PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Leadership

Adventist University of Africa

School of Postgraduate Studies

TITLE: FACTORS AFFECTING YOUTH RETENTION IN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCHES IN NYABURI DISTRICT, KENYA LAKE CONFERENCE, KENYA

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According to a report given at the 2016 year-end church board meeting that was conducted in the Nyaburi District of the Kenya Lake Conference, it was noted that more than 40 percent of the youths baptized each year drop out from the church. This drop was also noted in all the 14 churches in the Nyaburi District. This study, therefore, investigated the factors that affected youth retention in churches in Nyaburi District, Kenya Lake Conference, Kenya.

The study was guided by three objectives; how secularism affected youth retention in churches, how leadership affected youth retention in churches, and how nurturing affected youth retention in churches in Nyaburi District, Kenya lake Conference, Kenya. The study adopted the descriptive and research survey design and inferential statistics and obtained its data from primary and secondary sources. The primary data were derived from the questionnaires. The target population comprised all the 14 churches in the Nyaburi District. The researcher used census sampling to

select 32 youth leaders and 50 adult leaders from the 14 churches. The sample size was 82 respondents. Data were analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics and were presented in the form of pie charts. Findings revealed that 72.7% of the respondents agreed that factors such as secular worship, secular music, and social media affected youth retention in the churches in the Nyaburi District.

The findings also revealed that 70.9% of the respondents agreed that that leadership factors such as conservativeness, lack of involvement, gossip, and parents affected youth retention in churches in the Nyaburi District. Again, 75% of the respondents agreed that nurturing factors such as fellowship, teaching, and sharing affected youth retention in churches in the Nyaburi District. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that secularism, leadership, and nurturing affected youth retention in SDA Churches in Nyaburi District, Kenya Lake Conference, Kenya. To enhance youth retention, the study recommended that the youths be sensitized on the effects of the dangers in secularism. The church leaders should be trained on how to handle youths by not being too conservative, involving the youths in church programs and decision making, discouraging gossip, and encouraging parents to allow their children to attend church. Nurturing committees should also make sure that youths are involved in fellowship, they are taught on church doctrines and allowed to share their views with other church members.

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FACTORS AFFECTING YOUTH RETENTION IN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
CHURCHES IN NYABURI DISTRICT, KENYA
LAKE CONFERENCE, KENYA

A project

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree
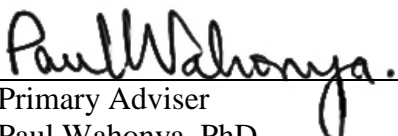
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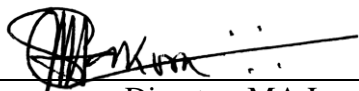LAKE CONFERENCE, KENYA

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Dedicated to All Seventh-day Adventist Churches in West Kenya Union Conference

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The youth between 15 to 35 years in the population of Kenya account for 9.1 million of the national population which approximates to around 32 percent of the total population (KNBS, 2009). As generations transit, the youth are constantly influenced by modernization which is a progressive transition from tradition to new ways. As Chaudhary (2013) says, Modernization is a process of socio-cultural transformation that will continue to evolve. The society at large is on a progressive trend, Parker noted this by saying that we are modern people who cherish greater thoughts of themselves and have as a rule small thoughts about God (Packer, 2005, p. 43). The youth are not left behind as new lifestyles, worldviews and new ideas escalate through technology, fashion, creative arts, and modern science. This shift of the youth from walking the Christian way has increased the downward trend of church youth attendance.

The worldview of modernization based on adopting new values and social institutions has taken the youth captive and driven them to deceptive philosophies that depend on the human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ (Col 2:8). The reductive naturalism which reduces what is reliably known to what one can see hear and empirically investigate is the framework of beliefs molding their values, ethics, and lifestyle (Hull, 1990).

Research in East Africa by Religion News Blog (2004) indicates that the youth either attend church as a ritual or don't attend at all. As Habib says; unlike being postmodern, the youth are desperate for the grand story to make sense of the world around them. Bringing to attention the retention of the youths in the churches is what this research aims at achieving. Research among evangelical youth by Christianity today in America indicates, 70 percent of young adults ages 14 to 30 yrs. stop attending church regularly (Habib, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Kenya's population according to a World Bank report was 44.35 million people up from the 38.6 million people in the 2009 census. Approximately seventy-eight percent of all Kenyans are below 34years while 35.59% are Kenyans below 14 years (World Economic Forum, 2015). Although the Church is called to be the salt and the light of the world (Mathew 5:13-16); the youth who are part of 78.31% are highly influenced by secularism and leadership.

As Packer (2005) says, we are modern people who cherish great thought of ourselves and have as rule small thoughts about God. Because of this secularism and leadership, the church finds it hard to retain youths in the church. The youth are willing to try new ideas, they live for the moment, and they think little of the consequences of their actions. Modernization comes with new lifestyles, ideas, and worldviews that influence the youth towards seeking meaning outside the church set doctrines (Miller, 2007).

Kenya's survey indicates that Protestant churches are worried about the rise of "a godless generation" youngsters aged 24 and below who are slipping out of the church. In the Nyaburi District, it has been confirmed that many youths are leaving

the church for reasons yet to be established. This project, therefore, seeks to establish the factors affecting youth retention in the Nyaburi District.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to establish the effects of secularism, leadership, and nurturing on youth retention in Nyaburi District, Kenya Lake Conference, Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following research objectives

1. To establish the effect of secularism on youth retention in Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Nyaburi District, Kenya Lake Conference, Kenya.

2. To find out the effects of leadership on youth retention in Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Nyaburi District, Kenya Lake Conference, Kenya.

3. To find out the effect of nurturing on youth retention Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Nyaburi District, Kenya Lake Conference, Kenya.

Research Questions

The study will be guided by the following research questions

1. How does secularism affect youth retention in churches in Nyaburi District, Kenya Lake Conference, Kenya?

2. How does church leadership affect youth retention in churches in Nyaburi District, Kenya Lake Conference, Kenya?

3. How does nurturing affect youth retention in Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Nyaburi District, Kenya Lake Conference, Kenya?

Significance of the Study

This study had significance in that it may have contributed to the body of knowledge in the area of young people who are most affected by the challenges that face them in the church. It also had significance to the parents of these young people in the church and church leaders who do not bother to involve youth in decision-making programs that can affect their wellbeing positively. The finding of this

research study may be used as a foundation base for further research on the same field. The research may guide the leadership to understand the world view held by the youth and be able to strategically establish profitability channels through the environmental forces to enhance church youth retention.

Scope of the Study

The study was carried out in the Nyaburi District of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Homa Bay County, Kenya. It was carried out in all the 14 Seventh-day Adventist Churches within the district. Although several factors affect youths in the churches, this study focused on youth retention in the churches within the Nyaburi District of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Kenya Lake Conference in Homa Bay County, and not any other aspects.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework that was formulated to guide the study. This framework shows the relationship between secularism, leadership, and nurturing and how they affect youth retention in the Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Nyaburi District, Kenya Lake Conference, Kenya.

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                  │      Retention of Youths in the Church   │
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Secularism Factors	Leadership Factors	Nurturing Factors
➢ Worship ➢ Music ➢ Social Media	➢ Conservativeness ➢ Involvement ➢ Gossip ➢ Parents	➢ Fellowship ➢ Teaching ➢ Sharing

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                  ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
                  │                Outcomes                  │
                  │   ➢ High Retention Rates                 │
                  │   ➢ High church Attendance               │
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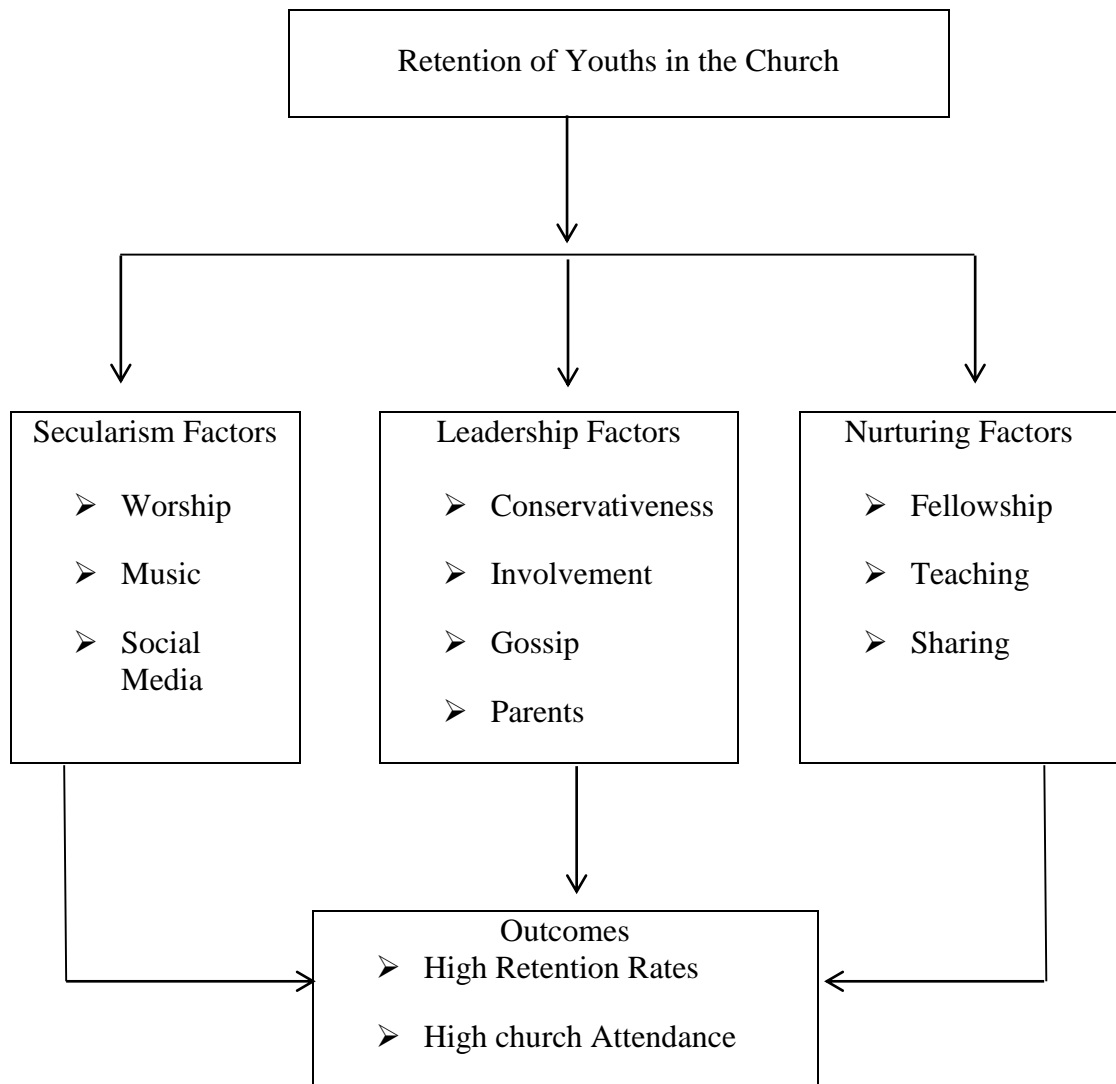
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

What the structural model indicated was that secularism practices such as secular worship, secular music, and social media affected youth retention in churches. The table also indicated that leadership factors such as conservativeness, involvement, gossip, and parents affected youth retention in churches. The table again indicated that nurturing factors such as fellowship, teaching, and sharing affected youth retention in churches. The model, therefore, suggested that if the independent variables were geared towards positive influence by means and ways of improving the good ones and eradicating the bad ones, then the outcome would be high retention and attendance of youths in the church.

Definition of Terms

Conservativeness: this here refers to being too rigid to the old ways of worship.

Gossip: here refers to talking ill against someone on his or her back.

Leadership: here refers to those elected at the church to guide others.

Media: this here refers to the use of modern technology gadgets such as phones, TV, laptops, computers, etc.

Music: a guide to playing or singing a particular tune.

Secularism: a position whereby religious beliefs are influenced by worldly decisions.

Social Media: It refers to the use of platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Telegram, LinkedIn, etc.

Worship: the devotion accorded to a deity or a sacred object.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter looked at the related literature on factors affecting youth retention in churches. It studied the effect of secularism where secular worship, secular music, and media were studied to establish how they affect youth retention in churches. It also studied the effect of leadership where conservativeness of leaders, independence, and gossip was studied to establish how they affect youth retention in churches. Lastly, it studied the effect of nurturing where fellowship, teaching, and sharing of the youths were studied to establish how they affect youth retention in churches. The literature was studied to help establish their effects on youth retention in the Nyaburi District, Kenya.

Secularism

Secularism in Worship

The term secularism in worship may be defined as importing worldly activities into the church. The world has many things that are believed to entice youths but are irrelevant to church doctrines. Youths tend to be lured by the worldly things to the extent that they want to bring them into the church. If they are denied, they threaten to leave the church. Some of the youths when asked why they leave the church, states that the church is irrelevant. Others seem to be attracted by the worldly things and thereby, leave the church for the world.

Many youths also leave the church because they doubt Christianity. Rational disbelief is a major reason cited by those who have left. Youth are constantly

pressured by the media to conform to the standards of the world and to be accepted by the unsaved within society. The immorality and worldliness embraced and practiced by many of their peers are often excused even by those who are older than others who say, "They're just kids," or "They're only young once ... let them live and enjoy all the world has to offer while they still can."

France (2007) says there is a growing blending within young people's lives, where they are combining a range of tasks and activities, rather than being singularly focused (France, 2007, p. 64). An example is a balance between work and study. The young are leading a double life, which is radically different from previous generations who saw the transition is located in the school-to-work paradigm. This makes their life a risk affair of experimenting and trying out anything new that makes them feel cool.

In studying the youth and globalization, as an ethical dilemma issue, Brickhill (2010) says the post-modern world is full of non-biblical worldviews whose goal is to replace Jesus Christ (Brickhill, 2010, p. 57). It is important that Christians "understand the times and know what to do" (1 Chr 12:32). The battle is ultimately between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of man. The world deliberately seeks to turn the minds of its young people in a direction different from God's will. Paul warns in Colossians 2:8 (NIV), "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophies which depend on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

Moral value is decaying among the youths of today. The family and church are largely affected by the decay of moral values. Many families break up because of this and churches are not spared either. Lack of respect by the children can also be seen where children instead of politely asking for something from their parents, use force

and demand for whatever they want in the family. This is believed to be as a result of secular perceptions eroding their minds. One of the things responsible for this moral decay is Television. The gadget teaches many foreign things that the youths are eager to master and apply before fully understanding their positive and negative sides.

In churches, according to Wilson (2003) have a lot of change from traditional and cultural worship styles and teachings to foreign styles of doing things. He notes that in modern times there is a lack of African feel in the worship in many African churches. Due to television, sects and other religious propaganda spread over to other places, and because of ignorance, people chose to follow the wrong things. This as believed by many people, is a result of secularism finding its way into the African churches. Wilson (2003) continues to state that many of them are slowly changing to the patterns of the world through the influence of education, exposure to other values and lifestyles, and choices.

The importation of secular worship into churches according to Miller (2007), can be traced back to the late 20th century when a phenomenon known as Church Growth Movement was started and began to impact the church. The movement majorly impacted the worship and music of the church. Because of its impact on worship, secular worship styles, secular music impacted the church severely. The youths believed what the movement said and published more than what they used to hear and read from the church.

This impact was severely felt because the youth are easily influenced by a wide range of worldviews and dilemma lifestyles that influence their choices and decision. It is believed that youth use popular culture to mediate between real life and the ideal. Religious concepts concerning God, sin, and death, however, are largely absent from this work-a-day worldview as Miller (2007) discovered that the youth

often change more quickly (Miller, 2007, p. 18). Youth are very quick and accurate in making judgments and decisions on their own and in situations where they have time to think.

However, when they have to make decisions in the heat of the moment or social situations, their decisions are often influenced by external factors. Costella (2006) says that while it can be hard for youth to resist peer influence sometimes, especially in the heat of the moment, it can also have a positive effect (Costella, 2006). Just as people can influence others to make negative choices, they can also influence them to make positive ones.

Anyabwile (2013) says as a generation, Youth are thorough-going creatures of the digital age—being the first generation to grow up with computers in the home, with cell phones as appendages of their hands, texting to the point of creating "texting thumb" injuries, and iPods attached to their heads. The youth in this generation are drawn to celebrities, places, and ways of life that the church deems unhealthy for them. Solomon (2000) says Youth in Kenya is simply defined, made up of, owned, and even manipulated by technology. Their identity and personality are made of it, they form social groups and relate with each other intimately through technology (Solomon, 2000).

Costella (2006) adds that youth are bombarded by television programs, commercials, music, billboards, video games, magazines, newspapers, and movies that give us the impression that to rebel against all authority is cool; that parents are old, out-of-touch has-been who do not know what they are talking about; that sex, lust, and immorality are perfectly acceptable as long as one is honest and responsible. Unlike being postmodern, the youth are desperate for a grand story to make sense of the world around them. They need meaning. They are desperate for true hope; they

are restless, insecure, worn-out, and desperately searching for meaning to explain all the hurt and suffering they see around them, meaning for their very existence.

Modernization as culture influences the youth to abandon tradition. As Chaudhary (2013) says, the diffusion of scientific and technical knowledge by modern educational institutions can help in the creation of skilled manpower to play the occupational roles demanded by the industrial economy. In studying the youth and globalization, as an ethical dilemma issue, Solomon (2000) discovered that young people in Kenya are simply defined by technology as noted earlier. Their identity and personality are made of it.

Arnold (2009) says that fashion is not merely clothes, nor is it just a collection of images; rather, it is a vibrant form of visual and material culture that plays an important role in social and cultural life. "It is a major economic force, amongst the top ten industries in developing countries. It shapes our bodies, and the way we look at other people's bodies" (Arnold, 2009, p. 98).

Modernization can enable creative independence to express alternative identities or dictate what is deemed beautiful and acceptable. Batters (2016) says, in an age of mass consumerism and globalization, technological innovation and ecological consciousness, what constitutes individual identity has shifted, and discourses of power and truth have taken on new meaning. Modernization, therefore, has both positive and negative effects on youths.

As much as modernization has both positive and negative effects on youths, some aspects should not be allowed into the church since they go contrary to what the church has been teaching. However, since the youth love secular things the world provides, they leave the church when advised to strictly adhere to the traditional form of worship.

