

Towards a Pastoral Approach for the Synoptic Problem: Re-reading of the Gadarene Demoniac Story with Selected Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Musoma Town Tanzania “Work forming part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Religious Studies of Kenyatta University”

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to develop a Pastoral approach for the Synoptic Problem, a simplified approach of studying the Synoptic Gospels with Church members. This study was done in Musoma town Tanzania to help Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) members harmonize between their belief on trustworthiness of the word of God and the differences and similarities which emerge in the story of Gadarene demoniac in the Synoptic Gospel. The research design employed qualitative approach. The researcher used contextual Bible Study theory to re-read the Gadarene demoniac story whereby interviews and focus group discussions followed thereafter. 368 church members were divided to 46 Focus Groups Discussions with 8 members per each group, four Pastors were put in one session of Focus Group Discussion and four church leaders were interviewed separately in their offices. The researcher did a Biblical exegesis for the linkage of SDA church belief and Biblical context. Research finding revealed that, SDA church in Musoma believes that writers who had different education, background and personality were inspired with thoughts were led to compose their canonical gospels focusing on the need of their audiences. The writing process made them focus on specific issues which in turn affected their style, form, rhythm, occurrences, inclusion and vocabulary of each presenter and finally differences and similarities came upon their canonical gospels. Further study of the pastoral approach for the Synoptic Problem in the scope of other denominations and relationship between inspiration and the free use of intellectual knowledge of Biblical authors are recommended.

Keywords: Synoptic Gospels, Synoptic Problem, Pastoral Approach, Pericope, SDA Church, Gadarene demoniac story

INTRODUCTION

The Holy Bible is a combination of two volumes, Old Testament and New Testament. The second volume (New Testament) has 27 individual books which are divided into five subsections namely; Gospels, Acts of Apostles, Pauline letters, general letters and the Apocalypse [1]. The four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) give a history of the ministry of Jesus Christ and the beginning of Christian faith. These Gospels were viewed as one unit of Jesus' life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension [2].

The earliest harmony of the Gospels was that of Tatian who tried to harmonize all Gospels by introducing a theory called “Diatessaron”. Tatian theory was followed by other harmonies of Ammonius of Alexandria, Eusebius and Augustine [3]. Apart from being one unit, the first three Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) give their records in a similar way of expression, content and structure which gave a way for

them to be called “Synoptic Gospels” which means viewing together.

These Gospels however, differ in some details which raise a question “why the Synoptic Gospels are similar and yet different?” Amanze, Kealotswe and Nkomazana[4] say that “it is the existence of the similarities and differences which bring what has been called the Synoptic Problem” (p, 75) Moreover, Riches [5] says “the central focus of the Synoptic Problem is the analysis of similarities and differences between Mathew, Mark and Luke” (p, 151) The Synoptic Problem is therefore a study of literary similarities and differences of the first three Gospels in the New Testament, in an attempt to explain their literary relationship [6]. This is a global problem which led various scholars to come up with theories from different parts of the World.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Seventh-day Adventist church (SDA) believes the Bible as the authoritative word of God. According to SDA church manual [7] fundamental belief number one states; “The Holy Scriptures Old and New Testaments are written Word of God given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”(P, 156)On the other hand, the Bible reveals that there are differences and similarities in the Synoptic Gospels particularly in the passage of Gadarene demoniac found in Matthew 8:28-34, Mark 5:1-20 and Luke 8:26-39. One of the differences is the number of Demoniacs, whereby Mathew mentions two Demoniacs whereas mark and Luke mention one Demoniac. These differences bring confusion among SDA members and ask why the records of the same story differ? What the true fact among the two is? Can a re-reading of this story with selected Seventh - day Adventist churches in Musoma town Tanzania develop a pastoral approach for the Synoptic Problem? The researcher observed that there is a need for a pastoral approach for the Synoptic Problem among SDA members to harmonize their belief of the trustworthiness of the word of God and the differences and similarities in the Gadarene demoniac story in the Synoptic Gospels.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study focused on the following objectives;

