

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Missiology

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

TITLE: TOWARDS EFFECTIVE INTEGRATION OF SINGLE PARENTS IN DISCIPLESHIP, THAMANDA SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST, CENTRAL KENYA CONFERENCE

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Date Completed: June 2020

Christianity is anchored on Christ's command to carry the message of salvation to the ends of the earth. This can be done by ensuring that all adherents are involved appropriately and effectively in all Church activities. The Church is expected to be the place where all members have a sense of belonging, acceptance, and inclusivity. This implies that every Church member should get an opportunity to serve his or her master freely in the ecclesiastical programs of the Church.

This research was based at Thamanda SDA Church and sought to explore ways through which single parents could be effectively integrated into the discipleship programs of the Church at Thamanda. In this survey, the researcher attempted to find out the theoretical foundations for single parents' participation in discipleship. So, research adopted a qualitative research paradigm that is anchored on exploring the respondents' views in a particular setting, in this case, at Thamanda SDA Church. The investigation also used a document analysis method whereby

various literature and documents were analyzed and reviewed for coherency and contribution to the present research.

The research revealed that single parents have long been left out of the Church programs. As a result, the researcher developed and implemented a Missiological method that single parents can use as a means of discipleship as they go for mission. The strategy involves a volunteer perspective for soul winning activities under the strategy by the name “Faith Mission Strategy [FMS]” which entails trusting in God for discipleship. The evaluation carried out on the discipleship program verified that it was greatly successful. This was evidenced after single parents conducted a two weeks gospel campaign that resulted in more cooperation among Church members.

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A project

presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Missiology

by

Lawrence Gitonga Ruiga


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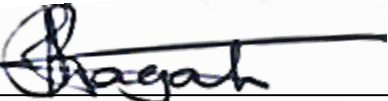
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Dedication is to my dear wife, Tabitha Kaura, our daughter, Ruth Kawira and all

Single Parenthood Fraternity

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	x
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	xi
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Research	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Research.....	3
Significance of the Research.....	3
Delimitation of the Research	4
Methodology	4
Definition of Terms.....	5
2. BIBLICAL AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF SINGLE PARENTS’ INVOLVEMENT IN DISCIPLESHIP	7
Definition of the Biblical Theology of Discipleship.....	7
Biblical Foundations of Single Parenthood in Discipleship	7
The Old Testament (OT) on Single Parenting and Discipleship	8
Jewish perception of single parenthood.....	10
The New Testament (NT) on Making Disciples as is Pointed out by Jesus	10
Ellen G. White’s Observations on Single Parents’ Discipleship	14
Evidence of True Discipleship.....	15
Effective Christian Discipleship	16
The Authentic Discipleship.....	17
Economy in Discipleship: Caring for the Widow	18
The Theology of Soul Winning and Involvement	19
Reflections of Other Writers on Mission Involvement.....	20
Causes of Single Parenthood	21
Divorce.....	22
Death	24
Separation	25
Challenges facing Single Parents.....	25
Raising Children	25

Spiritual Decline of Single Parents	26
Discrimination.....	27
Financial Management.....	28
African Culture and Single Parenthood	29
Church's Responsibility towards Single Parents	30
The Implication of Total Member Involvement (TMI) to Mission	
Engagement.....	32
Insights towards Integrating Single Parents in TMI	37
Opportunities for Effective Integration.....	40
Faith Mission Strategy	40
Summary	41
3. THAMANDA SDA CHURCH.....	43
General Description of Thamanda Pastoral District	43
Strength and Feebleness of Single Parenthood in Thamanda.....	43
Strengths.	44
Feebleness.	44
Geographical Setting.....	45
Historical Setting	45
Political Setting.....	45
Social-Cultural Setting.....	46
Economic Setting.....	46
Religious Setting.....	46
Islam.....	47
Traditional religion.	47
Christianity.....	47
The History of the Seventh-day Church in Kenya.....	48
Results from Qualitative Research Data	48
Summary	60
4. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION.....	61
Program Preparation	61
The Process	61
Action Plan.....	61
Design	62
The Aim of the Training	63
General Objectives of the Training.....	63
Specific Objectives for the Training.....	64
Program Implementation	65
Tutorial Methodologies.....	65
Tutorial Program.....	66
First session: 12 th November 2017.....	67
Second session: 10 th December 2017.....	68
Third Session: 17 th December 2017.....	68
Fourth Session: 10 th January 2018.	70
The Implementation Method.....	70
Evaluation	70
Discipleship Campaigns.....	70
The Sustainability of the Program	71

Music.....	71
Attendance	71
The Topics Discussed	72
Prayer Group	72
Reading the Bible.....	72
Team Spirit.....	73
Sitting Arrangement.....	73
Public Address System	73
Interrogation.....	73
Summary	75
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	76
Research Gap	76
Summary	77
Conclusion	78
Recommendations.....	78
APPENDICES	80
A. SURVEY INSTRUMENT	81
B. MAPS	83
C. SINGLE PARENTS DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING OUTLINE	86
D. TRAINING EVENTS SCHEDULE	87
BIBLIOGRAPHY	88
VITA.....	94

LIST OF TABLES

1. What the Church has done to make Single Parents have a Sense of Belonging.....	55
2. Single Parents' Responsibility in the Personal Ministries	55
3. What Church Should Do to Involve Single Parents in Mission.....	56
4. Single Parents Missiological Feeling a Sense of Belonging in the Mission.....	56
5. Self-Acceptance Lacking Among Single Parents Group	56
6. Views of Board on Church Duty to Make Single Parents Feel Sense Belonging ...	57
7. Opinion on what Church should do to Involve Single Parents in Discipleship.....	57
8. Programs Aiming at Involving Single Parents in TMI Known by Church Board...	57
9. The Factors that Make Single Parents be Ineffective in Mission	58
10. Point of View on How Church Can Equip and Support Single Parents	58
11. Focus Group Views on what the Church should do & Have Single Parents Meet Needs	60
12. Focus Group Sensing Problem or Distrust from Married Couples.....	60
13. Focus Group Observations of Single Parents Participation in the Church Activities	60
14. Focus Group Feelings on how Church Support and Equip Single Parents.....	60
15. Focus Group Views on Improving Single Parents' Effectiveness in Missio Dei ..	60
16. Schedule of the Training Events	67

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Three Groups Interviewed	48
2. Age of the Respondents	49
3. Single Parents Status	49
4. Single Parents Knowing the Spirituals Gifts	50
5. Single Parents and Mission Support	50
6. Level of Involvement in Mission	51
7. Children of Single Parents in the Church	52
8. Self-Acceptance of Single Parents Status	52
9. Gender of Respondents	53
10. Church Board Respondents.....	54
11. Focus Group Respondents	54

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CKC	Central Kenya Conference
FMS	Faith Mission Strategy
GC	General Conference
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
PCEA	Presbyterian Church of East Africa
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist
SP	Single Parent
SS	Sabbath School
TMI	Total Member Involvement
VOP	Voice of Prophecy

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I express gratitude to the Almighty God for His holistic grace that I have experienced throughout my life and for the opportunity to research and throughout this project. I also appreciate the leadership of CKC for permitting me time out to undertake my studies. Much regards to Thamanda District, and further, to Thamanda SDA Church for their overwhelming collaboration and prayer at the time of carrying out the project.

I sincerely thank my adviser Prof. Mary Getui for her professional supervision and the restructuring of this project. Also, I thank Prof. Becky Omwenga for reading my work. My dear wife Tabitha Kaura deserves a special appreciation for constant and tireless prayer, encouragement, patience, and support which were of great assistance to the completion of this project. My daughter Ruth Kawira, likewise, merits exceptional acknowledgment for her heartily input and cooperation in carrying out this present research. In conclusion, I sincerely appreciate all my well-wishers who, in many ways, stood by me to guarantee success in my research. Special gratitude to Pr. John Okemwa and Pr. Christopher Mukuka. Receive God's blessings.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the background of the effective integration of single parenthood as an aspect of discipleship at the Thamanda Seventh-day Adventist Church. It details the Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the research, Significance, Delimitation of the research, Methodology and the Definition of Terms with which this present research has adopted.

Background of the Research

Thamanda Seventh-day Adventist Church is situated in Kiambu County in Kenya. The Adventist faith was introduced in Thamanda in 1962 by Douglas Kariuki who doubles up as a pioneer and the first local lay preacher who established the Church at Nyathuna Village among Agikuyu. Currently, Thamanda SDA Church has a membership of 150 people. Among them are youth, married couples, single parents, and old people. However, the membership of single parents is 50 and they have become single either through death, separation, and divorce. This research, therefore, focuses on those single parents by divorce. Although most of the single parents are baptized and active members of the Church, they are confronted by serious social, economic, spiritual, and emotional challenges.

Because of evangelization and the growth of the membership of the Adventist denomination globally, the General Conference (GC) of SDA Church came up with the initiative of total membership involvement (TMI). The critical component of this

initiative was to engage all believing Seventh-day Adventists in mission work.¹ But, even though the fundamental beliefs of SDA Church encourage the unity of the body of Christ and the common priesthood of believers, the researcher (through participant observation) noted that there is a problem of integrating single parents in various Church activities in an effective manner at the Thamanda Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Moreover, TMI encourages every member of the SDA Church to participate in God's mission by partaking in the discipleship events. Similarly, TMI is a lifestyle where people are invited to partake in God's mission. Thus, TMI-driven initiative motivates and promotes the spirit of unity, service, and discipleship in the all-inclusive Church mission. The TMI was formulated and published during the GC Session in San Antonio Texas in the year 2015. It was conceived as a worldwide discipleship program, in which all local members are entitled to participate and be devoted to Christ.² As a result, Thamanda Church members are eligible and ought to participate in TMI activities. However, single parents of Thamanda Adventist Church are hardly participating in TMI initiatives.

Statement of the Problem

The number of single parents in Thamanda SDA Church grew either by death, separation, divorce, conversion, or membership transfers from other SDA Churches. However, there is no specific discipleship program laid down by the Church leadership to address the various needs of single parents. Moreover, single parents are capable of participating effectively in the TMI for they are readily available.

¹ Bill Knot, "The General Conference, Northern Asia-Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventists," *The Adventist Review*, August 2016, 17.

² Ibid.

However, they hardly participate in any of the TMI activities due to a lack of support. This research, therefore, argues that formulating plans towards effective integration of single parents in discipleship is vital for the Thamanda SDA Church mission and evangelization.

Purpose of the Research

The research explored effective ways of integrating single parents in TMI activities at the Thamanda SDA Church. It further sought an efficient strategy that single parents can apply to present the gospel with effectiveness in God's mission. The researcher also sought to address the underlying hindrances making the Church leaders not to incorporate single parents effectively in mission work.

Significance of the Research

The research project will help Church leaders to assimilate single parents in undertaking God's mission in Thamanda and assist them comprehend God's purpose. The Church will be able to understand God's aim over single parents in the contemporary context of Thamanda SDA Church. Moreover, the Church will be made aware of the role, responsibility, and the burdens of single parents in Church life and also in mission work.

Similarly, it will offer single parents missiological strategies and guidance on how to disciple both their families and even new believers. Consequently, the project will benefit the local Church to appreciate its responsibility on how to love, serve, preach, teach, heal, and liberate.³ Finally, this research would benefit the Adventist

³ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 412.

Churches to develop a handbook on understanding the Biblical teachings on single parents.

Delimitation of the Research

Although there is a wide failure to integrate single parents in total membership involvement (TMI) among the SDA Churches in Kiambu County, the research focused only on Thamanda Seventh-day Adventist Church. Nonetheless, this would hopefully ensure retention, help in reclamation, bridge the gaps in leadership, and improve discipleship mentoring programs among the single parents in the whole county.

Methodology

The researcher employed a qualitative research method. Both the questioner dispensed and interview directed to the Single parents and church leaders was meant to explore what they think causes the ineffectiveness in discipleship and what can be done by the membership to meet that missiological need. The researcher interviewed three categories of respondents, among them: five single parents, five Church board members, and one focus group comprising of five people. The Focus Group was picked randomly out of the membership of one hundred and fifty. The data was handwritten. The researcher likewise interviewed some single parents to found the efficiency of the program implemented.

The research also employed document analysis to review the available literature on single parenthood. For him to espouse a “Faith Missions Strategy,” that Single parent could apply effectively in discipleship, he observed to other

missiological model proposed by different writers. And they are Harold Lindsel,⁴ Paul G. Hiebert,⁵ John R. W. Stott,⁶ William Allen Smalley⁷ and others author as a basis of research leading to single parents' effective involvement in discipleship which is the primary outlook of the research.

Definition of Terms

Discipleship: Refers to making disciples or winning of souls for Christ.

Divorce: The dissolution of a marriage by judgment of a court or by accepted custom.⁸

Faith Mission Strategies [FMS]: refers [to a] concepts [which] are to look to God alone for financial support.⁹

Focus group: This refers to a small group of people studied to determine the response that can be expected from a larger population.¹⁰

Integrate: Make or be made into a whole, incorporate, or be incorporated.¹¹

⁴ Harold Lindsel, "Faith Missions," ed. Stephen Neil, *Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1971), 91.

⁵ Paul G. Hiebert, "Critical Contextualization," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11, no. 3 (July 1, 1987): 104–112.

⁶ John R. W. Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008).

⁷ William Allen Smalley, ed., *Readings in Missionary Anthropology* (Tarrytown, NY: Practical Anthropology, 1967).

⁸ Merriam-Webster, "Focus Group," *Merriam-Webster*, accessed October 10, 2017, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/focus+group>.

⁹ Lindsel, "Faith Missions," 91.

¹⁰ Gerry Breslin and Cormac McKeown, eds., *Collins Dictionary*, 7th ed. (Glasgow, UK: Harper Collins, 2008), 477.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 846.

Single parent: A person who has a dependent child or dependent children and who is widowed, divorced, or unmarried.¹²

Total Member Involvement: Refers to getting all involved in evangelization.

¹² Breslin and McKeown, *Collins Dictionary*, 1552.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF SINGLE PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN DISCIPLESHIP

This chapter reviews literature related to the theoretical foundation of integrating single parents into the Church's mission and evangelization. The chapter further details the biblical basis of inclusive discipleship for single parents.

Definition of the Biblical Theology of Discipleship

According to Atkinson, “there is little if any direct teaching in Scripture on single parenthood, for the obvious reason that premarital sexual intercourse is strongly forbidden, yet there is significant guidance for the Church today.”¹ The scripture, in this regard, explicitly mentions widows as opposed to single parents. It is, therefore, within this perspective that the researcher interprets single parenthood.

Biblical Foundations of Single Parenthood in Discipleship

Houser rightly opines that “it serves as a helpful framework for understanding what the Bible teaches about discipleship (or “disciple-making”).”² Jesus' command to all believers is to

Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations (Matt 28:19 ASB). Thus, all followers, in the Church of Christ including those who are in the status of widow-hood, have to obey that command and go out to make disciples for

¹ David J. Atkinson et al., eds., *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics Pastoral Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1995), 793.

² Jason Houser, Bobby William Harrington, and Chad Harrington, *Dedicated: Training Your Children to Trust and Follow Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 18.

Christ. Disciple-making is an inclusive mission and all disciples are expected by Christ to participate in it. As such, Greenway rightly argues that “the kind of mission work that pleases God and can expect His blessing, is done carefully on sound biblical foundations.”³

The Old Testament (OT) on Single Parenting and Discipleship

The most emphasized Biblical assurance in the OT is that God minds the welfare of single parents. The OT portrays God as the defender, reliever, establisher and the provider of single parents’ families (Ps 68:5; 146:9; Prov 15:25; Deut 24:17-22). The emergence of single parenthood can be traced to the time of Hagar. The book of Genesis 21:14-20 (ASB) says:

14And Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and *gave her* the child, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. **15**And the water in the bottle was spent, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. **16**And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot. For she said, let me not look upon the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice, and wept. **17**And God heard the voice of the lad. And the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, what aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not. For God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. **18**Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thy hand. For I will make him a great nation. **19**And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. **20**And God was with the lad.

The situation of Hagar was contributed by both Abraham and Sarai as a result of their doubt (Gen 12:11-13; 16:2-4; 18:12-15) on the promise of having a son at an advanced age. And so, Sarah induced Abraham to have a child with Hagar (Gen 16:2) and she bore Abram a son (Gen 16:17). However, the relationship between Ishmael and Isaac in their blended family was not reliable (Gen 21:9). Eventually, Hagar ended up bearing the burden alone as a single parent after Sarah called upon Abraham to send them away and disown Ismael.

