

**THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES IN FOSTERING LITERACY- A
CASE OF THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN MONGU
DISTRICT.**

BY
CHILOBE GLADYS

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DECLARATION

I, Gladys Chilobe, do hereby declare that this piece of work is my own, and that all the work of other persons has been duly acknowledged, and that this work has not been previously presented at this university and indeed any other universities for similar purposes.

Signed**Date.....**

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation by Gladys Chilobe is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Literacy and Learning by the University of Zambia.

Examiners

Signed..... Date.....

Signed..... Date.....

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ABSTRACT

From the onset of formal education, the church has been government's partner in the provision and fostering of literacy. Zambia is constitutionally and demographically a Christian nation. The Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church was selected for this study because it is a protestant denomination involved in the provision of literature to the public and runs one of the largest education systems in the world. The main objective of the study was to investigate the role of religious activities in fostering literacy and the SDA Church in Mongu district was used as the case study.

This study was premised on Paulo Freire's theory of Liberation Theology where literacy is expected to bring about a process of critical reflection and aid one navigate one's way through life. The research employed the qualitative design to collect data from a study sample of fifty respondents comprising two Pastors, four Church elders, twelve literature evangelists and thirty-two members of the public. Data was collected using purposive sampling. The instruments which were used included the semi-structured interview guide, Observation checklist, focus group discussion guide and a questionnaire. Data was analysed qualitatively according to emerging themes and patterns of responses.

The study's findings indicated that the books the SDA Church provided to the public did foster literacy and the books about health were the most popular among the members of the public. The literature was generally aiding people in different life situations to enjoy the benefit of reading to learn.

In view of these findings, the study recommended that the SDA Church could advertise the books in the media, open up more bookshops for easy access and possibly translate some of the books into local languages so as to broaden the readership.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late aunt, Mrs Rossah Chilala Mweemba Mwale, for encouraging and supporting me throughout my education; for making me believe in my ability to ascend the education ladder despite my humble background. To her I will forever be grateful. I also dedicate this work to my mother, Mrs Meta Mweemba Chilobe for making sure that I managed to go to school no matter how difficult the situation was at home; for making me share her belief that education can be an equaliser in society. I am grateful mum.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE STUDY

ADRA: Adventist Relief Service

DEBS: District Education Board Secretary

GC: General Conference of the Seventh Day Adventist Church

LE: Literature Evangelist

MoE: Ministry of Education

SDA: Seventh Day Adventist

SES: Special Educational Services

UNESCO: United Nations Educational Science and Cultural Organisation

VBS: Vacation Bible School

VOP: Voice of Prophecy

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

WMD: Women Ministries Department

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background to the study, the statement of the problem and the purpose of the study. Thereafter, research objectives, research questions, the significance of the study and the theoretical framework are also given. Lastly, there are the delimitations and limitations of the study and the operational definitions of terms used in the dissertation.

Background to the study

The passion to spread the gospel through Christian missionary work inspired many missionary societies to develop a number of activities which included printing and distribution of religious literature throughout the world.

Through missionaries, the Church established schools where the 3Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic) were taught. Since the bible was of great importance especially for protestant denominations, missionaries wanted Africans to have access to it, and for many, literacy was a means to this end. The bible was the first form of literature most people were exposed to. From 1883 to 1945, many mission stations were established in present day Zambia (Henkel, 1989) and Africa at large to provide education and proselytisation since the Church was equated to a school in the mind of many Africans (Snelson, 1974).

The first school where conventional literacy (reading and writing) was taught in Northern Rhodesia was opened at Limulunga, Mongu in 1883, by a pioneer Brethren missionary Fredrick Arnot (Snelson, 1974). Other missionaries who came in later included Francois Coillard of the Paris Evangelical Mission who established a mission at Sefula, Sesheke and a mission school at Lukona in 1905. The Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church came into Zambia and established a mission at Rusangu in Southern province in 1905. Adventists later expanded to other places and in Western province, they established a school at Liumba hill and Yuka in 1928. The Catholic missionaries also established mission stations at Sihole in 1943, among others (Henkel, 1989).

Missionaries used literacy instruction as the earliest form of education offered to Africans. Mwanakatwe (1974), however, explains that in most cases, little effort was made to apply literacy to a full range of life needs. Schooling was by and large just seen as a way of 'civilising' the Africans. The usual trend for most missionaries was establishing a mission station which comprised a school, a clinic and a church.

The language policy in mission schools during the colonial era was that of supporting the language of the community. The local language was used as the language of literacy instruction in the first four years before English was introduced so that learners could easily learn to read (usually the bible) in a familiar language. Manchishi (2004:1) explains that:

what one can explain without fear of contradiction is that the drive for evangelism proved extremely successful because the missionaries used local languages .The bible and other Christian literature were translated into local languages. People chanted hymns in languages they understood best, i.e., their own languages, and even in the schools the medium of instruction was in their own local language at least up to the fourth grade.

Even though the language policies have changed over the years, the Church has since then, been government's most reliable partner in the provision and fostering of literacy in Zambia.

Some of the schools opened by different missions before and after independence were later handed over to government. However, some are still partially owned by the missions and are currently referred to as grant-aided schools. Kelly (1999) explains that grant aided institutions are those where government contributes 75% of the cost of their capital work expenditure which, among others, include expenditure on teachers' salaries, school requisites, and boarding costs.

The major player among the churches in the provision and fostering of literacy is the Roman Catholic Church. The SDA Church also contributes much to education as it conducts one of the largest school systems of any protestant denomination ('Adventists' Microsoft ®Encarta®2008©1993-2007 Microsoft corporation). The Ministry of Education (MoE) recognises the contributions of these stakeholders in the 1996 policy document where it is stated that "voluntary agencies, mostly religious

bodies make a significant contribution to educational provision in Zambia through their grant-aided schools and colleges” (page 137).

In 1991, the Zambian economy was liberalised including the education sector and many stakeholders came on board to provide literacy. This meant that the laws that govern those who provide literacy were less strict hence, other people, apart from MoE were free to run literacy fostering programmes. Under a liberalised education system, the right of private organisations, individuals, religious bodies and local communities to establish and control their own schools and other educational institutions is recognised and welcome (Carmody, 2004). In spite of all this, literacy levels in Zambia leave much to be desired.

UNESCO on ([http://balita.ph/2009/10/high-illiteracy levels in Zambia](http://balita.ph/2009/10/high-illiteracy-levels-in-zambia)), reports that, according to the Zambian Demographic Health Survey, 1.3 million adults are considered to be illiterate in Zambia. This translates to 33.8 per cent of the adult population. This shows that government alone cannot cope with the mammoth task of fostering literacy hence the need for other institutions to continue aiding the government.

Zambia is demographically a Christian nation. Eighty-seven (87) per cent of Zambians profess some form of Christianity while one (1) per cent is either Muslim or Hindu. A 1996 amendment to the constitution declared the country a Christian nation while providing for freedom of religion in practice (<http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Zambia.aspx>). The majority of the Christians are either Roman Catholic or Protestant. Christian denominations found in Zambia and Mongu in particular include the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the SDA Church, the United Church of Zambia, the New Apostolic Church, Lutheran Church, Jehovah’s Witnesses and a variety of Pentecostal denominations.

Snelson (1974) and Henkel (1989) explain that Catholics and Protestants had different perceptions of the importance of school and of literacy; hence there were differences in the literacy curricular. These perceptions could have continued to the present day as Kapitzke, in Wagner (1993) explains that Adventist literacy emphasizes detailed analytical study of the scriptures (Kapitzke, 1995), whereas reading and writing in

Catholic schools is framed by symbolic narrative, ritual and image (Lesco, 1998). Qu'ranic literacy, in contrast, consists mainly of rote memorisation and recitation of Arabic verse (Wagner, 1993).

There has been some documentation on the Catholic Church activities on literacy. The Catholic Church does a lot of community based programmes, which foster literacy among different ages especially in low-income communities. There are also the activities of organisations under the Catholic Church, like Caritas Zambia, which focuses on interventions on fostering and upholding human dignity through pro-poor reforms for better services for the vulnerable and the needy in society. The organisation engages in conscientisation programmes which liberate people from constraints of ignorance, exploitation, poverty and injustice (www.zgf.org.zm/Grantpartners/caritazambia.html). The Catholic Church also runs a lot of adult literacy programmes spread throughout the country and a lot of community based programmes to better the life of lower income groups. There is hence need to find out what Protestants are also currently doing in fostering literacy.

The Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church has been selected for this study because it is a protestant denomination involved in the provision of literature to the public and runs one of the largest education systems in the world (<http://www.religiousfacts.com/christianity/denominations/seventhdayadventist.html>).

The SDA Church is a denomination that grew out of the prophetic Millerite movement in the United States during the middle part of the 19th century. It considers itself a branch of Protestant Christianity. The name of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination indicates its two main distinctive characteristics: Sabbath observance on the seventh day (i.e., Saturday) and an expectation that the end of the world is drawing near. Other distinguishing characteristics include adherence to the teachings of Ellen G. White (who is regarded as a prophet), and various dietary observances rooted in Jewish law (<http://www.religiousfacts.com/christianity/denominations/seventhdayadventist.html>).

As of June, 2011, the Seventh-day Adventist Church had about 17.3 million baptised members and more than 25 million adherents worldwide. The Seventh-day Adventist

Church is one of the world's fastest-growing organizations, primarily due to increases in Third World membership. It now operates and is established in 209 out of 232 countries recognized by the United Nations (http://www.adventist.org/facts_and_figures/index.html).

There is a lot of emphasis on reading in the SDA Church. The Church contends that “reading creates endless possibilities for people to be informed concerning such topics as careers, health, parenting and marriage ...”this Church feels that “...the gift to read God’s word –the good news of salvation should not be reserved for the privileged few” (<http://www.adventist.org>). On the Church’s statement on literacy, the then President of the world SDA Church, Elder Folkenburg stated that, according to the SDA Church, “the inability to read impacts every aspect of a person’s life- earning power, career opportunity, access to health care information and even ability to raise a child properly. Without the skill of reading, few doors of opportunity can ever be opened” (GC, 2001).

According to the SDA Church, Education means more than a certain course of study and a preparation for this life. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental and the spiritual powers (White, 1998: 13). It is hence explained that The Adventist educational programme is comprehensive encompassing "mental, physical, social, and spiritual health" with "intellectual growth and service to humanity" its goal (<http://www.religiousfacts.com/christianity/denominations/seventhdayadventist.html>).

Literacy is viewed by the SDA Church as a doorway to evangelism and education because the evangelism thrust would be very difficult when witnessing to people who cannot read and write. A common point of reference by this Church as one inquires about what the Church is doing in fostering literacy is the Bible in Revelation 1 verse 3 which reads, “Blessed is he that **reads**, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand”; Hosea 4:6 “My people die because of **ignorance**...” and 2Timothy 2:15 “**Study** to show yourself approved...”. One is henceforth; left to wonder what literacy fostering

activities this Church is involved in since reading seems to be a central theme in their organisation. It was also noted that the Seventh Day Adventists were earlier in their Church history referred to as ‘the people of the book’, due to their emphasis and interest in reading (<http://www.adventist-review.org/article4790archives/issue-2011-GC-update-2-revived-by-his-word-bible-reading-initiative>). The SDA Church denominational publications are in 377 languages and dialects ([http://www.adventist.org/facts and figures/index.html](http://www.adventist.org/facts_and_figures/index.html)). As earlier alluded to, this Church also conducts one of the largest school systems of any protestant denomination.

Statement of the problem

It was not known whether the SDA Church fosters literacy to the public through the literature the Church provides. This knowledge gap is worthy filling in especially that the reading culture in Zambia is perceived to be poor going by the indices presented by Luangala (2004). This gap in knowledge was duly filled in by this research since no research had been done on how the SDA Church fosters literacy.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to establish the role of the SDA Church in fostering literacy.

Main Objective

The main objective of the study was to investigate the role of the SDA Church in fostering literacy.

Specific Objectives:

The objectives of this study were to:

- i. establish the SDA Church’s understanding of literacy.
- ii. identify the SDA Church’s literacy promotion activities.
- iii. establish how the SDA Church manages to get people read or attract people to read their literature.
- iv. establish how literature evangelism fosters literacy.
- v. explore the benefits (if any) that people have experienced due to reading the literature provided by the SDA Church.

Main Research Question

What role does the SDA Church play in the fostering of literacy?

Specific Questions:

- i. What is the SDA Church's understanding of literacy?
- ii. What literacy promotion activities is the SDA Church involved in?
- iii. How does the SDA Church get or attract people to read their literature?
- iv. How does literature evangelism foster literacy?
- v. What benefits have people experienced due to reading the literature provided by the SDA Church?

Significance of the study

This study attempted to provide information on institutions apart from regular schools, which foster literacy. It was premised on the fact that there are many stakeholders in the provision and fostering of literacy in Zambia. The findings revealed what the SDA Church was doing in fostering literacy.

The study could assist government to continue working together with the church as a partner in the fostering of literacy. This research was community based hence it moved literacy to another level away from the confines of the classroom. Reading maintenance is vital in making people develop from learning to read to reading to learn. Collaboration by many stakeholders in fostering literacy would lead to having conscientised and knowledgeable citizens who were able to take care of their situations.

Awareness of religious groups' contribution to the fostering of literacy is important because while schools usually have specific age groups, the Church is open to all ages and economic status. Church literacy programmes cater for all ages and those who could have dropped out of school could take advantage of such programmes and compensate for what they missed in school.

It was also hoped that the study would stimulate further research into what other religious institutions were doing in fostering literacy so that all stakeholders would complement each other to enhance national development.

Theoretical Framework

A theory is a set of ideas that are intended to explain something about life and the world. It is a statement of some general principles that explain phenomena. A theory provides a general explanation for observations made over a general period of time. According to Barton (2007:14), “we construct theories to make sense of the world...we adjust and change our theories in the light of experience. This applies to literacy as much as to any other part of life”. The theoretical frame work of a study is a configuration or patterning of concepts and knowledge bits that one needs to bear in mind so as to make sense of what one is observing at any material time.

