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A Strategy to Increase Giving in the South Kenya Conference

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Andrews University

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ABSTRACT

A STRATEGY TO INCREASE GIVING IN THE
SOUTH KENYA CONFERENCE

by

Julius M. Bichang'a

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ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

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Problem

The South Kenya Conference (SKC) was the first to gain conference status in Kenya in 1981. Unfortunately it continues to struggle financially to the point of receiving subsidies from other conferences for its day-to-day operations. The annual stewardship statistical reports for the last 10 years show that the tithe is slightly higher than the offerings. While 14 % of the members return their tithes; only 8 % of them give offerings. This was one of the challenges I was faced with when I was elected as the conference Stewardship Director. This indicates that there is a weak commitment to systematic benevolence and Christian stewardship.

Methods

A logical framework and Gantt chart were used to organize the project and

describes the linkage of activities in the development and implementation of the project. Implementation involved the collection of local church treasurer's reports and conference treasury reports, conducting seminars, monitoring, and evaluations. Finally, a report on the progress, lesson learned, conclusion, and recommendations was drafted.

Results

The SKC, after the implementation of the project, reached the goal of a 20% increase in giving. Both tithes and offerings increased. Tithe increased by 39.99% and offerings increased by 13.42%. This was achieved by sorting out some of the issues that have been pending for many years in the conference. Some districts were divided and additional pastors were employed, which revived the spirit of the members.

The project also succeeded in holding seminars and stewardship promotions throughout the conference to teach, motivate, and encourage the members to practice biblical stewardship. The project resulted in 75% of the homes of members being visited and people prayed for.

Conclusion

Presently biblical principles and teaching stewardship principles are important. However, the research found that house-to-house visitation was the one thing that had the most impact on the giving patterns of the SKC. Without regular visitation many issues that affect giving are not addressed. When issues are not addressed on a one-to-one basis, giving of tithe and offerings decline.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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SOUTH KENYA CONFERENCE

A Dissertation
Presented in the Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

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October 2014

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This dissertation is
dedicated to
My wife
Jocelyn
My sons
Gerald and Grynal
My family
and
My mother and father
In-laws

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The South Kenya Conference was the first to gain conference status in Kenya in 1981. Unfortunately it continues to struggle financially to the point of receiving funds from other conferences for its day-to-day operations. This was one of the challenges I was faced with when I was elected as the conference stewardship director. It was obvious that biblical principles regarding faithfulness in stewardship needed to be emphasized in order to boost members' response to giving tithes and offerings.

Statement of the Problem

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Kenya is experiencing a low return of tithes and offerings. The annual stewardship statistical reports for the last ten years show that the tithe is slightly higher than the offerings. While 14 percent of the members return their tithes, only 8 percent of them give offerings (Treasury Report, South Kenya Conference, 2010). This indicates that there is a weak commitment to systematic benevolence and Christian stewardship. This situation calls for urgent attention and thus will be the focus of my project.

Statement of the Task

The task of this project is to develop and implement a strategy to teach, motivate, and encourage Adventists to be faithful in stewardship in the South Kenya Conference.

Significance for the Project

The insights gained from this project will be helpful to members' spiritual growth and commitment to faithful stewardship. Such a project is also needed to correct the misconception that offerings are not holy to the Lord. It is hoped that all these efforts will increase the amount of tithe and offerings returned, thus leading to a better financial status for the conference.

Description of the Project Process

The theological reflection section will focus on two areas. First, biblical principles on tithe and offerings in the Old and New Testaments will be researched. Second, stewardship principles from the writings of Ellen G. White will be studied. Current Christian literature will also be reviewed for additional materials to be used to conduct stewardship seminars for both pastors and elders. Pastors and elders will then team up in educating the members concerning biblical stewardship. Quarterly assessments will be done to determine the level of progress made. Yearly reports will be compiled and shared with the conference officers.

Limitations of the Study

Faithfulness in giving tithe and offerings is a matter of individual members surrendering all aspects of their lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. As such, the success of this project depends to a great extent on members' willingness to live by biblical principles. The best seminars can be presented but it is the Holy Spirit that can truly transform people's hearts.

Personal Basis for the Ministry

According to Reggie McNeal self-awareness is a very important basis for ministry. Self-awareness includes self-knowledge (knowing who you are), self-mindfulness (understanding your motive for doing what you do), self-vigilance (knowing what makes you tick and ticks you off), self-consciousness (knowing how you come across to others), and self-alertness (maintaining your emotional, physical, and spiritual condition) (McNeal, 2006, p. 10).

Because many of the Bible characters possessed a high level of self-awareness, they were able to accomplish much for God. Some examples include Moses, David, and Paul. As part of the implementation of my project, I will do a self-assessment to better understand my personal basis for ministry. Special attentions will be given to aspects that can affect the implementation of my project strategy.

General Background

God uses several things to shape people for His service. This section of my dissertation focuses on some of those things that have influenced my life and prepared me for ministry.

Reggie McNeal emphasizes that spiritual leadership is a work of heart. This truth escapes many spiritual leaders who focus on methods, techniques, and their ability to plan, rather than asking God to transform their hearts for them to have the right perspective of pastoral ministry (2000, p. xi). McNeal further outlines six sub-plots which God uses to shape leaders' lives: culture, call, community, communion, conflict, and common place. I will examine how God has used those subplots to shape me for ministry.

Culture

Culture is the first major player in a leader's heart shaping. My Kisii culture has contributed greatly to my being in ministry. It has instilled in me a sense of responsibility, discipline, and respect for elderly people from all walks of life. The hardships experienced during my initiation rite have taught me to be patient and persevere. It is my culture that has taught me to value community-centeredness over individualism as it is expressed in the following saying: "I am because we are, and since we are therefore I am" (Mbiti, 1990, p. 106).

Call

From birth my parents saw me as a special child without being able to explain why they thought so. At another time my district pastor told me that I looked like a pastor and that I would become a pastor. The more I became involved in church-related activities the more I felt that God was calling me to pastoral ministry. This sense of calling persisted through secondary school. I finally surrendered and went to study theology at Spicer Memorial College. Obedience to God's call gave me a sense of fulfillment.

Community

I have to a great extent been shaped by the values of my community. It is my community that taught me values such as patience, self-discipline, self-sacrifice, and accepting responsibility for my actions. My community taught me the value of self-sacrifice in a practical ways: they contributed from their meagre revenues to pay for my theological training.

Communion

A leader's personal relationship with God is a source of inspiration in his leadership. My communion with God has become the spiritual foundation that supports my ministry. Reflection on and memorization of Scripture and the reading of other spiritual books such as the writings of E. G. White have all contributed to strengthen my communion with God.

Conflict

I agree with Reggie McNeal when he says that "conflict is a difficult, and yet very necessary part of the heart-shaping of the leader. Through conflict, the leader grows. Through conflict, the leader learns to trust in God, and to trust in other people. Spiritual leaders must welcome conflict as a heart-shaping tool of God" (2000, p. 156). I have experienced conflict several times in my ministry. But instead of becoming bitter and resentful, my family and I always sought strength through fasting and prayer. God miraculously turned things in my favor.

Commonplace

"A lot of heart shaping activity goes on in the everyday, run-of-mill, when nobody's looking at the activity of the leader, the ordinary and routine serves to shape the leader's character" (McNeal, 2000 p. 178). My willingness to make sacrifices for people irrespective of their religious affiliations and station in life has been rewarding in my ministry. I once volunteered to help a Catholic family with their son's funeral arrangements when no one else in the community seemed willing to do so. To my surprise the entire family decided to join the Adventist Church. I have since learned that

ministry is not only about preaching but also about meeting people's felt needs.

Personal Assessment

Conversion and Assurance of Salvation

I started attending the Seventh-day Adventist Church when I was 8 years old and was baptized at the age of 14. In my church strict obedience to the Ten Commandments was strongly emphasized as a means of salvation that I always felt unfulfilled spiritually. The assurance of salvation became a reality to me when I heard a speaker preach on God's plan of salvation for humanity at a camp-meeting. He pointed us to Eph 2:8-10, which says that, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." That sermon was instrumental in helping me overcome my doubts about my salvation.

Margin

In *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Live*, Richard Swenson discusses how many spiritual leaders lack emotional, time, financial, and physical reserves. This imbalance in life becomes a source of all kinds of health problems. For Swenson part of the solution lies in contentment, simplicity, balance, and rest.

My biggest challenge is in the area of time reserve. I find myself so overloaded by ministry demands that I cannot spend quality time with my family. I need some improvement in my time management to set my priorities right.

Temperament

I took the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) test as part of my self-assessment. The results reveal that I am an ESTJ (Extrovert, Sensing, Thinking, and Judging) person. As an extrovert, I am energized through my interaction with people. As a sensing person, I like ministering to people's felt needs in practical ways. As a thoughtful person, I like deciding for myself after along reflection rather than being influenced by others. The judging side of my temperament sometimes puts a lot of pressure on those I interact with on a daily basis.

Tools for Self-Assessment

In their book, *Equipped for Every Good Work: Building a Gifts-Based Church*, Dan Dick and Barbara Dick provide four other tools for self-assessment: a Spiritual Gifts Inventory test, a Leadership/Interaction Styles test, Task Type Preferences, and Spirituality Web (2001, pp. 31-36).

Spiritual Giftedness

The Spiritual Gift Inventory test I took revealed wisdom, administration, and evangelism as my main gifts. This means that I love translating life experiences into spiritual truth and seeing the application of scriptural truth in daily living. My gift of administration enables me to plan and work with people, delegate responsibilities, track progress, and evaluate effectiveness. The gift of evangelism helps me to easily share the Word of God with others.

Leadership/Interaction Styles

The Leadership/Interaction Styles help leaders become aware of their leadership

styles and their characteristics. There are four main leadership/interaction styles: Director, Dreamer, Pleaser, and Thinker. The style that most closely describes me is that of a director. As a director I am task-oriented, focused on results, and willing to go an extra mile so that my job is done.

Task Type Preferences

This self-assessment tool describes the four ways we undertake our various assignments: Project, Work, Process, and Fellowship. Project is my type since I belong to the group of people who like to see programs, ministries, or events through from start to finish.

Conclusion

The time taken to assess my personal basis for ministry has helped me become aware of my strengths as well as my weaknesses. I need to become a genuinely changed person for me to effectively play my role in working alongside God to change the world.

Overview of the Project

Chapter 1 focuses on the statement of the problem and my personal basis for ministry. In Chapter 2 a biblical theology of tithing will be developed from the Old and New Testaments, from the writings of Ellen G. White, and other Seventh-day Adventist authors. In Chapter 3 the project context will be described, while Chapter 4 deals with the implementation of the project. Finally, Chapter 5 presents a report of the implementation, lesson learned, future impact, conclusion, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF TITHING

Introduction

This chapter will examine the biblical evidence which describes the tithing and offering systems in Scripture in an attempt to explore its essential characteristics and theological content. I will examine selected biblical passages in which tithing and offering are discussed or mentioned, and will emphasize the theological concepts associated with them and their purpose. I will then integrate those ideas and concepts to provide a broad picture of the biblical understanding of faithful stewardship.

Biblical Principles of Giving

This section will focus on some of the key Bible principles that should guide church members in giving. The principles are:

1. The principle of generosity. In 2 Cor 9:6 it states, “Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” Scripture suggests that the size of a harvest corresponds to the seed that is scattered. Prov 11:24-25 reads, “There is one who scatters, and yet increases all the more, And there is one who withholds what is justly due, and yet it results only in want. The generous man will be prosperous, and he who waters will himself be watered.” For example, a material seed (giving to a ministry) may reap a spiritual harvest (1 Cor 9:9).

God has blessed us both materially (Acts 14:17) and spiritually (Rom 5:17); therefore, we can be assured that God will increase the harvest. The Bible says that he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness (2 Cor 9:10).

2. The principle of cheerful giving. The Bible says, “Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor 9:7). In support of this principle, Ifechukwu argues that a person’s giving should be a deliberate act and not just a quick response to some emotional appeal (1993, p. 3). Certainly there is nothing wrong with giving a freewill offering because God has moved one to support a particular mission or project, but there should also be a purpose and a plan to giving (p. 3).

3. The principle of giving voluntarily. In 2 Cor 9:7 we read that we are not to give under guilt or compulsion. That admonition does not mean that members are only to support the local church or Christian organizations when they feel like it. In this particular passage, Paul was challenging believers in Corinth to give to a special need. This was a one-time special offering that was above and beyond providing for the regular needs of the church in Corinth. This indicates that people should be encouraged to support special projects voluntarily, out of their own heartfelt desire to receive God’s blessing (McArthur, 2000, p. 118).

4. The principle of giving generously. Notice that in 2 Cor 9:7 it says that God loves a cheerful giver. God values not the size of the gift (Acts 11:29; 1 Cor 16:2) but the heart of the giver and the willingness of the giver (a cheerful giver). This principle is seen in the Old Testament. When the temple needed to be repaired, Joash put an offering box

out for those who would give to this important work. All the officials and all the people brought their contributions gladly, dropping them into the chest until it was full (2 Chr 24:10). Notice that it says they gave to the rebuilding of the temple gladly. They were glad to give and provided a model for what Paul calls a cheerful giver.

