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The Development and Evaluation of a Program for Bible evangelism To Be Used by Laymen Employing Small-Group Methods as a Basic Format

Johnny Durant Johnson
Andrews University

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ABSTRACT

THE DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF A PROGRAM FOR BIBLE EVANGELISM TO BE USED BY LAYMEN EMPLOYING SMALL-GROUP METHODS AS A BASIC FORMAT

by

Johnny Durant Johnson

Chairperson: Benjamin Reaves
Title: THE DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF A PROGRAM FOR BIBLE EVANGELISM TO BE USED BY LAYMEN EMPLOYING SMALL-GROUP METHODS AS A BASIC FORMAT

Name of researcher: Johnny Durant Johnson

Name and title of faculty adviser: Benjamin Reaves

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Theologically in the Old and New Testaments the laity or "God's own people" are commissioned with the responsibility of communicating the gospel to the world in word and life. However, the contemporary Christian church finds itself under growing criticism for its failure to fulfill this commission. Although the gospel of Jesus Christ offers solutions to man's inmost needs, an increasing number of congregations seem unable to meaningfully promulgate their message. This study contends that a chief weakness is the lack of genuine Christian life and fellowship within the churches.
What approach or means can be taken to encourage and stimulate spiritual renewal and outreach within the church? It is suggested in this project that through the organization of church members into small Bible study groups, spiritual and evangelistic renewal can be effected. These groups using what has been termed relational Bible study as a basic format serve as cells for spiritual communication, nurture, and outreach. Teams of two formed the nucleus of the initial larger field practicum groups. The main principle of this approach was that after the cell groups had reached a certain point of maturity, they invited interested nongroup members (church members and nonchurch members) to join them.

Study sessions were informal and followed a participant-sharing relationship rather than a student-teacher pattern. This situation allowed for a free and open atmosphere. The intent was that participants were not to feel threatened or "called upon" to give answers to questions for which they might not be prepared. Additionally, the reluctance of those desiring to join the groups for their Christian fellowship and Bible discussion would thus be reduced. It was further intended that a mutual relationship of trust, confidence, sharing, Christian concern, and fellowship (koinonia) should be established within the groups.

The project was structured in the form of a training program for Bible evangelism to be used by laymen with the above-mentioned relational Bible study and small-group method at its core. To this end, seventeen trainees were involved in a training program
over a period of ten months. The program consisted of four phases: (1) motivation, (2) workshops, (3) practicums, and (4) evaluation. It was actualized in the context of a local church situation to observe what impact it would have upon the church as an influence for spiritual renewal and outreach. The first phase entailed the distribution of questionnaires, church-growth seminars, film discussions, preaching and lay-emphasis programs. The second featured a series of workshops stressing relational Bible study and small-group methods. The third required the trainees to take the leadership in Bible studies within the full group. Later they were responsible to arrange studies with outside contactees. The fourth was an evaluation of information gathered for indications of the program's effectiveness.

The results indicated that some impact was made on the immediate spiritual life of the church. A new sense of concern was aroused in spiritual renewal, greater missionary witnessing, and social outreach. Some cohesiveness was evident within the group structure. Church members and leadership (pastors and lay activities leader) indicated optimism about the future effects of the program. Specific recommendations with respect to future applications suggested that pastors should: (1) explore Bible evangelism in the form of small-group relational Bible study, (2) take the initiative in instructing their congregations in small-group witnessing and the concept of koinonia, (3) recognize that evangelism must manifest a concern for the total man through visible community social outreach, (4) recognize the potential
for implementing small-group evangelism which is to be found in a
careful use of Wednesday prayer meetings, the writings of E. G.
White and other literature, as well as workshops and other
appropriate resources.
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A Project Report
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Ministry

by
Johnny Durant Johnson
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[Signatures of committee members with dates]

Dean, SDA Theological Seminary
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I express my special gratitude to Marion and Ruth White for making their lovely home available to me for the many days and nights that I spent alone in its comfort writing the text of this report.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this project was to explore the possibilities in small-group methods for evangelistic outreach. Spiritual renewal for the participants was a hoped-for by-product.

