

**CAUSES AND IMPLICATIONS OF APOSTASY IN
THE
WEST ZIMBABWE CONFERENCE OF THE
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH (1998-2008)**

by

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to investigate the causes and implications of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church from 1998 to 2008. The research was undertaken due to the realisation that apostasy has reached a point of concern to both members and local church leadership. The researcher also noted with concern that not much if any has been done on the causes and implications of apostasy since the introduction of the Church in Zimbabwe over one hundred years ago and the organisation of the West Zimbabwe Conference about forty years ago.

The research was motivated by these concerns coupled with the increasing number of apostasy which continuously reflect negatively on the church and may subsequently limit the church's ability to evangelize the communities. The aim of the study therefore is to investigate the causes and implications of apostasy and make recommendations that will assist both church members and the church leadership in formulating policies and programs geared towards minimizing apostasy in the church.

The study combines both the quantitative and the qualitative research designs. The population for the study consisted of the one hundred and seventy one (171) churches with a total church membership of one hundred and fifty three thousand, seven hundred and two (153,702). A sample percentage of ten was adopted for the selection of churches while the proportional stratified sampling technique was used. The instruments used for the study were both face and content validated and a pilot study carried out to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. The data collected from the study was analysed using descriptive statistics and a descriptive interpretive method.

Findings from the study confirm that there is apostasy within the WZC of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Accordingly, the data analysis revealed that the causes of apostasy in order of magnitude are external, internal and doctrinal respectively. The study also revealed that youths, females and urban church members are highly susceptible to apostasy than their adult, male and rural counterparts respectively. Apostasy had a considerable effect on church membership as well as the receiving of tithes and offerings. Recommendations were made based on the findings of the research.

Key Terms: Apostasy, implication

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I declare that **CAUSES AND IMPLICATIONS OF APOSTASY IN THE WEST
ZIMBABWE CONFERENCE OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
(1998-2008)** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been
indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.


SIGNATURE
(Mr R D Mazibisa)

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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations will be reflected in the document (from chapter two) to avoid too many repetitions of long names

GENERAL ABBREVIATIONS

AA	:	Acts of the apostles
AFM	:	African Faith Mission
AMO	:	Adventist Men's Organisation
AY	:	Adventist Youth
BC	:	Bible Commentary (Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary)
DA	:	Desire of Ages
DCC	:	The Development of the Christian Church
GC	:	Great Controversy
EG White:		Ellen Guald White, also known as Mrs. Ellen White, popularly accepted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a prophetess.
KJV	:	King James Version –Bible
NIV	:	New International Version –Bible
RSV	:	Revised Standard Version
SAHS	:	Solusi Adventist High School
SDA	:	Seventh-day Adventist refers to the 'Church' that await the second advent of Christ and worship on the seventh day as written in Exodus 20:8.
SP	:	Spirit of prophecy. These are set of books written by Ellen G. White
WZC	:	West Zimbabwe Conference
ZUC	:	Zimbabwe Union Conference

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS USED FOR THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

Old Testament (OT)

Abbreviation:	Book:
Gen	Genesis
Exod.	Exodus
Lev.	Leviticus
Num.	Numbers
Deut.	Deuteronomy
Josh.	Joshua
Judg.	Judges
Ruth	Ruth
1 Sam.	1 Samuel
1 Kings	1 Kings
2 Kings	2 Kings
1 Chron.	1 Chronicles
2 Chron.	2 Chronicles
Ezra	Ezra
Neh.	Nehemiah
Esth.	Esther
Job	Job
Ps.	Psalms
Prov.	Proverbs
Eccles.	Ecclesiastes
Song of Sol. (also Cant.)	Song of Solomon (also Canticles)
Isa.	Isaiah
Jer.	Jeremiah
Lam.	Lamentations
Ezek.	Ezekiel
Dan.	Daniel
Hos.	Hosea
Joel	Joel
Amos	Amos
Obad.	Obadiah
Jon.	Jonah
Mic.	Micah
Nah.	Nahum
Hab.	Habakkuk

Zeph.	Zephaniah
Hag.	Haggai
Zech.	Zechariah

New Testament (NT)

Abbreviation:	Book:
Matt	Matthew
Mark	Mark
Luke	Luke
John	John
Acts	Acts
Rom.	Romans
1 Cor.	1 Corinthians
2 Cor.	2 Corinthians
Gal.	Galatians
Eph.	Ephesians
Phil.	Philippians
Col.	Colossians
1 Thess.	1 Thessalonians
2 Thess.	2 Thessalonians
1 Tim.	1 Timothy
2 Tim.	2 Timothy
Tit.	Titus
Philem.	Philemon
Heb.	Hebrews
Jas.	James
1 Pet.	1 Peter
2 Pet.	2 Peter
1 John	1 John
2 John	2 John
3 John	3 John
Jude	Jude
Rev.	Revelation

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study focusses on finding the causes of apostasy and their implications to the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh day Adventist Church between the years 1998 and 2008. The Seventh-day Adventist doctrines, policies and manuals were studied to determine how they met the needs of the church members. Particular attention was paid to the process of integrating the new converts into the church.

1.1.1 Background

An understanding of apostasy and its various forms is crucial for the establishment of an appropriate perspective at the beginning of this study. The word apostasy means “falling away.” In Greek, the common classical use of the word has to do with a political defection (Gen. 14:4, LXX; 2 Chron. 13:6, LXX; and Acts 5:37). In the New Testament, its usual meaning is that of a religious defection as realised in the false accusation of Paul (Acts 21:21). Apostasy (“apostasia” in Greek) is a compound word with two meanings: “apo” to move away and “stasis” to stand or standing. Apostasy is also defined as “abandonment of one’s religious faith, party, a cause, etc” (Hanks, 1979).

A person who abandons his/her religion, party or cause is viewed as an apostate and the process of abandoning one’s religious faith, cause or party is known as apostatising. Collins dictionary focus goes beyond the religious apostasy; it includes social and political apostasy as inter woven factors into the lives of people. He also considers the concept of the 4th and 5th century theologians who viewed apostasy as serious a sin as adultery and murder.

1.1.2 Forms of apostasy

The forms of apostasy were not exhausted in this study, as this could be a study on its own. However, explanations are provided for a full understanding of apostasy in the contest of this research. Chapman, (1988) identifies various forms of apostasy which are of paramount importance to this study and are therefore discussed as follows:

1.1.2.1 Apostasy as a change of mind

When a person is converted into Christianity, the mind changes from focusing on non spiritual to those things which helps him/her grow spiritually. Many times the person's interest becomes more on religious things and he begins to dislike the things which are not compatible with spiritual living, but when he apostatises, his mind begins to experience change, shift, transition, alteration, modification or deviation. All these forms apply to one's change of mind.

1.1.2.2 Apostasy as defection

This form is a change of allegiance in some instances; it is viewed as treason, betrayal, turning traitor, defection, breakaway, backsliding, faithlessness or disloyalty. An apostate is a person who first accepted or joined a Church, an organisation, party, association, a military and a club. In most of these institutions are sets of rules and conditions to which a person vows to abide. Hence, when a person breaks the code or the vows, the person is considered as having defected (apostatized). In some situations such as in the military force, such defection is often considered treason, traitorous or betrayal.

1.1.2.3 Apostasy as desertion

This is viewed as abandonment, forsaking, leaving, withdrawal, evacuation, pulling out or absence. These forms carry with them a notion of giving up, surrender, resignation and renouncement; handover, yielding and dropping out. In many instances the association learns of the desertion after the person has already left. There is very little reasoning, negotiation or discussions between the party and the person. Sometimes the resignation is sent by someone verbally, through the news media or by letter. This form of apostasy makes it difficult to reconcile with the person. In many instances, such apostasy comes as a result of internal dispute, mis understanding, quarrel or external influences.

1.1.2.4 An apostate as a defector

Some forms of apostasy carry strong feelings that an apostate is a defector, traitor, deserter or a renegade. This form also portrays feelings that an apostate is a dissident, protestor, separatist or schismatic. The understanding of apostasy in this category is that,

not only does the apostate leave Church or organisation, in this case, the apostate mobilises other people and influences them to see the Church, party, or organisation as bad, evil, unreliable, dangerous and unfulfilling. The apostate does all this to fight or to destroy the image of the Church, organisation or party.

1.1.2.5 An apostate as an impious person:

In this case, is one who becomes a blasphemer, Sabbath breaker, deserter, atheist, unbeliever, infidel, pagan, heathen, secularist or a gentile. In this form apostates turn their backs to the party or Church and return to their former life styles or sometimes choose the extreme situation to the one they were in before they were converted to the Church, organisation or party.

1.1.2.6 Apostasy as abandonment of a person's faith

This means to move away, to abandon (απολειπω) or to depart from the faith previously accepted, with the possible implication of going astray as the result of departing from the truth (Nida & Louw 1993). In following Chapman's forms of apostasy above, one can realize that sin has a potential of influencing people to leave church through various ways.

1.1.2.7 Apostasy as a standing away from the faith (stasis–Greek)

This is a form of forsaking (διαλειπω; εξλειπω; εγγαταλειπω and means to cease from an activity, which had been going on for some time. The form is expressed in the New Testament “your faith should not fail [stop] (Luke 22:32) and “Some have lost their way with regard to the truth” (2Tim. 2:18).

1.1.2.8 Apostasy as rejection

Another commonly used form of apostasy is rejection (απολεγομαι determined to avoid something or to put aside. This is an expression indicating that one is no longer continuing to believe a set of beliefs.

1.1.3 Apostasy in the context of this research

In this study, apostasy is understood as the act of a professed Christian, who knows but deliberately rejects the revealed truth regarding the deity of Christ (1 John 4:1-3) and

redemption through His atoning sacrifice (Phil. 3:18; 2 Peter 2:1). It is different from error, which may be the result of ignorance (Acts 19:9), or heresy, which may be the results of falling into the snare of Satan (2 Tim. 2:25 – 26). Apostasy may have a form of godliness but denying its power (2 Tim. 3:5); apostasy among angels (as in Is. 14:12 – 14; Ezek. 28:15; Jude 6); in Israel (Isa. 1:1 – 6; 5:5 – 7) or in the Church (Rev. 3:14 -16) awaits judgment.

The apostle Paul warned that apostasy will abound in the latter days (1 Tim. 4: 1-3; 2 Thess. 2:3; 2 Peter 3:17). He states that they will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths (2 Tim. 4:4). Many will leave the Church revealing themselves that they were not really converted (1 John 2:19).

1.1.4 Effects of apostasy

The understanding of apostasy leads to a realisation that apostasy is the Devil's tool, intended to destroy the unity and inhibit social and spiritual growth, resulting in the total distortion of one's image and credibility. It affects both the ecclesiastical and the secular spheres alike. It has no exemption or respect of one's status, age, affiliation, political party, family unity and the Church. Many people have been affected one way or the other as victims of apostasy.

1.1.5 Trends of apostasy

The trends of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have been viewed with deep concern; the more the Church expanded the more the rate of apostasy also increased. Despite many programmes being introduced or improved: the increased variety in the youth clubs such as camp outs, music, quiz competitions, prayer bands and many other activities; women's ministries added to the "Dorcas Club," which now have more activities aimed at ministering to women and the "Adventist Men's Organisation" (AMO), which is a way of fellowship intended to nurture the male members. In spite of all these efforts, apostasy seems to affect the Church continuously to the point where it has become a compelling concern for many Christians.

1.1.6 Inception and trends of apostasy

The phenomenon of apostasy has its origins in the Bible and dates back to the creation of the human race. Examples are the fall of man, Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:6-7), the rebellious act of Cain killing his brother Abel (Gen. 4:8), the antediluvian world apostasy, which led

to the flood (Gen. 7-8), the construction of the tower of Babel after the flood (Gen. 11:1-8) which signified a serious mistrust in God's promise, that He would no longer destroy humanity by water (Gen. 9:11), these and many other were the beginnings of many cases of apostasy where many people lost their faith and abandoned God's ways. There seems to be no age or generation that has not been affected by apostasy. It is probably the major devil's method used to influence humanity to rebel against God's will from the beginning of the world to this day.

With regard to the Old Testament prophecies such as those in Daniel 12:4, which speak of the increase of knowledge at the end of time, one would have expected that with such an increase in knowledge, the total elimination or a marked minimisation of apostasy would take place up to the point where it is insignificant. However, the opposite seems to be the present reality. In the New Testament, Judas Iscariot, the disciple of Jesus, rebelled and betrayed Christ (Matt. 26:47-51). The long and painful period of apostasy during the medieval age, in which the Christian Church lost direction with regard to God's ideal ways and caused a great deal of persecution of the minority that remained firm to the principles of faith until the dawn of reformation took place (Cantor 1963).

Many studies have been undertaken on this topic and many books such as, "Why the back door swings" Marjie (1981); "What can we do about Church dropouts?" Hadaway (1990); "Why teenagers reject religion" Dudley (1980); "Growing pains" Hartley (1972) and a number of others, have been written on the subject of apostasy but the problem still remains.

The writers cited above openly acknowledge that apostasy has reached a point of concern in the Christian Church. Dudley (1980) observes that teenagers are among the most affected by apostasy, while Hartley (1972) professes that apostasy causes considerable pain in the Church. The question is what causes apostasy? What are the implications of apostasy to the Church? Furthermore, how can it be eliminated or minimised?

One would believe that when people decide to accept Jesus Christ and His faith, they would have:

- Realised their sinfulness.
- Found no joy or satisfaction outside Christ.
- Need to change their lives and converted to Christianity.

Many converted people testify about what they left when they came to accept Christ; after which they also abandoned habits of various kinds to become what Paul calls “a new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17). Some people are converted from: stealing, murder, robbery, brothel activities and drug trafficking and many other sinful acts to Christianity.

The greatest question still remains, how does a “new creation” [convert] give up the new life and return to their former life style? What is the root cause of apostasy? There must be a serious reason, why a person regards his/her previous life better than the current new life. It is at this point that the researcher realised that there is a need to look deep into apostasy, particularly in this Church and in this generation, to find out if this is unique to this Church (the West Zimbabwe Conference [WZC]) or it is happening to other Churches in the same territory.

1.1.7 Overview of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference

A brief overview of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church over the last five years (1998 – 2002) records reveals a loss by apostasy of over one thousand and fifty two (1052) members and six thousand two hundred (6200) members reported missing from the Church. The latter group were members whose location could not be verified within a period of two years after lapsing. This group may include members who found themselves apostatised and left the Church before the procedure of acknowledging their state of apostasy was instigated and some may have moved (crossed the floor) to other churches without obtaining letters of transfer.

Most congregations, particularly those outside cities have fewer than one hundred (100) members. An apostasy of such magnitude would reflect a loss of about two churches per year, ten churches in five years and more than twenty in ten years.

If Jesus illustrated the concern for one lost coin, sheep and son (Matt. 15: 4 – 27), how much concern should we give to so many people who are lost from Church today? There is fear among many church members that churches in this part of Africa may be extinct in the near future as people find no fulfilment of their needs in church. It is against this background that the present study seeks to look into the causes and implications of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh- day Adventist Church.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Statistical evidence reveals that apostasy abounds in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with a loss through apostasy of one thousand and fifty-two (1 052) members between 1998 and year 2002. A total of six thousand two hundred (6 200) members were also reported missing or lapsed from the Church. This situation, if left unchecked may lead to the extinction of some local Seventh-day Adventist congregations in the West Zimbabwe Conference in the nearest future. It is against this background that the present study seeks to investigate the causes of apostasy and its implications on the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, with a view of recommending strategies which may be put in place in order to minimise apostasy in the conference.

1.2.1 Research questions

The researcher sought answers to the following research questions:

- What are the demographic characteristics of respondents in terms of age, gender, marital status, highest education achievement and number of years as church members?
- What are the causes of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?
- What are the implications of apostasy to the Seventh-day Adventist Church?
- Is there any relationship between the causes of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference and other church denominations within the same conference territory?
- To what extent do the Seventh-day Adventist Church doctrines, policies and manuals meet the needs of church members?
- What strategies could be put in place to minimise apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

1.3 Research objectives

The main objective of this study is to discover the causes and implications of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference with an aim of eliminating or minimize apostasy, which has the potential of compromising the church's ability to return its members and the recruitment of new converts. The aims of the study are:

- To find out the causes of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- To discover the implications of apostasy to the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and to the non believers.
- To find out whether the causes of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference Churches are related to those of other church denominations within the same territory.
- To review the Seventh-day Adventist Church doctrines, policies and manuals on how they meet the needs of the church members, in order to minimise apostasy.
- To make recommendations to the West Zimbabwe Conference leadership, on how apostasy can be minimised.

1.4 Scope and limitations

The purpose of this study is to find out the causes and implications of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The country has three Conferences which form up the Zimbabwe Union Conference. The Conferences are: East, Central and West Zimbabwe Conferences. The scope of the study will be limited to the West Zimbabwe Conference with one hundred and seventy one (171) churches and two hundred and fifty three thousand, seven hundred and two (253,702) members and fifty five pastors. The survey was carried out in sampled churches, with members, pastors, leaders and those who had apostatised. Church members, pastors and leaders of other denominations within the West Zimbabwe Conference territory were included in the study, in order to determine if similarities existed in the causes of apostasy. In addition, the literature review focussed on the causes and implications of apostasy in the history of the Christian Church with an emphasis on the apostasy in the churches in Galatia and in the period of the reformers. The study did not cover most of the reformers but only the first few, to find out how the Church viewed and dealt with apostasy and those who apostatised. The relevant literature was also reviewed on the history of the Seventh – day Adventist Church regarding the trends of apostasy.

1.5 Research assumptions

It is assumed that:

- All West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Churches follow the Church doctrines, policies and manuals.

- The causes of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Churches and other denominations within the West Zimbabwe Conference territory are similar.
- All respondents would respond honestly to the contents of the questionnaire and interview schedule.

1.6 Research methods

The purpose of this study was to find out the causes and implications of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This research was both qualitative descriptive and interpretive. Accordingly, a pilot study was carried out in two churches, of which one was a rural church, while the other one was an urban church. The research instruments for collecting data included a questionnaire and traditional and oral historical interviews. The types of sampling included simple random sampling, deliberate or purposive sampling and the captive method. All the interviews were conducted by the researcher and five pastors assisted with the administering of the questionnaire, particularly in the rural churches. The data analysis was qualitative and a limited numerical analysis was used to qualify the qualitative data interpretation.

1.7 Research authorisation

Permission was obtained from the university and from the West Zimbabwe Conference leadership, to carry out a survey on the causes and implications of apostasy. The letters of authorisation allowed the researcher to review the records on apostasy and to carry out interviews among church members, pastors and the West Zimbabwe Conference leadership.

1.8 Terminology

Branch: A smaller congregation than a company administered by a church.

Church Board: The highest governing board of the local church which makes decisions about church matters.

Company: A small congregation which has not been organised into a Church and is administered by a church.

Conference: In the Seventh-day Adventist Church Organisation, a number of congregations make up a district and a number of districts make up a conference.

In this study, the West Zimbabwe Conference is made up of 173 churches and 45 districts according to the official records at the end of 2008 (SDA1998-2008).

Dark ages: A period of 1260 years of persecution which took place about 538 AD and ended about 1798 AD at the beginning of the great awakening influenced by the French Revolution.

Deism: A sceptical belief that rejects Christianity and its miracles and supernatural revelations. Deism, argues for a more distant God, one who does not actively participate in earthly human affairs.

Diaspora: Christians living outside their country of origin.

Disfellowship: An exclusion of an apostatised member's name from the Church membership record.

District: A number of churches make up a district.

Dorcas Club: A church organised club composed of women who, among other activities, collect items of clothing, food stuff and other items to give to the poor.

Implication: Implication in this study means the effect or the impact of apostasy on the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Judaizers: Jews converted to become members of the Christian Church who wanted to maintain the old religious beliefs and rites of the Jews.

Leadership: This refers to the president, the executive secretary and treasurer of the Conference. In the case of a local church, leadership refers to the pastor and the church elder/s.

Missingmembers: Church members who have not attended church services for a continuous period of at least two years and could not be contacted for the verification of their absence from church.

People of the way: The first Christians were called the people of the way.

Population: A group of interest to the researcher, the group to which the researcher would like results of the study to be generalised (Gay 1981).

Proselytes: Gentiles converted to the religion of the Jews.

Sanhedrin: The highest board in the Jewish Church.

Saul: He was a member of the Sanhedrin who sought to deny the Christians of their freedom of worship, but was later converted to Christianity and his name changed to Paul.

Union: A number of local conferences organised into a union.

Women's ministry: A department in the church which encourages women to minister to other women in the community, in hospitals, in prisons and other places.

1.9 Overview of chapters

This study is organised into seven chapters:

Chapter 1 provides a general introduction to the whole study. It includes the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, the scope and the limitations of the study, research assumptions and the explanations of the terminology, the list of abbreviations, the methodology used in this study and an overview of the chapters in this thesis.

Chapter 2 focusses on Apostasy in Christian history and thought, regarding the causes of apostasy and their implications for the Christian Church; how it was viewed and dealt with in the New Testament, particularly in the letters of Paul with a special emphasis on the Galatian Churches, the apostasy after the apostolic era, their relevance for apostasy today and other information related to the study pertaining to the introduction to the reformation period.

Chapter 3 provides a brief history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church of which the West Zimbabwe Conference is a part as well as the doctrines, policies, manuals and any other documents relevant to the study. The literature was studied to explore the trends of apostasy through the history of the Church.

Chapter 4 focusses on the methodology and research design pertaining to this research. It includes the type of research, the population, sample and sampling techniques, research instruments, validity of the instruments, pilot study, method of data collection and the methods of data analysis.

Chapter 5 deals with the data presentation and data analysis of the records, interviews and the administered questionnaire.

Chapter 6 presents the report on oral life history interviews and their analysis

Chapter 7 presents the findings pertaining to the entire study, the conclusion and the recommendations made.

CHAPTER TWO

APOSTASY IN CHURCH HISTORY AND THOUGHT

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Apostasy in the early Church

The purpose of this chapter is to review apostasy in the Christian Church history and its thought on the causes and implications of apostasy. The following periods will be reviewed:

- Apostasy at the inception of the Christian Church.
- Apostasy during the ministry of Paul to the churches in Galatia.
- A comparative study of Galatians' apostasy and today's church.
- Apostasy after the apostolic era.
- Apostasy during the reformers period.

2.1.2 Apostasy at the inception of the Christian church

The Christian Church was established by Jesus Christ, according to the divine principles. It is important to note that the Christian Church is different from that of the Hebrews (Judaism), which is confined to the Jews and to the only temple in Jerusalem. Furthermore, the Christian Church is universal, cutting across all the regions of the earth and racial barriers in keeping with Christ's directives (Acts 1:8).

The most devastating phenomenon of apostasy during the ministry of Jesus Christ is the apostasy of Judas Iscariot. This man (Iscariot) is one of the luckiest twelve disciples to be with Jesus Christ. The question is how does apostasy affect this man (Iscariot)? If the seeds of apostasy were planted in him before joining Christ's ministry, does it imply that Iscariot was not converted when he became a disciple of Christ and spent all his days with Him? Did Jesus fail to convert the man? It appears that Iscariot was tempted by his love for money as was revealed on two occasions (John 12:4-6; Luke 22:4-5). If so, what could have attracted him to Christ, since Jesus was not counted among the rich of the day in that region? Undoubtedly, then, the seeds of apostasy were planted at the inception of the Christian Church.

The death of Judas Iscariot seemed to have saved the Christian Church from apostasy and one would think that at the death of Iscariot, apostasy would also have expired and that

the Church would remain immune to it, yet apostasy has continued up to our generation. In fact, there seems to be a problem with eliminating apostasy to this day. Despite an increase in knowledge, the highly trained theologians and great scholars writing about the subject, apostasy has not changed or shown signs of lessening in the Christian Church. This study sought to find out where the Church was wrong, what the Church was guilty of neglecting, which contributed to the loss of precious church members, renowned evangelists and great church leaders through apostasy.

At the end of His (Christ's) earthly ministry, Jesus commissioned His apostles to lead the Church (Matt. 20:18-20; John 20: 21-22; 17:18-19). The apostles affirmed all the principles left to them by Christ to the last of Christ's disciple, John (the beloved). We can see how the apostles resisted apostasy, many times to the point of sacrificing their lives: Simon Peter was crucified in Rome; James (the elder) was beheaded by Herod in A.D. 44 (Acts 12:1-2); Andrew was crucified on St. Andrew's cross; Matthew and Mathias were martyred in Ethiopia; Saul (Paul) was beheaded in Rome and many others (Thompson 1984:1565). These men stood firm against all forms of apostasy in the Christian Church and yet, in their ministry, evidence abounds that apostasy was not an uncommon phenomenon.

Towards the end of the apostolic era, the apostles foresaw the impending apostasy in the Christian Church and warned against it. Accordingly, Paul warns Timothy, "guard what has been entrusted to your care, turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered (apostatized) away from the faith" (1Tim. 6:20-21)., Furthermore, he warns the Ephesian elders that apostasy would arise from within the Church (Acts 20:29-30) and also reminded the Thessalonians of the pending apostasy before the second coming of Christ (2Thess. 2:3-4).

2.2 Apostasy during the Ministry of Paul to the churches in Galatians

The way Paul deals with the Churches in Galatia explains how apostasy, if not recognized and dealt with quickly, can spread throughout the whole Christian Church. Within two or three years of Paul's mission to Asia Minor, many professed Christians had renounced the gospel (Gal. 1:6-12; 3:1-5). Paul informs Timothy that "everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me" (2 Tim. 1:15). Although one may not find evidence that everyone in Galatia deserted Paul, it is the view of the researcher that the majority of the church

members had or were in the process of apostatising. In this regard, six of the seven Churches in Asia were also warned by John against apostasy (Rev. 2-3)

2.2.1 Cause of Apostasy in the Churches in Galatians

The apostasy in the Churches of Galatia was caused by a conflict between Judaism and Christianity. Judaizers wanted all Christians to be circumcised before they are accepted in Church where as Christianity wanted Christians accepted into Church by faith through baptism only. Stagner (1967:136) says conflict is, “a situation in which two or more human beings desire goals which they perceive as being attainable by one or the other but not both.” In this regard, Leas and Kittlaus (1937:28) point out, “Conflicting goals are two purposes or objectives that cannot occupy the same group at the same time.” The Judaists believed that a person can earn salvation by rigorous adherence to various legal requirements either as a Jew or as a proselyte; that for one to be saved one needs to be circumcised, keep the moral laws, civil statutes and ceremonial rituals. Furthermore, these Judaizers claimed to have the support and prestige of the Jerusalem Church behind them and even of the original apostles (Knight 2005:18). Christianity on the other hand, introduced to the Galatians by Paul, was underpinned by the belief that a person is saved by faith alone and not by works (Gal. 2:16). In this context, Leas and Kittlaus (1937:20) explain that the conflict is seen as a type of behaviour that produces a barrier to another person’s attempt to meet his needs.

Leas and Kittlauss (1937:29) have three categories of conflict: the “intrapersonal”, the struggle that a person has within himself; the “interpersonal,” that is related to differences between people but is not related primarily to issues and “substantive conflict” that can occur between two individuals or between an individual and a group, or between groups. This type has to do with conflict over facts, means, ends or values. It is important to note that the problem that affected the Church in Galatia was substantive conflict. In this regard, the Christians in Galatia were caught between the two fighting parties, namely the Judaizers that promoted Judaism and Paul who preached Christianity. In the end, the Christians did not have sufficient knowledge of the scriptures to defend their faith against the Judaizers, resulting in the apostasy of some members. This cause of apostasy (substantive conflict) may be found in many Christian denominations including the West Zimbabwe Conference Churches of the Seventh- day Adventist Church.

2.2.2 Power struggle in the Galatians Church

The power struggle between the two parties (the Judaizers and Paul's theology) still seems to be existing between the liberals and the conservatives in the Church today. Knight (2005:24) declares, "One of the perennial issues is that of authority...believers in every age must decide on the foundation of theological decision making. Who or what determines what must be believed? Is it the Church, tradition, spirituals or some other form of authority?" He recommends that, "every teaching must be tested by the teaching of the apostles of Christ" (:24). Scott (1968:187) advocates, "... [this is] the only kind of apostolic succession we can accept- not a line of bishops stretching back to the apostles and claiming to be their successors."

The churches in Galatia had been established by Paul following the principle of salvation by faith rather than by works. Subsequently, some Judaizers went to those churches in Galatia and demanded that the new converts comply with all the Jewish conditions for the proselytes. There are four possible reasons why these Christians became Judaizers. Firstly, the long history of God's chosen nation (Jews) written in the Old Testament (Deut 6:3 -9), had made them believe that adherence to the laws had awarded them God's protection, miracles and many blessings; therefore, they felt obligated to keep the Jewish conditions even though they had become Christians. Secondly, the Judaizers did not accept Paul as an apostle of Jesus since he was not one of the original twelve apostles. Thirdly, they may have been motivated by a desire to avoid persecution by the Zealot Jews who objected to their fraternising with Gentiles (Gal. 6:12) and lastly, they did not believe in the theology of salvation by faith as preached by Paul.

2.2.3 The causes of apostasy in Galatia

The Judaizers used a three way approach to persuade the Christians in Galatia to apostatise from the Christian Church: Firstly, they discredited Paul's apostolic credentials, his authority to preach the gospel; secondly, they disapproved of the conditions for accepting Gentiles into the Church, which were preached by Paul and thirdly, they distorted the theology of salvation by faith. Consequently, they met with great success (Gal. 1:6) in deceiving a large segment of the Christian membership in the Churches in Galatia.

The above statements reveal that apostasy is the Church's greatest enemy. The "two chief characteristics of the false teachers are that, they were troubling the Church and changing

the gospel” (Scott 1968:23).” He (Scott) maintains that the two go together and that to tamper with the gospel always means trouble for the Church. “You cannot touch the gospel and leave the Church untouched, because the Church is created and lives by the gospel.” He observes that many times “troublemakers are not those outside who oppose, ridicule and persecute it, but those inside who try to change the gospel.” It is clear that the impact of the Galatian apostasy was affecting the whole Church. Therefore, Knight (2005:39) alleges that, “the Galatian heresy was dangerous because both the glory of Christ and the salvation of souls were at stake.” The causes of apostasy observed in the Church of Galatia may affect many churches, such as the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church today.

Regarding the denial of the credentials of Paul being an apostle, the Judaizers argued that he was not an authentic apostle of Jesus since he was not popularly known as one of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ. For the Jews, the qualification for being an apostle was that a person had literally been called by Jesus Christ and must have walked and ministered with Him (Richardson 1992:92). It was known that during the ministry of Jesus, “Saul” (later called Paul) was an enemy of the “people of the way.” There was no way that most Jews could view him as an apostle of the people he hated.

The false accusation of Paul was common among many Christian Jews who were not direct disciples of Christ. Their resistance is noted when Paul urges Timothy to guard against people who teach false doctrine, myths and endless genealogies and who promote controversies rather than God’s work (King James Version {KJV} 1Tim. 1:3- 4).

2.2.4 Paul’s response to the Judaizers

In response to the challenge of his apostolic call, Paul observed that “authority was a fundamental issue in Galatians” (Knight 2005:18). He traces his life from the time he persecuted the Christians, to his conversion, where God, through His Son Jesus, commissioned him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (Richardson 1992:93). The Lord (Jesus Christ) said to the disciple, Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel” (Acts 9:15). Paul does not regard himself as one of the disciples who walked with Jesus during His earthly ministry, but identifies his call to the apostleship as a unique one. Knight (2005) has four points to prove that Paul’s call to apostleship was unique and that he was not trained or oriented by the apostles in Jerusalem:

- After his conversion, he went to Arabia, then returned to Damascus (Gal. 1:17).
- After three years he travelled to Jerusalem, but only for 15 days (Gal. 1:18 -20).
- Then he journeyed to Syria and Cilicia (Gal. 1:21).
- After 14 years he returned to Jerusalem for a second visit (Gal. 2:1).

2.2.5 Paul in Arabia

Therefore, there was no time during which he could have been in Jerusalem for long enough periods for the apostles to instruct him. In the light of these facts, he contends that the argument of his opponents falls flat. His call came directly from Jesus (Acts 9:5, 16). The question is why did Paul go to Arabia, a place uncommon to the Jerusalem people? Could it be that it was the only safe place for him at that time, since he was not sure of what could happen to his life in Damascus, in Jerusalem or any other place he was known to be the persecutor of Christians after his conversion?

In view of Paul's conversion, one would support his choice for going to a neutral place such as Arabia, where few, if any Christians, fled to during the persecution. Viewed by the Jerusalem Church Council, the Sanhedrin where he obtained full authority to persecute Christians, Paul had openly abandoned, deserted and forsaken the Church, a form of apostasy and to the Christians, his famous acts of cruelty was still feared by many except for the few who witnessed his conversion in Damascus. On the other hand, there is a possibility that He was taking time out to commune with God before taking the God given mission to the Gentiles. Button (1994:55) refers to this as almost the only possible reason for the Arabian experience. The above discussion is an indication that church leaders need to satisfy the members about their spiritual background as such is a testimony which inspires the followers.

The convincing account of Paul's call to the apostleship can be compared to that of Isaiah and Jeremiah "before I was born the Lord called me; from my birth he has made mention of my name" (Is. 49:1). To Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations" (Jer. 1:5) and to Paul, "He who had set me apart before I was born and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles" (Gal 1:15, 16, Revised Standard Version (RSV)). The Judaizers were students of scripture; it is difficult to accept any reason for doubting that Paul was called like other Old Testament prophets.

In the period of Paul's ministry to the Galatians, most of the disciples of Jesus were confined to the area around Judea, Galilee, Damascus and probably Samaria. It was not clear to many Jews whether or not the disciples were in favour of Paul's entry requirements for the Gentiles to the Christian Church (salvation by faith alone). After the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:29) had mandated the conditions of accepting the Gentiles to the Christian Church, most of the Jews could not even accept the council itself as it was viewed as an opposition to the Jewish Church. To most Jews, the Jerusalem council carried no authority and could not make any mandate to the Jewish Church. For these and many other reasons, Paul's work to the Galatians was viewed by some Jews as void.

2.2.6 Judaizers' double standards

The Judaizers (Christian Jews), fearing persecution from the Jewish conservatives, sought to bring the new converts in line with the precepts of Judaism by demanding that they be circumcised and that they should observe all the Jewish rituals like the proselytes. The Judaizers practised double standards by wanting to please the Jewish conservatives and also remain followers of Christ. Accordingly, Knight (2005:45) points out that "serving Christ and pleasing other people are diametrical opposites rather than compatible goals." In his letter Paul retaliates with a question. "Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). Jesus Christ warns that no one can serve two masters (Matt. 6:24). In this regard, the Judaizers were to choose whom they would serve effectively between Jesus Christ and His gospel or Jews and their Judaism. To this day, Christians, have a problem with double standards, a situation which Churches, including the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church may not accommodate and for this reason, many people may apostatise from the Church.

The arguments regarding circumcision, upholding the moral laws, civil statutes and ceremonial rituals similar to those of Galatia were first brought up in Antioch (Acts 15:1 New International Version (NIV)). Accordingly, an argument arose between Paul, Barnabas and certain Jews until the matter was brought before the Jerusalem council, where it was resolved (Acts 15:5 – 21). At the end of the council, Judas and Silas were chosen, accompanied by Barnabas and Paul and sent to the church in Antioch with a letter containing the restrictions for the Gentile Christians. The letter read:

It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things (Acts 15:28 – 29 NIV).

From the conditions laid down by the elders in Jerusalem, it was clear that Paul did not remove any legal requirements from the gospel. In fact, what the Judaizers claimed was not required by the Christian Church. It would be difficult to believe that these Judaizers were ignorant of the wave of change in the Christian Church. In this regard, it becomes clear that the Judaizers may have been motivated by a desire to avoid persecution by the zealot Jews who objected to their fraternising with Gentiles (Acts 6:12). Knight (2005:156) explains that, there are two reasons why the Judaizers advocated circumcision (Gal. 6:12). In Knight (205: 156), Cole suggests that Paul's point was that the Judaizers "wanted ecclesiastical statistics," which was something to boast about. Circumcision also saved Jews from persecution, because the authorities officially recognised the Jewish religion and officially allowed Jews (those circumcised) to practise it (Knight 2005:157). The ecclesiastical statistics drive may be the cause of apostasy today. This drive lacks an emphasis on the teaching of the doctrines, which later became difficult for new converts to uphold.

The Judaizers also rejected Paul's theology, saying that "out of a desire to make the message appealing to the Gentiles, he had removed from the gospel certain legal requirements" (Barker: 1779). Throughout the letter to the Galatians, there was nothing more crucial for Paul than the gospel message that postulates, "Justification is by grace alone through faith alone without the works of law" (Knight 2005:39). He observes that Paul recognised only one gospel and one way only to God. Any "good" church member that had a different theology was anathema in his eyes" (Knight 2005:39). In this regard, he charges the elders of Ephesus to guard the Church because the grievous wolves will enter and will not spare the flock. (Acts 20:29). This strongly suggests that many Christian Jews were still convinced that salvation could be attained by works and the keeping of the law.

In many instances, the theology of Paul had given explanations and examples whereby God accepted, called or showed favour to people who did not do anything good or kept God's law in their lives. For example, Abraham (Gen.12:1) was called from a heathen background to establish God's nation (the Israelites); Moses a murderer was called to

deliver Israel from slavery (Ex. 3:10); Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:1) was shown the different periods of the universal human rule by God in a dream; Saul (Acts 9:15 -16) was called from a fight against the people of God. These and many others were accepted on the merits of grace and not of works.

