

THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PROLIFERATION OF NEW CHRISTIAN
RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN IMENTI SOUTH DISTRICT, MERU COUNTY.

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ABSTRACT

We live in a world where almost all human beings are yearning for deliverance from personal or collective suffering as a result of the prevailing evils. Consequently, people, despite innate pride of the human heart, are seeking Gods loving grace, a quest that has predisposed them to the teaching of any group that goes by the name "Christian". This has resulted in the proliferation of the new Christian religious movements - a common phenomenon in the world today, of which Imenti South District is not an exception. The purpose of this study is to explore factors influencing the proliferation of new Christian religious movements in Imenti South District of Meru. Questionnaires and interviews were used to obtain the background information on the factors behind the new Christian religious movements, and the areas in which the mainstream churches are failing to satisfy the spiritual and other needs of their members. The study was carried out in Imenti South District. In both the 36 mainline churches and the new religious groups the questionnaires were given to church leaders, administrators and lay Christians. The researcher had a target population of 16200 Christians but reduced it to 3240. This number was further reduced to 648 for ease of management. Descriptive research design is used. Stratified sampling was used to select the respondents because they exist in several groups. The final sample size was reduced to 162 respondents, and to these the questionnaires were administered. The researcher used questionnaires and interviews as the main instruments for data collection from the pastors/leaders, men, women and the youth of the various churches. The responses were collected for analysis and the data compiled in tables, graphs and the pie -charts. In general, the study established the following as the reasons behind the attractiveness of the new Christian religious movements and their forms of worship to people in strongly religious and secular societies hunger for holiness; the leadership struggles characterized by lack of inclusivity of all necessary skills. Unsatisfied psychological and basic need the pursuing of material prosperity. Search for spiritual healing, Sense of belonging and life's meaning. The Recommendation was made based on the outcome of the study that there is a need to promote good spiritual and moral teaching based on biblical theology and acculturate to modern positive Christian ethical values. The further research can be done on biblical exegesis, roles of the church in transforming social life, the charismatic movement, and the importance of the Christian ethical values in the present society.