

**METAPHORS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION: A STUDY OF
SELECTED SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST (S.D.A.) LAY LEADERS'
INTERPRETATIONS**

BY

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
ARTS IN LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGES, FACULTY OF ARTS OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

TO GOD THE ALMIGHTY: His infinite love and protective care.

To my dear father: Nicholas Ogana

To my loving mother: Grace Bosibori

To my beloved wife: Rodah Kerubo

To my dear daughter: Huldah Kemunto

To my loving sons: Kevin Moindi, Philip Nuru and Henry Mogere

To my sisters: Hannah, Rael and Jane.

To my brothers: Micah and Henry.

To my friends

For your sincere and timely prayers, support and encouragement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to register my honest appreciation to the Almighty God for His providence, love and protective care that has seen me this far. I direct my humble and heartfelt thanks to my supervisors, Dr. Jane Oduor and Dr. Isaiah Mwaniki, for their tireless contributions in making this research. May our Lord God and Redeemer sincerely sustain you for your support in shaping this project.

I genuinely wish to thank my lecturers who instructed me through the whole M.A. programme. They are Dr. Jane Oduor, Prof. Okoth Okombo, Prof. Lucia Omondi, Dr. Gideon Marete, Dr. Lilian Kaviti, Dr. Helga Schroeder, Dr. Ayub Mukhwana, Dr. James Michira and Mr. Mungania. They took me through course work

My classmates will never be left out either. I would like to acknowledge your co-operation and assistance. So thank you Adelide, Christine, Damaris, Diana, Muriungi, Ghati, Joyce, Matifari, Mbara, Musee, Mutie, Mwasusu, Mwenda, Oketch, Taitumu, Rehema and Ziada,

Special thanks are directed to my loving wife, Rodah Kerubo, for her love, endurance, support and encouragement all through these trying moments. To my daughter Huldah and sons Mogere, Kevin and Philip, please do accept my heartfelt love and appreciation.

I also appreciate other family members for their moral and material support. I truly thank my mother Grace and sisters, Hannah, Rael and Jane. The same is extended to Machini and Jerusa, brother and sister-in-law, respectively. These two friends stand tall among many, they are: Mr. Ogachi and Mr. Nyang'au, God bless you. It is not possible to mention all who matter but I have this for you: may our Everlasting Father, remember you, in your days of need.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AD	(Latin, Anno Domino) the year of our Lord
BC	Before Christ
KJV	King James Version
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
Rev.	Revelation
S. D. A.	Seventh-day Adventist

ABSTRACT

Metaphors are among language universal elements freely used in normal conversation and writing. It is on that note that it can be said that metaphors are the fabric or basic structure of language. This is why the study was carried out to establish why these metaphors are understood and interpreted differently by different groups of people, in order to ascertain the possible causes of varying interpretations and their remedies.

Subsequently, some metaphors from the Bible were identified and described using relevance theory. A few of these metaphors were taken to randomly chosen S.D.A. lay leaders for interpretation. After the interpretations of the metaphors by the S.D.A. lay leaders, they were analyzed using the same theory.

The outcome of the investigation showed that the lay leaders' interpretations of metaphors were very different from one another. It was established from the data analyzed that the Respondents' level of education, religious or theological background, source of materials and years of experience were the main causes of varying interpretations. The study also recommended refresher courses, workshops, seminars and adult literacy programmes for the lay leaders as remedies to reduce the varying interpretations of the Bible.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

One of the challenges facing the present generation of Christians is to understand the religious concepts and beliefs which are expressed in the Bible. The same text in the Bible is given different interpretations by the clergy from the same denomination as well as from other different Christian religious denominations. This leaves the present generation in a state of confusion, wherever sermons are being given. These concepts and belief systems as well as their teaching, are mainly dependent on how the messages are communicated by the members of the clergy. The fact that the Bible uses figurative language complicates the situation further. Members of the clergy interpret the messages given through figurative language in different ways. Among the most exploited figurative language that dominates biblical texts are the metaphors.

The term 'metaphor' is traditionally viewed as a figurative device of language where something is referred to implicitly, in terms of something else. A metaphor, as a figure of speech, is an expression taken from one field of experience and used to say something in another field. Timammy, (2002:150) states that from a stylistic point of view we seek to view metaphor as a figure of speech, one argues that

cases of metaphor are part of the fabric of language. This is a confirmation of our definition of metaphor already mentioned. Language in turn, as a medium of communication is used as the main tool for passing across the message of truth to the world. The Bible was originally written in Hebrew, the Old Testament was translated into Greek and later, it was translated into Latin by Jerome, a contemporary of Martin Luther and other early Christian Reformers. Martin Luther translated the Bible into German and several English translations followed during the Reformation, until the King James Bible was accepted as the Authorized Version (Apostolos-Cappadona 1995:60).

In analyzing meaning in language, it is noted that the difference between literal and figurative language is similar to the difference between the denotation, (the dictionary definition) of a word and its connotation (mental associations). The use of metaphor is therefore based on the connotations or mental associations of the expressions in question (Wehmeier 2000:435&692).

Figurative language makes it possible for human beings to think and communicate beyond the limitations of language. Under Ethnolinguistics, metaphors are found almost in every ethnic community. For example, in the Kisii tribe, metaphors are known as (*emebayeno*). An example is “Omokungu omuya mbokano botingire bogaika.” A good wife is a well-tuned harp. Terms and their meanings: “omokungu omuya” is a well behaved, wise and respectable woman (fair lady). “Obokano

botingire bogaika” is a well-tuned/set eight stringed musical instrument (the result of fairness).

The background/experience is that: a well-tuned musical instrument produces nice sounds that people love listening and dancing to. Its English equivalent/explanation can be said that, a good woman wins the admiration of the society and is well loved by her family members. This metaphor’s life application is the value of a good wife (Bosire and Machogu 2013: 1374).

Metaphors enable our minds to express the complexity of ideas by conveying meanings beyond the literal definitions of words, therefore, making our world meaningful. The use of metaphor should lead to a better understanding of literary work and the Bible as well. However, biblical metaphors have been given various interpretations by different preachers.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Various interpretations are given to metaphors in the Bible by different people. On the one hand, it is appreciated that, if a metaphor is well interpreted it can create a good picture of the relationship between the known and the unknown. On the other hand, if a metaphor is inappropriately interpreted, misunderstandings will arise as shown in the following three interpretations by three different authors.

In Revelation (3:15-16), the Holy Spirit through John the revelator is addressing the Laodicean Church in the following words: “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou were cold or hot. So, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth” (KJV Bible).

According to Wieland (2004),

Laodicea means the judging of my people, the most sick body of believers which is neither hot nor cold, hot being intensely in earnest full of burning zeal, moved with love for God and for His truth. To be cold is to feel exactly the opposite, to be shivering and realize one’s dangerous condition and to have a strong desire to come to the fire to be warmed.

Adeyomo (2006) says that Laodicea was a rich and powerful city. Its prosperity was among beautiful bluish-black wool which contrasted with the white clothes of sanctification. The bluish-black wool was the highly valued colour of the materials of the clothes of the inhabitants. The Church Laodicea was comfortable, smug and lukewarm. On the one hand the author does not give the connotation of the word lukewarm, nor does he give the meaning of hot and cold in his interpretations. Wieland, on the other hand gives the meaning of hot and cold in his own way as earlier quoted.

David and Pat (1998:554) say that Laodicea had good banking services and furniture of black woolen clothing which made Laodicea affluent. The town was proud of its medical school and renowned for a special ointment for sore eyes. Laodicea water supply was channeled from the nearby hot springs. The Church was like its water lukewarm, meaning that it was in a state of indecisiveness.

According to Horn (1979:658), yet another commentator, Laodicea means:

People's court of justice or people's judgement. It was an important city of western Asia Minor, belonging to Phrygia. The city gained prominence when it became part of the Roman province of Asia, organized in the Second Century BC. It was famous in NT times as a trade centre for a glossy, black wool and black garments locally manufactured from it, both articles being exported to other countries. Also important, throughout the Eastern world was the medicinal phrygian powder used for the eyes.

The interpretations given above are quite interesting. Horn gave a detailed historical background of the city of Laodicea and finally arrived at a near accurate interpretation of the lukewarm Church. He is followed by Wieland who interpreted hot and cold literally. But Adeyemo briefly mentioned that the Church was comfortable, smug and lukewarm. David and Pat on their part implied that the name lukewarm came as a result of the water from nearby hot springs which became lukewarm on reaching the city, after passing through a hot and dry place.

If David and Pat's (1998) interpretation is taken into consideration, our assumption is that the Laodicean Church is good. This is due to the fact that, water that is lukewarm is good for drinking and bathing. On the other hand hot water can be harmful if used for drinking or bathing. This is the interesting part of the given interpretations mentioned above. In case we accept the assumption that the lukewarm Church was good, then we will go contrary to Jesus' assertion that He will spew the lukewarm Church out of His mouth. What is not good is spewed or thrown out of our mouths, meaning that the Church's condition of being lukewarm

is not acceptable.

In my view therefore, lukewarm in this case seems to be explained by the Church's condition of being in the middle of hot and cold. This interpretation is similar to that of Wieland, which was mentioned in the previous quotation.

Consequently, the Laodicean Church which was lukewarm gives the implication of being neither cold nor hot, unenthusiastic, cool, halfhearted and unexcited. It can also refer to being indifferent, apathetic, and subdued or adopting strange ideas which constrained them from serving the true God. This condition was brought about by the Church having allowed the penetration of secular influence into it (White 1986:261). The Church, as an organization of worshippers, was complacent or too satisfied with the prevailing circumstances. They freely joined secular organisations whose activities were contrary to the Bible teachings. At the same time these people claimed to be staunch Christians. So the Church was half-baked because it was neither fully committed to religious virtue nor fully secular and that is why it was described as being lukewarm.

Wieland's (2004) interpretation of the word 'cold' as shivering and in need of warmth is not appropriate either. Metaphorically the word 'cold' may imply without emotion, unfriendly or lacking warm feelings. This brief discussion shows that the metaphor which we expect to be interpreted in the same way by all

commentators is given different or varying interpretations. This is just one text that is given varying interpretations and yet it is meant for the same congregation or readers.

The foregoing problem can be summarized in the following questions: What are some of the metaphors in the book of Revelation? Do different interpretations of metaphors bring about differences in meaning? What are the causes of variation in meaning? Are there solutions to the causes?

1.3 Objectives

In view of the statement of the problem discussed above the objectives of the study are:

1. To identify and explain the meaning of some metaphors used in the book of Revelation, using relevance theory.
2. To investigate the different meanings brought out by different interpretations of metaphors.
3. To investigate the possible causes of variation in meaning.
4. To identify possible ways of eliminating the causes of the variation in meaning.

1.4 Hypotheses

1. Various interpretations of metaphors bring about different meanings.
2. There are identifiable causes of variation in meaning.
3. There are remedies to reduce or eliminate the variation in the interpretation of metaphors.

1.5 Rationale/Justification

The present study focuses on some metaphors in Revelation and various interpretations by different people. Some of the interpretations may be confusing to the audience. Appropriate interpretation of biblical metaphors is necessary for pastors, their audience and the general readers of the Bible. This is because the message in the Bible is meant for all the people of God. They need to get accurate information, especially, the message in the book of Revelation because it is a revelation of Jesus Christ. Given that Christians are waiting for Jesus' second coming, it is important for the metaphors used in the book of Revelation to be understood, hence the need for their interpretation.

This work is important in that it shows that the interpretation may either be appropriate or inappropriate. The interpretation which gives semantic interpretation only is considered inappropriate while that which gives both semantic and pragmatic interpretation may be said to be appropriate. This is because semantic interpretation usually includes a surface meaning and the general

background of the metaphor while a pragmatic approach gives a symbolic or implied meaning under a given context. This makes the text under consideration to be understood better by the congregation.

Remedies given for the causes of inappropriate interpretations are useful to the clergy, Bible students such as trainee pastors and lay leaders of the Church. The work will be of great use to language teachers as metaphors are part of figurative language. Language as a medium of communication is necessary for any information to be moved from the source to the target. This situation calls for the intervention of language experts, among them are language teachers to handle linguistic issues in various fields, including the field of religion. The clergy will acquire more skills on interpretation of metaphor and therefore avoid giving their audience half baked, shallow, and poorly researched sermons sometimes based on rumour.

1.6 Scope and Limitations

Metaphors are widely used in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. This study is confined to the use of some metaphors in the book of Revelation in the New Testament.

The Bible uses several figures of speech. Some of these include proverbs, irony, sarcasm, satire, similes, and metaphors among others. This study examines

metaphors only. Some metaphors have been identified at random, from the book of Revelation. These metaphors are described within relevance theory. Only S.D.A. lay leaders of Nyamira Conference in Nyamira County will be used in the sample. A Conference is a large administrative unit in the S.D.A. Church with several pastoral districts under it. And a single pastoral district has a number of Churches under its control.

1.7 Literature Review

The focus in this section is on the literature which is relevant and helpful to this study and also on the theories guiding it. They will aid this research in its developmental stages down to the conclusion.

1.7.1 Theoretical Literature

Simpson (2004: 145) raises a theoretical issue to do with the stylistic analysis of metaphor. He says that one of the functions of metaphor is to alter or transform our perception of the target domain, while leaving unaltered our perception of the vehicle for the metaphor. The target domain is the topic you want to describe through the metaphor. For example, in the metaphor “Jesus is the Lamb of God” the target domain in this case is Jesus while the Lamb is the source or vehicle which remains unchanged. This transference of meaning is relevant to our study.