Secular Music

It is believed that music is part of worship. It has been in practice from the biblical times. The patriarchs, the prophets, kings, disciples, the apostles, and even Jesus himself used music in worship. Music defines the nature of the worship experience by revealing the manner and object of worship. However, when music is oriented toward pleasing self, then worship reflects a culture's elevation of people over God. The pleasure-seeking culture can be seen in the increasing popularity of various forms of rock music used for church worship because they provide easy self-gratification.

The type of secular music believed to have invaded the church is known as rock music. According to Bacchiocchi (2000), rock music is becoming a threat to the traditional hymns not only in Catholic churches but also in protestant churches. Seventh-day Adventist Church is also not spared from its impact.

According to Bacchiocchi (2000), a generation ago there was almost universal agreement that rock music, in whatever version, was inappropriate for personal and church use. At that time, young people who wanted to listen to "worldly music" had to look for a hiding place, away from the hearing of their parents, teachers, and even some of their friends. Today, if a Christian teenager wants to listen to the same "worldly music"—and in many cases much worse—he can do so with the encouragement of his family, church, Christian school, and friends. It is not uncommon to hear rock music blaring out of dormitory rooms in Adventist academies and colleges (Bacchiocchi, 2000).

The controversy over the use of pop music in the worship service is fundamentally theological because music is like a glass prism through which God's eternal principles shine. Music breaks this light into a spectrum of many beautiful

truths. The hymns that are sung and the instruments played during the church service express what a church believes about God, His nature, and His revelation for the present life and future destiny.

Many Christians complain that the traditional hymns of the church are dead because they do not appeal to them anymore. By contrast, contemporary religious rock music gives them a "kick," a pleasurable sensation. Those who appeal for church music that offers personal gratification ignore the fact that they are seeking for a self-centered physical stimulation rather than a God-centered spiritual celebration of His creative and redemptive activities.

The increasing number of Christian churches, in general, and SDA Churches, in particular, that are adopting new worship styles where various forms of rock music are performed, suffer from a condition that may be diagnosed as "theological impoverishment" (Bacchiocchi, 2000). The defining characteristic of this condition is the choice of music based on personal taste and cultural trends rather than on clear theological convictions.

If the youth are not allowed to use rock in the church, they will use its beats to accompany their so-called gospel songs. However, when denied to use the beats too, they will leave the church claiming that the traditional hymns are outdated and should only be sung by the elderly.

Social Media

Apart from secular music affecting the youth in the church, social media is another factor considered by many to affect their retention in the church. The world is going very fast and the emergence of technology has brought great global development. Technology is fast becoming the current driving force behind what is often called the "generation gap" (Monahan, 2009). While people of all ages have

become quite comfortable or are struggling to be in line with technology, the operation of technology is not the only separation between the young and old. Another difference is each of the generation's perceptions about technology. Not surprisingly, youth seem to be more likely to admit their lust to technology than adults. The direction of technology is affecting the lives of many peoples in both positive and negative manners. This study, however, tries to establish how technology, social media, in particular, affects youth retention in churches in the Nyaburi District.

It seems the link between social media and religion has attracted the interest of many scholars in the last decade. Lim and Putnam (2010, p. 914), in their article 'Religion, social networks, and life satisfaction,' state that social networks offer strong evidence for social and participatory mechanisms shaping religion's impact on life satisfaction. Although the rise of online social networking appears to represent a new challenge to religious individuals and institutions, Vitisia (2016) opines that it is wrong to assume that the interaction between religion and technology is always adversarial. According to Vitisia (2016), technology can enhance religious practices through the expansion and creation of religious communities.

The amount of time that youth, and even adults, have been spending with these social networks has caused a wave of concerns about the safety, and content of these sites, as well as the effects of these on social relationships. On the safety front, parents have been concerned with the ability of predators to log on to the sites and to make contacts with the youth (Hempel and Lehman, 2005). On the moral front, parents are concerned about the prevalence of pornographic material on these sites. These concerns may not be unwarranted, in a recent content analysis of Facebook

timelines, Coppins (2006) found that 59 percent of photographs on the site contained sexual poses and that 54 percent contained profanity.

Such fears about content have also come from the religious realm. Recently, according to Coppins (2006), student congregations of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at Brigham Young University were warned against the usage of social networking tools by their leaders (Coppins, 2006). While this decision does not reflect a policy decision of the church as a whole, it shows that some church leaders are carrying the same fears about social networking that are held in the public sphere.

Although leaders of the church have previously talked about the benefits of the uses, much in the discourse of the church regarding the media has focused on its negative effects (Stout, 1996). The media policy of the church for youth states: "Whatever you read, listen to, or look at has an effect on you" (Bradley, Deighton, & Selby, 2004). The leaders of the church have come out several times in recent years against the effects of pornography, urging members to stay away from it (Hinckley, 2004; Oaks, 2005).

Additionally, they are encouraged to stay away from any internet content that is media that is discourteous, immoral, violent, or pornographic in any way. This feeling towards the internet and social networking sites, in general, does not seem to be centered only within the Christian faith. Other faiths suffer the same effect too. Leaders of other churches have encouraged parents within their congregations to monitor their children's use of the internet and social media platforms. Parents are to encourage their children to use these sites for education and information only and not for prolonged communication which may lead to misuse (C. Bird, 2006). Although many forward-thinking youth pastors are beginning to embrace social networking

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sites (C. Bird, 2006), it would seem that the general attitude from these churches is somewhat antagonistic.

A study conducted by Armfield and Holbert (2003) on the relationship between internet use and religion found that there was a negative relationship where religion suffered most from the use of the internet. The study found that most of the internet users were reluctant to abide by the doctrines of religion and saw religion as an outdated sect. The researchers (Armfield and Holbert, 2003) claim that all forms of mass media are theorized to reflect the move toward greater secularization, presenting a predominantly secular image of the world we live within. Subsequently, the strong religious affiliation will be negatively related to all forms of mass media use because a vast majority of media content does not reflect traditional religious values (Armfield and Holbert, 2003).

Because the internet social networking phenomenon is so new, few studies have addressed it. Studies that have done so have looked at issues of safety and privacy, also looking at some of the reasons that students use social networking tools. Govani and Pashley (2005) performed a survey of students' Facebook profiles at Carnegie Mellon University and found that 80% of the students had not read the privacy policy for Facebook, and generally felt safe about giving out personal information in a campus environment. They also found that most users join Facebook because their friends pressure them into it, or to meet and socialize with others at their school. Another study of students at the same university found that very few students changed their privacy settings on Facebook, and as a result were ripe for stalking (Gross and Acquisti, 2005). In a survey of students in a different university about their Facebook usage, Jones and Soltren (2005) found that users who are more involved (have more friends) are more likely to disclose more personal information and that

although students may be aware that Facebook has privacy features build in, they choose not to use them.

In a study perhaps more useful to our current discussion, Anton, Rey, Abbott, and Bugeja (2006) performed a framing analysis of student and mainline newspapers to reveal college students' and adults' attitudes toward social networking. By using concept mapping, they found that student newspapers tended to focus on the more utilitarian aspects of Facebook usage. The most common topics are sex, games, and relationships. Once students have most of their time on sex and games, their faith is at stake. What they watch and do online takes most of their time than listening to a live sermon in the church.

According to Miaoyang (2001), technology is accused of controlling human life and controlling any spiritual development of children. By increasing the limitations on human life and teachings, technology becomes sovereign over their social life. On the production line, it is essential for workers and believers of God to follow several procedures, thereby becoming part of the machine. In other words, man is not able to master technology, which stands in opposition to him. Though automation implements the human strength of the worker, the operation of pressing a button reduces the operator to a sense of monotony, suppressing thought, and creativity. Man, gradually changes into a robot in charge of some operation. Spare time also is limited by technology for one cannot change the programs on radio and TV; fast food and inherently homogenous modes of spending leisure time turn dry and lacking in individualism (Miaoyang, 2001).

As this affects social life, it also affects the spiritual, feelings, mental communications, and understandings too. The development of high technology reduces the spiritual and cultural level. In sophisticated industrialized countries

technology places excessive prominence on material outcomes, thus relatively reducing the function of spiritual values. For the young, this encourages their indulging in material enjoyment while putting aside the spiritual search; it urges paying great care to technological sciences while disregarding the level of humanities (Gigli and Genova, 2001).

While new technology and its tools cause material progress, this is of no assistance for a lasting inquiry into the human spirit and philosophy. Therefore, many moral and religious groups have considered technology a reaction against spiritual life, lowering its quality and that of culture and turning to a more superficial means of intelligence. School examinations using technology allows students only to make choices and fill the elements of knowledge, but not of wisdom. Today there is an urgent need for intensification of the link between education and spiritual development and knowledge; indeed, the development of technology should be guided in a manner of spiritual guidance and thereby humanized (Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2007).

At this point, it is worth noting the effects of technology on the spiritual values in the lives of the youths. It is important to mention at the onset that technology when rightly used becomes a powerful missiological tool. Yet on the other hand when wrongly used, can lead the youth astray and make them leave the church. It should also be noted that false and misguided teachings have become rampant and are escalating like bush-fire via the internet and other social media. For this, many youths have been negatively indoctrinated and radicalized in extreme situations. On the same note, the Christian faith in many ways has been post modernized. This effect is evident in the lives of the youths, especially in matters of faith and practice. Due to these, mistrust has taken root in their lives. The availability of diverse "Spiritual

Materials" has exposed them to different versions of faith as a result, confusion prevails in their lives. This study aimed to establish how social media affect youth retention in churches in the Nyaburi District.

Leadership

Leadership is one of the vital factors for increasing adolescents' retention in the church. Leaders are the key decision-makers on the spiritual nourishment of the congregants and the adolescents in the church. They have introduced different programs such as the deployment of adolescents to other churches for mentoring programs. The retaining of transformational leadership behaviors is more positively related to subordinate effectiveness in a variety of church settings. The transformational behavior of church leaders influences adolescents to make them more aware of their roles as Christians and develop their self-interest in the church.

The youths must help others understand the gospel nature, impact, and how to Biblically convey it to others. This is contrary to the understanding that much of evangelism carried out by youths concentrates on emotionalism and appeals bases on emotional. As witnessed often, puffed-up decisions result from this kind of evangelism which should not be the case. It is the role of the youth ministry to make youths grow up and not to appeal to their culture but stress on social, spiritual, and emotional growth. This is as opposed to fostering the continued immaturity culture.

Instead, the Biblical comprehension of sanctification must be spearheaded by youths in the church. The youths must be taught and hence teach others on solid Biblical theology and not to get entertained to their last breath (Nielson, 2016). The young Christians must help others see that their faith is beyond the surface level and not just entertaining crowds. Through solid theology, they must develop disciples and help the church grow. Focused on God's word, the youths must unite the church and

get engaged in the process of sanctification besides showing each other agape love as a church (Thompson, 2017). Through closely working with parents, the place of youths in the church is to lay the foundation for solid theology and bring together the church.

On most occasions, when the youth are prevented from fulfilling and ambition that is deeply held, they opt out of the church to seek such opportunities elsewhere. The youths in the church, therefore, combined with elderly church leaders must do enough to engage other youths in the mission and make them have the feeling that the church offers them the services and responsibilities they require to be active disciples (Thompson, 2017). Most churches lack adequate opportunity to lay an expression of a call that God-given. This results in most young people being tempted to look for more outside the church so as their calling is fulfilled in gaining the wings in leadership and create an impact in other youths which may be constructively utilized in the church (Nielson, 2016). The youths must make the church their primary vehicle and directly impact their local churches and structures to give the church a distinct bearing towards Christianity in developing future generations of Christian leaders.

The local church needs the youths just as the youths need the local church. This is important hence the young pastors and workers in the church must be allowed to grow and integrate into the local church rather than just wandering from an experience that seems new and exciting to another. They should be disciplined and mentored so as they can pass this to other youths in the church and the community at large (Shepherd, 2016). However, this can be hindered by several problems as discussed in the following section.

The most outstanding challenge of the youth today is talking and walking the faith they are taught. Acts 2:41 demonstrates that the local church acts as the sole

vehicle of choice to God in mission, evangelism, and discipleship. Both the young and the elderly are saved and converted into the local church hence must remain as the pattern. Those who lead the young people and the young people themselves do not live in a vacuum, rather, they live in the church hence the youths must grasp the opportunities in their local churches to be mentored and trained since the church requires the input and gifts. The church must therefore offer church theology and be willing to implement it through giving the youth full access to many church life areas as possible to integrate them into the church community or family. This is where and how they can build a foundation and harness spiritual growth opportunities.

The youths must be provided with opportunities to impact other young people with the word of God as a way of expressing their calling and passion. This way, the church, and the community will be able to benefit from the influence in development and Christianity through a stronger theology church with leaders who are more effective in mentoring and who do not rely much on youth work professionalizing (Chancey and Bruner, 2017). This will by greater impact trigger the energy in young people to positively work for the church in harvesting souls into the eternal kingdom and as the wider body of Christ in the Christian ministry.

In the church, the youth can do so much through volunteering to work with both children and the older congregation in many ways. They can as well reach out to people who are close to their age who are walking through doors that the older church leaders may never understand. They are crucial and the church must tap this talent and energy because the church is one generation away from extinction as is believed that tomorrow's church leadership belongs to the youth. With this respect, it is self-evident that the church must be serious about their commitment to the youth and give them priority in today's church. It is not true to be hesitant as elderly church ministers that

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they could effectively minister the youth or prematurely conclude that youths have no interest in serving God. In as much as they think about the latest secular music and movie stars, they should be made to serve God in the church through music and other areas where their best talents prevent them from engaging in worldly destruction pleasures. Hence, the only value we as Christians can give to the church today is to take care of the youths and value them as this will reward the youths, the church, and the whole global community now and in the coming future.

Conservativeness

It is believed that leadership is key in directing and controlling the resources within an organization towards the realization of set objectives (Nash and Whitehead, 2014). Leaders in an organization take part in the formulation of strategies aimed to move the organization from the current state into a desired future state. Strategic leadership is multifunctional and involves managing through others by combining managerial and leadership skills to influence those whom they work with and make decisions voluntarily (Young, Patterson, Wolff, Greer, and Wynne, 2015). Leadership is embraced by both the Christian and secular world as a process of social influence and as a state in which a person seeks for support of his followers and rallies them to accomplish a common goal or task (Lynch et al., 2016).

Sadeghi and Pihie (2012) defined leadership as an individual having the ability to inspire confidence and support among people who have been organized to achieve the set goals of an organization. McCleskey (2014) suggested that leadership is a unique ability of extraordinary individuals who inspire others. The concept of church leadership involves a person determining the direction of the church's vision and mission. Many great leaders have led organizations to growth and prosperity in various ways by using different leadership concepts and styles.

There are major challenges as noted earlier, facing adolescents as they transition from childhood into adulthood. These challenges have been propagated by secularism, social media, cultural upbringing, changes in the family structure. The youth look for leaders who have a positive influence on their lives especially when adolescents make major transitions in their lives and as a result, they first go to the church if they lack the guidance at home. The church is a crucial organization for the shaping of the society at large and in particular the youth.

However, today many church leaders lack competence in terms of training the adolescents to remain in the church forever and be the future leaders in the church. Most leaders fail to follow the church programs due to poor guidance on adolescents' fellowship not realizing the adolescents are turning their attention away from the church. In many instances, the Christians would introduce their children to the church where they are nurtured in their early years. As the Bible puts it, when we train the children in the way they should go, they will not depart from it when they grow up (Prov 22:6).

Servant leaders believe that people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers. As Spicer (2017) notes, "the servant-leader is deeply committed to the growth of each individual within his or her organization." According to Nash and Whitehead (2014), leadership in church entails a relationship of trust and responsibility in which certain people are entrusted by Christ (Nash and Whitehead, 2014, p. 30). The authority of the office is defined primarily by service which includes the responsibility of stewardship of God's given natural and spiritual gifts.

The worst thing a leader can be identified with is the collapse of an organization after they have left. As Spicer (2017) says, leadership begins when God-

revealed mission captures a person. This person turns a leader as he becomes a servant to the mission. Leadership is complete when the equipper empowers those he has equipped into teams to maximize resources to execute the mission. A leader should be identified by the value they added to the organization. This kind of leadership is what is lacking forcing youth to leave the church.

As A. Bird and Stevens (2013) say, value-based leadership is a leader action to create a culture supportive of values that leads to mutual growth and enhanced self-determination. He further adds, value-based leadership technology engages the leader in work to help followers change their relationships, work skills, and attitudes. It is a task of straightforward teaching. It involves empowering followers, prioritizing high-quality service, and fostering innovation. The leader's role is one of learning and then teaching principles and values so followers can lead themselves.

The youths in this generation are victims of a microwave society that wants fast things. Nduyo (2013) says that healthy youth ministry, like all authentic Christian ministries, originates with God, and flows from the person of Jesus through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Nduyo, 2013). Christian ministry is the sovereign work of God, yet God, in his divine independence and grace, invites believers to partner with him in his disciple-making work. Farah teaches that youths overestimate what they can do in a year and underestimate what they can do in ten years. Since they have access to instant coffee, fast food, and social media devices that instantly connect them, they expect instant disciples (Lim and Putnam, 2010). A young person confesses addiction to food, sex, or alcohol, and leaders are frustrated when they are not fixed a week later.

As Lim and Putnam (2010) assert, dangerous leadership contexts are a special snare for leaders with a lack of self-awareness and a lack of emotional maturity.

Without understanding how and why they are reacting to the emotional pressure round them they neglect to observe wise boundaries. Luke-warmness among leaders that have captured the church makes leaders begin to feel that they have arrived–that they have reached a particular degree of development or stature, and then gradually allow themselves to become complacent in that place. This state of leadership does not sponsor youth spiritual growth and may not nurture youth to stay in the church.

Church programs are among the strategic leadership practices that are used to enhance adolescents' retention in the church. Church programming is designing programs for a reason, for retention of adolescents in the church. A study by Nduyo (2013) on the influence of empowerment programs on adolescents' retention in the church, established that different denominations can create common programs and do them together to nurture the spirit of connectivity and unity. With such being adapted young people will not be moving from one church to the other in search of the programs that are not offered in their church. This would enhance the churches to be able to retain their members.

Young people between the ages of thirteen to twenty-one are quite generally turning their attention away from religion and the church. Therefore, the leaders have to come up with some unique programs to help them like organized religious youth groups. Spicer (2017) conducted a study on adolescence in the Church: perspectives from church adolescents on mentorship and spiritual formation in the church. The study indicated that adolescents have attitudes toward mentorship held by church leaders. Mentoring relationships are associated with strengthened spirituality that endures the transition into the church. The study further indicated that many adolescents who do not engage in mentorship and feel mentoring relationships are not as desired or welcomed by adults in the church (Vitisia, 2016).

