

ABSTRACT

A STRATEGY TO REVITALIZE SMALL GROUP EVANGELISM IN
NAJJANANKUMBI SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH OF
CENTRAL UGANDA CONFERENCE

by

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ABSTRACT OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

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Title: A STRATEGY TO REVITALIZE SMALL GROUP EVANGELISM IN
NAJJANANKUMBI SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH OF
CENTRAL UGANDA CONFERENCE

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Revitalizing small group evangelism in Najjanankumbi Seventh-day Adventist church is a powerful challenge that the researcher took upon himself. Therefore the purpose of this paper is twofold: to examine the biblical foundations upon which the Seventh-day Adventist Church has built its ecclesiology and lay strategies that will serve the purpose. Much attention has been paid, in this research, to the biblical mission that was entrusted to the church. A model putting emphasis on the clergy to accomplish the mission and the laity to accomplish the care of existing Christians has been established.

Because of the Seventh-day Adventists' deep dependence on the clergy, the model suggested in this paper is very challenging but accomplishable. It is the researcher's hope that this project will help the church to be confirmed as a mission oriented care center. The model developed here envisions active small groups springing up in the whole of Najjanankumbi church congregation. Consequently, non-

pastor dependent Seventh-day Adventist churches emerging all over Central Uganda Conference, reaching out to lost souls, making Christ's disciples in every possible people's group, integrating them into loving Seventh-day Adventist fellowships, and ultimately seeing them saved in the kingdom of God.

Statistics of intensive small activities for the previous two years (2008-2010) were compared with those of six months (July-December 2012) to measure the effect of the model on the retention and addition of church members. The results showed a promising increase of new converts by 49%. There was greater involvement of members in small group activities, the return of inactive church members to church activities and the formation of new small groups in church.

Adventist University of Africa

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A project
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of the requirements for the degree
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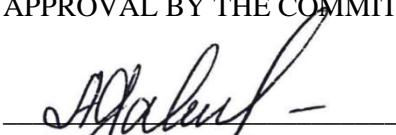
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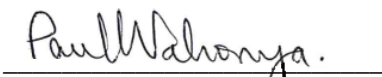
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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my beloved wife and children,
who have supported me in my entire struggle.

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I am also deeply indebted to many small group leaders in Najjanankumbi SDA church, who have generously given their time and shared their thoughts with me over the years and especially in this research project. Without them the vision of purpose driven small groups I have attempted to capture in these pages, would not have been possible.

Finally, I want to express my love and appreciation to my wife Annet and to my children Richard, Harriet and Robinah, who have endured me at my worst and inspired me to be my best. This is the gift healthy families always provide for one another and it is the gift I hope some who read these pages will find for their churches as well as for their own souls.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Small group evangelism has become a topic of discussion in churches, and on media like radio and television, to mention but a few, as a hope of providing the best possible ministry to people. Many churches like: New life church in USA, enthusiastically coped with the idea, while many more are looking towards the same as a definite strategy to evangelism.

In Najjanankumbi Seventh-day Adventist Church, small group evangelism is a five-year-old ministry. The Church is found in the heart of Kampala city, six kilometers, along Entebbe road. It has over 700 baptized members, of whom less than 20 percent participate in small group evangelism program. In the year 2005 when this evangelistic ministry was first introduced to this Church, about 90 percent of the members welcomed it. Every Sabbath, after divine worship service, members took time to meet in their respective groups to evaluate their weekly activities as regards to small group-evangelism. According to the membership statistics of the year 2007 the number of members had grown from 400 to 650.¹ This indicates a steadfast growth of membership.

Towards the end of the year 2008 participation of members in small group meetings started dropping from 90 percent to 20 percent. The number of people

¹ Najjanankumbi Seventh-day Adventist Church, Office of Treasury and Statistics, *Annual Statistical Reports*, Najjanankumbi: Central Uganda Conference, 2008.

joining the Church also declined. In the two years, that is, from 2008 to the middle of 2010 only 50 people joined the Church. This scenario came along with a number of problems:

1. The faithfulness of members seems to have declined, basing on the meager financial returns collected every Sabbath, in comparison to the previous returns.

2. Some members absent themselves from Church services and end up violating the Sabbath day of worship.

From the above observations, it seems that many Church members are losing their spiritual foundation and having no longer interest in the small group evangelism ministry.

Statement of the Problem

Only 20 percent of the Church members participate in small group evangelism. This is an indicator of the decline in the growth of Najjanankumbi Seventh-day Adventist Church. Seemingly, this decline affects the numerical, physical, economical, social and moral aspects of the Church. On top of that, the Church does not have a strategy that can assist in reviving the members for this particular program.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to design, implement and evaluate a strategy that will revitalize small group evangelism among the members of the Najjanankumbi Seventh-day Adventist Church to at least 60 percent participation.

The Significance of the Study

First and foremost, this study will encourage members of the Church to be friendlier and caring to one another thus creating spiritual warmth within their groups

as it was in the early church (Acts 2:42, 46-47). This kind of warmth will more so convince other people to join the Church. Secondly, it will benefit in building a team ministry around people's unique gifts and responsibilities. Boren asserts, "I developed as a leader in small groups and heard God's call on my life while praying with group leaders."² Thirdly, organizational leaders will benefit by using this model to promote small group evangelism in various churches. This model will be instrumental in promoting unity within the Church. Likewise, this strategy will bring a positive impact on other spiritual aspects, like evangelism and family life.

Definition of Terms

Local church: A united body of Christian believers that worship from Najjanankumbi SDA church.

Church member: A baptized Christian who belongs to the local Church and whose names are recorded in the Church membership book.

Small group: A group of church members ranging between six and twelve people as Roberta Hestenes suggests, "A Christian small group is an international, face to face gathering of 3 to 12 people on regular time schedule with a common purpose of discovering and growing in the possibilities of the abundant life in Christ."³

² M. Scott Boren and Don Tillman, *Making Cell Groups Work: Navigating The Transformation to a Cell-Based Church* (Houston, TX: Cell Group Resources, 2002), 16.

³ Roberta Hestenes, *Turning Committees Into Communities: A Surprisingly Effective Means for Preventing Worker Burnout While Boosting at the Same Time* (Colorado Springs, CO: Nav Press, 2010), 18.

Methodology of the Study

This study will be done basically within Najjanankumbi church. The research will be enhanced with a review of available literature about small group evangelism. Primary, secondary, and tertiary sources will be used to meet both exegetical and theological approaches. After getting theoretical information, questionnaires will be prepared to collect information from church member, pertaining to the interest they have in small group evangelism. Oral interviews will be conducted among Church members of the local Church, grouped accordingly.

After analyzing information gotten from the questionnaires, a program will be designed in form of modules, and then a seminar conducted involving all interested local Church members. It is this seminar that will pave the way for implementation of the program. Post implementation questionnaires will be designed to evaluate if there is any progressive improvement.

Delimitations

Even though small group evangelism would be tested all over central Uganda conference, this study is confined to Najjanankumbi local church, so that implementation and evaluation of the program would be thoroughly followed. In the same way, because of some individuals who can neither read nor writes, written questionnaires will be limited to where applicable and oral questionnaires applied otherwise.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Majority of the modern churches have become pastor-dependent which means that without the pastor, no real ministry is possible. Evangelism is facing a challenge of witnessing to the helpless and hopeless masses of people and at the same time disciplining them, while their physical needs are hardly ministered to. A holistic evangelism should be applied that involves material, social and moral needs with intent to meet the spiritual aspect. Broken, suffering and lost people would listen to people those who meet them where they hurt; who treat them with real, palpable love. Such a task needs collective responsibility and total commitment.

Leaving this responsibility to a pastor alone would leave him disgusted, burned out, frustrated and hence, degenerated prayer meetings are yielded. The relational element among church members is entirely lost. This may as well call for revitalizing relational meetings once again as a vital part of the present church for its life and health. Burrill comments that when a church is built on small group ministry, it no longer needs clergy person to be in control. As members care for themselves, the clergy are free to reach new people and thus rise up new churches.⁴

It seems when church members carry on their life in small groups, they can build a community that would keep them strong in the faith, as this may provide a basis for an ongoing nature and care which may be superior to that of a clergy. Burrill

⁴Russell C. Burrill, *Recovering an Adventist Approach to the Life and Mission of the Local Church* (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Books, 1998), 195.

continues, “Isolated Christians are not really Christians, even though their names are on the books of our churches. Caring communities where people truly minister to one another are the basis upon which all real missions can happen in the church.”⁵

The development of such caring community termed as small groups, seems to be the basis for the fulfillment of Christ’s mission of getting a community that cares and reaches out to share Christ with those who do not know Him. This small group phenomenon seems to be a very old ministry right from the Old Testament period to the present era, basing on the discoveries in the next section. It is therefore necessary to examine the biblical foundation, as regard to small groups, upon which the present church requires to build its ecclesiology.

The Old Testament View

The book of Genesis presents a theology of small group ministry as inherent in the Trinity (Gen 1:26). God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are working together in oneness. God has never been presented to humanity as a single entity but a plurality of oneness, called the Trinity. For that matter several writers refer to the Trinity, as the initial small group.⁶

Since God does not exist alone, neither can His people. God is one yet three, and three who are yet one. This communal living in a small group applies even to the marriage institution. God created humanity for a similar small group ministry, because in marriage two people become one, yet the one couple is still two people.

⁵Ibid., 93

⁶Gareth Icenogle, *Biblical Foundations for Small Group Ministry: An International Approach* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 1993), 21; Neal F. McBride, *How to Lead Small Groups* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1990), 14.

God created us as separate individuals yet made us capable of living together in humanity, next to a divine small group of Trinity. We were created to live in a community with each other and with God. Donahue and Robinson state, “This is not a reality we can choose against or ignore.”⁷ This God of relationship built a concept of interdependence in humanity, rooted in the Trinity of God, for humanity was made in the image of God. Icenogle comments, “The God, who lives in a group, creates a group.”⁸ Therefore, it is evident that small group ministry was initiated by God Himself, for the purpose of developing a relationship with humanity in the setting of a small group with other people.

The divine image can be restored by developing the vertical relationship with God and the horizontal relationship with human kind, a fact that Jard De Ville affirms with the following words, “people who have experienced failure in their lives and activities need to be reclaimed in every way and put to work in places where they can rebuild their sense of purpose and permanence in fellowship with God and the church.”⁹ Out of this kind of community came a sense of joyful challenges that drew others to join them as they sought opportunities for growth.