Cognitive linguists see the existence of many novel metaphorical expressions as

arising from complex blending processes that reflect ad hoc, creative, thought processes. Despite the fact that relevance theory which we have adopted, suggests that metaphor expresses one form of “loose talk” which rests on an important distinction between ‘descriptive’ and ‘interpretive’ representations. Descriptive use is the regular use of an utterance or thought to represent a state of affairs in the world. While the Interpretive use is the use of an utterance or thought to represent another thought or utterance which it resembles in content (Schroeder 2011:2). For example, metaphors are understood through interpretive representations. Any representation with a propositional form can either describe states of affairs (including hypothetical states of affairs) or interpret another representation with a propositional form (Sperber and Wilson, 2004). The metaphor “Jesus is the Lamb of God” is interpreted as implying that Jesus adopts the humble and harmless state. He is the sacrificial literal lamb. The identification of ‘descriptive’ and ‘interpretive’ representations are relevant to our current study.

Conceptual metaphor theory is predominantly concerned with generalizations about metaphor and therefore cognitive linguistics has not shown a huge interest in the role of context in the understanding of metaphors. According to conceptual metaphor theory, conceptual metaphors belong to our knowledge of the world and we understand most metaphorical expressions by activating corresponding conceptual metaphors (Tendahl and Gibbs 2008:1840).

Another example of a conceptual metaphor can be traced in the Bible. King David, in the Bible, said that “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He leads me in green pastures and clean and slow moving waters...” (Psalms 23:1-5). The metaphors used here include: shepherd, green, pastures, clean and slow moving waters. These are all familiar metaphorical expressions. They connect us to our knowledge of the world and this is the jurisdiction of conceptual metaphors.

On Grice’s account, a metaphor arises from the exploitation of the maxim of quality. Metaphors, hyperbole and irony are blatant violations (floutings) of the maxim of truthfulness (“Do not say what you believe to be false”). The maxim of truthfulness is designed to convey a related true implicature, (Levinson 1983:156-157).

Grice’s theory of implicature. The term “implicature” is used to account for what a speaker can imply, suggest, or mean, as distinct from what the speaker literally says. Grice distinguishes two kinds of implicatures: conventional and conversational. A conventional implicature depends upon something additional to what is truth-conditional in the normal meaning of words while a conversational implicature derives from a set of more general conditions which determine the proper conduct of conversation. This Grice calls the cooperative principle. He then develops it into nine maxims classified into four categories:

Maxim of quantity

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required.
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Maxim of quality

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

Maxim of relation

Be relevant.

Maxim of manner

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief.
4. Be orderly (Levinson 1983:155).

Metaphors can be well tackled under relevance theory because it calls for mutual understanding in the side of the addressee.

The theory of metaphor comprehension also known as *Invariance Hypothesis*; postulates that our understanding of a metaphor works in one direction only (Simpson 2004:211). Thus, in the metaphor “lake which burns with fire and brimstone” (Rev. 20:7-10), our conception of lake is configured into a new way of thinking. The ‘lake’ is the source domain while ‘fire and brimstone’ is the target domain in this case. Through the metaphor, a mental picture is drawn to enable us to understand that the fire mentioned above is not an ordinary fire but a huge one which cannot be quantified just like lake water cannot be quantified. The fire is blazing so intensely that it can melt any known substance.

Njeru (2010:15-18) who has adopted relevance theory in data analysis, says that, as the name suggests, relevance theory has to do with relevant information from the speaker to addressee. Relevance can be understood or read as a statement. Our minds pick out that which is worthwhile thinking or talking about. Ochoki (2010:29) says that: the main tenet of relevance theory according to Sperber and

Wilson (1995:118) is the principle of relevance. The principle is essential in explaining human communication. It is enough on its own to account for the interaction of linguistic meaning and contextual factors in utterance interpretation. A mismatch between the context envisaged by the speaker and the one actually used by the hearer may result in a misunderstanding. To avoid misunderstanding, the context actually used by the hearer should be identical to the one envisaged by the speaker.

The interpretation uses shared assumptions of the world. Shared assumptions or contextual assumptions are items of background knowledge relevant to the conversation. These are among other terms adopted in our current study, because they effect adequate interpretation of metaphors. Cognitive principle entails cognitive effort which refers to the actual mental effort used by the individual to interpret an utterance before achieving his expectation of relevance, as it has been seen in our interpretation of metaphors.

Cognitive linguists have traditionally explained understanding of novel metaphors as crafted extensions or elaborations of conceptual metaphors. In this case, the partial mapping from source to target domain extended beyond the standard mapping as it is found in conventional mappings. Examples of an extension of the “theories are buildings” metaphor would be the utterance. This theory has thousands of little rooms and long winding corridors. An extension such as the

“theories are buildings” metaphorical utterance is conventional or novel, because rooms and corridors are usually not mapped to the domain of theories (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 53). In relevance theoretical framework, the hearer of the metaphor “theories are buildings” had to answer questions (1a – 1c) in identifying the speaker’s meaning.

1(a) What was the speaker’s explicit meaning? Theories have a framework within which to work just like rooms have demarcating walls.

(b) What was the speaker’s implicit meaning? Theories are limited in scope.

(c) What was the intended context (i.e. set of contextual assumptions)? There is some assumed shared background knowledge about theories and rooms between the speaker and the hearer (Schroeder 2011:25).

The aim of the above given explanation is to show how a hearer using the relevance theoretic Compression Procedure might disambiguate, assign reference, assemble an appropriate context and derive implicatures as part of the overall process of constructing interpretation that satisfies his expectation of relevance. It should be noted that all communication is constrained by the search for relevance. The search for relevance has very much to do with the available context for the interpretation of the utterance. If there is no context which is background information against which the meaning of an utterance is interpreted, there is no interpretation (Schroeder 2011).

1.7.2 Metaphors in the Book of Revelation

Biblical commentators have written a lot of commentaries on metaphors.

Some of these commentaries are examined in this section.

According to Horn (1979),

Revelation [Greek Apocalupsis], or apocalypse meaning disclosure, unveiling, or something revealed is the last book of the NT, to which its author, John, gives the title: The Revelation of Jesus Christ. Originally, it was written in Greek language although the author's native language was Aramaic. Early Christian scholars assign the writing of Revelation to the close of Domitian's reign, about A.D. 96. Domitian encouraged the cult emperor worship and wanted to be addressed by the title lord, which Christians reserved for Jesus Christ alone. When Domitian tried to force his subjects to worship him, he naturally encountered stiff opposition from the Christians. This situation caused John's exile to Patmos and thus the writing of Revelation.

The book is a revelation of Jesus Christ at work perfecting a people on earth to reflect His flawless character. The focus of attention is the climactic end of this world and the establishment of a new world. John records a series of seven messages addressed to the seven Churches (Rev.1:4). To each a message of instruction, warning and encouragement was addressed, particularly appropriate to its own situation. In view of the fact that in Revelation the imminent return of Christ is stressed.

David and Pat, (1978) say the following about 'God's New World':

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth... and there was no more sea (Rev. 21:1). And there shall be no more curses: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; His servants shall serve Him. And there shall be no light there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign forever and ever (Rev. 22: 3 & 5 KJV). The world in which we are living has been experiencing war and destruction, diseases, corruption, insecurity and death. With everything evil gone and death destroyed, this is the Heaven on Earth (God's New World). The cities of the world have their riches and beauty, but, they are nothing compared to the glorious splendor, the shining radiance of the city of God where there is perfect peace, freedom and security.

The section is relevant to this study in that the metaphor 'God's new world' is given non-literal interpretation which we are also advocating, even though literal interpretation is left out. The literal one is this world with proper conservation measures adhered to in future, after the soil regains its lost fertility.

Wieland (2004: 257), on the other hand, interprets the metaphor "God's New World", as follows:

"It was only sin that brought a curse upon the present world. Floods, droughts, earth quakes, salty seas, swamps, wildernesses, deserts, useless mountains, ferocious animals, sorrow, fear and human tears. This curse, meaning the calamities listed above are witnessed in several places around the world. As the "tree" was cast into the cursed waters of Marah making it good for drinking (Exodus 15:23-25), so the Lamb of God's death on the tree of crucifixion has taken away the curse. With the curse taken away, no fear will drive us to hide from God, just as Adam and Eve did. Now, once again, the children of God will look

upon His face with joy”.

On his comment about ‘Seven’: (Horn 1979:980) says that ‘Seven’ was a sacred number among the Hebrews and the peoples of East, Central Europe and in some countries of Asia. In the biblical context, number seven is a symbol of perfection as it unfolds in our subsequent interpretations.

The above given literature on metaphor interpretation by different commentators, is relevant to this work. This is because interpretation of metaphors is our area of interest; especially biblical metaphors, from the book of Revelation to be precise.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

In this study relevance theoretical framework was adopted. Under relevance theory, metaphor is approached from a different perspective, which is rooted in a broad theoretical framework for explaining cognition and communication.

Relevance Theoretic Assumptions about Communication entails that: information can be relevant without being communicated at all. For example, you see me walking towards the door of my house with a key in my hand; you will conclude that I am going to open that door without being told. And information can be relevant in one context and not in another. If I say it is too cold in Nairobi today, the same coldness may not apply in Mombasa. So the basic notion is relevance in a

context. By ‘context’ we mean a set of mentally represented assumptions used in interpreting a given item of information. Information is relevant in a context when it interacts with the context to yield cognitive effects. Consider the illustration below:

Cognitive effects (of interpreting an input in a context) are listed as follow:

2(a) Strengthening a contextual assumption: I run to the bus stop to catch a bus and attend my lecture. At the stop there is a bus which is almost full, so I board it.

(b) Contradicting and eliminating a contextual assumption: in the process of running, I turn a corner and see a bus pulling away from the stop. So I won’t catch the bus.

(c) Combining with a contextual assumption to yield a contextual implication: (i.e. conclusions deducible from new information and context together, but from neither new information nor context on their own). If I failed to achieve my earlier aim of catching the bus and taking my lecture the outcome will be negative. There will be no relevance between failure to catch a bus and the surrounding context (Schroeder 2011: 35). This is so mainly because the result is unexpected.

The Communicative Principle of Relevance states that: every utterance (or other ostensive stimulus) creates a presumption of its own optimal relevance. The

utterance should be at least relevant enough to be worth processing. It should be the most relevant one which is compatible with the speaker's abilities and preferences.

Relevance theory was developed by Sperber and Wilson, (1986) as an attempt to develop the Gricean Pragmatics. Wilson argued that Grice's four maxims (quality, quantity, relevance and manner) are subsumed under the principle of relevance. This is why we have given relevance theory, top priority in contrast with the theory of implicature. Relevance is understood in the way our minds work when we hear an utterance or read the statement (this tackles conceptual metaphors): for example on receiving a visitor in my room I may decide to say "please have a seat" the hearer will consider the context of communication. If there is a seat around he or she will positively respond by sitting but if there is no seat nearby, the hearer will just ignore it as irrelevant (Schroeder 2011:34).

Relevance theorist said that creative metaphors are characterized by and carry weak implicatures. In order to understand these series of weak implicatures the listener requires additional cognitive efforts. According to the principle of relevance, extra effects will not be achieved by saying directly that Jesus has conquering power over the devil and his agents'. These extra effects are called 'poetic effects'. Metaphors therefore, create poetic effects. So, relevance theory suggests that metaphors and other figures of speech are examples of "loose talk".

“Speaking metaphorically is just another way of adhering to the presumption of optimal relevance” part of which can be achieved by poetic effects (Sperber and Wilson, 1995:270).

Metaphors are understood as instances of loose use of linguistic elements. These loosening or narrowing of lexical concepts are necessary in certain contexts. Loosening is to inhibit some of the lexical concept’s encyclopedic and logical information to make the ad hoc concept’s denotation larger. This is also known as broadening of a word’s original meaning. For example, the word meat in Old English as used in the Bible (KJV) meant all types of food. Njuguna (2010:13) quotes Huang (2007) who explains that ad hoc concept construction means, the pragmatic adjustment of a lexical concept. This adjustment is either a narrowing or broadening or a combination of both. Narrowing is to add some constraining information to make their denotation smaller. These two techniques may be employed simultaneously that is, loosening and narrowing. Alternatively, we may even create ad hoc concepts with a completely disjoint denotation from the lexical concepts.

Relevance theory has three main aims. First, it tries to deal with how hearers or readers understand what is explicitly or implicitly conveyed by utterances. Second, it acknowledges that communication takes place at a risk and tries to explain how, despite that it can sometimes succeed. And third it aims to do this in a way that is

compatible with human cognition (Sperber and Wilson 1995).

Relevance is defined as a “property of inputs to cognitive processes”. For example, all people eat food and so it is a normal occurrence. In relevance, communication is taken as a relationship between the speaker’s communicative intention and the propositional form of any sentence. This relationship is outlined in the communicative principle of relevance (Sperber and Wilson 1998: 190).