³ Roger S. Greenway and Timothy M. Monsama, *Cities: Missions’ New Frontier* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1989), 1.

The agony that Hagar's innocent child experienced is an example of pain which the majority of single mothers' children are experiencing in contemporary society. They are similarly faced by a lack of basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. Then, like other single parents, Hagar's focus was on the welfare of her child. And, as she cried out to God on her child's behalf, the scripture says, God heard the voice of the child but not Hagar's voice (Verse 17). However, God does not bring condemnation to single parents but gives mercy and grace in plenteous quantities to meet their needs and that of their children.

Similarly, Prophet Elijah was directed by God to go and reside at Zarephath, the home of a widow who provided for him in the time of hunger (1Kgs 17:10 ASB). God then used the widow to support the prophet from the meager treasures of food that she had.⁴ Thus, true discipleship ought to involve single parents in evangelization and missionary work. Moreover, in the ministry of Elisha God supplied the needs of a single mother whose two sons were to be taken into slavery for unpaid debt (2Kgs 4:7 ASB) and were set free. The admonition is to "learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, (and) plead for the widow" (Isa 1:17 ASB) who are in their midst. It is stated, "Godliness is an active principle, and the cultivation of righteousness is the surest guarantee against iniquity."⁵

Finally, the Bible mentions Jacob as being in the status of widow-hood, and as a widower, he bore the burden of rearing his sons Joseph and Benjamin after the death of Rachel at the time of giving birth to Benjamin (Gen 35:18, 19, 24 ASB). This

⁴ Francis D. Nichol, ed., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 2 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1976), 813.

⁵ Francis D. Nichol, ed., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1976), 98.

shows that single parents ought to be devoted to parenting as an expression of joy that came into their hearts for having been blessed with children.

Jewish perception of single parenthood. Although single parenthood in the Jewish culture was not something to be proud of but was perceived to be a disgrace in the society, the Jewish *katuba* stipulated that the husband must bear all the financial requirements in the incident of parting with his wife. The *katuba* also spells out the husband's financial obligations in the event of divorce or death.⁶ However, regardless of the financial condition or status in society, both widows and orphans have to be supported emotionally and be treated fairly. As per the Jewish law:

In the case of widows and orphans, later Jewish law stipulates that financial support is not enough; they must be given emotional support as well ... even if they are wealthy, even if they are widows and orphans of a king, we are specifically enjoined concerning them, as is said: 'you shall not ill-treat any widows or orphans' [Exodus 22:21]. ... He who created the world by His word made a covenant with widows and orphans that when they will cry out because of violence, they will be answered, as it is said, 'if you do mistreat them, I will heed their cry as soon as they cry out to me' (Exod 22:22).⁷

The New Testament (NT) on Making Disciples as is Pointed out by Jesus

Widows in the NT were on several occasions referred to during the early stages of Christian missions. And many of them became Disciples of Christ and participated in mission work. For Ellen G. White "Everyone who has received Christ is called to work for the salvation of his fellow men."⁸

Jesus, sitting near the temple treasury, affirmed a widow's offering for mission when He stated that "this poor widow cast in more than all. For all did of their

⁶ Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Literacy Revised Ed: The Most Important Things to Know About the Jewish Religion, It's People, and Its History* (New York, NY: William Morrow, 2008), 691, 692.

⁷ Ibid., 563–564.

⁸ Ellen G. White, *Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 110.

superfluity cast in unto the gifts; but she did cast in all the living that she had” (Luke 21:3, 4 ASB).

Jesus, during his public ministry, affirmed, consoled, and ministered to the widows with a lovely heart (Luke 18:1-5). And he ministered to the single parents even during the time of discomfort by comforting them during their grief (Luke 7:11-18). So, Jesus in his ministry used to relieve single mothers from their emotional burdens to integrate them into the mainstream social order.

Similarly, how the Grecian widows were treated was an issue that attracted the attention of the disciples. Ellen G. White observes that “in those days when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.”⁹ The concern for the widows led the disciples to delegate responsibilities to others for a better service delivery especially to the widows (Acts 6:1-7). However, the researcher interprets single parenthood for the scripture, amenably refer to widows as opposed to single parents.

Dorcas was a worthy disciple of Jesus, and her life was filled with acts of kindness. At the same time, she knew who needed comfortable clothing and volunteered service to all. Thus, her good deeds made her greatly beloved (Acts 9:36-39). Moreover, after the death of Dorcas, believers sent a message to Peter, and “when he came, they brought him into the upper chamber and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.”¹⁰ The mission work of the single parents in the Church, at that time in history, became practical, touchable, and noticeable by the Christian community.

⁹ White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 87.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 333.

According to Ellen G. White, Dorcas attended to all who, “needed sympathy, and she freely ministered to the poor and the sorrowful”¹¹ So, following the example of Dorcas, every single parent should be a burden bearer of the needy within their reach in the society. Ellen G. White rightly opined that “she [Dorcas] had been a worthy disciple of Jesus Christ, and her life had been characterized by deeds of charity and kindness to the poor and sorrowful, and by zeal in the cause of truth.”¹² The worthiness of discipleship is expressed by the good deeds to the disadvantaged for the cause of God.

For Ellen G. White, widows in the Church can contribute much to the welfare of the community. In her view, “Dorcas had been of great service to the church, and God saw fit to bring her back from the land of the enemy, that her skill and energy might still be a blessing to others, and also that by this manifestation of His power the cause of Christ might be strengthened.”¹³ So, a widow who is a true disciple of Jesus ought to devote her life to Christ’s service by making use of her skills, talents, and energy for the benefit of others.

According to McLanahan, “Church leaders should, therefore, remember that God has always honored the ministry undertaken by both married and unmarried women [person]. It is true that throughout ages God’s blessings [were] was inescapably evident in women’s ministry, both married and single.”¹⁴ Thus, inclusive disciple-making is for all believers regardless of their marital status.

¹¹ Ellen G White, *Conflict and Courage* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1970), 333.

¹² Ellen G White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3 (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press, 1878), 324.

¹³ White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 132.

¹⁴ Sara McLanahan, “The Consequences of Single Parenthood for Subsequent Generations” (Focus, 2011), <https://www.irp.wisc.edu/publications/focus/pdfs/foc113c.pdf>.

It is also to be noted that Jesus displayed Mercy by providing for the needs of both single parents and orphans. So, it is confirmed that “Widows and orphans were exalting the name of Jesus for His works of mercy to them.”¹⁵ Thus, it is affirmed biblically that Jesus showed mercy to a widow in the city of Nain. “And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.” (Luke 7:13). Like Jesus, the Church has to extend her compassionate deeds to single parents.

The disciple-makers are “Learners in the school of Christ ... [so they] were sent forth to teach others.”¹⁶ Likewise, Single parents were saved to save others applying Christ appointed technique in discipleship. Houser, in this regard, shares four keys elements to making disciples as is pointed out by Jesus when He was sending out his disciples (Matt 20:19-20):

1. Healing people. We have to initiate and be intentional because we are to “go” and “make” disciples (v. 19).
2. Trust. Disciple-making is about repentance and conversion with the accent on grace: “baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (v. 20). Baptizing represents our acceptance of the new life, where we rely on the grace of Jesus Christ.
3. Follow. Disciple-making is also about obedience and sanctification (increasing holiness): “teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (v. 20).
4. Jesus. Jesus is the object and focus of discipleship. He does not leave us on our own, trying to accomplish all of this by ourselves, because he promises to be personally present for the entire process, with us to the end.”¹⁷

Thus, if single parents apply comprehensively the above keys elements in mission, then they will be effective in forming the new disciples for Christ. Winter explains the main focus of evangelism that “if the great commission is the key text for

¹⁵ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1940), 572.

¹⁶ Francis D. Nichol, ed., “Teach All Nation” (Matt 28:19),” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980), 557.

¹⁷ Houser, Harrington, and Harrington, *Dedicated*, 18, 19.

evangelism, its goal, exegetically speaking, is to make disciples.”¹⁸ Single parents should be committed to Jesus’ mission as they put efforts to make disciples, which is the main point of evangelism. For Ellen G. White, “Christ’s followers have been redeemed for service and our Lord teaches that the true objective of life is ministry.”¹⁹ Likewise, single parents are as well redeemed for effective service and so they should be involved in Christ’s mission.

Timothy’s relation to widows was a great concern to Apostle Paul. So, he advised him to “Honor widows that are widows indeed” (1Tim 5:3 ASB). Moreover, Paul being single, recommended: “to widows, [that] it is good for them if they abide even as I” (1Cor 7:8 ASB). So, he pointed out that widows can decide to remain in widow-hood and that is an acceptable state in life. Further, it was Paul’s custom to minister and worship with all groups of people (Acts 16:13) without favoritism.

Ellen G. White’s Observations on Single Parents’ Discipleship

During the time of Ellen G. White, single parents embraced and supported the three angel’s messages with their means. So, she wrote,

I am acquainted with widows who took up their carpets and sold them to advance the cause. I knew a sister who borrowed five dollars, which she put in ... and then worked five weeks very hard as a kitchen girl to earn the money.²⁰

The Church has to encourage widows to continue supporting the growth of mission work with their means irrespective of the amount given.

¹⁸ Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, eds., *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 4th ed. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), 576.

¹⁹ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1948), 326.

²⁰ Ellen G. White, *The Good Samaritan*, Complete Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM] (Silver Spring, MD: The Ellen White Estate, 1999).

Evidence of True Discipleship

Considering deeply the command of Jesus to His followers of loving one another, Ellen G. White mentions that “this love is the evidence of their discipleship.”²¹ Believers have to uphold love and that will demonstrate to the world that they are there to make disciples of all nations. Likewise, affirming discipleship in the Church, she says that “every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary.”²² Thus, every true believer is for mission work and no room for the exclusion of anyone in making disciples. Further, she observes that a true disciple is expected to participate in “the Saviour’s commission,”²³ which is a lifetime ministry for every true disciple.

Ellen G. White Again, emphasizes that Jesus included all the believers in His commission to make disciples. According to her,

The Saviour's commission to the disciples included all the believers. It includes all believers in Christ to the end of time. It is a fatal mistake to suppose that the work of saving souls depends alone on the ordained minister. All to whom the heavenly inspiration has come are put in trust with the gospel. All who receive the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men. For this work, the church was established, and all who take upon themselves its sacred vows are thereby pledged to be co-workers with Christ.²⁴

Therefore, making disciples is an inclusive ministry and all who have received the life of Christ are ordained for discipleship. Ellen G. White sheds more light on the sign of discipleship, when he stipulates, “obedience-the service and allegiance of love

²¹ White, *The Desire of Ages*, 677, 678.

²² *Ibid.*, 195.

²³ Ellen G White, “The Great Commission: A Call to Service,” *Review and Herald*, March 24, 1910, para. 8.

²⁴ White, *The Desire of Ages*, 822.

is the sign of discipleship.”²⁵ Every disciple having that sign should be included in this work of making disciples which is a man to man responsibility from Christ to His followers.

Ellen G. White states that “the Church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of all people. It was organized for service and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. ... The members of the Church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory.”²⁶ Thus, members and special groups of single parents have to be effective in ministry.

Similarly, like many other members willing to work for Christ, if single parents were taught, instructed, and encouraged, they can begin the work of discipleship. So, Ellen G. White confirming the engagement of every member in service says that,

Every church member should be engaged in some line of service for the Master. Some cannot do so much as others, but everyone should do his utmost to roll back the tide of disease and distress that is sweeping over our world. Many would be willing to work if they were taught how to begin. They need to be instructed and encouraged.²⁷

Effective Christian Discipleship

Ellen G. White was much concerned with the constitutive elements of discipleship. She asks, “Will every soul consider the fact that Christian discipleship includes self-denial, self-sacrifice, even to the laying down of life itself, if need be, for the sake of Him who has given His life for the life of the world?”²⁸ If Christian

²⁵ Ellen G White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1940), 60.

²⁶ White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 9.

²⁷ Ellen G White, *A Call to Medical Evangelism and Health Education* (Nashville, TN: Southern, 1954), 17.

²⁸ Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1940), 288.

discipleship is to be effective, self-denial and self-sacrifice ought to be included in mission by the disciples. Also, Ellen G. White states that although good work depends on qualifications, what matters most is the love of Jesus. According to her:

The question that Christ had put to Peter was significant. He mentioned only one condition of discipleship and service. "Lovest thou Me?" He said. "This is the essential qualification ... Knowledge, benevolence, eloquence, gratitude, and zeal are all aids in the good work; but without the love of Jesus in the heart, the work of the Christian minister is a failure."²⁹

So, disciples should have the love of Jesus in their hearts otherwise mission work will not be successful. When Ellen G. White talks about cooperative efforts on mission between pastors and members, she states that "let ministers and lay members go forth into the ripening fields."³⁰ Thus all followers of Jesus are one in mission and have to team up as they go forth into the mission field to make disciples. She affirms that "every soul who Christ has rescued is called to work in His name for the salvation of the lost."³¹

The Authentic Discipleship

The TMI recognizes that authentic discipleship and equipped leaders are the key elements in a sustainable partnership of forming new believers in the local church setting. In this regard, Ellen G. White argues that every believer is a giver of his or her labor and declares that "to everyone work has been allotted, and no one can be a substitute for another."³²

²⁹ White, *The Desire of Ages*, 815.

³⁰ Ellen G. White, *Christian Service* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1947), 67.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

³² *Ibid.*

Economy in Discipleship: Caring for the Widow

Ellen G. White observes that caring for the widows, among other special groups in the Church, is a manifestation of good work. According to her, “fruits that are manifested in good works, in caring for the needy, the fatherless, and widows, are genuine fruits, and grow naturally upon a good tree.”³³ Likewise, Ellen G. White continues to argue that “God will avenge the widows and orphans who in hunger and nakedness have cried to Him for help from oppression and abuse.”³⁴

For her, “our work is incomplete if we do not educate others to be laborers together with God, visiting and praying with families, showing to the world what Jesus has done for us.”³⁵ Every believer is a laborer with God, and for that reason, they need to be trained for effective resolution in the work of God.

Moreover, Ellen G. White states that there is a need to teach the needy the economy in discipleship. In her view:

There are thousands of the widows and the fatherless, the young and the aged, the afflicted and the crippled, who should be taught how to help themselves. Many confined to their beds are unable to work. But those who can work should be made to realize that if they do not work, they shall not be fed. Everyone capable of eating a square meal is capable of working to pay for that meal. If made to pay for his food, he will appreciate the money-value of strength and time. Such beneficence carries with it valuable lessons. It not only ministers to the needs of the poor, but teaches them how to care for themselves.³⁶

³³ White, *Christian Service*, 96.

³⁴ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, vol. 3 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1980), 418.

³⁵ Ellen G. White, *Pastoral Ministry* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, 1995), 226.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 142.

Widows in the Church should be taught how to care for themselves and then they will also care for God's work individually with their resources. In this manner, they too become ministers, whom according to Ellen G. White,

With hearts filled with sympathy and compassion, they are ministers to those in need of help, bringing to sinners' knowledge of the savior's love. Such work calls for laborious effort, but it brings a rich reward. Those who engage in it with sincerity of purpose will see souls won to the Saviour, for the influence that attends the practical carrying out of the divine commission is irresistible.³⁷

The Theology of Soul Winning and Involvement

Single parents will find purpose in life only by pouring their life fully in mission and service to the world for which Christ died for God cares and provides for those He calls, involve, and send for mission. Then, the success of laboring for the conversion of souls needs to be done as per God's command. Ellen G. White asserts that "whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enabling."³⁸ The true Disciples of Christ, in their mission, should depend and trust not on their strength but that of God.

She also affirms that the work of making disciples is for those who have hearkened to the voice of Christ. She says that "everyone who has received Christ is called to work for the salvation of fellow men."³⁹ This is an indication that conversion is the first and most essential step in the course of making disciples.

Thus, Ellen G. White argues that to build up the Church, members have to be instructed on how to labor. She opines that "the greatest help that can be given to our

³⁷ White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 109, 110.

³⁸ Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People* (Nashville, TN: Southern, 1930), 101.