5. The principle of giving proportionately. This is emphasized by the apostle Paul with his final three words in 2 Cor 8:11, “by your ability.” Paul then underlines his point with this instruction: For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according what he/she does not have. Deut16:17 reads, “Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the lord your God has blessed you.”

6. The principle of giving sacrificially. This principle is mentioned when Paul acknowledges the Macedonian church’s giving. He says, “They gave according to their ability and gave beyond their ability they gave of their accord” (2 Cor 8:2-3). In this passage, Paul is challenging the believers in Corinth to re-evaluate their priorities and give sacrificially.

The principle of giving sacrificially is also seen in the story of the widow’s offering that amounted to all she had. Jesus used her example saying, “Truly I tell you, this poor woman has put more than those who are contributing to their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put everything she had, all she had to live on” (Mark 12:41-44). The same principle is also seen at work in the Old Testament. In 2 Sam 24:24 David says, I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing. David is reminding us by his behavior that true sacrificial giving means being willing to sacrifice that which we would be inclined to keep for ourselves.

Old Testament Teaching on Tithing

The Old Testament provides a theological foundation for tithing which makes this practice enriching to the life of the believer. The system, as revealed in the Old Testament, is divine in its origin as it was given by God to humankind. I will examine the biblical passages in which tithing is discussed and explore the theological and biblical understanding of giving. In the Old Testament there are four different types of tithes mentioned as discussed below.

1. The First Fruit: The first of the wool when the sheep were shorn, of the gain when wheat was threshed, the first portions of oil and wine were also set apart for God, as were the first born of all animals. This tithe was presented before the Lord at the sanctuary to be used by the priests (White, 1952, p. 526)

2. The First Tithe: In Israel there was a first tithe or special tithe, which should not be mistaken for the first fruit mentioned above. The first tithe was a tenth of all the income and was specifically for Levites and priests (Num 18:21; White, 1952, pp. 275, 277). Both the first fruit and the first tithe seem to have the same purpose to provide for those who officiated in the temple, but the difference was the mode of giving. Therefore, in the case of tithe from animals, the first born and the tenth both belonged to God.

3. The Second Tithe: Another kind of giving was the second tithe which was to be shared by Levites, the poor, orphans, and widows. The same was the third year tithe. In the third year it was shared in the home of the giver (Deut 14:23, 29; 16:11-14; White, 1952, pp. 274-275).

4. The King's Tithe: The last of the tithes found in the laws for Israel was the one that was given to the king (1 Sam 8:15). This tithe was separate from the tenth of the

resources, for the temple service (Horn, 1979, vol. 8, p. 1127).

Genesis 4:1-8

At the very beginning of human history,

Adam lay with his wife, Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain. She said, 'With the help of the Lord, I have brought forth a man' Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time, Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favour on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering, He did not look with favour. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. (Gen 4:3-5)

This passage presents the first mention of giving in the Bible. However, apart from a reference to the first fruits, tithes, and other offerings are not mentioned in this passage. In the case of Abel's offering the term "firstlings," *bekor*, refers to the firstborn (Mounce, 2006).

The word "tithe" or tenth," *maser* in Hebrew (Mounce, 2006, p. 980) is not used in Gen 4:1-8, and there are no obvious parallels in the story that would connect it to other tithing texts in the laws of Moses. However, the book, *The Sacred Tenth* includes an argument for tithing based on Gen 4:1-8 and centred upon a textual variant in the LXX reading of Gen 4:7 (Lansdell, 1955, p. 1). Lansdell's interpretation of this verse, based on the variant, leads him to conclude that Cain's offering was not accepted because he did not present to the Lord a sufficient quantity (a tenth) and not because of the quality of the offering (1955, p. 1). Wenham believes that it would be reasonable and consistent with the story to infer that the offerings were brought during the course of an agricultural year (Wenham, 1987, p. 103).

Snoeberger in the book, *The Pre-Mosaic Tithe: Issues and Implications*, argues "that lack of any background information surrounding these events leaves little room for

drawing firm conclusions about their relation to the practice of tithing. The fact that the brothers brought offerings merely shows that these ancient workers understood that their success depended on the providence of God, and this they acknowledged by bringing a token of thanksgiving from their respective occupations (Snoeberger, 2000, pp. 74-75).

The lack of explanation and detail within the text gives reason to believe that the offerings themselves are not the central focus of the story. The terms used in the passage lead Snoeberger to suggest that the offering was “roughly, though not exactly, equivalent to Israel’s first fruits, not their regular sin offerings or tithes” (p. 75). Mounce notes that one of the more frequent later uses of the word is as it refers to the meal or grain offering (2006, p. 17).

In the New Testament the Genesis events are referred to in connection with the offerings of Cain and Abel, with emphasis that Abel’s offering was accepted because it was offered by faith (1 John 3:12; Heb 11:4). In *Patriarchs and Prophets*, White, commenting on Cain and Abel, states:

These brothers were tested, as Adam had been tested before them, to prove whether they would believe and obey the word of God. They were acquainted with the provision made for the salvation of man, and understood the system of offering which God had ordained. They knew that [through] this offering they were to express faith in the saviour whom the offering typified, and at the same time to acknowledge their total dependence of Him for pardon, and they knew by conforming to the divine plan for their redemption; they were giving proof of their obedience to the will of God. (1958, p. 72)

Genesis 14:17-24

This passage records the first patriarch in the Bible in connection with giving tithe. Abraham gave tithe to Melchizedek, the priest of the Most-High God (Gen 14:20). His descendant Jacob also swore to give to the Lord a tenth of all his possessions (White,

1958, p. 225). It has been suggested that by returning to God one tenth of the income, the believer recognized God's ownership over all his property (Nichol, 1978, p. 309). The Bible does not mention this purpose; it may be concluded from the fact that the Bible indicates that God is the owner of the whole earth (Ps 24:1).

The context of Gen 14:20 shows that Abraham gave tithes to the priest of the most-high God. Therefore, the practice of returning tithe that continued into later periods could have been borrowed from these early patriarchs. According to the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, "Abram and not Melchizedek was the tithe payer as clearly stated in Heb 7:4. Giving the tenth of the booty taken from the enemy was an acknowledgement of the divine priesthood of Melchizedek and proves that Abram was well acquainted with the sacred institutions of tithe paying. That Abram paid tithe shows clearly that tithe paying was not a later command, that it was a divinely instituted practice from the earliest times (Nichol, 1978, vol. 1, p. 309). By returning to God one tenth of his income, a believer recognizes God's ownership over all his property. This incident features prominently in some authors' arguments in favour of tithing for Christians today (Kendall, 1982, p. 324).

Genesis 28:20-22

The Lord appeared to Jacob in a dream, revealing Himself as a loving and caring God, willing to bless, guide, and protect the patriarch (Rodriguez, 1994, p. 6). He further comments that Jacob gave tithe in recognition of the sovereignty of God.

He was really to meet the underserved promise with a country declaration of loyalty to God. In acceptance of god's self-disclosure as genuine, and in recognition of sovereignty Jacob was ready to give back a tenth (22) to God. (pp. 6-9).

It has also been suggested Jacob's paying the tenth was a form of acknowledgment of the pardon and favour he received from God. "He vowed henceforth faithfully to pay a tenth not to earn the favour of Heaven, but in humble and grateful recognition on the pardon and favour of god" (Nichol, 1953, vol. 1, p. 383).

Leviticus 27:30-34

Leviticus 27 is the first mention of the tithe in connection with the Mosaic Law. Much of the book of Leviticus covers details concerning the worship of God and therefore the themes of holiness and purity are prominent (Harris, 1981, p. 126).

Leviticus 27 mentions that the tithe is a special portion that belongs to the Lord and is therefore holy (v. 30). Tithe, according to Leviticus 27, is to be paid out of the produce of the land (v. 30), as well as from livestock (v. 32). The text also suggests that the tithe is separate from the first fruits, since the instruction is that every tenth animal be given as tithe regardless of its quality or order of birth (vv. 32, 33). The brief mention of tithe in Leviticus 27 relates to the overall context of vows and of redeeming what has been set aside as the Lord's. Therefore, the passage states that goods that have been tithed can only be redeemed by adding one fifth to the total value of the goods.

Malachi 3:1-8

The passage in Malachi begins with the Lord stating that he does not change. Seemingly some had become weary of waiting and thought that God had changed His mind and became unfaithful. Most likely, Malachi has in mind the law in Num 18:21. In Deut 14:22-27, the tithe was to be brought to Jerusalem, and the people were to celebrate with the priests. The people were partakers in the feast, and the tithe still belonged to the

people. When faced with the charge that they had been “robbing God,” the people would naturally ask, “How have we robbed God?” This may indicate that the priests were not fulfilling their task of instructing the people in the Law (Mal 2:6, 8; Verheof, 1987, p. 303).

In the *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, in reference to Malachi 3:8, the meaning of robbing God is given.

Tithing (being fiscally responsible before God) is introduced by the blunt question ‘will a man rob God?’ stealing means not only taking what is not yours but keeping back for you what belongs to someone else. In this case one-tenth of a man’s income was due God; failure to pay that debt amounted to robbery. (Alden, 1985, p. 270)

While this could refer to the idea that some people were tithing and others were not, it most likely means that the people were giving, but holding back the full amount required. Further, God challenged the Israelites to test Him, but Malachi does not state this testing in universal terms, but limits it to the current situation by the phrase “test me now in this” (Mal 3:10).

New Testament Teaching on Tithing

There is no explicit command to tithe in the New Testament, but neither is there a rejection of the system. Considering the five references where the mention of the word tithe is made, the purpose is not stated clearly and in each case, the subject is not directly tithe. The longest discussion of tithing in the New Testament is recorded in Heb 7:1-10. It is also noted in the Gospels of Mathew and Luke. The New Testament canon has not developed much concerning tithe. There are five texts or passages that make mention of tithe or rather are related to tithe in one way or the other.

Matthew 23:23

In Matt 23:23, in addressing the Pharisees, Jesus warned that they paid tithe but neglected more important matters of the law, such as justice, mercy and faithfulness. However, the text does not provide evidence that Jesus was dealing with tithe. Therefore, the text may not be used to justify tithe or argue against it. Jesus does not tell the Pharisees and teachers of the law to neglect the tithe, but their scrupulous attention to ceremonial detail consumes so much of their time and attention that they have no time to plan how they will daily do the more important matters, such as bringing justice to those who are wronged (Wilkins, 2004, p. 753).

Luke 11:42

In Luke 11:42, the reference to tithe parallels the message in Matt 23:23, already discussed above. Therefore, the text to be analysed is Luke 18:12, another occasion where Jesus is dealing with Pharisees, in connection with prayer. In his prayer, the Pharisee praised himself for being a faithful tithe returner; this amounted to an act of self-glorification or justification. The passage is a parable, which means that in understanding the text the truth communicated should be considered. Mel Rees, commenting on the text, argues that “Jesus was not condemning tithing, but rather the self-congratulatory spirit of the Pharisee” (1985, p. 30). The only message communicated in the text about tithe is that by the time of Christ, tithe was a common practice among the Jews.

In Luke 18:9-14 Jesus tells a parable about a tax collector and a Pharisee which reads, “And he spake this parable unto a certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous. . . , I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.” Blomberg correctly views this as a two-point parable, “Interpreting the Parables,” in his book. There

he notes Jesus' main point is not tithing but humility (Blomberg, 1990, pp. 257-258).

1 Corinthians 9:13, 14

Mel Rees, commenting on 1 Cor 9:13, 14, states: "Here Paul refers back to the priests who were supported by the tithe, and clearly stated that those which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (1985, p. 30). The apostle Paul does not use the term tithe, but reference to the priests is evidence that he was addressing the issue of tithe. In this case, the stated purpose of tithe is for the gospel ministry, especially providing for those who serve God. However, this is not conclusive evidence because the word tithe is not mentioned.

Hebrews 7:1-10

In Heb 7:1-10, "Paul refers to Abraham paying tithe, to the King of Salem, as well as the practice of the Levites in returning a tithe" (Rees, 1985, p. 30). Angel Rodriguez commenting on the fact that Abraham returned his tithe to Melchizedek in Hebrews 7 is clear evidence of the superiority of the priesthood over the Aaronic one. The passage presupposes that tithing is a divinely-ordained practice. There is no rejection of tithing, rather an implicit recognition of its value and significance (1994, p. 15).

Mel Rees, former stewardship director of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, states that although theologians disagree about the origin, purpose, and principle of tithing, they all agree on one point: in the distribution of the spoils, Abraham gave Melchizedek, "the priest of the most high God, tithes of all" (Gen 14:18, 20). This casual reference gives credence to the thought that the giving of tithes was an established custom. Abraham acknowledged God's sovereignty by giving a tithe and by telling the

king of Sodom, “I have lifted up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth” (v. 22; Rees, 1985, p. 30).