1. To investigate SDA’s presupposition of the reading the Bible in Musoma town
2. To assess the local members understanding of the differences and similarities in the Gadarene demoniac story in the Synoptic Gospels among SDA members in Musoma town
3. To analyze a pastoral approach for the differences and similarities in the Gadarene demoniac story in the Synoptic Gospels among SDA members in Musoma town

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the SDA’s presuppositions of reading the Bible in Musoma town?
2. What is the local members understanding of the differences and similarities in the Gadarene demoniac story in the Synoptic Gospels among SDA members in Musoma town?
3. What can be the pastoral approach for the differences and similarities in story of Gadarene demoniac in the Synoptic Gospels among SDA members in Musoma town?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Literature reveal that theories have been suggested for the differences among authors of the Synoptic Gospels namely oral tradition, fragmented theory, original gospel hypothesis, documentary hypothesis and mutual dependency theory [8-10].

Oral tradition theory explains that, the writers of the Synoptic Gospels depended on oral narratives to compose their materials. During the time of the early Christian Church, Jesus’ teachings were first communicated orally before composition of the canonical Gospels. Freed [11] says “Between the time of Jesus death and the time of our first Gospel, the unwritten Gospel was communicated by the apostles” (p, 60). Abakuks [12] says “it has long been accepted that in early church oral tradition played an important role in the transmission of the material that came to be in cooperated in the gospel” (p, 6). Moreover the story of the walk to Emmaus found in (Luke 24:13-35) suggests that there was unwritten information of Jesus arrest, crucifixion and resurrection. It is therefore logical to admit that the authors of the Synoptic Gospels borrowed their materials from oral teachings of their time.

Fragmented theory suggests that the authors made use of short narratives to write theirs. This theory is supported by the Gospel of Luke which openly mentions a compilation of different narratives which were delivered to the community. According to Plumber [13] Luke used other sources to compose his canonical gospel. (Luke 1:1-3) states “Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us, just as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eye witnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus” According to Freed [14] early Christian Churches used these materials which were later sorted and edited by the canonical Gospel authors.

Original Gospel hypothesis was introduced by a Germany philosopher called G.E Lessing [15]. This theory suggests that the Synoptic Gospels used original Gospel called ‘Gospel of Nazarenes’ According to Boring [16] the Gospel of Nazarenes was known to the Church fathers as the ‘Gospel of the Apostles’. This theory was later abandoned because it failed to explain the data by its own.

Documentary hypothesis holds that the Synoptic Gospels composed their documents from various sources and the differences emerged when authors copied different sources and the similarities were the result of using the same source [17]. Out of documentary hypothesis, two theories were developed, the two-source theory which explained the independent use of Mark and Quelle source by Matthew and Luke and four-source theory which includes Markan, Quelle source, Matthean and Lukan sources.

Lastly, mutual dependency theory suggests that one Gospel was used by others. According to Aune [18] Freed [19] and Thomas [20] the mutual dependency theory brought arguments of first written Gospel. The first argument was the Matthew priority which explains that Matthew was the first Gospel and was copied by Mark and Luke. Second argument was Markan priority which explains that Mark was the first, Matthew and Luke used it as their original source. Another argument suggests that apart from Markan source, Matthew and Luke used Quelle source to compose their documents. Amanze, Kealotswe and Nkomazana [21] say that "there is one original Gospel and others (Matthew, Mark and Luke) made use of it to compile theirs" (P, 75). Other sources which have been suggested are Matthean 'M' and Lukan 'L'. This argument is supported by Thomas [22] Neville [23] Piper [24] and Zuck [25] who say that the Synoptic Gospel writers composed their Gospels from other sources and the outcome was the similarities and differences.

