

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Masters of Arts in Pastoral Theology Project

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: PASTORING OF RURAL CHURCHES: A CHALLENGE IN
LUAPULA ZAMBIA FIELD

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While the Church in Luapula, Zambia has been able to record growth in membership on a quarterly basis, which now stands at 64, 190, the percentage of Spiritual maturity and qualitative growth in the knowledge of the truths held dear, as Adventists is still very low especially in rural churches. How can biblical approaches enhanced by pastoral care and lay involvement help in the nurture and growth of those disadvantaged rural churches? This question has been raised because the project is founded on the hypothesis that lack of pastoral leadership and lay involvement is the cause of stagnation in most rural churches in Luapula Field.

Considering the vastness of the territory to be covered, a survey was conducted in only one rural church-Lubwe church, to ascertain among other things how long members have been in the church and their involvement in the mission of the church; whether in their view pastors and elders have been giving adequate spiritual nurture or not. In addition to the survey, young people and the elderly who could not read and write were also interviewed.

Under literature review, Old and New Testament bible passages on church growth were investigated with a view to understanding what the Bible says, and how best we can work to help churches experience qualitative growth and thereby become active participants in missions. Other literature on church growth was also investigated; this includes Spirit of prophecy, Adventists and non-Adventist church growth authorities.

The program was developed and implemented over a period of six months; beginning with training lay members', lay involvement and monitoring. At the end of the period an evaluation of the program was carried out and recommendations made. Key among them was a recommendation to plant another congregation within the same area and nurture it to grow into a full-fledged church within a period of one year and also put a lay bible worker to over-see the growth of the church before a full-time pastor can be sent to the area. At the end of the project, lay members' involvement in soul winning became evident, in six months three baptisms were conducted and 147 souls were baptized, and where it has taken years for an organized company to become a church, it only took a period of eleven months for a congregation started after an evangelistic campaign was conducted to be organized into a church, which is now self-supporting and 100% of membership is fully involved in the mission.

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A project

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

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by

Sinyangwe Samuel

November 2013

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Dedicated to all Church Administrators and Pastors

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CA	California
MI	Michigan
NC	North Carolina
DC	District of Columbia
OT	Old Testament
NT	New Testament
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Pastoring large Mission Districts in Luapula Zambia Field of Zambia Union Conference is a challenge to the growth of rural churches. Especially where one pastor is required to take care of more than one political district with a total number of 80 or more congregations. Logistical problems and lack of adequate education on the part of the pastor impacts heavily on the nurturing of members and in the end inhibit effective growth of those rural churches. Christ's desire is that every church grows and bears much fruit that lasts (John 15:1-16). This can only be realized if members abide in Him.

Luapula Zambia Field has 205 churches and 462 companies / congregations giving us a total number of 667 congregations and out of these 67% is located in the rural and not easily accessed. Currently the field has a total membership of 64,190. The ratio of pastors to members is 1: 8,024 and the ratio of pastors to congregations is 1: 82¹. As a result of this situation most rural churches have stopped to experience growth numerically and spiritually. The whole situation was compounded by an action, which was taken in 1998 to remove pastors from some mission districts, which were not able to bring substantial income to support the pastor.

Since that time, church growth in those areas has been affected in a way, and the most affected churches are those located in rural areas. In an attempt to resolve

¹ Luapula Zambia Field of Seventh-day Adventist Office of Archives and Statistics, *Annual Statistical Reports* (Mansa, Zambia: Luapula Zambia Field of Seventh-day Adventist, 2010), 4.

this problem, mission districts have been merged making territories too large for one pastor to manage. The hope is that this study may not just inform us about our situation, but may also provide us with tools to use in helping rural churches to grow in a multi-church district.

Statement of the Problem

Because mission districts in Luapula Zambia Field are too large to be managed by one pastor and that most local churches are found in the rural parts of the field, a problem has arisen over the years in effectively training members and nurturing them so as to bring about desired numerical and spiritual growth in those churches. The question that one asks is what led to this situation and how best can those in leadership do to help resolve the situation. The desire for every church leader is to see that once a church is started it must be seen to be experiencing quantitative and qualitative growth. This poses a challenge to see churches not growing when they are supposed to be growing in spite of their location.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine factors affecting the growth of rural churches in a multi-church district and formulate a strategy that will help pastors and local church elders effectively lead their churches to meaningful spiritual and numerical growth.

Significance of the Study

This study was undertaken to broaden the understanding of church growth and the effect it creates because of the lack of it. Every leader should be concerned if the church is found not to be growing. The study will also provide church leadership with ways of addressing challenges faced in nurturing rural churches. When local church

leadership is equipped with information on how to nurture churches, they will be able to help their churches to grow without depending too much on the pastor.

Delimitations

This study covered only one rural church from Ng'umbo Mission District in Luapula Zambia Field. The district was closed in 1999 and the district pastor redirected to Literature Evangelism work due to its unproductivity, but all churches remained without being dissolved they were only attached to another district which had a pastor. The reason for this delimitation is due to the vastness of the field and financial constraints. The name of the church in which the study was conducted is Lubwe Church in N'gumbo Mission District, located 105 kilometers east of the field headquarters and 35 kilometers west of Samfya Boma where Administrative Offices for government heads are located.

Research Methodology

This study dealt with the analysis of factors affecting the growth of rural churches leading to the development of the strategy to assist Church leaders and pastors in multi-church districts, which are partly urban and rural to bring about desired spiritual and numerical growth especially to rural churches that are often neglected. This study came about after observing what has been going on, first as district pastor, departmental director and now as a president in the same field. In this study the role of Christian leadership in enhancing church growth and spiritual nurture of the local church members was emphasized since church growth is the work of God, those who engage in this work should partner with God in using biblical methods in helping churches to grow.

Most of those churches selected as a sample expressed their desire to see a brand of leadership with foresight and a sense of direction, which can train and equip

the church members so that they in turn can be fully involved in laboring for the salvation of others.

The researcher discovered that there was a great need for a simple workable strategy, to best suit the situation to be used in the process of creating a “mission mind set” in rural churches if they are to grow.

In order to achieve what was planned the study took the following steps:

1. The study used both primary and secondary data sources, and these sources included:
 - i. Reviewing relevant biblical texts from New Testament and Old Testament on church growth and lay involvement during the apostolic times.
 - ii. Reviewing relevant literature on principles of church growth.
 - iii. Checking of church statistical records where they are available to establish the history of the selected church and membership growth through baptism and other methods.
2. The researcher also conducted interviews and surveys on a sampled church.

The researcher mainly focused on the following:

- i. Church worship
 - ii. The nature of nurturing and training programs
 - iii. Member participation
 - iv. Sources of spiritual strength
 - v. The frequency of visitation and pastoral leadership to the local church and members’ homes.
3. A strategy was formulated based on the findings. The strategy included the following components:

- i. Resource materials were designed and prepared for pastors and local church elders for use in training and equipping the laity.
 - ii. A Suggested plan of implementation was also done (included in the lesson).
4. An evaluation of the project was carried out at the end of the project by way of calling a church board and church business where the overview of the program was presented and members made their observations.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter gives an overview of related literature on church growth and God plan for every church. This literature is presented in two categories: The first category discusses the general understanding of Church Growth. The second highlights the Adventist theology of church growth and the role of leadership in helping churches to grow.

Church Growth: Biblical and General Basis

The generally accepted view of Church Growth is that since a church is viewed as an organism each congregation is expected to grow. The Bible has in several instances clearly pointed out that God desires to see that every church grows (Genesis 12:1-5; Matthew 28:19-20; John 15:1-10 (NKJV). In Genesis 12:1-5, we see God calling Abram and promising him that He would become a great nation and that through him, all nations would be blessed which indicates to us that God's wish for the church, is that it grows both in size and usefulness. While Genesis 12 reveals the working of God with one man, in Matthew 28:19, 20, Jesus commissioned the twelve disciples as His initial church to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. The church grows by winning other people into the church for Christ. The book of Acts in particular is characterized by the phenomena of growth, for example, in Acts 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 19:20; 28:31, growth is mentioned.

From a company of 12 Galileans the church grew to thousands of believers and churches were planted all over Asia Minor (Acts 2:41; Titus 1:5. The church grew in membership, study of the word, prayer and support of the mission (Acts 1:14; 2:42; 2Corinthians 6:3-4a; Ephesians 4:12, 13 and Matthew 20:28 - NKJV), in other words everyone had a mission mind set. Those converted to Christianity were conscious of the reason for their being members of the early Christian church.

When the church lacks effective outreach methods in reaching out to the surrounding communities with the gospel, the possibility is that there is stagnation and eventual spiritual death, a situation where members become less responsive to church programs. Elaborating on this point, McGavran points out that,

Church growth is basically a theological stance. God requires it. It looks to the Bible for direction as to what God wants done. It believes that Acts 4:12, John 14:6, and scores of similar passages are true. It holds that belief in Jesus Christ, understood according to the scriptures, is necessary for salvation. Church growth rises in unshakeable theological conviction.¹

Going further, he also points out that “Church growth is humane action: the strong bearing the burdens of the weak and introducing to the hungry the bread by which man lives. Nevertheless, God’s obedient servant seek church growth not as an exercise in humanity, but because the extension of the church is pleasing to God. Church growth is faithfulness.”²

Stressing the will of God in church growth, Wagner also argues that, “the chief and irreplaceable purpose of mission is church growth. Social service pleases God, but it must never be substituted for finding the lost.”³ Following

¹ Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 7.

² Ibid, 8.

³ Peter C. Wagner, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 22.

these statements we can conclude that everyone should be moved by the burning desire to share the good news of Christ if the church is to grow. The emphasis here is on personal effort, which is having the general membership catch the fire of reaching the lost. Members should all be focused to the nature and reason for their existence if the church is to be considered healthy.

The ministry and purpose of the local church today must reflect the ministry and purpose of Christ. In addition to this every growing church will need to develop new leaders. The process begins with instructing mature Christians who in turn go to train younger members of the church to continue reaching out to those who do not have church affiliation and continuing to teach new converts to obey the word of God. Peter C. Wagner argues that, “if ministry for lay persons in the church today is defined outside of this basic purpose, it is either substantially incomplete or simply inaccurate.”⁴

In summary we would say, Church growth is all that is involved in reconciling men and women back to God so that they can once again have a personal relationship with their God and mature into responsible church members who begin to work for the good of others.

Qualitative and Quantitative Church Growth

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament speak in support of qualitative and quantitative church growth (Isaiah 37:31; Acts 2: 41-47; 2 Peter 3: 9 NKJV). In John 1:1-15, Jesus admonishes the church to abide in Him and bear much fruit. Church growth therefore is more than just numbers. In Acts 2: 41-47

⁴ Peter C Wagner, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 22.

we find four aspects of growth, in verse 42 there is “growing up,” in verse 47 there is “growing together,” in verse 47 there are two aspects: “Growing out” and “growing more.” These aspects spell out the qualitative and quantitative growth of the church regardless of where the church is. But for the purposes of this study, the focus will be on rural churches.