In the New Testament, the purpose of giving tithe is not explicitly clear. In most passages on tithing, reference is made to the Old Testament. Therefore, the purpose of giving can be understood in light of the Old Testament, especially during the dispensation of Israel, where tithing had an inner meaning. The return of tithe provided certain information on the knowledge of God (White, 1952, p. 525).

Through the tithe God allows His people to deal with the holy, to handle that which belongs to Him. When dealing with holy things, we are challenged to be holy. Tithing makes a contribution toward that glorious goal because in our giving we are imitating God (Lev 20:26). Since tithe is holy, it becomes a test of loyalty for every person. It is a test because it sets limits to our freedom by calling our attention to our dependence on God. Tithe is a test because it appears to be part of our income and, therefore we can be tempted to keep it for ourselves, thereby violating its holiness.

Tithing reminds us of our covenant with the Lord, of our total, unconditional surrender to His will. In the covenant relationship, God becomes our God and we become His people, He is recognized as our saviour, the one who would bless us. In our relationship, we humbly recognize that all we have belongs to Him.

Ellen G. White on Tithing

In this section I will explore the concept and practice of tithing, along with the theological foundations for tithing in the writings of Ellen G. White. There is not an explicit theology of tithing developed in a systematic form in the writings of Ellen White. However, the topic provides a window to explore the theological aspects.

According to Ellen White, the connection between tithe and the divine will points not only to the perpetuity of tithing itself, but particularly to the fact that it was instituted as an expression of God's love for the benefit of the human race after the fall (White, 1952, p. 525).

The tithing system, White says, was instituted by God in order to help Christians realize that the preservation of their lives is totally dependent on the loving and saving will of God. Tithing also contributes to character development and self-image. White forcefully argues that through the power of God, the tithing system seeks to break down the control of selfishness in people's sinful nature by assisting to develop nobility of character. By instituting this system God permanently was appointing human beings as stewards of His goods on this planet and, consequently, reinstating them to a personal relationship with Him as owner of all (White, 1952, p. 256).

In *Testimonies for the Church*, White says:

God's plan in the tithing system is beautiful in its simplicity and equality. All may take hold of it in faith and courage, for it is divine in its origin. In it is combined simplicity and utility, and it does not require a depth of learning to understand and execute it. All may feel that they can act a part in carrying forward the precious work of salvation. Every man, woman, and youth may become a treasurer for the Lord, and may be an agent to meet the demands upon the treasury. Says the apostle: 'Let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him. (1857, pp. 392-393)

The special system of tithing was founded upon a principle which is as enduring as the law of God. This system of tithing was a blessing to the Jews; otherwise God would not have given it to them. So also will it be a blessing to those who carry it out to the end of time (White, 1857, pp. 404-405). God expects no less from us than He expected from His people of old. He claims the tithe as His own, and it should ever be regarded as a sacred reserve, to be placed in His treasury for the benefit of His cause. He

asks also for our freewill gifts and offerings of gratitude. All are to be devoted to the sending of the gospel unto the uttermost parts of the earth (White, 1857, p. 300).

Giving as a means of spreading the gospel is further emphasized:

God is calling upon His people to give Him of the means that He has entrusted to them, in order that institutions may be established in the destitute fields that are ripe for the harvest. He calls upon those who have money in the banks to put it into circulation. The Lord has made us His stewards. He has placed His means in our hands for faithful distribution. He asks us to render to Him His own; He had reserved the tithe as His sacred portion to be used in sending the gospel to all parts of the world. (White, 1857, p. 51)

The practice of tithing does two things: It provides for the gospel ministry and shows appreciation of God's gift. Thereby humans can claim His blessing as faithful stewards. This statement is supported by the following quotation, from the writings of Ellen G. White.

“As the giver of every blessing, God claims a certain portion of all we possess. His provision is to sustain the preaching of the gospel. And by making this return to God, we are to show our appreciation of this gift” (2003, p. 144).

The returning of tithe is also taken as an acknowledgment of God's providence and as a contract between God and the giver.

All that men enjoy they received from the Lord's great form, and He is pleased to have his heritage enjoy his goods; but he has made a special contract with all who stand under the blood-stained banner of prince Emmanuel, that they may show their dependence and accountability to God by returning to His treasury a certain portion as His own. (2003, pp. 249-250)

The gospel commission stands as the central purpose of tithe: Tithe is to be invested in supporting missionary work, which must be done to fulfil the commission given to Jesus' disciples just before He left His disciples (White, 2003, p. 200).

Tithe is also regarded as a test of heavenly fellowship (p. 251). Hence, whatever

means are entrusted to humans, a tenth belongs to God, and failure to return that portion, is seen as Satan's influence in a person's thinking (1926, p. 318). The missiological function is seen as the main reason why a tenth should be returned to God. Therefore, as supported by the statement below, the tithe should not be redirected for other purposes.

The tithe is set apart for a special use, it is not to be regarded as a poor fund. It is to be especially devoted to the support of those who are bearing God's message to the world, and it should not be directed from this purpose (1857, p. 277).

In *Patriarchs and Prophets* Ellen White: notes that, apart from giving tithe as a means to provide for the function of the house of worship, tithe was to be a reminder to the people, that God "was the true proprietor of the fields, their flock, and their herds", and that God is the giver of "sunshine and rain", making all harvest possible (1952, p. 526).

God intended that his people, Israel, should bear light to all inhabitants of the earth. In maintaining their public worship they were bearing a testimony to the existence and sovereignty of the living God (1952, p. 526).

Ellen White notes that giving tithe in Israel was considered as an expression of loyalty and love to God (1952, p. 526). This is emphasized in Mal 3:7-10, especially verse 7. It says that the people had turned away from the Lord and He urged them to return tithe as a sign of obedience to Him. Therefore, tithe has an aspect of stewardship, in which a faithful steward demonstrates loyalty to God. Stewardship is "man's responsibility for and use of everything entrusted to him by God" (2010, p. 270).

Tithe should only be used for the support of those who are engaged in evangelistic and nurturing ministries. "The tithe is to be used for one purpose, to sustain the ministers whom the Lord has appointed to do His work, and to support those who speak the words

of life to the people, and carry the burdens of the flock of God” (White, 1948, p. 82).

The Seventh-day Adventist Church teaches that the pastor should be an example in teaching and returning tithe faithfully (White, 1923, p. 225). Again, those paid by tithe should faithfully discharge their duties (p. 228).

Tithing in Adventist Authors

In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, tithe is viewed as God’s plan that is applicable both to the Old Testament and New Testament eras and among Christians today. Therefore, tithe is part of the stewardship of material possessions entrusted to us by God. That means we have a responsibility to return tithes to God, since tithe is His part of what He has entrusted to us (General Conference, 2005, p. 301).

Tithe is not a test of fellowship in the Adventist Church. It is, however, “recognized as a spiritual obligation that every believer owes to God and one of the spiritual exercise in which the giver should have part in claiming by faith the fullness of blessing in Christian life and experience” (p. 307).

In the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, church officers and particularly the elders are encouraged to return a faithful tithe. By so doing, they can encourage church members to do the same. Further, if a person fails to set an example in returning tithe, the same should not be retained in any church office (General Conference, 2010, p. 163).

In the book *God and Man Unlimited*, when commenting on tithe, Rees notes: “God entered into a partnership agreement with man. The tithe is His share of the profits made in the management of His goods” (1982, p. 52). In his *Biblical Principles for Giving and Living*, Rees writes: tithing was designed, not to raise money, but as a

protection for each individual to keep him from forgetting God's ownership (Rees, 1985, p. 29).

The system of tithe and offerings was intended to impress the minds of God's people with the great truth that God is the source of every blessing. They should treat Him with gratitude for the good gifts of God's providence. Tithe paying is accompanied by a steward-owner relationship (p. 29).

In that case, the tithe plays a similar role to the Sabbath: "The Sabbath reminds us of God the creator, the Sabbath is a memorial of creation (Exod 20:8-11), not related to tithing, but according to the scriptures, they both belong to the Lord (Rees, 1995, p. 30).

Tithing in Other Christian Literature

The subject of giving tithes finds different views within the Christian church today. For example, some Protestants argue that, "because scripture has not been properly interpreted, the following has been urged as the voice of God because tithing . . . was a law (de jure) in Israel it is a Law to the church" (Ramm, 1970, p. 3). Schmidt, Willmer, and Christian Stewardship Association say, "Christians will not become stewards by someone's exhorting them to be good stewards, or by telling them that stewardship pays good dividends, or by laying on them the Old Testament law of the tithe" (1996, p. 53). They will not become stewards until they know that because of who God is and who they are, they dare not ever be anything other than stewards of God's grace and goodness (p. 53).

Dr. Wesley K. Willmer, vice president of advancement at Biola University, says,

Just as the church is fragmented and culturally feeble, so is Christian stewardship. It has been eroded and uprooted, and as a culture we have changed our giving values

from a vertical relationship to God of stewardship to horizontal self-serving giving practices. (cited in Schmidt, 1996, p. 68)

Giving is nothing less than a complete lifestyle, a total accountability, and responsibility before God. Stewardship is what people do after they say they believe, that is, after they give their love, loyalty, and trust to God, from whom each and every aspect of their lives comes as a gift. “Worship without giving is always incomplete; giving without worship is always inadequate” (Rodgers, 1977, p. 70).

David Draewell, in the book *They Gave Themselves First*, states:

The highest priority in life for a follower of Jesus Christ is to love God completely and to seek His kingdom and righteousness above all else. As such fundamental priorities must direct every part of our lives, it is logically follows that God must also have first place in the use of our possessions, in general, and in our giving, in particular. (1995, p. 132)

Commenting on giving, Vallet identifies several reasons for tithing:

Sometimes it is said that the tithe is to be used for own celebration. Sometimes the tithe is to be given to the priests either for a religious celebration or because the priest is to be paid. The tithe is not a bad measure of giving for Christians, but it does not approach the standard, set for the household of Jesus Christ. When we are generous, we touch some small part of ourselves that calls up the possibility of the God in us. One of the greatest gifts God has given us is the ability to give, even to God. Generosity feels good! Friends who give freely and often have told me that giving is much more fun than spending. Tithing is an act of faith. The promise to return one-tenth to God assumes that 90 percent is enough and that the God who gave it will continue to give it enough to provide for us. The great benefit of stewardship perspective on theological education is that it takes it from intellectual exercise into practical behaviour. (2011, pp. 244-245)

Grimm states, “People give to the people they trust. Who is asking for the money is often as important in obtaining a positive response as the purpose for the money. The most effective steward is relational—not functional or organizational. People give confidently to the people they see as worthy, just as they give to causes they believe are worthy” (Grimm, 1992, p. 80). Giving must therefore be built on the relationship of

respect, trust, and integrity which is solidly in place in the congregation (p. 24). When Christians do not obey God's command to carefully plan their giving in advance, it keeps them from giving as much as they could and should. That is why they need their pastor to remind them regularly of their duty (p. 26-27).

Summary

This chapter explored the biblical principles of tithing in the Old Testament, the New Testament, Ellen G. White, and other Christian literature to provide evidence of tithing in the Scriptures. This helps to provide a broad picture of the biblical understanding of faithful stewardship.

The conclusion is that God has provided everyone with resources. He has also given human beings the responsibility to manage wealth as stewards. God holds every person accountable for how his resources are used.

Chapter 3 deals with the political, cultural, and religious contexts of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Kenya Conference. This provides a description of the environment where the project will be implemented.

CHAPTER 3

POLITICAL, CULTURAL, AND RELIGIOUS ANALYSIS OF SOUTH KENYA CONFERENCE

Introduction

The South Kenya Conference is among the conferences that form the East Kenya Union Conference in the East-Central Africa Division. The annual stewardship statistical reports for the last ten years show that the tithe is slightly higher than offerings. In the South Kenya Conference some 18% of the members return tithe (South Kenya Conference, 2010), but only 14% of the members give offerings. Together, these figures indicate a weak commitment to systematic benevolence and Christian stewardship. This situation calls for urgent attention and thus will be the focus of my project as I teach and promote a biblical theology of stewardship to improve giving.

Ministry always takes place within a context. The political, cultural, social, and religious context of the South Kenya Conference will be reviewed to determine what affects giving in the church. A geographical description, demographics, political, social, production, globalization and cultural traits of people in Kisii County will complete this context.

A Geographic Description of Kenya

Kenya is located on the eastern part of the African continent. Kenya is bordered by Tanzania on the southwest and Indian Ocean on the southeast. Sudan and Ethiopia lie

to the north and Uganda to the west, while Somalia lies to the east of Kenya. The book *Our Lives Today* describes the country's striking features: mountains, wildlife, the Great Rift Valley, lakes, rivers, and sunny beaches along the coastal plains. It has also differing vegetation's: forest, grassland, semi-desert and desert, swamps, and shrub, just to mention a few (Kamau, Indire, & Rutere, 2005, pp. 6-13).

