



An Identification of Key Factors Leading to the Dissatisfaction Amongst Pastors in Ministry: A Case of the East Central Rwanda Field – Rwanda

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify the factors that contribute to pastors' dissatisfaction in the East Central Rwanda Field of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The survey was conducted on 50 pastors from the region using a questionnaire. The gathered data was analyzed using the Chi-square test of independence. The test results revealed that there is a significant association between calls and satisfaction, with a p-value of 0.02829. Moreover, the pastor's transfer and promotion in ministry were found to greatly affect their satisfaction level. The study discovered that 28% of the respondents were uncomfortable with a transfer, and 26% were shocked when the transfer was repeated every year. Furthermore, 26% of the respondents felt that the transfer was unfair because it occurred without prior consultation with the pastor. The results also revealed that 38% of the respondents believe that promotion brings jealousy while 20% accused the administration of partiality. The study concluded that transfers and promotions are common occurrences in pastoral ministry. However, when they are associated with the wrong motives behind the calling, they can harm the pastor's life and ministry. Based on the findings, a discipleship approach through mentoring is recommended to help prevent the factors that lead to pastors' dissatisfaction. This study makes two important contributions. First, it highlights the need for church administration to carefully assess the motives behind an individual's call during the recruitment process. Secondly, it emphasizes the importance of setting up a discipleship approach through continual mentoring to help pastors grow spiritually and successfully perform their duties.

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INTRODUCTION

Pastors have been distracted from their primary duty of equipping the saints for ministry. The survey has shown that the majority of pastors have been trained in the school of Theology. However, they know less about their spiritual maturity. As soon as they get into ministry, they are left on their own. Most of the pastors have no clue about spiritual mentoring. The focus of ministry has shifted from continual growth to personal interests for pastors. In the past decade, some of the pastors in the East Central Rwanda Field have left their ministry for various reasons. The researcher has identified three major reasons for their departure. Three pastors were dismissed from their duties due to embezzlement, while two others resigned due to immorality. Lastly, two pastors were fired because they were teaching

heresies, and they even took the church to court after their dismissal. These ethical misconducts have damaged the trust of believers in their pastors. Furthermore, some pastors have expressed discomfort when transferred from one place to another, especially when moving from the city to rural areas. It has also become almost a tradition that pastors experience anxiety during the period of election of leaders. This led to a study on the pastor's call and how he stays on the spiritual journey through commitment and faith-sharing.

It depends on the pastor's turning point in ministry and how his ministry demonstrates these three aspects throughout his journey. Boice states that there is a fatal defect in the life of Christ's church in the twentieth century: a lack of true spiritual growth.¹ Michael describes that Christian growth begins and ends with the call of the living Christ.² Dunn affirms it is true that the call to spiritual transformation in the early churches was a call to faith in the risen Christ, rather than simply a repeating of the message of Jesus.³ The Christian life is a journey that starts with a divine call. God is the initiator of the discipleship journey of every believer. Luther describes the Christian journey as an alternating rhythm of divine call and human response.⁴ The right starting point for a spiritual journey should always be encountering Jesus; otherwise, things may go wrong. In this case study, there are two aspects to this concept. First, there is a call to Christianity. Although everyone has a turning point that led to accepting Christ, it is a common experience for all believers. For a Pastor, the second call is that one to the ministry. However, these two calls should not cancel each other out but rather complement each other.

Effective ministry work for a Pastor includes a continual call to both Christianity and ministry. The call to pastoral ministry is continuous. The Scriptures use the word *calling* to refer to the conversion to Christ (Rom 1:7, 1 Cor 1:2). Here, the apostle Paul is calling Romans and Corinthians to salvation. Scriptures also use the term *calling* to refer to serving (Mk 1:17). This was a call to abandon regular routines of life and actively dedicate oneself to His service. Bivens described the call to serve as a public minister as an invitation or assignment to serve the church by carrying out tasks (ministry) the Lord gave to the church.⁵ Deutschlander affirms that the public pastors and teachers of the church have their particular ministry entrusted to them by a call.⁶ To every call, there must be a corresponding commitment, a decision, or a choice.

The commitment in this case is closely related to the motivation for entering the pastoral ministry. The study found that only 24% of the surveyed pastors confirmed their calling was genuine, while more than 50% were either job seekers or money-makers. Hopman argues that Peter's denial of Christ that very night illustrates the struggle many face when called to ministry.⁷ They pretend to dedicate themselves to the Lord but end up contradicting their decision. The fact is that 80% of pastors hold negative views towards the transfer and promotion of pastors. Chris stated that following Jesus requires a level of allegiance that even surpasses our loyalty to our own family.⁸ The pastor's decision to devote himself to the ministry, regardless of the reason, holds great significance. He has the option to actively serve, which is a positive response to the ongoing request, or he may become discouraged because he did not gain what he was expecting. This is a result of starting the journey from the wrong point. Out of the 50 pastors included in the study, 26% expressed dissatisfaction with their position.

¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Christ's Call to Discipleship* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 13.

² Michael Mawson, "Suffering Christ's Call: Discipleship and the Cross," *The Bonhoeffer Legacy: Australasian Journal of Bonhoeffer Studies*, 2016, https://aura.abdn.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/2164/10528/Suffering_Christ_27s_Call_5bwith_intro_5d.pdf?sequence=1.

³ James, D. G. Dunn, *Jesus' Call to Discipleship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 27.

⁴ Ivory D. Luther, *The Rhythm of Discipleship* (Louisville, K. E.: Geneva Press, 2008), 16.

⁵ Forrest L. Bivens, "The Doctrine of the Call and Ministry," *Essay Prepared for the Metropolitan South Pastoral Conference Southeastern Wisconsin District (WELS)*, February 1, 1994, <http://essays.wisluthsem.org:8080/bitstream/handle/123456789/519/BivensDoctrine.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

⁶ Daniel M. Deutschlander, "The Theology of Call and Ministry" (Northwestern College, 1993), [http://essays.wisluthsem.org:8080/bitstream/handle/123456789/4438/The Theology of the Call and Ministry-Deutschlander.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](http://essays.wisluthsem.org:8080/bitstream/handle/123456789/4438/The%20Theology%20of%20the%20Call%20and%20Ministry-Deutschlander.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

⁷ Nicholas Hopman. "Discipleship," *ValpoScholar*, 2015, 52. Accessed 25 March 2024, https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=nicholas+hopman+and+discipleship&btnG=.

⁸ J. Christ, "Jesus Teaches about the Cost of Discipleship," Life Way Christian Resources, 2020, https://thewoodlandsfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/tgp_sum20_adults_ddg_u23s2_csb.pdf.

There is a reason to doubt their commitment. Bell stated that improving discipleship commitment and assimilating people into the life and ministry of the church are crucial areas.⁹ Regardless of what prompted the pastor to pursue ministry, he must maintain a high standard of conduct in his daily life.

Ghazaryan argues that for the world to be transformed by them, the disciples of Christ must first transform themselves.¹⁰ In this case, the term commitment refers to both the decision to remain an effective disciple and the decision to remain an effective pastor. They must accept themselves as human and respond to their pastoral work. The pastor should take this turning point as a reminder to continue on the discipleship journey. Failure to remain steadfast in one area will inevitably impact the other, causing the pastor to veer off course. Despite the numerous setbacks and insincere appeals, the pastors of ECRF remain steadfast in their mission to spread the gospel. Faith-sharing through preaching the Gospel is widely regarded as the most vital aspect of ministry since it yields tangible results.

According to Armstrong, faith-sharing is a three-way communication where individuals share personal experiences of God.¹¹ Faith-sharing is the act of communicating the good news with others in any possible way. This communication needs to be consistent to benefit both sides. Nel introduced the concept of faith-sharing as a sustainable tool for Christian growth. According to Nel, discipleship is a learning process that involves following the one who calls us to join him on a journey.¹² This journey teaches us how to live a life of righteousness in the Kingdom. de Waal et al. stated that all members are called to grow in him through Christian maturity.¹³ For this study, the researcher aims to prove how the dissatisfaction of the pastor would eventually impact the spiritual condition of the congregation. The main objective of this study is to identify the primary reasons for dissatisfaction among pastors in their ministry. Additionally, the study aims to examine different factors that contribute to pastors leaving their ministry, such as their calling, commitment, transfer, promotion, and faith-sharing. The data collected will be used to explore how discipleship can help overcome obstacles in ministry caused by these factors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Robinson believes that mentorship and spiritual maturity are synonymous when a Christian takes on the responsibility of influencing someone else's life intentionally.¹⁴ In this case, a more experienced pastor mentors a new pastor for both his life and his ministry. Faith-sharing is integral to ministry. A pastor's commitment to spiritual formation is vital to its success. Pue recognizes that during the season when Christians are unaware, several points of attack must be fortified against.¹⁵ Each person acknowledges that they need those in their lives who can help keep them aware of where they are at and who they are as children of Jesus.