³⁹ White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 10.

people is to teach them to work for God, and to depend on Him, not on the ministers.”⁴⁰ Then, the work of teaching single parents on how to work for God is the responsibility of Church leadership. With particular reference to the single parents, Ellen G. White argues that

Single parents have to be ready to assume the responsibility as disciples to disciple new disciples for Christ as personal responsibility. The theology of soul winning and involvement, as stipulated in the great commission (Matt 28:19, 20), ensures that “the Savior’s commission to disciples included all believers in Christ to the end of time.”⁴¹

This means that single parents have to undertake the responsibility as disciples to disciple new disciples for Christ with total commitment to His mission.

Reflections of Other Writers on Mission Involvement

In this section, we review literature related to single parents in mission work though they experience challenges in life. The Secretariat of General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists quoted Stott stating that:

Every Christian has a gift and therefore a responsibility, and that no Christian is passed by and left without endowment, is fundamental to the New Testament [NT] doctrine of the church. It should also transform the lives of Christians and churches. Many church leaders complain that the congregation lacks gifted lay leadership, and this is the standard excuse for attempting little. ... You are the body of Christ,’ If we take God at His word, then we are committed to believe that He has endowed, or at least is willing to endow, each local church with all the gifts it needs for life, health, growth, and ministry.⁴²

⁴⁰ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 19.

⁴¹ White, *The Desire of Ages*, 822.

⁴² The Secretariat General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *His Hands Training Resources Handbook* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 2006), 20.

Then, every single parent as a Church member has to make thorough use of his or her gifts for the Church's well-being, progress, and her mission. Considering that in every society single parenting is an intricate affair, Atkinson argues that,

Single parenthood is a complex phenomenon, despite the fact that the term is often used by politicians and the media as a blanket description. A single parent can be young girls who have an unplanned pregnancy, women who want a child but not a partner, a parent deserted or divorced by a spouse, former cohabitantes, or widows or widowers left to care for young children. Sometimes a person becomes a single parent in all but name, because of the other partner's inability, physical or mental, to share in caring for the children.⁴³

Within such a complexity, single parents have to be involved in mission in its fullness using their talents to disciple their fellow single parents from all backgrounds.

However, Hayman affirms that "single parents come from every background, every learning and earning level and all jobs and professions."⁴⁴ As such, willing single parents in God's work can use their ability to disciple many in their category as they participate fully in discipleship. Therefore the Church, as a biblical citizenry, must make sure that single parents are involved successfully in mission. For Rienow,

The Church must also be direct with single parents so that they can feel no pressure to volunteer in the Church programming. They are drowning! Let us give the blessed and freeing message to our single parents. This must go especially those who are in crisis, that by being a spiritual leader for their children at home they are "volunteering" in the most important Ministry of all.⁴⁵

Causes of Single Parenthood

Njagi points out seven common causes of single parenthood experienced in the Church by parents who were once married:

⁴³ Atkinson et al., *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics Pastoral Theology*, 793.

⁴⁴ Suzie Hayman, *Be a Great Single Parent: A Teach Yourself Guide* (London, UK: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 1.

⁴⁵ Rob Rienow, "Bible-Driven Ministry to Single Parents," *Church Leaders*, March 17, 2013, accessed December 1, 2017, <https://churchleaders.com/children/childrens-ministry-how-tos/165936-bible-driven-ministry-to-single-parents.html>.

Death: When a spouse dies, the surviving one is regarded as a single parent. In society the majority of single parents are women. ... Divorce: A person can be a single parent through divorce. ... Separation: Many couples have not officially or legally divorced but have accepted to separate due to unbearable family squabbles, troubles, or even physical assaults. ... Imprisonment: If a husband or wife is locked in the prison; the one left with the children is a single parent. ... Forced military service: In some countries, men are forced by the national law to serve in the military for some time. ... Sickness: This may sound funny. But a man or woman may be totally and rendered physically impotent. The “left” after the “walk away” partner-In this case one of the spouses just walks away from his or her home and goes never to come back.⁴⁶

Single parents regardless of what contributed to that status need to have self-acceptance in that situation. Sell rightly opines that,

A single parent’s greatest stress may not be caused by parenting issues but by how they got to be single parents. There are many types of single parents: divorced, separated, widowed, never-married, adoptive single parents, single parent without custody, and single parents with shared (joint) custody. The church for them tends to vary according to the type of the situation. For example, attitude a widowed single parent may entirely be different than those toward never-married or divorced parents.⁴⁷

William asserts that in the group of single parents,

There are those who are called to difficult and honored task of being single parents. These carry a special burden and should expect the understanding and help of their brothers and in Christ ... these single parents have responsibility of filling the role of two parents and that they may sometimes seem impossible. How they face the challenge will determine not only their children’s chance to make it in life but also their wholeness in Christ.⁴⁸

Divorce

Perhaps divorce is the most common cause of single parenthood in the Adventist community, and even in African society as a whole. However, Connors states that “single parents who are divorced, deserted or become single by any means

⁴⁶ Festus Njagi, *Ministry to Singles* (Nairobi, Kenya: Sam-Nam and Corrin Graphics, 2004), 1–2.

⁴⁷ Charles M. Sell, *Family Ministry*, 2nd edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 1995), 329–330.

⁴⁸ John Williams, *Family: God’s Handiwork* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1984).

where trust in another party is breached find it difficult to trust another person on matters of relationships.”⁴⁹

Hence, those who experienced divorce ought to be positively considered by the Church. Then, the reason for that concern is that they are part of the organization of Christ which is the remnant Church. Further, the decision of divorce is generally made by grownups, who may have lived with difficulties in their marriage for a long time without getting any permanent solution.

Satris rightly argues that “the bottom line is that divorce is an adult decision, usually made by one spouse, entered into in the case of many unknowns.”⁵⁰ And, this is a decision made by spouses after struggling with problems for many years in their marital life. For Satris, it is important to encourage young people to avoid divorce in their own lives as much as possible.⁵¹ The responsibility of every individual is to encourage young people to evade divorce in their lives as much as circumstances allow.

Furthermore, Mutea reports that the victim of divorce points to different reasons as to what led to their marriage break down. So he states that “many actors or those affected by divorce tend to attribute the breaking up of their marriages to sexual failure, loss of mutual physical attraction, homosexuality, physical and mental cruelty, and incompatible traits.”⁵² But Olsen argues that certain marriages ought to be dissolved with permission. He says,

⁴⁹ William A. Connors, “Single Parent Ministries in the Local Church” (Doctor of Ministry Thesis, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 1999).

⁵⁰ Stephen Satris, *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Moral Issues* (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 60.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁵² Rukwaru Mutea, *The Tie That Binds* (Meru, Kenya: Eureka, 2005), 5.

It should be permissible to dissolve certain marriages, not fortuitously but for very serious reasons, by ecclesiastical authorities or recognized judges, and give the innocent party freedom to marry again. So, the dissolving of marriage should not be taken lightly, but this action is automatically acceptable after those with authority have done what is necessary. It is from the recognized that the freedom to remarry is secured.⁵³

Death

Another cause of single parenthood in many cultures is death. Satris posed the question, “Since death cuts one off from all earthly goods, what sense it makes to be moral (in a given case) if the risk of death is high?”⁵⁴ Nobody knows of his or her death, however, it is sensible to be moral. Further, Wambari is of the view that morality is for the benefit humankind and states that “morality is for humanity and not humanity for morality.”⁵⁵

Similarly, Hatter mentions that the surviving person bears the burden of the family alone after the death of the partner. He says: “The death of the spouse can leave the surviving spouse with unexpected bills and reduced income, plus the responsibility of raising the children all alone”⁵⁶ That is a responsibility that needs total trust in God who cares for the widows in fullness.

Hatter also stated that “a single parent faces emotional challenges as she mourns the loss of a deceased spouse or absent parent. The sudden death, divorce, or birth of an unexpected baby takes an emotional toll on a single parent who may not

⁵³ V. Norskov Olsen, *The New Testament Logia on Divorce* (Tubingen, Germany: Wipf & Stock, 1971), 21.

⁵⁴ Stephen Satris, *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Moral Issues* (Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill/Duskin, 2006), 27.

⁵⁵ Kaguongo Wambari, “Making Sense about Morality,” in *Responsible Leadership in Marriage and Family*, ed. Mary N. Getui (Nairobi, Kenya: Acton, 2008), 9.

⁵⁶ Kathryne Hatter, “Effects of Single Parents on Children,” *How To Adult*, last modified April 18, 2017, accessed November 7, 2017, <https://howtoadult.com/causes-effects-single-parents-8008164.html>.

have anyone to talk to intimately about her challenges.”⁵⁷ The Church has to cover that gap by engaging single parents about their personal, spiritual, missiological, and social challenges in their lives.

Separation

Mbiti affirms, that an event experienced commonly than divorce now and then in every society is separation. According to him,

Temporary separations between husband and wife are more common than divorce. This may be caused by a quarrel between the husband and wife, or between the wife and the relatives of the husband; by a failure of the husband to give the full amount of marriage gift as agreed upon between the two families, by jealousies between the ‘co-wives’; by the unfaithfulness of one of the party; or by other tensions in the family ... modern life forces husband and wife to live apart for long periods when he goes to work in a distant city or study in a distant place, leaving her at home in the countryside or away from the place of study. Even such ‘inevitable’ separations have their detrimental effect on the marriage as a whole, and in a serious case, they lead to full divorce.⁵⁸

Therefore, separation ought to be avoided by all means to save marriages from falling into divorce.

Challenges facing Single Parents

This section reviews literature related to some of the challenges faced by single parents.

Raising Children

Houser mentions that raising children is a challenge faced by single parents. He writes: “Your challenges as a single parent is different from challenges that married couples face in raising kids. Children naturally perceive single parents

⁵⁷ Hatter, “Effects of Single Parents on Children”.

⁵⁸ John S. Mbiti and Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1969), 142.

differently. They rely on you because you're the only parent they have (or the only they know)."⁵⁹

For White, "a widowed mother with her fatherless children is bravely striving to bear her double burden, often toiling far beyond her strength to keep her little ones with her and to provide for their needs ... she needs encouragement, sympathy, and tangible help."⁶⁰ This implies that the Church has a lot to do regarding relieving the single parents' burdens as they struggle to meet their unavoidable necessities.

Spiritual Decline of Single Parents

Spiritual deterioration is experienced by single parents. In this manner, they, "have spiritual, physical, intellectual and social needs to which the church should address herself."⁶¹ Consequently, a lack of meaningful nurturing from the Church leads most of the single parents and their families to be deficient in faith, hope, service, and love.

Again, this is an issue that the Church ought to address for the single parents to experience spiritual growth like any other Church member by involving them fully in Church discipleship programs. By teaming together with other members with optimism in their Church life, single parents would develop a positive attitude towards their fellow believers. This further enables them to learn how to live a life of personal devotion, service to God, and humanity. This will make them successful in mission.

⁵⁹ Houser, Harrington, and Harrington, *Dedicated*, 188, 189.

⁶⁰ Ellen G White, *Ministry of Healing*, Complete Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM] (Silver Spring, MD: The Ellen White Estate, 1999).

⁶¹ Samuel Ngewa, Mark Shaw, and Tite Tienoued, *Issues in African Christian Theology* (Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational, 1998), 251.

Discrimination

Mukhubele argues that single parents experience unwarranted discrimination more than any other group in society. Therefore, he writes that “single mothers’ families have been rendered vulnerable and the church has found it difficult to accept them as families because as they identify them with sin and sinful behavior.”⁶² Church has to change that kind of attitude and give the room of acceptance to single parents for they are saints of God, the creator of the universe.

For Mbugua, the discrimination in the Church towards single parents is castrated by women who are married. For him,

Married women in the church ... fostering an atmosphere that makes single mothers feel that they are greater sinners who cannot simply be accepted in the church. He adds this tendency has made single mothers (especially those who have never married) think that God is quite far from them because the church does not accept them in the same manner as widows and widowers, and yet they neither can fit among the youth nor among the ‘standard’ parents.”⁶³

The Church ought to discourage anything that can make those single parents feel as if they are outcast in the congregation. He further argues that “single mothers feel out of place in the ecclesiastical and society.”⁶⁴ Church members considering the great needs and spiritual condition of single parents in their abode will be categorically eager to treat them fairly and not as second but as first-class creatures of God.

⁶² H. D. Mukhubele, “Restoring and Involving Black Single Mothers in the Whole Church Program in the Full Gospel Church of Gold in South Africa: A Case Study of District Three in the Limpopo Province” (Master’s Thesis, South Africa Theological Seminary, 2008), 45.

⁶³ N. G. M. Mbugua, “The Plight of Single Mothers and Their Children in Kenya: The Presbyterian Church’s Inadequate Response” (PhD Thesis, Interdenominational Theological Center, 1995), 43.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Financial Management

Wangai argues that financial management is also a challenge for single parents. He observed that “without prior training and experience, some widows are forced to make important financial decisions which in many cases turn to be disastrous.”⁶⁵ Single parents need to be equipped with monetary management skills to enable them to effectively make vital judgments on expenditures.

In this perspective, the Church as a family led by the true love of God has to relieve single parents from all the challenges they are facing so that they be free, ready, and available for mission. Thus, White affirms that love is the only sign that indicates we belong to God’s family. She argues, “It is not earthly rank, nor birth, nor nationality, nor religious privilege, which proves that we are members of the family of God; it is the love, a love that embraces all humanity.”⁶⁶ The family of God is a community of love where all humankind is incorporated irrespective of their status. Single parents have to be involved in service, sharing, and leading souls to Christ and unite with other members in mission as a family of God.

In summary, Gichinga mentions that the opinion of society regarding single parents is not constructive but destructive. According to her, “though the society was in transition and attitudes toward marriage were changing, it was regrettable that a section of the society and the Church still view single parenthood as a failure and unacceptable.”⁶⁷ But, this is a view passed by time, and ought to be replaced by the

⁶⁵ Frederick Wangai, “Home Management,” in *Responsible Leadership in Marriage and Family*, ed. Mary N. Getui (Nairobi, Kenya: Acton, 2008), 91.

⁶⁶ Ellen G White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1955), 75.

⁶⁷ Emmy Gichinga, *Answers for Unmarried Mothers* (Nairobi, Kenya: Uzima Press, 1996), 20.

positive one. The Church, and the society at large, ought to develop a more unitive approach to single parents.

African Culture and Single Parenthood

Marsden states that African culture is a culture that does not embrace single parenthood. According to him, “in the African cultural perspective, every individual is expected to marry and have children in conformity with the societal norms.”⁶⁸

Further, marriage is not an option culturally, but a must to every individual. So, it is a must to get married for one to comply with the norms of a given society in the African cultural context. Accordingly, anyone who does not enter and remain permanently in this institution of marriage is socially seen as an outcast.

Thus, in case of death, a widow remains the partner of the departed husband. And under a well-structured designated responsibility, the widow’s both material and sexual needs are fully catered for. Again, the household as a whole, was there to sustain the widow as she is part and parcel of the family forever. Njagi argues that many societies stick to the point that a widow is to remain unmarried after the death of the spouse. According to him, “the cultures and traditions of many societies in Kenya are that a widow should not be married outside the family of the husband. The reason is that she is a ‘property’ of the family.”⁶⁹

However, this cultural framework is no longer tenable and many people, including the Church, refer to single parents as “broken families.” In this regard, Denny rightly argues that all people must be faithful to the tribal requirements of their respective tribes with no reservation. “Be loyal to thy tribe, its claim upon its

⁶⁸ D. Marsden, *Mothers Alone: Poverty and the Fatherless Family* (Adelaide, Australia: Penguin Books, 1970), 96.

⁶⁹ Njagi, *Ministry to Singles*, 23.

members is strong enough to make a husband give up his wife.”⁷⁰ However, this must happen only if the tribal obligations are per the Biblical teachings as is stipulated, understood, and taught by the Church.

Church’s Responsibility towards Single Parents

Hall affirms that the Church is having major responsibilities on single parents in the community to undertake with earnestness. He says that “when the Church is effective at promoting her God-given virtues, the free Church is a powerful influence for society's goals.”⁷¹ However, the service needed by single parents can be provided not only by the Church but also by the state and any other institution in society.