In this world, Mission must be what God desires. It is not a human activity but ‘*Missio Dei*’, the Mission of God.⁵ God is the owner of church growth and has keen interest to see that every church that is planted grows. And this growth goes beyond mere sociological factors. McGavran argues that “Wholesome growth also means faithful obedience to God in developing churches so solid in their human matrix that they can grow, but also so separated that they remain pleasing to God.”⁶ This connects well with Robert E. Maner who also argues that, quality is seen in the ability of the church meeting the needs of the people they come in contact with.⁷ Quality eventually results in quantity. While it is possible to have one without the other the balance should always be maintained.

Meaningful qualitative and quantitative church growth takes place when people who have been won back to Christ have been effectively trained and are also working for the salvation of others who have not yet known Christ as their Lord and Savior. Ellen G. White indicates that part of the reason some churches continue as babes is because members fail to labor for others, they are always only needing to be fed.⁸ This tells us that as men and women, young and old in the

⁵ Peter C Wagner, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 22.

⁶ Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 6

⁷ Robert E. Maner, *Making the Small Church Grow* (Kansas, NC: Beacon Hill, 1982), 14

⁸ Ellen G White. *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1970), 335.

church get involved in evangelism each one of them experiences spiritual revival and growth. The apostle Paul talks about the spiritual gifts in relation to body life (2Corinthians 12 & Romans 12), that is every member should use his or her spiritual gifts for the edification of the whole body the church.

Every church has the potential to grow if a “mission mind set” is constantly nurtured in all members. According to Peter C. Wagner, for the church to grow a pastor must be a possibility thinker, who uses his dynamic leadership to catalyze the entire church into action for growth. He also goes on to say that a well-mobilized laity, which has discovered and developed all the spiritual gifts for growth plays a pivotal role in bringing about meaningful church growth.⁹

Going by Wagner’s argument above, growth then demands that the local church leadership and the entire church membership must be willing to pay the price and also agree that their goal in evangelism would be to make disciples and effectively incorporate them into the body of Christ and enabling them to become mature, healthy and reproducing Christians¹⁰. For this to happen today as it happened in the early church, church members must be willing to cooperate with the Holy Spirit and also allow Christ to live in them and they in Him (John 15:1-5).

Church Growth and Revival

In Joel 2:28 the bible records that in the last days God would pour His Spirit upon all flesh and revival will take place. We see the fulfillment of this during the time of the apostles as explained in Acts 2. From these and passages of scripture the need for revival is emphasized. In all these bible passages God calls the

⁹ Peter C Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 37.

¹⁰Ibid, 38.

church, His people to revival if they are to be productive. So, for meaningful revival to happen people should engage in prayer, study and share the word and fellowshiping with one another, but bearing in mind that it is God who grants revival to his people that results into increased holy living with renewed zeal and power to participate in mission.

Commenting on Habakkuk 3:2b, “O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years”. Paul G. Hierbert argues that, “Any long range vision for missions must include not only the planting of new churches but also the revival of old ones. The former without the latter eventually leads only to lands full of dead and dying churches.”¹¹ From this it can be seen that church growth is not a one-time event, but rather progressive and multiplicative. One process affects the other in a way, hence the need for vigilance on the part of leaders.

Ellen G. White in the book *Christian Service* points out that “When churches are revived, it is because some individual seeks earnestly for the blessing of God. He hungers and thirsts after God, and asks in faith, and receives accordingly.”¹² In other words what this means is every must desire to experience revival and thereby grow.

According to Knowles, two pertinent questions need to be asked by any local church needing to grow: Where have we come from and where are we going? In his view these two questions, which the researcher also considers to be important should act as a guide in the setting of goals and objectives in line with each local church mission statement.¹³ A mission statement plays an important role in

¹¹ Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Barker Books, 1994), 159.

¹² Ellen G. White, *Christian Service* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1925), 121.

¹³ George E. Knowles, *How To Help Your Church Grow* (Georgia, Nebraska: J. A. Thomas & Associates, 1997), 17, 18.

keeping an organization on course, because it spells out what is expected of that particular entity.

In the case of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, our mission is summarized in the commission that Jesus Christ gave in Matthew 28:19-20 – “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” And for a Church to be seen to be alive it should be reaching out to the world with the gospel and making disciples for Christ.

Revival in the apostolic church as pointed out in Acts 1 and 2 did not come by accident, there was a deliberate action taken on the part of the apostles who were the nucleus. They were in one accord, praying and studying the word of God together, after they had reconciled with one another the Holy Spirit came upon them and they were filled with power to go out and evangelize for God. In Acts 1 and 2, the bible attests to the fact that for the church to grow there is need for the four major things to be taking place, and these are: (1) Unity of purpose, (2) prayer, studying the bible, (3) fellowship and (4) reaching out to the community with the gospel. The emphasis placed on these four aspects of Christian life in the book of Acts and other epistles suggest that, churches wanting to grow need to incorporate them in the spiritual nurturing programs.

Lay Involvement in Church Growth

The involvement of lay members in the growth of a local Church cannot be over emphasized. Most Church growth specialists emphasize the need for all Church members to be concerned and see the need to grow. McGavran, the father

of Church growth points out that “Only where Christians constrained by love obediently press on, telling men the good news of the Saviour, does the Church spread and increase.”¹⁴The motivating factor according to McGavran here is obedience based on the love for the lost souls. Members should love Christ first before they can obey to carry out what He commands them to do.

True love emanates from what Christ has already done for the individual members who are already in the church regardless of the place where that local church is found. Louie E. Bustle also argues strongly in favor of total lay involvement in the work of church growth by saying, “there is much to be done in the work of the church. Although the pastor may be trained to do the work, he must find ways to train the laity to help.”¹⁵ Speaking in favor of lay involvement in ministry, Ellen G. White also argues that “The work of God in the earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our Church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with those of ministers and Church officers.”¹⁶

Scholars have noted that in Churches where lay members are fully involved, Churches grow but as soon as lay members leave everything to the pastor churches stop to grow and begin to decline in vitality and membership. Worse still if the pastor takes care of several Churches and some of the Churches are located far away where they cannot be easily reached. This agrees with what the apostle Paul outlines in 2 Corinthians 5:17-20, that those whom Christ died for should never live to please themselves but please the one who saved them, and in 1 Peter

¹⁴ Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 5.

¹⁵ Louie E. Bustle, *Keys for Church Growth* (Kansas, MO: Beacon, 1990), 70.

¹⁶ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1948), 351-352.

2:9 the bible reiterates that Christ called us of darkness into His marvelous light of Jesus to those who are still in the world.

Ellen G White warns that, “In the great judgment day, those who have not worked for Christ, who have drifted along thinking of themselves, caring for themselves, will be placed by the judge of the whole earth with those who did evil. They receive the same condemnation¹⁷. This means that every Christian has a role to play in the salvation of others using his or her spiritual gifts than let some do their work.

In the Apostolic church there were those referred to as the people of God (*Gk - laos*), (Galatians 3:28) referring to the general Church membership (2Corinthians 5:15-17), this encompasses everyone including the paid clergy (apostles). The other group was that of apostles (*Gk - apostolos*), which means “one who is sent on a mission.” The twelve apostles held jurisdiction over the universal Church, but there were also other apostles who functioned without universal jurisdiction. Both groups worked to preserve doctrine, decide doctrinal controversies, proclaimed Christ and performed the leadership role of overseeing the missionary expansion and the equipping of the early church (Ephesians 4:11-13 NKJV).

There were also those called Elders and Bishops, terms that are closely related. In the New Testament the term “Elder” is used primarily to denote an overseer. It was not used for the priest, but was a leadership role (Titus 3:5; 1Peter 5:1-2; 2John 1:1-3; 3John 1:1).

During the Inter-testament period, the term referred to as laity, referred also to elders and apart from this it also shows that the term “elder” had multiple meanings. This we find in Collin Brown’s attestation, where he says “At the end

¹⁷ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1948), 199.

of the 3rd or beginning of the 2nd century B.C. under the Seleucid king Antiochus III, we have evidence of the existence of a council of elders consisting of 70 or 71 members, the Sanhedrin (cf. Josephus, Ant.12, 2,5ff). At first, on the analogy of the Greek *gerousia* and the Roman *senatus*, the members generally are spoken of as *presbyteroi in Greek*. But the word is used more and more to distinguish the lay members.”¹⁸ Thinking along this line of thought, it can be concluded that the paid and unpaid preaching and teaching elders as also mentioned in 1 Timothy 5:17-19, correspond more to the present role of the clergy and not necessarily the role of care giving which was done by the general membership.

The other group is that of deacon (*Gk. Diakonos*), a term that refers to service and ministry for the saints (Galatians 2:17; Romans 13:4; Ephesians 3:7; 6:21; Colossians 1:23, 25). This again indicates that ministry in the New Testament Church encompassed all members as opposed to the Old testament system where ministry was exclusively for the priests (Numbers 18:2; Exodus 28:3-4; Ezra 7:24; 8:17; Joel 2: 17). Since we have seen that total involvement of all the members in ministry is required, the role of the pastor then should be that of training and equipping members. Ellen G White argues that “So long as church members make no effort to give others the help given them, great spiritual feebleness must result...The greatest help that can be given our people is to teach them to work for God and to depend on Him, not on the ministers.”¹⁹ Commenting again on the importance of unleashing Church members energy after they have been trained and equipped, Ellen G. White illustrates this by giving us the following scenario,

¹⁸ Collin Brown, *New International Dictionary of the New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971), 196.

¹⁹ Ellen G White. *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 18, 19.

The owner of a large mill once found his superintendent in a wheel-pit, making some simple repairs, while half-dozen workmen in the line were standing by, idly looking on. The proprietor, after learning the facts so as to be sure that no injustice was done, called the foreman to his office and handed him his discharge with full pay. In surprise the foreman asked for an explanation. It was given in these words: 'I employed you to keep six men at work. I found the six idle, and you doing the work of but one. Your work could have been done by just one of the six. I cannot afford to pay the wages of seven of seven for to teach the six to be idle'²⁰

She again goes on to point out that, "In laboring where there are already some in the faith, the minister should at first seek not so much to convert un believers, as to train the church members for acceptable co-operation."²¹

The researcher is convinced that if rural churches are to grow, members should be taught how to work for themselves without depending too much on pastors by developing local leadership, and if pastors are to help them they should only act as guides after they have equipped them. Local church members must be equipped with new methods of evangelism, new methods of worship that is fulfilling, inspiring and reviving, and just working to ensure that each and every member is involved in the life and ministry of the church. This tells us that every church should be a training center where the pastor is to act as a foreman or the captain of a ship's crew to ensure that all the people of God are equipped for their respective areas of ministry and mission, each church member should come to the level where he or she is able to identify his or her spiritual gift. And as they are nurtured and motivated to work for others it results in personal spiritual growth as well as the growth of the church.

