

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

*An Assessment of Perceptions and Attitudes of Christians
Towards Cremations and how These Attitudes and
Perceptions Affect Missiological Education*

BY
GRACE ITEGI

*A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Christian Education*

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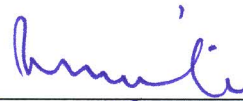
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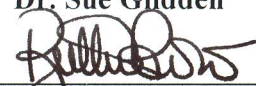
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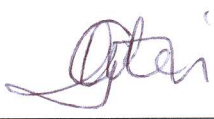
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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

**AN ASSESSMENT OF CHRISTIANS' PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES
TOWARDS CREMATION AND HOW THESE PERCEPTIONS AND
ATTITUDES CHALLENGE MISSIOLOGICAL EDUCATION**

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 Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners

(Signed) 

Grace Itegi

July, 2007

ABSTRACT

The research study focused on cremation of the dead and the attitudes and perception of Christians towards it. Cremation is quite a rare practice among Kenyan Christians who view it cautiously and with apprehension.

The study sought to establish the perceptions and attitudes of Christians with regard to cremation as well as to determine their knowledge concerning the subject. It was also the researcher's intention to find out how the doctrine of resurrection relates to cremation and some of the theological views that arise from the topic. The role of Christian education in the matters of cremation was also pointed out. The researcher also focused on how these perceptions and attitudes affect missiological education. It also aimed at enlightening Christians on cremation matters so that they in return are helped in making informed decisions. In addition, the study looked at the cultural beliefs and values that are held by Christians and how these values affect their view about cremation.

The study population included congregation members of the Anglican Church of Kenya, Nairobi Baptist church, Pentecostal churches and other mainline churches in Nairobi as well as pastors from the same churches.

The researcher used two questionnaires to collect quantitative data from the sampled churches. One tool targeted congregation members while the other collected data from pastors. A total of 359 members and 54 pastors participated. An interview guide for the individual in-depth interviews was formulated and administered. The researcher held two focus group discussions one with church workers and the other with a few friends. The researcher also interviewed two people who had cremated their loved ones.

The researcher hypothesised that there is a relationship between respondents' attitudes toward cremation and their willingness to cremate a loved one. The study also endeavoured to contribute towards highlighting and creating awareness within the Christian fraternity in Kenya so as make informed decisions in matters pertaining to cremation practice.

The results indicated that respondents strongly felt that cremation does not hinder the doctrine of resurrection. It was found that knowledge about cremation was lacking in the churches. The members are in need of church teachings about cremation. The results point out how Christians' perceptions and attitudes affect missiological education especially due to the discontentment when some Christians opt for cremation while others are opposed to it.

To

My husband who tirelessly walked with me through difficult times of research, to all pastors, evangelists, scholars and Christians who are interested in obtaining more insights in the subject of cremation.

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I am grateful to two church members who shared their first hand experiences having previously cremated a loved one.

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To God be the glory and honour.

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