2.2.7 Galatians between two theologies

The theology of the two groups (Paul and Judaizers) was too advanced for the new Christians in Galatia to understand and argue their case intelligently. The Christians could not challenge the false teachers as they were not well informed of the outcome of the Jerusalem council regarding the conditions of accepting the Gentiles into the Christian Church. They knew a little about the conditions of the Gentile proselytes, which were different from the conditions Jesus Christ set for the Christian Church. In the absence of the above knowledge, the Christians in Galatia gave in to pressure from the agitators (Gal. 5:12) and apostatised from the Christian Church. The above discussion reflects the conditions under which a person who is new in Church may apostatise.

The causes of apostasy in Galatia were from within the realms of the Church. Paul and those so- called ‘Judaizers’ had accepted Christianity and had been recognised by the heathens as followers of Christ. Both groups were informed of the mandates from their highest council in Jerusalem (Acts 15), now known as the Jerusalem Council. The mandates stipulated only four requirements as indicated above, for the Gentiles to be accepted into the Christian Church. It is important to point out that too many Church conditions or rules inhibit the freedom of worship as these are often used as regulators by the leaders.

Considering the three allegations against Paul’s work to the Galatians, we can also identify them as causes of apostasy: There is danger of apostasy if members doubt or cannot verify the credentials of their spiritual leader. His authority over the spiritual activities of the Church is always questioned and members can fall prey to false teaching. This was one of the causes of apostasy in the Galatian Church.

2.3 Galatians, Bereans and today’s church

The Galatians were also not like the ‘Bereans who were of a more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true’ (Acts 17:11). White (in, Acts of

the Apostles 1970:150) maintains that the minds of the Bereans were not narrowed by prejudice. They studied the Bible, not out of curiosity, but, in order that they might learn what had been written concerning the promised Messiah. If church members are not well informed with regard to the Church doctrines and do not check if what is practised in the Church is in line with the Biblical doctrine, they can fall prey to the wrong teaching. It is to be established whether or not the present church members experience similar causes of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Church of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The views of the Judaizers may be indications that even today many churches may fall prey to some ideologies, traditions and customs, which some people believe are still binding for their salvation. The situation of the Galatians is a difficult one and is shared by many new Christians today. There are some converts who cannot remain firm to their faith when internal church conflicts break out, such as that of the Judaizers and Paul. Both parties had extensive knowledge of scripture and the functions of the Church, but the Galatians did not search the scriptures to defend their faith. However, Paul was surprised by the sudden change of the Galatians from what he had taught them to supporting another gospel, which Paul asserts is really no gospel at all (Gal. 1:7). The conflict in the Galatians Church reflects another cause of apostasy, the one that takes advantage of new converts who have not grounded themselves in the doctrines. It was also difficult to express one's religious doubts or argue intelligently with old church members with more experience than them. There is need to investigate if similar causes of apostasy exist in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In the Galatian Church we see the congregation deserting the true gospel (2Tim. 1:15), a form of apostasy (explained in chapter one) in which a converted person gives up, surrenders, resigns, renounces, yields or drops out of church. In this form of apostasy, the deserter usually does not give notice of his intention to leave the Church, the Church learns of the desertion when a person has already left. There is frequently little or no chance to reason or negotiate with a person who apostasises from the Church in this way. However, in the case of the churches in Galatia, Paul had a chance to meet and reason with the apostate church, a situation that is not common to people who desert their faith. It is important to establish which situation is common to other churches when members apostatise in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

2.3.1 Foolishness of the Galatians

When apostasy takes place, two situations compete in the mind of an apostate, something new or something old begins to compete with the present situation. In the case of the church members in Galatia, The true gospel preached by Paul was being compared with the Jewish religion and the theology of salvation by grace through faith against the salvation by works. The churches in Galatia could not find reasons to support Paul's authentic credentials of being a true disciple of Jesus; they could also not defend Christianity against Judaism, they began to see Judaizers and Judaism as being the better option for them than Paul and Christianity, hence they deserted (apostatized) the true gospel of salvation by faith for that of salvation by works, a principle challenged by Paul (Gal. 2:16). In his letter, Paul regarded the decision of the Christians in Galatia as foolishness. He addresses them as follows:

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law or by believing what you heard. Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? (Gal.3:1 NIV).

The above statement reflects two strong words, which Paul used to describe the Christians in Galatia, the words "foolish" and "bewitched." The word "foolish" does not mean that the Galatians were mentally deficient, but simply failed to use their powers of perception. The word is used several times by both Paul and Jesus Christ in the New Testament (Luke 24:25; Rom. 1:14; 1Tim. 6:9; Tit. 3:3). In one instance, Jesus warned against the use of this word, "foolish" when He said:

But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subjected to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, Raca, (related to the Aramaic word for empty which means "empty-head" NIV notes) is answerable to the Sanhedrin. However, anyone who calls out 'You fool!' will be in danger of the hell fire (Matt. 5:22).

The word "fool," means a person who lacks a sense of judgment, an idiot or imbecile; a village fool. Whereas foolish comes from a French word "fol" meaning a mad person and a Latin word "follies" means empty headed person (Collins dictionary). The Greek word for hell is $\eta\epsilon\lambda\lambda / \gamma\eta\eta\nu\nu\alpha$, which Jesus used to indicate the punishment for describing someone as a fool. It derives its name from a deep ravine south of Jerusalem, the valley of Hinnom. During the reigns of the wicked kings, Ahaz and Manasseh, human sacrifices

to the Ammonite god Molech were offered there. Josiah desecrated the valley because of the pagan worship that took place (2Kings 23:10; Jer.7:31-32; 19:6). It became a dumping place and a perpetually burning city dump and later a figure for the place of final punishment (Gal. 3:1 notes NIV).

Another strong word Paul used was “bewitched.” It is not clear whether witchcraft was commonly practised in Galatia, that Paul could suspect a spell of this kind to have affected the Christians in Galatia. The term “witchcraft” is used in both Old and New Testament. In Deuteronomy 18:10, it is listed among the detestable practises of the people of Canaan; In Galatians 5:20, it is mentioned as one of the acts of a sinful nature and in Revelations 22:15, it describes one of the groups of people who will be left outside the city of God.

The factors discussed above, affected the churches in Galatia. First, they failed to use their mental powers of perception to see the difference between the principles of Judaism and those of Christianity, which was foolishness; second, they gave in to the influences of Judaism’s false teachers which bewitched their minds. Drawing from the the experiences of churches in Galatia, there is a possibility that people may apostatise by merely being foolish, failing to use their powers of perception to make wise judgments in various situations or by giving up their faith by becoming bewitched by influences that prevail around them. The question on the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church today, is how different is it from the Church in Galatia? Is it possible that church members can apostatise today because of the two factors that affected the churches in Galatia? Do either or both of the above causes of apostasy apply to some church members today? There is most certainly a need to investigate these aspects of apostasy.

In dealing with apostates, there is a need to know that if the apostates have made up their minds to desert, surrender or give up their faith it because they have decided that there is something better for them than what the present religion offers to them. It can also be the case that the apostates also compare those who converted them with those who convinced them to leave the Church.

2.4 Trends of apostasy

Paul begins by affirming his call to the gospel ministry (Gal. 1:11); the authority of the message (Gal. 1:12) and then he makes a comparison between the two religions (Christianity and Judaism) , both of which he knew well (Gal. 1:13 – 24). Paul’s presentation provides the following insights regarding dealing with apostates, namely that, it is important to understand the causes of their apostasy fully; to know which pillars of his (Paul’s) pastoral calling have been distorted; to know which Biblical doctrines have been misunderstood by the apostates and to know the background of the situation in which the apostates find themselves. This study investigated how the apostatised members can be attracted back to the church in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The way Paul dealt with apostasy sets an example with regard to the qualities needed by church leaders today. Not only did he exhibit considerable courage by the way he faced the hostile opposition group when delivering his firm message; he also expressed his views tactfully. Duncan (1934:15) states, “Not for a moment can the apostle keep back what presses so heavily on his soul.” His words were well calculated to startle the Galatians out of their complacency. Frindly (1902: 35) also declares that Paul was of steadfast faith and well- informed regarding the scriptures. White (1911:57) adds further:

The greatest want of the world is the want of men, who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost soul are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.

The above authors present ideas on how apostasy can be approached. There is a need for firmness in handling the apostasy phenomenon in the church. Accordingly, the methods of handling apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church were also investigated.

2.5 Comparative study of Galatians and today’s Church

Both similarities and differences exist between the Galatians and today’s church: the rapid growth of the Church that characterises both periods; the high degree of interest in the gospel of Jesus Christ; the clash of ideas between the conservatives and the liberals and the plight of new converts. Similarly, there is conflict in the Christian Churches of today as was the case in Galatia.. The conflicts, no matter how petty they may be, can divide the Church and result in poor relationships among church members, families and

marriages if not dealt with properly and in time. In effect, conflict is one of the great causes of apostasy in today's Church.

It is therefore not surprising that Luther (1953:19) asserts that apostasy caused by conflict is not limited to certain faiths or denominations. In fact, no lines of fellowship or beliefs can escape from such conflicts. Indeed, conflict affects the spirituality of people, weakens the prayer lives of people and creates divisions among church members, causing some to apostatise from the Church.

The conflict between the Judaizers and Paul in the Galatian Churches was caused by some Christian Jews advocating that Judaism should be as important for salvation as the redemption of people by God's grace through faith alone. Accordingly, Luther (1995:26) admonishes, "when a conflict arises in the Church, the parties' core identities are at risk: spiritual commitment and faith understandings are highly inflammatory because they are central to one's psychological identity." He adds, "When Christians differ over beliefs or commitments, they may question or even condemn one another's spirituality or character." The condemned person feels alienated from God and that can lead the individual to apostatise.

The disputes over church matters are different from any other disputes. When two people disagree over a tradition, an interpretation of scripture or doctrinal position, they are not just arguing a point; they are taking each other to task intellectually, theologically and spiritually and intrude on someone's sacred ground. It is interesting that many people who may fight fairly at work often fight unfairly at church. McSwain and Treadwell (1981:59) assert that conflict causes stress which "forces individuals to choose from among a multitude of options in life how they [people] shall live." It is at this point that the Devil takes advantage of the situation and can lead some people to apostatise. According to Luther (1995:63), "Conflict is not necessarily a bad thing; it can be used as a tool for growth and for deeper understanding." Undeniably, there is a need to resolve this conflict amicably as the failure to resolve conflicts often leads to many Christians losing their faith.

2.6 Choice of a church and apostasy

Many people choose to belong to a church without studying its doctrines and cannot tell if the church is scripturally based or not. According to Luther's (1995) observations,

various church programmes may be a tool to assess the church. He states further that there is a need to also find out what the church teaches and believes about Christ: What are the undeniable, unchanging truths of the Scriptures that a person would refuse to compromise? A church that has doctrines, which are not scripturally based, has a potential of leading its members away from the structures Christ laid for the Christian Church. Luther (1995: 66) also declares, “When a church starts placing the same weight on human-made rituals as they do the commands of God, something’s wrong.” Christians today need to read the scriptures as did the Bereans (Acts 17:10, 11) in order that they support or defend their faith when conflicts affect the Church. He (Luther) states, “I have seen Satan tear apart Churches with conflict too many times. I have seen him [Satan] bring strife and dissension into the most peaceful Churches.”

The impact of the conflict in Galatia affected the whole Church (2Tim. 1:15) and it was felt by all the parties involved: The Judaizers, Paul and all the Christians in the province of Asia. The Christian Church today has expanded, covering many countries of the world, with many preachers approaching the gospel of Jesus Christ from many perspectives. As realised from the discussions above, the comparison between the situation of apostasy in the Galatian Churches and the Church today, strongly suggests that Church conflict has a higher potential of causing apostasy and has a greater impact on the present Church than during the time of the Galatians.

2.7 Apostasy after the apostolic era

After a century, the apostles also left men to lead the Christian Church in accordance with the principles Christ established. After the leadership of the apostles, the Church began to experience many changes and adjustments. The contemporary witnesses of apostasy in the early Christian Church had unveiled the truth about the existence of apostasy during and after the apostolic era. The apostles could speak with authority and correct many anomalies in the Church. When these apostles died, no one could appeal to the voice of reason or speak with power and authority. Scholars felt too inadequate to speak with such authority and felt that they were not worthy to be accepted by the Church as the apostles.

Towards the end of the first and the beginning of second century, many scholars wrote letters expressing their concern about the increase of apostasy and the absence of apostolic authority in the Church. Ignatius (of Antioch) emphasised that he could only give advice and did not have the authority to direct the Church of God like the apostles.

His inability to meet the apostolic expectations is noted when he tells the Trallians, “I did not think myself competent as a convict, to give you orders like an apostle” (Trallian 3:3) and to the Romans, he wrote, “I do not order you as did Peter and Paul, they were apostles, I am a convict” (Rom. 4:3).

According to *The Development of the Christian Church (DCC)* (Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA Church) 1949:533), after the apostolic era, many doctrines were changed (1Tim.1:10; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; 4:3-4) and some laws of the Decalogue, particularly the fourth commandment, were adjusted to decree that the Saturday Sabbath worship should be observed on a Sunday as is evident in the decree signed by Emperor Constantine “in AD 321 to honour the first day of the week ‘the venerable day of the sun’ this was the first Sunday law” These and many other changes created fear and the persecution of many who did not accept the changes and adjustments of the foundation of the Christian church laid by Christ and the apostles

During the period called the dark ages, many Christians were covered with the skins of animals and then torn to pieces by wild beasts for not abandoning the pillars of the Christian Church established by Christ. Some were forced to make a decision whether to be true to their Saviour and die or to compromise their faith and offer incense to the pagan gods of the state religion (*The development of the Christian Church. (DCC)*. 1949:533). Christians find it difficult to reconcile the standards of the New Testament Church and the Christian church of today. One wonders what happened to the early Christian Church’s teachings, practices and leadership. The common question is whether Christ’s principles continue to guide the Church after He left or did apostasy take place after the apostolic era? The first apostles stood for what was right, even though it cost them their lives. However, they later compromised on the principles, which governed the early Church.

2. 8 Apostasy during the period of the reformers

Reformers such as Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin and many others, tried to follow the apostolic way of resisting apostasy in the Church but were themselves regarded as apostates and some were excommunicated; while others were killed. In Luther’s time, the Church created a situation characterised by the selling of indulgences and teaching “that one’s eternal destiny would be determined by how effectively one had appropriated the Church’s sacramental graces in order to bring forward truly meritorious

works since only faith active in works of love could be a saving faith” (Walker, Norris, Lotz & Handy 1986:420). Walker *et al.* (1986:421) contend that “Luther ... is one of the few individuals of whom it may be said that the history of this world was profoundly altered by his works.” He remarks that Luther moved people by the power of a profound religious faith, resulting in their unshakable trust in God and in a direct, personal relationship with God, which brought the certainty of salvation that left no room for the elaborate hierarchical and sacramental structures of the “Middle Ages” (Walker *et al.* 1986).

2.9 Luther’s effort to reform the apostate Church

The message of Luther focussed on the most important aspect of the Pauline teaching, in that, like Paul, it regarded salvation in essence, as a close personal relationship with God. In other words, he referred to God himself as the “Uncreated Grace” rather than the “created grace” of the church’s sacraments). He was consistently teaching that the sinner is justified (accepted, acquitted and forgiven) before God by faith alone and that by absolute dependence on and trust in the Gospel of free forgiveness, the Word of God. He asserted that “Repentance is not a single act of penance, but a constant change of heart and mind extending over one’s life time”(Walker *et al.* 1986:422).

In response to the monk’s difficult way of life, Luther (1953:110), advocates:

Learn Christ and him crucified. Learn to pray to him and despairing of yourself, say; ‘Thou, Lord Jesus, art my righteousness, but I am thy sin. Thou hast taken upon thyself, what is mine and hast given to me what is thine and hast taken upon thyself what is thou was not and hast given to me what I was not.

Monks believed that a life of suffering merited acceptance before God. In support of Luther’s statement, Norris (1996:112) remarks, “Those God- given provisions [laws] showed them the way they ought to live. But he is saying quite firmly that those provisions did not provide a path by which they could merit salvation.”

The life of monks has had an effect on many people who believe that by keeping the law and suffering they will be saved. In this regard Hansen (1994:106), adds, “The law ...makes us aware of our sins. But it does not; indeed it cannot, set us free from bondage to sin. The promise of blessing comes only through faith in Christ.”

At the peak of Luther's challenge against the sale of indulgences, he presented his disputation concerning penitence and indulgences. At twelve noon, on the first day of October 1517, he posted ninety-five theses on the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg in Germany (Schaff 1996:156). This event became important and is celebrated by many Protestant German Churches to this day. On the first day of November, he called for a meeting with Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz and Bishop Hieronymus Scultetus to whose diocese Wittenberg belonged. The meeting was also attended by the professors and students of the University of Wittenberg.

The success of the meeting influenced many people and had a considerable impact throughout the Catholic Churches in Germany. What Luther did, paved the way for many other people to support the reformation. The example of Luther's fall (as viewed by the Catholic Church) is an indication that one person lost to the Church has the potential to cause many other Church members to apostatise. Accordingly, the impact and the trends of apostasy continue to destroy the unity of the Churches even today.

The statement, which Luther made against the practices of the Church strongly suggest that it is possible that a person can be considered an apostate when he rightly contradicts certain functions of the Church, as was the case when he advocated "that the text of the Bible is to be preferred even to the authority of the whole Church" (Walker *et al.* 1986:428). As a response to these and many other statements "Eck felt that the whole controversy might now be quickly ended by a papal bull of condemnation to Luther, which he set himself to secure. This bull, "*Exsurge domine*," "Arise, O Lord ...protects the vineyard Thou gavest Peter from the wild beast who devours it ..." (Kauffman 1985:295).

Subsequently, Luther was summoned to the Diet of Worms, where he refused to renounce his stance on salvation by faith alone. On this occasion, Luther presented his profound statement of faith: "Unless I am convicted either by scripture or by right reason... my conscience is captive to the word of God, I neither can nor will recant anything, since it is neither right nor safe to act against conscience. I can do no other. God help me. Amen." (Kauffman 1985:295). This statement was issued on June 15, 1520 and from that time onwards, some devoted Roman Catholic Christians viewed Luther as an apostate, yet after many years, people began to realise that what Luther was saying was true and the

Church adopted many truths propounded by the man they had excommunicated from the Church as an apostate

2.9.1 Who is an apostate, Luther or the Church?

If one were to evaluate Luther and the Church today, who would be an apostate? Is it the Church or the person? If we are following the Pauline teachings today, Luther would win against the Church, yet when we apply the definition of apostasy, Luther clearly disagrees with the Church for several reasons. He was baptised in the Church, he vowed to uphold the practices and the beliefs of the Church, deliberately turning against what he vowed to uphold, automatically made him an apostate and many people believe that he had committed an act of apostasy. If this is ethically true, the question is, does it mean that when a person is baptised and makes vows, there must be no further search for new insights or ways of improving the Church procedures? It is therefore important to investigate if the church leaders deal with people's new ideas without conflict resulting.

Reading through the treaties written by Luther, namely, "To the Christian nobility of the German nation," "The Babylonian captivity of the Church" and the "Freedom of a Christian" (Walker, Norris, Lotz & Handy 1986:430); it is not difficult to see the changes in the Church today that came about as a result of Luther's reforms. The question remains why was Luther considered an apostate? If this problem is not resolved, it may cause many Christians to be inactive resulting in a stagnant church. Accordingly, there could be similar problems in the Christian Church today.

2.9.2 Factors leading to Luther's apostasy from the Church

There are four factors that may have led to Luther's fall from grace in the Catholic Church: At that time, Luther was serving in a theological seminary, preparing students for service in the Church. Any deviation from the procedures and beliefs of the Church affected the students he taught, as a result, the whole of Christendom was affected by a new theology which was neither known, accepted nor understood by the Church leadership. Furthermore, the seminary leadership did not endorse his new beliefs in the curriculum of the institution; this meant that some faculties did not subscribe to his beliefs and in his development. Early in September 1517, he prepared "a disputation against scholastic theology" published his ninety five theses, presenting a truly radical attack on virtually the whole of medieval scholasticism, including the "*via antiqua*" (Walker *et al.* 1986: 424).

A common understanding of the Roman Catholic Church, which had become a universal system, would not allow a radical change that is instituted from an unconstitutional base. The best model for solving a problem such as that between Luther and the Church is the Antioch/Jerusalem Council model (Acts 15) discussed above, than one which forces its way up from the bottom of a hierarchy. Although Luther was theologically correct in many ways, he was also ethically incorrect in many ways. The problem here was neither Luther nor the church leaders, but the difference between the church vows and the scriptures. If the scriptures and the vows were in harmony, there would have been no problem during the reformation.

2.9.3 Ulrich Zwingli's reforms and apostasy

The reformers following Luther made their stances well understood in their efforts to help the Church, which had lost most of its apostolic foundations. One of the most outstanding reformers was Ulrich Zwingli, born in 1484, a parish priest and a city preacher. His convictions were based on the humanist philosophy grounded in Erasmian principles with regard to the study of Paul and Augustine. His emphasis was different from that of Luther who focussed on the Christian life as one of freedom in terms of forgiveness by and reconciliation with God. To Zwingli, it was far more a case of conformity to the will of God as set forth in the Bible (Norris 1996: 445).

Another difference was shown in their understanding of the Lord's Supper. Luther contended that the words "This is my body" were literally true and he propounded that the body and the blood of Jesus Christ were "really" or "substantially" present in the consecrated bread and wine and were truly received by all who partook of these substances (Norris, 1996: 445). However, to Zwingli, understanding the Lord's Supper was based on a symbolic understanding of the words. He denied any bodily presence of Jesus Christ in the Lord's Supper. He believed that Christ was present spiritually, not in the bread and wine, but in the hearts of the faithful. He explained, "The elements are the outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace, already present: So 'eating' is equivalent to believing (*edere est credere*)" (Norris, 1996: 445).

2.9.4 The clash of theologies

The differences between the contemporary reformers escalated into serious clashes of theologies. To Luther and Bugenhagen, the Lord's Supper was important, yet for Zwingli and Oecollampadius, Luther's stance was an unreasoning remnant of Catholic

superstition. Zwingli maintained that the body can only be in one place. He believed the body of Christ has been in heaven since He left and that physical things cannot contain or convey spiritual realities (Norris 1996:445).

In response, Luther retaliated by saying that, “Zwingli’s interpretation was a sinful exaltation of reason above the ‘simple word’ of scripture and a denial of the reality of Christ’s Incarnation.” He also declared that Zwingli and his supporters were not Christians, while Zwingli alleged that Luther was worse than the Roman champion, Eck (Walker *et al.* 1986:446).

The clash among the reformers made the Roman Catholic party and all the conservatives rejoice, and that brought the Zwingli’s reformation to an end. As the most politically gifted of all the reformers, Zwingli fought against the old strongly conservative rural cantons of Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden and Zug that were opposed to Zwingli’s changes. Subsequently, when violence erupted, Zwingli himself was severely wounded. After refusing the ministrations of a confessor, he was killed and his body was quartered and burned and mixed with dung, to prevent his ashes being collected as Protestant relics (Norris 1996: 447).

In life, Zwingli was extremely successful and was highly revolutionary regarding the reformation. In addition, his aim was to return the Church to the state in which Christ’s apostles had left it. However, when one looks at the events leading up to his untimely death, one becomes aware of his painful struggle in a life that ended on a disappointing note. If one focusses on these reformers (Luther and Zwingli), similar situations could be developing today. If that is the case, then many Christians may be mourning the fall of Christian Church standards while fearing for their lives, if they should announce such reformatory measures. As was the case with Luther, why was the reformation of Zwingli not accepted in the Church? What made his Church look at him as one who had apostatised from the Church? What are the possible methods he could have employed to make his whole Church accept his reformation theology without resorting to conflict?

2.9.5 Ulrich Zwingli’s apostasy from the Church

While the solutions for apostasy may be many, we need to look at the causes of Zwingli’s apostasy first. It is possible as in many churches, that when he was converted to the Church and when he was baptised, he vowed to obey, respect, and uphold the beliefs of

the church. Like Luther, Zwingli was highly placed, which meant that he was highly respected and honoured by the church leadership, being in the position of a priest and a city preacher where most of the elite attended church services. His situation can be viewed from at least three perspectives, namely from that of the ordinary person, the scholar and the highest level of church administration respectively.

2.10 Implications of apostasy for church members

The Reformation period also had ordinary people like in any other period of the Christian Church, they were composed of lay persons that were not well educated; while some were born in the Church, some people were baptised just before or during the period of reformation. Those born in the Church also formed three groups in terms of their levels of knowledge. One group could appreciate and support the changes in certain functions as they had suffered for a long time because of their grievances regarding the sale of indulgencies. This group had read the Bible and compared it with what was happening in the Church and were satisfied that certain matters were not in line with what the Bible said. Hence, they felt that God's time had come so that His ways could come to pass in the Church. In the same group there could have been some conservatives who fully believed that all was well in the Church and anything else was a denial of God's rule and for anyone to go against it was clearly apostasy. The last group was composed of those who said they would watch and see.

As can be seen from the views of those born in the Church, not many may be lost (apostatise) from the Church. The next group of ordinary lay people is the most vulnerable group, those who joined the Church just before the reformation changes took place or during the period of change. The excitement of new converts and their high hopes and ambitions, were quickly hit by the storm of confusion in the Church. Many of these people, became affected and had difficulty in making firm decisions .because of their inexperience in Church matters. Some of these people joined the reformers' struggle to change church procedures and became apostates together with the veteran Christian reformers. Others quickly renounced their faith when they realised that life in the Church was equal to or worse than that outside the Church. These two groups of people constituted the largest number of people who apostatised from the Church. When leaders fight, most ordinary people are affected. Hence, the impact of apostasy is felt by the whole Church.

The next group was that of the educated scholars or theologians. These people were driven to search the scriptures more and more deeply to see if the reformers were true to what they said, but many of them lacked the courage to support the desired change in the Church. This group of educated people was also divided as some were for, while others were against the reformation. This group was one of the most disappointing groups because they had the knowledge and the capacity to present their facts, but they chose to remain quiet.

These contemporary reformers (Luther and Zwingli), lacked much in terms of diplomacy, they were not able to meet by themselves to discuss and resolve their differences amicably without exposing themselves or disturbing the public with their differences of opinion. The open conflict between the reformers caused much more harm than good to the Church. The conflict among the reformers resulted in the many denominations we see today. All those who left the Church were regarded as defectors, deserters or rebels (all forms of apostasy) by their original Church.

The question is whether the Churches need reformation today. Are any reformation activities taking place at present? If so, how different are they from those of the previous Church? If they are different, why are divisions present in churches today? Could the attempts to reform the Church today become part of the causes of apostasy? Is it possible to reform the church without dividing the Church? The Christian Church today needs to think seriously about the reformation methods that will improve or change the Church for the better, without fragmenting into different denominations or segments and looking at each other as apostates. From a single Christian Church founded by Christ, numerous different Church segments have been formed. These churches felt that the members of the other churches had apostatised.

The last group involved in the struggle for reformation was the Church leadership. It is difficult to know what the reformers could have done to correct the anomaly in the Church without causing trouble to the leadership. While it is true that all leaders are expected to uphold all the set standards of the Church organisation, it is also true that leaders are expected to acknowledge that God reveals His will to people irrespective of their standing, status or the standards in the Church: Moses was considered to be apostatised by both the Israelites and the Egyptians, yet God saw him as a deliverer of God's chosen nation (Gen. 3:9, 10, 11); Gideon considered himself to be weak and lowly,

and coming from the weakest clan of Manasseh. when God used him to destroy the worshipped idols, Israelites considered him as a rebel (a form of apostasy) and he later delivered Israel from the Midianites (Judges 6 and 7); while although Saul abandoned (apostatized) and defiled the orders of the Sanhedrin, but God sent him to preach to the Gentiles.

2.11 Apostasy from Biblical theology or from the church policy

All these people made a considerable impact on the Church by correcting situations in the fallen Church, yet they were considered to have apostatized. In this regard, it is difficult as a church to identify genuine reformers. Some of the theological arguments may later have been found to be true in the many years to come, yet such people were condemned by their former churches.

During the reformation period, the church leaders considered the policy equal or more important than the Biblical doctrines. The leadership's position on the two reformers is an indication that any person who does not adhere to the vows he/she professed to uphold becomes an apostate and this was the case for many other reformers. This study sought to establish whether the vows and the scriptures were reviewed often to see if they are in harmony with the scriptures in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

2.12 Conclusion

The reviewed literature revealed that there has been apostasy since the inception of the Christian Church. One of the first causes of apostasy was the desire for money, which led Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus. The consequence of this act was that the ministry of Jesus was terminated and this also led to the death of both Judas and Jesus. Furthermore, the literature shows that during the apostolic age, there was a clash between the theology of salvation by grace through faith, preached by Paul the founder of the churches in Galatia and the theology of salvation by works propagated by the Judaizers. The implications were so great that almost all the church members of the churches in Galatia apostatized. The reformation reviewed literature showed that regardless of the new light from the scriptures, the church leaders still preferred to uphold the church policies rather than the scriptures. Therefore, most reformers were considered apostates even though they were in favour of the Scriptures. These and many other causes and implications of apostasy

revealed by the reviewed literature determined the perspective from which these investigations were carried out in the West Zimbabwe Conference.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

APOSTASY IN THE SDA CHURCH

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a brief history of the Seventh – day Adventist Church of which the West Zimbabwe Conference is a part; accordingly, it examines its stand on apostasy, the doctrines, policies and manuals, membership recruitment and preparation of new converts and the disciplinary instruments. The brief background of the Church (SDA Church) is necessary for understanding the West Zimbabwe Conference’s view on apostasy, the beliefs and doctrines which form the bases on which any form of apostasy is assessed and determined by the Church.

3.2 The Church’s stand on apostasy

The West Zimbabwe Conference falls within the sisterhood of the Seventh-day Adventist Churches whose doctrines and beliefs it upholds. The Church’s understanding is in harmony with the definitions and the forms of apostasy in chapter one. However, the Church’s view on apostasy goes further than the interpretation of apostasy in that chapter. It is important to note that the Church does not only regard people who abandon their faith, desert, defect or reject the Church as apostates, but, also those in the Church who may have broken or failed to uphold the code of ethics set out in the manuals. For example, members who break the seventh commandment in the Decalogue (Exodus 20:14) are considered apostate by the Church even though the members have not abandoned their faith or rejected the Church. Furthermore, people who smoke tobacco or drink alcohol, even though they are faithful in most other Church activities, are regarded as apostate (SDA Church 2005:195) and their names are not noted in the Church register as full members.

3.3 Historical background of the Seventh–day Adventist Church

The focus of this study is on the causes and implications of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A brief historical background of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is necessary as the West Zimbabwe Conference believes and upholds all the doctrines and beliefs of the Church.

The history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church dates back to the years stretching from 1782 to 1860, after the period of the Reformation, during the period of the “great religious awakening” and after the bitter wars of the French Revolution in the 1790s, which ended the papal dominance by the captivity of the Pope in 1798 (SDA Church 2005:380). This period also led to the end of Deism, a sceptical belief that rejects Christianity with its miracles and supernatural revelations, when many people began to question human reason (Deism) as a sufficient basis for civilised living (Knight 1999:13). This philosophy had robbed the Christians of their trust, faith and focus to God and to Jesus Christ. The end to Deism paved the way for many people to return to Christianity and to the Bible truths.

3.3.1 The Church’s roots

The Seventh-day Adventist Church finds its immediate roots in the knowledge and expectation of the “Second Advent” of Jesus Christ, in the early nineteenth century (Knight 1999: 13). The second advent of Jesus Christ movement was born from a belief that certain prophetic signs pointing to the second coming of Jesus Christ had been fulfilled. The outstanding prophetic signs were those in the book of Matthew 24:7 regarding the earthquake and Matt. 24:29 to 30, referring to the darkening of the sun, the moon and the falling down of the stars. Hence, some people started to preach about the second advent of Jesus Christ basing their messages on these texts.

3.3.2 A movement is formed

The first person to preach the advent message was William Miller, born in a Christian family belonging to the Baptist Church and who later abandoned Christianity (a form of apostasy) to embrace Deism which had become popular during the first years of the nineteenth century (Knight 1999: 13). Miller and many other people later abandoned (a form of apostasy) Deism and returned to Christianity.

Miller’s conviction concerning the eminent return of Jesus Christ was based on his calculation of the period stated in Daniel 8:14 (KJV) “And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” In verse 17 of the same chapter, the angel indicates that the vision concerns the end times and in Daniel 9:24 (NIV) says, “Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.” His

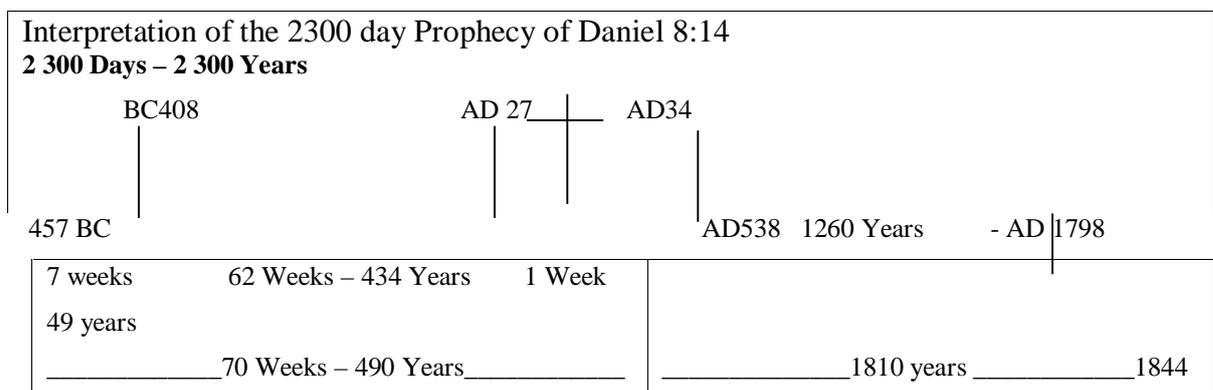
interpretation of the above verses, led him to believe that the second coming of Jesus Christ was eminent.

Many people, such as Joseph Baths, James White, Ellen, (later Mrs. White), Samuel Snow and many others supported Miller’s ideas, namely, that at the end of Daniel’s prophecy of 2300 days, Jesus would return to this earth. This group is known as the Millerites. Convincingly, the Millerites demonstrated through a variety of mathematical calculations that the fulfilment of the 2,300 – days prophecy of Daniel 8:14 would take place in the autumn of 1844 (Knight 1999: 22).

Samuel Snow further predicted that Daniel’s prophecy about the cleansing of the sanctuary would come to pass on the Jewish Day of Atonement- the tenth day of the seventh month of the Jewish year (Lev. 23:27). That day, according to the Karate Jewish reckoning was on October 22, 1844, which the Millerites interpreted as the second coming day of Jesus Christ (Knight: 23), later known as the day of great disappointment.

In interpreting the 2300 day prophecy of Daniel 8:14, the Millerites followed the year-day prophetic principle as indicated in Numbers 14:34 “... even forty days, each day for a year ...,” and Ezekiel 4:6 ... I have appointed thee each day for a year.” Following this principle, all the days and weeks of the prophecies of Daniel were converted over two years. The diagram below shows the various periods of the prophecy marked in years leading to 1844, a date on which the Millerites expected Jesus Christ to come. The later part of the vision is explained to Daniel by the angel. The period is divided into two sections, the first 490 years and the second 1810 years which are also broken into smaller periods.

Table 3.1: Prophetic time followed by the Millerites. Source: Nelson, Thomas (NKJV Notes 1982: 1315)



3.3.4 Interpretation of Daniel's prophecy

The Millerites followed their understanding of the end time visions in the book of Daniel. Their interpretation of the visions made them believe that the advent of Jesus Christ would be precisely at the end of the period of 2300 days (years). They mainly focussed on certain chapters and verses as will be seen below. However, various scholars differ in their interpretations of these texts. Nevertheless, the discussions focus mostly on the Millerite's interpretation as they are the basis on which the Seventh-day Adventist Church is founded.

3.3.4.1 Daniel 8:14 “And he said unto me, unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed (KJV).”

3.3.4.2 Daniel 9:24 “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy (KJV).”

3.3.4.3 Daniel 9:25 “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times (KJV).”

3.3.4.4 Daniel 9:26 “And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the Prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end therefore shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined (KJV).”

3.3.4.5 Daniel 9:27 “And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate (KJV).”

The scholars' comments are divided on the statement “he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease” (Dan. 9:27). Barker (1985 NIV Bible Notes) interprets the statement as

referring an end to the OT sacrificial system; He states that some believe that the statement is a reference to the antichrist (“the [ultimate] ruler who will come” v.26) making a treaty with the Jews in the future and then disrupting their system of worship, an abomination that causes desolation (Dan. 11:31). However, Nichol (SDA Bible Commentary: 844) believes that the cleansing of the sanctuary cannot refer to the Temple at Jerusalem, which was destroyed in A.D. 70. He asserts that the sanctuary of the new covenant is clearly the sanctuary in heaven (Rev.11:1; Dan.8:11-13).

The “sanctuary shall be cleansed” is another component scholars are divided about. The “New International Version Bible commentary reveals that the 2300 evenings and mornings probably refers to the number of sacrifices consecutively offered on 1,150 days, the interval between the desecration of the Lord’s altar and its re-consecration by Judas Maccabeus on Kislev 25, 165 BC. The pagan altar set up by Antiochus on Kislev 25, 168, was apparently installed almost two months after the Lord’s altar was removed marking a difference of three years between the desecration and re-consecration of the altar.

