

*NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY*

*The Impact of Cult and Sects on the Spiritual Growth of
Christians in Africa Inland Church Naivasha*

*BY
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*A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Divinity in Missions Studies*

JULY 2006

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July, 2006

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

**THE IMPACT OF CULTS AND SECTS ON THE SPIRITUAL GROWTH OF
CHRISTIANS IN AFRICA INLAND CHURCH NAIVASHA**

I declare that this is my original work and has not been
submitted to any other College or University for academic credit

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the Nairobi Evangelical
Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners

(Signed)

John Mbugua Kariuki

July, 2006

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to describe the impact of cults and sects on the spiritual growth of Christians in AIC Naivasha. In order to accomplish this research the researcher generated four research questions from the literature review.

A qualitative research was carried out for this study. By use of closed and open-ended questions, face-to-face interviews were recorded and transcribed. Data was collected from eight cultic groups composed of men, women, youths and children from different ethnic groups.

The finding reveals that the presence and aggressive recruitment of cults and sects in the town of Naivasha impacts negatively the spiritual growth of members of Africa Inland Church Naivasha.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to Christians of AIC Naivasha.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIC: Africa Inland Church

AIM: Africa Inland Mission

DCC: District Church Council

ICPG: International Christian Preachers of God

JCC: Jerusalem Christian Church

JW: Jehovah Witnesses

NAC: New Apostolic Church

NDDC: Naivasha District Development Committee

RCC: Regional Church Council

TSDA: Traditional Seventh Day Adventist

GLOSSARY

Jeshurun –Loved or Upright Ones

Kanitha wa Anabii Akorino- Church of the Prophets

Kanitha wa Witikio na Uhonania -The Church of Faith and Healing

Mungiki - United Multitude or Crowd of People

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

This research investigates the impact of cults and sects on the spiritual growth of Christians in the Africa Inland church Naivasha, Nakuru District, in Rift Valley Province of Kenya. The church was founded by missionaries of Africa Inland Mission (AIM), in the early 1950's during the colonial period.

Naivasha has a warm climate that attracts tourists' from all parts of the country and the world at large. Some of the businesses taking place in this town include horticultural farming, animal rearing, poultry, fishing and tourist sites found in Mount Long' not, Hell's gate, Geothermal plant just to mention a few.

According to "The provincial population figures of 2000 had projected that by the year 2005, Naivasha will have a population of half a million, and this was to prepare the municipality for the infrastructure and other social amenities" (Naivasha District Development Committee Report 2000, 6).

AIC Naivasha is one of the Local Churches under the Naivasha District Church (Pastorate), in Kijabe Region (Diocese). The church is surrounded by various religious groups which include the Evangelical churches, Roman Catholic, Neo-Pentecostals and also world religions such as Islam and Hinduism. There are many mushrooming unknown sects. "In Kenya, which is said to have more than 600 registered denominations and several hundred more unregistered, the government and mainstream churches have quietly expressed nervousness" (Githongo 2000, 1).

Naivasha is not exceptional, there has been a high proliferation of religious groups, for both evangelicals and cultic, some have constructed permanent places of worship, rented halls, schools, tents, residential houses and others worship in open fields.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the cults and sects that impact on the spiritual growth of Christians in AIC Naivasha; for Christian to be able:

1. To ascertain those cults and sects hampering the spiritual growth of Christians in AIC Naivasha
2. To determine the common characteristics of these cults and sects
3. To assess the challenges that these cults and sects pose on the spiritual growth of Christians
4. To identify various ways and means of reaching out and converting the cultic adherents
5. To identify how the church can be thoroughly equipped to respond to the challenges of cults and sects

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to benefit Christians in AIC Naivasha who have been impacted negatively by these cultic groups. Findings will benefit the AIC Naivasha DCC and the researchers who have interest in understanding, identifying and reaching out to the cults and sects.

Statement of the Problem

The study seeks to investigate the impact of cults and sects on the spiritual growth of Christians in AIC Naivasha, in an attempt to make the church fully equipped to combat the challenges posed by various cultic groups.

Research Questions

This research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the cults and sects hampering the spiritual growth of Christians in AIC Naivasha?
2. What are the teachings of cults and sects as opposed to those of AIC Naivasha?
3. What challenges do the cults and sects pose on the spiritual growth of Christians in AIC Naivasha?
4. What criteria can Christians in AIC Naivasha use to determine cults and sects?

Delimitation and Limitation

This study confines itself to interviewing eight cultic members from different ethnic groups and at least a family member who is an AIC Naivasha. The interview has been limited by the willingness of the interviewee to share their experience in the movement and what impact they have on the spiritual growth of Christians.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The importance of literature review is to clarify the problem that is being investigated, and to interact with what others have done. Most of these materials are taken from the libraries and accessed from the internet.

Definition of Terms

“The word ‘cult’ comes from the Latin word ‘cultus’ which is a form of a verb ‘Colere’ meaning to ‘worship’ or ‘to give reference to a deity’. The term ‘cultus’ may also mean the honoring, reverencing, or a veneration of the divine. ‘Colere’ may further mean to till the ground and hence to take care of, or attend to , aim of the action being the production of some benefit by the object of attention” (Davies 1986, 202). The term cultus may seem to refer to the rituals, rites, practices, ceremonies and celebrations pertaining to the worship of a deity.

Gomes writes, “A cult of Christianity is a group of people claiming to be Christian, embraces a particular doctrinal system taught by an individual leader, group or organization, which system denies either explicitly or implicitly one or more of the central doctrines of the Christian faith as taught in the sixty-six books of the bible” (1995, 7). The same idea came with Martin Walter who defines it as any religious group which differs significantly in some one or more respects as to belief or practice, from those religious groups which are regarded as normative expressions of religion in our total culture (1965, 11). Therefore one can concur with Martin who argues that cultic groups may gather around a specific person who has personal interpretation of

the bible.

A cult deviates doctrinally and in behavior from a parent or host religion and it grows out of and deviates from previously established religion. Cults can also be defined as those “Groups which are heretical in one or more significant respects and which frequently practice strong social control over their members. They sometimes also engage in forms of brainwashing to gain and retain converts” (Erickson 1986, 40). Many Christians have lived among cultic groups without knowing who they are.

As Owande writes:

Here in Kenya most people are totally ignorant of the nature of a cult. Majority of people think a cult is some kind of devil worship or occultism. This confusion of cult and occult is the reason that many people get caught up in cults totally unaware of what they are getting themselves into. The common definition of a cult is: any group (religious, political, psychological, or otherwise) which exercises significant control over the thoughts, feelings, and actions of its members by use of deception and manipulation, without the knowledge and consent of its members. Hence, what makes a particular group a cult is not so much its beliefs, but what it practices” (2000, 1).

This shows that a particular group a cult is not so much its beliefs, but what it practices.

The word Sect is a Latin word ‘*secta*’, party or school; it is derived from *secare* meaning *to cut, to separate* or *to follow*. “A group whose identity particularly consists of belonging to a larger social body, typically a religious body” (Elwell 1984, 995). These are small number of members that distinguishes from the major churches and diverges from the doctrinal mainstream with spontaneous nature and strong awareness of forming the elect with anti-institutional tendencies and strong emphasis on the lay element.

The Vatican secretariat writes, “The criteria for distinguishing between sects of Christian origin, on the other hand, and churches and ecclesial communities, on the other hand, might be found in the sources of the teaching of these groups. For

instance, sects could be those groups, which apart from the bible, have other revealed books or prophetic messages, or groups which exclude from the bible certain proto-canonical books, or radically change their content” (1986, 2). In summary majority of the evangelical churches have defined cults and sects as any religious group with distinctive worldview of its own derived from, but not identical with the orthodox teaching and having a distinctive features.

Common Characteristic of Cults

Cultic groups can be characterized by their existence in varying degrees and different combinations; it is always logical to keep in mind that not all manifests the same traits like the other, although they have some common characteristics.

Most cultic groups claim to have:

To have Extra-Biblical Revelations of Scriptures

This is sometimes called the new truths. “Some cults make no claim to new truth or extra-biblical revelation, but they believe that they alone have the key to interpreting the mysteries in the bible. The scriptures are their only acknowledged source of authority, but they are interpreted unreasonably and in a way different from that of Orthodox Christianity” (McDowell and Stewart 1983, 22). Christians must use the bible for there is no revelation that can supersede the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The founder of Jerusalem Church of Christ (JCC) charismatic prophetess Snaida-Akatsa often said “the end of the world was near, and how the cult leader brought a ‘special visitor to one Sunday service. This is Jesus, the preacher told her believers, patting the shoulder of an Indian Sikh man. ‘You must repent’” (Lovgren 2000, 1).

In summary Christians must be able to distinguish the heretical teachings proclaimed by self proclaimed leaders; they should not invest their divine authority in

persons of a visible individual who speaks higher than the authority of the bible. The second coming of Christ is hidden; no one knows the day or the hour.

That the Bible is not Only their Source of Authority but They have other Sources

“The theology of Unification Church for example, is a strange combination of pseudo-Christian, mystical, psychological, and charismatic ingredients. The final authority is not the bible but the writings of Sun Myung Moon” (Boa 1981, 170). Christians must understand that cults elevate their human leaders to a messianic level by doing so they impact negatively the spiritual growth of believers in Christ. What happened in Uganda should be a lesson to learn about cults and sects.

Lovgren writes:

Hundred of members of the small sect the movement of the restoration of the ten commandments of God, including 78 children, died in a fire in a church in Kanungu, 220 miles south of the capital, Kampala. Police treated the Kanungu fire as a mass suicide, but it looks more like the culmination of a systematic policy of killing cult members. Two cult leaders, Joseph Kibwetere, a defrocked catholic priest, and Cletonia Mwerinde, a former prostitute, may have fled before the fire as the cult grew increasingly divided after the world did not end December 31, as the leaders had predicted (2000, 2).

This can be assumed that cultic members may have wanted back their belongings, which they had surrender upon joining the church. Christians must study the bible in order to understand that there is no other source of authority higher than God, his spoken and written word all this are revealed by Christ.