Relevance-theoretic account of utterance interpretation proposes that a fundamental assumption about human cognition is that people pay attention to information that seems most relevant to them. Sperber and Wilson (1995:260) formulate their 'Cognitive Principle of Relevance' that is to say: “Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance”. With this regard to communication they specify that every utterance starts out as a request for someone else's attention and this creates an expectation of relevance. This idea is called the ‘Communicative Principle of Relevance’.

According to Sperber and Wilson (2004: 613) expectations of relevance provide the criterion for evaluating possible interpretations of a speaker’s utterance. The basic interpretation process that follows from this idea is described as follows:

3(a) Follow a path of least effort of computing cognitive effects. Test interpretive hypotheses (disambiguation, reference resolutions,

implicatures, etc) in order of accessibility

(b) Stop when your expectations of relevance are satisfied (after communication is effected and the speaker having achieved his or her objective). That is, follow the factual attributes of the referents as in the metaphor “Jesus the Lamb of God” (John 1:29), due to the fact that metaphors operate at connotational level not defining attributes explicitly.

This present work was guided by relevance theory because it is different from most other pragmatic theories for example, Grice’s theory of pragmatics, (Levinson 1983). Due to the fact that relevance theory takes seriously the information that utterance interpretation is a psychological matter, and is affected by cognitive as well as social and linguistic factors, including mental effort (Schroeder, 2011:25).

Relevance therefore, was preferable to other theories in that it takes into consideration an utterance’s explicatures and implicatures. An explicature is what is said by a specific context in which it is uttered. While an implicature is any meaning that a word or sentence may have that goes beyond its surface meaning (Matthews 2007:342).

1.9 Methodology

The total number of Respondents contacted in this research was twenty five, nineteen men and six women. This was because men seem to be the majority in leadership positions as compared to women in the S.D.A. Church in Nyamira Conference. All of them were given numbers one to twenty five, for the purpose of identification.

1.9.1 Data Collection

Data was collected from written sources. These were mainly the Bible, where metaphors from the book of Revelation in the New Testament were identified, and commentaries which gave more information on metaphors. The metaphors therefore identified were written down and then taken to the Church elders. These were lay leaders of the S.D.A. Church. They were given fifteen metaphors randomly chosen from the book of Revelation, for interpretation. Twenty-five lay leaders were identified and each of them received a questionnaire. These leaders were briefed on what was required of them, before they were left to do the assignment independently. One of the requirements was to read and understand the biblical quotations, before they embarked on the actual task of interpretation. They therefore, interpreted the metaphors according to their understanding. After two

weeks, the questionnaires were collected at a pre-arranged venue.

The twenty-five S.D.A. Church leaders chosen were from five different Churches within Nyamira Conference because a single Church could not provide the required number of elders. Their years of experience ranged from five to twenty years. The leaders' chronological age was taken into consideration. It ranged from thirty-one to seventy years.

The Church elders' geographical area of residence, was taken into consideration. The location of choice was Nyamira Conference of the S.D.A. Church in Nyamira County. The population was distributed evenly because there were thirteen elders in Upper Nyamira and another twelve in Lower Nyamira, respectively, so as to cover the whole Conference. A place called Manga Ridge, was the demarcating line between Upper and Lower regions of Nyamira Conference. The Conference's geographical area covers both Nyamira and part of Kisii Counties. It was purposively selected because of its close proximity between the researcher and all the respondents.

1.9.2 Data analysis

In the research relevance theory was used in analyzing the metaphors. The Cognitive and the Communicative Principle of Relevance were of great importance. This is because human beings are able to understand covert or implicit information that is relevant to them. The interpretations of leaders were collected

at an agreed venue. At the site, eighteen respondents returned the questionnaires in person while the remaining seven just sent their copies. The questionnaires were examined to confirm that they were the ones which were given out. Then the elders' work was analyzed as follows: literal, non-literal, a mixture of literal and non-literal and that which deviated from the three already mentioned.

1.10 Significance of the study

This study enhanced better understanding of biblical metaphors, especially from the book of Revelation. The study is helpful to Bible readers to acquaint themselves with the use of metaphors as a figurative device of language for effective communication. Metaphors used in the Bible, call for the reader's higher reasoning. Pastors and language teachers are not left out either. The pastors on one hand need to apply both literal and non-literal approach to metaphor interpretation. Language teachers on the other hand should be well equipped on semantic and pragmatic knowledge of linguistic elements. The use of this figure of speech then achieves the goal of convincing, informing and persuading the reader to make an informed decision.

CHAPTER TWO

METAPHORS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a definition of metaphor, different types of metaphors, their varied uses and application. Different scholars have interpreted metaphors differently in specific discourse analysis. Different features of metaphors are identified and analyzed under a relevance theoretical framework.

2.2 Definition of the Metaphor

The term metaphor has been regarded as a phenomenon of language, at least since it was coined in ancient Greece. *Metaphora* is derived from *meta-*, ‘beyond’ and *phora*, which is derived from *pherein* ‘to carry’. In the original etymological sense *meta-phor* refers to a kind of movement from one thing to another. Metaphor can be defined in general terms as a way of expression, in language or any other semiotic system, in which one ‘meaning’ or ‘thing’ is described as or looked at in terms of another (Taverniers 2002:1).

A metaphor is a figurative device in language where something is referred to, implicitly, in terms of something else. Metaphor involves identification of resemblances. It goes further by causing transference, where properties are transferred from one concept to another. Under cognitive semantics, there are two

concepts in metaphor which have been mentioned already in Chapter One. The two concepts are the source domain and the target domain. Consider the metaphor ‘lion of the tribe of Judah’ (Rev. 5:5), here Jesus is the target domain while the lion is the source domain.

It can further be that a metaphor is seen as a kind of decorative addition to ordinary plain language. It is seen as something outside the normal which requires special forms of interpretation from listeners or readers. If taken literally or semantically, for example, Jesus is a person on the one hand, and a lamb on the other hand (Rev. 19:9). The utterance is defective (violates conversational principles, speech acts and semantic nonsense). This calls for the need to turn to a pragmatic approach in interpretation. This metaphor implies that Jesus was sent to the world to die on the cross as a sacrificial lamb to save man from sin.

2.3 Types of metaphors

The types of metaphors discussed in this section are listed as follows:

4(a) subdued metaphors or implied images of justice for example, “Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him” (Rev. 1:7, KJV).

(b) Complex metaphors also known as telescoped metaphors of which, one metaphor facilitates another. For example, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end” (Rev.1:8). The beginning will not be complete

without making mention of the end.

(c) Structural metaphors sometimes called functional or organic metaphors.

They are mainly symbolic in nature. For example, “Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth” (Rev.17:5). Babylon symbolizes an apostate Church full of wicked followers.

(d) A dead metaphor is one in which the sense of a transferred image is absent, an example: “to grasp a concept” and “to gather what you have understood” use physical action as a metaphor for understanding. Most people do not visualize the action. Dead metaphors normally go unnoticed.

Dead metaphors in English can be native Germanic words in which the original, metaphorical sense has become obsolete for example, a cliché which refer to an overused expression. Any metaphoricity in their sense is only relevant in a diachronic or etymological perspective. Some people distinguish between a dead metaphor and a cliché. Others use “dead metaphor” to denote both.

(e) A mixed metaphor is another type that leaps from one identification to a second identification inconsistent with the first. “I smell a rat [...] but I will nip him in the bud”---Irish politician Boyle Roche. This form is often used as a parody of metaphor itself: “If we can hit the bull’s-eye then the rest of the rhetoric is the skill of using language in speech or writing in a special way that influences or entertains (Wikipedia 2012).

2.3.1 A Comparison of metaphors with other types of analogy

Where a metaphor asserts the two objects in the comparison are identical on the point of comparison, a simile merely asserts a similarity. For this reason a metaphor is generally considered more forceful than a simile.

The metaphor category also contains these specialised types:

5(a) An allegory is an extended metaphor wherein a story illustrates an important attribute of the subject. The Holy Spirit addressing the Church in Thyatira concerning her righteous deeds but changed to tolerate evil, this does not please God (Rev. 18:23). This is a warning to God's people the world over who turn to sin, that, they will never escape punishment.

(b) The next one is catachresis which is a mixed metaphor used by design and accident (a rhetorical fault). An example of a catachresis has been given early on mixed metaphors.

(c) The third one is a parable which is an extended metaphor narrated as an anecdote illustrating and teaching a moral lesson, such as the Pharisee and the Publican. The Pharisee was boastful, arrogant and had self-righteousness while the Publican was humble and remorseful for his sins. In return, the Pharisee was rejected by God when it was all blessing to the humble and repentant Publican (Luke 18:9-14).

Metaphors, like other types of analogy, can usefully be distinguished from metonymy as one of the two fundamental modes of thought. Consider the following examples: using the White House to refer to the US president

(metonymy) and the Lamb of God for Jesus (metaphor). Metaphor and analogy both work by bringing together two concepts from different conceptual domains, whereas metonymy works by using one element from a given domain to refer to another closely related element (Matthews 2007).

2.3.2 Features of Metaphor

This subsection is dealing with the identification and explanation of different features of metaphors. Number 6(a) below is the first one to be identified.

6(a) Conventionality

Conventionality follows the normal way of doing things and it also refers to dead metaphors. Cognitive semantics argue against the concept of dead metaphors. It points out that even familiar metaphors can be given new life to retain their metaphorical status (Saeed, 2003:348). Saeed uses the metaphor UP-DOWN as an example. Examples of the metaphor UP are: ‘Our business hit the peak last month’ meaning it did well, ‘high in spirits’ meaning happy. While DOWN implies negativity for example, ‘She was low in spirits’ meaning discouraged.

(b) Systematicity

The metaphors follow a given sequence or chronological order. Lakoff and Turner (1989) use the metaphor ‘life is a journey’ to explain systematicity. Thus, birth is often described as arrival as is ‘the baby is due next week,’ or ‘she has a baby on the way’ and death as departure as in ‘she passed away

this morning' or 'he's gone', (Saeed, 2003: 348). Life is a journey with departure and arrival. In this metaphor therefore, life is seen as something in transit with a place of origin, point of departure and destination.

(c) Asymmetry

Asymmetry has to do with having two sides or parts which are not the same in size or shape, this refers to the way metaphors are directional. The listener is provoked to transfer features from source to target for example the metaphor 'life is a journey' is asymmetrical and the mapping is directional not otherwise. It cannot be turned the other way round as, 'a journey is life'. The same applies with the metaphor 'the tree of life' (Rev. 3:22). We cannot say 'the life of a tree' without altering the meaning of the original metaphor 'the tree of life'.

(d) Abstraction

This deals with a general idea not based on any particular real person, thing or situation, the quality of being abstract or conceptualizing an idea. A typical metaphor uses a more concrete source to describe a more abstract target. For example, 'life is a journey' exhibits this: the common experience of physically moving about the earth is used to characterize the mysterious process of birth, ageing and death.

2.3.3 Interpretive Process of Metaphors

Factual attributes of referents should be adhered to, due to the fact that metaphors operate at connotational level. These referents avoid defining attributes of metaphors linked to parables and proverbs. Metaphors are implicit similes, so meaning is obtained through inference. Semantic process of interpretation which calls for the use of comparison theory of similes with suppressed predications of similarity is used. It applies a semantic approach to a phenomenon in the analysis of a lexical item. This is also known as literal interpretation because semantic features of words and phrases are considered. In order for the interpretation to be complete, literal interpretation which provides background knowledge and non-literal interpretation with the implied meaning should be applied.

Interactive theory is also applied under the semantic process. Here a linguistic expression embedded in another literal expression, and the meaning of the expression interacts with the earlier one and changes the final meaning. For example, two young men meet and greet each other happily. One of them pulls a pistol and shoots dead the other friend. The interaction of the two young men at first gives the impression of intimate friendship while the second incident of shooting shows enmity between them. So the conclusion about the whole episode becomes quite different.

Pragmatic approach, is another method of the interpretive process. It can also be referred to as non-literal approach to interpretation of metaphors. Pragmatics has to do with language plus context. So, context is necessary in achieving appropriate interpretation of metaphors as already noted (Schroeder 2011:9).

2.3.4 The Role of Metaphor in Ordinary Language

As already mentioned in chapter one, metaphor is seen as a decorative additive to language. It needs extra intelligence in the part of the hearer to digest what the speaker wants to pass across. Gibbs (1994) argues that ideas such as these given above; can be broken down into a number of more specific hypotheses:

7(a) Metaphorical thought plays some role in changing the meaning of words and expressions over time but does not motivate contemporary speaker's use and understanding of language.

(b) Metaphorical thought motivates the linguistic meaning that have current linguistic communities or may have some role in an idealized speakers/hearers' understanding of language. But metaphorical thought does not actually play any part in an individual speaker's ability to make sense of or process language.

(c) Metaphorical thought motivate an individual speaker's use and understanding of why various words and expressions mean what they do but does not play any role in people's ordinary comprehension of everyday language.

(d) Metaphorical thought functions automatically meaning as these hypotheses are interconnected and reflect a hierarchy of possibilities about the interaction between metaphoric patterns of thought and different aspects of language use and understanding.

Consider also the following quotation: Lakoff and Turner (1989) describe metaphors associated with an up-down orientation as spatial metaphors.

For example:

8(a) I am feeling up (my spirits rose)

(b) I am feeling down (I am depressed)

Good is up; bad is down; for example;

Things are looking up, we hit a peak last year, he is in a superior position, he fell from power, she is my social inferior (Saeed, 2003:347).