It's easy to think that if something was a success for one year, it should become a tradition for the next 20 years. This is sometimes true but might not always be the case. Once again, you cannot go wrong in listening to the adolescents and letting them be the judge. Keeping things fresh and exciting so that the adolescents can't wait to come back might change as the leader grows. Creating a safe place to share the love of God and having an opportunity to explore the meaning of faith with friends and people who care is a priceless gem and an opportunity for a foundation that is invaluable.

The church leadership ought to be the church to young people in the real sense of the word. The church is responsible for communicating the message which has been entrusted to it so that faith may be born and nurtured through the church programs. The voice of the church leaders must be to the young people today what the voice of Moses was to the Israelites when he spoke to them in the wilderness. Developing a training program for adolescences is an urgent necessity. This would enable the church adolescences to use their talents for the glory of God (Vitisia, 2016). The training of adolescences is an important task facing church leaders today. There are indeed adolescents who have little understanding of their place in the body of Christ.

Nduyo (2013), state that the Church needs to search and retain the young adolescents afresh. This would be achieved by being close to them through the programs that they attend. It is indeed a fast-changing world and hence continuous effort for greater understanding will keep the Church young and relevant. They form a complex reality, ranging from highly urbanized and westernized to the most backward and rural, with a diverse spectrum of economic and social conditions in between.

A study done by Young et al. (2015) indicates that church leaders significantly influence the retention of the adolescent in the church by being their spiritual and emotional guides. Therefore, the ability of church leaders to deal with setbacks, rejection, and failure to a certain degree, and the goal-orientation does not get lost is characteristic for mission-oriented church leaders. This shows that these leaders have scored higher regarding mission orientation, team-orientation, and training of the adolescents in the community (Zakaria, Mariapan, and Hasbullah, 2013).

Being in a church service is the best way of fostering belief and giving education to young people. Worshipping God is the most earnest way of adoring God away from their busy lives of work and study. They can acquire Christian personality and have good fellowship with brothers and sisters in God through worship and it is the best opportunity for education. Nowadays churches are losing this godliness in their worship and rigidity or flippancy is taking its place and therefore, the youth are not retained in the church.

The tight schedule of service, habitual repeated rituals, formal confessions, framed prayers, spiritless hymns, and stereotypical rhetoric messages are examples of this conservativeness of worship. The noisy music, frequent clapping, tedious offerings, and unnatural humor in services have become very flippant. The administrative rigidity of churches also stifles communication among the people. Young people especially can't stand the rigidity and flippancy of services in the church.

Those young people who are living in a complicated and noisy modern culture want a spiritual atmosphere in which they can truly experience the glory of God. Their everyday life itself should be worship to God, but church service should have the spiritual substance which is so important to them. It is natural for them, in light of

this, to go to other churches where they can experience more solemn services. It doesn't mean that the atmosphere itself is the spiritual substance, but at least they notice there the company of thirsty young people.

Young people have a great desire for cultural benefits, too. People are saying that there are many cultural benefits in churches where there are many young people. All the various facilities and even the food in church attract young people. The social image of the churches which consists of the fellowships among the church members and the sense of belonging is important, too.

This is not an exhaustive list of why young people are leaving churches. For example, some people are leaving churches when they are confronted with difficult afflictions. They feel the churches don't have the spiritual, intellectual, and strong basis to solve their problems. Others are leaving because of the shocks from the modern society.

Involvement

Another issue affecting the youth today is the culture of independence. In this section, it is a case whereby, the youth is involved in making decisions and in the leadership of the church. In as much as it is true that all desire independence and we all want to be free, this independence must be handled with great care and precaution.

Modern contemporary trends depict that youths in schools, universities, colleges, homes, and even churches fighting for independence. When their demands for independence are not granted, then the following consequences are normally observed; vandalism, open rebellion, running away from home, ecclesiastical schism, crimes, and to some the highest expression of independence is by committing suicide. In this regard, the majority of the youth want independence in its loose and natural sense. They even claim that the gospel has set them free. It is a gospel of liberty. It is

interesting to note that some charismatic and liberal preachers instigate youths to embrace independence in its loose sense via the pulpit.

Many of the youths have found themselves in a mess because of a wrong conception of independence. It is important to realize that the way youth define independence has determined to a greater extent how they react to the world around them. The youth need to understanding that it is much safer, intellectually, to understand human life in terms of independence boosts one's dignity or tampers with one's dignity. For instance, today, the personal and social agony evidenced in the youth comes in how large measure they have embraced independence in its loose nature. Starting with independence, most of them 'end in the most unbreakable slavery habits, forced upon them by their own psychological constitution' (Dutton, 2004).

Listening to young people's ideas can both empower youth to voice their perspectives and strengthen the understanding of what youth identify as relevant. Young people can inform which church programs and administrative involvement strategies will work best for them and their peers.

A few researchers, however, are beginning to recognize the need to seek youth perspectives to fully understand the adolescent experience. Bradley et al. (2004), asserts that obtaining young peoples' perspectives is necessary because the social position of adults limits what they can purport to know about youth (Bradley et al., 2004). Furthermore, Morrill, Yalda, Adelman, Musheno, and Bejarano (2000) argue that to legitimately comprehend a particular articulation of youth culture, researchers must meet youth in the spaces where young people make and have their lives constructed by adults daily.

The literature does not establish how involvement affects youth retention in the church. However, the lack of it may negatively affect the youth since they also feel part of the church when involved in leadership and decision making.

Gossip

Gossip here can be termed as speaking negatively against someone in their absence. This practice is believed by many church members that it occurs in most of the churches. Youth fall victim when it comes to gossip since they are the most vulnerable. Adults see the youth as fornicators and sinful beings who should not be involved in church programs.

The youth have a big role is the ministry which can only be possible through adults demonstrating to them that a discipleship and love culture is embraced in the church (Day and Kurtz, 2017). In our various churches, the youth have been deprived of proper assets for development from the church, parents, and school to help them grow and spread the gospel. Such assets will assist in preventing the youths from premarital sexual behavior, drug abuse, and anti-social behavior which are rated high-risk behaviors.

This way, the level of responsibility and pro-social behaviors among the youths will be encouraged and spread by youths to their fellows in the church hence promoting living standards that are healthy and spiritually effective to yield successful and responsible adult society. To boost these efforts, the church must incorporate contemporary stratagems to the youth ministry in establishing the growth of youths. The elders have a role to be flexible and adjust to the ever-changing needs of youths through updating and matching the youth energy and vitality while avoiding old models. The youth must therefore in the long-run not to dilute the gospel message but discover how to live out the good news and encourage others to do so (Nielson,

2016). However, there is little literature on the same and therefore, this study seeks to establish how it affected youth retention in churches in the Nyaburi District.

Parents

Christianity has long been a staple of culture the world over. It has spread with civilization and influenced cultures for over 2000 years. Recently, however, the number of Christians in the United States is declining. Since 2007, the percent of Americans identifying as Christian dropped from 78% to 70%, with nearly 23% of the population having no religious affiliations (Burke, 2015). This change poses a significant problem to our society's declining morality, as Christianity is mostly responsible for what is usually accepted as basic morals. While the drop has been seen in all ages, races, and ethnicities, millennials and youth have seen the largest change (Burke, 2015). They are less involved, less interested, and many are leaving their faith once they reach adulthood. For anyone involved with a Christian church, the decline in the quality and quantity of the next generation is obvious.

Although there are several reasons for this decline, there are two major factors that affect a youth's involvement in their church: the quality of their youth ministry, and the religious influence from parents in the home. The reason for a church's poor youth ministry may vary depending on the church. For many youths, it's a lack of depth. Fun meet and greets, candy, and superficial, repetitive "Jesus loves you can only hold a teenager's attention for so long, as discovered by Carol (2004). A sense of belonging, meaning, and opportunities to develop competence were all things that consistently drew youth into the church. While these elements can be fairly easy to incorporate, they are also easily left out of a program.

Churches become so desperate to grow the youth ministries that they become all about attracting youth and forget the things that will make teens want to stay. A

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study by the Steptoe (2006) found that 66% of teens ranked worshipping and making a connection with God as the most important thing they looked for in a church and youth group (Steptoe, 2006). If a church is investing all of their time in flashy attractions, they are neglecting the things that teens truly want, the things that will keep them within the group.

Perhaps the largest factor in teens' attitudes toward the church is their parents. Parental influences greatly shape children and youth, both consciously and subconsciously. Religion is no exception. Over half of young adult children follow their parents' example in remaining affiliated with the same religious traditions and beliefs (Ziettlow, 2013).

For a parent to successfully pass on their faith, they need to be consistent (Ziettlow, 2013). They must live what they preach, and do so as consistently as possible. A religiously disinterested youth may not be shunning their faith so much as they are reflecting their parents' noncommittal attitudes (Rymarz and Graham, 2005). Without a constant model, youth lack a religious role model to follow (Ziettlow, 2013) Beyond a constant example, there must also be a good relationship between parent and child (Ziettlow, 2013). No matter how zealous their faith, a distant, overly strict, or overbearing parent will have far less success in passing their faith on to the next generation.

Fathers in particular have a strong impact on a youth's view of religion, says Dallas in an article that summarizes both personal observation and external studies on fathers and religion. Fathers have historically been the leaders of the family's spiritual life, providing a moral example and religious instruction (Dallas, 2016). Even as society's view of fatherhood shifts, dads are still greatly influencing the course their children take (Dallas, 2016). Research conducted by Dallas (2016) found that 56% of

fathers and children with close relationships shared similar levels of religious participation, while only 36% of those with weak relationships shared close levels of religious participation (Dallas, 2016).

Essentially, the better the father-child bond, the more likely that child will engage in and remain with his faith. When approached from a slightly more psychological perspective, this isn't surprising. God is typically presented as a male, fatherly figure. When a youth's father is present, engaged, and loving, they are more likely to have a positive view of a relationship with God (Dallas, 2016). On the flip side, if the youth had an absent or abusive father, they may have a harder time having a strong relationship with God (Dallas, 2016), as they have no reference point for what a healthy father-child relationship looks like.

What can be done to remedy these issues? In the case of ineffective leadership, the remedies are a little simpler. The teenage years are a time of exploration and uncertainty, with many unsure of where they belong. Thus, a youth ministry should evoke a sense of belonging. Giving students a physical space that is "theirs" can help, as they have a space that isn't some multipurpose recreation room, but someplace just for them (Carol, 2004). A balance between being "open" enough for new members, but "closed" enough to retain current members, should be found. Small groups and integration with the overall church life help create a sense of cohesion and "family" (Carol, 2004).

Secondly, today's secular world causes many teens to crave a sense of meaning. Meaning can be created by not just skimming the surface, but delving into deeper conversations and even personal faith journeys. Adult leaders can share their faith journeys, and there should be at least one trusted person that can speak with youth about their faith journeys (Carol, 2004). Discussions about rituals and traditions

within the church that does more than just superficially describe them, but delve deeper into their origins and purposes can help give youth a greater understanding of their faith.

Youth should also be given opportunities to develop competence. Discussion and activities that help students know what their talents and spiritual gifts are, as well as acting upon them, give youth a chance to be more actively engaged (Carol, 2004). Youth can also benefit from developing leadership potential and skills (Carol, 2004) by participating in church-wide activities that engage and provide learning opportunities.

In the case of parental influence, there are less apparent solutions. In general, if there is little or no faith life at home, it can be very difficult to introduce one. A parent discovering or re-kindling their faith can help, or another family member such as a grandparent may step in to take youth to church. Some particularly driven youth may be inspired to find God on their own, even without a religious upbringing, but this is less common. Unlike problems within the youth ministry, the issue of parental influence doesn't have any particular solution.

Whatever the reasons for the lack of youth involvement, it is a problem that needs to be addressed. By seriously analyzing their youth programs, churches can identify their weak points and come up with ways to fix them. They should also focus on instructing not just the youth, but the adults so that the faith can be more effectively passed on. By implementing strategies such as these, Christians can take a more active role in creating a stronger, more faithful next generation.

God acts in the world, gathers, and forms us through the family as the most basic and first community cite. The youth must demonstrate in the family the moral, spiritual as well as overall faith development and act as mentors to adolescents. With

love and support from their parents, the youths are to enhance the family to live in faith and love for Christ which brings about novel understanding as well as skills in the family so as family life is enhanced (Campbell, 2000; Day and Kurtz, 2017). Therefore, the youth must lead other family members in building a community that precipitates Christianity and the love for Christ (Chancey and Bruner, 2017; Day and Kurtz, 2017).

In the church, the youth must play the same role as adults as the gospel mission calls all believers to glorify and spread the good news of God. Today, the youths in the church are learning many Christian faith concepts which are important but they should not be set aside by adults as Christian calling is a calling to all (Campbell, 2000). Youth involvement in the church community is crucial since it is in the church that the people of God meet Christ through Holy Communion in a way that is concrete.

Therefore, the churches must be friendly to youths in fostering their growth spiritually. When the youths are welcomed and allowed to serve alongside adults in the church community, they develop a full-fledged member feeling and can be easily identified as a community. The youths have a role to present their youthful vision and energy in the activities of the church since they have a great deal to offer as youth Christians to the church. Through meaningful roles, the youths can express their faith hence develop a commitment spirit to the church as a community. The church therefore must tap the talents from youths and be friendly to them through valuing the adolescents through adequate response to their needs and carefully giving the audience. The church must facilitate youth activities by providing them with money and facilities that enable them to grow as disciplines (Thompson, 2017). As the youth

commit to the church, the church must also give back to the youths by committing to their development.

Apart from the school, the church, and the family, Christian youths have an obligation in the greater community for the church (Chancey and Bruner, 2017). The church has the responsibility to reach out to youths and establish an organization of young disciples to go out and be witnesses in spreading the gospel truth. The youth can learn about joyful giving in service organization communities as they are challenged spiritually to love other people like Jesus does (Day and Kurtz, 2017).

Through activities like rural development, youths can spread the gospel. This way, the youths use their energy to develop their villages in areas that are stuck in alcohol abuse, illiteracy, bad social habits, and unemployment among others. Through social work in the villages where youths live, rural development is possible alongside the spread of the gospel message through huge numbers of youth volunteers. This way, the evils and problems in the villages can be minimized. For instance, if there is a promise for every youth to take part in giving education to one youth villager in the village who is illiterate, the whole village will become literate hence able to study the bible and get the gospel message (Nielson, 2016). The whole village will be an organizational community in Christ.

In fostering the total spiritual and personal growth of other youths, the youths understand each other better than adult Christians could. Therefore, they must take part in the concern for the whole person's growth and address other youth's needs spiritually in their whole life context. The Christian youths must play a crucial role in promoting the holistic development and growth in the entire person of other youths (Nielson, 2016). They must be able to actively listen to the specific religious, development, and social needs of other youths to enable them mature accordingly.

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This can be facilitated through the aid of adult church members and leaders. Christian youths must work to eliminate the current notion that young people are least interested in Godly things. Youths whose hearts are drawn to God understand that not all that glitters is gold as many worldly pleasures will escape and only in God that everlasting hope, truth, and joy can be found.

As young Christians, they must turn away from worldly culture and seek Godly adults to gives Biblical answers on life challenging questions that are hard to ordinarily be answered. In the Bible, God often used youth people to do his will. For instance, when Mary conceived Jesus, she was just but a teenager while as a young giant slayer David was still a youth. To add to the list, God called Samuel to minister in the Tabernacle as a prophet when he was only a young boy (Nielson, 2016). It is through the youth people that God is working in these end times.

Through providing a safe environment for youths, the church can be of great value as youths who want to congregate and live an honoring life to God. Upon sensing that the church is up to this mission, parents will be free and apt to allow their youths to worship services and events. This way, the youths themselves become of value to other youths and the church as a whole through engaging themselves in church service projects so as they feel to be making a difference in other people's lives (Nielson, 2016).

They must therefore be involved in mission trips to get exposure to new cultures and let the adventures stick in their minds. This excitement and enthusiasm through involvement in church activities positively impact other church members hence make the church a place of joy to be for all. The youths should be made leaders today in rehearsal for tomorrow's church through a welcoming and encouraging environment for good life living in Christ. The youths must participate greatly in the

church and the community to stop youth secularization as opposed to abandoning the youth ministry (Nielson, 2016). There is a growing need for the church to acknowledge the presence of youth service in the church today.

Together with adult Christians, the youths must be involved actively in teaching parents their ministry to their children as they are required to continue the mentorship after the child leaves the church (Nielson, 2016). This is because parents are living with their children for their life while church service is specifically on given days. Therefore, through the youths helping parents be actively and effectively involved, the long term investment in the youth spiritual growth is achieved. It is worthwhile therefore to occasionally integrate the entire congregation as youth segregation from the entire congregation only helps in facilitating the youth ministry downfall.

However, through the integration, it will help in grounding into the entire church community the children. This will in turn make the youths start seeing important life moments and how the adult Christians solve these problems like an elderly adult struggling with a disease but remain a faithful Christian to his or her death bed (Day and Kurtz, 2017). This means that every moment in the life of the youth in the church can assist them foster Christian faith in Godliness as a church member through viewing the Christian faith as to be fully integrated in life and death time.

Nurturing

Fellowship

In the New Testament, the concept of retention can be found in various texts. They will be studied to address the problem of youth membership loss in the Nyaburi District. It is hoped that since these principles were effective in nurturing Christians in

the 1st century, they can be applied to the Nyaburi situation. The book of Acts 2:41-47 gives some principles which were used in the 1st century to retain members in the early church.

The book of the *Acts of the Apostles* was written by Luke to show how fast Christianity had spread within 30 years (Barclay, 1976). The immediate context of Acts 2:41-47 is chapter one which speaks about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, which was part of the fulfillment of the prophecies of Joel 2:28 and Christ's promise in John 17:26-27. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit marked a new era where Gods' message was taken to many nations through those who were present at Pentecost.

After the Pentecost event, Peter stood and explained to those who were present the meaning of the event. In his speech or sermon, Peter spoke in brief about the life and ministry of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:22). He spoke about Christ's death and how God's purpose was fulfilled in the death of His son (v. 23), Christ's resurrection, which was due to God's intervention (Ps 16:8-11), Christ's exaltation (vv. 33-36), and Christ's salvation (vv. 37-39).

Peter's sermon convicted the audience and they asked what they should do. Peter appealed to them to repent and many of them repented and received forgiveness. That sermon gave birth to a new community and it is from this new community that the principles on spiritual nurture are drawn. The apostles' teaching included the Jewish Scriptures as well as the teachings of Christ on earth and the revelations He gave to the apostles from heaven. This means the early Christians gave priority to the revealed Word of God (Lawson, 2001).