The Seventh – day Adventist Bible commentary attributes the 2300 days to the years starting in 457 BC to 1844. The contextual evidence of the starting time is given in Daniel 9:25 “...from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem...” The commandment to build Jerusalem was given by King Artaxerxes in 457 B.C.

The seventy weeks (490 years) that form the first part of Daniel’s prophecy is further divided into three parts:

- Seven weeks (49 years) from 457 BC to 408 BC rebuilding Jerusalem (Dan. 9:25).
- Sixty two weeks (434 years) from 408 BC to AD 27 covering the birth of Jesus to His baptism (Dan. 9:25);
- One week, (7 years) Daniel 9:27 cover the period of three and half years from the baptism of Jesus AD27, His ministry, crucifixion and His ascension. The last three and half years end with the death of Stephen in AD34 (Acts 7:58-30).

In order to calculate the 2300 days prophecy, the Millerites followed the events in Daniel 9:25 which reads:

From the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem until the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks ($7 \times 7 = 49$ years) and threescore and two weeks ($62 \text{ weeks} \times 7 = 434$ years): the streets shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.

The decree of Artaxerxes, which came into effect in the fall of 457 BC, giving the command to the captives (Israelites) to return to Judea, to rebuild Jerusalem, marked the beginning of the 2300 weeks (2300 years) of Daniel's prophecy. The Millerites followed the event basing their calculations from 457 BC. Nelson (1982: 1314 Notes) states, "It was at Christ's baptism (Matt.3:16) that He was anointed (Dan. 9:24) by a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit and began His ministry." The above calculation shows that the 483 years from 457 BC ended at Christ's baptism in AD 27. This period leaves one week (7 years) to complete the 490 years of the first part of the 2300 years of Daniel's prophecy. Christ's ministry covers the three and half years to His death and His ascension and the last three and half years ends at the death of Stephen in AD 34 (Acts 7:58-60), which completed the first part of the 2300 years.

The second period (see diagram) spans 1810 years to the final part of the prophecy. This period generated special interest among the Millerites in the search for the end time signs. In their study, they associated this period with the time when Justinian's General Belisarius liberated Rome in AD 538 and increased the authority of the Pope (the Holy See), as a starting point for the 1260 years of Christian persecution known as the period of the dark ages (SDA Belief: 156). To the Millerites, this period marked the fulfilment of Dan. 7: 25; Rev. 12:6 and 13:5-7. According to their calculations, this period ended in 1798 when the Papal dominance ended through the victories of Napoleon's armies in Italy.

The French revolutionary government directed Napoleon to take the Pope prisoner. Upon receiving this order, General Berthier entered Rome and proclaimed political rule over the Papal authority of the Church. According to the interpretation of the Millerites, the suspension of the Papal authority was the fulfilment of Rev. 13:3 (SDA Church 2005: 156).

3.3.5 The SDA beliefs on the fulfilment of the end time prophetic signs

The Millerites also believed that this act introduced a new period, which was the fulfilment of John's vision in Revelations 14:6-7; Daniel 12:4 and Matthew 24:14.

Following the 1260 years known as the “dark ages,” a period followed that was characterised by a time of great religious awakening. Bibles were once again brought into public use and more discoveries pointing to the end time were made by the Millerites.

Signs in the natural world made the Millerites anticipate the imminence of Jesus Christ’s return more than any other signs they had discovered. The first natural sign they associated with the fulfilment of the end time prophecy, was the great earthquake which occurred in November 1, 1755 known as the Lisbon earthquake. Its effect was observed in Europe, Africa and America, covering an area of about four million square miles (SDA Church 2005: 378). Its destruction centred on Lisbon, Portugal, where it levelled public and residential buildings, causing scores of thousands of deaths (SDA Church 2005:378). The Millerites associated the earthquake with the fulfilment of the Rev 6:12 prophecy.

The second sign believed to be the fulfilment of the Matt 24:29 prophecies occurred twenty five years later in May 19, 1780 when an extraordinary darkness was noticed (SDA Church 2005: 378). Timothy Dwight, president of Yale University comments that, “The 19th of May, 1780, was a remarkable day. Candles were lighted in many houses; the birds were silent and disappeared, and the fowls retired to roost. A very general opinion prevailed, that the Day of Judgment was at hand.” Samuel William of Harvard (SDA Church 2005:379) also believes that the darkness started between 10:00 am and 11:00 am and continued until the middle of the next night. At 9 p.m.when the moon became visible; it had the appearance of blood (SDA Church 2005:378).

The third sign which followed after fifty three years is believed to be the fulfilment of the Rev.6:13 and Matt 24:29 prophecies regarding the falling stars. The great meteoric showering happened in November 13, 1833. It was estimated that a single observer could see an average of 60 000 meteors per hour (SDA Church 2005:379). The Millerites interpreted these natural happenings as indications of the second coming of Jesus Christ. Hence, the Millerites movement was prepared to meet Jesus Christ in 1844.

Jesus Christ did not return to the Earth on October 22, 1844 as anticipated by the Millerites. The movement experienced what is known as the “great disappointment.” The Millerites had voluntarily given away all their earthly possessions and abandoned their jobs in the hope of a new settlement on the new Earth. After the great disappointment, they were all desperate and could not easily return to their former churches. Many

apostatized. A few Millerites remained united and read the Bible to determine where they had gone wrong. It is this group from the Millerites movement that later organized themselves into a Church denomination known as the Seventh-day Adventist Church today of which the West Zimbabwe Church is a part. In their efforts to achieve unity, they began to document their beliefs and doctrines to identify themselves as a church denomination,

3.4 The historical development of the Millerite movement after 1844

The Millerite movement, later known as the “Advent movement” continued after the great disappointment in 1844. They were few in number, with unhappy memories of the past and of having been cast out of their former churches because of accepting the Advent Movement doctrines. In 1860, the movement was organized into a church and the name, Seventh-day Adventist was adopted. In 1861, the first conference was organized. This involved the organization of local churches, and the organization of the various churches into one united body to constitute what is now called a local conference and later in 1863 the first ‘General Conference was organized, formed of a number of local conferences. This set the Advent Movement on a coordinated, organized course to what the Seventh-day Adventist is today. Below is a reflection of the church organization structure.

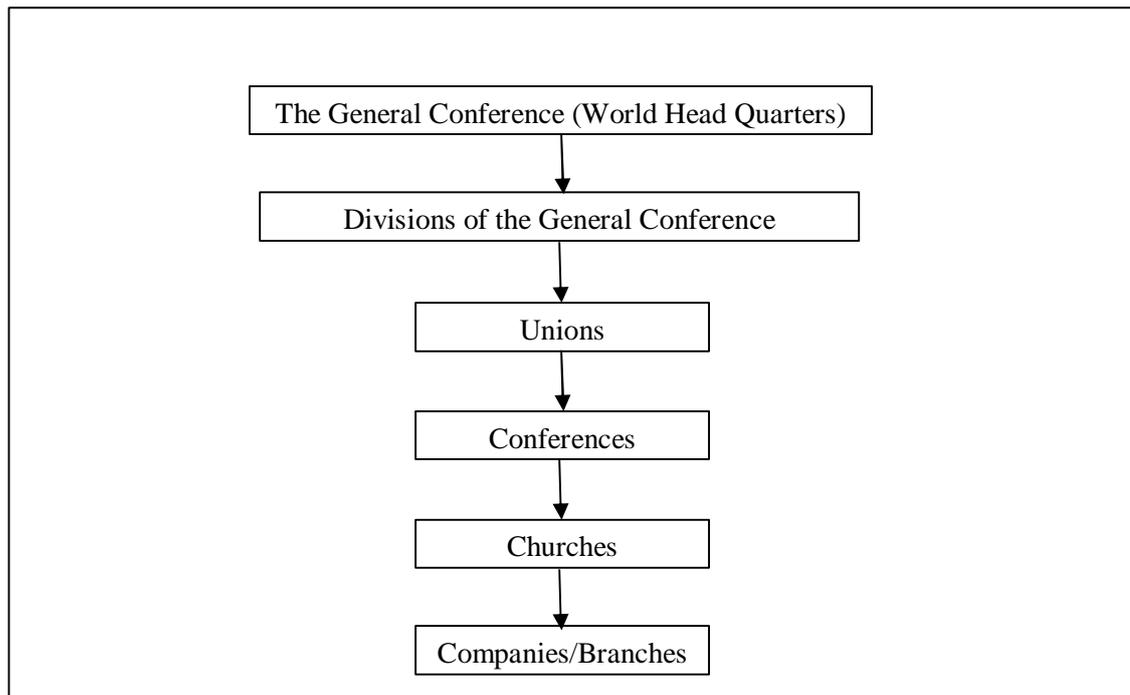


Figure 3.1:Seventh-day Adventist Church organisational structure

3.4.1 Differences of opinion over the beliefs

The Seventh day Adventist Church, like the churches in Galatia and those of the reformation period, experienced conflict and apostasy right from the beginning. The outstanding issues, which caused some members to abandon the Advent Movement were those regarding the Church doctrines and beliefs. For example, some believed that the Church should have its own creeds; while others felt that it should be the Bible and the Bible alone (*sola scriptura*) that served as its creed. The Church later realised the need to have a clear interpretation of their beliefs, hence, the Church governance instruments, such as the Church manual, were put in place. A few of these beliefs which seem to be unique to the SDA Church are discussed below. (For more beliefs, See Appendix K).

3.4.2 Second coming of Jesus Christ

After the 1844 “great disappointment,” the church founder members had differences over the belief in the second coming of Jesus Christ. Those choosing to retain their faith in the imminent return of Jesus Christ, found themselves increasingly excluded (excommunicated) by their former congregations that were not in agreement with the Millerites’ beliefs (Knight 2004:19). However, the Seventh-day Adventists finally verbalised their beliefs as follows:

...[the] second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the Church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Saviour's coming will be literal, personal, visible, and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. The almost complete fulfilment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ's coming is imminent. The time of that event has not been revealed, and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times (SDA Church 1988:371).

3.4.3 The Sabbath

This belief entails observing the sabbath on Saturday for worship as opposed to the keeping of Sunday as a holy day was met with considerable dissidence by the the Adventists. This belief also led to divided opinions among the founder members of the Millerites. The difference of opinion over this belief can be traced to the background of the founder members. Almost all the Millerite members came from other denominations. For example, Miller came from the Baptist Church and Joseph Bates was born in the Christian Connexion Church, he then subscribed to Deism before joining the Millerite movement, James White came from the Anglican Church, Ellen (later Mrs. White) came from the Methodist Church, Rachel Oakes came from the Baptist Church, Frederick Wheeler came from the Methodist Church, and Waggoner came from the Baptist Church to name but a few.

Many denominations had worshipped on Sundays from the time it was instituted by Emperor Constantine in AD 321 as the venerable day of the sun (SDA Church 1949:533). To some, Sunday was a day of worship because it is Christ's resurrection day and to others, Sunday is the Sabbath, if Monday is counted as the first day of the week. The differences between the denominations from which the Millerites came, strongly suggest that it was not easy to accept Saturday as the Sabbath day of worship instead of Sunday as was the case with most denominations at that time.

Although some people agreed on the keeping of the Sabbath, they differed from each other over the exact time to begin and close the Sabbath. Bates and his friends still held out for the six o'clock position (Knight 1999:38). However, others advocated the sunset position. Logically, the six o'clock position would be correct because it could be workable even in the world regions where the sun does not set for longer than twenty four hours at certain seasons of the year. However, at the height of the argument, Mrs. White

(recognised by the SDA Church as a prophetess), received a vision confirming the sunset-to-sunset position of keeping the Sabbath holy (Knight 1999:38) which affirms the Genesis position for a complete day (Gen.1:5).

The two beliefs (the Second Advent of Jesus Christ and the Sabbath) are the outstanding beliefs which underpin the name of the denomination, “Seventh-day Adventist.” However, this study did not seek to find out which day of the week is to be observed as a Sabbath day of worship, but sought to investigate if there are causes of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Churches, that result from the differences between the Sabbath day of worship and the new members’ former beliefs (SDA Church 1949:533).

3.4.4 Doctrinal apostasy

The doctrine of the final judgment on Earth also met with different opinions from the Millerites. Some advocated a pre-Advent judgment, some an instant Advent judgment and others believed on the post-Advent or millennium judgment (Knight 1999:155). These and many other beliefs caused divisions among the believers resulting in some Millerites apostatising. Spalding (1962:265) alleges that:

... the Messenger Party, Stephenson and Hall, “cherished error of doctrine, and resented the witness of the Spirit against their heresy, fell into mental derangement” (apostasy); Cranmer, “who sought to pick up the remnants of their party (within the Millerites), was estranged because he did not... reform his life (apostatise).

Spalding (1962:265) also remarks that Snook and Brinkerhoff became believers like Kora, Dothan and Abiram but quickly fell by the wayside (apostatized). However, a remnant of the Millerites settled with a final draft of the belief on the judgment that:

In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement (SDA Church 2005: 347).

The beliefs discussed above suggest a need to investigate if the differences in these and any other beliefs are causes of apostasy, particularly, amongst people who come to the West Zimbabwe Church from other churches who hold different beliefs.

3.5 Doctrines of the Seventh – day Adventist Church

The West Zimbabwe Church of the SDA Church has six major doctrines which are subdivided into twenty eight fundamental beliefs. The doctrines and beliefs are as summarised in table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2: Summary of SDA doctrines and beliefs

Doctrine	Beliefs	Doctrine	Beliefs
i) The doctrine of God	1.The word of God 2.The Godhead 3.God the Father 4.God the Son 5.God the Holy Spirit	v) Doctrine of the Christian life	19.The Law of God 20.The Sabbath 21.Stewardship 22.Christian behaviour 23.Marriage and family
i i)The doctrine of man	6.The creation 7.The nature of man		
iii) The doctrine of salvation	8.The great controversy 9.Life, death and resurrection of Christ 10.Experience of salvation 11.Growing in Christ		
iv) Doctrine of the Church	12.The Church 13.The remnant and its mission 14.Unity in the body of Christ 15.Baptism 16.The Lord’s Supper 17.Spiritual gifts and ministries 18.The spirit of prophecy	vi) Doctrine of last things	24.Christ’s ministry in the heavenly sanctuary 25.Second coming of Christ 26.Death and resurrection 27.The millenium and the end of sin 28.The New Earth

These doctrines and beliefs are the pillars of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. White (1947:428) declares, “If there were no church discipline and government, the church would fragment, it could not hold together as a body.” White (1947:146) further advises, “Sin and sinners in the church must be promptly dealt with, that others may not be contaminated.” The doctrines and beliefs are the references against which all other forms of doctrines and beliefs can be measured to see whether or not they conform to the prescripts of the Church.

3.6 Reasons derived from the doctrines and beliefs for assessing erring members

Twelve criteria have been derived from the doctrines and beliefs for assessing and determining whether an erring member has apostatised from the Church. They are:

- Denial of faith in the fundamentals of the gospel and in cardinal doctrines of the Church (as stated above).
- Violation of the law of God, such as worship of idols, murder, stealing, profanity, gambling, Sabbath-breaking, willful and habitual falsehood.
- Violation of the seventh commandment law of God.
- Such violations as fornication, promiscuity, incest, homosexual practice, sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults.
- Physical violence, including violence in the family.
- Fraud or wilful misrepresentation in business.
- Disorderly conduct which brings reproach from the Church.
- Adhering to or taking part in a divisive or disloyal movement or organisation.
- Persistent refusal to recognise the properly constituted church authority or to submit to the order and discipline of the Church.
- The use and manufacture or sale of tobacco in any of its forms for human consumption.
- The use, manufacture or sale of alcohol beverages.
- The misuse of or trafficking in narcotics or other drugs (Manual: 195).

The above list may not be exhaustive; however, it reflects the major conditions of assessing apostatising members.

3.7 Church discipline

It is important to know the administrative structures of the local church with its various levels of dealing with the erring members in the Church:

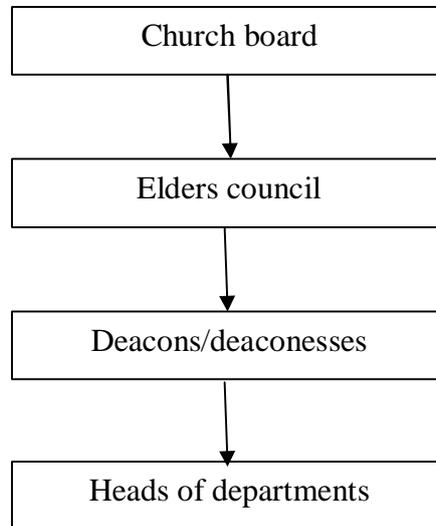


Figure 3.2.: Administrative local church structure

The local church pastor is in charge of the local church. He administers the church affairs through the various boards as shown above. Although the church board is the highest administration board (chaired by the pastor /church elder) in the local church, it does not make final decisions on disciplinary cases, it makes recommendations to the Church whose vote or decision is final.

The outcomes when assessing erring members fall into three main categories. A suspected member's case may be found conforming to the assessment instrument above. In such cases, a member retains full membership. When a member's case does not conform with the beliefs and doctrines of the Church, the member may be censured (temporally halted) or disfellowshipped (membership excluded) from the Church.

An apostatising member may be censured by means of a vote of the majority of church members for a stated period of time. In this case, a censured person may be given a grace period of between three and nine months before he/she can be recognised as a full member of the church again. During the period of censure, the member is expected to reform him/herself and show a significant change in his/her faith in keeping with the beliefs and doctrines of the Church.

The consequences regarding censured members include the termination of any and all offices they may hold in the Church, the removal of the privilege of election to any office while under censure, participation by voice or by vote in the affairs of the church and he/she will have no public part in the activities of the church programmes until the period of censure is over (Seventh-day Adventist 2005:29). However, such members are considered part of the congregation while under censure and may attend church services.

In the case of a disfellowshipped (excluded) member, a similar procedure is followed. The membership of the erring member is removed from the church records by the majority vote of the church members. This level is considered to be the most severe form of discipline the Church can administer. Any member who is disciplined by means of this method is considered an apostate by the Church. The return of such a person is only possible through re-baptism, after the Church has looked at his/her case and is satisfied that the person has reformed him/herself and there are chances of him/her remaining permanently in the Church.

3.8 Problems with the disciplinary assessment tool

The twelve point tool of assessing the apostatising members raises a few concerns for some people or congregations. The assessment tool does not state which of the twelve offences and at what level a member who has erred in any of the above categories can be placed under censure (suspension) or removed from membership (considered an apostate). Therefore, it may be difficult to maintain a similar conclusion in the many congregations of the same conference.

Each of the twelve statements carries a number of concerns. For example, item B. “Violation of the law of God, such as worship of idols, murder, stealing, profanity, gambling, Sabbath-breaking, wilful and habitual falsehood,” may be difficult to apply where an individual has erred with regard to any of the stated items. If one member gambles at a casino, at an auction sale or at shares auctions and another commit murder, would they all be placed under censure or be removed from membership?

If allowances are made, how does the Church respond to the statement in James 2:10-11 which says “Whoever breaks one breaks them all..?” In the following item of the assessment tool, “Adhering to or taking part in a divisive or disloyal movement or organisation,” it is not clear whether the movements or organisations referred to are

disloyal to the state or to the Church. Furthermore, what means are there to assess the loyalty of the movements and/or organisations for individuals who wish to join the WZC Church? From these and other cases of assessment, there is a need for further investigation if members are to know and understand how erring members are assessed by the church. A particular issue that concerns new converts joining the Church is whether they are informed about the twelve conditions according to which a member can be placed under censure or be withdrawn from church membership. There is a need to investigate how the new members are oriented into the Church.

3.9 The recruitment and preparation of members before 1998

The method of recruitment and preparation of baptismal candidates has changed in the years between 1998 and 2008. One of the major changes in the recruitment during this period was the preparation of baptismal candidates. Before this period, the new converts took two years in preparation for baptism. This was probably due to the high rate of illiteracy among the African people. In the sixties and early seventies the period of preparing the baptismal candidates was reduced to one year and later still to three months. The Church confirms that, “All should be faithfully taught what it means to become a member of the body of Christ” (Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA) 2000:29). It further advises that, “Thorough instruction in the fundamental teachings and related practices of the Church should be given to every candidate for Church membership before being baptised and received into the fellowship” (SDA 2000:29). This study helped the candidates to know the doctrines and many other rules of the church. Furthermore, their understanding of the doctrines and beliefs of the Church helped them to affirm their commitment for baptism and joining the church or decide otherwise.

3.10 The recruitment and preparation of new converts after 1998

From the nineteen- nineties till now, a new wave of numerous evangelistic campaigns have been introduced in the Church. In these programmes, many converts were added to the Church, but the preparation period of baptismal candidates was greatly reduced to a point where people are baptised on the same day they are converted. With this method of evangelism, the converts are taught after baptism. There is no confirmation (in 2008) of such a transition in the Church Manual (SDA Church 2010). There are however, Biblical calls where people were called and then taught afterwards. Abraham was called and God began to teach him after he had responded to the call; the disciples were called and taught

while they followed Jesus Christ and Elisha was called and introduced to the prophetic ministry after his response to Elijah. It is not clear if the West Zimbabwe Conference or the SDA World Church is following this method now.

The present method of evangelism in the West Zimbabwe Conference seems to present problems regarding apostasy concerning people who may realise that their lifestyles are contrary to some doctrinal conditions immediately after they have been baptised. For example, a polygamist may realise after being baptised that the Church does not accept polygamous people as full members of the Church. Polygamy is regarded as contrary to the seventh commandment (Exodus 20:14) by the SDA Church. There is a possibility of many people finding themselves unacceptable to the Church after they have been baptised. It is also difficult for many people to know all the expected standards of the Church if those preaching did not outline them in the sermon for that day.

After baptism, some of the baptised members may realise that they do not comply with the beliefs and doctrines of the Church. Such cases are processed through the assessment instrument by the Church board and the church. In this case, such individuals may be placed under censure (probation) while some may be disfellowshipped (excluded from church membership) and are thus regarded as apostate.

On the other hand, some of the baptised members may find it difficult to conform to the expected standards of the Church and leave without the Church noticing and assessing their cases. These disappointed members whose cases are not known might be classified among the missing members, who may (if not verified after two years) be disfellowshipped (membership withdrawn) and be regarded as apostates.

The argument regarding people lost from the Church under the above conditions poses a number of questions: Are people found under such conditions real apostates? Have they lost their faith? Or have they been denied fellowship with the Church? What is the theology of salvation regarding the conversion of a soul? Does a person get his/her life in order before accepting Jesus or is a person made perfect by coming to Jesus Christ? Paul asserts, "Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Rom. 8:14 NIV). Paul also expresses the following message to the Galatians, "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27).

If the Church believes in salvation by faith as opposed to salvation by works, how can it expect a sinner to be perfect before coming to Jesus Christ? In Galatians 4:6, Paul seems to emphasise that we become sons of God first then the Spirit comes to perfect us. Accordingly, there is a need to investigate both methods of recruitment to find out if they reinforce membership retention or have they increased apostasy in the Church. It is also important to find out the impact of both methods on the Church as a whole.

3.11 Missing members

The conditions regarding the movement of members from one sister church to another, is that a member who goes to another place for a period of six months or more should request transfer of his/her membership to the new congregation (SDA Church 2010:36). If a member leaves without notifying the congregation and leaves no address behind, makes no effort to reach the home church or send a report and it is found impossible to locate the member, after an absence of two years, such an individual is regarded as a missing member. There is concern about the long list of missing members, namely eleven thousand (11 000) members (SDA Church 1998-2008). The question is whether or not the members know the expectations of the Church when a member moves from one congregation to another. If they do, what could be the reason for not requesting the transfer of their membership from one congregation to another for a period of over two years? There is also a need to investigate the cases of missing members.

3.12 Conclusion

The literature review on the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, revealed the trends of apostasy from 1844 when the Church experienced what they call the “great disappointment” The doctrines, policies and the Church manual, as the main Church administration instruments, were viewed as crucial, particularly the section of the Church Manual which deals with discipline. Furthermore, the literature review showed that there was no demarcation regarding the conditions for which a member can be disfellowshipped (excluded) from the Church or secured (suspended). Accordingly, it was necessary to determine how the disciplinary cases were decided. In the records is a list of members whose reasons for either missing church services for two or more years or for apostasising, were not verified. These and many other facts formed the basis of the investigation regarding the causes of and implications of apostasy for the West Zimbabwe Conference.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the methodology that was used in conducting this research. Accordingly, this chapter includes the research types, the population, samples and sampling techniques, the pilot study, research instruments, validation of instruments for data collection, methods of data collection and the procedures that were followed during data analysis.

4.1.1 Research types

Various types of research are used by researchers, depending on the nature and objectives of the research. Each type is appropriate for a specific area of research. Best and Kahn (1993) refer to a four – point analysis of the research types, which may also be used to classify the research data. The first is historical research which describes ‘What was?’ This type involves investigating, recording, analysing and interpreting data, which are helpful to understanding the past and the present, and to a limited extent, in anticipating the future. This type of research is appropriate for a historical study such as the investigation of the causes and implications of apostasy. This type also involves analysis of records and the descriptive interpretation of past events.

The second type is quantitative descriptive research, which uses quantitative methods to describe ‘What is?’ This type involves describing, recording analysing and interpreting the conditions of what exists. It also includes some types of comparisons or contrasts and attempts to discover relationships between existing non- manipulated variables. Some form of statistical analysis is used to describe the results of the study. The third type is the experimental research type. This type describes “what will be,” when certain variables are carefully controlled or manipulated. The focus is on variable relationships since these are always part of the experimental method. However, this method is not suitable for historical research as it deals with the experimenting of current situations.

The fourth is the qualitative descriptive research type. This type uses non-quantitative methods to describe ‘What is?’ Qualitative descriptive research uses systematic procedures to discover the non – quantifiable relationships between existing variables.

This type was used to compare the West Zimbabwe Conference situation with other church denominations, to determine if similar causes of apostasy existed there. In this case, the causes of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference were compared with those of the Church in Galatia.

The quantitative research type (discussed above) entails a descriptive (survey) type of methodology for which the researcher adopted the descriptive interpretive method. Gay (1981) explains that a descriptive study determines and reports the way things are. One common type of descriptive research involves assessing the attitudes towards or opinions about individuals, or organisations, events or procedures. Zulueta and Costales (2003) explains that descriptive research seeks to provide information about one or more variables. It answers the question: "What exists." He indicates that this question can be answered by either using quantitative or qualitative method. However, Best & Kahn (1993) explain what descriptive research entails, when it describes and interprets. Furthermore, it is concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, opinions have, processes which are going on, and effects that are evident or trends that are developing.

According to Cohen and Manion (2005), a descriptive research design requires the collection of very extensive data in order to arrive at an in- depth understanding of the entity studied. Descriptive research obtains information from a representative sample of the population. In the same vein, Awoniyi and Alege (2007) state that a descriptive survey generally tries to collect information from a representative group and is based on such information and inferences are drawn about the behaviour of the entire population.

There are two types of descriptive research methods, namely a case study and a descriptive survey research method. A case study, according to Zulueta and Costales (2003), is used to capture information about human behaviour through in-depth data collection and analysis of data from a relatively few examples of the phenomena. It uses content analysis of documents and records, as well as observations and interviews as key instruments for data collection. This method is suitable for the current situation where there is a need to take the time to observe the development and changes in the targeted subject area of study. It is not appropriate for collecting data in a historical context where events have already taken place.

The second descriptive research method is the descriptive survey. This approach investigates the universe of the phenomena population by selecting samples from the population to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interrelation of variables. It uses a questionnaire and interviews as key instruments for data collection (Zulueta & Costates, 2004). Regarding this approach also, the past records form the basis for which the researcher establishes the evidence for the existence and the extent to which a situation has reached and or affected the population in question.

A descriptive survey method is appropriate and effective for this study as it includes the use of questionnaires, interviews and past records for the collection of data. Since the investigation is of a historical nature, records covering the past ten years (1998 to 2008) constituted a major part in the collection and analysis of data for this study.

4.1.2 Quantitative method

A quantitative descriptive method is a procedure involving the assignment of numerical values to variables (Zulueta 2004). This method, according to Best and Kahn (1993) is used to describe records, undertake analyses and interpret conditions. It involves comparison or contrast and attempts to discover relationships between existing non-manipulated variables. In addition, statistical analysis is used to describe the results of the study. Accordingly, the quantitative method was used to help determine the extent of the impact of apostasy on the West Zimbabwe Conference Churches. Furthermore, the investigations sought to discover the extent of the impact upon the various aspects of the Church.

The quantitative descriptive method reflected the outcomes of the study regarding the impact of apostasy on the young people, young adults, adults and old people. It included the outcome in terms of gender and also compared the impact of apostasy between the urban and rural churches of the West Zimbabwe Church and also compared them with some of the other denominations. This method was used to investigate the impact of apostasy on the Church through internal, external and doctrinal influences.

4.1.3 Qualitative method

“Qualitative research” is a term used for a range of research strategies that has its roots in the social sciences research such as anthropology and sociology. It involves collecting

data within natural settings, and the key collecting data instruments are the researchers themselves. (Zulueta & Costales 2004).

Qualitative research can be sub –divided according to the expected outcomes of a study. The basic purposes of qualitative research include description, interpretation, verification and evaluation. With a descriptive analysis, the researcher gives an account of a process. The purpose is to visualise a situation as a means of understanding what is happening. In interpretive analysis, the researcher makes generalisations. In addition, the researcher provides insights that might lead to people changing their behaviour, refining their knowledge, and/or identifying problems. Interpretive analysis is also used to develop new theories. In verification analysis, the researcher verifies assumptions, theories and generalisations, and in evaluative analysis, the researcher makes a judgment about policies, practices and innovation instructional practices (Zulueta & Costales: 2004).

This method is appropriate for a historical study, where the investigator deals with Church policies and practices, which either retain its members or discourages them from remaining in Church. This study tried to gain insight that will lead the members to changing their behaviour in identifying problems that lead to apostasy. Regarding this approach, Zulueta and Costales (2003) indicate that qualitative research is concerned with the process of an activity rather than only with the outcomes of that activity.

The qualitative researcher analyses data rationally rather than statistically. The outcomes of qualitative research are the results of questions and conjectures and not the verification of predicted mathematical relationships. This is a feature of qualitative research distinguishing it from quantitative research. An important aspect about qualitative research is its ability to identify and interpret patterns of human responses as a result of the knowledge, experiences and theoretical orientation beliefs of the respondents. In this study questionnaires were used, oral interviews were conducted and records and church files were viewed to determine the causes of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference Churches. This approach is in line with the Zulueta method as discussed above. In summary, the descriptive qualitative interpretive method was employed in this study.

4.2 Study area

The West Zimbabwe Conference is one of the three conferences that make up the Zimbabwe Union Conference. Politically, this conference territory covers two of the ten

provinces of the country, namely South and North Matabeleland. This conference extends to the borders with South Africa in the south, Botswana in the South west, Zambia in the North and in the East it shares its border with the Central Zimbabwe Conference (See Appendix D & Figure 1). The city of Bulawayo which is the second largest in Zimbabwe is situated in this territory and the Conference administrative offices are situated in this city.

The towns of Beit Bridge, Gwanda, Plumtree, Hwange and Victoria Falls are within the West Zimbabwe Conference territory. In addition, there are a few district centres such as Tsholotsho, Esigodini, Filabusi, Lupane and Binga, which are also in this territory.

4.3 Population

According to Gay (1981: 86), the population is defined as the group of interest to the researcher, the group to which the researcher would like results of the study to be generalised. He explains that the defined population has at least two characteristics that differentiate it from other groups. First, the population may be virtually any size and may cover almost any geographical area. Second, the group the researcher would like to generalise. In terms of this understanding, a population is generally a realistic choice and not an idealistic one.

The West Zimbabwe Conference covers a territory with a population of about two million (2 000 000) people and a church membership of one hundred and fifty three thousand, seven hundred and two (153,702) members according to the end of 2008 annual record, this is a ratio of one church member to every fourteen people in this territory (SDA Church 1998-2008) (See Appendix E).

In this study, the population consisted of the one hundred and seventy one (171) Churches with a total church membership of one hundred and fifty three thousand, seven hundred and two (153,702) members. This study also focussed on the fifty five (55) pastors serving in this conference (The president, executive secretary, departmental directors and district pastors) and the two thousand and forty nine (2,049) members who were recorded to have apostatised between 1998 and 2008 (SDA Church 1998-2008). It should however, be noted that some members among the eleven thousand (11,333) people recorded as missing members during the same period, may have apostatised without the knowledge of pastors or other members and were therefore categorised as missing

members (SDA Church 1998-2008) This group of people was part of the targeted population for this study. Pastors and members of other church denominations were also included in the study.

4.4 Sample and sampling technique

A sample is a portion of a population and sampling means selecting some members of the entire population for use in this study. It is the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individuals represent the larger group from which they were selected. Gay (1981) states that the selected individuals comprise a sample and the larger group is referred to as a population. According to Punch (2005:101), all research involves sampling, no study, whether quantitative or qualitative or both can include everything. In this case, the sampling is user friendly for most researchers. Punch also points out that the key concepts are the "population," the total target group who would, in the ideal world, be the subject of the research and about whom one is trying to say something. The sample, the actual group of people included in the study and from whom the data is collected, make the sampling an important part of the research.

4.5 Purpose of sampling

The purpose of sampling is to gain information about a population in which it may be difficult to manage the whole population when administrating the data collecting instrument. Sampling is a way to achieve representativeness. It is usually called probability sampling. For example, the area for this study was over seven hundred kilometres. There were one hundred and seventy one (171) churches with a population of one hundred and fifty three thousand seven hundred and two (153 702) members. The members had their main services once a week, on Saturdays and their assemble attendance for worship was higher than on any other day of the week. To involve every member in the administration with the data collection instrument at the rate of one church per week would require one hundred and seventy one weeks to complete the data collection exercise alone. Accordingly, the researcher agrees with Punch (2005) regarding the advantages of sampling, "It reduces time, distance and is financially affordable." Gay (1981) also expresses the viewpoint that a study of such a [large] group of people can result in a considerable expenditure of time, money and effort. He points

out that if a sample is well selected, the research results based on it will be generalised to the population.

4.6 Types of sampling

There are two main types of sampling designs or methods, namely the random sampling (probability) and non-probability sampling techniques. Random sampling can be carried out in various ways, namely, simple random sampling (by ballot, lottery or using the dip-hand method), systematic sampling, stratified random sampling and cluster sampling; while non-probability sampling includes, among others, deliberate (purposive) sampling and captive sampling (Awoniyi & Alege, 2007).

In order to obtain credible results in any study, the researcher needs to select the most appropriate or most effective type of sampling. Zulueta and Costales, (2004), describe two general types of sampling designs or methods, the first type is probability sampling, also called “simple random sampling” (Rosenthal & Rosnow 2008). With probability sampling, each of the units in the target population has the same chance of being included in the sample; it has a greater possibility of being a representative sample of the population and the conclusion derived from the data gathered can be generalised for the population. The second type of sampling is non- probability sampling and it is not possible that each of the units in the target population has the same chance of being included in the sample; there is no assurance that every unit has some chance of being included and the conclusions derived from the data gathered are limited only to the sample itself (Zulueta & Costales 2004).

4.6.1 Probability sampling

There are four types of probability sampling: the first is simple random sampling. Zulueta and Costales (2004) state that this is the basic probability sampling design, which gives every unit of the population an equal chance and non – zero probability of being included in the sample. Rosenthal and Rosnow (2008) describe simple random sampling as simple, meaning that the sample is selected from an undivided population and random meaning that the sample is chosen by a process that gives every unit in the population the same chance of being selected. The other three types are systematic sampling stratified random sampling and cluster sampling

4.6.1.1 Simple random sampling

The two ways of doing simple random sampling is by means of lottery sampling and table random sampling. When the lottery method is used, the names are written on different pieces of paper then placed in a box and mixed well; the pieces of paper are taken one at a time until the total sampling size is reached. The other is table random sampling in which each sampling unit of the population is listed and given a number. The selected samples are those in the chosen case. For example, if the tenth case is to be used to select from one hundred units of the population, the selected numbers would reflect the following: 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90 and 100 making a total of 10 units selected as samples (Zulueta & Costales: 2004).

4.6.1.2 Systematic sampling

This type of sampling is used when there is a ready list of the total universe (population). The procedure in using this scheme is that the total population is divided by the desired sample size to get the sampling interval (Zulueta & Costales: 2004). For example, if the population is 10 000 and the desired sample size is 1000, the interval is equal to 10 000 divided by 100 = 100. Therefore, 100 is the first sample and every 100th number in the list becomes the sample until the whole list is complete. If the universe is composed of several people groups the same method is done for each group and the total of samples in each group is added to a single number.

4.6.1.3 Stratified random sampling

When the population consists of a number of sub- groups or strata that may differ in terms of the characteristics being studied, it is often desirable to use a form of sampling technique called stratified random sampling. This procedure can be divided into proportionate and disproportionate. Proportionate refers to the selection of subgroup or strata in equal proportion depending on the population in each stratum. In disproportionate, the strata are not equally represented it is either over represented or under represented (Awoniyi, Aderanti & Tayo, 2011). These sampling techniques are often referred to as proportional stratified random sampling and non-proportional stratified random sampling respectively. After determining the number of subjects to be included in the sample, the researcher may then use either the simple random or the systematic random sampling technique for the selection of subjects. The sampling

techniques could therefore be proportional stratified simple random sampling; proportional stratified systematic random sampling, non-proportional stratified simple random sampling or non- proportional stratified systematic random sampling as the case may be.