Denial that Jesus Christ is not God

The message that is carried through the bible teaches that Jesus Christ is God; this makes it the central doctrine of the church. Some of the cults such as the Jehovah

witnesses refute this statement for they believe that “Jesus Christ, is a created individual, the second greatest personage of the universe, the first and only direct creation by his Father, Jehovah appointed him as his vindicator and the chief agent of life toward mankind. Born as a human son of God, in October, 2 B.C. He became the messiah seed in fall, in AD. 29. He died on stake as ransomed in spring, in AD. 33. He resurrected immortal spirit son a glorious spirit creature” (Breese 1984, 79). In summary the doctrine of Christology is one of the major doctrines in the evangelical orthodoxy, when this doctrine is distorted one may be losing the central essentials of spiritual growth.

Their Leaders are Self Proclaimed Messiahs Appointed by God to Deliver and Lead the People

In various cultic groups prophets and prophetess are considered to be their leaders. Lovgren writes: as Mary Snaida-Akatsa, known as ‘Mommy’ to her followers, enters the Jerusalem Church of Christ in Nairobi Kawangware slums, the worshippers fall to the floor in fear. When the self-proclaimed prophetess accuses a member of being a witch, a vision she says she’s received from God, the disciples stomp their feet, throw rocks and chase the unlucky follower out of the church with yells of Ashindwe! Ashindwe! - Swahili for ‘be defeated’ (2000, 1). Cultic adherents do not have the courage of defending themselves instead they leave the group; later they join another or stay away from any church fellowship.

Breeze writes:

Joseph Smith of the Mormons claimed that John the Baptist had given to him the priesthood of Aaron. As if this were not enough, he later claimed that he had received a higher priesthood, that of Melchizedek, from Peter, James and John. His followers repeatedly claim that he has done more for the salvation of this world than any other man who has ever lived except Jesus (1984, 47).

In summary Christians must understand that human messianic leaders use the powers of their intelligence or personality to impose strange ideas and directives that hamper the spiritual growth of believers in Christ.

Salvation is by Good Works

No one is taught in the cults that he can be saved from eternal damnation by simply placing his faith in Jesus Christ. "It is always said, believe in Jesus and do this, or follow that. All cults attach something to the doctrine of salvation. This might be baptism; obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel, or something else, but it is never taught that faith in Christ alone will save anyone" (McDowell and Stewart 1983, 27). Christians must be aware that cults in the world preach another gospel that leads to human despair, death and hell. Those who follow another gospel put their spiritual growth in a tragedy.

Offer Hope that is Uncertain

Cultic groups offer false hope for if they teach the truth their adherents would be set free by the blood of Christ. The New Apostolic Church (NAC) is exploding in the African continent, because of its theology and ritual practices.

Kuligin writes:

One of the most interesting aspects of the NAC is its view that dead people can still be saved through intercession of the living, and it may be the chief reason why the NAC has been so well received in Africa. This is done in a service of departed souls held three times per year in every district. In the service two members act as vessels who then partakes three sacraments, baptism, communion and holy sealing. A departed soul is able to come and participate in these sacraments, thus securing salvation for itself (2005, 72)

Christians must always remember that there is no intercession for the dead, a good example is when David lost his son, the most bitter experience in life, he knew he cannot return back to him (2 Sam 12:13-25), however the apostle Paul wrote about some people being baptized for the dead in (1Cor 15:29).

Classification of Religious Cults and Sects

The literature review suggests that some cults are foreign while others have been founded locally. These cults seem to have a recognized traits that are emphasized, these are; claims on extra-biblical revelations, denial of bible authority, denial of Trinity(distorted doctrine about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit), denial of salvation by grace, claims of healing, deliverance and hope after death. Some other cults and sects accept an authority figure that uses their mind-control technique on individuals and group members. Some still show traits of legalism, sexual perversion, physical abuse and violence intolerance toward other people.

Those that fall under the category of foreign cults are Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses, whereas Jeshurun, Anabii, International Christian Preachers of God, Jerusalem Christian church, Branhamites, Legion Maria, Traditional Seventh Day Adventists just to mention a few, are local sects. There are more cultic groups that show the same traits as mentioned above, but they are so closed for interaction, these are Free Masons, Rastafarians and Mungiki's. All cultic groups can be measured in the light of the scriptures, especially on the major doctrines, if they fail to pass the test they can be classified as cults and sects.

Impact of Cults on Institutions

Cults and the Family

The cultic groups have destroyed many Christian families; the relationship between husbands, wives and their children have been weakened, while on other hand the cultic leaders demand total commitment at the expense of sacrificing family time.

There has been a lot of financial exploitation to a point of exhaustion; some families are not able to plan and to budget due to divided priorities. Just like other cultic leaders, “Snaida-Akatsa has become rich from her church. Neighbors say she owns several cars. She sells fruits and vegetables, which she claims are blessed, from her many farms in rural Kenya to followers after each service” (Lovgren 2000, 3)

Many cultic groups have made children suffer for lack of school fees, lack of food, and sometimes forced to attend some religious ceremonies and rituals. Children have lacked good guidance, counseling and role model to emulate because their parents have double commitments. Some cultic leaders are said to have even molested their adherents. A girl who was allegedly being indecently assaulted by a sect leader from Kenneth Dyers support group said, “ she was taken into a room where there wasn’t a third person present and asked to take her clothes off, and she was touched during energy conversion processing ...she didn’t go into detail”(Kenneth 2003, 2).

Some of the families have denied their children the right to good health, when they are sick they are prayed for and denied the right to socialize with other children. “Jehovah Witnesses for example reject the scriptural doctrine of the atonement with a substituted fancy that when we donate or receive blood, we give away or accept a portion of the human soul” (Baalén 1938, 265). This is very clear indication that Christians who follow this teaching cannot donate or receive blood even when their family members are dying. This belief destroys good family relationship where love, care and concern should be practiced, and as a result the spiritual growth of Christian family is destroyed.

The Vatican secretariat writes:

The most vulnerable groups in the church, especially the youths, seem to be the most affected. When they are ‘footloose’, unemployed, not active in parish life, or voluntary parish work, or come from an unstable family background, or belong to ethnic minority groups, or

live in places which are rather far from the church's reach, etc., they are a more likely target for the new movements and sects. Some sects seem to attract mainly people in the middle-age group. Others thrive on membership from well-to-do and highly educated families. In this context, mention must be made of university campuses which are often favorable breeding grounds for sects or places of recruitment. Moreover, difficult relations with the clergy, or an irregular marriage situation, can lead one to break with the church and join a new group (1986, 3).

It seems that those who join cults and sects sometimes have no evil reasons; it is probably that sects attract good people and good motivation in those people. This may happen fast especially when the church have failed in pastoral care.

Cults and Society

Some cults and sects portray a bad picture of Christianity in the society. For

Example:

The Nairobi-based prophetess Lucy Nduta of the Salvation Healing Ministry was accused of allegedly obtaining money to cure, through prayers, six people with HIV/AIDS. The prophetess count charged that on august 2004, she fraudulently obtained a motor vehicle worth Sh. 300,000, in 2005 another count of Sh. 700,000 to cure the disease, to another Sh. 158,000, to another Sh.120,000, to anothertotaling to Sh. 1.6 million, the case continues (Kwomboka 2006, 40).

Christians must understand that healing comes from God and there is no cure of the HIV/ AIDS disease. No one should contribute money in order to get healing.

A controversial ministry founded by bishop Gilbert Deya "has been accused of running a baby smuggling racket where children are miraculously born in Africa to barren women and then transported back to Britain" (Religion New Blog 2005.1). The ministry is surrounded with lies on baby saga, owning a personal jet, made up stories and pictures in the magazines and website, exaggerated number of members in Britain and Kenya, claims that the Kenya government had tried to kill his mother and it is unsafe for him to travel. When religious sects build on lies, it becomes difficulty to

reach out the community with the gospel. Sometimes the media takes advantage of defaming Christianity.

Cults and the Government

Some cultic groups like the Mungiki's have been watering down the government initiative of promoting peace and unity. The sect has been terrorizing innocent people, manning bus stations, peddling drugs to other youths, infringing the rights of women, forceful rape, threatening them with death and forcing them to undergo circumcision. Some Christians a strong feeling that this cult is satanic, an organized group sent to fight the church as well as the government peace initiatives.

Parents whose children joined this movement always live in fear. An AIC Naivasha parent once said, "Children when young step on their parents' toes, but when they grow up they step on their hearts". This was very painful for it showed that the impact of cults and sect on the spiritual growth of parents is very real.

On the other hand other cultic sects work underground, "The Traditional Seventh Day Adventist's relationship with the state is a distant one, a passive relationship which is neither openly, friendly nor openly hostile. While it comes to certain national issues where other organizations take sides, the Adventist sits on the fence", (Nyakundi 1990, 118). The evangelical churches having admitted SDA's in their evangelical fellowship it must be noted that some of their sects dig graves at night as well as conducting burials, weddings and other rituals secretly. As Christians, it is always good to do things in he right way and follow laws of the land. These practices if allowed to continue for long will hamper the spiritual growth of Christians.

Theological View of Cults

Denial of Trinity

The doctrine of Trinity is one of the fundamental doctrines in the bible that most cults and sects deny, the true Orthodox biblical doctrine teaches that within the nature of one God there are three eternal persons; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Some of the cults believe in Trinity but they re-define it so that the doctrine is not Orthodox, some teach that there are three gods instead of one true God who exists in three persons.

Boa writes:

The doctrine of the Trinity is denied by Jehovah Witnesses in no uncertain terms. They say that Satan is the originator of this doctrine. Witnesses reject the concept of the Trinity because they cannot reconcile it with their reasoning. Using their inaccurate translation of the bible to play down his divinity, they distort the meaning of such terms as only begotten greater than I first born and son of God to support their unbiblical conclusions about him(1981,77).

The church must teach exhaustively the doctrine of Trinity for it is one of the major doctrines that enable Christian believers to grow spiritually.

Denial of the Deity of Jesus Christ

The other central doctrine in the bible is the doctrine of Christ, “The full deity of Jesus Christ is of course contained within the doctrine of the Trinity. And all the pseudo-Christian cults categorically reject this truth. His oneness, or equality, with the father will be the focus of considerable attack by the cultists. On Christ, they declare, is the first-born of God the only direct creation of God , the one by who all else was created, uniquely born, sinless, a miracle worker , the only efficacious sacrifice –but not equal with the father” (Robertson 1983,22). The church should ensure that the doctrine of Christ is not distorted whatsoever, for if it does, it minimizes the efficacy of Christ’s redeeming blood.