Kenya covers an area of approximately 582,646 sq. km. The climate varies with altitude. There are two rainy seasons: the long rains, from March to April and the short rains, from October to December (Galgalo, Owich, Ogomo & Mwaniki, 2009, pp. 6-12). According to the 2009 census, Kenya's population of 38.6 million spread over 43 different ethnic groups. The languages spoken are English, Kiswahili, and many other indigenous languages. Kenya is divided into 47 counties, headed by a governor as the head of the county assembly. The counties are shown in the Kenya map in Figure 1.

A Geographical Description of Kisii County

Kisii County is one of the 47 seven counties of Kenya. The county is characterized by a hilly topography with ridges and valleys. The most notable features of these topographical zones are hills of Sameta, Nyamasibi, Kiong'anyo, Nyanchwa, and Kegochi. Red volcanic soil covers 75% of the county, but in the valley bottoms, there is black cotton soil. The county grows cash crops such as tea, coffee, pyrethrum, and subsistence crops such as maize, beans, and potatoes (Kisii Tribe, n.d., para. 9).

Kisii County experiences an equatorial climate resulting in a bimodal rainfall pattern, with an average annual rainfall of 1500 mm. The months of July and January are relatively dry. The maximum temperatures in the county range between 21°C and 30°C,

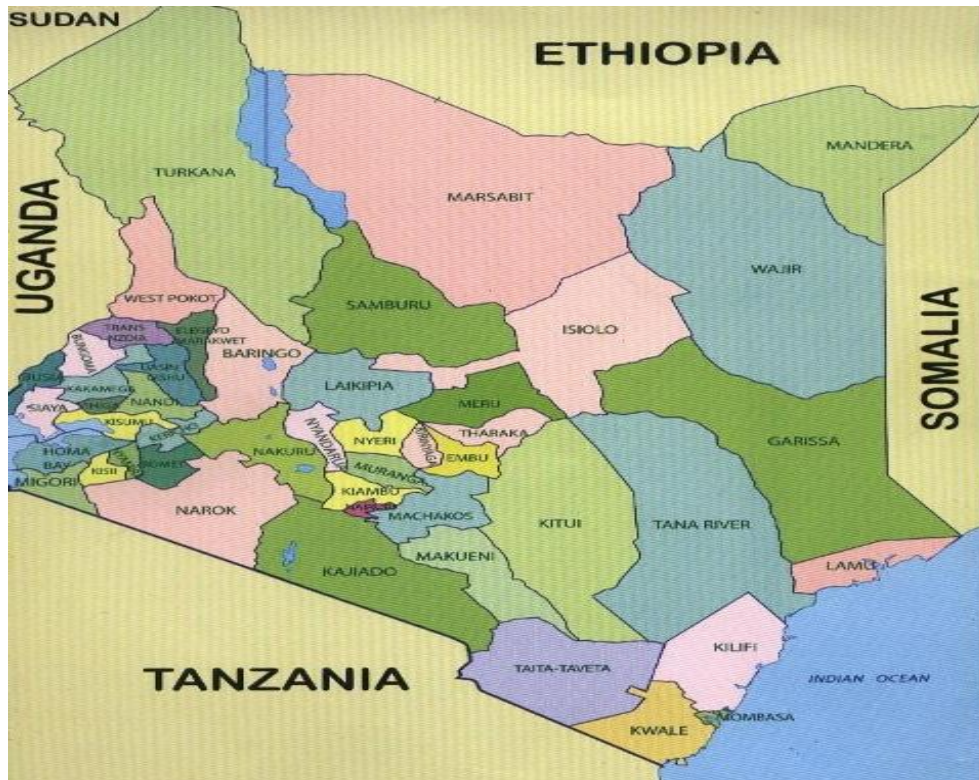


Figure 1. Map showing the Kenya administrative counties. Taken from <http://softkenya.com/map/Kenya-county-map/files/2012/2013>

while the minimum temperatures range between 15°C and 20°C. Figure 2 shows the county of Kisii with its districts and constituency boundaries.

Historical Description of Kisii County

The Kisii district was among other districts that used to form Nyanza province before the introduction of counties. The original larger Kisii District was divided into Nyamira and Gucha. In 2010, under the new constitution, all districts in Kenya were reorganized into 47 counties. Kisii County comprises seven districts: Nyamache, Kisii Central, Kisii South, Kenyena, Masaba South, Gucha South, and Gucha. Each of the districts has several divisions headed by division officers, chiefs, and sub-chiefs.



Figure 2. Map of Kisii County. Retrieved from Soft Kenya.com/Kisii
www.informafrika.com/information/africa-information-about-kisii-county-in-kenya

Demographics

The 2009 Population and Housing Census listed the Kenyan population as 38,610,097. Of the population 19,192,458 were males, and 19,417,639 were female (Opiyo, 2009, p. 20). The Kisii County population in the same census showed 1,152,282, comprising 550,464 males and 601,818 females. This population was projected at 1,226,873 in 2012, consisting of 536,062 males and 640,811 females. With a growth rate of 2.1%, the population is projected to be 1,306,652 in 2015, with 624,171 males and

682,481 females. It is projected to be 1,362,779 with 650,982 males and 711,797 females by 2017 (Galgalo et al., 2009, p. 20). The age distribution of 0-15 years constitute 45%; 15-64 years, constitute 45%; and 65 and above is 10% of the total Kisii population.

Political Context of Kisii County

Kisii County in the previous elections had never voted as a block. The county has nine constituencies and nine representatives in the National Assembly, a senator, and the woman representative. The county's political condition has always been peaceful. Kisii County embraces all political parties.

The system of government is like that of other counties in Kenya. The governor is the head of the county, assisted by the deputy governor. The County Assembly Executive Committee is made up of the members of the County Assembly, headed by the Speaker of the County Assembly.

Social Context

Paul Hiebert, in the book *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, states:

All humans live in societies, or communities of humans, who relate to one another in orderly ways. Without some social order, human life is impossible. That order is the result of human interactions that, overtime, lead to socially acceptable ways of doing things. Pattern emerge as people relate, imitate one another, learn from their parents, or are forced to behave certain ways by those who hold power over them. (2009, p. 138)

Due to education, the Abagusii people have undergone drastic cultural changes. The Abagusii were one of the few Kenyan tribes that practiced mandatory female genital mutilation. Although this ritual has been outlawed, it still persists, but not as frequently as in the past. Abagusii boys continue to be initiated into adulthood; this ceremony brings families together to share in the feasting associated with this rite of passage.

Marriage in the Abagusii community is arranged. Parents identified the bride then make a proposal to the bride's parents for consideration. The process of dowry, then marriage has changed; people marry by their choice only. The birth of a baby also demands a large celebration. Members of the village carry gifts to the baby's parents in the form of foodstuffs, clothes, and even soft-drinks.

Cultural Context

Brian M. Howell and Jenell W. Paris in their book, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, state: "Culture is an idea created to describe a reality that people experience, the behaviors and assumptions common to a group that distinguish one group from others" (2011, p. 25). Edward T. Hall also notes: "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (1976, p. 1). This section looks at several cultural practices that have a direct impact on the giving patterns of the members of the South Kenya Conference.

Akama and Maxon, in the book *Ethnography of Gusii of Western Kenya* describe the god of the Abagusii.

Abagusii believed in a supreme God called *Engoro*. It was *Engoro* who created the universe—the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars and the natural forces. Thus, he was the source of all property and all life. He governed the destiny of man, sending him rain, or drought, plenty or famine, health or disease, peace or war, depending on whether man lived a good or bad life. He was all-knowing and was thus held in the highest possible regard by the community. He lived in the sky. He was not visible, nor did he directly interfere in the daily affairs of man. But occasionally revealed him-self through storms, earthquakes, thunder, and lightning. Other events were carried out by his agents, the spirit of ancestors. (2000, p. 122)

The Abagusii believed death was unnatural. It was blamed on witchcraft (*oborogi*) in all instances. A death gathered the members of the village to prepare for

burial, with all members of the village contributing to the expense. An adult person was buried in front of the house where he lived before his death. A man was buried on the right side of the house, and a woman on the left side of the house, in order to appease the spirits (Kisii tribe, n.d., para. 10).

Funerals took place at the dead person's homestead, with a large gathering as a sign of prestige. Christian elements, such as catechism reading, hymn singing, and sermons are combined with the traditional practices of wailing, head-shaving, and animal sacrifices (Kisii tribe, n.d., para. 12).

Abagusii believed in the survival of the spirits of their ancestors, and thus appeased them through the sacrifice of sheep and goats. Failure to do so would mean that the spirit would meddle in human affairs and bring misfortune. They sought the medicine men (*abanyamariogo*) to conduct rituals at some cost to chase away the spirits (Gusii-Counties and their culture, n.d., heading 7).

Circumcision was practiced for both boys and girls at the age of ten years. The female genital mutilation is longer widely practiced, even though some do it secretly. Circumcision called for all members of the village to participate, through contributions of money or items and in the care of the guests that came to feast. These celebrations took place annually in November and December, followed by a period of seclusion, during which the boys were taught different roles and what is expected of adults (Akama & Maxon, 2000). Page before says 2006, which is right??

Production and Exchange

The Abagusii are regarded as one of the most economically active communities in Kenya, with tea and coffee estates and banana groves. Kisii is largely an agricultural area,

with much of its economy powered by proceeds from the sale of agriculture products.

The Abagusii tribe does domestic farming and supplies goods for their communities and the rest of Kenya. Agricultural foodstuffs are for local consumption. Traditional foods grown include maize, millet, sorghum, yams, pumpkins, and green vegetables. The region supports a variety of crops but is probably best known for its bananas, known as *matoke* in the local language. Most of the bananas produced are sold to other regions, but since the mode of farming is mainly subsistence, a considerable portion is consumed at home. This has ensured a steady supply of food to the town with food prices being comparatively lower than in other regions (Kisii County, 2014).

Urbanization

The members of the community value education so much that all families try to educate their children. Upon completion of studies, they move to the urban areas in search of jobs. The rural-to-urban movement is high, because white-collar jobs are in cities and because most industries are also in the cities. “The overwhelming statistics show that a majority of those who live below the poverty line live in rural areas” (Bauer, 2009, p. 84)

Religious Context of South Kenya Conference

The Joshua project indicates that 99% of the Gusii are Christian. When the Christians segments are considered, 70% are Protestants, 15% Roman Catholic, and 15% Independent (Joshua Project, 2014). The Roman Catholic Church was first established in 1911 and Seventh-day Adventist mission came in 1913. There are four major denominations in Kisii land: Roman Catholics, Seventh-day Adventists, Swedish

Lutherans, and Pentecostal Assemblies of God (Gusii in Kenya-Ethnic people, 2010).

The churches are distributed throughout the area since the denominations settled first in this part of Kenya. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is found in every sub-location of the county.

Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kisii County

The first Seventh-day Adventist missionaries came to Kenya in 1906. They were Canadian born Arthur Asa Granville Carscallen and Malawian Peter Nyambo, students at Duncombe Hall College (Newbold College) in England. In the same year, on November 27, 1906, the first mission at Gendia started among the Luo people, in Western Kenya (Neufeld & Neuffer, 1962, p. 731).

It took nearly five years to have the first 10 converts baptized. In 1911 four new stations were opened. Nyanchwa station was founded in 1912, in Gusii land. From the account of the late pioneer Pastor Nathaniel Nyanusi, Adventism entered Gusii a short while before the colonial government embarked on conscripting young men in preparation for First World War.

According to N. M. Nyaundi's book, *Seventh-day Adventism in Gusii, Kenya*,

World War 1 affected the mission work which had started taking root at Gusii land under the leadership Ira Evanson. The mission station at Nyanchwa was closed for five years, Ira Evanson left. The record indicates that Yakobo Olwa, Barnaba Okumu, and Leonard Lane restarted mission activities soon after launching of the work in 1918. Lane left in 1920 and was succeeded by Eric B. Beavon. The most popular missionary known to the Abagusii worked hard and witnessed the work grows. (Nyaundi, 1997, p. 27)

Nyaundi further narrates the beginning of the Adventist Church among Gusii:

Seven years ago there were no Christians in Kisii, only fifty-five raw savages anxious to learn to how to read and write at the mission school and out-schools. The first Kisii church was organized in 1923, with a nucleus of ten zealous young men. Today, there

are four churches in Kisii, with a total membership of 313, eighty-six bush schools with a total average attendance each Sabbath of 3,286 students enrolled, and forty-two Sabbath schools with attendance each Sabbath of 3,080... There were five large baptisms last year. Twenty on Kisii's were baptized in January in a stream which flows through the township. Thirty eight were baptized near the Maasai border on August 9, and thirty-eight of the Nyaribari clan of August 14. (Nyaundi, 1993, pp. 10-11)

The first converts baptized in 1922 were all men. In 1923 six women were baptized. The church then spread from Nyanchwa to other parts of Kisii as follows: Gionseri in Bobasi, 1919; North Mugirango, 1921; Matunwa, 1921; Bonchari, 1921; Kitutu Masaba, 1922; Machoge, 1924; South Mugirango, 1927 (Nyaundi, 1997, p. 43-44).

