

**SPIRITUAL MATURITY: INTERROGATING THE SPIRITUAL  
TRANSFORMATION IN SELECTED REDEEMED GOSPEL CHURCHES IN  
MACHAKOS COUNTY**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The purpose of the study was to assess the spiritual maturity among the members of Redeemed Gospel Church in Kangundo District. The study adopted descriptive survey design which used the cross-sectional approach to data collection. The study sampled 945 participants selected using systematic random sampling and questionnaires were consequently distributed to all participants. Overall, 538 questionnaires were returned and analyzed using SPSS. t- tests were performed for independent variables. The study findings revealed that the respondents were spiritually mature (average of 60.8%) for all the subscales of the Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI) as indicated by Awareness of God Scale (62.5%), Impression Management Scale (47.1%), Grandiosity Scale (59.7%), Instability Scale (58.6%), Disappointment with God Scale (67.4%) and Realistic Acceptance Scale (69.3%). The respondents got low scores in most of the items in all the subscales which was an indication of spiritual maturity, an evidence of spiritual transformation. The study recommended that the church should therefore emphasize in its teaching ministry as education was found to be core in spiritual transformation, hence spiritual maturity.*

**KEYWORDS:** Spiritual Maturity, Transformation, Discipleship, Learning, Education, Christian.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Barna (2001) defines discipleship as an activity that guides individuals to become spiritually mature zealots for Christ who in turn reproduce equally passionate mature followers of Christ. The maturity of followers calls for the need for the church to make disciples of the converts through teaching and guiding the followers. However, discipleship has been barred by a number of factors that needs the attention of the church. Barna (2001, p. 88) identifies nine barriers to discipleship. Of much interest to this study is 'Lack of clear measurable definition of spiritual success' and 'failure to teach people in a systematic way through strategic learning and development process customized for the student'. Thus, for transformation in the church, these two factors need reconsideration.

### **The Disciple Making Ministry of the Church**

The last words of a departing person are very important especially in an African setting where people go out of their way to ensure they properly comprehend the final instructions so as to fulfil the wishes. This was the case with Jesus when his ministry on earth was completed. He left the final instructions contained in the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20). The church was commanded not only to evangelize but also to make disciples and teach people to obey all that Jesus taught them. The church seems to have done well in evangelism as evidenced by large

multitudes in the church who claim to be Christians. However, literature on the Commission that calls upon the church to make disciples and teach people to obey the teachings of Jesus shows that little has been done. This has resulted in lack of transformation among confessing Christians. Jesus wanted people to be made into disciples and be baptized, then the disciples were to be taught to obey all that He had commanded and this is what can be attributed to the growth and effectiveness of the early Christians.

But in place of Christ's plan, historical drift has substituted 'make converts (to a particular faith and practice) and baptize them into church membership'. This causes two great omissions from the great Commission to stand out: to make converts into disciples and teach them what was commanded by Jesus. These two omissions are connected in practice into one whole. It is impossible to teach converts how to live as Christ lived and taught (Willard, 2006, p. 6) if they have been made disciples.

The church has dichotomized evangelism and discipleship which has had consequences. Evangelism should be the beginning point, after which those that have been witnessed to, are then disciplined towards Christlikeness. This is what will result in spiritual transformation. The church has forsaken its biblical mandate as given in the great commission and if Christianity will be anything worth its salt, then the church must go back to the Great Commission and do it in totality (Herbamas & Issler, 1992, p. 26).

Converts to Christianity must be disciplined through teaching them to obey all the teachings of Jesus. Jesus himself made disciples who were transformed, and that is why Christianity spread quickly and had a lot of impact. Today's Christians have very little impact as a result of lack of transformation. Ogden (2003), reports that there is a lot of superficiality especially in the "incongruity between numbers of people who profess faith in Jesus Christ and the lack of impact on moral and spiritual climate of our times". Barna (2001) says that discipleship does not happen in a vacuum. It has to be accomplished in cooperation with other followers of Christ. He argues that it requires an intentional and strategic thrust to facilitate spiritual maturity and that the church should develop a philosophy that emphasizes discipleship and provide the process for facilitation of spiritual maturity.

### **The Role of the Holy Spirit in Spiritual Transformation**

The work of making people into disciples of Jesus and teaching them to obey all that Jesus has taught them is not solely human effort. It requires cooperation between the human and the divine and Jesus made a provision for this. He told them to wait in Jerusalem to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that they will be empowered for the assignment and this was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:8, 2:1-4).