In Acts 2:41-47, the key elements are the apostles' teaching of the Word, fellowship, prayer, breaking of bread, and witnessing. The apostles' teaching was

with authority. These apostles were appointed by God to nurture the Church through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:28). The teachings of the apostles and the prophets birthed a new fellowship—the church (Eph 2:19, 20).

Two distinctive activities marked the fellowship of the early church. The "breaking of bread" is a term that here probably included the Lord's Supper as well as eating a meal together (cf. v. 46; 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23-25; Jude 12) (Blaiklock, 1979; Kent, 1985). Elsewhere the phrase describes both an ordinary meal (Luke 24:30, 35; Acts 20:11; 27:35) and the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:24). Probably these early Christians ate together and as part of the meal, or after it, used their common food, bread, and wine, to commemorate Christ's death (Neil, 1981, p. 81).

The term *koinonia* is a Greek word meaning "fellowship," which is found in Rom 15:26 and Heb 13:16, referring to sharing possessions or contributions given to the poor saints in Jerusalem. The breaking of bread uses the same word referred to in Luke 24:35, 46; Matt 26:26; Mark 14:22; and 1 Cor 11:24 where it refers to both physical meals and the Lord's Supper (Bruce, 1970, p. 99).

The key ingredients which made the church strong and fostered spiritual growth can be summed up in the following. "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowshipped daily" (Barrett, 1994). This revealed how the church members were regularly taught and how the apostles were consistent in giving regular instructions from the Word of God (Acts 2:43). The presence of God's Spirit initiated new relationships and newness of life among the believers. Individuals became a community of fellowship and friendship. This kind of fellowship was one of the reasons the church grew in numbers and spiritual life (Falk, 1995).

The sharing of things among the early church was also common. This reveals the experience of those in God's kingdom and is part of the fulfillment of Christ's mission as recorded in the Bible. The believers from all levels of life were together, including the poor, the lame, and the rich. They had all things in common (Acts 2:44; Luke 4:16-18, 21) (Ironside, 1943).

Teaching, fellowship, sharing of goods, and prayers of repentance made it possible for the new converts to continue maturing in faith. The religious practices in that early church embraced obedience which led to a community of worship, a practice of sharing of goods, and witness (Ironside, 1943).

The sharing of goods is not common today, but Luke described what the Spirit of God can do when it comes to economic disparity. The Spirit moved believers to do away with social disparities and helped foster a spirit of sharing (Ironside, 1943, p. 291).

Commenting on Acts 2:42-47, Barclay makes the following observations concerning the Apostolic Church whose members were involved in various church activities (Barclay, 1976, p. 42):

1. It was a learning church with the church members listening to the apostles' instructions and gaining new insights.

2. It was a church of fellowship that enjoyed a quality of togetherness where the members lived as brothers and sisters in a family.

3. It was a praying church that depended upon God for strength; they met in prayer before going out to the world. Thus they were able to face the problems in life because they lived a life of prayer.

4. It was a worshipping church; they worshiped God in their homes and the temple.

5. These were the things which attracted people. It was not only a good church but it had a winsome attractiveness and virtue. It was able to attract people to God.

I can draw some of the principles which made the early church strong from the brief look at Acts 2:42-47 as given above. The same principles can be applied to

churches in the Nyaburi District to help them be strong and retain their youth in the church. These principles include teaching the Word of God consistently to newly baptized members and older members including youths, having regular times of prayer in the church and the homes of newly converted youths, stressing a life of fellowship and witnessing in the church, and above all, teaching the importance of a life of dependence upon the Holy Spirit's leading.

These principles may help the church leaders to teach the youths about holistic theology, which will require new church members to be taught about creation, God, heaven, and eternity. This will help answer many questions in the minds of youths. There will be instruction on power and the cross. This will be taught since in our context many people search for power. Teaching on God's power and Him as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe (Gen 1; 17:1), how Christ defeated Satan and his host and brought all things to Himself (John 16:33; Eph 1:22), and how Gods' supreme power was demonstrated at the cross where Satan was defeated and the world was redeemed will help the youth trust in Gods' power (1 Cor 1:23-27; Heb 2:14-15) (Hiebert, 1999, p. 371).

Ephesians 4 speaks about the practical aspects of the life of believers after receiving the grace of God. In this chapter, the apostle Paul discusses Christian duties, privileges, and the responsibilities that fellow believers have to one another. Paul also gives several exhortations that encourage spiritual growth and how it can be achieved (*SDABC*, 1021). He suggests the following principles on spiritual nurture:

1. All believers are to be instructed to stay in Christ to experience spiritual growth.

2. All believers are to stay united to have close relationships which are necessary for fostering spiritual growth.

3. When all believers use their spiritual gifts, they will be strong in the faith and care for each other.

Teaching

Lawless (2005) provides a few insights into the effects of the new member class and the mentoring relationship between long-term members and new ones. From his studies, Lawless found that by placing new believers with experienced members the dropout rates were reduced dramatically. He stated, "We greatly reduced the numbers dropping out or going out the back door, members are getting involved" (Lawless, 2005, p. 45).

Cress (2000) classic on helping new members stay on board was found to be valuable to this study, especially from an Adventist point of view. This literature explores the dynamics of effective discipleship and highlights the church's responsibility to the converts it makes. Unlike many of the works reviewed in this section, Cress's assessment of the "step by step" journey of the new believer, from baptism to full maturity in the faith, was found to be unique. The only work that was found to be similar in its practicality and simplicity was that of Willis. The others tend to be more general.

White (1950) talks boldly on the retention of church members. According to her, that was one of the most important tasks given to church leaders. In her book, *The Acts of the Apostles*, she gives the following principles concerning nurturing new converts:

1. Appoint some church officers to be in charge of the new converts.

2. Have earnest and hardworking people continue to give instructions to the new converts.

3. Carefully train the new converts to establish them in the faith.

4. Follow the example of Paul and Barnabas in training and creating a fellowship for new converts.

5. Instruct the new converts on how to take care of themselves as they rely upon God's promises in Matt 18:20.

6. Appoint godly men to take charge of the new converts and keep on instructing them in the principles of the faith.

7. Involve the new converts in God's service to help them grow in faith.

In White's book Evangelism, the following principles on nurturing new members are briefly explained:

1. The new converts are to be helped and instructed by mature members on how to experience the truth in their lives.

2. God is better pleased to have new converts thoroughly educated than to have a large number of professed members who are not truly converted.

3. New converts are counseled to seek the society of those who fear God so that they can help them to gain strength in their faith.

4. The new converts should be engaged in the service of the Lord to help them grow strong and also as a sign of their faith.

5. A follow-up program must be carried out for the new converts which involve visitations and giving them Bible readings (E. G. White, 1946, p. 334).

In the book Testimonies for the Church, E. G. White (1948) gives the following counsel concerning temptations surrounding new converts and on how they can be assisted. Those who are young in the faith may be kept from great temptations or opposition by being placed under the care of experienced Christians, and the new converts should be told that Christian life is constant warfare; hence, they should be firm, not slothful.

Concerning converts in a city, E. G. White (1948) states, "And as men and women are converted to the truth, those standing at the head of city mission should with much prayer show these new converts how to experience the power of the truth in their lives. This united effort on the part of all workers would be as a nail driven in the sure place."

Regarding those who have been baptized recently, E. G. White (1948) recommends that they should be subjected to more detailed instructions about their

baptism and what it means once a person is baptized. New instructions which can help them to be firm in their faith include;

1. Teaching that baptism means being baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit and that it is a sign that they were buried in the likeness of Christ's death and raised into a new life.

2. They are dedicated to God, to Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

3. They are to make the things of the world second in their life.

4. They should not live careless or indifferent lives.

5. They should always keep in mind that they are subjects of Christ's kingdom and partakers of the divine nature. They are to surrender all that they are and have and employ all their gifts to God's glory.

According to Ellen White, small groups are another means of nurturing and bringing new members into the church. She states;

> If there is a large number in the church, let the members be formed into small companies to work not only for the church members but also for the unbelievers. If in one place there are only two or three who know the truth, let them form themselves into a band of workers. Let them keep their bond of union unbroken, pressing together in love and unity, encouraging one another to advance, each gaining courage and strength from the assistance of the others (E. G. White, 1948).

She also says that companies should assemble in the evening, at noon, or in the early morning to study the Bible. During the meetings, the members should relate personal experiences to each other for this will bring more comfort and joy to the soul than even songs sung in the churches. This kind of association will be a means of maintaining one's integrity (E. G. White, 1948).

According to E. G. White (1948), another principle for spiritual growth is the study of the Word of God, which is the key ingredient in the spiritual life of a true and committed believer in Jesus Christ. Concerning reading the Word of God for spiritual growth, she states:

> If we would live a truly Christian life, the conscience must be quickened by constant contact with the Word of God. All the precious things with an infinite cost

that God has provided for us will do us no good. If they cannot strengthen us and produce spiritual growth, this can only be achieved by eating the word of God and making it a part of ourselves (E. G. White, 1948).

Sharing

A small group is an intentional, face-to-face gathering of three to twelve people, on a regular schedule with the common purpose of developing relationships, the meeting felt needs of group members, growing spiritually, and laying plans and working together to lead others to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior of their lives. The group is to help each to grow in their relationship with God, grow in their relationship with each other, and reach out to share what they have with others.

The Bible story and the experience of the church both confirm that from the very beginning of human history to the present, small groups of one kind or another have been part of the divine plan for the human family (Colon, 2010, p. 5). The family unit was the first and most important small group ordained by God. As far away as many individual families might be today from His ideal because of sin, the family is still the backbone of society worldwide.

After the Exodus, God gave His approval to the suggestion of Jethro that Moses should divide the entire new nation of Israel (perhaps as many as two million men and women or more) into groups of ten, not just to make Moses' work easier, but to make God more accessible to the people (Exod 18). As recorded in Exodus 18:13-26, Jethro advised Moses to divide the people into small groups as a means of having effective leadership. While the context was on effective leadership, the method has an element designed to keep people together, growing together, working together, and sharing. This kind of arrangement will assist in meeting the physical, mental, and social needs of those in the small group.

This small group ministry was also seen in Jesus. Although He had many disciples, He invested much of His time and energy in developing His small group of twelve. (Mark 3:13-15; Luke 6:12, 13). He taught them to be completely dependent on Him and each other. People in small groups can share burdens and associate and even understand each other's temperaments. This can be helpful for the newly born members of the church (Githii, 2008, p. 33). Therefore, if the small group principle is applied to the youths, it can help retain them in the church.

The meeting where newly converted people meet in the church and receive love from the other members is likened to giving blood to a person. This is where the personal needs of new converts are taken care of and their concerns shared. A church which has regular meetings has a higher potential to empower, equip, and transform their communities and the new converts (Linthicum, 2005, p. 150). Youths should be in cooperated in church meetings to help them give their ideas and views in decision making.

The basic teaching of making a believer into a disciple must be applied to new converts. These include, (a) time with God in prayer (John 15:7-8), (b) time in reading His Word (John 8:31-32), (c) time with God in fellowship (John 13:34-35), and (d) a habit of tithing (Luke 14:33) (Warren, 1995, p. 349).

Another principle is to involve all members in ministering to one another, this is vital to the spiritual nurture of new converts. In Acts 6:1-7, the number of members increased and the needs of the members also increased. The apostles were finding it difficult to minister to everyone. The church chose members who were full of the Holy Spirit to take care of the other needs so that the disciples could continue teaching the Word. The results were good. "The word of God kept on spreading and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly" (Stott, 2007, p. 76). The key

points are that God calls all His people to ministry; God calls different people to different ministries; and God expects those called to the ministry of the Word to concentrate on their calling (Stott, 2007).

The passage of Acts 6:1-7 also points out that every ministry is equally necessary to the growth and functioning of the church. Each Christian needs to do the ministry the Father has called them to do. Giles (1997) points out that if the twelve apostles were going to focus on their evangelistic work it would demand that communal leadership be taken over by others. Marshall (1980, p. 135) agrees when he says, "It is not necessarily suggested that serving tables is on a lower level than prayer and teaching; the point is rather that the task to which the Twelve had been specifically called was one of witness and evangelism."

Sell (2010) notes, "The Greek words used in verses 2 and 4 show that the apostles recognized that both activities are 'ministry.'" Every ministry is important because it is impossible to know what the result of each ministry will be. If the conflict between the Hellenistic Jews and Hebraic Jews had not been solved with the Seven, it could have torn the new church apart before it was even established. Therefore, each member of the church is a minister in a given capacity. This is true with the slogan which was introduced by the personal ministry department in the Adventist Church known as TMI (Total Member Involvement). Each member including the youths should be involved in ministry.

Delegation is a principle in which a leader distributes duty to other members of the organization. The book of Exodus narrates the Children of Israel's deliverance from Egypt by Moses. After God brought several plagues upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, Pharaoh agreed to allow the Israelites to leave Egypt. Under the leadership of Moses and his brother Aaron, the children of Israel left Egypt for the land of

Canaan. Moses was not only their leader but was also acting as a judge to solve the many cases brought to him (Exod 18:1-24).

It was in the above-mentioned context that Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, advised Moses on how to handle the heavy burden of solving cases from the people. Concerning this text, Brueggemann (1994) explains that Jethro proposed a judicial system to Moses, which was distinct from the primitive practice of one- man adjudication. In the new system, good and well-trained people were recruited for judging. The system had courted for different social units, the lesser courts where the other judges worked, and a high court where Moses presided to solve the most difficult cases.

The system not only saved Moses from leadership burnout, but it helped the community have peace, harmony, wholeness, independence from conflict, stability, and shared welfare. This principle of independence and delegation in leadership can be used to enhance the unity of a group to keep people together and to encourage many to experience a growth experience. This kind of leadership fosters a nurturing process by involving others in new tasks (Brueggemann, 1994).

The case of Jethro and Moses in Exod 18:7-27 promotes the principle of delegating responsibilities. It is suggested that the advice of Jethro to Moses not only helped Moses avoid overwork but is also involved members in service to the people. "You do a service to a man when you evoke his latent faculty. It is no kindness to others or service to God to do more than your share in the sacred duties of Church life" (Meyer, 1981).

Evidently, in Moses' leadership before Jethro, the people were becoming unruly, because Moses was not dispensing justice quickly enough (v. 23). Jethro's counsel was wise and practical, and he presented it as a suggestion, subject to the will

of God. Moses may not have realized the seriousness of the problem he faced. Moses seems to have been a gifted administrator, who would not have consciously allowed Israel's social welfare to deteriorate. However, his "efficiency expert" father-in-law pointed out how he could manage his time better (McGee, 1983).

The system not only saved Moses from leadership burnout, but it helped the community have peace, harmony, wholeness, independence from conflict, stability, and shared welfare. This principle of independence and delegation in leadership can be used to enhance the unity of a group to keep people together and to encourage many to experience a growth experience. This kind of leadership fosters a nurturing process by involving others in new tasks. Since it fosters a nurturing process, it can be termed as the best method ever to retain youths in the church.

Delegation of duty was also seen in the early church when the problem of food distribution arose between the Hellenistic Jews and the Hebraic Jews in Acts 6. The apostles did not solve the problems that came with growth by trying to work harder. Instead, they solved them by delegating responsibilities to others who could help (George and Lagon, 1987, p. 115).

The following principles can also help keep members in the church:

1. Having a consistent, intelligent, and loving follow-up of known members

2. Visiting new members and their families.

3. Helping new member discover their spiritual gifts.

4. Subdividing members into smaller groups and making each group growth-conscious (Hiebert, 1999, p. 48).

Bill Hull offers four principles needed to make disciples: come and see, come and follow, come and be with me, and remain in me. Here, only two principles; come and see and come and remain in me will be discussed.

Come and see principle (John 1:39). In this verse, the writer now turned his attention from John the Baptist's witness to Jesus, to record the reactions of some men to John's witness. Two of John the Baptist's disciples left him to follow Jesus when they heard John's testimony about Jesus. One of them recruited his brother to join them. Jesus did not call these men to follow Him as His disciples now. They began following Jesus to learn from Him. They also took the first steps toward genuine discipleship. This was no tentative inquiry, but a commitment of themselves to Him as disciples (Morris, 1995, p. 137).

Jesus asked these two men why they were walking behind Him. According to Pue (2001), the Evangelist wants his readers to reflect on a deeper question: "the Logos-Messiah confronts those who make any show of beginning to follow him and demands that they articulate what they want in life." Jesus' question allowed the men to express their desire to become His disciples. However, they may not have been quite ready to make that commitment. They replied by asking where He was staying. This careful response may have implied that they simply wanted to have a preliminary interview with Him (Pue, 2001). Or they may have been expressing a desire to become His disciples (Montgomery, 2007).

Jesus responded by inviting them to accompany Him ("Come"), not just to "see" where He was staying, but to visit Him. They first had to "come" with Him, and then they would "see." This statement was also highly significant spiritually. Only by coming to Jesus could they comprehend what they were seeking spiritually. The same thing holds today. The two men accepted Jesus' invitation and stayed with Him for the rest of that day. In staying with Jesus, He (Jesus) had the opportunity to share with them the Word of God at His place. They had come to Christ and had seen what it was to come to Christ. So what remained was for them to remain in Christ forever.

Remain in me principle (Ephesians 4:12-16). In this passage, Paul was looking at the church on two levels. He saw the body of Christ, made up of all true believers, growing gradually until it reaches spiritual maturity, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. But he also saw the local body of believers ministering to each other, growing together, and thereby experiencing spiritual unity (Wiersbe, 2007, p. 608).

The gifted leaders are supposed to equip the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the body of Christ. The saints do not call a pastor and pay him to do the work. They call him and follow his leadership as he, through the Word, equips them to do the job (2 Tim 3:13–17). The members of the church grow by feeding on the Word and ministering to each other. The first evidence of spiritual growth is Christlikeness.

The second evidence is stability. The maturing Christian is not tossed about by every religious novelty that comes along. Religious quacks are waiting to kidnap God's children and get them into their false cults, but the maturing believer recognizes false doctrine and stays clear of it. The cultists do not try to win lost souls to Christ. They do not establish rescue missions in the slum areas of their cities, because they have no good news for the man on skid row. Instead, these false teachers try to capture immature Christians, and for this reason, most of the membership of the false cults comes from local churches, particularly churches that do not feed their people the Word of God.