Development of Theories for the Synoptic Problem

During the time of enlightenment, German scholars came up with interdependence theory which suggests common sources for the Synoptic Gospels. In 1783 Johann Jakob Griesbach formulated a theory called "Griesbach Hypothesis" which puts Matthew as the first Gospel, Luke the second and Mark as the third who copied from Matthew and Luke [26]. This theory was challenged by Karl Lachman who in 1835 suggested Markan priority. In 1863 a notable German scholar H.J. Holtzmann introduced another source called Quelle and suggested that Matthew and Luke used this source on the details which Matthew and Luke agree against Mark [27]. This idea created two-source hypothesis theory which explained the independent use of Mark's Gospel and Quelle source by Matthew and Luke [28].

These theories were developed from German to English mainly in the universities of Cambridge and Oxford. English scholars like Sanday [29] Streeter [30] Butler [31] and Turner [32] modified the two document theory and included Matthean and Lukan sources. According to Hultgren [33] the first scholar who introduced four document theory was B.H. Streeter. He said "Within English speaking scholarship B.H. Streeter at first advocated a more complex solution to the Synoptic Problem. In his article 'the four gospels' Streeter offered a modified form of a simple two-document hypothesis in his four document hypothesis." (p, 52). This four document hypothesis includes Markan, Quelle source, Matthean and Lukan sources. Another English scholar Farrer [34] challenged the existence of Quelle source, he accepted the Markan priority and dispensed Quelle source. However, French scholars suggested multiple-source hypothesis which included Quelle source and other sources. L. Vaganay

was the main supporter of this view and more of its defense has been advocated by Boismard [35] who proposed the following documents;

- A Palestinian Proto Gospel which he named 'A'
- Gentile revision of it. 'B'
- Independent document from Palestine. 'C'
- Quelle source.
- Interim Matthew (dependent on 'A' and 'Quelle source')
- Interim Mark (dependent on 'A', 'B' and 'C')
- Proto Luke (dependent on Interim Matthew, 'B', 'C' and 'Quelle source')
- Canonical Matthew (dependent on Interim Mark and Interim Matthew)
- Canonical Mark (dependent on Interim Mark)
- Canonical Luke (dependent on Interim Mark and Proto Luke).

Boismard hypothesis of multiple sources was later broken down by Burkett [36] who argued that, none of the Synoptic Gospels was the source of the others instead he suggested Proto-Mark which was edited to Proto-Mark 'A' and Proto Mark 'B' which along with Quelle source became the sources for Matthew and Luke. Therefore, Proto-Mark document was more valued by some scholars who say that each gospel made use of this large document. According to Meyboom [37] scholars support Proto-Mark because it is more extensive than any other Synoptic Gospels.

Among American scholars are Dungan [38] and Farmer [39] who argue that, the order of the canonical Synoptic Gospels supports the Griesbach solution. They attempt to revive Griesbach hypothesis which support the Matthean priority. Dungan concludes that Matthew is the most original document since it is imbedded with Jewish settings. He says that Markan was a revision of an account that was similar to Quelle source, hence disqualifies the Markan priority.

This idea differs from African scholars who have also shown interest in the issue Synoptic Problem. Abogunrin [40] argues that the reality of the situation is that all the conclusions which reject tradition in favor of priority of Mark have succeeded in further complicating the Synoptic Problem. Amanze, Kealotswe and Nkomazana [41] support the four source hypothesis; they say "the four documentary hypotheses explained the relationship of the Synoptic Gospels in terms of the sources used by the writers." (p, 76)

These solutions have explained that the Synoptic Gospels depended on the common original sources which caused commonalities in arrangement, literary similarities and differences. According to Aune [42] these theories got impression after emerging influence of historical critical method of Biblical interpretation in Germany. This method suggested a free investigation of

the Gospel through scientific and historical analysis. According to Bacchiocchi [43] this method did not include the idea of inspiration of the Holy Spirit to the authors, because it presupposes that the Bible is purely human document, rejecting any possible divine inspiration and divine intervention.

Contrary to historical-critical method approach which was mainly used by scholars to study the Synoptic Problem, SDA believes the word of God as special revelation to humanity.

Seventh - day Adventist's presuppositions to the reading of the Bible

According to SDA church manual [44] fundamental belief number one states that;

"The Holy Scriptures Old and The Holy Scriptures are infallible revelation of God's will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrine, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history."