Brosius argues that only God, and not human programs or spiritual growth strategies, can bring about real change in human lives.¹⁶ According to Buzzanell, spiritual maturity can take on the forms of friendship, teaching, advising, and co-learning in the mentor-mentee relationship.¹⁷

⁹ Antony L. Bell, "Increasing Discipleship Commitment and Assimilating People into the Life and Ministry of the Church Are Some of the Most Significant Areas in Need of Improvement" (Asbury Theological Seminary, 2007), <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1785&context=ecommonsatsdissertations>.

¹⁰ Ani Ghazaryan Drissi, "What Is Transforming Discipleship?," *The Ecumenical Review* 71, no. 1–2 (2019): 216–24, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/erev.12421>.

¹¹ R. S. Armstrong, *Faith Witnesses: Leader's Guide* (Philadelphia, PA: The Geneva Press, 1987).

¹² Malan Nel and W J Kobus Schoeman, "Rediscovering 'Disciplemaking' and the Role of Faith-Sharing," *HTS Theologesic Studies/Theological Studies* 75, no. 4 (2019), <https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.4102/hts.v73i4.4583>.

¹³ Kevin Petrie et al., "Developing A Discipleship Measurement Tool," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 12, no. 2 (2016): 86–104, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1337&context=jams>.

¹⁴ Natasha Sistrunk Robinson, *Mentor for Life: Finding Purpose through Intentional Discipleship* (Grand Rapids Michigan: Zondervan, 2016).

¹⁵ Carson Pue, *Mentoring Leaders: Wisdom for Developing Character, Calling, and Competency* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005).

¹⁶ Kevin Michael Brosius, "Culture and the Church's Discipleship Strategy," *Journal of Ministry & Theology* 21, no. 1 (2017): 123–57, <https://www.clarkssummitu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Brosius-Culture-and-the-Church-1.pdf>.

¹⁷ Patrice M. Buzzanell, "Spiritual Mentoring: Embracing the Mentor-mentee Relational Process," *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 2009, no. 120 (December 4, 2009): 17–24, <https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.373>.

Randy stated that having a spiritual mentor is a great way to advance in spiritual development.¹⁸ Spiritual maturity is an ongoing process that goes hand in hand with the pastor's performance. Therefore, it requires intentional communication, willingness, and openness in the ministry. According to Setyawati et al., promoting employees can motivate them to improve their performance, resulting in increased job security within the organization.¹⁹ The other way around may result in dissatisfaction. Antoine has found the gap between faith and practice in the religious environment of Rwanda. He observed poor spiritual transformation among clergy during the 1994 genocide against Tutsis in Rwanda, even involving pastors.²⁰

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed an exploratory approach to identify significant aspects of pastoral ministry. This includes pastors' calling, commitment, promotion, transfer, and faith-sharing through data analysis. Additionally, the researcher sought to determine whether there is a relationship between a pastor's reason for joining the ministry and their satisfaction with their work. Since the two variables (calling and satisfaction in ministry) are both categorical variables, the research performed the test of independence to analyze the relationship. Finally, it used the Chi-square statistic to test the independence between the two variables. This association analysis was performed using the R language.

To perform the Chi-square test, the researcher formulated the null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis as follows:

H₀: Satisfaction in ministry and the reason for joining the ministry are independent.

H₁: Satisfaction in the ministry and the reason for joining the ministry are dependent.

Calculation of test statistic and p-value

The value of the Chi-square test statistic is given by the following formula²¹

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^k \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

Where k represents the number of categories, O_i represents the observed counts of the i^{th} category, and E_i represents the expected count of the i^{th} category.

Population and Sampling

A case study was carried out in the East Central Rwanda Field (ECRF) to investigate the dissatisfaction of pastors with their ministry. All 50 church pastors in the ECRF were considered for the study, and none of them were excluded. The selection was based on their availability and accessibility.

Instrumentation

The study involved a self-constructed questionnaire with seven questions, each containing four

¹⁸ Keith R. Anderson and Randy D. Reese, *Spiritual Mentoring: A Guide for Seeking Giving Direction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999).

¹⁹ Novita Wahyu Setyawati, Dewi Sri Woelandari PG, and Muhammad Richo Rianto, "Career Development, Motivation and Promotion on Employee Performance," *East Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 1, no. 9 (2022): 1957–70, <https://journal.formosapublisher.org/index.php/eajmr/article/view/1453/1308>.

²⁰ Antoine Rutayisire, "Designing a Model of Leadership Development for Missional Pastors in the Anglican Church of Rwanda" (Fuller Theological Seminary, 2015), <https://www.proquest.com/openview/3a0373155db1439c80674b6603f64418/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750>.