The Nyanchwa mission gave birth to the South Kenya Field in 1912. The work grew steadily until it was organized as the South Kenya Conference in 1981. The growth continued steadily through organizations such as Adventist Youth Organization (AYO) and camp meetings, which rejuvenated the feelings of acceptance of Adventism. The church has grown to 153,412 members by first quarter of 2013.

Growth Patterns for Past Ten Years

The Adventist membership of South Kenya Conference has grown steadily. Table 1 and Figure 3 show the growth in the past ten years. Table 1 and Figure 3 show a sharp decline for 2003 and 2011, due to dropouts. The past ten years indicate a growth in membership, apart from 2011, when a thorough auditing was done in the entire conference to know the exact membership. Those who were inactive were removed. The average growth is 3.5%, an upward trend that needs to be maintained.

Table 1

Membership Growth in South Kenya Conference

Year	Membership	Percent Growth/Loss
2003	119,543	(.2)
2004	119,293	6.8
2005	127,391	2.0
2006	129,976	5.6
2007	137,297	3.0
2008	141,416	2.9
2009	145,550	3.2
2010	150,221	8.3
2011	137,744	(3.4)
2012	142,443	7.2

Note. Taken from South Kenya Conference Executive Secretary, Annual Reports, 2003 through 2012.

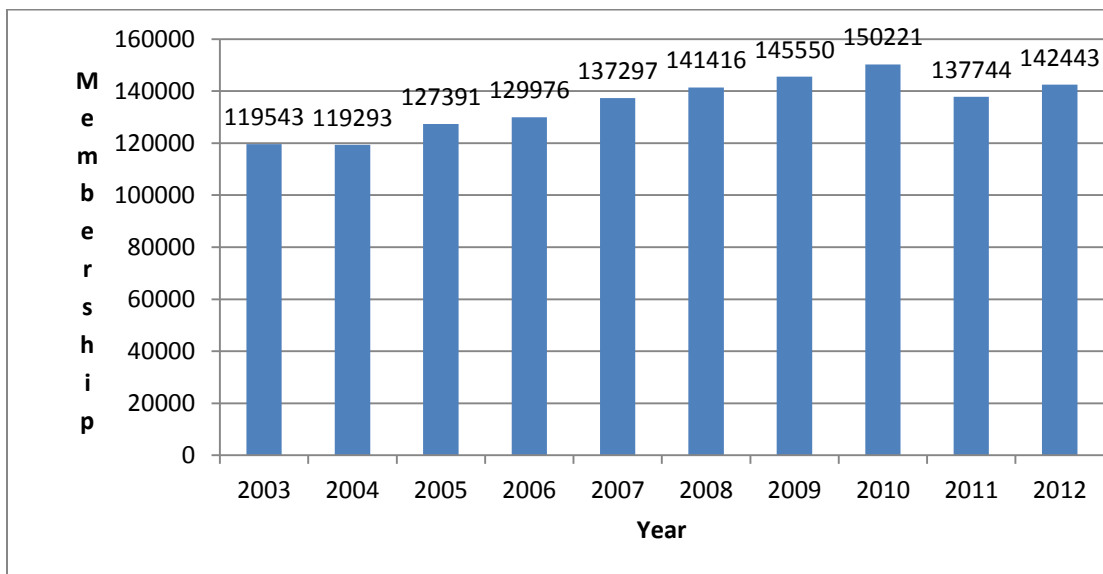


Figure 3. Membership growth, 2003 through 2012.

Pastoral Leadership

The SKC has 864 churches organized in 65 districts. Each district is assigned a pastor. The average number of members per pastor is 2,191. This number would increase if companies were also considered (Statistical Report of SKC, 2013).

The South Kenya Conference has 73 pastors, 65 in districts, and 9 in the office. The work load of a pastor in a district is heavy, possibly causing the low return of tithe and offering since members are not shepherded (SKC Ministerial Secretary, 2013).

Finances for the Past Five Years

The past five years have experienced growth in tithe and offerings due to continued seminars, visitation, auditing, and shepherding of members. The growth has been achieved due to members returning in kind when visited in their homes. Table 2 shows the tithes and offerings for the past five years. It shows that tithe has grown by 43.97% while offering have grown by 52.4%.

Table 2

Tithes and Offerings

Years	TITHE	OFFERING
2008	67,263,197.70	4,658,105.00
2009	65,756,367.00	6,763,772.94
2010	75,388,405.00	7,269,641.16
2011	84,689,159.57	8,307,714.43
2012	96,843,355.38	9,785,952.25

Note. Information obtained from South Kenya Conference treasury, Annual Reports through 2008 to 2012.

Church Attendance

Member of the Seventh-day Adventist South Kenya Conference congregates in 1,251 worship centers every Sabbath. The attendance at the Sabbath School is smaller than the attendance at the worship service. The conference is trying to encourage local church members to increase their attendance. Average attendance on Sabbaths is around 87% of membership. Most congregations hold afternoon programs for Bible study, departmental activities, and choir practices, which always record the highest attendance (South Kenya Conference, Personal Ministries, April 2013).

The Adventist Church of South Kenya carries out a number of activities in the churches. Sabbath activities include mission reports, songs, lesson discussion, feature talks, collecting of tithe and offerings, and sermons. The afternoon is occupied with Bible study sessions and Pathfinder Club activities. The church also conducts outreach programs of visitation to hospitals to pray for the sick, distribute literature, prison visitation, and even evangelistic campaigns. Camp-meeting is another important activity of the year.

There are social Sunday retreats for all departments. Pathfinder camporees, pot lucks, rallies, music extravaganzas, weekend prayer meetings, holy communion held quarterly, church organization, school spiritual week of emphasis, Voice of Prophecy, radio programs, and television are ways the gospel is shared with the people.

Felt Needs in South Kenya Conference

The administration shared a number of needs in the SKC on April 23, 2013, during the workers' meeting. Pastors manage large districts, with high membership, leading to inefficient care of member's needs. New members are baptized but not

nurtured, due to the large size of the districts. This causes too many members to drop out of the church.

The second felt need was the need to teach and nurture members who fear witchcraft and evil spirits. The members leave the church secretly to seek assistance from magicians or to get answers to pressings issue. Members need to learn to trust in God in order to overcome evil spirits.

Third, was the need of employing more pastors as soon as they finish their studies, but they cannot be taken on due to a shortage of funds. This is one more reason why members need to be encouraged to give systematically.

Missiological Implications

A good understanding of faithful stewardship will lead to an increase in giving, which will lead to the increased employment of pastors, narrowing the ratio between members and pastors. Shepherding would thus become more effective and witnessing activities could increase because the presence of the pastor would be more widely felt.

The more food there is in the house of the Lord, the more a church will grow, will increase its witnessing, create a larger impact in the community, increase the respect from the members, and provide support so the gospel can spread to other areas where the gospel has not been preached.

When faithful stewardship is well understood, giving becomes part of the lifestyle of God's people. Thus mission work will be easier and entered areas will be reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Summary

This chapter has suggested that for the presentation of the gospel to be accepted, one needs to take into account the cultural, social, and religious factors. The analysis of the cultural, social, and religious context in the South Kenya Conference has revealed potential challenges and opportunities for ministry in order to have an impact on faithful stewardship. The next chapter will describe a strategy to train, motivate, and mobilize members to increase their faithfulness in returning their tithes and offerings to God.

CHAPTER 4

A STRATEGY TO INCREASE OFFERINGS IN SOUTH KENYA CONFERENCE

Introduction

The preceding chapter dealt with the political, social, and religious contexts of the South Kenya Conference in Kisii county of Kenya. This project is intended to offer the needed understanding for the development of an appropriate strategy that will help to increase offerings in the South Kenya Conference. Using the logical framework approach this chapter outlines the step by step approach of the strategy.

General Methodology: Logical Framework Analysis and Gantt Chart

The logical framework is a tool used for planning and managing projects and programs. It looks like a table and aims to present information about key components of a project in a clear, concise, logical, and systematic way. The log frame was developed in the United States and since has been adopted and used in many other locations.

The log frame matrix summarizes all the important planning decisions, assumptions, and resource allocations specified for operational purposes (European Commission, 2004, p. 57).

The logical framework has the following advantages: it brings together in one place a statement of all the key components of a project and presents them in a concise,

systematic, and coherent way thus clarifying the logic of the project. Also, it separates out various levels in the hierarchy of objectives (Ketchen & Eisner, 2009, p. 56). It clarifies the relationships between the various aspects of the project, identifies the main factors related to the success of the project, provides a basis for monitoring and evaluation by identifying the indicators of success, and means of quantification, it encourages a multidisciplinary approach to the project preparation and supervision (p. 57). The logframe also provide a guide as to what information needs to be gathered through a participatory process (European Commission, 2004, p. 94).

When used correctly, it provides a sound mechanism for project development, by describing the basis for activity scheduling, budgeting, monitoring, and for evaluating the impact, effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance of the project. A logical framework allows information to be analyzed and organized in a structured way, functions as an aid to thinking, and helps the project to remain focused during implementation (Takyi, 2011).

Logframe

The Logical Framework Matrix, which is the product of a thorough analysis of the key elements of the project, is a simple table with four horizontal rows describing the Goal, Purpose, Outputs, and Inputs of the project and four columns showing the Narrative, Objectively Identifiable Indicators, Means of Verification, and Important Assumptions (see Figure 4).

Narrative	Objectively Verifiable Indicators (Targets)	Means of Verification (Sources)	Assumptions
Goal			
Purpose			
Outputs/Activities			
Inputs			

Figure 4. Format of a logical framework matrix.

Goal

The goal is the end toward which the project's purpose is directed. It is also called the overall objective, the end result achieved by a variety of projects and non-project activities.

Purpose

The purpose is the core problem which the project is designed to achieve and which contributes directly towards the realization of the goal, the purpose is described as outcomes in other presentations.

Outputs

The outputs address the problem the project seeks to resolve. In the logframe outputs are usually written in the past tense and written as actions yet to be done.

Inputs

Inputs are the resources available to produce the outputs. These include personnel, equipment, training, facilities, technical assistance, and funds (Takyi, 2011).

Objectively Verifiable Indicators

Objective Verifiable Indicators (OVI) are elements on the horizontal level together with the means of verification and assumptions. An indicator is a sign which expresses a level of achievement within each of the four rows (goals, purpose, outputs, and inputs). It is a thermometer of the project. Just looking at the indicators therefore should reveal the state of the project.

Means of Verification

Means of Verification (MOV) are sources of data needed to authenticate support for the indicators. “They are sources of information and methods used to show fulfillment of a goal” (NORAD’s Working Group, 1990, p. 7).

Assumptions

Assumptions are identified as significant external factors, conditions, or constraints which are essential for a successful implementation of a project but over which the project personnel have no control. They are always stated in positive language because they look at the favorable conditions that needs to be met in order for the project to succeed.

Below in Figure 5 is a logframe that summarized my strategy to increase offerings in the South Kenya Conference.

Summary	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumption
<p>GOAL</p> <p>Giving increased in the South Kenya Conference (SKC)</p>	<p>Increased offering returns 20% by March 2014</p>	<p>Conference & local church treasurer statistical records</p>	<p>All members of the South Kenya Conference will participate in faithful giving</p>
<p>PURPOSE</p> <p>A strategy to encourage faithfulness in giving among members of the SKC</p>	<p>Faithfulness in giving among members of SKC increased 20% by March 2014</p>	<p>Reports from church treasurers and conference treasurer</p>	<p>Members will respond faithfully</p>
<p>OUTPUTS</p> <p>1. Local & conference treasury data on giving collected & analyzed</p> <p>2. Training materials produced</p> <p>3. Seminars conducted</p> <p>4. Monitoring & evaluation done</p>	<p>Financial reports of 10 churches analyzed by March 2012</p> <p>Seminar materials produced by April 2012</p> <p>Seminar conducted by Dec. 2013</p> <p>Quarterly monitoring & final evaluation by March 2014</p>	<p>Financial statements & report of findings</p> <p>Produced seminar materials</p> <p>Trained working class, pastors, elders, treasurers</p> <p>Quarterly reports & final evaluation reports</p>	<p>Funds will be availed</p>

Objectives	Measurable Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
<p>ACTIVITIES</p> <p>1.1 Collect local treasurer's reports</p> <p>1.2. Collect conference treasurer's reports</p> <p>1.3 Analyze local treasurer's reports</p> <p>1.4. Analyze conference treasurer's report</p> <p>2.1 Produce training material</p> <p>3.2. Conduct seminar on giving</p> <p>4.1. Monitor quarterly local treasurer's reports</p> <p>4.2. Monitor quarterly conference treasurer's report</p> <p>4.3. Conduct mid-term evaluation of the project</p> <p>4.4. Conduct final evaluation of the project</p>	<p>INPUTS</p> <p>Personnel</p> <p>Data collection</p> <p>Attendance list</p> <p>Budget</p> <p>Church ground</p>		<p>Pastors and elders will co-operate</p> <p>All entries will be good</p> <p>Funds available</p>

Figure 5. Logframe.