According to Eldridge (1995, pp. 46-51), the Holy Spirit works in the word of God to illuminate it to the learner to bring the true understanding of the mind of God. The Holy Spirit as the author of the scripture knows everything and he can be trusted to give the correct revelation. The Holy Spirit also works in the teacher to help him/her understand the content, the learner and teaching methodology. The teacher himself must live a Christ-like life. This is only made possible through the work of the Holy Spirit. In the learner, the Holy Spirit convicts him of sin, indwells him and provides him with gifts to do the work of God. It is the Holy Spirit that produces spirituality and guards believers from doctrinal error. To make disciples of Jesus, the work of the Holy Spirit must be appreciated. He is the senior partner. Jesus promised to be always present as the disciples fulfil the great commission and this has been made possible

through the work of the Holy Spirit. Ntamushobora (2015) emphasizes that spiritual transformation is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God, being the third person in the trinity. He is the comforter and counselor that Jesus promised to the disciples, the one who would give them power to become witnesses (Acts 1:8) and convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8) NIV.

### **Intentional Discipleship in the Church**

Commenting on the state of discipleship in the recent years, Ogden (2003, p. 22) observes that “There appears to be a general lack of comprehension among many who claim Jesus as saviour, as to the implications of following Him as Lord. This also featured in The Eastbourne Consultation, Joint Statement on Discipleship (1999) stating that “As we face the new millennium, we acknowledge that the state of the church is marked by growth without depth...”. This is pointing back to the discipleship challenge that we have referred to earlier. There seems to be absence of intentional discipleship making and the church must take the challenge to be more intentional in the disciple making efforts. Willard (2006) believes that the shallowness of the contemporary church stems from lack of commitment to intentional discipleship.

It is incredible to imagine that today there are Christians who believe they can be Christians without being disciples of Jesus (Willard, 2006). Being a Christian is to be a disciple of Jesus. This could be blamed on the church for not being intentional with discipleship. Spiritual growth happens through deliberate efforts. Intentional discipleship examines the outcome of discipleship which is spiritual growth, then plans practical activities that would be most effective in realizing the outcome. In his study Barna (2001) found out that among the people who were reported to be pursuing spiritual development, 68% were involved in a small group designed to generate spiritual growth, 24% attended Sunday school class that motivated them to grow, 15% were being spiritually mentored and 11% attended a special class that motivated to grow. He observed that most Christian adults had not set goals for spiritual development, had no standard against which to measure growth or they had failed to set procedures which could hold them accountable for their lack of spiritual growth. This means that intentionality must be an important focus in helping disciples to experience spiritual growth.

This approach makes use of transformational methods of nurturing the believer to understand and grow in the ways of God such as small group fellowships, mentoring relationships, use of age appropriate curriculum for church groups, role modeling, formal discipleship classes and covenantal accountability, among others (Ogden, 2003). This is all what the educational ministry of the church is about.

### **The Relationship between Discipleship and Christian Education**

Barna (2001) defines discipleship as an activity that guides individuals to become spiritually mature zealots for Christ who in turn reproduce equally passionate mature followers of Christ. Christian education in this research will refer to training in the context of the church that focuses on Christian faith formation through the use of scripture. According to Barna (2001), the terms discipleship and Christian education are closely related and they build on each other to create a fully mature follower of Jesus Christ. Education is the process through which discipleship is achieved. This means that without Christian education, discipleship cannot happen. It is Christian education that prepares and teaches one for a lifetime of becoming a complete and competent follower of Jesus.

It is quite unfortunate that today Christian education is not taken seriously even in the church. It is not surprising to find churches that do not have a Christian education department and not to mention absence of trained personnel to handle the teaching ministry of the church.

Christian education as a discipline has become so trivialized that many schools have dropped it from their curriculum. In addition, what was once so important aspect of church life is now seen by many to be irrelevant and innocuous. But rather than simply bemoaning the current state of Christian education, we are more responsible if we ask what the Bible teaches about teaching. If scripture values teaching ministry the church must value it also. If teaching is critical in a biblical perspective, it must also be critical in our perspective for twenty-first century (Downs, 1994, p. 23).

The failure of the church to take Christian education seriously is directly proportional to the poor state of discipleship in the Church. The Church must teach Christians to obey all that Christ taught. Evangelization alone will not cause progress in the church because teaching is a vital component of church ministry. This is demonstrated by Paul who believes that the ability to teach is a major qualification of a church leader (1 Tim 3:2) and that whatever he taught Timothy should be entrusted to reliable men who are qualified to teach others (2 Tim 2: 2).