2.4 Interpretation of Metaphors using Relevance Theory

In this section, the selected metaphors from the book of Revelation are explained within relevance theory. Having looked at the above metaphors, let us consider what relevance theory has in store. Relevance like cognitive linguistics aims at capturing important aspects of the reason for metaphor, and how people ordinarily use and understand metaphor in daily life. Both theories offer essential insights into the role of metaphor in cognition and language use, and suggest detailed hypotheses on metaphor understanding that surely are part of a comprehensive

theory of metaphor.

Relevance theoretic account of utterance interpretation proposes that a fundamental assumption about human cognition is that people pay attention to information that seems most relevant to them. Our cognitive systems have developed with time such that our brains allocate their resources efficiently, or towards relevant stimuli. On that note, Sperber and Wilson (1995: 260) formulate their cognitive principle of relevance. Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance. “Every utterance starts out as a request for someone else’s attention, and this creates an expectation of relevance. This idea is called “the communicative principle of relevance” as earlier mentioned in Chapter One. Accordingly an addressee will take an utterance to be the most relevant one the communicator was able and willing to produce. The addressee’s assumption is that the utterance is worth being processed.

An input to a cognitive system is relevant when on the basis of existing information the input yields new cognitive effects. Cognitive effects are achieved when a speaker’s utterance strengthens or contradicts an existing assumption by combining an existing assumption with new information to yield some new cognitive implications. For example (Rev 6:1) “ And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, come and see”. The statement “The lamb opening one of the

seals” contradicts an existing assumption. A lamb is a young one of a sheep. Conventionally, a lamb cannot open a seal, because it does not have knowledge of opening or closing seals. The above metaphor thus provokes our mental processes in order to develop knowledge and understanding.

In the Holy Bible (Rev 5:13, 14) the Lamb of God refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is given the name lamb because of His sacrificial death on the cross as mentioned earlier. He died on the cross on behalf of humanity, just like an ordinary lamb or sheep is sacrificed in order to appease some supreme being. The new cognitive implications therefore achieved are that Jesus Christ is at work. He will open the seals and read out the mysteries within. This will be the ‘Day of Judgment when Jesus the Lamb of God shall judge the whole world. This is the implicature of the above utterance

In addition to cognitive effects relevance is defined in terms of the cognitive efforts it takes to process the input. Cognitive efforts are determined, for example, by the degree to which the mental representation of the input or the access to contextual information causes effort. The relevance of an assumption is optimal when the assumption has been “optimally processed”.

Consider the following extract from the book of Revelation (20:10) “And the devil that deceived many was cast or thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where

the beast and the false prophets are and they shall be tormented day and night forever and ever”.

Our mental representation of the concept of fire and brimstone include many attributes that may be associated to the lake. These may include:

- 9 (a) A lake is big and deep
- (b) A lake does not question its creator
- (c) A lake serves its purpose
- (d) A lake can be calm or rough
- (e) A lake can either be useful or destructive
- (f) A lake is a large water body which can either be fresh or salty

Each of these may possibly be activated to some degree by use of fire and brimstone in relation to the lake. However some of the attributes may be particularly accessible in discovering the meaning given in the preceding statement, to indicate that the fire is uncontrollably destructive. Following the relevance theoretic compressive procedure, these implications are considered in the order of accessibility and then we arrive at an interpretation that satisfies our expectations of relevance. Attributes (9a-e) are relevant in this case but (f) is not because it is a literal interpretation of the statement.

Within relevance theory, speakers are not constrained to say what, strictly speaking is true, because in many cases speaking loosely is the best way to achieve optimal relevance. Loosely in this case refers to metaphorical use of language. Consider

the metaphorical utterance “Behold the lion from the tribe of Judah” (Revelation 5:5). Listeners generally have some background knowledge about the lion and the house of Judah. They may therefore infer that the statement means Christ’s destructive power over the devil and his agents. The tribe of Judah may refer first, to the Israelites and second, to God’s Faithful. The lion is insensitive when dealing with its enemy. The Bible says that Jesus is coming with the clouds and every eye shall see Him and those who persecuted him shall regret (Rev.1:7). So just as earlier put, Jesus will not spare sin and sinners. But to take the literal interpretation of lion as a large fierce animal of the cat family is irrelevant.

The implicatures given above may be relatively weak, but they can be assumed to best resemble the speakers’ thoughts about Jesus. An implicature is an utterance with a covert or implied meaning. It can vary in terms of strength, because an addressee can have more or less confidence in the speaker’s intension of having communicated the implicature. The following is an addition of these implicit utterances or metaphors.

The first metaphor to be discussed is given in (10) below:

10. “*Alpha and Omega*” (Rev. 1:8)

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty” (Rev. 1:8 KJV).

On his observation Horn (1979:32), states this about ‘Alpha and Omega’:

It refers to the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. It is used as a title for God the Father and the Son Jesus Christ that appears in (Rev. 1:8). John the revelator explains this expression to mean (beginning and the ending). It implies that God is eternal (He always was, He is and He will be).

Concerning the given quotation of the metaphor, a traditional analysis assumes that this statement cannot communicate a meaningful proposition because human beings are not letters. 'Alpha and Omega', as earlier shown, was the first and last Greek letters of the alphabet. According to the original relevance theory account, the statement does not have an explicature because its proposition is not being communicated. Yet, according to the ad hoc concepts account, we can assume that the encoded concept for 'Alpha' and 'Omega' loosened in a way that their denotations may also cover human beings or a deity like Jesus. A result of this approach is that metaphors can communicate explicatures.

Therefore the metaphorical meanings of an expression like 'I am Alpha and Omega' do not necessarily fall under the scope of the utterance's implicatures. In this case a particular element of a logical form can initiate inferential processes that can lead to ad hoc concepts, explicatures and implicatures. These different representational formats are all communicated and are mutually adjusted to one another. This explanation has some relevance about God as the Creator of the world and the only one expected to bring it to its very end, hence the name: the

Beginning and the End.

11. *'A woman with a cup of iniquity with whom the Kings have committed fornication'* (Rev. 17:1-5)

'And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and bedecked with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication'(Rev.17:4). A woman literally means a female human being, the opposite of a male. A cup is in reference to some utensil used for drinking liquids foods such as water, milk, beer just to mention but a few.

Metaphorically, a woman in prophesy is a symbol of a Church. A pure woman being a pure Church while an evil woman symbolizes an evil Church. The woman being talked about in this context is always variously decorated in away, portraying a prostitute which signifies an unfaithful Church to Jesus Christ. The harlot woman not only represents one Church but also a union of all those religious sects of the world, which share a common apostasy from the truth of God and which will eventually unite and entice the world's Superpowers to rise against God's truth and to molest His people. The interpretation arrived at, is actually a result of our stereotypical knowledge about Satan and his agents. Satan's agents are always attempting to lure God's sons and daughters into sin (Wieland 2004:45).

12. *'Babylon the great city is fallen'* (Rev. 18:1-3)

“And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great city is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils and the hold of foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird” (Rev. 18:2 KJV).

Horn (1979:109-114) says this concerning Babylon:

It is called Babel in Hebrew and Aramaic languages and Babulon in Greek. It was a city in the Mesopotamian Valley which was one of the first cities founded by King Nimrod. In the Holy Scriptures (Genesis 11:9), the name means confusion based, evidently, on the fact that the Hebrew verb balal means to confuse. A number of prophecies were directed against Babylon, predicting that the city would be destroyed and become desolate or an uninhabited place. (Isaiah 13, 14:1-23, Jeremiah 50:51). This prophesy, has gradually been fulfilled (Cyrus the Great took it in 539 B.C.). In the Bible (Revelation 18:1-3), Babylon implies a religious organization which teaches false doctrines and therefore, it is bound to fall.

The destruction predicted above is inevitable because there is always a rise and fall of every kingdom or organization known in history. The above quotation is relevant because it gives the historical background of Babylon and the implication of the metaphor. So, this ‘Great Kingdom of Babylon’ is expected to fall just like its predecessors when Jesus returns on earth.

13. *‘Clothed in white raiment’ (Rev. 4:4)*

The word “white” is used in the Bible to imply purity, righteousness or a spotless character (Isaiah 1:18). Raiment in Old English means, clothes. Soft raiment was worn by the fastidious and wealthy in contrast to the coarse garments worn by the poor (Horn 1979:1053). The saints shall be clothed in white raiment as a sign of victory over the devil’s cunning schemes. Therefore white raiment is

metaphorically used to refer to righteousness.

14 'God's new world' (Rev. 22:5)

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea” (Rev. 21:1 KJV).

‘God’s New World’ as found in the book of (Rev.22:5) says this in the literal interpretation: in this world of sin, there is a natural light provided by the sun during day time while at night the stars and the moon provide light. We enjoy being with their light because we are able to see and work easily. Non-literally, in God’s new world, there is no sun, moon, or stars as sources of light; God Himself will be the source of light. The comprehensive principle leads us to understand that the above metaphor refers to this world created a fresh.

There will be no floods, droughts, earthquakes, salty seas, swamps, wilderness, deserts, sin and fear. These shall end forever. In peoples minds the statement is relevant to the Christians who are looking forward to a new world which is free from all evil. Therefore, there will be no night which implies trouble, because everything will be in their perfect state. God Himself will be the Father of all creatures and ruler in everything. There will be an everlasting joy, true worship, no pain or sorrow. People will live for ever without aging to death. Literally, Christians are waiting for Jesus just as people expect a relative which indicates the

anxiety of their waiting. This interpretation is relevant, in that, the above consequences of sin threaten the very fabric of human life.

15. *'Jesus is coming with clouds'* (Rev. 1:7)

“Behold he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindred’s of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen” (Rev. 1:7 KJV).

‘Jesus is coming with the clouds’ literally, may be said that; they are the ordinary clouds we observe daily which cause rain and are given names such as nimbus, cumulus among others and they define weather. These are not ordinary clouds such as we see every day in the sky. These are implicitly a multitude of heavenly messengers. There will be thousands of heavenly angels who will appear just like clouds. This may also imply that Jesus’ second coming shall be characterized with heavenly glory. The above interpretation is relevant to the saints who are waiting for Jesus’ Second Advent.

16. *'The Root of David'* (Rev. 5:5)

Semantically, a root is associated with a tree and not a human being. Roots help a tree to stand firmly to the ground. They also provide trees with water and nutrients from the soil. The Root of David is implying Jesus Christ whose parents’ genealogy is that of Abraham and David, (Matthew 1:16-17). Jesus is literally connected with the house of David and to the salvation of the human race.

17. *'Satan's throne' (Rev. 2:13)*

“I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth” (Rev. 2:13 KJV).

Horn (1979:1044) has this concerning Satan:

He is an “adversary” (1 Peter 5:8), who is fond of cherishing animosity among brothers. He is also called the ‘devil’, (Matthew 4:10 and Rev. 12:9), Beelzebub (Matthew 12:24), Belial (2 Corinthians 6:15), the tempter (Matthew 4:3), the enemy (Matthew 13:39), the evil one (Matthew 13:25), and the deceiver (Rev. 12:9).

Satan tempted man to doubt God and reject His authority (Genesis 3:1-6). Satan’s throne is the special place where Satan operates as a leader. Because Satan is in control in human beings, he is working to corrupt the Church and laying the foundation of disobedience to God. So, throne is a symbol of power and authority which only Jesus can destroy.

18. *'Seven Churches' (Rev. 4:11)*

“Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and what thou seest, write in a book and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia...” (Rev. 1:11 KJV).

On his opinion, Horn (1979:1046), states that:

Seven in Hebrew and Aramaic is Sheba, and in Greek it is hepta. Seven is a sacred number among the Hebrews and peoples of the East, Central Europe and others for example, India, China and the British Isles. Babylonians regarded seven as the number of totality or completeness. It is believed to have originated from the seven days of the creation week and the blessing by God of the seventh day (Genesis 2:3 and Exodus 8:11).

The “Seven Churches” of (Rev. 4:11) as mentioned in the quotation above may be interpreted literally, just like the literal names of Churches around our home. These are just names of various churches named after the names of places where they are situated without any deep meaning. In relevance, every utterance has a variety of linguistically possible interpretations. Therefore, the names of these seven Churches mentioned in the book of Revelation are symbolic of the Church in different periods of the Christian era. Number seven indicates completeness and is symbolic of the fact that the message extended to the end of time.

19. ‘Seven horns’ (Rev. 5:6)

Concerning the above metaphor, horns, for those animals which have them are like weapons for self-defense and for repulsing perceived enemies. As per our contextual assumptions, the intended implication is that the horns mentioned in Revelation are not the literal horns but they are the Spirits of God. These Spirits guided God’s people throughout world history and accomplished, perfectly, His purpose on earth. So, it is context in this case that has determined the above given interpretation.

20. '*Seven seals*' of (Rev. 5:5) may be said as follows:

A seal is an official mark, stamped on a document to show that it is genuine and carries the authority of a particular person or organization, (Wehmeier 2003:1059).

The seven seals, is a symbol of God's complete authority and approval of His saved Ones. God's seal is explicitly shown on the Seventh-day Sabbath. God rested, blessed and hallowed the Sabbath Day and commanded man to keep it as well (Exodus 20:11 KJV). The interpretation has been drawn from an observation of the speaker and what is going on in the immediate environment.