4.6.1.4 Cluster sampling

This is used in large-scale surveys. The researcher arrives at the set of sampling units to be included in the sample by first sampling larger groupings called clusters. The cluster is selected by simple or stratified sampling. If it is not possible to include all sampling units in the cluster, the final selection from within the cluster is also carried out by a simple random or stratified sampling procedure (Zulueta & Costales: 2004).

Regardless of the specific technique used, the steps in sampling are essentially the same: identification of the population, determination of required sample size and selection of the sample. However, “the degree to which the selected sample represents the population is the degree to which results can be generalised” (Gay: 1981). Sampling may be approached through the use of certain techniques; Gay discusses the four basic sampling techniques, namely, random, stratified, cluster and systematic sampling. Since the targeted population in this study is composed of different levels of church members: ordinary church members, local church leaders, conference leaders, those who apostatised and church members of other denominations within the West Zimbabwe Conference territory, who were used to determine if other churches also experience the same causes of apostasy, more than one sampling technique will be used in the selection of samples.

4.6.2 Non-probability sampling

There are two types of non-probability sampling, namely deliberate (purposive) sampling and captive sampling. These are discussed below.

4.6.2.1 Deliberate (purposive) sampling

Deliberate sampling is used when there are specific members of the population with certain traits crucial to the study whom the researcher must interview (Awoniyi & Alege: 2007). The president of the West Zimbabwe Conference, the departmental directors and the local church leadership (church elder, deacons, deaconesses, youth and women

leaders in the local church) were purposively selected. In other words, for the purpose of finding the historical trends of apostasy in the Church, some members who might have a large amount of historical information on the subject were purposively sampled and interviewed.

4.6.2.2 Captive sampling

The captive sampling method is employed when the researcher decides to use only the sampling he can get or where it is difficult to get the sampling in groups and where targeted sampling cannot be easily located (Awoniyi & Alege 2007). This method was used with those who apostatised, those recorded as missing, pastors and members of other church denominations.

Three groups of people were interviewed using the captive sampling schedules. The group included pastors of other church denominations, the missing church members and those who apostatised.

4.7 Sampling techniques

A sample percentage of ten was adopted for the selection of churches and the proportional stratified sampling technique was used. The one hundred and seventy three (173) Churches were divided into the seventy (70) urban and one hundred and three (103) rural churches. The churches were arranged alphabetically and the tenth cases selected and used as a sample. Hence, seven (7) urban and ten (10) rural churches are used for the study. Five percent of members from each of the selected churches were sampled using a simple random sampling technique and questionnaire was administered to this group. All nine of the conference leadership and seventeen (17) pastors of the selected churches were interviewed; Five local church leadership: head elder, head deacon, head of women's ministries and two youth leaders, from each of the selected churches were purposively selected for focus group interviews. The apostatised members, pastors and church members from other denominations were selected using the captive sampling technique and were interviewed

4.8 Research instruments

A research instrument is a tool used by the researcher to collect data in the course of a study or when observing different stages of development throughout the study. The choice of instruments depends on the nature or on the type of study. The researcher used

questionnaire and interviews for this study. He also viewed the church records on apostasy.

4.9 Questionnaires

Zulueta & Costales (2004) define a questionnaire as a set of orderly arranged questions, carefully prepared to provide answers to the specific problems underpinning the study. In addition, it is a list of questions related to a particular topic, provided with a space for the respondents to fill in their responses. A questionnaire is the principal instrument for data collection. The answers to the questions provide a basis for hypothesis testing. However, questionnaires may need testing before they are used in the main study. They should also stand the tests pertaining to reliability and validity. However, Awoniyi, Aderanti, and Tayo (2011) state that a questionnaire is a self reporting system. They also postulate that a questionnaire is like a structured interview; but the responses given to questions are done in writing. Questionnaires are sometimes referred to as recording schedules. Compared with interviews, the written questionnaire is typically more efficient and practical and allows for the use of large sample units. In addition, standard instructions are given to all subjects at the same time. Importantly, the personal appearance, mood and conduct of the investigator do not influence the results.

Awoniyi, Aderanti, and Tayo (2011) list two types of questionnaires, namely a structured (closed form) and the unstructured (open ended form). The structured questionnaire contains questions and their alternative answers, whereas the unstructured questionnaire has the advantage of giving the respondents the freedom to reveal their opinions and attitudes, but it has the disadvantage that the information generated is difficult to process and analyse. However, the advantages of questionnaires are that they can be used in the absence of the researcher, they can be administered to many people at the same time; no psychological discomfort is experienced as can be the case with face- to- face interactions or interviews and it can be used to obtain reliable information if it is well used. The disadvantages of questionnaires are that sometimes there can be misinterpretations of the questions and the low return of questionnaires.

4.9.1 Structure of the questionnaire

The questionnaire employed in this research consisted of structured and unstructured questions (discussed above). There are seven sections A to G (See Appendix A) in the questionnaire. Section A has questions on the demographic characteristics of respondents;

Section B contains structured questions focussing on the respondents' perceptions of the causes of apostasy; Section C has unstructured questions focussing on the same topic; Section D has structured questions on the impact of apostasy on the Church; Section E contains unstructured questions also on the impact of apostasy; in Section F the respondents listed the names and contact addresses of people who apostatised from the Church and Section G is a list of names and contact addresses of people considered by the Church to be missing members. The questionnaire used a three point scale, where respondents had to select either "Yes" "No" or "Not Sure" by using a tick (P) to indicate their answers for all the structured questions as shown in the questionnaire, while they gave written responses to the unstructured questions.

4.10 Interviews

An interview may be interpreted as a process that involves at least two people in a face-to-face oral discussion with the aim of one person wanting to elicit information from the other person. The two people involved in the interview are the interviewer and the interviewee. As is the case with the questionnaire, there are two types of interviews, namely structured and the unstructured interviews, either held face-to-face or by telephone. Although questions can be the same as those in the questionnaires, interviewers may deviate from the set of questions for the purpose of clarification of certain points. The advantages of structured interviews are that they are standardised and answers can easily be classified. Another advantage is that there is increased reliability as a result of restriction of variation in administration. However, the disadvantage is that the interviewee does not enjoy enough freedom to explain the responses made. In this study, the same methods used for the written questionnaire were used for the interviews.

4.11 Oral history interviews

In recent years, researchers have included an oral history in their interviews. In some historical research situations, where no written records may be found, oral history interviews have become the best alternative method for data collection. Ritchie, (2003) defines an oral history interview as a collection of memories and personal commentaries of historical significance obtained through recorded interviews. He explains that an oral interview becomes an oral history only when it has been recorded, processed in some way, made available in an archive, library or other repository, or reproduced in relatively verbatim form of publication. However, Denis and Ntsimane (2008) also define an oral

history interview as a complex interaction between an interviewer and the interviewee, about past events, which requires questioning as well as listening on the part of the interviewer. It is a historical conversation or conversational narrative.

An oral history interview is different from a traditional research interview, in that an oral history interview sometimes requires the interviewer to merely introduce the subject and then allow the interviewee to narrate all the information that can be remembered, without interruption or questions in between the narration. In this case, the interviewer only makes notes of or records what the narrator is saying.

Oral historians have debated about how much an interviewer should intervene during the interview. Ritchie (2003) comments that some argue that independent researchers (those doing interviews for their research) were too biased to conduct oral history interviews and that archival oral historians would be better interviewers because they have no vested interest in any interpretation. However, Ritchie feels that, “Oral history” has always been multi – disciplinary. He points out that standards and guidelines have been developed to raise the consciousness and professional standards of all who wish to engage in oral history interviews. Ritchie further adds that oral history is as reliable or unreliable as other research sources. Abram (2010) points out that analysing the transcripts of an oral history interview is unlike analysing any other historical document or current primary sources accessed by an historian. He explains that it requires specific analytical techniques that are suitable for interpreting it.

The question is how can an oral history interview fit into this study? Can it yield credible results in the study of apostasy? The answer is simple. The realisation that apostasy is not an event but has been a perpetual phenomenon since creation makes the interviews an integral part of this study. In fact, apostasy has a long history of making itself felt in the Church, generation after generation. Thus far, there has not been a prescription to cure apostasy. It is therefore, needful to engage some oral history interview methods, to allow both old church members (with many years in the Church) and the apostates to relate or narrate their memories or experiences with regard to the causes and implications of apostasy in the Church. It is the researcher’s hope that viable oral history interviews will provide information which will help the Church to ascertain what the gap is between them and the apostatised and also, that the oral history interview record will be used to

document the collective hurting memories of both the concerned members and the apostates.

It is important to note that oral history interviews are suitable for interviewing people who apostatised from the Church. These are people who need someone to listen to them and people, whose feelings have been hurt and who have not been heard by an unbiased person, people who want to relate their experiences as they look at the Church from the outside in. They are no longer interrogated by the Church, but are given an opportunity to express their feelings by an open and unbiased interviewer. This may start a historical trend of addressing apostasy in a positive manner in the Church.

4.12 Identifying interviewees

Identifying the interviewees was one of the major tasks in this research. Denis and Ntsimane (2008) suggest the following methods for identifying interviewees: some can be identified through referrals by word of mouth, by letters, by telephone, by email, by consulting church records, by church members and by other methods.

4.12.1 Validation of research instruments

Validation is the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. The most important question on validity is, “What does this instrument measure?” The main forms of validity are, face validity, content validity, construct validity and criterion related validity (Awoniyi & Alege 2007).

Face validity refers to how reasonable the instrument appears to be as an instrument to research a particular attribute that is to be studied. It is actually the extent to which one is able to accept the validity of the instrument upon mere superficial inspection of it.. This method was not appropriate for this study (Awoniyi & Alege 2007).

Content validity means the extent to which the content of the instrument corresponds to that of the subject matter and its associated behavioural outcomes. In addition, content validity is measured by analysing the topical content and the concepts to be measured. The closer the instrument content is to that of the subject matter, the higher the content validity of the instrument. In order for the content validity of the instrument to be high in this study, the researcher designed the instrument in conjunction with the objectives of the study to answer the study question on the causes of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Churches (Awoniyi & Alege 2007).

Criterion related validity is the extent to which the test performance predicts future performance on some valued measures other than itself. This is usually done by comparing test scores with another measure of performance obtained at a later date or with another measure of performance obtained concurrently in order to estimate present status. This process leads to the predictive validity, in which the instrument has the ability to predict some future events (Awoniyi & Alege 2007).

Another form of validity is congruent validity that measures the extent to which a constructed test correlates with that of a test of known validity. The instrument measures the extent to which performance in a test agrees with the observed life performance. For example, some people's behaviour in public may be indicators of what they believe in. The last form is constructed validity, that is, the extent to which a test performance can be interpreted in terms of certain psychological qualities or traits. It is the psychological quality, which we assume exists in order to explain some aspect of behaviour. Construct validity is not directly observable as it deals with intelligence, scientific attitudes, scholastic aptitude, study skills and other related factors (Awoniyi & Alege 2007).

The validity of the research instruments was determined by using face and content validity. This instrument was given to the research adviser. Based on his advice, all necessary corrections and adjustments were made. The content validity of the instruments were also determined before it was administered to the respondents (Denis & Ntsimane 2008).

4.13 Pilot study

A pilot study is a small scale study conducted prior to the conducting of the actual study. The entire study is conducted, every procedure is followed and the resulting data are analysed according to the research plan. Gay (1981) explains that a pilot study is a kind of dress rehearsal. He indicates that even a small scale pilot study, based on a small number of subjects, can help with refining procedures, such as instrument administration and scoring routines and in trying out analysis techniques. The main study will almost always be modified as a result of a pilot study exercise. A pilot study was carried out in order to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to 40 church members from two churches (one urban and one rural) in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh - day Adventist Church. Responses to the questionnaire were coded and the items on the questionnaire were subjected to factor

analysis to find out how well the items related to each other. The results of the factor analysis revealed that the communalities of all the items ranged from 0.583 to 0.885 which indicated that all the items are valid and reliable.

According to Field (2005), communality is the proportion of common variance within a variable. The principal component analysis works on the initial assumption that all variance is common; therefore, before extraction the communalities are all 1.000. After extraction, the communalities of the various items ranged from 0.583 to 0.885 thus giving us a better idea of how much variance is in reality in the various items. For example, 69.8% of the variance associated with question 1 is common or shared variance or the proportion of variance explained by question 1. From the table, since the communalities for all the items are greater than .360, consequently, all the items as shown on the tables are valid and reliable (See Appendix C.). Notwithstanding the communalities of the items 1-3 on the impact of apostasy were modified for the main study following ambiguities detected in the respondents' responses during the pilot study.

4.14 Methods of data collection

Punch (2004) describes two methods of data collection, namely the traditional and the guided. Regarding the guided type, Punch states that after the researcher has collected the first set of data, the analysis begins; the second set of data is collected from the same group after the first analysis is done. The second step is guided by the emerging trends and patterns discerned from the first analysis. The researcher administers the same instrument to collect data from the same group of people and analyse the data at each stage. This exercise is repeated several times until theoretical saturation is achieved – that is, until new data are not revealing new theoretical elements, but are rather confirming what has already been found. This method is not appropriate for the study of a historical nature as it is suitable for monitoring events, which have the potential to change their development.

The other method that Punch (2004) describes is the traditional view of research. He points out that in this type “data collection is a discrete stage” in the research. With regard to this method, data is collected and all interviews conducted before data analysis begins. This method is appropriate for a study where data is concerned with the events of a historical nature. The traditional method was used for collecting data for this study.

4.15 Methods of data analysis

There are two data analysis methods, namely, quantitative and the qualitative methods. Qualitative analysis generally refers to research which interprets data without numerical analysis; however, some qualitative research includes the limited quantification of data. In this study, qualitative interpretation of data was used and limited quantification was observed, where the researcher noted the number of respondents in each category of the responses. However, the data analysis was biased in favour of the qualitative interpretation of data. Three processes are found in qualitative data analysis namely, data organisation, data description and data interpretation.

Data organisation is critical, because of the large volumes of data collected in the qualitative studies. In this study, data were organised into the various categories of apostasy to discover if the causes were internal, external and or/doctrinal. With regard to apostasy, this research sought to discover whether males or females or both and whether the youth or adults or both were affected by apostasy in the Church. The second step was a description of the data, that entailed the description of both the participants in the study as well as a description of the categories with regard to the settings in which the data were collected.

Accordingly, the data collected from the study were analysed using both descriptive statistics and a descriptive interpretive method. The responses from the questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics with regard to frequency counts, the means and standard deviations. In turn, responses from the interviews were analysed using a descriptive interpretive method in which responses from the interviewees were categorised into themes and then interpreted.

4.16 Research authorisation

A letter from the Department of Christianity Spirituality, Church History and Missiology, of the University of South Africa, introducing the researcher, was presented to the president of the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Authorisation by the president to conduct a research study on the *Causes and implications of apostasy* in his conference churches was granted to the researcher (See Appendix H).

4.17 Administration of the questionnaire

The respondents were informed about the purpose and the context of the research and about the confidentiality and anonymity of the exercise. To avoid delays and to attain a high percentage return of responses, the researcher was assisted by ten well- trained people in administering the questionnaires. These people were trained and exposed to at least one demonstration exercise, where the researcher himself administered the questionnaire to the sample in the church. Afterwards, each assistant was assigned to administer questionnaires to the churches. The exercise took between three and four weeks to reach all the selected churches. After this exercise, the researcher continued with the various interviews.

At the beginning of each session, where questionnaires were administered, the researcher introduced himself to the sampled group. After the introduction, an explanation regarding the exercise was given to the respondents, as follows:

“The survey seeks to find out what the causes of apostasy are in the West Zimbabwe Conference churches. I am asking for your participation in completing the questionnaire. Your responses to this questionnaire will inform the researcher of the causes and implications of apostasy in your church. The exercise takes between 15 and 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your name will not be used in any way, so your response will be confidential and anonymous. I want to let you know that your participation in this study is completely voluntary.

If you have questions during the process, do not hesitate to raise your hand quietly, the researcher will come and assist you. Do not discuss with someone during the process, because the researcher need your personal views in the questionnaire. Read the instructions in the questionnaire before you respond.

When you are through, raise your hand, the researcher will collect the questionnaire from you.”

After collecting all the question papers, thank the respondents for their participation.

Table 4.1: Interpretation of the mean scores

Scale	Responses	Mean interval	Verbal interpretation
2	Yes	1.3500 – 2.000	Highly Significant
1	No	1.000 – 1.3499	Significant
0	Not Sure	0.0001 – 0.9999	Insignificant

4.18 Conclusion

This research methodology chapter described the sampling of the respondents and the administering of the questionnaires. In addition it discussed both the qualitative methods and quantitative methods of collecting data to achieve the desired goals. Although, the main focus of this research was on qualitative methods, quantitative methods were used to determine the implications of apostasy regarding membership and finances for the Church. Furthermore, before a qualitative assessment could be carried out in the next chapter, table 4.1 was used for interpreting the data elicited from the respondents.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data on the findings of the causes and implications of apostasy, in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as well as an analysis of the data. This data was obtained from the West Zimbabwe Conference office records, interviews with the conference leaders and departmental directors, interviews with local church pastors and local church leaders, pastors and church members of other denominations, interviews with those who apostatised and the summary of the data compiled from the questionnaire administered to selected churches. A description of the data is provided along with a summary of the various categories of data presented. The results of the findings, conclusions and the recommendations are reflected in the last chapter of the study.

5.2 Data from the West Zimbabwe Conference office records

The West Zimbabwe Conference records on apostasy were viewed for the period between 1998 and 2008. During the period in question, no record of the causes of apostasy was found in the conference office. Whenever it is necessary to determine the causes of apostasy, the conference leaders refer to the local church records for any causes of apostasy.

The West Zimbabwe Conference compiles and keeps a record of the figures regarding apostasy but they do not state the causes of apostasy. The figures also do not reflect the categories of apostasy but only gives the number of members who apostatised in each year. Although the figures reflect the magnitude of apostasy, they do not explain what causes apostasy. Accordingly, the record of figures makes it difficult to know if the causes of apostasy are internal, external or doctrinal. It is also difficult to establish which groups of people are affected most, among the youth, adults, females, males and urban or rural inhabitants. In the same way, the record of the missing members only reflects figures, and there are no written records with regard to what causes large numbers of church members to stay away from church for two or more years. The unsubstantiated verbal responses from the West Zimbabwe Conference leadership and the departmental directors regarding the causes of apostasy are:

- Some members became part of the diaspora (Christians living outside their country of origin).
- Some may have discovered themselves incompatible with the expectations of the Church and did not want to be exposed to the disciplinary conditions of the Church.
- Some (through ignorance,) may have moved to other places and continued to worship in the Seventh-day Adventist Church without obtaining letters of transfer.
- Some may have apostatised without notifying the Church, hence, the church record them as missing members.

Below is the record compiled from the West Zimbabwe Conference office, reflecting the figures of people who apostatised and people who were recorded missing between the years 1998 and 2008.

Table 5.1: Apostates and missing members (1998-2008)

Year	Apostasy	Missing Members	
1998	239	301	
1999	152	494	
2000	203	1,754	
2001	156	1,379	
2002	145	2,018	
2003	1583	457	
2004	267	153	
2005	157	2,645	
2006	213	1,738	
2007	135	230	
2008	224	164	
Total	2,049	11,333	

Record compiled from the WZC annual report (1998 -2008)

The data above reflects two thousand and forty nine (2 049) people who apostatised and eleven thousand, three hundred and thirty three (11333) people recorded missing during the period 1998 to 2008. In the light of Matthew 18:12 - 14 (the parable of the lost sheep),

where Jesus Christ expresses concern over one lost sheep out of one hundred (1%), the loss of these people and the long list of missing members, is a compelling cause for concern for many Church members in the West Zimbabwe Conference.

5.3 Data from the interviews with the West Zimbabwe Conference leaders and departmental directors

The interviews with the Conference directors highlighted the following as causes of apostasy. Some causes were mentioned by more than one person. However, the causes were sorted and recorded:

- Associating with unbelievers in activities which do not enhance spirituality (**Eternal**).
- Involvement in politics to an extent where church principles are compromised (**External**).
- Premarital sex and cohabitation (**External**).
- Continually breaking the Sabbath and not frequently attending church services (**Doctrinal**).
- Baptising people before they are taught all the doctrines and policies of the church (**Doctrinal**).
- Apostasy reduces membership (**Implications**)

The above list of the causes of apostasy reflects a conservative response. Not much is said about the internal causes of apostasy and their implications for the Church. Most respondents indicated that churches were making good progress. Some respondents expressed the view that the number of apostasies were of minor concern. They were asked whether the implications of apostasy affected the Church in terms of the decline of membership affecting the tithes and offerings, thereby compromising the member recruitment drive, causing divisions in the Church or creating a low spirit of fellowship among church members. Most responses from the directors were that all these aspects do not have any significant impact on the Church. However, comparing their responses with the responses from the local church leadership (elders, deacons youth and women leaders), revealed much concern over the causes and implications of apostasy taking place in the local churches.

The differences of opinion between the responses from the conference leadership and those of the local church leadership reflect several factors, namely,: the conference sees

the causes of apostasy as insignificant in all the areas asked, whereas the local church leadership sees the causes and the implications of apostasy to the Church as seriously affecting the Church. The church members are either closer or live with those who apostatised; hence, they see apostasy as a cause for concern for the local Church. Furthermore, the local church members know the causes of apostasy as the cases of apostasy are first noted and processed by the local church board and the Church,

The biggest contributors to the witnessing programme during the evangelistic campaigns are church members. Their opinions have more weight than those of the conference leaders. The local church acknowledges the implications of apostasy in their membership, with regard to tithes and contributions by members as well as in terms of the public responses when carrying out the witnessing programmes. The conference receives statistical collective reports, which do not explain the responses of the public's views when influenced by those who apostatised. In the same way, figures regarding the tithes and offerings come to the conference from the churches or districts and they do reflect the effects of apostasy on individual member churches or small companies, which are well exposed to the effects of apostasy in the local church.

To understand the extent of the effects of tithes lost through apostasy, it may be interesting to note that members are expected to donate their tithes amounting to ten percent (10%) of their income. Therefore, if each member donates one United States dollar per month, then because of the 2,049 people who apostatised and 11,333 members that were reported missing, the Church would have forfeited 13,382.00 dollars per month and 160,584.00 dollars per year and in the ten years of the period under study, the Church would have forfeited 1,605,840.00 dollars. It is interesting that some respondents did not regard such a loss as significant. In the same way, the people who are either criticising or blaming the Church for the loss of their faith, compromise the Church's ability to recruit more people to the Church (comment from interviewees).

5.4 Data from the interviews with local church leaders

The number of responses by the local church leadership (church elders, deacons and the various heads of department) exceeded those by the conference leaders. Importantly, the local church leaders expressed deep concern about the causes of apostasy. The list below reflects the causes of apostasy stated by the interviewees after such causes were sorted. The causes are listed according to the categories in the written questionnaire.

5.4.1 Internal causes of apostasy

- Personal clashes between members often results in one or both parties apostatising
- Failure to be elected to positions aspired for by members in church sometimes leads to apostasy.
- Electing people to positions for which they are not competent to perform, results in disappointment, causing people to give up their faith.
- Resentment regarding disciplinary action meted in terms of church policy, due to the poor and unprofessional approach towards the offenders, causes apostasy.
- Failure to have one's expectations met, for example, not being assisted materially or financially and getting no sympathy from members in desperate times of need, causes apostasy.
- Too much gossiping and criticism among church members reduces the spirit of fellowship; hence this causes apostasy.
- Intense dislike of those elected to positions of local church leadership creates unnecessary conflict, which often leads to apostasy.
- Delays in resolving disciplinary cases often lead to apostasy.
- The absence of church counselling leaves a lot to be desired, many cases leading to apostasy could have been prevented by the provision of such a service.
- Offenders receive little or no tolerance; very few if any offenders are forgiven by the church, hence, some members think trying to put matters right is a waste of time as a result of such feelings, apostasy becomes the only alternative.
- New members are not given enough time to adjust to a new Christian lifestyle, some fail to adjust and apostatise.

5.4.2 External causes of apostasy

- Associating with unbelievers in activities that do not enhance spirituality causes apostasy.
- Associating with members of other denominations or church sectors whose moral behaviour is not an important factor in their churches, lead to apostasy.
- Adhering to cultures with beliefs and practices that are not in harmony with those of the SDA Church causes apostasy.
- Continually breaking the Sabbath and not frequently attending Church services due to social attractions often lead to apostasy.

- Involvement in worldly politics to a point where church principles are compromised causes apostasy.

5.4.3 Doctrinal causes of apostasy

- Baptising people before they are taught all the doctrines and policies of the Church, causes some people to lose their faith when they discover that they accepted baptism ignorant of the expectations of the Church. For example, one may accept Christ after listening to two or few more sermons and is baptised. The Church may later learn that his/her private life is contrary to the Church doctrines and policies, following which the person is then removed from the church membership record and is considered an apostate, yet the two sermons may not have covered all the doctrines and policies to help the new converts make good decisions regarding their baptism.
- Inconsistence in upholding the Ten Commandments causes apostasy. For example, most emphasis is on only three of the Ten Commandments, namely, the keeping of the Sabbath day (Saturday) holy; not committing adultery and not stealing, thereby causing apostasy.
- Adherence to church polices and laws more than the scriptures, leading some members to apostasy.

5.4.4 Implications of apostasy for the Church

- Apostasy reduces church membership (See Table 4 above).
- Apostasy creates discomfort and disappointment among friends and family members of the apostate.
- The criticisms of those who have apostatised, compromise the Church's ability to recruit new converts.
- Apostasy reflects a poor image of the Church to the unbelievers or non- church members.
- Apostasy has a significant implication regarding tithing and the offerings made by members.

5.5 Interviews with pastors and members of other denominations

5.5.1 Data from the interviews with pastors

The interviews were mostly conducted formally with a few being done using the captive method. Thirty one pastors from other denominations were interviewed, while seven declined. In response to the first question regarding whether they had experienced apostasy in their churches in the last ten years, all the respondents answered in the affirmative, except two who wanted further clarification on how the researcher defined apostasy in his research. Regarding apostasy being defined as the loss of one's faith in Jesus Christ, one responded that no one who accepted the faith of Jesus Christ as his/her saviour later denied that Jesus was not the Lord even if the person stopped attending church services. However, the others agreed that there are people who truly lose their faith completely and apostatise, particularly those who tended to believe in the ancestral spirits. The causes of apostasy given by the rest of the pastors included the following:

- Most of the apostates lacked a doctrinal understanding of God. They put God on the witness stand in court and judged Him in terms of their own successes and failures, that is, if they failed in what they thought God should have helped them to succeed, God is judged as a failure and replaced by another power of their choice or they just give up their faith.
- Another cause of apostasy is that some Christians see God through the lives of other people, if their heroes of faith renounce (apostatise) their faith, they also lose their faith and apostatise.
- Ministers who criticise other ministers when preaching cause apostasy.
- The differences between the Christian Churches cause apostasy. For example, Christians who wish to change from one Christian denomination to another are re-baptised as a sign that their former faith is void, yet continue to worship the same Jesus Christ.

5.5.2 Data from the interviews with church members of other denominations

The interviews with members of other denominations were conducted after using the captive sampling method. Two hundred and sixty one people were interviewed. Thirty-three people declined. The responses fell into the four categories of the written questionnaire, namely the internal, external, doctrinal and implications of apostasy for the

Church. All the respondents agreed that apostasy was taking place in their churches. The following are the causes of apostasy given by the respondents:

- There is serious competition between the different denominations regarding membership, because churches have become commercial enterprises. It has become evident that church owners or organisations depend financially on church contributions as their sources of income.
- A lack of love and care in times of need causes apostasy. A high percentage of people in Zimbabwe are poor and come to church with the hope of receiving comfort and material help particularly in times of need, such as illness, or when death occurs in a family. Accordingly, people who move from one church to another, do so in search of churches that usually provide a lot of material assistance to their members.
- The failure of ministers to live according to what they preach causes apostasy. Accordingly, there are two problems, namely dishonesty in financial matters and the immorality of many ministers that cause many members to lose their faith in Jesus.
- Ministers who betray the values underlying the doctrine they preach cause apostasy. For example, a minister who preaches good Christian family behaviour and values and yet destroys the marriages of the members causes apostasy.
- Doctrinal differences cause apostasy. The conservative and the liberal churches differ in terms of their emphasis on doctrines yet, both use the same Bible, some people end up doubting the Bible itself, hence, they lose their faith in Jesus Christ.
- Corruption causes apostasy. The conditions leading to the struggle for human survival in Zimbabwe make it difficult for many Christians to live a faithful life; hence, some give up their faith for a corrupt and immoral life.

5.6 Data from the interviews with people who apostatised

At the end of the questionnaire administered to the sampled church members (See Appendix A, section F) provision is made for each respondent to give the details of people who had apostatised. The details helped the researcher to identify and interview some from those who had apostatised. The responses in this section are brief due to the limited time interviewees gave to the interviewer for the interviews to take place. However, the detailed responses from the interviewees who had more time are presented in chapter six.

The following are the causes and implications of apostasy summarised from the responses of the interviewees.

- The majority of the youth interviewed revealed that they had left the Church because the programmes were not tailored to meet the needs of young people. The youth programmes were just an appendix to the adult weekly programmes. All special youth programmes such as camping or outings were too expensive for most of them, particularly those from non- Christian families.
- Furthermore, the youth pointed out that they had left the Church because it (the Church) had no power to assist students who were subjected to conditions which compelled them to compromise their faith, such as having to attend classes or participate in sport on the Sabbath (Saturdays) in non- Christian schools.
- In addition, the youth explained that they had left the Church because the SDA Church did not tolerate girl pregnancies and did not regard such pregnancies as a consequence of temptation.
- The youth contended that the SDA Church did not allow weddings in Church if one partner was not an SDA baptised member.
- Moreover, the youth pointed out that they had left the Church because there were too many restrictions: one could not engage in sport on the Sabbath and no pre- marital sex, smoking or drinking of beer were allowed, were amongst many other reasons given..
- In turn, the adults intimated that they had left Church because of working on the Sabbath (Saturdays). The church did not permit you to remain a member if you worked on such days.
- The adults revealed that they had left the Church because of marriage to non- Christians whose lifestyles were not in harmony with the beliefs of the Church.

- Lastly, the adults declared that they left the Church because they had joined prophetic church sects, which helped to rid them of demon possession and illness, which the Seventh-day Adventist Church did not do.

5.7 Data from the written questionnaire

A questionnaire was administered to one thousand five hundred respondents who expressed their opinions regarding both the causes and implications of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference churches. Accordingly, the questionnaire was administered to seventeen (17) churches, of which seven were in urban areas; while ten were in rural areas. One hundred members from each church were expected to respond to the questionnaire. However, some rural churches, which had fewer members than the required number, included their companies or branches (smaller congregations administered by the main church). Despite having adequate membership at the time of administering the instrument, some members declined to complete the questionnaire. Hence, one thousand five hundred (1500) respondents completed the questionnaire properly. Table 5.2 below reflects the summarised demographic data and the responses of Church members on the various causes of apostasy:

Research question 1

What are the demographic characteristics of respondents in terms of age, gender, marital status, highest education achievement, and number of years as a church member?

Table 1.2: Distribution of respondents according to age

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percent	Cumulative percentage
Valid 12-20 years	318	21.2	21.2	21.2
21-40 years	706	47.1	47.1	68.3
41-60 years	390	26.0	26.0	94.3
61 years and above	86	5.7	5.7	100.0
Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

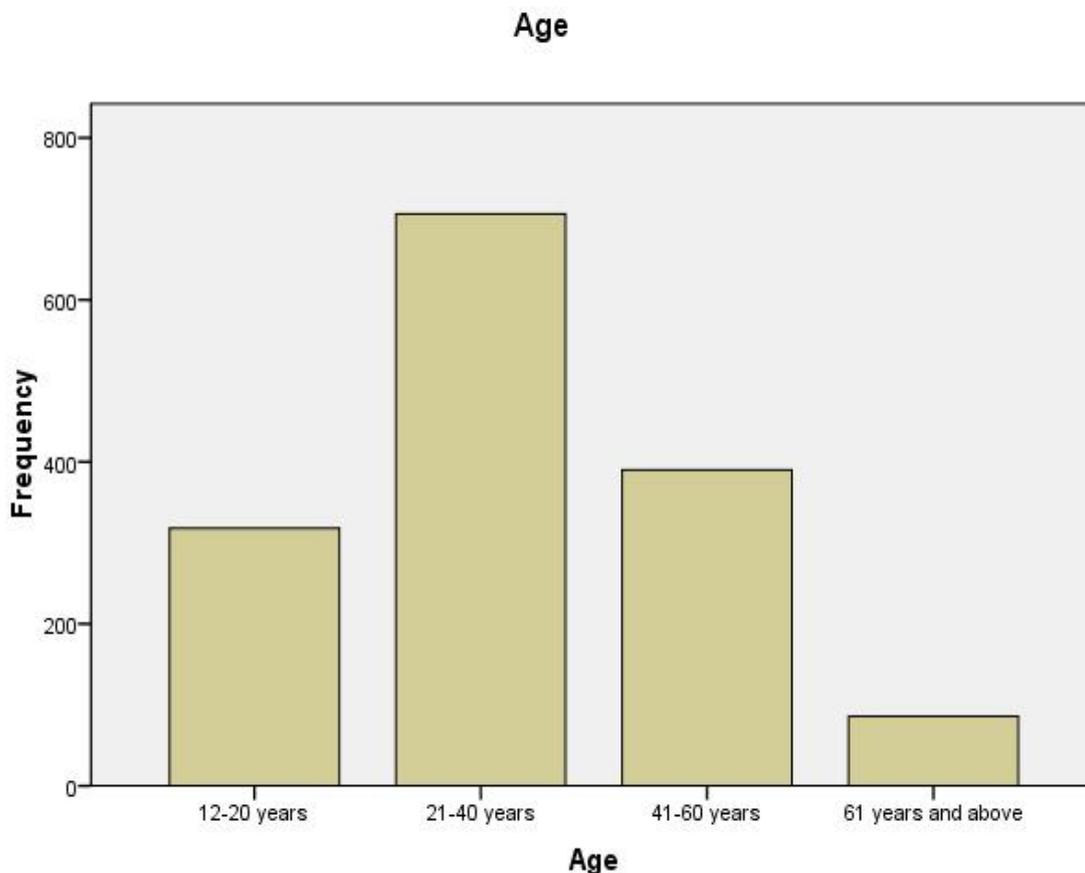


Figure 5.1: Bar chart showing the distribution according to age

The highest numbers of respondents were composed of people, between the ages of twenty one and forty years. The lowest number of respondents were the older people, sixtyone years and above. If the above table is a reflection of the membership distribution in the West Zimbabwe Conference, the middle group is the respondents that were 21 to 60 years of age that made up the the majority in the Church.

Table 5.3: Distribution of respondents according to gender

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid Female	824	54.9	54.9	54.9
Male	676	45.1	45.1	100.0
Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

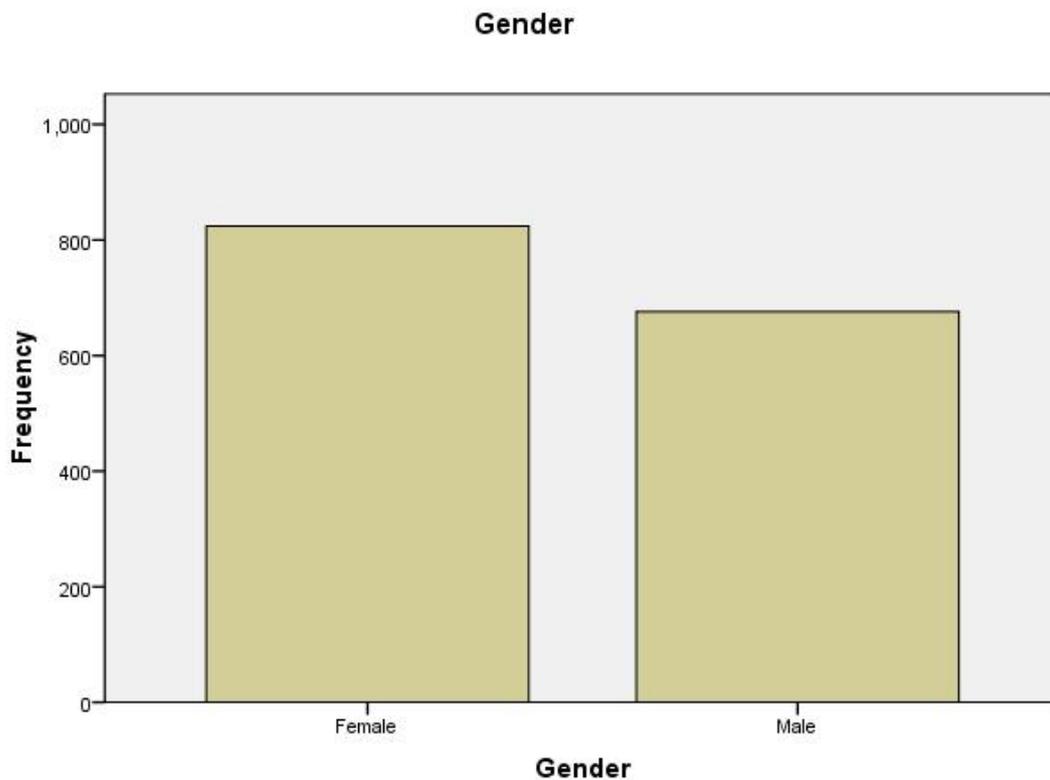


Figure 5.2: Bar chart showing distribution according to gender

The above table and figure show that a higher number of females than males responded to the questionnaire. Since the respondents were sampled randomly, the table indicates that the West Zimbabwe Conference contained more females than males. The difference in number, between the two groups may also indicate that more females were willing to contribute toward the search for solutions to the problem of apostasy.