Moses, who was a pure descendant of Levi through his father Amram and his mother Jochebed, was not an exception from communal or relational leadership when God chose him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. On the way to Canaan from Egypt, when Moses took up the leadership of Israel, it did not take long for Jethero,

⁷Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson, *Building a Church of Small Groups: A Place Where Nobody Stands Alone* (Grand Rapids: MI: Zondervan Press, 2005), 36.

⁸Gareth W. Icenogle, Lecture in the Course “The Church in Ministry Through Small Groups,” Fuller Theological Seminary, Nov 6-17, 1995.

⁹Jard De Ville, *The Pastor’s Handbook on Interpersonal Relationships* (Silver Springs, MD.: The Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), 24.

the father-in-law of Moses, to identify a problem with Moses' leadership style and hence he called for a need to re-organize the Israelites into small groups of tens (Exod 18:23). Moses, who had reverted to the pyramid style of leadership,¹⁰ as Russell puts it, was exhausted. The Israelites were Moses-dependent, only waiting for instructions and advice from him. The pyramid style of leadership that kept the group as one unit had a lasting effect on the life and family of Moses. It had previously kept him busy and he had no time for them and the entire community.

God's plan right from the beginning of creation is community-based and diffusing of power from the hands of the few to the hands of the many organized in groups is inherent in creation. This helped people to grow socially, morally and physically healthy. Palmer claim, "In a healthy society the private and the public are not mutually exclusive, nor in competition with each other. They are instead, two halves of a whole, two poles of a paradox. They work together dialectically, helping to create and nurture one another."¹¹ So it was with the people of Israel during Moses' days. They were to help one another in groups of ten, a system that nurtured them for a long time. They were to complement one another as two halves of a whole. It seems God had this in mind, as His ultimate goal, that we live in groups to help one another.

Donahue portrays five core values of small groups; values that even the people of Israel during Moses' leadership benefited from. The first value discusses the change of life; the second helps in getting strategic leaders, third value deals with the development of a span of care to one another; the fourth value speaks of creating an

¹⁰Burrill, 98.

¹¹Parker J. Palmer, *The Company of Strangers: Christians and the Renewal of American's Public Life* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 198, quoted in Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics* (Cambridge, London: Harper and Row, 1987), 32.

atmosphere of prayers and celebration, thus all the above values lead to the final value of developing fully devoted followers.¹² A variety of small groups were necessary to meet the individual needs of believers as well as diverse needs of the body as a whole. This life change value could have been a major tool in developing character of people's lives that had been ruined for many decades in the Egyptian land, by the Egyptian culture (Exod 3:7-9). The Bible reveals the Israelites gathering in prayer sessions and making various celebrations (Lev 24:1-9) that might have led them to a state of being devoted followers until the time they reached the Promised Land.

Israel, being a wondering community, needed strong leaders to get them through the challenges they consistently faced. They were always complaining due to lack of water and food, or even enemies who surrounded them (Num 14:1-4). So Israel needed well skilled and articulated leaders who could act authoritatively. It seems, due to the establishment of small groups, power was decentralized other than being centralized on Moses. As power was diffused from the hands of the few to the hands of the many, most leaders were to be equipped with skills necessary for the entire welfare of the Israelites. This is the sole purpose of small group arrangement. Burrill points out "The purpose of small group is to give away power."¹³

This Moses' model of leadership had implications in the establishment of Jewish synagogues, which might have been set up in small groups of ten or more people - a system inherited from God to the nation of Israel. In this way, many

¹²Bill Donahue, *Leading Life Changing Small Groups* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Press, 2005), 22.

¹³Burrill, 99.

Israelites committed themselves to the accomplishment of the mission. Polich and Scandlyn assert, “Small groups can be exciting, challenging, and spiritually transforming.”¹⁴

The New Testament View

Just as the Old Testament presents the theology of small group ministry, inherent in the Godhead, the New Testament also presents a better view of small grouped church in practice. The example of the Trinity paved a clear way to proceeding generations on how to maintain and equip God’s people with the knowledge about Him. A small group of Adam and Eve was preceded by a small group comprised of the Trinity (Gen 1:1-27). Other groups emerged as families, thus adding up to form God’s nation that worshiped Him.

Jesus followed the same trend during His ministry on earth, for it is divine. He was in the first small group ever to be formed, which was composed of three (The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit). Jesus participated in forming the second small group of two, composed of Adam and Eve. This seems to be the pattern that needs to be followed and I feel much more convinced to call it a silent command. Christ who is an example to human beings,¹⁵ kept the pattern continually before people. Gareth elaborated, “the one who was with God in a small group from the beginning was sent to be with a few so that the few could be with a few more in each expanding gathering.”¹⁶ It was Jesus Christ who was with God and then sent to be a living

¹⁴Laurie, Polich and Charley Scandlyn, *Small Group Strategies: Ideas and Activities for Developing Spiritual Growth in Your Students* (n.p.) 2005, 123.

¹⁵Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 4 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 632.

¹⁶Gareth Weldon Icenogle, *Biblical Foundations for Small Group Ministry: An International Approach*, (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1994), 118.

example (John 1:1-8). The small group ministry was the real ministry of Jesus on earth. It is for this reason, that the researcher re-examines Christ's ministry in relation to small groups, in the next paragraphs.

Small Groups in the Ministry of Jesus

While on earth, Jesus spent most of His time growing His life into a small group of 12 people. He went up on a mountainside and called to Him those He wanted, designating them apostles (Mark 3:13-15) and appointing Himself as a small group leader. God's power is more likely to be fully demonstrated when a smaller, more faithful group is gathered together and sent on a mission. This is a core value for the establishment of a small group ministry, which develops into a community. Icenogle asserts that Christ's key ministry was a small group strategy.¹⁷ However, it is important to understand that at the heart of Jesus' small group ministry was the idea of a community. A small group was merely a vehicle for the establishment of a community.

So it should not be surprising that even the disciples established a small group church.¹⁸ The disciples took the example of their master, Jesus. It seems even today, if congregations are involved in small group ministry, holistic outreaching church can easily be developed. In groups people learn to share real situations of life, care for one another, and as a result grow many more caring leaders, practically groomed from within. With trained leaders, small group evangelism would be of substance in all generations. Henry and Richard Blackaby affirm that the church is losing influence

¹⁷Ibid., 68.

¹⁸Neal F. McBride, *How to Lead Small Groups* (Colorado Springs, CO: Nav Press, 1995), 16.

due to lack of leadership.¹⁹ The more groups are, once properly trained and equipped, the more leaders would be developed. Arnold states that churches that plan to grow as the second millennium closes (though we are now in a third millennium), will either adopt the side door technique of small group evangelism or prepare to die.²⁰ The millennium has already elapsed but the message is relevant in the present era.

Though Jesus never commanded the church to have small groups, His ministry demonstrated the development of small groups as a primary objective for Christians to have a place where to grow and practice Christian life together. In partnership with the Spirit of God this creates an opportunity to share Jesus with friends.

In the New Testament caring groups empowered members to be servants (Acts 1:12-14); servant-hood is the highest expression of citizenship in God's kingdom. This could be the reason why Jesus referred to His disciples as servants (Luke 17: 10), implying that they should continue their ministry in the way He had taught them.

It is evident from the Bible that Jesus sent His disciples in small groups of "two by two (Luke 10:1-12)." This technically calls for a revision of exchange to the mode of laboring on a lonely basis. Christians need to work in groups, for they are groups that are intended for the establishment of a larger group, call it church or a community. Burrill puts it clear that involvement in a community is not an option for the Christian, but it is Christianity.²¹

¹⁹ Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God's Agenda* (Nashville,TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2001), 8-9.

²⁰Jeffrey Arnold, *Small Group Outreach: Turning Groups Inside Out* (Downers Grove,IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1998), 35.

²¹Ibid, 104.

According to what has been studied, it is God's plan and Christ's desire to see Christians growing in small groups for the purpose of developing a relationship that can lead to spiritual growth. Therefore, the development of a relational church is more likely to be the greatest need of the church today. People need to practice a life that is divinely accepted in preparation for eternal life. Schrock clarifies, "Heaven is not the beginning of a relationship with Jesus, but the eternal continuation of an already established relationship."²² It will be a continuation of love for Jesus and one another. He continues to say that here on earth Christians tolerate each other and keep each other brothers-at-arms' length.²³ So it is better to get on with truly living for Jesus here and now. This can be realized in small groups' participation, whose purpose is to develop relationships.

Whereas the church had not been directed by God to having small groups, Jesus is one of the greatest exponents of small groups. His ministry demonstrated the realization of small groups as the major objective and a culture to be adopted. Therefore, Christian community should be a place where people start to practice the Christian life together. It should be a place where people can meet and discuss their success and failure in an atmosphere of acceptance and adherence to God's law.²⁴ If the group is healthy, friendship deepens, and members are able to challenge one another to take new steps in growth. It is assumed that growing Christians will always find new reasons to worship and thank God together.

²²Simon Schrock, *Get on With Living: Solid Advice on How to Overcome Negativism and Hang-Ups* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship Inc. 1976), 94.

²³Ibid., 95.

²⁴Jeffrey Arnold, *The Big Book on Small Groups* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1992), 73-74.

According to Arnold, Jesus initiated every activity in His group and the result of every activity was to follow back to Him. As members of the body, they were reliant on one another and on Christ, and mutually responsible to use whatever contributions were made to grow the body into maturity.²⁵ While this is true, not all things should be taken for granted. A group with a less-than-biblical purpose can do more harm than good. During Christ's life and ministry on earth, He functioned as the head to the small group of twelve apostles to ensure that all things are done to the glory of God and for the sake of leading people to maturity. Mahaney declares, "Not every small group is intent on this purpose, however. Some put a higher priority on socializing than sharing and sanctification. Others excel in open sharing and sympathetic listening, yet they never confront sin or challenge members to change."²⁶ Many Christians know a lot about Jesus and the Bible, but their lives do not reflect it. They do not take Jesus as their model, a person who revealed to mankind communal relationship.

In the same way, some groups are biblically unbalanced and unhealthy for they lack life change. True followers would be expected to love others because that is what Jesus did to the group members of His time. So, Jesus' ministry is totally based on communal relationship expressed in small groups, groups full of love to one another and working together as a healthy unit. This denotes something that is vital to a Christian's spiritual health, and central to Church's true life.