The church is sent into the world to gather men from every nation into the family of God. Evangelism is the essential mission in which the church participates in partnership with God. As one writer has put it, "Christians are fond of saying that evangelism is the work of God. I suggest that this is not so. Evangelism is the work of the church."

Effective mission or "discipling" must follow the methods of Christ. The life of Christ took the form of the suffering servant as He ministered to human needs of every description. This would suggest that if the church is to fulfill its role as the servant of God's mission, it must manifest a Christlike sensitivity to human needs and misery at points of disunity and suffering. The shape of Christ's mission took the shape

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or form of personal evangelism which church leaders today claim
is the secret of church growth. As McGavran explains it:

We find as we study church growth around the world,
that the church grows best when every Christian is
trained in, and works at evangelism.1

The ultimate goal of God's mission is the reconciliation
and unity of the whole creation in Christ. This envisions all
men as brothers in Christ and potential members of His church.
This implies that the work of man's reconciliation to God is of
such magnitude and complexity that its fulfillment will require
the full involvement of the laity in realizing the goal of the
church's mission. Changes in church structure and organization
are necessary if it is to become the missionary church, which
it must if the gospel is to be heard in the world. Opportunity
must be given for more lay encouragement and participation in the
affairs of the church.

The great potential of the church in the future is not
to come from theological seminaries but from lay persons
who recognize their own gifts of the Holy Spirit and who
seek to use them, both within and without the church.2

However, only as the church ministers to the problems
and struggles of the laity in the present world, will the laity
in turn become genuine ambassadors of reconciliation in areas of
modern life to which the church has not access (e.g., government,
business, industry). The ultimate goal of God's mission there­
fore begins within the structure of the church.

1Donald A. McGavran and Win Arn, How to Grow a Church

2Bruce L. Blackie, Gods of Goodness (Philadelphia: The
Any church structure that serves the life of Christ must be mission-oriented enabling Christians to be open to the Spirit's power to unite them across all social barriers in the cause of reconciling men to God. It is within the experience of a small group sharing fellowship and insights that the path to spiritual transformation and eternal redemption is likely to be discovered.

Evangelism and church renewal complement each other, and both are being effectively realized through small-group methods. This is the consensus of many church leaders and ministers. Following is a typical statement:

Renewal is beginning to come to the Church. I have seen it in small groups of people who have passed through the institutional phase of Christianity to the priesthood of all believers. And I have seen it in a rebirth of our mission to the world.\(^1\)

Another has commented:

Since it is our conviction that there cannot be true evangelism apart from the renewal of the Church, we seek to encourage renewal through the interaction and involvement of small groups whereby the congregation honestly shares its needs, problems, and blessings with one another and through the power of the Holy Spirit, released through such koinonia, is able to carry on spontaneous evangelism with those previously unreached by the Church.\(^2\)

**Justification for the Project**

Justification for the project, and the incentive for its undertaking, are based upon the following points:


1. Theologically, in the Old and New Testament, the laity, "God's own people," are commissioned with the task of communicating the gospel to the world.

2. It is generally accepted by Seventh-day Adventist church leaders that only with lay involvement can this commission be realized in its fullness.

3. The gifted pioneer writer of the Seventh-day Adventist church, Ellen G. White whose counsel the church takes seriously, urged that "members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church members, but for unbelievers." The same writer stressed that "Every church should be a training school for Christian Workers. Its members should be taught to give Bible readings. . . ."

4. This training can best be implemented through a systematic and planned program.

5. Research indicates that group discussion and participation tend to be more effective in changing attitudes and behavior than "enlightenment" or "persuasion" through the one way lecture communication.

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Description of the Project

Arrangements were made with the Calvin Center Seventh-day Adventist church to provide the field setting for this component of the project. Both pastor and lay activities leader consented to support its program. The project was divided into four phases which may be briefly outlined as follows:

1. Motivation: Questionnaires were distributed in the church to members, lay activities leader, and pastor seeking their personal opinions concerning the present lay activities program. Further motivation was attempted through preaching, lay emphasis programs, lay evangelism films, and literature.

2. Training preparation: A series of workshops were held in the church stressing relational Bible study and small-group methods. Literature on group-dynamics procedures selected from the bibliography, Resources for Small Groups, and other sources was used to provide material for study, discussion, group activities, and handouts. Movies and film strips were also used as instructional media.