Thus, it is at this point that the Church has to involve single parents in personal and meaningful ministry throughout their life. Therefore, it is for the Church to accommodate them and focus on their physical, social, and spiritual needs. From the beginning, God has called His followers to “do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God (Mic 6:8). Again, the Church must be a place where all the single parents should find love, peace, hope, and kindness. Moreover, the Church should help single parents to understand that they are not alone for the Church is a place of safety and refuge.

Moreover, Njagi shares six obligations that the Church can do to support single parents in her midst:

1. **Value them as other members:** Single mothers are members just as others in the congregations. They should be valued. Whatever is done, given or offered to other members, these single parents should not be forgotten.

⁷⁰ Frederick M. Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*, 4th ed. (New York, NY: Prentice Hall, 2010), 35.

⁷¹ David W. Hall, *The Legacy of John Calvin: His Influence on the Modern World* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2008), 22.

2. **Special teachings and counseling:** Many times, the planners for annual church calendars forget the existence of these people. They plan for youths, children, couples, but forget to plan for single mothers. Let single parents be included in all church programs. With family life seminars, which emphasize the husband/wife relationship, special meetings and speakers for single parents should be put in place as well.
3. **Opportunities to meet with widowers:** Special meetings should be planned by the church of these single parents to meet with men who are widowers. They might have a chance of remarrying.
4. **Material assistance:** Some of the single parents are old. They have no way of self-support at all. The church can support these ladies by assisting them to begin a project such as a kiosk to support themselves. This may sound difficult but with a willing heart, nothing is impossible.
5. **Involving them in the gospel ministry:** some single parents are young and energetic mothers. The church can assist them to join into the gospel ministry either as teachers, literature evangelists, or lay preachers. The lord can use them mightily if opportunities are opened by the church leadership.
6. **Visitation:** One of the marks of true religion is visiting widows. James 1:27. The church leaders should know who the single parents are in their churches and how they can be visited. Care must be taken in men visiting young single parents.”⁷²

It is also observed that “as the local church is enabled and equipped to reach into its context, evangelism and development will merge to bring about the true transformation of the society.”⁷³ A transformed society and the Church will make single parents feel accepted. And that would make them experience moral and missiological freedom in their communities and their ecclesiastical life. Therefore, a church focusing on converting, involving, equipping, and supporting single parents to convert others is precious in the sight of God.

Besides, “it’s significant that disciple-making and church planting is now spreading quickly through segments of the society that has been unreached until now. ... The Lord of the harvest-of all kinds of crops-will be pleased when it does.”⁷⁴ The

⁷² Njagi, *Ministry to Singles*, 40–41.

⁷³ Winter and Hawthorne, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 695.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 710.0k

Church has to set in place a comprehensive membership (single parents) oriented discipleship program which is all about Soul-winning, Nurturing, Retention, and Reclamations.

Again, God calls single parents to give a suitable reply to discipleship that is motivated and strengthened by His love and grace. However, the church has to train single parents for mission. And, by so doing, they will be equipping them with skills needed for mission work. Consequently, Wagner argues that what is vital in mission work is the task of educating, when he says: “Leadership selection and training is the single most crucial issue in the spread of the gospel throughout the world today.”⁷⁵ Christian leaders have to motivate and equip the laity (single parents) in an effective manner for a lifestyle of ministry.

Training members for mission is a prerequisite for ministry. Church leadership has to undertake that responsibility with seriousness. Winter argues that “to build up the Church as a living, reproducing body, Paul instructs pastors and teachers to train the members of the Church for the ministry, to edify the body of Christ (Eph 4:11-12),”⁷⁶ Burden of training, provision of resources, equipping and mobilizing the congregation on the discipleship is upon Church leadership.

The Implication of Total Member Involvement (TMI) to Mission Engagement

The implications of TMI is about personal total participation in soul-winning activities. So, it is here that God works with humanity in mission to save the rest of

⁷⁵ C. Peter Wagner, *On the Crest of the Wave: Becoming a World Christian* (Ventura, CA: Regal Book, 1983), 167.

⁷⁶ White, *Gospel Workers*, 326, 636.

humankind and creation. Again, making disciples and inviting the new disciples in TMI activities is a lifetime endeavor for all believers.

In this regard, TMI-drive initiative is brought together in the spirit of unity, service, and discipleship. And, in this motivation, everyone is doing something for Jesus as per his or her ability. Besides, O'Brien observed that "the theme of Paul's total involvement in the gospel runs like a scarlet thread throughout the letter, from the first verse to the concluding doxology. ... Paul also knew that God was powerfully at work in the gospel, leading men and women to salvation."⁷⁷ Disciple makers should recognize the fact that the work of leading persons to salvation is of God and not man.

Knott confirmed that "Total Member Involvement encourages each of the SDA Church's 19.1 million members worldwide to find ways to share Jesus with friends and communities."⁷⁸ So, the vision of TMI which ought to be taught by every Church member is for everyone to be involved in the mission of the Church.

Moreover, Morris indicated that "Total Member Involvement is presupposed in the Great Commission. Every follower of Jesus is called to be a witness, evangelist, and an ambassador of reconciliation."⁷⁹ So, a Holy Spirit-driven laity (Single parents), will bring forth effective wonderful experience in disciples-making.

Then, by the Holy Spirit working through TMI, positive results will be witnessed by everybody in the local congregation. Therefore, this is the time to share "the hope that is in you" (1Pet 3:15), with friends, neighbors, relatives, and

⁷⁷ Peter T. O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1995), 76.

⁷⁸ Knot, "The General Conference, Northern Asia-Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventists," 17.

⁷⁹ Peter Roennfeldt, "Cultivating Church Planting in Your Territory," ed. Derek J. Morris, *Ministry Magazine* (May 2016): 26.

communities on the individual or collective basis in that spirit of TMI. Thus, personal interaction and witness are keys to forming new disciples as everyone is needed in God's mission.

Therefore, it is mentioned that "the Christian community must offer a living witness of hope that eventually may lead the world to give glory to its God."⁸⁰ Christian parishioners, who are ready to witness, will see the needs of forgiveness, reconciliation, life-long burden lifting, new insights, courage, and rededication as they live disciples' life. So, in this case, God will be glorified in the Church.

Besides, Senior affirms that not even one single community is to be left out without being reached with the gospel of Christ. He says that "the Lord is also in the community's mission."⁸¹ Jesus is at the center of mission done by the peoples. For him, "Christian disciples are sent men and women-sent out in the same work of the world Evangelism to which the Lord was sent, and for which He gave His life. Thus, evangelism is not an optional accessory to our life. But it is the heartbeat of all that we are called to be and do."⁸² All believers, single or married, are sent for mission by God as they are required by Jesus to go and make disciples of all nations.

Winter, talking about disciple's multiplication, indicates that a missionary or not, one can multiply disciples by doing these four simple things:

1. Know and love the people you disciple.
2. Mobilize your disciple to immediately edify those they are discipling
3. Teach and practice obedience to Jesus' basic commands in love, before and above all else

⁸⁰ Donald C. P. Senior and Carroll C. P. Stuhlmueller, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 299.

⁸¹ Ibid., 242.

⁸² Winter and Hawthorne, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 125.

4. Building loving, edifying accountability relationships between disciples and churches to reproduce to churches.⁸³

In like manner, plans for TMI-driven evangelistic series among other activities must be held often to reach all with the message of the Gospel.

Winter reports that no person is to be left out by the gospel of Christ. He states that “every person on earth must be reached with the gospel and be a disciple for the Kingdom, but the flexibility, variety of tools and possibilities have multiplied. Let us use them where appropriate.”⁸⁴ In saving a soul, there is a need to use diverse methodologies depending on the individuals targeted.

Ellen G. White recommends the use of various strategies and applies them in discipleship. She states that “let us not forget that different methods are to be employed to save different people.”⁸⁵ Applying a dissimilar approach there is no doubt, the work of making-disciples is going to bear fruit. Further, she mentions that for disciple-makers, “No sooner does he/she become to know the Savior than he/she desires to make others with him. The saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in the heart.”⁸⁶

And, without any sort of discrimination, every group in the congregation should be involved effectively in TMI activities. Knotted points out that, “groups of the longstanding members have to commit to faithfully nurture every newly baptized person in their church including inviting the new members to become a part of TMI

⁸³ Winter and Hawthorne, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 634.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 555–556.

⁸⁵ Ellen G White, *Review and Herald*, Complete Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM] (Silver Spring, MD: The Ellen G. White Estate, 1903).

⁸⁶ Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1942), 102.

soul-winning activities.”⁸⁷ Special groups, such as single parents, are doing a credible job in the Church as they take part in the TMI especially in raising and welcoming new members to become partakers in the TMI discipleship events.

Moreover, Rock affirms that the second coming of Christ has to be hastened by reaching the unreached with the gospel. He mentions that “to us, it is given not only to wait for but to hasten the coming of the day of God (2Pet 3:12). This is the mission of the gospel of the kingdom, and this is our mission.”⁸⁸ The single parents should participate in hastening the coming of the anticipated day of Christ and not to wait for it doing nothing.

Also, Pastors and Church officers cannot do the job of making-disciples alone and get it done as it is expected. Every church member is to be integrated into the Total Member Involvement activities for the mission to be accomplished. In the same manner, Rock states that for mission work to be accomplished, there is a need for involvement of the congregation. “The task is too vast to be completed without all God’s people.”⁸⁹ Every Church member (single parent) is trustworthy for reaching the world with the gospel irrespective of talents, circumstances, or status of the individual.

Moreover, Schantz mentions that disciples are sent to all nations to make new disciples, when he writes that, “the very last recorded words of Jesus is a call to his

⁸⁷ Knot, “The General Conference, Northern Asia-Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventists,” 9.

⁸⁸ Calvin B. Rock, ed., *Perspectives: Black Seventh-day Adventists Face the Twenty-First Century* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1996), 95.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 298.

followers to be witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8).⁹⁰ Thus, all believers are to be partners in TMI for Christ in totality to the end of the earth.

Further, White emphasizes that all Church members have to be united for mission to be completed. She writes: “The work of God in this earth can never be finished until men and women of our Church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers.”⁹¹ God calls earnest workers who are prudent, warmhearted, tender, and true to principle to unite their efforts with that of other Church workers. Certo mentions that discipleship needs to have vision and knowledge of the participants, when he says, “Church members to increase the usage of insights and expertise of all”⁹² vital to disciple all people in the world for Christ.

Insights towards Integrating Single Parents in TMI

Insights gained from the effective integration of single parents in TMI (mission) are to be understood as the three ingredients of the great commission as follows:

In the Matthew 28:19, 20 ... have much to learn regarding the duty and dynamics of biblical evangelism. ... This verse in question and other portions of scripture declares that the objective of Christ’s commission is to bring men and women to the knowledge of the truth. This is accomplished by making disciples through preaching and teaching rather than merely make converts. Disciples are those who have come to Christ by faith and are being taught of him continually. Thus, from biblical perspective evangelism is a process rather than a point. The **second** important ingredient of the great commission is that it is universal in scope. ... The **third** and final ingredient in the Great Commission is ever with his people. According to Acts 1:8, those who would

⁹⁰ Borge Schantz and Reinder Bruinsma, eds., *Exploring the Frontiers of Faith: Festschrift in Honour of Dr. Jan Paulsen* (Lueneburg, Germany: Advent-Verlag, 2009), 379.

⁹¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 117.

⁹² Samuel Certo, *Supervision: Concepts and Skill-Building*, 6th ed. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 76.

make disciples for Jesus must first be endowed with power from on high. Such power gives enabling and makes one an effective witness for Christ. ... All Christians are called upon to be witnesses of Christ's saving power. ... The church of Jesus Christ is commanded to carry Christ's message of salvation to every people group.⁹³

However, everyone must promote unity in diversity in the membership which will result in oneness in mission. Therefore, it is pointed out that, "a strong pastor [leader] must promote ties between all members."⁹⁴ Once that is realized, it will end up building strong teamwork for Christ in mission. So, single parents teaming up with others in mission is recommended as is affirmed:

It is understood that teamwork where all single parents serve well there is a good result in mission. Thus, most of the teams, are working in volunteer bases a category in which single parents fall effectively towards discipling new adherents. Further, it is mentioned, "team of expatriates concentrated ... efforts upon discipling, equipping, and releasing ... to take the lead in building up the church and reaching the lost."⁹⁵

Guiding single parents in discipleship is the responsibility of the Church leadership: Single parents need guidance in mission from Church leadership. Again, it is the responsibility of the Church leadership to guide the entire membership on how to deal with missiological challenges in the Church. In this regard, Mary Getui argued that "leadership is here understood as to guide, to control, to direct, to govern, or provide a way out of the challenges and problems. Responsible leadership is when leadership is executed with commitment, trust, excellence and refinement."⁹⁶ Church leadership should, therefore, guide single parents on how to be Christ's disciples, and involve new disciples in God's work once they have believed.

⁹³ Ngewa, Shaw, and Tienoued, *Issues in African Christian Theology*, 248–9.

⁹⁴ Winter and Hawthorne, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 636.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 684.

⁹⁶ Mary N. Getui, "Leading and Being Led by the Aging/Retired/Retrenched: A Challenge in Africa Today," in *Responsible Leadership in Marriage and Family*, ed. Mary N. Getui (Nairobi, Kenya: Acton, 2008), 100.

Moreover, Winter emphasizes the importance of involving new disciples in mission. He states that a disciple maker should, “mobilize ... disciples immediately to edify those they are guiding.”⁹⁷ In addition, it is necessary to enlighten the new disciples once converted for the mission and continue retaining and expediting mission purposes.

Moreover, it is plainly mentioned that “true discipleship entails not only Biblical teaching (Matt 28:20), but also a passionate commitment to love our fellow believers unconditionally. This, was the heart of Christ’s message to his disciples as he faced the Cross (John 15:9-13).”⁹⁸ Further, for effective purposes, they ought to have good relationship with Christ, and other adherents as they participate in mission drive in the local church contexts.

Again, single parents working in the masters’ mission field have to explore some means of reaching others with the word of God, applying all the skills necessary for the work. Hence, as Ellen G. White rightly argues, “let every worker in the Masters Vineyard, study, plan, devise methods, to reach the people where they are.”⁹⁹ Use of talents and skills by the disciple makers is vital in mission work.

Thus, single parents have to yield their time of discipleship to God, that being a living sacrifice dedicated to His service, teaming with others in mission by, “sharing of responsibilities and abilities.”¹⁰⁰ They ought to do this with others within their groups, and with any designated respective discipleship team in their midst.

⁹⁷ Winter and Hawthorne, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 636.

⁹⁸ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 19th ed. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 2015), 129.

⁹⁹ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1970), 122, 123.

¹⁰⁰ Wangai, “Home Management,” 90.

Therefore, with the spirit of ministry, single parents have an excellent opportunity to share duty, and competency in winning souls together with others. However, single parents are not just guided, but also taught on how to labor unselfishly, earnestly, perseveringly, for the salvation of others.

Opportunities for Effective Integration

The general view of the society towards single parents has not been an encouraging one from the African cultural point of view. While married persons are respected in the community, single parents are not given high regard because of their status.

In line with the integration of single parents into Church evangelization and mission, Samita points out that there is need for “more innovative strategies to be charted out by the churches on how to reach the societies more effectively.”¹⁰¹ Church has to come up with strategies that can be used in all opportunities of social and cultural events and have it exploited wisely to make mission work effective in the community without excluding anyone.

Faith Mission Strategy

In order for the single parents to guide new disciples, there is a need of applying missiological notion such as contextualization, but more so, the Faith Mission Strategy. Faith Mission Strategy is applicable where disciple makers are encouraged to live by faith, praying to God to supply for their needs as they do mission work without direct appeal for financial donation from the Church. For Lindsel “Faith missions is a ... concept which looks to God alone for financial

¹⁰¹ Zachariah Wankacha Samita, “The Family and the Church in New Christian Religious Movement,” in *Responsible Leadership in Marriage and Family*, ed. Mary N. Getui (Nairobi, Kenya: Acton, 2008), 125.

support.”¹⁰² This means that single parents have to be self-sufficient in missiological, social, and financial requirements as they serve God in the mission fields.