### **Observational Learning**

The observational learning theory according to Bandura (1976) proposes that people behave the way they behave because they see people they respect being rewarded for their behaviour. This theory has implications for the teaching ministry of the church. The teacher should improve his/her status with students, model preferred attitudes and skills and use others as models to be imitated (Yount, 1999, p. 81). Teachers are expected to provide excellent examples to those whom they teach. This in turn produces excellence in the students (Yount, 1999, p. 37). Christlikeness is to be modeled by the teachers. Teachers who do not model what they teach can be likened to the Pharisees whom Jesus referred to as blind guides (Matt 15; 14; 23:24). Paul challenged the Corinthians to follow his example as he follows the example of Christ. (1 Cor 11:1).

The observational learning theory is useful because in most cases Christian values will be new behaviours to converts and the presence of role models from whom they can imitate will cause change in behaviour as they are assimilated to the Christian community. Bandura (2003, p. 171) supports spiritual modeling in stating that congregations provide several models of behaviour to reinforce lifestyles patterned on them. In the absence of that, spiritual concepts can be very abstract and people may not know how to apply them. This concurs with Oman and Thoresen (2003, p. 149) who say Spiritual modeling is proposed as important but neglected component of traditional religious involvement as well as of many spiritual practices. These authors recommend that spiritual modeling and observational learning are areas that should be taken seriously in research.

### **Assessing Spiritual Transformation**

Assessment is an important aspect of the teaching/learning process and any good education programme must have clear assessment criteria. If Christian education is real education, then the learning outcomes must be observable. Generally, assessment of the affective domain, where attitudes and character objectives fall, is difficult to assess. This leads many educators to ignore setting affective objectives altogether and since there was no affective objective in

the first place, the assessment criteria does not include the affective outcomes. This has been the greatest undoing in Christian education programmes because the affective goals are most neglected (Ford, 1991). The teachers do not set assessment criteria for spiritual transformation and therefore they do not know how the learners are faring spiritually.

Different instruments have been developed to assess spiritual transformation and decision to use them is dependent on the particular purpose. Any instrument for research purposes must be reliable and valid otherwise the results will be doubtful (Salkind, 2014, p. 125). Some instruments with proven reliability and validity include the Spiritual Transformation Inventory developed by Todd Hall and The Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI) developed by Todd Hall and Keith Edwards.

The study adopted the Spiritual Assessment Inventory. The instrument, as reported by Stanard et al. in Brown, Johnson and Parish (2007) is not only brief and easy to administer but it is also grounded in a solid theoretical foundation. The authors report that it measures both the spiritual and psychological aspects of maturity in terms of a person's relationship with God. The model of spirituality adopted by the instrument is one that integrates the relational maturity from an object relations perspective and Experiential God awareness, which is based on New Testament teaching. The authors of the instrument concluded that the underlying theory and validity were supported empirically and so the instrument was useful for clinical and research assessments (Shorkey, Uebel & Windsor, 2008, p. 300). The initial instrument had five subscales namely: Awareness of God, Instability, Realistic Acceptance, Disappointment with God, and Grandiosity and later a sixth scale, Impression Management, was added (Hall & Edwards, 2002).

### **Awareness of God**

This scale "measures a person's tendency to experience God's presence and communications" (Hall, Reise & Haviland, 2007, p. 158). This is an indication of spiritual transformation. A transformed person understands the things of God as he/she is able to discern them. The work of the Spirit of God who is the agent of transformation is evident in a person who understands spiritual truths as they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2: 10-14).

### **Grandiosity**

Grandiosity refers to feelings of excessive self-importance (Hall, Reise & Haviland, 2007, p. 158). "It can be an exaggerated sense of one's own ability, wisdom, or importance, often in regard to how such things affect the quality of life," (Pearson, 2010). Grandiosity among Christians is represented by an exaggerated form of spirituality and Christians with high grandiosity scores suggest spiritual immaturity which implies lack of spiritual transformation (Mbogo, 2015, p. 124). A mature disciple of Jesus does not display acts of the sinful nature such as pride because the old nature has been crucified with Christ and the fruit of the spirit includes self-control (Gal. 5:16-26). The Bible advocates that we count others better than we are (Phil. 2:3).

### **Instability**

Instability deals with how stable a person's relationship with God is (Hall, Reise & Haviland, 2007, p. 158). High scores in the instability scale could be a sign of spiritual immaturity. Mbogo (2015, p. 125) reports research results in which she found out that the longer one has been a



Christian, the more stable he/she would be. This could suggest that new converts were likely to portray more instability.