This study was underpinned by Paulo Freire’s theory of liberation theology that is based on the idea that people should work to change bad social, political, and economic conditions. This matches with the Church’s ideals of freeing humanity from ignorance and oppression in society. Freire’s theory has a background of Christianity and dwells on the tenets of conscientisation of individuals on their social realities through dialogue (Freire, 1972). According to Freire, people find solutions to their own problems that prohibit them from discovering their self worth through literacy. This literacy is attained by collaboration and dialogue among themselves. The main task of literacy in any given context is bringing about a process of critical reflection which is manifested in awareness of the learner’s state of affairs (Freire, 1972, 1985). To Freire, literacy is liberation or freedom and to the SDA Church, it is the doorway to evangelism and empowerment in its diversity.

Literacy is a necessity for people to begin to solve their own problems. The promotion of literacy changes the way human beings relate to their environment. No wonder Lauback (1947) emphasises that a literate person is not only an illiterate person who has learnt to read and write, he is another person.

After people are helped to decipher meaning from contextual symbols (reading), they are empowered with knowledge and skills to contribute to personal and societal development. The literacy fostered by the church is expected to liberate people spiritually, mentally, physically, and socially. This study intended to establish whether the literacy the Church provides indeed liberates people in all the different spheres of life.

Liberation theology highlights the value of literacy by making those conscientised become subjects rather than objects of the world. The implication is that the ability to change one's situation for one's betterment lies within oneself. People should realise that there is a difference between nature, that is, that which is not made by man and cannot be changed; and culture, that which is made by man and has a shifting site of identity, resistance and opposition that provides conditions of self and social formation (<http://www.henrygirowx.com/online-articles-paulofreire.html>). Once people understand culture as an addition of people to a world they did not make and could be used to create and recreate the transcendental meaning of human relations, then they can use reading and writing as a key to the world of written communication. This awareness can make people lose their apathetic and naive view of the world and be aware of, and accept their role as subjects in and of the world.

The literature people are exposed to awakens them to realities around them and makes them realise that they can always do something about their situation. Literacy makes people aware that their presence and existence demands action and critical thought (Freire, 1985). This entails that people who are literate are critical thinkers and are not gullible and neither are they easily exploited. Apart from being intellectually stimulating, theories of liberation demand a response from the relatively comfortable reader. It would hence be important to establish whether the literature the SDA Church provides makes people have this kind of awakening.

Delimitations of the study

Delimitations are used to address how the study is narrowed in scope (Cresswell, 1994). This study limited itself to the role of the SDA Church in fostering literacy. The site was limited to some selected parts of Mongu district only. Mongu was selected for the study because it is the provincial headquarters of the Western Province of Zambia. It was therefore, important to find out other institutions which fostered literacy in the province apart from the regular schools run by the MoE.

Limitations of the study

Limitations are those conditions which are beyond the control of the researcher and may also place restriction on the conclusions of the study (Best and Kahn, 2009). The

research design was qualitative and focus group discussions were used. The challenge was bringing literature evangelists together for discussions since they were busy field workers. Only those who managed to turn up on the appointed days took part in the study. The respondents from the members of the public were picked through a kind of snowballing using the Literature Evangelists. Other potential respondents could have been left out because they were not clients of the evangelists used in the focus group discussions. The other challenge was that some participants, especially SDA Church members, were sceptical about why the researcher was asking about their Church literacy. This was clarified by explaining that the research was purely for academic purposes and the researcher was interested in finding out literacy provided by the Church so that the world was made aware of what literacy was found in the SDA Church. The limitation was that the findings may not be generalised to other churches since this was a case study of the SDA Church in Mongu.

DEFINITIONS OF OPERATIONAL TERMS USED IN THE STUDY

The definition of terms explains how the given terms have been used in a study. Correspondingly, the following terms were used as explained below:

Church: an institution and a community of individual believers. Institutionally, church denominations and organisations have rules, formal and informal norms, officials, material resources and histories (Patterson, 2010).

Conscientisation: a method used in education to make people who have lost their sense of self worthy rediscover themselves and realise their potential and that they are creators of culture and deserve the best.

Liberalise: to make a system, laws or moral attitudes less strict.

Illiteracy: inability to read and write.

Literacy: a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, develop their knowledge and potential and participate fully in their community by reading the word and the world. Literacy will hence concentrate on the aspect of reading.

Foster: to help a skill, feeling or idea develop over a period of time.

Proselytise: to try to convert somebody to a religious faith.

Protestant: a member of a part of the Christian Church that separated from the Catholic Church in the 16th century.

Conventional literacy: reading and writing.

The Word *Church*: used in lowercase ‘church’ unless it is part of the name of a specific denomination.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents the reviewed literature on the role of the Church in fostering literacy. The main purpose of literature review is to determine what has already been done within the area of the research problem (Mugenda, 1999). As a preamble to the review of literature, the concept of literacy will be explored in different perspectives and contexts. The literacy levels on the global and Zambian levels will then be looked into. After that, there will be an insight into the importance of reading and a look into the reading culture in Zambia. A global perspective of the church's role in the fostering of conventional literacy as well as the current role of the church in fostering literacy locally will then be explored. The chapter will end by looking at the studies related to the topic after which a chapter summary will be given which will include the contribution this study may make to the body of knowledge.

Perspectives on literacy

All rates of literacy are based on the common definition of the ability to read and write at an adequate level of proficiency that is necessary for communication (Brandt, 2009). Traditionally, literacy has been closely associated with the alphabet and its rules in written communication. It is more of a technical capability to decode or reproduce written or printed signs, symbols, or letters combined into words. Snow (1991) defines literacy as a complex relationship between reading, writing, ways of learning and ways of knowing. The way meaning is represented in signs, logos, music animation and forms of multimedia is what literacy is today. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has a more inclusive definition of literacy as “the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute, and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts”(UNESCO, 2003). Literacy hence involves a continuum of learning to make people get that which they want and be effective members of their communities. More recently, literacy has taken several meanings, for example, computer literacy, visual literacy, cultural literacy, media literacy. Literacy in one sphere of life may not necessarily mean one is literate in the other.

In the modern life, people need different forms of literacy to properly function in society. Functional literacy goes beyond basic reading and writing. It includes the ability to calculate figures, correctly filling in forms, understand road maps and manuals, and carry out activities considered necessary to function in society.

According to the National Commission on Excellence in Education, an estimated thirteen percent of Americans though basically literate are functionally illiterate (Harvey, 2008). The percentage of the functionally illiterate people is even higher in developing nations. An increase in literacy is assumed to lead to the improvement of an individual's life and development of society. Reading books enables someone to think like a literate person exposed to different mindsets which he explores in his/her readings. Literate thinking manifests itself in different ways in oral and written language in different societies. Literacy is strategic, constructive, and interactive and meaning based. This implies that literacy does not exist in a vacuum but requires the participation and involvement of humans in practical and active activities like listening, speaking, reading and writing. It exists in a context, in relation to the values associated with that context (Bhola, 2007).

Literacy is not an inborn human characteristic but rather an ability that is learnt. It has long been considered by the experts as an important contribution to the health development of individuals and society. Though there is no correlation between literacy and intelligence, literacy and education level are closely related (Harvey, 2008).

Thus, Freire (1972) saw illiteracy and ignorance as a kind of bondage from which one has to be emancipated. He, therefore, perceived literacy as an effort to liberate not another instrument to dominate (Godotti, 1994). In short, literacy is liberation or freedom.

This study used Freire's ideas of literacy as liberation and therefore established how the SDA Church fosters it to liberate people from ignorance and make them read the word and the world so as to make themselves free and productive members of their society. The above perspectives show that the understanding of literacy over the years has been extended beyond conventional literacy (reading and writing). It is now

necessary to consider more meaningful aspects of literacy in society as a whole because literacy impinges on people's everyday life.

Literacy is a social practice. To be literate entails development of courage and confidence to question, seek and secure accountability for those in authority. People should insist on participating in what obtains in their environment so as to shape their destiny. It means awareness of what is happening in one's environment and be involved to find solutions. Literacy is liberating and enlightening, that is why modernization theorists have emphasized literacy's role in widening mental horizons and bolstering rationality (Kaestle in Gordon, 1985). Even in the early missionary times, education was viewed as a civilising force which would make people who perceive cause and effect instead of magical thinking in paganism (Snelson, 1974).

Reading the word, which is the focus of this study, should make people's lives better. Ballara (1991:15) is in line with this view when she says that "literacy helps people acquire necessary knowledge, make better use of natural resources and protect the environment, it facilitates a change in attitude that can encourage increased productivity". This is because the ultimate goal of reading is to be able to understand written material, to evaluate it and use it for one's needs. In a nation like Zambia where most of the people live below the poverty datum line (Carmody, 2004), it is important to find out how different institutions, like the church, foster literacy. In this case, the idea is to establish society's response to the books provided by the SDA Church. This is because beside its intrinsic value, the ability to read and write has economic consequences. Adults who are better than average readers are also higher than average earners or are more likely to have high paying jobs (UNESCO Microsoft student, 2008 DVD).

Literacy levels

The concept of adult literacy or illiteracy rates refers to the number of literate or illiterate adults expressed as a percentage of the total adult population aged fifteen and above. A person is considered illiterate if he /she cannot read and write with understanding a simple statement related to his /her life (UNESCO, 2003).

Global literacy levels

UNESCO gives an estimation of 855million adults who did not have basic literacy in 1995. The picture has not changed much over the years. This problem is acute in sub Saharan Africa, Southern Asia and the Middle East. In developed nations, almost every person above age 17 has basic literacy but that is not so in developing nations. The levels of both basic and functional literacy are much lower in developing nations. Functional literacy is lower than basic literacy in all cases. Lack of wide spread literacy is a serious social problem. UNESCO has shown that illiteracy accompanies poverty, low life expectancy, political oppression and underdevelopment. There is also an observation that where such conditions occur, literacy rates are lower among women and ethnic minorities (Harvey, 2008). Research has, also, shown direct relationship between literacy among women and improved health and childcare in the family (UNESCO, 2003). That is why most organisations target women for adult literacy programmes. It would hence be interesting to explore how the literature provided by the SDA Church is aiding humanity in this aspect.

A survey of African nations on Encarta Microsoft student 2008 gives the global picture where all countries except Botswana (84.1%-women and 81.4%-men), show lower literacy levels for women than men. In spite of this gloomy picture, Kelly (2008), writes that “the Education for All Global Monitoring Report for 2002 tells us that ‘to be able to read, write and calculate has been acknowledged as a human right.’ In the realm of human rights, governments have three obligations, to respect, protect and fulfil the rights in question”. This also emphasises the need for this study to find out what those institutions which government has allowed to be partners in fostering literacy like the Church are doing.

Literacy levels in Zambia

Zambia is not different from most countries in the world in terms of having lower literacy levels for women compared to the men. The country is at 82.2% distributed as 87.7% for men and 76.8% for women according to the 2005 estimates by UNESCO (UNESCO Microsoft student 2008 DVD).UNICEF meanwhile gives the rate of 71% adult literacy for the period of 2005-2010 (<http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/>

[zambia-statistics.html](#)). The list of countries by literacy rates as included in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2011 report puts Zambia at 70.9%. As earlier alluded to, these literacy levels in Zambia leave much to be desired in that 1.3 million adults are considered to be illiterate according to the UNESCO Demographic Health Survey (<http://balita.ph/2009/10/high-illiteracy-levels-in-zambia>).

Reasons for poor literacy levels are so many; some of the reasons are overcrowded classrooms, untrained or poorly trained teachers and the use of English as a medium of instruction (Carmody, 2004). Carmody (*Ibid*) further observes that despite expanding the primary section at independence when 70% of the population was illiterate, the literacy levels are still low going by the 2001 survey where it was established that most pupils were functionally illiterate by the end of grade five. The Southern Africa Consortium Measuring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) also conducted a reading assessment nationwide among grade six pupils and the findings were that three quarters of grade six pupils were virtually illiterate (Kelly, 1999).

These findings show that reducing the levels of illiteracy and fostering the literacy skills for those who have acquired literacy requires that stakeholders really have to put in a lot and complement each other.

Zambia has tried to improve literacy by making progress in improving access to primary education. In 2002, government declared that education would be free from grade one to seven, school uniforms ceased to be compulsory and schools would provide basic requisites for pupils (Carmody, 2004). Nevertheless, Kelly (2008) observes that “the national literacy rates for those aged between 15 and 24 fell from 79% in 1990 to 70 in 2004. For young women the rate dropped from 75 to 66% in the 15-year-period, and for young men from 79 to 75%”. This gives the picture of the younger generation becoming more and more illiterate hence the need to find out what stakeholders like faith based organisations are doing to foster literacy so as to enhance national development.

The importance of reading / literacy

The importance of reading cannot be over emphasized. Chall & Steven (2008) define reading as “an activity characterised by the translation of symbols, or letters into words and sentences that have meaning to the individual”. This activity is a prerequisite for acquisition of other skills and to the development of more rational attitudes. The ultimate goal of reading is to be able to understand written material.

One gets to adapt to any environment as long as they can read. Abadzi (2003:18) also explains that “reading affects the interaction between the visual and the language systems so language use is modified through literacy”. A reading person will hence be able to explain concepts clearly and the more he/she reads, the better he/she gets at explaining issues. Carson (1990:36) also emphasizes the importance of reading when he says “as long as you can read, you can learn just about anything.” This study is vital since it has to be clear whether the books the SDA Church is providing to the public are able to bring out these skills in the readers.

It is also noted that the illiterates do not understand the meaning of complex abstract speech. They may also not understand certain messages directed at them. Meanwhile, reading enables a person make informed decisions because it nourishes the human intellect in probing things deeper and provides guidance to people to instances they have not been exposed to.

It is as well worth noting that reading, especially by adults is purposeful. It is meant for meeting a particular need. This draws us back to the issue of literacy being a social activity and within a given context. Bhola (1989) alludes to this when he says that the social correlates of literacy determine the use of literacy. For example, a farmer will use literacy mainly for reading agricultural leaflets and brochures, someone with a chronic illness will use literacy to read about that illness while a young expectant mother will read about child birth and baby care. The rewards of literacy will also be socially determined. A literate population is a necessity for modern technological growth. This highlights the need to explore how literacy is fostered by different stakeholders, including the church, in different social settings so as to determine if people’s needs are being met.

The reading culture in Zambia

It is a challenge to embark on a programme that requires reading in Zambia because the reading culture is perceived to be poor. Luangala (2004) defines reading culture as “a people’s way of life in which reading is the key survival strategy”. The conception of a reading culture therefore should not be restricted to leisure alone but should reflect the totality of a way of life as implied in the word ‘culture’.

