

Determining different categories of African mothers in the SDA Church in Suba-Sub County, Kenya

Author's Details:

⁽¹⁾Justine OchiengAila ⁽²⁾Dr.GorOchieng Peter. Department of Humanities and Economics, Rongo University, Kenya

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate different categories of African mothers in the SDA Church in Gwassi Sub-Station in Suba Sub-County, Kenya. Specifically the study sought to achieve one objective viz: Determine different categories of African mothers in the SDA Church Suba-Sub-County and how they minister to them. The study adopted a case study research design. The researcher undertook an intensive analysis on the prevailing situation using in-depth knowledge of the study variables. The study also employed stratified random sampling technique where various categories of leaders and women in the Church were interviewed. The total sample size was 300. A questionnaire was administered to single women, widows, women in polygamous marriages and men. Focused group discussions targeting all women in the Church, pastors and elders were also employed. The study established that the work of SDA Church has not yielded much success in leadership. This has made many women join other churches in the Sub-Station. The study has also revealed that African mothers continue to suffer marginalization within the SDA Church and the church has ignored their plight. The study concluded that, there are many women suffering in Suba Sub-County, but the Church has kept quiet concerning their plight and is only interested in their numerical and financial benefit. The research recommended effective Pastoral Ministry guidance for pre-marital and post-marital counseling programs, inclusion of women in leadership positions and a review of Church doctrines which could be relevant to issues affecting African mothers.

Key Terms: Seventh Day Adventist Church, Women Leadership, Suba-Sub-County

Introduction

The Seventh Day Adventist Church (SDA) as a new sect derives “her” root from 1826 in England, but the movement developed faster in America. Their message pointed to 1844 as ‘a time for Jesus Second Advent’. After the great disappointment, a group of people who believed in William Miller’s expectation “three angles message” (Revelation 14), got encouragement by Ellen G. White’s vision “December 1844 and October 1848”, (Great Controversy, 1995p433). As time went by they managed to get followers and formed a congregation (*Seventh - day Adventist Encyclopedia (10vol. 1976)*). Like other Missionaries, the founders thought of spreading SDA church to other parts of the world.


In 1903 and 1905, some Missionaries were sent to Africa. The first contingent led by Pastor A.A Carscallen, his wife and Pastor Peter Nyambo and reached Mombasa in 1906, but found that Muslims had occupied much of it (Greenleaf, Floyd, 2000). The group moved to Nairobi by railway, then to Port Florence the present Kisumu city. They unfortunately found the Anglican Church in the area; and then decided to cross the Nyanza Gulf, they reached Gendia village in Karachuonyo where they established the first Mission station (Pastor Isaac Okeyo, 1989). The first converts were Thomas Ojiera and four ladies (Hanna Marindi, Maritha Okal, Rebecca Ogowe and Gori Peter). These new members were first taught reading, writing, religious doctrines and then finally baptized. This prepared them for marriage as they continued to maintain their faith. These converts worked with great vigor thus spreading the word of God in most parts of Nyanza such as Kamagambo, Kisii and Suba Sub-County (Pastor Isaac Okeyo, 1989).

The mission of the Church changed by lapsed of time. In the early periods Pastor Isack Okeyo argued that “for the sake of attracting people to come and attend Sabbath services regularly, Mrs Carscallen used to give the ladies some salt after church services were over. She also gave some salt to children whose parent never went to church, to take to their parent”. (Ibid 1989, p13). The future turn of event was un-expectation. The Church which used to solve their socio-economic problem reversed their activities when the first convert died. Jesus Christ noticed the same amongst the “Israelites faith”, but did a correction by planting a new faith which emphasized on the caring of all believers, and valuing each member as belonging to God’s family. The members were called upon to share in the proclamation of the good news (Acts 15). Other qualities

included their commitment to Christ’s kingdom and to accomplish God’s mission (Acts 6:1-7). Women who were part of Christ’s followers included; the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well who served as the first evangelist by providing hospitality and sustenance to Jesus (John 4: 1-28), and Mary who was the first to preach Jesus’ resurrection even to the other eleven unbelieving disciples (Mark 16:1-8). In the contemporary world “The SDA Church pastor's main obligation is to preach the same message in mainline churches.

In addition, pastors are to be involved in local ministry: such as hospital chaplaincy, visitations, funerals, weddings, and organizing religious activities” (Jordan, Anne Devereaux, 1988). “Pastoral care”, therefore, is to encourage the local congregation and brings new people into the church. The mission requires immediate attention for both social- economic problems of their members on Sabbath.


Below is a sample of SDA Church Sabbath offering envelope.