This fundamental belief affirms that the Bible is the Word of God, infallible and inspired. Affirming the divine authorship, former president of SDA church Folkenberg[45] states;

"Our unequivocal, historic emphasis upon the divine inspiration and trustworthiness of Scriptures has strengthened our church. It has helped us resist the error of treating some parts of the Scriptures as God's Word, while ignoring or rejecting other parts. If we accept it as God's Word, we must accept it all, whether or not we like what it says. To us the Scriptures should be the ultimate revelation of God's will for our lives." (P, 22)

Pipim [46] also explained that SDA church presuppose that the Bible is of divine origin, infallible revelation of God, sole authoritative and record of God's acts in history. The church affirms that, Biblical writers were inspired by the Holy Spirit and their work was not of independent making, they depended on the divine revelation to compose their documents. An exposition of fundamental beliefs of SDA [47] states that "In some instances writers were commanded to express the exact words of God, but in most cases God instructed them to describe to the best of their ability what they saw or heard. In these cases the writers used their own language, patterns, and style." (p, 14). White [48] one of the SDA pioneers states "Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts."(p, 21) She also believed that the authors were 'God's penmen, not His

pen.' She believed that God revealed his will to the authors who in turn wrote God's message according to their understanding and personality.

This reveals that SDA church believes in thought inspiration of the Bible. SDA church presuppositions do not expose the reasons of literary similarities and difference in the Gadarene demoniac story in the Synoptic Gospels. Did the Holy Spirit overlook some details to some author of the Bible in the process of giving inspiration? This brings a gap which was discussed in this study.

Convergences and divergences from the exegetical study

The exegetical study shows that the pericope in study appears in three Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) and it has convergences and divergences which need another approach which will enable the SDAs in Musoma town harmonize the divergences and their Biblical trustworthy belief.

Convergences

Exegetical study has discovered similar elements among the writers which call for a pastoral approach fit for the Church community. All writers (Matthew, Mark and Luke) narrate that Jesus took his journey to the other side of the Galilean sea where he met an incident of demons possession (Mat 8:28; Mark 5:1, 2; Luke 8:26, 27) who made the possessed to be wild (Mat 8:28; Mark 5:3-5; Luke 8:29).

The demons acknowledged Jesus as the son of God and inquired not to be tormented but they would be allowed to enter into the Pigs which were feeding around (Mat 8:29, 30; Mark 5:7-12; Luke 8:28-32) Moreover, similar elements appear in Jesus' actions and the outcome of his divine power. Demons were casted out and were allowed to go into the Pigs which rushed to the sea and died (Mat 8:32; Mark 5:13; Luke 8: 32-33). When the headsmen saw what happened, they went to the city to give information and the whole city came to the scene to witness what had happened (Mat 8:33; Mark 5:14; Luke 8:34). And at last all writers say that the natives of the country begged Jesus to depart from their country (Mat 8:34; Mark 5:17; Luke 8:37).

Divergences

Apart from similar elements, there are differences that appear to this triple tradition narration. The first difference is the use of pronoun 'He' and 'They' Matthew uses singular pronoun 'He' while Mark and Luke use plural pronoun 'They' (Mat 8:28; Mark 5:1; Luke 8:26). Another difference is the two different towns mentioned by the authors, Gadara and Gerasa. (Mat 8:28) says "And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes" (Mark 5:1) says "they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the

Gerasenes” and (Luke 8:26) says ‘Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. This difference can be solved only by studying historical-geography of the ancient world that produced the text.

Furthermore, Matthew introduces two demoniacs while Mark and Luke introduce only one individual who was possessed (Mat 8:28; Mark 5:2; Luke 8:27). If Matthew and Luke depended on Mark as their source, it is logic to assume that Matthew could not add another demoniac to his narration, there should be another reason of introducing the second demoniac. The authors also differ on describing the condition of the demoniacs; (Mat 8:28; Mark 5:3-5; Luke 8:27, 29). In this narration, neither Mark nor Luke mentions that ‘no man could pass that way’ only Matthew does this. Moreover, Matthew and Luke say nothing on the continuous crying of the demoniacs and the act of bruising with stones, only Mark does this. Matthew and Mark do not say about ‘nakedness’ of the demoniac while Luke says ‘for long time he worn no clothes’.