Luangala (*ibid*) suggests that the indices of a reading society can be observed in behavioural patterns of people. For example, in Zambia where the reading culture is poor, most people do not use dairies, road maps, and shopping lists; they do not read manuals, food labels, and menus. In most cases they would rather ask someone than read for themselves. Abadzi (2003) also explains that illiterates tend to rely on their elders’ experience and might be less likely to use data received on the spot for deductive reasoning. They rely more on concrete facts and consensus. This is true of an average Zambian. Meanwhile, the lack of sufficient reading ability impairs a person’s capacity to function in modern society. No wonder some people sign contracts they do not understand; would rather follow a deceased person’s verbal instruction and not a written will or even be late for an appointment while wearing a well functioning watch. This means that a good number of Zambians are still at the stage of object and other regulation and not self-regulation by reading for one self (Luangala, 2004). Reading is hence intended to make people be self-regulated.

MoE (1996) however, tries to justify the Zambian situation by observing that the development of reading skills and formation of reading habits are heavily dependent on the availability of suitable and varied reading materials and this is not the case in Zambia. MoE (*Ibid*) further explains that the virtual impossibility of developing a reading culture in the absence of libraries has retarded the development of both local authorship and publishing industry. This situation echoes the need to find out how the Church is coming in to meet this need, which MoE cannot sustain.

Meanwhile, if the fragile literacy skills are to be preserved, they have to be nurtured and exercised. Reading maintenance has to be encouraged by providing reading materials so that learning to read develops into reading to learn (Ouane in Wagner, 1993). Chall & Stahl (2008) are in consonance with Ouane (in Wagner 1993) when

they state that reading maintenance and development of functional literacy stresses the use of reading to learn new information so as to have better mastery of the environment. Liberation theology also stresses the same fact in that it emphasises that literacy should enable people to read to learn so as to navigate their way through life.

The global role of the church in fostering literacy

A 1975 archives article on religion stresses the validity of every religion and looks at the choice of a religion as a personal preference or lifestyle. James et al (2008) define religion as “a set of beliefs, practices, related to moral behaviour on earth and to life after death”. Majority of the people today follow one type of religion or the other. The Christian religion has many followers and as earlier alluded to, the Church provides and fosters literacy. Most churches run schools, colleges and universities where conventional literacy (reading and writing) is taught along with the Church’s core business of evangelism.

There are many Church activities of service to humanity where literacy is concerned. In America, for example, the Church provides Supplementary Educational Services (SES) especially in low-income communities. The community collaboration allows members to play their role so as to achieve their potential in academic achievement and skills training. A number of faith-based organisations provide tutoring and other academic enrichment services for eligible low-income individuals. The Church also provides early reading programmes as well as after school mentoring programmes, for example the safe and drug free schools programmes (<http://talkingpage.org>.) All these programmes foster different types of literacy along with the conventional literacy. How and what the SDA Church specifically does in this aspect is not clearly known; hence this study.

A global perspective of the SDA Church in fostering literacy

The SDA Church, being the church the study is focusing on, is also known for its involvement in the provision of conventional literacy (reading and writing), like other mission denominations. Along with the afore mentioned activities, the SDA Church has many schools and universities all over the world. The SDA Church run universities include the Andrews University in America, Ukrain institute of Arts and

Sciences in Ukraine, The Friedensau University in Germany, Symyooock University in Korea, Dominican Adventist University in the Dominican Republic, Adventist University of Central Africa in Luanda, Solusi University in Zimbabwe and Zambia Adventist University in Zambia, among others (education.gc.adventist.org/colleges). These universities empower people with technical and professional skills in various fields of study which include Business, Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Science and Technology, Theology and Religious Studies.

Literature evangelism is for proselytisation and equipping people with a diversity of skills (multi-literacies) within their environment. The concept 'literature evangelism' implies evangelising using literature and this means people have to read to get the message. This is the literacy this study is focusing on. The question is what does the literature provided by the SDA Church do to those who read it? Does it foster literacy in various fields or is it just for evangelism?

Although the Adventist Church began in North America, Adventists in Europe were the first to develop a literature evangelism programme. The first literature evangelist was George King, a man with no special gift of preaching but called to sell and distribute tracts door to door. In 1881, he persuaded the church leaders at the General Conference (GC) which is the governing body of the world SDA Church, to combine books 'Thoughts on Daniel' and 'Thoughts on Revelation' and guaranteed the sale of one thousand copies. On April 3 1882, the first copy of the book of Daniel and Revelation came to the press. Thus the Adventist colporteur ministry was born and has since circled the globe (Gerald, 1998). There is also the notable contribution of Michal Belina Czecho Viski, a former Polish priest who joined the Adventist Church in America and returned to Europe as a missionary and called himself a 'book Colporteur'. He was the first to venture into the European soil with the Advent message (Heinz, 2010). In the mid- late nineteenth century he was producing and selling a missionary paper as well as books calling on people in their homes in Northern Italy, France, Switzerland and the Alsace. Later the Germany missionary Ludwig R Conradi took up this kind of activity especially in Germany speaking areas.

Literature evangelism has been an integral part of proselytisation in the SDA Church. For example, since 1948, literature evangelists have sold approximately 1.5 million

books in Austria alone. About 10 % of all Adventists in Austria were introduced to the church through literature evangelists (news.adventist.org/2007/08/Austria-adventist-literature-evangelists-celebrate-cetenary.html). The SDA church today owns and operates 63 publishing houses around the world that print literature in 377 languages (<http://www.adventist.org/worldchurch/factsandfigures/index.html>). One may wonder what this has to do with fostering literacy. The point is that the literature provided is not only religious or doctrinal but it is so diverse that it caters for different aspects of life ranging from spiritual to physical health issues. This study tried to establish how this Church fosters literacy in its activities including the provision of literature to the public.

At a global level, the SDA Church through its Women Ministries Department (WMD) has identified challenges which women face. These include; literacy, poverty, abuse, workload, lack of training, mentoring and leadership opportunities. On the issue of literacy, the WMD observes that one of the greatest needs of women around the world was the need to learn how to read and write. The WMD reiterates UNESCO's (2001) statistics that out of the approximate one billion illiterate adults, two thirds of the world's illiterates are women (WMD of the General Conference, 2007). MoE (1996) probably gives an explanation to this situation using the *Zambian scenario* where it is stated that for every 100 girls who begin grade one, only 70 complete the full primary course, 23 proceed into Junior secondary school, 9 into senior secondary, and 7 sit the school certificate examination in grade 12.

WMD explains that the inability of a woman to read and write cripples the family's spiritual growth and training of her children. When a woman learns to read, all her family has a better chance of becoming literate and this enhances their quality of life. It is for this reason that the WMD globally recommends basic literacy training, computer literacy classes, second language training, leadership training and mentoring programmes especially for women. This is why there is need to explore the literacy fostering activities the SDA Church offers to see if such needs are taken care of.

The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2002) reports that around the world, one in every three women suffers some form of abuse. Women Ministries and Adventist Relief Agency (ADRA) have launched a worldwide campaign just to bring awareness

and advocate for the end of violence against women and girls around the world. Material has been printed for people to read on what constitutes abuse and how to deal with the situation. The idea is not just to talk about it, but to mean it and hold workshops and talk about it. The purpose is to end it now (www.enditnow.org). Small & Sandefor (2010) explain that the aim of this campaign was to mobilise Adventists around the world and invite other community groups to join to resolve this worldwide issue. Prominent SDA Church leaders have signed the end it now petition. The GC Women Ministries Hand book (2001:V111 54) on the statement on women issues also states that:

every human being has the right to literacy, to education, to adequate health care, ...women are entitled to the God given privileges and opportunities intended for decision making and to freedom from mental, physical, or sexual abuse...ultimately we believe that the Church will fulfil its mission only when women are empowered to achieve their full potential.

This gave the WMD the idea of urging the Church worldwide to be conducting abuse education seminars, women shelters, support groups and healing seminars; provide reading materials and encourage reading and entrepreneurship because most of the abused women are those who are illiterate, or/ and have no income of their own.

Current role of the Church in fostering literacy in Mongu

The Ministry of Education along with the Church and other stakeholders try to foster literacy in many ways. As earlier mentioned, Zambia is demographically a Christian nation with 87% claiming to practice one form of Christianity or the other (<http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Zambia.aspx>). Most of these religious institutions provide supplemental literacy through direct involvement with the people. This is done in various ways including establishing schools, providing sponsorship in existing government schools and other literacy related programmes.

Practical examples of how the Church fosters literacy in Mongu can be observed in a number of Christian denominations like the Catholic Church, the New Apostolic Church, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the SDA Church, just to sample a few.

The Catholic Church runs a lot of literacy programmes through literacy classes and other skills projects in a number of parishes and communities. The Church also sponsors a lot of orphans and vulnerable children in a number of both basic and high

schools in Mongu. Caritus-Mongu also conducts a variety of community-based literacy fostering programs.

The Jehovah's Witnesses also distribute literature to the public, the most common ones being the *Awake* and *Watchtower* journals. According to the organisation, the journals enlighten people on how to cope with life in the modern world. The Witnesses also have a programme where they teach their illiterate members how to read and write. The Church runs this programme independent of MoE and they have their own resources and syllabus (watchtoweryearbook2012www.jw.org).

The New Apostolic Church is one of the churches, which help foster literacy in Mongu. The Church fosters literacy by sourcing international aid to assist the community especially the underprivileged to improve their education. This is done through the Henwood Foundation, which offers scholarships to learners in both secondary schools and tertiary institutions.

The SDA Church has from the early missionary times run educational institutions and this has continued to date. Apart from conventional schools, the Church has within its organisation groups which have different literacy related activities. There is the Adventist Youths (AY) which has classes starting from small children to senior youths. These classes are taught a lot of things arranged according to their age and needs. The adults have Women Ministries Department and Dorcas Society for women and Adventist Men Organisation (AMO) for men whose objective is to enable Church members to be self-sufficient and self-sustaining apart from just learning the scriptures.

One of the activities of the SDA Church is that of providing literature to the public. Wagner (1989) mentions that the SDA Church does print and distribute literature that contains spiritual and health guidelines. This work was intended to find out the exact literacy readers get from this literature along with other activities the SDA Church is involved in which foster literacy.

Related studies

Most Christian denominations spread their Christian faith by making converts read the bible themselves and this meant teaching them how to read. A lot of people in the world today have acquired literacy through missionary effort to teach reading and writing. The teaching is from the drive to bring the world of the Christian God to those who had not selected it on their own (Venezky in Wagner, 1993). It is noted that the more mission stations there were in a given area, the more schools were built. Snelson (1974:96) makes this observation about the Southern Province of Zambia when he says “the Tonga must be the most proselytised people in Central Africa. If this has led to their spiritual confusion, it has worked to their educational advantage since each denomination has striven to extend its work through schools”.

Missionaries understood the fact that initial literacy is best taught in a familiar language. The desire to provide bibles to people in their own languages led to translation of the bible and other religious literature into indigenous languages. Writing systems have hence been devised and hundreds of languages committed to print (Venezky in Wagner, 1993).

Modern linguists have also profited from these translations in grammar, phonetics, philosophy and linguistics as missionaries tried to relate the indigenous concepts of God and other beliefs to the Christian perspective to make people understand.

There has also been the provision of reading materials to people by different faith based organisations. For example a sister organisation to the Wycliff Bible translation has provided literacy training and materials in 1320 languages in 50 countries since its inception in the 1930s (Wagner,1993); there is also the Adventist Publishing Department which distributes literature worldwide (www.adventist.org) and the Jehovah’s Witness also distributes the *Watch Tower* and *Awake* tracts.

Venezky in Wagner (1993) suggests that the issue to be examined is whether the literacy obtained through missionary effort has allowed people to use print independently and autonomously to negotiate their own way of life or whether it has deprived them one way of life while driving them into another that they might not have otherwise chosen. The point, however, is that the Church has taught literacy to

thousands of people in the world who might have otherwise remained illiterate. The literature provided by the Church has also helped in exposing the people since they have a chance to read widely. Venezky (*ibid*) also observes that for many Africans' exposure to Christianity was entry to western education and modern technology. Carmody (2004:26) also alludes to this when he states that "it was through the school that children would become modern and acquire, among other things, new perceptions of time, success and reward as well as a strong sense of themselves as individuals."

It has however, been noted in most of the literature reviewed in this study (Snelson,1974, Mungubhai,1987,Venesky in Wagner, 1989) that for the missionaries, literacy was a weapon for achieving conversion and not an end in itself. Snelson (1974:11) states that "the purpose of the school was not to educate but to get natives really saved on the rock, Jesus Christ". Therefore, in most cases little effort was made to apply literacy to a full range of life needs. Rarely was indigenous literature printed or used to advance technical skills. Mungubhai (1987:127) observes that the missionary efforts in Figi in the nineteenth century "fostered and made socially acceptable only a narrow range of uses of literacy, primarily in Figian language". This is also true of Cree language, which James Evans developed around 1840 around Manitoba in Canada (Wagner, 1993). A similar situation was also observed in Somalia where the Arabic script was first introduced in the 13th century to aid Koranic teaching and in South Africa where the first version of Afrikaans produced by Muslim Malays showed that literacy traditions were narrow and largely driven by religious castes and orders. Literacy was undertaken to reinforce proselytisation and religious pursuits (Prah in Brock-Utne &Garbo, 2009). Such occurrences may explain why most African languages are not developed enough to include technical terminologies.

In Zambia, the studies concerning literacy and the Church in Zambia include those done by Carmody. One was a case study in Chikuni, Monze, Southern province of Zambia where he sought to find out the social impact of the mission school on people's conversion to Catholicism. Literacy was identified as a resource that underpinned European domination. It was clear that there were mixed feelings that surrounded the literacy provided by church schools with their conversion motive as opposed to the more preferred holistic nature of literacy that should liberate the individual from forms of colonialism, poverty, indoctrination.

The other study was also done by Carmody where he analysed conversion and the school at Chikuni from about 1905 to 1939. The findings were that the Tonga people converted to Catholicism because they perceived that wage employment was closely linked to schooling. Therefore, the primary motivation of African conversion at Chikuni was centred on the benefits of modernisation, which the mission offered (Carmody, 1999). The implication is that people used the literacy they acquired from the mission schools as a gateway to wage employment, which was a desire at that time because of the hut tax. Both studies done by Carmody focused on the school as a means to conversion though it was established that Africans primarily attended school not because they wished to be converted, or wanted to convert but to get the literacy they needed for wage employment. Similar situations were experienced by other mission stations during that period in time, for example, at the SDA mission at Rusangu, natives wanted to learn English so as to have access to wage employment (Snelson, 1974).

