

## Examining Readiness for Adult Faith Formation in Local Churches in Rwanda

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**Abstract:** Every believer has been commissioned by God, through Jesus Christ, to tell someone about Jesus (Brown, 2008). Christian educational ministries should make sure that every believer is a “witness for Christ (Courtenay& Milton, 2004). This study was cross sectional with both qualitative and quantitative approach. The researchers explored Scriptures related to the Great. In-depth interviews and focus group interviews were used as qualitative inquiry and statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze quantitative data gathered from 185 Christians attending the selected local church in Rwanda. The finding shows that some adults are thirsty to learn about the words of God but faith education programs for adults are not yet established in local churches- Local churches should establish an atmosphere in the churches in which members of lesser academic achievement are encouraged and supported to learn and utilize loving words of Jesus.

**Key word:** Believer, baptism, Christian education, Christian leaders, disciple, local church, Minister.

### I. Introduction

Every believer has been commissioned by God, through Jesus Christ, to tell someone about Jesus (Brown, 2008). Christian educational ministries should make sure that every believer is a “*witness for Christ*” (Courtenay& Milton, 2004). In the Baptist faith tradition, once individuals believe and accept Jesus Christ into their hearts and into their lives, they are baptized and encouraged to grow through studying God’s word, worshipping

the Lord, and establishing a relationship with God and others. The scripture that is most often used for discipleship is the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20, in which Jesus commissions his disciples by declaring, *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go into all nations and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, even to the end of the age.”* Jesus’s promise is *“I will be with you always.”* Meaning that the believer is assured by the Holy Spirit, given by Jesus Christ, to fulfill this great commission that is found in all four gospels(Lauzon,2001), Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:45-49; and John 17:18; 20:21. This scripture is the “heart” of Christian education and the teaching ministry. The primary task of disciple development is to educate and empower individuals in order to equip them to become followers of Christ. This can be translated with scriptures in John 8:31-32 and John 15:7 where Jesus said, *“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”* And *“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”* The local church must spend time developing disciples and providing opportunities for growth within the body. However, many local churches in Rwanda have not yet developed even small group ministries (Bible study, marketplace ministry, mission, ministry group, etc.) as a tool for promoting discipleship especially among adults attending local churches in Rwanda.

## II. Methods

This study was cross sectional with both qualitative and quantitative approach. The researchers explored Scriptures related to the Great Commission as found in all four gospels, Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:45-49; and John 17:18; 20:21 for biblical literature. In-depth interviews and focus group interviews were used as qualitative inquiry and statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze quantitative data gathered from 185 Christians attending the selected local church in Rwanda.

### III. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Presentation of respondents by sex

The study shows that most respondents were male 54.6% while female were 45.4%.

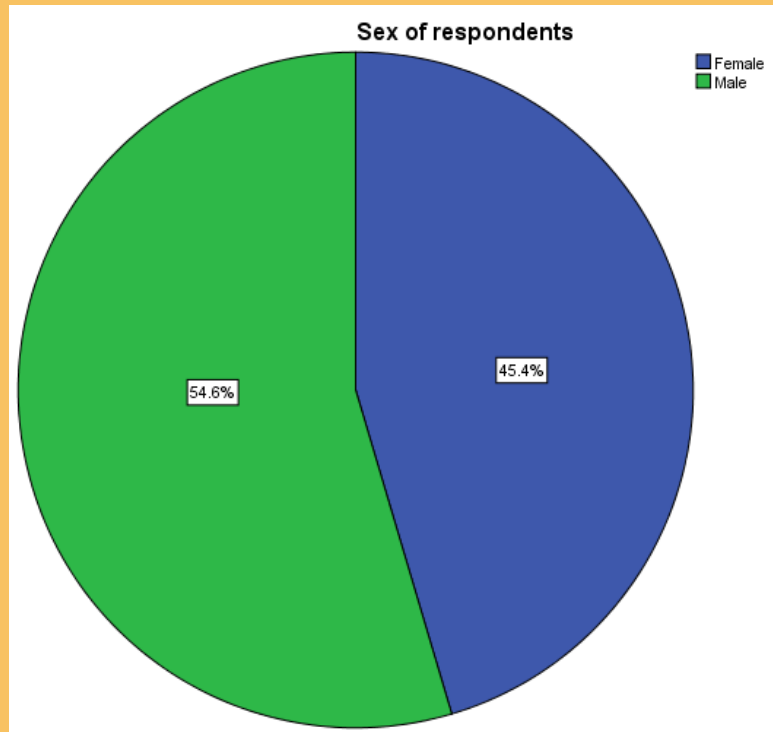


Figure 1. Distribution of respondents by sex.  
Source: our primary data

#### 3.2. Presentation of respondents by marital status

The study shows that most of respondents were married (56.2%) followed by single (29.2%) and separated (13.5%)

