

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Leadership

Adventist University of Africa

School of Postgraduate Studies

Title: EFFECTIVE RETENTION STRATEGY FOR SUCCESSFUL
EVANGELISM OF THE CHEWA OF CHINSAPO COMMUNITY IN
LILONGWE, MALAWI, THROUGH SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

Researcher: Brian Stoneck Chafunya

Primary adviser: Joseph Bandawe Kuthemba Mwale, PhD

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The work of evangelizing the Chewa ethnic group of the Central Region of Malawi has been difficult. The purpose of the study was to find out why the Chewa people resist the Seventh-day Adventist Church and to find out ways of retaining them after they are converted to Adventism.

In order to find out why the Chewa people do not stay long after joining the Seventh-day Adventist Church, a study was conducted that involved small group ministry. The reason was to find out if using small group ministry would help them stay. The study was conducted at Nsewa Adventist Church in Lilongwe from September 2016 to March 2017. Twenty mature leaders were selected and trained on how to lead a small group. The idea was that after training, these people will lead twenty small groups that were to be established. The researcher was to monitor these small groups so that the purpose of establishing them would be realized.

The objectives of establishing small groups were that Adventist members would invite the Chewa people during the sessions so that they learn what Adventists believe. This was because inviting them to church proved to be futile. These small groups were organized to be taking place in villages where Adventists live.

The project was launched when the researcher was the pastor of the church where the research project was being conducted. However, the project met a setback as the researcher was moved to another place. The district had no full time pastor for four months. The researcher however, visited the project though not frequently. The small group leaders did a commendable job as there were not many problems.

At the end of six months, data were collected and analyzed. The data were collected using quantitative data. The results supported the assumption that if small group ministry were as a strategy for evangelizing the Chewa, they would learn and acquire the SDA beliefs and then stay in the church.

In conclusion, the study has shown that using small group ministry can help the Chewa People join the Adventist Church and stay. The study recommended that small group ministry should be used by the church in other region as well where the Adventist Church is resisted like in the Eastern part of Malawi where Islam is dominant.

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A project

presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Leadership

by

Brian Stoneck Chafunya

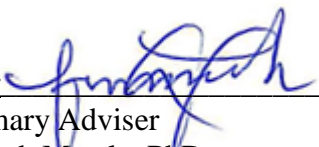
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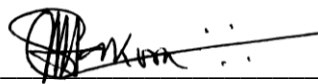
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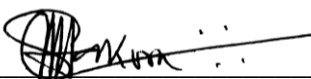
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APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

for 
Primary Adviser
Joseph Mwale, PhD


Programme Director, MA Leadership
Musa Nyakora, PhD


Secondary Adviser
Musa Nyakora, PhD


Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies
Daniel Ganu, DPH

Extension Site: Solusi University

Date: April 2018

This work is dedicated to my wife, Patricia Chafunya, whose patience and understanding provided support during my study, reading and the work on this project. She even followed me every time I went to conduct this study. She helped me in formulating and correcting the questionnaire.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMC	Central Malawi Conference
MUC	Malawi Union Conference
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist
SID	Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division
WHO	World Health Organization

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Seventh day Adventist Church has faced setback in its evangelism. This is shown by the number of Adventists against the world population. Much as making disciples is a great command by our Lord Jesus Christ, it is clear that the church is facing problems in its evangelism strategy globally.

There has been resistance to the Adventist message by some ethnic groups of the world like the Arabs and other races like the whites. Even in Africa, it has also shown that Adventists are a small number as compared to the population of this continent. This can be attributed to different religions and beliefs the continent has.

The problem of evangelism by Adventists has also affected Malawi. There are several ethnic groups in the country. One of the ethnic groups that is known to resist Adventist message is the Chewa ethnic group of Central Region. The Chewa ethnic group covers almost the entire region of Central Malawi.

Evangelizing the Chewa has been a big problem that Seventh day Adventist has faced. Several methods have been employed in order to evangelize the Chewa but all the methods have yielded no results. This study seeks to find out if using small group ministry as a strategy to evangelize the Chewa can yield lasting results. Since other methods have failed, the researcher will use small group ministry by training a small

group of leaders how to run small groups. Thereafter, these leaders would be assigned to lead these small groups.

As already stated, the Chewa is one of the dominant ethnic groups in the Central Region of Malawi. Probably, it is the largest ethnic group covering almost the entire region and it is known for its high resistance to the message the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA Church) preaches. Table 1 below demonstrates the resistance of the Chewa to our message and the figures though not very current but the situation has remained like this for a period of sixty years from when the region was organized into a field. There is a need to challenge this resistance by using more effective means of evangelizing the Chewa of Central Region of Malawi. Life style issues like growing of tobacco, brewing of beers, and cultural/ traditional dances coupled with cultic beliefs are major identified obstacles preventing them from accepting Adventist doctrine and lifestyle.

The current evangelistic approaches the SDA Church in Malawi has employed to win these people into Adventism have so far proven less effective because they fall short of addressing the physical and social needs of the targeted group. While the people are able to join the SDA Church when the message is first preached to them, it is observed that after a short stay in the church they backslide to their old ways of life and or denominations because of the realities of their daily physical needs.

The current information from the Secretarial office at Central Malawi Conference (CMC) shows that there is indeed a problem facing the SDA Church in Central Region, particularly, among the Chewa ethnic group. The church has to use strategies that are effective in winning the Chewa and make them stay in the church.

Table 1 below shows the extent of the population of the region and the percentage of SDA members per district.

Table 1. Population of Central Region and Percentage of SDAs in Each District.

District	Population	Current Membership.	Percentage of Membership
Kasungu	627,467	3,619	1%
Nkhotakota	303,659	2,021	1%
Ntchisi	224,872	889	0.4%
Dowa	558,470	1,834	0.33%
Salima	337,895	3,803	1%
Lilongwe	1,230,843	28,688	1%
Mchinji	456,576	2,201	0.48%
Dedza	624,445	4,832	1%
Ntcheu	471,589	21,730	5%

One reason why they go back after being converted to Adventism is the loss of entertainment called *gulewamkulu*. This is a cultural dance which is linked to cultic beliefs connected to Spiritualism and ancestral worship which are theologically seen to be opposed to the Word of God by the SDA Church. This cultural dance is only wide spread among the Chewa and not common in other ethnic groups in the country.

Regarding *gulewamkulu*, a method to destigmatize it can help to water down its popularity among the Chewa. Some methods can be making it not to be in the hands of chiefs because chiefs are custodians of culture, and they encourage this tradition hence it is very popular.

The study was aimed at developing an effective strategy for evangelizing the Chewa people of Central Malawi by preaching to them the Adventist message. This aim was consistent with the objective of the study to win and retain them into SDA Church. This study conducted in the Chewa of Chinsapo area in Lilongwe. The study

will find out if small group ministry could make a difference in evangelizing the Chewa.

Richards (1973) observes that small groups help converts to develop and nurture their relationship with Christ. This study proposed Small Group approach as a strategy to win and keep Chewas in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Theological Principle

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a church of the Book. All our teachings and beliefs are Bible based. It has been noted that some SDA members are conditioned to be lone Christians. They are independent at times. The church has proximity but without community. The church has fellowships in different communities but they do not create small groups. May be this is why the church has failed to use the theological principle of small group ministry. This may be the reason why the church has a problem of retaining the Chewa ethnic group in the church.

In Psalms 142:4, the Psalmist declares that “no man called my soul and no man knows me.” There are many people who live next to us or pass by our doors but we never bother calling them to church meetings. Small group ministry which needs to be done in areas where we live should be the first places where these people should be invited to attend meetings at our churches.

Small group ministry should provide social network for our people to meet the world. Small groups should provide love, support and encouragement. It is more than attendance to public worship, it is more than occasional gathering on church premises.

Psalm 133:1 says that it is good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together. Man is a social being as God Himself declared that it is not good for man to be alone (Gen. 2:18) Small group ministry provides the fellowship gathering.

In Proverbs 27:17, the writer says that iron sharpens an iron. It is true therefore that when people meet to share the word of God, they learn from each other and broaden the understanding in the word of God. They become rooted in the faith.

Jesus reiterated this in Matt. 18:20 when He said that “where two or three people gather in my name I am there with them.” This tells us that small group gathering ought not to be big enough for the meeting to take place. Heb. 10:25 also encourage Christians not to forsake assembling together. In meeting together we give each other warmth in the word. It seems that, the theology of small group ministry should not be overlooked by the SDA Church as it would provide the platform for reaching out to these people.

The theological principle of small groups can be summarized by the following reasons:

1. To bring salvation to them.
2. This is the largest ethnic group in Central region of Malawi and can help in church growth in the region.
3. They will also help the church physically and financially.

Problem Statement

Currently the population of Central Region of Malawi is at 4,835,816. Out of this number, 69,626 are Adventists, representing 1.4% of the population. It has been noted that a lot of people join the SDA Church every year. In fact, there were several Mission Stations that were opened previously but due to lack of commitment, many of these Mission Stations have been closed. This is because the number of people who join the church in the region do backslide every year. For example, the church may baptize 5,000 people in the Chewa Region in a year but by the end of the same year, these people are not traced as they would have disappeared.

The backsliding of the Chewa is as a result of poor commitment to the church. This poor commitment is shown because many things that surround the region. For example, there are lots of entertainment which attracts them. Another commitment is on the part of the Adventist members themselves.

The Church needs to be vigilant in retaining the people who join the church. One of the ways to keep them is to provide guardianship to newly baptized members. This can be done by attaching a very mature and committed member to a new member that joins the church. These guardians will be committed to following these members, encouraging them to be committed to the church. When the members absent themselves, it should be the duty of these guardians to follow them up. There should be commitment on both the new members and the existing members so that the new members remain in the church.

The major problem for these people not to remain in the church is cultivation of tobacco and gulewamkulu. For tobacco, the church should provide alternatives for tobacco. One alternative can be encouraging them to start growing other crops that bring cash like groundnuts and soya beans. Another alternative is to give bible studies frequently so that they become busy attending to bible studies instead of them going to attend gulewamkulu as part of entertainment.

The Purpose of Study

It has been observed that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has not effectively and successfully evangelized and won souls to Christ in the Chewa region of Central Malawi. The purpose of this study was to determine an effective strategy such as small group ministry for evangelizing the Chewa of Central Malawi which is about 80 percent of the population of the region.

Significance of the Study

The study will help SDA Church to have methods to be used in retaining the Chewa and the rest of the members in the country. Much as the method was used as means to retain the Chewa, the method is equally important to other ethnic groups who have different reasons as to not joining the SDA Church. For example, the Yao who are mostly Muslims have problems in joining the SDA Church because of the hostility they have from fellow Muslims when they join other religion like Christianity. If small group method is used among these other ethnic groups, positive results can be realized.