There were conflicting perceptions on the purpose of literacy provided by the Church between the missionaries and the natives. That is why Mwanakatwe (1968), observes that with very few exceptions, little was done by early missionaries to stress the importance of education for its own sake. Missionaries wanted converts to read scriptures for spiritual enrichment and preparation for eternal life while learners sought specialised knowledge that would enable them come to terms with the western way of life and the demands of the colonial government. Nevertheless, a lot of people became literate through the mission schools. This is evident in the fact that by 1924, 50 000 children were in school and only 600 of the 50 000 were in non-mission schools (Mwanakatwe 1974).

In more recent times within the Zambian context, there was a study by Mwimanenwa (2011) (for her Master of Education Degree in Literacy and Learning) where she looked at the Catholic Church and promotion of literacy in postcolonial Zambia. She explored, using interviews, focus group discussions and observation the activities of the Church in promoting literacy to the people in Kalabo District of Western Province. Her conclusions were that the Catholic Church was an active partner in literacy promotion in their different programmes. She also found out that there were

different literacies that the Catholic Church was engaged in which people did not even realise were literacies, for example, maize growing and the tie and dye making.

Summary of the reviewed literature

There is no universal standard of literacy. Unless there are specifics given, all literacy rates are based on the definition of 'the ability to read and write'. The literature reviewed however showed that the definition had become dynamic and situational over the years. The literacy levels in the world indicated that approximately one billion people did not have basic literacy; more were functionally illiterate and two third of these were women. On the Zambian scenario, about 1.3 million people were illiterate and like most places in the world, women were the majority in that category.

Despite this prevailing scenario, literature has shown that reading is an important activity, which bolsters rationality and is a prerequisite to the acquisition of other skills. Reading makes one meet felt needs and makes one move from being object and other regulated to being self regulated (Luangala, 2004). Unfortunately, research has also shown that the reading culture in Zambia is poor. This gives the need to find out what other institutions like the Church are doing to foster literacy.

Most of the reviewed literature especially about early missionaries' contribution to literacy brought out the fact that missionaries had contributed to the translations and writing of many indigenous languages. Therefore, through the desire of missionaries to teach people to read the bible so as to convert to their religion, thousands of people have become literate (Venezky in Wagner 1989).

Certain studies (Mungubhai, 1987; Mwanakatwe, 1974; Snelson, 1974; Carmody 1999) also show that the literacy taught by missionaries was rarely applied to full range of needs because it was mainly designed for proselytising. Carmody (1999:17) points out that the Church "saw the school not only as a means of spreading the gospel but of establishing itself structurally". Even the languages which were translated had narrow uses of literacy because the technical aspects required to make the languages be used for technical development were lacking. Nevertheless, the Church still contributed a great deal to the literacy of thousands of people.

The Church worldwide still fosters literacy by providing education in church run schools at all levels of education. The Church also distributes literature. There are also a lot of church based organisations which help out with learners with special educational needs throughout the world (www.talkingpage.org).

This particular study looked at how the protestant churches contribute to literacy. A few highlights have been shown on the activities by different Churches which foster literacy in Mongu. The SDA Church in Mongu district was selected for the study for the simple reason that it was one of the churches which are widely spread and was involved in the provision of literature to the public. The idea was to find out how that literature, along with other activities, fostered literacy. The study hoped to contribute to the body of knowledge on the literacy provided by the Church.

All stakeholders, such as the church, who are concerned about humanity, should promote literacy. This is because literacy has been known to further equity and social development. No wonder Myrdal as cited in Wagner (1993:132) explains that “literacy opens up avenues of communication that otherwise remain closed. It is a prerequisite to the acquisition of other skills and the development of more rational attitudes”. It is hence important to establish exactly how the Church is fostering literacy especially that the United Nations has proclaimed the decade January 2003 to December 2012 as the decade of literacy (<http://www.jctr.org.zm/bulletins/bul78Adultliteracy.html>).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter discusses the general methodology used in the study. Orodho, (2003) defines methodology as the scheme, outline or plan that is used to generate answers to research questions. Methodology is about describing the strategies that will be applied in carrying out the study. It discusses the research design, target population, sample size, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis.

Research design

A research design is the structure of the research. Khotari (2004) explains that research design entails advance planning of the methods to be adopted for the collection of the relevant data and techniques to be used in their analysis, keeping in view the objective of the research and the availability of time and money. This study used the qualitative design. This non-experimental research method is useful when the researcher wants to collect data on phenomenon that cannot be directly observed such as opinions, attitudes or any social issues. Creswell (2009:4) explains that a “qualitative research is a means of exploring and understanding the individual or group ascribe to a social human problem”. This implies that the focus is on an individual or a group and this was also the focus of this study. A case study of the SDA Church was used and findings could not be generalised to other Churches.

Bryman (2008), Bogoan and Biklen (1998) give a number of characteristics of a qualitative research design among which are that it is inductive or contextual, naturalistic, process bound, meaning oriented, and descriptive.

The aspect of being inductive as opposed to being deductive implies that it is not about proving a hypothesis or theory but to see a phenomenon take shape as data is being collected and examined hence making it contextual (Bryman, 2008; Bogoan and Biklen, 1998). The fact that qualitative research is meaning oriented comes in when the researcher looks at the meaning that the participants assign to the social

phenomena. People understand things differently hence the assumption that there are multiple realities.

One of the characteristics of the qualitative research design is that it is naturalistic. This implies that data is collected on the premise or location of the participant (Hammersely and Atkinson, 2009; Bogoan and Biklen, 1998; Bryman, 2008). Hammersely and Atkinson (2009) actually explain that the researcher does not interfere with the everyday life of the participant or their social or natural setting. Information is got from people without disturbing their day-to-day way of life. The significance of the naturalistic approach of the qualitative research is that it recognises the entirety of the human being, that is, the motives, the values, the beliefs, intentions and the discourses because all these are imbedded in the social and cultural aspect of people (Bogoan and Biklen, 1998).

A qualitative research design is also process bound (*ibid*). The implication of this is that the researcher is not only interested in the outcome of the revelation of the results of the research but what goes on before one makes a conclusion. Pettigrew (1997:338 in Bryman 2008) looks at the process as being “a sequence of the individual and collective events, actions and activities unfolding overtime in context”. This design does not therefore distort the participants’ daily routine but gathers the data within that context.

The characteristic of a qualitative research being descriptive is also brought out by Bryman (2008); Bogoan and Biklen, (1998). This implies that the research adopts an exploratory nature of data collection other than dwelling much on figure description. The direct quotations of the participants are used so as to stick as close as possible to the participants’ points of view. The researcher tries to understand the social phenomena from the perspective of the participants.

The above explained attributes of a qualitative research design were put into consideration by the researcher as the role of religious activities in fostering literacy was being explored. Appropriate methods were also used so as to ensure that the research was contextual, meaning oriented, naturalistic, process bound and descriptive.

Target Population

Population can be defined as “a group of individuals, objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement” (Kombo and Tromp, 2009: 76). The population in this study included Church leaders in charge of the literature evangelism and education in the SDA Church; literature evangelists and members of the public in Mongu district. The researcher chose this population because she felt that this group was more likely to give the needed information because they were involved in the literacy fostering activities in one way or another.

Study Sample

Sampling is the process of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group (Orodho and Kombo, 2002). At the management level, the district pastor and the field pastor in charge of literature evangelism were invited to take part in the study. Three urban congregations of the SDA Church and one peri-urban one were sampled. From each congregation, one elder and three (3) literature evangelists were involved. From the public 32 people were invited to participate in the study.

Sampling procedure

Purposeful sampling was used. Best and Kahn (2009) explain that qualitative research uses the naturalistic inquiry which has design strategies of emergent design, flexibility and purposeful sampling, studying the real world situation as they unfold naturally. The power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information rich cases for in depth analysis related to the central issue being studied (Kombo and Tromp, 2009). This was important in this study because the researcher needed to go to a particular population stated above because they were rich in the information needed for the study. The snowballing sampling procedure also came into play so as to get to some members of the public.

Research instruments

The instruments which were used for this study included the semi-structured interview guide. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) explain that interviews are preferred due to their room for probing which yield in-depth responses about perceptions, experiences, opinions, knowledge, observation description of activities and actors. Conversations are rich and detailed including the context and that adds value to the data. Observation checklist and document review checklist were also part of the instruments used. Along with the aforementioned were focus group discussions and a questionnaire.

- **Semi-structured interview guide**

The interviews used in research can take different forms. They can be structured, unstructured or semi- structured. The unstructured and semi- structured are sometimes referred to as qualitative research interviews (Bryman, 2008). This research nevertheless, used semi- structured interviews. Semi- structured interviews refer to “a context in which the interviewer has a series of questions that are in the general form of an interview schedule but is able to vary the sequence of the questions”(ibid:196). This interview is hence partially guided as opposed to the strictness of a structured interview. In this kind of interview, the researcher has a choice to change questions depending on the response of the participants. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and one hour and were conducted in the offices of the respondents.

- **Observation checklist**

The observation checklist was used to gather the information which was notable by just observing what was going on at the places where literacy activities were said to take place. The observation included the infrastructure, materials and even the behaviour of people as they interacted in these environments. No one needed to explain but the researcher was on her own reading the environment and taking note of literacy fostering appearances and activities of the environment.

- **Focus group discussion guide**

The focus group discussion (FDG) is a type of group interview where there are several participants inclusive of the moderator (Bryman, 2008). A topic is tabled

before the group for discussion. In a focus group, the participants deliberate on each other's views on a given issue, "a major reason for conducting focus group research is the fact that it is possible to study the process whereby meaning is collectively constructed within the session" (*ibid*:476). To qualify or modify each other's views adds to the advantage of focus groups. The whole aim is to identify trends in the perception of the people.

The focus group was vital in this study because it gave a collective view of the understanding of literacy and the literacy activities in the SDA Church. Two focus groups of literature evangelists were established comprising six and eight members and the sessions ran for 45 minutes to 1 hour. These discussions were done in the pastor's office with his permission but without his presence.

- **Digital- audio Recording and Transcription**

The FDGs and the interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. There are many advantages of recording a discussion or an interview. The natural mind has an inclination to forget hence the recorded interviews and FDGs could be given a thorough and repeated examination to ensure the researcher gets the actual data got at the time of the interview and the FDG (Heritage, 1984 in Bryman, 2008). The other advantage of recording the work is that one can frequently go back to the work to clarify a point that may not be clear when first stated. Recorded data is also easily available when someone wants to use it for any other purpose away from the original intention. It is as well easy to have a backup for work which has been recorded.

The use of the recorder somewhat boosted the respondents because they realised that the research was a serious piece of work. Upon inquiry on why the discussion was being recorded, the researcher explained that it was for the sake of accuracy of information to be presented and easy reference when need arose.

Recordings may have their own disadvantages especially when transcribing, for instance, failure to distinguish voices when people speak at the same time (Bryman, 2008). This, however, was not really a problem because what was needed were people's views and not who said what. The data was transcribed after the recording.

In spite of the task being time and resource consuming, it gave the researcher the advantage of becoming familiar with the data and identifying key themes.

- **The Questionnaire**

A questionnaire (Appendix A) which mainly had open ended questions but for the biographical data was used as one of the instruments of data collection. The open-ended questions provided the qualitative data. It is said that questionnaires are versatile, allowing the collection of both subjective and objective data through the use of open or close format questions (Ghosh, 2008).

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part one was the biographical data, which was meant for demographical features of the participants' gender, age, religious affiliation, and marital status to determine what was prevalent in the choice of literature. Part two comprised open-ended questions, which explored the respondents' understanding of literacy, what attracted them to literature provided by the SDA Church, the benefit they got from that literature and giving their own point of view about the SDA literature. The researcher decided to use open-ended questions because open-ended questions allow researchers to have a better understanding of the respondents' true feelings (Scheaffer et al, 1996). This part also had one question, which was closed in that respondents were given a list of types of books, and they were to pick out that type(s) they liked. This question was meant to be matched with the data on demographic features during data analysis to see which books were popular with which gender, age group, marital status and members or non-SDA members.

Data collection procedure

Creswel (2009) explains that research methods are the techniques used in data collection and they as well involve data analysis and interpretation. This study used the qualitative method to collect the required data, to analyse and interpret it. The qualitative method demanded that data be collected through interviews, focus group discussions and a questionnaire. Audio recordings were also done as a back up for focus group discussions and the interviews. There was also data collected through observations.

The pastors and the elders in charge of literature evangelism and education were interviewed individually, mostly in their offices and the sessions were recorded digitally. Some of the literature evangelists were also interviewed while others took part in focus group discussions.

Data analysis

Data was analysed as it was collected, as the study was qualitative. The data was derived from research questions and analysed according to emerging themes and patterns. Thematic analysis involves the identification of themes through careful reading and re-reading of the data. In thematic analysis, the emerging themes become the categories for analysis (Rice and Ezzy, 1999). There was hence, categorisation of the major themes and identification of related issues arising.

Reflections on ethical issues

The study ensured that respondents were respected and their rights were not trampled upon during the course of the study. Cohen (2007) cites Cavan who defines ethical issues as “a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others and that while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better”. Permission was hence sought from all concerned stakeholders prior to the commencement of the research. These included the University of Zambia and the Western Province Provincial and District Education Offices. The others were the President of West Zambia Field who is the leader of the SDA church in the province, as well as the Mongu Central Mission District Pastor. The administrative elders for the churches sampled were also written to so as to allow the researcher to gather data from their literature evangelists. Permission was as well sought for the researcher to take some pictures as a back up to some literacy activities. Consent was also sought from participants and their rights explained before they got involved in the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research according to the research questions. The research questions were: i. What is the SDA Church's understanding of literacy? ii. What literacy promotion activities is the SDA Church involved in? iii. How does the SDA Church get or attract people to read their literature? iv. How does literature evangelism foster literacy? v. What benefits (if any) have people experienced due to reading the literature provided by the SDA Church? The responses from different respondents were compiled according to the research questions.