Tithes & Offerings
INTO THE STOREHOUSE

Return to Me all the Tithes into the Storehouse Malachi 3:10

Name Hellen Testine
 Address _____
 Email _____
 Telephone _____
 Estate / Group Jerusalem



SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
LAKE VICTORIA FIELD
 P.O. Box 578 - 40300, Horna Bay

OUR MISSION IS TO CARRY THE GOSPEL MESSAGE TO THE WORLD*
(Matthew 28:18-20)

A SIMPLIFIED PLAN

STEP 1 - RETURN THE TITHE 10%

STEP 2 - PRAYERFULLY DETERMINE YOUR OFFERINGS

STEP 3 - DIVIDE YOUR OFFERINGS

"Each one must do as he has made up his mind not reluctantly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver" Corinthians 9:7

"What shall I render to the Lord for all his beauty to me? I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all His people, in the courts of the house of the Lord."
Psalms 116 :12,19

	Date 1/31/18	Date 2/27/19	Date 3/12/19	Date 4/1/19	Date 5/1/19
	Shs.	Shs.	Shs.	Shs.	Shs.
GOD'S TITHE 10%		80	80	170	
Combined Offerings 10%+					
1st January					
Week of Prayer					
Camp Meeting Offerings	1000				
Camp Meeting Expense					
Field Advance					
Church Building		20	20	30	
Any Other (specify)					
Total		100	100	200	

From the sample above it is evident that there is no provision for the vulnerable. However, “Seventh-day Adventist Church has a worldwide vision of emphasizing and communicating the gospel message” (Church manual, 2005, p13). It is encouraged by its outreach to more races, ethnic communities, and languages more than any single Protestant body in the world. But for church growth, “she” is expected to re-assess the family situation and reconsider “her” role in the women’s life and how to fulfill it. This is why Ellen G. White assert “when a great and decisive work is to be done, God chooses men and women to do his work, and he will see the loss if the talents of both are not combined” (Seventh - day Adventist Encyclopedia (10 vol 1976).

Statement of the Problem

One of the key issues receiving the attention of the SDA Church in the past years has been the role of its pastoral ministry in fulfilling the life of women as part of its congregation. Records in church log books

reveals that Churches have realized growth in membership, but women who are the majority in the church have been neglected in various church decisions making such as rebaptism of women living in polygamous union after the death of their spouses

In Kenya, the SDA church has not taken effective ministry to the African mothers with the seriousness it deserves, especially, the vulnerable within the society such as widows and single African mothers. For example, in Suba Sub-County, the church has realized numerical growth of women; as the number grew women have been crying for liberation, but shepherds have assumed their problems though it is recorded in church manual that. “The women ministry department exist to uphold, encourage and challenge Seventh-Day Adventist women on their daily walk as disciples of Jesus Christ as member of his world church with an objective of Ministering to the broader spectrum,” (Vance, Laura, 1999, Church Manual, 2005, p 126).

This has therefore limited the chances of women to address their problems in the society and even the entire church fraternity. Many women have done well in Literature Evangelism but this has been thwarted by men, that is to say, majority of pastors and church leaders are men, for example in Ranen conference (Migori and part of Homa Bay- County) there are only two women pastors out of eighty five pastors. The problem associated with African mothers such as, stigmatization by the society, isolation (loneliness), financial constraints and stresses have never been pastoral issues. Leaders do not bother to understand women as people who require more effective pastoral care. This study therefore was an attempt to examine the pastoral ministry on women, leadership exclusion and historical background of the church in Suba Sub- County

Categories of African Mothers

Married African Mothers

In traditional Africa, for example, among the Luo, “polygamy and wife inheritance are intended as a way of protecting the family of the deceased. The practice ensures that the wife and children of the deceased are protected to continue the lineage”.(Mzee Songora Marire 15:12:2019,O.I).Similarly(Paul Mboya 1938) posited that “The home is a primary setting for the restoration of the image of God in men and women. Within the family, father, mother and children can express themselves fully, meeting each other’s needs for belong worth are developed. The home is also the place where by God’s grace, the principles of Christianity are practiced, and values are transmitted from one generation to the next” (Paul Mboya, 1938).

Single Motherhood

There are over twenty eight categories of African single mothers’ i.e. broken marriage, widowed, and twenty five causes of single motherhood (P.N. Wachege 2003, p72-126).In support of the rise of single mothers in America Nancy Van Delt (1980) assert that “today people tend to accept divorce as socially acceptable”, her findings reveal that 38% of all first marriages end in divorce and the church is not immune from that state. She adds that “what has accelerated this state of affairs is due to a number of causes which require special pastoral care”, similarly, Gangel (1996), observed that, “Today’s single mothers belong to different groups each with its own sub-groups with varying needs, pressure points, and social emotional concern”.

Among the Luo, (MzeeSongoraMarire O.I, 15-12-2019), asserted that “single-mother families were as a result of wars, natural disasters, and other calamities that separated adult males from their families”. Today, most single-mother families result from out-of-wedlock births, separation, and divorce. In the society, single-mother households have long been recognized as a major cause of school failure, family poverty, and juvenile delinquency, problems that intensify as the numbers of single-mother families’ increases. The United States leads all other industrialized nations in the number of single-mother families. In the United States one out of every two children will spend a portion of their childhood in a single-mother home. The percentage of children in the United States living in single-mother homes increased from 9 percent in 1960 to 24 percent in 1986.’ The 1990 census reported that between 1980 and 1990, single- parent homes headed by females increased to 35.6 percent and homes headed by males increased to 29.1 percent. These unsettling data underline the need to move beyond mere rhetorical responses to a realization that we are facing a national epidemic that demands a concerted and aggressive response.

Challenges Facing African Mothers in Gwassi.