The third evidence of maturity is truth joined with love: "Speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15). It has well been said that truth without love is brutality, but love without truth is hypocrisy. Little children do not know how to blend truth and love. They think that if you love someone, you must shield him from the truth if knowing

the truth will hurt him. It is a mark of maturity when we can share the truth with our fellow Christians, and do it in love. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Prov 27:6).

One more evidence of maturity is cooperation (Eph 4:16). Believers realize that, as members of the one body and a local body, they belong to each other, they affect each other, and they need each other. Each believer, no matter how insignificant he may appear, has a ministry to other believers. The body grows as the individual members grow, and they grow as they feed on the Word and minister to each other. Note once again the emphasis on love: "forbearing one another in love" (Eph 4:2); "speaking the truth in love" (Eph 4:15); "the edifying of itself in love" (4:16).

Love is the circulatory system of the body. It has been discovered that isolated, unloved babies do not grow properly and are especially susceptible to disease, while babies who are loved and handled grow normally and are stronger. So it is with the children of God. An isolated Christian cannot minister to others, nor can others minister to him, and the gifts can't minister either way.

So, then, spiritual unity is not something believers manufacture. It is something they already have in Christ, and they must protect and maintain it. Truth unites, but lies divide. Love unites, but selfishness divides. Therefore, "speaking the truth in love," let them equip one another and edify one another, that all of them may grow up to be more like Christ (Hull, 1990, p. 216).

Galatians 4:19 says, "Until Christ is formed in you." Fee (2007), commenting on this verse, suggests a very strong principle concerning membership retention. He explains that the new Galatians were not to deviate from Christ. They were to stay in Christ until Christ's image was formed in them. This goal should be given to each newly converted member, to stay with Christ and to be Christ-centered.

Malphurs (2009) 2offers several important contributions to how Jesus made disciples that are crucial in membership retention. Unlike the crowds which followed Jesus, the disciples who believed followed Him and obeyed Him. They were a narrow circle of followers called the twelve disciples and a broader circle which consisted of a variety of men and women from various groups who believed and followed Jesus (Luke 6:13; 8:1-3). To follow Jesus meant to be a servant of Jesus, to be willing to serve Jesus even to the point of death. To make disciples, Jesus focused on small groups of disciples (Mark 1:16-20; John 2:11). Second, He spent time with the inner circle of the twelve. Third, He counseled individuals like Nicodemus in John 3.

Malphurs (2009) also listed five steps which can assist new believers to grow in Christ. These steps can be summarized as follows:

1. They should follow Jesus (1 Cor 11:1; 1 Pet 2:21) and to follow Jesus means to serve Him (Acts 20:19; Rom 12:11; Col 3:24; 1 Thess 1:9) and serve others (1 Cor 12:5; Eph 4:12; 6:7; 1 Pet 4:10).

2. They should deny themselves and embrace His will for their lives (Rom 6:1-14; 12:1; Gal 2:20; Phil 3:7-8).

3. They should believe and hold to Christ's teachings (Acts 2:42; 6:1-7).

4. They should love one another (1 John 3:14).

5. They should bear fruit (Gal 5:22; Col 1:10.

Malphurs (2009) lists three additional points concerning how the early church made disciples. These points indicate the kind of lifestyle the members of the early church lived which resulted in its rapid spiritual growth. He suggests that (a) they met in large houses (medium-sized groups), (b) they met in smaller houses (small groups), and (c) they ministered one-on-one (individually) as Barnabas ministered to Paul (Acts 9:26-28).

Tangeman (1996) discusses several key points to keep church members growing. The points include a church strategic plan, helping members discover their

spiritual gifts, being mission-focused; and having a church structure that favors

spiritual nurture. These points are further explained as:

1. Having a strategy of shaping new believers into Christ's image.

2. Having a simple church structure which will enable church members to easily meet one another.

3. Assisting and helping the members to accept changes that will be rewarding to them and others.

4. Encouraging small groups as a means of nurture among the members.

5. Letting all members be involved in seasons of prayer.

6. Helping members to discover and use their spiritual gifts to edify all the other members.

7. Helping the members to focus on the mission of the church.

8. Establishing small groups where disciples can be nurtured, supported, encouraged, and trained.

Warren (1995) offers a few additional suggestions on how to help church

members become mature. He suggests that spiritual growth must be intentional for it

requires commitment and effort to grow (Rom 6:13) and spiritual growth must be

very practical, for any believer can grow to maturity if he or she develops the spiritual

habits required.

Also, spiritual growth is a process that takes time (see, e.g., how God allowed

Israel to grow little by little in Deut 7:22) and people arrive at maturity through a

process (Eph 4:10). Spiritual maturity is better demonstrated by behavior than by

beliefs, so believers should let others see their faith by their actions (Jas 3:13), for

Matt 7:24-27 suggests that by their fruits you shall know them. Christians need

relationships to grow to spur one another along (Heb 10:24-25; 1 John 3:14), and it

takes a variety of spiritual experiences with God to produce spiritual maturity (Deut

11:2; Prov 20:30).

Social meetings also have an important role to play in the retention of youths. Russell Burrill suggests that the social meeting was one of the earliest methods used to care for church members. This method helped church members share their testimonies and experience the presence of the Lord. Such experiences encouraged the members to grow strong in the faith (Burrill, 1998, p. 180).

Burrill (1998) further suggests that social meetings are a strong method in nurturing church members. Adventists maintained a beautiful balance between the relational and the cognitive, however, modern Adventists seem to be majoring on the cognitive and neglecting the relational. Perhaps it is time for modern Adventists to rediscover the balanced life of the cognitive and the relational. Perhaps it is time for fewer sermons and more fellowship.

Many social meetings have been conducted at Adventist events such as camp meetings and General Conference sessions. It was on such occasions that E. G. White (1958) presented Jesus Christ as the only solution for our sins. It was also at such occasions that the newly converted gave their testimony about how they had been forgiven and expressed their joy and happiness about their new experience with Christ (E. G. White, 1958, p. 188).

Concerning social meetings as a means of nurturing new converts, Burrill (1998) explains that social meetings enabled the early Adventists to develop a community among believers. During those occasions, the Bible studies conducted allowed them to share and confess their sins and to encourage one another. The social meetings acted as a glue to hold the early believers together. It also helped them to iron out differences between themselves.

For any newly converted member to grow spiritually, the Adventist Church has suggested that seven principles be followed (General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, 2005, p. 155):

1. A life of Spirit. The Spirit of God not only gives birth to a new life, but He also fosters the spiritual growth and helps the new convert to daily walk with God (John 14:17; 16:13; Rom 8:14; 2 Cor 3:17, 18).

2. A life of love and unity. The Christian life starts by being reconciled to God and then to one another, for sin had brought separation (Isa 59:2). In Christ, there is reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18). Love is a requirement of any believer for as Christ loved us, so we must love one another (John 13:34).

3. A life of study. As the food is a basic need to sustain the physical life, so is it with God's Word—it is likened to a sword (Heb 4:12). The Word equips Christian with all good virtues for the Christian journey. It is to be studied daily and regularly (2 Tim 3:16, 17).

4. A life of prayer. To know God's will is part of what is needed for spiritual growth. This will be possible only as one has a constant life of communion with God-life of prayer (Luke 18:11; Eph 6:18). Prayer is likened to oxygen for the soul.

5. A life of fruit-bearing. The Christian life is demonstrated by what the Bible calls fruits of the Spirit (Matt 7:20; Eph 2:78). It is a life of obedience which is the result of the believer's relationship with God. Love is demonstrated in action (John 14:15, 15:4).

6. A life of spiritual warfare. The Christian journey is filled with warfare, the war between good and evil, and between Christ's people and the devil (Eph 6:12, 13; 1 Pet 5:8-9). The Christian life is both a battle and a march.

7. A life of worship, witness, and hope. Christian growth takes place within a community of the redeemed and, on the other hand, we have a community of those without the visible body of Christ. This life happens while we are being together with other members (Acts 2:42-47).

New converts stay when integrated into a group and given a role or task. New members should be given some kind of church duty to keep them involved so that they can identify themselves with the church (Burrill, 1998).

The Ministers' Manual of the Seventh-day Adventist Church points out a very important aspect concerning nurturing church members. The book states that it is not just baptizing people into an important church, but teaching and fellowshipping with them is also vital. The most miraculous thing about Pentecost is not that 3,000 were

baptized in a day but that they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship. (Acts 2:42) With the Holy Spirit's aid, it's possible to enjoy both quantity and quality in church growth (General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, 2005).

Another way of caring for the new member is to continue giving them instructions. "As newborn babies, desire the pure milk of the Word that you may grow thereby" (1 Pet 2:2). Assign them some work and let them be trained on how to witness to their immediate friends and family members. The same method was used by Christ in Mark 5:19 (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1992, p.132).

Summary

It is noted that many factors contribute to youth leaving the church. Some factors such as secularism, leadership, and nurturing can negatively impact youth retention in the church. The study on theological principles from both the Old and New Testaments and the writings of E. G, White has emphasized many important principles on membership retention. These principles can be broadly classified into four main categories: (i) the role of a Christ-centered life, (ii) the role of newly baptized member, (iii) the role of the church leaders, and (iv) the role of the mature Christians. Each of the four categories has a crucial part to play in membership retention.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the procedures that were followed in conducting the study. The steps that the researcher used in studying the effect of secularism, leadership, and nurturing on youth retention in the Nyaburi District were described in detail. This chapter entails the study design, populations, target population, sampling methods, and procedures and research instruments that were used in carrying out this study.

Research Design

This is a case study that adopted a descriptive research design and inferential statistics which enabled the researcher to summarize and organize data in an effective and meaningful way. According to Paulin (2017), "descriptive research studies are based on some previous understating of the nature of the research problem." The design seeks to capture the quantitative aspect. The descriptive survey attempts to describe or define a subject often by creating a profile of a group of problems, people, or events through the collection of data and tabulation of the frequencies on research variables or their interaction as indicated.

Using the descriptive research design, the researcher was able to describe the variables of the study and derive predictive regression models for predicting changes in the dependent variables. Most importantly, the descriptive design is the most appropriate for the study because it allowed the researcher to describe strategies adopted by the church, and make specific predictions on how much change was

caused by predictor variable(s) and whether the effects are significant. Descriptive research describes a phenomenon as it exists, by taking raw data and tabulating it into a useable format. This study used the descriptive survey design which provided the needed information on the population in understanding the effect of secularism, leadership and nurturing on youth retention in the Nyaburi District.

Population

A population is the entire group of individuals or items under consideration in any field of inquiry and has a common attribute (Baumgarten, 2012). The population of this study comprised of church leaders and youth leaders in Nyaburi District. The church leader's age ranged from 25 years and above. The respondents were from the Nyaburi District. According to the available records, the district had 32 youth leaders and 50 adult leaders which added up to 82 respondents.

Sampling Procedure

Sampling design is a definitive plan for obtaining a sample from a given population. It refers to the procedure the researcher would adopt in selecting items for the sample. Sampling is described as the process by which a relatively small number of individuals, object, or event is selected and analyzed to find out something about the entire population from which was selected (B. L. Kothari, 2007). Census sampling is ideal whenever the population is small; the respondents can easily be accessed and are willing to participate in the research. Census sampling was adopted comprising of 32 youth leaders and 50 adult leaders. The youth were ranging from 13 to 25 years old while adults were above 25 years.

As described by Mugenda (2008), primary data refers to information that is collected for the first time while secondary data are information from previously published or compiled sources. Quantitative primary data was collected through the

administration of questionnaires to sampled respondents. Primary data was designed in line with the objectives. Secondary data was collected from the church attendance records.

Research Instruments

Data collection tools are instruments used to collect primary data. The study used questionnaires to collect the data. The questionnaires were presented in simple English since the respondents would read and understand the questions asked. The duration given to the respondents to fill the questionnaires was two weeks by a drop and pick method. Questionnaires had advantages over some other types of surveys in that they were cheap, they did not require as much effort from the questioner as verbal or telephone surveys, and often have standardized answers that make it simpler to compile data. Questionnaires are also sharply limited by the fact that respondents must be able to read the questions and respond to them.

The choice of the methods to use is influenced by the nature of the problem and by the availability of time and money (Mugenda, 2008). The preferred instrument for data collection in the study was mainly through the administering of questionnaires. With standardized questionnaires, one can be confident that the data represented in the same way by all the respondents. The study relied on primary data that was collected by the use of structured questionnaires. Primary data collection included raw data that was collected from the churches in the Nyaburi District of Seventh-day Adventist Church, Kenya.

Pretesting

According to Baumgarten (2012), a reasonable pilot group should consist of between 1-10% of the sample size, hence this study picked 10% of the sample size. To be included in the study for pretesting of the instruments, the study distributed the

developed instrument among 10% of the youths and 10% of the leaders in the churches because the target population was heterogeneous. Thus, the study used five church leaders and three youth leaders of churches in Gendia Town district to pre-test the questionnaire.

Pre-testing identified problems like the excessive length of questions, unclear instructions or questions, lack of clarity in questions, leading questions, and closed-ended questions that have alternative answers. Baumgarten (2012) asserted that the accuracy of data to be collected largely depends on the data collection instruments in terms of validity and reliability. This district was selected since it is the neighborhood, it is large like the Nyaburi District and therefore its opinion was similar to that of Nyaburi District. Baumgarten (2012) stated that pre-testing is done to test the effectiveness of a questionnaire on a limited number of people from the population of interest before the actual survey is done.

Validity

Baumgarten (2012) describe validity as the extent to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure. The question of validity is raised in the context of the three points: the form of the test, the purpose of the test, and the population for whom it is intended. For this study, face validity was used to determine the validity of the instrument developed. Baumgarten (2012) argued that face validity refers to the degree to which a test appears to measure what it purports to measure. The validity of the instrument was determined using experts in the field of leadership. These experts assessed each of the statements of the questionnaires to determine their validity, at the end of the exercise; all the invalid questions were deleted from the questionnaires.

Reliability

According to Baumgarten (2012), research requires dependable measurement. Measurements are reliable to the extent that they are repeatable and that any random influence which tends to make measurements different from occasion to occasion or circumstance to circumstance is a source of measurement error. Baumgarten (2012) describe reliability as the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever it measures. Errors of measurement that affect reliability are random errors and errors of measurement that affect validity are systematic or constant errors.

For reliability, the researcher used the test re-test method to decide the dependability of the exploratory study. The test was given twice to the same gathered group of respondents after a two weeks' interval. To measure the internal correlation of the variables, the researcher used Cronbach's alpha which was then compared to the conventional cut-off point of 0.7. When testing reliability, a Cronbach's alpha higher than 0.7 indicates internal consistency on the instrument. Cronbach's alpha was produced for each subscale.

To test the reliability of the questionnaires, the study carried out a pilot test for both questionnaires. The reliability of the questionnaires was tested by computing the Cronbach Alpha. The recommended value of 0.7 is used as a cut-off of reliability (Baumgarten, 2012). The findings are indicated below:

Table 1. Reliability Test Results

	Youth Leaders		Adult Leaders	
Variable	No. Of Items	Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Secularism	5	0.847	4	0.792
Leadership	5	0.715	5	0.869
Nurturing	5	0.811	5	0.843

The findings for youth leaders indicated that secularism had a coefficient of 0.847, leadership had a coefficient of 0.715, and nurturing had a coefficient of 0.811. The findings of adult leaders established that secularism had a coefficient of 0.792, leadership had a coefficient of 0.869, and nurturing had a coefficient of 0.843. The reliability results of all set variables in the questionnaires gave a Cronbach Alpha of 0.7 and above, this showed that the questionnaires were sufficient and could be relied on in the study.

Data Collection Procedure

Primary data is collected directly from the field for the first time. The data collection procedure is the process of selecting and developing measuring tools and methods that are appropriate to the study (C. R. Kothari, 2008). The drop and pick method was adopted to allow the respondents sufficient time to answer the questionnaire. The respondents were requested to give their contact information for correspondence throughout the week-long period of filling the questionnaire. The researcher obtained an introduction letter from the Adventist University of Africa (AUA) to assure the respondents that the information collected was only used for academic purposes. The researcher also acquired a letter from Kenya Lake Conference authorizing access into the Nyaburi District.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process that starts immediately after data collection is completed and ends at the point of interpretation and processing of the results (B. L. Kothari, 2007). Data is of no value in its raw state and, it has to be analyzed to give meaning and to provide answers to the research problem.

Data analysis is the process of evaluating data using analytical and logical reasoning to discover new information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting

decision making (Mugenda, 2008). The data collected was coded and entered into Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) 23.0 statistical packages for analysis and the research findings were presented in the form of frequencies and percentages.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics as noted by Minja and Barine (2012), is referred to, as norms governing human conduct which have a significant impact on human welfare. It involves making a judgment about right and wrong behavior. The goal of ethics in research is to ensure no one was harmed or suffer adverse effects from research activities. The explanation was done to the respondents to assure them that the information they were to give was to be treated as confidential and for academic purposes only.

Their confidential information was only accessed by the researcher. They were not required to provide any identifying details and as such, transcripts and the final report did not reflect the subjects identifying confidential information. In this regard, the names of the respondents, and the names of the specific departments in which they worked was not disclosed. Their specific responses to the questions remained confidential and were used only for this study. The researcher ensured that participants who were willing volunteers were sufficiently informed of the aims of the study. The researcher sought consent from respondents first before engaging them in administering the questionnaire. For the respondents below the age of 18 years, parental authority was sought verbally through a meeting with the parents and guardians in the church.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with the results and presentation of data. It gives the observed findings and results following the application of the variables. It contains the questionnaire return rate, demographic characteristics of the study variables, descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics of the study.

Questionnaire Return Rate

The researcher distributed 32 questionnaires to youth and 50 questionnaires to adults. The respondents from the youth were 25, making a response rate of 78.0%, respondents from the adults were 41 making a response rate of 82%. This shows that the response rate for both youth and adults were sufficient for the study, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Questionnaire Return Rate

	The response rate for youth		The response rate for Adults	
Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Response	25	78%	41	82%
Non-response	7	22%	9	18%
Total	32	100%	50	100%

According to Mugenda (2008), a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting, a rate of 60% is generally good while a response rate of above 70% is excellent. Similarly, Babbie (2010) asserts that a response rate of above 70% is

deemed to be very good. Therefore, the response rate in the current study was sufficient for the analysis and reporting of the findings.

Demographic Information

The researcher sought to establish the demographic information of the respondents to determine their influence on the study. The findings of both the questionnaires are indicated in the subsequent sections.