Gantt Chart

A Gantt Chart is a bar chart that shows the tasks of a project, when each must take place, and how long each one will take. As the project proceeds bars are shaded to show which tasks have been completed. People assigned to each task also can be represented. This chart is produced after the Logical Framework had been completed and serves as a tool to monitor the project development.

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

Figure 6. Example of a Gantt chart. Taken from C. Burton and N. Michael, 1993, *A Practical Guide to Project Management*, London, England: Kogan, 65.

Below is a Gantt Chart (Figure 7 and 8) that is based on the information in the logframe for my project to increase giving in the South Kenya Conference. Figure 5 depicts the information for the first year of the project and Figure 6 illustrates the information for years two and three.

ACTIVITIES	Year 1											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Output 1 Data collected and analyzed												
Activity 1.1 Collect reports			■	■	■	■	■			■	■	
1.1.1 Collect local treasurer's reports			■	■		■	■					
1.1.2 Collect conference treasury report					■	■	■			■	■	
Activity 2.1 Analyze reports			■	■	■	■	■				■	■
2.1.1 Analyze local treasurer's reports			■			■	■				■	
2.1.2 Analyze conference treasury report				■	■	■	■					■
Output 2 Training material produced												
Activity 2.1 Produce training material						■	■		■	■		
Output 3 Seminar conducted												
Activity 3.1 Conduct seminars			■	■		■	■					
3.2 Conduct seminars on giving				■		■	■					
3.3.2 Seminar for workers & farmers			■			■	■					
3.3.3 Seminar for business men				■		■	■					
3.3.4 Seminar for students					■	■	■					
Output 4 Monitoring & evaluation conducted												
Activity 4.1 Monitoring & evaluation of the p						■	■					
4.1.1 Monitor quarterly local treasury reports						■	■					
4.1.2 Monitor quarterly conference treasury report						■	■					
Activity 4.1 Evaluation												
4.2.1 Conduct mid-term evaluation reports						■	■					
4.2.2 Conduct final evaluation of project						■	■					

Figure 7. Gantt chart for scheduled activities, year 1.

ACTIVITIES	YEAR 2				YEAR 3				ONE IN CHARGE			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	A	B	C	D
Output 1 Data collected & analyzed												
Activity 1.1 Collect reports												
1.1.1 Collect local treasurer's reports												
1.1.2 Collect conference treasurer's report												
1.1.3 Analyze local treasurer's reports												
1.1.4 Analyze conference treasurer's report												
Output 2 Training material produced												
Activity 2.1 Produce training material												
Output 3 Seminar conducted												
Activity 3.1 Conduct seminars												
3.2 Seminars on giving												
3.3 Seminar for workers & farmers												
3.2.3 Seminar for business men												
3.2.4 Seminar for students												
Output 4 Monitoring & evaluations Conducted												
Activity 4.1 Monitoring & evaluation of project												
4.1.1 Monitor quarterly local treasure's reports												
4.2.2 Monitor quarterly conference treasury reports												
Activity 4.2 Evaluation												
4.2.1 Conduct mid-term evaluation project												
4.2.2 Conduct final evaluation of the report												
Key: A = Researcher; B = Church Treasurer; C = Conference Treasurer; D = Evaluator												

Figure 8. Gantt Chart for scheduled activities, years 2 and 3.

Description of the Mission Strategy

The South Kenya Conference is experiencing a disparity of tithes and offerings. Furthermore, the reports from entire churches of the conference treasury indicate that only around 33% of the church members return tithes and 21% return offerings. This

shows the lack of systematic giving and a lack of understanding of faithful stewardship.

This project therefore seeks to design a manual that will be used to teach members to give faithfully. A number of actions are to be carried out in order for such a project to be realized. The details of such activities are outlined below.

Application of Logframe

The Overall Goal

The overall goal is to see giving increase in the South Kenya Conference. This project will concentrate on shepherding and teaching members to be faithful in giving and will work to have more members participating in systematic giving. This emphasis seeks to strengthen the member's confidence in the conference and their pastors as one way to encourage faithful stewardship.

Measuring the effectiveness of this project will not be realized immediately. However, by March 2014 an increase of 20% in tithe is anticipated to be verified through the statistical reports from the local church and conference treasury records. The success of this project will depend on the assumption that all the members of the South Kenya Conference will participate in giving.

Purpose

The purpose of this project will be to encourage faithfulness in giving among the members of SKC. A strategy will be developed to motivate, teach, and encourage faithful giving. The measurable indicator will be 20% increase in the members involved in faithful giving. This will be verified through the local treasurer's and conference treasurer's records.

Outputs

To achieve these project four major outputs must be produced. The first output is to collect the local treasurer's reports in order to establish the number of those who give and the amount they give in tithe and offering. It will help me to know how many members participate in giving regularly. The local treasurer's report and conference treasury reports, which show the amount of offerings given in the church and received in the conference will be collected and analyzed. The financial reports of ten churches will be analyzed as an indicator and financial statements and report findings will be used as a means of verification.

The second output that will be used to achieve the objectives is to produce training materials. Seminar material will be produced on topics of giving based on the Bible. Examples of those who participated in the exercise of giving and God's response will also be discussed. The end result will be the production of handout materials for planned giving. The third output will be to conduct seminars for the following categories of people: professionals and non-professionals. These seminars seek to instill an understanding of the biblical teaching on giving. Finally, the fourth output of monitoring and evaluation will be put in place. The treasurers will share their testimonies and a team from the conference treasury office will be part of the evaluation committee. The means of verification for this output will be the conference treasury reports.

Implementation of Strategy

According to Edmund D. Soper in his book, *The Philosophy of the Christian World Mission*, states, "No matter how excellent and perfect the strategy may be if it is not backed by the implementation it will be a library decoration occupying space on the

shelf” (Soper, 1943, p. 235). By definition, a strategy is an overall approach, plan, or way of describing how to go about or reaching a goal or of solving a problem. According to Edward Dayton and David A. Fraser in their book, *Planning Strategies for World Evangelization*, writes, “As Christians, a strategy forces us to seek the mind and the will of God. A strategy is an attempt to anticipate the future God wants to bring about. It is a statement of faith as to what we believe to be and how we can go about bringing it into existence” (1990, pp. 13-14).

Activities and Resources Schedules

The activities deal with the action steps that will bring about the achievement of the outputs of the logframe. Subsequent is the discussion of how the projects outputs will be realized.

Collect Local Treasurer’s Reports

The local church treasurer’s report will be collected to gain a general understanding about the giving patterns of the members in churches. This data will be collected from the treasures involved with the ten churches, which will also provide an opportunity to talk to the treasures, elders, and pastors concerning their church performance in the area of finance. Then the reports received from the ten churches and from the conference will analyzed to ascertain giving patterns by May 2013.

Produce Training Materials

The second activity will be to produce training materials. Teaching materials on the topic of giving will be based on the Scriptures, from Ellen G. White’s writings, and from other Christian authors. The seminar materials will be produced by the researcher

(largely based on the material in Chapter 2 of this project) by April 2012.

Conduct Seminars

There will be a seminar conducted on giving for farmers, working class people, church treasurers, elders, students, and pastors by December 2013 by the researcher.

Monitoring and Evaluations

Monitoring is a systematic management activity set in motion from the very beginning of a project to identify necessary remedial actions needed to keep the project moving on schedule. The evidence of effective monitoring will be seen through the collection of local and conference reports. By the beginning of the second quarter of 2012 I will be able to monitor and evaluate the progress of the project by reviewing the quarterly local and conference treasury reports in the first year. Ongoing monitoring will occur throughout the duration of the project with a final evaluation conducted by March 2014.

The researcher will prepare reports on the activities conducted, getting information from the conference treasury officers. The project will involve the district pastors, church elders, church treasures and stewardships leaders in the implementation process to help it achieve its goal and purpose.

The researcher along with the conference treasury team will evaluate the progress of the project to see whether it has achieved its overall goal. The local treasurers will also play a major role in availing the information on the response of the families that have returned tithes and offerings faithfully. Elders and pastors will also function as evaluator because they are the major stakeholders.

Means of Evaluation

The logframe and Gantt chart will be used as means of evaluation of this project. The logframe presents the goal, purpose, outputs, and objectives while the Gantt chart indicates when the items of the logframes are to be achieved. In essence the Gantt shows the steps taken to accomplish the outputs and the time for each tasks of the project.

Linkage of the Logical Framework Matrix

The scheduled activities presented in the Logical Framework Matrix are linked with the outputs and activities listed in the Gantt chart. The stated timelines for the accomplishment of the various activities are marks that will help to keep the project focused and on schedule.

Summary

Developing a strategy to increase offerings in the South Kenya Conference is the main purpose of this project. To accomplish this purpose four interrelated outputs or key ingredients were identified as important to achieve the purpose. The first output was to collect local treasurer's and conference financial reports to ascertain the real situation concerning giving patterns, and then conduct seminars in order to inform the members concerning the biblical teachings of stewardship. This is to be followed by monitoring and evaluation to keep the project on track. In the next chapter I will describe the implementation process, mention lessons learned, and make recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the methodology, the application of logframe, and Gantt chart. The logframe was useful in determining the goal of the project, its objectives, and the activities to be fulfilled in order to achieve the objectives. The Gantt chart served as a road mark indicating the time frame of each activity, the necessary resources, and the personnel responsible for the implementation of the project. The chapter also provided details on monitoring, evaluation, and the expected results.

This chapter will give a report of the project implementation, which will involve giving details of the various activities conducted, lessons learned, and the project's future impact, conclusions, and recommendations.

Report on Project Implementation

According to the logframe the initial part of this project implementation concerned obtaining permission from the conference to access the local church treasurer's reports and the conference treasurer's report. The permission was granted during the year-end meetings held on December 15, 2011, which paved the way for the commencement of the implementation of the strategy. The next exercise involved was the

collection of data to establish why returning of tithes and offerings was low in South Kenya Conference.

Collection of Local Church Treasurer's Report

On March 23, 2012, I collected the local treasure's reports. The information obtained will be used to determine the actual situation in South Kenya Conference as far as giving is concerned. The information will also be useful in identifying those districts that are poor in returning tithes and offerings. The information will also assist in the development of the right material relevant for training.

Analyzing the Treasury Reports

The reports of the local treasures showed the names of all the church members and those who returned tithes and offerings. The reports further indicated that there was a problem in recording tithes and offerings. In certain cases receipts were not issued to those who returned tithes and offerings. There was also indication that some churches did not differentiate between tithes and offerings. For example, all the tithe collected could be divided into two halves, one half could be remitted to the conference while the other half remained in the local church.

Sometimes the local treasure's report revealed that offerings were not remitted to the conference for two or three months, some receipts were missing, and the report that was submitted to the conference lacked the signatures of the elders and deacons to authenticate the reports.

The local treasure's report also showed that those who do not earn monthly salaries return tithes more frequently than those who do earn a monthly salary. The

giving patterns showed changes with some months high and other months low. During harvest time tithes returned went high and went low when the harvest was over.

One thing that surprised me was that tithes were always high in the months when they experienced hunger and times when members sent their children to school. On inquiring I was informed that people tended to depend more on God during these times; hence, returned more faithfully as a sign of appreciation of God's grace during these times of difficulty.

The local treasurer's report further revealed that most offerings are not receipted. This is because it is not possible for a church to return only tithes throughout the month and return no offering as the records tended to indicate.

The other observation is tithing went down during the times when the conference called for members to congregate at district centers or station centers. This is because most members do not attend district Sabbath meetings away from their churches because of the distance. Others are not keen on returning tithes and offerings away from their local churches. Once they do not return during that particular Sabbath then they will not give at all.

The names of those giving offerings are few compared to the actual number of members in the churches. For instance, a church with a membership of 330 could only find 30 to 45 people giving and those same people will give month after month. My assumption of this scenario might be because many members have not understood the reason behind tithing and giving offerings, or people are tired and have given up the faith.

The local treasurer's report also indicated some malpractice in altering figures of certain receipts in some churches. This issue surrounding the malpractice could be

attributed to a lack of auditing, and putting in place the mechanism of checks and balance and that could put the practices a stop to that. Another reason is that members need to reconsider what God has asked them to do and know who has called them to be faithful.

In some cases the treasurer's reports reflected some receipts where the serial numbers were not tallying, and where some different receipts had been inserted. This caused a lot of curiosity in me and I sought to find out the reason of different receipts. I discovered that even some pastors were not faithful when it comes to handling money. They collected more receipts from the conference, and instead of replacing them with ones that are filled in the local churches, they kept them in their houses and used them when pressed with financial needs.