Church records in Gwassi Sub-station reveal that, African Mothers have faced numerous challenges in their churches, some of which are emotional, social, economic, physical and cultural factors. “In handling those who are stressed, there should be mediation between the current situation and the historical Christianity” (Janeatte1999). In agreement with her findings on the challenges faced by women, Mugambi (2009) argued that “the mandate from God through Jesus Christ is that, the Christian faith should bring about peace on earth and good will to human kind. It is the responsibility of each of us to ensure that we place this challenge as our top priority so that it may be restored amongst those plagued by despair”. Such insights affirm the need for the church of Christ to urgently confront matters affecting African mother in despair in the SDA Church.

The imposed loneliness where the feelings of widows and the changes are experience is the most difficult to bear (Wachege, 2003). One of them mentioned that “there is no human being here I can talk or share an idea with. There is no one to unburden myself to, no one to comfort and console me, noone to utter a word of encouragement of hope. The following questions are raised; what is family life? Could widow inheritance be a solution? or as it merely an escape?” (Ibid 2003). In support, Calvin (1993 ,p11) noted that, “when a friend lost his wife he knows from his experience, the painful wound which took him seven years to overcome their sorrows of his wife’s death”. Similarly, (Hannah W Kinoti and John M. Waliggo,p 977) observed that “in Africa the well-being of a community and individuals alike was envisioned as a dependent on peoples’ observance of proper customs and traditions. These were customs which had the sanction of past generations, which proved as a way of maintaining peace, harmony and prosperity in the community”.

Biblical Teaching on Marriage

The Bible mentions that, marriage is a relationship between two people, which are expected to commit fully and have trust in each other (Gen 2:18, Corinthians 7: 2 – 3). The institution of marriage requires a deep understanding of oneself towards the long journey, which demands love, trust, and respect to one another. Jesus condemns adultery in Mathew 5:27-32, and similarly, St Paul does not support adultery which was experienced in the early church (I Corinthians 5: 1-5). In Matthew 15:7-14, the Bible advocates that those who assemble to worship God should put away evil things unless they are ready to worship Him in spirit and truth and in beauty of holiness. Those families in the church should be in the church family which reflects an organized character of God, love for the church, eventually helping individual to build and maintain strong family relationship. Christian families should show strong membership for the kingdom of God and fosters the reconciliation and healing between generations (Malachi 4:5-6). Marriage should extend support to those who have been injured and hurt by abuse; death and broken relationship.

The Role of Seventh Day Adventist Pastoral Ministry to African Mothers

The Africa Mothers in Gwassi sub-station have been seeking places where they could air their views; surprisingly, the church has turned to be a prison for most of them. “The gospel message whose essence is to bring liberation and joy to the recipients has denied them their human dignity and self-esteem” (NahasonNdungu, 2006). Hence, there is need for the SDA church to address the social economic challenges facing all the church quotas. They should focus on Adventist ministry within a “believing” and “behaving” framework. In this regard, there is need for a “narrative” approach that does not emphasized reading the Bible from a confessional framework, but seeks to open a dialogue between the stories of the Bible, women’s stories, and the story of all God’s people in the church or priesthood of believers. This approach is part of the wider approach to practical theology and in particular a qualitative-oriented methodology. The narrative approach, however, needs to be open to dialogue with all approaches, including the confessional approach which emphasizes telling “God’s great story” to “hurting” and hopeless women among congregations in the SDA church, but it refuses to be dictated to, or prescribed to by a confessional approach. Seventh-day Adventism has also been profoundly shaped by its focus on the prophetic writings within Scripture interlay because of its emphasis on the second coming and an apocalyptic eschatology. The Adventists’ believed that, the Bible as the Word of God is the source of Adventist thinking. (Johns 2010) noted that, “of all Christian bodies, they (SDAs) are a people who, from their inception, have looked to the

Bible as the source and standard for their beliefs.” In this way, the pioneers of the denomination, because of their understanding of what the Scriptures taught did not teach other Christians but separated themselves from the existing churches of their day. This conviction has caused the SDA adherents to claim for a unique identity with special confessions and a strong sense of mission as Remnant Church. In Revelation 14 the teachings on the Sabbath emphasize that, “Eden shall bloom on earth again, and God’s holy rest day will be honored by all beneath the sun” (Ellen G. White, nd p283).

On the use of authority in leadership, Richard Wisely (2003, pp. 84 – 85) said that, “something similar can be said about notions authority too, and indeed authority and application seem to be two sides of the same coin, in the end, the Bible is not fundamentally about principles to be applied, or about authoritative rules to be obeyed (I will want to say, of course, that it is about Jesus, or at least nearly so, but we will come to that presently) and the book of Nehemiah in any case, is thin on principles and rules that is why it is a particularly bad candidate for applying for us”.

The phrase ‘biblical authority’ or ‘authority of the Bible’ as used in the SDA Church should focus more on exegesis so as to decide which kind of Biblical is authoritative. The emphasis on moral or ethical authority based on the Bible that suggest that all that is recorded in bible says is authentic but when interpreted wrongly the judgment may affect one’s faith negatively.