Demographic Information for Adults

Gender distribution among adults. The researcher sought to find out the gender presentation of the adults in the church. The findings are shown in Figure 2.
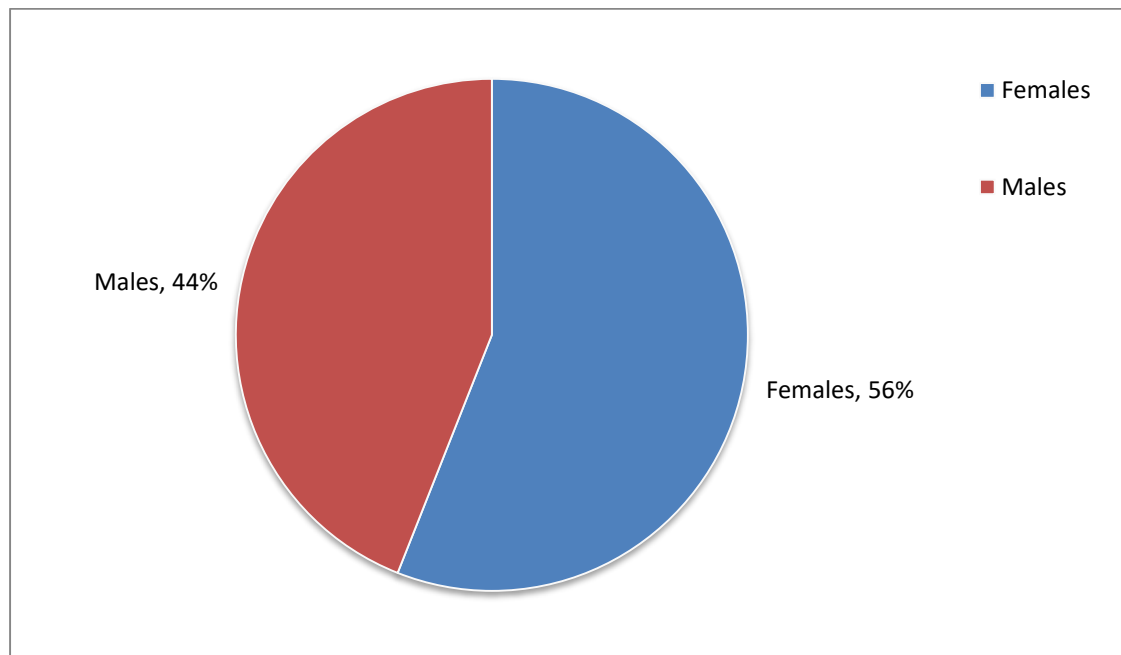

Figure 2. Gender Distribution among Respondents

Figure 2 established that the majority of the respondents 56% were females and 44% were males. This shows that the majority of the target population of adults in the church are females. It shows that more females are retained in the church than males.

Type of membership distribution among adults. The study sought to establish the adults' type of church membership. The findings are shown in Figure 3.
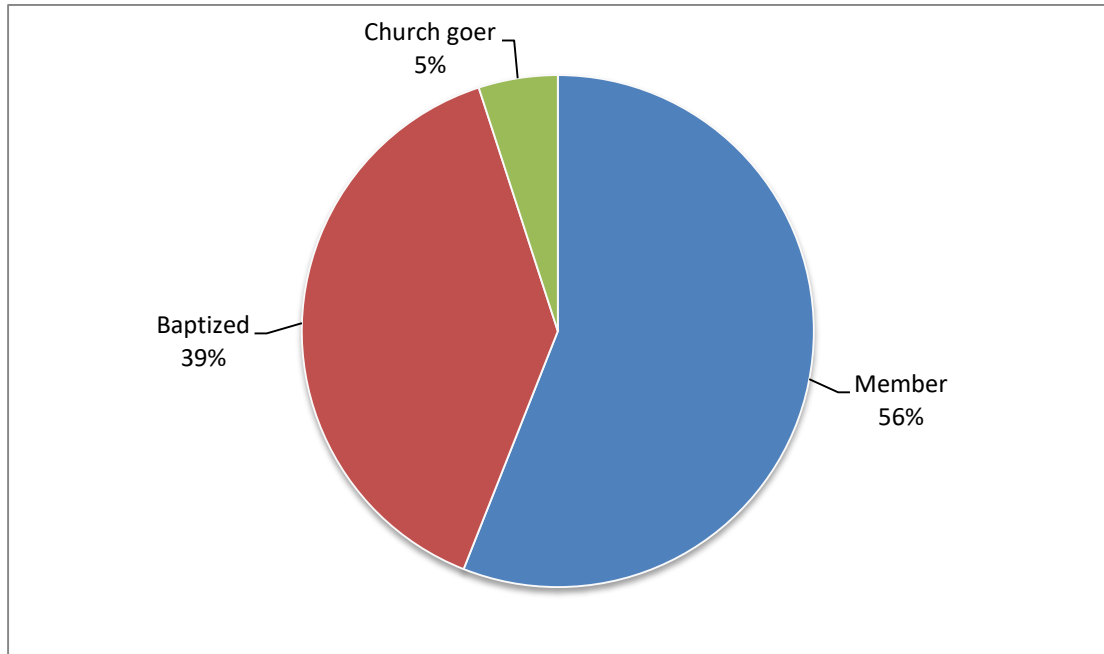

Figure 3. Type of Membership

The findings show that 56% of the adults described their church membership as members, 39% were baptized members and 5% indicated churchgoer showing no strong attachment to the Christian faith. The findings showed that the majority of the adults have held up their faith and retained in the ministry and are hence members of the church. It however shows that a lesser number of the adults have been baptized. At Nyaburi District, baptism is done for everyone who has gone through a baptismal class decides to be baptized. It, therefore, shows that there is a need for the adults to understand the faith and the basic Biblical doctrines.

Age distribution among adults. The findings in Figure 4 revealed that 44% of the respondents were aged between 30-40 years, 32% were 40-50 years and 24% were 20-30 years. The findings show that majority of the respondents were 30 years

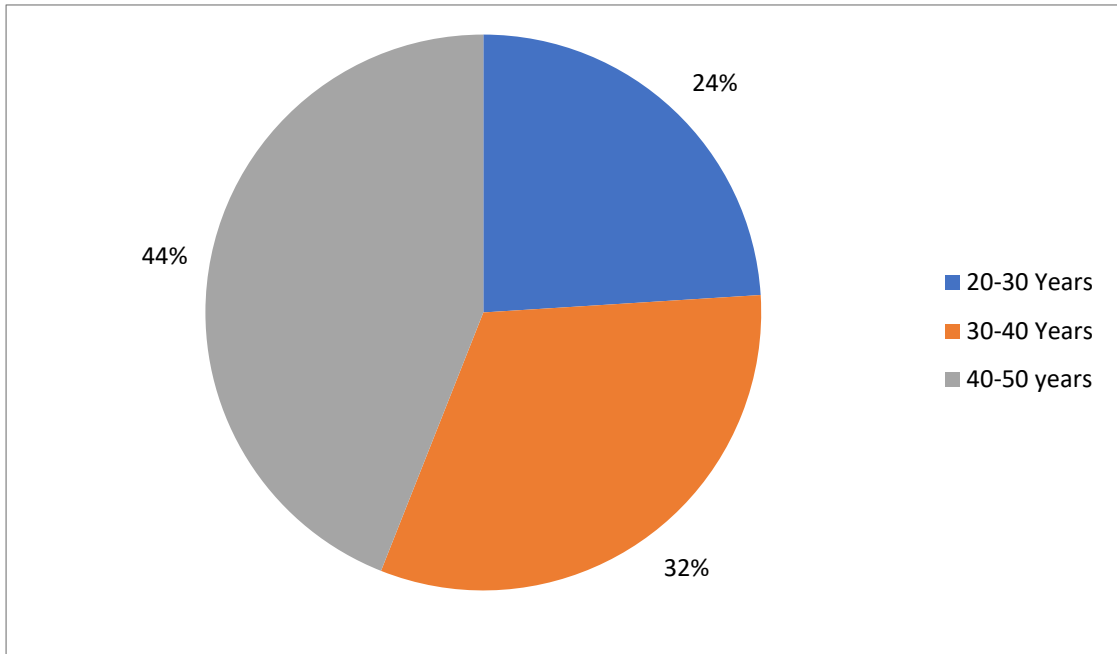and above an indication that the youth were mature and would be able to nurture the adults in the church.

Figure 4. Age

Marital status distribution among adults. The researcher requested the respondents to indicate their marital status. The findings were indicated in Figure 5.
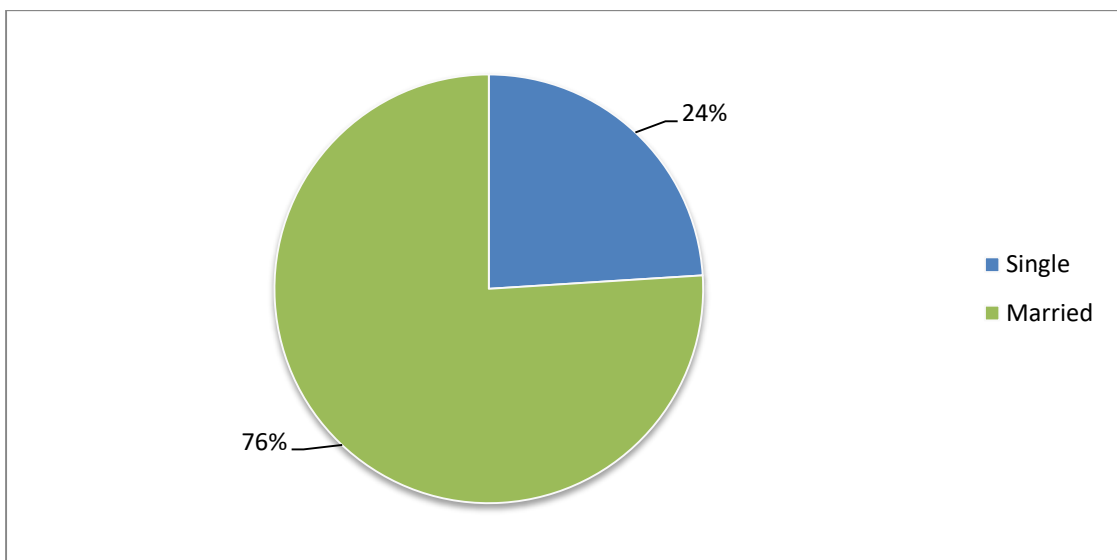

Figure 5. Marital Status of Adults[SB1]

Figure 5 above shows that 76% of the respondents were married and 24% of the respondents were not married. This shows that the respondents were majorly responsible and were likely to shoulder more responsibilities in the church.

Demographic Information for Youth

Gender distribution among the youth. The researcher requested the youth to indicate their gender. The findings are shown in Figure 6.
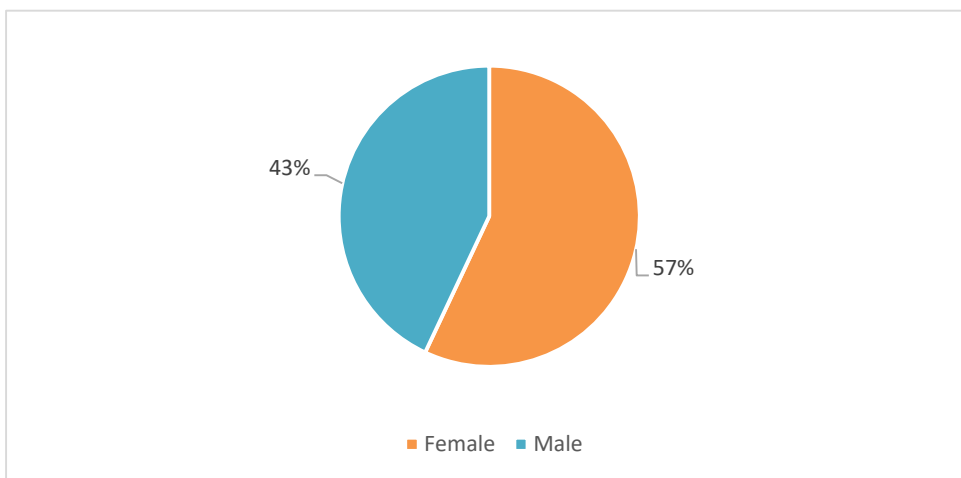
Figure 6. Gender

The findings in Figure 6 above, it was established that 57% of the respondents were female and 43% were male. This asserts there were more female youth, an indication that men are few congregants in the church. Since the ratios do not differ significantly, it can further be deduced that a majority of the youth between 13 to 18 years in the church who have been attending the Sabbath school since they were children had been retained.

Objective 1: Effect of Secularism on Youth
Retention in Nyaburi District, Kenya.

This objective sought to establish the effect of secularism such as secular worship, secular music, and social media on the retention of youths in Nyaburi District, Kenya.

Effect of Secular Worship

The respondents were asked whether secular worship affects the retention of youth in the Nyaburi District. The results given in Figure 7 below showed that 27 (40.9%) of the participants strongly agreed that secular in worship affect youth retention in the Nyaburi District. 23 (34.8%) agreed that secular worship affects youth retention, 13(19.7%), and (4.5%) disagreed and strongly disagreed that secular in worship affect youth retention in the Nyaburi District.
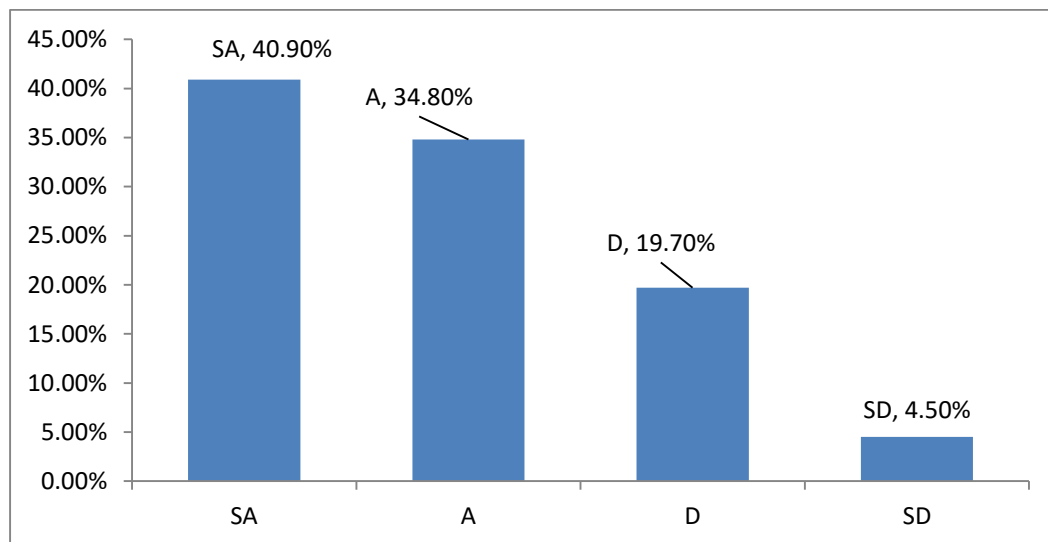

Figure 7. Effect of Secular Worship

This finding is in line with Brickhill (2010) who says that the post-modern world is full of non-biblical worldviews whose goal is to replace Jesus Christ. The battle is ultimately between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of man. The world

deliberately seeks to turn the minds of its young people in a direction different from God's will.

Wilson (2003) also stated that a lot of change from traditional and cultural worship styles and teachings to foreign styles of doing things can be seen in Christian churches today. He notes that in modern times there is a lack of African feel in the worship in many African churches. Due to television, sects and other religious propaganda spread over to other places, and because of ignorance, people chose to follow the wrong things. This, as believed by many people, is a result of secularism finding its way into the African churches.

Effect of Secular Music

The respondents were asked whether secular music affects youth retention in the Nyaburi District. The result in Figure 8 showed that 33(50%) strongly agreed that secular music affects youth retention, 19(29.8%) agreed, 9(13.6%) disagreed, while 5(7.6%) strongly disagreed that secular music affects youth retention in Nyaburi District.
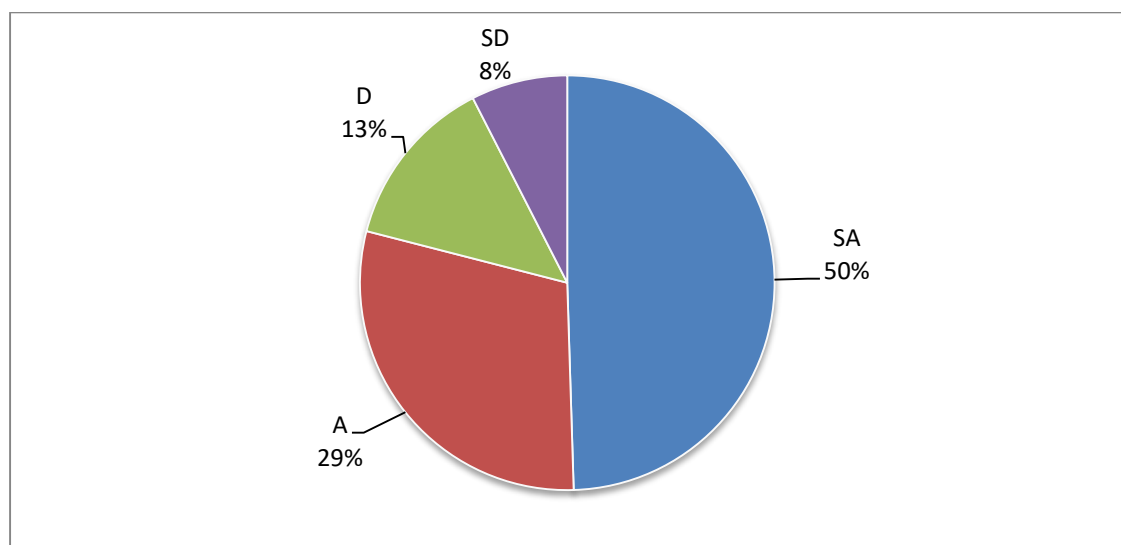

Figure 8. Effect of Secular Music

This finding is supported by Bacchiocchi (2000) who noted that rock music is becoming a threat to the traditional hymns not only in Catholic churches but also in protestant churches. Seventh-day Adventist Church is also not spared from its impact. According to Bacchiocchi (2000), a generation ago there was almost universal agreement that rock music, in whatever version, was inappropriate for personal and church use.

At that time, young people who wanted to listen to "worldly music" had to look for a hiding place, away from the hearing of their parents, teachers, and even some of their friends. Today, if a Christian teenager wants to listen to the same worldly music, and in many cases much worse, he can do so with the encouragement of his family, church, Christian school, and friends.