### **Disappointment with God**

The scale measures an individual's level of anger, frustration, and disappointment with God (Hall, Reise & Haviland, 2007, p. 158). A person who gets disappointed with God has not yet attained spiritual maturity as this could thwart one's spirituality (Mbogo, 2015, p. 124). God does all things for the good of mankind and our responsibility is to thank and worship him for who he is and what he has done. The Bible tells us to thank God in all things for it is His will for us in Christ Jesus and everything happens for the good of them that love the Lord (1Th 5:18, Rom 8:28).

### **Realistic Acceptance**

The scale assesses how well an individual is able to reconcile their relationship with God after experiencing a disappointment (Hall, Reise & Haviland, 2007, p. 158). A spiritually mature person is able to reconcile his relationship with God quickly after experiencing a disappointment. He/she understands that he/she is mortal while God is immortal. Humans can only surrender to Him and understand that he is the source of their very lives as the author and the finisher of their faith (Heb 12:1-2) and indeed all he does is for their good (Rom 8:28).

### **Impression Management**

The Impression management subscale was later introduced to the spirituality scale as a measure of test taking aptitude. It was assumed that most spiritual people would not experience the frequency and intensity that was stated and most likely would not endorse the statements as their true characteristic because "the items on the IM scale states some virtuous and common spiritual behaviour or attitude in an exaggerated form" (Hall & Edwards, 2002, p. 350). A high score would suggest lack of spiritual transformation or spiritual immaturity "since the impression management scale assessed illusionary spiritual health" (Mbogo, 2015, p. 126).

### **Theoretical and conceptual Framework**

The study was embedded on principles of the Social learning theory. "According to social learning theory, modeling influences produce learning principally through their informative function. During exposure observers acquire mainly symbolic representations of the modeled activities which serve as guides for appropriate performances" (Bandura, 1976, pp. 22- 24). Observational learning is one of the best ways to teach values. Members are to observe the character of mature Christians as they live out their faith and in turn model similar practices.

Bandura (1986) suggests that the effectiveness of observational learning depends on the degree to which the following four processes of observational learning are affected: Attention which calls for people to be keen on the modeled actions, Retention which ensures that actions are cognitively registered symbolically in memory, Production through which the retained symbolic memories get reconverted into overt actions to bring out desired responses and lastly Motivation which advocates for favourable perceived consequences of performing the actions so that the actions are repeated. Yi and Davis (2003, p. 150) theorize that "an increase in any one of the dimensions in isolation will increase the total magnitude of the observational learning process". Kile (2010) observes that "in order to learn from observation, it is necessary first that the model must attract the individual's attention".

At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus called twelve disciples so that they would be with Him so they could learn from him how He ministered. Later He sent them to serve and carry on with the work He was doing (Mark 3:14). Jesus washed the disciples’ feet to model servant leadership (John 13:5).