The Seventh Day Adventist Church and Single Mothers

Single-mother Households and widows often rely on Churches or the clergy as coping strategies. Many people have unfortunately, reported increased cases of stress and disappointment on how the Churches have responded to their needs as single mothers. ‘This disappointment can perhaps be explained tendency for churches to limit their assistance to single-mothers families in their particular congregation’. Single mothers are hesitant to express their needs to fellow church members because; they fear public exposure of their personal business and they also wish to avoid being pitied upon. This leads the church to respond inadequately, based on the person’s expressed needs rather than her actual needs, consequently, a single mother who relies on the church as a coping mechanism experiences frustration and increased stress because of the church’s response. When churches work independently of other agencies or with a smaller population, a limited perspective of single-mother family needs is maintained, resulting in inadequate response to the problem. The church has an essential role in addressing the needs of single-mother families. These needs cannot however, be adequately addressed without fully understanding the problem. The first work of Christians according to Ellen G. White (1952) is to be united in the family. She noted that “the more closely the members of a family are united in their work in the home, the more uplifting and helpful will be the influence outside the home”. She further suggests that “a well-ordered Christian household is a powerful argument in favor of the reality of the Christian religion. This ties her closer to her family tie which is sacred of any on earth”.

The family as argued by Ellen G. White, “helps in maintaining a relationship to Christ” (Ibid, 1952). Since marriage was designed to be a blessing to humankind, the concept of “family” has taken on a different meaning for the Seventh-day Adventists especially the African mothers. The SDA church has been slow to respond to the problems of single-mothers due to the lack of substantive documentation. In most cases, children from single-mother homes seem to learn valuable lessons that help in developing strong faith at an early age. Many children learn very early how to depend on God with regard to the spiritual condition of the single parent but they later on get disappointed by church’s attitude and practice.

Church's obligation to support Widows

The Jewish people in the days of Moses understood the importance of including financial support. In Kenya, some basic needs are provided to widows, but the scope of their needs is increasingly tremendously. Some of them might desire a Christian education for their children, and the SDA church should set up a scholarship endowment fund towards meeting this obligation. Other widows may have previously lived on a low income, while others may have lived on a higher one but face emotional problems. So, the congregation will need to exercise wisdom to determine which needs are vital. The leaders must be committed to widows who genuinely need assistance, whatever the cost might be.

The SDA believers should be happy to do that because it shows God's compassion toward the destitute. Even when widows have financial resources, the SDA Church needs to come alongside with encouragement, love, and support in every way possible. The increasing collapse of the family unit in our society means could lead to an increase in the number of widows that need to be under the church's care. For instance, A Christian widow who as for instance several children might not receive any help from unsaved parents. It could be good if she moved back into her parent's home as Judah did to her in-law Tamar in Gen. 38:11; Judah said to his daughter-in-law: Tamar, "Return to your father's house and remain a widow until my son Shelah grows up." He said this because he was afraid that his Shelah would be killed, as his brother had been, so Tamar went back. Jesus too had a human feeling for His mother when he was on the cross, "The perfect example of Christ's filial love shines forth with undimmed luster from the midst of ages. For nearly thirty years Jesus by His daily toil had helped bear the burdens of the home. And now, even in his last agony. He remembered to provide for His sorrowing, widowed mother. The same spirit will be seen in every disciple of our Lord." (Desire of Ages p 664). Jesus Christ passion and Naomi story need to be a reference to the needs of widows in the SDA Church especially in Gwasssi Sub-station.

The Church's obligation to evaluate their needs

The church needs to discern the widows who are in genuine need of financial care and not just indiscriminately give it to everyone. The scripture should institute some guidelines on who qualifies and who doesn't. "If any widow has children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents; for that is good and acceptable before God."

Conclusion

The family Ministry to African Mothers in the SDA Church is in place, but, it has not achieved much in relation to ministering to the contemporary African Mothers' families. Adventist Women Ministry which deals with the general welfare of women in the SDA church is not clear in her objectives on how to minister to African Mothers families. There is lack of a clear policy frame work in relation to ministry to African Mothers thus causing a major setback to the SDA Ministerial role.

Research Methodology

This section on the methodology used in this study, discusses the design, the locale, target population, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, validity, piloting, data collection procedure and method of data analysis for the study.

Research Design

The study was conducted using a case study research design, where the researcher took time to do intensive analysis on the prevailing situation, using representative samples to give in-depth knowledge, by examining the impact of the seventh Day Adventist Church's Pastoral ministry on women's life.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Suba Sub-county, which is part of Homa-bay County. In this Sub-county, the first SDA missionaries were; Pastor Watson, Daniel Onyango and Mr. Spark (Isaac Okeyo, 1989). Here, there are over eighty four churches with a membership of about ten thousand followers. Women in each local Church are an average of 60% of the total populations. The study was conducted in the following locations; Gwasssi Central, East, South, West and North. The locations have been chosen because of the high population and strong historical background on the SDA church.

Targeted Population

In this study, the church leaders and women (married, married in polygamous families, single, widows) in the SDA Church provided information for the study. It was assumed that they are better informed on the pastoral ministerial perspective on their churches and how this has affected their lives as African mothers. The situation analysis was conducted in each District Pastor's office where they provided relevant

information in their Districts (Godbura, Magunga, Kisegi and Lwanda). The estimated populations identified were eight hundred (800) respondents. These were women drawn from three churches within the district and the church pastor together with the elders.