Other differences are the arrangement of sentences, (Luke 8:28) interferes the narration of the condition of the demoniac while (Mark 5:3-5) has no this interference. Luke and Mark report that Jesus asked the name of the demons and the demons gave a name ‘Legion’ while Matthew does not mention it. (Luke 8:34) reports that the healed demoniac was found by the Gadarenes sitting at Jesus feet, (Mark 5:15) reports that ‘the demoniac was found sitting there’ and Matthew says nothing about it. Luke and Mark report that the healed demoniac begged Jesus that he would allow him to be his follower while Matthew is silent about it (Luke 8:18; Mark 5:38), replying this request, Mark reports that Jesus refused while Luke does not say it but gives information that Jesus sent him away.

Lastly, Mark and Luke say that Jesus told the healed demoniac to go back and proclaim what God had done to him (Mark 5:20; Luke 8:39) while Matthew says nothing. Mark reports that, after the proclamation of the healed demoniac in the city, all people marveled while Luke and Matthew have not mentioned it.

All these convergences and divergences go beyond oral tradition, fragmented theory, mutual dependency theory, original gospel hypothesis, and documentary hypothesis which have been established. These theories do not consider the exegesis of the New Testament which the intended meaning of the original text [49]. The theories do not study the literary context, structure grammar, and theology of the text and call for a pastoral approach, a simplified approach of studying the text by church members.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive approach and employed grounded theory, a type of qualitative research which generated and developed a theory from field data collection. The researcher used interviews and Focus Group Discussions to collect views and opinions from church members, Pastors and church leaders in Musoma town after re-reading the story of Gadarene demoniac in the Synoptic Gospels with the participants using Contextual Bible Study theory. The use of qualitative approach extended the range of enquiry of the pastoral approach for the Synoptic Problem.

This study used purposive and simple random sampling techniques. According to Babie [50] purposive sampling is done on the basis of researcher observation of the usefulness of representatives. This study selected five out of nineteen churches, four Pastors who minister in the selected churches and four out of ten church leaders, this is because their beliefs were particularly connected to the study and gave relevant information, Ferreira and Puth [51]. Simple random was employed to each church whereby every member had an equal chance of being chosen by employing lottery, names were written and was put in a pool, and then the researcher picked the required number from the pool Rivera and Rivera [52].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data reduction

On this stage, data was coded into identified themes and was tabulated according to the interview and FGD questions and the objectives of the study as outlined in following tables;

Table 1: Themes tabulated from research question one

Q #	Interviews & FGD questions	Themes	Objectives of the study
1.	What are the SDA's Presuppositions to the reading of the Bible?		
1 (a)	What do you think before reading your Bible?	Bible is the word of God	To investigate SDA's presuppositions to the reading of the Bible.
1 (b)	What does the SDA teach concerning authorship of the Bible?	Holy men wrote the Bible under inspiration of the Holy Spirit	
1 (c)	How do the SDA's view the Bible as the source of their faith?	SDA teachings are based in the Bible	
1 (d)	What do you say about error and mistakes in Bible	There are no inspirational errors and mistakes but discrepancies	
1 (e)	Can you see human element in the process of reading your Bible?	There are Human elements in the Bible	

Table 2: Themes tabulated from research question two

Q #	Interviews & FGD questions	Themes	Objectives of the study
2	What is the local members understanding of the differences and similarities in the Gadarene demoniac story in the Synoptic Gospels among SDA members in Musoma town?		
2 (a)	How did the Holy Spirit inspire the Biblical authors?	Thought inspiration	2. To assess the local members understanding of the differences and similarities in the Synoptic Gospels among SDA members in Musoma town
2 (b)	How Did the differences and similarities emerge among the inspired authors?	Different personalities communicated the same thought	
2 (c)	Can a personal emphasis of the same story bring differences among authors?	Personal emphasis of the authors brought differences	
2 (d)	Can different audience affect style, form, vocabulary and emphasis of the same story? Explain.	Different audience affected style, form and emphasis	
2 (e)	Was there a specific audience to each author? Could this bring divergences among themselves?	There were different audiences	