Research Questions

1. Would the acquisition of new SDA values, attitudes and belief systems, through small group ministry reduce or eliminate the problems of backsliding from the SDA Church by the Chewa people of Central Malawi?
2. If the Chewa people of Central Region of Malawi were enticed to consolidate the SDA values, belief systems and attitudes through small group ministry, would they stay in the SDA Church as a result?
3. What impact would there be on the Chewa people of Central Malawi if we paired some of them with some SDA members through small group ministry after sharing the SDA beliefs for a period of three or four months, would that reduce or remove backsliding from the SDA Church?
4. What effect would there be upon the Chewa people of Central Malawi if we provided through small group ministry alternative entertainment and new cash crops to replace gulewamkulu and tobacco, would they stay in the church?

Limitation

The study faced challenges which hampered its effectiveness. These challenges included; Time factor: Financial resources: The expertise of the researcher and the Behavior of the Respondents.

Time: Because the researcher was a part time student and was a full time worker, time was a constraint and so to do justice to the study, the researcher needed to allocate extra time to the study. That meant reducing time allocation to less important activities such as watching TV, watching football games and unnecessary visits to friends.

Financial resources: Research is an expensive activity which demands a lot of money on travel to data collection, stationary, equipment of some sort such as a computer, airtime for communication and for other incidentals. The researcher had to reduce expenditure in less important areas such as buying unnecessary units for airtime, buying of newspapers, making unnecessary travels and spending only on very essential items such as food, tithe, offerings to the church and buying of essential church literatures.

Researcher's expertise: The researcher's knowledge and skill in research was very important for doing justice to research study. Most first time researchers face the problems of poor research knowledge and skills and sometimes lack of research expertise. These deficiencies were removed by the researcher through reading relevant literature on research, by working very closely with the supervisor and by interacting with fellow research students in the area of research.

The Behavior of Respondents: Respondents are the subjects who will provide the primary data of the study. They can be of any class of people with different attitudes, social values and understanding of the research work. Some may not be very

serious in providing research data, others may be unwilling to provide the data, and still others may be negative about the issue of providing data.

To reduce the negative consequences of these behaviors, the researcher needed to be very careful in selecting these respondents by focusing on people who are well known to the researcher, people of integrity, people of moral soundness and people who are less likely to cheat. Finally by giving them an orientation and induction into the research process so that they become aware and sensitive about what they are expected to do as respondents. In the case of leaders of small group ministry, the researcher had to give them specific training on how to go about research process.

Delimitation

The study was delimited to the Chewa ethnic group of Chinsapo area in Lilongwe, Malawi. This area was chosen because although it is closer to the city. It represents what the Chewa people are; their value systems, cultural values and beliefs systems. Its socio-cultural group solidarity and cohesion make it easy to use small group ministry for entering the Chewa stronghold.

Definition of Terms

Culture Beliefs that people hold strongly on to. It becomes part of their day to day lives.

Gule Wamkulu A tradition or culture very common among the Chewa ethnic group. It is associated with evil spirits. This tradition is characterized by men putting on sacks or birds feathers all over the body and they are often violent when they meet people who have not been initiated into this belief.

Oikos A Greek term which means assembling of people in small groups. It may be in people's houses. It is from this word where small group ministry has its roots.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the general and specific review of the topic, which provided the opportunity to the researcher to learn what previous researchers did and found on this topic.

General Review

There are several kinds of small groups. Such small groups include small groups at work place, small groups in schools, small groups in homes and small groups at church. A lot has been written on small group ministry as an effective tool to bring people together for evangelism purpose. This is because small groups are more dynamic than large groups. Small groups normally constitute 8-10 members.

Though much has been written on small groups, Seventh day Adventist Church has not used this method much. Thus the main function of small groups in churches is to bring people together for evangelism, to make them stick together and provide room for more people to come and stay. This study will find out if small group ministry can be one of the methods to bring people to the SDA Church and make them stay.

Comiskey (2008) defines cell (small) group as a group of three to fifteen people who meet weekly outside the church building for the purpose of evangelism, community and discipleship with the goal of multiplication (p, 5).

It is from this definition that the church can use small group as a means of evangelizing the Chewa in order to increase membership in Central Malawi Conference.

Comiskey (2002) argues that cell groups help people to grow in Christ. He indicates that cells are not simply social gathering that focus on fellow and refreshments. They are meant to transform people to be effective (p, 3).

The author is saying that small groups should be purposeful any time they meet. The purpose is to make people grow in Christ. If they grow they will stay. This is why he states that the cell group should not be big as it may derail the purpose.

Osborne (2008) stresses the need to have stickier churches that do not only draw people to Christ but they also make them grow into maturity. He continues to say that most churches have become focused in reaching the people but have forgotten the importance of keeping them p, 13.

The author is stressing the need for churches to retain its members. The churches has had a lot of evangelistic campaigns all these years in the Chewa strong hold. People have been converted but they cannot be traced. This is because as the author writes, these members do not stick together because they have not grown into maturity. While increasing membership is important, churches should not forget the fact that keeping them is more important. It is better to take time keeping converts than going on reaching to people who cannot be kept.

House (2011), indicates that community within the church today is hemorrhaging. He says it is giving pressure of culture to do more and fill the gap of entertainment and this has pushed the church community to the margin (p, 18).

The author is lamenting the behavior of entertainment in the church. The result is that members are left hungry for the word of God.

The author is saying that small group can be an ideal place for evangelism that in the church, because in the church there is too much noise coupled with the creeping in of culture. One of the reasons identifies as a stumbling block to the Chewa joining the church is the kind of entertainment called Gule Wamkulu. If small group leaders were to make small group meetings as participatory to all group members, it would help people stay as everyone would be involved. Small group meetings should not be a place for entertainment but a place where members would enjoy their presence.

Himes (2017) states that during small group meetings, people should be encouraged to bring Bibles and encouraged to read and much time should be spent discussing the Bible (para 3). The author is saying that the main purpose of small group gathering is to learn from the Bible and having deep and meaningful study from it. Therefore, people should be encouraged to bring their Bibles and should follow the discussions during each meeting. The reason is that members should get used to reading and studying their Bibles even at their homes.

Mallison (1996), States that small group is the building block of the life of the local congregation and is fundamental to the development of the individual and corporate Christian lifestyle (p, 1).

The importance of small groups cannot be ruled out by the church. According to the author, small groups are the tools that build the church. This means that as a church, if small groups are employed, they will help in the building of the members and converts to become mature Christians. Lifestyle forms part of the person. As people are coming from a lifestyle which has been categorized as devilish, they should find a replacement which will make them see that nothing was lost as a result of abandoning their former lifestyle.

Gladden (2011) states that in order for small group ministry to be a success, a church must know how to define success, vision and mission (p, 29).

What the author is saying is that a vision drives a mission. This then means that there must be that vision by the church to win souls for Christ. When the vision is there strategies like small groups will be put in place.

In concurring with the author above, Boren (2010) argues that the church need to re-envision a way to empower normal groups led by normal group leaders that are full of normal followers to listen to God and live in such a way that they impact the world around them (p, 11).

What the author is saying is that the vision the church has in a community should be embraced by that community. The church should be the place where the community look up to if positive impact should be felt in the community. That is, the community should feel the presence of the church around it.

Comiskey (2015, para 5), argues that the New Testament churches were house churches. These house churches which were like small groups played an essential role in the rapid growth and ultimate triumph of Christianity. He continues to say that the first three centuries belonged to the house church movement.

The author is advising the church today that it is possible to have small groups and win souls. It take a commitment to do that. If Seventh-day Adventist Church in Malawi, in particular, Central Region was committed to the small group strategy, much could be accomplished.

The author continues to say that just like with New Testament churches were rich and full of Christ's words, the church should also be dwelling richly with Christ's words. This suggests that we cannot share what we do not have. We need a thorough study of the Bible if we are going to deliver (para 7).

Concurring with the author above, Davis (1976), says that the home environment creates an oikos relationship that is a crucial tool for evangelism.

Oikos is a Greek word and has a connotation of evangelism. Cell group meetings in the early New Testament church used the word oikos to mean gatherings in the house for evangelism purpose. For example, when Jesus healed the demoniac of Gadara in Decapolis, He commanded him to go back to his home to tell the people what God had done to him. That was oikos.

Nsengimana (2014) says that Jesus is an example in the formation of small groups. He says that the choosing of the twelve apostles was the starting point of the Christian church (p, 23).

The twelve according to the author was the formation of the small group that helped in the formation of the Christian church. Thus the disciples were a nucleus to the formation of the church as we see it today.

The author continues to say that small groups that met in houses played a large role in the early Christian church. He says that small house groups develop deep relationships among members (p, 25).

These house groups made a difference in the community hence it was easy for people to join the church. It is good to establish and cultivate a good relationship among group members and the church as a whole and establish a good relationship with the community. This will have a lasting impact.

Hillerman (2010, para 2), argues that persons who remain connected with their brothers and sisters in the local church almost invariably grow in self-understanding. This is because we grow and thrive together if we stay together. The author is suggesting that it is important to be connected with friends in the church because by

doing so we grow and get strengthened. By connecting with friends and other people, members become deeply rooted to the small groups.

James (2014) advises that the major goal of small groups is to enter into community with God and with one another (p, 136).

The church should not just linger in communities but bring to the people God's words and the relationship with one another. We can make a difference in the community and the community should feel the presence of the church.

The author continues to say that trinity lives in community, God the father, God the son and God the Holy Spirit have lived in a community throughout eternity. As Christians, we have to live in oneness. So small groups should lead us to that (p, 136).

Here the author is saying that it is a planned strategy that man should live with others. As a church we live in a community and we belong to a community. Small groups should take the church to the community.

Donahue, (2012) states that committed and authentic relationships have always been an essential component in the process of growth (p, 25). As reported by the author, relationships are important in any grouping. If relationships are improved in small groups, the purpose and goals of these small groups will be realized. Realizing that the goal of these small groups is evangelism and making sure the Chewa stay in the church after joining, small group leaders should make sure that good relationships should be an essential component in every small group.

Icenogle (1994) state that community is the purpose for Jesus Christ, the son of God. It is the common life between God and humanity and so small groups are the most visible and frequent form of this community (pp, 10- 11).

The author counsels the church that in a community, small groups should be seen as another community where people belong. In essence, small groups should make people feel they are welcomed and that it is here where they belong. Belonging is a sense that people feel they can find answers for their problems whether physically or spiritually.

Dunham (2014, para.5), comments that small groups enable churches to fulfill the “one-another” command of the scriptures. We are told to love one-another, instruct one-another, pray for one-another and bear one-another’s burden. These are adequately accomplished in small groups.