21. '*Sodom and Egypt*' (Rev. 11:8) is quoted as:

'And their bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified' (Rev. 11:8 KJV).

Horn (1979:1050) states that:

Sodom [Greek, Sodoma], is usually mentioned with Gomorrah (Genesis 10:19, 13:10). Lot dwelt there but escaped with two of his daughters as the only survivors and Sodom and other cities were destroyed by a fire from heaven because of the wickedness of its inhabitants. Joseph was sold to Egyptian slavery in the 17th century B.C. While in Egypt, the family of Joseph, Jacob's last born son, moved in and settled in the area of Goshen (Genesis 39:1 to 47:28). Jacob's descendants multiplied in Egypt and became a formidable force. They were later enslaved and with the accompaniment of miracles were eventually delivered under the leadership of Moses (Exodus 1:8-12, 3:10-12, 7-12).

The above quotation can be understood in a context of assumptions drawn from perception, memory and inference. Therefore, "Sodom and Egypt" may imply the bottomless pit or the place which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt. This is also where our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. Egypt persecuted God's people

(Israelites), just as Jesus was crucified by sinners. Egypt can also be referred to as an evil power, which does not acknowledge God. Sodom symbolizes immorality, just as the old city of Sodom was destroyed because of immorality (Horn 1979:1050-1051).

22. *'Stood the Lamb as it had been slain'* (Rev. 5:6-7)

The metaphor 'stood the Lamb of God as it had been slain' according to Horn (1979:655) is probably based on the words of Isaiah 53:7 "he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter" The little 'Lamb of God' presents Jesus as the suffering Messiah. This implies that the sacrifices of the OT typified Him as God's appointed sacrifice for sin. Saint Peter refers to Christ as a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Peter 1:19) and John also refers Christ as "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev.13:8).

Using optimal relevance which is meant to spell out what the audience is entitled to expect in terms of cognitive effects and processing effort, the above metaphor, symbolizes Jesus Christ. The same Jesus was referred to as a lamb, in the sense that, He was also offered as a sacrifice once and for all, to save mankind from sin. Therefore, Jesus was called a Lamb, because He was a sin bearer, to be slain just like a literal lamb in the OT, in order to take away the sins of the world (John 1:1-5).

23. '*Synagogue of Satan*' as found in (Rev. 3:9) states:

“Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet and to know that I have loved thee” (Rev. 3:9 KJV).

Contributing on this subject, Horn (1979:1057) says that:

A synagogue refers to a place of assembly, congregation, originally a Jewish place of worship presided over by a local board of elders. Sacrifices were never offered at the synagogue. At first it was chiefly a place for the reading and exposition of the law, but in time, more elaborate services developed and eventually it served also as a school and as a court of justice as defined in the Mosaic law (Mark 13:4).

The above contribution satisfies the presumption of optimal relevance because a synagogue was associated with God and His people. A 'Synagogue' literally put; is a place where specific services were offered to a specific people. For example Jesus could enter the synagogue of the Jews and would teach the message of hope (Luke 4:16). Paul likewise, habitually entered the synagogue of the Jews and Greeks and taught them the gospel (Acts 17:2).

A 'synagogue of Satan' here refers to a dwelling place of Satan or where Satan lived. It may imply a Church which allows her members to entertain evil practices, and they become a habitat of Satan and now Satan operates from and through them at his own will. For instance, the acceptance of gay marriage in Church: contrary to the biblical teachings on marriage between two people of the opposite sex (1 Corinthians 7:2-4). Therefore those who reject the truth must always change into

the 'synagogue of Satan'. This means that there is no neutral ground; one can either be, on the side of God or Satan. Here, the hearers' expectation of relevance has been satisfied by the proposition explicitly expressed above.

24. *'The dragon'* as in (Rev. 12:13) states:

And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child (Rev. 12:13 KJV).

Here again, the metaphor calls for the presumption of optimal relevance, given that it sheds light on phatic communication. Phatic communication is an utterance such as that one said to a stranger in order to establish a friendly relationship. The dragon, literally interpreted, is a type of animal that is known to be poisonous and dangerous to human beings and other animals. Non-literally, Satan is referred to as the dragon which was cast away from heaven to the planet earth. This dragon made Adam and Eve to transgress God's law and brought sorrow to mankind and all other creatures. The dragon (or Satan), is the source of human suffering. With this information, therefore, God wants to detach His children from the devil so that they may cling to Him alone.

25. *'The Laodicean Church which is lukewarm'* (Rev. 3:15-16)

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; ... so because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:14 & 16 KJV).

The Laodicean Church wore a false garment of Christianity. This also points at the modern Church with the majority of its members being hypocrites. The above given metaphor, has been explained in detail in Chapter One, under the statement of the problem. Laodicea means not fully committed to the powers that be and was complacent or contented. The speaker had what is called in relevance theory as the informative intention which is the intention to inform the audience of something. And that is to be principled or to choose to serve one master.

26. *'The Lion of the tribe of Judah'* (Rev. 5:5)

“Then one of the elders said to me, weep not, lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals” (Rev.5:5 RSV).

The communicative intention of the speaker is that a lion is a very fierce animal, considered to be the king of the jungle. It devours its prey mercilessly. And the hearer's informative intention is to be aware that, Jesus Christ in the same way, will deal ruthlessly with Satan and his followers, when He comes again (Rev. 1:7). Jesus will be the King in the heavenly Kingdom, and all the saints shall be His subjects (Rev. 15:3). As a lion protects its territory, so is Jesus a pillar of protection to the tribe of Judah, by extension saints in the whole world.

27. *'The morning star'* (Rev. 22:16)

“I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am

the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star” (Rev. 22:16 KJV).

‘The morning star’ may literally be interpreted as the star that illuminates the planet earth at dawn. Non-literally, Jesus Christ is the morning star that lights the whole world. Just as the moon reflects light from the sun, the saints reflect light from Jesus: the source of light (John 5:14). He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever. The morning star shall execute judgment and justice in the earth and His Kingdom shall have no end.

28. ‘*The tree of life*’ (Rev.22:2 KJV). “In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life which bore twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations”.

In order to evaluate the interpretation of the metaphor, ‘the tree of life’ refers to Jesus. This is the overtly intended interpretation or the speaker’s meaning. The food that grows out of this sin- cursed earth cannot sustain life for more than a few years. It has no real life in it. But the ‘fruit of this tree’ provides both healing and eternal life.

“The tree of life” is apparently like “Banyan” tree which can have two trunks. It joins at the top over the river, but grows out of the two banks on either side. The

tree on which the Lamb of God died for us, has taken away the curse. Thus, it is ‘a tree of life’. Jesus Christ in this context is ‘the tree of life’. His sacrificial death on the cross of crucifixion has brought life to the saints or the true believers of Jesus Christ (John 3:16).

29. *‘The woman Jezebel’* (Rev. 2:20)

“Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and eat things sacrificed unto idols” (Rev. 2:20 KJV).

Horn (1979:595 states that:

Jezebel means uncertain. The name occurs in Phoenician with the name Baal prefixed as B’lzl, and on an ancient Hebrew seal, spelled zbl. The infamous woman Jezebel was the wife of Ahab of Israel and daughter of Ethbaal, who was king of Tyre and Sidon (I Kings 16:31). As a pagan of strong will, she made a determined and successful attempt to introduce her religion into Israel. She killed worshipers of Yahweh, persecuted the prophets and supported hundreds of prophets of Baal, for whom Ahab built a temple on Samaria.

The prophet Elijah incurred Jezebel’s wrath by his vocal and active opposition of Baal worship, by slaying all the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel (I Kings 18:40) as quoted above. Because of Jezebel’s seduction of the Israelites to idolatry, her name is used in Rev. 2:20 as a symbol of that form of seduction in later periods. Jezebel is the name God gave in reference to a group in the Church whose beliefs

and character resembled this heathen queen of ancient Israel. The above rebellious group of people, oppose and molest God's faithful ones, just like Jezebel bitterly persecuted those few Israelites who remained loyal to God.

Generally, in relevance, the qualitative difference between literalness, (i.e. identity between the utterance's proposition and the thought's proposition), and only a very small resemblance between those two propositions is seen as a continuum. Metaphor is somewhere on this continuum and there is no difference in kind between metaphor processing and the processing of non-metaphorical utterances (Tendahl 2006). For example, (Rev. 18:2) says "Babylon is the cage of every unclean and hateful bird". Literally the statement can be seen to refer to an enclosure with undesirable birds like hawks and which are not fit for human consumption. Metaphorically, the statement refers to the world full of sinful, rebellious, brutal and pleasure-seeking people. It greatly pains God as it renders His plan of redemption null and void, given that God instituted it, in order to save rebellious man. The plan of redemption culminated at Jesus' death on the cross. Hence, the metaphor may be interpreted as follows: Babylon which means confusion, is a cage of every unclean and hateful bird which refers to sinful people whose activities offend and harm fellow human beings. This is our own comment on the metaphor.

2.5 Conclusion

In this Chapter, the definition of metaphor has been given as a figurative device of language where something is referred to implicitly, in terms of something else. Different types of metaphors were identified such as subdued metaphors, complex metaphors, and structural metaphors among others. Also mentioned here were features of metaphors which include: conventionality, systematicity, asymmetry and abstraction. Some metaphors from the book of Revelation in the Bible were identified and interpreted using literal and non literal approach. It was quite interesting considering our own interpretations and those from other authors who attempted the tusk of interpreting the same metaphors from the Bible and from the Book of Revelation in particular.

It was noticed that listeners will never assume that the speaker's utterance should be taken literally; instead, they will only assume that it is spiritually relevant. In order to achieve optimal relevance writers of the Bible were forced to speak loosely and so the congregation does not expect them to talk literally. Once again relevance theorists maintain that speakers sometimes conceptualize the world metaphorically, because it is the most relevant option.

CHAPTER THREE

INTERPRETATIONS BY SOME S.D.A. LAY LEADERS

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Two, provided some definitions of metaphor with their varied use and application. Different interpretations by researchers and our own were considered under a relevance theoretical framework. Twenty metaphors were indentified and interpreted out of which only fifteen were sampled and given to the lay leaders for interpretation. In this chapter, investigation of various interpretations of the metaphors by some S.D.A. lay leaders was considered. Also in consideration was the analysis of their work, the approach they gave to each metaphor interpreted that is literal, non literal, a mixture of literal and non-literal or a different one from the first three. The lay leader's indicated their level of education, age bracket, and years of experience as Church leaders on the questionnaire provided.

3.2 Literal Interpretation

In this section, the literal interpretations from respondents are analyzed. Each metaphor is identified first and is followed by the literal interpretation or interpretations provided by the informants. The first one is numbered (30) here below:

30. “*Alpha and Omega*” (Rev. 1:8)

Respondent Eight and Nine in their contribution say that in Greek, Alpha and Omega is first and last in that order. This interpretation deals with the semantic part of the metaphor leaving out its pragmatic aspect. But all the other respondents gave a non literal interpretation of the above metaphor.

31. “*A woman with a cup of iniquity*” (Rev. 17:1-4). Respondent Seven and Twenty-one interpreted the metaphor “a woman with a cup of iniquity” as follows: “A woman is a female human being who is mature in age. A woman is the opposite of a man; who is her male counterpart. A cup is a utensil that is used for drinking liquids. A cup of iniquity here refers to a cup containing undesirable contents, remarked the two respondents. Still there is no implied meaning of the metaphor.

32. “*Babylon the great city is fallen*” (Rev. 18:2). The literal interpretation of the metaphor “Babylon the great city is fallen” by respondent Seven says that; “Babylon is not only magnificent but also a great city as well. It was popular and outstanding in its greatness and magnificence in the past. It fell because of its poor leadership”. A part from respondent Seven, who was explicit in the surface meaning, the remaining twenty-four gave a deeper meaning of the metaphor.

33. “*God’s new world*” (Rev. 21:1). Respondents Six, Seven and Twenty-one,

interpreted the metaphor “God’s New World” as follows: In this world of sin, there is a natural light provided by the sun, moon and stars. We enjoy their light because we are able to see and work as easily as possible and feel secure. We feel insecure when the world is covered with darkness because there are many things that pose danger to human beings and other animals. This is a word to word interpretation without the implied one.

34. “*Jesus is coming with the clouds*” (Rev. 1:7). Clouds in literal sense are the ordinary clouds we observe daily which cause rain and define weather. This was the contribution of respondents Six and Fifteen, while the rest gave a non literal interpretation of the same metaphor.

35. “*Satan’s throne*” (Rev. 2:13). Informant One, Three, Five, Nine, Ten, Eleven, Twelve, Thirteen, Fourteen, Nineteen and Twenty-two, said that the metaphor above is a place where God’s people are persecuted. This is the devil’s dwelling place. The devil is in this world cheating people to remain complacent.

36. “*Seven churches*” (Rev. 1:11). On his part, Respondent Six said that the seven churches can be likened to Gekora, Mosoch Central, Gachuba, Kiabiraa just to mention a few up to seven. These are just names of various churches, named after the names of places where these churches are situated without any deep meaning. Number Six on the other hand said that these seven Churches literally existed in

Asia Minor.

37. “*Sodom and Egypt*” (Rev. 11:8). Respondent Seventeen stated that Sodom is a city where its inhabitants engaged in evil. Eighteen had this to say: Sodom was the city inhabited by Lot and Egypt was a land of bondage of the Israelites, no implied meaning was given.

