remaining 22% live in urban areas (KNBS, 2009, p. 29).

The Political Context of Nyamira County

According to the county commissioner, Nyamira County has four constituencies and four representatives in the National assembly, two representatives at the senate, the senator and the women's representative. The county's political landscape has been smooth. Kenya was a one party state until 2002 when it embraced a multiparty system. In the 2007 elections, three out of four constituencies were in the government and one in the opposition. All this changed in the 2013 general elections. All the four constituencies are in the opposition. The county government is also in the opposition.

Nyamira County, like all counties in Kenya is run by a county government. The governor is the Chief Executive Officer, who is assisted by the deputy governor. These two oversee all lines of the county.

The county has a county executive committee or the county assembly comprising ten members. This is headed by the county assembly speaker. This body makes laws as relates to the county and in accordance with the national assembly. There are also ten county secretaries who are technocrats whose role is to advise the county assembly on its diverse responsibility.

Below the county secretaries are ten county chief officers who serve as overseers of the sub-county administration. Below the sub-county level is the ward administration which is in touch with the citizenry at the grass roots.

Social-Cultural Context

According to Howell and Paris, culture is "The total way of life of a group of people that is learned, adaptive, shared, and integrated" (2011, p. 36). Studies done by anthropologists indicate that even simple societies have complex social and cultural lives. This chapter deals with four social-cultural aspects: language, cultural beliefs, educational level, and social and demographic pictures of Nyamira County.

Language

Nyamira County is a homogenous society. It is occupied by only one tribe. The Abagusii are a Bantu group that occupied this land in the eighteenth century. According to Were and Wilson, authorities in East African history, "By the end of the eighteenth century therefore, Gusii (Kisii) was either settled or nearly settling by its present occupants" (Were & Wilson, 1972, p. 77).

The Language of a particular people is critical to the church mission. "For Christians, an essential question about language and language theory concerns how we read and understand scripture. God has provided revelation through language and the written scriptures are central to our understanding of the Divine" (Howell & Paris, 2011, p. 59).

The Abagusii speak a language known as *ekegusii.* In Nyamira County, all speak that language. Other languages spoken are English and Kiswahili. In Nyamira County,

vernacular is the main language. When it is necessary to speak in English, for example in a campmeeting where a guest does not speak the vernacular, then there is need to translate into *Ekegusii.*

Cultural Beliefs

G. Van Rheenen in his book *Communicating Christ in Animistic Context* has defined animism as "the belief that personal spiritual beings and impersonal forces have power over human affairs and, consequently, that human beings must discover what beings and forces are influencing them in order to determine the future action and, frequently, to manipulate their power" (1991, p. 20). The Kisii people are animistic and therefore influenced by an animistic worldview.

This section discusses a number of cultural beliefs and practices that have a direct bearing on the integration of members into the life of the local church in the Nyamira Conference. Information in this section was received in an interview with James Matundura, the chairman of Abagusii Cultural Association, and Harrison Moronya, a retired Adventist pastor who is a member of the Abagusii Cultural Association. The interview was carried out on November 12, 2012.

First, is the belief in God. The Kisii believe in one God called *Engoro*. He is approached through intermediaries. According to J. Matundura, "A typical Kisii mother would get up early in the morning and facing the sun, squeeze milk from her breast and say, *engoro onderere* (God take care of my child" (personal communication, 2012). The sun was an intermediary between people and the God who lived beyond the sun.

Second, is the belief in spirits. The Kisii believe that there are good spirits (*chisokoro*) and bad spirits (*ebirecha*). These good ancestral spirits participate in the

welfare of the community and individuals. The bad spirits are responsible for the pain and suffering of the people. The good spirits should be appeased so that they protect people from the bad ones (Moronya, personal communication, 2012).

The third relates to life and death. The Kisii do not believe in the resurrection. They believe that those who die join the ancestors (*chisokoro*) if they were upright, but if they were crooked they join the spirits (*ebirecha*). A proverb which explains this belief states, *"Motienyi okwa oboka; monto akwa asira"* (The moon dies and resurrects, but a human being dies and never resurrects).

This is the reason why the Kisii people, some Adventists included, treat a dead person with more care than a sick person. A person may die for lack of some little money to take her/him to hospital, but as soon as that person dies, people become generous and raise lots of money to take care of funeral expenses (Moronya, personal communication, November 12, 2012).

The fourth is belief in health and disease. The cause of disease and ill-health is not germs and vectors but power from the evil spirit and evil people. Every misfortune has a human cause behind it, so the Kisii have a proverb that explains the cause of misfortune, ill-health, and death. It states, *"Tiyana gokwa etaberegeti getondo"* (Every death or misfortune has a human cause behind it) (Matundura, personal communication, 2012).

<center>Educational Background in Nyamira County</center>

Educational attainment of a group of people determines how they look at life. The learned population migrates to urban areas in search for employment and decent homes, leaving the less learned in the rural areas. In this section, I will analyze the educational

<center>56</center>

levels of the rural people of Nyamira County because this is where the project will be implemented.

The Kenya census report of 2009, records 376,580 people living in the rural areas of Nyamira County; 267,528 of them (71%) have low or no education at all (never went to school, pre-primary, and primary). This leaves 109,052 with a fair education (secondary, tertiary, and university). This clearly shows that the literacy level of the Nyamira rural population is low.

Religious Context of Nyamira Conference

The Nyamira Conference is home to many religious persuasions. According to the Joshua project, Nyamira County is 99% Christian and 1% ethnic religion. The same source reveals that of the Christians in this county, 70% are Protestants, 15% are Roman Catholics, and 15% African Independent Churches.

The main Christian churches in Nyamira County are: the Catholics, the Anglicans, the Lutherans, and the Adventists. The Pentecostals and their affiliates are also growing rapidly (Records of Nyamira District Ministry of Culture and Social services, 2012).The churches are not distributed evenly in the County. There are concentration areas for each denomination, depending on where pioneers of a particular denomination settled first.

Seventh-day Adventist Church In Nyamira County

History of the Adventist Church in Kenya

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kenya was established by A. Carscallen, a missionary from Canada who asked in 1906 for the help of E. C. Enns and P. Peter

Nyambo to be placed at Gendia, in the western part of Kenya.

> The first SDA missionary to Kenya was Canadian-born A. A. Carscallen, who arrived from Britain in 1906. With the assistance of E. C Enns, a German missionary from Pare in Tanganyika, he chose as the site for the first mission station a five acre plot at Gendia Hill, about two miles inland from Kendu bay of lake Victoria. This site was among the Luo people in what is now called South Nyanza. (Neufeld, 1962, p. 731)

They were joined by J. D. Baker and his wife in 1907. The first 10 Luo believers were baptized on May 21, 1911. Four more stations were opened in 1912. The work moved slowly and in 1914, the work was disrupted by World War I. In 1920, many missionaries were sent from England, the first group of ten arriving in 1920 and another one in 1921 (Neufeld, 1962, p. 731).

This part of the world field was organized into the East African Union in 1921. It was dissolved in 1933 and reorganized in 1942. It has been reorganized several times, in 1960, and 1987 (Neufeld, 1962, p. 19). The church has grown rapidly in the East African Union, from a humble beginning of 10 believers to the current 747,687 members, making it the largest Union in East-Central Africa (Division Secretary's Annual Report of 2012). According to the *2012 Year Book*, the East African Union is the fourth largest Union in the Adventist world.

History of the Adventist Church in Nyamira County

The first missionary to Gusii land arrived and established a mission station on Nyacnhwa Hill in 1912. There was not much success because of the locals' experience with the colonial government. According to N. M. Nyaundi, in his book *Seventh-day Adventism in Gusii, Kenya*,

> The Abagusii did not welcome the entry of the white man. Historians document open resistance which resulted into many punitive raids from the incoming colonial

government. It took a lot of persuasion for the missionaries, both Catholics and Adventists, to penetrate and settle. (Nyaundi, 1997 p. 29)

The Adventist church started growing after the First World War with the first converts baptized in 1922. The church spread from Nyanchwa to other parts of Kisii as follows: Gionseri, Bobasi (1919), Bonyunyu, North Mogirango (1921), Matunwa, Nyaribari (1921), Iruma, Bonchari (1921), Sengera Manga, Kitutu (1922), Nyabioto, Majoge (1924), Nyangweta, South Mogirango (1927) (Nyaundi, 1997, p. 45).

The Kisii region was organized into a mission field called the South Kenya Field in 1912 and was reorganized in 1953, 1981, and 1995. The work grew rapidly until it was organized into the South Kenya Conference in 1981. The Nyamira Conference was carved from the South Kenya Conference and organized into a conference in 1995 (Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, 2012, p. 40).