The SDA Church's understanding of literacy

All the respondents were asked to give their understanding of literacy and the common answer was "the ability to read and write". The Church leadership involved in the study further informed the researcher that the SDA Church started through establishing schools and teaching people how to read and write. The first schools in Western Province were at Liumba hill and Yuka in 1928 and this is also documented by Snelson (1974) and Henkel (1989); and a lot other schools were established later on. Most of these schools have, however, been handed over to government while a few are still kept as grant aided.

One of the pastor respondents explained that the SDA Church believed in education and defined education as "the harmonious development of the physical, the social, the mental, and the spiritual. One of the focuses is the mind so we believe in taking our children to school". He further explained that literacy was an essential part of life and not a luxury and that is why the bible in Revelation 1: 3 calls he that reads to be blessed. One of the elders also emphasized 2Timothy 2:15 which calls people to study to show themselves approved and do the best at whatever they do. "To see people who read and write is a blessing", said one elder. One of the pastors explained that the Church also understood literacy to be a door way to evangelism because the evangelistic thrust would be difficult if the Church dealt with people who cannot read

and write. That is why the Church started by first establishing schools, teach people how to read and write as they preached to them.

The fact that the Church had a statement on literacy highlights the fact that literacy was held in high esteem. The value attached to literacy in this Church was still seen when one of the respondents referred the researcher to the WMD Pastor and Elder's handbook (WMD, 2007), where literacy was identified as the first among the six challenges facing women. Asked on why the focus of literacy was on women, one of the pastors explained that women were very influential in shaping the attitude of children towards education. They were in fact the first teachers and if they were literate, then society levels of literacy would definitely rise. This was the reason why the Church was deliberately organising programmes to improve literacy among women.

The literacy promotion activities which the Church was involved in

The second question in this study investigated the literacy promotion activities the Church was involved in. As earlier alluded to, literacy levels in Zambia are quite low. One of the pastors estimated the literacy levels among the SDA Church members in West Zambia Field to be at just above 60% especially in the official language. An elder from one of the churches explained that because a lot of people are not good at English, there is need for an interpreter each time someone made a Church presentation in English. The literacy levels, however, depended on the location of the congregation. Literacy levels were higher in urban congregations and lower in the peri-urban and rural ones. One of the elders stated that the youth in his urban congregation were doing better than elders in terms of literacy because most of them had the secondary school level of education and were comfortable with the use of English but some elderly people were offended when people used English without interpreting. This however, was not the case in the peri-urban congregation which was sampled because it mainly comprised low income members and most of the youths had dropped out of school. Only the regional official language, Silozi was used during worship.

Asked about who was in charge of issues to do with literacy in the Church, one of the elders explained that the SDA Church had an education department which took care

of all education and literacy related activities which were done by the Church. The noted literacy fostering activities the Church was involved in included: the 'revived by his word' bible reading initiative, voice of prophecy lessons, evangelistic campaigns, Vacation Bible School, Church libraries, reading promotions, Adventist Youth programmes, Dorcas society activities, Sabbath School lessons and literature evangelism.

The “Revived by his word” bible reading initiative

Commenting on Church programmes, which foster literacy, one of the elders, explained that the point to begin with was the current world Church programme. The world SDA Church had started a reading programme called 'Revived by his word' bible reading initiative where Seventh-day Adventists worldwide were urged to read one chapter of the Bible every day between April 17, 2012 and the 2nd of July 2015 General Conference Session in San Antonio, Texas. The elder explained that the study of God's Word accomplished at least four major things in relationship to revival. It provided a foundation for true revival; it stimulated, fostered and sustained true revival; it counteracted false revivals; [and] it created an understanding of and commitment to God's mission. He further clarified that the desired goal was that by reading one chapter each day, and two chapters during the General Conference Session in San Antonio Texas, the Bible Study Plan would conclude by the end of the session, noting that 1,189 chapters of the Bible would thus be covered in the 1,717-day period. The SDA Church in Mongu, like everywhere else, had taken this reading programme seriously, leaders constantly reminded their members which book, and chapter was being read on a particular day. One of the pastors explained that this bible reading initiative drew the Church to their early history tag of being referred to as 'the people of the book'.

Voice of prophecy lessons

The distribution of Voice of Prophecy (VOP) lessons was another way the SDA Church fostered literacy. Asked on how this activity fostered literacy, one of the pastors explained that the programme kept people reading by distributing lessons either by hand or through postage. People read the lessons, answered the given questions and then sent them back for marking. Marked scripts were sent back to the students along with the next lesson when results were satisfactory. "There are times

when we have to sit with the student and explain some lessons”, said one elder. Upon completion of the series, certificates were issued and where possible, a graduation ceremony was arranged.

Evangelistic campaigns

These are public meetings (commonly known as crusades) occasionally arranged to proselytise to non-church members to make them join the SDA Church. According to one of the pastors, when literature was distributed prior to an evangelistic campaign in the target area, there tended to be more people joining the Church because they would have already read some bible truths for themselves. The pastor further explained that the literature distributed prior to a crusade was sometimes combined with health messages encouraging people to lead healthy lives.

Vacation Bible School (VBS)

The vacation bible school, as the name suggests is a programme the SDA Church organises for children during school holidays. The elder in charge of this programme explained that the main objective of VBS was to keep children busy and reading during holidays. The target age range was 6-12 year olds. It was further explained that attendance was open to both SDA Church members and non-members. It usually runs for ten days of each school holiday. The activities include devotion, classes (arranged according to age) where biblical and secular, as well as nature lessons are taught. Asked what they liked about VBS, one of the participants said he loved reading and listening to bible stories.



Fig.1



Fig.2



Fig.3

Some of the Vacation Bible School classes (figs1, 2, and 3).

Church Libraries

Each of the sampled churches owned a Church library where members could borrow books. An elder explained that a librarian was elected each year among the Church members to take care of the library. The objective of the Church libraries, according to one of the librarians, was, “to keep members reading so as to be a well informed congregation”. Checking on the books stocked by these libraries, the researcher noted that the collections included spiritual books, bibles and hymn books, autobiographies, health books, psychology books, books on motivation, marriage and interpersonal relationships, children’s books and picture rolls, magazines (usually church publications) and other general literature. Asked about how they made people know what books were available, the librarians in some of the congregations explained that they occasionally printed out a list of available literature for people to borrow.

It was however observed that none of the sampled congregations had a reading room. All of them used some space in the vestries as library storage rooms. Some only had bookshelves where some of the Church library books were displayed while others kept the books in carton boxes but the church librarians had records and were lending

books out to members. An inquiry on membership to the library revealed that there was no library membership fee. All Church members could borrow, “this is Church property and everyone is a member”, said one of the librarians. None of the librarians had a programme on specific library hours. It was explained that Lending was done on demand whenever it was appropriate.

Reading Promotions

One of the elders explained that the education department of the SDA Church quarterly organised reading promotion weeks, which were concluded by a display of, books available at the Adventist Book Centre (ABC). The main objective of this programme, according to another elder was to encourage people to read widely so as to understand their church doctrine and many other societal issues. On the reading promotion Sabbath afternoons, workers from the ABC, or a member of the education department and the church librarian gave brief summaries of the contents of, and the benefits of reading each of the displayed books.



Fig. 4. Display of literature during a reading promotion programme.



Fig 5.A worker from ABC giving highlights on available literature.

The use of projectors during worship

One of the more recent ways of fostering literacy in the SDA Church was the use of a projector during worship. The administrative elder of the congregation where they used this technology explained that the use of a projector was meant to keep people reading during worship. He explained that using the projector was meant to make people be self-regulated by reading for themselves as opposed to just depending on what others have said. The congregational hymns were beamed on power point as well as bible verses as the sermon was being preached. The elder also said that beaming the sermon also enabled even those who might not have carried bibles to be able to read and follow the sermon well. Upon being asked what she thought about the use of the projector during worship, one of the congregants said, “the pictures and verses which roll keep us reading so we cannot even dose”. Some congregations also print out the announcement brochures for people to read on their own and this saves time as one elder explained.

Adventist Youth (AY) Programmes

The AY programme as a literacy fostering activity was highlighted by one of the elders and he, as well, explained how the programme was arranged. He said that the Youth Ministries which runs programmes for the young people in the SDA Church catered for young children up to the youth. Lessons were divided according to classes and age starting from adventurers, pathfinders and senior youths. Asked on the nature of lessons, the elder explained that the lessons included assertiveness, life skills, first aid, leadership, Church doctrine, survival skills, entrepreneurship, to mention but a few. One of the youths explained that they (the AY) occasionally did Church presentations and sometimes held fairs to display what they learnt. They also went camping (usually in the bush) during school holidays to go and learn some skills.

The elder explained that the objective of the AY movement was to bring up responsible future leaders who could survive all situations. He further explained that the Church had a fully prepared curriculum for the youth ministry with readily available training manuals for each class starting from the Busy Bee (first class) to Master Guide (final class). According to the elder, the young were being prepared for life through such programmes.

Dorcas society activities

The leader of the Dorcas society at one of the sampled congregations explained that Dorcas had open membership for all females from sixteen years onwards. The young female adults were often encouraged to join the Dorcas society. The leader explained that “though Dorcas is popularly known for community service, it also had programmes where skills are taught”. She clarified that there were no appointed teachers but whoever knew how to do something could teach other members on appointed days.

The literacy activities learnt as explained by the leader were basically practical skills like baking, knitting, crocheting and different kinds of crafts including home management. “We want women to be financially independent by making money using their hands”, said one of the leaders. This society encouraged women to be self-reliant by starting their own businesses after empowering them with these skills. Women who could not read were taught basic literacy by Dorcas in conjunction with Women

Ministries. The researcher observed that Women Ministries was more of teaching while Dorcas did the handy work.

Sabbath School lessons

An elder explained that one of the times when in depth study of the scriptures was done was during what were called Sabbath School classes. In these classes, people were divided in groups of about eight, each with a discussion leader. The Sabbath School Superintendent (term used to refer to the person in charge of the Sabbath School) at one of the sampled congregations explained that these discussion groups were divided according to age (starting from baby class where infants went with their mothers or caretakers) and status in the church, that is, whether one was a baptised member or not. There were lessons designed for each group and an in depth study was done every Saturday for 45minutes to 1 hour before the main service.

The lessons discussed were in a book called the Sabbath School Study Guide. The superintendent further explained that the Sabbath School Study Guides were produced by the World Church and quarterly distributed throughout the world. An analysis of these books showed that study guides had weekly lessons divided in daily lessons. During the lesson on Saturday, members shared their understanding of the lesson of the week. Asked on how that activity fostered literacy, the superintendant explained that “study guides keep people reading throughout the week and the Saturday discussions are for clarifying gray areas”. In the SDA Church slogans, Sabbath school was referred to as “the heart of the Church and the Church at study”.

Literature Evangelism

Literature Evangelism is under the publishing department of the SDA Church. The pastor in charge of publishing explained that the literature evangelists sold books to the public and encouraged them to read. One of the literature evangelists explained that the books sold by literature evangelists were in two categories; Trade books and Subscription books. Trade books were those about Church doctrine and administration while Subscription books were those about health, psychology, marriage, motivation, spiritual children’s books and other books on other general issues.

For easy analysis on preference of books from the members of the public, the researcher put the books in five categories namely spiritual, motivational, health, family life and interpersonal relations and children's books. Table 1 below shows the preferences of books by the members of the public. This table was compiled following a questionnaire, which was given out to 32 respondents, and their biographical data was as follows:

Questionnaire for respondents

Total number- 32

1. Gender

- a. Male- 17
- b. Female- 15

2. Marital status

- a. Single -9 [6male and 3 female
- b. Married- 19 [10 male and 9 female]
- c. Divorced- 0
- d. Widowed -4 [1 male and 3 female]

3. Age group

- a. 19- 30 years- 8 [6 males and 2females]
- b. 31-40 years- 15 [4 males and 11 females]
- c. 41-50 years- 5 [5 males]
- d. 51- 60 years- 3 [1 male and 2 female]
- e. 61 years and above 1 [1 male]

4. Religious affiliation

- a. Non SDA Church members – 17
- b. SDA Church members - 15

Key to understanding table 1 below

The given figures in the columns show the number of respondents who chose the category of the literature indicated above. The horizontal entries give the categories of the respondents in terms of age, religious affiliation, marital status and gender.

Percentages therefore can be calculated from the total number of respondent (32) or the total number in a given category.

Table 1

AN ANALYSIS OF LITERATURE ACCORDING TO PUBLIC PREFERENCE

	CATEGORIES OF BOOKS				
	Spiritual	Motivational	Children's	Familylife & interpersonal relations	Health
AGE	No.of resp.	No.of resp	No.of resp	No. of resp	No. of resp
19-30 yrs	6	4	2	5	5
31-40 yrs	9	9	3	10	12
41-50 yrs	3	2	2	2	3
51- 60 yrs	3	2	2	2	3
60----	0	0	0	1	1
RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION:					
SDA member	14	10	7	10	10
Non SDA	7	6	2	9	14
MARITAL STATUS:					
Single	7	4	2	7	6
Married	12	10	6	10	13
Divorced	0	0	0	0	0
Widowed	2	2	2	3	3
GENDER					
Male	11	6	5	10	8
Female	9	6	3	8	12

The analysis of the book preference revealed that the health books were the most popular in all age groups. This was evident in that all those who were 41years and older preferred the health books. Meanwhile 12 out of 15 respondents between 31 and

40 also chose health books. 5 out of the 8 respondents between the ages of 19 and 30 chose health books.

It was noted that health books were also popular among non SDA Church members in that 14 out of the 17 respondents in this category settled for health books. In terms of gender, it was also clear that the female bought more of health books because 12 out of 15 chose this category. Meanwhile quite a number of the male respondents preferred spiritual books (11 out of 17) and those on interpersonal relationships (10 out of 17).

Preferences in terms of marital status revealed that the married had high scores in health (13 out of 19) and spiritual books (12 out of 19). Books on motivation and family life and interpersonal relations were also quite popular in this group because about half of the people in this category (10 out of 19) chose them.

The least popular category of books was children's books. Only about half of the Church members (7 out of 15) bought these books. The rest of the statistics were very low in this category. For instance, only 3 out of 15 people in the age range between 31 and 40; 5 out of 17 males and 3 out of 12 females; and only 2 out of 17 non-Church members bought children's books.