The Church flourished and Christians were strong as long as biblically founded fellowships were there.²⁷ The same spirit has continued to flourish in one

²⁵Ibid., 31.

²⁶C.J. Mahaney, *Why Small Groups: Together Towards Maturity* (Gaithersburg, MD: Multnomah Publishers, 1996), 3.

²⁷Ibid., 2.

way or the other. Christians need to be adaptive to the fellowship principles of the early Church in order to build bridges with new converts and keep them spiritually warm.

Jesus had set a precedent to be followed and through this method, evangelism was to occur. The purpose of small group was not only to study the Bible, but also to help people grow spiritually. Biblical integrity and spiritual faithfulness were promoted. People, who were in groups held each other accountable for their lives in Christ, truly cared for one another and adequately witnessed for Christ. Jesus had modeled to the people of His time a relational church. They were to call each other “brother” and “sister.” He taught a ministry of oneness, where they participated in studying the word of God, shared food, prayed and fellowshiped; a culture that was practiced later in home churches or during the days of the Apostles after Jesus’ ascension (Acts 2:44-46). The next section will discuss the massive churches that developed out of small group gatherings that were biblically founded.

House Churches

Early Christians, governed by the priorities of God, were motivated by the purpose of God, stayed dependent on the provisions of God, and equipped the people of God. The community took care of outstanding personal needs and spiritual needs as well. By the fact that the sharing of bread was done in homes, it may also imply that their meetings were vehicles for the establishment of Christian communities, that later developed into Churches. The small group fellowships operating in this early church, demonstrated the teaching of Jesus, which is group-based, not judgmental, and is of true care of one another. They were much more open to one another. “The ‘hiddenness’ of fallen Eden had been removed, and the believers could openly share

their doubts, their struggles, and their problems.”²⁸ As a result, they were strengthening one other. This meant the church could move on even when the ‘pastor’ was not around. Eating together binds people together; no wonder Christ used it symbolically to show oneness in Him (Matt 26:26). Just as it is said that birds of the same feather fly together, community fellowship could easily be done in their homes, where both moral and spiritual values are realized.

This dynamic situation brought the approval of all people. Spiritual and numerical growth was evident.²⁹ God was at work in their midst. Through small groups, the brokenness of the fall had been restored.

The early disciples met in groups, small enough, to fit into peoples’ homes. For instance, Priscilla and Aquila were tentmakers and probably not wealthy (Acts 18:3). Such homes could accommodate groups of ten or fifteen, while, a well to do home could accommodate a large group of thirty-five.³⁰ This was the beginning of the present Churches. These people did not need to meet with the larger group to be the Church; Jesus had already declared that where two or three are gathered in His name, He is present (Matt 18:20). This made each of the small groups a church in the fullest sense. Therefore, small groups formed the pillar of the Church. Mogler claims, “While some congregations do not see a high value in small groups and are consequently very slow to start and engage in small group ministry, others are so convinced of them that they claim that small groups are Pillars of the Church.”³¹

²⁸Burrill, 107.

²⁹Neal F. McBride, *How to Lead Small Groups* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Nav Press, 1990), 19.

³⁰Robert Banks, *Paul’s Idea of Community* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 35.

³¹Christian Mogler, *Small Group Ministry* (n.p.), 28.

These small groups stimulated the development of spiritual maturity and love of God and men through edification and discipleship. People were connected relationally; they provided encouragement and fellowship in order to glorify God and make disciples of all nations. Small group ministry gives an opportunity to all people to participate in the development of their fellow Christians regardless of the position someone has in the Church, as the ministry promotes individual participation in God's work. Schwarz confirms that a small group setting is the area of Church life where people have the greatest opportunity to bring about dramatic changes without holding an official leadership position,³² and therefore, calls it a holistic small group ministry. The head, the hand and the heart of the participants are nurtured as a result of each individual participating in the group.

Burrill assures, "this small group setting for the Church continued for the first three hundred years of Christianity until the Church was institutionalized at Constantine's regime."³³ In view of the above scenario, the Church should think to revitalize and reestablish this forgotten small group ministry of Christ, a ministry that seems to be of more use in the evangelization process of the contemporary world. How did the Apostolic Church look at this ministry? Did it play any part in the development of the Church? In the next section, the author will attempt to answer the above questions, by looking into the apostolic view of the small group ministry.

³²Christian A. Schwarz, *Color Your World with Natural Church Development: Experiencing All that God Has Designed You to Be* (NCD Australia, Church Smart Resources, 2005) 17.

³³Russell C. Burrill, *Recovering an Adventist Approach to the Life and Mission of the Local Church* (Fallbrook, California: Hart Books, 1998), 109, quoted in Neal F, McBride, *How to Lead Small Groups* (Colorado Springs,CO: Nav Press, 1995), 19.

Apostles' View

Apostles were chief disciples of Jesus Christ who took the responsibility of proclaiming the kingdom of God and imparting to their listeners all what Christ had made known to them. Paul was one of them who planted most of the Churches as stipulated in the book of Acts.

While Paul had experiences of worshiping in synagogues, he preferred to begin his Churches on a new model of house basis, as had been taught by Jesus and probably those who followed Him immediately. House worship was ever communal and always organized in small groups. Evangelism during this period of time was done by a community and always focused on a community. In that century, there was no Christianity without a small group (community); neither could one be a Christian if not part of a small group.³⁴ Paul promoted a deliberate strategy in obedience to the model of Christ by preaching oneness in brotherly love.

For someone to be a Christian, by Paul's expression, was to be in a small group with other Christians. They were members of one another. So Paul's concern was to see people brought into mutual dependence upon each other. Any group that did not promote this kind of mutual caring, grounded on biblical foundations, was not considered as Christ's Church. This could be the reason why Christians were baptized into the body. "For by one spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether, slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one spirit, for the body is not one member but many" (1 Cor 12:13-14).

This is the incense of Paul's theology pertaining to small group ministry. Not just membership but participation in groups that are dependent and caring, especially

³⁴Robert Banks 17, 26-27.

to those who are weak. Both cognitive Bible study and relationship among believers were needed.

That could be the reason why, together with fellowship, there was a practice of breaking of bread and prayer. They also included singing of psalms, hymns and other spiritual songs (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16). Paul tried to transform the Church from a spectator to a participatory one; for the Christians to participate meant a lot to their spiritual growth.

This seems not to be only Paul's strategy, but many apostles used the same. John's evangelistic campaigns were based on establishment of groups (1 John 1:1-4). John advocated for new believers to join fellowship with those who already lived in fellowship with the Father and the Son. In agreement with Apostle John, Burrill claims that "the Church is not a building; it is not a creed; it is fellowship. It exists for the sake of bringing other people into its fellowship. It is not a fellowship of just any individuals, but of individuals who are in fellowship with the Father and the Son."³⁵

It can be said, therefore, that a truly caring community (small group) where members minister to each other is itself an evangelistic tool. Many non-believers, who are around a truly converted group and those who responsibly care for each other, will flock to be a part of it. Such caring small groups are a drawing card for evangelism. This may have been the reason that led to the success of the early Church.

If the Church revitalizes the idea of living in small groups, the ministry will become an evangelistic agency. In the same way small groups that only nurture themselves and fail to reach out to others will technically yield to a dying Church. Valuable activities taken up in groups like teaching and preaching, determine the future of the Church. The training done in small groups, towards members, helps to

³⁵Burrill, 119.

get good leaders and committed Christians, thus assuring the next generation for the Christian Church. Bakke suggests that churches that are small with intimate relationship may be the very best places for training the next generation of large-city Church leaders.³⁶ Small groups, therefore, are tools for the training of evangelists and promotion centers for evangelism as well.

Before trying to start a new ministry within the Church building, people need to build trust and continuity among themselves. A small group Bible study, if properly organized, is more likely to be a good beginning. Allan and Martin attest “I have been in large young adult gatherings, but they are not as enjoyable as a small group of interested attendees.”³⁷ That is Christ’s design for believers; human beings were meant to get along with one another.

In His ministry on earth, Jesus befriended people, met their needs, and only after they had a relationship of trust He urged them to follow Him. So the apostles’ evangelistic outreach program, integrated the essential components of interactive small groups.³⁸ This implies that the ministry belonged to all people of God. The function of teaching, giving encouragement, as well as giving corrections were the responsibilities of all followers of the Lord, and not just the clergy. For clergy to become the primary caregivers of the Church is to rob the Church of that which belongs to the whole body of believers. The small house church of the New

³⁶Ray Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1997), 117.

³⁷A. Allan and Deidra Martin, “Get to Know, Go Slow, Spiritually Grow”, *Adventist Review*, (June 1999),13.

³⁸Sarah K. Asaftei, “Discipling Post moderns: It is all About Getting Connected,” *Elders Digest* (July/September, 2009),14.

Testament era provided the framework for the small group ministry of mutual care. Burrill claims, “The entire life of the Church originates in the small groups.”³⁹

Ellen G. White Writings

Ellen G. White gives extensive counsels on the empowerment of Christianity through what she terms as small companies. By merely studying the concept of the two terms – small companies and small groups – the meaning of these two terms is identical. Ellen White, therefore, emphatically advises to apply small companies. She declares that the idea of dividing the Church into small companies was given to her by one who does not err. Definitely this is God. She, too, advises that if the church has a large membership, let the members be formed into small companies to work, and not only for the Church members, but for unbelievers.⁴⁰ By doing so, every individual is expected to work using the talents that God gave, to build one another up in the most holy faith. As they work and pray in Christ’s name, the number increases.

When people are grouped in small units, participation of every individual seems to be a reality; monitoring and assigning of responsibilities seems to be much clearer than in a big group. Therefore, evangelism turns out to be a business of every one. White asserts, “Everyone who is added to the ranks by conversion is to be assigned his post of duty. Everyone should be willing to be or to do anything in this warfare.”⁴¹

If everyone is concerned with evangelism, prayer, Bible study, mutual encouragement and care, the things that are expected in a small group, will definitely

³⁹Burrill, 224.

⁴⁰Ellen G White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 7 vols (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 7:21-22.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 30.

form an active group, hence a living Church. White says, “A working Church is a living church.”⁴² As members care for themselves, the clergy are free to teach new people and rise up new churches. Therefore, small groups seem to provide the foundation for ongoing nurture and care which is superior in evangelism.