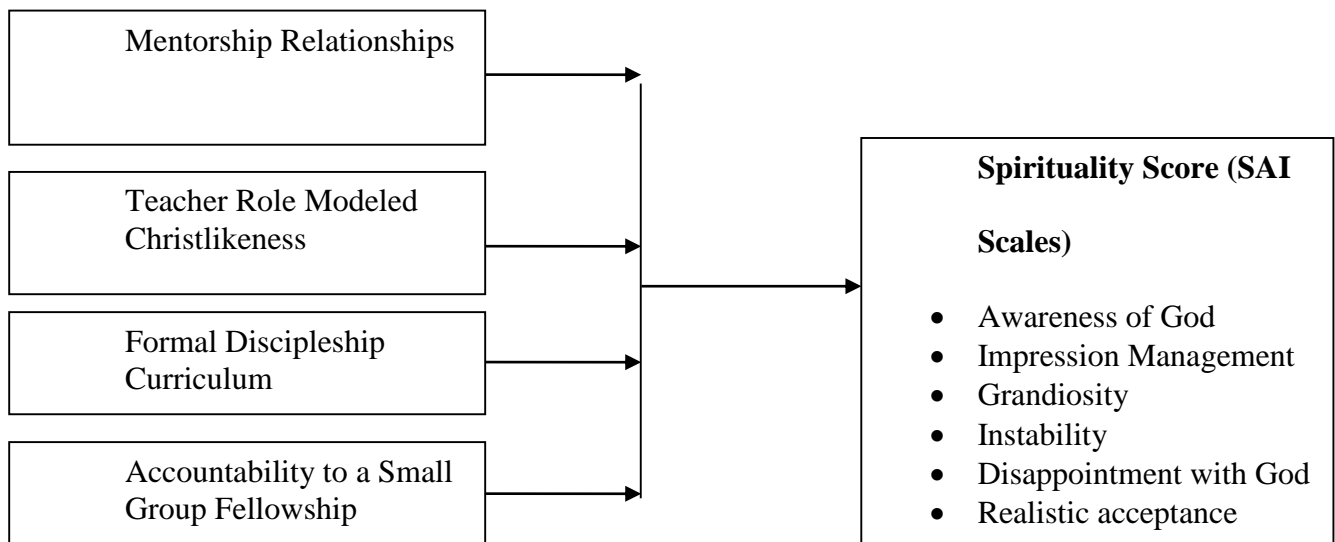
**Conceptual Framework**

Christian education is education in its own right and the learning outcome (spiritual transformation) is likely to be influenced by the use of certain discipleship strategies used in the teaching ministry. Following is a conceptual representation that guided this study.

**Independent Variables  
Variable**

**Dependent**

**Discipleship Strategies used in the Teaching Ministry of the church**



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

**METHODOLOGY**

The researcher adopted the descriptive survey design and utilized the cross-sectional approach that collected data at one point in time. The survey was carried out to establish to the effect of discipleship strategies on spiritual transformation. The independent variables were mentoring relationships, role modeling Christlikeness, formal discipleship curriculum and small group fellowships. Information on the variables was gathered using a questionnaire.

The research sample included 945 participants that had been selected to participate in this study. Systematic random sampling method was used to select the churches and the participants for this research to ensure representativeness. The questionnaire was chosen as the instrument

to gather information for this study. The questionnaires were administered to 945 participants that had been selected using systematic random sampling but only 538 were returned.

## **Findings, Discussion and interpretations**

### **Spiritual Transformation of the Respondents**

Most of the members of Redeemed Gospel Church in Kangundo District were found to be spiritually mature (an overall average of 60.8%) for all the subscales of the Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI). The respondents got low scores in most of the items in all the subscales which was an indication of spiritual maturity, an evidence of spiritual transformation. The average for all the questionnaire items in the particular subscales of the Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI) gave the following average percentages: Awareness of God Scale (62.5%), Impression Management Scale (47.1%), Grandiosity Scale (59.7%), Instability Scale (58.6%), Disappointment with God Scale (67.4%) and Realistic Acceptance Scale (69.3%). This was largely attributed to the exposure to discipleship strategies used in the teaching ministry of the church that were believed to enhance spiritual transformation.

Information on spiritual transformation was provided by Spiritual Assessment Inventory adapted from Todd and Edwards.

The results of the analysis of the spiritual transformation were presented according to the subscales of the Spiritual Assessment Inventory. Each of the scales was categorized into three: Mature (represented by 1 and 2), moderately mature (represented by 3) immature (represented by 4 and 5). High scores for all the subscales indicated spiritual immaturity which is a sign of lack of spiritual transformation, while low scores for all the scales suggest spiritual maturity indicating evidence of spiritual transformation.

### **Awareness Scale**

The respondents responded to the questions relating to awareness scale that measured a person's level of awareness of God. Majority of the respondents had low scores in most of the questionnaire items on this scale. They disagreed with most of the items which implied that they were spiritually mature, an indication that spiritual transformation had taken place. Items assessed include (with percentage of respondents who had low score in each item): "I do not have a sense of how God is working in my life" (69.5%); "God's presence does not feel very real to me" (75.6%), "Listening to God is not an essential part of my life" (72.9%); "I am not aware of God prompting me to do things" (64.5%); and "My experiences of God's responses to me don't impact me greatly" (71.9%). Also, "I am not aware of God's presence in my interactions with other people" 64.5%; had a low score on the item "I am not aware of God responding to me in a variety of ways" (62.5%); "I am not aware of God attending to me in times of need", (69.9%); "I am not aware of God telling me to do something" (66%) while 67.9% had a low score on the item "My experiences of God's presence don't impact me greatly".

Other items that scored low according to the responses from the respondents include: "I don't have a sense of the direction in which God is guiding me"; "I am not aware of God communicating to me in a variety of ways"; "I am not aware of God's presence in times of need"; "I do not have a sense of God communicating guidance to me"; "I do not experience an awareness of God speaking to me personally"; "I do not have a strong impression of God's presence"; "I am not aware of God being very near to me"; and "When I consult God about



decisions in my life, I am not aware in my prayers of his direction and help". However, 57.3% of the respondents had a high score on the item "From day to day, I sense God being with me since" they agreed with the statement that from day today they sense God being with them. This was the only item that wrongly suggested that majority of the respondents were spiritually immature in this scale and it was attributed to the wrong wording of the questionnaire item. The statement was not a negation like the other questions in this scale.