The author advises that love for the perishing souls will provoke the church to rise beyond limits to save them. This is the command that Christ has left with us. The church is to pray for the community so that people are turned to God.

Cloud & Townsend (2003) indicate that members’ growth come from the body of Christ which is the church, hence small groups and small group leaders can also help members to grow (p, 21).

With this advice from the authors, it is evident that what is required is the zeal and impetus to have things done. Leaders can play crucial role in all this. If the small group leaders are serious to push and make this strategy move, the whole church can follow the same path. What is needed is to make the people grow and get rooted in the faith. It takes a committed church and a committed small group leader to realize this, and it is the duty of every church member to realize this and act accordingly.

Arnold (2004) comments that Jesus Christ is our first and greatest model for how small groups can stimulate faith and growth in others (p, 18).

The author suggests that churches should follow Christ’s example in the way it can help the church grow. Christ started with twelve people. This was a form of a

small group. They can use the same pattern by having smaller units of groups. As the units grow, it means the church is also growing.

Noto (2016, para.2), argues that leaders should seek at connecting people into small group ministry. He quotes Jesus as saying that the shepherd left the 99 and went on to look for the one sheep that was lost.

He continues to say that just as Jesus came, sought and found the lost, small group leaders should also embrace the same spirit, (para 4). Here the author is suggesting that looking for members signifies relationship. If members can bring friends into small groups, they are ready to stay since the members become connected because of the relationship which already exists. So relationship is important if small group ministry is to prosper.

Timmis & Chester (2008) purport that churches should be gospel centered. This involves two things. It means being word- centered and mission centered (p, 16).

The authors are saying that churches need not only read and study the word but to spread the good news. The church has to be a missionary in the community where it is found. Teaching people to remain in the faith is part of missionary work.

Payne & Marshall (2012) argue that the great commission is about making disciples. Thus churches must make disciple-making their main agenda (p, 13). The authors are challenging the church that it exists to make disciples so that they too can make disciples. Making disciples means teaching them and helping them to grow. A disciple is a follower. If people are to follow Christ, they have to be mature Christians. Its only when they are disciple that people become mature.

Neighbour & Mack (2007) concur with the statement above that small group can achieve the great commandment and great commission of Jesus Christ (p, 13).

The command was to go and make disciples. The church must make that deliberate intention to go to where people are. People are in their homes in the community. The church therefore should go in these communities to look for people and enroll them into small groups. The command is to go and look for people not the people to look for where the church is. In this command, the church find people and teach them and help them to keep the teachings. In that way the people will be encouraged to remain in the faith.

To be a disciple is to be a follower after learning. It should be the agenda of the church to make disciples for Christ. After all, this is the great commission. Those that have accepted the gospel should be taught and encouraged to keep what has been taught to them. This is disciple making.

Clinton (1991) add that one of the purposes of small groups is to mentor believers to become leaders and active members of the community (p, 5). In this, the authors suggests that the presence of the church in the community should be felt and impactful. Small groups are one of the instruments the church can use to impact any community. This is where the Seventh day Adventist Church in the Central Region of Malawi has failed by not utilizing this strategy.

Laurie (1999) argues that any effective sharing of one's faith should always begin with God- given burden (p, 3). In other words, people need to have the passion for soul winning and small groups can serve this purpose because when people meet and share their respective experiences in these small groups it strengthens their spiritual commitment and zeal for the Lord's work.

Henrichen (2002) argues that passion for evangelism is the mark of a true disciple and he further observes that through small groups, members learn the art of discipleship and have the opportunity to practice their faith (p, 7). The authors says

that it is through small groups that members the passion to minister unto one another. Through small group meetings members learn to sharpen each other, thereby increasing in faith.

Olford (2007) observes that Christ is a Christian's example in soul winning and in every aspect of Christian life and service (p, 1). Church members would thus do well to emulate Him and become actively involved in soul winning and disciple making. We can safely suggest that evangelism and discipling are the identifying marks of a true, committed follower of Christ. It is only in this way that their loyalty to Christ and His great commission as stipulated in Matthew 28:18-20 can be substantiated.

Johnson (2011) states that when Jesus was ready to form the Christian church, He begun with a small group. It is interesting to note that much impact was made in the Christian church through the small number of people who sat at Jesus' feet to hear instructions and the church grew both spiritually and numerically. This tells us about the power of small groups and how they can enhance the gospel (13).

White, (1948) observes that the formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort is something given by one who cannot err. She says that if there is a large church, let the members be formed into small companies to work not only for members but for the unbelievers (p, 21-22).

Mack, (2007) states that small group leaders need to grasp a clear understanding of the need to discern what God sees as important about one's own leadership. He continues to say that leadership skills and knowledge are not significant in a person but the heart and soul in a person (p, 15, 16).

What the author is suggesting here is that small group leaders should understand that God intends to use a person in His work. One of the things the leader

should understand is the willing heart to lead. Small group leaders should be in the work. Leadership skills and knowledge come as a result of willingness to be taught.

Donahue & Bowman, (2012) argue that to be a coach is to invest in leadership and potential of a person (p, 16). The authors are saying that leaders, including pastors should see the potential in people and lift this potential in people high. Since most of the times, these small groups will be left in the hands of group leaders, church leaders and pastors should invest in leadership potential of every person. A coach should always take interest in the person being coached.

Comiskey (2006, para. 7) records that there is a faulty thinking by some cell members and cell leaders to lightly treat cell attendance but highly prioritize Sunday morning worship. It takes a while for members to fully realize that the cell is the church.

From the statement above we can understand that small groups do not last long or serve intended purposes if leaders do not engage cell members regularly. For small groups to be vibrant, it can depend on how small group leaders approach these small groups. The more group leaders view small groups as churches, the more group members view the same. It is true that leaders should be on the fore front to encourage attendance in every small group meetings.

If small group leaders would realize their responsibilities as pastors, they would be able to follow members. Pastors follow members, so small group leaders should follow group members as well. After all, the purpose of small groups is to plant churches. Churches cannot exist if leaders do not follow their members.

Johnson, (2016) says that because churches are attended by people of difference walks of life, with different ideologies, their thinking and differences

should not be allowed to derail an opportunity to meet Jesus(p, 1). This tries to discourage politics or individual views to take stage in small groups.

Here, the author is saying that extra care should be taken during group meetings because sometimes people may lose direction because of going out of topics by discussing things not relevant to the topic. It should be understood that the purpose of small groups is for people to meet Christ and make decisions to follow Him.

Comiskey, (2008 para, 1) says that conflict is an inevitable part of any small group. However, the good news is that group conflict can be managed effectively by any group leader and can even strengthen relationships within the group. Mature and selfless leaders who are visionary and creative are more and capable of resolving conflicts wisely and amicably. When a conflict erupts in a small group, it should be the duty of a leader to bring the group members together and by so doing the small group continues to grow.

Moss, (2013) observes that small groups are one of the greatest ministry tools we have. The author says that they provide opportunities for spiritual growth and discipleship. The writer says that it is in small groups where people get nurtured and disciplined. In small groups, members grow spiritually and share experiences and minister to one another.

Freeze & Lucado (2013) state that the significant sense of belonging is central to what it means to be the church. ... The authors continue to say that despite the best efforts pastors and small group leaders exert, the church is too often a place of loneliness rather than connectedness (p, 11).

According to the statement above, the assumption is that this might be one of the reasons why people don't stay long in our churches. People who feel lonely at church tend to shun it and eventually leave. It is important that leaders should try to

make things that will make people active. Small groups are one such places. When people learn to be active in home cells, they can be active in churches as well.

What makes people active in small groups is the feeling that they have been accepted. This encourages them to be active at church because they have friends and that they are being connected to the larger family- the church.

Comiskey (2003) observes that not two small groups are alike, but each group maintains the same component- seeking God upward (upward focus), developing relationships with one another (inward focus) and reaching non- Christians (outward focus) p, 17.

The author is trying to say that we cannot have the same program in two different small groups. Each small group should strive to bring group members to God. In whatever we do, we should aim at living and behaving in a loving relationship with God. Relationship is also important in small groups. This makes it easy to evangelize because members have one common agenda.

Phillips (1999) observes that people come to congregations as part of a desperate search for community. Congregational leaders are called to transform their congregations into communities where estrangement, anger, and grief are overcome. Where fragmentation and dislocation are healed, where people are for others in covenantal ways with expectations of one another and with mutual forbearance and where injustices and prejudices are addressed (p, 8).

The author is saying that at small group level people should find hope and reason to live. In small groups, people should have answers for the problems affecting their lives. This is true because where people have issues affecting their lives they should be told that God lives and that a community is a place where they can hold on to.

Donahue (2004) states that man was created for community so as to fully express the beauty, power and the image of God. From the Garden of Eden to the present, God has always intended for people to be in fellowship with one-another (p, 16).

The author tells us that when people feel the sense of belonging, they remain in that community. It is with the same idea that when small groups are vibrant in the communities, people tend to stay connected and remain there.

Wuthnow (1994) added that the house of fellowship besides making friends, members also deepen their spiritual lives through participation in the group (p, 33).

It is through involvement and participation that people enlarge their spiritual scope by getting involved in group fellowship or small group. Small group meetings make people a learning center.

Sand (2013, para.1) reports that getting young church member actively involved in outreach and Christian leadership is a long lasting challenge because a lot of the youths today are no longer interested in church matters or issues to do with religion.

He then says that involving the youths is crucial not only for the survival of the church but for the completion of the mission (p, 1).

The author is saying that as the church employs small group ministry to win souls, its purpose should not be retaining of church members but also preparing them for the coming of Jesus and the fulfilling of the gospel commission written on Matthew 28:18-20.

Segal (2015, para. 1), reports that small groups are destined to die a slow death if it has no direction. He says that small groups should be guided by a vision statement of functional purpose of small groups.

Specific Review

Nsengimana (2014), reports that people meeting in small groups love each other, encourage each other and support one another and they forgive one another. He says that these are some advantages of small groups. He continues to say that this is what has led to the growth of the SDA Church in Rwanda (p, 47). Small group ministry for evangelism has been adopted by some Seventh-day Adventist Churches. To these that have tried it has proven to be a successful instrument for evangelism. One example is the church in South American Division of the Seventh-day Adventists.

Chaves (2008, para. 2), indicates that there may be many factors that have contributed to the growth of the church in Brazil and other countries in Southern America. The use of small groups is one of the most effective tools.

With the information the author gives, it is true that small group has worked in some Adventist Churches elsewhere. It gives encouragement to the church in Malawi, especially Central Malawi Conference that if the strategy can be used rightly, it can impact the region with Adventist message where the Chewa are dominant and where evangelism has failed to take its roots.