Growth Patterns

The Adventist work in the Nyamira Conference has grown steadily. Table 1 and Figure 3 below show the increase of members and the percentage growth for the last ten years.

Table 1

Membership Growth in the Nyamira Conference

Year	Membership	Percent growth/(loss)
2003	111,547	3.2
2004	91,835	(17.7)
2005	96,927	5.5
2006	100,880	4.1
2007	103,480	2.6
2008	101,677	(1.7)
2009	102,899	1.2
2010	107,011	4.1
2011	107,688	0.6
2012	112,394	4.4

Note. Taken from Nyamira Conference Secretary's Annual Reports for 2003 through 2012.
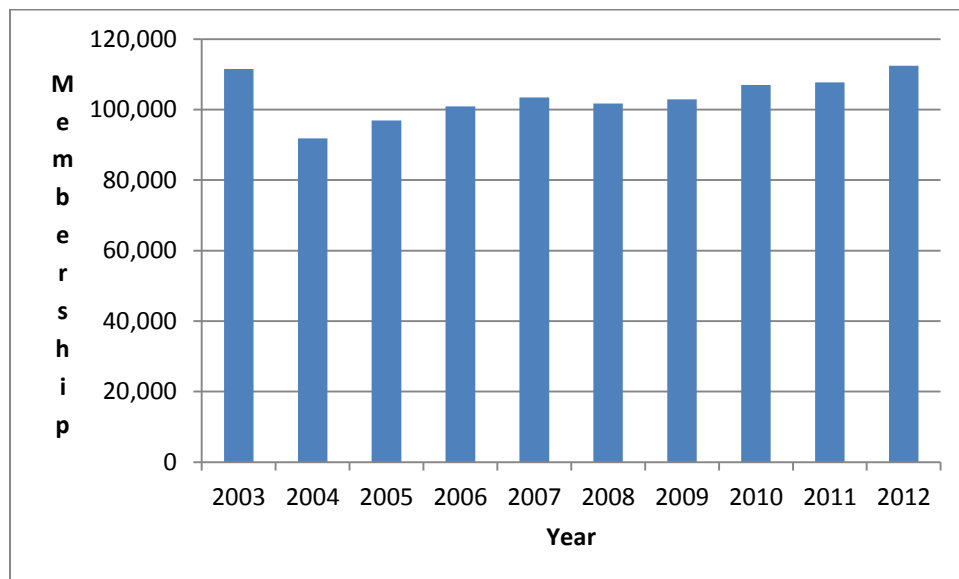
Figure 3. Membership growth for 2003 through 2012.

From the Table 1 and Figure 3 it can observed that there was a negative growth between 2003 and 2004 and between 2007 and 2008. The average growth is 0.6%. This pattern for the Nyamira Conference is slow and irregular.

Pastoral Leadership

The Nyamira Conference has 398 churches organized into 59 districts. Each of these districts is assigned a pastor. The average number of members per pastor is 1,744. This number is twice as large when we take Sabbath School members into account (Statistical Report, 2012).

The Nyamira Conference has a total of 68 pastors, 59 in the districts and 9 in the office. Those in the office are the president, executive secretary, and 7 department directors. There are more pastors in the frontline service than those in the office. The work load for the frontline pastor is heavy, making the pastor-believer contact time minimal (Secretary's Records, 2012). This accounts partly for the high loss of members in this conference.

Financial Growth for the Nyamira Conference

Table 2 shows the financial performance for the years 2008-2012.

Table 2

Financial Growth

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Tithe	49,558,709	62,868,368	72,198,247	79,820,459	87,160,824
Offerings	4,516,720	4,518,036	5,190,866	5,036,930	5,596,206

Note. From Nyamira Conference Treasurer's Annual Reports for the years 2008-2012.

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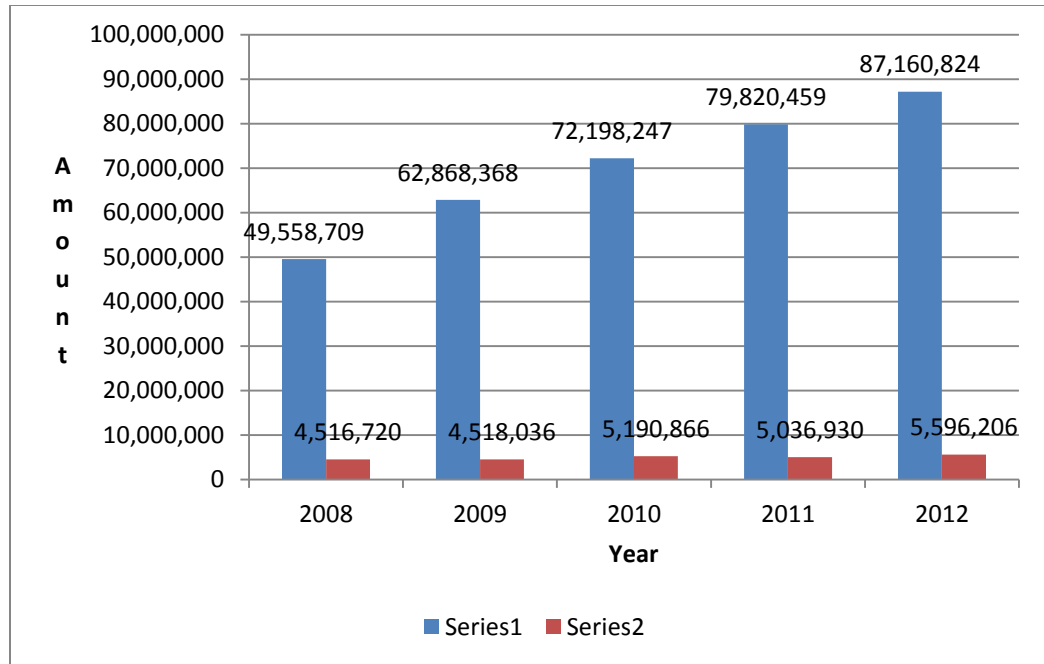
Figure 4. Financial growth, 2008-2012.

It is clear from Table 2 that members understand the concept of tithing, but have a challenge with offerings. There is a consistent growth in the returning of tithes over the period under consideration, but minimal and uneven growth in offerings.

Church Attendance

Adventists in the Nyamira Conference congregate in 741 worship centers every Sabbath. Although the conference is establishing a tradition of doing Sabbath School and divine worship counts, the average attendance can be put at 80% of the Sabbath School attendance. There is a higher attendance during the divine service than during Sabbath School. The local churches in the Conference are doing their best to encourage their members to increase Sabbath School attendance.

Most congregations hold afternoon sessions, especially for Bible study and

departmental activities. The choir normally records higher attendance than other groups. Some churches hold mid-week prayer meetings and Friday and Sabbath vespers. Attendance in these meetings is usually small (Personal Ministries and Sabbath School Records 2012).

Church Activities

The Adventist Church in the Nyamira Conference carries out a number of church activities on the Sabbath and throughout the week. In this section, I will deal with the common ones which cut across all or most churches.

First, there are the regular Sabbath activities. These include Sabbath School activities like mission reports, singing, mission features, and Bible Study action units. There are also mid-morning activities like returning of tithes and offerings, business meeting items, and preaching. During the Sabbath afternoons, there are departmental activities and Bible study sessions.

Second, there are evangelistic activities. These are outreach activities like literature distribution, visitation and Bible studies, camp meetings, and public evangelistic conventions and they involve children, youth, and adult men and women.

Third, are nurture activities. These cover representative and a whole range of activities like retreats for all age groups, potlucks, rallies, Pathfinder camporees, social weekends, music extravaganzas, seminars, departmental outings, and week of prayer meetings.

Fourth, church calendar of events and scheduled meetings. These are annual camp meetings, free medical camps, quarterly communion service meetings, annual ingathering days, week of prayer meetings, establishment of churches in unentered areas,

establishment of church schools and health facilities and establishment of media.

Literature evangelism also makes available books and other printed materials to the public. The Voice of Prophecy schools, radio, and television afford opportunities to bring the gospel in simple ways to people who would otherwise remain ignorant of God for a long time.

Felt Needs

There are a number of felt needs in the Adventist church in the Nyamira Conference. Shem Ngoko, the conference president, in an interview carried out on November 10, 1012, mentioned to me the following felt needs in the conference:

Economic empowerment is the first. Most people in Nyamira live below the poverty line. Only 15% have completed a professional course that can ensure that one gets a decent job.