Denial of Salvation by Grace through Faith

The Bible teaches in Ephesians 2:8 “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God”. Cults typically deny salvation by grace, thus distorting the purity of the gospel. The Mormons for example “emphasize the necessity of becoming more and more perfect in this life.

The Jehovah Witnesses emphasize the importance of distributing Watchtower literature door –to –door as part of working out their salvation” (Geisler and Rhodes 1997, 11). The bible teaches us that salvation is by grace, a gift of God, through faith in the lord Jesus Christ. Those who receive Jesus by faith are forgiven their sins and are born of the Holy Spirit thus becoming the children of God. As Christians, we cannot save ourselves; it is by grace that we are saved through faith in Christ. If Christians teach salvation by good works, we may in turn become a cult or sect, and this would negatively impact our spiritual growth in Christ.

Reasons why People join Cults

There are various reasons why people join cultic groups; this may be a spiritual, emotional, social or intellectual problem with unmet needs. The mainstream churches have been accused of neglecting these needs, forcing their members to look for help elsewhere. The Vatican secretariat argues:

In complex and confused situations people naturally search for answers and solutions. The sects appear to offer: simple and ready-made answers to complicated questions and situations; simplified and partial versions of traditional truths and values; a pragmatic theology, a theology of success, a syncretistic theology proposed as new revelation a new truth to people who often have little of the old truth clear-cut directives; a claim to moral superiority; proofs from supernatural elements: glossolalia, trance, medium-ship, prophecies possession, etc (1986, 4).

Cults and sects seem to be offering human warmth, care and support in small and close knit communities. They also seem to be thinking for the individuals.

Passantino writes “A person usually joins a cult because he has problems that he is having trouble solving, and some of the cults do promise to solve”, (1981,22).

As believers in the lord Jesus Christ we must understand that all human beings have needs, and it is only God who graciously provides. The individual and community needs are not truly and permanently met by these cultic groups, for what they provide is just a temporary solution. It is only through a personal encounter with Jesus Christ that all human needs can be met.

To Fulfill their Spiritual Needs

A person does not usually join a cult or a sect because he has done an exhaustive analysis of the world religions and decides that a particular cult presents the best theology available.

Boa writes:

It is unfortunate that so many have turned to non- Christian sources for the fulfillment of their spiritual needs, this should not be so surprising if we remember that a large number of Christian churches have lost their spiritual vitality. They have exchanged a life giving relationship for an external religiosity. Thus instead of attracting those who are on a spiritual quest, some Christian churches and enterprises repel them. The current religious alternatives should be seen as a challenge to the Christian community to get serious about the progress of the gospel, the good news of new life in Christ (1981, 14).

Christians must understand that cults and sects teach lies, and those who believe lies are already deceived. The spiritual danger of believing in a lie has an eternal consequence, believing in a ‘counterfeit Jesus’ and ‘counterfeit gospel’ results to ‘counterfeit salvation’. This distorted doctrine affects negatively the spiritual growth of a Christian for the Holy Spirit does not work in such circumstances.

To Fulfill their Emotional Needs

Many people who join cults and sects do so because they have been promised love and acceptance which they never find in their homes and in their churches. People affiliate themselves with cultic groups because they want affection; friendship and recognition. Our biblical goal as Christians is to meet emotional and spiritual needs of our people with the nourishment of the word of God which operates in our lives and in our families. Many people in the community, who are hurting, are in need of counselors who would listen to them and offer guidance in times of stress. Christians should see the importance of having Christian family counselors who may assist on some emotional problems. They must be taught how to handle and manage their lives instead of running to a hooking prey. Those who run to cultic groups put their spiritual and emotional life in danger.

To Fulfill their Social Needs

Some people join cultic groups because Christians have been impassive to the economical and social needs of the suffering community. The cultic have been very enthusiastic to promote their mission and vision statement to people without fear and shame. For example, Jim Jones the founder of "The People's Temple Church was involved in many works of philanthropy and charity, such as running nursing homes, adopting unwanted children etc. some who were involved with Jim Jones really were not interested in religious aspect at all , but simply in the social programs he shepherded" (Gomes 1995, 84). Christians must look for social activities to be engaged in, for joining a cult is like putting a label- 'This religion is dangerous to your health and life'. One may loose his entire family in an alleged circumstance that

negatively impacts on the spiritual growth of a Christian.

Challenges Cults Pose to Christians

The cults and sects pose a number of challenges to Christians, which need a careful and a biblical observation;-

Witnessing and Visitations

Most of the cultic groups are very aggressive when it comes to witnessing. For example every Thursday from 8 am to 5 pm the Jehovah Witnesses keep on visiting homes, knocking doors house to house, talking in a friendly manner, and where they are welcomed they spend time indoctrinating Christians and return for follow-up . Burrell agrees that “The sect members are ready to spend long hours in learning their beliefs and mastering their techniques and then in spreading their views to others” (1981, 152). In their 2 hour Saturday and Sunday services, they sing 3 songs in intervals, 2 prayers, announcement, while the rest of the time 90 % they use on public talk where reading the scriptures, pamphlets, tracts, magazines and answering questions is done.

Their Submission to their Leaders who are in Authority is Another Challenge to Us Christians.

The cultic followers respect, obey and support their leaders who are self proclaimed, some of them are considered infallible, unquestionable and above reproach. “The cult leader strengthens his presumptuous leadership by arrogating to him-self the position of being the only repository of divine truth. He frequently talks about ‘my message’, ‘my revelation’ ‘my leadership’, ‘my people’. In doing this, he is

pushing the heretical proposition that he has been made the true custodian of some private revelation from God” (Breeze 1984, 56).

The Cultic Groups are Committed to their Teachings, Implementing their Beliefs and Submission to their Leaders.

Gomes writes:

Jim Jones asserted that he raised more than 40 people from the dead. He claimed to have raised himself from the dead. He faked his own assassination in the parking lot of his church, pretending to have been shot. All the members of the congregation were herded into the temple, supposedly for their protection. Suddenly Jones appeared, holding his bloodstained shirt with two holes in it. He declared that he had raised himself from the dead. People associated with him later testified the fraud” (1995, 39).

Christian trying to reach out to cultist without biblical truth cannot change them, some do not see the dangers surrounding them instead they feel secure and loved. Their eyes and minds are closed up to see the reality.

Approaching the Cultists

Christians must fulfill the Great Commission which states; “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Mt 28: 19-20).

- Christians approaching the cultists must be full of genuine love; for the main aim is not to win an argument but to win a soul for Jesus Christ.

Christians must approach the cultists by clothing themselves with humility as the lord Jesus Christ did when he was here on earth. They must carry with them the word of God and allow the Holy Spirit to use them in evangelizing.

- Christians must be ready to learn from the cultists so that one can use the scriptures correctly and in context. Gomes suggests, “Young people should be taught how to think critically about philosophical and religious matters” (1995, 93).
- Christians must know what the cultist doctrines are, in order to have a common ground to win them to Christ. For example when reaching out to the Legio Maria “we must not approach them in an overly critical fashion. If we are too critical, they will quickly become uncooperative. We must start by loving them as people, just as we are” (Moreau and Kombo 1991, 26).

Preventing People from Cultic Influence

This research suggests four ways in which the church can use to know the legitimate needs that make people turn to cults. Evangelical Christians may be surprised to find that those things they ignore, are the most important; these are intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual needs which are fulfilled by practicing vibrant biblical Christianity.

Chepkwony writes:

It is clear that the youths are the easiest target. In order to be more attractive to them, the movements tend to be very tolerant and open to everybody, regardless of their religious background nationality, ethnicity, color and status. Everybody is welcomed as they are. Moreover they do not discourage one from attending church; on contrary, they do not discourage one to be a member of a church until before long, one finds himself or herself so fully with the movement that he or she is totally alienated from their church” (1996,33).

- The church should lead Christians to a deep level of understanding of the scriptures which is one of the essentials of faith. Individual Christians should be able to state clearly and defend the doctrine of

Trinity, the deity of Christ, the bodily resurrection and salvation by grace through faith.

- The church may create awareness to their members by teaching on the dangers of cults and sects periodically so that Christians can be fully equipped. Sometimes when problem arises some Christians are unable to cope. For example in search of a child a couple may consult a spiritualist, a traditional medicine doctor or an orthodox doctor and in most cases without the desired results.

Kemdirim writes, “They engage in ritual activities to deities and divinities that they feel are responsible for their unfortunate condition and could help them out of their plight. In desperation to have a child they do anything even if it means backsliding in church-practice and getting initiated in occultism” (1996, 240).

Christians should learn to think critically after they understand the principles for discerning truth from error.

The church will be challenged to meet the needs of people holistically, Gomes citing Melton points out that:

Quite a few people who leave mainline churches for cults do so because the church seems cold and impersonal. The cultists especially attract young people who feel they do not fit in the conventional church. Churches should be programmatic in providing opportunities for fellowship small groups situations, which allow for intimacy not possible in the larger church setting, can be very important in counteracting anonymity and impersonality in our churches (1995, 89).

- The church can become more effective and efficient in meeting the needs of its members by adjusting her programs; especially for those working on the flower farms on Sunday's. These people demand an extra pastoral care; for failure to this, their spiritual growth will be seriously affected as well as their families.

Criteria of Judging the Cults and Sects

The evangelical churches have several factors of judging cults and sects, for any group that claims to be a Christian has to be in conformity with the sound doctrines of the church. There are two main ways of determining the orthodox.

The Gospel and the Holy Scriptures; - the message of the church to the world is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel or the kerygma is made of sound doctrine composed of life, death, resurrection, and the ascension of Jesus Christ. The bible is composed of 66 books 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. The scriptures teach about the love of God to the humankind which is authenticated in the free salvation. The scriptures exalt Jesus Christ the son of God who is God and came from heaven, any cult or sect that venerates self-proclaimed leaders can be termed as heretical.