Consequently, single parents would have the ability to serve effectively if they are involved, equipped, and trained for mission. Further, they would have the potential to serve as any other Church member regardless of their status both in the Church and society. Thus, to be effective in Faith mission, one ought to be a disciple of prayer trusting the Lord every day. So, single parents should be looking to God with faith for their daily support. Then, this should take place before they engage themselves in a direct appeal for donations from Church members for God’s mission.

Single parents have to show interest in making people disciples for Christ as approval that they depend on God for their salvation and survival and not humankind. Besides, this should be their tendency as they move forward in making disciples for Jesus. Then, they will command respect and value from the rest of the Church members. Likewise, as single parents get involved in mission work God would move Christians to give the needed funds.¹⁰³ The motivating factor for believers to support discipleship is seeing the self-sacrificing single parents being active in reaching new members with the gospel.

Summary

Close examination of both Scripture, Spirit Prophecy, and other literature, this chapter has established that single parents’ involvement in God’s mission has a firm biblical foundation. The Church is, therefore, expected to consider single parents in

¹⁰² Lindsel, “Faith Missions,” 91.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

their midst for care and effective participation in the discipleship for they are, as well
an important part of the body of Christ.

CHAPTER 3

THAMANDA SDA CHURCH

This chapter presents the setting of Thamanda SDA Church in Kabete constituency of Kiambu County, Kenya. The chapter specifies the natural condition of Single Parenthood, the Geographical, Historical, Political, Social-Cultural, Economic, and Religious context of Thamanda SDA Church. The chapter will also present research data and analysis.

General Description of Thamanda Pastoral District

Thamanda SDA District is located in Kiambu County, Kenya. The district is composed of ten churches which are Thamanda, Kamandura, Kwamindo, Kerwa, Nduma, Ndeiya Makutano, Gatimu, Ngecha, Nyathuna Mian and Nyathuna West. The largest community living here is the Agikuyu, and most of them are Christians with few adherents of other religions.¹

Strength and Febleness of Single Parenthood in Thamanda

Single Parents in Thamanda SDA Church have both strength and febleness. That natural condition affects their participation in the mission either positively or negatively. And as such membership have to understand and accept them accordingly

¹ Admin, "Kikuyu Culture & Traditions," *Magical Kenya*, 2019, accessed February 26, 2020, <http://old.magicalkenya.com/default.nsf/features1/61C4B46EE07655A64325709A00352ECC?opendocument>.

for the mission's sake. And that leads to mission and missiological health of the church.

In that regard, church leaders have to take note of that and involve single parents in mission having mutual opportunities to utilize their strength in Christ's work. Also, have to complement and support them at their point of weakness.

Strengths. From a general point of view, single parents have strengths based on different factors that are not experienced by married couples. Single parents have much freedom and time to seek new believers. Again, they can exercise their talents in God's mission. Moreover, they possess power and are even much more advantaged than married spouses in winning other single parents in the society for Christ. It is also to be noted that single parents strongly support each other to encounter their daily challenges than any other group.

Feebleness. Single parents' feebleness is contributed by many factors among them not being spiritually nurtured by the concerned churches as is entirely expected.² It is only when the ecclesiastical community cares for the single parents that they can overcome their Missiological, Spiritual, and Social feebleness. Furthermore, most of them are economically deprived of low income. Again, most of them suffer from an inferiority complex accompanied by lack of self-acceptance. Thus, that contributes to the denial of their basic Missiological rights among many ecclesiastical privileges in the Church.

Moreover, single parents are distrusted by many people leading to a feeling of being socially excluded for Church fellowship. As a result, no program has been put

² Michal E. Carpeter, "What Are Some of the Challenges Single Parents Face?," *Ehow*, accessed February 26, 2020, <http://www.ehow.com/list-challenges-single-parents-face.html>.

in place to edify them in the Church. Besides, nobody tries to or attempt to help them to know Christ or make them accept Him as their personal Savior.

Similarly, they are not effectively involved in discipleship and that makes them feel discriminated by others in the congregation. This diminishes the single parents' ecclesiastical and missiological enjoyments. So, they remain there as feeble believers without any spiritual and missiological values and strengths.

Geographical Setting

Thamanda is located in Kiambu County in Kenya. Thamanda is located in the southern part of Kiambu County along the Great North Road.³ It borders the southern-western part of the Aberdare ranges.

Historical Setting

Thamanda village was initially a white settler zone but the natives were given land by the Kenyan government immediately after independence. Immediately after the native Africans settled in the area, they started engaging in various socio-economic activities, among them peasant farming, and livestock rearing.⁴

Political Setting

Administratively, Thamanda village is located in Sigona Ward of Kabete constituency in Kiambu County, Kenya. Its political leadership is regulated by the

³ Wikipedia, "Kiambu County," *Wikipedia*, n.d., accessed February 26, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiambu_County.

⁴ Wikipedia, "Kiambu," *Wikipedia*, n.d., accessed February 26, 2020, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiambu>.

Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC),⁵ just like the rest of the country.

Social-Cultural Setting

Culturally, the Thamanda zone is predominantly inhabited by the Agikuyu ethnic community. Kikuyu community, like any other community in Africa, has a very rich culture which is interpreted as the foundation of the daily lives of people.⁶ This is further extended to people's customs, traditions, religion, matrimonial, commercial, and social affairs.

Economic Setting

The main economic activity in Thamanda is agriculture which includes dairy farming, horticulture, real estate development, micro-businesses, and poultry farming.⁷ However, people are also involved in commercial activities such as the transport business and other small-scale entrepreneurial activities.

Religious Setting

The religious situation within Thamanda SDA Church reflects the freedom of worship as it is in the other parts of Kenya. Among the churches within Thamanda are PCEA, Catholic, Pentecostal, and Protestant denominations.⁸ Other religious

⁵ Admin, "Election," *Independent Election and Boundaries Commission*, last modified 2015, accessed February 26, 2020, <https://www.iebc.or.ke/election/?bvr>.

⁶ Admin, "Kikuyu Culture & Traditions."

⁷ Admin, "Crop and Livestock Production," *Kiambu County Government*, last modified 2018, accessed February 26, 2020, <https://kiambu.go.ke/crop-and-livestock-production/>.

⁸ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, "International Religious Freedom Report for 2018" (United States Department of State, 2018), <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/KENYA-2018-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf>.

traditions like Islam also exist in Thamanda. However, the majority are SDA, and PCEA but other denominational churches also exist with a minority of followers.

Islam. Islam arrived in Kenya in 685 having been introduced by Muslims from Oman and the first Mosque was built in 830.⁹ They are largely centred in big cities. And, they are the majority in the Northern and Coastal parts of Kenya. However, in Thamanda, they are a minority.

Traditional religion. Kikuyu community believes in God by the name Ngai whom they believe lives on Mount Kenya.¹⁰ And they believe that Ngai is the Supreme Being who created everything. Again they used to offer a sacrifice of a he-goat to Ngai under a tree known by the name *Mungumo*. However, there were other religious specialists among the Agikuyu such as Mogo *wakibiru*, rainmakers, healers, diviners, and priests. This Agikuyu indigenous religious worldview is still manifested in rituals such as initiation rites and marriage.

Christianity. The first Christians to establish Christianity in East Africa were Vasco da Gama and his crew, including Roman Catholic missionaries in 1498. However, the Arab occupation led to the suppression of Christianity until the arrival of Johann Ludwig Krapf, the pioneer of the Church Missionary Society missionary at Mombasa in 1844.¹¹ Further, Roman Catholics represent large percentages, followed by protestants and then the evangelical churches. Again, PCEA missionaries were the first to settle in the Thamanda area, and then Seventh-day Adventist Church came.

⁹ Emre Yıldırım, “Kenyan Muslims,” *INSAMER English*, last modified March 10, 2017, accessed February 26, 2020, http://insamer.com/en/kenyan-muslims_1121.html.

¹⁰ National Museums of Kenya, “The Kikuyu Community of Kenya,” *Google Arts & Culture*, accessed February 26, 2020, <https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/the-kikuyu-community-of-kenya/0QIS6HqkJjAUIQ>.

¹¹ Christine Nicholls, “How Did Christianity Come to Kenya?,” *Old Africa Magazine*, October 2, 2017, accessed February 26, 2020, <http://oldafricamagazine.com/how-did-christianity-come-to-kenya/>.

The History of the Seventh-day Church in Kenya

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kenya traces its roots in the country since the missionary era. It was introduced by a missionary known as Arthur Asa Grandville Carscallen (1879–1964) from Germany in the year 1906 at a place called Gendia in Nyanza. He was accompanied by an African native from Malawi known as Peter Nyambu¹² and started first mission work among the Luo then to the Abagusii communities, where the first Church was built in 1918 at a place called Nyachwa. And from that time it extended to other parts of Kenya.¹³ The Adventist Church is one of the fast-growing Christian denominations in Kenya. It is organized into two conference unions such as the Eastern Kenya Union Conference, having its headquarters at Nairobi, and the Western Kenya Union Conference with its headquarters in Kisumu.

Results from Qualitative Research Data

The research data were obtained from three focus group discussions. Each focus group discussion was composed of five members as presented in Figure 1 below.

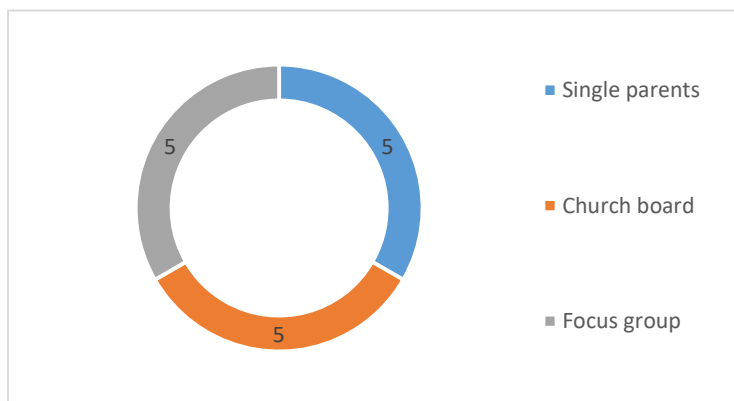


Figure 1. Three Groups Interviewed

¹² Kenya Current Reporter, "History of SDA Church in Kenya," *Kenya Current*, December 21, 2016, accessed February 26, 2020, <https://kenyacurrent.com/history-sda-church-kenya/>.

¹³ Ibid.

Figure 2 below shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents, that is, the age range of the respondents.

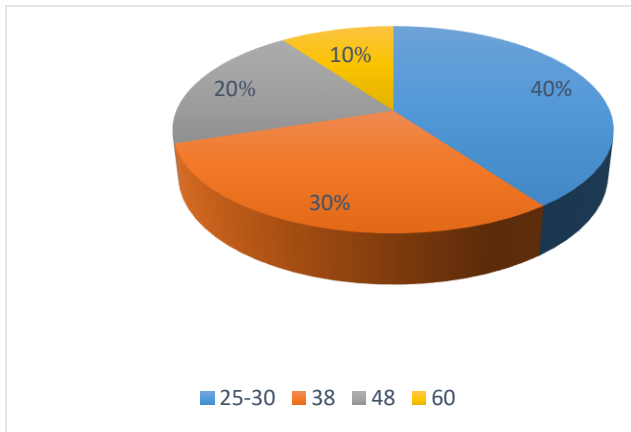


Figure 2. Age of the Respondents

Figure 2 above shows that 40% of the respondents were aged between 25-30 years, 30% were aged 38 years, 20% were aged 48 years, and 10 % were aged 60 years. The results presented in Figure 3 show the nature of the single parenthood of the respondents.

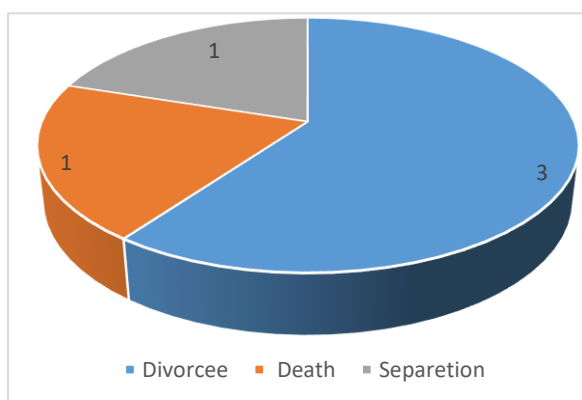


Figure 3. Single Parents Status

Therefore, three out of five reported that they became single parents by divorce. Then, one out of five said she became a single parent by separation, and one

out of five indicated that it was by death. The results presented in Figure 4 are of the single parents who either aware of or not aware of their talents.

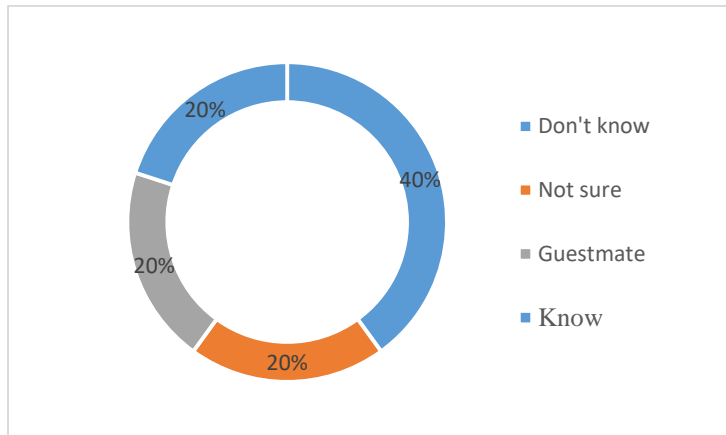


Figure 4. Single Parents Knowing the Spirituals Gifts

Therefore, 40% of the single parents do not know their spiritual gifts, 20% are not sure of or aware of their spiritual gifts. But, 20% know their spiritual gifts and are sure of it. This shows that single parents ought to be taught how to identify their spiritual gifts for mission effectiveness. Figure 5 shows the analysis of the financial support of single parents to the mission.

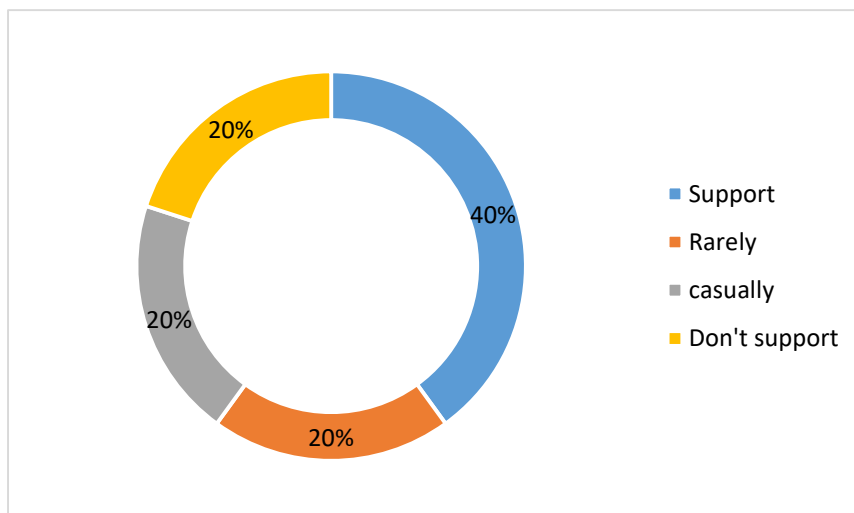


Figure 5. Single Parents and Mission Support

It was reported that single parents supporting mission work is 40% only. But 20% support mission work rarely. Again 20% support mission casually, and 20% of the single parents do not support mission. This is due to various personal, internal, or external factors. The issues encountered by single parents such as moral, financial, and spiritual issues should be addressed wisely with much concern for their efficiency in discipleship.

Figure 6 shows that 40% of single parents are not involved in discipleship or personal ministries.

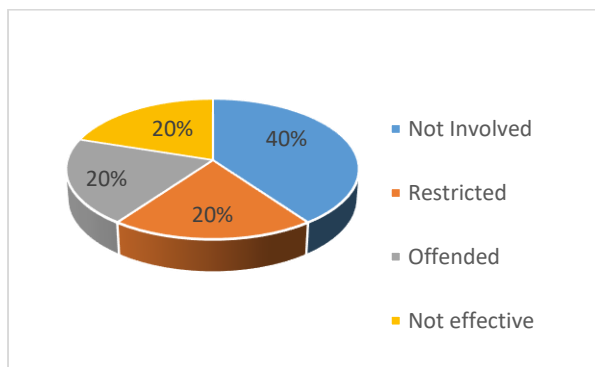


Figure 6. Level of Involvement in Mission

Further, 20% were restricted in discipleship making because of their age, 20% were excluded from mission having been thought to be of no missiological value and 20% got involved but not effectively. Then, the major causes of lack of involvement of the single parents were identified as lack of discipleship training, mission program, integration spirit, acceptance, recognition, and appreciation. Further, they are considered by the membership to be sinners and unfit for the mission due to their status.