The second felt need is the teaching of the gospel. People need to be taught the whole scope of the gospel. The necessary knowledge of the gospel as a past experience, addressing the question, what did God do for the human race on Calvary? People need to know the good news that Jesus paid the wages of sin (Rom 6:23). There is the need to know the gospel as the present experience, and be able to answer the question, what is God doing in the heart of an individual believer? They need to know that the power of God is consuming sin and helping people to overcome weakness and evil inclinations (2 Cor 5:17; Rom 8:26). They also need to know the good news of the future and be able to answer the question, what will God do to sin and its consequences?

Third, is the need for a power encounter. Most believers fear evil spirits. In times of crisis, some members go to magicians and soothsayers to seek answers to their

problems. They need to study stories where God faced Satan and overcame; stories like demon exorcisms and miracle stories. Then they can be assured that the power that God used is available to believers.

Misiological Implications

The background of Nyamira County and Conference has been described as it relates to geography, history, and socio-cultural set-up. There are a number of missiological implications in the integration of new believers into the life of the local church.

First, the church has now been in the conference for over a century. This creates a situation where old members are so used to each other that they do not create a conducive environment for the integration of new believers. They tend to be impenitent because they expect new believers to mature overnight. This is normally done unconsciously and innocently but it affects the new believers negatively.

Second, Nyamira Conference has only one ethnic group, the Kisii. This has the advantage of spreading the gospel quickly among the people because it eliminates the conflicts that attend a community with more than one tribe. The disadvantage, however, is that a missionary from outside is likely to be seen as a foreigner and find difficulties in serving them.

Third, there is a strong attachment to traditional beliefs. This leads to split level Christianity. This is seen in the big numbers of people removed from the church. Members tend to engage in magic because of fears of the spirit world.

Fourth, the ratio of member to pastor is big and currently stands at 1:1,904. This makes it difficult for the pastor to give quality time for one-on-one nurture. It forces him

to delegate or delay certain essential nurture activities and this leads to spiritual feebleness among the members. This also makes pastors to overstretch their time and ultimately leads to burnout. The conference ends up having pastors who are tired and cannot offer quality service to the local congregations.

Fifth, the minimal and irregular growth of membership indicates that nurture methods and programs are either inadequate or irrelevant. It also indicates that members are not involved in evangelism and nurture.

Summary

In this chapter much has been said regarding the background of Nyamira County. Its geography and history have been described and its social and cultural backgrounds have also been considered. Its religious background shows that the county is largely Christian. Adventism is one of the major Christian denominations, having now been in existence in this area for over a century.

This background informs the researcher of the place where he is going to implement the Spiritual Guardianship plan so as to integrate new believers into the life of the local church for meaningful nurture and retention. Chapter 4 will describe the preparation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the mission strategy.

CHAPTER 4

A STRATEGY TO INTEGRATE NEW MEMBERS INTO
THE LIFE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH IN
NYAMIRA CONFERENCE

Introduction

The preceding chapter dealt with the geographical, historical, social-cultural, and

religious contexts of Nyamira County and Nyamira Conference and provided an

overview of the environment where the project is going to be implemented. The history

and practice of nurture, especially the integration of new members in the life of the local

church in the Nyamira Conference will be studied in order to develop a Spiritual

Guardianship Plan to address the loss of members from the local churches in the Nyamira

Conference.

In carrying out this project, the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) and the

Gantt chart will be used. The LFA is a major tool often employed in the planning,

management, and evaluation of projects. The Gantt chart presents the implementation,

monitoring, and evaluation of tasks and sub-tasks of a project. The following sections

describe these approaches as they relate to the implementation of the strategy to integrate

new believers into the life of the local church.

General Methodology: Logical Framework
Analysis and Gantt Chart

Background

The Logframe was developed by Practical Concepts Incorporated in 1969 for the

United States Agency for International Development (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004,

p. 23). It later was extended to 35 countries. In the 1990s, it was mandatory for aid

organizations to use the LFA in their project proposals (Gawler, 2005, p. 10), but has

become more optional in recent years (Taylor, 2003, p. 13).

Logical Framework Analysis

The Logical Framework, also called the Logframe, is a tool with a variety of

definitions. Three are considered here: (a) it is a tool for planning and managing projects

and programs (Ortengren, 2004, p. 10); (b) a management tool mainly used in the design,

monitoring, and evaluation of international development projects (Candle & Yeates,

1991, p. 95); and (c) a mind map of the entire lifetime of a project (Schmidt, 2009, p. 10).

This tool brings into one table the goals, purposes, outputs, activities, indicators,

means of verification, and assumptions of a project. Another expert writes, "Using it

encourages the discipline of clear and specific thinking about what the project aims to

do" (Taylor, 2003, p. 12). The Logframe has a major limitation, though as someone has

said that it "has proven to be a useful planning and management tool, but it is not a

comprehensive tool and does not guarantee project success" (European Commission,

2001, p. 22).

LFA and the Logical Framework (LF) need distinction: LFA is a project design

methodology while LF is a document (NORAD, 1999, p. 38). The logframe is the subject of this paper.

Divisions, Terms, and Their Meaning

The logical framework document is a 4 column by 4 row matrix. Figure 5 summarizes the contents of a Logical Framework.

Narrative Summary	Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
Goal			
Purpose			
Outputs			
Activities			

Figure 5. A typical logical framework.

A Brief Description of the Terms

Goal

This describes the end toward which the project purpose is directed. "The goal is the main overall objective that the project is meant to contribute to in the long run" (Dale, 2000, p. 32). It is the ultimate destiny.

Purpose

The purpose is the overall objective which the project is designed to achieve thereby contributing directly to the achievement of the goal (Rosenberg & Posner, 1979).

Outputs

Outputs are the results of a project, the specific outcomes produced by the inputs which may be quantitative, qualitative, or attitudinal (NORAD, 1999, p. 23).

Inputs

Inputs are the materials and resources available to produce the project outputs such as personnel, equipment, facilities, technical assistance, and funds (DANIDA, 1996, p. 43).

Narrative Summary

A narrative summary describes the objectives column which includes the goal, purpose, outputs, and activities of the project (Cracknell, 2000, p. 10).

Objectively Identifiable Indicators

These are signs or indexes which express the level of achievement in projects and provide a basis for monitoring and evaluation of projects (Faludi, 1984, p. 19). Indicators should be SMART (Chikati, 2000, p. 23). SMART is a short form for S-Specific, M-Measurable, A-Achievable, R-Realistic, and T-Time bound.

Means of Verification

Means of verification are the identified kinds and sources of data such as documents, tools for monitoring, and reporting systems as well as survey needed to support the indicators to be achieved (Gasper, 2000, p. 19). The means of verification is often confused with risk, which is a negative statement of what might prevent objectives from being achieved (Healey, 1997, p. 97).

Assumptions

Assumptions are positive statements of conditions that must be met for the project to succeed.

Gantt Chart

The Gantt chart takes its name from Henry Gantt who developed it in 1910. According to Schwalbe, "Gantt Charts provide a standard format for displaying project schedule information by listing project activities and corresponding start and finish dates in a calendar format" (2000, p. 234). There are many tools used to schedule project activities, but the Gantt chart is most popular. Brown and Hyer give the reason. "The Gantt chart is very popular because of its simplicity and ease of use" (2010, p. 211).

The Gantt chart has a number of advantages. First, it makes it easy to notice quickly where resource conflicts might exist. Second, it is simple and easy to use. Third, it can be used for both small and large projects, and fourth, it helps to track the progress of the project for ease of monitoring and evaluation. Figure 6 shows an example of a typical Gantt chart.

Tasks	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Research	■							
Feasibility analysis		■						
Design			■					
Test				■				
Implementation stage 1					■			
Receive feedback						■		
Revise							■	
Implement stage 2								■
Review					■	■	■	■

Figure 6. A typical Gantt chart.

Description of Mission Strategy

Introduction

The Nyamira Conference is one of eight regional offices in the Kenya Union
Mission. An analysis of the statistical reports for the last five years (2008-2012), shows
that there is a significant loss of members. A survey carried out to find out reasons for
this loss revealed that lack of integration of new members into the life of the local church
was the most critical factor.

There is a variety of approaches to nurture new believers that can be used to
address this problem in the Nyamira Conference. This project seeks to design a Spiritual
Guardianship Plan which will be used by the local churches in the Nyamira Conference
to integrate new members into the life of the local church.

Application of the Logframe

Overall Goal

The overall goal of this project is to ensure that the Nyamira Conference has become a model conference in integrating believers into the life of the local church in the East African Union Mission. This will involve creating an enabling environment for new believers to be assimilated quickly into the community of believers and be ready for nurture programs and activities run by the local churches. This will reduce the number of believers dropping out of church in the conference to insignificant levels. This will be in response to God's desire for His church, "And this is the will of Him who sent me, that I shall not lose none of all those He has given me, but raise them up at the last day" (John 6:39).