Table 3: Themes tabulated from research question three

Q #	Interviews & FGD questions	Themes	Objectives of the study
3	What can be the pastoral approach for the differences and similarities in story of Gadarene demoniac in the Synoptic Gospels among SDA members in Musoma town?		
3 (a)	Can a pastoral approach for the Synoptic Problem be developed for church community?	There is a pastoral approach	3. To analyze a pastoral approach for the differences and similarities in the Synoptic Gospel among SDA members in Musoma town
3 (b)	What are your opinions and views to a pastoral approach for the similarities and differences in the Gadarene demoniac story in the Synoptic Gospels?	The authors had different ability to express themselves	
3 (c)	Can a specific audience, personal emphasis, specific purpose and thought inspiration theories establish a pastoral approach for the similarities and differences in the Synoptic Gospels?	specific audience, personal emphasis, specific purpose and thought inspiration establish a pastoral approach	

Data display

On this stage, data from the respondents was summarized according to the identified themes which were guided by the research questions.

Research Question 1: What are the SDA's presuppositions of reading the Bible in Musoma town?

The aim of this question was to find out SDA's presupposition to the reading of the Bible. Out of it, five themes were developed from five sub-questions.

Bible is the word of God

All respondents commented that before reading the Bible, they term it as the word of God. They view the Bible as the Holy book which contains message of God and should be regarded as authoritative word of God the creator. Twenty seven (27) groups said "it is an inspired book which brings a message from God." Five (5) groups said "it is a book of God." six (6) groups, Pastor number 1, Pastor number 2 and Pastor number 4 said "it is a word of God" one (1) group and Pastor number 3 said "it is a Holy Book" Leader number 1 and Leader number 3 did not hit the point, they gave unclear answers

Holy men wrote the bible under inspiration of the Holy Spirit

Responses to this theme were noted. Church members, Pastors and leaders revealed that men wrote the Bible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. 6 groups, Leader number 3, Leader number 2, Leader number 1, and Pastor number 3 said "Holy Spirit led men to write the Bible." 2 groups said "Men wrote and spoke what came from God." 1 group said "God inspired people with thought" 30 groups said "The Bible was written under the guidance of the Holy Spirit" Pastor number 4 gave unclear answer and Leader number 4 gave irrelevant answer.

SDA teachings are based in the Bible

Participants responded differently, 20 groups, all pastors and all leaders said that the church doctrines are based on the Bible. 16 groups gave unclear answer and 3 groups gave irrelevant answer.

There are no inspirational errors and mistakes in the Bible but discrepancies

36 groups commented that the Bible is the word of God which has no inspirational mistakes but individuals who received the message had human nature which is subject to mistakes. Clarifying this point Pastors and church leaders said that the so called mistakes are discrepancies which were caused by feeble human language, the process of translation, education and literary composition and these do not contradict the intended message of God. They said "We believe that God did not err while revealing messages to the writers,

but writers' language was subject to mistakes in the process of delivering the message" 3 groups gave a negative answer that there are no mistakes in the Bible.

There are human elements in the Bible

Participants commented that it is obvious that the Bible was written by human beings. Moreover, one Pastor quoted SDA co-founder White (2005:88) who wrote that "But the Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human. Such a union existed in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of man" This observation revealed that the Bible has two nature combine divine and human which cannot be separated.

Research Question 2: What is the local members understanding of the differences and similarities in the Gadarene demoniac story in the Synoptic Gospels among SDA members in Musoma town?

The goal of this question was to investigate pastoral causes of the differences and similarities in the Synoptic Gospel. This question developed five themes from five sub-questions.