How the Church attracted people to its literature

The third question of the study was finding out how the Church attracted people to its literature. This was firstly looked at in terms of what the literature evangelists did to entice people to buy their literature. Secondly, people's views about what attracted them to buy literature from the SDA Literature Evangelists were explored.

What Literature Evangelists (LEs) did

The common response from the literature evangelist was that; before selling any book, LEs explained what was to be learnt in that particular book and the benefits thereof. The implication was that the LE had to read or at least scan through all the books they were selling so as to be able to explain to their clients the benefits of

purchasing those books. According to what was highlighted in the Focus Group Discussions, the Literature Evangelists also did occasionally get back to their clients after some time to find out what they thought about the book they had purchased. Discussions might also take place if the client felt so. The LEs also emphasised the fact that some clients often contacted them to tell them of how the book had assisted them. This was common when a client had a spiritual, health or marital problem or any problem to do with interpersonal relationships.

The itinerant work of the literature evangelists had also contributed to fostering literacy by initiating literacy programmes and schools. There was a case of a literature evangelist who was a respondent in this study who led to the opening of a school at a place called Nangalata within Mongu district. According to her, she decided to go and sell books at this village called Nangalata but realised that people could not read. She then just conducted an evangelistic campaign but when she realised people had the desire to read, she went back to the West Zambia Field office (term used to refer to the SDA provincial office) to ask for permission and material support to start a literacy centre. The support was given and her learners could read the local language within three weeks. According to the pastor, the Nangalata School was inspected by MoE and was, at the time of the research, not just a literacy centre but a community school under the Church with classes up to grade four. Plans were underway to make it a grant-aided school.

What attracted people to buy literature from the SDA Church?

Apart from the explanations given by the literature evangelists, respondents had a lot to say upon being asked what made them buy books from the SDA Literature evangelists. All the answers but one went back to the emerging themes according to the categories of books. It should be reiterated that these responses were from sampled members of the public regardless of their religious affiliation but were regular purchasers of the literature sold by the SDA Literature Evangelists.

The claim that the spiritual and moral nature of the books was very attractive was a common response. “The spiritual books give a practical application to the word of God with their Christian centred lessons”, explained one respondent. It was also a common claim that the spiritual books had drawn respondents closer to God.

The health theme also came out as a strong attraction to the literature. Some respondents claimed that they learnt about the SDA health books from family and friends after having certain health conditions. Others claimed that simple changes to lifestyles according to what books recommended improved their health. Still pertaining to health, some respondents stated that they were attracted to the books due the availability of information on natural herbs and nutrition. One of the respondents explained that the SDA literature had given him a solution to the problem of aging and other health related problems. Another respondent explained that “being a nutrition teacher, i really like the way they give explanations on health principles in terms of food liked in the diet”. Health books were actually one of the most popular especially among non-Church members as the responses indicated.

The unique theme emerging was that of the quality of the books in terms of research and presentations of issues. Most respondents felt the books were professionally presented with scientific evidence. Others also liked the pictorial presentations as points were illustrated. This made them attractive to a lot of people because of the elaborate illustrations.

How literature evangelism fosters literacy

Question four was an investigation into how literature evangelism in particular fostered literacy. The researcher established that literature evangelism, which is under the Publishing Department of the SDA Church fostered literacy by encouraging reading whenever possible. The pastor in charge of publishing explained that literature evangelism fostered literacy by facilitating the ownership of the following libraries:

Home libraries

The pastor explained that the SDA Church encouraged people to have family libraries at home. This was to make children appreciate reading at an early age. It was noted that the reading culture was poor in Zambia because many families did not have well stocked libraries hence children were not exposed to books at an early age. He further explained that lacking a home library made reading become alien to the children. “Children appreciate reading when introduced at family level because a family should

be a reading unit”, he elaborated. A Literature evangelist explained that when LEs took books to people’s doorsteps, children sometimes asked their parents to buy certain books for them. The pastor proudly stated that many homes had literature supplied by SDA and in this way, the Church was fostering literacy through literature evangelism.

Institutional libraries

The SDA Church did not only sell books to individuals but to institutions as well. The pastor explained that the Church had sold books to government departments like MoE and Ministry of Health (MoH). MoE purchased books like motivational books for schools while MoH purchased health books for the Nursing School in Mongu. The pastor further explained that the books in institutional libraries became resource books for workers and learners hence people were kept busy reading.

Office libraries

The pastor in charge of publishing explained that within an institution, people could make office libraries where they could develop a habit of reading whenever they were not so busy at their work place instead of just spending time in idle talk. Literature evangelists also explained that they went to offices to supply different types of books so as to avail people, who may be too busy to go to a book shop, the opportunity to buy the books. The pastor also highlighted the fact that keeping an office library enabled one to have easy access to research on issues, which might need urgent attention like conflict management and other interpersonal relationships.

Church libraries

The idea of keeping a Church library so as to have an informed membership was reiterated by the pastor. The Publishing department supplies books to churches so that church libraries were vibrant. The pastor further explained that the activity was not only limited to the SDA Church but other churches also did purchase some books to use to teach their members since some churches did not have deliberate publishing programmes. He further stated that there was no limitation on who should buy as long as the books helped humanity.

The pastor summed up the importance of literature evangelism in fostering literacy by clarifying that it was through the establishment of personal or family libraries, institutional libraries, office libraries and church libraries that literature evangelism fostered literacy. The idea was to have a reading people who would be free from exploitation and gullibility.

Benefits people have experienced due to reading literature provided by the SDA Church

The final question explored what people felt were the benefits got from reading the literature provided by the SDA Church. There were varied responses to this question. The responses formed a pattern corresponding to the categories of the literature.

A good number claimed that the literature had helped them in their spiritual growth. “I have learned to understand God in a deeper way,” said one of the respondents. Some respondents also said that reading the SDA literature had given them a new approach to life issues.

In relation to the motivational theme, some respondents felt that the literature provided by SDA Church had motivated them to work hard in everything they did. According to some respondents, the literature was well researched and some biographies and autobiographies had really encouraged them to believe they were destined for great things and could achieve anything with hard work. “Reading motivational books has really made me feel that I am cut out for greatness,” claimed one respondent. Some of the prominent literatures in this category were books entitled ‘Gifted Hands’ and ‘Think Big’ by Benjamin Carson.

There was also the theme of health coming out prominently as a benefit people experienced due to reading the literature from SDA. ‘I love the Health Encyclopaedias and the Healing power of plants and food’, explained one respondent. Many respondents felt that the literature had made them develop good health habits. This ranged from health life styles of exercise to avoiding taking toxic substances like tobacco, drugs and alcohol, to regulation in diet. There were also claims of experiencing better health as a result of following guidelines on diet. One respondent

explained that vegetables were usually neglected and viewed to be meant for those who could not afford 'good food' but the literature provided by SDA had proved that vegetables were healthier than meat. There were also benefits expressed on knowledge of what caused some diseases as well as how to avoid, or treat them using locally available remedies. One of the respondents also claimed that the health books had improved her knowledge of Biology and food science.

The aspect of improvement on interpersonal relations was also one benefit that came out quite prominently. One of the respondents explained that the books on marriage and family life, on human resource management and others on interpersonal relations improved people's way of life because an enlightened person communicates easily and effectively. Some respondents claimed their marriages had improved due to reading the books while others claimed to be better communicators and managers than before. One of the respondents actually explained that lack of effective communication brought about problems at home and in work places and the books the SDA Church provided helped to improve communication.

Child care and nurturing was also another theme emerging as a benefit availed by the literature provided by the SDA Church. It was claimed the respondents were assisted in character building for their children. There was also emphasis on the guidelines the literature gave for bringing up children.

Apart from what the researcher gathered from respondents, there was information got from just observing what was going on. The researcher found out that literacy levels were lower in the sampled peri urban congregation compared to the urban ones. This peri urban congregation was in a linguistic minority community where most members were from the Mbunda and Luvale ethnic groups. As earlier alluded to, English was not used during worship in this congregation. Only Silozi was being used. Meanwhile about 40% of the congregants could not even read the regional official language, which is Silozi.

The Church environment exhibited some form of literacy going on. All the sampled congregations had notice boards where information was pinned. However, very few people took time to read what was on the board. The Church walls also had some

things displayed. The Church walls nevertheless became 'talking walls' when there was a special presentation by any of the Church groups like AY, Dorcas or Women ministries.

Summary

The findings presented on the role of the religious activities in fostering literacy have shown that the SDA Church in Mongu had many programmes that foster literacy. The Church emphasised the importance of a reading membership and viewed literacy as 'a door way to evangelism'. The Church had a literature evangelism programme which encouraged establishing libraries from family to societal level and the researcher found this to be the main way by which this Church had contact with non members. The public also expressed how they had benefitted from the literature evangelism.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings according to the objectives of the study. The purpose of this study was to find out the role of religious activities in fostering literacy. Its specific objectives were: (i) to establish the SDA Church's understanding of literacy; (ii) to identify the SDA Church's literacy promotion activities; (iii) to establish how the SDA Church managed to get people read or attract people to read their literature; (iv) to establish how literature evangelism fostered literacy; (v) to explore the benefits (if any) that people had experienced due to reading the literature provided by the SDA Church.

The Church's understanding of literacy

Based on the findings, it is clear that the respondents generally understood literacy to be reading and writing. There was an emphasis on the importance of literacy by the SDA Church hence the stress on education as the Church's entry point. The idea was to teach people to read so that they could, on their own, discover a lot more than what they were taught.

The importance the SDA Church places on literacy was seen in the Church statement on literacy which says that "...the ability to read impacts every aspect of a person's life- earning power, career opportunity, access to health care information and even ability to raise a child properly. Without the skill of reading, few doors of opportunity can ever be opened" (General Conference, 2001). This places a lot of emphasis on the ability to read so as for one to navigate one's way through life, to harness whatever resources one comes across. Most opportunities can only be used by the literate hence the emphasis that reading enables the opening of doors of opportunity. This idea is in line with what Owen and Mable (in Wagner, 1989:171) mean when they say that "literacy is functional only when it facilitates learning and increase knowledge of healthy, nutrition, biology and other subjects that change how individuals understand the natural world"

The importance of literacy in the SDA Church was still evident from the fact that literacy was identified as the first among the six challenges facing women in the WMD Pastor and Elder's handbook (WMD, 2007). The Church, through its literacy fostering programmes, aimed to reduce the number of the current approximately one billion illiterate adults of which two thirds are women. This was seen through the literacy programmes designed for women. The programmes for women were quite commendable because they actually empowered them with skills useful within their environment, which might even be used to earn a living.

The findings also indicated that the SDA Church looked at literacy as a need and not a luxury; it was an essential part of life. This is because things are not the same when one acquires literacy because they are able to get the best out of their environment. That is why UNESCO (2007:191) states that "... literacy must aim above all to arouse in the individual a critical awareness of social reality, and to enable him/her to understand, master and transform his/her destiny". Liberation theology advocates the same kind of literacy; that which makes people aware of social realities and realise that they have what it takes to do something about their situation. The acquisition and fostering of literacy enables one to explore possibilities around them.

The SDA Church, whose core business is proselytising, also viewed literacy as 'a doorway to evangelism', according to one pastor respondent. He further stated that the evangelistic thrust would be weak when people cannot read and write. Fostering literacy for the sake of conversion could be a limitation but ideally, a person who is able to read should principally do so to find his/her way out of different situations. Liberation theology has this element of making literacy a liberator because it enables people to sort out issues on their own.

Illiteracy on the other hand would keep people at the point of being object and other regulated (Luangala, 2004) since they cannot explore scriptures and other writings on their own so as to make independent decisions. However, even when there was so much emphasis on the importance of reading by the Church such as the daily reading of the Sabbath School study guide, one wonders whether the reading culture is encouraged beyond Church publications as just a way of life as implied in the word culture.

The Church's literacy promotion activities

The revived by his word reading initiative

As stated in the findings, the SDA Church was running a programme called '*Revived by his Word reading initiative*' so as to encourage people to read one chapter of the bible every day. The purpose of this initiative was to encourage Church members worldwide to read the Bible every day. The reading plan began with world SDA Church President, Ted Wilson joining the division presidents in reading Genesis 1 on 17th April 2012, the first day of Spring Council; and the initiative will be concluded by reading Revelation 22 during the 2015 General Conference Session in San Antonio, Texas (<http://www.adventistreview-org/article4790archives/issue-2011-gc-update-2-revived-by-his-word-bible-reading-initiative>). There are 1,171 days from Spring Meeting 2012 through the beginning of the General Conference Session on July 2, 2015. Participants will cover the 1,189 chapters in the Bible. By reading one chapter each day and two chapters during the General Conference Session, millions of participating members will complete their journey through the Bible. (*Ibid*) An online component, featured on the Revival and Reformation website and sponsored by the SDA World Church's Ministerial Association, allows participants to share devotional thoughts.

Throughout its history, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has found the reason for its existence in the bible. Adventists contend to be Bible-based, Bible-believing, Bible-reading people. Although millions of Church members worldwide have a meaningful devotional life, recent research indicates that many do not (<http://www.adventistreview-org/article4790archives/issue-2011-gc-update-2-revived-by-his-word-bible-reading-initiative>). According to the SDA Church, Revived by His Word reading initiative was designed especially to strengthen the spiritual experience of each Church member, it should strengthen those who know Christ deeply, and motivate those who are struggling to know him better (<http://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2012/03/revived-by-his-word-a-journey-of-discovery-together-through-the-bible>”).

This is an ambitious programme which really fosters reading since people are reading a chapter of the bible every day! The question however is, are the members reading? Some SDA Church members who the researcher asked were reading while a good

number were not consistent. The reading members were expected to benefit quite a lot because the bible as a literary work has many things one could learn from. The online comments on chapters of the day, though exclusive to those with internet connection was a good initiative because it would enable people to explore different insights on the same chapter. This was educative because of the diversity, which may come out. It was felt that this reading programme would build members in all spheres of life as White (©1977:62) counsels that:

There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of the Scriptures. No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible. If God's word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose rarely seen in these times.

The Church felt that “Revived by His Word” would become much larger than reading or listening to one chapter of the Bible each day. It would direct the attention of the entire world Church to the importance of knowing Jesus through His Word and encourage families to read the Bible together. In cultures where the Bible is not readily available, this initiative would encourage elders to gather the Church family to read the Bible aloud. It was a simple, practical and affordable way of keeping people reading everyday ([www.adventist.org-revived by-his word-bible-reading-initiative](http://www.adventist.org-revived-by-his-word-bible-reading-initiative)).