Ellen White has a balanced view of small group ministry as seen with multiple benefits to the community. She foresees the day when the large Church would no longer exist, because of persecution, and the only way for the Church to survive would be in small groups.⁴³ Just as it was during the communism era, God’s Church survived through small-group house-churches. Pirouet reports, “Difficulties vary from country to country and include the closure of Churches, reductions in the number of clergy, obstruction of Christian education and evangelism, and the exclusion of Christians from senior jobs.”⁴⁴ Many were dreading away from ancient Churches to what they called small group mission Churches.⁴⁵ It is more likely to be the same during the period of persecution to come. Ellen White considers small group ministry to be a better way of making people certain that people did not become burned out in ministry. She advises,

Let small companies assemble in the evening, at noon, or in the early morning to study the Bible. Let them have a season of prayers, that they may be strengthened, enlightened, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit....

⁴²White, *Testimonies*, 6: 435.

⁴³Ellen G. White, “Individual responsibility in the church,” MS 350, 1902, Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association.

⁴⁴Louise Pirouet, *Christianity Worldwide Church History 4: AD 1800 Onwards* (Marylebone Road, London: SPCK, 1989), 223.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 225.

This will bring more comfort and joy to the soul than all the pleasant instruments of music that could be brought into the Churches.⁴⁶

To White, small groups are not just a program of the Church, but the major organizing principal of the work of the Church. To have a Church without small groups operating in it was a way of neglecting God's work, for the Church is to be built on small groups. She sees these small group meetings as absolutely essential for the good life and health of the mega Church. It is possible for the Adventist church to be revived that way. All of these small group experiences result in believers working for others in evangelism.

To oppose a small group ministry in the Church is to reject the counsel that God gave through the pen of Ellen G. White. Small group ministry seems to be a requirement for any church to grow. If Christians are to be faithful to the biblical and historical heritage of the church, local Churches should be completely restructured into small group as the major organizing principal. This biblical form of evangelism needs to be revitalized in all Christian Churches, especially in this sophisticated century. Many people will be attracted into small group ministry where they will be nurtured with relational ties, and ushered into the Christian community. Such small groups can be extremely successful not only at building a community, but also introducing people to Jesus, deepening their relationship and walk with Jesus. It can also be incredibly effective in caring for and reaching out to the unchurched. New and Old Testaments reveal that small group ministry has been a strong tool for evangelism, discipling, member care, community building and worship. The Seventh-day Adventist minister's manual puts it in a clear way,

⁴⁶ White, *Testimonies*, 7:195

The life of the body is in cells. If the cells die, the body dies. If the cells are healthy the body is healthy. When the cells multiply, the body grows. A study of past revivals has shown that every major revival has been influenced by a ready access to the Bible and the gathering of believers in small intimate groups.⁴⁷

This calls for a revitalization of small groups within the Church, which holds the life of the church as the cells do the same to the body. This is the model for the believers.

In small group driven Churches, everyone who joins a group is part of a team who sets goals for reaching friends for Christ. They are reborn into a spiritual family who cares for them and they are compelled to participate in servant-hood and become fully devoted followers of Christ, fully embracing the Church's mission. Randall G. Neighbour supports Ellen G. White's statements by stating the following, "If numbers are important to you, you should know that eight of the ten largest Churches in the world (for example: Yoido full gospel Church, the largest in the world; Cologne Cathedral in Germany and also Presbyterian Church in Incheon, Korea; which is the largest Presbyterian church in the world) are small-group driven."⁴⁸ In this intimate setting, disciple-making happens in the context of relationships and faith sharing as support and encouragement are shared among the group. Collins calls this "the magical combination of preserve the core and stimulate the progress."⁴⁹ Small group ministry is a ministry that preserves the flock and at the same time stimulates it to

⁴⁷General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Minister's Manual* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), 163.

⁴⁸Randall G. Neighbour, *The Naked Truth about Small Group Ministry: When It Won't Work and What to do About it*, (2009): [http://www.books.Google.com?id=ud7xuDeKts&printsec=small group](http://www.books.Google.com?id=ud7xuDeKts&printsec=small+group), (29 March, 2011).

⁴⁹Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2001), 95.

progressively multiply. This is a world phenomenon that needs to be captured, if the Church is to grow massively.

Ellen G. White states, “The world will be convinced, not by what the pulpit teaches, but what the Church lives. The minister in the desk announces the theory of the gospel; the practical piety of the Church demonstrates its power.”⁵⁰ This kind of individual participation of the piety can easily be demonstrated in the small group ministry, which attempts to be a good avenue to a recovery of the relational element in God’s Church.

In conclusion, Ellen White admonishes members to live in units of fellowship. Fellowship reinforces the truth taught and links it with personal experience for added impact. It is in the context of fellowship that the giftedness of the entire body is most capable of functioning. In such groups, needs can be shared, experiences communicated, and gifts can be exercised in such a way that real growth and healing take place.

⁵⁰White, *Testimonies*, 7:16.

CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL SETTING

This chapter presents the setting of Najjanankumbi church community found in central Uganda Conference in two major sections. The first section describes the general geographical, historical, and social economic situations in the central region of Uganda.

The second section discloses in depth the presentation of Najjanankumbi by using qualitative and quantitative tools such as questionnaires and interviews.

Country Profile

Najjanankumbi church is found in Uganda, a land locked country boarded by Kenya (east), Tanzania (south), Democratic Republic of Congo (west), Rwanda (south west), and Sudan (North). It has a savannah type of vegetation, with a tropical, cool and favorable climate throughout the year with rear but recurring natural hazards of droughts, floods and storms. The current population is approximately 35 million.⁵¹ Baganda is the largest tribal group of people of the country. Their language is second to English among those spoken in the country; both of them are used by majority of Ugandans.

⁵¹ Statistical Report, Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2010: <http://www.ubos.org/sphider/search.phy?query=population+census&search=2010>.

The country got its independence on 10 October 1963 from the British colonial rule, with Dr. Milton Obote⁵² as the prime minister, but who later became a president of the Republic of Uganda. His rule, together with the proceeding governments have brought a tremendous change in attitude of the people of Uganda, more especially those in Kampala, where Najjanankumbi church is located.

Kampala, the capital city, is divided into five divisions: Kampala Central, Kawempe, Makindye, Nakawa, and Lubaga. Najjanankumbi SDA Church is situated in Lubaga division.

The social-political setting is very competitive and unstable due to the chaotic situation of the city. Persistent and serious human rights violations, combined with failure to introduce reform of the police, army and security forces or address impurity and the lack of clear commitment on some parts of the government are real obstacles that need to be confronted by the top leadership of the country, and the city in particular. The next section will ponder more on this issue.

Political Situation

The political setting of the area became unstable when people started to withhold their support from the ruling party (National Resistance Movement). As a result, there is persistent and serious human rights violations, combined with the failure to introduce reform in security agencies. This has led to lack of clear commitment. Such real obstacles needed to be confronted by the top leadership of the country to avoid chaos in the country that destructs and destroys even the mega resources that are available. Since the gaining of its independence, Uganda governments have been characterized by economic mismanagement, corruption,

⁵²The late Dr. Milton Obote was the first prime minister of Uganda who later became a second president of Uganda from 1963 to 1970 and then from 1979 to 1986.

hyper-inflation, human rights abuses, unemployment, and mismanagement of public funds that have resulted in public demonstrations.⁵³ Such demonstrations have turned out to be the culture of the people in the central region of the country, Kampala. Eventually, there has been an imposition of sanctions by the investors, following the switch from “willing buyer- willing seller” to “first truck” land reform economic instability. This has also led to a social-political and economic crisis resulting in chaos.

Social-Economic Situation and Church Growth

This section describes the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Najjanankumbi and the impact of the country’s chaotic environment on the Church’s spiritual situation. The Church was organized in June 30, 1960. It is one of the leading Churches in the Central Uganda Conference found in Uganda Union. It owns Najjanankumbi Young Christian Secondary School, Najjanankumbi Young Christian primary school and Najjanankumbi dispensary. . The church is located in the heart of the city along the road that leads to the southern edge of Kampala city. It is approximately five kilometers (3.1 miles) by road south of the central business district of Kampala.

Medical services in this area are scarce. Non-government organizations help fill the gap by providing free services for the area residents, like counseling, immunization and dental care. According to the year-end statistical report of 2012, the church had 811 church members and about the same number of Sabbath School

⁵³ Uganda Demonstrations: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa13112592>

members, thus totaling to about 1,500 persons together⁵⁴ who are looking towards these services.

In response to the growth in membership, the church board recently voted to realign its services by convincing more people to join the clergy as mission volunteers. Now the church has one ordained pastor from the Conference and one lay worker. This is a strategy intended to curb up the chaotic situation of the country, which is also affecting the Seventh-day Adventist church. All church institutions, like schools and medical centers need urgent proactive and innovative leadership strategies in order to make use of the success opportunities that are embedded in such a country's chaotic situations, thus the church. Unfortunately, such unprecedented social-political, economic and spiritual chaos resulted in low morale, low output and brain drain of church members. In light of the above, this section of the research intends to study in detail the situation of the church in relation to the activities of small group ministry in the church.

Najjanankumbi church has attempted to respond in different ways, particularly to the crisis in the church. Starting with 2007, the church has applied a small group evangelism strategy in order to motivate church members to evangelize and also to retain those who were already in the church. When this ministry was introduced to the church, almost 90% of church members welcomed it. They benefited from it and many recipients appreciated the strategy which turned out to be the strength and an opportunity to nurture and evangelize the community.

In other instances, medical doctors and nurses together with women's ministries, youth ministries and lay preachers teamed up their efforts to reach out into

⁵⁴This information is taken from the statistics of the church secretary of Najjanankumbi church for the year 2012.

un-entered areas. Thus, medical personnel gave medications to the community, while the rest were giving out other essential commodities, such as salt, soap, clothes, and sugar. This resulted in a growth of membership from 400 to 650 by the end of 2007.

Towards the end of 2009, participation of members in small group meetings started dropping from 90% to 20%. Certainly, the number of people joining the church also dropped. Consequently, the church has been seriously affected by this mess in terms of its offerings and tithe returns.