Chaves (2008, para. 4), continues to report that it is good to have a theme or agenda in the way we do our small group meetings. This helps the group to be focused. For example, the Adventist Church in Argentina embraced the theme “we all belong to the family of God.”

The theme suggests that if members were to embrace this idea that we all belong to the family of God, the church would have been working hard to bring people into the fold of God which is His family.

No-one feels good when one member of the family goes his/her own way. We try all we can to bring the wayward member back home. Similarly, as the family of God, it is important to do whatever it takes to bring the lost member into God's family.

The author then advises the church that through the environment which small group offers, it helps members experience the relational aspect of what it means to be part of a Christian community.

Paradise SDA Church article (2017 para 3), comments that church members learn a lot of experiences during small group meetings because people understand the Bible better and apply it in their personal situations. It continues to say that members realize they are part of God's family and handling stress and pressure is easier as they get support from people around.

What the writer of the article is saying is that as a church, we have to be supportive to one another, more especially those that have problems. There should be deliberate efforts to assist those that have problems because as family, whatever affects a church member affects the whole church. It is through ministering to one another that people can stay and the church can grow.

According to the article by Trinity Lutheran Church (2017, para2), the church has grown through the use of small groups. It says that every year new small groups are being formed and new members added. It says that the mission of Trinity Church is to make disciples. What the article is saying is that the importance of small groups as a means of evangelism cannot be overlooked. If the SDA Church in CMC could be vigilant enough in using small group ministry, positive results could be realized.

The article of First Church in Belmont (2017), also records that small group members at the First Church listen to others and are listened to. The article is saying

that groups which have a philosophy of listening to others, tend to build a strong relationship as everyone is valued. As a church, Adventists need to value everyone in small group meetings. By doing that, there is a bond and this bond end up in binding the group together in solidarity.

Lessons Learned from the Literature Review

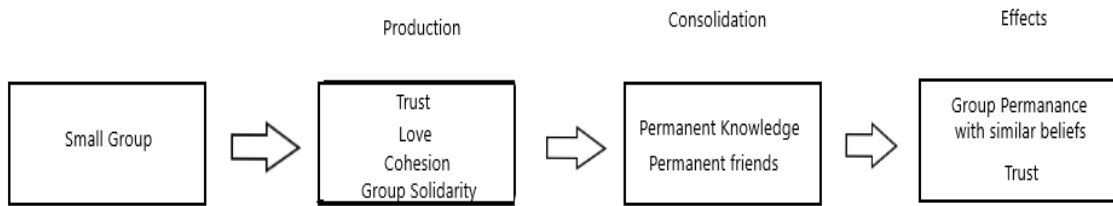
Though much has been written on small group ministry, the Seventh day Adventist Church in Malawi has been slow in utilizing this information. Nevertheless, from the churches which have used small group ministries it has been demonstrated that it is an effective strategy to both nurture new converts and to evangelize the communities. In other words, it is our belief that small group ministry could be effective in evangelizing the Chewa ethnic group in Malawi.

Small group ministry has shown that people stick together because of the relationship they have at small group meetings. This is because as they meet, they interact and they get involved and participate in the discussion and any activity that happen in these small group meetings. Such activities may include visiting members that have been affected by some misfortunes like diseases or funerals.

By doing so, members become woven and there is an inter-twined group. There is possibility for members to stay long in these small groups and in the church as well. The interaction that they get in small group meetings enhances their relationships. The relationships build trust, love, and cohesion and group solidarity.

It is established therefore that churches that use small groups have grown in membership and that members stay in those churches. It is from these lessons that the SDA Church in CMC can follow so that the church in Central Region grows in members and have mature and quality members.

Conceptual framework



Independent and dependent variables

Independent Variables

1. Training them about SDA values and knowledge belief systems.
2. Practicing new skills and copying their new SDA mentors
3. Pairing them to come together and work group cohesion, together with their mentors.
4. Providing the new converts with mindset. Alternatives to their old entertainments and new cash crops.

Dependent Variables

1. Acquisition of new SDA values and belief.
2. Consolidation of the values and belief systems
3. Enhancement of group solidarity and social conscientiousness then full acceptance.
4. Permanent change of attitudes, social values, and belief systems, hence stay in the church.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Research uses qualitative and quantitative paradigms. In qualitative research, the researcher observes the behavior of respondents. Normally the questionnaire or the interview is not structured. In quantitative research, the researcher intends to discover a natural law and uses quantitative data which are analyzed statistically. In this study, the researcher used qualitative data which are in graphic form rather than in numerical form.

The researcher selected a purposeful sample of twenty people from the church who were used as group leaders. The researcher trained, mentored, coached and demonstrated to the selected individuals how to form and effectively run small groups. These were adults who were responsible and experienced church elders. The training took six weeks. These people were trained on how to use research instruments such as questionnaires, inventories and checklists. Upon satisfactory completion of this training, the researcher assigned each of the twenty trained small group leaders to form and lead a small group each for six months.

Population and Sampling Procedure

The researcher used a sample of 50 respondents which was collected from a population of 350 people which form the membership of Nsewa Church. This sample was arrived at by using non probability sampling technique to arrive at the 50 members of the sample.

Sample Characteristics

The study had 50 respondents. These respondents comprised of 36 males and 14 females. They ranged from ages 18-56. They had different educational background, from primary school to university.

Research Instruments

The study used questionnaires, checklists and inventories as instruments for data collection. They were constructed by the researcher and pilot test them for validity and reliability on a small sample of eight persons similar to the members of the actual research sample. The questionnaires were illicit information about the attitudes and feelings of the subjects, the checklists listed activities that must be done and the group leaders checked how often and how well they are done, and the inventories had a list of the changes or developments that are being experienced as a result of a training or the implementation of the strategy.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher used open ended and close ended questionnaires which were taken to the respondents to fill and answer according to the items in the questionnaire. Each set of research instrument had specific instructions to the respondents on how to respond to the items in the questionnaire. The following were the procedures:

1. Booking the respondents by date, time and venue.

2. At the meeting place, we established the rapport then introduced the instruments to the respondents.
3. After reading the questionnaire to the respondents and after answering their questions, the respondents were asked to actually respond.
4. After receiving the complete responses, the researcher thanked them for their time, for the data they provided and for accepting to be members of the research team.
5. After finishing responding, and before taking the questionnaire away, the researcher checked if all the information was completed and if all the questions were answered.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected were a qualitative in form. They were analyzed through the following process.

- i) The data were organized through spreadsheet to check completeness.
- ii) The data were cleaned or edited to remove irrelevant things in the data and strengthen the data by adding missing details.
- iii) Coding the data into relevant categories that signified what each category meant.
- iv) Assigning meanings to the results of the various categories/themes as results.
- v) Interrogated the results to determine what the results say then what they meant.

Ethical Considerations

The outcomes of this study depended very much on voluntary people who were willing to share information and spend their time with the researcher. The potential fear of the respondents as to what could happen to them as a result of their disclosures would prevent some of them from being willing to offer the desired information.

To ensure that this does not happen, the researcher ensured the subjects that they had nothing to fear because their privacy was guaranteed and that they were secured by remaining anonymous or by not revealing their identities in anyway. For instance the researcher did not require respondents to provide their names and other sensitive personal data irrelevant to the study. The researcher made sure that the respondents were assured that the data they were to provide would not work against them. The researcher also assured the respondents that those who wanted to withdraw could do so without coercion.

The research was conducted in semi urban settings with people of a basic culture somehow different from that of the researcher. It was likely, therefore, that the researcher in the process of doing his study could hurt some people either emotionally or ethically.

In order to protect the respondents from harm or injury to their emotions, feelings and ethics, the researcher openly did the following;

1. Declared his intention to the church and community
2. Sought permission from traditional leaders to form small groups in their communities.
3. Clearly communicated to the Chewa leaders the content in the items and that the research was for an academic award.

4. The information or data were to remain confidential and nobody was to be exposed or singled out in any way.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Presentation of Results

This chapter presents the results of the study and discussion of findings.

Respondents General Profile

The project recruited fifty participants of which fourteen were women and thirty-six were men. Table 2 below summarizes the results.

Table 2. Results of Gender Analysis of the Sample

	Frequency
Male	36
Female	14
Grand total	50

The results show that less women participated in the sample because selection was based on those that participated willfully without being forced to.

In the sample, the members were of the ages from 18 years and over 56 years.

Table 3 below summarizes the results of the age range.

Table 3. Results of Analysis of Age Range of the Sample

Item	18-25 years	26-35 years	36-45 years	46-55 years	56 and older	Total
Male	11	12	1	6	4	34
Female	3	6	4	1	2	16
Total	14	18	5	7	6	50

The results show that most of the participants were adults and this implies that the respondents knew what they were supposed to do and, also, did it willfully. Out of 50 participants, 36 were aged 26 and older. This shows that majority of the participants were adults. This means that they understood what the study was intended to achieve as they were able to understand the instructions and that they were involved in the whole process from the beginning to the time of collecting of data

In the sample, the members were of different educational levels. It ranged from primary school to university. Table 4 below summarizes the results of the educational levels of respondents.

Table 4. Results of Educational Levels of the Sample

Item	Primary	Secondary	College	University	Total
Male	3	21	10	1	35
Female	2	6	5	2	15
Total	5	27	15	3	50

Out of the 50 participants, 45 had full basic education and over while only 5 had low level education. This may imply that the sample was not only mature but also

reasonably educated. They understood the instructions and knew what they were supposed to do and did it.

These responses were a true reflection of what they thought was the most appropriate answer to each question.

The people who participated in the study were of different social statuses. This includes people with positions in the church and those that did not have positions.

Table 5 summarizes results of the social status.

Table 5. Results of Social Status

Item	Lay Members	Church Workers	Administrators	Total
Male	23	7	6	36
Female	9	2	3	14
Total	32	9	9	50

The results show more people with positions in the church had participated in the project. There were 18 church workers and administrators and 32 lay members. It also indicated that people with positions in the church were interested and willing to participate in the project. It tells then that the study was open to everyone including those in positions. This may mean that when a similar project is implemented in other churches, a similar interest by members would also be registered.

Close Ended Questionnaire Items

Item 1: What major factors are responsible for members of the Chewa in Central region of Malawi for resisting to join the SDA Church?

The question had five possible answers from which the respondents were supposed to choose. All the fifty respondents answered this question. Table 6 below summarizes the results.

