

postmodern world using kindness and love.

Fifth, several recommendations and suggestions will be provided for lay people, pastors, directors of departments, and presidents of conferences trying to implement in their fields a dynamic and effective evangelistic program based on friendship and interpersonal relationships.

The researcher is expecting the following results from this project:

1. Contribute to the fulfillment of the "Great Commission" in the North Brazil Union territory.

2. Strengthen and motivate pastors, local leaders, and church members to be engaged in a relational evangelistic method.

3. Build people's ministries and change people's lives in families, churches, and communities.

4. Give support to both the membership and leadership in the North Brazil Union, challenging them to work together to experience and implement relational evangelism.

5. Help leaders and church members to know how to develop effective teamwork in the North Brazil Union, and how to utilize more effectively the relational evangelistic method to lead people to the kingdom of God.

This project will show that relational evangelism which follows Jesus' friendship method is one of the best strategies to reach people for Jesus in this secularized and changing world. All members and church lead-

ers will be mentored, taught, and motivated to participate in an evangelism program focused on interpersonal relationships, friendship, and love.

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Title: A Model for Small Group Ministry in the North Zambia Field of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

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The purpose of this dissertation is to develop a contextualized model for small group ministry in the North Zambia Field to enhance the retention of new members.

While the numbers of members being baptized annually are encouraging, the percentage of members dropping out of the church annually is a cause of great concern. Between 1996 and 2006, the North Zambia Field, through baptism or profession of faith, had 72,652 converts, an annual average of 7,265 converts. However, 17,303 or 23.82 percent of those added and 2.70 percent of the total membership dropped out of the church through apostasy and going missing. This annual loss of church membership poses a seri-

ous problem for church growth. The largest number of members dropping out of the church in the North Zambia Field consists of newly baptized members brought into the church through various evangelistic activities. Many of these new members are either unchurched or coming from different denominations in Zambia. When these new believers come from such varying backgrounds into the Seventh-day Adventist church, there is a great need for spiritual nurturing, training for discipleship, and pastoral care as they bond with established church members and develop a sense of belonging in their local church families. However, because so many people are baptized at short evangelistic efforts, without first being grounded in the practices and doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, many new members either return to a life without faith or return to their previous churches. Some of the reasons they give for dropping out of the Seventh-day Adventist Church include: lack of spiritual nurture, lack of discipleship training and lack of pastoral care to help them build relationships and bond with established church members. One way to address this problem is to encourage churches to form small groups to spiritually nurture, train for discipleship, and provide pastoral care to help new members to assimilate.

The resources used for this research come from James White Library at Andrews University in

Berrien Springs, Michigan. Other sources include the Bible, the writings of Ellen G. White, certain officials of the North Zambia Field Office, and the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church website statistics for the Zambia Union Conference. In view of the fact that the researcher lived in the United States of America from 2003 to 2008, some of the research data was obtained by telephone interviews with people living in Zambia at the time. The interviews attempted to find out why the new members drop out of the church in the North Zambia Field—especially members who come into the church through evangelistic efforts. Research data was also collected from North Zambia Field departmental directors' records such as the Secretary's Quarterly Report. A questionnaire was mailed to district pastors in the North Zambia Field to discover the reasons why new members drop out of church. These data were integrated with the researcher's first-hand experiences as president of the North Zambia Field from 2000 to 2002, and several years of experience as the Zambia Union ministerial secretary responsible for church growth.

The researcher expects to start implementing the small group model for membership retention upon his return to Zambia. By God's grace, he expects to see positive results as the model is implemented.