²¹ David S. Moore and Stephane Kirkland, *The Basic Practice of Statistics*, vol. 2 (New York: WH Freeman, 2007).

Data Analysis

Data from the questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive analysis of frequencies from the data recorded in an Excel sheet. Also, a Chi-square test was used to analyze the association between satisfaction and call.

Ethical Considerations

At the beginning of the study, the respondents were provided with a consent form to review and sign before any other activity was conducted. The participants were given the choice to participate or decline. The confidentiality and integrity of the data were upheld throughout the study. The researchers took steps to avoid any form of data fabrication or plagiarism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographics

The study divided the respondents into four age groups: 30-40 (12%), 41-50 (23%), 51-60 (36%), and 61+ (6%). Educational levels were also analyzed in the study, with the following results: primary (6%), secondary (4%), undergraduate (84%), and graduate (6%). It is worth noting that those who have obtained an undergraduate degree in Theology tend to have higher education scores. This is directly linked to the fact that 80% of those who aspire for promotion experience jealousy towards colleagues who have been promoted or lack confidence in the church administration's promotion process.

Exploration analysis

The section below presents the results of the exploration analysis and the results of the association analysis.

Table 1: The exploration analysis of results

	QUESTIONS	%
1	How did you come into ministry (Call)?	
	a. Seeking for job.	14%
	b. Looking for money.	44%
	c. Pushed by a relative.	18%
	d. I prayed for and got a call.	24%
2	How do you consider the transfer of pastors? (call)	
	a. I am discouraged when I am transferred.	28%
	b. I was even shocked when the transfer was repeated in less than two years.	26%
	c. I consider it an injustice to move a pastor without prior consultation with him.	26%
	d. I am convinced transfer is part of the pastor's call.	20%
3	What do you think about vertical promotion (Satisfaction)?	
	a. I long for it very much.	22%
	b. I feel jealous when a colleague is promoted.	38%
	c. I think the administration is partial in this business.	20%
	d. I believe it is part of ministry life.	20%
4	What is your attitude towards the ministry now (Satisfaction)?	
	a. I feel satisfied in my current position.	24%
	b. I am not satisfied with my position.	26%

	c. Pastors are not well paid.	34%
	d. I do not trust the way things are run in the church administration.	16%
5	What would be your response if you were to quit the ministry before retirement? (call)	
	a. To ask for separation benefits.	16%
	b. To take the church to court for justice to be.	14%
	c. To wait upon retirement benefits.	44%
	d. To look for a better job peacefully.	26%
6	How do you evaluate yourself and your faith-sharing (communication)?	
	a. I feel comfortable to share the gospel.	32%
	b. I am gifted to bring people to Christ.	28%
	c. I don't have the gift to preach the Word.	10%
	d. I find it easy to speak anytime.	30%

Call: According to the data, only 24% of individuals joined the ministry as a vocation while the remaining 76% joined for other reasons. This presents a challenge as their motivations for joining may not align with their true calling. As a result, the majority of pastors may not feel fully satisfied. Michael states that Christian discipleship begins and ends with the call of the living Christ.²² Dunn confirms that the call to Christian transformation in early churches was a call to faith in the risen Christ, rather than simply repeating the message of Jesus.²³

Faith-sharing: It was found that out of the respondents, 32% were comfortable with sharing the gospel, 28% acknowledged that they had a talent for sharing, 30% found it easy to speak about the Word, and only 10% of them admitted that they did not have the gift to share the good news. However, this poses a danger in ministry, where pastors limit themselves in communicating the good news without considering the consistency of their calling and commitment. Antoine discovered a disconnect between faith and practice in Rwanda's religious setting.²⁴ Bell stated that improving discipleship commitment and assimilating people into the life and ministry of the church are crucial areas.²⁵

Association Analysis Between Satisfaction and Call

The association analysis was conducted using the Chi-square test, and the resulting p-value is 0.02829. In this study, the goal was to analyze the association between satisfaction and call. Since both variables are categorical, the study utilized the Chi-square test, which is a method for testing the independence of categorical variables. Therefore, the study involved testing a hypothesis where the null hypothesis (H_0) assumes that satisfaction and calls are independent, while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) assumes that they are dependent. The decision and interpretation of the Chi-square test are based on the test's output, specifically, the p-value, which represents the probability of obtaining the sampled results assuming independence of the row and column variables in the cross table. In this case, the test yielded a p-value of 0.02829, indicating a relationship between calls and satisfaction. Consequently, the null hypothesis, which assumes independence, was rejected. This suggests that there is a relationship between the reason behind individuals joining the ministry and their level of satisfaction in the ministry. Moreover, the contingency table highlights that 67% of those who were satisfied with their ministry experience prayed and received a call, while 17% joined the ministry seeking employment, 8% joined to earn money, and 8% were pushed into it. Conversely, 85% of those who were dissatisfied

²² Mawson, "Suffering Christ's Call: Discipleship and the Cross," 5.