Sample size and Sampling Procedure

According to Mark et al (2007), “a sample is a carefully selected portion or part of the targeted population while sampling procedure is where a fraction of the data is taken from a large set of data, and the inference is drawn from the sample is extended to the whole group”. Similarly, table for determining sample size i.e. “for a given population of 800, a sample size of 260 respondents would be appropriate to adequately represent a cross-section of the population” (Krejcie and Morgan 1970). The study employed stratified random sampling technique where various categories of leaders and women in the church were interviewed. A questionnaire was given to single mothers, widows, women in polygamous marriages and men. In addition, focused group discussions on pastoral ministry on women’s life included all categories of women in the church, pastors and elders.

Data collection Instruments

In this research, information was sourced from primary, secondary and experiential knowledge from the church members which was facilitated by a questionnaire and interview guide. The researcher was concerned with views of women and men in the church. Closed and open ended questions were used to gather information relevant to the study, and a set of questions for Church leaders, members and women in each category were fourteen, eight and ten respectively.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to test the validity and reliability of the research instruments. Pre-testing examined whether the research instruments were formulated clearly to gather valid and reliable data which could be used to answer the research questions. This was done by giving two questionnaires to women who did not form part of the sample size for the main study and interviewing one church leader and Pastor. Any unclear questions in both the questionnaires and interview schedules were rephrased accordingly. The reliability test was carried out using the test-retest method.

Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed. Quantitative data was arranged based on the inference of the study themes, while qualitative analysis involved making inferences from questionnaire and interview guides. Comparison of the study objectives and data collected was done to identify any gap left, the primary and secondary data were reviewed and finally a summary and recommendations of the study was done.

Ethical Considerations

Before embarking on data collection, the researcher obtained permission to conduct the research from the SDA Station Office. The respondents who were voluntarily chosen to participate in this study were provided with adequate information on the benefit of their respond.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The main objective of this study was to investigate the different categories of African Mothers in SDA church and how the church is ministering to them in Gwasssi Sub- Station in Suba-Sub County. The results are as discussed below:

Categories of African Mothers in the Seventh Day Adventist Churches in Gwasssi Sub-Station

This section presents findings on the various categories of African mother in the SDA congregations in Gwasssi Sub-Station. The study has established that majority of African mothers in this Sub Station are women who are currently in marriage. A significant number of single mothers who are referred to in this

study are based on the social orientations as means of survival in. The findings show that, single mothers are defined as either, divorce, widowed, and separated, getting children out of wedlock or single by choice were rated at a response rate of 30% were widowed, 10% were either separated or divorced while 2% were single by choice or gotten children out of wedlock and therefore became single by default.

Married Women

The data gathered in Gwasssi Sub-Station revealed that, married women form the majority of African mothers by their cry for liberation which has never been a pastoral concern. Some due to their age have decided to remain in the church halfheartedly as their expectations have been failed in numerous occasions by their spouses, some have resorted to go to human rights organizations i.e. Family Social and Community Based Initiative (FASCOBI), while others have joined other contemporary social groups in which they can air their grievances and discuss as survival tactics. Some of these groups are Family, Social and Community based initiatives such as Nyakonya” and “Nyanam”. Such challenging situations/condition continues to pose serious ministerial challenges to the women in the sub-station. On church responsibilities, 60% of the women said that, they have been given church responsibilities as church treasurers or deaconess. But their cry had never been a ministerial issue, because they only told to keep on praying, while the church is busy on other monetary goals in the interest of the church, not on the personal needs of the flocks especially the women. There are instances where married women have been abused by their parent in-laws, brothers’ in-law, Sisters’ in law and the like. The church has remained silent on this. The findings have revealed that, some women have temporarily divorced or separated by moving to far places such; Oyugis, Kisii, M igori, Nairobi and Tanzania

Widowed Single Mothers

The study revealed that there was a higher mortality rate among men than women in Gwasssi sub-station which has resulted to the death of one of the head teacher in the station, although most traditional practices are on the decline due to growth of Christianity in the society, the church’s doctrines have overridden African culture in theory but not in practice. This is because, most women have been crying for liberation but the church has failed to recognize their presence. The researcher observed that some of widows who participated in this study were treated in an unfriendly manner. One of them even narrated how the church had treated her with contempt after the death of her husband, though she had served the church for several years in leadership. She sought assistance from Homa Bay Court in exhuming the body, after they fell off with her in-laws on where and how the burial was supposed to be conducted. The church has also denied some widow access to sacraments due to unconfirmed rumours about their sexual conduct; such women are believed to be “loose” or preying on men carelessly. I feel sorry for the lady who reminded me my mum past life when we were in church board meeting “Jasi you can’t help me, do you remember your mum is also a widow but had been rebaptised”.