Table 6. Major Factors Responsible for Chewa Resistance to Join the SDA Church

Responses	Male	Female	Total
Polygamy	2	2	4
Tobacco growing	8	3	11
Beer drinking	3	3	6
Gule Wankulu	21	8	29
Disinterest	0	0	0
Total	34	16	50

Out of the 50 respondents to this item, 29 split into 21 males and 8 females said that gule wankulu was the major factor that prevent the Chewa of central region from joining the Seventh- day Adventist Church. 11 respondents splitting into 8 males and 3 females said tobacco was the factor. Beer drinking had 6 respondents split into 3 men and 3 women. Finally, 4 respondents splitting into 2 men and 2 women said that polygamy was the factor.

According to these respondents, the major factor that prevents the Chewa of central region of Malawi from joining the Seventh-day Adventist Church is Gule

Wamkulu. The next major factor is tobacco, the third major factor is beer drinking (6 responses) and the least is polygamy.

Item 2: Why do you think Gule Wamkulu is responsible for people not joining the SDA Church?

The item had three responses from which the respondents had to choose. Table 7 summarizes the response to the item.

Table 7. Reasons Why Gule Wamkulu Is Responsible for the Chewa Not Joining the SDA Church

Responses	Male	Female	Total
Members do not want to be outside their tradition	23	7	30
It binds the Chewa together	3	3	6
It has been there for a long time and people don't want to get rid of it	8	6	14
Total	34	16	50

Out of 50 respondents to the item, 30 respondents split into 23 men and 7 women said that Gule Wamkulu is responsible for the Chewa to not joining the SDA Church because members of the Chewa do not want to be out of their tradition. 14 respondents which comprised of 8 men and 6 women said that this tradition has been there for a long time and people find it hard to get rid of this tradition. 6 of the respondents which consisted of 3 males and 3 females said that this tradition binds the people together. Next to the responses above (14) said that the people have been in this tradition for a long time such that it is difficult to get rid of it. Finally, 6 respondents said that this culture binds the Chewa together. This then implies that there is strong tie between the Chewa and their tradition.

Item 3: Why do you think tobacco is responsible for people not joining the Chewa?

The item had four possible answers from which the respondents were to choose from. Table 8 below summarizes the responses to the item.

Table 8. Why Tobacco Is Responsible for the Chewa's Resistance to SDA Church

Responses	Male	Female	Total
It gives people money	5	7	12
It is widely grown in the region	5	2	7
People think tobacco is the only crop that brings money	21	4	25
People have never tried other cash crops	4	1	5
Total	35	14	49

Out of 49 respondents to the item, 25 respondents which comprised of 21 men and 4 women said that people think tobacco is the only cash crop that fetches more money than any other crop. The second of respondent of 12 people which comprised 5 males and 7 females said that they cultivate tobacco because it gives them money. The third cluster of respondents which was made up of 5 men and 2 women said that they cultivate tobacco because it is widely grown in the region. The final group which was made up of 4 men and 1 women adding up to 5 said that the people have never tried any other cash crop except tobacco.

From the respondents' answers, it is clear that tobacco has played big role in preventing the Chewa from joining the SDA Church. This is because the church's teaching does not allow people to cultivate tobacco while in the church.

Item 4: In your everyday life, how many members of SDA do you interact with?

The item had four answers from which the respondents were to choose from.

Table 9 summarizes the item.

Table 9. Number of Adventists, which the Chewa Members Interact with Every Day

Response	Male	Female	Total
0-5	13	8	21
6-10	8	5	13
11-20	3	1	4
Over 20	8	1	9
Total	32	15	47

Out of the 49 respondents to the item, 21 respondents which was made up of 13 men and 8 women said that they interact with 0- 5 Adventists per day. Out of 13 respondents comprising of 8 men and 5 women said that they interact with 6-10 Adventists per day. The next group of respondents which was made up of 8 men and 1 woman said that they interact with over 20 Adventists per day. Finally, 4 respondents comprising of 3 men and 1 woman said that they interact with 11-20 Adventists per day.

This implies that Adventist are not doing enough to spread the Adventist belief to the society especially among the Chewa region. By interacting with few Adventists, it means the church is not making any impact in the Chewa strong hold. This is evident by the fact that few people have little knowledge of Adventism.

Item 5: Why do you think are the main reasons why you want to interact with SDA people?

The item had four possible answers from which the respondents chose. Table 10 summarizes the results of the item.

Table 10. Reasons Why People Want to Interact with Adventists

Responses	Male	Female	Total
I love their music	5	1	6
I find them to be good people	6	1	7
I am one of them	17	10	27
They are peaceful	4	2	6
Total	32	14	46

Out of the 46 respondents on this item, 27 respondents split into 17 men and 10 women said that they were one of them. Meaning that they were Adventists. Another group of respondents of 7 respondents comprising of 6 men and 1 woman said that they see Adventists as good people. The third group of 6 respondents comprising 5 males and 1 female said that they love Adventist music. Finally, 6 respondents made up of 4 men and 2 women said that they see Adventists to be peaceful.

This suggests that the majority of the respondents on this item were Adventists (27). The second group of respondents (7) said that they found Adventists to be goods people. The third and fourth group had 6 respondents each. They said that they love Adventist music and that they perceive Adventists to be peaceful people.

The responses to the item implied that while the majority of the respondents were Adventists, it is also clear that those that are not Adventists have high regard towards Adventists. They said that they love Adventist music. Others said that they find Adventists to be good and peaceful people. This is advantageous to the church and it can be easier to make impact on the people of what Adventists believe and preach. Therefore, the church need to wake up and be aggressive in preaching the gospel of Christ.

It is also true that much as the church believe the Chewa to be difficult in accepting the Adventist message, chances are that with the perception that the people have about Adventists, upon persistent, it may have a reward by having some Chewas embracing the message. What is needed therefore is to live Christ like character that can be one of the means to evangelize the Chewa people.

Item 6: What do you think attracts people to join SDA Church?

The question had five possible answers from which the respondents were to choose from. All the fifty respondents who participated in the study responded to this question. Table 11 below summarizes the results of the item.

Table 11. What Attracts People to Join the Adventist Church?

Responses	Male	Female	Total
A-They have friends in the church.	8	2	10
B-They have relatives in the church.	11	4	15
C-The SDA Church is near their home	1	3	4
D-They went to an SDA School	9	4	13
E-The message the church preaches	1	0	1
Total	30	13	43

Out of 43 respondents to the item, 15 respondents comprised of 11 men and 4 women said that they are attracted to Seventh-day Adventist Church because of their relatives. 13 respondents made up of 9 men and 4 women said that they are attracted to SDA Church because they attended SDA Schools. The third respondents comprised of 10 respondents split into 8 men and 2 women said that they are attracted to SDA Church because of friends who belong to this church. Another group made of up of 1 man and 3 women totaling to 4 respondents said that the SDA Church is near their homes and so it is easy to be attracted to the church because of proximity. Finally 1 man said that the message that the church preaches attract people to it.

The results of the respondents (15) suggest that relatives can play a greater role in attracting people into the church. Second respondents (13) said that some are attracted into the church through attending Adventist schools. This means that schools can act as a means to evangelize. What this tells is that the school should not only teach academics but evangelize as well. The third respondents (10) said that people are attracted into the church through friends. In essence, church members should live a life of decency if people are to be attracted into joining SDA Church.

Item 7: Why do you think are the reason why people don't want to join the SDA Church?

The question had five answers from which the respondents were supposed to choose. Table 12 below summarizes results.

Table 12. Reasons Why People Do Not Want to Join the SDA Church

Responses	Male	Female	Total
A-The church's life style.	4	1	5
B-They are rigid to the law.	16	5	21
C-The day they worship has lots of entertaining activities.	6	5	11
D-They feel SDA members are arrogant.	7	2	9
E-They have negative attitude towards SDA Church	0	1	1
Total	33	14	47

The item had 47 respondents. Out of this, 21 respondents comprised of 16 men and 5 women said that they feel Adventists are rigid to the law. 11 respondents split into 6 men and 5 women said that the day Adventists worship has a lot of entertaining activities. 9 respondents comprised of 7 males and 2 females said that they feel Adventists are arrogant. 5 respondents which was composed of 4 men and 1 female said that the church's life style is difficult for people to follow. Finally, 1 woman said that people have negative attitude towards SDA Church.

What this implies is that the majority of the respondents (21) Adventists are rigid to the law. The other respondents (11) said that the day Adventists worship has lots of entertainment. The third respondents (9) said that Adventists are arrogant. The next respondents (5) said that the church's life style is difficult to follow. 1 respondent said that people have negative attitude towards SDA Church.

While people may have these sentiments, it has to be made clear that it is not a matter of being rigid to the law but fulfilling God's requirements. It is this fulfillment of the law that make Adventists have a different life style that make them have a

different life style. In essence, whatever the people are saying is the reason as to why it is difficult to join the SDA Church cannot be ascertained as Adventists are following what the Bible.

The people should be encouraged to see that God is interested in people who follow His requirements more than doing whatever anyone feels.

Item 8: What do you think SDA members should do to attract many people to join in the church?

The question had five possible answers from which respondents were to choose. Table 13 below summarizes the item.

Table 13. What SDA Members Should Do to Attract Many to Join the Church?

Response	Male	Female	Total
A-Interacting with them.	6	4	10
B-Share the church's beliefs with them.	13	1	14
C-Accept the people the way they are.	3	4	7
D-Encourage them to diversify farming	0	1	1
E-Help them understand that their tradition should not be looked as a hindrance to accepting the SDA faith.	7	1	8
Total	29	11	40

There were 40 respondents to this item. 14 of these respondents which was made up of 13 males and 1 female said that the church's beliefs should be shared to Chewa people. 10 respondents which comprised 6 men and 4 women said that Adventists should interact with the Chewa people. 8 respondent which was split into 7 men and 1 woman said that Adventists should help the Chewa understand that

tradition should not be seen as a hindrance to accepting Adventist faith. 7 respondents which consisted of 3 men and 4 women said that Adventists should accept the Chewa people the way they are. Finally 1 woman said that the people should be encouraged to diversify farming.

Item 9: What should Adventists do to encourage the Chewa people to join Adventist Church and remain after joining?

The question item had five responses which the respondents were choose from. Table 14 below summarizes the results of the item.

Table 14. What Adventists Should Do to Encourage the Chewa to Join the Adventist Church?

Response	Male	Female	Total
A-Encourage them to grow other cash crops such as soya, ground nuts to remain in the church.	15	9	24
B-Convince them that these crops need no fertilizer and they are easy to cultivate.	4	1	5
C-Tell them the problems facing the tobacco industry.	7	1	8
D-Help them find better markets for other crops.	1	0	1
E-Showing them love.	5	2	7
Total	32	13	45

Out of the 45 respondents to the question, 24 respondents, comprised of 15 men and 9 women said that the people need to be encouraged to grow other cash crops other than tobacco. That the church need to 8 respondents which was split into 7 men and 1 woman said that the people need to be told of the problems facing

tobacco industry worldwide. The other group of respondents made up of 5 men and 2 women said that Adventists should show love to them. 5 of the total respondents which comprised of- 4 men and 1 woman said that while they are to be encouraged to cultivate tobacco, they have to also to know that these cash crops other than tobacco do not need fertilizer and are easy to cultivate as compared to tobacco. Finally 1 woman said we should find markets for these people so that they sell the other crops that they can cultivate.