Effect of Social Media

The respondents were asked whether social media affect youth retention in the Nyaburi District. The result in Figure 9 showed that 26(39.4%) strongly agreed that social media affect youth retention, 20(30.3%) agreed, 13(19.7%) disagreed, while 7(10.6%) strongly disagreed that social media affect youth retention in Nyaburi District.
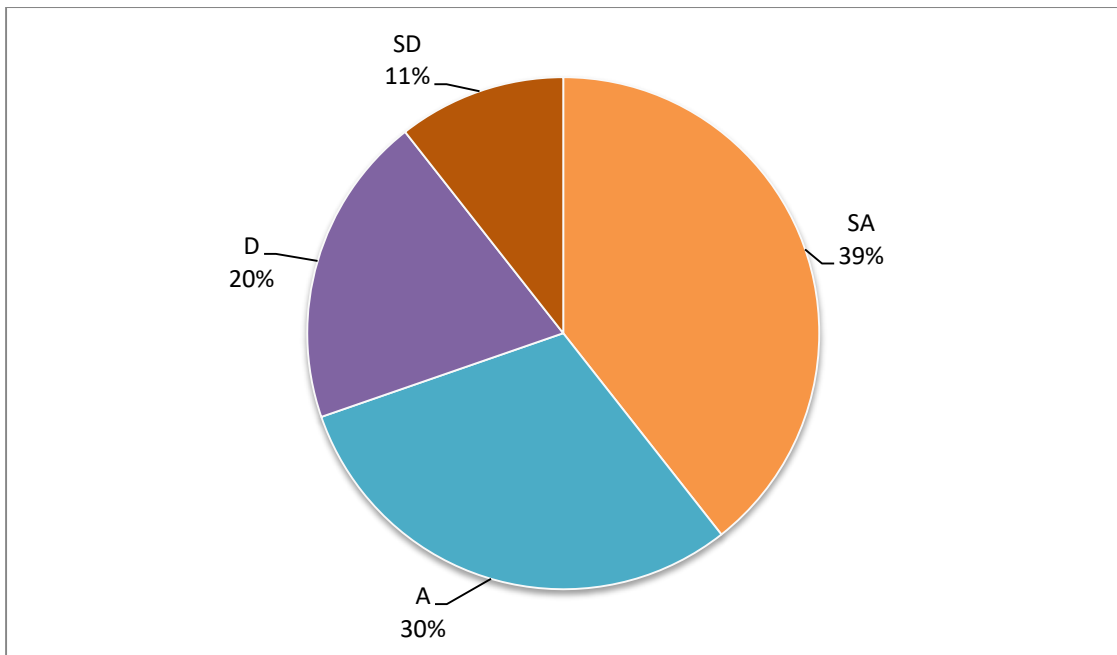
Figure 9. Effect of Social Media

This finding is in line with Hempel (2005) who noted that parents are concerned about the prevalence of pornographic material on social media. These concerns may not be unwarranted, in a recent content analysis of Facebook timelines, Coppins (2006) found that 59 percent of photographs on the site contained sexual poses and that 54 percent contained profanity.

Armfield and Holbert (2003) also noted that the relationship between internet use and religion found that there was a negative relationship where religion suffered most from the use of the internet. The study found that most of the internet users were reluctant to abide by the doctrines of religion and saw religion as an outdated sect. below are the findings in percentage:

Objective 2: Effect of Leadership on Youth Retention in Nyaburi District, Kenya

This objective shows the data on the influence of teachers on the enrolment of pupils in ECDE centers. It shows how lack of training, lack of teaching/learning

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materials, and how remuneration influenced enrolment in ECDE centers in the Mbita sub-county.

Conservativeness

Figure 10 shows how the conservativeness of leaders affects youth retention in the Nyaburi District. The study found that 37(56.1%) strongly agreed and 20(30.3%) agreed that conservativeness affects youth retention. 5(7.6%) disagreed, while 4(6.0%) strongly disagreed that conservativeness affects youth retention in the Nyaburi District, Kenya.
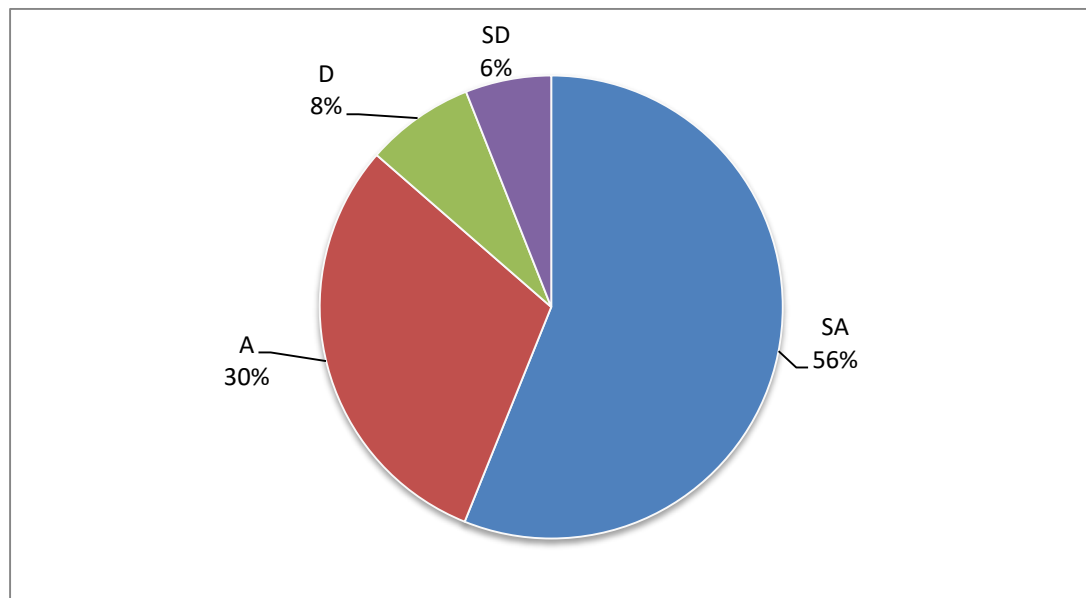

Figure 10. Conservativeness

This finding is supported by Nash and Whitehead, (2014) who state that leadership in church entails a relationship of trust and responsibility in which certain people are entrusted by Christ. The authority of the office is defined primarily by service which includes the responsibility of stewardship of God's given natural and spiritual gifts.

Nduyo (2013) also noted that a tight schedule of service, habitual repeated rituals, formal confessions, framed prayers, spiritless hymns, and stereotypical rhetoric messages are the examples of this conservativeness of worship. The noisy music, frequent clapping, tedious offerings, and unnatural humor in services have become very flippant. The administrative rigidity of churches also stifles communication among the people. Young people especially can't stand the rigidity and flippancy of services in the church. The figure below shows how conservativeness affected youth retention in Nyaburi District:

Lack of Involvement

Figure 11 shows how a lack of involvement affects youth retention. The study found that 40(60.6%) and 16(24.2%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that lack of involvement of youths in making decisions and in church programs affected youth retention in the Nyaburi District. 6(9.1%) and 4(6.1%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that lack of involvement affected youth retention in the Nyaburi District.
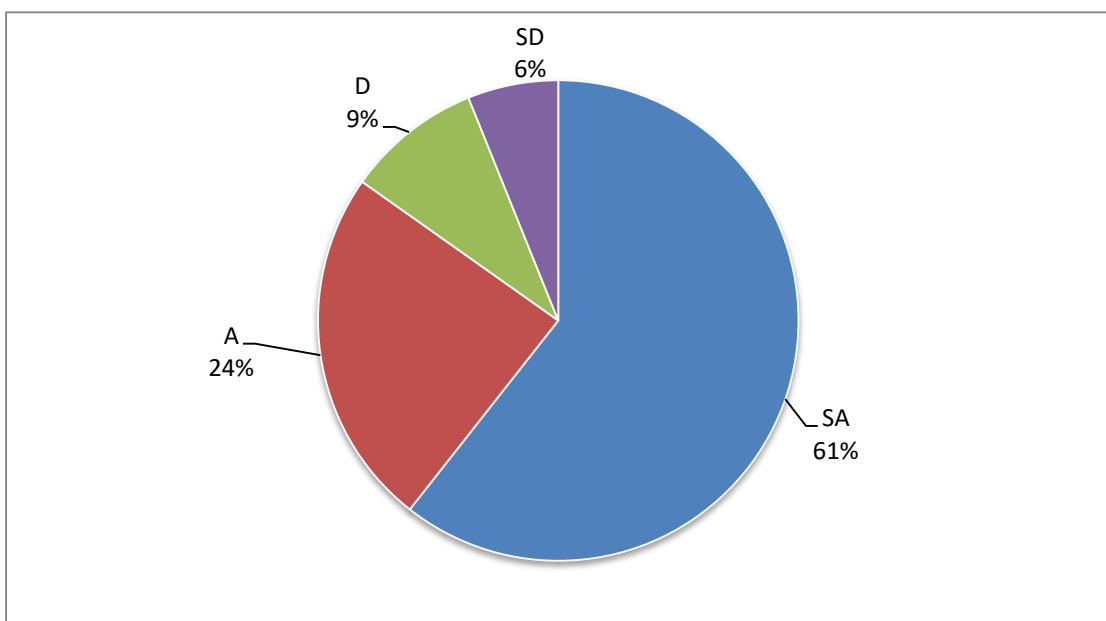
Figure 11. Lack of Involvement

This finding is supported by Bradley et al. (2004) who assert that obtaining young peoples' perspectives is necessary because the social position of adults limits what they can purport to know about youth. Furthermore, Morrill et al. (2000) argue that to legitimately comprehend a particular articulation of youth culture, researchers must meet youth in the spaces where young people make and have their lives constructed by adults daily.

Gossip

Figure 12 shows the effect of gossip on youth retention in the Nyaburi District. The study found that 30(45.5%) and 23(34.8%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that gossip affected negatively youth retention in Nyaburi District while 10(15.2%) and 3(4.5%) disagreed and strongly disagreed that gossip affected youth retention in Nyaburi District.
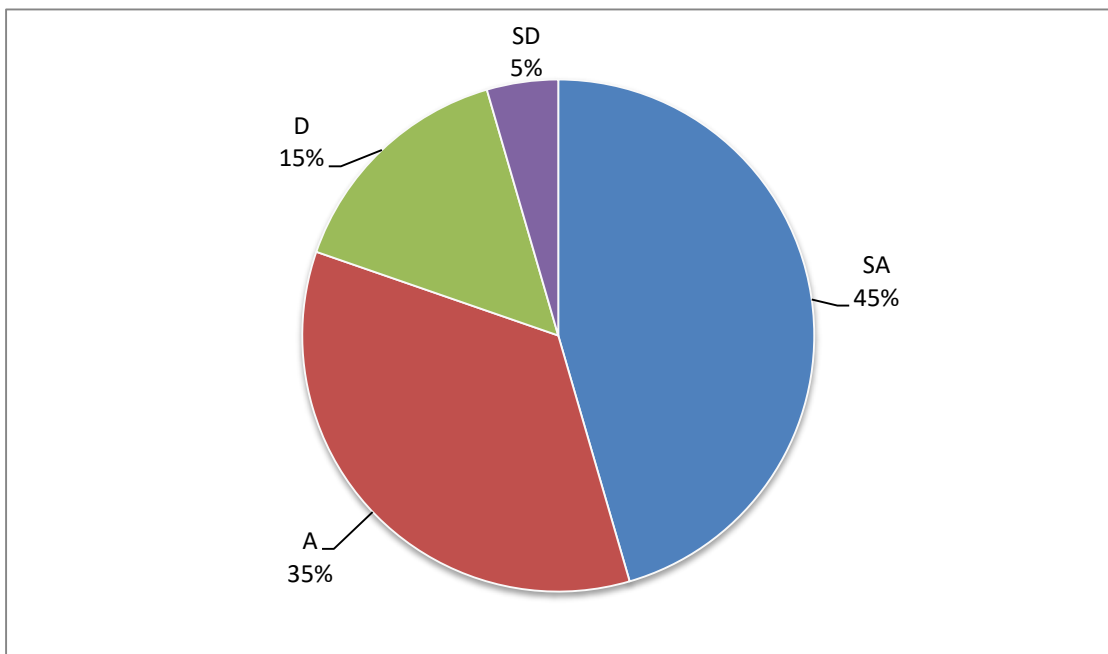
Figure 12. Gossip

This finding is not in line with any scholar since no literature on how gossip affects youth retention in the church was found. From the findings of objective two which studied the effect of gossip on youth retention in Nyaburi District, the study found that in affected negatively youth retention in Nyaburi District, Kenya.

Effect of Parents on Retention

Figure 13 shows how parents affect youth retention, the study found that lack of sharing affected youth retention in Nyaburi District, the study found that 25(37.9%) strongly agreed and 13(19.7%) agreed that parents affected youth retention in Nyaburi District. However, 17(25.8%) disagreed and 11(16.7%) strongly disagreed that parents affected youth retention in the Nyaburi District.
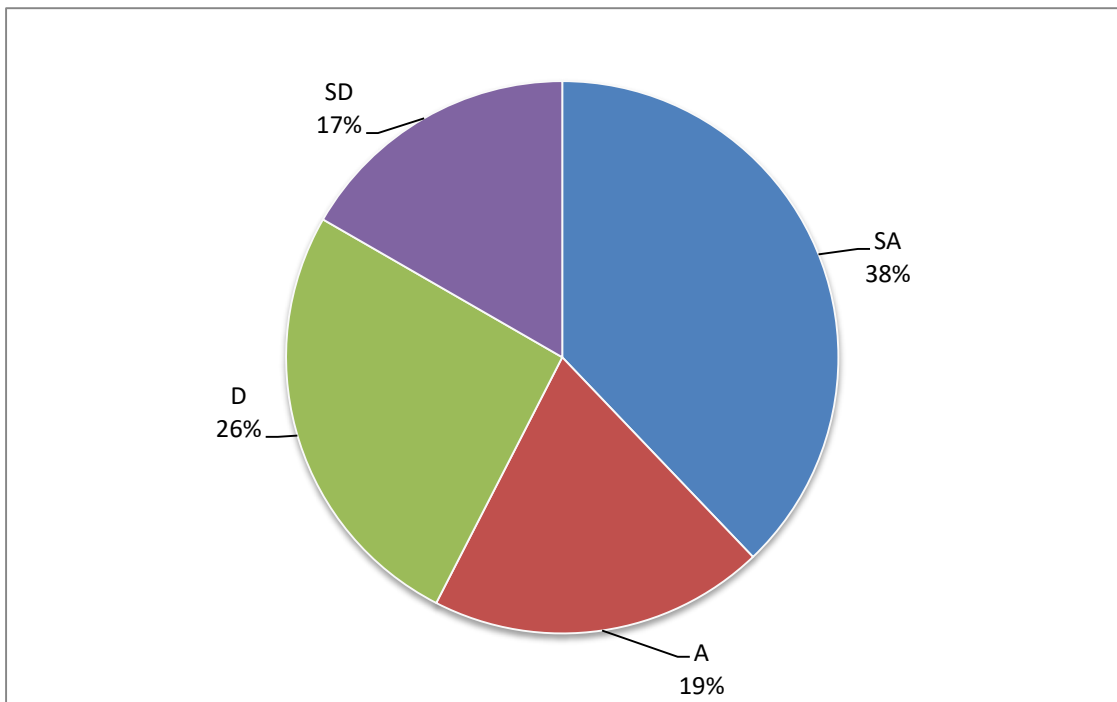

Figure 13. Effect of Parents on Retention

This finding is supported by For a parent to successfully pass on their faith, they need to be consistent (Ziettlow, 2013). They must live what they preach, and do so as consistently as possible. A religiously disinterested youth may not be shunning their faith so much as they are reflecting their parents' noncommittal attitudes (Rymarz and Graham, 2005). Without a constant model, youth lack a religious role model to follow (Ziettlow, 2013). Beyond a constant example, there must also be a good relationship between parent and child (Ziettlow, 2013). No matter how zealous their faith, a distant, overly strict, or overbearing parent will have far less success in passing their faith on to the next generation.

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**Objective 3: Effect of Nurturing on Youth
Retention in Nyaburi District, Kenya**

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This objective gives the data on how nurturing affected youth retention in the Nyaburi District. It gives how lack of fellowship, lack of teaching, and lack of sharing affected youth retention in the Nyaburi District.

The Effect of Fellowship

Figure 14 shows the effect of fellowship on youth retention in Nyaburi District, the study found that 40(60.6%) strongly agreed and 17(25.8%) agreed that lack of fellowship affected youth retention in Nyaburi District. On the other hand, 7(10.6%) disagreed and 2(3.0%) strongly disagreed that lack of fellowship affected youth retention in the Nyaburi District.
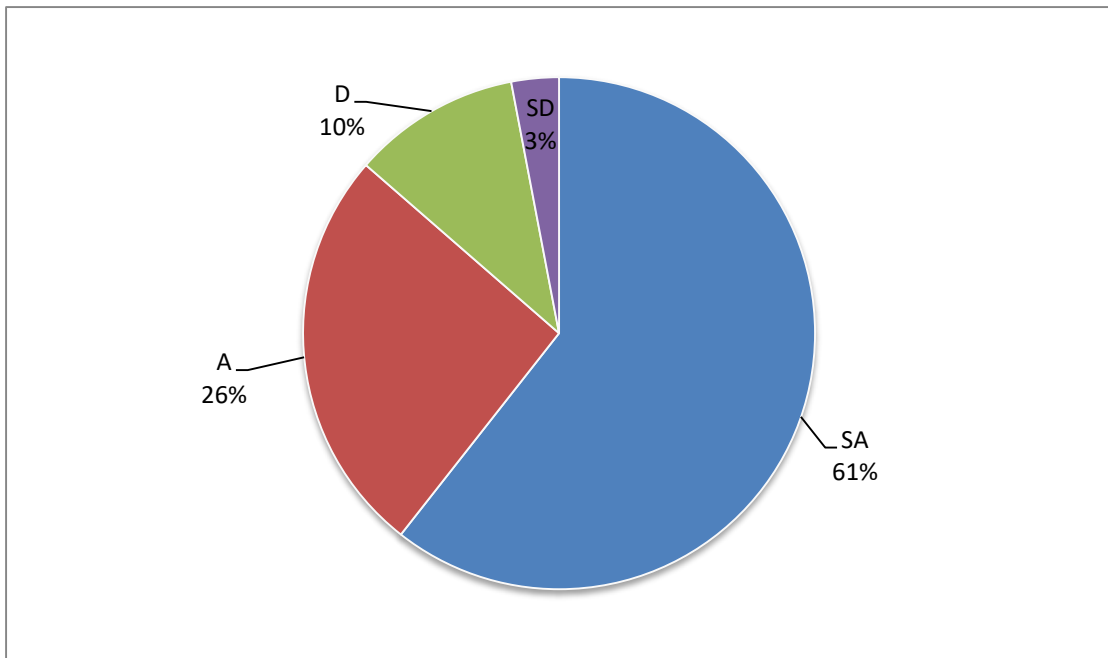
Figure 14. The Effect of Fellowship

This finding is in line with Ironside (1943) who stated that teaching, fellowship, sharing of goods, and prayers of repentance made it possible for the new converts to continue maturing in faith. The religious practices in that early church embraced obedience which led to a community of worship, a practice of sharing of goods, and witness (Ironside, 1943).