The indicator that will measure the success of this project will be seen when all other eight conferences in the East African Union begin to copy the Nyamira model of integration. The success of this project will be verified through statistical reports from the local churches and from the conference level showing reduced numbers of members dropped from church books. This is, however, possible in the assumption that Nyamira Conference administration will be supportive of the project.

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to develop and implement a Spiritual Guardianship Plan to be used by all local churches in the Nyamira Conference to integrate new believers into the life of the local church to mitigate loss of members. This will be measured by having 60% of the churches adopt and implement the Spiritual Guardianship Plan by December 2013. The means of verification will be through the number of

training sessions offered and undertaken under the assumption that local church pastors, leaders, and members from selected churches will be willing to participate in the project.

Outputs

Five outputs will be considered in this project. First, a church district where the project will be implemented will be identified and surveyed. Seventy questionnaires will be administered in five selected churches by June 2012. This will be verified by a developed questionnaire in the file.

Second, the proposal to integrate new believers into the life of the local church will be discussed with the leaders of the five churches. The means of verification will be permission secured from the Nyamira Conference executive committee by January 2012. A copy of the letter in the file will be the means of verification of this output. The assumption is that the Nyamira Conference executive committee will approve the project.

The third output will be to develop seminar materials and conduct seminars on integration of new believers. Five PowerPoint seminar presentations will be developed and 70 selected persons will be trained and equipped by September 30, 2012 as a measurable indicator. The means of verification will be attendance records of the training sessions.

The fourth output will be to encourage the trained personnel to replicate the seminars on integration in their respective churches. This is in keeping with what the Bible teaches, "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2). The measurable indicator will be 20 seminars which will be conducted in the five churches by

December 30, 2012. The seminar handouts given to the seminar participants will be the means of verification of this output.

The final output will be to monitor and evaluate the project. This will involve developing an evaluation sheet, having it approved and sharing with the selected local churches. Further, a schedule to visit the churches will also be developed by March 30, 2013. This will serve as a means of verification of this output. The tabular representation of the logical flow of the project is shown in the logframe below (Figure 7).

Objectives	Measurable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
GOAL: Nyamira Conference has become a model of integrating new members into its local churches in the entire East African Union	All other seven organizations in the East African Union copy the Nyamira model by December 2013	Local church and conference statistical reports	Nyamira Conference administration is supportive of the project
PURPOSE: A strategy to integrate new members into the local churches in the Nyamira Conference developed and implemented	Sixty percent of the new members integrated in the churches in Nyamira Conference by 4th quarter, 2012	Training sessions given to selected leaders and members	Local church pastors, leaders and members from selected churches in Nyamira conference are willing to participate in the project
OUTPUTS: 1. Proposal to integrate new members into the local churches discussed.	Permission secured from the Nyamira Conference by January 31, 2012		
2. Target Churches identified and surveyed	70 questionnaires administered in five selected churches by June 30, 2012		
3. Seminar materials on integration developed and seminars conducted	5 PowerPoint presentations developed and 70 selected persons trained and equipped by September 30, 2012		
4. Trained persons grouped and seminars replicated	20 seminars conducted in 5 churches by Dec 30, 2012		

Objectives	Measurable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
5. Monitoring and evaluation of project done	December 30, 2012 Schedule to visit the churches and evaluation sheets developed, approved and shared by March 30, 2013	Monitoring and Evaluation tools	
ACTIVITIES: 1.2 Discuss proposal with Nyamira Conference executive committee 1.3 Secure permission to conduct the project in Nyamira Conference 2.1 Select churches, participants, and administer questionnaires 3.1 Develop materials 3.2 Conduct seminars 4.1 Distribute training materials to participants 4.2 implement the project 5.1 Develop and share M&E materials and schedules 5.2 Launch the project Visit selected churches quarterly until the end of the project	INPUTS: Support groups Teaching materials Budget Approval documents		Conference leaders' plans and itineraries will not interfere with project implementation in selected church

Figure 7. Logframe. Ways of integrating new believers into the life of the local church.

The Logframe documents all the key components of a project in one place. This helps the implementers and donors to be in charge of the project and ensures that the beneficiaries receive the benefits of the project. This tool will help me to plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, and present the results of my project.

The next section describes the implementation of the strategy. Using a Gantt chart, a detailed description of the activities to be carried out to ensure the success of the project will be given.

Implementation of Strategy

Implementation is the most critical step of a project. According to Aubrey Malphurs, "having a strategy in writing is one thing, turning it into action is quite another. . . . The strategy [often] dies for lack of implementation" (1999, p. 175). This principle applies to ministry as well as to the corporate world. This is what Jesus was possibly thinking when He told a crowd that followed Him,

> Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you dig the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, "This person began to build and wasn't able to finish it." (Luke 14:28-30)

Malphurs further states, "Having developed a good strategy, we must now take action; we must make it happen . . . [or] the strategy dies for lack of implementation" (1999, p. 175). In the following section, a step-by-step implementation process will be described using a Gantt chart. See Figures 8 and 9 below.

ACTIVITIES	YEAR 1											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Output 1: Permission to do project secured												
Activity 1.1: Discuss project, get permission	■	■				░	░					
1.1.1 Write letter	▨					░	░					
1.1.2 Present proposal		▨				░	░					
Activity 1.2: Get approval			■			░	░					
Output 2: Data collected												
Activity 2.1: Select churches and participants				■	■	░						
2.1.1 Select five churches				▨		░						
2.1.2 Select 70 participants					▨	░						
Activity 2.2: Gather and analyze data				■	■	░		■				
2.2.1 Develop integration questionnaire				▨								
2.2.2 Pretest questionnaire					▨							
2.2.3 Administer questionnaire						░	░	▨				
2.2.4 Analyze response							░	▨				
Output 3: Seminars conducted												
Activity 3.1 Study materials on integration				■	■	░	░	■				
Activity 3.2 Prepare materials on integration				■	■	░	░	■				
Activity 3.3 Conduct seminars						░	░		■	■		
Output 4: Project implemented												
Activity 4.1: Prepare venues						░	░	■				
Activity 4.2: Work out implementation schedule						░	░		■			
Activity 4.3: Launch project in five churches						░	░			■		
4.3.1 Church A						░	░			▨		
4.3.2 Church B						░	░			▨		
4.3.3 Church C						░	░			▨		
4.3.4 Church D						░	░			▨		
4.3.5 Church E						░	░			▨		
Activity 4.4: More seminars; get reports						░	░				■	■
Output 5: Project monitored and evaluated												
Activity 5.1: Develop monitoring schedule						░	░					
5.1.1 Work out agreements						░	░					
5.1.2 Share the documents						░	░					
Activity 5.2: Project evaluated						░	░					
5.2.1 Develop evaluation tools						░	░					
5.2.2 Share the tools						░	░					
5.2.3 Collect project results						░	░					
5.2.4 Analyze project results						░	░					

Figure 8. Gantt chart (year 1).

ACTIVITIES	YEAR 2				YEAR 3				ONE IN CHARCH			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	A	B	C	D
Output 1: Permission to do project secured												
Activity 1.1 Discuss project, get permission												▓
1.1.1 Write letter												▓
1.1.2 Present proposal												▓
Activity 1.2 Get approval												▓
Output 2: Data collected												
Activity 2.1 Select churches and participants											▓	
2.1.1 Select five churches											▓	
2.1.2 Select seventy participants											▓	
Activity 2.2 Collect data; conduct seminars												
2.2.1 Develop questionnaire											▓	
2.2.2 Pretest questionnaire											▓	
2.2.3 Administer questionnaire										▓		
2.2.4 Analyze responses										▓		
Output 3: Seminars conducted												
Activity 3.1 Study materials on integration										▓		
Activity 3.2 Prepare materials on integration										▓		
Activity 3.3 Conduct seminars										▓		
Output 4: Project implemented												
Activity 4.1: Prepare venues											▓	
Activity 4.2: Work out implementation schedule											▓	
Activity 4.3: Launch project in five churches											▓	
4.3.1 Church A											▓	
4.3.2 Church B											▓	
4.3.3 Church C											▓	
4.3.4 Church D											▓	
4.3.5 Church E											▓	
Output 5: Project monitored and evaluated												
Activity 5.1: Develop monitoring schedule		█	█						▓			
5.1.1 Work out agreements			█								▓	
5.1.2 Share the documents				█								
Activity 5.2: Evaluate project					█	█	█					
5.2.1 Develop evaluation tools					▓				▓			
5.2.2 Share the tools					▓							
5.2.3 Collect project results						▓	▓				▓	
5.2.4 Analyze project results								▓	▓			
Key: A= Researcher B= Selected Group C= Church Boards D= Conference Committee												

Figure 9. Gantt chart (years 2 & 3).