According to the responses, it is obvious that the majority of the respondents (24) said that people should be encouraged to cultivate other crops. Second to that was (8) respondents who said that the church should tell the Chewa about the problems facing tobacco market globally. The third highest respondents (7) said that Adventist members should show love to the Chewa people regardless that they have a different perception of our church. The other group of respondents (5) said that the church needs to show love to them. The last respondent (1) said that the church should find market for these other cash crops.

The responses suggest then if people can be encouraged to cultivate other cash crops, it can be easier for them to become Adventists since tobacco is the hindrance to them joining Adventist Church. Again, the responses say that these cash crops are easy to cultivate and that they don't need fertilizer. In essence, the church should try to find markets for these crops as suggested by the respondents because tobacco has a readily market as compared to the other cash crops, hence the reason for people cultivating tobacco in large numbers.

Item 10: What should the church do to make people stay in the church after they have joined?

The question item had four possible answers from which the respondents were to choose. Table 15 below summarizes the results of the item.

Table 15. What the Church Should Do to Make the People Stay after Joining

Responses	Male	Female	Total
A-Assign mature members to every convert.	9	4	13
B-Have bible studies and prayer meetings with them.	21	8	29
C-Bring them into fishers of men clubs.	1	1	2
D-Encourage some of them to be literature evangelists.	1	1	2
Total	32	14	46

There were 46 respondents to this item. Out of this, 29 respondents which comprised 21 men and 8 women said that the church should have bible studies with the Chewa people. 13 respondents split into 9 males and 4 females said that the church should assign mature members to the converts so that they get rooted as the mature members would encourage them and follow them up in case there is a problem. 2 respondents made up of 1 man and 1 woman said that the convert should be taken to fishers of man club. Finally, 2 respondents as well made up of 1 man and 1 woman said that the converts should be encouraged to become literature evangelists.

According to the respondents it is clear that the majority of the respondents in this item (29) said that the church should have bible studies with the Chewa people. Next to this were 13 respondents who said that the people should be assigned mature

members to be their guardians. 2 said that they should be incorporated into fishers of men. Finally 2 said they should be encouraged to join literature evangelism.

What this implies is that if vigorous bible studies were to be conducted with these people they can become so conversant with the faith Adventists believe and making decision to stay after joining cannot be a problem. Again by assigning mature members to these people, they will also stay as the duty of these mature members is to follow up on the converts. The people who have been assigned guardianship will be encouraged to bring these converts to bible studies and prayer meetings.

Results of Open-ended Questions

Item 11: Give some reasons why people do not want to join the SDA Church?

The question item had four possible answers where the respondents were to choose from. Table 16 below summarizes the results.

Table 16. Reasons Why People Do Not Want to Join SDA Church

Responses	Male	Female	Total
A-Rigidity to the law.	20	6	26
B-Bad reflection of Adventists to the society.	8	3	11
C-Entertainment on Sabbath.	2	3	5
D-The SDA Church is not found in some areas in the region.	0	1	1
Total	30	13	43

Out of the 43 respondents that responded to the item, 26 respondents split into 20 men and 6 women said that rigidity to the law by Adventists make the Chewa not to join Adventist Church. 11 respondents divided into 8 males and 3 females said that

Adventists portray a bad reflection to the society. 5 people split into 2 men and 3 women said that the day the Adventists worship has a lot of entertainments and so it is difficult for many to join the church. 1 woman said that the SDA Church is not found in many areas in the region.

This implies that the majority of the respondents (26) said that Adventists are rigid to the law. This means that the majority of the people feel that the law can be kept in the way one wishes as opposed to how Adventists keep it. They feel the law is difficult to follow. This sentiment can be connected to the second group which had 11 respondents who said that Adventists portray a bad reflection to the society. This implies that the society has high expectations from Adventists. However, according to the respondents, Adventists fail to meet this expectation. This means that what Adventist preach is not what they live. This leaves a lot to be desired hence the reluctance to join the church.

The third respondent (5) said that the day Adventists worship has lots of entertainment which prevent the people from joining the SDA Church. They people think that joining the SDA Church will deprive them of the entertainment they always have on this day. Finally 1 respondent said that the SDA Church is not found in many areas in the region and so it is difficult to join the church which is not popular in many areas.

Item 12: In your view, what should the church do to retain the members of the Chewa group that join the SDA Church?

The question item had four possible answers from where the respondents were to choose. Table 17 below summarizes the results.

Table 17. What the Church Should Do to Retain the Members of the Chewa

Responses	Male	Female	Total
A-Interact with them	15	9	24
B-Invite them to join small groups	12	3	15
C-Give them positions in the church	4	1	5
D-Encourage them to grow other cash crops	3	0	3
Total	34	13	47

Out of the 47 respondents to the item, 24 respondents split into 15 men and 9 women said that church members should interact with them. 15 respondents comprising of 12 males and 3 females said that the people should be invited to small groups. 5 respondents which was made up of 4 males and 1 female said that once the Chewa have joined the church, they have to be given positions. Men said that the people should be encouraged to grow other cash crops other than tobacco.

According to these respondents, the major way to retain the Chewa in the church is to interact with them (24). Next to retaining the Chewa in the church were 15 respondents who said that the people should be invited to small groups. Third way of retaining the Chewa were 5 respondents who said the people should be given position when they join the church. Finally some respondents (3) said that they should be encouraged to grow other cash crops.

What this suggests is that the church should do all it can to make sure that the Chewa remain in the church. The church exists for evangelism so whatever way it takes to bring people to Christ should be employed. Interacting with them may mean mingling with them in the society and taking them to bible studies.

Item 13: If you were an Adventist member and a Chewa, what advice would you give to church leaders on how to nurture the Chewa people to join the SDA Church?

The item had 4 possible answers which the respondents chose. Table 18 below summarizes the results of the item.

Table 18. The Advice a Chewa Adventist Would Give to Church Leaders about the Chewa Who Join the church

Responses	Male	Female	Total
A-Teach them the truth without attacking their tradition	14	6	20
B-Conduct Bible studies with them	9	7	16
C-Encourage them to participate in church activities	7	0	7
D-Encourage them to grow different cash crops other than tobacco	2	0	2
Total	32	13	45

Out of the 45 respondents that responded, 20 respondents comprised of 14 men and 6 women said that the church should teach the Chewa about Adventist faith without attacking them. 16 respondents split into 9 men and 7 women said that the members should have bible studies with the Chewa people. 7 respondents comprised of 7 men said that when the Chewa join the church, they should participate in church activities. 2 men said that the people should be encouraged to grow different cash crops other than tobacco.

According to the respondents, it is clear that many respondents (20) said that teaching the Chewa without attacking them. This is true to a certain extent. It has been

observed that it is a tendency among Adventists to attack members of other denomination. In attacking preachers think they will win lots of converts but the opposite is true. The more the attack is made on the Chewa and their tradition which is seen to be evil, the less the people are to be converted.

The second respondents (16) suggested that bible studies should be conducted with the Chewa. Conducting Bible studies with them will give them opportunity to ask questions and get clarification to issues that puzzle them. The third group of respondents said that when the people are converted into Adventism, some of them should be given positions in the church. It may happen that the people might have had positions from the faith they belonged to before converting to Adventism. Giving them positions may make them stay as they may see the respect accorded to them.

Finally, 2 said that they people should be encouraged to grow other cash crops other than tobacco. It has been observed over and over that tobacco is one of the major reasons why the Chewa don't want to join the SDA Church. If these people are encouraged to grow other cash crops other than tobacco, it will be easy for them to remain in the church.

Item 14: After going through this questionnaire and learned why the Chewa do not join the SDA Church in large numbers, what advice would you give them?

This question item had 4 answers where respondents were to choose from.

Table 19 below summarizes the results.

Table 19. Advice That Has to Be Given to the Chewa Who Join the church

Responses	Male	Female	Total
A-Encourage and teach them what the bible says.	13	9	22
B-Understand their tradition in order to know how to approach them.	4	1	5
C-Encourage them to refrain from their tradition	6	3	9
D-Do community service in Chewa territory	3	1	4
Total	26	14	40

Forty respondents responded to the question item. Out of this 22 respondents split into 13 males and 9 females said that the members should be encouraged to teach the people what the bible says. 9 respondents made up of 6 men and 3 women said that the people should be encouraged to refrain from their tradition. 5 respondents which comprised 4 males and 1 female said that the members of the church should understand the Chewa's tradition so that they know how to approach them. 4 respondents split into 3 men and 1 woman said that the church should do community services in Chewa territory.

According to the responses above, it is clear that the majority of the respondents (22) said that members of the church should be encouraged to teach the people what the bible says. By teaching the Chewa what the bible says, they will understand better why the SDA Church is rigid with the law. The second largest group of respondents (9) said that the Chewa people should be encouraged to refrain from their tradition. The Chewa's major tradition called gulewamkulu is seen to be associated with Satanism hence the reason why most of them do not join the church.

If the Chewa refrain from their tradition, they will find no problem joining the church. The third group of respondents (5) said that the members should understand

the Chewa tradition so that the members should know how to approach them. It is clear that if Adventist understand the Chewa’s tradition, it will be easy to approach them and preaching to them will also not be difficult. Finally, 4 respondents said that the church should conduct community service in the Chewa territory. The tradition which the Chewa embraces has left their territory under developed. Most of these people live miserable lives. If community services are done in the Chewa territory, the Chewa people may become civilized and realize that it is the tradition they follow that has led to a life of misery

Item 15: After going through the experience of this questionnaire, what advice would you give the Chewa who backslide?

This question item had four possible responses from where the responses were to choose from. Table 20 below summarizes the results.

Table 20. Advise to the Chewa Who Backslide after Joining the Church

Responses	Male	Female	Total
A-They should not be shy to come back to church.	14	7	21
B-They should differentiate between tradition and the gospel.	10	4	14
C-They should begin cultivating other cash crops	1	1	2
D-Tell them the love of God	1	1	2
Total	26	13	39

Out of 39 respondents to the item, 21 respondents divided into 14 males and 7 females said that they should not shy to come back to the church. 14 respondents split into 10 males and 4 females said that they should differentiate between tradition and

the gospel.2 respondents split into 1 man and 1 woman said that they should begin to cultivate other cash crops. Another group of respondents of 2 split into 1 man and 1 woman said that the church should tell them the love of God.

According to the respondents, the majority of the respondents (21) said that the people should be encouraged not to be shy when they want to come back to the church. This implies that many of the Chewa who have backslidden feel shy to come back to church even when they want to. Encouraging them to come back to the church will take away the shame they have because of backsliding. This shame may come because of the ridicule from friends and relatives. If church members would stand by these backsliders to encourage them, they can gather courage and confidently come back to church.

The second group of respondents (14) said that the people should be encouraged to differentiate between tradition and the gospel. This encouragement can come while they are being told to come back to church. Differentiating between the gospel and tradition will make them to have a good choice. The third and fourth respondents of 2 each said that the people should begin to cultivate tobacco and tell them the love of God. By telling them to cultivate tobacco they will remain in the church.

Item 16: Describe at most strength of small groups in enticing people to join the church as demonstrated by this study.

The question item had four possible answers. Table 21 below summarizes the results.

Table 21. Strength of Small Groups in Enticing People to Join the church

Responses	Male	Female	Total
A-Helps people see Adventist Church differently from what they thought.	7	5	12
B-It helps to reach out the Chewa.	8	4	12
C-It is easy to identify problems.	6	2	8
D-It creates friendship with the community through interaction.	4	0	4
Total	25	11	36

The question item had 36 respondents. Out of this, 12 respondents split into 7 males and 5 females said that the people that it helps to see Adventist Church differently from what they have thought. 12 respondents again comprised of 8 men and 4 women said that it helps Adventist members to reach to the Chewa. Eight respondents consisting of 6 males and 2 females said that it is to identify problems in small groups and it is easy to rectify these problems as well. 4 men said that it creates friendship with the community as members of the church interacts with non-members.

According to the results of the responses, 12 respondents said that small groups are important in enticing people to join the church because they help people to see the SDA Church in a different way than they used to see previously. It is through small group meetings where people can learn the truth about SDA Church. By bringing them to small group meetings, they become familiar with what Adventists believe and will clear the negative perception that people have about the church. 12 respondents again said that small groups help the church to reach out the Chewa people without much hindrances. It is true that while inviting people to a public meeting has proved to be a failure and has failed to yield results, small groups can be

a means of reaching out to these people. Inviting them to small group meetings can yield results.

The third respondents said that in small groups, it is easy to identify problems. Because members are closely connected, identifying problems and rectifying them is easy as people work in collaboration to help each other. Finally 4 said that small groups creates friendships with the community through interaction. It was said earlier on that few Adventists interact with the people per day.

This is one of the reasons that negates Adventist influences in communities. However, if people are invited to attend small group meetings, it will become an open door to making friendship with the community thereby changing the image of the church in the community. Small groups will act as linkages between the church and the community. The church's impact should be felt in the community where it exists and small group ministry can be one way.

Item 17: Describe at least five strategies you will continue to use this study which will continue to bring people in the church.

This question item had five strategies which people gave as the means to continue bringing in people into the church. Table 22 below summarizes the results of the item.

Table 22. Five Strategies That Would Make the Program to Bring More People in the Church

Strategies	Male	Female	Total
1-Continue conducting Bible studies with them.	8	3	11
2-Continue charity works in Chewa communities.	6	2	8
3-Making frequent visits in their homes to enhance relationships.	5	2	7
4- Adventists should live what they profess.	4	2	6
5-Enroll them in VOP Bible lessons	4	2	6
Total	27	11	38

Out of the 38 respondents, 11 split into 8 men and 3 women said that the church members should continue conducting bible studies with them. 8 respondents split into 6 males and 2 females said that the church should continue charity works in the Chewa communities. 7 respondents comprised of 5 men and 2 women said that making frequent visits in their homes will enhance relationships. 6 respondents split into 4 men and 2 women said that Adventists should live what they profess. 6 other respondents split into 4 men and 2 women said that the people should be enrolled in VOP bible lessons.

The responses show that the majority of the respondents in this item (11) said that the church should continue conducting bible studies with the Chewa people. This will continue to make the Chewa continue learning about the bible and to know more about Seventh- day Adventist Church. The second group of respondents (8) said that the church should continue charity works in Chewa areas. If the church changes the image of the community through providing social needs to the people, it will be easy

as well to bring to them the gospel. So charity works in communities should not be overlooked if the people are to see the image of the church.

The third respondents (7) said that church members should make frequent visits in homes of non- Adventists. This will continue to enhance relationships between the people and the church. By visiting people in their homes inviting them to bible study meetings will be easy as well. The next group of respondents (6) said that Adventists should live what they profess. When Adventists live a different life from what they profess, it will be difficult for people to be converted as they will not take the church seriously. So living what the church teaches is paramount if the people are to accept Adventist faith. Finally 6 other respondents said that the people should be enrolled into VOP Bible lessons. This will make people learn more as what they learn will increase the knowledge they get during bible studies in small groups.

Item 18: In your everyday life, what type of grouping do you associate with?

This question item had 6 answers which the respondents gave. Table 23 below summarizes results of the item.

Table 23. Groupings Which the People Associate with in Their Everyday Life

Responses	Male	Female	Total
1-Fellow workers.	5	3	8
2-God loving people.	7	4	11
3-School mates.	5	1	6
4- Peers.	4	2	6
5- Non- believers.	3	0	3
6-Business friends.	3	1	4
Total	27	11	38

The item had 38 respondents. Out of these, 11 split into 7 men and 4 women said that they associate with God loving people. 8 respondents divided into 5 men and 3 women said that they associate with fellow workers. 6 split into 4 males and 2 females said that they associate with peers. Another 6 respondents comprised of 5 men and 1 woman said that they associate with school mates. 4 respondents divided into 3 men and 1 woman said that they associate with business friends.

According to the responses above, it is obvious that many respondents (11) said that they associate with God loving people. It true that when the people associate with God loving people chances are there is a possibilities of people getting to know more about God because of the interaction. The second respondents (8) said that they associate with fellow workers. Another group of respondents (6) said that they associate with peers while another 6 respondents said that they associate with schoolmates. The final respondents said that they associate with business friends.

What this implies is that whoever people associate with plays a role in making decision to accepting Christ or not. Whatever people discuss influence their choices. If people associate with God loving people they will be impacted positively to decide for God. In short associations shape people's destiny.

Item 19: Of these groups, which ones are capable of influencing people to leave the church?

This question had 42 respondents of this figure 30 were males and 12 were females. Table 24 below summarizes the number of respondents to question 19.

Table 24. Groups of People Which Are Capable of Influencing People to Leave the Church

Responses	Male	Female	Total
A-Non-believers.	12	5	17
B-Fellow business partners.	10	4	14
C-Peers.	8	3	11
Total	30	12	42

Out of the 42 respondents to the item, 17 divided into 12 males and 5 females said that non-believers can influence people from leaving the church. 14 respondents which was split into 10 men and 4 women said that fellow business partners have also an influence to make people leave the church. 11 respondents comprising of 8 males and 3 females said that peers have an influence as well to make people leave the church.

According to the responses to the item, the majority of the responses (17) said that non-believers are capable of influencing people to leave the church. Next to this were 14 respondents who said that fellow business partners can play a major role in making people leave the church. Finally 11 respondents said that peers can influence people to leave the church.

What this implies is that there is a connection between behavior and choices. People with bad behavior can influence others to follow their behavior.

Item 20: Of these groups, which ones are capable of influencing people to remain in the church?

The question item had 3 answers that the respondents gave. Table 25 below summarizes the results.

Table 25. Groups of People Capable of Influencing People to Remain in the Church

Responses	Male	Female	Total
1-God-loving people.	17	5	22
2-School mates.	4	4	8
3-Peers.	5	2	7
Total	26	11	37

Out of 37 respondents to the question item, 22 respondents split into 17 males and 5 females said that God loving people can influence people to remain in the church. 8 respondents comprised of 4 men and 4 women said that school mates have an influence to make people remain in the church. 7 respondents split into 5 males and 2 females said that peers can also influence people to remain in the church.

According to these respondents (22), said that God fearing people can influence people to remain in the church. 8 respondents said that school mates can influence people to remain in the church. Finally, 7 respondents said that school mates can influence people to remain in the church. This means that if people are to remain in the church, choices will influence it. Therefore if people can decide to interact with God's loving people they will remain in the church as most of what they say will be spiritual.

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONCLUSION
AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Summary

The study has shown that it is possible to use small groups as a means to evangelize the Chewa ethnic group. The study which was conducted at Nsewa church went on well and the people showed interest in carrying out this study. The study also showed that there is a big gap between Adventist members and the Chewa ethnic group which covers almost the entire part of Central Region. It was observed that cultural beliefs such as Gule Wamkulu among the Chewa attract many people as it is seen as one of the important aspect in their culture.

The study further showed that Seventh-day Adventists can do much better in evangelizing the Chewa of central region. Much as some ways have proven a failure, it has been revealed that while it is possible to use small group ministry as a means of evangelizing the Chewa, there is a lot that Adventists should do if evangelism in the region is to succeed.

The study also observed that the region is known to have a conducive environment for the cultivation of tobacco. In fact, most of the tobacco produced in the country is grown in central region. Thus cultivating tobacco has become a culture as well as it is common among the Chewa.

The study also showed that the beliefs that the Adventist Church holds is not in agreement with what the cultural beliefs of the Chewa. Since it is hard for the Chewa to quit their tradition, it becomes hard for them to embrace Adventism. Hence

few people join Adventist Church. Even the few people that join the church, their attendance is not good since they are not strong in the faith as they lack encouragement. This is evidenced by empty churches in most parts of the region. This is because of frequent absenteeism. Because of this, churches die out after being planted as many people stop going to church and revert back to their former lifestyle.

The study showed that it is possible for the Adventist Church to exist and grow strong in the region. It was observed that while public campaigns have proved futile to bring people into the church, using a different strategy can bring positive results. The study showed that small group ministry can be one of the strategies. It was found out that the church need to change its ways of evangelism from public to small group ministry. For this to yield results, Adventists should change their perception and attitude towards the Chewa people.

It was further observed that Adventists have a tendency of not mixing with other people. This makes people failing to understand what Adventism is all about. For the Chewa and other ethnic groups to understand what it means to be an Adventist, the church should make a deliberate effort to present itself to the community, that is to say that Adventists should mix with different people. The church should learn to tolerate different people regardless of their cultural beliefs or tradition. If the impact of Seventh-day Adventist Church is to be felt, members need to change their perception against the Chewa.