Economy of the Area

The economic situation of the area is very alarming. People are mainly engaged in speculative activities, causing serious distortions in prices and the economy in general. Prices are notably changing on daily, if not hourly basis. Such unpredictable changes cause serious confusion to budgeting and planning. This leads to great suffering of the majority of the members and opulence to the privileged few. Social ills have become prevalent due to destitution and HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Like in any crisis, the most affected are women and children in the poor sector of society. Women are the ones to bear the double responsibilities by taking care of the basic needs of the family, including the old and the young. In Kampala, especially in Najjanankumbi, people have experienced serious reductions in public and social welfare services such as a supply of water and electricity, healthcare and education. Consequently, the burden of women has increased, and they are the majority in the church. Most of the church-members are casual laborers and while a few are civil servants. The welfare, education and medical organizations remove the safety net for the entire population, rural and urban, regardless of the locality, so there is no escape.

The political impasse that has dragged on for years, continue to poison all social-economic and religious activities in terms of progress, as will be discussed in the next section.

The Potential of the Church

The economy of the area has caused a noticeable gap between the religious socialization of church members and the subjective construction of their own personal religious biography. Their religious behavior does not correspond to their inner subjective religious convictions which are beyond dogmatic considerations. What church members say is not what they do. It is therefore a challenging task of the church leaders to guide and accompany church members, especially the youth, on their way to spiritual maturity. When young people leave their families and enter the world in which they have to live and establish themselves, they confront a society characterized by pluralism and a great complexity of life. A leadership style is needed that will be helpful for church members to be informed about the origins, contents, and results of the diversity that the world is offering.

Youth Lifestyle

Lifestyle is a complex concern or term. It includes the entirety of norms and values as well as patterns of physical, social and mental behavior of an individual varying with age gender and cultural background. It is the consistent, integrated way of life of an individual as typified by the individual's manner, attitudes and possessions.⁵⁵ Basing on the statistical report of Najjanankumbi church pastor, 70% of

⁵⁵David B. Guralink, ed. *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language* 2nd ed., (New York: World publishing Company, 1972), 816.

the church memberships are between 15 and 30 years of age. This is the biggest group of member class and so has a great impact and influence on the entire church. These are the youth who are living in a chaotic environment full of unpredictable political flows and a high inflation in the economy of the country.

Like any other citizen, the youth are engaged in speculative activities for survival. To make it worse, some even go for illegal business and negative social behavior, like street-sex practices, drug abuse and sports betting, to mention but a few. As a result, AIDS pandemic compounds the problem.

Most of the members, who belong to the prescribed age group, do not have a permanent resident status. They tend to move from place to place in search of cheap housing. This makes it hard to trace their whereabouts in terms of residence.

When it comes to marriage, few of them go to church to formalize their marriages, in fear of spending finances that they do not have. The few, who tried, have ended up in big financial constraints. Consequently, many of them simply cohabit and then later on formalize their marriage when they feel financially secure.

The recreational centers like beaches, theaters, not to mention other social clubs that are surrounding the church's location, are technically affecting the social-religious status of these individuals. Many young people tend to spend little as possible from their resources they have to satisfy their peer interests. When they come to church, they have nothing to offer; hence, they get burdened by the churches constant requests for offering and tithe returns.

A sense of the importance of sex and sexual reputation for money and pleasure is more apparent among the youth. Sexual experimentation is common in Najjanankumbi church. The ratio of lifestyle related ailments has gone up considerably with time. The statistical report of the church board established in 2009

reveals that the number of cohabited couples was 119 up from 46 in 2007.⁵⁶ This has increased the stress level, mainly to those who become engaged in sex for money and for pleasure.

On the other hand, sex among the youth results from a lack of parental help. They simply resort to sex as the only way to get what they want in order to compete with the demands of this world. For these people to have illegitimate sex is considered as an embarrassment and telling about it to their parents is difficult, for they are afraid of being misunderstood and harshly judged; consequently, many of them contemplate the last resort—to end their life by a suicide.

The youth are the backbone of the church's future and if they are unhealthy and unfit, it turns out to be a major roadblock in the healthy and positive development of the entire church. They really need help to be pulled out of such a problem. It is assumed that the best person to do this should be one of their generation and age, but with a different worldview.

This indicates that peers are often the first people to be approached by young people who are struggling with such a problem. In search of sympathy and understanding, a group leading in consolation can cope with such an age-met stress. They need to be held together and work for progress.

Parents may be unaware that they have only a little control over or no knowledge about their teenager's behavior. Young people are more inclined to confide to their friends, who may not be equipped to deal with the crisis. A need for a church family is at high demand. It needs to provide a lot of social activity for such

⁵⁶Najjanankumbi church secretary's report to the business meeting in January 2010.

youth groups to gain self-esteem. Blanchard said, “People who feel good about themselves produce good results.”⁵⁷

The spiritual growth of God’s people, their development in the virtues of Christ, and their relationship to one another, as members of His body are all closely bound up in Christianity. In many respects it depends upon the spirituality, efficiency and concentration of those who minister in Christ’s stead. Such can pave a strait road to community, unity, and security. Vanauken says it so well, “The best argument for Christianity is Christians; their joy, their certainty, their completeness. But the strongest argument against Christianity is also Christians; when they are somber and joyless, when they are self-righteous and smug in complacent consecration, when they are narrow and repressive, then Christianity dies a thousand deaths.”⁵⁸ In order to achieve the best among the youth, the traditional method needs the replacement or a supplement with a small group ministry which can mold productive, cohesive teams out of the most diverse community.

Church Leadership Style

One of the challenges leaders of Najjanankumbi Church are facing today is to lead people who do not share the same value system. The leadership style used is very traditional, thus slowing the spirit of unity and faith among church members. To achieve better results of church unity and understanding, the traditional method needs a replacement or be supplemented with small group activities. Barna asserted that the church is dying due to lack of strong leadership.⁵⁹ Because of this vacuum that has

⁵⁷ Kenneth Blanchard and Spencer Johnson, *One Minute Manager: The Quickest Way to Increase Your Prosperity* (Berkley Books, New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1985), 20.

⁵⁸ Vanauken Sheldon, *A Severe Mercy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 85.

been created by the existing leadership style, self-appointed saviors have rushed in and the church is losing her influence.

Small group ministry is the hope that can cause others to act or respond in a shared direction, become a resource to achieve the main goal for the church, and inspire confidence and support among her members. As enshrined in the mission statement of the Seventh-day Adventist church, the main objective of the church is the salvation of all.⁶⁰ People may be drawn into the church through various avenues. Yet if they are not helped to focus their attention on Jesus Christ, “the author and finisher of faith” (Heb 12:2), they could be disappointed or discouraged or even misled by what they see and hear within and outside church circles. Blackaby suggests that today’s leaders must mold productive, cohesive teams out of the most diverse workforce in history.⁶¹ When the joy, the uncertainty, the completeness, and the beauty of Christian community is cultivated and communicated; evangelism can possibly be the glorious result.

The next chapter will attempt to develop and suggest ways of implementing some of the possible measures that can help to revitalize small group evangelism.

⁵⁹George Barna, *Leaders on Leadership* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books 1998), 365.

⁶⁰General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Working Policy of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 2008-09 ed. (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2009), 29.

⁶¹Blackaby, 2.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

The following chapter highlights the methodological procedures that were followed in order to establish innovative strategies to motivate and revitalize small group activities. It integrates descriptive research, design, sampling techniques, reliability and validity of research instrument, data analysis and interpretation, in order to make the reality known.⁶²

The researcher chose the survey design since it “looks with intense accuracy at the phenomena of the moment and describes precisely what the researcher sees.”⁶³ It enabled collections of detailed descriptive data of the existing situation, giving a wider understanding of the existing conditions and practices of social phenomena. It helped the author to discover relevant and informed strategies to improve the situations.

The researcher sought to make an inquiry through collection, organization, analysis and interpretation of quantifiable, statistical or numerical data. He opted for this approach because it is a traditional approach based on statistical figures that the investigator translated into valuable information through the use of a proven scientific data analysis.

⁶²Nancy Jean Vyhmeister, *Your Guide to Writing Quality Research Papers: For Students of Religion and Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 151.

⁶³Paul D. Leedy, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 2004), 103.

He also included the qualitative research method for it is able to capture peoples' subjective attitudes, feelings, and experiences. It examined phenomena in their natural settings. It further afforded the researcher some interactive opportunities with people whose experiences were quite relevant, valuable and informative in terms of this study.

Questionnaires and Interviews

The researcher chose random samplings drawn from members of the congregation and church officers of Najjanankumbi Church, because it considerably avoids the possibility of choosing one's friends to answer questions.⁶⁴ This would have probably resulted in biased and distorted information. A fast procedure to collect the required data within the defined period of time was used. This was done to avoid possibility of collecting sterile data, in case the original research questions posed might have been irrelevant and expired if delayed.

In an endeavor to save time and to maximize high responses, the researcher distributed and collected the questionnaires, from the randomly selected respondents at their appointed meeting places as allocated by church elders within the church premises. To make sure that the respondents would not share or discuss the answers, questionnaires were distributed just in time for completing them in the presence of the researcher or his helpers.

Since questionnaires are data collecting tools, preciously designed to gather information or helpful data in solving the research problem,⁶⁵ the process of filling questionnaires was therefore done in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. Respondents

⁶⁴ Vyhmeister, 150.

⁶⁵ Leedy, 193.

were assured of anonymity and confidentiality as they completed the self-admitted questionnaires.

Due to observable weaknesses, challenges and limitations that a questionnaire might have, such as inability to correct misunderstandings that may be raised by respondents, to probe or clarify ambiguity, to appraise the non-verbal behavior of the respondents, the researcher decided to include interviews or the triangulation method. Anonymity was an important factor in obtaining responses.

Since the wording of the statements and questions that are used in structured interviews are similar to those used in questionnaires, the researcher preferred to apply face-to-face unstructured interviews to the structured one. These helped the researcher to complement the questionnaires. Non-verbal communication like facial expressions asserted more emphasis. Vyhmeister says, “Interviews are superior to surveys in terms of in-depth information.”⁶⁶ Thus, interviews provided the researcher with qualitative data as respondents were free to give their feelings, thoughts, experiences and emotions towards certain practices. Sincerity, frankness, truthfulness and insight of the interviewee could be judged better throughout cross-questioning while the interviewer also gained a deeper impression of the subject matter under study.

In order to avoid the rise of domination or withholding of information on issues of participation, the researcher made use of participatory method where answers eventually came out of a process of brainstorming and ranking of issues within a context of the study. Data collected was not of much value until it was analyzed and interpreted. The findings were done on both church officers and church members.

