

**MEMBERSHIP GROWTH WITHIN THE METHODIST CHURCH IN
MUTHARA CIRCUIT OF MIATHENE SYNOD
MERU COUNTY**

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ABSTRACT

The researcher studied membership growth within the Methodist Church in Muthara Circuit, Miathene Synod, Meru County. The researcher selected Muthara Circuit amongst others due to the fact that presumably it has the lowest membership growth within the Methodist Church in Miathene Synod Meru County. The study was guided by the following objectives: to identify factors affecting membership growth within the Methodist Church in Muthara circuit, to evaluate the participation of youth, men and women in mission and evangelism programs of the Methodist Church in Muthara circuit, to identify strategies that will improve the membership growth within the Methodist Church in Muthara circuit, to find out the problem facing membership growth within the Methodist Church in Muthara circuit and to suggest possible solutions to address the problems facing membership growth within Methodist Church in Muthara circuit, Meru County. The research was guided by the following research questions: what factors affect membership growth within the Methodist Church in Muthara Circuit? What role do men, women and youth play in mission and evangelism in Muthara Circuit? What strategies are necessary to improve the membership growth within the Methodist Church in Muthara Circuit? What problems face the membership growth with the Methodist Church in Muthara Circuit and what are possible solutions to the problems? The research design adopted a descriptive case study and the existing literature analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Primary data was collected by use of questionnaire, interview guide and observations. Data was collected from the population size of 84 respondents which include leaders / clergy, youth, men and women in Muthara Circuit. Sampling technique used was stratified random sampling for youth, men and purposive sampling for the clergy/ leaders. The sampling size was 69 respondents as determined by Yamanes formula (1992). Data was analyzed by use of statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS) and interpreted in percentages, mean and frequencies and illustrated in tables, figures, for deductive and evaluative purpose. The study explored issues such as gender / sex, level of education, marketing strategies, modernity, praise and worship (music) with Public Address System (PAS), Group salvation social reforms, Ethnicity, Evangelism and mission and sacrament and their effect on membership growth in Muthara Circuit. The study realized that there is a direct relationship between Methodist Church, mission and Evangelism and membership growth. It points out that the traditions, beliefs and values of Church have a direct influence on the membership growth. The study concluded that the Methodist Church and its members must be able to rationalize their traditions, culture and beliefs for membership growth to be improved. The recommendations include; the Methodist Church to envisage the modern changes in the youth, men and women in terms of education and technological advancement like use of facilities & equipment to attract membership growth in the Church.