

AFRICA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAMS IN URBAN AREAS
TO THE YOUTH: A CASE STUDY OF SELECT CHRIST IS THE
ANSWER MINISTRIES (CITAM) CHURCHES IN KENYA

BY

RAYMOND MUSYOKA JUMA

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Approved:

Primary Supervisor:

Dr. Klaus-Peter Derungs

Associate Supervisor:

Dr. Henry Mutua

External Examiner:

Prof David Ngaruiya

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ABSTRACT

Discipleship is a common topic of discussion in African churches. Notable researchers have written on this topic while focusing on what discipleship is or is not. This study investigated the efficacy of youth discipleship programs carried out in an evangelical church in Nairobi. This is a case study of Christ is The Answer Ministry's (CITAM) discipleship program called Safari. The researcher interacted with young CITAM members, church leaders, and youth pastors to find out how the program had impacted the youths. Data from select CITAM churches (Woodley, Valley Road, and Buruburu) were generated and analyzed. Five years after the launch of the Safari program and with the investment of significant resources, the researcher wanted to determine how much, and in what ways, the program impacted the church community. Data was empirically generated through in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and participant observation. The research findings demonstrate that on paper, the Safari is an exceptional program to produce Christians with divine priorities. There was, however, a disparity between what is the theoretical intention and what was happening on the ground. Parents and guardians were emphasizing education, career, and creation of wealth. While a level of spiritual and behavioral transformation was evident, the study established that more work is needed to ensure Safari is relevant to the needs of young people. Furthermore, the study finds that parents put more pressure on youths to excel in academics than Christian growth. In other words, academic success is rated higher than Christian commitment. Pastors and other disciples-makers had limited time with youths because of other competing activities in schools and colleges.

Keywords

Safari, discipleship, effectiveness, transformation, urban, youth