Table 5.4: Distribution of the respondents according to marital status

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Single	592	39.5	39.5	39.5
	Married	777	51.8	51.8	91.3
	Separated	24	1.6	1.6	92.9
	Divorced	23	1.5	1.5	94.4
	Widowed	84	5.6	5.6	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

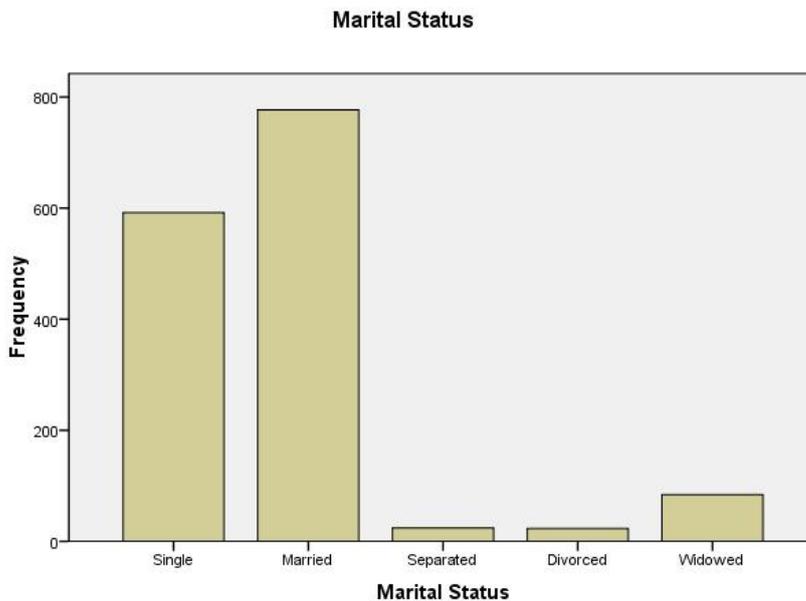


Figure 1.3: Bar chart showing distribution according to marital status

The table reflects a wide gap between two groups (married and single) and the rest of the groups of people who responded to the questionnaire. The distribution of the frequency above may be a reflection of the membership in terms of marital status in the West Zimbabwe Conference Church.

Table 5.5: Distribution of respondents according to educational level

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Primary	149	9.9	9.9	9.9
	Secondary	768	51.2	51.2	61.1
	College	387	25.8	25.8	86.9
	University	196	13.1	13.1	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

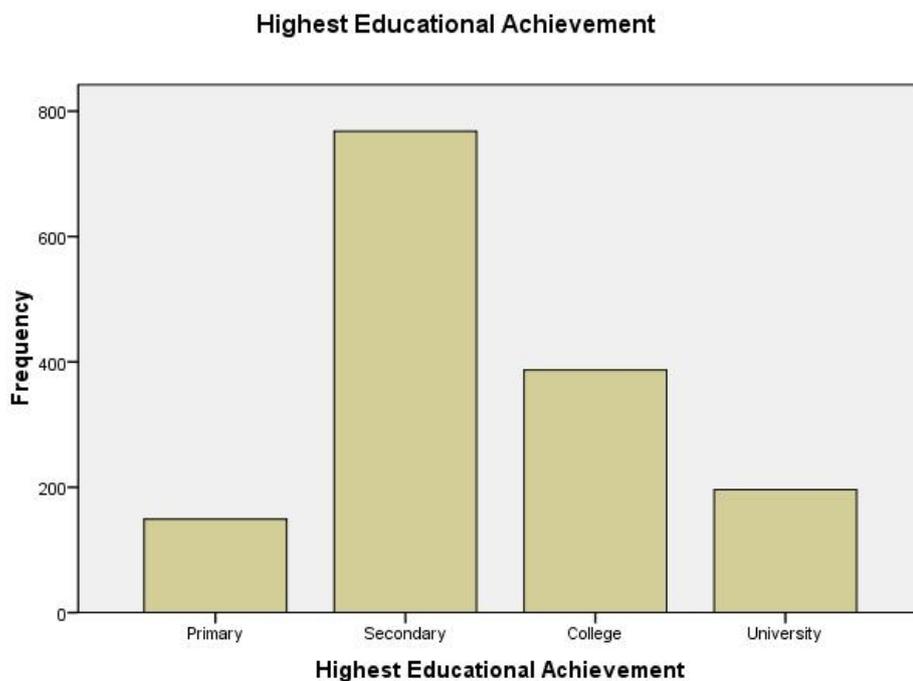


Figure 5.4: Distribution of respondents according to educational level

The majority of the respondents were either at secondary education level or people who completed and did not proceed further than the secondary school level of education. A significant number of the respondents, namely 387 and 196 respectively, were those at College and University level respectively. The lowest numbers of respondents were at the primary school level of education. The low number of respondents at primary school level of education can be attributed to two factors: The entry requirement for primary school (grade one) is six years of age, a student normally completes primary school at the age of twelve (12). . The Seventh – day Adventist Church baptises people from the age of

twelve onwards. With this in mind, the low number of with a primary school level of education among the respondents shown in the table above is an indication of the fact that baptising takes place during the final year of primary school. Another contributing factor is that old people were born at a time when receiving a secondary education was not common for many people, as a result of that some old people ended their education at primary school level.

Table 5.6: Distribution of respondents by years as a church member

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid 1-5 years	403	26.9	26.9	26.9
6-10 years	305	20.3	20.3	47.2
11-20 years	405	27.0	27.0	74.2
21- years 40	307	20.5	20.5	94.7
41- years and above	80	5.3	5.3	100.0
Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

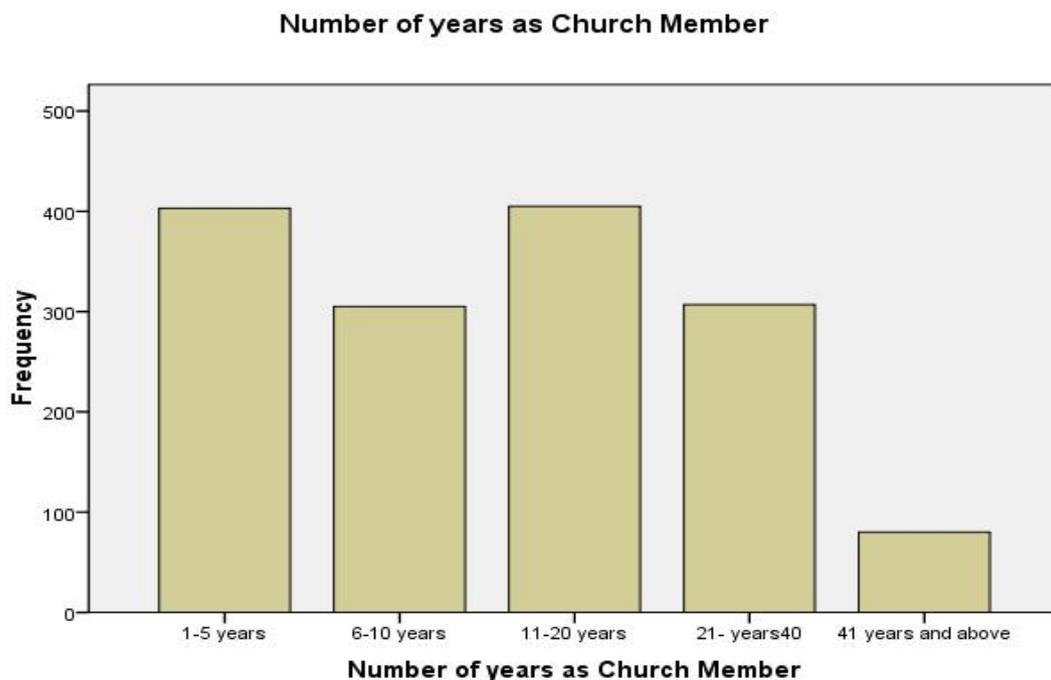


Figure 5.5: Distribution by number of years as a church member

An interesting scenario regarding the distribution of the respondents is the number of years respondents had been in the Church. The respondents who had been in the church for one to five years and eleven to twenty years respectively, had almost the same frequency and those with six to ten and twenty one to forty years membership of the church also reflect a similar relationship regarding their frequency.

Research question 2

What are the causes of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

Table 5.7 on the following page, depicts the frequency distribution, the mean and standard deviation of the respondents' responses on internal causes of apostasy

Table 5.7: Frequency distribution, the mean and standard deviation of the respondents' responses regarding the internal causes of apostasy

Items	Yes	No	Not Sure	Mean	Std. Deviation
Apostasy is from within the Church.	1004 (66.9%)	262 (17.5%)	234 (15.6%)	1.5133	.74980
Conflicts inside the Church cause apostasy.	1230 (82.0%)	151 (10.1%)	119 (7.9%)	1.7407	.59244
Struggle for church positions or ranks, causes apostasy	1040 (69.3%)	265 (17.7%)	195 (13.0%)	1.5633	.71157
Age gap between the youth and the adults causes apostasy	466 (31.1%)	784 (52.3%)	250 (16.7%)	1.1440	.67595
Programmes which do not meet the needs of the members cause apostasy.	891 (59.4%)	365 (24.3%)	243 (16.2%)	1.4323	.75499
Too many laws in the Church cause apostasy	484 (32.3%)	854 (56.9%)	162 (10.8%)	1.2147	.62036
Lack of love and care in times of need causes apostasy.	1284 (85.6%)	144 (9.6%)	72 (4.8%)	1.8080	.50130
Internal causes of apostasy average				1.4882	.32899

The statistics in this table reveal the lack of love and care in times of need, conflict inside the Church; the struggle and competition for church positions and programmes, which did not meet the needs of the members, are highly significant internal causes of apostasy with a mean of 1.8080; 1.7407; 1.5633 and 1.4323 respectively. Too many laws in the Church and the age gap between the youths and adults were both significant causes of apostasy. The overall mean of 1.4882 shows that apostasy from within the Church is significant. The low standard deviation for all the items shows that the respondents were homogeneous in their responses.

Table 5.8: External causes of apostasy (descriptive statistics)

Items	Yes	No	Not Sure	Mean	Std. Deviation
Outside social influence causes apostasy	1147 (76.5%)	220 (14.7%)	133 (8.9%)	1.6760	.62978
Outside political influence causes apostasy.	831 (55.4%)	412 (27.5%)	257 (17.1%)	1.3827	.76111
Technology (TV, Cell phones and cinemas,) cause apostasy	978 (65.2%)	369 (24.6%)	153 (10.2%)	1.5500	.67216
Working on days of worship causes apostasy	1151 (76.7%)	223 (14.9%)	125 (8.3%)	1.6853	.61960
Marriage outside the Church causes apostasy	1212 (80.8%)	171 (11.4%)	115 (7.7%)	1.7340	.59286
Living in a non-Christian environment (family or community) causes apostasy.	867 (57.8%)	467 (31.1%)	166 (11.1%)	1.4673	.68599
Going to a non Christian school causes apostasy.	705 (47.0%)	615 (41.0%)	179 (11.9%)	1.3520	.68440
Choosing friends not of the same faith causes apostasy	932 (62.1%)	425 (28.3%)	143 (9.5%)	1.5260	.66354
External causes of apostasy average				1.5467	.34813

The descriptive statistics for the external causes of apostasy reflect that marriage outside church; working on days of worship; outside social influences; technology (TV, cell phones and cinemas); choosing friends not of the same faith and living in a non- Christian environment (family or community) were highly significant causes of apostasy with a mean score of above 1.4, whereas, going to non- Christian schools and outside political influence were significant causes of apostasy. The low standard deviation for all the items also reflects that respondents were homogeneous regarding their responses.

Table 5.9: Doctrinal causes of apostasy (descriptive statistics)

Items	Yes	No	not sure	Mean	Std. Deviation
Baptising people before they are fully taught all the doctrines of the Church, cause apostasy.	1119 (74.6%)	258 (17.2%)	122 (8.1%)	1.6700	.64914
Failure to observe the Sabbath on Saturday causes apostasy.	939 (62.6%)	331 (22.1%)	230 (15.3%)	1.4727	.74585
Because the Church does not prophesy to the people like other Churches, this causes apostasy.	481(32.1%)	804 (53.6%)	214 (14.3%)	1.1781	.65742
Because the Church does not accept pre- or extra-marital relationship and polygamy, this causes apostasy	490 (32.7%)	829 (55.3%)	181 (12.1%)	1.2060	.63653
Because the Church believes in the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, this causes apostasy	174 (11.6%)	1187 (79.1%)	139 (9.3%)	1.0233	.45636
Because the Church beliefs that in the Lord's Supper (the sacrament), the wine we drink and the bread we eat is not the real blood and the real body of Christ, but merely the emblems, this causes apostasy	100 (6.7%)	1184 (78.9%)	215 (14.3%)	.9233	.45210
Because the Church does not believe in ancestral spirits (the living dead), this causes apostasy	263 (17.5%)	1084 (72.3%)	153 (10.2%)	1.0733	.52167
When people apostatise, they inform the Church leaders of their intention to leave Church.	137 (9.1%)	1041 (69.4%)	322 (21.5%)	.8767	.53943
Doctrinal causes of apostasy average				1.1777	.26886

The descriptive statistics of the doctrinal causes of apostasy shown above are divided into three levels: Firstly, because people were baptised before they had been fully taught all the doctrines of the Church and failure to observe the Sabbath on Saturdays were highly

significant doctrinal causes of apostasy with a mean of 1.6700 and 1.4727 respectively; Secondly, because the Church did not accept pre- or extra-marital relationships and polygamy (the mean 1.2060); because the Church did not prophesy to people like other churches (the mean 1.1781); because the Church did not believe in the ancestral spirits (the living dead) (the mean 1.0733) and because the Church believed in the Trinity (God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit (the mean 1.0233). These were significant causes of apostasy. Thirdly, because the Church believed that during the Lord's Supper (the sacrament), the wine we drink and the bread we eat is not the real blood and the real body of Jesus Christ, but these are merely symbols (the mean .9233), rank insignificant with regard to the causes of apostasy although there are concerns about apostasy over the same issue. The low standard deviation for all the items with regard to the doctrinal causes of apostasy also showed that the respondents were homogeneous in terms of their responses.

The summary of the average mean for three possible areas of apostasy, namely, external (with an average mean of 1.5467), internal (with an average mean of 1.4882) and doctrinal (with an average mean of 1.1777), all appeared to be grounds for causing apostasy. However, two of these areas (external and internal) were highly significant as the cause of apostasy. The doctrinal aspects, though not highly significant, were significant evidence of a cause of apostasy in the Church. It can therefore be concluded from the respondent's responses that the causes of apostasy in the order of magnitudes were external, internal and doctrinal respectively.

Research question 3

What are the implications of apostasy for the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

Tables 5.10-5.12 show the implications of apostasy for different groups of people in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh - day Adventist Church.

**Table 5.10: Implications of apostasy for different groups of people in the West
Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid Youths	681	45.4%	45.4%	45.4%
Adults	89	5.9%	5.9%	51.3%
Both youths and adults affected equally	730	48.7%	48.7%	100.0%
Total	1500	100.0%	100.0%	

The implications of apostasy were more highly significant with regard to the youths than for the adults with a percentage of 45.4% for youths in comparison with 5.9 % for the adults respectively. The future of the Church lies in the preparation of the youth today. White (1946:101) comments that, “More than any natural endowment, the habits established in early years decide whether a man will be victorious or vanquished in the battle of life. Youth is the sowing time. It determines the character of the harvest for this life and for the life to come “ (White 1946:101).

Table 5.11: Implications of apostasy in terms of gender

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid Females more than males	343	22.9%	22.9%	22.9%
Males more than females	195	13.0%	13.0%	35.9%
Both gender are equally affected	962	64.1%	64.1%	100.0%
Total	1500	100.0%	100.0%	

The descriptive analysis above shows that the implications of apostasy on gender were highly significant on females. The analyses of the implications reflected a highly significant percentage of 22.9% on female as compared to the percentage of 13.0%.on males. These implications can be deduced from the interviews with those who

apostatized. A high number of females lost their faith due to the temptation to which they were exposed resulting in them having pre-marital pregnancies and marrying non-Christians.

Table 5.12: The implications of apostasy with regard to location

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid Urban members more than rural church members	453	30.2%	30.2%	30.2
Rural church members more than urban church members	129	8.6%	8.6%	*38.8
Both rural and urban church members are equally affected	918	61.2%	61.2%	100.0
Total	1500	100.0%	100.0%	

The descriptive statistics regarding the implications of apostasy in terms of urban and rural church members revealed a frequency of 918 out of 1500 that means a percentage of 61.2% of the respondents showed that apostasy had highly significant implications for both. The comparison between the urban and rural areas also shows that the implications were highly significant with regard to urban church members with a valid percentage of 30.2% which was 21.6% more than the percentage of the rural members.

Table 5.13: Implications of apostasy affecting the church

	Yes	No	Not Sure	Mean	Std. Deviation
The impact of apostasy affecting the conference leadership.	834 (55.6%)	239(15.9%)	426 (28.4%)	1.2722	.87578
The contributions of tithes and offerings are most affected	935 (62.3%)	311 (20.7%)	254 (16.9%)	1.4540	.76612
Apostasy affects the Church pastor more than others.	522 (34.8%)	626 (41.7%)	352 (23.5%)	1.1133	.75512
Apostasy has a significant effect on the membership	1263 (84.2%)	87 (5.8%)	150 (10.0%)	1.7420	.62586
Impact of apostasy average				1.3954	.46186

The above descriptive statistics show that the implications of apostasy were highly significant regarding the membership and the contributions of tithes and offerings by church members with a mean of 1.7420 and 1.4540 respectively, whereas the implications of apostasy were only significant with regard to the conference leadership and the local church pastors with a mean of 1.2722 and 1.1133 respectively. The responses from the respondents shown in the table above and the interview responses of the local church leaders contradicted the interview responses of the conference directors and leadership. The responses of the majority (local church leadership and church members) strongly confirmed that apostasy had great implications for the Church.

Research question 4:

Is there any relationship between the causes of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and other church denominations within the West Zimbabwe Conference territory?

There was a relationship between the West Zimbabwe Conference Church and other church denominations with regard to the causes of apostasy. It is important to note that there was apostasy in other church denominations too. The differences between them lay in how they viewed the causes of apostasy. The other church denominations viewed the causes of apostasy in the light of their church leaders (pastors and bishops). Most causes of apostasy were evaluated in terms of the roles of ministers. The interview responses (from church members of other denominations) regarding the causes of apostasy testified as follows:

- Competition for membership numbers between the different denominations led to apostasy, because churches had become commercial enterprises. It had become evident that church owners or organisations depended financially on church contributions as their source of income.
- The failure of ministers to live according to what they preach caused apostasy. There were two traps into which many ministers fell that caused many members to lose their faith in Jesus. These were unfaithfulness regarding financial issues and immorality.
- Doctrinal differences caused apostasy. The conservative and the liberal churches differed in terms of their emphasis on doctrines, yet both use the same Bible. Consequently, some people ended up doubting the Bible itself and losing their faith in Jesus.
- Most apostates lacked a doctrinal understanding of God. They put God in court and judged Him in terms of their successes and failures, that is, if they failed where they thought God should have helped them to succeed, God was judged as a failure and replaced by another power of their choice or they just gave up their faith.
- Another cause of apostasy was that some Christians saw God through the lives of other people, if their heroes of faith deviated (apostatized) from their faith, they also lost their faith (apostatized).
- The minister who criticised other ministers when preaching also caused apostasy.

In the light of the above responses as well as many other responses by church members, it became clear that members observed many flaws in the role of ministers or church leaders. Any error or neglect on the part of a minister's professional or personal spirituality impacted heavily on the spirituality of church members. The researcher observed that almost all the responses given by church members in this category laid a

certain amount of blame on the minister's role, whereas the responses from the West Zimbabwe Conference Church members revealed that they did not see much evidence of the minister's personal spiritual role with regard to their approach towards the members. Furthermore, their focus was on the role of the Church as a system and what it did or did not do in causing apostasy. In fact, the West Zimbabwe Conference ministers have power to cause members to apostatise as they do not have ownership of the churches they lead. All the churches belong to the organisation. The role of a minister in the West Zimbabwe Conference Churches is characterised as a servanthood ministry, in other words, they are workers who can be transferred from one church to another at any time by a system such as the conference board.

Another aspect of the causes of apostasy that were examined was whether or not apostasy was a cause for concern for any members of other denominations. Although the members interviewed expressed an insignificant level of apostasy; the extent of this apostasy could not be verified as it was not the focus of this study.

Research question 5

To what extent do the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh day Adventist Church doctrines, policies and manuals meet the needs of church members?

The respondents with whom interviews were conducted regarding the doctrinal causes of apostasy, expressed satisfaction with the structure and the focus of the doctrines, policies and manuals. The respondents believed that there was nothing wrong with the doctrines, but felt that the problem lay with how the doctrines were applied or interpreted by various local church leaders, that left much to be desired. The following were the concerns of the respondents in this regard:

- The election of local church leaders (elders, deacons and heads of departments) was done on the grounds of spirituality; while the educational qualities of people were not taken into consideration. Hence, some people with little or no intensive knowledge of the doctrines, policies and manuals were elected to positions of local church leadership based on spiritual merits only. After the election of local church leaders, a short orientation course was carried out, mostly in the urban churches, but there was no training of elders to assist them with understanding of the doctrines, policies and manuals, a course which took four years for a minister to complete. There was a

challenge for such local church leaders in terms of administering or explaining the doctrines, policies and manuals to churches, which had members with various levels of education. In the rural areas where one pastor had many churches with companies and branches (See the church structure in Figure 3.1), the pastor might visit a church company or branch once in six months. The fact that there might be cases of maladministration because of less qualified church elders, might not be evident or noted even when the pastor visited the church, company or branch after some months. In effect, the doctrines did not meet the needs of some members.

- There were two situations that were highly significant causes of apostasy; the first was baptising people before being taught all the doctrines and policies of the Church fully. The second was failure to observe the Sabbath day (Saturday) as a holy day. These two causes of apostasy were an indication that members were not fully informed with regard to the doctrines, policies and manuals. Accordingly, it became difficult for the members, particularly the new converts to uphold their church membership.
- The twelve reasons for which erring members could be subjected to disciplinary procedures were cited by some interviewees as one of the significant problems that have caused many members to apostatise.. The twelve conditions do not state which ones can lead to the withdrawal of church membership and which ones can merit censure. The choice is left to the individual church boards or congregations. This part of administration becomes challenging if the local church leadership is not well versed with regard to doctrines, policies and manuals. If the twelve conditions in the manual (2005:195) are not categorised in terms of which ones can lead to disfellowshipping (exclusion) of a member and which ones are for censuring members, the conditions in this regard will not fully meet the needs of some members.

5.8 Conclusion

The data from the instruments administered to the sampled population were analysed in terms of a scale that categorised the causes as highly significant, significant and insignificant causes respectively as well as the implications of apostasy, whereas the categories for the causes of apostasy were examined within the Church (internal causes),

from without the Church (external causes) and with regard to the Church doctrines (doctrinal causes). Although the data were obtained from the office records, from the instruments administered and from the interviews carried out, they could not present a complete picture of the causes and implications of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference Churches without the responses of those who have apostatised or who are missing from the Church. Hence, the next chapter will complete the presentation and the analysis of data, which will include the responses from the oral life histories of the people who have apostatised.

CHAPTER SIX

ORAL LIFE HISTORY INTERVIEWS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the oral life histories of some people who apostatised from the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The apostates were given time to express themselves in detail regarding what caused them to apostatise and how their cases were dealt with by the Church. Their responses were recorded in writing while they spoke to the interviewer, organised and presented without distorting the information given. The names of people and of places were removed for the purpose of confidentiality. Certain statements which could suggest or identify people who were possibly implicated in their situation were also left out. The responses were transcribed verbatim to reflect the feelings and passions of the respondents.

The interviewer asked the following questions at the beginning of each presentation by way of an introduction:

“Tell me about your life before you became a Christian? “How long were you a Christian before you abandoned your faith? What caused you to apostatise or abandon your faith? How was your case dealt with by the Church? How long have you been out of Church now? Where you visited since you left the Church? What are your views or concerns about the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church? “

The researcher gave them enough time to tell their stories without any interruptions. Their life histories are presented below.

6.2: Life history 1

“I was not a Christian before joining the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I was born in a polygamous family. My father had four wives. I grew up in a rural area where culture and tradition were highly regarded. However, there were few churches with a few members in our area. Most young people going to those churches came from Christian homes. There was not as much evangelism in communities as there is today. I did not go to church until I was married. I have one wife and six children. I also have children out of wedlock.

My wife became a Christian. I did not have an interest in church activities until a year after her baptism. I decided to join the Church during a powerful three weeks' evangelistic campaign, conducted by an evangelist from the United States of America in 2003. At that time, I thought the world was coming to an end. After two days of listening to the sermons, I was baptised into the Church. The campaign continued to the end of the third week and other people were baptised at the end of the campaign. All of us (newly baptised) were welcome into the Church, each in the nearest congregation or in the church of one's choice, as long as it was a Seventh-day Adventist Church. The elders told us to continue coming to church every Sabbath (Saturday). I was excited to go to church, for a few weeks we were separated from other church members for Bible study which turned out to be another sermon by the church elder. This gave us two sermons each Sabbath morning; one by the church elder and the other one was the main sermon, which included everyone in the church.

“After a month, our group of (newly baptised converts) was integrated into the Church and a new group continued with the elder. I was a church member for two years, determined to remain one all my life. After one year and some months, (I cannot remember the exact time) I realised that I was still not conforming to the Seventh-day Adventist Christian lifestyle. The audience assumed that I knew everything, yet I did not know how to change my life to conform to that of a Christian. The elders' so called Bible study lesson which, I later learnt was intended to be an orientation for new converts became another sermon presentation. I tried to seek advice from some members. Their responses clearly indicated to me that I was not conforming to the Church's expected lifestyle, if I still did what I was asking about. I wanted to know whether or not it was permitted for one to drink beer once in a while; sell beer or tobacco in my stores, maintain extra marital activities with the woman with whom I had children before I was baptised , amongst other things The response to me was that I had accepted all the baptismal vows the day I was baptised and that from that day onwards, I was to abandon everything and abide by these vows. These vows are the dos and don'ts of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for all her baptised members [See Appendix L]

I do not think it is possible for one to change his life in one day. I agree that the mind can change but the lifestyle changes gradually as more light comes into one's mind. I further inquired how one can do it and whether there was a grace period where new members

are to work out their way to perfection. The response was that there is no stated period for changing one's life. It is assumed that when one decides to be baptised one has already changed everything. To the church leaders, two years were enough for me to have changed my life. Their views may be correct but it all depends on whether the person is well informed with regard to the requirements.

I must tell you that when I decided to be baptised, I was a chain smoker, a heavy drinker of alcohol, had a family and other children out of wedlock. I had shops which included items the Church did not like and many other situations in my life, which according to the Church, were not in harmony with the Church rules. Having said these few things to you, you are probably seeing a true picture of a sinner who was never converted.

The greatest pain during that time was that each time I revealed my challenge to a church member I received a response which indicated to me that I was not a Christian or still not converted and that if the elders and the pastor learnt of my situation, my stance will be discussed and my name will be removed from the Church register. It did not take long after these inquiries before two deacons approached me on the same subject (that my stance is not conforming to the expectations of the Church) and that my situation would be discussed by the church board (church governing board). In preparation for the board meeting, the deacons asked me many questions. I told them the truth that I had realised that I was wrong after I was baptised and that I did not know how to change my life to what the Church wants me to be. The deacons appreciated my response to their investigations but indicated that the church board would decide on my situation.

The last message to me was that the church voted in favour of the church board's recommendation that I be disfellowshipped from the church and that the only way I may be re-admitted as a church member would be through another baptism, which could be done after the Church is satisfied that I have changed my social life and stopped certain activities [including those stated above] which do not conform to the Church's standards.

I was not told whether I could still continue coming to church or not. I tried to attend church services after that, but quickly stopped, because I learnt that my case had finally been decided in the presence of the whole church with my children and many other relatives present. I also discovered that my coming to church was an embarrassment to the Church, to my family and to my relatives who knew my life well. What worried me the

most was a public declaration to the church that I was no longer regarded as a church member.

The day the Church disfellowshipped (removed my name was removed from the church records) me, I received a large number of calls welcoming me back to the world ,some in a mocking way. I was embarrassed and my family also left the congregation for another one, because of my poor image in that church.

The implications of being disfellowshipped from the Church were so great that I stayed indoors for over a month, wondering whether it was necessary to live or die. I felt lost in the world, lost in the Church and also lost from heaven. I did not want to meet church members and I did not want to meet those who were with me before I became a Christian.

In the whole world, only my wife knew what was happening to me. My house was like a place of mourning, with family mourners whose funeral could not come to an end. I received no church visitors, no calls of prayer, only sounds of mockery surrounded me, finally it dawned on me that heaven if ever there was one, meant nothing to me. I turned my back on the Church and rejoined my former life and to this day, I have never heard the sounds of the Church in my ears. I am satisfied with what I am and I truly hate the Church and I hate God who wants people to be perfect before they choose to follow Him. I believe that, if the thief that was forgiven his sins by Jesus Christ on the cross had lived for another week, he was going to be thrown out of Church like me.”

6.3 Life history 2

“I was brought up in a non- Christian family and our neighbourhood had no Church. The Christian Zionist people we knew lived far from our village. I was first exposed to Christianity in school. Some teachers who taught Bible lessons were cruel to students. They beat and punished us when we arrived late at school I did not have an interest in church activities till I completed school.

I later became interested in going to church when I was working in Bulawayo because most of my workmates were Christians. I was baptised into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 2007. The congregation I went to was so big that I did not know most of the members or all the elders of the Church. Each Sabbath service was like a public political campaign meeting. I was a church member for eight months. I decided to leave because I

found no satisfaction either spiritually or socially in the Church. I have been out of the Church for over five years now. I am happy with friends who are also out of the Church and I have no restrictions in my life.

I am not sure if my departure was noticed and discussed by the church board since the membership is large. I was not consulted or asked about my absence from church. In fact, I do not think the Church realised that I had left the Church. In the months I was a church member, I could miss going to church for a month or two and no one asked me about it or visit me. I felt distanced from the members and from the Church. I do not know if my name was ever written in the books of the Church after my baptism.

As a church member, I did not find the Bible helpful to me as I decided going to church and be baptised because my workmates were Christians. To those Christians I related to, I did not find anything the Bible or Christianity had done to or for them". The respondent was asked if the Christians he worked with did not relate to him well. He said, "Most of the Christians I worked with were corrupt and I was fired from work by them.

I do not remember any one of the church members visiting or talking to me on matters of faith or the Church. I do not even know if the pastor or the elders of the church can recognise me as a person who was one of their members once. I do not know how you got to know about me.

I think –the church is too big for one pastor and elders to know all the members. It is impossible for them to visit all the church members when they are sick or during their bereavements. For example, I lost my mother and my young sister, both funerals were at my house, I was not visited by the pastor or the elders of the church. That is why I think I was never noticed as a baptised member from the time I joined the Church to the time I gave up my faith and left the Church.

As a non- Christian I find no difference between now and the time I went to church. For me going to church was just an event in which I did not find it a better alternative to my previous life."

6.4: Life history 3

“I was born in a Seventh-day Adventist family. I was also baptised in the SDA Church. I was a church member until I got married. The change and loss of my faith was largely due to my wife who did not like Christianity. She is a spirit medium (Sangoma). Her ancestral spirits bothered her if she went to church. She does not want me and the children to go to church.

Several times I appealed to the pastor for help. Each time prayers were done, the situation became worse. Some church members criticised me for cooperating with my wife and some advised me to divorce her. Twice I was disfellowshipped (my name removed from the Church register). First, I tried to force my wife to abandon the exercise of being a spirit medium; for a while she tried and the Church allowed me to be re-baptised (for conditions for re-baptism, See Appendix L).

After a few months, my wife was attacked by the ancestral spirits again. She became very ill until I gave in to save her by cooperating with her demands, such as providing snuff, beer and sometimes uncooked animal blood for her to take when she was possessed by the demons. This made me compromise many of the Church principles, such as attending church activities and worship. I started to assist with certain duties, such as the preparation of beer, getting the snuff, providing fresh blood from chickens or goats which are the major requirements when she is demon possessed, hoping to avert the danger of her getting ill again.

The Church could not tolerate my situation any longer. I was again disfellowshipped from the Church for the second time. I inquired what could have prevented the Church from removing the demons from my wife. Some said the demons cannot be removed if the one possessed likes them or is not willing to abandon them. I knew that it was not easy for my wife and the whole family because each time we cooperated with the Church; my wife became sick to the point of death and her relatives fought against me fiercely. Other church members insisted that I should divorce her and return to church. The reasons why my wife did not want the ancestral spirits removed from her, were that each time she tried, the demons also threatened to kill her and the children.”

When I asked if the respondent still believed in the power of Jesus, he said: *“During the first part of my marriage, when the problem started, I had faith. I could pray and fast,*

hoping that God would come to my rescue. But nothing happened. The church members also started accusing me of compromising the Church's standards; I finally gave up everything to do with faith. From the experiences I have gone through, I believe that even if my wife dies first, it will be difficult for me to change my lifestyle since demons do not die, they (the demons) may cause havoc to the remaining members of the family."

Asked if the respondent was satisfied with what the pastor and the church members had done to help him, he said:

"The pastor truly did his best to help me by praying and counselling with us as a family. Even now he sympathises with us regarding the condition we are in. There are church members who still talk to us and sometimes visit us. There are however, many church members who shun us like people with leprosy, among such people, are my former friends from youth and my relatives who are church members."

6.5 Life history 4

"I was born and brought up in the Seventh-day Adventist's church family. In 1973 when the war of liberation was severe in the country, I went to South Africa. I lived with people who were not Christians and my lifestyle gradually changed. After a long time, I lost my faith and started drinking beer and smoking tobacco. I have lived this kind of life for more than forty years now. I lost my marriage and lived a life of desperation, depending on temporary and piece jobs which could not sustain my life.

I returned from South Africa, but I did not stay at the home where I was born. Instead, I wandered around the country looking for work to earn a living. I finally settled here where I have stayed for about ten years now. From 1973 to date, I have not been to church for worship. I lost interest in worshipping God and do not think I can be a Christian any more.

Since I left the Church, I cannot recall anyone from the Church visiting me with regard to church matters. Actually, I do not blame the Church people for not visiting me because I lost my faith while I was away from home where many people did not know that I was a Christian. And, when I returned home I have been living with people who do not know that I was once a Christian. I recently told the people I live with that I grew up as a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. Maybe they are the people who told you about me."

6.6: Life history 5

“I was born and brought up by Methodist parents, educated in the schools of the same church up to high school level. When I started working, I lived at ---- where there were no Methodist churches nearby. The Seventh-day Adventist Church dominated the area and was popular. I joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church and I was baptised in 2002.

Six years later in 2008, I worked for the Apostolic Faith Mission Church (AFM). I became a friend with one of their pastors to a point where I decided to leave the SDA Church and joined the AFM Church. This Church (AFM) was different from the first two churches I attended. Since I was self-employed and depended on piece jobs I was now free to work on either Saturdays or Sundays and went to church at any time I was free. Their conditions of worship were more relaxed than the Methodist and the Seventh-day Adventist churches.

When the Apostolic Faith Mission job contract ended, I started looking for piece jobs, consequently I could not travel every week for worship at the Apostolic Faith Mission Church. Since I left the AFM Church, I have not gone to any other church to this day. It is a long time since I stopped going to church. I lost my faith and I do not think I can be a Christian any more.

The Apostolic Faith Mission pastor made several visits as a friend, encouraging me not to abandon the church services and my faith, but the job opportunities away from the church were inhibiting me from getting time to go for church worship. I am now living a non- Christian life.”

6.7: Life history 6

“I came from a non- Christian home. I was baptised into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1998 when I was young; I was about thirteen years old. What made me like the Church were my friends. We played and went to church together. My parents allowed me to go to church but I was always unhappy because my parents did not buy me clothes to wear to go to church. I was always poorly dressed. After completing primary school, I was sent to a non-Christian secondary school and my parents relocated to a place where there was no SDA Church. I lost contact with my friends and that caused me to give up my faith in 2008.

Many people have approached me, encouraging me to go to church but it is difficult for me to be a Seventh-day Adventist Church member. I know the Church does not accept people who drink beer and smoke tobacco. I am partaking of both, and at my age, it is not easy to stop. I cannot remember much of the Church doctrine now. I only remember that I enjoyed the youth programmes in the Church when I was young.”

6.8: Life history 7

“I have been a Seventh-day Adventist baptised member from my youth. My parents are SDA Church members. My brother is a pastor in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The cause for the loss of my faith is that Jesus has delayed His coming. I waited a long time for Him to come, but He did not come. I now do not believe that there is Jesus who is still to come.

Another reason for the loss of my faith is that those who say they are Christians behave badly and what I see them do, tells me that there is nothing like Christianity. Some of the Christians are worse than many non- Christians. I think it is better for me to remain good without becoming a Christian. I strongly feel that the Seventh-day Adventist Church should not preach or tell people that there is a Jesus and that Jesus is coming soon. Many of those who preached that Jesus is coming soon have grown old and some have died without seeing their Jesus that was coming soon. I think that is a serious mistake, because many people (like me) who joined the Church thinking that there is a Jesus who is coming soon to give them eternal life, will not wait any longer. I think such statements should not be made. I do not think many people can live all their lives expecting the coming- soon Jesus. I do not want to hear about the coming- soon Jesus. I want to live a good life till I die.”