Thought inspiration

33 groups, all leaders, Pastor number 2, Pastor number 3 and Pastor number 4 admitted that inspiration was not a process of word to word dictation but men were imbued with thoughts which left a room for them to express the received thought. The authors therefore used their own spiritual experience, education, language rhetoric and background to write the inspired thoughts. Moreover, inspiration didn't hinder the writers to use other sources concerning the same revealed subject; a good example is the Gospel of Luke which was extracted from other sources. 6 groups and Pastor number 1 gave unclear answers.

Different personalities communicated the same thought

Participants responded that in most cases authors received a thought which was communicated in different ways. Leader number 3 said; "the authors used their education, spiritual experience and personalities". Leader number 1 said; "The Holy Spirit did not spiritualize the authors, but left them write the message as they could, they were also able to visit other source, for instance Luke says clearly that he compiled his narratives from other sources (Luke 1:1-3)"

Personal emphasis of the authors brought differences

Participants commented that there was a personal emphasis for each author on the interested matters. They said that literary study of the Gospels shows clearly areas of interest of the authors and what they emphasized. Commenting on this point, Pastor number

3 commented that Matthew emphasized on Jesus as the promised Messiah who would establish the kingdom of God, Mark emphasized on the deeds of Jesus and Luke emphasized on Jesus as the son of man focusing on his human side and his sympathetic approach to the marginalized. Therefore, their composition of the same story had different hues in the point of their emphasis and had similar wordings in their common points.

Different audience affected style, form and emphasis

It was agreed by all respondent that authors addressed specific audiences who had different challenges and experiences. Matthew had Jews Christians who anticipated for the coming Messiah, Mark had Roman converts who were experiencing persecutions and Luke had gentile Christians who were facing rejection from Jewish brethren and the challenge of philosophical arguments of Greco- Roman world as well. Explaining this point Leader number 3 said “the style of Matthew and vocabulary he used fitted the Jews, Mark style fitted his Roman Christians and Luke fitted Gentile Christians” In this case; the same story is expected to include differences in writing style, the use of words, and it is also expected to include the same events and wordings as well.

There were different audiences

All respondents said there was specific audience to each author. Pastor number 2 and Pastor number 4 commented that it is not possible to approach Jews and the Gentiles alike, their needs, experiences and world views differs, so, the same message can be presented into two different ways. Pastor number 3 also said; “The divergences depended much on the different audiences of the message”.

Research Question 3: What can be the pastoral approach for the differences and similarities in story of Gadarene demoniac in the Synoptic Gospels among SDA members in Musoma town?

The goal of this question was to determine a pastoral approach for the differences and similarities in the Synoptic Gospels. The question developed three themes which were identified from the three sub-questions.

There is a pastoral approach

All groups, all pastors Leader number 1, Leader number 3, Leader number 4 said that there is pastoral approach Leader number 2 gave irrelevant answer.

The authors had different ability to express themselves

Leader number 2 commented that authors differed in cultural background, the use of words and the ability to address audience of different political, economic and social factors. Leader number 4 gave unclear answer. 21 groups Leader number 3, Leader

number 1, Pastor number 1 and Pastor 2 commented that writers had a room to describe what was revealed to them. Pastor number 3, Pastor number 4 commented that the authors had common object which influenced similarities. 18 groups: gave unclear answer.

Specific audience, personal emphasis, specific purpose and thought inspiration establish a pastoral approach

All respondents commented that each author had a specific purpose in mind, Personal emphasis, specific audience and thought inspiration. These made them focus on their purposes which affected the style of narration of the same story. Matthew’s purpose was to highlight the teaching of messianic kingdom, Mark was dealing with the actions of Jesus and his passion and Luke’s purpose was to bring Jesus as the son of men who sympathized with all kind of people including the downgraded. In this case, their vocabulary, rhetoric, arrangement of words differed according to authors objectives.