The reading, as White (1977) says, was expected to elevate the thoughts, give vigor to the faculties therefore making individuals more critical and productive members of society. The spiritual aspect of being drawn closer to God was the same as the early missionaries' idea of making natives being saved on the rock, Jesus Christ (Snelson, 1974). Nevertheless, other areas of emphasis were quite different from the literacy provided by the church in the early days of mission work in Zambia because the main idea then was just conversion. That is why early critiques viewed church education as not meeting life's needs (Mwanakatwe, 1968). This reading, on the contrary, was intended to develop the whole person because a lot can be learnt even from a religious writing. There was the provision for online comments so that people share insights as they apply the readings to their everyday situations.

It was hence noted that the Church plays a major role in fostering literacy because they, like other stakeholders, view literacy to be an indispensable element in development in all spheres of life. The SDA Church in Mongu district, like other

organisations, tried to contribute to the improvement of literacy so as to make humanity unleash their potential for excellence.

Church libraries, Reading promotions, VBS and VOP programmes

The Church libraries were a good literacy fostering activity because it has been established that reading is a prerequisite to the acquisition of other skills. The reading promotions also helped people to know the types of available books. The Vacation Bible School and the Voice of Prophecy lessons kept people reading and that is what fostering literacy entails.

These programmes fostered literacy because you can learn anything as long as you can read (Carson, 1990). Reading also bolsters rationality; that is why Nicolopoulo and Cole in Wagner (1993: 89) explain that “literacy is closely associated with advances in the level of sophistication of modes of thinking for both cultures and individuals from simple to complex, from pre logical to logical, from myth to history and from closed to open”. Reading also brings about what Luangala (2006) calls rational thinking instead of the magical mode of thinking; and divergent instead of convergent thinking. Rational and divergent thinking bring about development because “innovations are pioneered by eccentrics who refuse to do things the way everybody else is doing them, crazy thinking fellows who refuse to remain content with the norms; i.e. divergent thinking” (*ibid*: 5).

The Church libraries could probably do better if they had reading rooms and specific time tables for library hours. Despite the Church libraries stocking a variety of books, the librarians informed the researcher that the borrowing rates were quite low. The excuse people generally give for failure to read regularly was that there were no books but here is a situation where people are not reading much despite having a readily available source of books. The implication was that the reading culture was not so good and people may still be at the point of being other regulated as Luangala (2004) observed. This even came out clearly when it was noted that there were notice boards but people rarely read what was on the board but would rather wait for someone to make an announcement pertaining to a notice on the board. The ideal situation is that

what is on a notice board should not even be talked about because everyone is expected to know about it.

The use of a projector during worship

The use of a power point projector during worship and printing of bulletins was a brilliant way of keeping people reading during worship because just listening to a speaker may bore some people. It is actually more mind captivating to see rather than to just listen.

Adventist Youth (AY) Programmes

Adventist Youth programmes were age specific and very vital to wholesome development. The challenge the researcher observed was that attendance by the children in some sampled congregations was not good. The excuse by some youths was that Sunday (which was the day AY meetings take place) was the only day they had to do chores at home since they were at school during the week and at church on Saturday. Those who attended regularly nevertheless said Sunday was just fine since they just learnt from 14-16hrs and they had the rest of the day to do their house chores.

Watching a presentation by AY members of different ages showed the fact that the lessons are worthy taking due to prowess exhibited in a variety of issues like bible knowledge, first aid, art in its diversity, entrepreneurship, to mention but a few. AY exposed children to some skills which most children of today do not have, maybe due to the fact that these skills are no longer being emphasised in the schools. AY is like the scout movement except it includes the girls as well (<http://www.religiousfacts.com/christianity/denominations/seventhdayadventist.html>).

The Dorcas Society

The Dorcas society was popular for its community service but within the Church it had the role of equipping young women with survival skills in terms of handcrafts like crocheting, baking, weaving and general home management. These skills have availed some women income generating activities to sustain themselves. This is what Freire (1974) advocated about what literacy should do; to be relevant to the participant's social reality. Lind and Johnson (1990) are also in line with this when they contend that literacy programmes which address females has its contents usually centering on

childcare, nutrition, health, among others, which are conventional roles for women. These are roles, which women usually assume in society hence making the Dorcas literacies appropriate though people may not even view such to be within the realms of literacy.

Sabbath School lessons

The Sabbath School classes also gave an opportunity for the fostering of literacy because of the in depth bible study in small groups ideal for discussions. Kapitzke (1995) explains that Adventist literacy emphasizes detailed analytical study of the scriptures. Sabbath School classes were one of the occasions when this happened. During this time, People had the opportunity to seek clarity over things they did not understand and this could not be done when someone was preaching.

A Sabbath School class is a kind of focus group discussion. A topic from the study guide was tabled before a group and participants deliberated on each other's views and meaning was collectively constructed within a session as Bryman (2008) explains of a focus group discussion. It was because of this unique feature of deliberation that Sabbath school was deemed to be the heart of the Church and the Church at study. The researcher, however, noted that most of the time people tended to resolve conflicting points of view by following what the writer said. This left little room for objectivity.

Literature evangelism

Literature evangelism had a unique way of fostering literacy because it went beyond SDA Church members, it was open to everyone. The other difference was that unlike evangelistic campaigns, which targeted people for conversion, literature evangelism did not have this emphasis in all the literature provided. Though people have converted to Adventism due to literature provided by Literature Evangelists, a good portion of the literature the Church provided had nothing to do with doctrine or proselytising. It is just there to help humanity in terms of health, positive thinking and interpersonal relationships. Freire (1974) encouraged this kind of literacy, which makes people understand their role in society as makers of culture.

As earlier stated, the researcher put the books in five categories namely spiritual, motivational, health, family life and interpersonal relations and children's books so as to determine exactly how the public was responding to this literature.

An analysis of the literature according to age, sex, marital status and religious affiliation of the readers revealed different preferences as illustrated in the findings. The implication was that people preferred specific categories of books because of felt needs.

The health and nutrition books proved to be the most popular among all ages of the respondents. This could be due to the large number of common diseases these days, which cut across age, sex and religious affiliation. The findings indicated that people were keen on learning home remedies to ailments and general health living through appropriate diet and life styles.

The least popular category of books was children's books. Only about half of the Church members (7 out of 15) bought these books. The rest of the statistics were very low in this category. For instance, only 3 out of 15 people in the age range between 31 and 40 bought children's books. Meanwhile this is the childbearing age but they are not buying their children books. 5 out of 17 males and 3 out of 12 females purchased children's books; and only 2 out of 17 non-church members bought children's books.

These findings could actually explain why the reading culture is almost nonexistent in Zambia today. Children are not introduced to literature at a tender age. How can parents expect their children to cultivate an interest in reading later in life if they did not inculcate the habit of reading in them when they were still young? The findings on reading preference simply reiterate the fact that most of reading really is for meeting needs and not just for the sake of it. Because society has health problems, and a lot of social problems in families and work problems, we find books in this category being bought; but because inculcating a reading culture in children is a future benefit, which cannot be seen now, very few people were investing in it. Society needs to be future focussed if the reading culture is to improve.

The principle element in any child's environment is the family, which is the first unit in whose life it shares. It is here that the child is first exposed to literacy practices. Barton (2007: 148) points out that "the family is an ecological niche in which literacy survives, is sustained and flourishes". The sustenance and flourishing of literacy in the family implies that the practices are intentionally passed on to the children and this ensures continuity. Unfortunately, this is not the case with most families in Zambia, going by the findings in the literature preferences.

How the Church managed to get people read the literature they provide

The third objective was about establishing how the church managed to get people read their literature. The findings revealed that what attracted people were both the canvassing skills of the literature evangelists and what other people who had been in contact with the books had said about the literature.

People claimed that they were assisted in terms of health, spiritual life and even in terms of interpersonal relationships. It was due to this that people felt that these books taught the whole person; they covered the spiritual, the physical, the mental and the social aspects of humanity. Generally, the books were said to be attractive and educative and were 'capable of changing someone's perspective on life issues', as one respondent put it.

The work of some of the literature evangelists in the study area had even received international recognition and had appeared in Church publications. One of such was the work of one of the respondent LEs who appeared in *'The Literature Evangelist'* magazine (GC, 2003) for her outstanding record of literature evangelism.

Another respondent Literature Evangelist, as stated in the findings, initiated the opening of a school at Nangalata in the outskirts of Mongu town. She initially went to this village to sell literature to the people but realised that most of them could not read so she decided to start teaching them how to read. This particular one used methods similar to Paulo freire's culture circles where people learnt to read within a very short period. Her learners could read the local language within three weeks. In Freire's

culture circles in Brazil, illiterate adults learnt to read and write in 30 hours and in Nicaragua, illiteracy was reduced from 40 to 13% in two months. Freire pointed out that the astounding results of literacy in culture circles were a consequence of offering literacy as a tool through which groups rather than individuals could be empowered (<http://www.galan-democracy.net/GD-SITE-INGREDIENT-PAULOFREIRE.html>).

More initiatives of this nature could help reduce the levels of illiteracy in Zambia especially in rural and peri urban communities. When people are made to see the need to read, then it will be consented effort between the learners and facilitators. In his culture circles, Freire used generative words picked from the participants' everyday life. These are an effective way of making literacy related to life and not a farfetched concept. Even when literature is provided in this case, it will be to attend to the needs of the people. That is what liberation theology advocates, to read for a purpose and make sure you get that which you want and become a subject in control of the culture society has created.

The fact that some people were attracted to the literature provided by the SDA Church through interaction with those who have been exposed to it shows that there was more marketing needed. Because people buy books for specific purposes, advertising these books more would lead to a wider readership.

How literature evangelism fostered literacy

The explanation that literature evangelism fostered literacy through the creation of libraries at home and even in workplaces is an important aspect of encouraging reading. This is a commendable way of fostering literacy because reading can virtually be done everywhere. As earlier alluded to, reading, especially by adults is purposeful. It is meant for meeting a particular need. This draws us back to the issue of literacy being a social activity and within a given context. Mbola (1989) is in line with this when he says that the social correlates of literacy determine the use of literacy. Reading helps resolve many needs like health, spiritual and conflict management at home and in work places. For example, business person will use literacy to expand his business while a student will mainly read to answer assignment questions; meanwhile a parent with a rebellious teenager will use literacy to read

about parenting teens so as to resolve the conflict at home. The creation of libraries hence enables people to meet their felt needs.

One gets to adapt to any environment as long as they can read. Abadzi (2003:18) also explains that “reading affects the interaction between the visual and the language systems so language use is modified through literacy”. A reading person will hence be more elaborate when explaining issues because his/her reading has exposed him/her to a wide vocabulary. Reading is also prerequisite to the acquisition of other skills that is why institutions purchase books so as to sharpen the skills of their human resource.

Apart from bolstering rationality and making people move from magical to rational thinking, which have been already clarified, making a wide collection of literature makes the reader have a vicarious experience and it improves creativity. This is what is required for national development.

As stated in the findings, the researcher observed that cases of illiteracy were high in residential areas dominated by linguistic minorities. This was attributed to certain traditional practices like circumcision for boys and initiation ceremonies for girls. One of the elders explained that after a child was initiated, they were considered as adults and could not be controlled under the tutelage of an uninitiated ‘adult’. Consequently, they drop out of school before they can even read and write. Wolf and Bowers, (1999) acknowledge this when they explain that literacy difficulties are over represented among learners from linguistic minorities and children from lower social economic backgrounds due to social cultural and linguistic factors. For such learners, opportunities to learn maybe diminished through frequent absence from school, low expectations of success and literacy not being highly valued. For such children learning to read and write effectively may represent such an uphill battle that they opt out of the race.

The finding that the literacy levels were lower in the peri urban congregation in a linguistic minority community could also have a story to tell about education in the country. This could be due to the language policy since their own languages are not used in initial literacy instruction hence making school alien to the children. Kelly (1999) agrees with this when he states that the data on the participation of religious

and ethnic minorities is scant but there is some evidence that these particular groups suffer from inequalities in the education system. Bernado & Fedman (in Wagner, 1993) suggest that the cultural differences between school and home can become significant barriers in the acquisition of literacy by members of ethnic minority groups. For such groups, literature evangelism has no impact because a good number cannot even read the regional official language, let alone English. Though the SDA Church through women ministries previously had a programme teaching women in the peri urban congregation how to read, the task is still mammoth. The creation of libraries here does not really help and this renders literature evangelism rather ineffective in such communities.

Prah (in Brock-Utne & Garbo,2009) observes that only about 10% of Africans can read and write colonial languages with any degree of finesse yet it is in colonial languages that 95% of literature circulating in Africa is written in. This implies that few are able to read. He further notes that “the limited literature produced in African languages is mainly religious Christian materials, principally the bible and allied literature” (pg 302). This leaves those not fluent in colonial language like English with very little variety to read which could help them in different aspects of life away from the spiritual realms. This fostering of literacy could be said to be catering only for the elite. Meanwhile liberation theology is meant to use literacy to free people from all sorts of constraints which make their lives miserable. This limitation on what can be read in one’s own language inhibits the use of literacy for freedom since the tenets of liberation theology according to Freire (1974) is becoming literate in one’s own language and making one’s situation better by using generative words from one’s day to day experiences. The lack of adequate literature in local languages is a hiccup in the effectiveness of literature evangelism.

Another aspect observed about this literature evangelism in the study was that there has not been deliberate effort to accommodate people who are physically challenged, for example the visually impaired. These people could be catered for by transcribing some books into Braille and/ or including audio recordings of some selected books so that they also have the advantage of listening to the contents since there were no books written in Braille at the book centre. This makes the programme only exclusive to those with the sense of sight.

The benefits that people had experienced due to reading the literature provided by the SDA Church.

People claimed to have experienced different benefits due to reading literature provided by the SDA Church. Rather than conceiving of literacy as the acquisition of universally applicable technical skills, it is better understood in terms of multiple literacies that are inextricably imbedded in group and context specific discourses (Gee, 1990). This is what has been exposed. Like it has been stated in the findings, people want different things from literature and if these needs are satisfied, then that particular literacy programme is of value.