²⁰ Ellen G. White. *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1948), 197-198.

²¹ *Ibid*, 96.

Natural Church Growth Principles

From the study of various books written by Burrill and Wagner on the subject, the researcher discovered that in the recent past there has arisen a push to promote “Natural Church Growth.” According to these authors churches are supposed to grow naturally, but before this can happen, leadership must resolve problems that negatively affect the growth of churches. Christian A Schwarz in Burrill, argues that healthy churches are characterized by eight things and these are empowering leadership, gift-oriented ministry, passionate spirituality, functional structures, inspiring worship services, holistic small groups, need-oriented evangelism and loving relationships.²²

Apart from these, several other approaches and principles used in helping the church to grow stood out very clearly throughout my study. Among the many scholars consulted on, the study has only highlighted on those that had an impression on him. These if impressed on church members’ minds from small and big churches in rural and town areas will not be the same: The following are some of the approaches suggested to be helpful in natural church growth.

Church Growth as a Divine Enterprise

The divine dimension has to do with the fact that members need to know that God is at work in our world and His interest is to draw all people to Him through the working of the Holy Spirit. The human dimension is where people must have a right relationship with God, right goals informed by the right vision. It has been discovered that Churches grow when they realize that it is God’s will for the church to grow, and use several avenues to reach and meet communities felt

²² Russell C. Burrill, *Church Growth and the Empowering pastor* (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Books, 1993), 34.

needs. Commenting on Christ's way of reaching people, Ellen G. White argues that "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them 'follow me.'"²³ In order to achieve this there is need to conduct seminars to provide time to become acquainted with people and then begin to build relationships before they can be mobilized, trained, equipped and deployed to go and minister to others.

Effective Evangelistic Methods

Commenting on a principle that love is not taught but caught. Ellen G. White also suggests that in the cities of today, where there is so much to attract and please, the church must come up with extraordinary and interesting ways to arrest the attention of the people with the truth, and in trying to achieve this she suggests that there must be no fixed rules and unkind criticisms of those we intend to reach with the gospel.²⁴ This is true with the early church as well. The church in its infancy, tried many methods ranging from house churches to well organized evangelistic methods. More still each time they came to a new place, they would raise people from where they found them, like in the case the church in Athens. They did not criticize peoples' culture, way of life or religion, but rather approached them with the new gospel from their own context.

In most traditional Seventh Day Adventist churches, especially rural churches where most members do not read for themselves to broaden their understanding of

²³ Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 194.

²⁴ Ellen G. White. *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 109.

the Bible about lay involvement in ministry, methods like involving new members, as a way of helping them to feel that they belong to the church may not be well received. Old members usually feel that new members will destroy the church. On the contrary, new members must begin to work for the salvation of others as soon as they come into the church because they are still zealous.

So, there is need to have a deliberate plan to grow on the part of the pastor and his local church leadership. If this is to succeed, George E. Knowles also suggests that “Training should be offered in specific areas such meeting new neighbors, reclaiming inactive members, witnessing to close friends and relatives, winning whole families, reaching the youth and getting decisions.”²⁵ Evangelism and Church growth move together. Church growth is as a result of using effective methods of evangelism, which include the following:

Holistic Small Groups

Holistic small groups involve among other activities dividing a church into smaller companies of believers, for the purposes of prayer, bible study, and fellowship. These are not just small groups but, holistic groups that help people not only know the bible, but help them to apply it to their life situation in their quest to become fully involved in the life of the church.

In scripture it is clear that the early church met in small groups in homes (Acts 2:41- 46; Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16: 19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2 - NKJV).According to Burrill, these holistic small groups acted as relational groups in which even newcomers both receive affirmation and discipleship.²⁶ In these small

²⁵ George E. Knowles, *How To Help Your Church Grow* (Georgia, Nebraska: J.A. Thomas & Associates, 1997), 123.

²⁶ Russell Burrill. *Revolution in the Church: Unleashing the Awesome Power of Lay Ministry* (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research Center, 1993), 123.

groups the laity instead of pastors cared for the flock and prevented members from growing cold spiritually.

Speaking in support of this, Ellen G white points out that, “The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort has been presented to me by one who cannot error. Let them keep their bond of union unbroken, pressing together in love and unity, and encouraging one another to advance, each gaining courage and strength from the assistance of others.”²⁷ The loss of members can be traced to lack of warm, loving relationships especially to new members. This can be solved by having members meet in that small group, and whenever they meet it is expected that each one experiences an atmosphere of transparence, trust, and love endeavoring to meet each other’s felt needs. Members should ensure that whatever is done has a religious and spiritual bearing on each one’s daily life. In churches where this method of holistic small groups has been maximized, growth and spiritual revival have taken place and continue to take place. Speaking in support of this, Burrill quotes Ellen G. White as saying,

Let small companies assemble in the evening, at noon, or in the early morning to study the bible. Let them have a season of prayer, that they may be strengthened, and enlightened, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. This work Christ wants to have done in the heart of every worker. If you yourselves will open the door to receive it, a great blessing will come to you... It is by this means only that you can maintain your integrity.²⁸

While the meeting described above sounds like the social meeting discussed earlier, but here Ellen G. White emphasizes the need for praying intensely for members own personal revival and sanctification and also for the salvation of the lost persons within their communities and beyond. She further argues that “Prayer is

²⁷ Ellen G. White. *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 21.

²⁸ Russell C. Burrill. *Recovering An Adventist Approach To The Life & Mission Of The Local Church* (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Books, 1998), 197-198.

heaven's ordained means of success in the conflict with sin and the development of Christian character. The divine influences that come in answer to the prayer of faith will accomplish in the soul of the suppliant all for which he pleads. For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for any gift He has promised, we may ask and the promise is 'Ye shall receive.'"²⁹

Love Relationships

The ability of Church members to demonstrate the love of Christ is critical in Helping members to grow numerically and spiritually and thereby enhancing church growth. The bible uses a lot of images about the church that are relational in nature. For example, the church is seen as a covenant community, the holy assembly of God, the body of Christ, the flock, the bride, the royal priesthood of believers, and as a household, just to mention but a few (Psalm 35:18; Eph. 5:18-22; 2Cor. 12&14; 1 Peter 2:9 -NKJV). With such evidence at our disposal, we can safely say that to be born into the kingdom of God is to be brought into a relationship, and if a church can fail to relate, then it is living in contradiction to itself and to God. Ellen G. White attests to this fact by arguing that, "the greatest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and loveable Christian."³⁰ She also continues to point out that,

The golden chain of love binding the hearts of believers in unity, in bonds of fellowship and love, and in oneness with Christ, and the father, makes the connection perfect, and bears to the world a testimony of the power of Christianity that cannot be controverted . . . Satan understands the power of such a testimony a witness to the world of what grace can do in transforming character . . . He will work every conceivable device to break this chain which links heart to heart of those who believe the truth and bind them up in close connection with the Father and the Son.³¹

²⁹ Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1911), 564.

³⁰ Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1938), 100.

³¹ Ellen G. White, *God's Amazing Grace* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald, 1973), 237.

The Bible also attests to this fact when the members of the early church had the love for one another and this brought remarkable growth (Acts 2:41-47 NKJV). This is also true today, churches that experience quality growth have members who love one another, care for one another and enjoy the fellowship of each other.

Friendship Evangelism

Friendship evangelism plays an important role in establishing and nurturing new members. As old members befriend the new members and share their spiritual experiences with them their faith is strengthened. In addition church members should also develop a positive attitude towards those who are not members in to win them. Non – believers must be able to see Christ in those who have accepted Christ as their savior. Ellen G. White points out that

There are many who need the ministration of loving Christian hearts. Many have gone down to ruin who might have been saved if their neighbors, common men and women, had put forth personal effort for them. Many are waiting to be personally addressed. In the very family, the neighborhood, the town, where we live, there is work for us to do as missionaries for Christ. If we are Christians this work will be our delight. No sooner is one converted than there is born within him a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus. The saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart.³²

In the above quotation, Ellen G White is admonishing each and every members of the local church to act a part in reaching out and being a channel through which God's love can be seen. Those who are dying without the knowledge of God would not because the truth would reach them.

The Early church showed their concern by sharing their possessions with the less fortunate. Some of the members in rural churches need not to be just preached to. Where poverty abounds the church need to offer practical help just as James stated in

³² Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1940), 141.

James 2:15-16, “If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one you say unto them depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled.” The church must reach out to minister to the needs of members especially those that have just joined the church. If they are to forget where they came from with their previous attachments, they need to see and know that they are loved by those they are joining.

Public and Witnessing Evangelism

Public Evangelism and witnessing is motivated a passionate love for the salvation of sinners. Here people are on fire for the Lord, and their zeal affects those around them and moves them to be involved in ministry. There is a correlation between enthusiasm for one’s faith and being involved in the life and ministry of the local church as one expresses his or her faith. When people are enthusiastic about their God there is nothing they can fail to do for Him, they will always find serving God their greatest joy. In Acts 1: 8, the bible indicates that once members are filled with the Holy Spirit, they will go and become witnesses for God. And in the Ministers’ manual it stated that,

Outreach is the price a congregation joyfully pays for the privilege of calling itself Christian. Nothing is as inspiring as an enthusiastic, well organized church led into evangelistic outreach led by a true pastor evangelist. You can measure the depth of a church’s Christian love by how much of its time is spent in outreach.³³

Leadership and Church Growth

In 1Peter 5:1-4 (NKJV), the apostle Peter emphasizes the need of Christian leaders to feed, and take care of the flock of God bearing in mind that leadership will be held accountable to whatever they do to the flock put under their care. There must

³³ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association. *Seventh-day Adventist Minister’s Manual* (Silver Spring, ML: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1992), 123.

also be willingness on the part of leadership to do the work willingly and not under compulsion.

In the book of Ezekiel the prophet provides an example of how leadership style and attitude affect church growth and productivity of church members in general. While the researcher is emphasizing church member total involvement in the work, it is also clear from Ezekiel 34:2-5 that leaders play a very critical role in the growth of the church. In his words the prophet says, “Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd.”³⁴ Here there are two extremes we need to avoid. One situation is where leaders decide to do everything and members just sit and watch pastors perform. On the other hand is a situation where leaders do not consider church growth as a priority.

Concern for churches to grow on the part of leadership is what is required; because where there is a concern plans will be put in place to help the situation like what we see in the action the apostles took when they saw that the work was becoming too heavy for them. At that time they proposed to have deacons elected.

Ellen G. White says points out that,

The appointment of the seven to take the oversight of special lines of work, proved a great blessing to the church. These officers gave careful consideration to individual needs as well as to the general financial interests of the church, and by their prudent management and their godly example they were an important aid to their fellow officers in binding together the various interests of the church into a united whole.³⁵

³⁴ Myron Rush, *Management: A Biblical Approach* (Nairobi, Kenya: Word Alive, 2002), 209.

³⁵ Ellen G. White, *The Acts Of The Apostles* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1911), 89.

Solutions to problems affecting the success of organizations of which the church is part, do not reside in leaders alone, but also in the full participation of individual members supported by prudent leadership who understand that their role is to instruct those they lead into all truth so as to qualify them to engage in the work and life of the church. Myron Rush points out that,

People are an organization's most valuable resource.... Without people, an organization is nothing more than so many lines and boxes on a piece of paper called an organization chart.... Every Christian leader and manager should be concerned about making his organization as productive as possible. He should also keep in mind that God has given people unlimited creative ability for innovation and problem solving. Therefore, the leader should put people's creativity to work as a means of increasing productivity."³⁶ He also goes on to say that "People need to be needed. They are innovative individuals full of solutions to problems, and they want to contribute. Much of an individual's sense of self-worth comes from contributing to the needs of his group or organization."³⁷

Leadership and Spiritual Nurture/Equipping

Spiritual Nurture of church members begins with the implementation of the gospel commission as prescribed in Matthew 28:18-20. However, it is important to note that, the multiplication of disciples does not happen overnight. In most churches and rural churches in particular, it should start small and it may take time for every member to catch the fire of the spirit. Leaders are to follow the strategy Jesus used when He was on earth, He commanded to go make disciples, baptize those who believe and continuing to teach them to obey the word. The process would not end there; they were to be enabled to start reproducing their lives and faith in the lives of others for whom they labor. The goodness of this strategy is that it brings joy in the

³⁶ Ellen G. White, *The Acts Of The Apostles* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1911), 12-16

³⁷ *Ibid*, 19.

later life of the one doing the work of a disciple (3John 1:4; 1Thessalonians. 2:19-20 - NKJV).

Commenting on making disciples as the best strategy for spiritual nurture, James A Cress points out that “The value of making disciples for the church is that it strengthens the body, develops godly leaders, and perpetuates God’s mission to the world.... And the value of making disciples to the world is that individual lives are changed – lives of individuals who will inhabit Christ’s kingdom.”³⁸ It is therefore, important for church leaders to understand that “the product of evangelism must be disciples, not decisions. Failure to recognize this is a failure to fulfill the great commission through which Jesus sent His disciples into the world to make disciples of all people, teaching them to observe all things that He had commanded.”³⁹ He also goes on to point out that “The church’s ministry of discipling is not only the imperative of the great commission but also a factor in maintaining spirituality for those members who are already discipled. In other words, if believers are not involved in discipling others, their discipleship will be limited, lacking and losing ground rather than being vital and growing. If those who walk in faith do not keep the mission of discipling clearly focused, they lose a vision for the very thing that will bring increased spirituality to their own lives.”⁴⁰

Helping church members to come to a point where they begin to be involved in the work and life of the church is proof enough to show that the church is growing. When the gospel is introduced to new converts, they must be quickly helped to grow in loving their Lord and thereby commit themselves to serving Him. “The condition

³⁸ James A. Cress, *You Can Keep Them If You Care* (Ontario, Canada: Maracle Press, 2000), 14.

³⁹ Ibid, 16.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 19-20.

of prolonged spiritual infancy is in most cases, the result of poor discipleship or of no discipleship at all. Converts are no more able to care for themselves than babies are able to care for themselves. The neglect of the new convert at this stage tends to make him a spiritual dropout or it locks him into permanent babyhood. The convert who was destined to be a stalwart servant of Christ and His Church remains an infant in need of perpetual care.”⁴¹ The goal of nurture in my view is to help members to come to a level where the laity can effectively carry out mission without depending too much on the continuous help of the pastor. As Russell C. Burrill has indicated from his book, Christians maintain their spirituality as they continued to work for others who are not yet in the church.⁴²

In the gospels and the letters of Paul and Peter, birth, growth and fruit bearing have been discussed in relation the process of spiritual maturity of the individual church member (1Peter 2:2 - NKJV). From the time of conversion, a new convert sets on spiritual journey to maturity and fruit bearing as the goal. This means that whatever happens between birth and maturity determines the end result. The researcher discovered during the course of study that leadership plays a very critical role in the spiritual nurture and growth of new converts as well as old members who have over the years grown cold. From the study it is emphasized that the process is more important than the product. James says, “When the long established members express disappointment at the lack of maturity in the lives of new members, they essentially say that they do not wish to parent. Unreasonable expectations lead

⁴¹ James A. Cress, *You Can Keep Them If You Care* (Ontario, Canada: Maracle Press, 2000), 27.

⁴² Russell C. Burrill, *Recovering an Adventist Approach To The Life and Mission in The Local Church* (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Brooks, 1998), 40.

established members to seek that which cannot occur-instantaneous sanctification.”⁴³

Speaking about the need to nurture new members, Dr. Joel Musvosvi in his illustration likens new members to a newly born baby, and he illustrates his point this way,

When a baby is born into a family we don't say to him little Johnnie, we are so happy that you have finally come after waiting for you for nine months in your mother's womb. Please feel welcome in this family. This morning your Mummy and Daddy are going to work for your sake. When you feel hungry there is food in the kitchen, and if you need to change your dippers' you can go and pick dry clothes in the wardrobe and change. Remember we love you so much. We will see you at five thirty.⁴⁴

This kind of speech to the newly born will be useless. At this age what the child needs are practical acts of nurture to meet the baby's needs. In like manner new members are like babies who don't need good speeches, they need people to be close to them and help them to grow in their faith. Sad to say that our evangelism endeavors today take after the manner of the illustration, after we have opened or planted a new church sometimes there is no attempt to ensure that growth takes place in that newly opened church. The result is lack of growth and eventual spiritual death.

This brings us to the most important aspect of the limitless possibilities of following Christ's example. Christ worked with individuals; beginning the twelve He taught and nurtured them notwithstanding their shortcomings but labored with each one of them patiently. He looked at what each one of them would become. Following this reasoning Ellen G White asserts that. "In laboring where there are already some in the faith, the minister should at first seek not so much to convert unbelievers, as to train church members for acceptable cooperation."⁴⁵ She also goes on to point out that

⁴³ James A. Cress, *You Can Keep Them If You Care* (Ontario, Canada: Maracle Press, 2000), 32.

⁴⁴ Joel Musvosvi: *Sermon Illustration preached at Chalimbana during Zambia Union Ministerial Retreat* (Lusaka, Zambia, April. 1992).

⁴⁵ Ellen G White, *Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1942), 159.

“Many would be willing to work if they were taught how to begin.”⁴⁶ These two quotations show to us the need to show by example how to witness as Jesus did. Leaders are not there just to teach others to witness but they should demonstrate in practical ways how it actually works. The apostle Paul expands this in 1 Corinthians 11:1, when he says “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” So, in a sense, we are to become duplicates of Christ the model in church growth and spiritual nurture, and consequently, others will become models of Christ in the same manner and thereby continue to widen the circle.

So, the work of recruiting and training more workers for the Lord’s vineyard cannot be over emphasized. The researcher is convinced that if rural churches are to grow, they should be taught how to do it on their own by developing local leadership, and if pastors are to help them they should only act as guides after they have equipped them. Local church members must be equipped with new methods of evangelism, new methods of worship that is fulfilling, inspiring and reviving, and just working to ensure that each and every member is involved in the life and ministry of the church.

Conclusion

From what has been discussed in chapter two, it can be concluded that the Bible, Ellen G White and other church growth writers do agree and emphasize that the will of God is to see that every church grows. Notwithstanding the environment and circumstances within which the church is found, we are encouraged that each and every one of us does his or her honest part in bringing about that ideal growth where every church member becomes a channel God can use to bless others ignorant of His blessings.

⁴⁶ Ellen G. White, *Christian Service* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1947), 59.

Like the Apostles and the early church who after responding to the call to go and make disciples of all nations, God blessed them with immeasurable success. From the book of Acts, we see that from a small group of 12 apostles the number increased to 120, and with their commitment and dedication to prayer and duty God was adding thousands daily to their number. Viewing church growth as the will of God, forces us also not to act otherwise but to endeavor to focus on equipping local church members and there by releasing their energy to work for the Lord on their own without depending unnecessarily on the pastor especially in a situation where pastors are few and some churches cannot easily be reached. All members are admonished that during the week they should act their part faithfully, and on Sabbath tell their experiences and the meeting will then be as meat in due season, bringing to all present new life and fresh vigor.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Ellen G White, *Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1942), 199.

CHAPTER 3

DISCRIPTION OF LUBWE CHURCH

The study conducted revealed that 13% of the members in Lubwe church are single women and the elderly and 87% of the members were young people. A Larger part of the members in this church spend most of their time fishing, mostly during the months of March to November and from December to April they would be doing subsistence farming. At the time of the study only 7% of the members were on a monthly salary, 63% subsistence farming, and 20% of the adult youths had no reliable income, and 10% were dependent children with no income.

Membership Growth Analysis

At the time of conducting a church life survey, membership at Lubwe church was 87. The church was organized in 1982 with a total membership of 25 with only 7 members in baptism class.

Table 1 shows the situation before the project was done and the situation from September, 2010 to March 2011 when the project was concluded. The researcher recorded the increase and the decrease as it was reflecting in the available records (differences from year to year) at the local church compared with the records at the field office. Table 1 shows that within the six months period (between October 2010 to March 2011), with adequate attention Lubwe and any rural church can grow.

Table 1: Statistical Analysis for Lubwe Church by Year

Year	Members	Increase in Membership
1982	25	
1983 - 1990	57	32
1991 - 1995	79	22
1998 - 2000	68	11
2001 – 2009	117	49
Oct. 2010 – Mar 2011	204	89

SWOT Analysis

If we are to appreciate the subject matter and in this case the church under study Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis was used. In a way this helped the research to focus on what needed to be done and at the same time inform church leadership not to neglect things that enhance church growth. The research used the SWOT analysis method to only analyze the spiritual strength and such things to do with the nurture and growth of the church.

Strength

As already noted, Lubwe church has a membership large enough to do the work if each and every one of them puts his or her spiritual gift to good use. The church is located in an area with very good rainfall, and with most members being subsistence farmers the church stands a better chance to be self-reliant in terms of stewardship and supporting the mission if properly organized.

Weaknesses

The noted weakness in this church is that stable leadership that is committed to God and the work given them is rare. For church programs to be implemented they need to be monitored closely for them to take root and succeed.

Opportunities

The church is in an area where evangelism can be done in spite of it being in a predominantly Roman Catholic area. The community is receptive to the Seventh day Adventist church gospel, with members receiving the necessary training much can be done for the up building of God's kingdom.

Threats

There are a number of threats to the members of this church. The first one is that most members felt that the field had neglected them for too long since they have not been given a pastor to shepherd them. Most members are still having strong attachments in their traditions and cultures that are incompatible with Seventh day Adventist beliefs. And being a fishing area and partly farming, Lubwe Church members are exposed on a weekly basis to business activities that threaten regular Sabbath worship, and sometimes when one converts to Adventism from Catholicism, they are threaten with eviction from Catholic mission land, since there are some who live on mission land.

Church Membership Survey

On September 19, 2010, questionnaires were given to 53 members out of the 87 members who were present at church on that day. Explanation was given on how the questionnaire was to be answered, considering the fact that most members have low levels of education. Those who received the questionnaires were asked to answer

the questions accordingly and return them immediately to avoid the possibility of losing some questionnaires. Everyone who indicated his or her desire to participate in the study was given a questionnaire. After the exercise questionnaires were collected and results collated. Table 2 below showed the number of years respondents have been Adventists in Lubwe since the church was organized. Table 2 results showed that at the time a survey was being conducted, 20.75% of respondents showed that they had been members of the church for 5 years, 16.98% 10 years, 18.88% 15 years, 24.51% 13years and 18.88% for over 21years.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents According to the Number of Years in Church

No. of years in church	Frequency	%
1 -5	11	20.75
6 - 10	9	16.98
11 - 15	10	18.88
16 - 20	13	24.51
21 and above	10	18.88
Total	53	100

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents according to daily personal prayer and bible study. It also shows that majority of the respondents,21% spent 10 minutes in daily personal prayer and Bible study.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents According to Daily Personal Prayer and Bible Study

Time for Daily Personal Prayer and Bible Study	Frequency	%
10 minutes	21	39.62
15 minutes	9	16.98
20 minutes	10	18.87
30 minutes	13	24.53
Total	53	100%

Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents according to their original church. Results from Table 4, showed that 64.15% were once Roman Catholic Church members before they became Seventh-day Adventist. 9.43% United Church of Zambia, 18.87% Watch Tower and 7.55% representing other denominations and born Adventists.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents According to their Original Church

Original Church	Frequency	%
Roman Catholic	34	64.15
United Church of Zambia	5	9.43
Watch Tower	10	18.87
Other	4	7.55
	53	100%

The relevance of worship and other spiritual programs was examined and results presented in Table 5. Table 5 shows that majority of the respondents 22% indicated that relevance of worship and teachings in the local church was poorly done.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents According to Relevancy of Worship and other Spiritual programs

Relevance of Worship / Teachings in Local church	Frequency	%
Very Inspiring	3	5.66
Inspiring	9	16.98
Not Inspiring	19	35.87
Poorly done	22	41.51
Total	53	100%

Poor growth in Lubwe church was investigated and results presented in Table 6. Results from Table 6, revealed that 32% of respondents blamed leadership for lack of growth in the local church. 28% stated lack of programs as one of the causes for lack of church growth and spiritual maturity, 22% put the blame on the nature of the community and 16% cited church members themselves as being responsible.

Other factors cited through the interview with those who could not read or write was lack of home visitations by elders and pastors. Some when interviewed indicated that the only time they saw the pastor was when they were being baptized or ordained as elders and deacons. Jonas Arrias quoting Ellen G White points out that, if the pastor neglects the work of visiting members in their homes, he is an unfaithful shepherd, and the rebuke of God is upon him. His work is not half done.¹

¹ Jonas Arrias, *Wanted A Good Pastor* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 2011), 69.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents According to causes of Poor Growth in Lubwe Church

Causes of Poor Growth	Frequency	%
Leadership	17	32.08
Lack of programs	15	28.30
Members	9	16.98
Community	12	22.64
Total	53	100%

This situation was even made worse when the committee in 1998 took an action to lay off some pastors because of unavailability of funds to pay. Mission districts seriously affected where situated in rural areas, as a temporal measure those districts were attached to districts which remained with pastor adding more strain on the already overburdened pastors. Such districts remained in that state until 2012 when the executive committee of Luapula Zambia Field took an action to implement a recommendation made by this study to send a Lay Bible Worker to work with the local churches in those areas.

Interview Results

After a survey, an interview was conducted among other church members who could not read the questionnaires. There were five youths and five elderly men. All of them were baptized members and some were even serving as leaders in various capacities. Seven out of ten indicated that they have been in the church for more than five years. When each one of them was asked as to how willing they were to participate in the work, three answered they did not know what their gift were. Four answered that they were too new to be active in church work, and only three of them

had positions in the church. When they were asked as to why the situation was the way it was, all of them put the blame on the negligence of leadership to empower local church members, and older members more often than not showed a negative attitude towards new members.

Effort was made to find out how members were finding the programs and teachings or sermons presented to members during worship and at other times. The question was “to what extent do the worship services on Sabbath help you with everyday living?” only two out of ten responded in the affirmative, the other eight said they are not being helped to grow spiritually. The sermon is the high point of the worship service for most Adventists. In this particular interview, what the interviewer discovered was eight out of ten interviewees showed limitedness in experiencing the depth and richness of emotion in their worship of the living God, with a much stronger sense of obligation and as a result members fail to move to a higher Spiritual level.

Being a Roman Catholic dominated area and the absence of a clearly outlined program focused on inculcating Adventism in the mind and lives of individuals’ members, it is quite difficult to have members develop a mission mind set. After working with them during program implementation and subsequent evangelistic campaign the church experienced revival and begun to record growth, an indication that there is a correlation between church growth and evangelism. The church must be intentional in its planning of programs and worship services for the un-churched or special Sabbaths aimed at non-members. Ellen G White gives significance to this fact when she argues that, “The world will be convinced, not by what the pulpit teaches,

but by what the church lives; the minister in the pulpit announces the theory of the gospel; the practical piety of the church demonstrates its power.”²

The more church members are involved in reaching out to the community with the gospel, the more they are revived and the church experiences numerical growth. Again churches that place more emphasis on teaching practical spiritual disciplines are more likely to be growing churches, unlike a situation where members feel what is being taught is irrelevant and falls short of meeting the needs of members. Leadership in such endeavors becomes key to the growth and success of the work. Church leaders must seek to build up and advance their congregations. And for this to become a reality, any church growth strategy should be bathed in prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The other aspect that came out when the interviewees were asked a general question why church was not growing as it should. Their answer was perceived by the community as a very small-unknown church. The question of visibility also came to be a key issue for church growth. When asked as to what could be the solution to this situation, their answer was the church should be seen to be providing services or meeting peoples’ needs in the community, they further suggested that if the church is to have an impact in that area which is predominantly Roman Catholic, we needed to embark on the plan of establishing new congregations in other areas.

Ellen G white points out that, preaching is a small part of the work to be done for the salvation of souls.³ She further elaborates on this matter by saying, “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to

² Ellen G White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1949), 16.

³ Ellen G. White, *Preaching and Soul winning* (Washington, DC: *Review & Herald*, August 22, 1899).

their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them follow me.”⁴ This approach helps the church not to become marginal to the community-needing a place to belong and accepted, and their acceptance of the message creates a barrier that makes it impossible for most of the community to hear and accept the Adventist message.

The approach of mingling as advocated by Ellen G White may not have immediate results, but in the long run opens up a far wider audience for the message. The mingling should be of a particular orientation, “as one who desired their good. In other words, the representative of Christ is to mingle with unbelievers from a position of concern, friendship and caring, and not exploitation, condemnation or judgmental attitudes. The community must see that the church is friendly and cares.

The other factor attributed to by the interviewees as the cause for lack of church growth in the area is the fishing business. During the fishing season, people leave their villages and go into fishing camps and live lives much to be desired. They have no time to concentrate on spiritual things. Churches located in big towns and cities are more likely to be growing than churches located in rural areas and small towns due to many factors ranging from lack of exposure to limited resources.

⁴ Ellen G White, *Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 143.

CHAPTER 4

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

This chapter has three parts as outline in proceeding sections. The first part will deal with the preparation done in the church where the project was conducted, which includes personal, material and spiritual. The second part will deal with program development and the implementation of the project and the last part will deal with the evaluation of the whole project.

Personal Preparation

Preparation was done at the field office with no other responsibility of pastoring. This allowed for a more flexible program, even though the church and the area where the project was to be conducted was 105Kms away. Before beginning the project, the executive committee had to sit to authorize the project. At the time the area had no resident pastor. Upon receiving authorization, the local church was visited on 4 September, 2010 with the view to holding a planning meeting with the local elders and church members. During these meetings, the objective of the project and how the project was going to run was discussed and made clear to Lubwe church.

Material Preparations

Apart from time and other resources, the project needed money which was made available through savings and donations. The meeting place was to be the place where they were meeting for worship services. Lessons used in training were prepared in the local language especially for those who could read, except when it came to

referring to the church manual and elders hand book and Spirit of Prophecy books on spiritual revival, church growth and lay members involvement in ministry. Lessons were mainly to address local church leadership, evangelism methods, spiritual nature programs in the local church and the role of spiritual gifts in church growth. Other lessons on church organization, how to run effective church boards came from the church manual (see Table 7).

Program Development and Implementation

Table 7. Program development

Chap. 1	Chap. 2	Chap. 3	Chap. 4: Program Development			Chap. 5	Appendices
Introduction	Theoretical Foundation: Bible, EGW, history, SDA and other authors	Description of local Setting (Survey and interviews)	Design / Preparation	Implementation	Evaluation	Summary and Conclusions Recommendations	All prepared materials
8 pgs.	22 pgs.	11 pgs.	6 pgs.	6 pgs.	6 pgs.	5 pgs.	30 pgs.

The implementation of the project began on September 4, 2010. On this day, a motivational sermon was preached at eleven hours emphasizing the reason for our existence as Seventh Day Adventist Church body and as individual members and then the researcher proceeded with a meeting for the members, young and elderly in the afternoon from 1400hrs to 1600hrs. In the afternoon the researcher emphasized the need of each and every member to realize that we all exist for mission hence the need to get involved in helping the church grow by using individual God given spiritual gifts (2Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 – NKJV).

The other aspect the author emphasized is the need for individual personal growth through bible study and prayer. God’s desire for us is that we grow and become fruitful as the Bible states in John 15:5, 8, “I am the vine, you are the

branches: He that abides in me, and I in him, the same bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing...In this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit.” As we were coming to the close of the Sabbath, an appeal was made and sixty seven enlisted to attend the seminar to train in church growth and evangelism.

The second session resumed on Sunday, 5th September 2010 and run for the whole week and ended on Sabbath of 11th September, 2010 with a consecration service to dedicate their lives to seeing that the church grows spiritually and numerically. For three days members were only meeting at church for lessons and prayer. Thursday and Friday was reserved to practice what was taught. Major lessons presented were: History of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, Role of Small Groups in Church Growth, Evangelism, Spiritual Gifts and Simple ways of Conducting Bible Studies, planning of worship and Church Leadership (how to plan and run church boards), and How to plan and Conduct and Evangelistic Campaign.

After the training was done, on Sunday the 11th September 2010, we met as a church again to now plan for the evangelistic campaign which was scheduled to take place from September 26th to October 16th 2010. During which those trained were to put what they learnt into practice. Between 12th September and 26th, the church was tasked to now practice what they learnt under the supervision of the elders and leaders of small group. Everyone involved was excited and the ground work was done, VOP lessons were distributed, Bible Studies were conducted and Dorcas workers carried out community service ventures.

When time came to begin the evangelistic campaign, it was a joy to see what members are able to do when they are trained and fully motivated to do the work. At the end of three weeks of public preaching 147 new members were added to the church through baptism and a new company of believers was established. Leadership showed signs being concerned in seeing the church grow. Where it has ten years for a

company to be organized into a church, it only took one year and the company that was opened grew to a level where the executive committee took an action to organize them into a church. In the same area where we had only one church we now have two big flourishing churches and the church has continued to grow. After six months of observation time membership increased by 87 members as compared to 117 members recorded in eight years (see Table 8). This indicated that every church has the potential to grow when given the attention it deserves regardless of where it is found, be it in the city or in a rural area as seen in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Membership before (2009) and after (March 2011) the project

Year	Membership	Increase
December 2009	117	
Oct. 2010 – Mar 2011	204	87

Evaluation

At the end of the six-month period (October 2010 to March 2011), the program was evaluated by looking at its strength and weakness. Newly baptized members were put under the guardianship of Old and spiritual members. On one hand new members were encouraged to get involved in the activities of the church. In the book evangelism, Ellen G White encourages the method of integrating newly baptized members into the activities of the church as a way of building their faith.¹

Strength

At the end of the project on 31st March, 2011, members especially those who were actively involved in the project implementation process observed that the

¹ Ellen G White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1948). 351.

training part was very helpful in setting the members to work for the growth of the church. This indicates that people appreciated and valued the program, lessons presented and how the whole process was conducted. Those who were trained pledged to begin rolling out the program to other surrounding companies using the same strategy. To prove their resolution to continue with the same program, in 2011 trained lay members sponsored and conducted seven evangelistic campaigns in the surrounding areas of Lubwe which resulted in opening six new congregations. Eight evangelistic campaigns were done that year, and membership now stands at 1558 putting all the congregations which were started together, including Lubwe church.² Throughout program implementation, elders and other church leaders participated very well. They supervised other smaller groups like prayer and bible study groups. Those given the responsibility of being guardians to new members were reporting to the elders in case of any help.

Weakness

Noted among the many weaknesses is the distance from the field office and companies that have been established, coupled with lack of commitment on the part of local church leadership. It was also discovered that some small groups could not work because of the way members are scattered. It was then resolved that we group members according to proximity. Others worked very well.

² *Luapula Zambia Field of Seventh-day Adventists, Office of Archives and Statistics, Annual Statistical Reports* (Mansa, Zambia: Luapula Zambia Field of Seventh-day Adventist, 2011), 6.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

This chapter covers an overview of what is contained in the preceding chapters. In the introduction a statement of problem is given which stems from the realization that churches in rural areas are in Luapula Zambia Field are faced with a challenge of experiencing meaningful spiritual and numerical growth, and an attempt to answer the question, ‘can rural churches experience meaningful growth even in the absence of a resident pastor given the attention they need?’

The purpose, significance, delimitation and the methodology of the project all appear in the introduction. In addition the project also contains the theoretical basis of the project, and also the qualitative and quantitative information on the responses of members on the issue of the role of church members in church growth. The project has also dealt with what the Bible, Ellen G White and other scholars have said on the subject.

Chapter three of this project deals with finding from the surveys and interviews of members, bringing out real reasons why rural churches are not experiencing meaningful growth. The researcher in chapter four dealt with implementation and program development. Chapter five gives the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

Conclusion

This project and its findings suggest that when member trained for ministry they can do a lot to help the church experience meaning spiritual and numerical growth. Churches located far from where they can easily be reached by a pastor can also grow without necessarily depending on pastors. When programs are right, the teachings are appreciated and members are helped to discover their potential, they own the program. Continued education of members and monitoring, will not only help the church to grow but also help to establish members in the faith. Once they discover the purpose for existence, they begin to reach out to the community with the gospel of the kingdom and many are saved. Local church leadership is however, key in the whole process of evangelization and helping the church to grow. If members can develop a mission mind set, the church would continue to grow. All should feel that they are part of the whole process, each willing to pay an equal price. If new members come and find the whole church on fire, it would be very easy for them to join and be part of the work.

Recommendations

1. To ensure the success of future under takings, the researcher has recommended the following: Recommended that the line departments at the field level intensify local church departmental trainings so as to enable local leaders are better equipped to carry out the mission of the Church effectively.
2. Recommend to the Luapula Field engage government on issues affecting members as far settlement is concerned. This is where the Roman Catholic claims ownership of land.

3. Recommend to Luapula Zambia Field as a matter of urgency to set funds for the lay bible worker if they cannot afford a fulltime pastor to work with elders and coordinate the work in remote/rural churches.
4. Recommend Luapula Zambia Field leadership to set time in their busy schedule time to visit and conduct seminars in such areas as a priority
5. Recommend that elders are trained before they assume their role of being local church elders
6. Recommend that emphasis is placed on teaching members church governance and our fundamental beliefs to establish them in their faith
7. Recommend that the church provide education materials in spiritual nurture.
8. Recommend that evangelization of territories be systematic (Acts 1:4-8), for easy management of congregations opened.

APPENDIX A

MAPS / DESCRIPTION OF LUBWE AREA

This project was done in Luapula province (Lubwe Area) situated in the northern part of the republic of Zambia, a country located in Southern Africa between latitude 15 00 S and longitude 30 00 E. It is 752, 614 square kilometers with an estimated population of 11 862 740.¹ Zambia as a country is endowed with diverse cultures because of the composition of its population. The rural and the urban population are divided as follows 58% and 42% respectively.² The major religion in Zambia is Christianity, followed by Hindu and then Islam is in the minority bracket. As a result of this the Zambian government under the leadership of the then Republican president Frederick Chiluba declared the nation Christian in 1991 and this was enshrined in the Zambian Constitution in 1996.³ Figure 1 on the next page gives an overview of the country Zambia where Lubwe is found.

¹ “Zambia” <http://www.cia.gov/library/publication/the-world-factbook/geos/za.htm> (22 December, 2009)

² _____: *“Zambia Basic Education Atlas”* -2nd ed.(Lusaka, Zambia: Macmillan, 1997), 20

³ “Zambia” <http://www.operationworld.org/country/zamb/owtext.html> (22 December, 2009)



Figure 1: Map of Zambia Showing Political Boundaries

Map of Zambia Showing Provincial Boundaries

Figure 2 shows boundaries of the nine (9) provinces. Comprising them are 72 districts and the capital city being Lusaka which is located between 15 25 S and 28 17 E.⁴ One of the nine provinces is Luapula in which Luapula Zambia Field and Lubwe church exists. The population for the province is estimated at 3 000 000.⁵ When this is compared with the current church membership of 64 190 in Luapula Zambia Field, the ratio is 1: 47. According to the records, the field (North Zambia Field) was first organized in 1972. Before this the northern region of Zambia Union mission was covering 4 provinces namely: North Western, Copperbelt, Luapula and Northern provinces. It was in 1972 when the church saw the need to realign the region into North Zambia Field and Copperbelt field. One field covered 2 provinces -Northern and Luapula while the other field covered Copperbelt and Northwestern provinces.

⁴ "Zambia" *World-factbook* (22 December 2009)

⁵ *Zambia" Basic Education Atlas 2nd ed.* (Lusaka, Zambia: Macmillan, 1997).20.

Again seeing how difficult it was to manage such big territories, Zambia Union Conference June 2007 at their mid-year committee, voted to realign North Zambia Field two fields restricting each field to only one province, now we have Luapula Field and North Zambia Field standing as single entities.

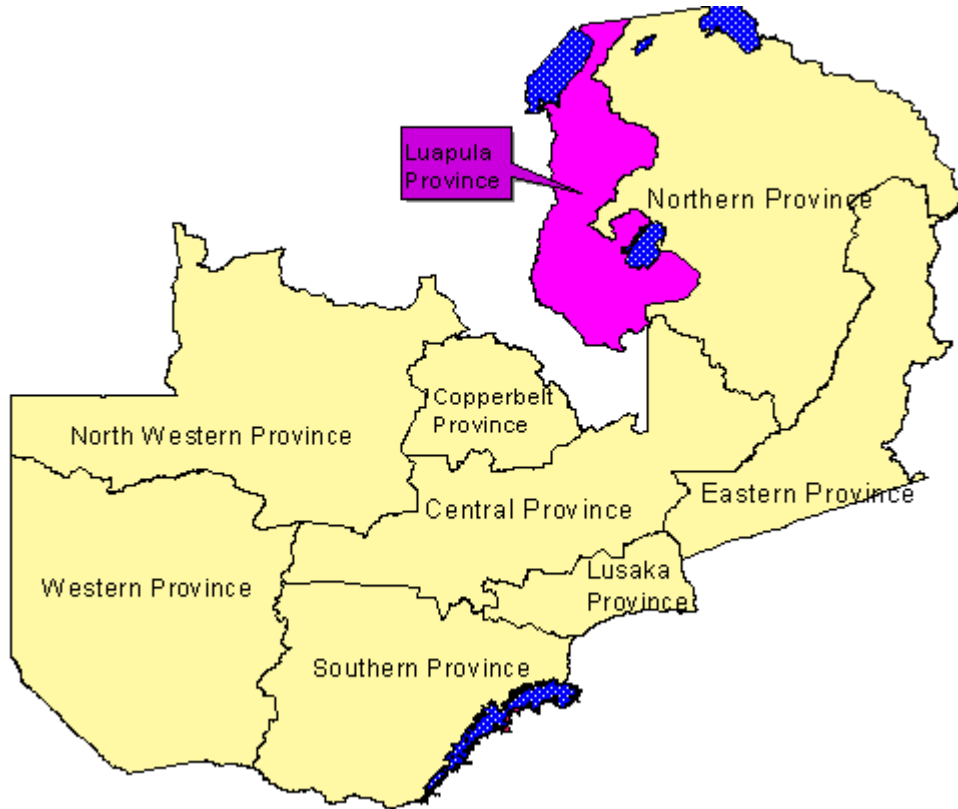


Figure2.