The overall mean was 2.23 which indicated that majority of the respondents had a low score on most of the items relating to awareness scale. The average percentage for all the items in the awareness scale was 62.5%.

## **DISCUSSIONS ON FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

Majority (62.5%) of the respondents had a low score as they disagreed with most of the items. The scale recorded an overall mean of 2.23. This suggested that they were spiritually mature, which affirmed that spiritual transformation had taken place. Out of the 19 items that were analyzed 18 items recorded low score, which means that the majority of members of Redeemed Gospel Church were spiritually mature. The item (item 31) which recorded a high score was probably attributed to the inconsistent wording. All the awareness items were phrased in the reverse apart from that one item that was positively phrased most likely due to a typing error.

According to Hall, Reise and Haviland (2007, p. 158) the scale "measures a person's tendency to experience God's presence and communications". A person who is able to experience God's presence and communication is a spiritually transformed one and may be termed spiritually mature. A transformed person understands the things of God as he/she is able to discern them. Moreover, the work of the Spirit of God who is the agent of transformation is evident in a person who understands spiritual truths as they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2: 10-14).

The low scores in these findings in the awareness scale could be attributed to the fact that the members had been disciplined using some strategies used in the teaching ministry of the church such as mentoring relationships, role modeling Christlikeness, formal discipleship curriculum and participation in small group fellowships which were believed to enhance spiritual transformation. The study agrees with Ogden (2003) who believes that intentional discipleship examines the outcome of discipleship which is spiritual growth, then plans practical activities that would be most effective in realizing the outcome.

The implication of these findings is that churches should be more intentional in discipling members as it leads to spiritual growth. A variety of discipleship strategies will work in combination to produce spiritual growth. Worth to note was that members spirituality was also influenced by involvement in mentorship programmes, teachers who role model Christlikeness and involvement in small group fellowships in addition to formal discipleship curriculum.

### **Disappointment Scale**

The scale measured a person's level of disappointment with God. Majority of the respondents had low scores in most of the questionnaire items on this scale. They disagreed with most of the items which implied that they were spiritually mature and suggested that spiritual transformation had taken place. Majority of the respondents (72.3%) had a low score on the item "There are times I feel disappointed with God." The respondents disagreed with the statement that there were times when they felt disappointed with God. On the item "There are times when I feel frustrated with God, 67.8% of the respondents disagreed with the assertion

that there were times they frustrated with God which resulted to a low score on the item. Majority (67.7%) had a low score on the item “There are times I feel irritated at God” and similarly, 70.7% of the respondents had a low score on the item “There are times when I feel angry at God”. This overall response was occasioned by the fact that majority of them failed to affirm the assertions that there were times they felt irritated at God and there were times they felt angry at God respectively.

Other items assessed include: “There are times I feel betrayed by God” (68.8%); “There are times I feel frustrated by God for not responding to my prayers” (64.7%); and “There are times when I feel like God has let me down” 57.8%.

The overall mean was 2.24 which indicated that majority of the respondents had a low score on most of the items relating to disappointment scale. The average percentage for all the items in the disappointment scale was 67.4%.

### **Discussions on Findings and Interpretations**

The majority of the respondents had a low score, an overall mean of 2.24. An average percentage of 67.4% disagreed with most of the statements in the Disappointment with God Scale. This suggested that they were spiritually mature which affirmed that spiritual transformation had taken place. This was attributed to the fact that majority had been disciplined using the discipleship strategies used in the teaching ministry of the church that were believed to be catalysts of spiritual transformation. All the 7 items that were analyzed recorded a low score which means that the majority of members of Redeemed Gospel Church were spiritually mature.

The expected outcome of spiritual transformation is that one is content with God. A spiritually transformed person will not be expected to be disappointed with God because he/she understands that God is sovereign and his purposes for mankind are good despite the circumstances. We are advised in the Bible to thank God in whatever the circumstance because it is His plan and because everything happens with a reason and for good of those who The Lord (1The 5:18, Rom 8:28). A person who gets disappointed with God has not yet attained spiritual maturity as this could thwart one’s spirituality (Mbogo, 2015, p. 124).

Transformational discipleship research project by Geiger, Kelly and Philip (2011), found out that church leaders are in the process of rediscovering the importance of paying attention to disciple making. This is out of the realization that spiritual growth is not accidental, but it calls for intentionality on the side of the church in helping Christians grow. The church must invest in the discipleship of the members for spiritual transformation to take place.

### **Grandiosity Scale**

This scale measured a person’s feelings of excessive importance in his relationship with God.