Respondents said that, a pastoral approach for the differences and similarities in the Synoptic Gospels should not be biased on the literary works only but should include inspiration motif. Pastor number 2 commented that “any solution to this so called differences and similarities need to take into consideration that every scripture is inspired and the authors did not write the Gospels by their own intellectual knowledge without the element of inspiration” addition to this Leader number 1 said “we admit that the authors were inspired but in turn they differed. So, the better solution should consider not only the literary work but also the other part of inspiration”.

Participants also commented that in order to find out a better pastoral approach the following things should be studied;

- Background of the authors
- Addressees
- Grammatical analysis
- Textual criticism

Lastly, Leader number 3 said “because God knows His people in every specific place, He then knows how to approach them and what should be emphasized. In this case, God used different individuals to present the same story in different emphasis and to meet different needs”

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

Research objective no 1

To investigate SDA’s presupposition of the reading the Bible in Musoma town

The questions that guided this objective reveal that SDA church presuppose that the Bible is the word

of God which was written by holy men who were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Research revealed that SDA's faith is based on the Bible which has no inspirational errors and mistakes but has discrepancies.

Research objective no 2

To assess the local members understanding of the differences and similarities in the Gadarene demoniac story in the Synoptic Gospels among SDA members in Musoma town

Despite the inspirational experience of the writers, divergences and convergences elements emerged in their literary works. Local members understand that the writers were inspired with thoughts which were narrated by different personalities using their own language, education, style and cultural background. These authors had different addressees who had different challenges and needs which shaped the style of the writers who were compelled to meet the need of their audiences. Therefore, the writers were obliged to emphasize on specific elements according to the need of their audiences. Respondents said that every author had specific purpose of his Gospel, this made them to stress on specific issues and made them use different style, rhythm, arrangement of words to compose their Gospels which in turn brought differences and similarities.

Last point which came from the respondents was eye witness. Local members understand that Mathew witnessed the event while Mark and Luke got information from other sources; this made Matthew to mention two (duo) demoniacs while other evangelists mention only one who approached Jesus.

Research objective no 3

To analyze a pastoral approach for the differences and similarities in the Gadarene demoniac story in the Synoptic Gospel among SDA members in Musoma town

Research finding shows that there is a pastoral approach for the Synoptic problem. This approach is the inclusion of both thought inspiration idea and the literary work of the writers as well. The pastoral approach is to study the process of inspiration and the process of message proclamation. Moreover, eye witness idea has been included as the cause of differences. In the case of similarities, findings showed that the authors were narrating their story focusing on the same object. We should expect similarities because the story is one and the object is the same

Finally, thought inspiration and the literary study of the text which includes the background of the authors, political set up, economic factors of the audience; grammatical analysis, eye witness, special

emphasis and specific purpose of each author fit to establish a pastoral approach.

CONCLUSIONS

This study focused on introducing a pastoral approach for the Synoptic problem. The findings suggested that there is a need of inclusion of the inspiration idea in the process of looking for pastoral approach for this problem. Scholars should not overlook the idea that the authors of the Bible were inspired as the Bible claims (1Peter 1:19-20).

The findings showed that the causes of the problem need to be tackled not only on the used sources but also on the intention and the special purpose of the writers and the need of the audience they were addressing.

Therefore, a pastoral approach suggests that the Synoptic Problem should be viewed by the SDA church in Musoma that, the writers were inspired by thoughts which did not limit them to visit other sources were led to compose their canonical gospels focusing on the need of their audiences. This process made them focus on specific issues which in turn affected their style, form, rhythm, occurrences, inclusion and vocabulary of each presenter and finally differences and similarities came upon their canonical gospels. This approach harmonizes the trustworthiness of the word of God and Synoptic Problem. It affirms that the writers were inspired the same but differed in explaining the received thought because they had specific audience, special purpose and personal emphasis.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY

The purpose of this research was to find out the pastoral approach for the Synoptic Problem which was done in the scope of SDA church, however more research on the pastoral approach for the Synoptic Problem in the scope of other denominations is recommended. Moreover, further research can be done on the relationship between inspiration and the free use of intellectual knowledge of Biblical authors.

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