Effect of Teaching

Figure 15 shows the effect of teaching, the study found that 43(65.2%) strongly agreed and 14(21.2%) agreed that lack of teaching in the churches affected youth retention in Nyaburi District. On the other hand, 6(9.1%) disagreed and 3(4.5%) strongly disagreed that lack of teaching affected youth retention in the Nyaburi District.
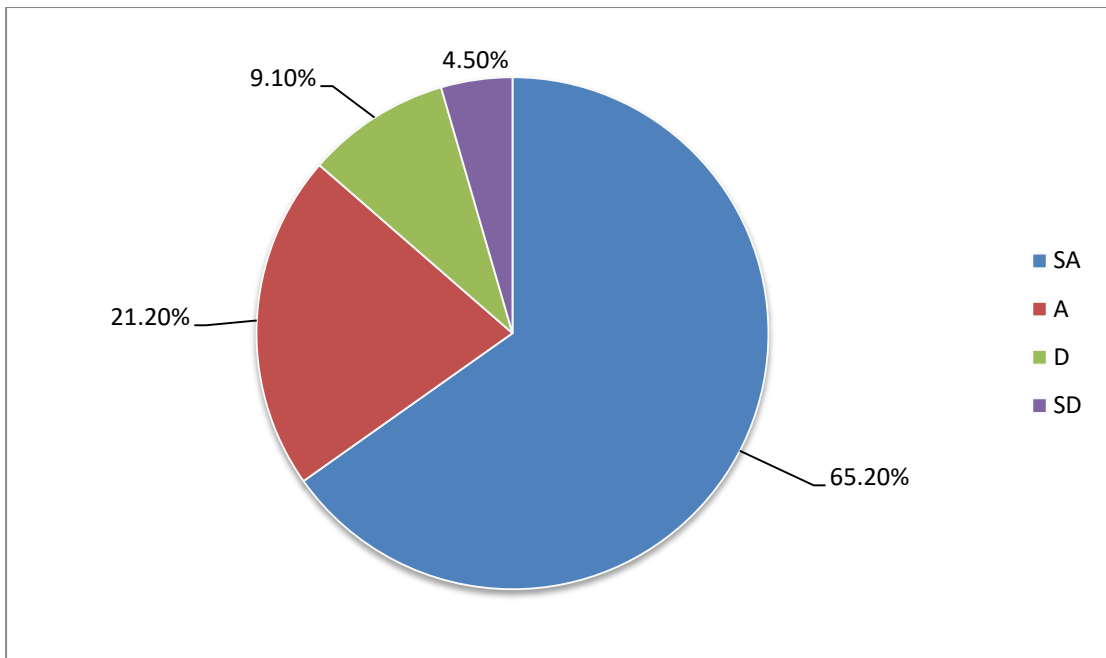
Figure 15. Effect of Teaching on Retention

This finding is supported by Barret (1994) who commented that the early Christians devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowshipped daily (Barrett, 1994). This revealed how the church members were regularly taught and how the apostles were consistent in giving regular instructions from the Word of God (Acts 2:43). The presence of God's Spirit initiated new relationships and newness of life among the believers. Individuals became a community of fellowship and friendship. This kind of fellowship was one of the reasons the church grew in numbers and spiritual life (Falk, 1995).

E. G. White (1950) also noted that those who are young in the faith may be kept from great temptations or opposition by being placed under the care of experienced Christians, and the new converts should be told that Christian life is constant warfare; hence, they should be taught how to stand firm in the faith. The findings, therefore, agreed that the lack of teaching affected negatively youth retention in the Nyaburi District.

Effect of Sharing on Retention

Figure 16 shows how lack of sharing affected youth retention in Nyaburi District, the study found that 30(45.5%) strongly agreed and 23(34.8%) agreed that lack of sharing among members affected youth retention in Nyaburi District. However, 7(10.6%) disagreed and 6(9.1%) strongly disagreed that lack of sharing among members affected youth retention in the Nyaburi District.
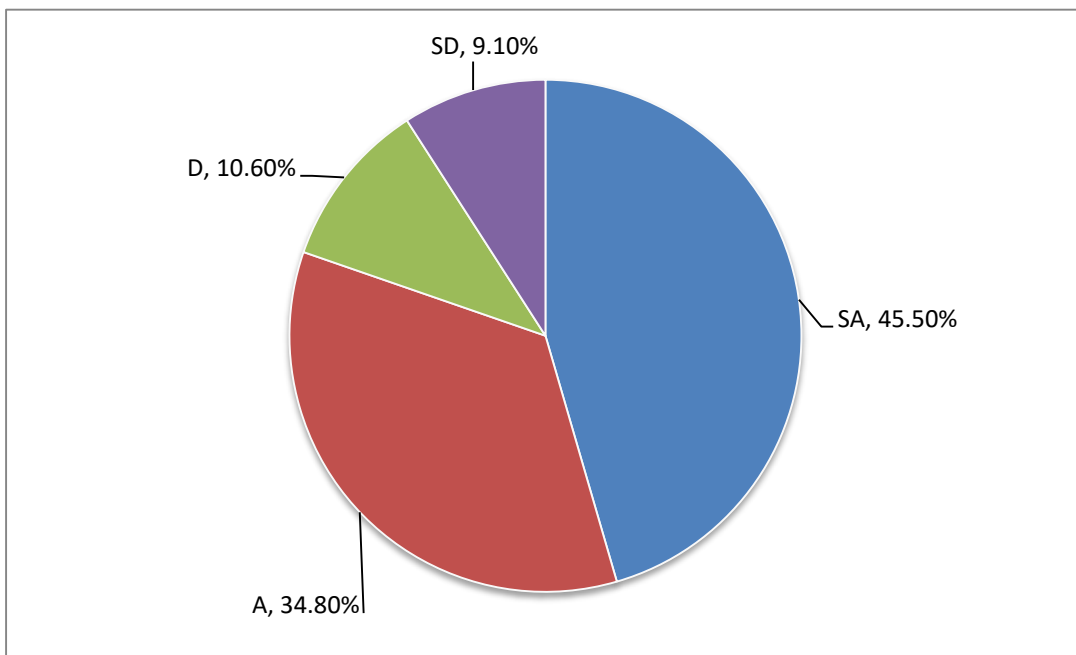

Figure 16. Effect of Sharing on Retention

This finding is supported by Vitisia (2016) who states that it is no kindness to others or service to God to do more than your share in the sacred duties of Church life. Sharing is the only way church members can live together. The finding shows that lack of sharing among members affected youth retention in the Nyaburi District, Kenya.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents the discussion and summary of the findings in line with the conclusion of the study. Recommendations are given as per the objectives of the study as well as recommendations for further studies.

Summary of the Findings

The purpose of the study was to assess the factors affecting youth retention in the Nyaburi District. The study was guided by the following research questions; how does secularism affect youth retention in the Nyaburi District? How do leadership affect youth retention in the Nyaburi District? How do nurturing affect youth retention in the Nyaburi District?

The study established that secular worship, secular music, and social media affected youth retention in the Nyaburi District. It also established that bad leadership such as conservativeness, lack of involvement, and gossip affected youth retention in the Nyaburi District. The study again found that some aspects of nurturing such as fellowship, teaching, and sharing affected youth retention in the Nyaburi District.

Secularism

The focus groups agreed that secularism in worship, music, and media affect youths in the church and highly contribute to their leaving the church. It was noted that youths copy the secular pattern of worship in other denominations intending to implement the same in the SDA Church. After their intention is thwarted, they leave SDA Church for the denominations which allow such practices. This was also the

case with music. The youth want to incorporate secular music in gospel music which is contrary to Adventist doctrines. They leave the church to join other denominations which accommodate secular like music. When it came to media, the group agreed that most of the youths who leave the church are influenced by social media. They take most of their time in social media more than they take in worship and due to that, they see normal worship as boring. It was also noted that some chat on social media even when a preacher is preaching.

Leadership

The majority of the focus group agreed that church leadership contributes highly to youths leaving the church. They claimed that some leaders are too conservative that they can't accommodate youths who cannot adhere to their rules and guidelines. Some of the areas identified under leadership which contribute to youths leaving the church are;

Discrimination in church discipline. When the church is discharging church discipline, it is carried out with partiality. Those who "matter" have their cases handled with lenience (such as church leaders) while others (mostly youths) are dealt with strictly. This double standard in carrying out church discipline discourages youths (and church members alike) and some leave the church.

Lack of effective church leaders. Some church leaders do not perform their duties as expected such as caring for the youth, the weak in faith, visiting the newly baptized members, or attending to the needy. Because of this, some youths are exposed to temptations that drive them from the church. Some church leaders are involved in leadership wrangles, for example, seeking church positions instead of caring for members. This kind of behavior causes others to leave the church.

Lack of Christ-centered sermons. The youth leaders and those interviewed reported that most of the sermons and teachings conducted in the churches do not focus on Christ, His birth, life, death, and resurrection. They are mainly stewardship and departmental promotions which are not connected with the gospel. Lack of preaching and teaching the gospel consistently leads some youth to question the credibility of the gospel. Christ says that without Him nobody can do anything (John 15:5). No spiritual nurture can be attained without members abiding in Christ.

Lack of spiritual nurture emphasis. It was also agreed by the leaders that the churches have no systematic spiritual nurture programs that are conducted in the local churches. They claim that what is being conducted is church programs are without specific goals in spiritual nurture. They said that some programs conducted are like social entertainment. No regular studies are conducted on Christian growth and discipleship; therefore, some youths find it hard to grow spiritually leading them to conform to the world.

Lack of sufficient instructions. Reports of both focus groups and church leaders reported that most of those baptized are not given enough biblical principles before baptism. Therefore, when they encounter some challenges after baptism, they easily leave the church because they lack enough biblical knowledge to sustain them.

Lack of a Christ-like life. The newly baptized youths expect to see a Christ-like model from the professed church leaders and members. When this expectation is not met, some decide to drop from the church. This is a common problem because a majority of church members are not living up to the set Christian standards.

The focus group suggested five ways to improve retention: present more Christ-centered messages in our churches, increase instruction for baptismal candidates, administer church discipline consistently and without partiality, establish

active nurture and retention committees, and have the Kenya Lake Conference

conduct more spiritual nurture seminars to the youths.

Retention Strategy for Nyaburi District

The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to make disciples as

commanded by Jesus Christ (Matt 28:19-21). Because of this, I undertake the project

to curb the youth membership loss in the Nyaburi District.

The overarching goal of my project is to reduce youth membership loss in the

Nyaburi District. The purpose which is connected with the goal is to develop and

implement a strategy to increase youth retention in the district. To achieve the above,

five major outputs will be produced by the project. These are: (a) permission from the

conference, (b) focus groups interviewed, (c) seminar materials developed, (d)

seminars conducted, and (e) monitoring and evaluation completed.

In the first quarter of the year, permission will be received, focus groups will

be interviewed in April and May of the second quarter of the first year, materials will

be developed from the Bible, Ellen White's writings, and other Christian writers in

August and September of the third quarter of the first year, and seminars will be

conducted starting from October of the first year through January of the third year.

Monitoring and evaluations plus summaries and recommendations will be conducted

in the second to the fourth quarter of the third year. Activities that will be carried out

include study and collecting materials for training, exposition, and topical studies

(Warren, 1995), disciple-making (Hull, 1990), cultural setups (Anderson, 1997), and

involvement of the conference (Dudley, 1983).

After permission has been granted by the conference and church boards,

questionnaires will be administered to the focus groups, materials will be developed,

seminars conducted, and monitoring and evaluation carried out. The elders will be

trained as TOTs (trainers of trainers) as well as other leaders in the fourteen churches. I agree with McNeal that as a leader I should form a culture of good virtues (McNeal, 2006, p. 72).

Implementation of Strategy

Every project requires a careful and thoughtful strategy to succeed. One writer has observed that it is one thing to make a strategy and another to implement it. Strategies often die due to lack of implementation (Malphurs, 2009, p. 175).

A strategy is described as a careful plan or the art of devising plans to reach a goal. A good strategy has both long-term planning and short-term foresight (Robb, 1989, p. 37). In another way, a strategy shows the goal while implementation leads to carrying out details to achieve the goal of the project.

Unlike business strategies, a Christian strategist is required to depend upon God, for without Him, he or she will fail. The reason is that God is the one who provides all the power needed to succeed in His mission (John 15:4-5; Phil 4:13; Dan 2:27-28). As Dayton and Fraser (1990) put it, "As Christians, a strategy forces us to seek the mind and will of God. The strategy is an attempt to anticipate the future God wants to bring about. It is a statement of faith as to what we believe the future to be and how we can go about bringing it into existence" (Dayton & Fraser, 1990, p. 14). The strategy is also a means of communication to fellow Christians so they can know how we think and concentrate our effects.

During the first year of the project activities involving the first two outputs are expected to be partially completed. These activities include receiving permissions from Kenya Lake Conference; focus groups interviewed, and collected data analyzed. The second year of the project covers outputs three and four. Seminar materials on membership retention will be developed from the Bible, Ellen G. White writings, and

other Christian writers. Seminars will be conducted where the members are classified into several groups. For example, members will be grouped by gifts, small groups, church groups, and family groups. In all these groups, members will share prepared materials or principles on membership retention as taught in the Bible, the writings of E. G. White, and other Christian writers. The third-year output number five will be conducted. The activities carried out include monitoring and evaluation and final summaries and recommendations.

The outputs in this project are from the first to the third year. There needs to be a lot of flexibility since change is expected in the application of the activities and resource schedule.

Focus group. Interviews will be conducted with key informants who understand the youths in the Nyaburi District. Discussions will be carried out on why youths drop out of the church immediately after they are baptized. The questionnaire approved by AUA University was administered to the focus groups (see Appendix for questionnaire). After conducting interviews with various groups, men, women, youth, the collected data will be analyzed. The main ideas will be listed as to why youths drop from the church.

Production of teaching materials. By the end of the third quarter of the first year, the teaching materials will be ready. Biblical principles that will be used to teach youth retention will be drawn from the teachings of the OT and NT, teachings of Ellen G. White, and other Christian literature.

Training of elders and members. Seminars will be conducted for 14 church elders in the fourth quarter of the second year. This will be the first training. These elders will be used to train members in their respective churches in the first and second quarter of the third year. In the third quarter of the third year, the members

will be organized into various groups as they share the information on how to retain

youths in the church. Some of the groups will include home churches, family groups,

and groups based on spiritual gifts.

Teaching materials in the churches. By the fourth quarter of the first year,

each church will have received developed teaching materials from the Bible, the

writings of Ellen G. White, and other Christian authors.

Church meetings. A special time for teaching the church members will be set

aside and with the help of the church elders, several meetings will be conducted in

each of the 14 churches. Some of the meetings will be conducted on weekends,

including on the Sabbaths.

Recommendations

The researcher suggests the following recommendations for the planner, the

Nyaburi District churches, and the Kenya Lake Conference.

Recommendations to the Planner

1. The planner should consider beginning the implementation of the project all over again, especially in the churches where the implementation did not take place.

2. To improve on the weak aspects of the project, more sensitization seminars need to be held for elders, church leaders, and members before the commencement of similar projects.

Recommendation to the Nyaburi District
Churches

All district churches should consider incorporating a similar project in their

churches and should continue with the implementation process.

**Recommendation to the Kenya Lake
Conference**

The Kenya Lake Conference should adopt the project and share it with other

districts to increase the youth retention percentages in all the churches in the district.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

SELF-ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

I am a student of Adventist University of Africa (AUA) in the School of postgraduate studies undertaking a study on; "**Effect of Youth Retention in Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Nyaburi District, Kenya Lake Conference, Kenya."** You are therefore requested to respond to the few questions below with honesty. The response given will be treated with confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only.

Instructions

Do not write your name on this questionnaire.

Carefully read the instructions on each section before you respond.

SECTION A

1. Gender: Male   (   )   Female   (   )
2. Membership: Baptized Adventist (   )   Visiting Adventist   (   ) Member, but not yet baptized   (   ).
3. Age Group in Years: 11-18   (   ) 19-25 (   )   26-40 (   ) 41-55 (   ) over 55 (   ).
4. How long in church: 6-10 yrs (   ) 11-20 yrs. (   ) 21-35 yrs. (   ) over 36 (   )
5. Marital Status: Single (   ) Married (   ) Divorced (   ) Widow/er (   )

Please answer the following questions on the scale: (1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3=disagree, and 4= strongly disagree**)**

Secularism	1	2	3	4
Youths bring secular worship in church and when cautioned leave the church.				
Youths want to church to be like secular organizations.				
Youths want to sing secular music in the church.				
Youths leave the church when denied to sing secular music in the church.				
Youths like to chat on social media even in the church during church services.				
Youths leave the church when told not to chat in the church.				
Leadership				
Church leaders are so hushed to youths causing them to leave the church.				
Leaders don't accommodate youths who question their leadership skills.				
Leaders are too strict for the youths.				
Leaders don't involve youths in church programs.				
Leaders don't involve youths in decision making.				

Gossip in the church against youths makes them leave the church.				
Indeed, some parents don't want their youths to go to church every day.				
Some parents think that their children will get involved in fornication when they go to church and this causes some youths to leave the church.				
Nurturing				
The nurturing of the youths is not done in the church.				
The nurturing committee is not concerned with youths who are leaving the church.				
Youths are not involved in fellowship groups.				
Youths are not humbly taught church doctrines.				
Most teachings are against how youths conduct themselves and this affects them in church.				
There is no sharing of faith among adults and youths.				
Youths are not allowed to freely share their faith with their fellow youths.				

In your own opinion what other factors affect youth retention in Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Nyaburi District, Kenya Lake Conference, Kenya?

Thank you for your cooperation.

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