The conference treasury reports showed the exact figures as were collected from the local church treasurers in March 2012.

Seminar Material

After the collection of information from the local treasurers and the conference treasury I embarked on preparing seminar materials. The production of materials was an ongoing exercise that was carried out throughout the first and second year of the project. The seminar materials were of two kinds having different themes and used on different periods of the project implementation.

The theme of the first seminar was "close range shepherding," which included topics such as biblical principles of giving, shepherding, faithfulness, and commitment. The close range shepherding theme sought to encourage the leaders to know their place in ministry as shepherds who are there to shepherd their flock closely. In the material I

sought to emphasize that it is only through close range shepherding that the members can return tithes and offerings faithfully.

The second batch of material was prepared to cater for the specific needs of the churches. These needs became apparent during the first round of seminars as I interacted with the participants who were leaders in the local churches. The theme of the second seminar was “Stewardship of material possessions.” It included topics such as record keeping, auditing, and unfaithfulness in giving,

Stewardship Seminars

Once the material was ready, a series of seminars were conducted conference-wide in the month of March and April, meeting participants at the regional centers. The South Kenya Conference is divided into five regions: South Gusii (7 October 2012), Masaba (8 October 2012), Gosere (9 October 2012), Nyanchwa (11 October 2012), and Kilgoris (13 October 2012). The participants were church elders, local church treasurers, stewardship leaders, department leaders, and district pastors.

The dates for each region were set between March and April 2012 and communicated to the members through the district pastors. The seminars were interactive, comprising teaching, discussion, questions, and answers.

Once a seminar was held the participants were organized into groups and an exchange program was developed for them to replicate the training at the local church level. The exchange program involved a process where the participants were posted to churches that were outside their districts to conduct seminars. The district pastors coordinated the program and submitted reports of the seminars to the conference when they brought their trust funds in May 2012.

This training was followed by a conference-wide week of stewardship that was conducted in October 2012 after the camp meetings. During the week of stewardship, the speakers were instructed to submit reports to the conference immediately after the seminar was conducted.

Repeats of the seminars were done at station levels (station levels are a group of districts) for all the participants. This was followed by the stewardship week of prayer in the months of March and April 2013, in the second year of the implementation of the project. This was necessary because some of the leaders in the churches had been removed from leadership during the church elections carried out at the end of 2012.

During the training for local church leaders a number of issues came up as to why giving is low in the conference. Some of the identified reasons were: Lack of education, unfaithfulness, church discipline, lack of auditing, lack of transparency, and accountability.

The challenges raised were shared with the conference administration along with suggestions for changes. The conference in addressing the challenges decided to set sub-committees. The researcher was mandated to prepare material that could be shared during the next stewardship week of prayer and used in the region's centers for training. The pastors were advised to teach new members about giving.

Those participants who participated in the implementations of the project were used to educate the local churches on biblical principles of giving. On the side of unfaithfulness, the pastors were informed to take time during elections, to choose people of credibility, and those that had demonstrated a high standard of giving.

The Ministerial Department was asked to facilitate a reconciliation plan to help

members to forgive one another. The treasury department was asked to prepare an audit exercise in the entire conference, which began in May 2012. Transparency and accountability was looked at and pastors were asked to channel the information received from the conference to the local churches. The reports for the tithes and offerings received from the local churches every month were sent back to verify what was received at the conference.

Monitoring and Evaluations

The final evaluation was conducted in December 2013. The speakers were sent to replicate the message to the local churches during the stewardship week of promotion, which was monitored by the district pastors. The researcher assisted in visitation of some churches to see the progress of the program, and sometimes participated in prayer for special homes that needed the attention of a pastor. Even the conference departments also participated in the monitoring process through visiting members in their churches, and then to their homes for prayer. This raised the morale of the church members. The results of giving were brought to the conference during the reporting dates of January 2014. The following were observed:

There were general improvements in giving in the churches. This was reflected in the increment in the number of givers. This is also reflected in the increased giving as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Tithes and Offerings 2014

Years	Tithes	Offerings
2011	78,618,368.30	10,094,605.67
2012	91,910,581.04	10,842,112.00
2013	110,065,619.71	11,191,383.00

Note. Received from South Kenya Conference treasury, Annual Reports through 2014 to 2011.

The following observations can be made from Table 3: There is some improvement in both the tithes and offerings. The amount shown in 2011 was taken before the implementation of the project. The project implementation started in 2011 and by 2012 the tithes had increased by 19.75% and between 2012 and 2013 it increased by 39.99%. Offerings also increased by 10.4% in the year 2011 to 2012. In the year 2012 to 2013 offerings increased by 13.2%. These statistics indicate a positive effect of the project intervention. There was an increment in both tithes and offerings.

Lessons Learned

I have learned several lessons in carrying out this project: First, there is a good response from members' giving when they are visited in their homes and feel that they are part of the church and are recognized.

The second lesson is if faithful stewardship is to rise up, pastors must be closer to members, visit them, pray with them and encourage them in their homes. Members will respond freely in giving when that takes place. This instills the confidence of the members in their pastor. The times of sermons from the pulpit will do less in building a

church that has healthy giving. The spirit of giving immediately changes after an elder and pastor steps into the houses of members to remove the syndrome of negligence.

Third, I learned that members withhold their giving whenever there is a misunderstanding with the pastor or even with fellow church members. It is essential that as members of the body of Christ we need to put off our disputes, forgive one another, and live together as one family (Ps 127:1-2). When reconciliations takes place between the parties involved it activates the members to work as a team.

Fourth, I learned that in some churches auditing had not been done for a long time and that led to some money be mishandled in the hands of the local treasurers.

The fifth lesson learned was that pastors are not committed to the work of teaching members biblical stewardship, the whole quarter ends without a single sermon on giving with the fear of being mistaken of only preaching about money, caring not to lose popularity, and to please wealthy members. There has not been a seminar organized for teaching the members on the biblical principles of giving.

Sixth, pastors are loaded with a lot of work in the field that leaves them exhausted at the end of the day's activities. A pastor with a membership of 5,000 will never have enough time to visit their homes and even conduct church board meetings, plan for seminars, nor have time to go console members who have lost their loved ones.

Seventh, research showed that low income members give more regularly than other members who give occasionally and sometimes do not return at all. I do not know the reason but my speculation could be they are more faithful and trust more on God.

Eighth, members are not informed of the money they give to the conference as to whether it reached them or not. Many have stopped participating due to a communication

breakdown from the conference to the churches, which leads them to think they are not regarded and appreciated.

The ninth thing I learned was that where the giving was high it reflected on the pastor and elder teaching on giving. The scripture reveals that one of the key responsibilities of a spiritual leader is to challenge the members to give and that when they listen, God's people respond obediently. When Moses challenged the people to give for the construction of the tabernacle, they brought so much more than what was needed (Exod 35:4-5).

The tenth lesson was when I realized that many of members have debts from banks loans. Many people do not give because they are overwhelmed with debts that have high interest in paying back. They struggle to give as they should. The members try as much as they can to settle with the banks than they think of settling with God first through the return of tithes and offerings. It is clear that God does not want His children to live under the curse of slavery to debt (Deut 28:44).

The last lesson learned was the joy of seeing the members who were reached during the stewardship of prayer. The number of the members doubled in attending church and the number that participated in giving increased, also implying that even the tithe and offerings increased too. The secret is visitation of members to help them understand this noble cause of giving.

The lessons experienced were challenges during the implementation of the project. Some churches did not participate because they had some pressing issues in their churches. The time rescheduled for the exercise did not take place in some churches due to other programs from other departments of the conference.

Future Impacts

The implementation of this project was a difficult task to accomplish in increasing offerings in the South Kenya Conference. The intention of the researcher was to increase the giving by 20% over a period of three years, but in the end the results indicated an increase of 39.96%. This gives a clear indication that members well nurtured, taught, and shepherded can give beyond what they been giving, and even sustain the church in all its operations. The future impact means that the conference will be able to sustain itself and even have funds to divide the district to narrow the ratio between pastors and members.

Conclusions

At the start of the implementation of this project the conference was in a financial crisis. The objective of this project was to increase giving in the South Kenya Conference, to develop and implement a strategy to teach, motivate, and encourage Adventists to be faithful in their stewardship of tithes and offerings. The strategy worked to increase giving by 20% by the end of the project. The implementation of the project was well received by members and a number of non-Adventists were reached. The strategy did not only increase in tithes and offerings but rejuvenated the spirit of the members to recommit their lives to God.

The project was faced with some challenges of monitoring the entire program, since it included the whole conference, which called for the officers and departmental directors to join hands in monitoring.

Recommendations

After working with this project I have written eight recommendations as a result of the implementation of the project. The recommendations will be useful to the South

Kenya Conference administration, the district pastor, and the researcher.

1. *To the researcher:* I need to continue working with the pastors to make sure members understand the biblical principles of giving, faithfulness, and commitment.

2. *To the pastors:* Replicate the experience gained in visitations to clearly communicate the vision of God for the work of the church, and to provide effective shepherding in order to make the members disciples of stewardship.

3. *To the district pastors:* Identify the wealthy members and plan to have with them a one-on-one talk on biblical stewardship so that they understand stewardship and will want to support the church through their resources. The district pastor can recommend names to the conference for visitation.

4. *To the local church treasurers:* Communicate the church finances in ways that are complete and understood by the members to create confidence and transparency. To maintain honest weights and measures is an explicit precept of the Bible

5. *To the members:* Those members that have matured in giving should partner with new members in order to teach and witness to them, which will create avenues for new members to be encouraged by fellow church members. This will create a better impact on new members because they see the examples set by the regular members.

6. *To the conference:* Have a regular audit in all the churches at least once every year. This helps the integrity of the local church treasurers and seals the loopholes in the church funds and creates confidence of the members in their treasurers.

7. *To the conference treasury:* Prepare some basic education to train the local treasurers and not go on the assumption that they know how to keep the books. Elect treasurers who have some knowledge of accounting.

8. *To the conference committee:* See that all local churches have opened accounts in the banks. Encourage members to be good stewards and understand the meaning of stewardship.

APPENDIX
SEMINAR NOTES

SEMINAR NOTES: Part One

Close Range Shepherding.

Shepherding Defined:

Shepherding may be defined as the process of watching out and caring for the sheep so they will not starve, be killed by predators, or wander off.

In shepherding, Shepherds are expected to guard the sheep, lead them to pasture and water, keep the herd together, and bind up those who are injured, in order that the sheep might fulfill their purpose.

Shepherds of God's Flock.

God Himself is often pictured as a shepherd of His people who brings delight to His sheep: Psalm 23. (***Read through***). Other prominent leaders are often called shepherds of Israel: Moses, Jeremiah, and most prominently, David. The prophets promise that a future son of David will come and shepherd God's people: For example, Ezekiel 34:22-23. (***Read through***).

This prophecy is clearly fulfilled in Jesus. He is called the good shepherd, the chief shepherd, the shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep. He is gathering them all into one flock.

Jesus is the chief shepherd of His flock. I Peter 5:4

Jesus and Peter.

In the processes of reinstating Peter, Jesus used a question about love.

3 times Jesus asked him the same question.

The question was; ***Peter son of John do you truly love me more than these?***

Each time, Peter answered yes lord I love you.

And for the 3 times Peter answered the question, Jesus said ***Shepherd my sheep.***

Implying that when one loves Jesus, shepherding God's Church becomes the point to live by. It is just impossible to love God and you don't shepherd His flock.

In Stewardship Ministries, Shepherding is the point.

It is shepherding that turns people into stewards.

This is what Jesus meant when He told Peter to shepherd His flock.

John 20:15-17.

Same thing Peter is telling the elder and young men. ***1Peter 5:2-3***

(Read through).

This is what Paul meant when he told the elders of the Church of Ephesus to shepherd the Church of God that He purchased with His own divine blood.

Acts 20:28.

Stewardship leadership is about shepherding the flock.

The current stewardship temperature of the flock especially in giving, is a direct testimony of the work of the shepherds.

God Shepherds Closely.

When He wanted to rescue the Children of Israel from Egypt, He shepherded Moses closely in the bush first. **Exodus 3:2-4**

In the Garden of Eden when man sinned and became naked God moved in closely and clothed man with garments of skin. **Gen 3:21**

Jesus the Chief Steward.

Peter calls the lord the chief Shepherd **1Peter 5:4**

He is the chief shepherd.

Close Shepherding.

Jesus shepherded Zacchaeus closely **Luke 19:5-9**

Jesus came to the spot where Zacchaeus was. Close to him, from there to his house and Zacchaeus's Stewardship temperature picked momentum to the extent of paying his debtors 4 times & gave to the poor.

Close Shepherding makes things change.

Close shepherding brings salvation to human kind

Close Shepherding makes people stand and talk.

Close shepherding makes people give.

When they give, they depend more on God.

Jesus and the disciples in the boat during the Storm. Mark 6:45-52

The disciples left for Bethsaida and left Jesus remained on the main land behind.