²³ Dunn, *Jesus' Call to Discipleship*.

²⁴ Rutayisire, "Designing a Model of Leadership Development for Missional Pastors in the Anglican Church of Rwanda."

²⁵ Ghazaryan Drissi, "What Is Transforming Discipleship?"

joined the ministry to make money, were pushed into it, or to seek employment. These findings indicate a strong association between the reason for joining the ministry and job satisfaction.

Transfer vs Satisfaction

It was found that only 20% of people believe that transferring pastors from one church to another is part of their calling. On the other hand, 28% of respondents felt uncomfortable with the idea of a transfer, while 26% were shocked and 26% thought it was unfair to move a pastor without consulting them. This suggests that regardless of a pastor's intentions or calling, their ministry can be negatively affected by the dissatisfaction caused by a transfer. According to Andrews, missionaries who see their work as an opportunity for spiritual growth tend to have a more fulfilling experience in their ministry, missionary work, and family life.²⁶ The effects of transferring a pastor may vary depending on the location's geographical and economic environment, which could lead to different levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Promotion vs Satisfaction

According to the survey results, 22% of the respondents aspired to be promoted, while 38% of the respondents felt envious when a colleague was promoted. Additionally, 20% of the respondents accused the administration of bias, which made them unsatisfied with the current situation. Only 20% of the respondents considered promotion as a part of the ministry. Setyawati et al. have mentioned that promotion motivates employees to improve their performance and creates employment stability within the organization.²⁷ Vertical promotion has a significant impact on pastoral satisfaction as it comes with various allowances and recognition. When ministers are dissatisfied, it affects not only their performance but also their spiritual growth.

Discussion Summary

The majority of pastors typically hold a bachelor's degree in Theology, which qualifies them for their profession. Regrettably, 76% of all respondents have joined the ministry for the wrong reasons. This has resulted in promotion and transfer becoming a significant challenge for many employees. However, findings have demonstrated a strong relationship between call and satisfaction in pastoral ministry. Therefore, a mentoring approach focused on spirituality was considered suitable for the spiritual growth and effectiveness of pastors in their ministry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and discussion, it is recommended that the following suggestions be given due consideration. Firstly, the recruitment process for pastors should be approached thoughtfully to avoid any potential unease in their ministry. Secondly, the administration should establish a mentoring program for pastors to alleviate any discontentment they may experience in their profession. Lastly, conducting a similar study on a larger sample size would be beneficial in advancing the research.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated the reasons behind pastors' dissatisfaction and analyzed the relationship between various factors and satisfaction. Moreover, the research aimed to determine how mentoring and discipleship can help overcome obstacles faced by pastors in their ministry due to these factors. The results indicated that a pastor's satisfaction in life, family, and ministry is closely associated with their calling, transfer, and promotion. As a pastor's spiritual life and his ministry are not immune to challenges, a constant reminder would be useful to help pastors step into ministry and grow in their spiritual journey. Whether the motive behind a pastors' call is genuine or not, they require progressive

²⁶ Leslie A Andrews, "Spiritual, Family, and Ministry Satisfaction among Missionaries," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 27, no. 2 (1999): 107–18, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/009164719902700204>.

²⁷ Setyawati, PG, and Rianto, "Career Development, Motivation and Promotion on Employee Performance."

personal and ministerial development. The discipleship approach through spiritual mentoring can play an essential role in this process.

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ABOUT AUTHOR

Gerard Karasira Nsengiyumva is a highly experienced and ordained pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Rwanda, with an impressive 30-year record of serving in various capacities. He completed the Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology from the prestigious Adventist University of Africa in 2017. His academic pursuits have continued, and he is currently engrossed in pursuing a Doctorate of Ministry from the same esteemed university. His experience ranges from serving in local churches to holding the prestigious position of executive director of the conference, which speaks to his vast knowledge and expertise. Gerard finds immense joy in preaching to congregations of all sizes, and he also has a keen interest in teaching and training pastors and lay people. He has a particular passion for mentoring new and young pastors, which is a testament to his dedication and commitment to the growth and development of the church community. His research interests are centered around the development of effective discipleship strategies and the process of spiritual formation. He is particularly interested in exploring the intersection of theology and practical methodologies, intending to identify best practices for nurturing the spiritual growth of individuals and communities.