38. “*Stood the Lamb as it had been slain*” (Rev. 5:6). A lamb is a young one of a sheep. It has no complicated character trait or behavior. It is lovely, friendly, docile and beautiful. The lamb without blemish in Old Testament of the Bible was used for offering sacrifices for the remission of the sins of the children of Israel. This is the observation of respondent Six stating one side or the surface meaning, in response to the interpretation of the above metaphor.

39. “*Synagogue of Satan*” (Rev. 3:9). Number Six says that a synagogue was a place where specific services were offered to a specific people. Jesus for example would enter the Jewish synagogue and would teach them the message of hope. Saint Paul likewise entered the synagogue of the Jews and the Greeks and taught them the gospel.

40. “*The dragon*” (Rev. 12:13). Number Six said that literally a dragon is a type of animal that is known to be poisonous and dangerous to human beings and other

animals. There is no mention as to why it is used in the Bible.

41. “*The morning star*” (Rev. 22:16) Respondent One, Two and Seventeen had these to say: ‘the morning star’ may literally be interpreted as the star that gives light to the planet earth at daybreak. Much more is needed as to why it is used and its relevance to the Christians.

42. “*The tree of life*” (Rev. 22:2). Respondent Six further said that the food that grows out of this sin cursed earth cannot sustain life for more than a few years. It has no real life in it. The metaphor must have meant more than that.

43. “*The woman Jezebel*” (Rev. 2:20). Informant Six was the only one who said that Jezebel was a prophetess of the heathen god Baal. God never called her to work. She was married to an apostate King of Israel known as Ahab. This was the historical background only of the woman Jezebel.

3.3 Non-literal Interpretation

This subdivision is dealing with the non-literal interpretation of metaphors as done by the selected informants. Opening the section is the metaphor listed number (45) below.

44. “*Alpha and Omega*” (Rev. 1:8). A part from respondent Eight and Nine, the

rest gave a non literal or a pragmatic interpretation of the metaphor. They said: “It refers to Jesus Christ who is the beginning and the ending. He is the Creator and will be responsible for the destruction of the world or sin and sinners by extension”. The metaphorical part of the metaphor came out clearly in the above given interpretation.

45. “*A woman with a cup of iniquity*” (Rev. 17:1-5). Respondent Six, Seven and Eight were more articulate concerning the metaphor “A woman with a cup of iniquity”. In the OT, it refers to Apostate Israel. “I will do these things unto thee, because thou hast gone a whoring after the Heathen, and because thou art polluted with their idols” (Ezekiel 23:30).

A woman is a symbol of a Church, which figuratively, is going to be married by Jesus at His second coming “... blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb ...” (Rev. 19:9). A cup of iniquity is interpreted to mean, false teachings that are contrary to the teachings of Christ Jesus. These teachings do not exalt Jesus Christ instead they exalt the false religious systems.

In prophecy, a woman is a symbol of a Church. A pure woman on one hand symbolizes a pure Church: ‘pure’ in this sense means a Church without false doctrines, but instead upholds the true teachings, as they are shown in the Holy Bible. In addition to these: an evil woman, on the other hand, symbolizes an evil or corrupt church, which mingles biblical teachings with false doctrines. For

example, “God helps those who help themselves”. On the contrary, the Bible says: “For God so loved the world that He gave his only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3: 16). The quotation: “God helps those who help themselves” cannot be found in the Bible. False doctrines cannot be traced in the Bible either. This woman is portrayed as a harlot who symbolizes a church or organization of worshipers who are unfaithful to Jesus, just as a harlot is unfaithful, to her husband (Hosea 1: 1-10).

The harlot does not only represent one Church but the union of all those churches of the world which share a common apostasy or false belief from the truth of God, and which will eventually unite together for the purpose of putting pressure on the nations of the world to join in rebellion against God’s truth and to oppress God’s people, that is, the faithful ones. These Respondents’ views were shared, although briefly, by their counterparts such as Respondent Nine and Fifteen. This interpretation in my observation, bears, what is known as relevance in a context.

Relevance in context is a mentally represented assumption used in interpreting a given item of information. The item of information in this regard, is the metaphor “A woman with a cup of iniquity” (Rev. 17:1-5).

The above interpretation has followed the cognitive principle of relevance. It governs all types of information transmission both accidental and intentional. This information is intentional, as its aim is to draw us back to its origin in the book of

Revelation. This, by our standards, may lead to a balanced interpretation of the metaphor.

46. “*Babylon the great is fallen*” (Rev. 18:2). Respondent Seven and Twenty-one summed up the metaphor as follows: Babylon is a metaphorical reference to a religious system that advances false and confusing teachings. The term Babylon’s historical background has been given already in Chapter Two. Babylon the great is a term God applies to the union of all those Churches of the world which share common apostasy from the truth of God, and which at long last unite together for the purpose of waging war against God’s elect. Babylon the great City, has fallen because of her persistent rejection of the truth from heaven because, unclean spirits have entered her.

Respondent One, the only lady among six ladies who filled in the questionnaire, says that Babylon symbolizes the great organizations in the world today that seek to control the whole world. She goes on to say that these will finally fall because of their failure to recognize God as the Supreme Being. In my opinion: this interpretation combines with a contextual assumption or shared background knowledge, to yield a contextual implication that is, conclusion deducible from new information. The ‘great organizations of the world’ is the new information in this case.

On his part, Respondent Six interprets the metaphor “Babylon the great city is fallen” as follows: Babylon is a term that applies to world loving Churches. These are Churches with teachings which appeal to: material possessions, comfortable life and more to peoples’ emotions, as opposed to their salvation. No matter how committed these Churches may appear to be, they are bound to fall. The term Babylon designates false or apostate religion. He quotes White (1989). This interpretation also strengthens the already existing assumption about Babylon the great city, as found in the book of Revelation. Other Respondents such as Five, Eleven, Twelve, and Sixteen, say that Babylon was one of the ancient cities from where the whole world was controlled. It was under King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4: 1 &30). In the present time, Babylon would mean unity of the whole universe, which will go against the will of God. But, God will destroy it when Jesus returns to the earth from heaven.

In consideration of the above, it can be added that: Babylon may mean confusion or a false Church with confusing doctrines. There is some expectation of relevance created here. It reminds us of what happened when people had evil schemes against God. They burned bricks and had slime for mortar and decided to build a city, whose top was to reach heaven. This was aimed at evading God’s punishment of floods, in case they sinned just as it happened during the time of Noah when the whole earth was destroyed by the floods, save for Noah and his family. These people started building the tower because they were one nation and

spoke one language. So God caused confusion and they failed to understand one another's speech. They therefore scattered to other places and their programme of building the tower as a place of refuge, stopped (Genesis 11:1-9). So this confusion was called BABEL. This is the origin of the name Babylon in later days, added Respondent Seven and Twenty-one. The rest of the Respondents just said that Babylon means 'confusion'.

47. "*God's New World*" (Rev. 21:1). This is what Respondents Six and Eight said about "God's New World": there will be no life threatening incidences because Satan, the source of all evil and his agents will be no more. No sun will be needed, because God Himself shall be the source of light. The saints shall live an everlasting life as there will be no aging to death in God's new world. The metaphor symbolizes the newly recreated world, or it refers to Jerusalem or paradise, as per the views of Respondent Four and Twenty-five. On their part, Respondent Seven and Twenty-one commented that, the emphasis is on the insignificance of the created luminaries (light), in the presence of God. Heaven will be glorious and it is the presence of God that will make it so.

In God's new world, there are sources of light such as those mentioned earlier. God himself will be the source of light. There will be no floods, droughts, earthquakes, salty-seas, swamps, wildernesses, deserts, useless mountains, and terminal

sickness among others. Now with sin and fear forever ended there will be no night, all things shall be without fault. God himself will be the father of all creatures and ruler of everything. There will be an everlasting joy, true worship.

This far, it is unfolding that metaphors always communicate their messages in an implicit manner. It is not easy to spell out precisely what is actually being communicated when giving your interpretation without watering down the original message. This is because what is implicitly communicated either verbally or non-verbally can be so vague. Perhaps this is why some Respondents' interpretations under scrutiny tend to be different from the others.

Respondent Eight states that God will resurrect the righteous dead and be joined with the living, who are righteous and they will go to heaven for a thousand years. They will stay with their God. God will finally purify our world and make it a holy place for the sinless to live forever and ever. This is "God's New World".

Respondent Two and Twenty-three say that after destroying Satan and sinners, God will create the world a new where saints will live. This will be God's New World. Respondent Nine shares the same view as that of Respondent Two. He says that in the New Earth, there will be no curse, sin, diseases, troubles and mourning. This is because the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city. The first heaven and the first earth had passed away. People will live with God

and serve him. Respondents One, Five, Eleven, and Fifteen summed it up by saying that God's new world is the new earth after sin and sinners are destroyed. The saints will dwell there and worship God their creator forever and ever.

In all these instances, the communicators, attempted to show the audience something which may be either precise or vague. Some of the above mentioned interpreters have tried to communicate although vaguely about God's new world. This may be referred to as ostension which is another word for showing. When people talk about ostensive communication in relevance, it means showing or pointing.

However, there is one thing that stands out clearly. Some particular metaphors have been approached differently by some lay leaders. Then one is left wondering as to which one of the given interpretations is the most appropriate.

But those who will go against the teachings of the Holy Bible by taking away some words, to the same people, Jesus will also subtract their share in the tree of life in the new city. The tree of life is there for those who overcome the devil's temptations. Respondent Nine did not tell us what 'the tree of life' is or its referent in this context.

Respondent Two and Twenty-one in their opinion, called 'the tree of life' the

power that God will give to his people to live forever in heaven while Respondent One says that it is a literal tree that God has planted in heaven and the redeemed people will eat and live forever. Like Respondent One, Four and Eleven said that the tree of life is in heaven. Its fruits will be food for the saints and its leaves will be for their healing. Respondent Five, Twelve, and Sixteen say that the tree of life, was in Eden, and is now reserved for the saints. They go ahead to say that, it is the ability that God shall give to the saints or the saved ones to be able to live forever.

48. *“Jesus is coming with the clouds”* (Rev. 1:7). Respondent Six was of the view that, “these are not the ordinary clouds such as we see every day. They will be thousands of heavenly angels who will appear just like clouds”. According to observations of Respondent Seven and Twenty-one, Jesus will come with the heavenly power and glory (Matthew 26:64).

49. *“Satan’s Throne”* (Rev. 2:13). Satan’s throne is the special place where Satan operates as a leader. Because he is in control in human beings, he is working to corrupt the Church and laying the foundation like a leader of those falling away from the truth. All those who funded and promoted satanic practices, are in the same kingdom of Satan. They have one thing in common, that is, they do not value God any more but value and follow Satan’s teachings, commented Respondent Six, Seventeen and Twenty-one.

50. “*Seven Churches*” (Rev. 1:11). The names of these seven Churches mentioned in the book of Revelation are symbolic of the Church in different periods in the Christian era. As indicated earlier in Chapter Two, number ‘seven’ in prophesy, stands for completeness and is symbolic of the fact that the message extended to the end of time. While the symbols used reveal the condition of the Church at different periods in the history of the world, observed respondent One, Six, Seven and Eight.

51. “*Sodom and Egypt the allegorical cities whose streets the bodies of Satan’s agents will lie*” (Rev. 11:8). Respondent Four and Twenty-five, state that, “Sodom and Egypt” refer to the end time activities, when evil doers, will be destroyed. Sodom, on one hand, represents immorality in the end time world, while Egypt, on the other hand, represents corruption and persecutions directed to God’s end time people as noted in Chapter Two.

52. “*Stood the Lamb as it had been slain*” (Rev. 5:6). Respondent Six, Seven, and Eight interpreted the above metaphor as follows: Jesus Christ was referred to as the Lamb of God in the sense that He was also offered as a sacrifice, once and for all, to save mankind from sin: that whoever believes in him, should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16). The same quotation is shared by other leaders already mentioned. Therefore, Jesus was likened to a lamb because he was a sin bearer to be slain just like a literal lamb in the Old Testament, to take away the sins

of the World (John 1:29).

It may be added that, the above interpretation falls under this category: man, in his/her helpless condition of sin needs somebody to carry his or her burden of sin. Jesus offers this answer. The metaphor “stood the lamb as it were slain” is well interpreted and relevant in the context of Christianity. This interpretation therefore strengthens most Christians’ assumption that Jesus is the lamb whose blood was offered as a sacrifice on the cross to save humanity. A lamb, as a young one of a sheep in the literal interpretation above strengthens an existing assumption about a lamb. It is therefore claimed to be relevant because it has cognitive effects.

53. *“Synagogue of Satan called themselves Jews while they are not”* (Rev. 3:9). Concerning the metaphor “Synagogue of Satan” Respondent number six says that the term collectively refers to those beings who have deliberately decided to join the ranks of Satan to advance his principles. It refers also to Satan’s religion and devout worshippers who, as a matter of fact, are out to advance or promote his (Satan’s) deceptions. Paradoxically, these people who are referred to as a “Synagogue of Satan” are in Church and even occupy senior positions of church leadership.