Results presented revealed that majority of the respondents had a low score which implied spiritual maturity as an average percentage of 59.7% disagreed with most of the statements in the Grandiosity Scale.

With regard to the item: “I seem to have a unique ability to influence God through my prayers” 54.2% of the respondents scored low. Majority (63.8%) scored on the item God recognizes that

“I am more spiritual than most people” and 65.4% had a low score on the item “God understands that my needs are more important than most people’s”.

Further, 64.5% scored low on the item: ‘Manipulating God seems to be the best way to get what I want’; 58.8% scored low on the item: “I find my prayers to God are more effective than other people’s” while 65.6% had a low score on the item: “I seem to be more gifted than most people in discerning God’s will”. However, 46.7% of the respondents had high score on the item: “My relationship with God is an extraordinary one that most people would not understand,” as they failed to affirm the assertion that their relationship with God was extraordinary that most people would not understand.

The overall mean was 2.46 which indicated that majority of the respondents had a low score on most of the items relating to Grandiosity Scale and the average percentage was 59.7%.

### **Discussions on Findings and Interpretations**

The majority of the respondents had a low score on most of the items; an overall mean of 2.46 and an average percentage of 59.7% of all questionnaire items in this scale. This indicated spiritual maturity which affirmed that spiritual transformation had taken place. Six out of the seven items that were analyzed recorded low score, which means that the majority of members of Redeemed Gospel Church were spiritually mature.

Grandiosity among Christians is represented by an exaggerated form of spirituality and Christians with high grandiosity scores suggest spiritual immaturity which implies lack of spiritual transformation (Mbogo, 2015, p. 124). A mature disciple of Jesus does not display acts of the sinful nature such as pride because the old nature has been crucified with Christ and the fruit of the spirit includes self-control (Gal. 5:16-26). The Bible advocates that we count others better than we are (Phil.2:3).

The implication for church ministers is that discipleship efforts in the church and Christian circles are directly proportional to the level of spiritual maturity displayed by the members. As long as members are discipled, they will display spiritual transformation and if they are not discipled they will not be spiritually transformed.

### **Instability Scale**

Majority of the respondents had a low score which suggested that they were spiritually mature. Most of them (58.6%) disagreed with most of the assertions. About sixty seven (67.7%) scored low on the item: “I am afraid that God will give up on me,” while 69.5% scored low on the item: “my emotional connection with God is unstable”. Majority (58.9%) had a low score on the item that stated: “There are times when I feel that God is punishing me”, whereas 68% scored low on the item: “I worry that I will be left out of God’s plans” as 59.7% scored low on the item: “When I sin, I tend to withdraw from God”. However, 49% had a low score on the item: “I feel I have to please God or he might reject me”.

Other items that scored low included: “There are times when I feel that God is angry with me”; and “When I feel God is not protecting me, I tend to feel worthless”. However, 48.7% had a high score on the item: “When I sin, I am afraid of what God will do to me”. This suggests that people have not yet understood God as loving father and that He is willing to forgive their sin.

The overall mean was 2.55 which indicated that majority of the respondents had a low score on most of the items relating to Instability Scale.

### **Discussions on Findings and Interpretations**

The majority of the respondents had a low score, an overall mean of 2.55. On average for all the questionnaire items in this scale, majority 58.6% disagreed with most of the statements. This indicated spiritual maturity which affirmed that spiritual transformation had taken place. Eight out of the nine items that were analyzed recorded low score which means that the majority of members of Redeemed Gospel Church were spiritually mature.

High scores in the instability scale is a sign of spiritual immaturity while low scores indicate spiritual maturity. Mbogo (2015, p. 125) posited that members who have been in church for a long time are more stable than those who recently joint. This suggests that new converts are likely to portray more instability and needs close assessment and supervision.

### **Impression Management Scale**

Majority of the respondents had a low score in the Impression Management Scale which suggested spiritual maturity. On average, based on all responses in the questionnaire for this scale 47.1% disagreed with most of the statements. A percentage that was very low compared to other scales. Probably due to failure to perceive what it actually tested or probably it could be said that this is a growth area for most of the participants.

About forty seven percent (47.4%) agreed with: "I am always in a worshipful mood when I go to church" and also, 50.4% agreed with: "I always seek God's guidance for every decision I make". This suggested spiritual immaturity for both items.

Further, 47.2% disagreed with: "I am always as kind at home as I am at church"; 48.5% disagreed to: "I pray for all my friends and relatives every day," while 55.6% disagreed with "I am always in the mood to pray". These failed to affirm the statements that they prayed for all their friends and relatives daily and that that they were always in the mood to pray respectively.