In Magunga district at Koga church, a widow said that the church elders had been going to her house as total strangers and leaving hurriedly. Other women have also hated her in the community. She had been nicknamed the “Samaritan lady “and painfully narrated that “While family friends feel that I’ m a rebel, the other women look at me as the Samaritan woman who met Jesus at the well.” She adds that, “the departure of my husband has made people to belittle me in the society. Even the Pastors whom people have a right to demand access to, occasionally had forgotten my status and have joined other on the song of heresy”. The findings have also revealed that the women who happened to slip out of human weakness and engage in sexual relationship with any other men are brutally beaten to death by those who regard themselves as staunch members and church members hardly disclosed their cohabiters amongst them, may God remember that lady who kept on wailing on the night of June 10 until her last breath at Koga hill (I.O on 6 April,2019). The church has also barred some women from receiving sacraments even after undergoing fresh baptism, though; Ellen G White advised the SDA Church that “God is calling them to return those who are lost in His house” (Testimonies for the Church, v.5 p77). Jerusha Muga similarly reminded the SDA Church that Jesus wept when He observed the worried look on their face on His way to Jerusalem. She assert that ”The tears that amoment ago were stealing down the Master’s cheek now flow unchecked. His

disappointment is so great that its intensity cannot be described. At last, motioning towards the empty mansions about him, He finds words: ‘*Gabriel, don’t they want to come home?*

Disappointment tears at the savior’s heart. Empty palaces. Who will occupy them if you won’t?. Friend, those empty palaces are waiting for you and for me... Friend don’t you want to go home”. (If to Day were your Last Day on Earth, p 72).

Single, Separated and Divorced Mothers

The study established that in the church records, there are single mothers in every church in the Suba Sub-County, because either they are divorced or they have separated from their spouses. The researcher established that there were at least five (5) single mothers per church who have separated from their spouses mainly because of socio-economic challenges which always lead to misunderstandings and quarrels. This situation does not exclude even the women who are lucky to be in employment. Most of the women who are employed in the Sub County as teachers represent a significant figure of the separated mothers. This situation has left them with permanent scars and regret as both spouses face challenges as a result of the separation.

The data collected from Magunga church revealed that the single mothers are facing numerous parental challenges, where children have lacked a checked growth pattern in their life. Women are also the breadwinners, and are kept away from their homes much of the time. In some instances, some children, especially girls, have dropped out of school. For the divorced mothers, the challenge lies in dealing with their new status and findings away to detach themselves from their spouse leading some to depressions and confusion.

Causes of Single Motherhood in Gwassi Sub-Station

The study findings revealed that death is a major cause of single mother in Suba Sub-County. Other causes include; social and economic difficulties. Out of 10 women interviewed in each local church, death has been observed as the major cause with 70% of respondents in each local church agreeing with the findings; detachments from both tradition and Christian teaching has also resulted into separation as some mothers become tired of daily domestic violence in their families.

Sexual unfaithfulness has also contributed to the separation of married couples. Loose morals and low personal integrity in Suba Sub-County has played a key role in separating families. For instance, information from one of the local churches i.e. at Magunga SDA church, many separations in the church has been due to loose morals; while some men interviewed said that the Non-Governmental bodies who advocate for gender equality in the Sub County have overemphasized what is expected from them, leading to disintegration of families. Other causes include; early pregnancies; alcohol addiction and drug abuse.