Respondent Five says that “Synagogue of Satan” is a name for idol worshipers pretending to be worshipping God. Respondent Number Eleven says that it is a centre of false teachings and pretence. Number One, on the other hand, states that

the people who have lost their love for God before Christ's second coming are referred to as a "Synagogue of Satan". Respondent Two says that the Jews were known to be God's chosen people and the Holy Scriptures state that those referred to as synagogue of Satan pose as Christians or true worshippers of Jesus Christ (Jews) so the Synagogue of Satan would mean those who do not worship God, but claim to do so. The synagogue of Satan "therefore is a place of worship where people adore false Gods.

Other Respondents like Two, Six, Eight, Nine and Twenty-three all share the same sentiments. They have followed a path of least effort in deriving their interpretation. This is under relevance theoretic comprehension procedure. Because it is written in the Bible, that, a synagogue was a place of worship. And Satan is the devil who is associated with all evil. So anybody or anything associated with Satan is bound to be bad.

Respondent Seven and Twenty-one, on the other hand, go an extra mile in saying that: a synagogue was a place where specific services were offered to a specific people or deity. For example, Jesus would enter the synagogue of the Jews and could teach the message of hope (God's word). Paul likewise entered the synagogue of Jews and Greeks and taught them the gospel (good news about Jesus Christ). This is the literal interpretation of the metaphor.

54. *“The dragon pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child”* (Rev. 12:13). In the views of Respondent Four, Six, Ten, Seventeen and Twenty-four, the dragon symbolizes Satan who was cast away from heaven to the planet earth. This dragon made Adam and Eve to transgress God’s law and brought sorrow to mankind. The same dragon had plans to destroy the Church which was emerging and trying to preach the word of God.

55. *“The Laodicean Church which is lukewarm”* (Rev. 3:14&16). The Laodicean Church does not have a burning zeal for God’s work or love for God’s truth and righteousness nor does she understand and feel the need. This description reveals the sad condition of those who today are looking forward to seeing the soon coming of the Lord Jesus. Or, Laodicea represents a group of believers who are undecided in serving the Lord. They seem to serve two masters at the same time; that is, God and Satan. Because God does not tolerate such, He will leave them to serve Satan alone, observed Respondent One, Two and Twenty-three.

56. *“I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star”* (Rev. 22:16). All the twenty-five lay leaders who answered the questionnaire shared the same information about the metaphor “the morning star.” They said that Jesus is the One who is referred to as the morning star. Jesus is said to be light of the world. In both the Old and New Testament Jesus is called the bright morning star (Gen. 1:2-3 and Luke 11:24). If a person is not a believer of Jesus Christ as the

son of God, he or she is said to be in darkness. When this person believes in Jesus: Christian values, which were considered petty there before, are understood better than before. They start making sense in the eyes of the new believer.

Jesus is therefore said to have penetrated the believer's heart like a great bright light. Then, the person starts experiencing a new life in Jesus. He or she is now said to be walking in a path illuminated by Jesus Christ, the bright morning star is the planet Venus which is usually seen at dawn, observed the Respondents. It is from this context where the metaphor "the morning star" is derived in reference to Jesus Christ. This interpretation has been effected by use of context because it has contextual implications which are conclusions deducible from input and context together. The metaphor morning star is the input and the solar system is the context. The morning star (Venus) which is seen and the knowledge the interpreters have about Jesus Christ, have yielded the interpretation of the metaphor "the morning star".

57. "*The Tree of Life*" (Rev. 22:2). Respondent Seven interpreted the metaphor "tree of life" as follows: trees grow freely on fertile soils. The food that grows out of this sin cursed earth cannot sustain life for more than a few years. It has no real life in it. But fruits of those trees referred earlier, provide both healing and eternal life. Non-literally, the tree on which the Lamb of God died for us, has taken away the curse, as quoted earlier on. Thus, it is a tree of life. Jesus Christ in this

context is a tree of life. Fruits of the righteous are also trees of life.

In our view the above interpretation follows the presumption of optimal relevance. The interpreter has precise expectations about how to achieve relevance. He or she has chosen the context. The metaphor “tree of life” on the Christian context refers to life everlasting, given by none, other than Jesus Christ. But if we change the context to a hospital situation, we will talk about life supporting machines. These machines help patients who are critically ill and are admitted in the intensive care unit (ICU).

The metaphor ‘tree of life’ seems to have a variety of interpretations, by different people. As already seen, Respondent One says that the tree of life was a literal tree planted by God in Eden which when eaten people would live forever. God took it away after the fall of Adam and Eve. The same tree shall be eaten by the people who will be redeemed by Jesus. Respondent Two says that the tree of life is the power that God will give to his people to live forever in heaven. While Respondent Eleven and Sixteen share Respondent One’s sentiments concerning the metaphor the ‘tree of life’. Respondent Twelve on his part says that people will be saved by just eating the tree of life. Respondent Five concurs with Respondent Two, by saying that the tree of life is the ability that God will give to the saints to live forever. Contributing on the same metaphor, Respondent Eight stated that: it is a spiritual life giving ability given by God.

Using contextual assumptions derived from standard cultural stereotypes of trees and life, those analyses are imbalanced as they stand. There is more to this metaphor than what is said by Respondent Two, Five, Eight, Twelve and Twenty-three. Maybe the metaphor the ‘tree of life’ was meant to communicate not only that Jesus is our redeemer but also a fountain of life everlasting. This utterance helps the speaker to achieve the extra effect that there is more than one type of life, that is, the normal physical life we have which will come to an end at some time and the eternal life reserved for the saved ones, only offered by Jesus Christ.

58. *“But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel”* (Rev. 2:20)
Jezebel is the name God gave to a group in the Church whose belief and character resembled that of the heathen queen of ancient Israel. The queen literally persecuted those few Israelites who remained loyal to God. Jezebel may symbolize cults such as devil worship, witchcraft and churches which use satanic powers to attract converts. Because of Jezebel’s seduction of the Israelites to idolatry, her name is used as a symbol of that form of seduction in later periods. This contribution was made by Respondent, Four, Six, Seven and Twenty-one, with the rest of the Respondents giving almost similar interpretations to the one already mentioned in the section which dealt with literal interpretation.

3.4 A Mixture of Literal and Non-literal Interpretation

Respondent Six was the only one who gave both literal and non literal interpretation of all the given metaphors. His interpretations have already been quoted in the literal and non-literal interpretations given earlier.

3.5 Different Approach to Interpretation

This division is considering a rather different approach to interpretation of some metaphors by a number of Respondents. These Respondents include the list given as follows:

Respondent Four, Ten, Eleven and Nineteen gave a different interpretation of the metaphor “The woman Jezebel” from all other Respondents. Informant Four said in his wording that Jezebel symbolizes devil worship and other cults like witchcraft. It also represents those churches which use Satan’s powers to attract converts as stated earlier. Respondent Ten on his part said that Jezebel is a symbol of false prophets who are bent on destroying God’s true followers. Eleven on one hand said that Jezebel was a sinful woman who caused her husband’s death. So, the emphasis is on Ahab, Jezebel’s husband’s death. He went further to say that God is promising to forgive those who turn to Him. There is no mention as to how the forgiveness is coming, given that Ahab and Jezebel died because of their sins. Nineteen on the other hand finally said that Jezebel, a king’s wife, cheated him that she would give him their neighbour’s land. This led to her husband’s death.

Nineteen continued to add that in the beginning, Eve cheated Adam her husband and both fell into sin.

Respondent Twelve also followed this path of uniqueness. This is what he said concerning the metaphor 'The dragon': He said that it was the symbol of a great red dragon which is presented pictorially as a leopard-like beast, representing the earthly governments, which instead of maintaining peace and stability on the contrary, they engage in oppressing and exploiting God's people. This war or conflict is carried on till the close of time. The people of God symbolized by a holy woman and her children are the remnants of God. The remnants are the few holy ones who survive the destruction of sin and sinners that is, lawlessness and law breakers in that order. In the last day, the remnants will be found to be keeping the Commandments of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ.

Respondent Fifteen had this concerning the metaphor "The tree to life" He said that it is the source of happiness and provides for every problem after people became victorious in heaven. Medical and dietary needs of the saints will come from this "Tree". So Respondent Twelve and Fifteen agree in giving some metaphors a unique type of interpretation. They said that God is literally going to feed people with fruits in heaven. That is why the interpretation is referred to as a different interpretation from all others.

The above interpretations can be said to be strange. There is a mixture of literal and non-literal interpretation. There is some addition to the already existing context by referring to Adam and Eve, and also by touching on law-breakers and lawlessness. There is mention as well of God feeding saints with fruits in heaven. So the interpretations given to the metaphor “The woman Jezebel”, ‘The dragon’ and ‘The tree of life’ can be referred to as different from the other fashion of interpretations of the metaphors.

The following partition is examining the respondents’ distribution according to their social strata. The first one to be mentioned is marked (3.6) here below:

3.6 Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education

The Respondents’ level of education was sampled into three classes: primary school level, secondary school level and tertiary level. They were asked to indicate their individual level of education in the questionnaire. Their responses are given on table 1. Shown below.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education

		Secondary		Tertiary	
		No.	%	No.	%

A	Literal interpretation	4	16%	0	0
B	Non-literal interpretation	6	24%	1	4%
C	A mixture of literal and non-literal	6	24%	7	28%
D	Different interpretation	1	4%	0	0
E	No information	0	0	0	0
	Total	17	68%	8	32%

Table 1 above, shows that the total number of Respondents as being twenty-five. Seventeen out of twenty-five had secondary level of education which translates to 68% of the total number of Respondents. Eight out of twenty-five, which is 32% of all the Informants, had tertiary level of education and none of them had primary school level. In the interpretation of the metaphors this category, that is, secondary school level of Respondents used literal, non-literal and a mixture of literal and non-literal approaches. The distribution was equal for B&C that is 6 Respondents each which is 24%. Respondents, who indicated in the questionnaire that they preferred to use literal approach, were 4 or 16%. In the category identified as different interpretation, only 1 which translates to 4% out of 17. When it came to the actual work of interpretation, some of them had a different approach to interpretation of some metaphors. In the class of Respondents with secondary school level, 6 out of 17 or 35% used a mixture of literal and non-literal approach to interpretation. While their counterparts with tertiary level of education, 7 out of 8 which is 87% used a mixture of literal and non-literal way of interpretation.

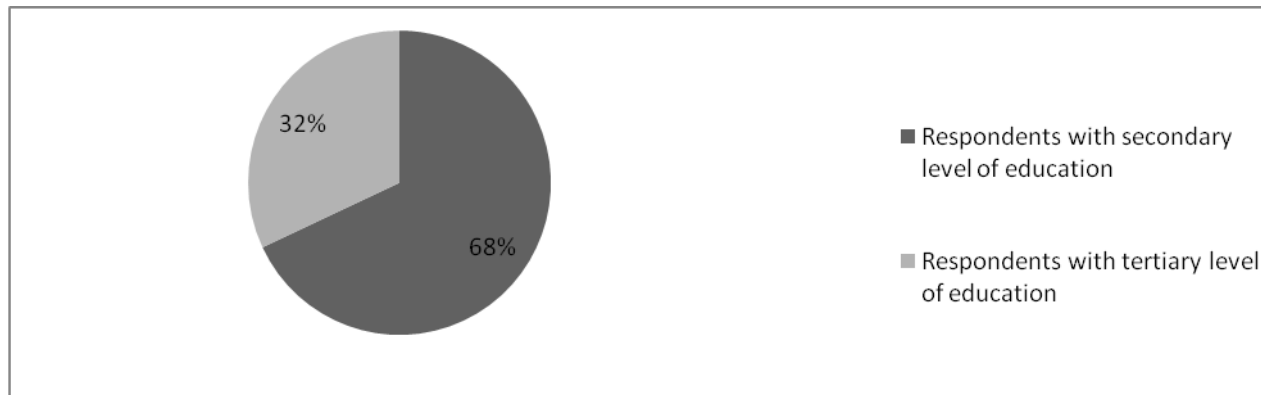
There were eight out of twenty-five Respondents with tertiary level of education. This number translates to 32% of the total number of Respondents. One or 13% out of the eight Respondents used non-literal approach of interpretation only. This can then lead to the conclusion that the group's level of education was a contributing factor in interpretation of metaphors.

The approach adopted here follows a non-literal one in metaphorical interpretation. Those who approached metaphors from the literal angle or other approaches a part from a mixture of literal and non-literal method, fell short of a balanced interpretation. This is because metaphor interpretation involves much more than this and can extend to over-substantial texts, as observed by Eckert et al (2003:213). This text includes transference of meaning (Davidson 1978:29). Additionally, Davidson on the other hand, describes metaphors as “the dream of work of language” this, said in another way, like all dream work, its interpretation reflects as much on the interpreter as on the originator. In other words, the interpreter needs to infer what the originator intended to communicate and therefore give an explicit interpretation of the metaphor.

In order for the metaphor to be a dream, Katz et al (1989:142) say that on the work of language, the interpreter, needs to be well equipped with the language in question. This has been proved right by the Respondents contacted. Those of low level of education had great difficulty in the interpretation of some metaphors while their counterparts in the higher level of education had less difficult. The

information on Table 1 can also be represented on a pie chart as shown in the figure labeled (figure 1) below.

Figure 1: The Percentage of Respondents According to their Level of Education.



The pie chart above, shows that the majority that is, 68% of the Respondents contacted were under the category of secondary school level of education. While those with tertiary level of education, were only 32% of the total informants.

3.7 Distribution of Respondents by Age Bracket

The Table drawn below shows the percentage of Respondents in respect to their age bracket.