6.9: Life history 8

“I was born in a Seventh-day Adventist family. I was a baptised Seventh-day Adventist Church member from 1992 to 2001. I left the Church eleven years ago. What caused me to abandon the church and my faith was my marriage. I married a non- Christian. When I married, we agreed with my husband that I would continue going to church. After marriage my husband’s relatives and the whole clan could not understand why I went to Church, while the rest of the family went to work in the fields and participated in other activities on the Sabbath (Saturday). They could also not understand why I was not participating in the family traditional activities such as appeasing the ancestral spirits

(Ukuthethela) a process which included the preparation of traditional beer and drinking and also performing certain rituals, which to me, my Church and my parents were taboo and sinful. The situation caused a lot of misunderstandings between my husband and I, my parents and my in-laws and my husband's clan.

My parents in-law blamed my husband for letting me do what I wanted, instead of following the traditional ways as other women who were married in the same clan. My husband could not stand the pressure from his parents and the clan. He gave in and disapproved of my desire to continue going to church. These problems almost caused my marriage to break down.

I consulted my pastor regarding whether I could divorce my husband and continue coming to worship in Church or lose my faith. The pastor said that the decision is with me, but pointed out to me that the Bible says, "What God has joined together, let man not separate" (Mark 10: 9 NIV.). He also said God hates divorce (Mal. 2: 16 NIV)." Because of the strong Biblical warnings by the pastor, I gave in for the sake of my marriage. I did not divorce my husband but, I have never had peace of mind regarding my marriage since that time. I am still worried about the fact that I lost my faith. I have gone deep into non- Christian activities and my children have been dedicated to the ancestral spirits. This bothers me and I do not know how God views my life now."

6.10: Life history 9

"I was born and brought up in a Seventh-day Adventist family. I was baptised into the Church when I was a young girl. I left the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 2003 when I was in high school. What caused me to leave the Church and abandon my faith was that I became pregnant. I was still a student. My case was discussed several times by the Church board; finally I was disfellowshipped from the Church.

I submitted my apology through the elders of the church, admitting that I was influenced by peer pressure while I was at school. My case took a long time to be concluded because some board members were advocating that I should be placed under censure (be suspended) instead of being disfellowshipped (excluded) from the Church. When they heard that I was not planning to marry the boy who was responsible for the pregnancy, but wished to continue with my education, some board members feared that I might have another pregnancy, while I was still unmarried at school. For this and other reasons not

known to me, the Church decided that I should be disfellowshipped from the Church; they would not even consider me, at least, for censure. I left the Church, completed my university studies and I am now happily married but not to the boy who made me pregnant.

I was not happy the way the Church dealt with my case. I knew that I was wrong and did not object to it. The composition of the church board included some young people; boys and girls some of whom were my friends and some proposed love to me but did not succeed. This made the situation very difficult for me. I was embarrassed by the mockery from my church peers, my relatives and those who were friendly with me were also embarrassed. I lost my dignity and felt lost in the community and also lost with regard to heaven. My mother who was one of the deaconesses asked me to go and live with my grandmother until the child was born. That saved me as I had already decided to commit suicide. I will always be thankful to my parents who stood by my side even though I had disappointed them.”

6.11: Life history 10

“I was not a Christian until I was an adult. I was baptised into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1997 and remained there till I was married. I married a non Christian woman, whose parents were members of the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) which is led by Lehanyan whose church headquarters are in Polokwane (Petersberg) in South Africa. I left the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 2002. What caused me to leave the Seventh-day Adventist Church was that my sick child was healed by a prophet from the Zionist Church of the Johane Masowe Church, which is an African Independent Church.

I am now a prophet in that church and I am satisfied with my church. I enjoy being a prophet. I could not be one if I had remained in the Seventh-day Adventist Church since they do not heal and prophesy in the ways that my church does.

No one from the Seventh-day Adventist Church visited me either for encouraging me to go back to their church or to ask me why I had left the Church. I often meet many of their church members. I believe that my case was discussed and I was probably disfellowshipped from the Church.”

6.12: Life history 11

“I grew up in the non- Christian environment of the mines, moving from one mine compound (slum) to another. When I got married, I got a house in a small village where I have been living with my family to this day. Preachers came to our village and conducted an evangelistic campaign, about twenty of us were converted and baptised into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1998. A pastor from the main church which is about thirty kilometres away from our small congregation visited us once in a while.

I left the Church in 2000. What caused me to leave the Church was that the services and the programmes were boring and dull. Sabbaths (Saturdays) were very lonely for me. The congregation was small and their fellowship was cold. The Church gave no support to its members. When members were sick or bereaved, the Church had nothing to help its members with.

As a non -Christian, I am now free to do what I want. When I go beer drinking, I meet and enjoy myself with many friends. My friends are helpful in many ways; they assisted me when my wife died. When I am not well they visit me often. I like that and I cannot leave such a life.”

6.13 Life history 12

“My parents are not Christians but my mother told me that, when she was young, she went with her parents to the Lutheran Church. I was baptised into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 2003 when I was in a Seventh-day Adventist primary school. I am now working. I stopped going to Church when I was at college three years ago. What caused me to stop going to Church and to abandon my faith was peer pressure and the programmes at college. There were many lessons and tests which took place on the Sabbaths (Saturdays). It was not easy for me to approach the college officials, seeking for permission to be free on the Sabbath (Saturdays).

My situation was also weakened by some Seventh-day Adventist students who compromised the Sabbath conditions and participated in college activities on the Sabbath. The difficult conditions at college compelled me to leave the Church.

After college, I went to work in places where there was no SDA Church nearby. I continued with a non- Christian life style till now. My life style cannot conform to the

Seventh-day Adventist Church standards or any other Church now. I think I have left the way and I think I am alright with my life.”

6.14: Life history 13

“I come from a Christian home. My mother goes to the “Family of God Church” my father does not go to church. My parents are free to let us (children) go to any church of our choice. I went to a Seventh-day Adventist Church with friends and I was baptised there in 2006. I left the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 2009 and joined the Pentecostal Church.

What caused me to leave the Seventh-day Adventist Church was that the Church programmes were boring. There were no activities for young people and each time a youth camp was organised, a lot of money was required from each youth, which was an inhibiting factor for some of us who were not able to pay for the outings.

The Seventh-day Adventist also does not prophesy or speaks in tongues and does not have the healing spirit. The programmes are not challenging and do not meet the needs of young people. Where I go now, the church has more young people, that is, young and young adults than old people. The youth programmes helped me to get a partner. I have just married and I am happy now.

“I was told by friends that I was disfellowshipped by the Church for changing from the Seventh-day Adventist Church to another church denomination.”

6.15: Analysis of life histories

6.15.1: Life history 1

The first life history above reflects a number of causes of apostasy. First, it is not clear on which perversions of the gospel both the respondent and the Church were focussing.. Cleveland (2006: 86), refers to three perversions of the gospel. He asserts, “There are those who have taught that a person is saved by his own works; those who teach that a person is saved by passive faith and those who believe that a person is saved by a mix of faith and works.” However, He states that “we are saved by grace through lived faith in a living Lord.”

Cleveland further explains how “faith that works” helps Christians, particularly the new converts, to uphold the Christian faith. He remarks that authentic faith is effective and

does what it is supposed to do as a curative virtue and authentic faith inspires obedience to the requirements of God's holy law. On the other hand, it produces the confidence and trust that makes the person restless until his life is in harmony with the revealed will of God. Cleveland (2006:87) concludes by saying, "This is salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." If the respondent was taught about salvation by grace through faith, he could have changed his life to comply with all the church doctrines within the period of two years he was a church member. The second challenge observed is that the respondent provided evidence that he was baptised before learning about all the Church doctrines and had no knowledge of the Christian lifestyle expected by the Church. It is not clear whether the preacher informed the audience about doctrines before the respondent came or the preacher did not touch on the doctrines in all his sermons during his campaigns. If the respondent had been fully taught before baptism, he could have made an informed decision either to be baptised or to wait until he was ready. Cleveland (2006) further argues that it is important as an evangelist to understand the three factors that affect the spiritual decisions made by people. He states that such factors include the economic, social and religious [spiritual] factors, which influence people's thinking and behaviour. He emphasises that all the factors should be taken into account during the evangelism campaign. The problem of the respondent reflects evidence that the three factors were either poorly or never dealt with during the evangelistic campaign he attended. He still sold items in his shops, which the Church regarded as undesirable such as tobacco, beer and others; he also continued with some of his social activities, such as extra-marital activities and among the spiritual challenges are that he did not take a keen interest in studying the requirements of the Church for members.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual (SDA Church 2010:44) states that, "Pastors must instruct candidates in the fundamental teachings and related practises of the Church so they will enter the Church on a sound spiritual basis The Church Manual also emphasises that thorough instruction and public examination before baptism must be carried out,so that candidates individually or in a baptismal class are instructed from the scriptures regarding the Church's fundamental beliefs and practices and the responsibilities of membership. The pastor should satisfy the Church by means of a public examination that candidates are well instructed, are committed to taking [the baptismal] step and through practice and their conduct, demonstrate a willing acceptance of Church doctrines and the principles of conduct, which are the outward expressions of

those doctrines as stated; for “by their fruits you will know them” (Matt. 7:20).”If public examination is impractical, then candidates should be examined by the board or a committee appointed by the board, such as the board of elders, whose report should be given to the Church before candidates are baptised (SDA Church 2012:45).

The conditions of the Church in the manual state the conditions that should be met before candidates are baptised. If all the procedures are followed, cases such as the one above would not be causes for apostasy.

6.15.2: Life history 2

The second life history above reflects the problems of Churches with large memberships. The cited church is one of the churches, which had over three thousand members at the time the respondent was baptised. In this response are comments that clearly reflect some amount of neglect on the part of the pastor, elders and church members, in the nurturing of the newly baptised members of their congregation. There is also evidence that a pastor’s absence with regard to new converts creates a problem with their orientation and integration into the Church. This problem was realised in the newly established churches in Galatia when Paul left them alone, by the time the apostle returned, almost all the church members were in a state of apostasy. Although there was probably a pastor for the respondent above, the silence on the part of the church pastor is an indication that the pastor did not take an interest in the newly converted members.

There is a need for the ministers of the gospel to look into the problems facing the new converts. The decisions made by the new converts are not the conclusion of a struggle with sin but the beginning of a struggle to create a change in one’s life. Hartness and Eskelin (1993) indicate that great decisions that affect one’s life are not made progressively over a long period of time. They are the results of conscious decisions that one makes at specific moments. These are not hasty choices but are deeply rooted resolutions resulting in significant changes in one’s thoughts and actions.

They (Hartness and Eskelin) also point out that changes to sustain the decisions will take place one at a time as one comes face- to- face with challenges that may be the greatest, one has chosen to confront. In this regard, the pastoral guidance and counselling are crucial to the settlement of the newly convert’s mind in church. Hartness and Eskelin (1993:11) also contend that, “Most of the frustration people experience is based on failure

to deal with present circumstances.” They also state that “God doesn’t change us so that he can accept us, but he accepts us so that he can change us” (Hartness & Eskelin 1993:11). These statements inform us that the process of change after baptism is important and it is to be handled with much care and diligence by the pastor and those charged with the responsibility of orienting and nurturing the newly converted members of the Church.

6.15.3: Life history 3

The third life history describes the suffering caused by the Church, family and relatives of his wife. On the one hand, the respondent revealed his serious struggle with the demons affecting the lives of his wife and his family and on the other hand, he faced condemnation and disfellowship from the Church, in addition, he had to respond to pressure from the relatives of his wife. As a Christian, where did the respondent stand or what could he do to escape unharmed from such a situation? Some church members recommended that he should divorce his wife but the pastor gave him a Biblical caution saying that God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16) and that the only condition for divorce in the Bible is the unfaithfulness of a spouse (Matt. 19:9) which did not apply in this case.

There was a theological problem in the life of the respondent in that all the advice given to him did not resolve his faith problem. Neither divorcing his wife in order to remain in the Church nor giving up his faith in God in order to avoid a divorce was a solution to his problem. The efforts made by the respondent with regard to consulting various key people in his life as a Christian, reflect a need to find a solution to avert similar such causes of apostasy in the Church in future.

The worship of ancestral spirits is common in African cultures and affects some Christians in various ways. Donko (2011:20) recounts, “Some members come to the pastors with their possessed or bewitched children and spouses, asking for deliverance.” The above remark confirms Donko’s observations regarding the effects of ancestral spirits on the lives of Christians. If the West Zimbabwe Conference is not an exception in this regard, there is a need for a theological solution in order to assist those affected by demon spirits, such as the respondent and to retain their members in the Church.

Donko (2011:19) adds that, apart from demon possession, spiritualistic manifestations may be found in other contexts such as magic, curses, and spells. He explains that the “Spiritualistic effects of magic, spells, witchcrafts, and voodoo could be in the form of an

unusual ailment that medical science may not be able to diagnose.” He continues by saying, “witchcraft manifestation could be in the form of financial losses, barrenness, strange incurable ailment and alcoholism (p. 19).” Furthermore, Donko (2011:19) contends, “Seventh-day Adventist ministers and members in several parts of Africa are being challenged by spiritualistic [demons]. He then asks, “Do we have to teach our members how to stay away from demonic activities?”

With regard to Donko’s question, it is evident from the respondent above’s account, that none of the Church members or his pastor knew how to deal with the demonic activities affecting church members or how to help the respondent in such a situation. The answer to Donko’s question is that a deep theological study on this phenomenon (demonic spirits affecting the church members), is imperative for all pastors in the African Church, not only to assist those possessed by demonic spirits, but the affected church members, such as the respondent’s family discussed above, also need to know how to deal with demonic problems when it affects their families.

6.15.4: Life history 4

The fourth life history, like the second and third life histories, reflects on the phenomenon of apostasy that is caused by an external influence. It is observed that in the all three life histories (2, 3 and 4), the respondents had compromised their faith due to external influences. The loss of faith by the fourth respondent may be attributed to the lack of a strong Christian foundation at home or in his home church. However, arguments can be put forward both for and against this viewpoint from a theological perspective

There are references from the Scriptures, regarding young people who left their homelands and lived with people of different religions, but did not lose focus on their religion. Joseph (Gen. 39) is one such young man who stood for his faith as a slave; the slave girl at Naaman’s house (2Kings 5) demonstrated her faith in terms of her home religion and many others. Raelly (1998) describes the state of the four Hebrew boys who were subjected to the Babylonian spiritual conditions to the extent of having their names changed to those of idol worshippers and they were constantly associated with idolatrous customs in terms of the seductive rites of heathen worship, hoping to induce them to renounce the religion of their nation. These and many other cases, demonstrate that external influences cannot be wholly attributed to the loss of faith. There is however, a

need for church programmes in the West Zimbabwe Conference to address the challenges beyond the Church's sphere of influence.

6.15.5: Life history 5

There are two theological challenges in the fifth life history, which may have caused the respondent to apostatise. Regarding the respondent's evaluation of his life, he seems to attach more value to job opportunities than to his faith and worship, hence, compromising his chances of salvation and eternal life. Similar to the situation in history four above, the respondent also lost his faith because of his concern about job opportunities, which made him, move from place to place. Unlike the experiences recounted in life histories two, three and four, the respondent here did not mention the influence of other people as the cause of his apostasy; the respondent expressed more concern about job opportunities, than the prize of eternal life. This is confirmed by his decisions on two occasions, the first was that he left the Seventh-day Adventist Church because he received a job contract with the Apostolic Faith Mission Church and secondly, he left the AFM Church after the contract had expired, when he secured a job opportunity elsewhere. At this stage, he lost his faith and had not, up to the time of the interviewer's contact with him, been to any church again.

Undoubtedly, there is a need for the Church to address both the spiritual and the physical needs of the church members. Although the Church may not provide in all the members' needs, the Church should provide guidance and counsel on how Church members can survive and provide in their physical needs without compromising their faith.

Another cause of apostasy ascertained from the respondent is that the Church leadership was not in touch with the respondent. This case is similar to that discussed in life history four; both respondents indicated that there was no follow up communication from the Church. It is not known if the Church keeps contact records of its members for the purpose of visitation programmes (addresses, telephone and/or cell numbers). If contact records had been in place and visitation programmes were properly adhered to by the church, apostasy because of a lack of communication would have been averted. Hence, a solution to the cause of apostasy above should have been found.

There is a need for the pastor and other church leaders to visit church members frequently to enhance meaningful fellowship, to know members and render help when members face

challenges. Arrais (2011:81) recommends the six elements of visitation a pastor can apply to enhance the retention of the members. He includes visiting the sick, the elderly, new converts, church visitors, family members, missing members and the local church leaders. He also maintains that despite modern difficulties, there remain a longing in the hearts of the church members to be visited and held accountable by their church leaders (Arrais 2011:79). He cites Acts 20: 28 to emphasise that “God has given pastors the responsibility of shepherding His flock.” Arrais emphasises that visitations made to members who do not attend church regularly, no matter what, show that the Church still cares for them and such visitations encourage some of them to return to church (Arrais 2011:81). It was noticeable that in more than fifty percent of the interviews, nurturing through visitation of members was not emphasised in some West Zimbabwe Conference churches.

6.15.6: Life history 6

In the sixth life history, not much is said by the respondent about what caused the respondent to abandon his faith, except the change of environment and the loss of friends, however, it is apparent that there was neglect of the respondent on the part of the church during the time the respondent was still a member. There is no comment on what part the pastor or church leaders played in support of the youth’s spiritual interest from the time the respondent was converted to the time he left the Church. There is also no comment on whether an effort was made to follow up on the youth at the school to which his parents had sent him.

Undoubtedly, a few things could have been done to create a lasting desire to remain a Seventh-day Adventist member all his life; for example, a visit could have been paid to his parents to express appreciation regarding the church attendance of their child. In addition, an appeal could have been made to the parents on behalf of the respondent to provide better clothes for their child to wear to church. In effect, such activities could have laid a strong spiritual foundation in the life of the youth.

Dobson (1970:50)) recommends the law of reinforcement as follows, “Behaviour which achieves desirable consequences will recur.” Furthermore, he points out that if a person likes what happens as a result of his behaviour, he will be inclined to repeat that act. Accordingly, the child repeats the behaviour which he considers to be successful (Dobson

1970:53). The same technique, when applied to the youth of the Church will create a desire to hold onto it for the rest of their lives. Furthermore, the Church could also be charitable by providing clothes for the boy to build a strong relationship with his family.

6.15.7: Life history 7

It is apparent from the seventh life history that the respondent experienced serious theological problems. However, before looking at the theological issues involved in causing the apostasy of the respondent, there is a need to look into the other factors that also had an effect on the respondent's faith.

The respondent was born into a family with Seventh-day Adventist parents and lived within the Seventh-day Adventist Christian environment. He went to Christian schools while his brother was a pastor in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but all this did not have a positive effect on the respondent's faith. Miravalle (1991) asserts that there is a dramatically growing awareness throughout the world of a near universal need to begin to change the lives of our families. In his discussion, he emphasises that this awareness will restore the confidence and faith of many Christians. The question that arises is, whether or not the respondent had completely lost his faith in Jesus or did he have spiritual problems, which when resolved, could strengthen his faith in Jesus? His desire to live a good life seemed to come from a heart filled with deep Christian feelings and an amount of knowledge that there is a God who delights in people's goodness.

The emotional response of the respondent also reflects that there was a challenge either at home or in Church or both, with regard to living a Christian lifestyle. The respondent seemed to perceive a great deal of dissonance among those who professed to be Christians to the extent where he doubted Christianity itself.

There is evidence that the respondent did not receive a firm Christian foundation in terms of a good grounding in Biblical doctrines. Even though he was brought up in a Christian environment, the doctrine of the second coming of Jesus Christ was not well understood. It is also noted that the respondent's life was influenced by secularism. Copley (2005:38) intimates that, in terms of secular views of religion, it is a source of perversion, extremism, promotes arcane values or is seen as mere stupidity. He also remarks, "If Christianity does not offer a remedy for fundamental ailments, its own distinctive voices will be drowned out by louder voices and alternative confidences." Therefore, it is

important for both Christian parents and the Church to explain the Christian doctrines correctly to their children. Accordingly, the correct understanding of doctrines helps Christians to stand firm against secularism.

Accordingly, misunderstanding of the doctrines may affect many Christians in the West Zimbabwe Conference as it affects Christians in general. Pipim (1996:25) confirms that there is a crisis regarding the doctrines of the Church in general. He asserts, “The Church’s most distinctive theological doctrines are being challenged from within. Uncertainty prevails over the Church’s unique identity and mission, and its worldwide organisational unity is being defied. This is the crisis facing the Church today.”

Furthermore, Rodriguez (In: Cassimy, Jules & Satelmajer, 2009:36) explains:

Pastors particularly deal with important theological issues when they interpret for their congregations the mission and the message of the Church. They experience direct involvement in the theological work when they stand for a message under attack, and when they prayerfully work on their sermons for their congregations.

Both of the above comments indicate a need for theologians to relook the Church’s position on doctrines such as the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Pipim (1996:28) also refers to the crisis over biblical hermeneutics. He points out that, this crisis has recently spawned extensive new hermeneutical terminology in our Church such as:

- Casebook versus codebook.
- The principle versus the literal approach.
- The contextual versus the key text approach.
- The dynamic versus the rigid approach.
- The principle/spirit versus literal/letter.
- The historical-critical method versus the historical-grammatical method and many other terms.

Furthermore, Pipim (1996:28) reflects on the “historical Adventist approach to scripture, which recognises that the Bible is fully inspired, trustworthy, and authoritative”

Looking at the crisis discussed above, it may not be easy to deny the problem that caused the respondent to fall into apostasy. In this regard, it is necessary for the pastors to resolve the crisis in order that church members may have a better way of understanding the doctrines in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

6.15.8: Life history 8

The eighth life history reveals a problem with regard to faith and traditional/cultural beliefs. This cause of apostasy does not seem to have been resolved at the time of the interview. It would be helpful for the pastor to seek theological assistance regarding this problem, to discover the solutions which would help members in the West Zimbabwe Conference churches from experiencing the same problem.

The questions that come to mind with regard to the plight of the respondent are: Where did the respondent go wrong? Where did the pastor fail or what could have been done to avoid a situation like this? The following suggestions to this problem will not exhaust the subject of tradition/culture versus Christianity as this would require a study on its own. However, the discussion here suggests a need for theology scholars to focus more on such areas in order to assist Christians who may be deprived of their faith due to their marriage with non- Christians.

The concern for any person listening to or reading the above response is that the respondent was a committed Christian who made an effort before marriage to uphold her faith. Although her efforts were limited, she placed her faith in the advice of her pastor. It is also evident from her life history, that after receiving the pastor's advice and the Biblical warning against divorce, she was driven by a lack of spiritual depth on which to base her further arguments regarding the participation of traditional/cultural activities and consequently lost her faith.

Mbiti (1982:83) undertook a deep study on the subject of the ancestral spirits and its power over the living. He often refers to them as "the living dead." Furthermore, Mbiti explains that most people seem to believe that the spirits are what remain of human beings when they die physically. He explains that the "living dead" are the dead who are still within the Sasa period; therefore they are in a state of *persona* immortality and their process of dying is not yet complete. They are the closest links that people have with the spirit world (Mbiti 1982:83). Consequently, it is difficult to convince those who believe

in them, that Christianity transcends their beliefs in the ancestral spirits. Hence, the respondent finds herself in conflict with those who believe in the ‘living dead.’”

The saying “Prevention is better than cure” is applicable in this case. The apostle Paul warns the Corinthians by saying:

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? (2Cor. 6:14-17 NIV).

These warnings to the Corinthians are important for our generation and should be taught to guide the young people as they prepare for marriage. Accordingly, White (1948:22) argues:

Just such unsanctified marriages are filling up the ranks of the Sabbath keepers...many marriages can only be productive of misery; and yet the minds of the youth run in this channel because Satan leads them there, making them believe that they must be married in order to be happy.

Nevertheless, Self and Self (1998) contend that marriage can be happy, satisfying, successful and rewarding. It is not a static state of perfection; it must always be a dynamic, lively relationship, adjusting and changing to accommodate all the situations of life, which will make the marriage comfortable to both spouses.

While many traditions and cultures will follow the Biblical route in marriage (Eph. 5:31) which allow the married couple to live their own lives after marriage, there are some cultures and traditions such as the one reflected in the above response in the West Zimbabwe Conference, which strive to maintain clan expansion (keeping and burying the dead clan members together).

In such cultures (expansion clans), it is important that when the gospel message is introduced, an intensified orientation programme is developed for the new converts, which should include frequent visitations to the family members and clan leaders in that community, informing and pleading on behalf of the newly converted, in order to secure their Christian future after they have been baptised or when they enter into marriage.

6.15.9: Life history 9

In life history nine, the respondent revealed considerable pain over the way her case had been dealt with by the Church fifteen years earlier. Once, she broke into tears when she

recounted her experiences. It is interesting to note that the girl blamed herself and also had the courage to present her apology through the elders to the church board.

The delay in resolving the case reveals a concern over the interpretation of Church policies or doctrines. The respondent indicated that the delay in making a decision over her case was caused by the deliberations regarding whether she should be placed under censure or be disfellowshipped from Church. The grounds for instituting disciplinary procedures against her was that she had violated the seventh commandment “You shall not commit adultery [fornication] Exodus 20:14)” is also stated in the Church Manual (SDA Church 2010: 62)

There are two possible ways in which her case could have been resolved. Firstly, she could have been censured with temporary suspension or disfellowshipped (her name removed from the Church records). The Church Manual (SDA Church 2010:62) as discussed in chapter three above, is silent on what the criteria are for disciplining the members in terms of whether they should be placed under censure or whether they should be disfellowshipped. Although the respondent hoped for forgiveness after she had made her apology to the elders, she was not placed under censure, which is lighter than disfellowship. This is a concern the Church needs to consider.

Another point of theological concern is that pertaining to apology. If an apology is the expression of a person’s repentance, what human consideration will override the spirit of forgiveness? Theologically, the only and the highest way of settling sin is by an apology, an expression of repentance as demonstrated by a thief and forgiven by Jesus Christ on the cross (Luke 22:40 - 43).

Regarding the procedures followed in connection with the case of the respondent, at a young age, one may realise what many youths go through in terms of their spiritual warfare. They ponder about the meaning and implications of temptation? They wonder what kind of confession is acceptable to this Church and to God. These and many other questions have no answer in young people’s minds; as a result, many young people turn their backs on the Church and lose their faith in Jesus. Bigner (1997: 240) declares that teenage girls are seen to expose themselves to many problems.

The pregnant youth risks a number of complications: they may have difficulty in the delivery and in the survival of a healthy baby; such situation put the mother and

the child at risk. Some youth try to avoid apostasy after sexual abuses by marrying before they are ready or by resorting to abortion.

Dudley (1978:10) reveals that frequent comments from the youth are that “They [adults] only care about the rules, not about people and their concern is entirely in keeping with the image they project to the constituency, not with the lives of students [the youth].” He also contends that the more fundamental a church is, the greater the number of standards that it constitutes. Dudley (1978:8) adds:

Adventism is a very fundamental faith that impinges noticeably on the daily behaviour of its members, thereby providing more opportunity for friction with those who are not committed to its tenets and that all who are responsible for the guidance of youth, whether it be parents, teacher or Church youth leader, have experienced concern in some degree over the problem as a result too many of our youth are alienated from the Church.

6.15.10: Life history 10

Although the tenth life history reflects no abandonment of faith in Jesus Christ, the respondent is considered by the Seventh-day Adventist Church as an apostate. Regarding the interpretation of the term “apostasy” in chapter one, the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s position on apostasy goes beyond the literal definition of the term “apostasy.”

It is generally understood that people who abandon the Church (SDA Church) have apostatised since the Church cannot account for their spirituality when they are out of the SDA Church and those who join the SDA Church from other denominations particularly, those coming from other “Christian communions who have embraced the Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and who have previously been baptised by immersion may request re-baptism (See also Appendix M). (SDA Church 2010:50).

6.15.11: Life history 11

Many church members prefer small congregations because it is easy to know one another and fellowship together in such congregations. In addition, it is not as demanding to assist one another in such an environment as in the churches with a large membership. However, the experience related in life history eleven is a unique one. It may be assumed that the respondent’s congregation is either a company or a branch (See Appendix K). In big districts, where one pastor is responsible over many churches with companies and branches, smaller congregations may be visited less by the pastor than in the big

churches. Hence, some members such as the above respondent may feel neglected and consequently lose their faith.

In every circumstance, it is necessary for a pastor to consider all the congregations as important regardless of their size. The retention of members in the Church depends largely on the frequent visits of the pastor to the churches or to the individual members. McKenna (1986:96) recommends six principles of leadership, which may be applied effectively by those with many congregations to retain their members. He advises,

- “Follow in your strength, lead in your weakness.” That is, if you are to grow as an effective leader, you will delegate your strength and develop your weaknesses.
- “Follow among leaders, lead among followers.” This principle will assist in places where a pastor delegates capable members to assist with the visitation to smaller congregations in order to facilitate quality and helpful programmes for the members.
- “Follow in calm, lead in crisis” in a crisis a transforming leader (pastor) is needed;
- “Follow in planning, lead in administration ;
- “Follow in procedure, lead in principle”
- “Follow with people, lead with things”..

These principles help a pastor to see the individual gifts of his people, honour their strengths and encourage their development as unique contributors to the Church. If the pastors in the West Zimbabwe Conference apply such suggestions, the lack of quality programmes and meaningful fellowship (as stated in the response above) can be addressed.

6.15.12: Life history 12

Life history twelve reflects several challenges that caused the respondent to apostatise: The lack of help from the Church as the spiritual parent of the respondent, peer pressure at school and ethical decisions all contributed to the apostasy of the respondent. It is observed that the respondent compromised her faith because she did not want to face the consequences of appealing to the college authorities, seeking permission to be excused from engaging in college studies and other activities on the Sabbath for her spiritual

freedom. She also failed to withstand peer pressure when other SDA students compromised their faith and participated in study activities on the Sabbath (Saturdays).

This life history reveals a weakness in Christian ethics and in the upholding of moral principles. Holmes (1984:51,52) emphasises the importance of adhering to moral principles when he comments:

Moral principles [are] the most inclusive and ultimate ethical concepts, apply not just to particular kinds of activities but universally – to every kind of environment, whatever it may be. They are therefore exception-less principles which can never give way to something more inclusive and which never give way to expedience.

If the respondent had a firm background underpinned by moral principles, she could have stood firm against peer pressure and upheld her faith regardless of the consequences.

Morley (1992:4) argues that a passionate, authentic life is first based upon sound biblical beliefs. He also contends that, “Many, if not most, of the problems I have personally encountered among anguished Christians result simply from not having settled beliefs and doctrine.” A firmly grounded spiritual foundation will stand the test of time, against peer pressure and all political enforcement. The Church as a spiritual institution has a responsibility for cultivating an authentic Christian lifestyle, which is in accordance with the blueprint for Christian practice and living. This should build a firm foundation for its youth in the Church.

Establishing a firm foundation for the belief, of the believers will sustain their faith for the rest of their lives under any circumstances. The firmly rooted spiritual beliefs of young people are reflected in the lives of Joseph, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Daniel 1: 7) who stood firm in their beliefs throughout their lives, regardless of the secular environment, peer pressure or political enforcement.

The respondent above reflects a weakness with regard to the foundations of biblical doctrines and beliefs; hence, she could not surmount the circumstances that challenged her faith. When values clash in the absence of firm biblical beliefs, ethical decisions are difficult to make. Hanson (2002:4) points out that, “The values we consistently rank higher than others are our core values, which define [our] character and personality.” He also remarks that we translate values into principles so that they can guide and motivate both ethical conduct and decision- making.

In the case of the respondent's faith, the Church had an opportunity to lay a firm spiritual foundation before reached the college level of education, where her faith was challenged to the point of apostatising.

6.15.13: Life history 13

Although the interpretation of doctrines and beliefs differs from one denomination to the next, it is important that those upheld by a specific denomination must be clarified to the satisfaction of its members. Failure to provide in this need is also observed in life histories five and ten, amongst other problems, where the respondents left the West Zimbabwe Conference Church and went to the African Faith Mission Church and the others to the Zionist Church of the Johane Masowe respectively. Although the respondent does not complain about his former Church (SDA Church), it appears that the Church had nothing to offer that would motivate the respondent to remain in the Church.

It is regrettable that the youth saw the Church programmes in such a negative light that they decided to join an alternative denomination. This is evidence that the concerns of the youth are not addressed in some West Zimbabwe Conference Churches. It is not certain how many young people leave the Church or apostatise because of the lack of appropriate youth programmes and unaffordable youth outings, which are the major contributors to establishing a firm spiritual foundation in the lives of young people.

In his twelve keys to an effective church, Callahan (1983:64) discusses competent programmes and activities. He maintains, "There is a myth among some churches that the more programs and activities a church can offer the more people it will reach in the community." He also asserts that, "The likelihood of that happening is extraordinarily remote (Callahan 1983:64)." Furthermore, Callahan contends that a church that has successfully developed a major programme, which meets the community's standards in that specific field of endeavour, earns communitywide respect for that programme. It is important to note that a successful programme is multidimensional, focussing on a range of groups and age levels of people. In addition, Callaghan (1983:67) comments, "with one major program well in place, the other programs in that local church tends to rise to its level of competence."

From the above oral life histories, it is evident that the causes of apostasy are doctrinal (that is, members are not taught well before their baptism). Further causes are the fact that

the church programmes do not meet the needs of members and do not empower them with regard to withstanding outside church influences involving culture, traditions, social and peer pressure. This oral evidence affirmed the causes of apostasy obtained through the use of questionnaires.

The use of oral life histories gave the researcher an opportunity not only to collect data regarding the causes of apostasy but also to obtain firsthand knowledge of the concerns and the depth of the feelings of people who had apostatised from the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Most of the respondents could express themselves freely as they were not bound by church codes of conduct. Even though some had left the Church more than five years earlier, they revealed details of their situations and the pain inflicted on them because of the unfair treatment they had received at their points of exit, as though it had taken place in the recent past. For some, this was an opportunity to speak out and to be listened to.

Seven out of the thirteen respondents expressed doubts about whether the causes of apostasy were evident in or discussed by their churches, since they had not been consulted at their points of exit. If their cases had not been discussed in their churches, respondents 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12 and 13 were possibly on record as missing members. Such cases may be a strong indication that a higher number than the 11,333 members reported missing between the years 1998 and 2008, could have apostatised without their cases being considered by the Church, thereby bringing the rate of apostasy to a higher level than is presently recorded.

The above life histories also provide evidence that the voices of the lost members need to be heard if the Church is to retain its members. There is also evidence that many apostates blame the Church because of the poor treatment they received when they were still church members or at their points of exit. If their voices remain unheard, this may handicap the Church's ability to evangelise communities in the West Zimbabwe Conference territory. Therefore, it will be prudent for the West Zimbabwe Conference pastors and leaders to take note of this summary of the findings as well as the recommendation that follow, so that that future programmes in the churches can focus more on the needs of the members.

6.16 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings and analysed data derived from the oral life histories of thirteen respondents who had apostatised from the West Zimbabwe Conference Churches. The respondents had an opportunity to relate their life histories orally as well as their experiences during the time they were church members and after they had left the Church. In addition, they described the challenges and concerns they had experienced at the time of their exit.

Both chapters five and six provide the findings concerning the causes and implications of apostasy. All the factors pertaining to the study have been examined by means of the various instruments described in chapter four. The presentation and the analysis of the data provide background information for the next chapter (seven), which will present the general findings and draw conclusions pertaining to the whole study and will also make recommendations applicable to the West Zimbabwe Conference as well as to the field of scholars.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS ON THE CAUSES AND IMPLICATIONS OF APOSTASY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the findings regarding the causes and implications of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, between the years 1998 and 2008. Based on the findings, recommendations were made with regard to the West Zimbabwe Conference as well as recommendations for further research. The findings reflect the highly significant, the significant and the insignificant causes of apostasy, derived from the descriptive analysis in chapter five and six. The levels of apostasy are drawn from the four categories of apostasy stated in the questionnaire, namely the internal, external and doctrinal categories respectively, as well as their implications for the Church.

The absence of records regarding the causes of apostasy in the conference office is indicative that there is a possibility that the leadership is not well informed with regard to what causes church members to apostatise. Every church or district pastor only knows the causes of apostasy in his church or district. Accordingly, a pastor has no way of determining from the conference office records whether other churches or districts experience similar causes of apostasy so that the magnitude of his district's apostasy can be compared with that in other districts. The lack of records regarding the causes of apostasy in the conference office also hampers the leaders' ability to plan programmes, which will minimise apostasy in the conference churches.

7.2 Causes of apostasy

7.2.1 Internal causes of apostasy

The findings of the study confirm that there is apostasy within the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The concerns of the church members over the causes of apostasy are also confirmed in the responses of the one thousand five hundred sampled respondents and in the interviews carried out throughout the West Zimbabwe Conference Churches.

7.2.1.1 Highly significant internal causes of apostasy

The results of the study confirm that there are causes of apostasy within the Church:

- The study reveals that the "lack of love and care particularly in times of need" has caused apostasy. It is also important to point out that the spiritual and the material support provided to the members of the Church are not balanced.
- Conflict inside the church is not resolved amicably resulting in members making the decision to apostatise in many circumstances.
- The struggle for Church positions is no different in the Church from the competition for positions in the secular world.
- The fact that the programmers do not meet the needs of the members, it appears that they are not equipped to assist members in their spiritual lives in terms of helping them to grow spiritually or overcome adverse circumstances in their lives.