The Apostle Peter in his epistle gives us some hints of judging a cultic group, he writes, But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them-bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping (2 Pet 2:1-3).

The Church Covenant and Creeds; - most of the cults and sects do not have church covenant or even an idea of its importance. For example in AIC Kenya they have a written church covenant that states her believe:

Having been born again by the grace of God through faith in the lord Jesus Christ, being justified on the ground of his shed blood, having

confessed our faith before men, in the presence of God and this assembly, we do now most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ. By the power of the holy spirit we engage, therefore to work together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of his church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations. We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to dedicate our children in the word of his grace; and to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances. By the grace and power of God, as strangers and pilgrims, we will put away from us all bitterness, and wrath and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking; and be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us. We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; and to aid each other in sickness and distress. Should we move to another place we shall at once seek to continue fellowship with likeminded believers there in the spirit of this church covenant (AIC Majibizano 1982, 43).

This document is very important for it summarized the believes, responsibilities and accountability of believers as well as their allegiance to God. When a new member joins church fellowship, it must be made clear to him or her, the vision and mission the church. In many cultic groups it is difficulty to find anything written on their beliefs and their mission; sometimes Evangelical Christians have fellowshiped in certain cultic groups unknowingly, later their spiritual growth is seriously affected.

The Apostles' Creed; is another important document to detect cults and sects. It has been in use since the 2nd century where Christians professed their belief in the Triune God, universal church and the forgiveness of sins. With the development of heretical teaching, however there was natural tendency to use the creeds as a test of catholic orthodoxy.

This creed stated:

I believe in God the father almighty, maker of heaven and earth: and in Jesus Christ his only son, our lord; who was conceived by the holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven and sited on the right

hand of God the father almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen (AIC Majibizano 1982, 43).

Christians can detect cultic groups if they find that they deny the summary of this creed. Sometimes new babes in Christ may ask questions but after undergoing a proper catechism and discipleship teaching one matures in faith.

In summary, literature review suggests that mushrooming of non-mainstream evangelical cults and sects is a world wide problem; Christians must be fully equipped to combat with the challenges posed by these groups.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This section deals with the methodology used to collect relevant and helpful information, it describes the research methodology, approach, participants, entry procedure, data collection, ethnographic record, data treatment, and analysis.

Research Methodology

The researcher used qualitative research, which involves an inquiry process for understanding. This method is based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or a human problem. This approach uses strategies of inquiry like narratives, phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory studies, or case studies. The research is based on ethnography which is a description and interpretation of a cultural or social group or system. “The researcher examines the group observable and learned patterns of behavior, customs and ways of life” (Creswell 1998, 58).

The rationale for choosing this methodology is that it accommodates friendly conversations, since the researcher investigates the cults and sects that impact on the spiritual growth of Christians in AIC Naivasha. Spradley says “it is best to think of ethnographic interviews as a series of friendly conversations into which the researcher slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants” (1979, 58).

Research Approach

The data was collected through the following three means:

- a) Open ended questionnaires,
- b) Oral interviews,
- c) Library and internet resources.

Questionnaire and Interviews Tools

The researcher met with eight different members of cultic groups, and from different ethnic groups, who have their families in AIC Naivasha and participated as a participant observer in their worship services in order to gather information through their response. One questionnaire and an interview tool were formulated; some were not willing to fill the questionnaire and requested the researcher to feel free in filling.

The researcher used opened- ended questionnaire and oral interview at the informants' homes, places of work and after the church worship service.

In this research, personal interview was carried out. The interviewer asked participants questions designed to draw out answers relevant to the research. There was no schedule in such interviews and participants were free to relate to their experiences, to describe the events and to give their opinions and attitudes. In this way the researcher was able to have more information from some of the informants. The information obtained was supplemented by data gathered from literature as well as from observations. The researcher concurs with Creswell that "qualitative research takes place in the natural setting. The qualitative researcher often goes to the site of the participant to conduct the research. This enables the researcher to develop a level of detail about the individual or place and to be highly involved in actual experiences

of the participant” (2003, 181).

This qualitative research has allowed the researcher to make the best interpretation of the data as Creswell writes:

Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive. This means that the researcher makes an interpretation of the data. This includes developing a description of an individual or setting, analyzing data for themes or categories, and finally making an interpretation or drawing conclusions about its meaning personally and theoretically, stating the lessons learned, and offering further questions to be asked. It means that the researcher filter the data through a personal lens that is situated in a specific sociopolitical and historical moment. One cannot escape the personal interpretation brought by qualitative data analysis] (Creswell 2003, 182).

The researcher became personally involved in interacting with the informants, through one-on-one meetings, structured interviews, attended their worship services, and participated in social events. He also had interest on the topic as he investigated the impact of cults and sects on the spiritual growth of Christians in AIC Naivasha.

Research Approach Description

This research investigates the impact of cults and sects on the spiritual growth of Christians in AIC Naivasha; it also explores their beliefs and practices.

In any ethnographical research language plays a very important role. “The ethnographer must deal with at least two languages-their own and the one spoken by informants” (Spradley 1979, 17). The researcher in this case used ‘Kikuyu’, ‘Kiswahili’ and English languages to communicate effectively and in field note taking.

Research Participants

Spradley (1979) is right that although “anyone can become an informant, not everyone makes a good informants”. Bernard (1995, 166) defines good informants as

“people who you can talk to easily, who understand the information you need, and who are glad to give it to you or get it to you”. To the question “are a few informants really capable of providing adequate information about a culture?” Bernard answers by the affirmative and adds: “It depends on two things; choosing good informants and asking them things they know about”.

The participants of this study were eight members of different cultic groups and different ethnic groups in Kenya, who have their families in AIC Naivasha. Spradley argues “many ethnographers do study familiar cultures”(1979,51) even though problems may emerge, such as language differences may seem to be slight and are easily overlooked, analysis of field data becomes difficult and familiar culture scene creates problems for interviewing.

Entry Procedure

To investigate the impact of cults and sects on the spiritual growth of Christians in AIC Naivasha the researcher had to attend different worship services, visiting homes and participating in discussions and dialogues. This was possible for the researcher had access and desire of learning from them without challenging their doctrinal beliefs and practices.

Data Collection Procedure

In considering the nature of the informants, the data was collected in multiple phases; this was done intentionally to provide the relevant information. Eight family interviews were made during the field work, for about one hour and it was made weekly from January 2006 to May 2006. During all the visits to the cultic groups the researcher made it clear that he was a researcher, although they knew him this did not hinder the researcher in taking the role of a participant.

Bernard (1995, 136 ff) defines participant observation as involving “getting close to people and making them feel comfortable enough with your presence so that you can observe and record information about their lives”. In the researcher’s methodology there were some mixed feelings, for some thought that the researcher had hidden agenda with some ulterior motives while others thought he had joined the movement. In our discussions the researcher observed that many wanted to give him the reasons why they left their former churches and justifying the reason of doing so, the researcher had to strictly had stick to the rule of being a researcher. Having established relationship with his informants, one- on- one meeting, long open ended interviews were conducted for all the informants using questionnaire and taking notes. The interviews took more than one hour; and the researcher took control of the time to ensure that there was no sidetracking from the focus.

As the interviews were going on, the researcher noted that some feared their leaders as well as their fellow cultic members; especially whenever they passed by. The researcher thought they were suspicious of his visits while others could have thought the researcher was appealing to get them to go back to their former fellowships. The researcher observed that they wanted to introduce him to the group instead of the researcher introducing himself. They could perfectly speak of his research desire and the church denomination the researcher is affiliated to. The researcher also noted that some were amazed to find that he can pay them visit at their homes and attend their worship services without any biases.

The AIC Naivasha Christians whose family members belong to the cultic groups appreciated the researcher visit very much (especially) at homes. They freely shared their experiences and requested for prayers and encouragement in their spiritual

growth. In the process of sharing the researcher could hear their cry. They could ask, 'where is the church and why are they taking so long to come to our rescue'.

Ethnographic Record

The ethnographic record includes field notes, which McKinney calls "an anthropologist's most sacred possession" (2000, 81). The note taking was very helpful for the researcher, since he could go back to it and translate the actual words used by the informant. The researcher's presence may have introduced biased responses, whereas some of the informants were not able to handle questions and self-expressions for they sometimes referred the researcher to their leaders.

Treatment of Data

The data as recorded was transcribed verbatim and subjected for analysis for each informant. The draft was read so frequently to them in order to confirm what they said. In the interactions, statements full of biases were extracted and statements which had the same meaning were cancelled. The researcher formulated the meaning by understanding the meaning of each statement without altering the exact meaning as presented by the informants. From the formulated meaning seven claims were raised, which were common to all of the informant's descriptions. The researcher discarded statements that were irrelevant to the topic.

For the purpose of verification, the researcher referred each claim to the informants' original descriptions. While this was being done more information from the original informants was discovered. This enabled the researcher to re-examine the data and clusters of ideas. This showed the researcher that data claims

were not related to the other ones, as well as some few cluster of ideas contrasted with the rest.

In the researcher's conviction some experiences which were not possible to be explained logically and not possible to be accounted for were authentically in existence, especially when they claimed to be the true followers of Jesus Christ. The researcher makes brief summaries at the end of every chapter and recommendations in the concluding chapter of study.

Data Analysis Procedure

The interviews of the eight informants from different cultic groups were transcribed and significant statements were taken from these transcriptions, which became the data analysis. When the significant statements were extracted from the original transcriptions it became clear that there was need of having a separate list of verbatim quotes from cultic adherents and of their families in AIC Naivasha. These statements were put under various sections since their statement differed in their emphasis. The extraction of the significant claims from all the eight transcriptions and irrelevant claims were eliminated. From the significant claims the researcher formulated the meaning. These meanings were achieved by reading, re-reading and reflecting upon the significant claims in the original transcriptions, so as to get the meaning of the informant's claims in the original data. The researcher formulated the meaning of cluster in seven themes; the following facts emerged as common to all the informants. All the eight claimed that; (1) their mission is to preach, obey the spirit and teach the truth, (2) worship services should be organized as the spirit leads, (3) full membership comes by obeying and acceptance of their leaders, (4) Jesus is not

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This section analysis reports and interprets data collected from field work as well as data from other researchers, literature review, research design and questions aforementioned. The method of data collection for the investigation on the impact of cults and sects on the spiritual growth of Christians in AIC Naivasha was through ethnographic interviews and Participant observation method. In order to effectively gather the data, this researcher made use of written field notes, personal observations, interviews, personal conversations, and diaries. The field notes were written in ‘Kikuyu’, ‘Kiswahili’ and in English language because some were illiterate, semi-literate and literate.

Data analyses, consisted of “reviewing field notes to search for cultural symbols (usually encoded in native terms) and to search for relationship among those symbols” Spradley (1979, 94). The researcher analyzed data collected through field work by answering the four questions designed in chapter 1.

In any data analysis, the ethnographic researcher looks for research domains as the first and most important unit of analysis. Spradley writes, “The first step in a preliminary domain search is to select a sample of verbatim notes from an ethnographical interview. (Verbatim notes of what people say, collected through participant observation, may also be used). It is possible to make the search by using a single paragraph or even a few sentences or sentence fragments” (1979, 103).

In this research, as the eight different cultic adherents and from different ethnic groups were interviewed, there were common characteristics observed. All the eight claimed that: (1) their mission was to preach, obey the spirit and teach the truth, (2) worship services should be organized as the spirit leads, (3) full membership comes by obedience and acceptance of their leaders, (4) Jesus is not the only source of authority, (5) salvation is achieved by obeying the set rules, (6) to offer hope and not fear (7) to offer healing and deliverance.

Translation was necessary in the entire process in order to discover the meanings of each cultural context and understand their usage. Spradley writes, “The task of ethnographic translation is to communicate the cultural meaning you have discovered to readers who are unfamiliar with that culture or cultural sense” (1979, 205). The researcher had to translate ‘Kikuyu’ and ‘Kiswahili’ into English language as it is important that every ethnographer must develop the skill of communicating in written form.

Claims of Cultic Groups

Their Mission is to Preach the Gospel, Obey the Spirit and Teach the Truth

The cultic groups investigated claim that their mission is to preach truth of the gospel and obeying the spirit. One informant said, “I cannot do anything unless the spirit permits me, I must wait and listen attentively to hear the spirit speak, then I can start my journey, work, eat, sleep, speak or worship. If the spirit doesn’t speak I can definitely know he has refused” (Translated from interview 1 Anabii Sect).

This implies that Christians who follow these teachings are in danger of believing every kind of spirit, and by doing so, they may not discern between the Spirit of truth

and the spirit of error. In summary Christians should test spirits in the light of the scriptures, for not all spirits come from God. Some Christians in AIC Naivasha had bad experiences after a cultic leader laid hands on them, as a result they withdrew from church fellowship and from friends and their spiritual growth was badly affected. It is right say, not all spirits are clean, and some may bring confusion and divisions.

An AIC Naivasha Christian youth commenting about his mother who is a cultic confirmed this statement by saying:

The problem with my mother is that she hardly participates in family matters. I have not taken dowry to my father in law who is ailing and he is asking for it; I am deeply troubled. Whenever I tell my mother about it she tells me, 'take it easy'. I have been patiently waiting and now I feel guilty and ashamed to face my father in law. I have told my uncle about it, and have decided with or without my mother, I should go (Translated response to interview 1 AIC member).

Most cultic groups who claim that their mission is to preach the gospel, obey the spirit and teach the truth; use words such as 'mission' 'gospel' 'spirit' and 'truth' as cover terms while they mean 'drawing people to themselves and to their movement'. Some of the dangers of believing in spirits are that they destroy communication and family relationships. For example children in AIC Naivasha who have been introduced to a cult find it difficult to share with their parents, they look for help elsewhere, and in the process their spiritual growth is affected badly.

Another Jeshurun cultic informant said, the reason why the church is not experiencing signs and wonders in this twenty first century is because Christians have not been listening to what the spirit says to the church, as it was with the seven churches in the book of revelation (Translated from interview 2 Jeshurun sects).

This is a clear indication that the word 'spirit' is misused and sometimes used in their context to justify what they do. Christians in AIC Naivasha who are not gifted in performing miracles and wonders sometimes they think they are not spirit filled, this affects their spiritual growth and brings frustration. In my observation, AIC Pastors are also affected for they have to do a lot of teaching and counseling to contend against these teachings. In summary Christians who have the spirit of discernment should protect the church against false teachers, who misuse the term 'spirit' to confuse Christians.

Full Membership Comes by Obeying their Leaders and their Acceptance

All cultic groups have different emphasis; some have gone to extremes where they claim that their leaders are the true prophets from God.

A Branham pastor informant said, "What qualifies one to be a full member in our movement is by believing in the end-time message of restoration given to William Marion Branham 1909-1965" (Translated from interview 3, Branhamite sect).

Christians who believe that church membership comes through obeying faith founders may become frustrated after lacking acceptance. Christians in AIC Naivasha who had been influenced by this teaching moved from one sect to another looking for identity and spiritual nourishment and in the process their spiritual growth was badly affected.

In response to (interview 3), the Branhamite pastor's son said, "The problem with my parents is that they cannot have television or a radio in the house. When I take my children for visit, they (children) complain of being bored since there is nothing to watch or listen. They argue that William Branham taught Christians not to have these things for they corrupt the mind." (Translated response to interview 3, AIC

member).

Some cults and sects have lost good relationship with their children, grand children and other members of extended family. This happens when they turn to legalism and use dead men ideas and philosophies. The twenty first century Christians must not run away from reality but must be transformed in the mind and give total allegiance to Christ. Christians in AIC Naivasha, who tried to follow these teachings and philosophies, became frustrated after learning that those men had some serious shortcoming. Some were more frustrated when their needs were not meet, and as a result their spiritual growth was marred and never came back to church fellowship.

In summary cultic leaders are not interested in serving people but serving their own interests. Christians must not follow cultic leaders but only Jesus Christ the son of God who sets a good example.

Worship Services are Organized as the Spirit Leads

All cultic groups seem to be committed to their faith; they talk more about satisfaction and fulfillment of their spiritual needs in all their worship services. A woman informant member of International Christian preachers of God said:

Worship services should be organized as the spirit leads, God has been showing us visions and dreams, and this could not have been possible if there was interference. She gave an example of her experiences; 'Two months ago I saw a vision concerning my beautiful cat that got lost. She came home but when I tried to catch her I could not be able. She jumped from one basket to another. This was a clear indication to me that my son who died had gone to heaven and I could not bring him back. The city he was in was very beautiful, and full of God's wonders. (Translated from interview 4 ICPG sect member).

Those reaching out to cultists must show patient, especially when listening to some extra-biblical revelations. This may help them to respond biblically and

relevantly. AIC Naivasha Christians who interact with cults are impacted negatively; some end up into deserting faith, after missing promises. In summary Christian who doubt their faith face serious problems; sometimes they quit bible study and prayer fellowship and remain unsettled and as a result they become apostates.

An AIC member husband to the IPCG sect informant said:

“My wife talks about visions and dreams nearly every day after attending worship services, this is causing me headache. She tells me prophetic messages that are inconsistent and hard to comprehend, I warned her for I am not interested. I have observed that this talk arises after she attends fellowship and overnight meetings; I may ban her from attending this church, for this has brought tension in our marriage. Last week she realized that I was angry. She responded I will keep praying that God may reveal to you his mysteries. ‘I seriously need your prayers and advice’ (Translated Response to interview 4 AIC members).

This is a clear example of how cults and sects destroy marital relationship between husbands and wives. Most cultic groups have no regular program of leading worship services, sometimes meetings are scheduled whole day or over-night. In their defense they claim ‘it is God’s day to do his will. On time management no one seems to care, songs, testimonies, stories and long preaching are done without hurry.

AIC Naivasha children whose parents are in cults are denied parental care and guidance. As a result Children who are forsaken may fail to find an ideal model of a good parent and their character is badly shaped.

A Jerusalem Christian Church informant said:

I wish your church can allow the spirit to do his work, you may find miracles and wonders accompanying the believers. She said this justifying her reason of leaving the mainstream church. She continued to say; “Ever since I left my former church I have seen visions and dreams. I was terminally ill and God healed me; He talked to me in a dream and promised that he would heal me if only I obeyed and served him wholeheartedly. When I shared this with fellow Christians they perceived that I am mentally confused. I left that church for it was a barrier, as for now I am free. I like worship that is vibrant; where

inspiring songs are sung, using instruments, clapping of hands and stamping feet. I like praying freely, lifting holy hands to God and speaking in tongues, that worship is satisfying I feel in touch with God (Translated from interview 5 JCC sect member).

Cultic groups that emphasize on healing use term 'healing' wrongly; some justify the reason why they don't go to hospital or use of herbs while others simply pray. Christians must remember that Jesus is our great healer' he gave gifts to men. It is right to have faith taken into action. The sick people need encouragement and prayer so that the grace of God may be sufficient in their lives. Some AIC Children whose parents are cultic movements are deeply affected when they fall sick; they are prayed for and denied right to take medication. As a result their spiritual growth is weakened and later they hate church fellowships.

Full Membership is by Obeying God's Word and Being Accepted by the Leaders

Most cultic groups interpret that the church membership is attained through baptism, adopting Christian name, partaking communion, tithing and doing voluntarily work. They still highly regard their self proclaimed leaders for their approval.

An Anabii sect leader informant said:

Our denomination is the true church having the right doctrines and good structure; he challenged those churches that train ministers as a waste of time, since the Holy Spirit is a wonderful teacher and counselor. God has given some people gift of knowledge, wisdom and discernment to lead the church but not all are gifted to leadership; the theological training is another way of forcing people to become leaders, who later perform badly for lack of call. We have one spiritual leader who is spirit filled; as there was only one high priest in the Old Testament who carried the names of the tribes in both of his shoulders. Look to what is happening! Those who claim to be leaders are always fighting, suing others in the law courts, every time their names run through the media on leadership struggles. There is no need of having so many leaders; for they will cause fights, divisions and hatred among the members (Translated from interview 1 Anabii sect).