Figure 7 presents the state of the single parent's children in the Church.

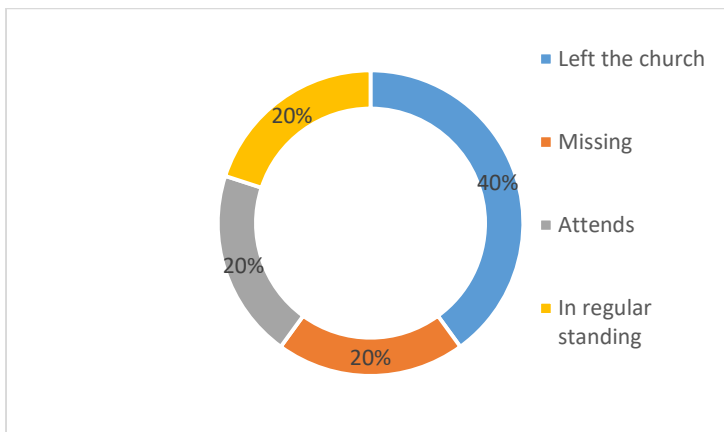


Figure 7. Children of Single Parents in the Church

It is reported that 40% of their children have left the Church and 20% of them are missing. Only 20% attend the Church rarely while 20% of those children are the ones in the regular standing. And, this is a warning that single parents, members, and leadership have to join hands in guiding, reclaiming, winning, and ministering those children with determination. Further, single parents' families must spiritually be attended with much commitment for their salvation.

Figure 8 reveals that 40% of single parents do not accept their status.

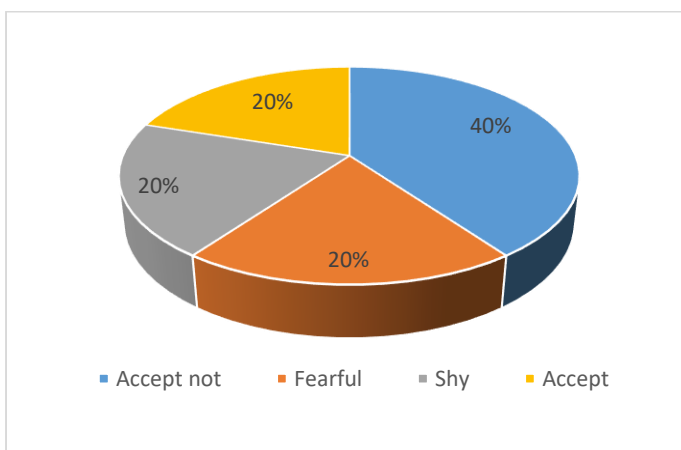


Figure 8. Self-Acceptance of Single Parents Status

It was also established that 20% have a low opinion and are fearful of their status, and 20% are shy about their status. As per the research, only 20% have accepted their single parenthood status and are proud of it. So, they need to be accepted, encouraged, respected, recognized, involved, and supported so that they can develop and feel a sense of belonging and self-esteem.

Figure 9 indicates the number of single parents interviewed as per their gender. Four out of five were females, and one was a male. This shows that the Church has more female single parents than males.

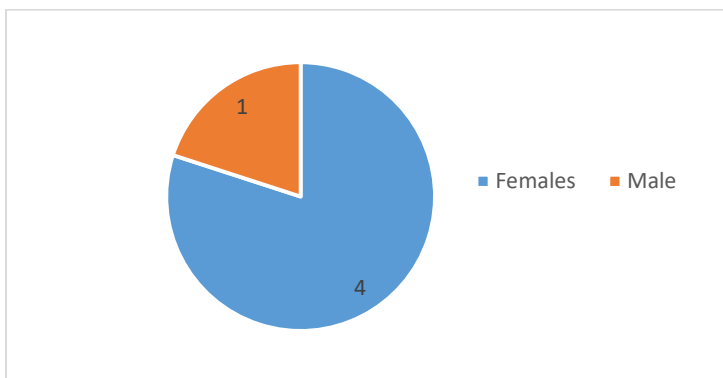


Figure 9. Gender of Respondents

Figure 10 shows the number of Church board members interviewed when the research was carried out.

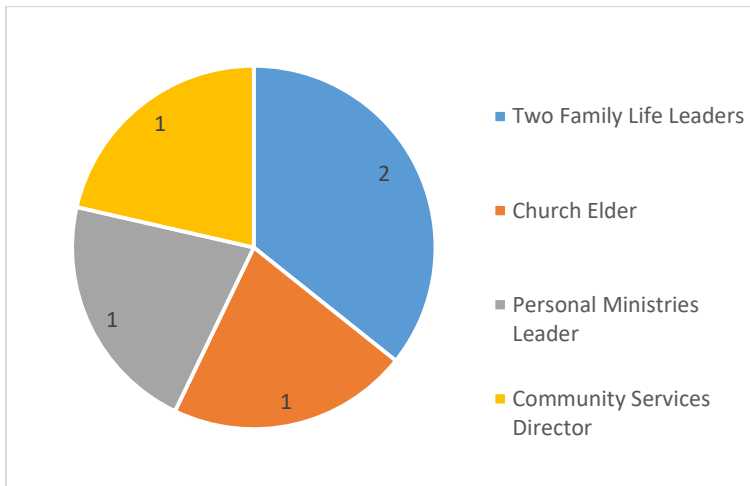


Figure 10. Church Board Respondents

Two out of five are leaders from family life departments, male and female. Then one was the first Church elder, and one was the personal ministries/TMI leader. And another one was the community services director.

Figure 11 indicates the categorization of focus group members who were chosen randomly for the interview.

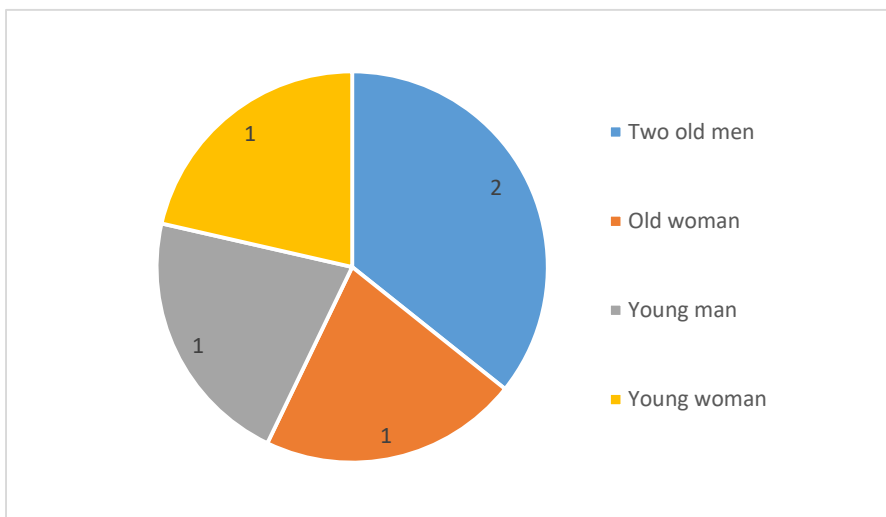


Figure 11. Focus Group Respondents

Two, out five, were old men and one was a senior woman. One was a young man from a single-parent family and another one was a young woman from a single-parent family.

Table 1 specifies that 40% of the single parents feel Adventist Church has done almost nothing in involving them in discipleship.

Table 1. What the Church has done to make Single Parents have a Sense of Belonging

What is Done	No	Percentage
Not Enough Done	2	40%
Less Attempted	3	60%

Whereas 60% feel that the Church has attempted very little in involving single parents in discipleship. All this is due to the attitudes of most members towards single parents that they have neither the ability nor fitness for mission.

Table 2 indicates that 40% of single parents are responsible for outreach programs in the department of personal ministry. Another 60% have responsibilities in the department of community services.

Table 2. Single Parents' Responsibility in the Personal Ministries

Responsibility	No	Percentage
Outreach	2	40%
Community Service	3	60%

Table 3 shows that 60% of single parents feel that the Church should train them and involve them in discipleship. And 40% indicate that the Church needs to support them financially and also equip them to include them effectively in mission. Therefore, the research discloses that the Church does not train, support, and equip single parents.

Table 3. What Church Should Do to Involve Single Parents in Mission

To be done	No	Percentage
Train	3	60%
Equip/Support	2	40%

The results captured in Table 4 shows that 40% of the single parents feel a sense of belongings as they get involved in Church activities. But a large number, 60%, feel no sense of belonging in the mission.

Table 4. Single Parents Missiological Feeling a Sense of Belonging in the Mission

Single Parents	No	Percentage
Feeling a Sense of Belonging	2	40%
Not feeling a Sense of belonging	3	60%

Table 5 indicates that 40% of single parents have accepted themselves in the status of single parenthood. But 60% have not yet accepted themselves and that is a serious issue in the single parents' group.

Table 5. Self-Acceptance Lacking Among Single Parents Group

Single Parents	No.	Percentage
Self –acceptance	2	40%
No self-acceptance	3	60%

Table 6 shows that 60% of Church board group members believe that the Church should train and help single parents to have Missiological skills so that they have a sense of belonging in *MISSIO DEI*. And 40% of the board member was for the opinion that single parents should be financially supported by the Church for the mission work and that will make them feel they are part and parcel of the mission.

Table 6. Views of Board on Church Duty to Make Single Parents Feel Sense Belonging

Views of Church Board	No	Percentage
Missiological Skills	3	60%
Support	2	40%

Table 7 shows that 60% of Church board group members believe that the Church should have a documented TMI program yearly and that will make single parents effective in discipleship. And 40% stated that the Church has to promote teamwork and team spirit.

Table 7. Opinion on what Church should do to Involve Single Parents in Discipleship

Opinion	No	Percentage
TMI Program	3	60%
Team Spirit	2	40%

Table 8 shows that 60% of Church board group members are not aware of any program aiming to involve single parents in TMI. And 40% of them claimed that they are aware of only one program intended to involve single parents in the mission and that is community service.

Table 8. Programs Aiming at Involving Single Parents in TMI Known by Church Board

Church Board	No	Percentage
No programs	3	60%
One Program	2	40%

Table 9 shows that 60% of Church board group members' personal opinion was that lack of training is a factor that makes single parents to be involved

ineffectively in mission. And 40% of them had the view that the factor that leads single parents to be involved ineffectively in mission is their inferiority complex.

Table 9. The Factors that Make Single Parents be Ineffective in Mission

Factors	No	Percentage
Lack of Training	3	60%
Inferiority Complex	2	40%

Table 10 shows that 60% of Church board group members had the opinion that the Church should equip and support single parents financially and that will make them fully effective in discipleship. And 40% of them were of the view that the Church has to nurture single parents spiritually and that will make them effective in mission.

Table 10. Point of View on How Church Can Equip and Support Single Parents

Church Board	No	Percentage
Financially	3	60%
Spiritually	2	40%

Table 11 shows that 100% of the focus group had the opinion that what the Church should do to make single parents feel a sense of belonging in encountering missiological, spiritual, economic, and social necessities is to have an inclusive annual calendar of events in which single parents' ministry events feature. And also 100% of the focus group had the view that the Church should affirm to the single parents' an all-inclusive fellowship in the congregation.

Table 11. Focus Group Views on what the Church should do & Have Single Parents Meet Needs

Focus group	No.	Percentage
Inclusive Yearly Calendar	5	100%
Inclusive Fellowship	5	100%

Table 12 shows that 80% of the focus group argued for the existence of distrust from married couples when teaming with single parents in the TMI. However, only 20% had no problem or distrust from married couples when teaming up with single parents in the discipleship. This shows that most of the married couples are not free to work together with single parents. This contributes to a great Missiological relational weakness among members. Further, that also makes the teamwork and team spirit to die in the Church.

Table 12. Focus Group Sensing Problem or Distrust from Married Couples

Focus group	No.	Percentage
Sensing Distrust	4	80%
Not Sensing Distrust	1	20%

Table 13 shows that 60% of the focus groups had the observation that single parents do participate in Church activities. However, 40% observed that single parents do not participate at all for they were excluded in Church events.

Table 13. Focus Group Observations of Single Parents Participation in the Church Activities

Focus group	No.	Percentage
Limited Participation	3	60%
No. Participation	2	40%

Table 14 shows that 20% of the focus groups mentioned that the Church is doing a lot in supporting and equipping single parents' ministries in the TMI. Nonetheless, 80% believed that the Church is doing nothing in supporting and equipping single parents in the work of discipleship.

Table 14. Focus Group Feelings on how Church Support and Equip Single Parents

Focus group	No.	Percentage
Support and Equips	1	20%
No Support and Equips	4	80%

Table 15 indicates that 60% of the focus group had the view that the Church, by training single parents, will help them improve their effectiveness in making disciples. And 40% believed that the Church has to support single parents financially to enable them to improve their effectiveness in making new disciples for Christ.

Table 15. Focus Group Views on Improving Single Parents' Effectiveness in Missio Dei

Focus group	No.	Percentage
Training	3	60%
Financial Support	2	40%

Summary

The setting of Thamanda SDA Church in Kabete constituency of Kiambu County, Kenya is presented herein. Further, the Geographical, Historical, Political, Social-Cultural, Economic, and Religious context of Thamanda SDA Church is likewise stipulated. Again, the research data and analysis is also offered in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

This chapter presents the program development, implementation, and evaluation of the strategy. It provides ways through which and effective integration of single parents in the mission and evangelization at Thamanda Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Program Preparation

The preparation takes into consideration the process and action plan and design for the program implementation.

The Process

Permission was sought from the Church board of Thamanda SDA Church to conduct a survey and make use of their Church building as a centre for the training single parents in discipleship. Single parents were mobilized to attend the scheduled sessions at Thamanda SDA Church.

Action Plan

Being cognizant of the fact that single parents are a delegate, sensitive, and complex group to deal with, the researcher devotedly embraced prayer for God's leadership, guidance, protection, and wisdom throughout the program. The researcher conducted a four-day discipleship training seminar for single parents, Church leadership, and Church members.

Design

The researcher prepared training materials focusing on the missiological needs of single parents and Church members. Moreover, the presentations were meant to equip single parents with knowledge, skills, and training on how to win souls for Christ. Further, it was designed to encourage them to share their faith with unbelievers within their reach. So, the presentations aimed at equipping them for the mission purposes for effective comprehensive integration of single parents in the Church.

This design was anchored on the fact that Christ calls his followers to a very important mission of making disciples (Matt 28:18-20). This implies that single parents deserve thorough training in the soul-winning endeavors. Thus, the presentation was meant to make the participants have confidence in undertaking the inclusive skilled responsibility in Church activities.

Besides, for effectiveness and involvement purposes in mission, the presentation was intended to train the participants on how to have a good relationship with Christ. At the same time, maintain good relationships with other members as they get involved in TMI mission drive in the local Church a calling which they should take earnestly.

Likewise, focusing on the value of wholesome competence, the presentation was intended to educate the single parents on the Missiological, Physical, Social, Spiritual, and Mental awareness. This was meant to make them comprehend various approaches on how to conduct Bible studies, which is a Missiological groundwork for Missiologist. Therefore, the presentation materials were designed to cover thirteen topics as follows:

1. Session 1: Addressed the Biblical promises for single parents in discipleship.

2. Session 2: The Gospel ministry as God intends for single parents in His mission.
3. Session 3: Biblical characteristics of a disciple expected by God for His entire disciples.
4. Session 4: Making- Disciples: Jesus' call for every single parent.
5. Session 5: Single parent ministry & Small Group ministries intended for mission.
6. Session 6: Guiding children for Christ.
7. Session 7: Seven habits for successful single parenting.
8. Session 8: Single parents and self-sufficiency for Mission.
9. Session 9: Missiological modules towards multiplying disciples for Christ.
10. Session 10: Power encounter for Christ.
11. Session 11: Seven ways of encouraging single parents.
12. Session 12: Five reasons why the Church should serve single parents.
13. Session 13: Fifteen ways for the Church to minister and involve single parents.