7.2.1.2 Significant internal causes of apostasy

- The fact that the Church has too many strict laws and the fact that the Bible doctrines and church policies are sometimes accorded equal importance, accordingly, both are treated as divine by the Church.
- The fact that the gap between the youth and the adults is not taken into consideration in many situations. Examples given were that during the divine service children were told a five minute story, while the adults received a much longer sermon. The church board includes members of every age group and the discussions, particularly those of a disciplinary nature are discussed within the whole group. This practice compromises the confidentiality of the matters discussed as highly sensitive matters are voted for by all the baptised church members regardless of age.

7.2.1.3 Insignificant internal causes of apostasy

The responses to the questionnaire did not deliver any insignificant causes of apostasy however, the interviews revealed the following:

- Delays in resolving the disciplinary issues leading to apostasy.
- Offenders received little or no leniency, few, if any, offenders were forgiven by the Church, hence, some offenders felt that trying to put matters right was a waste of time therefore, apostasy became the only alternative.

7.2.2 External causes of apostasy

Highly significant external causes of apostasy

The study revealed that of the three categories (internal, external and doctrinal), the external causes of apostasy affected the members most. Accordingly, the interviews and questionnaire responses all indicated that the causes below are highly significant:

- Social influences outside the Church which did not enhance a Christian lifestyle.
- Political influences, which compromised Christian standards.
- Technology, such as the television, cell phones and the cinema. The wrong use of these media have not been challenged or replaced by their good use
- Working on days of worship causes apostasy. The Church has not risen to a level where it can assist the members to find alternatives to working on the Sabbath. After conversion, members were left without constructive advice regarding how they could avoid working on the Sabbath, yet when their working on the Sabbath was discovered, they were considered apostates.
- Marriage outside the Church. The respondents observed that in many cases where one spouse was converted, after their baptism, their marriages were said to be outside the Church marriage. Although the one baptised was respected as a full church member, their marriages often experienced challenges to the point where some members lost their faith. White (1977:304) asserts, “There is in the Christian world an astonishing, alarming indifference to the teaching of God’s Word with regard to the marriage of Christians with unbelievers.” She further contends that many who profess to love and fear God choose to follow the bent of their own minds rather than take the counsel of infinite Wisdom. She also observes that in matters which vitally concern the happiness and well-being of both parties in this world and the next, reason, judgment, and the fear of God are set aside and blind impulse, stubborn determination are allowed to take over (White 1977: 304).
- Living in a non- Christian environment with regard to the family or community. The responses revealed that, the Church had not equipped its members to survive in isolation from other Church members.
- Going to non- Christian schools: Church programmes are not equipping the school going age group of church members to withstand peer pressure when subjected to the influence of non- Christian schools.

- Choosing friends who are not of the same faith: The respondents observed that the Church was losing many potential young people through the Old Testament Samson syndrome (a situation in which the young man Samson, the Nazarene married a heathen girl, Delilah, gave up his allegiance to God and the mission to save Israel (Judges 16.)

7.2.3 Doctrinal causes of apostasy

7.2.3.1 Highly significant doctrinal causes of apostasy:

An understanding of the doctrines of the Church lays a strong Christian foundation for church members. Those whose Christian lives are not firmly guided by the doctrines may experience more spiritual challenges than those who are doctrinally firm. The following are the causes of apostasy cited by the respondents:

- Baptising people before they have been thoroughly instructed with regard to all the doctrines and policies of the Church: Most respondents expressed deep concern over this cause of apostasy, in that they felt concern about the fact that the Church baptises people without them having knowledge of the expectations of the Church.
- Failure to observe the days of worship, particularly “keeping the Sabbath Day (Saturday) Holy” as stated in the scriptures: The responses are that members are not equipped to find ways of avoiding work on the Sabbath. This has affected many church members who give up their faith because they have to work to survive.

7.2.3.2 Significant doctrinal causes of apostasy

- The Church does not accept pre- or extra- marital relationships and polygamy. The respondents observed that the culture of polygamy has not been well addressed by the Church.
- The Church does not prophesy to people as other churches do. The miracles of healing, which are associated with the prophetic churches, have not been challenged by the West Zimbabwe Conference programmes.
- The Church does not believe in ancestral spirits (the living dead). Because of the deep rooted beliefs in the cultural aspects of the lives of African people, many church members failed to find a firm basis for resisting its influence.

- The Church believes in the trinity (God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit). The responses elicited regarding this cause of apostasy often come from converts from non- Christian religions.

7.2.3.3 Insignificant doctrinal causes of apostasy

- The Church believes that regarding the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the wine we drink and the bread we eat are not the real blood and the body of Jesus Christ, but are merely symbolic. This is a cause of apostasy in the different Christian denominations. This problem has manifested itself since the time of the reformers, namely, Martin Luther and Zwingli (Norris 1996: 445).

7.3 Implications of apostasy

7.3.1 Implications of apostasy for groups of people:

- The implications of apostasy are felt by both the youth and the adults of the Church. However; the responses from the interviews and questionnaire confirm that the youth of the Church are severely affected by apostasy.
- The effects of apostasy are experienced more intensely by female than male church members.

7.3.2 Implications of apostasy based on location

The findings reveal that apostasy affects urban church members four times more than church members in rural churches.

7.3.3 Implications of apostasy for the Church

- Apostasy has a significant effect on church members: The fellowship among Church members creates a strong bond between members as they continue to worship together, when apostasy strikes, the memories of such fellowship results in disappointment for the church members and the effects are far-reaching. Many times when an apostate meets Church members, the memories of fellowship are re-activated in their minds.
- Members' contributions, in the form of tithes and offerings, are affected the most. These financial contributions are useful in many ways: they are used to construct more church structures; to maintain the church premises; to procure church furniture and the church literature; to pay the ministers and other church workers and for many

other purposes. Accordingly, the loss of members (through apostasy) has a significant effect on the finances of the Church.

- Apostasy has far-reaching implications with regard to the conference leadership. The responsibilities of the conference leaders include maintaining unity in all the churches; bringing (converting) more people to the Church; administering the conference churches and many other activities. For the leadership, apostasy is therefore regarded as detrimental concerning the unit and progress of the Church as it compromises the ability to evangelise the communities.
- Apostasy creates discomfort and disappointment among the friends and family members of the apostate. In fact, the effect of apostasy on families and/or friends is most devastating. When one turns apostate in a Christian family, many things also change and family worship is no long the same, furthermore, Christian fellowship in the family is disturbed; hence, one apostate creates an uncomfortable situation in the family. In the same way, an apostate disturbs the fellowship among friends. For both family and friends, Christian fellowship is not compatible with an apostate life.
- The criticism of those who have apostatised compromises the Church's ability to recruit new converts. There are few, if any apostates, who blame themselves and speak well of the Church. On the contrary, most apostates blame the Church for their fall. In many cases, for an apostate to be re-accepted into the secular world, an apostate usually contends that the Church was not a suitable place for him/her. Furthermore, non-Christians may evaluate the Church on the basis of the descriptions of an apostate and may reach the same conclusions as an apostate.
- Apostasy provides a poor image of the Church to unbelievers. It is an accepted fact that the life of an individual has an impact on other peoples' lives, either for good or for bad. In the same way, people who apostatise may influence non-Christians to develop negative perceptions of the Church .

7.4 Conclusion

This study has revealed that the causes of apostasy are dynamic and not static, reflecting the human trends in life. During the time of the reformers, the departure of a single church member raised a lot of concern for the whole of Christendom. About fifty years ago, people did not experience the magnitude of apostasy that we have today. Dudley (1978:18) citing statistics from the Department of Education and the Young People's Missionary Volunteers Department of the General Conference, comments that:

...those baptised between the ages of ten and fourteen, 26.8 percent had withdrawn from the Church five years after baptism, and of those baptised between the ages of fifteen and eighteen, and 21.8 percent had withdrawn from the church five years after baptism.

It is interesting to note that a figure of twenty percent pertaining to apostasy in the Church did not seem to be a cause for concern even for church leaders.

It is a fact that modern technology can have both good and bad implications. On the negative side, television and cell-phones have led to opportunities to be exposed to pornography, which has caused many, particularly young people to apostatise. Regarding such temptations, Teesdale (1945:55) advises that the wise youth should think for themselves and pray that they will receive God's power to remain upright. He also remarks that, "Character is what a person is and personality is what others see, but what a person is and what others see are usually synonymous." Marvission further contends that, "television is a threat to the Christian's relationship with God, but when it is used with discretion it can influence Christian life (Teesdale (1945:6)." Secular world politics have also penetrated the church and have become one of the significant causes of apostasy. Consequently, Copley (2005:31) expresses the opinion that the media are detrimental for religion. He declares that, "An American adolescent is estimated to have clocked up to 20 000 hours watching television by the age of sixteen." Copley also maintains that the main pastimes of most children is watching television and surfing the internet. The amount of time spent at school or at church cannot compete with the time spent on these gadgets. This and a great deal of other evidence of apostasy creates concern about a disturbing phenomenon, which the Church cannot afford to ignore with regard to its survival today.

The history of the Christian Church from its inception to date has passed through many periods of apostasy. It is interesting to note that apostasy seems to fall into the same categories throughout the years, namely internal, external and the doctrinal causes of apostasy. Although the causes of apostasy differ in nature, they all fall into one of the three categories of apostasy. There were periods in history when the Christian Churches in Europe flourished and their membership grew remarkably; however, their membership were also decreased by apostasy. Although the Christian Church in Africa is currently thriving with regard to its membership, if the trends of apostasy are not reversed, the decline of the Church may also be experienced.

The trends and the categories of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have now been exposed and many causes of apostasy have been revealed. The researcher however, admits that the study did not exhaust the search for all the causes of apostasy as they are dynamic in nature. In the interval between this research and the time of the publication of this document, new causes of apostasy never anticipated, may be in the open.

7.5 Recommendations for the Conference

There is significant growth of the Church in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In the year 1999, the Conference had 78,467 Church members, in 2008 the membership was 162,519, an increase of 84,052 members in ten years. During the same period, the conference had 42 pastors and in 2008, there were 61 pastors, an increase of only 19 pastors. The growth of the Church indicates a need for more pastors so that they can have an effective ministry. The recommendation is made that the West Zimbabwe Conference should look at the possibility of increasing the number of pastors in the Church.

Interviews with the local church leadership (elders, deacons and leaders of the departments), recognised the need for the establishment of a counselling department in the local churches. Their responses reveal that most cases of apostasy are the result of untimely and inadequate counselling. Accordingly, it is recommended that the conference leaders should establish a Department of Counselling in the local churches in order to assist members in their times of need.

In addition, the findings of the study confirm that most apostasy cases are the result of baptising the converted people before they are fully versed in all the doctrines and policies of the Church. Therefore, it is recommended that the conference leaders should create a period of study in which the baptismal candidates receive a thorough grounding in the doctrines and policies of the Church before they confirm their desire to be baptised.

This study observed that from 1998 to 2008, the number of missing church members rose from 301 to 11,333 members. These members were recorded as missing after a period of two years of not attending church services and after all efforts to find them had proved futile. Eight out of thirteen cases of apostasy recorded in the life histories in chapter six

above, suggest that some apostatised Church members were recorded as missing members. Hence, the recommendation is made that the local pastors should improve the records pertaining to both church members in general and the baptismal candidates, in particular so that enough details are available that can help to make it easy for pastors to access before visiting church members.

The gap between the youth and the adults is apparent. Accordingly, it is recommended that local pastors should be mindful of the various age groups of church members when planning programmes for the Church.

The lack of love and care, particularly in times of need is highly significant in the Church. It is observed that while spiritual comfort is significant, there is a need to balance spirituality with material support where possible. It is recommended that the local pastor should develop a programme or where it is already available; it should be improved in order to minister in a meaningful way to all the Church members in all situations.

The life history interviews reveal that there is a lack of pastoral visitation to Church members. Most of those interviewed, confirm that they had not been visited before and after they apostatised. Therefore, a recommendation is made to the pastors in the West Zimbabwe Conference Churches to include a specific programme as part of their activities for church members' visitation.

7.6 Recommendations for further studies

i) A highly significant cause of apostasy is in the area of conflict inside the church. The causes of conflict were not studied in detail as they were not the focus of the study, however; conflict is rated second highest in the internal causes of apostasy in the Church. A recommendation is made for a research study on what causes conflicts resulting in apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

ii) The competition for church positions is one of the highly significant causes of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference Churches. It is recommended that a study be undertaken to find out what causes church members to compete for church positions to such an extent, that it results in apostasy.

iii) The external causes of apostasy observed from the responses of the local church leaders are also rated highly significant by church members who responded to the

questionnaire. It is also confirmed by more than eighty percent of the life history interviews. This situation seems to pose a concern for church members. This concern is based on the question that, if people are initially able to renounce a lifestyle outside the Church, in favour of a Christian lifestyle, what makes them consider the lifestyle outside the Church better than that of a Christian lifestyle again? For this reason, it is recommended that a study should be done to compare the power of the world outside the Church against that of the Church in order for appropriate programmes to be put in place to minimise the external causes of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference Churches.

iv) The literature reveals that both culture and tradition are significant causes of apostasy in the African Christian Church, Mbiti (1982), Donko (2011) and many other African scholars confirm this fact. Much has been written on this subject, although their work covers a large part of this study, it is necessary to look into the dynamics of the traditions as they differ greatly from one another. The life history interviews in the West Zimbabwe Conference express a need for a further study on the topic of traditions and culture versus Christianity. Therefore, it is recommended that research be done on how traditions and culture affect Christianity and how Christians can avoid or be saved from beliefs in the spirits of the “living dead.”

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE: FOR CHURCH MEMBERS

The researcher involved this project is pursuing a Doctoral Degree programme in Church History (DTh). This research project is a partial fulfilment of the said degree programme's requirements.

This research seeks to discover the causes and implications of apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Your participation in this research will assist the researcher to come up with findings and recommendations that can help to establish ways of minimizing apostasy in the West Zimbabwe Conference. Please help ensure that this research is a success by responding honestly to the content of this questionnaire. **All information provided will be treated confidentially. Do not write your name on this questionnaire.**

Instructions: Make a tick (P) or fill in the spaces as appropriate.

SECTION A. PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. **Age between:** a. 12 to 20 years () b. 21 to 40 years ()
c. 41 to 60 years () d. 61 and above ()
2. **Gender:** a. Male () b. Female ()
3. **Marital status:** a. Single () b. Married () c. Separated ()
d. Divorced () e. Widowed ()
4. **Highest educational achievement:** a. Primary (...) b. Secondary ()
c. College () e. University ()
5. **Number of years as a church member:**
a. between 1 and 5 years? () b. between 6 and 10 years? ()
c. between 11 and 20 years? () d. between 21 and 40 years? ()

e. between 41 and more years? ()

SECTION B. CAUSES OF APOSTASY

State the extent to which you agree or disagree to the following Causes of Apostasy, on a three-point scale of Yes, No. or Not Sure. **Tick the appropriate space (P)**.

No	Internal causes of apostasy	Yes	NO	Not Sure
1	Apostasy is from within the Church.			
2	Conflicts inside the Church cause apostasy.			
3	Struggle for church positions or ranks, causes apostasy			
4	Age gap between the youth and the adults causes apostasy.			
5	Programmes which do not meet the needs of the members cause apostasy.			
6	Too many laws in the Church cause apostasy.			
7	Lack of love and care in times of need causes apostasy.			
	External causes of apostasy			
8	Outside social influences cause apostasy.			
9	Outside political influences cause apostasy.			
10	Technology (TV, cell phone, cinemas, etc.) causes apostasy.			
11	Working on days of worship causes apostasy.			
12	Marriage outside the Church causes apostasy.			
13	Living in a non-Christian environment (family or community) causes apostasy.			
14	Going to a non- Christian school causes apostasy.			
15	Choosing friends not of the same faith causes apostasy.			

	Doctrinal causes of apostasy			
16	Baptising people before they are fully taught all the doctrines of the Church, causes apostasy.			
17	Failure to observe the Sabbath on Saturday causes apostasy.			
18	Because the Church does not prophesy to the people like other churches, this causes apostasy.			
19	Because the Church does not accept pre- or extra-marital relationships and polygamy, this causes apostasy.			
20	Because the Church believes in the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, this causes apostasy.			
21	Because the Church believes that in the Lord's Supper (Sacrament), the wine we drink and the bread we eat is not the real blood and the real body of Christ, but merely the emblems, causes apostasy.			
22	Because the Church does not believe in ancestral spirits (the living dead), this causes apostasy.			
23	When people apostatise, they inform the church leaders of their intention to leave the Church.			

SECTION C: OTHER CAUSES OF APOSTASY

List below any other causes of apostasy you have known in your Church in the last ten years.

- a). -----
- b). -----
- c). -----

SECTION D: THE IMPLICATIONS OF APOSTASY

For questions 1-3, choose the best option that reflects your opinion. Only **one** option is justifiably correct. Tick the correct one. (P)

1. In your opinion, which of the following are mostly affected by apostasy
 - a. Youths ()
 - b. Adults ()
 - c. Both youths and adults are affected equally ()
2. The implications of apostasy affect
 - a. Females more than males ()
 - b. Males more than females ()
 - c. Both sexes (gender) are equally affected ()
3. The implications of apostasy affect
 - a. Urban members more than rural church members ()
 - b. Rural church members more than urban church members ()
 - c. Both rural and urban church members are equally affected ()

In your opinion, state the extent to which you agree to the following as implications of apostasy. Make a tick in **the appropriate space** (P)

No	Items	Yes	No	Not Sure
1	Apostasy affects the conference Leadership.			
2	Contributions by church members in the form of tithes and offerings are most affected			
3	Apostasy affects the church pastor more than others.			
4	Apostasy has significant effects on the membership			

SECTION E: OTHER IMPLICATIONS OF APOSTASY

In your opinion, what- other implications of apostasy have you noticed in your church in the last ten years?

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)

SECTION F: PEOPLE WHO APOSTATISED

List below, the names and addresses (telephone / cell numbers) of people you know who have given up their faith (apostatised) and left the Church.

Name Telephone / cell phone number Address

- a)
.....
- b)
.....
- c)
.....
- d)
.....

SECTION G: MISSING MEMBERS

List below, the names and addresses (Telephone / cell phone numbers) of people who have been considered by the Church as missing members, who have not been coming to church for the last two (2) or more years.

- a)
.....
- b)
.....
- c)
.....

Thank you for the contribution you have made

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Conference leadership, local church leadership, leaders and church members of other denominations

Causes of apostasy

1. Have you experienced apostasy in your church in the last ten years?
2. In your opinion, what are the causes of apostasy?
3. What are the implications of apostasy for the church?

Interview Questions

For people who apostatised

For how long have you left the Church now?

1. What were the causes that led you to give up your faith and leave the Church/what were the causes that led you to miss Church services for more than two years?

Interview questions

For people classified as missing

2. For how long have you left the Church now?
3. What were the reasons that led you to miss church services for more than two years?

APPENDIX C

COMMUNALITIES OF ITEMS ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE AFTER

FACTOR ANALYSIS

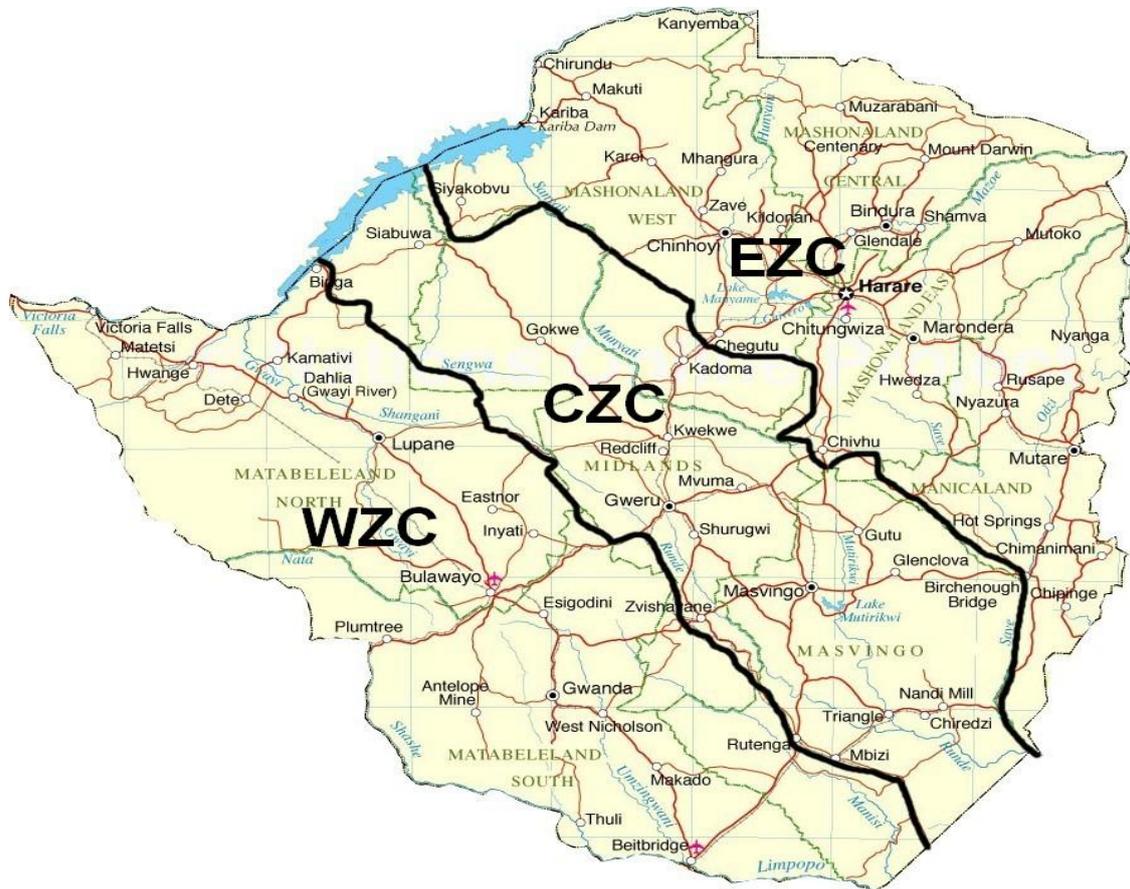
Results of the pilot study questionnaire discussed in chapter 4	Initial	Extraction
Apostasy comes from within the Church.	1.000	.698
Conflicts inside the Church cause apostasy.	1.000	.764
Struggle for church positions or ranks, causes apostasy.	1.000	.697
The age gap between the youth and the adults causes apostasy.	1.000	.863
Programmes which do not meet the needs of the members cause apostasy.	1.000	.583
Too many laws in the Church cause apostasy.	1.000	.841
Lack of love and care in times of need causes apostasy.	1.000	.873
Outside social influences cause apostasy.	1.000	.795
Outside political influences cause apostasy.	1.000	.748
Technology (TV, cell phones, cinemas, etc.) cause apostasy.	1.000	.768
Working on days of worship causes apostasy.	1.000	.873
Marriage outside the Church causes apostasy	1.000	.815
Living in a non-Christian environment (family or community) causes apostasy	1.000	.779
Going to a non-Christian school causes apostasy.	1.000	.671
Choosing friends not of the same faith causes apostasy.	1.000	.833
Baptising people before they are fully taught all the doctrines of the Church, cause apostasy.	1.000	.817
Failure to observe the Sabbath on Saturday causes apostasy.	1.000	.868

Results of the pilot study questionnaire discussed in chapter 4	Initial	Extraction
Because the Church does not prophesy to the people like other churches, this causes apostasy.	1.000	.641
Because the Church does not prophesy to the people like other churches, this causes apostasy.	1.000	.740
Because the Church believes in the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, causes apostasy	1.000	.681
Because the Church believes that in the Lord's Supper (Sacrament), the wine we drink and the bread we eat is not the real blood and the real body of Christ, but merely the symbols, this causes apostasy	1.000	.730
Because the Church does not believe in ancestral spirits (the living dead), this causes apostasy.	1.000	.808
When people apostatise, they inform the Church leaders of their intention to leave the Church.	1.000	.828
VAR00024	1.000	.717
VAR00025	1.000	.885
VAR00026	1.000	.751
The impact of apostasy affects the pastor.	1.000	.836
Contributions by church members in the form of tithes and offerings are most affected	1.000	.780
The impact of apostasy affects the church pastor more than others.	1.000	.769
The impact of apostasy has a significance effect on the membership	1.000	.713

Extraction method: Principal component analysis.

APPENDIX D

MAP OF ZIMBABWE DEPICTING THE WEST ZIMBABWE CONFERENCES



The three Conferences which make up the Zimbabwe Union Conference are:
West, Central and East Zimbabwe Conferences.

APPENDIX E

RECORD OF APOSTASY IN THE TEN YEARS (1998 – 2008)

Year	Churches	Membership beginning of year	Members' baptism	Members accepted by faith	Members accepted by letters	Apostasy	Missing members	Membership at year end
1998	100	64,432	7,480	37	787	239	301	70,593
1999	102	70,593	8,546	314	501	152	494	78,467
2000	104	78,467	9,809	82	743	203	1,754	86,208
2001	112	86,208	13,852	148	594	156	1,379	98,905
2002	117	98,905	9,134	87	786	145	2,018	105,617
2003	124	105,617	7,881	361	1,251	158	457	112,324
2004	130	112,324	20,892	437	875	267	153	133,514
2005	130	133,514	12,767	70	689	157	2,645	136,687
2006	114	132,873	12,521	56	865	213	1,738	143,404
2007	156	143,404	8,050	39	953	135	230	150,680
2008	171	150,680	3,285?	8	117	224	164	153702
Total	171	153702	106537	13112	9,026	2,049	11333	153702

The periods reflected above were years of mega- evangelism and most evangelistic campaigns were conducted by international evangelists from other countries. The West Zimbabwe Conference membership increased unprecedented, yet at the same period apostasy also increased. The ten years under study opens with a membership of 70 593 in 1998 and closes with a membership of 153 702 in 2008 an increase of 83 109 new members brought to Church. In the same period apostasy also increased, the period starts with 239 apostates and in 2008 apostasy rose to 2 049 and at the same period 11 333 missing members were recorded

APPENDIX F

WEST ZIMBABWE CONFERENCE RURAL CHURCHES

1	Balule	22 Gandangula	43 Lusulu	64 Mkhombo	85 Senondo
2	Bhazha	23 Gangabezi	44 Lutsha	65 Mlevu	86 Shake
3	Binga Central	24 Gonye	45 Mabale	66 Moyeni	87 Shashane
4	Boyabembuzi	25 Greenwalk	46 Madumabisa	67 Mpumalanga (9)	88 Siansali
5	Buhwa	26 Gurambira	47 Magedleni	68 Mthwakazi	89 Sibomvu
6	Chibila	27 Gwatemba	48 MaHindi	69 Mtshingwe	90 Siganda*
7	Chikombezi	28 Habane	49 Mahumutsha	70 Musazi (11)*	91 Sikhoveni
8	Chipale	29 Hawuke	50 Majiji (47)*	71 Mwele	92 Sindombe
9	Chirind	30 Hebron*	51 Makhetho	72 Mwembe	93 Sipepa
10	Chobeni*	31 Ingwizi	52 Makuva	73 Mzola 2	94 Siyadindi
11	Crosby	32 Inyathi	53 Makhetho	74 Mzola-1	95 Sizinda
12	Dakamela (7)	33 Jambesi	54 Makuva	75 Nemané	96 Soluswe (2)
13	Daluka	34 Jenda	55 Mananda	76 Ngungumbane	97 Sonkonkoni
14	Dandanda 1	35 Jiba	56 Maphisa	77 Nhlozemandla	98 Soshe
15	Dandanda 2	36 Jotsholo	57 Matshudula	78 Njelele	99 Tshabanda
16	Dongamuzi	37 Kabelá	58 Mawabeni	79 Nkosikazi	100 Tshitatshawa*
17	Duncal	38 Khoce	59 Mayembe	80 Nswazi*	101 Tsholotsho
18	Dwaleni	39 Kings dale	60 Mazibisa*	81 Ntshelanyemba	102 Wenlock
19	Enqameni	40 Kwarai*	61 Mbamba	82 Nyamandlovu	103 Zinda
20	Evimileni*	41 Lukadzi	62 Mbembeswana	83 Ratanyana	
21	Gandama	42 Lupanda	63 Mhlabeni	84 Samahuru	
Key: Churches marked by a * were sampled for the administration of questionnaire					

APPENDIX G

WEST ZIMBABWE CONFERENCE URBAN CHURCHES

1	Barbourfield	17	Gwabalanda	32	Mountain View	48	Padonhurst	64	Thorngrove
2	Barhamgreen	18	Hillside	33	Mpopoma	49	Parklands	65	Trenence
3	BeitbridgeCentral	19	Hwange	34	Mpumalanga	50	Plumtree Central*	66	Tshabalala
4	BeitbridgeSuburb	20	Kingsdale*	35	Newton West	51	Pelandaba	67	Tshabalala Central
5	Belleview	21	Lupane Cetral	36	Nguboyenja	52	Pumula Central	68	Tsholotsho
6	Bulawayo East	22	Luveven	37	Njube	53	Pumula East	69	Waterford
7	Cement	22	Magwegwe Central	38	Nkayi	54	Pumula North	70	Woodvell*
8	Chinotimba	23	Magwegwe North	39	Nketa 8	55	Pumula South		
9	City Centre	24	Magwegwe West	40	Nketa 9*	56	Queen's Park East		
10	Cawdray Main*	25	Mahatshula	41	Nkulumane	57	Queen's Park West		
11	Cowdray Pack West	26	Makokoba	42	Nkulumane South	58	Queen's Park West		
12	Emakhandeni	27	Maphisa	43	North End	59	Rangemore		
13	Emganwini	28	Maranatha	44	Norwood	60	Richmond*		
14	Emmanuel	29	Matsheni	45	Ntabazinduna	61	SAHS*		
15	Entumbane	30	Matshobanai*	46	Ntshonalanga	62	Selbone Park		
16	Greewalk	31	Mkosana	47	Old Pumula	63	Solusi University		

Key: Churches marked with a * were sampled for the administration of the questionnaire

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APPENDIX H: LETTERS OF AUTHORISATION



Student Number: 3213-267-0
Date: 2011-10-27

Mr RD Mazibisa
No 6 Derby Road
Hillside
Bulawayo
Zimbabwe

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

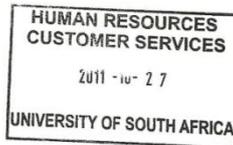
Mr RD Mazibisa is registered for the DTH (Church History) degree. He is at the stage of carrying out field research on the topic:

CAUSES AND IMPLICATIONS OF APOSTASY IN THE WEST ZIMBABWE CONFERENCE OF THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH (1998-2008). His supervisor is Prof PH Gundani.

Please assist him wherever you can.

Yours faithfully,


Prof PH Gundani



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WEST ZIMBABWE CONFERENCE

18 November 2011

To All Pastors

This letter serves to grant Pastor Robson Dube Mazibisa permission to carry out a Doctoral DTH (Church History) survey in our churches, on the "Causes and implications of apostasy in the WZC churches". Please assist him in this exercise. It is our hope that his survey will inform us on this regard.

Yours faithfully

JB Sibanda
PRESIDENT

JB/ts

APPENDIX I

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS

Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word.

1. Holy Scriptures

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealers of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history. (2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12).

2. Trinity

There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 14:7).

3. Father

God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love

and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also revelations of the Father. (Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; 1 Cor. 15:28; John 3:16; 1 John 4:8; 1 Tim. 1:17; Ex. 34:6, 7; John 14:9).

4. Son

God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God's power and was attested as God's promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things. (John 1:1-3, 14; Col. 1:15-19; John 10:30; 14:9; Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:17-19; John 5:22; Luke 1:35; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 2:9-18; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; Heb. 8:1, 2; John 14:1-3).

5. Holy Spirit

God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ's life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with the Scriptures leads it into all truth. (Gen. 1:1, 2; Luke 1:35; 4:18; Acts 10:38; 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:11, 12; Acts 1:8; John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7-13).

6. *Creation*

God is Creator of all things, and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of His creative activity. In six days the Lord made “the heaven and the earth” and all living things upon the earth, and rested on the seventh day of that first week. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His completed creative work. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was “very good,” declaring the glory of God. (Gen. 1; 2; Ex. 20:8-11; Ps. 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Heb.11:3).

7. *Nature of man*

Man and woman were made in the image of God with individuality, the power and freedom to think and to do. Though created free beings, each is an indivisible unity of body, mind, and spirit, dependent upon God for life and breath and all else. When our first parents disobeyed God, they denied their dependence upon Him and fell from their high position under God. The image of God in them was marred and they became subject to death. Their descendants share this fallen nature and its consequences. They are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker. Created for the glory of God, they are called to love Him and one another, and to care for their environment. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7; Ps. 8:4-8; Acts 17:24-28; Gen. 3; Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12-17; 2 Cor. 5:19, 20; Ps. 51:10; 1 John 4:7, 8, 11, 20; Gen. 2:15).

8. *Great controversy*

All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God’s adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. This human sin resulted in the distortion of the image of God in humanity, the disordering of the created world, and its eventual devastation at the time of the worldwide

flood. Observed by the whole creation, this world became the arena of the universal conflict, out of which the God of love will ultimately be vindicated. To assist His people in this controversy, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and the loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them in the way of salvation. (Rev. 12:4-9; Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:12-18; Gen. 3; Rom. 1:19-32; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; Gen. 6-8; 2 Peter 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:9; Heb. 1:14).

9. Life, death, and resurrection of Christ

In Christ's life of perfect obedience to God's will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life, and the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. This perfect atonement vindicates the righteousness of God's law and the graciousness of His character; for it both condemns our sin and provides for our forgiveness. The death of Christ is substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming. The resurrection of Christ proclaims God's triumph over the forces of evil, and for those who accept the atonement assures their final victory over sin and death. It declares the Lordship of Jesus Christ, before whom every knee in heaven and on earth will bow. (John 3:16; Isa. 53; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4, 20-22; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 19-21; Rom. 1:4; 3:25; 4:25; 8:3, 4; 1 John 2:2; 4:10; Col. 2:15; Phil. 2:6-11).

10. Experience of salvation

In infinite love and mercy God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God. Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ, as Substitute and Example. This faith which receives salvation comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God's grace. Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God's sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life. Abiding in Him we become partakers of the divine nature and have the assurance of salvation now and in the judgment. (2 Cor. 5:17-21; John 3:16; Gal. 1:4; 4:4-7; Titus 3:3-7; John 16:8; Gal. 3:13, 14; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; Rom. 10:17; Luke 17:5; Mark 9:23,

24; Eph. 2:5-10; Rom. 3:21-26; Col. 1:13, 14; Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 3:26; John 3:3-8; 1 Peter 1:23; Rom. 12:2; Heb. 8:7-12; Eze. 36:25-27; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Rom. 8:1-4; 5:6-10).

11. Growing in Christ

By His death on the cross Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil. He who subjugated the demonic spirits during His earthly ministry has broken their power and made certain their ultimate doom. Jesus' victory gives us victory over the evil forces that still seek to control us, as we walk with Him in peace, joy, and assurance of His love. Now the Holy Spirit dwells within us and empowers us. Continually committed to Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we are set free from the burden of our past deeds. No longer do we live in the darkness, fear of evil powers, ignorance, and meaninglessness of our former way of life. In this new freedom in Jesus, we are called to grow into the likeness of His character, communing with Him daily in prayer, feeding on His Word, meditating on it and on His providence, singing His praises, gathering together for worship, and participating in the mission of the church. As we give ourselves in loving service to those around us and in witnessing to His salvation, His constant presence with us through the Spirit transforms every moment and every task into a spiritual experience. (Ps. 1:1, 2; 23:4; 77:11, 12; Col. 1:13, 14; 2:6, 14, 15; Luke 10:17-20; Eph. 5:19, 20; 6:12-18; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:18; 2 Cor. 3:17, 18; Phil. 3:7-14; 1 Thess. 5:16-18; Matt. 20:25-28; John 20:21; Gal. 5:22-25; Rom. 8:38, 39; 1 John 4:4; Heb. 10:25).

12. Church

The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for service to all mankind, and for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. The church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word, and from the Scriptures, which are the written Word. The church is God's family; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant. The church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head. The church is the bride for whom Christ died that He might sanctify and

cleanse her. At His return in triumph, He will present her to Himself a glorious church, the faithful of all the ages, the purchase of His blood, not having spot or wrinkle, but holy and without blemish. (Gen.12:3; Acts 7:38; Eph. 4:11-15; 3:8-11; Matt. 28:19, 20; 16:13-20; 18:18; Eph. 2:19-22; 1:22, 23; 5:23-27; Col. 1:17, 18).

13. The remnant and its mission

The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolised by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness. (Rev. 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:10; Jude 3, 14; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Rev. 21:1-14).

14. Unity in the body of Christ

The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope, and reach out in one witness to all. This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children. (Rom.12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; Matt. 28:19, 20; Ps. 133:1; 2 Cor. 5:16, 17; Acts 17:26, 27; Gal. 3:27, 29; Col. 3:10-15; Eph. 4:14-16; 4:1-6; John 17:20-23).

15. Baptism

By baptism we confess our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and testify of our death to sin and of our purpose to walk in newness of life. Thus we acknowledge Christ as Lord and Saviour, become His people, and are received as members by His church. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ, the forgiveness of

our sins, and our reception of the Holy Spirit. It is by immersion in water and is contingent on an affirmation of faith in Jesus and evidence of repentance of sin. It follows instruction in the Holy Scriptures and acceptance of their teachings. (Rom. 6:1-6; Col. 2:12, 13; Acts 16:30-33; 22:16; 2:38; Matt. 28:19, 20).

16. Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a participation in the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of faith in Him, our Lord and Saviour. In this experience of communion Christ is present to meet and strengthen His people. As we partake, we joyfully proclaim the Lord's death until He comes again. Preparation for the Supper includes self-examination, repentance, and confession. The Master ordained the service of foot-washing to signify renewed cleansing, to express a willingness to serve one another in Christ like humility, and to unite our hearts in love. The communion service is open to all believing Christians. (1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 11:23-30; Matt. 26:17-30; Rev. 3:20; John 6:48-63; 13:1-17).

17. Spiritual gifts and ministries

God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts which each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfil its divinely ordained functions. According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people. Some members are called of God and endowed by the Spirit for functions recognised by the church in pastoral, evangelistic, apostolic, and teaching ministries particularly needed to equip the members for service, to build up the church to spiritual maturity, and to foster unity of the faith and knowledge of God. When members employ these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God's varied grace, the church is protected from the destructive influence of false doctrine, grows with a growth that is from God, and is built up in faith and love. (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:9-11, 27, 28; Eph.

4:8, 11-16; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 1 Peter 4:10, 11).

18. Gift of prophecy

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10).

19. Law of God

The great principles of God's law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God's love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age. These precepts are the basis of God's covenant with His people and the standard in God's judgment. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit they point out sin and awaken a sense of need for a Saviour. Salvation is all of grace and not of works, but its fruitage is obedience to the Commandments. This obedience develops Christian character and results in a sense of well-being. It is an evidence of our love for the Lord and our concern for our fellow men. The obedience of faith demonstrates the power of Christ to transform lives, and therefore strengthens Christian witness. (Ex. 20:1-17; Ps. 40:7, 8; Matt. 22:36-40; Deut. 28:1-14; Matt. 5:17-20; Heb. 8:8-10; John 15:7-10; Eph. 2:8-10; 1 John 5:3; Rom. 8:3, 4; Ps. 19:7-14).

20. Sabbath

The beneficent Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one

another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God's kingdom. The Sabbath is God's perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's creative and redemptive acts. (Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11; Luke 4:16; Isa. 56:5, 6; 58:13, 14; Matt. 12:1-12; Ex. 31:13-17; Ezek. 20:12, 20; Deut. 5:12-15; Heb. 4:1-11; Lev. 23:32; Mark 1:32).

21. Stewardship

We are God's stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God's ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellow men, and by returning tithes and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God for nurture in love and the victory over selfishness and covetousness. The steward rejoices in the blessings that come to others as a result of his faithfulness. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15; 1 Chron. 29:14; Haggai 1:3-11; Mal. 3:8-12; 1 Cor. 9:9-14; Matt. 23:23; 2 Cor. 8:1-15; Rom. 15:26, 27).

22. Christian behaviour

We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with the principles of heaven. For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things which will produce Christ like purity, health, and joy in our lives. This means that our amusement and entertainment should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit. It also means that because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are

harmful to our bodies, we are to abstain from them as well. Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholesomeness, joy, and goodness. (Rom. 12:1, 2; 1 John 2:6; Eph. 5:1-21; Phil. 4:8; 2 Cor. 10:5; 6:14-7:1; 1 Peter 3:1-4; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 10:31; Lev. 11:1-47; 3 John 2).

23. Marriage and the family

Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between partners who share a common faith. Mutual love, honour, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church. Regarding divorce, Jesus taught that the person who divorces a spouse, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery. Although some family relationships may fall short of the ideal, marriage partners who fully commit themselves to each other in Christ may achieve loving unity through the guidance of the Spirit and the nurture of the church. God blesses the family and intends that its members shall assist each other toward complete maturity. Parents are to bring up their children to love and obey the Lord. By their example and their words they are to teach them that Christ is a loving disciplinarian, ever tender and caring, who wants them to become members of His body, the family of God. Increasing family closeness is one of the earmarks of the final gospel message. (Gen. 2:18-25; Matt. 19:3-9; John 2:1-11; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:21-33; Matt. 5:31, 32; Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18; 1 Cor. 7:10, 11; Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-4; Deut. 6:5-9; Prov. 22:6; Mal. 4:5, 6).

24. Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary

There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning

ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences that, among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent. (Heb. 8:1-5; 4:14-16; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; 1:3; 2:16, 17; Dan. 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6; Lev. 16; Rev. 14:6, 7; 20:12; 14:12; 22:12).

25. Second coming of Christ

The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Saviour's coming will be literal, personal, visible, and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. The almost complete fulfilment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ's coming is imminent. The time of that event has not been revealed, and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times. (Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:7; Matt. 24:43, 44; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2:8; Rev. 14:14-20; 19:11-21; Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 Thess. 5:1-6).

26. Death and resurrection

The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be

glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a thousand years later. (Rom. 6:23; 1 Tim. 6:15, 16; Eccl. 9:5, 6; Ps. 146:3, 4; John 11:11-14; Col. 3:4; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess.4:13-17; John 5:28, 29; Rev. 20:1-10).

27. Millennium and the end of sin

The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever. (Rev. 20; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Jer. 4:23-26; Rev. 21:1-5; Mal. 4:1; Ezek. 28:18, 19).

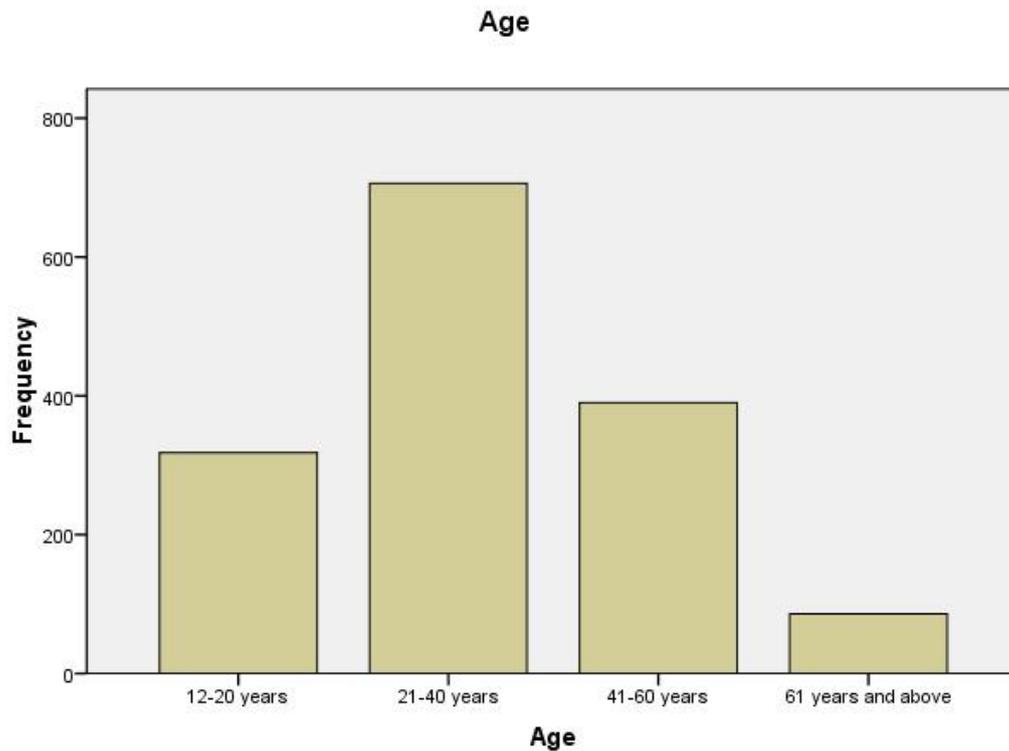
28. New earth

On the new earth, in which righteousness dwells, God will provide an eternal home for the redeemed and a perfect environment for everlasting life, love, joy, and learning in His presence. For here God Himself will dwell with His people, and suffering and death will have passed away. The great controversy will be ended, and sin will be no more. All things, animate and inanimate, will declare that God is love; and He shall reign forever. Amen. (2 Peter 3:13; Isa. 35; 65:17-25; Matt. 5:5; Rev. 21:1-7; 22:1-5; 11:15).

APPENDIX J: ANALYSED DATA

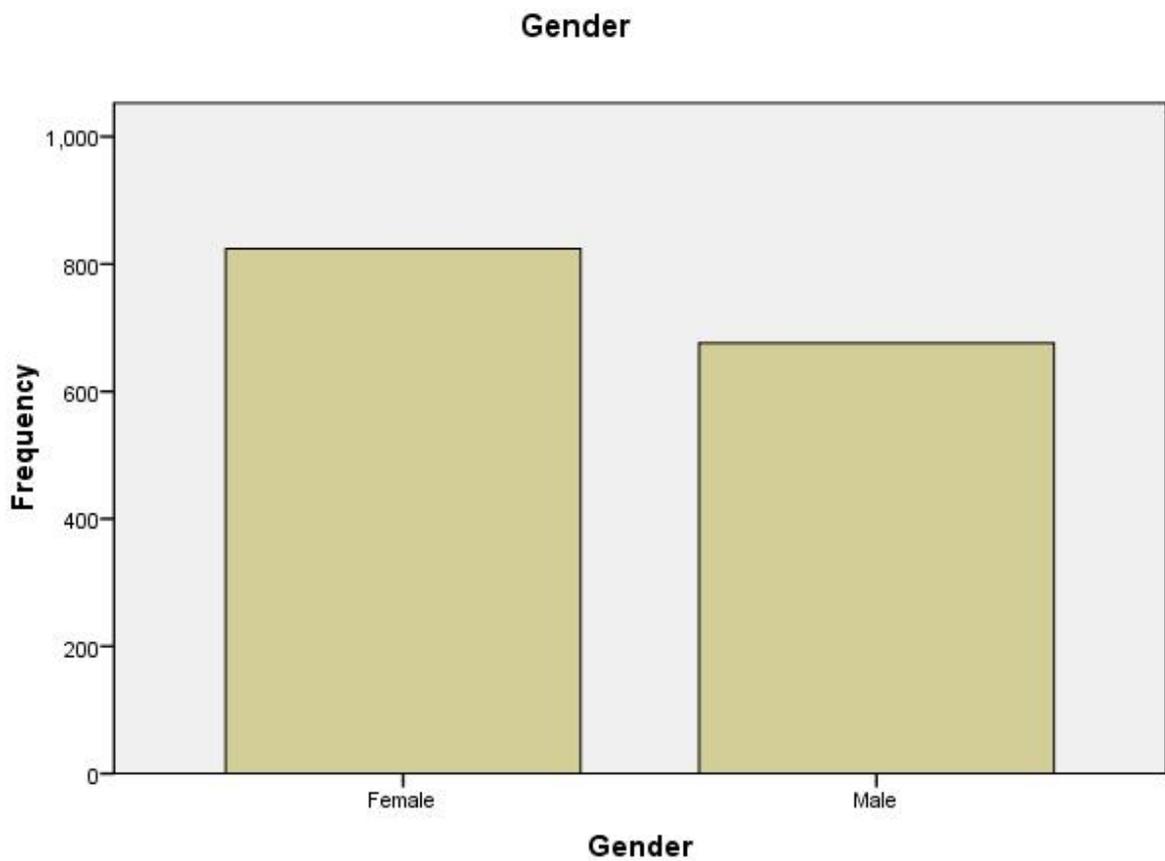
Descriptive statistics pertaining to age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 12-20 years	318	21.2	21.2	21.2
21-40 years	706	47.1	47.1	68.3
41-60 years	390	26.0	26.0	94.3
61 years and above	86	5.7	5.7	100.0
Total	1500	100.0	100.0	



Descriptive statistics pertaining to gender

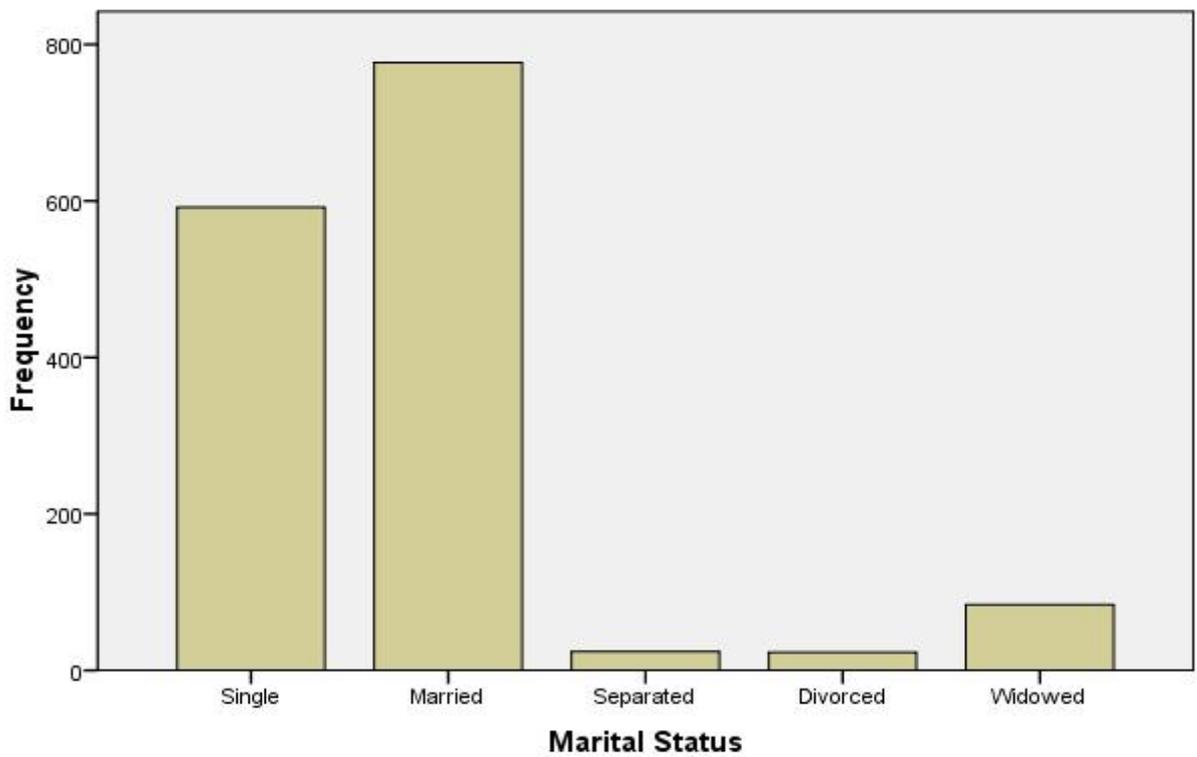
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	824	54.9	54.9	54.9
	Male	676	45.1	45.1	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	



Descriptive statistics pertaining to marital status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
valid	Single	592	39.5	39.5	39.5
	Married	777	51.8	51.8	91.3
	Separated	24	1.6	1.6	92.9
	Divorced	23	1.5	1.5	94.4
	Widowed	84	5.6	5.6	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

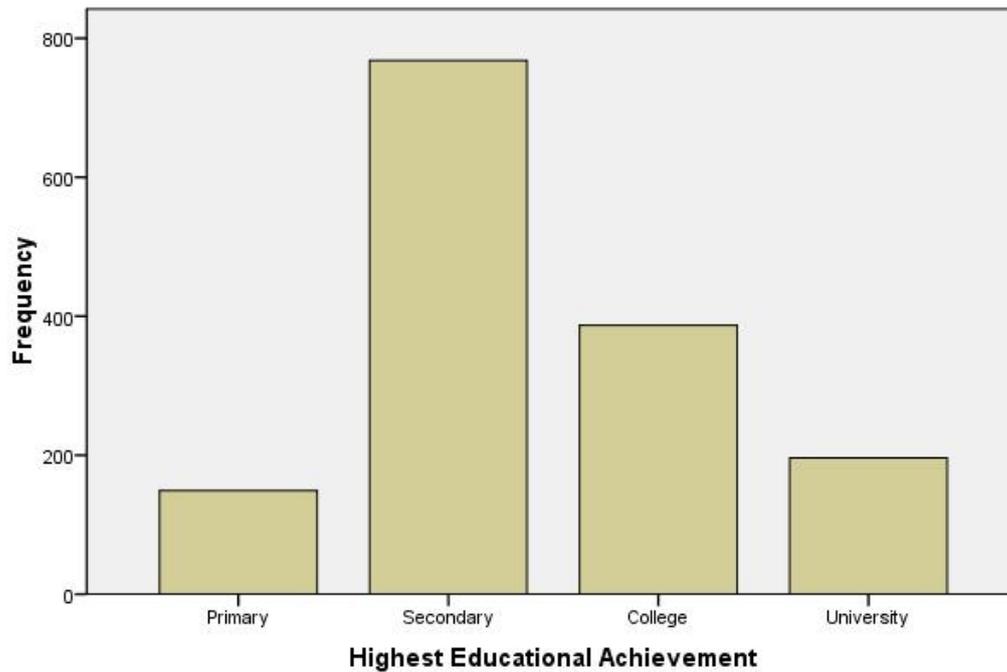
Marital Status



Descriptive statistics pertaining to the highest educational achievement

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Primary	149	9.9	9.9	9.9
	Secondary	768	51.2	51.2	61.1
	College	387	25.8	25.8	86.9
	University	196	13.1	13.1	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

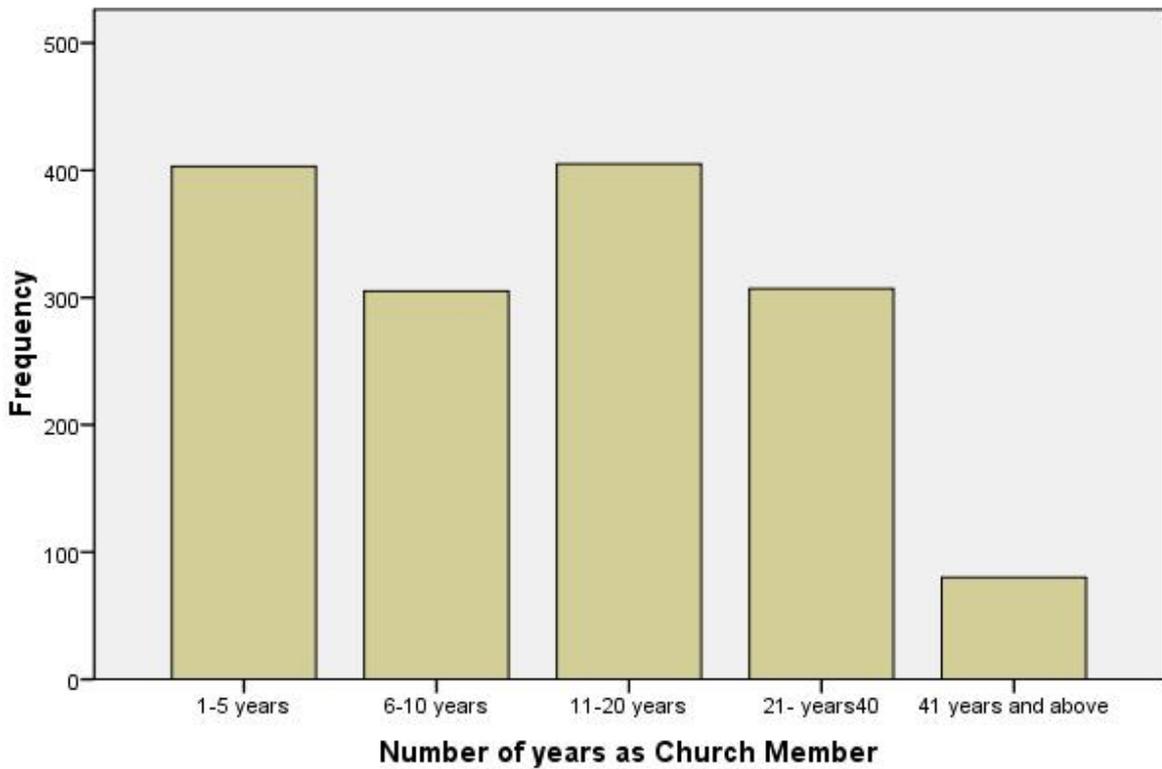
Highest Educational Achievement



Descriptive statistics pertaining to the numbers of years as church members

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-5 years	403	26.9	26.9	26.9
	6-10 years	305	20.3	20.3	47.2
	11-20 years	405	27.0	27.0	74.2
	21- years40	307	20.5	20.5	94.7
	41 years and above	80	5.3	5.3	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Number of years as Church Member



Apostasy is from within the Church.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	234	15.6	15.6	15.6
	1	262	17.5	17.5	33.1
	2	1004	66.9	66.9	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Conflicts inside the Church cause apostasy.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	119	7.9	7.9	7.9
	1	151	10.1	10.1	18.0
	2	1230	82.0	82.0	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Struggle for church positions or ranks, causes apostasy

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	195	13.0	13.0	13.0
	1	265	17.7	17.7	30.7
	2	1040	69.3	69.3	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Age gap between the youth and the adults causes apostasy

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	250	16.7	16.7	16.7
	1	784	52.3	52.3	68.9
	2	466	31.1	31.1	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Programmes which do not meet the needs of the members cause apostasy.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	243	16.2	16.2	16.2
	1	365	24.3	24.3	40.6
	2	891	59.4	59.4	100.0
	Total	1499	99.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.1		
Total		1500	100.0		

Too many laws in the Church cause apostasy

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	162	10.8	10.8	10.8
	1	854	56.9	56.9	67.7
	2	484	32.3	32.3	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Lack of love and care in times of need causes apostasy.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	72	4.8	4.8	4.8
	1	144	9.6	9.6	14.4
	2	1284	85.6	85.6	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Outside social influences cause apostasy

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	133	8.9	8.9	8.9
	1	220	14.7	14.7	23.5
	2	1147	76.5	76.5	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Outside political influence causes apostasy.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	257	17.1	17.1	17.1
	1	412	27.5	27.5	44.6
	2	831	55.4	55.4	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Technology (TV, cell phone, cinemas, etc.) causes apostasy

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	153	10.2	10.2	10.2
	1	369	24.6	24.6	34.8
	2	978	65.2	65.2	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Working on days of worship causes apostasy

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	125	8.3	8.3	8.3
	1	223	14.9	14.9	23.2
	2	1151	76.7	76.7	99.9
	3	1	.1	.1	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Marriage outside the Church causes apostasy

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	115	7.7	7.7	7.7
	1	171	11.4	11.4	19.1
	2	1212	80.8	80.8	99.9
	3	2	.1	.1	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Living in a non- Christian environment (family or community) causes apostasy.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	166	11.1	11.1	11.1
	1	467	31.1	31.1	42.2
	2	867	57.8	57.8	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Going to a non- Christian school causes apostasy.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	179	11.9	11.9	11.9
	1	615	41.0	41.0	52.9
	2	705	47.0	47.0	99.9
	3	1	.1	.1	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Choosing friends not of the same faith causes apostasy

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	143	9.5	9.5	9.5
	1	425	28.3	28.3	37.9
	2	932	62.1	62.1	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Baptizing people before they are fully taught all the doctrines of the Church, cause apostasy.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	122	8.1	8.1	8.1
	1	258	17.2	17.2	25.3
	2	1119	74.6	74.6	99.9
	9	1	.1	.1	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Failure to observe the Sabbath on Saturday causes apostasy.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	230	15.3	15.3	15.3
	1	331	22.1	22.1	37.4
	2	939	62.6	62.6	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Because the Church does not prophesy to the people like other churches, this causes apostasy.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	214	14.3	14.3	14.3
	1	804	53.6	53.6	67.9
	2	481	32.1	32.1	100.0
	Total	1499	99.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.1		
Total		1500	100.0		

Because the Church does not accept pre- or extra-marital relationship and polygamy, this causes apostasy

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	181	12.1	12.1	12.1
	1	829	55.3	55.3	67.3
	2	490	32.7	32.7	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Because the Church believes in the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, this causes apostasy

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	139	9.3	9.3	9.3
	1	1187	79.1	79.1	88.4
	2	174	11.6	11.6	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Because the Church believes that in the Lord's Supper (Sacrament), the wine we drink and the bread we eat is not the real blood and the real body of Christ, but merely the emblems, this causes apostasy

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	215	14.3	14.3	14.3
	1	1184	78.9	79.0	93.3
	2	100	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	1499	99.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.1		

Because the Church believes that in the Lord's Supper (Sacrament), the wine we drink and the bread we eat is not the real blood and the real body of Christ, but merely the emblems, this causes apostasy

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	215	14.3	14.3	14.3
	1	1184	78.9	79.0	93.3
	2	100	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	1499	99.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.1		
Total		1500	100.0		

Because the Church does not believe in ancestral spirits (the living dead), this causes apostasy

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	153	10.2	10.2	10.2
	1	1084	72.3	72.3	82.5
	2	263	17.5	17.5	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

When people apostatise, they inform the church leaders of their intention to leave Church.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	322	21.5	21.5	21.5
	1	1041	69.4	69.4	90.9
	2	137	9.1	9.1	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Apostasy affects the age group.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Youths	681	45.4	45.4	45.4
	Adults	89	5.9	5.9	51.3
	Both youths and adults affected equally	730	48.7	48.7	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Apostasy affects gender.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Females more than males	343	22.9	22.9	22.9
	Males more than females	195	13.0	13.0	35.9
	Both gender are equally affected	962	64.1	64.1	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Apostasy affects the location.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Urban members more than rural church members	453	30.2	30.2	30.2
	Rural church members more than urban church members	129	8.6	8.6	38.8
	Both rural and urban church members are equally affected	918	61.2	61.2	100.0

Apostasy affects the location.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Urban members more than rural church members	453	30.2	30.2	30.2
	Rural church members more than urban church members	129	8.6	8.6	38.8
	Both rural and urban church members are equally affected	918	61.2	61.2	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

Apostasy affects the conference leadership.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	426	28.4	28.4	28.4
	1	239	15.9	15.9	44.4
	2	834	55.6	55.6	100.0
	Total	1499	99.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.1		
Total		1500	100.0		

Apostasy affects the returns of tithes and offerings.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	254	16.9	16.9	16.9
	1	311	20.7	20.7	37.7
	2	935	62.3	62.3	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

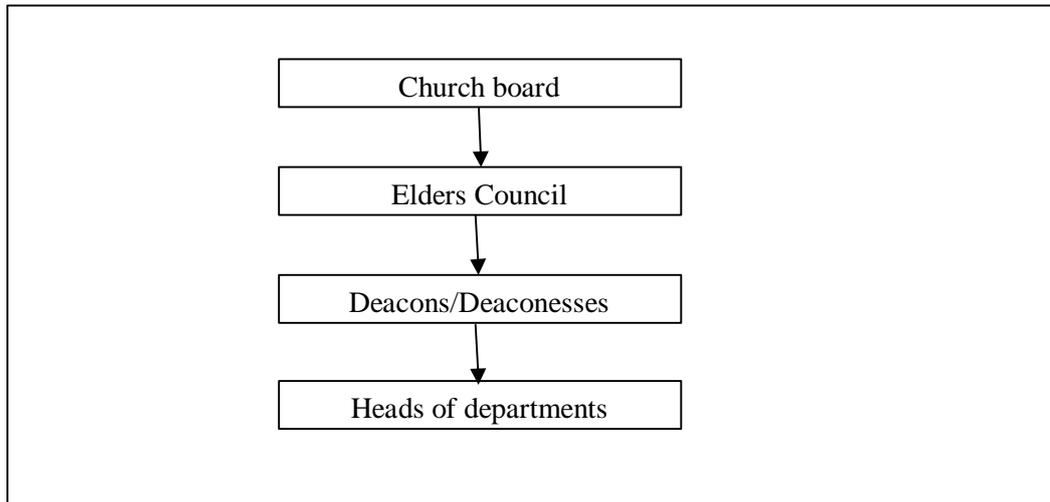
Apostasy affects the Church pastor more than others.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	352	23.5	23.5	23.5
	1	626	41.7	41.7	65.2
	2	522	34.8	34.8	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

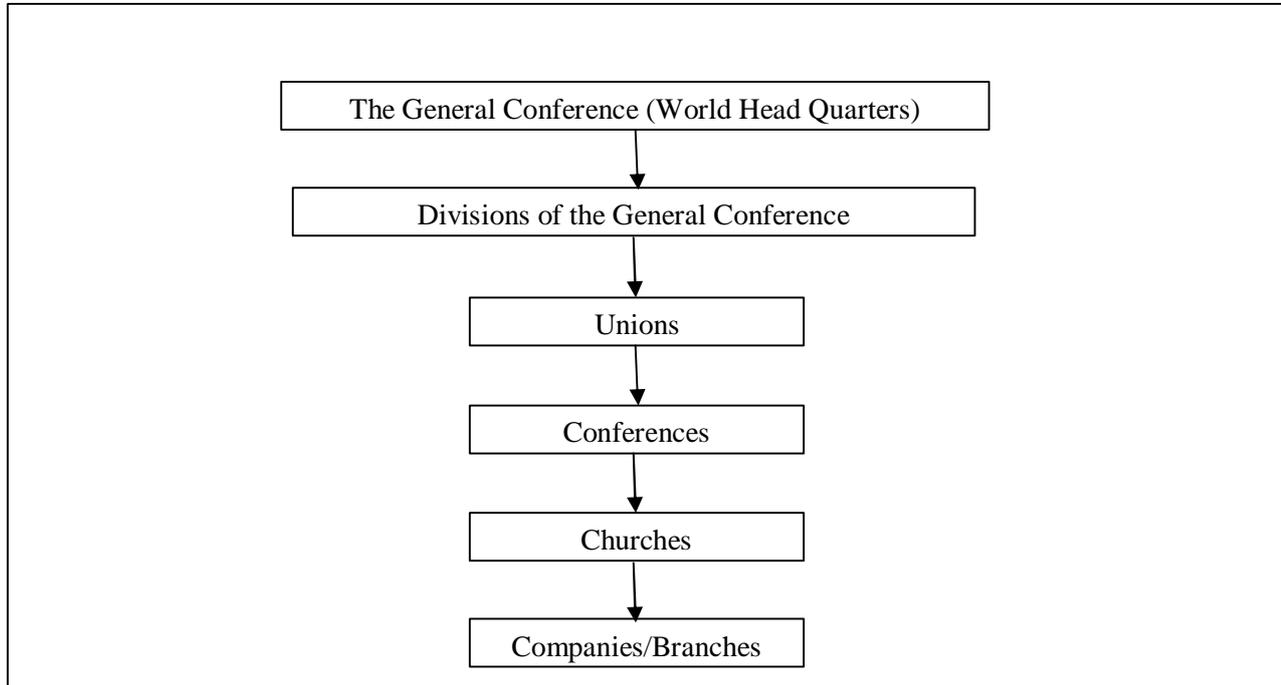
Apostasy has a significant affect on the membership

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	150	10.0	10.0	10.0
	1	87	5.8	5.8	15.8
	2	1263	84.2	84.2	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	

APPENDIX K: Seventh -day Adventist Church
Local church governance structure



Seventh-day Adventist Church organisational structure



APPENDIX L

BAPTISMAL VOW AND COMMITMENT (SDA Church Manual 2010)

Baptismal vow—Baptismal candidates and those being received into Fellowship by profession of faith shall affirm their acceptance of the fundamental beliefs in the presence of the local congregation or other properly appointed body. (See p. 45.). The pastor or elder should address the following questions to the candidate (s), whose reply may be verbal assent, raising the hand, or other culturally appropriate method.

Vow

1. Do you believe there is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a Unity of three co-eternal Persons?
 2. Do you accept the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary as the atoning sacrifice for your sins and believe that by God's grace through faith in His shed blood you are saved from sin and its penalty?
 3. Do you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and personal Saviour, believing that God, in Christ, has forgiven your sins and given you a new heart, and do you renounce the sinful ways of the world?
 4. Do you accept by faith the righteousness of Christ, your Intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary, and accept His promise of transforming grace and power to live a loving, Christ-centred life in your home and before the world?
 5. Do you believe that the Bible is God's inspired Word, the only rule of faith and practice for the Christian? Do you covenant to spend time regularly in prayer and Bible study?
 6. Do you accept the Ten Commandments as a transcript of the character of God and a revelation of His will? Is it your purpose by the power of the indwelling Christ to keep this law, including the fourth commandment, which requires the observance of the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath of the Lord and the memorial of Creation?
 7. Do you look forward to the soon coming of Jesus and the blessed hope, when "this mortal shall . . . put on immortality" [1 Cor. 15:54, KJV]?
- As you prepare to meet the Lord, will you witness to His loving salvation by using your talents in personal soul-winning endeavor to help others to be ready for His glorious appearing?

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8. Do you accept the biblical teaching of spiritual gifts and believe that the gift of prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church?
9. Do you believe in Church organisation? Is it your purpose to worship God and to support the Church through your tithes and offerings and by your personal effort and influence?
10. Do you believe that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit; and will you honor God by caring for it, avoiding the use of that which is harmful, and abstaining from all unclean foods; from the use, manufacture, or sale of alcoholic beverages; from the use, manufacture, or sale of tobacco in any of its forms for human consumption; and from the misuse of or trafficking in narcotics or other drugs?
11. Do you know and understand the fundamental Bible principles as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church? Do you purpose, by the grace of God, to fulfill His will by ordering your life in harmony with these principles?
12. Do you accept the New Testament teaching of baptism by immersion and desire to be so baptised as a public expression of faith in Christ and His forgiveness of your sins?
13. Do you accept and believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the remnant church of the Bible prophecy and that people of every nation, race, and language are invited and accepted into its fellowship? Do you desire to be a member of this local congregation of the world Church?

Alternative Vow (SDA Church Manual 2010: 47)

1. Do you accept Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and Lord, and do you desire to live your life in a saving relationship with Him?
2. Do you accept the teachings of the Bible as expressed in the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and do you pledge by God's grace to live your life in harmony with these teachings?
3. Do you desire to be baptised as a public expression of your belief in Jesus Christ, to be accepted into the fellowship of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and to support the Church and its mission as a faithful steward by your personal influence, tithes and offerings, and a life of service?

Baptismal Covenant—The Church has adopted its 28 fundamental beliefs, together with the baptismal vow and Certificate of Baptism and Commitment, as a baptismal covenant.

A printed copy of this covenant, with the Certificate of Baptism and Commitment properly completed, should be given to all accepted into the

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membership by baptism. An appropriate certificate also should be given those accepted on profession of faith.

The Certificate of Baptism and Commitment contains a space for the new member to sign as an affirmation of commitment. Following the baptism, the Certificate of Baptism and Commitment should be presented to the candidate as a covenant document. The commitment reads as follows:

Commitment

1. I believe there is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons.
2. I accept the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary as the atoning sacrifice for my sins and believe that by God's grace through faith in His shed blood I am saved from sin and its penalty.
3. I accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and personal Savior and believe that God, in Christ, has forgiven my sins and given me a new heart, and I renounce the sinful ways of the world.
4. I accept by faith the righteousness of Christ, my Intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary, and accept His promise of transforming grace and power to live a loving, Christ-centered life in my home and before the world.
5. I believe that the Bible is God's inspired Word, the only rule of faith and practice for the Christian. I covenant to spend time regularly in prayer and Bible study.
6. I accept the Ten Commandments as a transcript of the character of God and a revelation of His will. It is my purpose by the power of the indwelling Christ to keep this law, including the fourth commandment, which requires the observance of the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath of the Lord and the memorial of Creation.
7. I look forward to the soon coming of Jesus and the blessed hope, when "this mortal shall . . . put on immortality" [1 Cor. 15:54, KJV]. As I prepare to meet the Lord, I will witness to His loving salvation by using my talents in personal soul-winning endeavor to help others to be ready for His glorious appearing.
8. I accept the biblical teaching of spiritual gifts and believe that the gift of prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church.

9. I believe in Church organisation. It is my purpose to worship God and to support the Church through my tithes and offerings and by my personal effort and influence.

10. I believe that my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit; and I will honor God by caring for it, avoiding the use of that which is harmful, and

APPENDIX M

REBAPTISM (SDA Church Manual -2010: 49)

Rebaptism is specifically mentioned only in Acts 19:1-7, where the apostle Paul endorsed it for a group of believers whose previous baptism of repentance had been by John. In addition to repentance, Christian baptism

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is associated with an understanding of and personal commitment to the gospel and the teachings of Jesus and a reception of the Holy Spirit. With this increased understanding and commitment, rebaptism is acceptable.

Individuals from other Christian communions—On biblical grounds, individuals from other Christian communions who have embraced Seventhday Adventist beliefs and who have previously been baptised by immersion may request rebaptism.

The following examples, however, suggest that rebaptism may not be required. Evidently the instance of Acts 19 was a special one, for Apollos is reported to have received John's baptism (Acts 18:25), and there is no record that he was rebaptised. Apparently some of the apostles themselves received John's baptism (John 1:35-40), but there is no record they were rebaptised. If a new believer has accepted significant new truths, Ellen G. White supports rebaptism as the Spirit leads the new believer to request it. This follows the developmental pattern of Acts 19. An individual who has previously experienced baptism by immersion should evaluate his/her new religious experience and determine whether he/she desires rebaptism. There is to be no urging.

“This [rebaptism] is a subject which each individual must conscientiously take his position upon in the fear of God. This subject should be carefully presented in the spirit

of tenderness and love. Then the duty of urging belongs to no one but God; give God a chance to work with His Holy Spirit upon the minds, so that the individual will be perfectly convinced and satisfied in regard to this advanced step.”—Ev 373.

Apostasy and rebaptism—Although apostasy existed in the apostolic church (Heb. 6:4-6), Scripture does not address the question of rebaptism. Ellen G. White supports rebaptism when members have apostatised and then are reconverted and wish to rejoin the Church. (See pp. 66, 67, 154.)

“The Lord calls for a decided reformation. And when a soul is truly reconverted, let him be rebaptised. Let him renew his covenant with God, and God will renew His covenant with him.”—Ev 375.