In summary many sect leaders do not delegate leadership responsibility, for they fear losing their position. They do not draw people to Christ but to themselves, they fight to be served not to serve. Some Christians in AIC Naivasha have a feeling that one leader is better than church councils. They end up missing home bible studies, church fellowships and prayer cell organized by church leaders; consequently their spiritual growth is affected and they remain babies in Christ.

Jesus is Not the Only Source of Authority

One of the most distorted doctrine in the bible is that of Christ; for many cults do not believe 'Jesus is God'.

A JW informant said, "God was not married, how then do you teach he was the son of God. Jesus is not God; he was a sinless human being. The doctrine of Trinity is not even in the scriptures but an additional material that is incorrect. Jesus is not God and will never become one" (Translated from interview 6 Jehovah Witness a cult member).

The doctrine of Jesus Christ should be the central focus in any discussion with Jehovah Witnesses, when this doctrine is distorted the saving work of Christ is reduced to nothing. AIC Naivasha Christians who entertain JW's thought they were true bible believers and received gladly the free literature that taught strange doctrines; as a result their spiritual growth was affected while some joined the group. Christians must be careful not to be indoctrinated, for the bible teaches 'Jesus is God'.

Salvation is Achieved by Obeying Rules

Some cultic groups follow rules and regulations, those who fail to meet the standard are forced to repent by bringing contribution as penalty for sin.

One TSDA sect informant said:

I am saved by the grace of God plus good works, without the good works it is impossible to please God. Christians must understand the bible to know how to dress modestly; men keep short hair, whereas women must cover their hair with a head scarf, put on long dress, and no chains and earrings in order to remain godly. Christians must abstain work on the Sabbath in order to please God (Translated from interview 8 Traditional Seventh Day Adventist sect member).

Although the Seventh Day Adventists have been admitted in the fellowship of evangelical churches, there are some who openly criticize worship in other denominations, claiming that Sunday worship was for a sun-god.

AIC Naivasha Christian whose neighbors and business associates are TSDA's have been negatively impacted through this teaching. All Christians must understand that salvation is not based on good works but by the grace of God through faith in Christ.

An Anabii informant said, "Christians who are truly godly do not contaminate themselves with earthly matters such as drinking and eating blood, animal stomachs, beverages, fermented porridge and the like. We must be holy because the one who called us is holy; she commented, 'our white dressing is the symbol of that holiness'. It is a mark for everyone to see we are the true children of God" (Translated from interview 1 Anabii member).

In summary Christianity is not based on dos and don'ts but it's a lifestyle that is Christ-like. Many sects emphasize on keeping laws and regulations. Christianity is a life relationship where believers are called to have close relationship with Christ. Christians in AIC Naivasha who have been influenced by the Anabii sect have retarded in their spiritual growth by becoming legalists. Some have abstained from eating meat slaughtered on Saturday's claiming it is a holy day.

They Offer Hope and not Fear

Cultic groups claim that their existence is of great importance, they are instrument of God to bring hope and not fear. Some have established charitable organization as a way of propagating their faith.

In a street children community home visitations, a mormon informant said, “we have brought food with us for it is unjust to have plenty while others are suffering’. Since all of us are aliens and strangers in this world we need to help one another. For we were sent to be a light unto the world, and to be the savior’s of men” (Translated from interview 7 Mormon cult member).

Mormonism is a cult known in another term ‘The Latter Day Saints’, since they have a distorted doctrine on Christology, they are living in error. No one has the ability to save a human soul it is only Christ. Christians therefore must remember that relationship with Jesus Christ is the only basis for spiritual growth which comes only by trusting the work of Christ on the cross. Any trust on works lead to legalism and a Christian is unable to experience healthy relationship with God.

AIC Naivasha families have been receiving Mormons support through self help projects. Christians must know that alms giving may be another way of propagating Mormonism faith, and as a result distorted teaching may follow.

To Posses Powers of Healing and Deliverance

Cultic groups claim to have powers of healing and bringing total deliverance, into the lives of suffering people, this is not true, for it is only God who can heal and deliver his people. Many Christians attend healing and miracle services to try their luck. Most preaching and teachings emphasize on planting seeds and waiting patiently for bountiful blessings. Some Christians have spent money buying oil and holy water sold in healing services to serve the purpose. Christians in AIC Naivasha

should not spend money on superstitious beliefs; they must trust God who is the true healer and deliver.

Data Analysis and Literature Review Integration

Most cultic groups in Naivasha make claims that are similar to those cited by different author as mentioned in the literature review. To those who claim that their mission is to preach, obey the spirit and teach the truth should read the scriptures which is the final authority. In the first letter of Apostle John the bible warns us to test the two kinds of spirits, in order to know whether they are from the Holy Spirit or from an evil one. The false prophets in John's day spoke under the influence of spirits alienated from God, as Christ, Paul and Peter warned the believers saying:

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world" (1Jn 4:1-4).

The understanding of the doctrine of Holy Spirit causes problems in the Mormons system, "for they (Mormons) teach that the father and the son each have physical bodies, they are unable to say the same for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is usually regarded impersonal substance of spiritual 'fluid' which is dispensed in varying degrees and to individuals" (Boa 1983, 70).

Christians should know that Apostle John does not depersonalize the Holy Spirit just because he proceeds from the father; for if that was the case, Jesus would not a person either, since he proceeded from the father (Jn 15:26). There are two names used for Jesus, Counselor and Spirit of Truth. The counselor conveys the

helping, encouraging and strengthening work of the spirit while the spirit of truth points to teaching, illuminating and reminding work of the spirit.

Christians in AIC Naivasha must understand that the Holy Spirit ministers to us both in head and heart, failure to believe this, believers spiritual growth is affected.

Worship Service Should be Organized as the Spirit Leads

Most of the cults and sects interpret the bible literally, Apostle John wrote, "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-25).

Gomes argues that:

"Even though the church is not a social club, it nevertheless should be a place where people can develop meaningful friendship; quite a few people who leave mainline churches for cults do so because the church seems to be cold and impersonal. The cults especially attract young people who feel they do not fit in the conventional church, churches should be programmatic in providing opportunities for fellowship, small groups situations, which allow for intimacy not possible in the larger church setting, can be very important in counteracting anonymity and impersonality in churches. We need to cultivate an attractive atmosphere of worship that addresses the heart and head alike" (1995, 89).

God is spirit, he is everywhere and can be worshiped anywhere at any time.

It is not where we worship that counts, but how we worship. Christians in AIC Naivasha must understand that worship will become more meaningful and relevant only when God is worshiped in Truth and in Spirit. Those who have failed to do so have wandered from one church to another, sometimes ending up into cultic groups and as a result their spiritual growth is stagnated.

Full Membership Comes by Obeying and Acceptance of their Leaders

Many cultic groups highly regard their leaders as their fathers of faith,

Counselor, defender, prophet and they too seem concerned with their members, but after a time they change from simple servants to exalted messiah.

Christians in all situations should realize that their ultimate allegiance is not to men but to Christ, who bought them with his blood. The apostle Paul taught “You were bought at a price, do not become slaves of men” (1Cor 7: 23).

Breeze argues:

It is possible that many cult organizers began as humble people who came to believe their own promotion. They soon stamped their names on everything and pushed themselves so as being utterly indispensable to the faith of their followers. They cleverly continue to promote the image of external humility while in fact spending millions to keep their names in lights before their starry-eyed followers. ‘My people need me’ is their assumption ‘and, bless them, they can have me –for a price (1984, 49).

Christians must never in any way become slave of men, but of Christ, because the Holy Spirit came to live in us, and our bodies belong to God who bought us with a high price. The death of Christ on the cross freed us from the bondage of sin and works with us in his service.

Christians in AIC Naivasha have been sending money to organizations and movements to claim for greater blessings. Some have bought protective holy water and oil, which they sprinkle on their properties, and as a result their spiritual growth is affected. This is a dangerous belief, superstitions and Christianity cannot go together therefore, christo-paganism must be rejected in the church.

Jesus is Not the Only Source of Authority

The scriptures teach that ‘Jesus is God’ in the fullest sense, in John 1:1-3 says “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”. He was with God in the beginning, proving that he is eternal.

When Holy Father Simeon Ondeto the founder of Legio Maria cult died, the report circulated among the cultic group was very confusing. Some of his adherents believed that he was the source of authority, and were waiting for a miracle to happen. He claimed to be the black messiah and would not die since he was eternal. The adherents believed that, he would rise from the dead on the third day and so they waited for a miracle.

Hildebrandt writes that:



The third day came and went but Ondeto did not resurrect. Some of the cardinals and archbishops urged people not to despair that in fact the Holy Father was going to do a greater miracle than Jesus Christ resurrecting after six days. People continued to wait, but after six days Ondeto was still dead. Now the church leaders were faced with a major problem. They had not embalmed the body and it was beginning to decay and smell badly” (2000, 44).

The leaders of Legio Maria waited for vision and dream to determine the next step, after long wait they buried the remains. This is a clear indication that what cultic groups teach their members is contrary to the biblical teachings.

AIC Naivasha Christians who follow human leaders put their spiritual life in danger for all men mortal and after that they face judgment.

Jesus Christ is Not the Son of God

Free Masons believe Jesus was not the son of God, he was nothing but more than a teacher who required allegiance only to a supreme being.

Larson writes:

Though lodges in the South tend to be more Christianized, as a matter of dogma the Bible is only one of many sacred books, and adherents of all faith are allowed to membership. By placing death curses on themselves and others, Free-Masons violate the laws of Christianity. The teaching of Christ in Matthew chapter 5:33-37, clearly forbid the

uttering of presumptive oaths that one does not have the power to perform” (Larson 1982, 210).

On the other hand the Jehovah Witnesses are the most dangerous in indoctrination and active cult in Naivasha, they approach people in pairs, carrying bags of literature; they seem very innocent and well versed to some portions of scriptures that they use proof-text to convince people they are telling the truth. They deny Jesus is God, and when they talk about Jesus, they think of a very different person than a true one known to Christians. “They believe Jesus was just a good man- in fact an example of human perfection in which people like you and me can be gods one day. They do not believe that Jesus is the only begotten son of God. They do not pray in Jesus name” (Hildebrandt 2000, 14).

Christians in AIC Naivasha have been impacted negatively by this teaching; those who read the watchtower magazines ask a lot of questions regarding God-head. To eradicate this error the AIC Naivasha church council has decided that in every convention, seminar, conference and camps, teaching on cults must be taught, failure to this many Christians will enter into the cultic prey.