The Aim of the Training

The training aimed to equip the single parents of Thamanda SDA Church with techniques, knowledge, and skills to enhance their effectiveness in discipleship.

General Objectives of the Training

The objective of the training was three-fold:

1. To convey knowledge and skills to single parents towards effective discipleship in the TMI-drive initiative activities in the local Church. Focusing on changing specific worldviews, behavior, relations, abilities, skills, and perspectives aiming at increasing their efficiency in the discipleship.
2. By reconstructing the competency of the partakers, the Church from which the partakers belong is targeted for improvements in inclusive soul-winning activities.
3. To create awareness in the Church leadership and members concerning their roles toward single parents. This was to equip them with information, skills, and knowledge on how to carry on their duties to single parents in their local Church.

Specific Objectives for the Training

This research took a missiological approach which was to involve single parents effectively in God's mission. The outcome of the theoretical basics discussed in chapter two made it clear that single parents needed to be included effectively in Church activities. This was envisioned to allow them to contribute equally in God's cause naturally. Having this opinion in mind the specific objectives were:

1. To improve the competency of single parents who are increasing in number towards effective integration in mission at the Thamanda Seventh-day Adventist Church.
2. To facilitate training in the subjects that are falling in the parts of the researcher's findings that are identified to be the deficiency in discipleship.
3. To develop skills that will empower the single parents of Thamanda Church to make them active in winning new disciples as they participate in the TMI.
4. To enhance leadership skills while addressing the missiological issues encountered by single parents in discipleship.
5. To encourage single parents to support mission work ethically and materially.
6. To enhance single parents' skills and knowledge on how to win other single parents and their families.
7. To fortify single parents' dedication to God, His word, His work, and prayer.
8. To enlighten single parents on God's concern towards their participation in discipleship.
9. To strengthen single parents' attempts in fighting for their personal spiritual and missiological freedom.
10. To encourage single parents to make proper use of their spiritual gifts in God's vineyards.
11. To encourage single parents to work hard to win their children for Christ.
12. To encourage single parents to struggle and work for the souls of other special groups within the Church and society.
13. To encourage single parents to support the Church through their tithes, offerings, personal effort, and influence for the sake of the mission.
14. To encourage single parents to serve God as evangelists, lay preachers, bible instructors, and even in leadership positions.

15. To sensitize the married couples to have positive feelings toward single parents within their midst as coworkers in Christ.
16. To encourage Church board/leaders and members to appreciate single parents and work together with them inclusively in God's mission in their local setting.

Program Implementation

The implementation phase was conducted by the researcher through discipleship training sessions to single parents. The training took place at Thamanda Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Tutorial Methodologies

On the tutorial methodologies, Katimiza has indicated that “methodologies, include brainstorming, presentations, hands-on, demonstration, dialogues, case studies, role-playing, and games. The methods of presenting the tutorials include lectures, teamwork exercise, team discussions, and recaps.”¹ Moreover, the focus was to address the concern presented: the missiological gaps between the single parents and other members.

The researcher committed three hours per day in training starting from 10:00 am to 1.00 pm for four days. And the coaching seminar was conducted on date 12th November, 10th and 17th December 2017 and 10th January 2018. The approaches used in presenting the tuition comprised of lectures, teamwork exercises, team discussions, and recaps.

Moreover, to ensure the efficiency of the program, a timekeeper was appointed from among the participants. At the same time, the program coordinator was likewise appointed to coordinate and communicate with the participants during

¹ John Kamiza, “Enhancing Effective Teamwork among the Church Board Team in the Kakoro Seventh-day Adventist Church of the Eastern Uganda Field” (DMin. Dissertation, Adventist University of Africa, 2017), 118.

the training period. The researcher led the team and the rest of the facilitators to agree on the modalities of the training sessions. More importantly, every participant was asked to choose four people whom they would journey with and pray for continuously.

Tutorial Program

The researcher drew a program that was followed throughout the four days of the training period. The first session commenced on 12th November 2017 and the following topics were covered: Biblical promises for single parents, Effective discipleship, Gospel ministry, and the Characteristics of a disciple. On December 10th 2017, the second session began. The training topics that were covered on that day were: Making-disciples, Single parents ministry, Small groups ministries, and Skillful ministry to children.

On 17th December 2017, the researcher and other chosen facilitators covered topics on Successful single parenting, Self-reliance in mission, Multiplying disciples, and Power encounter. The last session was conducted on 10th January 2018. Besides, the facilitators also conducted a seminar focusing on the roles of the Church leadership and members to single parenthood in the Church. The topics covered were: Seven ways of encouraging single parents, Five reasons why the Church should minister to single parents, and Fifteen ways for the Church to minister to single parents.

Table 16. Schedule of the Training Events

TIME	NOV 12 th	DEC10 th	DEC 17 th	10 th Jan 2018
	Topic	Topic	Topic	Topic
9.00-10.00 am	Biblical Promise-SP	Making disciples	Successful parenting	7 ways of encouraging single parents
10.00-10.15 am	Time out	Time out	Time out	
10.15-11.15 am	Effective discipling & The gospel ministry	Single Parents Min. & Small group Min.	Self-sufficiency for Mission	(10.00 -12.00 noon) Divine service
11.15-11.30 am	Time out	Time out	Time out	
11.30-12.30 am	Characteristics of a Disciple	Discipling children	Multiplying disciples & Power encounter	
12.30-1.00 pm	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1.00 -2.00 pm	Review	Review	Review	Awarding single parents with a certificate of participation
2.00-3.00 pm				5 Reasons why serve singles
3.00-4.00 pm				15 Ways to minister solos
4.00 pm-				Departure

First session: 12th November 2017. The researcher commenced the training session with a devotion based on Matthew 28:19, 20 cf 4:19, with an emphasis on “Making-Disciples.” Then the researcher gave a brief explanation of the purpose of the training seminar. Again, the researcher made a special impact by affirming that single parents have the ability to making disciples. Moreover, he informed them that before their Creator and Saviour, they are considered imperative as they participate in God’s mission in the 21st century.

The researcher assured the single parents that they are an indispensable part of the Body of Christ (the Church) and that this present research project was meant to devise ways through which they can be involved effectively in Church activities. During the introduction period, the researcher gave each of the participants a chance

to introduce themselves and share their experience of single parenthood, social, and Church life.

Then, the researcher made another step whereby he introduced the lessons for that day which took three sittings. But, each session covered a maximum of one hour. The lesson for that first session was the biblical promises for single parents in discipleship, effective disciple-making, the gospel ministry, and the biblical characteristics of a disciple (See Appendix. Exhibit 1). Towards the end of the presentation, the researcher requested the participants to express their questions, comments, and reflections based on the presentation for the day. Lastly, the researcher urged the participating single parents to attend the remaining sessions, and the present session was closed by a word of prayer.

Second session: 10th December 2017. The topics covered were four: Making-Disciples: Jesus' calling for every single parent, Single parent ministry, Small Group ministries intended for mission, Making children disciples for Christ, and Seven habits for the successful single parenting in Church life. Besides, the researcher permitted single parents to talk about their children's spirituality. Lastly, the researcher encouraged the participants to avail themselves for the remaining sessions which were to take place on 17th December 2017. The session ended with a word of prayer.

Third Session: 17th December 2017. The three topics that were covered were: Self-sufficiency for Mission, Missiological strategy towards multiplying disciples for Christ, and Power encounter for Christ Missiologically. In the like manner, the researcher challenged the participants to make use of all the available opportunities to get involved in the TMI events in the Church (See Appendix C, Exhibit 2).

The researcher also encouraged the participants that they were blessed with a family and it is their divine responsibility to carry on with their parenting and spiritual duties depending and trusting in God (See Appendix C, Exhibit 3). The participants also discussed how to form a single parents' support group. They agreed to have a special meeting on which to discuss more in detail on how to operationalize the support group. The participants agreed on the following modalities:

1. They agreed to be organizing, supporting, and participating effectively in a faith proclamation campaign once every year.
2. They agreed to start a communal income-generating project for mission and they identified that a 'dry-cleaning enterprise' would be appropriate.
3. They decided to form a support group that will be meeting quarterly. They set up the group officials which will be meeting regularly with Church leaders (pastor/elder) for transparency and accountability purposes.
4. They accepted to be championing love, peace, and unity. And they also agreed to be doing all they can to have good relationships with all Church members regardless of their social status.
5. They also made a personal declaration of getting involved in Church activities teaming up with other Church members without shying up or suffering from inferiority complex but to embrace all for the sake of the mission.

Moreover, the participants requested more training seminars in the future and have them conducted regularly. They guaranteed that they will be available and always ready to attend. The session was ended with a word of prayer and a commitment by the researcher to award a certificate of participation to the participants in the next meeting that was scheduled to take place on 10th January 2018.

Fourth Session: 10th January 2018. The purpose of having this session was to instruct and equip both Church leaders and members with information, knowledge, and skills as per their roles towards single parents. It was also intended to make them take seriously their role in acknowledging, encouraging, valuing, and engaging single parents effectively. The topics covered were: Seven ways of encouraging single

parents, five reasons why the Church should serve single parents, and fifteen ways for the Church to minister and involve single parents in discipleship.

The Implementation Method

The implementation method was carried out through the tutorial program which involved seminars and workshops. Seminars engaged participants in active discourse and dialogue. The workshop approach equipped participants with the skills and techniques necessary for mission work and discipleship.

Evaluation

The researcher evaluated the entire program through discipleship campaigns and interrogation.

Discipleship Campaigns

The researcher, after going through the discipleship training seminar, the Church SP discipleship coordinator informed him of a plan of conducting discipleship campaign at a place called Rironi in the territory of Thamanda SDA Church. The two weeks' campaign commenced on 10th December 2017 and ended on 23rd December 2017.

After the campaign, a Sabbath school was started with fifteen people. Single parents got involved and they are going on with the follow-up. They participated in preaching, distributing works of literature, enrolling people in the Bible Correspondent Discover Lessons (VOP), and visitation. Likewise, they were involved also in giving moral and financial support, as well as inviting residents to attend the everyday meetings. Moreover, this was the first program of its kind to be piloted by single parents where they got a chance to be involved effectively in discipleship. And as such, they applied all the principles of discipleship acquired in the training.

The Sustainability of the Program

The first step taken to make the program embraced and supported by the Church was that single parent's leadership, first of all, deliberated deeply on the agenda. Then they tabled a proposal to the Church board which was subsequently embraced and owned by the Church. Besides, the members were involved and they all agreed to support the program with their means.

Moreover, the district churches were mobilized to give single parents spiritual, missiological, and ecclesiastical, ethical, and fiscal support for mission work. So, members assisted them materially. At the same time, the proposal was embraced by all Church members, as it was the first campaign ever conducted by single parents. Moreover, there was a visitation program done where house to house visits was effectively done during the campaign time. In this case, single parents exceedingly expressed courage, determination, devotion, and commitment to God's mission.

Music

A formation of single parents singing group was also realized. The group was composed of fifteen single parents. They used to sing both Kikuyu and Kiswahili songs. Besides, their choir leader encouraged them not to be shy but to be firm as they serve their Lord through music.

Attendance

The attendance of the meeting was very encouraging. Large groups of people attended the meetings with an average of 50 adults attending the evangelistic campaigns daily. Moreover, 100 children used to attend every evening under the care and guidance of highly qualified single parents.

The Topics Discussed

The meeting used to take place starting from 4.00 pm up to 8.00 pm every day. And the lessons presented included Health, Family Life, Bible Prophecy, Bible Study, and Gospel sermons. Then after every presentation, the altar call was made whereby people were invited to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. Biblical pictures on the book of Daniel and Revelation were shown and attracted many people who came to understand the message as was presented from the Bible Prophecy.

Prayer Group

Single parents organized a very effective prayer group. They prayed for their challenges, the campaign meetings, speakers, audience, the Church members, Church/Government leaders, and for their families. Every single parent was requested to pray for three people who have not accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. Further, that prayer group was spending most of its time in prayer. And, what was much encouraging is that members of the prayer group prayed with seriousness and unshakable commitment for Christ.

Reading the Bible

Some other single parents have signed the responsibility of reading the Bible verses as was mentioned by the speaker. Both the Kikuyu, Kiswahili, and English Bible translations were read respectively every day as the meetings were attended by people from various ethnic communities. After the Bible reading, the preacher explained the verse with the aiming of convincing the audience to follow and participate in Christ's mission.

Team Spirit

Single parents demonstrated a team spirit during the discipleship campaigns. The team spirit was revealed when doing any other assignment that was intended to make the meeting effective and successful. Sometimes they were assigned duties in a group of two or three by their campaign coordinator. Thus, praying, consulting, and putting the missiological ideas together for implementation demonstrated that the teamwork approach in discipleship had produced desirable results.

Sitting Arrangement

Single parents cooperated to make sure the sitting arrangement was efficiently done. Thus, carrying chairs, cleaning, setting, and taking them back again to the stockpile was a concern for everybody. Therefore, both young and old single parents and even widows participated fully with appreciation. Likewise, they used to set themselves at strategic places to invite and welcome people. Then, those who accepted the invitation were given a place to sit and listen to the good news. Moreover, young and old received a warm welcome and were issued with Correspondence Bible Courses and Adventist review magazine.

Public Address System

Much more interesting is that some of the single parents devoted themselves to be the public address system operators. They assisted in carrying the instruments, setting them, and putting them in place.

Interrogation

In evaluating the program, the researcher interrogated both genders of single parents on the discipleship training seminars that were conducted in November/December 2017 and January 2018. Thus, both of the respondents

appreciated the researcher for the program which was centered specifically on discipleship. Further, they explained that the training made them enlightened, knowledgeable, and informed. So, it was a program that was full of missiological awareness and rich with disclosures towards participation in God's mission.

Further, the researcher inquired whether the training has made them feel a sense of belonging in God's purpose in the local Church. One of the respondents said that "for a long time she was anguishing from inferiority complex. So, she thought she could never make a good preacher, a leader, or a lesson teacher, but as for now, she dares to participate in all Church activities as per her spiritual gifts.

Further, she continued to say that she has accepted the responsibility of leadership in the Church, a duty she has avoided for many years. Besides, she is heading a single parents' group in Thamanda district and she was one of the officials of the single parents' ministry in Nairobi station. Again, she said, she will continue to encourage other single parents to get involved in the TMI activities. Likewise, she wishes to be a mentor and an advocate of the single parents' concerns, needs, and contributions in God's work."²

Besides, the researcher sought to know the experience of the respondents during her first time to stand as a speaker in public during the single parents' first public evangelistic campaign. She stated that "the first time I was nervous, but prayed very hard for God to give the courage to deliver the Three Angels Message." However, she came to a point of enjoying preaching with enthusiasm as she continued to take part in sharing faith and hope she has with others."³

² Single Parent, "A Single Parent Thamanda SDA Church," interview by Author, January 10, 2018.

³ Ibid.

Summary

In summary, the implementation of the discipleship training seminar program for single parents of Thamanda Seventh-day Adventist Church took place between 12th November, 10th & 17th December 2017, and 10th January 2018. The implementation of the training was done according to the needs designated by the researcher's findings.

The training was organized into thirteen topics which covered all the phases pointed by the researcher. The number of participants who attended the training were 20, that is, 19 single mothers, and one single father. As a motivational token, the researcher awarded all the participants with a certificate of attendance.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter offers the summary, conclusions, and recommendations based on this research. Nevertheless, Thamanda Adventist Church was born out of the spirit of involving all members in discipleship, but the effective integration of single parents in the mission was never experienced. Thus, even though it continued to be committed in the activities of making new believers, there has never been any evidence of deliberate discipleship plans which involve effectively engaging single parents in God's mission.

Research Gap

Since its inception, single parents in Thamanda SDA Church have never been programmed and supported in making new disciples. Moreover, single parents' ministry has never been organized officially by the Church leadership. Besides, much of the information revealed in the survey shows that there is a low level of single parents' involvement in seeking new believers for Christ. Regardless as to whether they are talented and willing to do mission work most of the time are ignored, neglected, rejected, and excluded in God's mission by the Church. This gap has been effectively bridged by the present research by designing a program that seeks to incorporate single parents in mission work.