The Gantt chart shows graphically the activities and resource schedule. These activities are the action steps that will bring about the achievement of the outputs described in the logframe (Figure 7) above. The logframe deals with the dates, places, and the people involved in the project, while the Gantt chart shows the dates, activities, and sub-activities, to be carried out. Figures 8 and 9 above show the details of the activities to be carried out in the implementation of this project.

Description of the Spiritual Guardianship Plan

Introduction

In the first part of this chapter, I offered a detailed description of the strategy to be employed in this project. In this second part I will describe preparation for the implementation and evaluation of the project. I will describe the Spiritual Guardianship Plan, the dates, venues, and people involved in the implementation. I will also describe how the projected will be implemented, how it will be evaluated, and its outcomes.

Basis for the Spiritual Guardianship Plan

This Spiritual Guardianship Plan (SGP) is based on biblical teaching on taking care of fellow believers. God wants that those who believe in Him should be helped by fellow believers. Although Cain tried to evade this responsibility, God insisted that he was his brother's keeper, "Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Where is Abel your brother?' He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen 4:9). If God were to answer Cain's question, He would say, "Yes, indeed you are your brother's keeper."

The writer of the book of Proverbs captured this teaching well when he wrote, "As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend" (Prov 27:17). In

the New Testament, Jesus sent His disciples out two by two (Mark 6:7). Commenting on this, Ellen White said, "None were sent forth alone, but brother was associated with brother, friend with friend. Thus they could help and encourage each other, counselling and praying together, each one's strength supplementing the other's weaknesses" (1940, p. 350). Although this was said in regard to evangelism, it applies to nurture as well because these two are like two sides of the same coin.

The "one another" teaching in the epistles, especially those of Paul, also emphasize this necessity of believers helping believers to grow. The first church employed this approach with a lot of success (Acts 2:44-47; 5:32-37). Paul, writing on how believers should relate to their leaders said, "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give an account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you" (Heb 13:17). It is from these scriptural references and many more that I develop the Spiritual Guardianship Plan.

<center>Description of the Spiritual Guardianship Plan</center>

The Spiritual Guardianship Plan strategy I am using in this project is a simple seven-step process that can be implemented in a local church of any size. The main aim of the plan is to ensure the smooth integration of a new believer into the life of a local church for nurture and retention.

Step 1: Every local church appoints a committee to be known as the Nurture and Retention Committee (N&RC). The members of this committee comprise: A church elder as chair, a church clerk (secretary), the Adventist Women's Ministries leader (member), the Adventist Men Organization leader (member), the Adventist Youth Society leader

(member), the Children's Ministries leader (member) and the Interest Coordinator (member). In a large church such other leaders as the Personal Ministries leader, the Sabbath School superintendent, the head deacon, the head deaconess, and any other the church will find useful may be included.

Step 2: This committee prepares a list of all those who worship at a particular local church with a short profile of each believer. This will give them a quick overview of the condition and the needs of the people they are dealing with.

Step 3: This committee develops a list of challenges and issues that make integration of new members into the life of the local church difficult. They should involve the believers of that church through suitable methods like questionnaires or focus groups.

Step 4: The committee should work with the church board members to develop and implement programs and activities to address these challenges/issues.

Step 5: The committee should come up with appropriate ways of receiving, welcoming new believers, and making visitors comfortable. This should be discussed by the church board and communicated to the members to avoid causing confusion and embarrassment.

Step 6: The committee will assign older and mature members as spiritual guardians to the new members as soon as they express their interest in joining the church. These guardians should help new believers in matters such as:

1. Introducing them to the church environment—the older members, the seating arrangement, toilet facilities, etc.

2. Helping them to understand the church services—finding Scripture references, hymn numbers, when to stand up, or kneel for prayer.

3. Interpreting for them some terms used in the Adventist Church which may be perplexing to new believers like the Adventurers' club, the ambassadors, the Pathfinders, the Spirit of Prophecy, and many more.

4. Enrolling them in small groups in the church such as the Adventist Women's Ministries, the Adventist Men Organization, the Adventist Youth Society, the Pathfinder's Club, the Adventurer's Club, and other organizations that the church runs.

5. Being present during baptism, graduation, and induction sessions.

Step 7: Provide regular progress reports to the church board or the head elder on how each new believer is growing in his/her spiritual journey.

Permission Obtained

I chose to implement this mission strategy in the local churches of the Nyamira Conference because it recorded the highest number of membership loses among all the six conferences and two mission fields in the East African Union Mission from 2006 to 2010 (East African Union Mission Secretary's Statistical Report for 2006-2010).

I therefore will write a letter seeking permission from the Nyamira Conference Executive Committee in November 2011 to be discussed during the 2011 year-end executive committee for approval. Year-end meetings for the East African Union organizations are conducted in December.

Choice and Training of Assistants

I will spend three weeks, one in each of the first three quarters of 2012, visiting

the Nyamira Conference to introduce the mission strategy, choose the sites, and identify implementers of the strategy. This will be made easier because the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has attached the Nurture, Retention, and Reclamation Initiative to the work of the secretariat office. Being the East African Union Executive Secretary, I have been mandated to introduce the program in all the conferences and fields of the union. I will assign three quarters to my 2012 itinerary to the Nyamira Conference because it is the most challenged in membership loss. I also discovered that my mission strategy, Integration of New Members into the Life of a Local Church, was a major component of this nurture, retention, and reclamation initiative.

In the second week of March 2012, I will visit the conference officers and have opportunity to talk to their executive committee on the strategy. In the third week of May 2012, I will again visit the conference and this time hold sessions with leaders of local churches in each of their five stations. I will talk with them and administer a questionnaire (Appendix C) to find out the reasons for the huge losses experienced in the conference. In the first week of October 2012, I will go back to the conference again and this time select two churches where I will implement this intervention. I will help each of these two churches to set up a Nurture and Retention Committee. They will choose a total of 20 members to implement the Spiritual Guardianship Plan described above. These will be the assistants I will work with throughout the implementation period. These assistants will be trained in two sessions, during April and October 2013. Each of the training session will last two days.

Preparation and Assessment of Materials

I will prepare three types of materials for this strategy. First, will be the

questionnaire for collecting data. This will be prepared in June 2011. Second, will be the Nurture and Retention Job Description, and the third will be two sets of notes on Nurture and Retention. These materials will be tested in my itinerary throughout the whole union territory as I introduce the Nurture, Retention, and Reclamation Initiative in 2012.

Evaluation of the Project

No human undertaking is perfect. It is for this reason that any project undertaken should be monitored and evaluated. Project implementation should be monitored and evaluated throughout the implementation process. According to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, "Successful implementation of new project activities typically involves the process of adapting the ideal plan to local conditions, organizational dynamics, and programmatic uncertainties" (2004, p. 53).

Importance of Evaluation

Evaluation of a project is important for two main reasons. First, evaluation gives an idea of the progress of the project. According to Dayton and Fraser, "[It] looks at whether we have reached our goals, whether the way we went about them was appropriate, whether still our goals are appropriate" (1990, p. 320). Second, evaluation identifies risks and rough areas that need to be addressed. According to the European Commission, "it is very rare for any project to go according to plan" (2001, p. 55).

Scope of Evaluation

The scope of the evaluation shall be limited to the tools described in the logframe and the Gantt chart. These tools will include: questionnaires, trainings, interviews, participant observation, and monitoring and evaluation tools.

Evaluation Criteria

The criteria for the evaluation of this project will involve the relevance of a spiritual guardianship plan as a tool for integrating new believers into the life of the local church, the willingness of the selected team to take up the task, and the readiness of the church boards of the selected local churches to engage in the integration of new believers into the life of the local church.

Evaluators

The project deals with a spiritual program in a local church. The evaluation team therefore will be the church board members of the selected local churches. The leaders in charge of particular departments, especially Women's Ministries, Children's Ministries, Adventist Men's organization, and the Adventist Youth Society, will be trained and be involved in the evaluation. These four departments are especially important because new believers joining a local church are women, children, youth, or men. Since an external evaluator will add objectivity to the evaluation, the Nyamira Conference Executive Secretary and the Conference President will be involved in the evaluation.

Monitoring and Reporting Progress

The selected teams will give monthly reports to the local church boards, which will in turn report to the church business meetings of the respective local churches. The church clerks will report through regular monthly statistical reports to the conference. This progress report will be available in the local church board minutes and business meeting minutes as well as in the Conference Statistical Reports.

Linkage to the Logical Framework Matrix

The project evaluation makes sense when we go backward—that is, start from the end and work towards the beginning. Here is how it looks, starting with the last step: tasks are done to realize activities, which are performed to produce outputs. Outputs lead to the purpose of the project, and the purpose contributes to the overall goal.