CONCLUSIONS

From the findings, it is clear that the SDA Church has not addressed issues concerning all categories of African mothers in their congregations. From this perspective Adventism does not care about these issues, but they are often regarded as secondary or dealt with in a dogmatic way. The leaders spend a lot of time, money and energy telling the world that Jesus is “coming soon” (Hensho, 1999), yet, they are often silent when it comes to socio-ethical and socio-political issues affecting her members. “Human experiences, perspectives and people’s personal faith have in a way been trivialized and marginalized” (Plantak, 1997). “While Adventism will always help the poor and sick, often their focus is on winning so-called souls for Christ” (Kubo, 1998).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The research revealed that women are the most affected lot in the SDA Church. There is need to apply wisdom when addressing their plight to enable them remain in the house of the Lord. The SDA Church should note that there are various categories of African mothers which require diverse forms of pastoral care depending on their groups.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- i. Barr Beth Allison (2008), *The Pastoral Care of Women in Late Medieval England* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, *Gender in the Middle Ages*,
- ii. Biblical Research Institute Committee, (nd), *Symposium on the Role of Women in the Church, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Duplicated in U.S.A.*
- iii. Boff L. (1981), *Liberating Grace*, Trans John Drury (MaryKnoll): Orbis Books, second Printing.
- iv. Boff. L and Boff C (2007), *Introducing Liberation Theology*; London. Brings Richard (2003). *Leading the Bible Wisely*, London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge Holy Trinity Church.
- v. Burns A. and Scott C. *Mother (1994), Headed Families Why They Have Increased* (Hillsdale), Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University.
- vi. Cangel Kenneth N. B O and J. Wihart (1996), *The Christian Educators handbook on Family education a complete Resource on Family life issues in the local church*, Bakers Books K USA.
- vii. Cone James H. (1970), *God of oppressed Mary Knoll*, New York Orbis Books.
- viii. Domin Janeatte Janes (1999), *On Becoming a Healthier Church. Managing Your Stress.*
- ix. Fagal William. (nd), *Did Ellen White Call for Ordaining Women in*
- x. Ellen G. White and *Women in Ministry*, White Estate, Silver Spring, Md.
- xi. Finucane Colin (2009), *In search of Pastoral Care in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church: A Narrative Approach*, University of South Africa.
- xii. Fiorrenza E.S. (2007), *Wisdom ways: Introducing feminist Biblical interpretation*, Mary Knoll, New York: Orbis Books.
- xiii. *Five Christian Ladies (2002), We Bow down: women look at worship*, Huntsville Alabam Printed in the United States of American, by Publishing designs Inc.
- xiv. Fowler John (1998) "World View" UEAB, Kenya. Revisiting
- xv. Freire Paulo (1998) *Education for Critical Consciousness*, New York: Continuum Publishing Company.
- xvi. Gutierrez G (1973), *A Theology of Liberation*, Mary knoll, New York: Orbis Books.
- xvii. Galenakgosi Orapeleng (2008), *Chastity among adult Seventh - day Adventist in Bostwana, A Psycho-Spiritual study*, University of South Africa.
- xviii. *General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church (2005), Church Manual*, Hagerstown Maryland Review and Herald publishing Association.
- xix. George R. Ross. (2011), *Evaluating Models of Christian Counseling* (Eugene (OR), Wipf and Stock.
- xx. Gettward Norman Kand Horsley Richard A. (1993), "You Are not to be called Father" *The Biblical and liberation: political and social Hermeneutic*, London, published in Great Britain, the social for promoting Christianity knowledge, Holy Trinity church Marylebone Road.
- xxi. Getui M. (2008), *Responsible Leadership in Marriage and Family*, Nairobi Kenya, Acton Publishers.
- xxii. Greenleaf, Floyd (2000), *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (3d ed.)*. Originally Schwarz
- xxiii. Henson M.S. (1999), *The Church Leader's Dilemma*. In Couden B, *Understanding Intimate Violence*; Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association.
- xxiv. Hoschele Stefan (2004), *From the End of the World to the Ends of the Earth: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Missiology* (Nurnberg: Verlag fur Theology und Religions Wissenschaft.
- xxv. Jerusha Muga, (1997) *If today were your LAST DAY on Earth*. Eastern Africa Division Publishing Association, Harare, Zimbabwe.
- xxvi. John Bob, (2010), *How Pastors Can Equip Women for Ministry*, Cornerstone Baptist Church in Roseville, Michigan.
- xxvii. Jordan, Anne Devereaux (1988), *The Seventh Day Adventists: A History*, New York: Hippocrene Books.
- xxviii. Jurgen Moltmann (1967), *Theology of hope*: London Norfolk Printed in Great Britain by Lowe and Brydone Printers Limited.
- xxix. Jurgen Moltmann (1974), *The Crucified God*: London Norfolk Printed and bound in Great Britain by Redwood Burn Ltd Trowbridge & Esther's SCM Press Ltd.
- xxx. Kenya National Commission on Human Right (2007), *Luo Culture and Women's Rights to own and Inherit Property*, Nairobi Kenya.

- xxx. Kibicho Samuel G., (2006), “African Instituted Churches in Kenya” Volume V, God and Revelation in African context, Nairobi, published by Acton Publishers.
- xxxii. Kinoti Hannah W. and John M Waliggo (1997), *The Bible in African Christianity, Essay in Biblical Theology*, Nairobi Kenya, Acton Publishers.
- xxxiii. Kirwen Michael C. (2005), *African Culture knowledge: Theme and Embedded Believer*, Nairobi: Publishers by Marry Knoll institute of African Studies.
- xxxiv. Knight G.R (2000), “Adventist Theological struggles in the light of history”, published Paper read at the World Ministerial Counsel, October 21, Toronto.
- xxxv. Kubo, S. (1998), *Forward. in Plantak, Z. The Silent Church. Human Rights and Adventist Social Ethics*. xi-xiii. London: Macmillan.
- xxxvi. Kwabena Donkor (2011), *The Church culture and spirits: Adventist in African Silver Spring in USA*. Publishers by the Biblical Research institute General Conference of Seventh Day.
- xxxvii. Laura Vance L. (1999), *Seventh-day Adventism Crisis: Gender and Sectarian Change in an Emerging Religion*. London, Samuel G., Jr. *Seventh-day Adventists and the Civil Rights Movement* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009. x, 194 pp.)
- xxxviii. Marianne Dyrud Kolkmann (2013), *Women in pastoral ministry and church Leadership of the Seventh day Adventist Church: A woman’s Voice*, New Bold College, Germany.
- xl. Mboya Paul (1938), *Luo Kitgigi Timbegi*, Gendia Press.
- xli. Ministerial Association (1994), *The General Conference of Seventh – Day Adventists, Elders’ Hand Book*, Old Columbia Pike Spring Marylan USA.
- xlii. Miko Dickens (2012) *Jawar Biro Karango, (When is our Savior coming)* Kendu Bay, African Herald Publishing House.
- xliii. Morgan, Douglas (2001), *Adventism and the American Republic: The Public Involvement of a Major Apocalyptic Movement*.
- xliv. Mugambi J. N.K (2009), *Christianity and African Culture*, Nairobi, Action Publishers.
- xlv. Multi-faith Centre, University of Canberra. (2013), <http://www.canberra.edu.au/multifaith-centre/pastoral-care/pastoral-worker>.
- xlvi. Mwase Isaac M.T. and Kamaara Eunice (2012), *Theology of Liberation and Reconstruction*, Nairobi Kenya, Acton Publishers.
- xlvii. Nancy Van Pelt (1980), “To have and to hold a guide to successful marriage,” Tennessee, U.S.A, printed by Sothern publishing Association Nashville.
- xlviii. Ndeda Mildred A.J(nd), *Nomiyamiya, Luo church: Agenda analysis of the dynamic of an African independence church among the Luo of Siaya District in the twenties century and Beyond* <https://www.codesriaorg/migpd/NDERA/PDF-NDERA-IPDF>.
- xlix. Neufield, Don F (1976). *Seventh - day Adventist Encyclopedia* (10 vol 1976), official Publication.
- l. Newberry Annette (2008), *General Epistle: Faith for Turbulent* .Springfield, Missouri in USA Published in cooperation with life Publishers International.
- li. Nyamiti Charles (2005), *Jesus Christ the Ancestor of Humankind: An Essay on African Christology*, Nairobi, CUEA Publication.
- lii. Njagi Festus (2004), *Ministry to Single*, Kendu-Bay, Kenya, African Herald Publishing house.
- liii. Ogutu G.E.M. (2001/2002), *KER in the 21st century, and Luo social system: without our roots we are fruitless dead leaver*, Nairobi, printed by Sundowner Institute Press.
- liv. Oso Willis Yuko and David Onen (2011), *Writing Research Proposal and Report*, Nairobi, Jomo Kenyatta Foundation, printed by Print Arts Limited.
- lv. Owuor et al, (2011), “African Instituted Churches in Kenya: Changes and Hope in the 21st Century” *Hekima: Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences University of Nairobi vol.v*, Nairobi published by Hekima Publications.
- lvi. Panlien John (1998), *Revisiting the Sabbath in the Book of Revelation; Journal of the Adventist Theology Society*, ISBN 1550 – 7378.
- lvii. Pastor Okeyo Isaac (1989), *Adventism in Kenya* Kendu-Bay, printed by African Herald publishing House.
- lviii. Patton John (2005), *Pastoral care! An Essential Guide*, Nashville, TN, Abingdom Press.