⁶⁶Vyhmeister, 161.

Demographic Information of the Respondents

Respondents for this study were picked randomly from different age groups, regardless of gender, race and education. Out of the 300 questionnaires that were issued to church members, the researcher received 240 responses. The results are as shown in the respective tables below. They are classified according to age, sex, marital status; out-reach level, retention level, and happiness level.

Analysis shows that members less than 60 years of age participated the most (93.7%). Those who were above sixty were only three (6.25%). This can also tell that the youth and middle-aged people who responded were likely to form the most active group in such ministerial activities.

Table 1: Age of the Respondents

Valid	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 35 years of age	115	47.9%
Between 36 and 60 years of age	110	45.8%
Over 61 years of age	15	6.25%
Total	240	100%

In Table 2, gender was balanced, as is evidenced by 50% of the respondents from each sex. One observation from this table is that both sexes are highly esteemed.

Table 2: The Gender of the Respondents

Valid	Frequency	Percentage
Male	120	50%
Female	120	50%
Total	240	100%

In Table 3, 170 of the respondents are married (70%), 55 are singles (22.9%), 5 are widowed (2.08%) and 10 are divorced (4.02%). Married couples seem to be more responsible people than singles. This indicates that the Church has well established homes on which evangelism could be based. Aldrich says that “the two greatest forces in evangelism are a healthy church and a healthy marriage...It is the healthy marriage, however, which is the ‘front lines weapon.’ The Christian family in a community is the ultimate evangelistic tool.”⁶⁷

Table 3: Marital Statuses of the Respondents

Valid	Frequency	Percentage
Single	55	22.9%
Married	170	70.8%
Widow	5	2.08%
Divorced	10	4.2%
Total	240	100%

⁶⁷ Joseph C. Aldrich, Th.D. *Life Style Evangelism: Crossing Traditional Boundaries to Reach the Unbelieving World* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1981), 20-21.

In terms of outreach, Table 4 reveals that only 64.6% of the respondents managed at least to bring not more than five people to the church. Only 8.3% excelled by bringing more than five people each. There was a very big percentage (27.1%) who do not know whether there was anything done by them on the task of bringing people to Church.

Table 4: Outreach Level of Respondents

Valid	Frequency	Percentage
1 to 5 People	155	64.6%
More than 5 people	20	8.3%
Those who do not know	65	27.1%
Total	240	100%

Table 5 shows that when it comes to the level of retaining those who have been brought as new converts, 39.6% of the respondents said, that the people they brought to church were still in the church. Yet, 14.6 % could not trace their new converts from church. They have backslidden and left the church. There was number of people (18.8%) who were not sure whether whom they brought were still in the church or went away.

Table 5: The Level of Back Door Control

Valid	Frequency	Percentage
Who brought people in the church and they are still in it	95	39.6%
Who brought people but they had backslidden	35	14.6%
Who brought people some of whom are still in the church while others had backslidden	65	27.1%
Who brought people but do not know whether they are still in the church or not	45	18.8%
Total	240	100%

Group member visitation is revealed in Table 6. It presents the spiritual enrichment of the church members by visiting one another for spiritual encouragement. The table reveals that only 20.8% of the respondents were regularly visiting their fellow group members. 54.2% visited occasionally, while 25% did not visit at all. This shows that the power of relationship was not properly built that could influence the members. Table 6 puts it clear as it is below.

Table 6: Group Member Visitation Level

Valid	Frequency	Percentage
Regularly	50	20.8%
Occasionally	130	54.2%
Never	60	25%
Total	240	100%

Table 7 describes the level of happiness of the respondents. Over 235 (97.9%) people strongly agreed that group activity was good and that it was giving them a happy Church life. Only 5 respondents (2.8%) claimed to have no happiness with small groups. This raises a very important question. If people were happy with their small group families, why was it that group activities like visitations, outreach, nurturing programs were not actively responded to? While such differences in all tables may appear rather small or negligent, the researcher still considered it to be a cause of church concern to revitalize small group ministries.

Table 7: Happiness Level of Respondents

Valid	Frequenc y	Percentage
Those who were happy	235	97.9%
Not happy with their groups	5	2.8%
Total	240	100%

Table 8 displays a service level of the respondents. The number of Church officers who responded was almost equivalent to the local church members. It should also be noted that the people who responded were some who of those who participated in small group activities.

Table 8: Service level of Respondents

Valid	Frequency	Percentage
Officers	110	45.8%
Local members	130	54.2%
Total	240	100%

More so, the researcher interviewed members with intent of finding out the level of fellowship within the existing small group members. It was found out that out of the 37 people who were interviewed, 36 confessed that they meet only on Sabbaths to discuss their group activities.

From the above-mentioned data presentation, analysis and interpretation revealed the following:

1. There is a need of having a systematic program that will help every individual small group member to know the number of new converts added to church. Group leaders may not even know who is actively participating in the group programs and at what level.

2. The level of controlling the back door was very low. Table 5 showed that many did not know whether those brought into the church were still there or not. This means, people could not be nurtured properly, since they were not followed up by their mentors.

3. Minimal visitation was done; as a result the level of fellowship was lower.

4. There was a high level of happiness among group members, except a few individuals.

What was revealed by analyzing the data calls for a serious question, if the existing members are happy with their groups, why is it that the number of people participating in small group ministries is deteriorating from time to time? Why were they failing to convince other people to join their groups? Why is it that the level of keeping new convert in the church by controlling the back door was very low? Though the practice seemed to make people happy, it lacked direction to benefit the entire mission of the church. This technically tells that there is a need to apply a catching strategy to revitalize small group evangelism as a mechanism of lifting spirituality in Najjanankumbi Church.

SWOT Analysis on the Small Groups

The researcher sought to analyze the accumulated data concerning small group ministries in Najjanankumbi Church through a process known as SWOT analysis. SWOT is an acronym referring to “strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats,” as they affect any organization, in this case a small group ministry.

On the side of the strengths, Najjanankumbi Church leadership recognized small group as a means of nurturing and a tool to reach other people outside the Church. Table 8 showed that 45.8% of the respondents were Church officers. As a result, those few who were involved manifested an increased faith, based on the word of God. Secondly, married couples (70.8%) who were assumed to have stable families were involved in this particular ministry. This means, there is a possibility of getting stable molded leaders from these small groups. Thirdly, unlike other ministries, small group ministry is mainly comprised of the youth and middle-aged

persons (93.7%) whose brains and muscles are sharp to do group activities. Lastly, out of the 240 respondents, only 5 were unhappy, but the rest were happy and loved their fellowship small groups. It is in this context of happy fellowship that the giftedness of the entire body of small group ministry is capable of functioning.

On the side of the weaknesses, the level of visitation was very low which means many could not get exposed to the counsel and concern of others, as they could not get specifics from other members during the week which would have been gotten through sharing concerns among themselves. Care for others was very low.

One recognized threat is that the meeting culture is almost absent except on Sabbaths. The majority confirmed that during the weekdays there were no meetings. This resulted in non-functional small groups. Even though members were happy with their groups, they failed to make regular meetings and discuss strategies that could lead them to a better spiritual status. It is a threat in the sense that if people do not meet, they start to have the lack of a sense of belonging and a sense of concern.

However, two important opportunities were realized. The participation of both Church members and Church officers almost at a balance level gives an opportunity of setting up for a prosperous ministry that can work. If all the leaders who participated are given a clear program and methodologies of how to carry on the exercise, small groups can do better. Secondly, it is an opportunity of having both genders in a small group ministry which gives hope of reaching both men and women without hesitation and fear.

Fellowship Meetings

This section proposes a very specific innovation strategy for Najjanankumbi church, based on the Bible, Ellen G. White's writings and other authors in regard to the activities of small group ministries. The strategy takes into account the findings

and suggestions coming from the quantitative and qualitative research and SWOT analysis about small group ministry in this particular Church.

In response to the facts gotten after analyzing the previous data, church leaders, especially small group leaders, should be aware of the principle of innovative strategy by showing a concern for people and intensifying fellowship meetings, for which the following recommendations are set:

1. As evangelists, small group leaders should understand and acknowledge the educational implications of small group fellowship. Aldrich asserts, “Fellowship reinforces the truth taught, and links it with personal experience for added impact.”⁶⁸ The reservoir of truth, filled on Sabbath in church, must become a river of blessing during the week. So, fellowships should be intensified during the week, so that the river of gospel can flow even to those who do not attend church services on Sabbath. It is in the context of intensifying fellowship activities that the spiritual gifts of members can be maximally utilized and benefit in the evangelism program.

2. A fellowship strategy that will turn church members into active participants and build consistent yet multiple small group activities. Multiple in the sense, that one can have membership in more than one small group.

3. In order to achieve this, the researcher intends to implement a strategy of instructing leaders on building effective small groups. This will qualify small group activities by making them interesting and meaningful.

There are a number of basic principles as indicated below that determine whether a group will succeed or not.⁶⁹ Therefore the researcher intended to make sure

⁶⁸Joseph Aldrich, Th.D. *Life Style Evangelism: Crossing Traditional Boundaries to Reach the Unbelieving World* (Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1981), 118.

⁶⁹Ibid., 46.

that trained leaders are in place to see that these principles are in operation. Group goals were set, and were made clearly understood and relevant. Any group that lacks a clear and relevant goal is more likely to be plagued with a low level of commitment. All group members in their respective groups had to convene and set their own goals and plans to achieve them. People do not want to give long-term support unless they have had a say in the process of formulating them.

More so, effective communication is the basis of all groups that function as Gane claims.⁷⁰ Group members in their respective and timely organized groups had to communicate their ideas and feelings accurately and clearly, depending not on the thinking alone, but also on the feelings of comrades. When feelings are ignored or suppressed, there is no real honest leveling in the group.

Subsequently, the researcher found it necessary to ensure that the resources of every member are fully utilized. So all members grouped according to their interests, had to participate and be listened to. Participation and leadership among respective group members were distributed. Then the small group leaders' role was to lead the planning of the programs to organize the proceedings and to execute in their respective groups accordingly.