The overall mean was 2.95 which indicated that majority of the respondents had a low score though relatively higher compared to all the other scales on most of the items relating to impression management scale. This implied that most of the respondents were spiritually mature though they exhibited elements of spiritual immaturity as demonstrated by the high scores in some of the items.

### **Discussions on Findings and Interpretations**

Three out of the five items that were analyzed recorded low score which means that the majority of members of Redeemed Gospel Church were spiritually mature. In two of the five items that recorded a high score, majority of the members seemed incapable of managing their impressions. The key phrases that most likely lead to the high score included "always in worshipful mood" and "seeking God's guidance for every decision". Spiritually mature Christians worship and seek God's direction but not to the magnitude that was stated in the items and this could have contributed to them agreeing with the assertions. The average mean of 2.95 tended toward moderate maturity for the members of Redeemed Gospel Church and this is an aspect they may need to watch as it does not reflect much spiritual transformation.

The church needs to be more intentional in discipleship to teach members all aspects of spiritual dispositions.

### **Realistic Acceptance Scale**

The purpose of this scale was to find out how well a person was able to come back to terms with God after experiencing a disappointment. In relation to the Realistic Acceptance Scale, majority of the respondents had a low score which suggested spiritual maturity. An average of 69.3% based on the responses for all the questionnaire items in this scale disagreed with most statements. This scale had the highest percentage compared to other scales. This suggests that majority of the respondents understood God as He is which is a sign of spiritual maturity.

About seventy five percent (75.1%) had a low score on the item: “When I feel disappointed with God; I still don’t want our relationship to continue;” 68.6% on “I feel frustrated with God, I don’t desire to put effort into our relationship”; 66% on “When I feel irritated at God, I am unable to come to some sense of resolution in our relationship” and 71.2% of the respondents had a low score on the item: “When I feel angry at God, I don’t have the sense that God will always be with me”. This indicates that majority treasured their relationship with God, assign of spiritual maturity.

Other items that scored low included “When I feel betrayed by God; I don’t put effort into restoring our relationship” (70.8%); “When I feel frustrated by God for not responding to my prayers, I am not able to talk it through with God” (68%); and “When I feel like God has let me down; my trust in God is completely broken,” (65.8%).

The overall mean was 2.11 which indicated that majority of the respondents had a low score on most of the items relating to realistic acceptance scale.

### **Discussions on Findings and Interpretations**

An overall mean of 2.11 indicated spiritual maturity which affirmed that spiritual transformation had taken place. On average, 69.3% of the respondents failed to affirm most of the statements in the scale. All the seven items that were analyzed recorded low score which means that the majority of members of Redeemed Gospel Churches in Kangundo Sub County were spiritually mature.

This scale assesses an individual’s ability to reconcile their relationship with God after experiencing a disappointment (Hall, Reise & Haviland, 2007, p. 158). Most respondents were therefore spiritually mature person and were able to reconcile with God quickly after a disappointment.

### **Implications to research and practice**

The study findings presented here are essential for any missionary in the course of the mission. The missionary may use them in generating specific objective for the mission as they inform how and what to do so as to make converts into disciples, a mission commissioned by Jesus Christ. Again, church pastors with this kind of knowledge may be able to rate his/her members in terms of spiritual maturity. In a church setting, there are people who are well established in terms of spiritual nourishment while others are spiritually malnourished as in the case of new converts. As such, they can be trained separately given that these two groups needs different approaches in teaching and discipling them.



## CONCLUSION

This study assessed the level of spiritual transformation of members as was measured by the Spiritual Assessment Inventory in selected Redeemed Gospel Churches in Kangundo Sub County, Machakos County. Results revealed that majority of the respondents had a low score on items relating to awareness scale, grandiosity scale, disappointment scale, instability scale and realistic acceptance scale. This means that most of the respondents were spiritually mature and hence evidence of spiritual transformation. In addition, results revealed that majority of the respondents had a low score on most of the items relating to impression management scale but relatively a higher score than in the other scales. This implied that most of the respondents are mature spiritually but should watch some elements of exaggeration in their spirituality so that they do not overrate themselves as this does not reflect spiritual maturity.

## RECOMMENDATION

Based on the conclusions drawn, the study recommends that there is need for the churches to enhance their teaching ministries. This is because the teaching ministries were found to have a significant impact on the members' spiritual transformation. Given that Christian education is education in its own right with spiritual transformation as the learning outcome, mechanisms for assessing spiritual transformation need to be implemented.

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