Summary

The purpose of this research was to ascertain methods of integrating single parents effectively in discipleship at the Thamanda SDA Church. The research sought to examine ways through which the Church could involve all its members inclusively in discipleship under the TMI initiative. To fulfil its mandate, the researcher conducted interviews to establish the methods of integrating single parents effectively in God's mission. Thus, the researcher sought to know what single parents thought could be done for them by the Church to have them incorporated actively in God's mission.

The researcher presented the discipleship program, together with its implementation and evaluation strategies. Thus, different teachings were intended to train and motivate single parents to be involved effectively in making new believers. Besides, the research sought to inspire them to be active members of single parents' ministry and to be at the forefront of saving souls for Christ.

The evaluation of the program was done immediately after its conclusion to establish its efficiency. So, the researcher, having interrogated the single parents who participated in the training seminars realized that there was a great enhancement. Again, the researcher recognized that commitment of the single parents in mission, in prayer ministry, in the reading of the word of God, and the spirit of prophecy was taken with seriousness. The discussions with single parents' group, Church board members, and the focus groups made the researcher recognize the fact that effective integration of single parents in the mission had improved. Again, the desire of all members to participate fully in the TMI activities was embraced by the entire Church members.

Conclusion

The Thamanda Seventh-day Adventist Church is the second church to be established in the Thamanda pastoral district in Kiambu County in the year 1962. The first to be established was Nyathuna, whereas Thamanda was its Sabbath school. However, less was done in integrating effectively single parents of Thamanda Adventist Church, in mission activities. Single parents were, for a long time, not included in the nurturing, retention, reclamation, leadership and discipleship, or any program in the Church.

Further, the findings have revealed that single parents' ministry has never been organized officially in the Church from the beginning. However, the TMI drive initiative for the mission has now given an opportunity and encouraged all members to be involved in discipleship. Lastly, it is the duty of the Church, therefore, to continue facilitating training seminars that will give single parents opportunities to receive missiological skills, knowledge, techniques, and experiences. This is projected to make them effective in mission.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends that the Church should integrate effectively single parents (SP) in their discipleship programs. That should be done by communicating, teaming up, and listing them in their duties/outreach roster. Further, personal ministries to learn the spiritual gifts of single parents, provide programs, and give support that will encourage them to be effective in utilizing their gifts in the mission should be implemented by the Church.

Moreover, the local church authority has to ensure that single parents' ministry as a department is embraced, and instituted in the Church. It is also important to have single parents involved in various positions in Church leadership, and also in the

single parents' ministry. Again, single parents' coordinator and elder in charge to be nominated by the nominating committee.

Again, Church membership to accord to the single parents' acceptance, love, support, and inclusive fellowship in the congregation. Likewise, all Church members have to be encouraged to speak, relate positively, and freely with everybody regardless of their social status. Moreover, the local church has to provide single parents with discipleship programs, opportunities to fellowship, make them mingle, and socialize regularly with others in the Church.

Moreover, a family life department to have an inclusive annual calendar of events in which single parents' ministry events feature. The Central Kenya Conference family life departments plan for single parents' parenting, companionship, and integration seminars. Further, the CKC Personal ministries department conduct evangelistic training seminars for single parents, provide them with the occasions to disciple new believers, and enhance their knowledge and skills in discipleship.

The local church is encouraged to be having regular inclusive TMI drive initiative programs, and have a means of encouraging, equipping, motivating and involving all Church members, including the single parents in the soul-winning activities. More so, Church leadership to ensure that single parents' ministry is organized officially and make it active to meet the ministerial needs of single parents. Lastly, family life seminars which emphasize the husband/wife relationship should consistently be conducted to save more families from divorce and separation. Likewise, special meetings with well-informed speakers on single parenthood should be organized regularly.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

This research looks at the Missiological Challenges faced by single parents. The research is part of a Master's program in Missiology at the Adventist University of African (AUA), Kenya. So, the interview will take about 10-12 minutes. The information gathered will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Thanks, for your participation in the research.

Lawrence G. Ruiga

AUA Missiology Student

Interview Questionnaire

Exhibit 1: Single Parents Group Questionnaire

1. Do you think Adventist Church has done enough to involve single parents in discipleship and if so how? And if not so why?
2. What has been your responsibility in the department of Personal Ministry?
3. What should the Adventist Church do to involve single parents fully in TMI in winning souls?
4. In your view, do you feel a sense of belonging as you take part in a single parent's ministry?
5. As members of the body of Christ do you feel accepted or rejected by the church in discipling the new believers?

Exhibit 2: Church Board Questionnaire

1. In your opinion what should the church do to make single parents have a sense of belonging in God's mission?
2. In your opinion what should the church do to have the single parents involved effectively in discipleship?
3. Which programs aiming at involving single parents in TMI in winning soul are you aware of?
4. In your own opinion, what are the factors making single parents not to be involved effectively in God's mission?
5. As for your point of view, how can the church equip and support single parents to be fully effective in discipleship?

Exhibit 3: Focus Group Questionnaire

1. In your opinion what should the church do to make single parents feel a sense of belonging in encountering Missiological, spiritual, economic, and social necessities?
2. In your understanding is there any problem or distrust from married couples when they work together with single parents in evangelistic teamwork?
3. In your observation do the single parents participate effectively in the church activities?
4. What is the church doing to support, and equip single parents' ministries in TMI drive focusing on winning soul?

5. In your view how can the church improve the effectiveness of the increasing number of single parents in discipleship?

APPENDIX B

MAPS

Exhibit 1: KIAMBU COUNTY

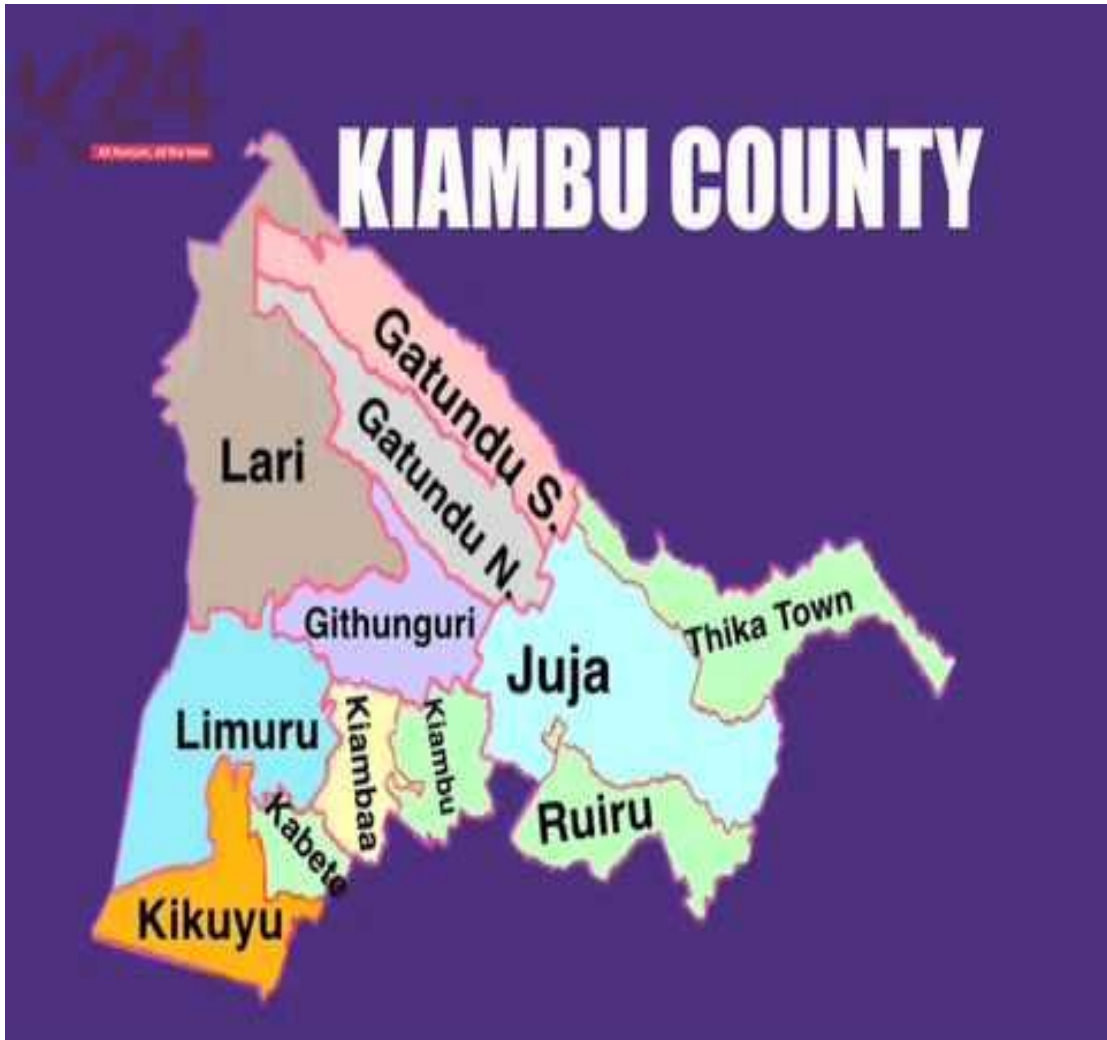
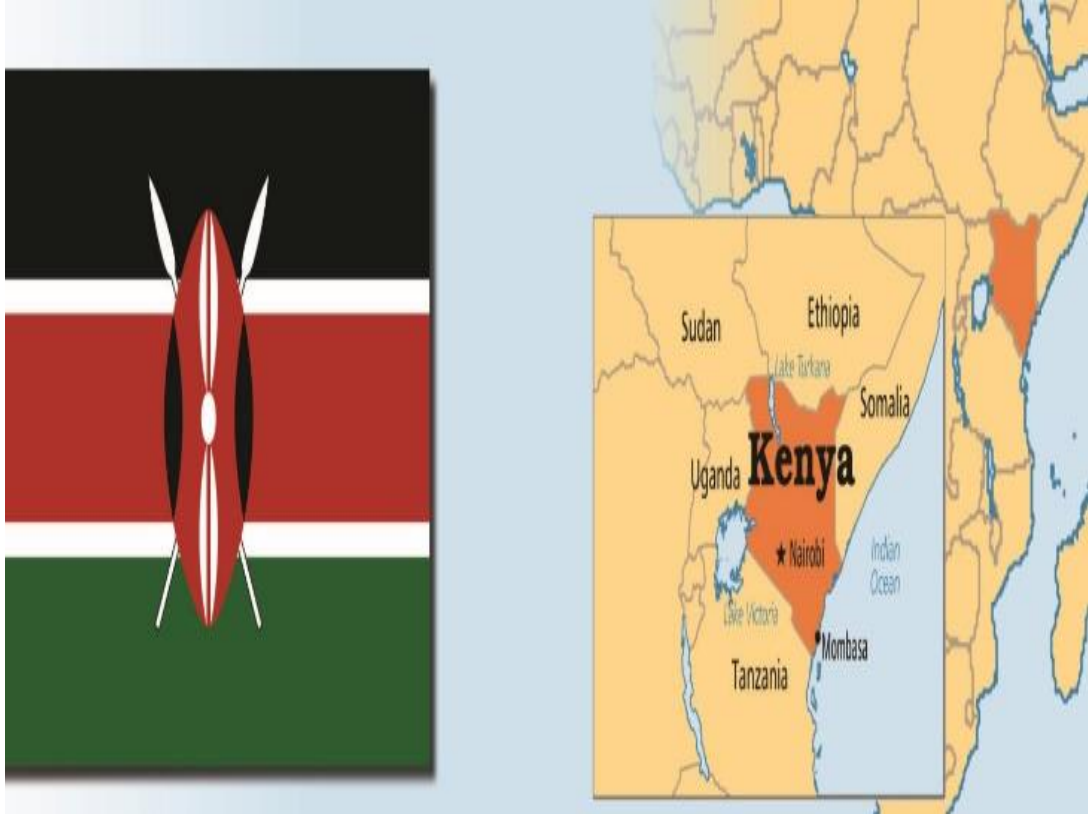


Exhibit 2:47 Counties of Kenya



Exhibit 3: The Republic of Kenya



APPENDIX C

SINGLE PARENTS DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING OUTLINE

Exhibit 1:12th November 2017

TIME	LESSON
9.30 am -10.00 am	Biblical Promise for single parents in mission
10.00 am -10.15 am	TIME OUT
10.15 am-11.15 am	1. Effective “Soul winner.” 11. The gospel ministry
11.15 am-11.30 am	TIME OUT
11.30 am -12.30 pm	Characteristic of a Disciple
12.30 pm -1.00 pm	LUNCH
1.00 pm s-1.00 pm	Retreat

Exhibit 2:10th December 2017

TIME	LESSON
9.30 am -10.00 am	Making Disciples
10.00 am -10.15 am	TIME OUT
10.15 am-11.15 am	I. Single Parents Ministry II. Small Groups Ministry
11.15 am-11.30 am	TIME OUT
11.30 am -12.30 pm	Discipling Children
12.30 pm -1.00 pm	LUNCH
1. 00 pm-1.30 pm	Retreat

Exhibit 3:17th December 2017

TIME	LESSON
9.30 am -10.00 am	Successful single parenthood
10. 00 am -10.15 am	TIME OUT
10.15 am-11.15 am	Self –sufficiency for Mission
11.15 am-11.30 am	TIME OUT
11.30 am -12.30 pm	I. Multiplying disciples II. Power encounter
12. 30pm -1.00 pm	LUNCH
1.00pm -1.30 pm	Retreat

Exhibit 4:10th January 2018

Time	Topics
9.00 am -10 am	7 Ways of encouraging single parents
10.00 am -12.00 noon	Divine Service
12.00 Noon-1.00pm	Lunch
1.00 pm -2.00 pm	Awarding single parents with a certificate of participation
2.00 pm-3.00 pm	5 Reasons why a church should serve single parents
3.00 pm-4.00 pm	15 Ways for the church to minister single
4.00 pm -	Departure

APPENDIX D

TRAINING EVENTS SCHEDULE

TIME	NOV 12 th	DEC10 th	DEC 17 th	10 th Jan 2018
	Topic	Topic	Topic	Topic
9.00-10.00 am	Biblical Promise-SP	Making disciples	Successful parenting	7 ways of encouraging single parents
10.00-10.15 am	Time out	Time out	Time out	10.00 -12.00 noon
				Worship
10.15-11.15 am	Effective discipling &The gospel ministry	Single Parents & Small group Min.	Self-sufficiency for Mission	
11.15-11.30 am	Time out	Time out	Time out	
11.30-12.30 am	Characteristics of a Disciple	Winning children	Multiplying disciples &Power encounter	
12.30-1.00 pm	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1.00 -2.00 pm	Review	Review	Review	Awardin certificate
2.00-3.00 pm				5 Reasons why the church should serve singles
3.00-4.00 pm				15 Ways for the church to minister solos
4.00 pm-				Departure

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VITA

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Name: Lawrence Gitonga Ruiga
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Place of Birth: Meru
Marital Status: Married
Spouse Name: Tabitha Kaura
Child Name: Ruth Kawira
Nationality: Kenyan
Religion: Christianity

ACADAMIC QUALIFICATION

INSTITUTION	YEAR	CERTIFICATE
Adventist University of Africa (AUA)	2014-2018.	M. A. in Missiology
University of East Africa Barton (UEAB)	2008	B.A in Theology
Kamagambo	1998	Ministerial Diploma
Equator	1985	A (Level)
Mutindwa	1982	O (Level)
Mutindwa	1980	KJSE
Kiraro	1978	CPE
Iruma	1970	-

WORKING EXPERIENCE

YEAR	PLACE (DISTRICT)	POSITION
From To	Location	Appointments
2016- Present	Thamanda	District Leader (Pastor).
2015 - 2015	Musoa	” ” ”
2014 - 2015	Ithanga	” ” ”
2012 - 2013	Naivasha	” ” ”
2009 - 2011	Kigaa	” ” ”
2007 - 2008	Chiakariga	” ” ”
2004 - 2006	Kiriria	” ” ”
2000 - 2003	Ndunyu Njeru	” ” ”
1994 - 1999	Kangema	” ” ”
1989 - 1993	Meru	Literature Evangelist