There is a definite dependence of the project goal on the successful implementation of the interrelated blocks of action from the tasks performed to produce a spiritual guardianship plan to be implemented in the selected local churches to the realization of the purpose (outcomes). The verifiable indicators serve as a standard of testing the relevancy, viability, and sustainability of the project.

From the indicators listed in the logical framework matrix, the selected and trained leaders, the local church boards, and the conference officers will all contribute to the overall success of the strategy.

Summary

The purpose of this project will be to make the Nyamira Conference a model of integrating new believers into the life of the local church in the Kenya Union. The logframe describes the details of the project showing the goal, purpose, and outputs. A description of the narrative summary showing all measurable indicators, means of verification, and assumptions is also given.

The schedule of activities of the project is described in appreciable detail. This gives the implementation details: dates, places, people involved, and topics covered. The project evaluation will follow a process involving evaluation criteria, evaluators, means of evaluation, the linkages to the logical framework matrix, and results evaluation.

This chapter has described the strategy that the project will utilize. Chapter 5 will describe the results of the project after implementation.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION, SUMMARY,

AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

In Chapter 4, I described a seven-step mission strategy called the Spiritual

Guardianship Plan (SGP). This is a plan to involve members of the local churches in the

Nyamira Conference to care for their fellow members, to help integrate new members

into the life of a local church, and to nurture new members into spiritual maturity. A

group of mature members from the Women's Ministries Department, the Adventist

Youth Society, the Adventist Men's Organization, and the Children's Ministries

Department in a particular local church are organized into a Nurture, Retention, and

Reclamation Committee (NR&RC). Other local church leaders such as the Personal

Ministries' leader, the Sabbath School leader, the Head Deacon, or the Head Deaconess

may be included in this committee depending on the size and preference of the church.

The main work of the NR&RC is to help the church create a healthy environment

where new believers are quickly assimilated into the community and begin to grow as

disciples of Christ as soon as they join the church. Each committee should study the

factors that hinder integration and nurture and address them through the church board.

The NR&RC also assigns older and mature members to interact with the new believers.

These spiritual guardians help the new believers in their walk with Christ until they grow into full spiritual maturity.

The members of these committees and the pastors participated in a training session before the implementation of the SGP was rolled out in two local churches (Nyakoe Central and Kenge'nyeri) in the Riotero multichurch district from 2013 to 2014. The monitoring and evaluation of the project was done by the district pastor and the researcher. The reports received from the two local churches were compiled into a final report which forms the subject of this chapter, along with the details of the project implementation, the lessons learned, and how this project can be replicated in all the local churches in the Nyamira Conference. I will also offer a conclusion and make recommendations gained from the project.

Project Implementation

Introduction

Most planned activities took place; however, the dates were not strictly followed. Some activities were completed earlier than scheduled, others came later, and others were not carried out at all. Specific reasons for any change in the scheduled date will be mentioned when the activity is discussed.

Permission Obtained

The first step in the implementation of my project was to secure permission from the Nyamira Conference to conduct my project. I sent a letter seeking permission to the Executive Secretary on November 14, 2011. This letter was discussed by the Nyamira

Conference Executive Committee on December 12, 2011, and permission was granted

and communicated to me through a letter dated January 9, 2012 (see Appendix B).

Venues and Participants

After permission was obtained, I spent February and March of 2012 to select the

churches and participants. I had indicated that I would select five churches where the

project would be implemented. This was not possible because of the distances to be

covered. I finally chose two churches in the Riotero multichurch district.

Churches

The first church identified was Nyakoe Central. This church was chosen because

it is one of the churches that had recorded the highest loss of members in the conference

for two consecutive years (2011 & 2012). Nyakoe Central is an urban church with a

membership of 230 as listed in the Nyamira Conference Fourth Quarter's Statistical

Report for 2011. The members are mostly middle class immigrants from other parts of

Kisii who have bought land and established homes in this area. Most of them are

employed.

The other church was Keng'enyeri. This church also had recorded a high number

of member dropouts. Keng'enyeri is a rural church situated two kilometers from Nyakoe

Central Church. It is a small church of 53 members as listed in the Nyamira Conference

Secretary's Report for Fourth Quarter for 2011. The members are from a low income

bracket, have a low literacy level, and live far apart from each other in an area that is

predominantly Catholic. Most people surrounding the church do not subscribe to any

religion.

Participants

I had to select 70 participants for the project. I finally decided to involve more
people to give me more objective data. In collecting data, I involved people from all parts
of the conference, but the implementers of the project came from Nyakoe Central and
Keng'enyeri churches, the two churches in the Riotero district where the project was
implemented. As I went around the five stations of the Nyamira Conference on my
itinerary as the Union Executive Secretary introducing the General Conference Nurture,
Retention, and Reclamation Initiative, I passed out a questionnaires to 45 respondents
from each of the five stations—10 men, 10 women, 10 male youth, 10 female youth, and
5 pastors, a total of 225 people. These questionnaires helped me gather data from
throughout the conference. I worked with 19 other people from the two churches where
the project was implemented: 12 from the Nyakoe Central Church and 7 from the
Keng'enyeri Church. These leaders constituted the Nurture, Retention and Reclamation
Committees of the two churches.

Methods of Gathering Data

I used two methods to gather information: the questionnaire and participant
observation. The questionnaire was developed in June 2011 (Appendix A). As I
conducted seminars and listened to the people's comments and from the questions they
asked in all the centers I held seminars, I was able to gather a lot of information.

Seminars and Data Collection

My itinerary to the Nyamira Conference ran between March 11-20, 2012. The
first seminar on NR&R was held at Mabariri, Gesura station on March 11, 2012. The

attendance was 84 leaders from local churches in the station and 7 pastors. At the end of the seminar, I administered 45 questionnaires. The second NR&R seminar was held on March 12, 2012 at Kebirigo Church, Kebirigo station. There were 241 local church leaders and 17 pastors who attended. I administered 45 questionnaires to leaders from various churches in that station.

On March 13, 2012, I had a third NR&R meeting at the Nyambaria Church, Tombe station. This is the largest station in the conference. The attendance was 325 leaders from the local churches in the station and 24 pastors. Forty-five questionnaires were administered at this center. A fourth seminar where another 45 questionnaires were administered was at Mbanda Church, Mbanda station on March 14, 2012. The attendance was 76 people. The final 45 questionnaires were given out at the Matutu station on March 15, 2012 at a meeting held at the Matutu Church.

I made notes from the questions and answers the participants were giving during the interaction period at each of the five centers. In this way, I gathered information from 225 participants and from all parts of the conference. On March 15 and 16, 2012, I visited the conference office and talked with the president, secretary, treasurer, and the departmental directors. Between March 18-20, 2012 I spent time with the leaders of the two churches where the project was implemented.

Analysis of Questionnaire Responses

The 225 questionnaires were analyzed in the month of April 2012. Six major factors that were mentioned more than five times in all the centers were recoded as factors that make integration difficult. When the questionnaire was narrowed down to the Nyakoe Central and Keng'enyeri churches between March 18 and 20, 2012 respectively,

the six factors again featured prominently. The factors are described below in the order

identified by most people to the one mentioned least. Others factors that a few people

brought up are also mentioned.

Lack of Mentorship

All of the 225 leaders (100%) who responded to the questionnaires indicated that

none of the churches in the Nyamira Conference had a formal mentorship program. Any

mentorship service offered in any church was informal. Neither did any church have any

well-documented nurture activity in their churches.

Lack of Involvement

It was interesting that 205 out of the 225 leaders surveyed (91.1%) said that new

members are not assigned duties until after about a year. Before then, the believers are

still considered new. It was reported that in some churches nobody is given any

assignment until he/she is baptized. In the meantime every new member is left alone

trying to find ways of becoming part of the faith community.

Long-Term Members

Surprisingly, 196 of the responses (71.1%) indicated that old church members

were a hindrance to the integration and nurture of new believers. The respondents cited

three lifestyle issues which were offensive to the new believers. First, some old church

members lived a double standard life, professing one thing but practicing the opposite.

Second, some old members created classes of people in the church. They group

themselves along economic, social, political, and spiritual lines. They form an

impenetrable inner circle where new members are left out. Third, was the pride of some

old members. They consider new members as immature who should take directions from them. This is often offensive to new members.

Fear of Evil Spirits

It was noted by 161 out of the 225 participants (71%) that believers, both new and old, fear the activity of evil spirits. They consult mediums in times of crisis rather than going to God for help. Most churches have not prepared their members adequately to rely on the power of God when Satan tempts them. In this way, the new believers make mistakes when entering into church membership, they become discouraged, and ultimately leave the church.

Diverted Attention

Another factor was that 157 of the 225 respondents (69.8%) said attention in most churches has shifted from mission to development. Most congregations are putting up new and bigger structures such as church buildings, pastor's houses, camp sites, pulpits, and many other buildings. All these structures are built by money raised from the members. There are appeals to raise the required money almost every Sabbath, and these appeals take more time than the Sabbath School and the Divine services combined.

Poor Leadership

The sixth factor mentioned by 115 of the 225 respondents (51.1%) was divided into three main issues about poor leadership. First, the leaders are harsh with the members in their discharge of duties. They speak rudely to both old and new members. Others participants said that some leaders lived in open sin and so they created a bad image of Christianity and were not good role models. Third, most leaders are so busy that

they have no time to attend to the members' needs. The members are not visited when they are sick or when they are struggling with other issues.

Other Issues Raised

There were five other factors given, but were not common to all churches represented and the percentages were negligible: (a) no thorough teaching of new members before or after baptism (7%); (b) no financial help extended to those in need (5%); (c) lack of conversion on the part of new believers before baptism (2%); (d) no good system of welcoming visitors (1%); and (e) long Sabbath programs which stretch into late afternoon (1%).

Seminars Conducted

The seminars for the participants from the two implementing churches were conducted from December 18-20, 2012. First, materials on integration and nurture were prepared between September and December 2011; second, the Nyakoe Central and the Keng'enyeri churches where the project was implemented were identified in 2012. Shem Ngoko, the Nyamira Conference President assisted me to identify Nyabuto Mochge, the pastor of Riotero district where I implemented the project. Third, I had a meeting with Mochoge and explained to him the requirements of the project. Fourth, the pastor identified Nyakoe Central and Keng'enyeri churches as the locations he wanted the project implemented. We also identified 19 participants: 12 from Nyakoe Central and 7 from Keng'enyeri who helped implement the project in their respective churches. Fifth, the pastor identified Rehema Academy as the venue where the two teams would meet for directions and seminars regarding the project. Sixth, the seminars on the SGP were

conducted between December 18-20, 2012. Two sets of notes were used (see Appendix C & D).

Report on Project Implementation

The launch of the project in the two churches was done in December 2012 and implementation ran from January to May 2013. I launched the project at Nyakoe Central on December 18, 2012 and at Keng'enyeri on December 19, 2012.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring

The project was monitored by Nyabuto Mochoge, the district pastor, who made sure the teams were following the job description developed to guide the project (Appendix E). The pastor received weekly reports from the coordinators of the SGP from the two churches implementing the plan. After he received the report for one month, he summarized the results and sent them to me. He met with each group fortnightly.

The Nyakoe Central team met every Sunday morning while the Keng'enyeri team met every Tuesday afternoon. Pastor Nyabuto attended the monthly church board meetings of the two churches when the teams presented their findings and recommendations. Then he summarized the monthly reports and sent them to me. He sent a total of seven reports, five from the Nyakoe Central and two from the Keng'enyeri Church.

I also had a joint monthly meeting with the teams at Rehema Academy from January to May, during which time I interacted with the committees addressing the concerns or questions raised. In January, March, and May, Thomas Nyakundi, the

Executive Secretary of the Nyamira Conference, joined me in the visits. His presence proved useful because as the members later commented, they were happy to have people from the union, the conference, and their district pastor working with them on a project in their local churches. We concluded the project on May 24, 2014 at the Nyakoe Central Church and on May 31, 2014 at Keng'enyeri. I chose to meet the teams on Sabbath so that they could report the progress of the project in the presence of all the members. It was necessary that each team reported to their respective church. In this way the members had opportunity to give their opinion on the impact the project had on the life and mission of their church.

<center>Evaluation of the Project</center>

The reports of the two churches were analyzed and the results are recorded below.

Nyakoe Central

The Nyakoe Central reports indicated four major successes they achieved from the implementation of the SGP. First, it helped them to discover that there were some non- Kisii visitors who worshipped at their church whose presence they were not aware of. When the SGP carried out a survey with the members to raise issues that could be addressed, they discovered that there were four people from another ethnic group who attended their services. They had stopped attending because services were run in the local language. They took an action in their February church board to conduct their services in Kiswahili. As a result the four members started attending services again.

Second, the church has been organized into five home churches with leaders for each home church. The members are excited about this because of the fellowship these

home churches afford. Members are visiting other members and bonding is taking place. These small groups are used for both evangelism and nurture.

Third, two of the home churches have reported reclaiming six former Adventists. This was achieved because members started visiting other members.

Fourth, they were able to assign old members as spiritual guardians to the 17 new members who were baptized on March 29, 2014. None of the 17 new members has fallen away unlike the previous times when a half or more would return to the world in the first month or so after baptism.

They reported one challenge. Some members were not happy with the SGP. They saw it as a faultfinding group in the church. Because of this the leaders have asked the pastor to conduct seminars on the importance of the Guardianship Plan.

Keng'enyeri

Although the SGP was launched in December 2013 the implementation did not begin until March 2014. The reason was that the SGP team was seen as engaged in fault finding. This started when the SGP team passed out pieces of paper asking the members to list issues that could cause people to leave the church. Most members used the opportunity to attack two leaders who were not getting along with the other members. One of these leaders was a member of the SGP team. The district pastor had to hold meetings with the church and clarify the roles and benefits of the SGP. The whole church, in a duly called church business meeting, resolved the issue and voted to implement the plan.

The SGP team started working March 1, 2014, but more cautiously this time.

They had sent two reports by the end of May 2014. Judging from the two reports they had already seen two benefits.

First, the members expressed their appreciation to the church administration for creating a forum which members were involved in deciding how their church would be run. About half of the members said they felt for the first time in the history of their church that they were members of that church. Before this time, they received orders from the leaders and they were expected to obey them.

Second, attendance at the church meetings has improved. People used to come late to church but now most members come early to Sabbath School and return for the afternoon services as well.

Although some members are still struggling to deal with the hurts they suffered from the first experience when the SGP was first implemented, most members think they will be better served if this plan is fully implemented.

Lessons Learned

In carrying out this project, I have learned many lessons, but will discuss only six of them.

First, there is a disconnect between the local churches and the higher organizations. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists suggests plans, initiates programs, and develops material to be used at all levels of the organization including local churches. These programs are sent down to the local churches through the various administrative levels. I learned that these initiatives and plans usually do not reach the local church.

I made inquiries from the conference secretary and learned that most initiatives

from the General Conference are adopted by the conference committee but they often do not reach the local church. A good example is the Nurture, Retention, and Reclamation program initiated by the Office of Archives and Statistics. It was adopted and recorded in the conference records in 2007, but the churches have yet to know anything about this initiative.

Second, the pastors in the Nyamira Conference are overloaded. The pastor-member ratio is 1:2000. The pastor of the Riotero district where the project was implemented has 17 churches and 6 Branch Sabbath Schools, a total of 23 congregations. The district membership is 2,000. When the Sabbath School members are added to this number, the total is more than 4,000. This makes it difficult for the pastor to give quality time to each congregation.

Third, the conference does not run a Lay Training Institute. The training of local church leaders is left to the already overloaded pastors. There is inadequate lay training of the leaders in the Riotero district where the Nyakoe Central Church and Keng'enyeri Church are located. They were happy when we offered training for them for a period of time.

Fourth, local church leaders and members are willing to discover their spiritual gifts and are ready to serve. They hesitate to serve because they do not know what to do and how to do it. After I taught about the SGP, there were more requests from other leaders for me to train them. Those who received the training are happy to serve others.

Fifth, I learned that more attention by the members is placed on the physical development of the church building than on spiritual development. The two churches have good church buildings, but are struggling with relational and spiritual issues. There

is no balance between spiritual development and infrastructure development.

Sixth, there is no Spiritual Master Plan from the conference which pastors can use in the local churches. Every pastor develops his and when he is transferred, he goes with his plan and the new pastor has to introduce his plan. This brings confusion. The SGP leaders said they do not know how to develop spirituality in their local churches because the church has to start anew whenever they receive a new pastor. They said that they have had five pastors in the last ten years and had to shift from one approach to another.

Future Impacts

My overall goal was to make the Nyamira Conference a model conference from which all the other eight organizations could learn from. This was too ambitious. It was more practical to work with two churches in the Nyamira Conference. The two churches are model churches from which to replicate the SGP to other churches in the conference and later from the conference to other organizations in the union.