The Respondents age bracket and years of experience as lay leaders were put into perspective. It appeared that the Respondents age bracket was not in proportion to their years of experience. Speculation had it that, one's years of experience depend entirely on when one joined the Church. Therefore, one's years of experience may be more or less irrespective of his or her chronological age.

Table2: Distribution of Respondents by Age Bracket

	Age bracket	No.	%
A	31 – 40	8	32%
B	41 – 50	11	44%
C	51- 60	5	20%
D	61 or over	1	4%
	Total	25	100%

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Years of Experience

Years of experience	No	%
1-10	11	44%
11 -20	8	32%
21 - 30	5	20%
31 or over	1	4%
Total	25	100%

Table 3 above shows the distribution of Respondents by years of experience. Their range was as follows: between 1-10 years the number of Respondents was 11 out of 25 or 44%, 8 out of 25 or 32% ranged between 11-20 years. Those ranging from 21-30 and 31 or over years of experience were 5 out of 25 and 1 out of 25 which is 20% and 4% respectively.

3.8 Conclusion

The opinion poll from the lay leaders contacted, had some varying interpretations after analysis. Respondents approached metaphors in their interpretation from four angles: literal or semantic approach and non-literal or the pragmatic approach. Others gave a mixture of literal and non-literal and also a different approach from the first three. The Respondents who gave a mixture of literal and non-literal interpretation of metaphors were said to be balanced. While the rest who applied the other three approaches were assumed to be lacking balance of the semantic and pragmatic sense of the metaphors interpreted.

Respondents were sampled into three groups that is, level of education, age bracket and years of experience as Church leaders. There was none with primary school level of education only. The Respondents fell into two categories: secondary school level of education which was the majority at 68%. While those with tertiary level of education stood at 32%, of the total number of Respondents which was 25.

The Informants' age bracket did not show any relationship with their years of experience. It was assumed that this was for the reason that Church members join Church membership at different age brackets.

CHAPTER FOUR

POSSIBLE CAUSES OF VARIATIONS IN MEANING AND REMEDIES

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter Three we considered a choice of interpretations from data collected. There emerged distinct differences in interpretation of the metaphors, despite the fact that the lay leaders belong to the same religious group or denomination. The lay leaders' work was analyzed and their approach used to each metaphor interpreted, that is, literal or non-literal interpretations among others. The lay leaders' age bracket, level of education and years of experience as leaders were also considered.

In this chapter, possible causes of varying interpretations and possible remedies were investigated. After analyzing data from the lay leaders, there emerged some marked differences in interpretation due to the following factors:

4.2 Level of Education

Education standards of the Respondents had some impact as was evident, in the analysis in chapter three. All the Respondents fell under two categories of education levels: secondary and tertiary. Those with secondary level of education were 17 out of 25 which translates to 68% of the total number of respondents. While the remaining 8 or 32% had tertiary level of education.

Under those with secondary education, 4 out of 17 or 24% gave a literal

interpretation only of some metaphors. On one hand another 6 out of 17 which was 35% gave a non-literal interpretation only. In the side of non-literal interpretation only, there was another group of Respondents of 6 out of 17 which was also 35%. And only one or 6% of the 17 Respondents had a different approach to interpretation.

On the part of those with tertiary education, none of them gave a literal interpretation only or a different approach to interpretation of metaphors. Only 1 out of 8 respondents or 13% applied a non-literal interpretation only. While the remaining 7 out of 8 or 87% gave a mixture of both literal and non-literal approach of interpretation of metaphors.

From the above explanation, it is clear that only 35% of the 17 respondents under those with secondary school level of education gave a mixture of literal and non-literal interpretation. The remaining 65% distributed themselves in other levels of interpretation. Their counterparts in the tertiary level of education had something different. Here, 87% of the 8 Respondents gave a mixture of literal and non-literal interpretation of metaphors. And only 1 or 13% of them gave a non-literal interpretation only. Therefore, it should be noted that literal interpretation only deals with the semantic part while leaving out the metaphorical aspect of the metaphor. The wide range displayed between those with secondary and tertiary level of education among Respondents concerning interpretation of metaphors is

indicative.

4.3 Years of Experience

Table 3.4 in chapter three considers the relationship between age bracket and the years of experience of the Respondents contacted. The table showed that as the Informants' chronological age went up, their population decreased. It shows that the larger number of lay leaders were middle aged. This was not the case with their years of experience. The leaders' age bracket was not proportionate to their years of experience. The reason might be that the leaders' age bracket is not a prerequisite to joining church service. But, years of experience was seen to have played a greater role in the interpretation of metaphors. It was discovered that senior members of the Church as they increased in age, their population in church service reduced as described here below:

Eight out of twenty-five which is 32% of the Respondents were between 31-40 age bracket. Eleven or 44% of the Respondents were in the 41-50 age group. Among the remaining six, five of them which is 20%, were in the 51-60 age set. Only one out of twenty-five or 4% was over 61 years of age. Concerning years of experience, the majority that is 11 out of 25 or 44% had between 1 and 10 years of experience as lay leaders. Eight or 32% had between 11 and 20 years of experience. Five or 20% of these leaders were having their years of experience ranging from 21-30. While only one or 4% of the total number of Respondents had

over 31 years of experience.

It was revealed that, the ones who had a mixture of literal and non-literal interpretation of metaphors happened to be within 51-60 age category with their years of experience ranging between 21 and 30. For example Respondent Six and Seven fell under this category. More especially Informant Six applied a mixture of literal and non-literal approach of interpretation to all metaphors tackled.

4.4 Sources of Biblical Interpretations

Diverse sources of literature must have been the main cause of varying interpretations witnessed among leaders from the same religious sect. It is appreciated that the lay leaders undergo training on matters of religion, facilitated by trained pastors from their denomination (S.D.A.). This is aimed at maintaining the doctrines of the Church. Despite the fact that the leaders are taught by their own pastors, people understand concepts differently. So, different opinions on a given subject may not be strange. Furthermore, these leaders are free to do further research on theology from Bible Commentaries written by authors from other Christian denominations apart from S.D.A. The practice is encouraged among lay leaders, for the purpose of widening their scope of understanding theological issues.

From the above analysis of the possible causes of variation in the interpretation of metaphors, these causes were not exhausted. In spite of that, it can be stated

authoritatively that education standards stood out as the main contributing factor to the various interpretation of metaphors.

4.5 Possible Remedies

The relevance theoretic view of communication entails that linguistic expressions used should only provide the addressee with skeletal evidence or the basics of the speaker's intended meaning. This is due to the fact that the pragmatic processor is independently capable of forming rich hypotheses about the communicator's intention on the basis of contextual clues alone as highlighted by Ward and Horn (2004: 641).

The addressees in this case are, the S.D.A. lay leaders, and the metaphors are the linguistic expressions. The linguistic expressions are supposed to provide some basic clues about the speaker's intended message. The addressee therefore needs to have contextual assumption or shared background knowledge in order to achieve the desired interpretation. But this is not always possible. The interpreter may be linguistically handicapped.

In order to overcome this hurdle one must read in the subject area widely. Knowledge of the language as a tool for communication must be developed. With this all round development of potential Respondents, their performance in their

areas of jurisdiction will improve.

In a nut shell it was said that, low levels of education was a hindrance to development in other areas of life, religion included. In order to arrest this anomaly, adult literacy levels should therefore be improved. This will be done through refresher courses, seminars and workshops, where language specialists do the facilitation.

Apart from refresher courses people should pay keen interest in all things that are going on around them. This includes the use of language in given circumstances, including non-verbal clues and meanings inferred or decoded in each circumstance. This will definitely raise standards in language competency among Church leaders. Because it is said that: ‘where there is a will there is a way’.

4.6 Conclusion

This Chapter has identified the reasons for varying interpretations of metaphors from the Book of Revelation and their remedies were identified. These reasons bore the following:

The Respondents’ level of education, whereby, low levels of education was seen as an obstacle or an impediment to interpretation of metaphors. The next one was the researchers’ diverse theological background. This was also the cause of their varied interpretations of the metaphors.

The Respondents' years of experience had an impact too. For it is said that: 'experience is the best teacher'. Leaders with more years of experience appeared to be more knowledgeable in religious affairs than those with few years of experience. Another factor for varying interpretations was the lay leaders' diverse source of biblical materials. Materials from the above identified backgrounds are bound to differ in their interpretations of any given text.

The following were some of the possible solutions to the identified causes of varied interpretations of metaphors. Adult literacy programmes were to be encouraged among the leaders in the form of workshops, seminars and other refresher courses.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a summary of the research findings is provided. The investigations' findings have led to the conclusion and recommendations as outlined below.

This study initially set out to establish why there were various interpretations of biblical metaphors. The metaphors were identified from the book of Revelation of the New Testament of the Holy Bible. The following objectives were therefore put forward which needed a scientific investigation:

1. To identify and explain the meanings of some metaphors used in the book of Revelation using relevance theory.
2. To investigate the different meanings brought out by different interpretations of metaphors.
3. To investigate the possible causes of the variation in meaning.
4. To identify possible ways of eliminating the causes of the variation in meaning.

5.2 Summary of the Research Findings

In consideration of the data analyzed in Chapter Three and Chapter Four, it was established that the first objective was positively achieved. It showed that metaphors were identified from the book of Revelation and described using

relevance theory. They were then given to the lay leaders for interpretation. After some time the metaphors were collected from the leaders and analyzed.

It was noted that there were varied interpretations of the metaphors from the lay leaders. The reasons for these variations in meaning were identified as: the leaders' level of education, source of biblical literature and years of experience as Church leaders. Chapter One of this study captured the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives, hypotheses and the rationale. The scope and limitations, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology and significance to the study were dealt with here.

In Chapter Two, metaphors were identified and described using relevance theory. The same metaphors were taken to randomly selected S.D.A. lay leaders for interpretation in Chapter Three. These metaphors were later collected and analyzed and found to be having various interpretations. Chapter Four examined the possible causes of variation in meaning and the possible solutions. Finally there was a summary of the research findings, the conclusion and the recommendations for future research given in Chapter Five.

5.3 Conclusion

This study had established that there are identifiable features of metaphors which

have been analyzed using relevance theoretic approach. There are some variations in meaning of the metaphors interpreted. It was identified that education levels, Church leaders' years of experience and different sources of biblical literature were the main causes of the varied interpretations. Therefore, in order for the interpretation to be adequate the interpreter should have shared assumptions or background information due to shared knowledge of metaphors under consideration. There were some solutions to the causes of varied interpretations cited. They include: refresher courses, workshops, seminars and adult education.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Research

This research dealt with the use of metaphors from the book of Revelation. It therefore recommended that future study be conducted on the symbols, irony, hyperbole and similes, as figures of speech in other books of the Bible, for example the book of Psalms in the Old Testament.

Further still, research can be carried out on the aforementioned figurative language as they are understood and interpreted by lay leaders of other religious denominations apart from members of the S.D.A. Church.

In addition, the study recommended that future research be done thoroughly to ascertain the dangers, the interpretive challenges pose to the hearers or readers of

the word of God. And recommended as well a linguistic anthropological research to be done with the intention of establishing whether ethnic languages have any contribution into the way the metaphors are understood by the audience.

In conclusion, additional research should be conducted on how the young people understand and interpret metaphors. This is for the reason that, investigations were only done on the interpretation of metaphors, by people aged 31 or above.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

A RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE TOPIC: METAPHORS IN REVELATION: A STUDY OF SELECTED S.D.A. LAY LEADERS' INTERPRETATIONS.

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

_____ **CHURCH** _____ **PASTORAL**
DIST _____ **CONFERENCE**

1. Please indicate your age bracket

31-40 [] 41-50 [] 51-60 [] 61 OR OVER []

2. Are you male [] or Female []

3. Please indicate your level of education.

Primary [] Secondary [] Tertiary []

4. Please indicate your years of experience as a Church elder.

1-10 yrs [] 11-20 yrs [] 21-30 yrs [] 31 yrs or over []

SECTION B: GUIDING QUESTIONS

Please tick the most appropriate approach for interpreting metaphors from the five options given below.

Literal interpretation

Non-literal interpretation

A mixture of literal and non-literal interpretation

Different interpretation

No information

SECTION C

INTERPRETATION OF METAPHORS

Please read and understand the Scriptures given in front of each metaphor and explain them briefly in the separate sheet of paper provided.

1. 'Alpha and Omega' (Revelation 1:8).
2. 'A woman with a cup of iniquity' (Revelation 17:1-5).
3. 'Babylon the great city is fallen' (Revelation 18:1-3)
4. 'God's new world' (Revelation 22:5)
5. 'The dragon' (Revelation 12:13)
6. 'Satan's throne' (Revelation 2:13)
7. 'Seven churches' (Revelation 4:11)
8. 'Stood the Lamb as it had been slain' (Revelation 5:6-7)
9. 'Sodom and Egypt' (Revelation 11:7-10)
10. 'The Laodicean Church which is lukewarm' (Revelation 3:15-16).
11. 'The morning star' (Revelation 22:16)
12. 'Synagogue of Satan' (Revelation 3:9)
13. 'The Tree of Life' (Revelation 3:22)
14. 'Jesus is coming with the clouds of Heaven' (Revelation 1:7)

15. 'The woman Jezebel' (Revelation 2:24).

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSE