

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Missiology

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST MISSION STRATEGIES ASSESSMENT
AMONG RABAI COMMUNITIES IN COASTAL KENYA

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This project studied “Seventh-day Adventist Mission Strategies Assessment among Rabai Communities in Coastal Kenya.” Reflecting on the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is best to describe the mission as the backbone of Christianity. However, the church faces many cross-cultural challenges in achieving this goal. Certain socio-economic and political environments pose significant challenges to the church’s attempt to realize the mandate.

The social and cultural challenges have surfaced with the mission endeavors in the African context. The Rabai people are among the indigenous people of the Mijikenda Coastal region of Kenya Coast Field. Despite the church’s commitment to effect its mission mandate, its previous efforts to engage the Rabai community have yielded limited success.

Due to cultural, social, or spiritual challenges, the Seventh-day Adventists' earlier attempts to reach out to the community have borne limited results. This study, therefore, evaluates and proposes a mission strategy tailored to the Rabai community in Coastal Kenya, aimed at improving both outreach and retention within this population. The research interviews and focus group discussions in this study, revealed that the major activities for the Rabai community include selling coconut brew and small-scale farming. While undertaking such activities, the community faced environmental challenges and unemployment with negative impacts on their economic activities.

During the research, it was observed that the Rabai community expects the church to support them mainly on preaching the gospel of repentance, church support on livelihood projects, addressing negative beliefs and partnership with community. The research established that media strategy is effective in soul winning due to it having wide coverage and more listeners, providing live coverage on TikTok and YouTube, Gospel music and programs that appeal to many, and providing opportunity for teaching people about God.

The study therefore recommends that, that media strategy be approved by the church not only in Kenya Coast Field, but also researchers to come up with other strategies to ensure more effective ways to maximize mission in the coastal region of The Kenya.

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SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST MISSION STRATEGIES ASSESSMENT AMONG
RABAI COMMUNITIES IN COASTAL KENYA

A project

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

by

Wilson Mwamzuka


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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Reflecting on the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is best to describe the mission as the backbone of Christianity. “Jesus Christ mandated His church to evangelize and make disciples of all nations.”¹ The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church shares the Great Commission mandate. However, the church faces many cross-cultural challenges in achieving this goal. Certain socio-economic and political environments pose significant challenges to the church’s attempt to realize the mandate.

The social and cultural challenges have surface with the mission endeavors in the African context. Scholars have struggled with the issue of Africans in terms of mission. It is recognized that “Beginning in prehistoric times, the people of Africa gathered in groups related by family ties and similar needs. These communities developed their own individual languages, cultures, practices, and religions.”² The statements by Lugira, suggests that, “if the Africans had their own religion and their culture, then it would suggest that it would be difficult to bring a new concept of worship to them because it would not be easy for them to receive it. “They would rather combine the two or remain with the one that they are used to.”³ Lugira admits

¹ Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 2010), 1158.

² Aloysius Lugira, *African Traditional Religion* (New York: Chelsea House, 2009), 10.

³ *Ibid.*, 11.

that, “For many people, combining traditional religion with either Christianity or Islam is also a way of life.”⁴

The combining together of culture and religion reveals the difficult to reach out to Africans and get those that will be fully committed to Christianity. Winter gives the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman. He indicates that, “when Jesus spoke to this Samaritan woman, it was immediately obvious that he faced a special cultural obstacle.”⁵ This scenario put into picture, suggests that whatever obstacle one may encounter in reaching out to the Africans, a strategy needs to be developed in order to fulfil the obligation of mission to Africa.

John Mbiti recommends that, “Africans are notoriously religious, and each people has its religious system with a set of beliefs and practices. Religion permeates into all departments of life so fully that it is not or possible always to isolate it.”⁶

Mbiti indicates that an African carries his religion wherever he goes. “Wherever the African is, there is his religion: he carries it to the fields where he is sowing seeds or harvesting a new crop; he takes it with him to beer party or to attend a funeral ceremony.”⁷ This means that, the African does not want to part with his religion. Mbiti’s statement confirms the challenges missionary have to grapple with while reaching out in Africa. With this idea in mind, it gives an impression that Africans are unreached in terms of spreading Christianity.

⁴ Lugira, *African Traditional Religion*, 12.

⁵ Ralph D. Winter, “The New Macedonia: A Revolutionary New Era in Mission Begins,” in Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement A Reader*, 4th ed. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), 350.

⁶ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Johannesburg: Heinemann, 1969), 121.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 122.

Mbiti tends to suggest that these perspectives of the African culture should not be ignored. In his statements regarding this, he recommends that, “to ignore these traditional beliefs, attitudes and practices can only lead to a lack of understanding of African behavior and problems.”⁸ Lacking to understand the Africans well may also lead to difficulty in reaching out to them. In this case then, the religion of the African may be detrimental to mission since missionaries needs to be versant with the challenges that could emerge as a result of this otherwise they may labor in vain. Mbiti argues that, “religion is the strongest element in the traditional background, and exerts probably the greatest influence upon the thinking and living of the people concerned”⁹

In an attempt to understand the above situation of the African traditional religion, this paper will capture some few statements from some scholars who have tried to discuss and express the situation of African theology. The aim is to try to discover whether the ways earlier used in the earlier times to reach out to the Africans really worked or did not work and if it did not work well, what was the contributing factor. In like manner, Andrew Mutero, a Kenyan theologian, mentions that “several African scholars tried to develop an African theology in the twentieth century. This attempt sought to reinvent Christianity and make it a truly local home-grown religion that not only grows, but also flourishes in the African soil”¹⁰

⁸ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 122.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹⁰ Andrew Mutero, “African Theology and Its Religion-cultural Matrix and Implication,” in *Culture, Adventist Theology, and Mission in Africa*, ed. Sampson M. Nwaomah, Ēriks Galenieks, and Davidson Razafiarivony (Nairobi: Theological Seminary Adventist University of Africa, 2016), 36.

Accordingly, Chipeta highlights three key words namely, “theology, mission and culture,”¹¹ which are important things to consider while dealing with Africans evangelization. Chipeta believes that, “the concept of culture explains that every society has some intangibles that influence human life.”¹² Chipeta agrees with Kraft who defined culture as “all things people learn after they are born in to the world that enable them to function effectively as biological beings in the environment.”¹³ Chipeta seems to be valid in that they expresses the difficulty which someone may have in changing his way of life abruptly without analyzing it. And that really seems to be the real issue since the Africans have been having their way of life for quite a long time. They have been having their religion which according to them has been always sufficient to them, and now another religion is brought to them which of course seems to be quite hard for them to change without making valid observations to it.

Chipeta proposes that “in order to reach out to a certain group of people with the gospel, cross-cultural witnesses for Christ need to have a knowledge about the particular culture and its relationship compared to other cultures.”¹⁴ In this regard, that is to suggest that this is what the missionaries ought to have done. Also, there will be a need to investigate the African worldview to determine whether whatever the missionary did was compatible with what was required to be done.

¹¹ Mabvuto Fitta Chipeta, “The Symbiosis of Theology, Mission, and Culture,” in Nwaomah, Galenieks, and Razafiarivony, 59.

¹² Ibid., 60.

¹³ Ibid., 60.

¹⁴ Ibid., 60.

Robert Schreiter argues that “genuine preaching of the gospel will always change the culture, and that change involves more than calling individuals back to the behavioral norms of the culture. It is a change of horizon, which has to have social implications.”¹⁵ this indicates the great work of all who engage in mission, to the social challenges of the Africans before they tackle the spiritual aspect of the concerned.

The best way for believers to express love is to aid the church in creating an environment conducive to attracting and retaining members so that they can be developed into true disciples of Jesus Christ. “The church exists to win people to Christ, help them grow in their faith and then send them out to participate in the mission of winning the entire world. The process of growing and sending them in their faith is called discipleship, and it is God's will for every church.”¹⁶ God’s biggest hope is to save the unbelievers in the world. He wants all people to be saved and come to know the truth. He uses His church to accomplish the hope. This means that all works the church does should be carried out centering on mission.

Many modern churches, however, have used evangelism as a means of church growth, and as a result of that they have failed. In Kenya, the Rabai people being one of the nine Mijikenda tribes believes that there is only one God who is also the creator of the universe by the name “*Mulungu* and *Kaya* as the sacred place of worship.”¹⁷

¹⁵ Mutero, “African Theology and Its Religion-cultural Matrix and Implication,” 36.

¹⁶ Ibid., 6.

¹⁷ Anthony N. Githitho, *The World Heritage Convention: Nomination Dossier for Inscription on the World Heritage List: The Sacred Mijikenda Kaya Forests (Kenya)*, PDF file, January, 2008, whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/1231rev.pdf. “The traditional Mijikenda religion was a combination of monotheism in which a Supreme Being and creator, *Mulungu*, was worshipped, and a strong belief in the influence of ancestral and other spirits in people’s daily lives. Many Mijikenda today have not completely abandoned this view... The Rabai call their sacred place of worship “*Kaya*.”

Rabai is a community of the Mijikenda ‘Nine Towns’ a series of hilltop settlements, *Kaya* immediately behind the Islamicized coast. Because they lived in a number of independent settlements, “it was not possible to convert them by winning the support of a single ruler.”¹⁸ Based on the above arguments, one would not be misplaced to suggest that whoever would endeavor to reach out to the Rabai people, should come up with missional strategies to reach out to the Rabai people.

In heeding to the words of Christ, Kenya Coast *Mission* Field, endeavors to reach out to different people groups in their area of *mission* field. The Rabai people group is one of the communities which they need to give more attention to. The reason is that the Rabai people received the ministrations of the Missionaries but they still observe their *Kaya* Traditional Religion up to now. Few Rabai community members have received Jesus Christ as their personal savior, but in time of crisis, they do not come to church. This suggests that they may have gone back to the community to seek solutions to their problems traditionally.

This mixture of Christianity and traditional Religion among the Rabai members attracts *syncretism*. Different attempts to reach out to them have been made including public evangelistic campaigns, door to door visitation, and distribution of free literature, all resulting to poor results. This Rabai traditional religion and practice is a great hindrance to the propagation of the gospel in the territory.

Statement of the Problem

The mission mandate of the SDA Church in Kenya’s coast field mission is to evangelize all communities within its geographical reach. The Rabai people are

¹⁸ Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 137.

among the indigenous people of the Mijikenda Coastal region of Kenya field. Despite the church's commitment to inclusive outreach, its previous efforts to engage the Rabai community have yielded limited success. Due to cultural, social, or spiritual challenges, the SDA Church's earlier attempts to evangelize the community have borne limited results. This persistent lack of retention and growth highlights a critical gap in the church's current mission strategy—particularly its cultural sensitivity, contextual relevance, and sustainability among the Rabai. As such, there is an urgent need to assess the effectiveness of existing mission approaches and to develop a contextually appropriate and culturally informed strategy that can facilitate meaningful engagement with the Rabai people. This study, therefore, seeks to evaluate and propose a mission strategy tailored to the Rabai community in Coastal Kenya, aimed at improving both outreach and retention within this population.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the Socio-economic and perception challenges that hinder the mission efforts of the SDA Church among the Rabai community
2. To assess the effective mission strategies employed by the SDA Church in reaching the Rabai community
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of the mission strategies used by the SDA Church in engaging and retaining members of the Rabai community.

Research Questions

1. What socio-economic and cultural perception factors hinder the mission efforts of the SDA Church among the traditional Rabai community?
2. What mission strategies has the SDA Church implemented in its outreach to the Rabai community?

3. How effective have these mission strategies been in engaging and retaining members of the Rabai community within the church?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it will assist the SDA Church to have a new approach to evangelize to the Rabai people group in Kenya coast and avoid repeating the mistakes done by the Earlier Missionaries. Further, it will provide a source material for those who may be having such challenges in other scopes of church missions.

Limitation of the Study

The researcher was not able to get some information from the target group due to the researcher being considered as a stranger in the Rabai community. Also, there was a tendency of consistency effect where respondents provided feedback to similar questions in a particular manner as they were repeated over and over while other respondents tended to provide overstatements or withhold some information depending on their perceptions. This brought about the unwillingness of the target population to provide information openly due to wrong perceptions, which resulted to some limitations of the study.

Delimitation of the Study

This study is delimited to the Traditional Rabai people in Kaloleni in the Coastal region of Kenya as part of the Mijikenda not all the Rabai people elsewhere, the Muslim Rabai People or the whole group of Mijikenda and their tribes. “The

Mijikenda Tribe consists of nine small tribes which have the same kind of values and a relative language.”¹⁹

The Research Design

The study is a theological study employing a qualitative research design. “Qualitative research is a fact-finding method for exploring and understanding people's beliefs, attitudes, experiences, and behaviors.”²⁰ “It involves collecting and analyzing data for insights into complex phenomena and social issues. Qualitative research methods can include interviews, focus groups, observation, and document analysis.”²¹ Unlike quantitative research, which focuses on numerical, objective data, qualitative research aims to understand the subjective meaning behind participants' experiences and behavior.

Researchers take this detailed data and analyze it using techniques such as content analysis, thematic analysis, or grounded theory to identify patterns and themes in the data. A qualitative approach was designed to obtain information concerning the current topic under discussion and, whenever possible, to draw valid conclusions from the topic under discussion. The research sought to explore and describe the opinions, feelings, behaviors, preferences, and attitudes of the selected population. A general focus of inquiry pertaining to examining the strategy of mission among the Rabai religion in the coastal region was attained.

¹⁹ Githitho, *The World Heritage Convention*, PDF file. "They are in fact 9 distinct groups (Mijikenda means 'nine tribes') but speak closely related Bantu dialects which share about 71% of their vocabulary suggesting that their separation and formation as different groups may have begun less than 1000 years ago (Nyamweru 1998, 8-9). The groups are: A-Giriama, A-Digo, A-Duruma, A-Chonyi, A-Ribe, A-Rabai, A-Kambe, A-Kauma, and A-Jibana (the prefix 'A' denotes a people or tribe.)"

²⁰John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publication, 2018), 82.

²¹Ibid.

Definition of Terms

Convenience Sampling: It involves using respondents who are convenient to the researcher

Focus Group: Focus group is a qualitative fact-finding method involving a small group of five to 10 people discussing a specific topic or issue.

- A moderator leads the group, poses open-ended questions, and encourages participant discussion and interaction.
- A focus group aims to gain insights into participants' opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors about the discussed topic.

Laity: Is a collective noun referring to the ordinary members of a congregation

Strategy: A careful plan or method; a clever stratagem

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL MISSIOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF THE STUDY

Mission Theology in the Old Testament

To study how to reach out to the Nations of the world, it is justifiable through studying the origin of Mission in the Old Testament. This is important because it will pave way for more knowledge of the techniques used by God and His messengers in reaching out to Nations in the Old Testament. This sub topic discusses what the Bible in the Old Testament reveals on this subject, and what scholars argue on this very subject.

Beginning from the book of Genesis in the Old Testament, the following texts expresses some ideas on mission. “And God said unto Noah, this is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth” (Gen 9:17).¹ Abram was instructed by God, "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation, I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing” (Gen 12:1, 2). Then in verse 3 God declares that, “I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen 12:3).

The phrase, “and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed,” in Genesis 12:3, suggests that when God was talking to Abraham, He had in mind a

¹ The Bible version used throughout this paper is the New King James Version, unless otherwise stated.

great mission to the whole world even though God did not immediately open the full plan to Abram. Later, while God was revealing Himself to Pharaoh He stated that, “But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth” (Exod 9:16). At the same time, God describes Himself as someone who delights in dwelling with His creatures, and when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, the Bible portrays a scenario of Him looking for Adam, so that He can redeem them and bring them back to Himself. Verses that point out to this are such as Genesis 3:9, which reads; “Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" the above verse suggests the missional aspect of God. Later Moses portrays the same impression when he was reporting to the Israelites about what he had been instructed by God Himself who had said that, “And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Gen 25:8).

Likewise, Isaiah echoes the same picture of God, when he alludes that, “Indeed He says, “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth” (Isa 49:6). Isaiah does not stop there, he alludes that, “The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising” (Isa 60:3). In verse 11 of the same chapter Isaiah emphasizes that, “Therefore your gates shall be open continually; They shall not be shut day or night, that men may bring to you the wealth of the Gentiles, And their kings in procession” (Isa 60:11).

Biblical scholars have been grappling with this issue while, probing the missional aspect of the Old Testament. To mention just a few amongst others, Craig Ott and Stephen J. Strauss in their book, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, struggle

with this issue. Ott and Strauss express that, “The Bible is from start to finish a missionary book, for it is the story of God himself reaching into human history to reconcile a fallen and rebellious humanity to himself and to reestablish his reign over all creation.”² Ott and Strauss add that, “In this sense God is a missionary God.”³ However, Ott and Strauss reveal that, “the theology of Christian mission has undergone, in David J. Bosch’s analysis, paradigmatic shifts throughout the history of the church.”⁴ This revelation by Ott and Strauss comes as response to the statement by David Bosch who declares that, “There is, in the Old Testament, no indication of the believers of the old covenant being sent by God to cross geographical, religious, and social frontiers in order to win others to faith in Yahweh.”⁵ The statement by Bosch therefore, seems to be detrimental to those who looks to the Old Testament as the basis for mission.

Jiri Moskala states that, “when God calls His people into existence, He gives them a mission.”⁶ In addition, Moskala adds that, “there were no Old Testament people of God without a mission; there is no election without a commission. God’s call presupposes a call for action. Biblical theology is a mission-oriented theology.”⁷ Moskala aggressively opposes the idea by Bosch that, “there is, in the Old Testament,

² Craig Ott and Stephen J. Strauss with Timothy C. Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 3.

³ Ibid., 4.

⁴ Ibid., vii.

⁵ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 19.

⁶ Jiri Moskala, “The Mission of God’s People in the Old Testament,” *Perspective Digest*, April 1, 2011, accessed 17 July 2022, <https://www.perspectivedigest.org/archive/16-2/mission-of-gods-people-in-the-old-testament>.

⁷ Ibid.

no indication of the believers of the old covenant being sent by God to cross geographical, religious, and social frontiers in order to win others to faith in Yahweh.”⁸ Moskala further mentions that, “Some scholars, however, argue that in the Old Testament there is no specific call to evangelize the world.”⁹ To sum up his arguments, Moskala suggests that, “the people of God in the Old Testament were to be an object lesson for other people and nations.”¹⁰ He therefore submits that, “from the very beginning, the horizon of mission for the Old Testament people was to be worldwide. Adam, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and others had their mission to fulfill.”¹¹

Another scholar defending the presence of mission in the Old Testament is Walter Kaiser Jr. who wrote,

Mission in the Old Testament to challenge the idea that mission is a New Testament development and that Israel was involved in mission only centripetally that is attracting people to Yahweh by living out their unique relationship with him. From the first chapter Kiser claims that centrifugal mission was always God’s plan, and announces that “the first Great Commission mandate of Bible (p.xix) can be found in Genesis 12:1-3, where God promised to bless Abraham and bless all peoples through him. God’s promise of blessing, which also appears in the creation accounts of God of Genesis 1-11, is one of the key themes that make up his promise-plan to the world.”¹²

There is a theme of mission in the Bible since the beginning. The above therefore thrusts us into a dilemma as to whether Mission was the purpose of God since the beginning or not, hence this could be a good reason to such out in to the Old

⁸ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 19.

⁹ Moskala, “The Mission of God’s People in the Old Testament.”

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Walter C. Kaiser Jr., “Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations,” accessed on 12 October 2018, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/review/mission-in-the-old-testament-israel-as-a-light-to-the-nations/>.

Testament while looking in to the truth of the matter. In trying to fulfill the demand of the above need, therefore, this research will try to examine some texts in the Old Testament in a bid to establish what is revealed in this topic. In doing so, it will not be denied then that Adam and Eve were created by God Himself in the Garden of Eden as the scriptures say, “And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that crept upon the earth” (Gen 1:26). The other point which demands attention is the revelation that He God Himself is the one who commanded them to have children. And He is the one who blessed Adam and Eve and told them to multiply, as the scripture reveal in Genesis 1:28 that, “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth” (Gen 1:28).

Mission in the New Testament

The words, statements, and themes of the New Testament writers suggests the fulfilment of the God’s missional agenda. In their introduction of the promised Messiah, their messages carry the core theme of the Old Testament which as indicated in this research above is the desire of God to reach out to Nations. Bosch agrees with this when he alludes that God “reveals himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in other words as the God who has been active in past history and who precisely for this reason will also be the God of the future.”¹³ In the New Testament,

¹³ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 34.

Mathew begins by saying that, “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matt 1:1).

Whenever David and Abraham are mentioned in the New Testament, minds are directed to who they were in relation to God’s mission. The fact that David, Abraham and other Heroes are mentioned as God’s messengers in the New Testament is a foundational missional aspect to express the desire of God to fulfil His purpose of reaching out to all Nations. Skott K. Leafe states that, “The New Testament reveals that God is seeking people to worship Him and it is for this very reason that He calls believers to preach the gospel everywhere.”¹⁴ Craig Ott and Stephen J. Strauss admit that, “The manner by which the nations will be gathered unto the Lord is manifest in the New Testament.”¹⁵ Ott and Strauss argue that, “the Old Testament has given us a clear vision of God’s sovereignty over the nations, his desire to bless the nations, and his ultimate inclusion of them in his kingdom. But the vision is primarily in the future. “Whereas Israel as God’s servant had failed to manifest the righteousness and glory of the Lord before the nations, the true Servant, the promised Messiah, would come as savior and as a light to the Gentiles. With him the Abrahamic promise of blessing to all the families of the earth comes to fulfillment”¹⁶

Bosch, is one whose statements brings confutation when he disputes the presence of Mission in the Old Testament. Bosch had commented that, “there is, in the Old Testament, no indication of the believers of the old covenant being sent by God to cross geographical, religious, and social frontiers in order to win others to faith

¹⁴ Scott k. Leafe, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, PDF file, June, 2017, <https://www.scriptel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/A-Biblical-Theology-of-Missions.pdf>.

¹⁵ Ott and Strauss, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 25.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

in Yahweh.”¹⁷ However, in his comments about the New Testament, he agrees that, the New Testament is essentially a book about mission.”¹⁸ This therefore gives an expression that David Bosch does not disputes the presence of Mission the in New Testament. Bosch however raises that, “it is important to note that the New Testament authors also differed from one another, not least in their understanding of mission.”¹⁹ From the foregoing discussion therefore Bosch, a respected scholar of mission, does not reject the presence of mission in the New Testament. Further he recommends that, “We should, however, not be surprised if the New Testament does not reflect a uniform view of mission but, rather, a variety of “theologies of mission.”²⁰

The reason for this discussion, is to establish whether there is indeed any presence of mission perspectives in the New Testament, which of Course indicators shows that the New Testament is a book full of mission perspectives. Again, Bosch defends that, “a careful reading of both Old and New Testaments reveals that God is himself is the subject of mission. We have here to do with *Missio Dei*, God’s mission.”²¹ When giving the story of the events happening during his time, Matthew records that there was some preaching done. Preaching is an act of giving some information of warning to someone or a group of members in order to save people so that they may not perish. Matthew states that, “in those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea” (Matt 3:1). In addition, Matthew illustrates

¹⁷ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 19.

¹⁸ Ibid. 33.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ David J. Bosch, “Witness to the World,” in Winter and Hawthorne, 78.

how John the Baptist did his work by submitting that, “repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 3:2).

Matthew does not stop there, he goes on revealing that the issue here is not just something new, but it was something that was prophesied by the prophets in the Old Testament. Thus, he stipulates that, “For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight’” (Matt 3:3). The message that comes clear from Matthew about the message of John the Baptist, points out to the core theme of the Old Testament, and which now turns to be the same one needing to be relayed in the New Testament.

In like manner, Mark starts his first chapter by mentioning the Gospel of Christ son of God, but he also reflects the point that whatever was happening was not something that came as a surprise to the people since it was predicted during the time of Isaiah. Mark declares that, “the beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way" (Mark 1:1, 2 NIV). As earlier discussed in this research, sending has a big relationship with mission, and mark points out to those perspective.

Moreover, the messages given by Mark reveals that the story in his book is about spreading the kingdom of God. In the fourth chapter, he argues that “So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knows not how” (Mark 4:26, 27). This goes in line with the agenda of God of reaching out to every human being for salvation. In the kingdom of God, there is no suffering and there is no death that is the better place for the people of God where He would wish His people to dwell forever and ever.

Again, Mark highlights that, And He said, "How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it? "It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil," Mark 4:30, 31, then Mark goes on adding that, "yet when it is sown, grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that the birds of the air can nest under its shade" (Mark 4:32).

The mission theme in the book of Mark can be realized throughout his epistle, and even the way he concludes it. He thus defends that, "And he said unto them, go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15, 16). Mark therefore describes the gospel as a Universal program which concerns every creature and this is important to note as because this agrees with the argument that the mission of God is about saving nations.

Accordingly, Luke agrees with what Matthew and Mark says concerning the mission of God. He affirms that the Angel who came to Mary bringing the good news about the child who was to be born was sent by God. Luke records that, "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary" (Luke 1:26, 27).

In addition, Luke mentions Zachariah in his discussion narrating that in this act, God had come to bring salvation to His people. Luke declares that, and his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people" (Luke 1:67, 68). The missionary theme by Luke is not hidden as one goes through his epistle. In the 10th chapter Luke narrates that, "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also,

and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come” (Luke 10:1). He portrays the aspect of sending which of course this is an aspect of mission found even in the Old Testament. Luke adds that, “therefore said he unto them, the harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2). Before the end of his epistle, Luke ensures that he mentions the main reason of his story about Jesus. He thus reports that, “and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” He argues that whatever had happened during this time was not something new, but something that is related to the mission of God which has been in progress since the Old Testament.

John in his epistle begins in analytical language in matters mission because John portrays a picture of unity between God and the Word. He narrates that, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:1-3). John makes it even more clear when he argues that, “In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” On the same, John indicates that, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). John also uses strong words like life, light of men, and even darkness which could indicate that, when human beings sinned there was darkness in the world which of course was a problem which needed to be solved, and the only one who was to come and solve this problem was God Himself who was the source of life and light. At this point, John had no other option except to reveal that the process of saving

souls could not be successful without incarnation, God wearing humanity in order to save humanity. Other writers in the New Testament do not have any other different messages except that of showing how salvation to the nations was implemented.

Jesus and Mission

A general overview of the New Testament shows that the coming of the Messiah in to the world goes in line with the agenda of God to save the Nations. The gospels, and the epistles carries the same agenda in fact Mathew gives as a picture of the work of the Messiah in this world as savior. Mathew commenting on Mary the Mother of Jesus confirms that, “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matt 1:21). If Jesus was to be born so that he could save his people from their sins, then there is a need to know who his people are. Again, it would be appropriate here to note that the people of Jesus are also the people of God. Because John says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:1-3). Then John adds that, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

Fernando L. Canale, defends that, “God’s self-revelation in Jesus as concrete, historical reality brought new light for understanding God.”²² This is like saying that, Jesus was revealing God in his person. If this is the case, then it brings back the idea of Jesus being God, and that the missional agenda of God to reach out to all Nations was also in his mind. In this case, the theme oneness of God becomes eminent in that

²² Fernando L. Canale, “Doctrine of God,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 123.

it becomes difficult to separate God's agenda and Jesus's agenda, and of course the Old Testament agenda and the New Testament agenda. Due to this, Canals expresses that, "the revelation of God in Jesus Christ did not modify the basic OT approach to understanding of the Godhead, which includes both the idea of oneness and of personal distinctions but simply assumed it. ... Jesus Christ was a man born of Mary (Matt 1:16). Those who knew Him as a child a young adult found it difficult to accept Jesus even as a prophet (Mark 6:3-5)."²³ Canale adds, "according to the NT, however, Jesus the man was the most direct and clear revelation of God given to humankind (John 1:18; 14:8, 9; Heb 1:2, 3). He is God incarnate."²⁴ Such statements elaborate how God was looking for a better way to identify Himself with the humankind in order to save them. It could be therefore easily be observed that, there is no mission of Jesus without the mission of God, and there is no mission of God without the mission of Jesus. This suggests that, the mission of God is the mission of Jesus and it is the same that the bible grapples with in the Old and Testament and eventually in the New Testament. In an attempt to make the story more meaningful, Bosch states that, "a careful reading of both Old and New Testaments reveals that God Himself is the subject of mission."²⁵

In his appearance from the wilderness after his forty days fasting, Jesus outlines his purpose of being in this world. He says that, "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18). Throughout his

²³ Canale, "Doctrine of God," 123.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Bosch, "Witness to the World," 78.

work in the world, as indicated in the New Testament, Jesus revealed that whatever he was doing, was not his will but the will of his father which according to the Old Testament since the beginning, God his father had indicated that He desired to save all the Nations. He said, “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30). This actually suggests that the work of the father is being fulfilled in the person Jesus. In his gospel Luke indicates that Jesus selected some among those who followed him in his work on earth so that he may send them to continue with his work even after his ascension to heaven. Luke defends that, “And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles” (Luke 6:13).

Don Richardson confirms that, “many millions of Christians know, of course that Jesus, at the end of His ministry, commanded His disciples to “go and make disciples of all [peoples]” (Matt 28:19).”²⁶ Before his ascending to heaven, Jesus revealed his full plan for the salvation of the Nations, when he alluded that, “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15, 16). It can be noted that the Jesus is involving all the world in his strategy to accomplish His mission. Mathew agrees with what Mark says, he reports that;

And Jesus came and spoke unto them saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matt 28:18-20)

On the same note, Jesus gave his disciples the Great Commission which was an emphasis of the plan he had given in the process of the mission in to all Nations.

²⁴ Don Richardson, “A Man for All Peoples,” in Winter and Hawthorne, 118.

Through Luke, he reveals that, “and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47).

The same Luke then adds, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Thus, the words “uttermost part of the earth” in Acts 1:8 include the universality of the initiative, which of course was the initial plan of God through the beginning.

Apostles and Mission

The Great Commission as realized in this paper was a command which was given by Jesus himself in order to fulfil the desire of God to reach all Nations on earth. Leaving at that point, it would not be appropriate without establishing whether it happened or not. The bible, and even bible Scholars have tried to express what transpired after Jesus ascended to heaven and even the results of whatever transpired in regard to the Great Commission. David Bosch for instance indicates that, “many scholars have underlined the remarkable fact that the so-called Great Commission seems to play no role in the New Testament church herself, because it is never repeated nor referred to.”²⁷

Bosch argues that the reason for the silence is one, “the Great Commission is not a commission in the ordinary sense of the word ... it was a promise, however, that could only be perceived in the act of obeying, as peter discovered when he visited Cornelius and said in amazement, “I now see how true it is that God has no favorites (Acts 30:34). Bosch adds that, “a second reason for the silence about the Great Commission in the early church lies in the fact that a mission to the Gentiles was

²⁷ Bosch, “Witness to the World,” 80, 81.

never at issue in the early church. ... mission in the New Testament is more than a matter of obeying a command. It is, rather, the result of an encounter with Christ. It would thus mean that since the apostles had been with Him for more than three years and that he had taught matters evangelism, and now as a sign of faith in him they would be ready to go and spread the gospel to others.”²⁸

Gebre Worancha mentions the issue of faith of the Apostles especially on whom they had believed. He alludes that “it is a biblical principle that genuine believers possess some “signs” or marks as a result of their faith in Him who is the good gift giver. Jesus spoke about this when He instructed His disciples to go and make more disciples.”²⁹ Worancha adds that, “the apostles were witnesses in proclaiming facts the gospel to the world,”³⁰ meaning that since they were eye witnesses, they had seen what their master had done, it was their turn now to proclaim the good news of salvation to others. The Acts of the Apostles gives a scenario of what happened after Jesus left them, which also seems to be a response to what they had been commanded by their master before He left them. It reads that, “then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away” (Acts 1:12, RSV). In his explanation, Luke gives a scenario of the Apostles not having any other option except going back to the upper the room which they had been staying in order to seek a way forward of the mission ahead of them which of course even though they did know how to begin, but they had to go anyway.

²⁸ Bosch, “Witness to the World,” 83.

²⁹ Gebre Worancha, *I Must Preach this Gospel: God's Mission and Accountability of His Church in This End-time* (Gyoha-eup, South Korea: Everlasting Gospel, 2009), 39.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

Luke records that, “And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James” (Acts 1:13). The picture being portrayed here Acts, is one that shows that the apostles were desperate and were to wait for the promise of Jesus which he had promised that he would not leave them as orphans. Prayers now was the only option in order for them to have a clear way forward of their mission. The book of Acts affirms that the Apostles did their part of prayer, as they waited for what could follow suit. It is thus labeled that “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren” (Acts 1:14).

Luke is not silent on the issue of involvement because in verse 14 he mentions “all” which of course would bring the thought that nobody was idle, they all prayed to God for help and guidance. Luke points out that the apostles were in “one accord” (verse 14) which also portrays a picture of unity of purpose of the disciples of Jesus before they engaged in the mission of God.

Before Jesus had left the apostles, He had prayed for their unity as indicated by the apostle John in the Gospel which stipulates that, “For I have given unto them the words which thou giveth me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me” (John 17:8). That was a very long prayer in John 17 the whole chapter, in His prayer Jesus asks His father to grant the apostles unity. He thus prays, “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:21).

In this regard, then, it could be argued that the prayer of Jesus was answered by God since Luke also portrays that scenario when he states that, “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place” (Acts 2:1). This reveals that the mission of God is successful when there is unity of purpose and prayer since after Luke explains the movements of the apostles after Jesus’ ascension, he also portrays the picture of unity and prayer. Jesus had made clear the role of the apostles. He had sent them to be His witnesses beginning from Jerusalem. His command was well relayed to them that, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8), although again the picture portrayed here is that they were not well conversant on what really was to take place.

Luke reveals what happened when they had obeyed their master through prayers and unity. The book Acts of the Apostles in the New Testaments confirms the Acts of the Apostles in fulfilment of the promise of Jesus that they would receive power and eventually they would do their part in the mission of God. As a matter of confirmation that it happened, the events are recorded as to what took place. It is written that, “and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them” (Acts 2:2, 3).

As revealed earlier in this research, that the book Acts of the Apostles is a confirmation that the mission of Christ took place after His ascension, it is thus recorded that the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and started to talk in a strange language. It mentioned that “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4).

Going forward from that day the apostles are expressed as those who fully engaged in the mission of Christ. At same time, it is portrayed that when Peter stood to clarify what was happening, this is reported as a sermon which made many people to receive the message of Christ. The writer in Acts argues that, “But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice” (Acts 2:14).

Out of the speech by peter it is recorded that, “then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41). Through the apostles, verse 47 indicates that “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). It would not be appropriate to assume that the apostles did not fulfil the mission of Christ which of course it is the mission of God. Because the book of Acts even further continues to explain how they were serious on the work, and even though the bible depicts the resistance as indicated in the scripture that, “they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus” (Acts 4:18).

It is mentioned that, “But Peter and John answered and said unto them, whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye” (Acts 4:19). The biblical sources and the scholarly sources affirm that the apostles engaged in mission work thus enabling the gospel to spread from Jerusalem to other parts as they had been instructed by their master Jesus Christ. This could be a good kick off of the missional strategy to reach out to the Nations which of course has been the desire of God since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. Bosch says that, “The calling of the disciples is a call to follow Jesus and a being set aside for missionary activities. Calling, discipleship and mission belong together.”³¹

³¹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 49.

Ott and Strauss state that, “The book of Acts makes evident that apart from the Spirit, the disciples would probably never have moved outside Jerusalem, gone to the Gentiles, accepted Gentile believers, nor convinced any hearers.”³² Thus the empowerment of the Holy Spirit played a very profound role in ensuring that the gospel goes beyond the boundaries of Jerusalem. John, one of the apostles of Jesus was also given a vision, which affirms the desires of God to reach out to all Nations. John indicates that, “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Rev 14:6).

Paul and Mission

This sub-topic will investigate Paul, his conversion to Christianity, and how God used him to fulfil His purpose in matters mission. To begin with, Paul introduces himself as “a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God” (Rom 1:1). P. J. (Flip) Buys mentions Paul “as the first Christian theologian and the greatest Christian missionary of all time.”³³ However the origin of Paul as a missionary is almost questionable because he is mentioned in time of crisis when the bible depicts him as the one who was holding the clothes of Stephen when he was stoned to death. The bible records that “and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul” (Acts 7:58).

The bible reflects Saul as one who threatened believers of Jesus Christ those that were on their missional obligation. The bible reads that, “And Saul, yet breathing

³² Ott and Strauss, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 73.

³³ P. J. (Flip) Buys, “A Missional Response to Poverty and Social Injustice,” in *Reformed Means Missional: Following Jesus in to the World*, ed. Samuel T. Logan Jr. (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2013), 82.

out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem” (Acts 9:1, 2). The question therefore could be rightly asked that how can he now be an apostle of Jesus, yet he was a killer? No one could accept his attempts to save those that are perishing. Thereafter, the bible does keep silent on what transpired to change the profile of Saul. The bible reflects how he met with Jesus and changed the story of Saul. The story goes on saying that, “And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutes thou me?” (Acts 9:3, 4).

The above story of Soul who later was named Paul seems to be a justification of the writer of the book of Acts of the Apostles trying to demonstrate how God can change someone from being a killer to be an evangelist in order to send him to go the Nations and reach out to perishing souls. The bible therefore finally declares that, “But the Lord said unto him, ‘Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel’” (Acts 9:15). Paul now ceases to be a killer and by the grace of God he becomes a salvation vessel to other human beings. From this time of this missionary change of Paul, God begins to open doors for gospel reaching out to even the Gentiles which of course as this research suggests that this was the plan of God since the fall of man to bring humans back to where they deserved to be.

The story of Paul preaching to the gentiles could not be easily consumed by the Jews since they were the elect of God, and this was an Idea which had not been revealed to them. It seemed to have been sealed under God’s docket till the coming of

the time. Though it seemed not be a new Idea in the Scripture, it seemed to be new to the Israelites. Buys mentions “Paul’s mission strategy” as the means which enabled mission reach many parts of the world during his time. Buys argues that Paul wanted to plant churches in strategic locations, and they in turn were to attend to the further tasks of evangelization and planting churches in their regions. This proposes that if Paul could have not worked strategically he could not have achieved his goal. This indicates that Paul could be a good role model in the Great Commission. In that regard, Buys agrees that, “If missions work had more closely considered Paul as a role model, the spiritual map nowadays would doubtless look different.”³⁴

During the time of Paul however, it was unique for a Gentile to be counted worth for salvation. In the *Dictionary of Mission Theology*, D. Chae declares that, “Paul was the first true missionary theologian. His mission was carried out through his theological convictions, and his theology formulated and developed through dialogue with the churches he had planted.”³⁵ He describes Paul a “bold, highly effective evangelist in his words and lifestyle, Paul’s missiology is clearly Christological and that he recognizes the Gentiles as heirs of the promise of God.”³⁶ Considering what has already been discussed in this research, Paul is suggested to be an apostle who succeeded so much in his musicological endeavors. The book of Acts narrates the missionary activities by indicating that, “and when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth

³⁴ Buys, “A Missional Response to Poverty and Social Injustice,” 85.

³⁵ D. Chae, “Paul,” *Dictionary of Mission Theology: Evangelical Foundations*, ed. John Corrie (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2007), 275.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 276.

by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus” (Acts 13:3).

Analyzing what the above text says, it indicates that there was a strategy which was to be followed, and which in the long run it succeeded. Because the bible indicates that “they fasted and prayed” (verse 3), words which suggests that mission without fasting and praying may not bring successful fruits. The text also mentions that they “laid their hands on them” which also suggests that the laying of hands was part of a strategy to ensure that the hand of God was with them. The issue of sending here has been mentioned, confirming the idea of God of sending His people since the beginning when He send His other servants in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

The words in the text indicates that “they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost” (verse 3), and it could be right if someone could say that Paul was sent by God to be a missionary to the people he went to evangelize. This confirms that Paul carried a very important and a peculiar message which was not his own message but from God Himself. Because he was sent by the apostles but not without the Holy Spirit. This emphasis by the writer has been since the beginning of his story in the book of Acts of the Apostles where we can trace it even in chapter one where it reads “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Consequently, in his missionary journey Paul encountered different challenges, but he did not waver for he understood his call, and the one who had sent him. Luke agrees with this when he affirms that “And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name

was Barjesus” (Acts 13:6). Meeting with a sorcerer is a scenario which indicates that the devil is resisting the work of the God since he is the greatest enemy of God who does not want anyone to be saved.

Luke continues to narrates how Paul maneuvered and succeeded to evangelize to his targets, the bible indicates that, “Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?” (Acts 13:9, 10). The picture portrayed here is a scenario of confrontation that shows that in any attempt to go for mission one needs to be ready for confrontations with the enemy of souls. Having this thought in mind, it calls for a study to know how to strategize on how to go. The scriptures indicate that, “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matt 28:18, 19). Teaching “all nations” in this text would therefore suggests that they were to go everywhere to meet all kinds of people including wizards and sorcerers and other loyal people wherever they are. This has been emphasized in this paper, and remains the desire of God.

Paul confirms that he managed to reach out to different classes in his attempts to perform his duties as a missionary. Paul mentions that, “For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law” (1 Cor 9:19, 20). Paul states that “to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ) that I might gain them that are without law to the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men,

that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor 9:21, 22). Showing the same sentiments, Paul again states that, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom 1:16).

Ellen. G. White’s Perspective on Mission

Ellen G. White grapples with the idea of mission. She states that, “The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world.”³⁷ According to Mrs. White, “from the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory.” It thus gives an impression of what God had purposed in His heart after seeing that the human being had fallen into sin.

Ellen White gives some examples of How He had tried to use some different figures of the Bible history to accomplish His purpose. She argues that, “Through centuries of persecution, conflict, and darkness, God has sustained His church. . . . From the beginning God has wrought through His people to bring blessing to the world. To the ancient Egyptian nation God made Joseph a fountain of life. Through the integrity of Joseph the life of that whole people was preserved.”³⁸ This contributes to the same idea of God having an intention of trying to reach out to the Egyptians through Joseph. In addition to the above, Ellen White says that, “Through Daniel God saved the life of all the wise men of Babylon. And these deliverances are as object

³⁷ Ellen G. White, *Acts of the Apostles* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2017), 6.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 7, 8.

lessons; they illustrate the spiritual blessings offered to the world through connection with the God whom Joseph and Daniel worshiped.”³⁹ The principle of God wanting to send someone to represent Him in His mission of reconciling the lost Nations to Himself becomes evident in Ellen White especially when continues to reveal that, “God chose Israel to reveal His character to men. He desired them to be as wells of salvation in the world. To them were committed the oracles of heaven, the revelation of God's will.”⁴⁰ To give her point weight she adds, “They robbed God of the service He required of them, and they robbed their fellow men of religious guidance and a holy example.”⁴¹

The Israelites were to be Missionaries in the whole world, and spread the love of God to the other Nation who had not known the love of God. This suggests that they did not measure up to what they were expected by God to be and in regard to this Ellen says that, “But the people of Israel lost sight of their high privileges as God's representatives. They forgot God and failed to fulfill their holy mission.

In her *Testimonies for the Church* revealing that, “To the same work He has called His people in this generation. To them He has revealed His will, and of them He requires obedience.”⁴² The phrase, “this generation” could also mean every generation including her generation and the generations that was to follow. She further reveals in the *Testimonies* that, “The missionary spirit needs to be revived in our churches. Every member of the church should study how to help forward the work

³⁹ White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 8, 9.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2017), 6:14.

of God, both in home missions and in foreign countries.”⁴³ If her words are to be understood well, then they would mean that the issue of mission is for every member of the church. It suggests that every member of the church should be actively involved in the mission of God.

Ellen White further says, “The church of Christ on earth was organized for missionary purposes, and the Lord desires to see the entire church devising ways and means whereby high and low, rich and poor, may hear the message of truth.”⁴⁴ Her perspective in Mission seems to go in line with the will of God in regard to Mission. In this regard, she argues that, “the purpose which God seeks to accomplish through His people today is the same that He desired to accomplish through Israel when He brought them forth out of Egypt.”⁴⁵ She continues to grapple with the same theme when she reveals that, “Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life.”⁴⁶

The argument of Ellen White in regard to mission is rampant in her books such that those who read can easily grasp how she regarded the subject to be of more importance to all who believe in God. In the book *Christ's Object Lessons*, she adds that, “all are called to do service for Him, and for the manner in which they have met this claim, all will be required to render an account at the great judgment day.”⁴⁷

⁴³ White, *Testimonies*, 6:29.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 6:30.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 6:16.

⁴⁶ Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2011), 154.

⁴⁷ Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2010), 326.

Ellen White expresses that, “Whether believers or unbelievers, all men are the Lord's property.”⁴⁸ And thus, “all are called to do service for Him, and for the manner in which they have met this claim, all will be required to render an account at the great judgment day.”⁴⁹ Moreover, she states that, “each has his place in the eternal plan of heaven. Each is to work in co-operation with Christ for the salvation of souls.”⁵⁰ She further argues that, “The commission reaches those who shall believe on his word through his disciples.”⁵¹

Ellen White “The highest of all sciences is the science of soul saving. The greatest work to which human beings can aspire is the work of winning men from sin to holiness.”⁵² She points out that, “Christians will have the mind of Christ, and be co-workers with him. To every one work has been allotted, and no one else can be a substitute for another.”⁵³ She defends that, “each one has a mission of wonderful importance, which he cannot neglect or ignore, as the fulfillment of it involves the weal of some soul, and the neglect of it the woe of one for whom Christ died. . . . God has appointed his children to give light to others, and if they fail to do it, and souls are left in the darkness of error because of their failure to do that which they might have done, had they been vitalized by the Holy Spirit, they will be accountable to God.”⁵⁴

⁴⁸ White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, 326.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimony Treasures* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1949), 1:531.

⁵² Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1905), 398.

⁵³ Ellen G. White, “An Appeal for the Australasian Field,” *Review and Herald*, December 12, 1893, par. 4, accessed on 13 May 2020, <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/821.13207#13212>.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

She therefore recommends that, “We have been called out of darkness into his marvelous light, in order that we may show forth the praises of Christ.”⁵⁵

⁵⁵ White, “An Appeal for the Australasian Field.”

CHAPTER 3

RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

Various resources were used to complete this project. Scholarly books were used to strengthen it and journal articles also serve as a source of confirmation and aided in the process of validating this project. The most important source was the Bible because it is the foundation for all the principles that this project covered. The project also used Bible dictionaries and commentaries to provide additional insight into the verses that were used.

The Small Groups Strategy with Lay Leaders

One of the effective strategies for mission and discipleship among Rabai community is forming small groups of lay leaders. The church can operate effectively as small groups rather than large, traditional churches by planting small groups in areas where traditional churches cannot reach. Daniel R. Basile writes “the natural result of fulfilling the Great Commission, is church planting.”¹

Cole writes, “Small groups of only two or three members can transform and challenge believers to live authentic spiritual lives as Christ’s disciples.”² Cole adds that, “unchurched individuals are more likely to attend a small group than a traditional church, which is another reason supporting the use of the small group model.”³

¹ Harley Atkinson, “Small Groups: Context and Strategy for Christian Formation and Evangelization,” *Christian Education Journal* 11, no. 1 (2014): 72.

² Neil Cole, *Church 3.0: Upgrades for the Future of the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2018), 22.

³ Roger Walton, “Disciples Together: The Small Group as a Vehicle for Discipleship Formation,” *The Journal of Adult Theological Education* 8, no. 2 (2011): 102.

The literature further supports small groups as an alternative to the traditional church for discipleship formation and active mission. “Religious activities held in traditional churches can be carried out in small groups, including water baptism and the celebration of the Lord’s Supper.”⁴

According to Basile “members need to pray persistently for each other’s’ specific requests, until they receive answers to those requests. Intercessory prayer results in growth and healing among all group members, when leaders model and reinforce it among those practicing it.”⁵ Basile adds that, “the aggrieved members need to show the same compassion and forgiveness towards those, who have offended them, they received from God, who compassionately forgave them.”⁶

The School Sponsorship Strategy

The church is the assigned agency of God for all people's salvation. According to Hill, Schilling, and Jones, “the church may require to relook its tactics in relation to how the message is delivered. However, the message has to constantly remain as it was.”⁷

One of the major tactics or strategies the church can use for mission is school sponsorship programs. In regard to this, Hill, Schilling, and Jones suggest that, “establishing the Missionary Societies in Europe and their devotion to spreading the gospel and evangelizing led the Church to establish a close relationship with

⁴Atkinson, “Small Groups,” 56.

⁵ Daniel Basile, “A Strategy to Plant a Missional, Multiplying Church in Pulaski County, Kentucky” (DMin diss., Liberty University, 2014), 108, accessed 13 May 2020, <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2009&context=doctoral>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Charles W. L. Hill, Melissa A. Schilling, and Gareth R. Jones, *Strategic Management Theory: An Integrated Approach* (Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2019), 132.

education. The Church and faith is the origin of most occupations, including teachers and doctors.”⁸

The formation in Europe of the Missionary Societies and their devotion to spreading the gospel and evangelizing inspired the Church to cultivate a tight relationship with education. The trend wasn't a new one, however, as originally the church and faith were seen as the origin of a number of professions, such as doctors and teachers. The primary focus was evangelization which allowed them to respond through evangelical movements to the noble call to spread the Christian gospel. In regard to the above, Ayub states that, “despite professing Christianity, they still used their different religions to initiate education. In addition to evangelization, they would civilize Africans by offering Western forms of education to correct their African paganism practices.”⁹

The Basel (Presbyterian) Mission School system operated in Ghana, operating educational institutions that included foundational, primary, secondary and theological seminaries. The pupils were taught arithmetic, history, geography, and some skills in agriculture during the six years of primary school education. Such skills are essential to improve people's lives and as a means to reach out for Christ. Bediako notes that writing and reading art teaching was only part of the educational missionary concept. Indeed, one of the greatest contributions made by the Basel. Ayub suggests that, “Mission to Gold Coast education was the industrial training they gave to carpenters, blacksmiths, and other various skills. Not only did they train by selling

⁸ Hill, Schilling, and Jones, *Strategic Management Theory*, 133.

⁹ A. W. Ayub, *The Role of Christian Missionaries in Socio-Economic Development: From Inception to 21 Century* (Eldoret, Kenya: Bookshelf Publishers, 2009), 122.

their skills to improve their own circumstances, they also gradually helped improve people's living standards.”¹⁰

For example, the Lutherans demanded that those converted should be capable of reading the Bible while the Anglicans were searching for a self-reliant church where local people would be encouraged to take responsibility for evangelization. On the other side, through learning, the SDAs, Presbyterians and Catholics sought to spread Christian culture. This goal led to more schools being built. While their immediate aim was to convert as many people as possible, in particular in Africa and Kenya, they nevertheless laid a strong foundation for education growth. They also established a strong educational system that crystallized throughout Africa's education development. The Church led mission in Uganda, one of the countries in the East African region to accept education very early. The European missionaries initiated formal education with the goal of evangelizing and converting residents into Christians.

The Four Strategies of Missions

The Small Groups Strategy with Lay Leaders

One of the effective strategies for mission among Rabai community is forming small groups of lay leaders. The church can operate effectively as small groups rather than large, traditional churches by planting small groups in areas where traditional churches cannot reach.

¹⁰ Ayub, *The Role of Christian Missionaries in Socio-Economic Development*, 123.

The School Sponsorship Strategy

The church is the assigned agency of God for all people's salvation. It has been established to serve, and its objective is to bring the gospel to the entire globe. The faith is the good news of Jesus Christ's death, burial and resurrection. The Bible states that the faith requires preaching, that there needs to be a corps of well-organized, well-disciplined workers to carry out this God-ordained mission

Media Mission Strategy

According to Bocala, “the Seventh-day Adventist Church has made thorough use of traditional media but has underutilized newer technology, like social media, in spreading its message.”¹¹ This suggests that the Seventh-day needs also to try new ways of communication in order to effect the mission mandate. In this regard, Bocala mentions Reddy saying that he “presented compelling statistics for the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s early growth and its use of various forms of communication.”¹² Bocala therefore opens a window which, properly utilized, can enhance mission strategies of the SDA Church in using new ways of technology.

Empowering Laity for Mission Strategy

The bible makes it clear that the main function of the pastor is to "equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Eph 4:11-12). Pastors will reduce the danger of burnout and family alienation. Unequipped church members tend to depend too much on the pastor's ministry and not the development of their ministry. The Bible teaches the delegation of responsibilities so that both leaders and members will work more effectively. This is referred to as the Jethro principle of leadership. Jethro said to

¹¹ Trisney J. Bocala-Wiedemann, “Social Media as a Tool for Evangelism among Youth and Young Adults,” *Great Commission Research Journal* 14, no. 1 (2022): 20.

¹² Ibid.

Moses, "This task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. You will surely wear yourself out" (Exod 18:18), and he counseled Moses to appoint proper persons as rulers of thousands, and others as rulers of hundreds, and others of tens (verse 21) to bring relief to Moses. The appointed laity were to help bear the burden with Moses (verse 23). This principle should be applied more among the ministry in Rabai community where the equipping of the laity will also promote church growth.

Conclusion

Strategy is the means agreed on to reach a certain goal. The best strategy is, first of all, biblical, because God's work must be done God's way, it is efficient and must be relevant. In any evangelistic strategy that is employed, we are in the process of two things. The church is either harvesting people whom God has already prepared through their spiritual heritage, friendship with a Christian persona reading, though process, working of the Holy Spirit (John 4:35-38), or the church is helping to move the unprepared towards belief by giving the Rabai people information to digest, models to observe, and facts to consider and respond to (planting and watering). The first group in many cases simply needs to know how they can receive Christ.

The second group needs to know who Christ is and why they should receive Christ. This follows the biblical paradigms of the book of Acts. Two evangelistic models we see in the book of Acts are Peter's proclamation message to "God-fearing Jews" (Acts 2:5) and Paul's persuasion message to the men of Athens" (Acts 17:22). The response to Peter's message was the 3000 who believed. The response to Paul's dialogue was mixed "some ... sneered, others said, 'We want to hear you again,' and a few believed" (Acts 17:32-34). We are experts in harvesting the prepared but we also need to be aware that if this is a shrinking segment of the student population, then part of our strategy in mission is to bring an increasing number of students into that

first group by educating and motivating students to receive Christ. In reaching the campus then, we use a two-fold approach. Finally, remember to invite Christ into the process to guide your ministry. You are doing powerful and wonderful work. Allow missteps to become learning opportunities; rejoice in success. Fill your work with “the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Gal 5:22-23, NAS).

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will present a detailed description of the research methodology. It will comprise a detailed procedure that will be followed to realize the research objectives. It will include a description of location of the study, research design, population, instruments, piloting, data collection procedure, and finally data analysis.

Location of the Study

The research will be carried in the coastal region among the Rabai community. The Rabai People live at a place named like their tribal name in Kaloleni Division at the Coastal region of Kenya. Their place of living *Rabai* is situated along the Nairobi Mombasa highway near Mazeras (See Figure 1 below). They are among the Mijikenda People who are the chief ethnic dominant tribe in the Kenyan Coastal region. The Mijikenda People consists of nine tribes speaking a closely related language known in a general term *chimidzichenda*, but each of them has their own traditional mother tongue. However, the choice Rabai as the study area does not render other Mijikenda tribes less important. The choice was guided by the need for examining strategy for evangelizing and discipleship of the traditional Rabai people in the coastal region. Figure 1 below shows the location of the study in the Kaloleni.

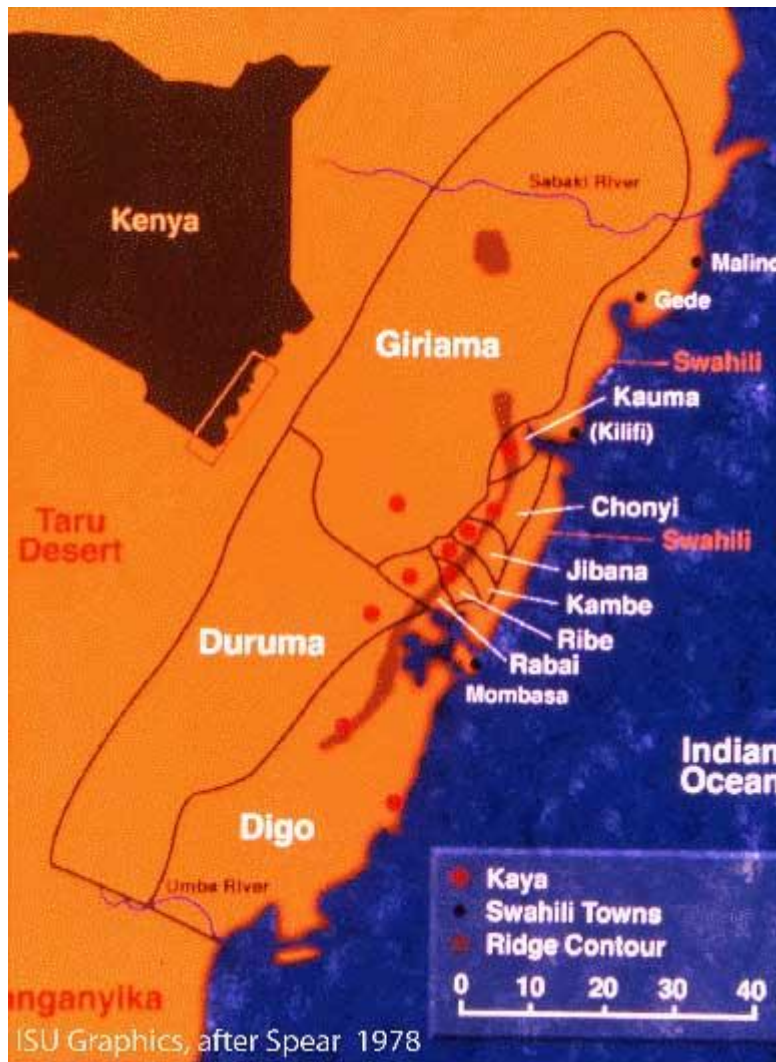


Figure 1. A Map of the Location of the Rabai People (emphasis original)
 Source: Maria Magdalena Ruiz O’Farrill (Lastheart), “Rabai People,” accessed 13 December 2016, <https://hubpages.com/travel/Rabai-People>.

Cultural Beliefs of the Rabai People

According to Gehman, “the belief system of ATR includes beliefs in the Creator God, divinities, nature spirits, the mystical powers of magic, witchcraft and sorcery; beliefs include the causes of sickness and death, health and prosperity and the need for divination to determine the causes for misfortune.”¹ Moreover Gehman

¹ Richard J. Gehman, *African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspective* (Wheaton, IL: Oasis International, 2012), 28.

affirms that, “Beliefs provide an explanation for everything that happens.”² The Rabai people and their traditionalism *Chirahai* shaped and grounded in the above background, it may not be easy to bring about another kind of religion.

The above argument by Gehman is supported by Elizabeth Isichei as she explains the work of the missionaries in East and Central Africa. Isichei narrates the visit of John Ludwig Krapf at Rabai while considering the intention of the missionary. She mentions that “the post he founded at Rabai, near Mombasa, was intended to be the first link in the chain.”³ Isichei indicates that the missionary did not succeed in evangelizing the Rabai. It suggests that although Krapf had a good intention, but his efforts were not able to Christianize the Rabai people.

Isichei adds that, “Rabai is a community of the Mijikenda ‘Nine Towns’ a series of hilltop settlements, *Kaya* immediately behind the Islamicized coast. Because they lived in a number of independent settlements, it was not possible to convert them by winning the support of a single ruler.”⁴ Based on the above arguments, one would not be misplaced to suggest that whoever would endeavor to evangelize the Rabai people, should first study the methods used by the earlier missionaries and subsequently formulate some new methods to evangelize the *Rabai* people.

In heeding to the words of Christ, Kenya coast Mission Field, endeavors to reach out to different people groups in their area of *mission* field. The Rabai people group is one of the communities which they need to give more attention to. The reason is that the Rabai people received the ministrations of the Missionaries but they still observe their *Kaya* Traditional Religion up to now. Few Rabai community

² Gehman, *African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspective*, 28.

³ Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa*, 137.

⁴ Ibid.

members have received Jesus Christ as their personal savior, but in time of crisis, they do not come to church. This suggests that they may have gone back to the community to seek solutions to their problems traditionally.

This mixture of Christianity and tradition Religion among the Rabai members attracts *syncretism*. Different attempts to reach out to them have been made including public evangelistic campaigns, door to door visitation, and distribution of free literature, all resulting to poor results. This Rabai traditional religion and practice is a great hindrance to the propagation of the gospel in the territory.

History of Kaya Religion among the Rabai Community

Traditionally, the *Rabai* people being one of the nine Mijikenda tribes believes that there is only one God who is also the creator of the universe by the name “*Mulungu* and *Kaya* as the sacred place of worship.”⁵ In an interview with Renson Nzaka, a Rabai community member and a SDA Minister, he stated that “the *Rabai* people use the word *Kaya* when they mean home or a place of worship.”⁶ Githitho affirms that, “According to their oral traditions the forests historically sheltered small fortified villages of the various groups when they first appeared in the region ten generations or more ago ‘*Kaya*’ means homestead.”⁷ Similarly, Mwachiro, also a

⁵ Githitho, *The World Heritage Convention*, PDF file. “The traditional Mijikenda religion was a combination of monotheism in which a Supreme Being and creator, *Mulungu*, was worshipped, and a strong belief in the influence of ancestral and other spirits in people’s daily lives. Many Mijikenda today have not completely abandoned this view... The Rabai call their sacred place of worship “*Kaya*.”

⁶ Renson Nzaka, Interview by the author, Changamwe, December 13, 2016. “*Kaya* means *Mudzini* (home) and *Kaya* also a place where “*At’u analomba Mulungu*” (where people pray to their deity).

⁷ Anthony N. Githitho, “The Sacred Mijikenda *Kaya* Forests of Coastal Kenya and Biodiversity Conservation,” accessed 13 December 2013, www.sacredland.org/PDFs/Mijikenda_Kaya.pdf.

scholar mentions that “the term is common among the coastal tribes.”⁸ The above arguments therefore suggests that the terminology *Kaya* among the Rabai People is more important because it has a close relationship with their Traditional religion.

Missiological Issues among the Rabai People

In regard to *Mission*, Komora reveals that Rabai is one of the areas which witnessed the beginning of early learning and Christianity.⁹ In this regard, it would be helpful to put into consideration that the Rabai people are Africans, who have their cultural and Traditional values which to some extent tends to be detrimental to the spread of the Gospel among them.¹⁰ Among the Traditional Africans, Mbiti points out that, “religion permeates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it.”¹¹ The above affirmations by Mbiti would therefore suggest that the Rabai Traditional Religion system does not differ from other African Traditional Religion systems, and that their basic beliefs do not differ. As earlier

⁸ Ibid. “Working in conjunction with the local communities of those areas, over fifty Kaya forest patches have been identified in the contiguous Kenyan coastal districts of Kwale, Mombasa, Kilifi, and Malindi... The Kayas would seem to owe their existence to the beliefs, culture, and history of the nine coastal Mijikenda ethnic groups.”

⁹ Athuman Komora, “Rabai Tribe of the Mijikenda,” *Malindians.com* (blog), n.d., <https://malindians.com/information/mijikenda-tribe-of-kenya/rabai-tribe-of-the-mijikenda/>. “Rabai is well known in the archives as the place where Christianity and modern learning in Kenya started well over 150 years ago. In 1994 the Krapf Memorial Museum was founded to commemorate German Missionary Dr. Johann Ludwig Krapf and to provide a reminder of monumental events during the advent of early missionaries.”

¹⁰ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 1.

¹¹ Ibid.

indicated above, one God who is also the creator of the universe by the name “*Mulungu* and *Kaya* as the sacred place of worship.”¹²

Those Who Have Worked among the Rabai People Group

Charles Chai, a SDA worker, worked among the Rabai. In an interview on 26th January 2017, he stated that the “Traditional *Rabai* people group are hard to reach with the gospel of Christ because they are very much used to drinking and magic.”¹³ Another one is Fidelis Odero, who worked in Rabai as a District Pastor of the SDA Church. In an interview, he affirmed that, “the *Rabai* people believes so much on Tradition.”¹⁴

The Research Design

The study employed a qualitative research design to investigate and understand the opinions, attitudes, and behaviours of the selected population concerning the development of a strong mission strategy to interact with the Rabai people group residing in the coastal region of Kenya. Qualitative research serves as a valuable tool for uncovering the nuances of complex phenomena and societal issues. By gathering and scrutinizing data, researchers can gain profound insights into the beliefs, attitudes, experiences, and behaviours of individuals within a specific context.

¹² Githitho, *The World Heritage Convention*, PDF file. “The traditional Mijikenda religion was a combination of monotheism in which a Supreme Being and creator, *Mulungu*, was worshipped, and a strong belief in the influence of ancestral and other spirits in people’s daily lives. Many Mijikenda today have not completely abandoned this view... The Rabai call their sacred place of worship “*Kaya*.”

¹³ Charles Chai, Interview by the author, Rabai Church, January 26, 2017.

¹⁴ Fidelis Odero, Interview by the author, Changamwe Seventh-day Adventist Church, January 27, 2017.

For instance, in this study's context, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with members of the Rabai community to gain a deeper understanding of their cultural practices and traditions. Additionally, the researcher observed community gatherings or events to witness first-hand how the Rabai people interact and communicate with one another. Moreover, qualitative research allows for a more nuanced exploration of the subject matter, enabling researchers to capture the rich diversity of perspectives and experiences within the population under study. Through techniques like thematic analysis and narrative inquiry, researchers can uncover underlying themes and patterns in the data that provide valuable insights into the complexities of human behaviour and social dynamics.

In essence, qualitative research offers a comprehensive and in-depth approach to understanding the multifaceted nature of human experiences and behaviours. By engaging with the selected population in a meaningful and respectful manner, the researcher gained valuable insights that could inform the development of an effective mission strategy tailored to the unique needs and preferences of the Rabai people group.

Focus Group Discussion

A focus group discussion was used to collect data. This qualitative fact-finding method involves a small group of people discussing a specific topic or issue. A moderator leads the group, poses open-ended questions, and encourages participant discussion and interaction. During a focus group discussion, the dynamic interaction among participants can unveil valuable insights that might not be easily captured through other research methods. For instance, envision a focus group investigating consumer preferences for a new product. The moderator could prompt participants to depict their ideal features, sparking a lively exchange of ideas and perspectives.

Moreover, the moderator's role is pivotal in guiding the conversation towards meaningful outcomes. By posing open-ended questions, the moderator encourages participants to freely express their thoughts and delve deeper into their opinions. This approach nurtures a collaborative environment where diverse viewpoints can be exchanged and discussed. Additionally, the small group setting of a focus group discussion enables a more intimate and engaging experience. Participants may feel more at ease expressing their thoughts in a small group setting than in a larger survey or interview. Such intimacy can result in more profound discussions and a deeper exploration of the topic at hand.

In conclusion, a focus group discussion acts as a potent tool for collecting qualitative data by leveraging the collective wisdom and insights of a small group of individuals. By employing effective moderation and participant interaction, valuable information can be uncovered, granting researchers a more profound understanding of the subject under investigation.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The researcher conducted two focus group consisting of six participants in Kaloleni District. This group comprised three individuals affiliated with the SDA Church and three from other non-SDA groups in the area. The selection of participants was meticulously done through a purposive sampling procedure to ensure a diverse representation across various categories. For instance, the three participants from the SDA Church included members of different age groups, professions, or levels of involvement within the church community. On the other hand, the three participants from the non-SDA groups represented different cultural backgrounds, beliefs, or occupations. This diversity in the composition of the focus group enriched the discussions and provided a broader perspective on the topic at hand.

By including individuals from both the SDA Church and other non-SDA groups, the researcher aimed to gather insights from different viewpoints and experiences. This approach facilitated a more comprehensive understanding of the subject under investigation and allowed for a nuanced analysis of the collected data. Overall, the focus groups' compositions were carefully curated to ensure a balanced and insightful discussion among the participants.

In addition to the above, the researcher conducted interviews to three individuals from the Rabai community, in order to ensure a diverse representation across various categories. This, of course, as mentioned above, facilitated a more comprehensive understanding of the subject under investigation and allowed for more progressive analysis of the collected data. The three individuals from the Rabai community included one Rabai elder, one community religion diviner, and one male youth to assist the researcher get the opinions of the non-SDAs about the church in the community. The questions used for the three individuals were the same as the questions that were projected for the non-SDA members.

Research Instruments

The researcher used the same instrument for the focus group discussion interview guide and individual interview guide to collect the required data. In the focus group interview, the researcher sought to gather group opinion while in the individual interview, the researcher sought personal opinions and feelings not influenced by group psychology on the issues that were raised.

This guide acted as a structured framework for conducting the discussions with the focus group and individuals who have common characteristics or experiences. The same instrument was used because it guided the researcher to collect valuable insights, opinions, and perspectives from participants on a specific topic or

research question. In the focus group discussion, the researcher posed open-ended questions to prompt participants to freely express their thoughts and share personal experiences related to the research topic. For instance, questions explored the participants' attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, and preferences, offering valuable qualitative data for analysis. Furthermore, the interview guide contained probing questions to delve deeper into the participants' responses and clarify any ambiguous or contradictory statements. This probing technique helped guarantee a thorough understanding of the participants' viewpoints and allowed the researcher to reveal hidden insights that did not initially emerge.

Moreover, the interview guide outlined the structure and flow of the discussion, ensuring systematic coverage of all relevant topics. Transition phrases such as "moving on to the next point" or "building upon our previous discussion" were used to facilitate smooth transitions between different sections of the interview guide, maintaining coherence and engagement throughout the discussion. In conclusion, the interview guide was pivotal in guiding the research process and fostering meaningful interactions with participants to produce valuable data for analysis and interpretation.

Data Collection Method

Data were collected through use of interviews. The survey contained one section for non-SDA members and another section for SDA members. The issues on the interviews were arranged chronologically for ease of administering and reference. The focus areas included economic activities, challenges, expected support from churches, perception about SDAs, and positive impacts of SDAs.

Focus group discussion aimed at assisting in understanding the impacts of SDAs on the lives of people in Rabai. The study focused on developing an effective

mission strategy to reach out to the Rabai people group in the coastal region of Kenya. The study used random sampling to select the respondents from the population with every member of the population having equal chances of inclusion in the sample.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection began after receiving formal authorization from the relevant authorities. The researcher initiated this process by reaching out to the district leaders for their approval. Establishing a clear line of communication with these leaders was crucial to ensure a smooth and efficient data collection process. After contacting the district leaders, the researcher provided a detailed explanation of the study's objectives and goals. This step was essential for gaining their trust and cooperation. Moreover, the selected sample respondents were informed about their participation in the study. Clear communication with the respondents was vital to ensure their understanding of the study's purpose and their role in the research. By diligently following these steps, the researcher could establish a solid foundation for a successful data collection process. The researcher personally collected the data for this study. The researcher also sought authorization from the Kenya Coast Field Executive Secretary to secure permission to conduct this research and collect data from the population of SDAs in the Rabai Community. The researcher collected data personally from the population.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the focus group discussions were carefully examined through thematic analysis. This methodology entailed a thorough exploration of the data to identify, categorize, and classify emerging patterns and themes. This process was vital in extracting meaningful insights and comprehending the underlying

messages conveyed by the participants. The researcher transcribed the audio recordings, ensuring that every spoken word was accurately documented for further analysis. This transcription phase was essential as it laid the foundation for the steps that followed in the analytical process.

Furthermore, after transcribing the data, the researcher thoroughly read and re-read the transcripts to identify initial codes and themes. This process promoted a comprehensive understanding of the content and helped uncover hidden codes and themes of the study. Afterward, the identified codes and themes were refined and organized into categories, promoting a structured approach to the analysis. This categorization step was crucial for interpreting the data and establishing connections between various elements.

Moreover, interpreting the findings in relation to the research objectives was a pivotal aspect of the analytical process. It entails synthesizing the coded data to draw substantial conclusions that aligned with the overarching research goals. Correlating the findings with the initial research objectives allowed the researcher to validate the study's relevance and significance. In addition to thematic analysis, the researcher also employed content analysis to explore the manifest and latent content of the data. This method transcends surface-level observations to unveil deeper meanings and underlying themes.

Overall, the amalgamation of thematic and content analysis furnished a comprehensive framework for comprehending and interpreting the data amassed from focus group discussions. By adhering to a systematic approach that encompassed transcription, coding, categorization, and interpretation, the researcher could extract valuable insights that contributed to the progression of knowledge in the respective field.

Ethical Consideration

The introduction letter from the Adventist University of Africa and letter of acceptance from the conference was used to reduce suspicions from the church leaders and ease access to information. The researcher applied all the accepted codes of conduct during the data collection process. Therefore, the data was taken with the highest confidentiality because the researcher was subject to the ethical approval of the Adventist University of Africa. A consent form and focus group non-disclosure agreement with all essential ethical consideration information was provided to the study participants.

CHAPTER 5

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In this chapter the researcher presents and discusses the data generated from the field work that was undertaken in the Rabai community in Kaloleni District. Since the Bible is very much clear reflecting on the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is best to describe mission as the backbone of Christianity. “Jesus Christ mandated His church to evangelize and make disciples of all nations.”¹ This focus is shared by the SDAs. However, the church faces many impediments to achieving this goal.

Mission ought to have the ability to give confidence in the midst of ambiguities, openness in the face of uncertainty and hopeful courage even in the face of death. It has the ability to elevate people to a new threshold from which they can view reality with new eyes, new hope, new resistance and new vigor. Witnessing in a political and cultural environment, the church’s work of mission soon faces the many challenges to accomplish its mission mandate. Nevertheless, servants of Christ need to come up with effective mission strategies to be able to reach out to many and bring them to Christ.

Discussions during interviews and data from the participants the focus group discussions are very much important in reflecting the thoughts of the respondents and their perception regarding the study. This can assist in ascertaining the challenges

¹ Osborne, *Matthew*, 1158.

encountered by the SDA Church as they fulfil their mission mandate amongst the community in the Kaloleni District in the Kenya Coast Field. The three non-Seventh-day participants comprised of three individuals from the Rabai community and included one Rabai elder, one community religion diviner, and one male youth to assist the researcher get the opinions of the non-SDAs about the church in the community. The information has been provided in the Table 1 below.

Table 1. Demographic Information of Participants - Three Non-Seventh-day Adventists

Statement	Response	No.	%
1 Gender	F	0	0
	M	3	100
2 Age	30-40	1	33
	41-70	2	67
3 Marital status	Married	2	67
	Not married	1	33
4 Education	Formal	3	100
	Non-formal	0	0
5 Years in the community	30-40	1	33
	41-70	3	67

The participants indicate that three (100 %) were male, one person (33 %) was of the age of 30-40, the other two (67%) were of the age of 41-70. On marital status, one (33 %) was unmarried and the other two (67 %) were married men. Further, it indicates that all three (100 %) had formal education, then one (33 %) had been in the

community between 30-40 years which and the other two men (67 %) had also lived in the community since their birth which is 41-70 years. The three participants of the SDA Church included members of different age groups, professions, or levels of involvement within the church community as shown in the Table 2 below.

Table 2. Demographic Information of Participants - Three Seventh-day Adventists

Statement	Response	No.	%
1 Gender	F	1	33
	M	2	67
2 Age	30-40	1	33
	41-60	2	67
3 Marital status	Married	2	67
	Not married	1	33
4 Education	Formal	3	100
	Non-formal	0	0
5 Years of membership	1-10	0	0
	11-20	3	100

The participants indicated that two (66 %) were men, and one person (33 %) was a female. Further the lady was women ministry leader and came from a different community of a non-Rabai community member. The remaining two (67 %) were men, one church elder and one youth leader all from the Rabai community.

On the age groups, one (33 %) was the youth leader, and was in the age of 30-40, the other two (67 %), the women ministry leader and the church elder were of the age of 41-70. On marital status, one (33 %) was unmarried and the other two (67 %)

were married. Further, it indicates that all three (100 %) had formal education. All of the three (100 %) had been members of the SDA Church within 11-20 years.

The demographic data in Table 3 below applies to participants from the three participants of the non- SDA focus-group which comprised of three members from the Rabai community and included one Rabai elder, one community religion diviner, and one male youth to assist the researcher get the opinions of the non-SDAs about the church in the community as elaborated below.

Table 3. Demographic Information of Participants - Three Non-Seventh-day Adventist Focus Group

Statement	Response	No.	%
1 Gender	F	0	0
	M	3	100
2 Age	30-40	1	33
	41-70	2	67
3 Marital status	Married	2	67
	Not married	1	33
4 Education	Formal	3	100
	Non-formal	0	0
5 Years in the community	30-40	1	33
	41-70	3	67

The demographic data in Table 3 above – applies to participants from the three participants of the non- SDA focus-group which comprised of three members from the Rabai community and included one Rabai elder, one community religion diviner, and one male youth to assist the researcher get the opinions of the non-SDAs about the church in the community.

All the three participants (100 %) were male, one person (33 %) was of the age of 30-40, the other two (67 %) were of the age of 41-70. On marital status, one (33 %) was unmarried and the other two (67 %) were married men. Further, it indicates that all three (100 %) had formal education, then one (33 %) had been in the community between 30-40 years which and the other two men (67 %) had also lived in the community since their birth which is 41-70 years.

Table 4 below shows the SDA Church focus group, which included members of different age groups, professions, or levels of involvement within the church community.

Table 4. Demographic Information of Participants - Three Seventh-day Adventist Focus Group

Statement	Response	No.	%
1 Gender	F	1	33
	M	2	67
2 Age	30-40	1	33
	41-60	2	67
3 Marital status	Married	2	67
	Not married	1	33
4 Education	Formal	3	100
	Non-formal	0	0
5 Years of membership	1-10	0	0
	11-20	3	100

The participants indicate that two (67 %) were men and one person (33 %) was a female. Further the lady was a women ministry leader and came from a different community of a non-Rabai community member. The remaining two were men, one church elder and one youth leader all from the Rabai community. On the age groups, one (33 %) was the youth leader, and was in the age of 30-40, the other two (67 %), the women ministry leader and the church elder were of the age of 41-70. On marital status, one (33 %) was unmarried and the other two (67 %) were married. Further, it indicates that all three (100 %) had formal education. All of the three (100 %) had been members of the SDA Church within 11-20 years.

Table 5 below presents the major economic activities for the Rabai people.

Table 5. Major Economic Activities

Interview Statement	Response	No.	%
List the major economic activities of the people of Rabai.	Farming-coconut	3	100
	Livestock keeping	1	33
	Coconut brew	2	67
	Boda-boda	1	33
	Construction	1	33

The research established that the major economic activities for the Rabai people are farming – coconut, livestock keeping, coconut brew, boda-boda services and construction with all the respondents (100%) engaged in coconut farming, 67% in coconut brew, and 33% each in livestock keeping, boda-boda business and construction as shown in Table 5 above.

The main social-economic challenges facing the Rabai community are documented in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Social-economic Challenges

Interview Statement	Response	No.	%
What are the main challenges facing the people of Rabai?	Climate change	1	33
	Charcoal production	3	100
	Unemployment	2	67
	Water scarcity	1	33

The research also identified the main social-economic challenges facing the Rabai community as climate change, charcoal production, unemployment and water scarcity which have negatively affected the day-to-day livelihoods of the community. Of the above challenges, all the participants (100%) pointed out charcoal production

the main challenge, 67% indicated unemployment and 33% each indicated climate change and water scarcity as the challenges as indicated in Table 6 above.

Table 7 below deals with the responses of the participants on how the challenges can be addressed.

Table 7. Addressing the Challenges

Interview Statement	Response	No.	%
How can the challenges above be addressed?	Coconut rehabilitation	1	33
	Technical training – TVETs	1	33
	Self-employment	1	33
	Sensitizations – at baraza and churches	2	67

With respect to the challenges faced by the Rabai community, the research identified five main ways of addressing the same and they include: coconut rehabilitation, technical training at TVETs, self-employment and conducting sensitizations at barazas and churches. Majority of the participants (67%) identified sensitization through barazas and churches as the most urgent measure to be undertaken while 33% each indicated self-employment, technical training and coconut rehabilitation as ways of addressing challenges stated.

Table 8 below addresses the issue of how the community thought the church could support the Rabai community, which could bring an impact in a bid to strengthen the mission strategies in the community.

Table 8. Church Support

Interview Statement	Response	No.	%
How best can the people be helped by the church?	Preaching repentance	1	33
	Support of livelihood projects	2	67
	Address negative beliefs	1	33
	Partnership with community	1	3

During the research, it was established that the Rabai community expects the church to support them mainly on preaching the gospel of repentance, church support on livelihood projects, addressing negative beliefs and partnership with community. Church support on livelihood projects was therefore identified by most participants (67%) as the most urgent way of collaborating with the community as an entry point while 33% of the respondents each indicated Preaching gospel of repentance, Addressing negative beliefs and Partnership with community as ways the church can support the community as indicated in the Table 8 above.

Table 9 below explains how the Rabai community members perceive the SDA Church in their community.

Table 9. Perception about the Seventh-day Adventists

Interview Statement	Response	No.	%
What can you say about the SDAs in Rabai?	Not work closely with Rabai's	3	100
	Not well known	1	33
	Have not explained about Sabbath	1	33
	Have not reached out to Kaya elders	1	33

The research further established that the Rabai community has various perceptions about SDAs of which the main comments include: They have not work closely with Rabai people, they are not well known in Rabai, they have not explained about the Sabbath belief and they have not reached out to Kaya elders. The main comment provided by all the participants (100%) was that the SDAs have not worked closely with Rabai people while 33% of the participants each pointed out that SDAs are not well known, have not explained about Sabbath and have not reached out to Kaya elders. The above comments explain the low visibility of the SDA Church in the area and hence the need to address the same. The above findings are provided in Table 9 above.

Table 10 below introduces the gap between the distinction between SDAs and non-SDAs.

Table 10. Distinction between Seventh-day Adventists and non- Seventh-day Adventists

Interview Statement	Response	No.	%
How do they differ from non-SDAs?	Religious beliefs	1	33
	Peculiar from other churches	2	67

As a result of the research, it was established that there exist differences between SDAs and non-SDAs in Rabai with the main differences being religious beliefs and being peculiar from other churches. Majority of the participants (67%) pointed out peculiarity of SDAs as the main difference. These differences can be explained while undertaking gospel outreaches. The findings are provided in Table 10 above.

Table 11 below shows the responses of the participants on the impact of the SDAs in the Rabai community.

Table 11. Ways Seventh-day Adventists Can Positively Impact Lives of Rabai

Interview Statement	Response	No.	%
In what ways has the SDA Church positively impacted the lives of people in Rabai	Teach on Christian living	1	33
	Mission presence	1	33
	Direct involvement with the people	2	67

During the research, it was established that SDAs can positively impact lives of Rabai by teaching on Christian way of living, being present in mission work and direct involvement with the Rabai people. Majority of the participants (67%) proposed direct involvement as the most appropriate way to impact people while 33% each proposed teaching on Christian way of living and mission presence as the ways the church can positively impact lives of the community. The above is as provided in Table 11 above.

Focus Group Discussion Responses

Two focus groups were gathered for being interviewed separately—one for the selected members of SDA which was gathered on 11th November 2024, from 3:30pm to 4:30pm, then another group was selected from the Rabai community which was gathered on 24th 02 2025 4:00pm to 5:00pm. Issues were raised, the responses were recorded and written down for storage. Below is the data according to the discussions on the different occasions.

Community Members' Responses in Group Discussion

Table 12 below shows the focused group discussion on the major activities of the Rabai community the discussion revealed that they involved themselves in selling coconut brew and small-scale farming. While undertaking such activities, the community faced environmental challenges and unemployment with negative impacts on their economic activities.

Table 12. Community Member's Response Economic Activities

Discussion Questions	Responses
1. List the major economic activities of the people of Rabai?	Selling coconut brew Small scale farming
2. What are the main challenges facing people in Rabai?	Trees have been cut down for the purpose of burning charcoal. Rabai young people have no jobs and also have no technical knowhow or knowledge which would enable them to have self-employment
3. How can the challenges above be addressed?	Seat together as a family and inform each other on the benefits of retaining the forests. Educate one another on the above challenges, and discuss on the possibilities of getting donors who can support them. Emphasize on members of the community to join religious groups
4. How best can the people be helped by the Churches?	They have never seen any help from the churches. Churches in the community to assist the community in giving knowledge that can assist the community to be self-employed. Or self-supportive. To encourage people to be involved in religious matters so that they can be develop discipline which will aid in getting employment or self-employment

(table continues)

Table 12 (continued). Community Member's Response Economic Activities

Discussion Questions	Responses
5. What can you say about the SDAs in Rabai?	<p>The SDA don't want to mingle with the Rabai people.</p> <p>SDA Church creates a disparity between Christians and the Rabai.</p> <p>Community not aware why SDA go to church on Saturdays while many other churches go to church on Sundays.</p> <p>Why SDAs do not do their weddings on Saturdays and even some of them do not even cook on Saturdays.</p> <p>SDAs don't want to assist the Rabai's in looking for solutions for their challenges.</p> <p>The SDAs are not friendly to the Rabai traditionalists.</p> <p>Some SDAs call some Rabai's as superstitious hence they don't want to be close to them.</p> <p>The SDAs don't want to associate with the Rabai's.</p> <p>SDAs don't join them in planting trees.</p>
6. How do they differ from non- SDAs?	<p>Non-SDAs Christians accept to come close to the non-Christian Rabai's</p> <p>The non-SDA Christians accept to work together with the non-Christian Rabai's</p> <p>Non-SDA Christians attend barazas of the non-Christian Rabai's</p> <p>Non-SDA Christians always help the non-Christian Rabai's</p>
7. In what ways has the SDA Church positively impacted the lives of people in Rabai?	<p>The SDA have not impacted the Rabai community in any way. Which is not good</p>

As a result of the focused group discussion in Table 12 above, the major activities for the Rabai community include selling coconut brew and small-scale farming. While undertaking such activities, the community faced environmental challenges and unemployment with negative impacts on their economic activities. The community proposed various ways of addressing identified challenges which included family approach to forest restoration, seeking donor support, seeking support from religious institutions and community members joining religious institutions so that they get support as members.

Community members recommended churches to provide knowledge on self-employment to the Rabai community. The community however said SDAs have not mingled with the Kaya elders and Rabai people well a step identified as creating good environment for religious, social and economic activities. The group also said they have never understood SDAs especially on matters Sabbath and are not friendly to the Rabai traditions. On the contrary, non-SDAs are in close contact with non-Christian Rabai's. The SDAs have therefore not impacted the Rabai community in any way which the community said was not good.

Table 13 below indicated that school sponsored mission strategy led to reaching out to students and teachers and conversion to Seventh-day Adventism and involvement in religious clubs.

Table 13. Seventh-day Adventist Members' Mission Responses

Discussion Questions	Responses
1. How many souls have been saved through small group mission strategy in your church for the last 2 years?	Seven
2. Can you describe how school sponsored mission strategy help convert souls to your church	Led to conversion to Seventh-day Adventism Reaching out to students and teachers Involvement in religious clubs
3. What kind of media mission strategy is your church using for broadcasting evangelistic programs?	Radio -Sheki FM TV – Hope channel
4. Briefly describe how effective is media mission strategy in soul winning in Rabai community for the last two years.	Live coverage on TikTok and YouTube Gospel music, programs appeal to many Teaching people about God

As indicated in Table 13 above, the research established soul winning activities in the last two years resulted in five, six and seven souls as per the participants' responses. Some of participants indicated that six souls were won over while others each indicated five and seven souls were won over. During the focus group discussion, it was established that school sponsored mission strategy has led to conversion to Seventh-day Adventism.

The research established that media mission strategy used in Rabai community include radio– Sheki FM and TV- Hope channel with all of the participants indicated that radio-Sheki FM and TV – Hope channel are mostly used strategy in the region. The research established that media strategy is effective in soul winning due to: it having wide coverage and more listeners, provides live coverage on TikTok and

YouTube, Gospel music and programs appeal to many, and provides opportunity for teaching people about God.

From these results, all the respondents' participants indicated that Gospel music and programs are preferred as they appeal to many listeners while one also indicated that live coverage on TikTok and YouTube, teaching people about God and wide coverage/more listeners as ways that have made media strategy effective.

School Sponsored Mission Strategy

During the research it was established school sponsored mission strategy has led to conversion to Seventh-day Adventism reaching out to students and teachers and involvement in religious clubs. 67% of the respondents indicated that school sponsored mission strategy led to reaching out to students and teachers while 33% each indicated that school sponsored mission strategy led to conversion to and involvement in religious clubs.

Media Mission Strategy Used

The research established that media mission strategy used in Rabai community include radio– Sheki FM and TV- Hope channel with all of the respondents (100%) indicated that radio-Sheki FM and TV – Hope channel are mostly used strategy in the region. Seventh-day Adventists should therefore improve mission strategies through radio.

Effectiveness of Media Strategy in Soul Winning

The research established that media strategy is effective in soul winning due to: it having Wide coverage and more listeners, provides live coverage on TikTok and YouTube, Gospel music and programs appeal to many, and provides opportunity for

teaching people about God. From these results, all the respondents (100%) indicated that Gospel music and programs are preferred as they appeal to many listeners while 33% each indicated that live coverage on TikTok and YouTube, teaching people about God and wide coverage/more listeners as ways that have made media strategy effective.

Conclusion

The research interviews and focus group discussions in this study, revealed that the major activities for the Rabai community include selling coconut brew and small-scale farming. While undertaking such activities, the community faced environmental challenges and unemployment with negative impacts on their economic activities. The community proposed various ways of addressing the identified challenges which included family approach to forest restoration, seeking donor support, seeking support from religious institutions and community members joining religious institutions so that they get support as members.

As a result, the community members recommended churches to provide knowledge on self-employment to the Rabai community. The community however said SDAs have not mingled well with the Rabai people, a step identified as creating good environment for religious, social and economic activities. The group also said they have never understood SDAs especially on matters Sabbath and are not friendly to the Rabai traditions. On the contrary, non-SDA Christian groups are in close contact with non-Christian Rabai's in the community. Due to the above findings in the study, the SDAs have therefore not impacted the Rabai community in any way which the community said was not good.

The church, therefore, is obligated to come up with serious effective mission programs and strategies to close the identified gap in order for her to be relevant and thrive in matters mission in the Rabai Community.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This chapter summarizes the whole study of developing an effective mission strategy to reach out to the Rabai people group in the coastal region, Kenya.

Reflecting on the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is best to describe mission as the backbone of Christianity. “Jesus Christ mandated His church to evangelize and make disciples of all nations.” This focus is shared by the SDA Church. However, the church faces many impediments to achieving this goal.

In an attempt to understand the above situation of the African traditional religion, this paper captured some few statements from some scholars who have tried to discuss and express the situation of African theology. It was observed that, the best way for believers to express love is to aid the church in the process of creating an environment that is conducive to attracting and retaining members so that they can be developed into true disciples of Jesus Christ. The church exists to win people to Christ, help them grow in their faith and then send them out to participate in the mission of winning the entire world.

In heeding to the words of Christ, Kenya Coast Mission Field, endeavors to reach out to different people groups in their area of mission field. The Rabai people group is one of the communities which they need to give more attention to. The reason is that the Rabai people received the ministration of the Missionaries but they still observe their Kaya Traditional Religion up to now. Few Rabai community

members have received Jesus Christ as their personal savior, but in time of crisis, they do not come to church. This suggests that they may have gone back to the community to seek solutions to their problems traditionally. It was also observed that, different attempts to reach out to them have been made including public evangelistic campaigns, door to door visitation, and distribution of free literature, all resulting to poor results. This Rabai traditional religion and practice is a great hindrance to the propagation of the gospel in the territory.

As indicated above, the mission mandate of the SDA Church in Kenya Coast Field mission is to reach out to all people in her territory. And whereas, the Rabai people are amongst the indigenous people of the Mijikenda in Kenya Coast Field in the East African region, the church is looking for a successful missional strategy to reach out to all the people groups in her territory.

Earlier attempts to fulfil this task have not been successful as expected, and those who have been joining the church leave immediately when they get challenges. Due to this situation of the Rabai traditional people and that it creates a dilemma of what should be done in order to successfully maximize mission amongst them, there was a need to attempt to develop a successful mission strategy to reach out to them.

The study was familiarized in Chapter 1, which presented the background of the study, the problem statement and how the study envisioned to resolve. Chapter 2 provided the theoretical, biblical, theological and the Missiological foundation of the study. Chapter 3 studied related literature referring major authors in the area of mission. Chapter 4 discoursed in to detail the methodology involved in this research. The study employed a qualitative research which examines the lived experiences of people. Chapter 5 delved in to data analysis, and finally chapter 6 which presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

The objectives of the Study were to examine factors that negatively affect mission to the traditional Rabai community, and to develop and implement an effective mission strategy to the Rabai people. The Research questions were, what are the factors that negatively affect mission to the Traditional Rabai community? And what effective mission strategies can be used to reach out to the Rabai community?

Six people from Kaloleni District were selected, three SDAs and three non-SDAs, and were interviewed through in-depth interviews. Additionally, a discussion of focus groups of three members of the SDAs and three from the Rabai community was utilized to gather the data through questionnaires and audio recordings, transliterated and implied with emergent themes. These emergent themes were used for data analysis and findings in Chapter 5.

The questions were aimed at examining effectiveness of mission approaches to the Rabai people and the results of the study were as explained below. The research established that the major economic activities for the Rabai people are farming – coconut, livestock keeping, coconut brew, boda-boda services and construction with majority of the people engaged in coconut farming.

The research also identified the main challenges facing the Rabai community as climate change, charcoal production, unemployment and water scarcity which have negatively affected the day-to-day livelihoods of the community. Of the above challenges, Majority of participants pointed out charcoal production and unemployment were put forward as the main challenges.