The essence of the human personality, however, is not entirely individualistic but social both horizontally and vertically. That is to say, not only in physical relations with other family members but also in spiritual relations with the heavenly beings. The researcher, therefore, approached the phenomenon of supernatural spiritualistic manifestations with one fundamental conviction: Evil powers were defeated once for all by Christ on the cross and that people should keep the primary

⁷⁰Barry Gane, *Building Youth Ministry a Foundational Guide* (Riverside, California: Hancock Center Publications 2005), 133.

task of group membership in the fulfillment of the gospel commission. Therefore, each member had to be wholly submissive whenever they convened and give regular reports on their group activities.

With this kind of spirit, fellowship meetings turned out to be receiving meetings of souls. To run this conviction better, the researcher found it necessary to formulate a design that helped to divide the members into groups according to their gifts, which also made it easier to own both old and new members. The next section elaborates the process of dividing and owning members, as people witnessed unprecedented growth in the entire Church.

Division and Owning of Members

In most situations, groups are more concerned with achieving the task laid before them. However, people will neither contribute nor commit themselves if they are not happy with their respective groups. At the same time, people can easily lose interest with a group if they fail to achieve anything. Therefore, the researcher sought to have an even balance when dividing the congregation into small groups. One of the most frequent reasons why small groups fail is a lack of equal participation. If one person has all the say, frustration will exist among other group members. So the researcher divided people according to power and influence. Power had to be balanced among members, basing upon their competence, expertise and information, hoping of getting members more cooperative and responsive. Influence was to affect people's character, beliefs and actions through example, fear and admiration.

People were given a chance to share what they consider as reasons for their being in groups. Personal choices were respected. People were requested to write down what they thought were the greatest needs of people in the community. The best form of outreach expected to be accomplished is to make activities satisfy the needs

of people that members would want to bring in as friends to share the fun, fellowship and celebration of heaven.

Small tight-knit group (not in size but in warmth and community) were made, where each member felt the sense of belonging and knowledge that they would be missed if they do not attend their respective meetings. Identity and sense of belonging was considered as crucial. The researcher assumed that there is no other factor that promotes mature faith and loyalty as much as a sense of belonging to and being accepted by the community of faith.

Different groups with different objectives but with one goal of evangelism were formed. This gave an opportunity for a member to join two or more groups with a different objective in order to achieve one goal—evangelism. Small groups function out on the affirmation of gifts; that is, it calls all people to recognize and develop their unique gifts. In order to affirm these gifts the researcher set small group ministry to pay close attention to the specifics of each person and out to each person's personal development and personal interests. The researcher thought of this procedure of forming a powerful fellowship string, because it is all about being bound together in fellowship.

The use of small groups is unlimited. Most activities can be more effectively achieved when carried out on a team-group basis under a particular purpose. The researcher aimed at seeing people fellowshiping together, developing one another in all aspects, care for all, have intimate relationship, that will lead them to feel the urge of witnessing for Christ and live a social Christian life. These six major purposes categorically formed the basics of the big purpose-groups, as stated below: fellowship purpose groups, development purpose groups, care purpose groups, intimacy purpose groups, witnessing purpose groups and social purpose groups. Every purpose

developed groups which were sub-divided into different small groups. As a result, 32 different groups, classified under 11 major categories according to interests were realized. These categories were: laborers, medical personnel, civil engineers, mechanical engineers, teachers, food industrialists, students, women, men, youth, and children. Some group members were intersecting into different various groups depending on their personal interests.

Fellowship purpose groups aimed at helping members to know each other and have full trust and confidence in one another. For that matter, gatherings and support were provided, and Bible study and discussions on personal levels were given.

Development purpose groups aimed at developing interpersonal skills. Intimacy purpose groups provided intimate sharing of Christian experience; visitors were invited, prayers and testimonies given. Care purpose groups provided support for individuals who were currently undergoing stress due to being unemployed, singleness, death, divorce and so forth. Witnessing purpose groups were purposely set to reach non-Christians. Social purpose groups provided social interaction between new and old members. Stabilizing the disadvantaged was also an added benefit from these particular groups.

So, each group had a target within the particular goal. In every category, goals were set and agreed upon by the group members so that they may give it support. Goals acted as filters of both ideas and activities. This ensured that relevancy was achieved. Groups had to have not only clear goals, but also goals that were relevant to the members of that particular small group.

Table 9: Purpose groups

Purpose Group	Small groups	By July 2012	New converts Dec 2012	%	Rank
Fellowship purpose group	-Youth fellowship small group	30	10	33.3%	12
	-Women fellowship small group	20	5	25%	15
	-Men's fellowship small group	15	2	13.3%	25
	-Students' fellowship small group	25	10	40%	9
	-Children's fellowship small group	20	7	35%	11
	-Medical personnel fellowship small group	8	6	75%	6
Development purpose group	-Food industrialists' development small group	10	2	20%	18
	-Medical personnel development small group	10	8	80%	5
	-Youth development small group	25	5	25%	15
	-Women development small group	30	3	10%	28
	-Laborers' development small group	22	5	22.7%	17
	-Men's development small group	23	2	8.7%	30
	-Mechanical engineers development small group	4	4	100%	2
	-Civil engineers development small group	11	10	90.9%	4
Care purpose group	-Children care small group	8	12	150%	1
	-Medical personnel care small group	13	7	53.8%	7
	-Women care small group	28	5	17.9%	21
	-Youth care small group	29	3	10.3%	27
	-Food industrialist care small group	18	3	16.7%	22
Intimacy purpose group	-Women's intimacy small group	10	2	20%	18
	-Adventist men intimacy small group	13	0	00%	32
	-Students intimacy small group	10	1	10%	28
	-Youth intimacy small group	20	4	20%	18
Social purpose group	-Women social small group	20	10	50%	8
	-Singles' social small group	33	11	33.3%	12
	-Youth social small group	20	8	40%	9
	-Students social small group	10	10	100%	2
	-Married couples social small group	30	2	6.7%	31
Witnessing purpose group	-Teachers witnessing small group	6	1	16.7%	22
	-Youth witnessing small group	15	2	13.3%	25
	-Women witnessing small group	11	3	27.3%	14
	-Students witnessing small group	6	1	16.7%	22

Owning of membership requires a built up covenant that may not necessarily be written down, but at the end of the day it will help to build a brotherhood relationship that sticks together for a common cause.⁷¹ In view of that, the researcher discussed with each particular group and outlined issues that they thought were important enough to be included in their covenant. Issues like venue, time and by-laws that guided their activities. It was noted that such above mentioned issues were the very weak points which had led to the disintegration of small groups that had earlier been formed. Now these were the very points that the researcher stressed out in order to revitalize the small group evangelism programs that had been weakened for long.

The features that were capitalized on, as a result of group discussion, included: confidentiality (confining the values that are happening in the group), availability (in the sense that people had to meet on regular basis at a time that is mutually convenient), and affirmation (affirming the gifts and the good in other members of the group which helped people to learn how to appreciate one another). Though confidentiality was regarded important, openness was regarded on the same level. Members shared with the respective groups what happened in response to what was taking place in the group.

Honesty turned out to be another feature whereby members were urged to be true to themselves and to the group. They were to accept any insight, good or bad. At the same time, members were urged not to be judgmental. They were to be aware of other people's feelings. This kind of sensitivity allowed members to pass on any subject that they may have been comfortable talking about. Every individual was responsible and gave accountability of the personal actions.

⁷¹Gane, 131.

In summary, covenant features which have been stated above, required a spiritual tone and purpose, as the main governing factor. The researcher could not ignore the need for making meetings sparkling, attractive, and interesting as much as possible. This became a noble cause for the people to participate in grace, worship, community and service. It is this kind of service that brought friends to share the fun, fellowship and celebration of hope for heaven. As a result, people who joined the groups were properly owned, and they were, finally, more likely to be retained as true active church members.

Evaluation of the Research

Much of the present day evangelism is of a foster parent type. The spiritual child is brought into the heavenly world by an outsider who then hands him/her over to a stranger who tries to bring him/her into a fellowship which is unfamiliar. Thus, at the start the odds are against successful integration.⁷² But it has been noted that human beings listen because they have been loved. People do not mind how much someone knows, but how much does that individual care. Caring involves both the whole image of the church in the community and the life of the individual relationship with the non-believer. When love is felt, message is heard.

Small groups in Najjanankumbi church helped to build a follow up matrix before non-believers who came to Christ. When small group members involved themselves socially in various events, webs of relationship developed. It is all out of these relationships that people come to Christ. Small groups turned out to be a key factor in relationship building and activities.

⁷²James Jauncey, *Psychology for successful evangelism* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), 61.

People identified themselves with the groups that gave them warmth, fellowship and participation. Having established group security and acceptance, people began to experience the specialty of their groups. In view of the above scenario, those who were grouped into units according to common interests or talents, like musicians, medical personnel, teachers, businessmen, soccer players and so forth, did not only produce maximum performance, but maximum involvement in fun, fellowship and evangelism (see Table 10).

The researcher also noted that for the groups to make an impact in worship, community and service, they are to be open, frank and have constructive discussions about the roles these groups play in evangelistic ministry, as well as looking for alternatives in order to avoid monotony. This created variety and creative leadership. For that matter, constructive discussions erupted from time to time as needs aroused.

Table 10: Summary of purpose driven groups

Purpose Group	No. of Small Groups	Participants by July 2012	New converts by Dec 2012	% of increment	Ranking
Fellowship	6	118	40	33.9%	2
Development	8	135	39	28.9%	4
Care	5	86	30	34.9%	3
Intimacy	4	53	7	13.2%	6
Social	5	113	41	36.3%	1
Witnessing	4	38	7	18.4%	5
TOTAL	32	543	164	30.2%	

Small groups became labs of learning more about love and care for one another, which was later reflected in the context of the whole Sabbath congregation. They also provided a safe and nurturing arena for the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. Gifts for the ministry were observed.

As it is presented on Table 10, people were mainly interested in groups that are purposely driven by socialization, fellowship, care, and those that promote developmental ideas. These were the groups that people joined the most and they brought the majority of people to the church. Intimacy and witnessing groups were the most degraded. Few people joined them and were converted through these groups. It seems that people were not interested in direct witnessing, like house to house evangelism, Bible preaching, lesson study or Bible study, giving testimonies and alike. Thus, in spite of the number of members, a group of even of five or ten persons can decide to do something and hold one another accountable. The table above presents not just some numbers, but most importantly the things that people are interested the most.