I suggest four ways to replicate the SGP to the rest of the churches in the conference. First, the Nyamira Conference officers need to vote the SGP as a program to apply in the local churches throughout the conference under the direction of the Conference Executive Secretary. Second, the Executive Secretary should develop an itinerary to train all the pastors in the conference on the SGP. Third, the pastors should train their local church leaders on the SGP. Fourth, the pastors should constitute a SGP team in every local church. The pastors can monitor the implementation of the plan and send quarterly reports to the Conference Secretary. The Conference Secretary in turn should report this to the Conference Executive Committee. The Secretary needs to collect the success stories and use them for promoting the project. He should also be given

authority to change what is not working until the plan runs smoothly throughout the conference.

There are two ways this project has contributed to the overall goal of the project. First, it has succeeded in the churches where the project was implemented, especially at the Nyakoe Central Church. The conference has two model churches in their territory to use in replicating the program in other local churches. Second, the Conference Secretary and the Riotero district pastor have had training in running this program. The conference can use these two pastors to train others.

Conclusion

The SGP was developed and implemented at the Nyakoe Central and Keng'enyeri churches in the Riotero district in the Nyamira Conference. The plan was monitored and evaluated through the use of a logframe and Gantt chart. The initial results were presented to the Nyamira Conference mid-year executive committee on May 30, 2014.

Recommendations

I recommend five things to four the stakeholders.

1. I recommend to the Riotero district that it replicates the plan in all 17 churches in the district using the experience gained from the Nyakoe Central Church and the Keng'enyri Church.

2. I recommend to the Nyamira Conference to start a Lay Bible Institute to train lay leaders on matters of mission and ministry. The conference can start one at the conference level and use the pastors to train the local church leaders. They can develop their own curriculum or use the General Conference International Institute of Christian

Ministries (IICM) syllabus prepared by the Personal Ministries and Sabbath School Departments of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. The Nyamira Conference Executive Committee should find ways of reducing the work load of pastors so that they have enough time to train members for ministry. I learned from the Nyamira Conference Ministerial Secretary that there are 65 trained pastors who are still not employed. If the conference absorbs these pastors through an internship program, they can give some relief to all 59 pastors serving districts in the conference. The work will expand and when income increases they can divide the large districts.

4. The East Kenya Union should put a mechanism in place to ensure that the SGP has been replicated in all the conferences using the Nyamira Conference as a model.

5. The University of Eastern Africa, Baraton Theology Department should offer courses on Nurture, Retention, and Reclamation in the ministerial courses they offer. In this way, the pastors will come out of college with good information on nurture and discipleship processes.

For further information about Integration of New Members into the Life of the Local Church and more especially the Spiritual Guardianship Plan (SGP) contact sammakori@yahoo.com   or mobile phone +254724240885.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire on Integration

Participants and Purpose

The purpose of this questionnaire is to discover the existing methods and

programs used in the Nyamira Conference to integrate members into the life of the local

church. It will also find out the level of involvement of the local church leaders and

members in the integration program.

This questionnaire will be administered to 70 people, chosen from five churches,

one from each of the five stations into which Nyamira Conference is divided. These will

include: two elders, four young people under 30 years of age, two from each gender, two

married ladies between the age of 40 and 50, two men between 40 and 50, two men

above 55 years of age, and two ladies above 55 years of age. These participants will be

selected in the first quarter of 2012.

Questionnaire

Please respond to the following 10 statements by circling the number that

represents the current performance of your church. Write your answer to no. 11.

Key

1. Very poor

2. Poor

3. Fair

4. Good

5. Very good

1. Those applying for membership are thoroughly taught before baptism. 1 2 3 4 5

2. New members are assigned mentors for some time after baptism. 1 2 3 4 5

3. There is a ceremony of welcoming new members into the church immediately after baptism. 1 2 3 4 5

4. New members are helped to register with a particular group in the church such as the Adventist Youth Society, the Adventist Women Ministries, the Pathfinder Club, the Adventurer Club etc. 1 2 3 4 5

5. There is post baptismal instruction for new members in my church. 1 2 3 4 5

6. New members are given instruction concerning spiritual gifts before baptism
   1 2 3 4 5

7. New members are assigned tasks in my church immediately after baptism according to their gifts. 1 2 3 4 5

8. My church has a well-defined system of knowing the members' welfare, both their joys and their challenges. 1 2 3 4 5

9. My church has active counseling services. 1 2 3 4 5

10. Members are involved in integrating new members into the life of the church. 1 2 3 4 5

11. In your opinion, what makes people drop out of church (apostatize)?

APPENDIX B

PERMISSION LETTER

NY AMIRA CONFERENCE,
P.O BOX 285, *TEL: 058-6144010, NYAMlRA, KENYA*

THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

9 TH JANUARY 2012

Pr. Samuel Makori
The Executive Secretary
East African Union
P.O. Box42276
NAIROBI

Dear Pastor,

RE: **RESEARCH REQUEST**

This is to let you know that the Executive Committee sitting on 5th December, **2011,**
took action Vide Min.324 to approve your request to conduct DMin Research at
Nyamira Conference.

We are willing to provide any necessary assistance to you, during the period you will
be conducting your Research.

May God bless you in abundance and wish you well as you prepare for the
exercise.

Thanks.

Yours in service

ZABLON A YIERA
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
NY AMIRA CONFERENCE

CC: OFFICERS

APPENDIX C

SEMINAR NOTES FOR 2012

Nurture and Retention Seminar Material for 2012

Introduction

No one will enter Heaven unless he/she does the will of God. (Matthew 7:21; 23:15; John 1:35-39). This is a simple, clear, and straightforward Biblical teaching. These are the simple facts of salvation n that both the Adventist leaders and membership should understand well. What is God's will for His Church?

A. **The Pillars of Nurture**
- Time – Mark 3:13-19
- Every member Involvement – Proverbs 27:17
- Point people to Jesus – John 1:35, 36
- Conducive Church Environment John 1:37- 39
- Good Role modeling from old members and Leaders – Genesis : 27:22

B. **Characteristics of a Nurturing Church**
- Strong –Acts 16:5
- Large – Acts 16:5
- Mature –Ephesians 4: 13
- Growing – 2 Peter 3: 18
- Healthy – John 15:16; 6:37,39

C.   **Challenges in a Local Church That Make Nurture**
- Fights and quarrels – James 4:1
- Groupings and classes – 1Corinthians 1:10-13
- Unstable – Ephesians – 4:14
- Low/ Worthless return of tithes and offerings – Malachi 1: 6-10; 3: 10
- Drop outs – Numbers 14: 1- 5
- Spectators – Matthew 20:1-16

D.   **How Nurture and Retention is realized**
- Feeding – John 21:15,17; 2Timothy 4: 1-2
- Tending/ Take care – John 21:16

E. **Mechanisms/Structures for Nurture and Retention in the Adventist Churc**h
- Departments (e.g. Family Ministries, AWM, AMO, AYS, CHM etc.).
- Committees and Boards (e.g. Church Board)
- Small Groups (e.g. Nurture and Retention).
- Institutions (e.g. the family, local church, church school etc.).

APPENDIX D

SEMINAR NOTES FOR 2013

Nurture and Retention Notes for 2013

NURTURE—Critical Factors

Introduction

- **Jer. 8:20.** The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.
- **Isa. 25:9.** In that day they will say, surely this is our God; we trusted in Him and He saved us. This is the Lord, we trusted in Him; let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation.
- **Genesis 4:9.**Then the Lord said to Cain, Where is Abel your brother? He said,"I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper?"
- **Psalms 144:12.**May our young men be like a well nurtured plant and our daughters like pillars fit for a palace".
- **1 Cor. 3:9.**For **we** are co-workers in God's service; **you** are God's field, God's building".

Factors for Nurture and Retention

There are many factors responsible of the spiritual health and makes people stay in the church, but I will deal with six critical ones.

N&R Factor # 1 Spiritual Guardianship Plan (SGP)

- Connecting new members to spiritual guardians
- Taking them through the process of orientation
- Getting them involved in ministry

N&R Factor # 2 Maintaining and strengthening relationships

People come into the church primarily on doctrinal, but they leave primarily on the social level. Four factors account for healthy relationships:

- Openness
- Acceptance
- Trust
- Love

N&R Factors # 3 Using Small Groups

- Prayer cells, singing groups, visitation groups, Bible study groups, etc.
- Develops relationships
- Orientation and integration made possible (Ps. 92:12-14)

N&R Factor # 4 Teaching New Members
- Hoshea 4:6
- Matthew 28:19

N&R Factor # 5 Spiritual Accountability

Have friends who:
- Share with you the challenges of life
- Will pray for you
- Call you and find out if you are pressing on with the journey

N&R Factor 6 Spiritual Exercises
- Bible study
- Prayer
- Meditation and memorizing scriptures
- Serving (Ephesians 4:11-14)
- Spiritual songs

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