Soon the tide was against them. Jesus was looking at them; He moved close to them, saved and protected them.

A good shepherd must move close to the sheep. For any temperature to raise you must be close to one another.

Jesus and Lazarus John 11:38-43

Jesus moved to the tomb. He was with the people.

Jesus called out Lazarus while at the tomb. He was right there and when He called Lazarus in a loud voice, Lazarus came out.

Life is restored when the shepherd is close.

Elisha and the Dead boy 2Kings 4:33-35.

For Elisha to bring the boy back to life, he had to lay on him. Close.

For Stewardship to rise up, shepherds must lay on the believers closely.

Remote control will not work here.

Pulpit sermons have very little to do in this regard.

The temperature of the one sleeping should be much better than the one slept on.

The current stewardship temperature of the Church depends on how much the church leadership has slept on the church **Jeremiah 48:10**

Paul and Eutychus; Acts 20:10

Paul preached up to midnight.

Seated in the window was a young boy by the names of Eutychus. He was sinking into deep sleep as Paul was speaking.

When he was sound asleep, he fell on the ground from the third story and was picked up dead.

Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his hands around him and the boy got his life back.

All of us together in Stewardship

Ecclesiastes 4:10-11

Two are better than one, if one falls down his friend can lift him up.

In Stewardship there is need to lift one another up. But you cannot lift someone unless and until you are close or with him.

We need to be close as shepherds, close, and close!!!

May the lord be our guide?

Part Two

Material Possession

Introduction

After years in the ministry, both as a district pastor and now departmental, my own eyes were opened dramatically regarding how much God says about how much His people are to use their material possessions to build the Kingdom of God. To my surprise, I discovered over 100 supra-cultural principles. In essence I discovered that God says more about how His people should use their material possession than any subject other than God Himself.

The Bible has five hundred verses on prayer, fewer than five hundred verses on faith, but over two thousand verses dealing with money and possessions.

The book of proverbs alone is filled with instructions about money.

It has been said that Jesus talked more about money than about any other subject. Of Jesus's thirty-eight parables, sixteen deal with money management.

One out of every ten verses in the gospels has to do with money or possessions—has total of 288 verses.

There is more said in the New Testament about money, than about heaven and hell combined.

If God thought it was important to talk to His people about money management and giving, you and I have no right to neglect these parts of His word. Based on the Apostle Paul's example, God has not given preachers the option of shrinking from teaching what

His word says about giving. Twice in one speech, Paul made the following claims: I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable (Acts 20:20). If you fail to teach the biblical principles of giving, you rob your of the profit they could receive from knowing and practicing the truth. Don't shrink your responsibility to declare the whole purpose of God.

Probably the main reason pastors fail to teach their people about giving is that they are afraid of offending, losing people and being mistaken that only they are speaking about money. "Fear of man" is alive and well in the hearts of many of us. God has inextricably linked ministry to money. As a Margaret Thatcher said, "No one would remember the Good Samaritan if he'd only had good intentions. He had money as well." It costs money to: Support missionaries, buy land and build church facilities, pay pastor's salary, extend the gospel to other communities. We could spread the gospel to everyone on planet earth within a few short years if we just had the money required to send the needed missionaries! There are many examples in the Bible which confirm the truth that God has linked money to ministry advancement. Here are just a few: Moses had to raise money to build the tabernacle (Exod. 35:4-9, 20, 36:1-7). David and Solomon had to raise money to build the temple (1 Chron.28-29) Even Jesus had to be financially supported by contributions from his female followers (Luke 8:1-3).

Don't hide your head in the sand and pretend that you don't need to raise your ministry to the people. Large district need to be split in order to take the gospel closer to the members if only members could practice biblical stewardship of giving to empower God's work. Many pastors believe that the pastor should only deal with "spiritual matters" and leave money matters to others such as the lay leaders or businessmen in the church. As pastor, you have the primary ability to raise the money for your church because you are leader and have the power of the pulpit. People look to the pastor for direction and no church board member or elder, deacon, has this kind of influence for good. If you don't use the power of your pulpit to teach your people to give, no one else in your church can (Jas 4:2).

When you realize that one of the most loving things you can ever do people is to help them live out God's principles of giving, it gives you courage to ask for concrete giving commitments. Asking people to give is an act love because when they get their giving in order:

Their marriage improves

Their spiritual deepen

Their faith grows

Their financial condition is enhanced dramatically.

Teaching stewardship is more than raising money; it is God's way of raising people.

Motivating people to give

Consider for a moment the scene in heaven when the announcement was made—Adam and Eve had broken their covenant with God. Sorrow such as we will never know or experience filled all heaven of heaven. In the book patriarchs and prophets says, "The world that God made was blighted with the curse of sin, and inhabited by beings doomed

to misery and death”...and there was no way of escape for the offender. The whole family of Adam must die (The Story of Redemption, p. 42). That was the most tragic moment in the moment that God cried in heaven. What was He going to do? Was there a way out of this dilemma? John the beloved draws the curtain aside and we read, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

What was it that motivated God the Father to give His only Son? It was love, love divine and Jesus spoke of this love when He said, “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). This revelation leads us to believe that it is only this kind of love (agape) that will motivate men and women who declare that they love Jesus to give their all, including themselves, so that God’s church will be able to accomplish what He had asked.

It is this kind of love which will move a mother to run into a burning house at the risk of her own life to save her sleeping baby. This kind of love moved Desmond Doss to do what he did in the face of deadly enemy fire on that lonely Sabbath to save as many of his fellow soldiers as he could. This kind of love moved our stalwart pioneers to press on and on, even when there were no funds, to keep sharing with others in every way possible the message of a soon-coming savior.

The act of the widow who cast two mites—all that she had—into the treasury, is placed on record for the encouragement of those who, struggling with poverty, still desire by their gifts to aid the cause of God... to make her offering, the widow had deprived herself of even the necessities of life, trusting God to supply her needs for the morrow.... Of her the Savior declared... this poor widow hath cast more (Mark 12:43). The motive for giving is love. But love recognizes a need. Love cannot pass it by. Love then demonstrates itself by tangible response.

The Christians must respond because his life is so filled with love for God that he can withhold neither love nor life. Love must be expressed if it is to develop and mature. Giving is an expression of love... Love is all that we have which is ours to give. The more our love matures, the more we want to be identified with his plans and purpose for our lives and His church. “Therefore, as His follower, recognizing His ownership of everything you possess, you will want to plan your offerings, believing that what you are going to give is for God and not for projects or programs (Paul Smith, Managing God’s Goods, p.58)

God has deposited with His people in this world enough to carry forward His work without embarrassment (Testimonies, Vol. 1 p. 197)

Some people spend their money freely and still grow richer. Others are cautious, and yet grow poorer. Be generous, and you will be prosperous (Prov. 11:24, 25).

The cause of God is a sure bank that can never fail, and the investment of our time, our interest, and our means in it is a treasure in the heavens that faileth not (Testimonies, Vol. 3, p. 90).

According to the monthly statistical report of the South Kenya Conference only 19 percent of members gave 10 percent in their churches in September, 2013, and only 9 percent gave offering. Why don’t Christians give generously?

Many pastors freely admit their distaste for talking about money and many, as a result of their discomfort, avoid the subject altogether in their preaching. This common bashfulness on the part of pastors reflects as a failure to fully grasp their God-given

responsibilities regarding teaching the whole counsel of God, which includes God's counsel on financial stewardship.

The Bible makes it clear that spiritual leaders need to teach their people biblical principles of stewardship. For example:

In Deut. 8:11-18 Moses warned the people of Israel that when they prospered in the promised land they must not think that they had made themselves rich, but to remember that God had given them power to make wealth.

Jesus dedicated sixteen verses in his Sermon in the Mount to teaching about money (Matt. 6:19-34).

The apostle Paul devoted the entire eighth and ninth chapters of 2 Corinthians to stewardship teaching, and in 1 Tim. 6:3-19, he urged Pastor Timothy to teach his people about the proper attitude toward riches.

Spiritual leaders are responsible to teach believers in the church what God says about material possession based on the apostle Paul's example and personal experience. (2 Corinthians 8-9). In the light of the biblical examples of spiritual leaders teaching their people about stewardship, it should be clear that the failure of pastor teach these principles hinders God's people from giving as they should.

Challenge the Congregation/Members to give

Along with teaching our people the biblical principles of giving, we pastors must also challenge people to give in order to lead them into obedience stewardship. Reports have shown that most people will give as they should unless they are asked to give. Churches with high levels of giving realize that most people do not increase their giving unless someone asks them to give on an annual basis... The bad news is that they will not grow in their giving unless they are asked. Scriptures reveals that one of the key responsibilities of a spiritual leader is to challenge his people to give and that when he does so, God's people respond obediently.

When Moses challenged the people to give for the construction of the tabernacle, they brought so much more than was needed that he had to command them to stop giving (Exo. 35:4-9, 20-24, 36:4-7).

In leading to give to the building of the temple, King David told how much he had personally donated to the task and then pointedly asked his people, "Who then is willing to consecrate himself this day to the LORD?" (1 Chron. 29:5). As a result, David's people gave willingly (1 Chron. 29:6-9).

When King Joash commanded the people to bring the temple levy as fixed by Moses, all leaders and the people responded by joyfully and obediently (2 Chron. 24:8-10).

When King Hezekiah commanded the people to bring the tithes as commanded in the Law, the people responded by giving so abundantly that the tithe piled up in heaps (2 Chron. 31:3-10).

In Nehemiah 13:10-12, we read that Nehemiah commanded the people to bring the tithes the temple storehouses for the Levites and singers. The result was that all Judah obeyed. When the prophet Haggai rebuked people for neglecting the temple to build their own houses, and commanded them to rebuild the temple, the leaders and the people obeyed (Hag. 1:1-15).

Therefore, we should never hesitate to ask our people to give

One of the best ways to increase your church's weekly giving is to help your members or congregations get out of debt. Many people do not give because they are overwhelmed with interest's obligations. When you lead them out of this bondage, you free thousands of shillings for ministry that were previously wasted on interest payments.

FREE AT LAST!—FROM DEBT SLAVERY

Debt is so much a part of our culture that someone once said, "Money was invented so we could know exactly how much we owe." Until Christians learn to spend less than they earn, and thereby avoid the great debt disaster, they will struggle to give as they should. By now, it should be dawning on you that your congregation desperately needs you to teach them biblical principles of wise money management.

It is clear that God doesn't want His children to live under the curse of slavery to debt. So how can you get out of the bondage of debt into the freedom of a cash-based life? (Deut. 28:43-45)

Three steps to Breaking out of Debt Slavery

Give to God first

The Bible says: "Honor the Lord from the wealth, and from the first of all your produce, so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine" (Prov. 3:9-10). If you want God's help to get out debt, you must put God first in your giving. When you give to the church first, what you left to live on goes a lot further than what you would have had without giving. This works because, according to Proverbs 3:9-10, God intervenes to bless you financially. **IF YOU WANT GOD'S HELP TO GET OUT OF DEBT, START PAYING GOD FIRST!**

Don't incur any further debt

Christian money expert Larry Burkett says, "If you don't borrow money, you can't get into debt. If you stop borrowing money, you can't get further into debt."

Pay off all debt before making any other investments

Don't invest any more money in anything until you have first paid all your debts

What good stewards know about giving?

Eight lessons on giving to the work of God

When we give to the work of God, we are not giving to man, but to God (1 Chron. 29:1).

God wants us to give to His work with all of our ability (1 Chron. 29:2, 2 Cor. 8:3).

God wants us to give generously to His work (1 Chron. 29:2-5a, 14a)

A genuine delight in the work of God will motivate us to give generously (1 Chron. 29:3).

Our giving is a true indicator of the depth of our commitment to Christ (1 Chron. 29:5b).

God wants us to give willingly to His work (1 Chron. 29:6-9, 17; 2 Cor. 29:9, 17)

When we give to God's work willingly and generously, we will experience great joy (1 Chron. 29:9, 17).

The most basic reason to give to God's work is because all our money and possession came from God and belong to God (1 Chron. 29:10-16, Jam. 1:17).

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VITA

Julius M. Bichang'a

Family

I was born in Kisii October 10, 1972 to Samwel Bichang'a and Jennifer Nyabonyi as their fifth child. I married Jocelyn Biyaki on September 26, 2006. We have been blessed with two sons, Gerald Okemwa Moturi and Grynal SamPeter Moturi.

Education

In 1994 I joined Spicer Memorial College for my bachelor's degree graduating in 1998. I then joined Andrews University at the University of East Africa, Baraton in 1999 to 2001 and received a MA in Religion. I will receive a DMin in Global Mission Leadership from Andrews University, Kenya Cohort in 2014.

Ministry Experience

Upon completion of my studies, I began working as a chaplain at Gionseri High School and worked there for six months. I was then assigned to a district as a pastor and served as a district pastor for seven years between 2003 and 2010. In 2011 I was elected as the Stewardship Director for South Kenya Conference where I am serving to date.