It is important to note that the researcher found out that people developed qualities and traits which developed into a means of livelihood basing to the groups those individuals joined. This curbed the problem of unemployment, especially among the youth. Through involvement in group activities, people came closer to one another and felt like a family. It gave them a chance to bring their non-Christian friends to a more neutral setting than the church. Hence, faith sharing became easier. It also allowed recreational pursuits and skills training to take place in an atmosphere of fun and fellowship. Opportunities were provided to learn about God using full sensory experiences and provided time for development, growth and acceptance of new thoughts, and ideas, spoken and unspoken.

In such times of vigorous evangelism, people who joined groups with opinions and ideas which were inimical to Christianity were taught how to live a victorious life, by surrendering their views and positions to Christ. They were helped to focus their attention on things of eternal value rather than mundane ones. Programs that

made people cultivate interest in church-oriented activities were made, thus making their faith stronger, their love greater, and their hope surer in the service and promises of Christ.

By way of exposure, opportunities were provided for dormant or hidden talents to be activated or unearthed. Through individual participation in various group activities, people gradually discovered their capabilities, interests, hidden potentials and their self-worth that help them serve God better.

A group that chose to follow a buddy-system retained their members. This was due to the fact that every buddy-system member knew the address, phone number, and some information about the buddy. In the long run, each individual was responsible to give a report to the group about the fellow buddy. Even when other members of the church forgot or neglected, the buddy was always responsibly caring and sharing. This prevented many from leaving their enjoyable small groups and hence, the church.

Groups that provided medical care, developmental skills, and social interactions were the most effective groups in terms of bringing people to church and retaining them. Medical personnel provided counseling, care, and support to those living with HIV/AIDS, and helped teaching uninfected people how to stay free and healthy. They showed acceptance and treated each other with compassion and love. This built a bridge between the medical teams and the community. Such kind of dialogue was an open channel for evangelism.

People who had no jobs fairly appreciated those groups that offered developmental skills. They were quick to join with hope of enjoying the benefits of acquiring some skills. In the process of providing care and imparting skills, the word of God was preached. This came along with good earnings and in turn fair returns

were brought to the treasury. The returns that had gone down before were raised as more people participated in the giving of offerings and returning tithe. This numerical growth was as a result of inviting friends and participating in nonthreatening social events. Such events reduced congregation's fear of losing intimacy which resulted in the addition of new members.

In a nutshell the researcher noted the following observations:

1. Groups divided basing on the purpose, talents and interests raised the percentage of small group participants from 20% to 77.6% (from 140 persons to 543).
2. The number of new converts was raised from 50 people in three years (2008-2010) to 164 people in six months (July 2012- Dec 2012).
3. People became more active with group activities as some were seen participating in more than one group. Sabbath afternoon programs became more active than they used to be before. Consequently, violation of the Sabbath was minimized. Instead of watching movies on Sabbaths, people had good programs that kept them busy.
4. Individual participation in giving tithe and offerings was raised. According to the church treasury's statistics of December 2012,⁷³ the number of tithe returners was raised from 25% to 49%.
5. Couples with unregistered marriages were encouraged by group members to register. Mass weddings were conducted on 30 December 2012. On this day 17 couples were joined together in holy matrimony.

⁷³Najjanankumbi Seventh-day Adventist Church, Office of Treasury and Statistics, *Annual Statistical Reports*, (Najjanankumbi: Central Uganda Conference, 2012), 7.

The next chapter will summarize and give a clear conclusion on the researcher's view. Specific actions will be provided that will develop the skills of those who minister in the life of a small church and help leaders to enhance in their daily practice of ministry.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study purposed to design, implement and evaluate a strategy that would revitalize small group evangelism among Najjanankumbi church members to at least 60% participation. It was also expected to benefit Seventh-day Adventist church, especially the Central Uganda Conference, by encouraging all members of the church to be friendlier and more caring with one another, thus creating spiritual warmth within their groups. This warmth was expected to convince other people to join the church. It was also expected to help members build a team ministry around people's unique gifts and responsibilities. Chapter 1 emphasized that even organizational leaders would benefit by using this model to promote unity, and bring spiritual aspects like small group evangelism and family life in various churches.

This has been arrived at through an investigation of the biblical and historical heritage of the Seventh-day Adventist church. The author has proposed a model of church that is non-clergy dependent, lay based, cell based, and purposely mission driven.

Chapter 2 reviewed the Bible and other writers in search for cases and principles of innovative small group evangelism. The Bible study revealed that God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are working together in oneness. And that God has never been presented to humanity as a single entity but a plurality of oneness,

called the Trinity. For that matter several writers referred to the Trinity, as the initial small group.

Having been created by a God who lives in a community, people are expected to live in communities, grouped in smaller units as Moses was advised when he was leading the people of God from Egypt to Canaan. A brief study of community in the Old Testament, as well as in the New Testament, revealed a God who works in and through small groups, a God who expects His church, to exist in community with each other and even to evangelize in small groups. Jesus also emphasized the same in His ministry by sending His disciples in small units of two. The apostles did the same by meeting in small groups within their houses. Ellen G. White asserted emphatically that the formation of such small groups was a revelation presented to her by One who cannot err. The only person who cannot err is God. Therefore, small group ministry should be regarded as a divine program.

Chapter 3 described the setting of Najjanankumbi church and the country at large. The geographical, historical, social and economic scenarios were presented as they affect the spiritual and moral behavior of the church members. Economic mismanagement, corruption, human rights abuses, unemployment resulted in public demonstrations. One aspect was clear that the group of young people that contributes over 70% to the church membership is comprised of the literate and illiterate, the poor and the rich, people of different races who are actively engaged in speculative activities.

With intent to save the situation, the researcher developed and implemented a strategy in Chapter 4, using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis. Interviews and questionnaires were applied. One of the commonly acceptable tools (SWOT) that is professionally known to be reliable for analyzing

data has been used. A plan was briefly suggested as to how the Seventh-day Adventist church could return to the model of ecclesiology that is more in harmony with its biblical and historical roots. In this model, a small group is a church by itself which becomes less pastor-dependent by transitioning the pastoral role to that of the trainer or equipper, instead of being a primary care giver.

Conclusion

It has been noted that the use of small groups is unlimited basing on the mode of communication one decide to use. Most activities can be more effectively achieved when carried out on a team-group basis, under a particular purpose. The most important step in the success of small group evangelism is clarifying the congregational purpose, centered at the cross of Jesus Christ. Therefore, in an attempt to influence moral development, small group ministry should avoid forms of communication and programming that consistently depend upon propositional or abstract modes of thinking. Devotional modules, discussion of issues, sermons, prayers, and songs, should as often as possible reflect a more concrete thought form and relate biblical concepts to the life situation in which people exist.

A purpose driven group builds morale by reducing the tension of competing claims; it reduces frustration because it helps prioritize and clarify what needs to be done; builds cooperation among those who are inside the group and attracts the interest of the cooperation of persons and groups outside this particular group; and also assists in regular evaluation of congregational faithfulness and effectiveness.

Recommendations

The church has constructed what is believed to be a clear platform of biblical truth, but now a clear a platform of biblical practice need to be created. Not only must

these truths be lived out in people's lives, but God has called the church to live their lives in community with others.

Therefore, it is recommended that a major attempt should be made to move the church in this new direction. It should not be an option for the Seventh-day Adventist church. The Adventist roots highly demand a lay empowered, purpose driven, non-clergy dependent, and small group based church. For the small group ministry to remain productively powerful, two major aspects must be put into consideration: the purpose of that particular group in relation to the interest/talents of the members joining the group, and a service that is centered upon the cross of Jesus Christ. Therefore, whatever the cost, purpose driven small groups must be revitalized in regards to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

APPENDICES
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHURCH MEMBERS

Dear church member,

You are invited to participate in a survey. The results of this study are intended to help us to know how we can best minister to the congregation and make it effective. Help to ensure this study be a success by responding to the content of this questionnaire.

PLEASE DO NOT INDICATE YOUR NAME. Thank you for your participation.

1. What is your sex?
 - a) Single b) Female
2. Your marital status
 - a) Single b) Married c) Divorce d) Widow/widower
3. Your age group
 - a) Less than 35 years b) 36-60 years c) 61 years or older
4. Are you an officer in the church?
 - a) Yes b) No
5. For how long have you been worshiping from Najjanankumbi SDA church?
 - a) Less than 5 years b) more than 5 years
6. How regularly do you share your faith with no- Adventists?
 - a) Often b) Occassionary C) Never
7. How many people have you been wholly responsible for bringing into the Church in the last five years?
8. Are these people still in the church?
 - a) Yes b) No c) Some

9. If yes, are you satisfied with the way they are nurtured?
 a) Yes b) No
10. Are you Happy with your family group?
 a) Yes b) No
11. How often do you visit your group members?
 a) Regularly b) Occasionally c) Never
12. How many of your church family members do you know their place of residence?
 a) All b) Half of them C) None of them
13. Would you like to change your family membership?
 a) Yes B) No
14. Why?

15. How many newly converted members have been baptized, in your group, in the last three years? _____
16. How would you like them to be nurtured?

17. What is the name of your family group?

18. How many people regularly meet in your group every Sabbath?

19. How many times do you meet as a group during the week?

20. How many people have left the group in the last three years?

21. If you are married, do you support your spouse to be a member of a different group? _____ Why?

22. If you are not a member of another group what makes it hard for you to join any of the family groups?

23. Have you ever been a member of any group before? If yes, what made you quite?

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CURRICULUM VITAE

BIO DATA

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EDUCATION BACKGROUND

PERIOD	INSTITUTION	AWARD
2010-2013	Adventist University of Africa	Masters in Pastoral Theology
1999-2000	Bugema University	Post Graduate Diploma in Education
1995-1998	Bugema University	Bachelor of Theology
1977-1983	Mpigi Secondary School	Ordinary and Advanced level Certificates
1969-1976	Kisenyi Primary School	Primary Leaving Examination Certificate

WORKING EXPERIENCE

YEAR	PLACE	DESIGNATION
2013-	Masaka SDA Church (South Buganda Station)	Station Director
2009-2012	Najjanankumbi SDA Church	District Leader
2005-2008	Mityana SDA Church	Zone Chairman
2001-2004	Kitimbwa SDA Church	District Leader
1986-1994	Nabitalo Secondary School	Teacher
1984-1985	Katuugo Primary School	Teacher

I, the undersigned, certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief, this CV correctly describes me, my qualifications and my experience.

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