Luapula Province Showing District Boundaries

Luapula Zambia Field is located in Luapula Province, which is made up of 7 political districts with its provincial capital in Mansa. Much of the area is rural with an estimated population of 986, 737⁶. The Mission field is subdivided into 15 mission districts and one of the mission districts is Ng’umbo where Lubwe church is found. According to the information gathered from surviving church members and past district pastors who served there, it came out that church was started in 1982 with a

⁶ _____ . *Zambia National census report*,(Lusaka, Zambia: McMillan, 2005), 76

membership of 109. Currently the membership stands at 123 though 10% of the members are recorded as missing.

Lubwe church is located 105 kilometers Northeast of Mansa in the district of Samfya. The area is located in a predominantly Roman Catholic mission station and as such the study revealed that 83.8% of the population is Roman Catholic, living the Seventh day Adventists at 5.3% and 10.9% for Evangelicals and Independent churches combined⁷. At the beginning of the study in April, 2009 the church had one active church elder with no district pastor. The church had a dilapidated building members have been using for worship on Sabbath and mid-week prayer meetings. The economic activities of the people in the area revolve around fishing and subsistence farming. As such illiteracy levels are very high in the area as most children choose fishing than going to school (see Figure 3).

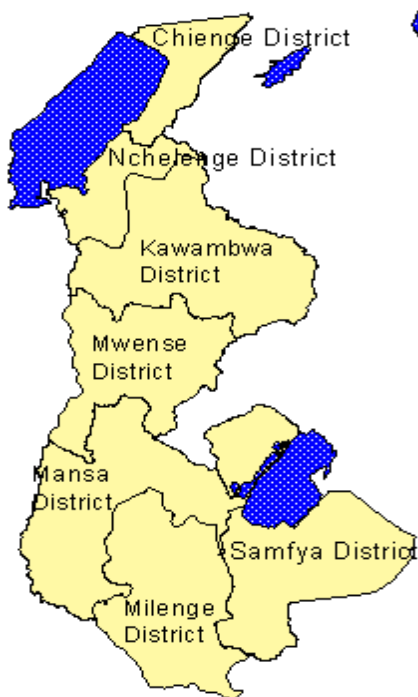


Figure 3.

⁷ _____ *Zambia National Census Report*, (Lusaka, Zambia: McMillan, 2005), 76

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHURCH MEMEBRS

Dear Church Member,

You are being requested to participate in survey. The results of this study are intended to help leadership know best to help rural church grow spiritually as well as in number. Please you are not required to write your name. The researcher is looking up to you to this become a success.

Thanking you in advance for participating faithfully, Pastor Sinyangwe Samuel

Please tick in the space to indicate your choice

1. How long (years) have you been a member of the Seventh Day Adventist church?
1-5 _____ 6-10 _____ 11-15 _____ 16 – 20 _____ 21 and above _____
2. Indicate the time you spend in personal prayer and bible study
10 minutes _____ 15 minutes _____ 20 minutes _____ 30 minutes _____
3. Do you meet as a family to pray and study the Bible?
Yes _____ No _____
4. Before you became an Adventist which church were you attending?
_____ Roman Catholic _____ UCZ _____ Watch Tower _____ Other _____
5. Have you ever held any church office since you became a member?
Yes _____ No _____
6. What level of education have you attained?
_____ Primary _____ Secondary _____ College _____ None _____
7. What Job do you do for a living?
_____ Govt. Employee _____ Fishing _____ Farmer _____ Business _____

8. Have you ever been involved in any evangelism/witnessing program?
_____ Yes _____No
9. Have you ever been visited by a pastor or an elder at home?
_____Yes _____No
10. How do you gage the worship services / programs in your local church?
___Very inspiring ___Inspiring ___Not inspiring _____Poorly done
11. Where can you put the blame for lack of church growth in Lubwe?
_____Leadership ___Lack of programs ___Members __ Community

APPENDIX C – LESSONS

LESSON 1: SMALL GROUPS AS A TOOL IN CHURCH GROWTH

Why Small Groups?

1. It is God’s orientation (It is the Mission of God – Missio Dei).

The formation of Small Groups as a base of Christian effort was shown to me by the one who does not make mistakes. - E G White, Christian Service, 72.

“Let’s form groups in our churches for the work. – E G White, Christian Service, 72.

2. It is a Biblical Principle:

“Moses organized the people in groups.

Exodus 18:17-25.

“Jesus formed a small group of disciples. Mark 3:13-15.

“The early Christian church was organized in small groups. Acts 2:42-47; 5:42.

3. It is God’s plan for the church of the end time.

For big churches:

“If the church has large numbers of members, it is better to organize them into small groups so that they can work” E G White, Christian Service, 72.

For small churches:

“If in a place there are only two or three people who know the truth let them organize themselves in groups of workers” E G White, Christian Service, 72.

OBJECTIVES OF SMALL GROUPS:

Ellen G White points out that, small groups in the church are there to work not only for the members but also for the unbelievers. Evangelism, 115.

This thought shows two main objectives of small groups:

1. Spiritual Growth :

Prayer and Bible study.

2. Evangelism:

Fellowship – *Relation and friendship.*

Witness – Wining souls for Christ.

What Are Small Groups?

1. They are weekly meetings of 3 to 12 people whose goal is spiritual growth and evangelism.
2. The meetings take approximately one hour.
3. The groups can be organized by geographic criteria or affinities.
4. They can function in a house or in a large room.
5. Each group has its leader, an associate and a host.
6. Together with the members they choose the date, place and time for the meetings.
7. Each group makes a commitment or a pact to come together for a period of at least six months.
8. After this period, they can renew their commitment for additional time.
9. They also set goals for growing and organizing new groups

BASIS OF SMALL GROUPS

They are based on the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.

“They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved”.

Acts 2:42 and 47.

Let small groups come together in the evenings or early morning to study the Bible on their own. That the small groups set aside a period for prayer so that they may be strengthened, illuminated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. What a testimony will you give concerning the loving convenience which you maintained with the workers in these precious periods, getting a blessing from God! That each person tells his or her experience -Test for the Church, p. 195. / Manuscript release, 1980, 9.

PROGRAM:

The time of each part of the program is suggestive and flexible:

Welcome and praise – 10 minutes.

Fellowship – 10 min

Introducing the visitor

Informal conversation

Testimony – 15 min

Evangelistic plan of the group

Spiritual and missionary testimony of the work that has been conducted

Assessment of the activity

Prayer – 10 min

1. Thanksgiving and requests; 2. Intercessory prayer.

Bible Study – 35 min

Participation of everyone in the study

Applying the studied message in the lives of the members

Appeal to all to live what they have learnt

How To Implant Small Groups: General Principles

01. Praying in each step of the implantation

02. Whatever the plan is the involvement must be free.
03. Helping the church leadership to understand the plan.
04. Giving good material to all participants about the issue.
05. Implanting the material step by step and not at once in the district.
06. The program of implantation must be adapted to each church and region.
07. Preparing and training the leaders before starting small groups
08. Providing material.
09. Transforming action unities into small groups is not the best plan.
10. It is advisable to transform small groups into action unities
11. The Bible studies have to be the principle of study of small groups.
12. The Bible studies for those who are interested in them shall be ministered in their homes.
13. During the evangelistic campaign both in the holy week and in the harvest week the small group conducts the evangelistic program during the whole week.
14. Where there are children, to appoint someone to lead the program.

Steps in Organizing the Local Church into Small Groups:

Pastor's Preparation

- a. To study the issue in the Bible, Spirit of Prophecy and other books and materials.
- b. To be convinced that small groups are the base for a spiritual growth and evangelism in the church.
- c. To share the plan with the elders and to obtain their support.
- d. To choose a general coordinator who can be the missionary director, and elder, or a member with skills of leadership.

- e. To choose future leaders. They will be the small group of the pastor and general coordinator.
- f. To follow the steps without fear to fail.

“We must never think of weakness. We must cooperate with the One who does not know weakness.” E G White, Christian Service, 261.

Leaders’ Preparation:

The leaders’ preparation can occur during weekly meetings, for a period between eight and ten weeks; in retreats, at a weekend or as the pastor thinks it is better.

Suggestive Themes for leaders’ training:

1. *Implementation and functioning of the small groups.*
2. *Biblical principles of small groups.*
3. *Historical bases of small groups.*
4. *Small groups: God’s plan for His church.*
5. *Leaders and their responsibilities.*
6. *Evangelism through small groups.*
7. *The revolution at the churches through small groups.*

Church preparation

- a. To Study with the church board all the details of the plan and to approve them.
- b. To approve the name of the general coordinator and leader for each small group.
- c. The missionary committee shall coordinate and implement the plan.
- d. To present the church revival during a whole week or at some weekends.

Suggestive Themes for revival

1. *The need for revival.*
 2. *The power of the Holy Spirit*
 3. *The High priesthood of all believers.*
 4. *The power of love and friendship*
 5. *Small groups in the Bible – OT*
 6. *Small groups in the Bible – NT*
 7. *Small groups and the Spirit of Prophecy.*
 8. *The Revolution in the Church through small groups.*
- e. After the spiritual preparation, to share with the church the plan of the small groups on the Sabbath morning.
 - f. To invite to register those who are willing to participate.
 - g. To have a meeting with the leaders on the Sabbath afternoon in order to give them material and last orientations.

ORGANIZATION

1. To prepare a list with the name of those who have registered themselves so the leaders shall invite them to their group.
2. Moses chose his leaders; Jesus chose his disciples to create their small groups. The pastor chose the leaders. The leaders have to choose the members for his small group.
3. The groups shall be organized preferably according to affinities, but they can also be organized according to geographical region
4. Not forcing anyone. Each one should have the freedom to choose the group that he or her wants to belong.

5. The family shall belong to the same group, unless the young people want to create a special group for themselves.
6. The church secretary shall provide the list of members so that the leaders may do a personal work by inviting them to participate in small groups.
7. It shall be prepared a list of the backslides so that the small groups can conduct a special work of getting them back to church.
8. Together with the general coordinator, the leader shall choose someone who will offer his house for the meetings.
9. Each leader will combine with the members of his group the day and time for the first meeting.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. To start the meetings.
2. Each member shall sign a commitment of participation.
3. The commitment can be in writing and signed or orally – whatever the group finds it is best.
4. Each group can choose a name, a song, a Bible verse and a flag.
5. It shall have a period for training and practice of the members between four and eight weeks (suggestive).
6. Only after this period people who are interested can be invited to participate in the program.
7. Who can be invited to the small group?
 - a. Relatives
 - b. Neighbors
 - c. Friends
 - d. Interested:

- of the church
 - of the Radio and TV programs
 - of Literature evangelism
 - of health institution
 - of Adventist School
8. An important motivation to get new members for the group consists in maintaining a vacant seat and at each meeting, to pray and challenge the members to bring a visitor.
 9. It shall also have a program of intercessory prayer where names of the interested people and prayer requests will be written down.
 10. Growth shall be the main goal of the group. When this occurs the group shall be divided into two small groups.
 11. Each group shall set its own missionary goals. Goal of:
 - a. Interested people
 - b. Bible studies
 - c. Visitation to the interested people and backslides members,.
 - d. Baptisms
 12. Suggestions of commitment:

My Commitment

- a. I will arrive on time at the meetings
- b. If I miss I will inform in time.
- c. I will help the group to have a positive experience
- d. I will participate in the evangelism
- e. I will help the group to grow and to form a new group

f. Our meeting will be on _____ (day)

Time: From _____ to _____

The period of the meetings of the group will last _____ months.

Name _____

Activities for the First Meeting of the Small Group:

1. Reception / Time of praise
2. Fellowship and introducing the participants
3. Defining the day, time, and place of the meetings
4. Giving all the necessary instructions
5. Signing a commitment card
6. Distributing church members addresses to be invited and visited
7. Bible studies
8. Prayer

Advantages of Small Groups in the Local Church:

1. It promotes the growth of the relationship with God.
2. It increases the knowledge of Bible Study
3. It develops the friendship and relationship to one another
4. It attends and helps the needy of people.
5. It capacitates the member for ministry.
6. It identifies quickly the spiritual gifts to be developed and used.
7. It helps in the pastoral caring of the church
8. It decreases the rate of apostasy and helps in the retention of members.
9. It contributes for the formation of new disciples.
10. It mobilizes a great number of members in soul winning

Weekly Meetings

- The life of a small group depends on the inspiration and training given to the leaders during the weekly or fortnight meetings conducted by the pastor or by the general coordinator.
- These meetings are for orientation, training, assessment and inspiration purposes.
- On the missionary Sabbath of each month, some small groups shall present a brief report of their meaningful activities or testimonies of their group.
- On each Sabbath the church should be encouraged to invite those who are not participating to be part of the small groups.

General Meetings:

What are they?

They are meetings of inspiration, praise giving, testimony and baptism.

When do they occur?

Every quarter, on Sabbath or when the church finds it best.

Who are the participants?

All church members. The small groups may parade

Who leads?

The pastor / elder or the coordinator with the support of the small group church board

The Duty of Small Group Leaders:

01. The General Coordinator:

- Supports the small group activities
- Provides material for the leader
- Helps in the organization of leaders' meetings.
- Leads the weekly meeting in the Pastor's absence
- Works in harmony with the Pastor or Elder and Missionary Director.
- Promotes general meetings for testimonies, motivation and fellowship.
- leads the committee of small groups

02. The Leader

- Leads the weekly meeting of the group
- Helps the group to participate in evangelistic program
- Visits the absentees and helps them
- Prays daily for the small group
- Dialogues each week with his associate and with the host
- Frequents the leader meeting weekly
-

03. The Associate Leader

- Supports the leader with pray
- Leads the meeting when the leader is absent
- Invites new members to the small group
- Helps to visit the absentees
- Assists the leaders' meetings

- Provides a list with the names and address of the members
- Fills in the reports

04. The Host

- offers his house for meetings
- Provides accommodation for all
- Welcomes the members and visitors when they arrive

Helps the leader and the associate in what is needed.

TITLE: MAJOR BARRIERS TO SUCCESSFUL PLANNING

TEXT: EXODUS 4:21

- ❖ “The Lord said to Moses, when you return to Egypt; see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the powers to do. But I will harden his heart so that he would not let the people go.”
- Moses was told the plan would work but not now.
- He needed to rely on God’s promises
- Unwavering Faith in God was KEY on the part of Moses
- ❖ *Maxwell points out that, “Good Leaders develop plans, but they also expect to make adjustments along the way. Rarely does any plan succeed without a bump or a glitch.”*

EXODUS 5:1, 2: - PLAN AHEAD

The major challenge the leader has is better understanding of the two key aspects:

1. Organization
2. Mobilization

- A leader should know that ORGANIZATION precedes MOBILIZATION
- Meaning of **PLAN AHEAD** acronym in organizational management:
 - P** - Predetermine your course of action
 - L** - Lay out Goals (Keep them Simple, Specific, Measurable and Attainable)
 - A** - Adjust your priorities (separate key issues from none variables)
 - N** - Notify Key personnel (Communication) to avoid confusion and sabotage
 - A** - Allow time for acceptance (Continue to sell the Idea – replace NO by ON)
 - H** - Head into action there should be no delay in implementing plans
 - E** - Expect problems (consider problems as challenges not hindrances)
 - A** - Always point people to your successes not failures to keep them moving forward
 - D** - Daily review your progress (It said that most people do what is inspected and not what is expected)

“LEADERSHIP AND CHURCH GROWTH”

Definition:

According to Russell, *Church Growth* has been defined as “The effective evangelization of lost men and women, effectively incorporating them into the body of Christ and enabling them to become mature, and healthy, reproducing Christians.”

- Church Growth as the will of God.
 - Genesis 3:9 – God who seeks
 - Genesis 12; Isaiah 5; 1Pet. 2:9 – God elects His church to fulfill His mission

WHAT IT TAKES FOR THE CHURCH TO GROW

- ❖ A leader who is a possibility thinker and one whose dynamic leadership has been used to catalyze the entire church into action for growth.
- ❖ A well mobilized laity, which has discovered, has developed and is using all the spiritual gifts for growth.
- ❖ A church large enough to provide the range of services that meet the needs and expectations of its members
- ❖ A philosophy of ministry which has its priorities arranged in Biblical order (Seeking the lost).

FOUR KEY ISSUES IN CHURCH GROWTH A LEADER SHOULD KNOW

1. The pastor or elder must want the church to grow and be willing to pay the price
2. The people must want the church to grow and be willing to pay the price
3. The church must agree that the goal of evangelism is to make disciples
4. The church must not be suffering from any terminal illness:

LIFE CYCLE OF A CHURCH

- A Church is viewed as a living Organism with a life cycle not as an Institution

1 2 3 4 5

- Birth > Growth > Maturity(Plateau) > Decline > Death
- According to research:
- 90% of all churches reach a plateau by their 15th birthday.
- The older the church the less effective it becomes in reaching the lost
- Every church takes the characteristics of the generation that birthed it.

THE PURPOSE OF THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

➤ **“Mission Mind Set”**

- a. 1 Peter 2:9 – To make known the character of God to the world
- b. Revelation 14:6-12 – To proclaim the three Angels messages to the whole world
- c. Matthew 28:19-20 – To make disciples of all nations “ethnos”(all Cultural groups)
- d. Matthew 5: 13-16 – “You are the salt of the earth ... You are the light of the world ...”

John Stott argues that, “When a community deteriorates, the blame should be attached where it belongs; not to the community which is going bad but to the church is failing in its responsibility as salt to stop it from going bad. And the salt will be effective only if it permeates society, only if Christian learns again the wide diversity of divine callings, and if many penetrate deeply into secular society in order to serve Christ there.” Christian Mission in the Modern World, p. 32

WHAT WAS THE SECRET OF GROWTH IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

- ✓ The church had an internal revival and reformation –Acts 2: 42-47
- ✓ Churches grow as they are spiritually revived and reformed.
- ✓ They fully understood their mission – reason for their existence – Gospel proclamation
- ✓ They proclaimed the gospel publicly and privately

HINDERING FACTORS TO CHURCH GROWTH IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

- ✓ Growing Greek influences in society – Secularization of society

- ✓ Formal Jewish religion
- ✓ Strong materialistic influence by Rome
- ✓ Small church considered by many to be a sect
- ❖ External Challenges
 - Rapid changing Environment / Society
 - ✓ Political
 - ✓ Economical
 - ✓ Sociological
 - ✓ Laws of the Land, etc.
- ❖ Internal Challenges
 - Membership Growth
 - ✓ Issues of Doctrine
 - ✓ Generation gap
 - ✓ Cultural differences (separate the “Essence of faith” from “Culture and Tradition”)
 - ✓ Moral degeneracy (Sin)
- ❖ In view of all this, as a church and leaders, we need to begin to position ourselves strategically to avoid a reactionary approach to solving problems when they occur.
- ❖ We must at all times teach the whole truth as revealed in the bible.
- ❖ Know thoroughly what is the “Essence of Faith” and that which is just “Culture and or Tradition”

LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE

- Facts about Change
 - a. Eternal Truths never change

- b. Culture is rapidly changing
- c. Tools and methods change

HOW CHANGE OCCURS IN VARIOUS SIZED CHURCHES

- Small Church under 100 members
 - Here the Pastor or an Elder Initiates change but real change happens through the Matriarch or Patriarch (every church has a ruling family)
- Medium Sized Church – 100-400 members
 - Change is best accomplished through the church board (Key Committee)
- Large Size Church (400+)
 - Change is best achieved through the initiating leader that the leader follows – “KEY” influential leaders
- The Bicycle Chain Principle of Leadership:
- Church members react negatively (recoil) when they are pushed or pressured to work.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

1. A time of crises
2. A change of leadership
3. A time of revival
4. During planning time

CHANGE REALITIES

1. An un changing church does not exist

2. No church can change or move if there is no mover or changer
3. In every change there is pain
4. What people don't understand they will resist
5. Take change as a process not the end
6. Be patient with people during the change process (Church growth experts say that it takes 24 to 48 months for meaningful change to take place)

4 QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE CHANGE PROCESS

1. What do I need to change?
2. Why should we change?
3. When can I make change?
4. Who are my potential allies?

LEADERS (PEOPLE) WHO ARE SUCCESSFUL AT CREATING CHANGE

Nehemiah 1-4:

- ✓ They possess the gift of leadership
- ✓ They have a sense of urgency for the Mission
- ✓ They have a strong walk with God
- ✓ They are Visionary
- ✓ Not satisfied with the status quo
- ✓ They have a supportive family that likes them
- ✓ They have passion for the lost souls
- ✓ They are committed to core values of the church
- ✓ They don't take negative responses personally
- ✓ They Love all people in the group especially those that resist change

FIVE WAYS A LEADER CAN DESTROY A MEMBER'S MOTIVATION

1. Failing to provide a job description and leadership in any form
 2. Give poor supervision – Maxwell points out that, “Most people do what is inspected and not what is expected.”
 3. Failure to provide feedback or Evaluations
 4. Failure to recognize achievements
 5. Failure to validate the importance of MINISTRY
- When the integrity of leaders become questionable

Examples of Leaders with integrity: - Psalm 25:21; Proverbs 22:1

- Jesus Christ – Matthew 22:16; John 8:46

Examples of People who lacked Integrity

- Aaron –
- Achan –Joshua 7:20,21
- Gehazi – 2kings 5:20-27
 - Giinter Krallman points out that, “Genuine integrity encompasses all spheres of life, radiates through attributes, words and deeds at all times everywhere. A true test of integrity is what we are and do when nobody sees us... Credibility is established through integrity. ” Mentoring for mission, p.165

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