By getting books from the SDA Church, people have acquired different literacy in fields of home management, medicine, especially first aid, psychology, family life and other interpersonal relationships. Some people have claimed improved health because they have done away with certain habits for example smoking and drinking alcohol so as to enhance their health. There were also claims of having improved communication skills both in families and at work places hence being better at interpersonal relationships. The motivation to work hard and believing they can do better was also a claimed benefit by many.

The above claimed benefits were in line with Freire's ideas of people being creators of culture due to literacy. They learn that nature cannot be changed but culture, which is made by man, has a shifting site of identity, resistance and opposition that provides conditions of self and social formation (<http://www.henrygirowx.com/online-articles-paulofreire.html>). People have hence used literacy to make their situations better, to be creators of culture. Once people understand culture as an addition of people to a world they did not make and could be used to create and recreate the transcendental meaning of human relations, then they can use reading and writing as a key to the world of written communication (Freire, 1985).

This awareness has made people lose their apathetic and naive view of the world because literacy has made them aware of, and accept their role as subjects in and of the world. The implication here is that a person realises that he/she can read about his/her situation or condition and find a way of dealing with it other than accepting

everything as fate. Literacy makes people aware that their presence and existence demands action and critical thought (*Ibid*). That is why Lauback (1947) says that a literate person is not just an illiterate person who has learnt how to read but he is a different person all together.

Reading has exposed people to their role as subjects of the world, makers of culture who know exactly what they want and how to get it. This entails that people who are literate are critical thinkers and are not gullible. There is the realisation that access to knowledge is a stepping-stone to a better life. For people to read they must see the value in reading; see tangible benefits in their own lives, from the pleasure of reading a good story to the curiosity of the world around them, to acquiring skills for their career (<http://statrosphereinternational.ca/?P=1068>). This is where the literature provided by the SDA Church comes in. Because of the diversity, people are able to use it to navigate their way through life other than mourn over their situation and accept it as fate.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In this chapter, a summary of the findings of the study and conclusions drawn from literature and from results are presented. Chapter six also presents recommendations made based on the findings of the study and suggested future research.

Summary

The first objective of this study was to establish the SDA Church's understanding of literacy. Literacy was generally understood to mean ability to read and write. The SDA Church had a statement on literacy which stated that, the ability to read impacts every aspect of a person's life- earning power, career opportunity, access to health care information and even ability to raise a child properly; without the skill of reading, few doors of opportunity can ever be opened (GC, 1995). The value attached to literacy in this Church was further seen when literacy was identified as the first among the six challenges facing women in the WMD Pastor and Elder's handbook (WMD, 2007). The SDA Church viewed education to be the harmonious development of the physical, the mental and the spiritual powers. Literacy was also considered the doorway to evangelism.

Secondly, the objective of the study was to identify the Church's literacy promotion activities. The noted literacy fostering activities the Church was involved in included: the 'revived by his word' bible reading initiative, the voice of prophecy lessons, evangelistic campaigns, Vacation Bible School (VBS), Church libraries, reading promotions, Adventist Youth (AY) programmes, Dorcas society activities, Sabbath School lessons and literature evangelism.

The study further intended to establish how the Church managed to get people read or attracted people to read their literature. The findings indicated that People were attracted to the books because of the marketing which was done by Literature Evangelists. The other attraction was what they heard from those who had read the books before. Others were attracted to the pictorial presentations in the books. To establish what kind of literature different people preferred to purchase from the SDA

Church, the researcher categorised the literature into spiritual, motivational, children's books, books on Family life and interpersonal relations and health books. An analysis on people's preferences in terms of the type of books indicated that the health books were the most popular in all age groups. In terms of gender, the female bought more of health books while most male preferred spiritual books and those about family life and interpersonal relationships. Non-SDA members preferred more of health books while members went for spiritual books. The married and the 31- 40 year olds opted for books on family life and interpersonal relations. These findings were an indicator that people read purposefully. They wanted certain literacies and they specifically went for that which they needed.

An inquiry into how literature evangelism fostered literacy revealed that literature evangelism fostered literacy through the creation of libraries, that is, at home, at the office, at learning institutions and at churches.

The final objective was to explore the benefits (if any) that people had experienced due to reading the literature provided by the SDA Church. Claimed benefits from the literature included spiritual growth, improvement of diet, development of healthy toxic free life styles, knowledge of home remedies for ailments and improvement in interpersonal relations.

Conclusion

The study established that the SDA Church fosters literacy in its activities. Literacy fostering activities could be categorised in terms of those for conversion and those for life skills. Both conversion and life skills are important because religion controls the moral fibre of society and a person who claims to live by Christian values is generally a good citizen usually not involved in bad vices.

The activities which could be categorised to be for conversion are the VOP lessons, revived by his word reading promotion, some aspects of the Sabbath School lessons, evangelistic campaigns and some AY lessons like Church doctrine. Some VBS lessons could also have some elements of indoctrination. The Sabbath School lessons, apart from conversion also have a lot of applications to current life situations so they

can work for multi literacies as well, just like the shared insights in the revived by his word reading initiative.

The activities which could out rightly be categorised as giving different kinds of literacy include; the creation of libraries through literature evangelism depending on what one decided to gather, Dorcas activities, reading promotions and some AY activities like leadership and lifeskills training. These activities came out clear to show what liberation theology is all about; to have literacy that makes people negotiate different challenges, harness resources and navigate their way through life. Dorcas activities and women's preferences in terms of choices of books show that a literacy programme which addresses females has its contents usually centring on childcare, nutrition, health, among others, which are conventional roles for women.

The libraries created through literature evangelism had literature for conversion, for example spiritual books and others for multi literacies, which included motivational, family life and interpersonal relationships, children's books (though some have elements of conversion), and health books. People were attracted to literature due to felt needs. This draws us to the issue of literacy being a social activity and within a given context. Reading gives the benefits of resolving many needs like health, spiritual and interpersonal relationships like marriage, management and conflict resolution at home and in work places. The preference table highlighted this aspect. The diversity in the literature brought out the fact that this literature could make readers fully human by realising that they were subjects of the world, capable of doing something in all their life situations. Literacy in this case like Freire (1985) suggested would make the readers lose their apathetic view of life and know that they can always do something to make their situation better.

Literature evangelism was inclusive in that it embraced non-church members; anybody was free to purchase the books. However, selectivity came in because those who had no money to purchase the books missed out on the information. The magazines given freely had little information. Secondly, it was only those who were fluent readers of English who benefited most because very few books were translated to local languages.

It is vital to identify all stakeholders who foster literacy so that different institutions complement each other to enhance national development. It should be noted that the illiterates depend on the literate. To create a more intelligent, safe and cost efficient nation, we should promote economic success by aiming to establish a more literate nation. The study established that the books the SDA Church provided to the public did foster literacy. The literature was aiding people in different life situations to enjoy the benefit of reading to learn.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been made:

A. To the SDA Church:

1. Translate most books, especially health books to local languages so as to broaden the readership.
2. Advertise the literature in print and electronic media.
3. Include audio recordings of some books so as to cater for the blind.
4. Subsidise some books including children's books so that more people can access them so as to cultivate a reading culture in children while they are still young.
5. Set a number of bookshops in town where even people who are not visited by Literature Evangelists can easily access the books.

B. Recommendations for further study

1. This study recommends that other studies could be carried out to find out how other faith-based organisations are carrying out literacy fostering activities.
2. A study could also be carried out to establish how different religious groups in partnership with government could come up with interdenominational literacy programmes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

TITLE: The role of religious activities in fostering literature:A case of the SDA Church in Mongu.

A. BIO DATA

1. Age:
2. Sex
3. Marital status (Tick)
 - a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Divorced
 - d. Widowed

4. Religious Denomination:

.....

B. QUESTIONS

NOTE: Answer the questions as truthfully as possible. There are wrong answers. All answers are correct according to the way you feel.

1. What is your understanding of literacy?

.....

2. What attracts you to buy literature sold by the SDA Church?

.....

3. What types of books do you like most among those sold by the SDA Church? (Tick)
 - a. Spiritual
 - b. Motivational
 - c. Health

- d. Family life and interpersonal relations
- e. Children's books

4. State the benefits (if any) that you have experienced due to reading books sold by the SDA Church.....
.....

5. What other comments would you make about the literature sold by the SDA Church?.....
.....

Appendix II

THE ROLE OF THE RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES IN FOSTERING LITERACY.

A CASE OF THE SDA CHURCH IN MONGU.

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE PASTOR IN CHARGE OF PUBLISHING

1. What is your Church's view on literacy?
2. What are the literacy levels in your Church?
3. What literacy programmes is your Church involved in?
4. What are the main objectives of each of the programmes?
5. In what ways does literature evangelism foster literacy?
6. How are the people involved in the programmes selected?
7. What kind of training do they go through?
8. How effective are these programmes, are the programs meeting the intended objectives?
9. How does literature evangelism serve those who are not able to read?
10. What future plans does the Church have that can improve the literacy levels in society and in particular among its membership?

Appendix III

In depth interview guide for Church elders

Research Topic: The role of the Religious activities in fostering literacy: A case of the SDA Church in Mongu District.

Questions

1. What is your Church's view of literacy?
2. What literacy programmes does your Church conduct?
3. What are the objectives of your literacy programme
4. How are the people who conduct the literacy programme trained to do their work? [Do you think that these workers are adequately trained?]
5. What benefits do you think people get from reading your church literature?
6. What challenges do you face in running the literacy programme?

Appendix IV

Observation schedule

Research Topic: The role of Religious activities in fostering literacy: A case of the SDA Church in Mongu District.

What to look for

1. The Church environment:

- The state of the surrounding area, any sign of literacy activities?
- Any sign of literacy activities inside the church?
- Is there enough space in what may be reading /library rooms or coners?
- Any shelves for literature?

2. The literacy Programme

- What resource materials are available?
- What is the content of the programme?
- Is the time allocated for literacy activities enough?
- What methodologies are used?

3. The literature

- What type of literature is displayed?
- Note the categories of literature available.

Appendix V

Focus group discussion guide for literature evangelists

Research Topic: The role of Religious activities in fostering literacy: A case of the SDA Church in Mongu.

QUESTIONS

1. What is your understanding of literacy?
2. What is your role in this literacy programme?
3. How do you get people to read the Church literature especially that the reading culture in Zambia is perceived to be poor?
4. What kinds of books are popular among your clients?
5. What benefits do you think people get when they read your books?
6. Do you have ways of knowing that people have read your literature?
7. What improvements do you think could be made to the literacy programmes to make them better?

Appendix VI

**The University of Zambia
School of Education
Department of Language and Social Sciences Education**

Dear Sir,

**RE: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR THE PROVINCIAL
EDUCATION OFFICER**

I am a student at the University of Zambia pursuing a Master of Education in Literacy and Learning Degree. I am here by seeking permission to carry out a research in your province, Mongu district in particular. The title of my research is ‘The role of religious activities in fostering literacy: A case the Seventh Day Adventist church in Mongu district’

The data collected will be confidential and will strictly be used for academic purposes.

Your permission to conduct this particular research in your area of jurisdiction will highly be appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,

Chilobe Gladys

The PEO’ comment:

Name:

Signature.....

.....

.....

Official stamp

Date

Appendix VII

The University of Zambia

School of Education

Department of Language and Social Sciences Education

Dear Sir,

RE: INFORMED CONSENT FOR THE DISTRICT EDUCATION BOARD SECRETARY

I am a student at the University of Zambia pursuing a Master of Education in Literacy and Learning Degree. I am here by seeking permission to carry out a research in Mongu district. The title of my research is 'The role of religious activities in fostering literacy: A case the Seventh Day Adventist church in Mongu district'.

The data collected will be confidential and will strictly be used for academic purposes.

Your permission to conduct this particular research in your area of jurisdiction will be highly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,

Chilobe Gladys

The DEBS' comment:

Name:

Signature.....

.....

Official stamp

Date

Appendix VIII

The University of Zambia

School of Education

Department of Language and Social Sciences Education

Dear Sir,

**RE: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR THE PRESIDENT-WEST
ZAMBIA FIELD**

I am a student at the University of Zambia pursuing a Master of Education in Literacy and Learning Degree. I am here by seeking permission to carry out a research in your church, in Mongu Central Mission District in particular. The title of my research is ‘The role of religious activities in fostering literacy: A case of the Seventh Day Adventist church in Mongu district’

The data collected will be confidential and will strictly be used for academic purposes.

Your permission to conduct this particular research in your area of jurisdiction will highly be appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,

Chilobe Gladys

The President’s comment:

Name:

Signature.....

.....

.....

Official stamp

Date

Appendix IX

The University of Zambia

School of Education

Department of Language and Social Sciences Education

Dear Sir,

**RE: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR THE MONGU CENTRAL
MISSION DISTRICT PASTOR**

I am a student at the University of Zambia pursuing a Master of Education in Literacy and Learning Degree. I am here by seeking permission to carry out a research in your church in Mongu Central Mission District. The title of my research is ‘The role of Religious activities in fostering literacy: A case the Seventh Day Adventist church in Mongu district’.

The data collected will be confidential and will strictly be used for academic purposes.

Your permission to conduct this particular research in your area of jurisdiction will highly be appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,

Chilobe Gladys

The Pastor’s comment:

Name:

Signature.....

.....

.....

Official stamp

Date

Appendix X

Individual participant's informed consent Form

Dear Respondent,

This serves to give you an understanding of the purpose of this research and procedures that will be followed. Further implications for your participation are explained. Finally, you are being asked to sign this form to indicate that you have volunteered to participate in this exercise.

1. Description

This exercise is a purely an academic educational research. The researcher is a University of Zambia student pursuing a Master of Education in Literacy and Learning degree. This research is a major requirement for the researcher to complete the program.

2. Purpose

The researcher wishes to find out how the church fosters literacy through the literacy programme which they provide to the public.

3. Consent

Participating in this exercise is voluntary. You are free to decline to participate in this exercise or withdraw from participating in this exercise.

4. Confidentiality

All the data collected from this research will be confidential. Participants are assured of anonymity and in this research.

5. Rights of respondents

The rights of the participants will be protected and respected. Participants are assured that they shall suffer no harm as a result of participating in this exercise. Participants are free to ask for clarification at any point of the exercise and to inform the research if they feel uncomfortable about any procedure in the research.

6. Declaration of consent

I have read and fully understood this document. I therefore agree to participate in this exercise.

.....

Signature

.....

Date