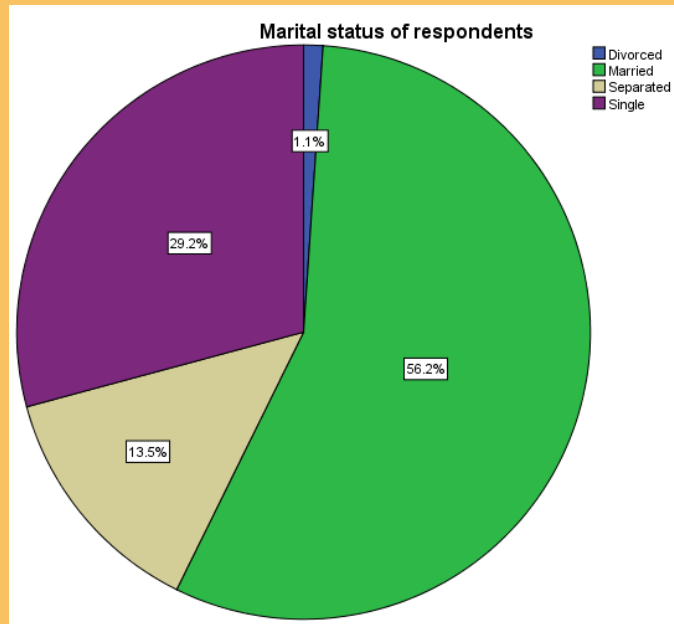


Figure 2. Presentation of respondents by marital status.  
Source: Primary data

### 3.3. Presentation of respondents by age

The findings show that many participants were in age range of 36-45 representing 48.6% followed by 25-35 representing 32.4%, and 18-24 and >65 representing 9.7% each.

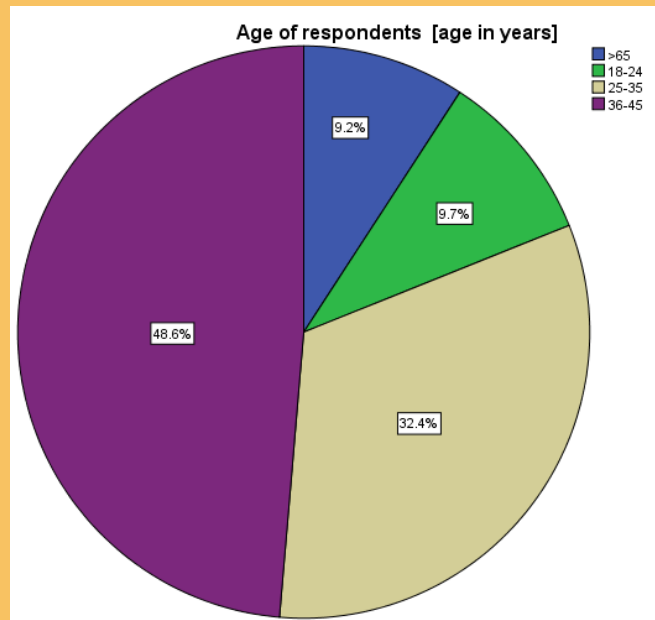


Figure 3. Distribution of respondents by age  
Source: Primary data

### 3.4. Testimonies of respondents

During the interview, interviewed adults demonstrated that adult faith education is necessary in local churches especially for adults who have fewer achievements including those adults who did not make it to go to school. They explained the following way: *“Our local church does not have faith education programs that support adults especially those adults who did not go to school. But, adults’ faith education is very necessary for us”*

Other studies have revealed that when adults engage more in new learning activities, they begin to see themselves as lifelong learners (Lauzon, 2005). Moreover, it has been found that the more adults learn, the more they want to learn (Lindholm, et al, 2011). This is also confirmed by scripture literature in Matthew 13:20 *“But he who received the seed in the stony ground is the person who hears the word of God, and at once receives it with joy”*.

Similarly, adults have expressed the thirst of words of Jesus. They explained as following: *“We still need to learn the word of Jesus with sufficient time; Jesus is our savior we need to know Him. We are missing education program additional to normal church activities in order to know deeply Jesus’s love”* The adults should be helped to be transformed by the life giving message of Jesus in order to explore its meaning, experience its power and live in its light (Orbinati, 2015). Local churches should establish an atmosphere in the churches in which members of lesser academic achievement are encouraged and supported to learn and utilize loving words of Jesus (Piercy, 2013).

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