Some other cultic groups like the “Rastafarians revere Haile Selassie as Christ and claim Selassie lives and rules, since no trace of his body, grave, or ashes has ever been found” (Larson 1982 397). Bob Marley was seen as a prophet some belief that his son Ziggy is his incarnation some say his father was like the Old Testament and his son is the New Testament.

On the other hand Larson writes:

Branham denied Trinity and eternal punishment, and gave accurate foretelling of future events, provided an erroneous interpretation of eve’s fall into sin, and subject to possible satanic deception by engaging in behavior that bordered on the mediumistic. He had also had inflated view of his importance, leading many of his followers to believe that he was God’s appointed Elijah, as prophesied in Malachi 4:5, for today’s so-called Laodicean age (1982, 79).

Youths in AIC Naivasha have been impacted negatively by these groups, because they are the majority and they interact a lot. Many girls have been married by non-Christians thinking that after marriage they would convert them to Christianity. After marriage some have realized how hard it is and as a result they quit church for fearing shame whereas their spiritual growth is completely ruined.

Yet in another cult Salvation in Nomiya Luo reflects the teaching that Johanna Owalo received from the Seventh Day Adventists. There is a major emphasis on the Law of Moses and on keeping the law. Salvation is not through the shed blood of Jesus Christ because he is not considered to be God or sinless, thus his death cannot atone” (Hildebrandt 2000, 40).

Christians should stick to the doctrine of Christ. Jesus was fully human and God, he took upon himself the fully humanity and lived as a man and never ceased to be the eternal God, who has always existed. Jesus is the foundation of all truth, he must be trusted and believed in for in him there is life everlasting.

Christians in AIC Naivasha who follow cultural practices and Christian believes are impacted negatively especially after death in the family Some are left suffering by their people and the church sometimes abandons them.

Christians must be well grounded in the word in order to overcome some strange cultural practices that are threatening their spiritual growth.

Salvation is Achieved by Obeying the Set Rules

The bible warns us against any philosophy of life based only on human ideas and experiences and not in Christ. The apostle Paul taught “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ” (Col 2:8-9).

Like the seventh day Adventist disciples of William Branham teach salvation by good

works as well as faith. “Any true believer who falls for their false teaching and wishes to join their fellowship will be told he must be baptized in the name of Jesus only in order to be accepted and truly saved. Branham taught that if anyone was baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit they would not go to heaven but wander in outer darkness” Hildebrandt (2000, 33).

Christians must know that the world is full of heretical teaching that credits humanity and not Christ. It is possible to live in the world where men are ruled by the ideas and philosophies of men ruling the world in the grave.

Christians in AIC Naivasha have not been taking seriously the doctrine of Christology; this can be witnessed when calamities strike, as some are left devastated.

On the other hand:

The Jehovah Witnesses are prohibited from participating in almost every celebration, Christian or secular, observed in culture, including birthdays, Christmas and Easter, New Year and all other such holidays. They are prohibited from taking blood transfusion and are taught not to allow their children to receive blood transfusions, even if considered medically necessary to save their lives. They have no regard for the cross as a symbol of the Christian faith and are taught that Christ did not die on a cross by on a simple upright stake (Bowman 1995, 13).

Some Christians in AIC Naivasha have not been donating blood to accidents victims especially when the hospital is in shortage. The teaching of Jehovah Witnesses seems to have negatively impacted on their spiritual growth of some Christians who seem not to care for the dying souls.

In another observation Christians in Naivasha do not attend Easter services as expected, some open their businesses and others rest in their homes. The researcher suggests that Easter service should be the most important Christian celebration in the Christian calendar. Easter differentiates Christianity with other religions for Christ was crucified, died and resurrected, whereas the other founders of faiths are dead.

Joseph Smith the founder of Mormonism gave:

Restrictions of food and drinks, he forbade all hot drinks, tobacco- except for treating bruises and sick cattle and alcohol- except for washing the body and taught that meat should be consumed sparingly e.g. in cold winter months or famine. The word of wisdom mentions nothing about caffeine, even though coffee and tea are rejected upon that basis. Strangely, hot chocolate a caffeinated beverage is permitted by Mormon leaders (Gorden 1995, 17).

Some Christians in AIC Naivasha have been influenced by this strange teaching, many people are against the use of tea and coffee drinks. Some have abandoned with no reason, while others have substituted with taking hot water. Christians must understand that salvation is by God's grace through faith in Christ and no good works can bring the true conversion.

To Offer Hope and Not Fear

Most of the cultic groups offer uncertain hope to their adherents as well as creating fear on those who fail to adhere their teaching. Although they claim to be offering future hope, their minds are on earth, for they are focused on material possession and power than anything else. The Apostle Paul said in Phil 3:20-21, "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body".

Breeze argues:

That we ought not to be surprised, therefore, that a nearly universal characteristic of the cults of our time is their insistence that one can never be sure of eternal life while in this world. The issue of salvation is never settled. The follower lives in constant fear that he has not done enough, given enough, prayed enough worshiped enough to be sure of salvation (1984,39).

Christians have the special privilege of being citizens of heaven, so no one should be tied to this life, or else fail to see Christ return for the second time. Those

struggling with pain physically challenged and other life difficulties have a wonderful hope in Christ's death and resurrection. This doctrine is very powerful and Christians should focus on the eternal hope in Christ.

Christians in AIC Naivasha are not worried about life to come, they are so focused on material things and neglecting the important things of life. The attendance of bible study, midweek prayers and fellowships are very low compared with church membership. This is a clear indication that cults and sects have negatively impacted on their spiritual growth for some lack desire of attending fellowships.

To Offer Healing and Deliverance

In this twenty first century there have been a lot of claims on healing and deliverance. Folifack writes "in the ordinary Christian life people undergo so many difficulties in search of healing from different churches and pastors. This basic human need for health and well being cannot be denied, but the danger of becoming a miracle seeker and never living a true life of faith is apparent" (2003, 32).

Christians must understand that when suffering God is with us in the midst of troubles. In summary a healing church is the one that fights the social evils in the society such as corruption, apostasy, idolatry and other evils governing the world and oppressing human beings and making life inhuman. Christians must understand that the true healing and deliverance is found in Christ's substitutionary death, his blood has power of overcoming all evils.

Cults and Sects in Naivasha

The researcher's findings show that Naivasha has over 52 religious groups; these include Evangelical churches, Roman Catholics, neo-Pentecostals, cults and sects as shown in Table 1. The population approximated is about half a million people according to the (NDDC report 2000). Some churches have permanent structures while majority rent halls and schools. The factors contributing to the proliferation of cults and sects are employment in the flower farms, military training schools, husbandry and poultry farming, fishing, tourist industry, center of communication and rural-urban migration.

The researcher found that Naivasha town has many ethnic groups who move with their religious beliefs and traditional practices. These cults and sects intermingle with AIC Naivasha Christians in businesses and associations, intermarriages, neighborhood-ness, employments and other social activities.

Some of the major cults in Naivasha include Jehovah Witnesses, Mormons and Legio Maria while sects are Jeshurun, Jerusalem Christian church, Anabii, Branhamites, International Christian Preachers of God, and Traditional Seventh Day Adventists. They all hold different beliefs as shown Table 2. The researcher found that Free-Masons, Rastafarians and Mungiki are cultic groups and the efforts made to interview them unsuccessful for they feared government intimidation. The research finding suggests that the intermingling of cults and sects with Christians of AIC Naivasha has impacted negatively on their spiritual growth. Therefore, Christians must be thoroughly equipped to combat the strange and dangerous teachings.

Classification of Cults and Sects in Naivasha

Table 1: Summary

	Jehovah witness	Mormons	Jerusalem Christian church	Legio Maria	Jeshurun	Anabii	Traditional seventh day Adventist	International Christian preachers of God	Branhamites
Cults /sects	Cult	Cult	Cult	Cult	Sect	Sect	Sect	Sect	Sect
Jesus Christ	Not God	Not God	Not God	Not God	Son of God	Son of God	Son of God	Son of God	Son of God Jesus only
Holy spirit	Not God	Not God	Not God but his spirit	Not God but his spirit	Spirit of God	Spirit of God	Spirit of God	Spirit of God	Spirit of God
Salvation	By good works	By good works	By good works	By good works	By acts and grace	By acts and grace	By acts and grace	By works and grace	By works and grace
Church	Claim to be the true church	Claim to be the true church	Claim to be the true church	Claim to be the true church	Claim to be the true church	Claim to be the new Israel	Claim to be the new Israel	Claim to be the true church of Christ	Claim to be the true church
Sin	By acts	By acts	By acts	By acts	By acts	By acts	By acts	By acts and nature	By acts
Future events	Live on earth	Three heavens	Spirit world	Spirit world	Death and judgment	Death and judgment	Death and judgment based on works	Death and judgment	Death and resurrection
Authority	Watchtower bible and governing body	Book of Mormon and Sun Myung Moon	Bible and self proclaimed prophetess	Bible, traditions and self proclaimed leaders	Bible, visions and dreams	Bible old testament, self proclaimed leaders	Bible old testament emphasis	Bible and self proclaimed leader	Bible and William Marion Branham

Comparison of Cults and Sects Beliefs

The research findings show that cults and sects have distorted the major doctrines in the evangelical orthodox; as a result there is a negative impact on the spiritual growth of Christians of AIC Naivasha.

Table 2: Summary

	Cults	Sects	AIC Naivasha is a Bible Believing Church
Major Bible Doctrines			
Jesus Christ	Jesus Christ is not God he was a human being	Jesus Christ is the son of God, although their emphasis is on their leaders	Jesus Christ is God fully man and fully God John 1:1 Jesus is God he was there in the beginning
Holy spirit	Holy Spirit is not God but a force	Holy Spirit is from God and is his spirit	He is God, in the God-head Acts 2:4 personhood of Holy Spirit. He is God
Salvation	Salvation is by good works	Good works and by grace	By grace of God through faith in Christ Eph 2:8-9 saved by grace not by good works
Church	Claim to be the only true church	Claim to be the true church	All born again believers in Christ are the body of Christ Eph 4:4-7 the oneness of all believers in Christ
Sin	Sinner by nature	Sin is a result of acts and can be removed by performing rituals and accepting Christ	Sinners by nature the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses all sins Rom 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God
Future events	Uncertain about eternal hope	There is life after death, their leaders have to give the assurance	Eternal hope is in Jesus Christ the son of God 1Thess 4:13-14 there is life and death for all those in Christ

The researcher's findings show that cults and sects have distorted the major doctrines in the evangelical orthodox.