With respect to the challenges faced by the Rabai community, the research identified five main ways of addressing the same and they include: coconut rehabilitation, technical training at TVETs, self-employment and conducting

sensitizations at barazas and churches. Majority of respondents) identified sensitization as the most urgent measure to be undertaken.

During the research, it was observed that the Rabai community expects the church to support them mainly on preaching the gospel of repentance, church support on livelihood projects, addressing negative beliefs and partnership with community. Church support on livelihood projects was therefore identified by most respondents (40%) as the most urgent way of collaborating with the community as an entry point.

The best way for believers to express love is to aid the church in the process of creating an environment that is conducive to attracting and retaining members so that they can be developed into true disciples of Jesus Christ. The church exists to win people to Christ, help them grow in their faith and then send them out to participate in the mission of winning the entire world. In heeding to the words of Christ, Kenya Coast *Mission* Field, endeavors to reach out to different people groups in their area of *mission* field. The Rabai people group is one of the communities which they need to give more attention to.

The mission mandate of the SDA Church in Kenya Coast Field mission is to reach out to all people in her territory. And whereas, the Rabai people are amongst the indigenous people of the Mijikenda in Kenya Coast Field in the East African region, the church is looking for a successful missional strategy to reach out to all the people groups in her territory. Earlier attempts to fulfil this task have not been successful as expected, and those who have been joining the church leave immediately when they get challenges. Due to this situation of the Rabai traditional people and that it created a dilemma of what could be done in order to successfully maximize mission amongst them, there was a need to attempt to develop a successful mission strategy to reach out to them.

The research established that media strategy is effective in soul winning due to: it having Wide coverage and more listeners, provides live coverage on TikTok and YouTube, Gospel music and programs appeal to many, and provides opportunity for teaching people about God. From these results, 50% of the respondents indicated that Gospel music and programs are preferred as they appeal to many listener

Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations:

1. That MEDIA strategy be approved by the church not only in Kenya Coast Field, but also the whole East Kenya Union conference
2. Researchers to come up with other strategies to ensure more effective ways of maximize mission in the coastal region of
3. The Kenya Coast Field church to train the Kaloleni Church on how they can relate to the Rabai community so that their presence may make an impact on mission strategies in the area.
4. Kenya Coast Field should set some budget to support Media mission activities in the coastal region.
5. To Field should send Global mission pioneers trained in winning souls so that they can look for those interested in SDA message in the community.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE AUTHORIZATION TO CARRY OUT THE STUDY



Adventist University of Africa
Developing Leaders for Service

A Private Chartered University Accredited by Commission for University Education, Kenya



24th March 2025

Wilson Mwamzuka
Theological Seminary
Adventist University of Africa
Kenya

Reference: AUA/ISERC/19/02/2025

Dear Wilson Mwamzuka

RE: Developing an Effective Mission Strategy to Reach Out to the Rabai People Group in the Coastal Region, Kenya

This is to inform you that the Adventist University of Africa Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee (AUA-ISERC) has reviewed and approved your research proposal titled above. Your application approval number is AUA/ISERC/2025/0021. The approval period is 24th March 2025 – 23rd March 2026.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:

- i. Only approved documents (including informed consent and study instruments) will be used.
- ii. All changes, including amendments, deviations, and violations, are submitted for review and approval by AUA-ISERC.
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to AUA-ISERC within 72 hours of notification.
- iv. Any changes anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affect the safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to AUA-ISERC within 72 hours.
- v. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to the expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
- vi. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to AUA-ISERC.

Prior to commencing your study, you are expected to obtain permissions or any other clearances needed.

Yours Sincerely

Josephine Ganu, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Scientific Ethics Review C'ttee
ethics@aua.ac.ke

ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA
ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE
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APPENDIX B

A REQUEST LETTER FOR AUTHORIZATION FROM
THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST KENYA COAST
FIELD TO CARRY OUT THE STUDY

10/02/2025

The Executive Secretary
Seventh-day Adventist church
Kenya Coast Field
P.O.BOX 89251-80-100
Mombasa
Kenya

Dear Sir,

**REF: REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN KALOLENI MISSION
DISTRICT OF THE SDA CHURCH, (RABAI) FOR MASTER OF ARTS
MISSIOLOGY THESIS**

Christian greetings,

This is to inform you that for the purpose completing my MA Missiology study at the Adventist University of Africa (AUA), I'm required to undertake a research under the topic, "DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE MISSION STRATEGY TO REACH OUT TO THE RABAI PEOPLE GROUP IN THE COASTAL REGION, KENYA." The main purpose of this letter is to request for a permission to conduct the above field research beginning from now, up to 31st March 2025.

Your consideration towards this shall be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,



Wilson Mwamzuka-Student
Master of Arts in Missiology,
Adventist University of Africa

XC: KCF Officers

APPENDIX C

AUTHORIZATION LETTER FROM KENYA COAST FIELD

Seventh – day Adventist Church
Kenya Coast Field

P.O. Box 89251 – 80100
Mombasa, Kenya.
+254 720 832 477
+254 723 446 376
E-Mail: info@kcf.adventist.or.ke
East Kenya Union Conference



17th March 2025

PR. WILSON MWAMZUKA
KENYA COAST FIELD

Dear Brethren,

RE: RESEARCH PERMISSION REQUEST

Christian greetings.

This is to kindly inform you that Kenya Coast Field Administrative Committee sitting on 17th March 2025, voted to grant you your permission request to conduct a research in Kaloleni Mission District for your thesis from 18th February to 31st March 2025. **(ACTION 24ADCOM-037)**

May God bless you as you continue serving in His vineyard.

Yours in God's service,

Dr./Pr. Eliab Omburo
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

XC: KCF Officers

EO/co



Go Ye Therefore and Teach All Nations..... Matthew 28:19-20

APPENDIX D

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

You are being asked to participate in a research study entitled:

“Seventh-day Adventists mission strategies assessment among Rabai communities in coastal Kenya.” A research for Master in Missiology degree at the Adventist University of Africa, Kenya. The information below tells you about what is involved in the research, what you will be asked to do, and the potential risks and benefits of participating in this study. You are encouraged to ask questions and seek clarification about the nature of the study. Please note that choosing whether to participate in this research is voluntary and entirely your choice. You may refuse to participate or discontinue your participation at any time during the study.

The purpose of this study: The purpose of the Study is contributed to **collection of information on Seventh-day Adventists mission strategies assessment among Rabai communities in coastal Kenya**

Your participation: You will be asked to participate in the mission approach interview guide whereby you will be guided to fill in some research guides. This means you will be asked to voice your views, opinions, or experience on this missional research study. The interview will take less than an hour to complete.

You will also be asked to participate in person. This means the study involves an interview and discussion in a group setting. There will be about 3 participants in the focus group. You will be asked about your opinions/perceptions or experience on

mission strategy to the Rabai Community in the Coastal Region of Kenya. Each focus group discussion will take about 45 minutes.

Benefits and Risks: If you participate, you will contribute to a knowledge about how to reach out to the Rabai people with Christian missional message, which may help to contribute to their salvation. There are no identifiable risks in participation.

Confidentiality: Your personal information will be kept confidential. Your interview responses will be anonymized so they will not be identified in any report or publication of this study. **Please carefully read and sign this Form if you are willing to participate in the study.**

1. My participation in this research project is voluntary. There is no explicit or implicit coercion whatsoever to participate.
2. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.
3. I understand that if I feel uncomfortable during the interview, I have the right to decline to answer any question or end the interview or discussion.
4. I understand that the interview will be audio-recorded to accurately capture my own words and a transcript will be produced for data analysis.
5. I understand the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information from this interview or discussion.

If you have any ethical concerns about your participation in this research, contact the Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee, Adventist University of Africa
<ethics@aua.ac.ke>

I have read and fully understood the statements on this Form. All my questions were answered satisfactorily. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Participant's Signature _____

Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date

Contact the supervisor of the research if you need more information or have questions: Professor Sampson Nwaomah. Email: nwoamahs@aua.ac.ke

Thank you.

Mwamzuka Wilson

Masters in Missiology/ATR. Email: mwamzukaw@aua.ac.ke

APPENDIX E
INTERVIEW GUIDE DESIGNED FOR NON-
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST MEMBERS

Dear Sir/Madam

I am Pr. Mwanzuka Wilson, a student for the Adventist University of Africa taking Master degree in Missiology. The purpose of this focus group discussion interview guide is to collect information on examining mission strategy to the Rabai people. This is only for academic exercise. The findings will be used solely for the purposes of the research and no individual shall be victimized. You are assured of confidentiality.

SECTION 1: Mission Approaches

1. List the major economic activities of the people of Rabai

.....
.....

2. What are the main challenges facing people in Rabai

.....
.....

3. How can the challenges above be addressed

.....
.....

4. How best can the people be helped by the Churches

.....
.....

5. What can you say about the Seventh-day Adventists in Rabai?

.....
.....

6. How do they differ from non- Seventh-day Adventists?

.....
.....

7. In what ways has the Seventh-day Adventist Church positively impacted the lives of people in Rabai?

.....
.....

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW GUIDE DESIGNED FOR
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST MEMBERS

Dear Sir/Madam

I am Pr. Mwamzuka Wilson, a student for the Adventist University of Africa taking Master degree in Missiology. The purpose of this focus group discussion interview guide is to collect information on examining a mission strategy to the Rabai people. This is only for academic exercise. The findings will be used solely for the purposes of the research and no individual shall be victimized. You are assured of confidentiality.

SECTION 2: Mission Approaches

1. How many souls have been saved through small group mission strategy in your church for the last 2 years?

.....
.....

2. Can you describe how school sponsored mission strategy help convert souls to your church

.....
.....

3. What kind of media mission strategy is your church using for broadcasting evangelistic programs?

.....
.....

4. Briefly describe how effective is media mission strategy in soul winning in Rabai community for the last two years.

.....
.....

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW GUIDE DESIGNED FOR FOCUS GROUP

Dear Sir/Madam

I am Pr. Mwamzuka Wilson, a student for the Adventist University of Africa taking Master degree in Missiology. The purpose of this focus group discussion interview guide is to collect information on examining a mission strategy to the Rabai people. This is only for academic exercise. The findings will be used solely for the purposes of the research and no individual shall be victimized. You are assured of confidentiality.

SECTION 3: Mission Approaches

1. List the major economic activities of the people of Rabai

.....
.....

2. What are the main challenges facing people in Rabai

.....
.....

3. How can the challenges above be addressed

.....
.....

4. How best can the people be helped by the Churches

.....
.....

5. What can you say about the Seventh-day Adventists?
in Rabai?

.....
.....

6. How do they differ from non- Seventh-day Adventists?

.....
.....

7. In what ways has the Seventh-day Adventists
Church positively impacted the lives of people in Rabai?

.....
.....

APPENDIX H

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

Non-Disclosure Statement:

You are being asked to read and sign this Form because you are being invited to be a participant in a focus group/discussion. As a participant, you will be asked to voice your views and others will voice their views. You are asked not to disclose anything said within the context of the discussion. By agreeing to participate, you agree to not disclose to others outside this event anything said within the context of the discussion.

___ I agree to maintain the confidentiality of the information discussed by all participants and researchers during the focus group session.

___ I do not agree to the confidentiality requirements of this study and decline to participate.

Name _____ Date:

Signature: _____

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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Date of birth: 27/07/1966

Sex: Male

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Nationality: Kenyan

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Education attainment

2014-2025 MA Missiology/ATR Candidate – Adventist University of Africa (AUA)-
Nairobi (Kenya)

2010-2013-Bachelor of Theology – Bugema University (Uganda)

201-2004-Secondary Education- Diani Secondary School (Kenya)

1984-1985 – Electrical Engineering Grade III Certificate-Mazeras Youth Polytechnic
(Kenya)

1976-1983 – Certificate of Primary Education (C.P.E) – Mwaluvanga Primary School
(Kenya)

Work Experience in the Church

2023 – To date (2025) – Departmental Head seventh-day Adventist Church Kenya
Coast Field-(Publishing, Music, S.O.P, and Camp meeting Coordinator)

2022 - Mombasa Station Director/Family Life District Pastor-Mombasa- (Kenya)

2019 – 2021 – Mombasa Station Director/Kizingo District Pastor-Mombasa - (Kenya)

January 2016 – December 2018 – District Pastor Bomu District – Mombasa west –
(Kenya)

25th March 2017 – Ordained to Ministry at Seventh-day Adventist Church Malindi
South – (Kenya)

July 2013 – December 2016 – Mombasa west Station Director/Changamwe District
Pastor – Mombasa – (Kenya)

January 2013 –June 2013 – District Pastor – Ukunda District

January 2009 – December 2012 – District Pastor- Mtwapa District – (Kenya)

January 2005 – December 2008 – District Pastor – Wajir/Mandera – North – Eastern
(Kenya)

April 2003 – December 2004 – Perani District (Kenya)

2001 to March 2003 – District Pastor – Yumbuni District (Kenya)

1998 – 2001 – Lay Representative South Coast Station – (Kenya)

1996 – 1997 – Church Elder – Seventh-day Adventist Church Mwanamkuu – South
Coast – Kenya

1995 – 2001 – Literature Evangelist – Seventh-day Adventist Church – Kenya Coast
Field – South Coast

January 1993 – December 1995 – Church Elder – Lukore Seventh-day Adventist

Church – South Coast station

1991 – 1992 – Personal Ministries Leader – Seventh-day Adventist Church Lukore –

South coast station

1990 – Youth Leader – Seventh-day Adventist Church – Lukore – South coast Station

Work experience outside the church: 1986 – 1989 Electrical Engineer – Mombasa

(Kenya)