- lix. *Plantak, Z. (1998), the Silent Church Human Rights and Adventist Social Ethics, London: Macmillan Press.*
- lx. *Saxton, Jo. (2011), Influential Women in Leadership at Church, Work and Beyond in Botswana, London, UK: Hodder & Stoughton.*
- lxi. *Schaefer Edith (1975), what is a Family? (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co.*
- lxii. *Secretariat General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church (2002), Church manual, Hagerstown Maryland review and Herald Publisher Associations.*
- lxiii. *Spalding, Arthur Whitefield (1949). Captains of the host: First Volume of a History of Seventh-day Adventists covering the years 1845–1900.*
- lxiv. *Spruill Karen (1973), the making of a mother: Not every woman would be bold enough to help others; Karen bares her soul .Hagerstown Printed in USA by international Biblical Society.*
- lxv. *The Christian Guardian, (1830), Church of England.*
- lxvi. *The United Bible Society of Kenya (1994), Good News Bible.*
- lxvii. *The Women's Ministries Department and Ministerial Association. (2007), The*
- lxviii. *General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Pastors and Elders Handbook for Women's Ministries , A complete Guide for Local Leaders, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904, U.S.A.*
- lxix. *USA Census Bureau of Statistical Abstract of the United States 2011. Wachege P.N. (1992), Jesus Christ our Muthamaki (Ideal elder): An African Christianity study based in the Agikuyu understanding of Elders, Nairobi, Phoenix Publishers.*
- lxx. *----- . (1992), African Liberation: A man perspective, Nairobi, Industry Printing.*
- lxxi. *----- (2003), African Third millennium Single Mothers and Widows:*
- lxxii. *Ethno regulation philosophical touch, Nairobi, signal press Ltd. Wahome Ephraim W., and et al (2005), "Religion Ethnicity and Identity in*
- lxxiii. *Africa", vol III, Hekima Journal of Humanities and Social Science, Nairobi, publications university of Nairobi.*
- lxxiv. *Wangui Kirima Phyllis (2012), The impact of some modes of women liberation on African Christian family in Kagio Town, Kirinyaga County. University of Nairobi, Kenya.*
- lxxv. *Waruta D. W., and Kinoti Hannah W. (2000), Pastoral care in African Christianity: Challenging Essays in pastoral Theology, Nairobi, and Nairobi Acton publishers.*
- lxxvi. *Wasike Anne Nasimiyu and Waruta D. W. (2000), Mission in Africa Christianity Critical Essays in Missiology, Nairobi, and Acton Publisher.*
- lxxvii. *White Ellen G. (1930), Messages to the young people, Review and Herald Publishing Association.*
- lxxviii. *-----.(1952), Adventist home, Nashville, Southern Publishing Association.*
- lxxix. *-----.(nd), Lwenj Lwenje, Ekind Kristo gi Satan, "The great Controversy", Kendu-Bay.*
- lxxx. *Yartekwei Lartey Emmanuel (2006), Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World (Cleveland, (OH), Pilgrim Press.*