Recommendations

The study pointed out that small group ministry can be one of the effective methods that can be used as a means of evangelizing the Chewa ethnic group. Hence the study recommended the following:

The Chewa may not be the only ethnic group that resists Adventism. There are other tribes as well such as the Yao. Having tried small group ministry in the Chewa culture, the strategy may work in other ethnic group. For example, the Yao ethnic group in some parts the Southern Region of Malawi is also known to resist not only Adventist message but Christianity in general. The area is known to be Islamic and Christianity is not accepted in this area. If small group ministry may be used, the area can be reached with Adventist message.

The study also recommended that though Adventism may be popular in some parts of the country, small group ministry should also be used in these areas as well so that people who are not conversant but just attend the church because of its popularity should get rooted in the faith and understand what the church teaches.

The study also recommended that pastors should be encouraged to understand the concept of small groups and what it can achieve. If pastors can embrace this concept, it can be used as a method in many places in the country. The study also recommends that students training to become pastors should be taught practical skills of how to lead small group ministry at Malawi Adventist University and also used among students in the university.

It is pleasing to note that many Pentecostal churches in Malawi start by cell meetings in homes, meeting once or twice a week. Within a short period, these small groups turn into churches. This is one good example of how small groups impact people's lives.

It has also been stressed that the study is not ruling out the use of public evangelism, but that while public evangelism is being conducted, small group ministry should be used vigorously so that people who are converted continue to learn

more thereby making them stay in the church. It is expedient therefore that small group ministry should be considered as one of the major strategies of evangelism.

The study recommend the SDA Church in Malawi to embrace taken by the church in Brazil. It was observed that one of the strategies for the growth of the in Brazil is small group ministry. Since it has proven that small group worked in Brazil, it is certain that with willingness to embrace the concept, it can work in Malawi as well.

The study therefore recommend that Malawi Union Conference through its Personal Ministries Department should make small group ministry materials available in all churches since the problem of church growth is not for CMC alone but the whole union. There should be uniformity in the way the church does its small group ministry and the lessons should be similar.

Conclusion

Small group ministry has been proven to be effective in churches that use it. It is pleasing to note that churches that have used it have grown into big churches. For example, Pentecostals around the country have their roots from small groups. Even in Adventist Church in some parts of the world such as Brazil and Argentina in South America Division, it has been seen that small group ministry has led to the increase in membership and the quality of members these churches have. In quality, it means members grow in maturity and in faith and have stayed in the church, hence the increase.

However, for small group ministry to succeed, it is important that group leaders should be aggressive, especially in the onset of the small group. This is because it may take time for church members to embrace the concept. Group leaders should expect a lot of absenteeism. Pastors should encourage group leaders not to give

up as this is a new concept in Adventist Churches and so pastors and group leaders should expect such set back, but they should not give up.

Another thing that group leaders and especially pastors should make sure is the availability of materials and resources are available at all times so that whenever they meet, they have new lessons to study. Pastors and group leaders should work hand in hand to make sure that materials are always available. If pastors can make small group ministry a tool for evangelism, especially in Chewa dominated areas, positive results can be experienced.

Suggestions for Future Research

After carrying out the research on how to evangelize the Chewa ethnic group, the researcher suggests that if another research will be carried out on small groups, the researcher should dwell much on how small group ministry can be used to evangelize the Moslem community.

It has been observed that Christianity has always faced a setback in Moslem dominated areas such that fulfilling the great command left by Jesus Christ in these areas is a problem. This is because Christians cannot hold public campaigns in Islamic places. The unfortunate part is that Moslems cover over half of the world population. Again, looking at the world population as compared to Adventists world- wide, the gap is very alarming hence, the need to try small group ministry in many places.

However, for the small group ministry to yield positive results, there is a need to be strategic as the way it can be used in Christian countries may be different from the way it can be done in Islamic countries as it involves risking a life. There has to be ways on how the people can be invited without being traced.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions

I-General information to the questionnaire Items

- A- The information to the questionnaire items are not examinations and so there is no right or wrong answers.
- B- No information shall be shared.
- C- The respondents to these questionnaires shall remain anonymous.
- D- Answer all open- ended questions as open as you can.
- E- Closed- ended shall require ticking or completing.
- F- If there is a problem or any clarification needed, feel free to ask.

II-Descriptive characteristics of the sample. Tick a group you are associated with.

Item	Gender	Male			Female	
		Age range	18-25 Yrs.	26-35 Yrs.	36-45 Yrs.	46-55 Yrs.
Marital status	Single	Married	Widowed	Divorced	Others	
Educational level	Primary	Secondary	College	University		
Social status	Lay person	Elder	Headman	Chief	Others	
Economic status	Church worker	Administrator	Manager			

1-What major factors are responsible for members of the Chewa in Central Region of Malawi for resisting the SDA Church?

- a- Polygamy
- b- Tobacco growing
- c- Beer drinking
- d- Tradition (gulewamkulu)
- e- Disinterest

2-Why do you think gulewamkulu is responsible for people not joining the SDA Church?

- a- Members do not want to be outside their tradition.
- b- It binds the Chewa together.
- c- It has been there longer and so people don't know how to get rid of it.

3-Why do you think tobacco is responsible for people not to join the SDA Church?

- a- It gives people money
- b- It is a widely grown crop in the region.
- c- People think tobacco is the only cash crop that brings money.
- d- People have never tried other cash crops.

4-In your everyday life, how many members of SDA do you interact with?

- a- 0-5
- b- 6-10
- c- 11-20
- d- Over 20

5-Why do you think are the main reason why you want to interact with SDA people?

- a- I love their music.
- b- I find them to be good people.
- c- I am one of them.
- d- They are peaceful.

6-What do you think attracts many people to join SDA Church?

- a- They have friends in the church.
- b- They have relatives who are members of the church.
- c- The SDA Church is near their home.
- d- They went to an SDA School.
- e- Others (specify).

7-Why do you think are the reasons why people don't want to join the SDA Church?

- a- The church's lifestyle.
- b- They are rigid to the law.
- c- Their day of worship has lots of entertainment.

d- They feel SDA members are arrogant.

e- Others (specify).

8-What do you the SDA members should do to attract many people to join the church?

a- Interact with them.

b- Share the church beliefs with them.

c- Accept them as they are as church members interact with them.

d- Encourage them to diversify farming.

e- Help them understand that their tradition should not be seen as an obstacle to joining the church.

f- Others (specify).

9-What should Adventists do to encourage the Chewa people to join the SDA Church and remain in the church after joining?

a- Encourage them to grow other cash crops such as cassava, ground nuts, beans soya etc.

b- Convince them that these crops are cheap and easy to cultivate since they don't need fertilizer.

c- Tell them the problems facing tobacco farming industry as WHO is lobbying for anti-tobacco because of its negative effects on people's health.

d- Help them find better markets for other cash crops which they may decide to cultivate as alternatives to tobacco.

e- Others (specify).

10-What should the church do to make people stay after they have joined the church?

a- To every newly baptized person, assign a mature and experienced church member to a spiritual guardian.

- b- Have constant meetings with them like payers, bible studies and mid-week prayer meetings.
 - c- Bring them into fishers of men clubs.
 - d- If necessary, encourage some of them to become literature evangelists.
- 11- Give some reasons why people do not want to join the SDA Church?
- 12-In your view, what should the church do to retain the members of the Chewa group that join the SDA Church?
- 13-If you were an Adventist member and a Chewa, what advice would you give to church leaders on how to nurture the Chewa who join the church in your area?
- 14-After going through this questionnaire and learned why the Chewa do not want to join the SDA Church in large numbers, what advice will you be giving them now?
- 15-After going through the experience of this questionnaire, what advice will you give the Chewa people who join the church but backslide?
- 16-Describe at most all the strengths of small groups in enticing people to join the church as demonstrated by this study.
- 17-Describe at least five strategies you will continue to use after this study which will continue to bring people in the church.
- 18-In your everyday life, what type of grouping do you associate with?
- 19-Of these groups, which ones are capable of influencing members to leave the church?
- 20-Of these groups, which ones are capable of influencing people to remain in the church?

APPENDIX B

LETTERS

From: Pastor Brian S. Chafunya, Lilongwe Central SDA Church, Box 30426, Capital City, Lilongwe 3.

To: The church Clerk, Nsewa SDA Church Box 128, Likuni, Lilongwe.

Date: 3rd September, 2016.

Cc: The District Pastor, Area 3 SDA Church, Lilongwe.

Beloved in Christ,

REQUEST TO CONDUCT A SURVEY AT NSEWA SDA CHURCH

I am Pastor Brian Chafunya, a student at Adventist University of Africa. I am pursuing a Masters Degree in Leadership. One of the requirements for the award of this degree is to conduct a survey/research. My research is entitled, “A strategy of evangelizing the Chewa ethnic group of Chinsapo area in Lilongwe district. Nsewa church was chosen to conduct this study. I therefore write to ask permission to carry out this research.

This study is new in Central Malawi Conference, hence, Nsewa is a pilot center. For this reason, this survey is very important.

Looking forward to your response,

Sincerely yours,

BRIAN CHAFUNYA

From: Pastor Brian S. Chafunya, Lilongwe Central SDA Church, P.O. Box 30426,
Capital City, Lilongwe 3.

To: The Conference President, Central Malawi Conference, P/Bag B516,
Lilongwe.

Cc: The Ministerial Secretary

Cc: The Education Secretary

Date: 12th January, 2014.

Dear Sir,

PERMISSION TO GO TO SOLUSI UNIVERSTY TO STUDY

I write to ask permission to go to Solusi to study. I have received an acceptance letter from Adventist University of Africa to pursue Masters Degree in Leadership, hence, the request. This course will run for four years which will be done in 9 weeks per year. Because of the nature of the course, it will demand that I leave work for nine weeks and go to Zimbabwe to study.

Looking forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,

BRIAN S. CHAFUNYA

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- <http://www.uubelmont.org/connection/small-group-ministry>

VITA

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name Brian Stoneck Chafunya
Nationality Malawian
Spouse Patricia Mpinganjira Chafunya
Religion Christian
Address Central Malawi Conference, P/Bag B516, Lilongwe- Malawi
Email address brianchafunya@rocketmail.com

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

2009 Bachelor of Arts Degree in Theology-University of Eastern Africa-
Baraton
1997 Ministerial Diploma-Lakeview Seminary
1993 Malawi School Certificate of Education-Ntcheu Secondary School

PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION

2015 to date Church Pastor, Lilongwe Central Church
2012-2015 District Pastor, Area 3 SDA Church, Lilongwe
2010-2012 District Pastor, Nathenje SDA Church, Lilongwe
2008-2010 District Pastor, Bunda SDA Church, Lilongwe
2002-2004 District Pastor, Dedza
1998-2001 District Pastor, Saiwa
1994- 1996 Worked as a teacher in the Government