As Kuligin writes:

Whereas often we find ourselves concentrating on the 'classic' cults. Cults such as the Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons, neither of these compared to the New Apostolic Church (NAC) terms of membership number influence in the continent. In the next decade, the membership of the NAC will approach to ten million Africans. Teaching concerning this cult should play a more prominent role in the education of evangelical church leaders and pastors, and subsequently of evangelical believers continent-wide (2005, 79).

The pastors and Christian educator in AIC Naivasha should take this challenge seriously and teach their members who are surrounded by cultic groups that hamper the spiritual growth of Christians.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Cults and sects are said to be the un-paid bills of the church ;(Baalen 1938, 390). AIC Naivasha and other Evangelical Churches must encourage biblical teaching of the scriptures such as Trinity, Christology, Pneumatology, Soteriology, and Eschatology, which are the major distorted doctrines. This will enable Christians to be able to detect for themselves cults and sects that impact negatively on their spiritual growth.

AIC Naivasha should ensure that they offer quality worship to God, and since God is Spirit, his worshippers must worship him in Truth and in Spirit (Jn 4:24). Most cults and sects challenge worship claiming it is boring, unsatisfying and un-fulfilling; that's why they opt to move elsewhere to look for satisfaction. The church should have vibrant worship, accompanied with musical instruments, trained music leaders and composed songs that are biblically and theologically sound.

Response of the Church

The AIC Naivasha and the rest of Evangelical churches should teach the biblical truths and doctrines comprehensively and extensively. For example “Un-informed Christians are easy prey for the Jehovah Witnesses, who know how to proof texts for all of their doctrines. Christians should spend more time in systematic bible study so that they may know how to biblically support true doctrines” Boa (1983, 79).

The church should demonstrate practical Christian living and should live what they preach and teach in order to make faith relevant.

- The church should be actively involved in Bible study, prayer fellowship, bible training, conferences, conventions and seminars. “Christians must realize while the opportunity is yet ours that the teaching of sound doctrine does not predicate a dead Orthodoxy” (Martin 1965, 352).
- The unity of the evangelical churches should be emphasized. All denominations whether Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox or Protestants agree on the essential core. “The relatively minor disagreements between genuinely Christian denominations, then, can not be used to argue that there is no objectively recognized core of fundamental doctrine which constitutes the Christian faith” (Gomes 1995, 11).
- The church should focus more on women, youth and children programs who are greatly enticed by the cultic movement. It seems that cultic groups recruit their most of their followers from the orthodox churches; the faith of the venerable should be strengthened to contend against faiths. The church should do extensive and exhaustive studies on cults to enable the Christians identify these movements, in order to protect their families and to learn how to win them back from the cultic movement.

AIC Naivasha should put more emphasis on catechism and discipleship trainings, where the participants are taught how to use the bible as a tool to contend against false teaching. Christians must be taught the basic doctrines and church history. Some of the teachings may include Lord’s Prayer, Ten Commandments, the apostle’s creed and believer’s covenant. Since cults and sects in Naivasha have no

theological trainings, AIC Naivasha should take the advantage of training ministers in theological colleges.

AIC Naivasha should stick closely to its mission of evangelizing and edifying the body of Christ. The local church should ensure that there is existence of children Sunday school, battalion for boys, cadets for girls, fellowships for youths, and for men and women. One informant said “the work of evangelism has been left entirely to the youths; I wish the whole church can participate in this Great Commission”. The church should keep on reminding herself of its vision and mission here on earth, since the Christian mission has always been to have a personal salvation in Christ and to have social responsibility in the community.

AIC Naivasha Christian should never fear confronting cultic groups with the gospel; sometimes they take advantage when they find ignorant Christians. The church should continue having regular teachings on various cults, counseling services for families and holistic ministry to meet other essential needs.

Further Suggestions

Since each cult and sect has its own distinctive characteristic, there is a general biblical principle which Christians have to use in evangelism.

1. Christians witnessing to cults and sects must have a close relationship with Jesus Christ; for the bible teaches; “But sanctify Christ as lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to every one who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence” (1 Pet 3:15).
2. Christians must remember reaching out to cults and sects is not an academic exercise but a spiritual battle; they must always remember that for our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly

realms (Eph 6:12).

3. Christians must use the bible as their source of authority to defend the truth, authenticity and the truth of the biblical doctrines. For every Christian must know how to use the scriptures with exhaustive understanding. One should not hesitate to share the teaching about God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, sin, salvation, death and resurrection, and things to come. All believers must have confidence that God can use each individual to reach out to cults and sects.

4. Christians must be patient and avoid arguments; for cults and sects may offend someone in order to loose the track. One must avoid arguments for it is easier to win an argument and loose a soul, therefore it is better to loose an argument than loosing a soul.

5. Christians must understand the context of the cultic adherents'; in order to have a wide knowledge on their beliefs. It is difficulty to reach out to cults when one has no basic understanding of their beliefs.

6. Christians must never allow the cultist to use the bible as a proof text to support their doctrines. Every verse must be interpreted in context, and reading of the scriptures should be done loudly and clearly for it speaks for itself.

7. Christians must ensure that they use terms that are clear for they may mean something else to the cultic adherents; for example a Jehovah witness will agree that Jesus was a son of God, while they mean he was not God but a 'god'.

8. Christians witnessing to cultic groups must spend enough time in prayer and in conversation; one should rely upon the power of the Holy Spirit for conviction.

Christians must be cautioned that lack of proper preparation can lead one to be swayed away from the truth.

9. Christians must know how to explain the finished work of Christ on the cross, since this is the central theme where our power comes from.

10. The members of evangelical churches who wish to stand firm in faith must spend good deal of time in systematic bible study and sending students to theological training for further studies.

Summary

The impact of cults and sects on the spiritual growth of Christians is a very important topic, relevant to the African culture where hundreds of mushrooming religious groups are increasingly proliferating. The evangelical churches should take this challenge of sending ministers into theological colleges in order to be fully equipped.

It is clear from the findings that cults and sects are out to make money and gain of power. In every service emphasis on 'planting seeds' which meant giving, bringing the first fruits, blessing the servant of God, protection against diseases and calamities are often repeated. To safeguard the flock of God, the ministers must feed, care, lead and protect the flock from cultic groups that are exploiting them physically, spiritually and materially.

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Interview 2: AIC Members

Participant 1. Interviewed By The Author, 23rd March 2006, Naivasha.

Participant 2. Interviewed By The Author, 26th March 2006, Naivasha.

Participant 3. Interviewed By The Author, 11th March 2006, Naivasha.

Participant 4. Interviewed By The Author, 10th April 2006, Naivasha.

Participant 5. Interviewed By The Author, 13th April, 2006, Naivasha.

Participant 6. Interviewed By The Author, 17th April 2006, Naivasha.

Participant 7. Interviewed By The Author, 9th April 2006, Naivasha.

Participant 8. Interviewed By The Author, 26th March 2006, Naivasha.

Research Questions for Cult Members / Leaders

Dear friend,

The purpose of this research is to describe the impact of cults and sects that impact the spiritual growth of Christians in AIC Naivasha. The researcher hopes that the findings of the study will greatly help the Christian families and the Naivasha District Church to identify these cultic groups.

You are kindly requested to answer the following questions as fully as possible and to the best of your knowledge in the space provided below.

NAME-----

MARITAL STATUS-----

AGE-----

POSITION IN THE CHURCH -----

OCCUPATION -----

1. What do you understand to be the mission of your movement? -----

2. How do you organize your worship service? -----

3. How do you feel worship in your movement today? -----

4. How does one qualify to become a full member? -----

5. What are the rules that govern your movement? -----

6. Who are the leaders of your movement? -----

7. What are the challenges that your movement faces today? -----

8. What do you believe to be the source of your authority? -----

General remarks -----

Signature -----

Date-----

Research Questions for AIC Members

Dear friend,

The purpose of this research is to describe the impact of cults and sects that impact the spiritual growth of Christians in AIC Naivasha. The researcher hopes that the findings of the study will greatly help Christian families and the Naivasha District Church to identify these cultic groups.

You are kindly requested to answer the following questions as fully as possible and to the best of your knowledge in the space provided below.

NAME-----

MARITAL STATUS-----

AGE-----

POSITION IN THE CHURCH -----

OCCUPATION -----

1. What do you understand to be the mission of cults and sects today? -----

Name some of the cults and sects in your area -----

2. What qualifies one to be a cultic member? -----

3. According to your own view what is your attitude toward the cultic movement? ----

4. What are the main characteristics of cults and sects? -----

5. What do you think are the ways of reaching and converting cultic groups? -----

6. What impact do you think cultic movement has on Christians in AIC Naivasha? ----

7. How do you view worship in the cultic groups compared to that of AIC Naivasha? -

8. How do cults and sects benefit Christians in AIC Naivasha? -----

General remarks -----

Signature -----

Date-----

CURRICULUM VITAE

Personal and Family History:

Name: John Mbugua Kariuki

Date of Birth: June 6th 1964

Place of Birth: Kiambu, Kenya

Marital Status: Married

Name of Spouse: Ruth Wanjiku Mbugua

Number of Children: Three

Names: James Kariuki Mbugua

Simon Gitonga Mbugua

Joy Wanjiru Mbugua

Education History:

1971-1978 Maiella Primary School

1979-1982 Naivasha Mixed Secondary School

1984-1988 Moffat College Of Bible Kijabe Kenya

2001-2003 Kenya Methodist University Meru

Work Experience:

1988 – 1995 Assistant Pastor AIC Naivasha

1996-1998 Youth Pastor Naivasha Districts

1999-2001 Senior Pastor AIC Naivasha

Currently a Student at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology
Awaiting Graduation on July 2006.