3. Application: Trainees made Bible presentations to the training group for the purpose of developing practical skills. In further practicums trainees contacted persons who were not members of the church but were interested in gathering together for Christian fellowship and Bible study. Gatherings were held in houses of church members or the house of the contactee.
Beginning studies were in a free conversational style. It was desired that out of these studies Koinonia relationships could be established.

4. Evaluation: Questionnaires were employed to obtain feedback from trainees, church members, the pastor, and lay activities leader. The possible effectiveness of the program was originally scheduled to be evaluated for its six-month impact, however the evaluation was actually conducted after ten months.

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1Koinonia is one of three Greek words for church in the New Testament. It means "mutuality" or "commonality" (like having all things in common: Acts 2:42). We translate this word "fellowship," but it is deep and loving fellowship.
CHAPTER II

THE SMALL GROUP--A CONTEMPORARY PHENOMENON

It is an observable fact that in many areas of society (e.g., industry, education, sociology, mental health, and religion) there is an explosion in the use of small-group methods. This trend has been especially pronounced within the past two decades. Behavioral scientists are assigning numerous roles to small groups. Group training is seen today as useful and basic in management, business, and numerous working organizations.

Kurt Lewin is generally accepted as the founder of modern group dynamics because of his work at the University of Iowa in the mid-1930s. Through his later work at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology group dynamics was established in the academic world. Pioneer work was also done in the field of interpersonal groups by Elton Mayo and his associates. The National Training Laboratory (Institute for Applied Behavioral Science) formed at Bethel, Maine, in 1947 for teaching group dynamics has brought together many specialists in the fields of

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1 Lewin organized and developed the field theory, a "method for analyzing causal relations and building scientific constructs."

psychology, sociology, education, and other disciplines. They examine critically the problems of group dynamics and their teaching methods. The work of the NTL has provided great impetus for the contemporary small-group movement.

Group counseling is at the forefront of methods for dealing with personality problems, serious mental illness, alcoholism, drug addiction, troubled families, and even weight control. The literature on small groups is abundant and more is being written. Small groups are being used in the renewal of church life in a variety of ways.

a. Small groups are being used for educational purposes, e.g., The Institute for Advanced Pastoral Studies.

b. Small-group insights are enriching ongoing boards and committees.

c. Small groups are valuable for Bible study, prayer and discussion.

d. Small groups can lead to action in the world, e.g., Groups can organize as social service groups and spearhead projects.

e. Small groups enrich seasonal worship programs.

f. Small groups improve communications through preaching, e.g., Groups organize themselves into small units to discuss sermons and provide feedback.

g. Small groups may focus on personal growth, e.g., Groups meet for sharing, and discussing personal problems.

h. Some churches organize into mission groups.

i. Small groups are used for therapeutic purposes, e.g., The pastor if trained may work on his own, or with a psychologist in discussing deep personal problems.\(^1\)

Definitions of Small Groups

It may be helpful in the understanding of small-group functions to review some descriptions and definitions of small groups as they appear in the literature.

For a body of persons to be considered a group there must be some interaction. In addition to interaction between group members, there will typically emerge four features of group life which may be outlined as follows:

1. The members share one or more motives or goals which determine the direction in which the group will move.

2. The members develop a set of norms which set the boundaries within which interpersonal relations may be established and activity carried on.

3. If interaction continues, a set of roles become stabilized and the new group becomes differentiated from other groups.

4. A network of interpersonal attraction develops on the basis of the "likes" and "dislikes" of members for one another.1

There are, then, five characteristics which differentiate the group from a collection of individuals. Group members are (1) interacting with one another. The group share a common (2) goal and (3) set of norms, which give direction and limits to their activity. They also develop a set of (4) roles and a (5) network of interpersonal attraction, which serve to differentiate them from other groups.

According to Hare, small groups include all those having from two to about twenty members. It is pointed out, however,

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that even larger groups may be considered "small" if face to face interaction is possible, and collections of fewer than twenty individuals may actually include several smaller groups.¹

The most commonly used definition of a small group is that given by R. F. Bales:

A small group is defined as any number of persons engaged in interaction with each other in a single face-to-face meeting or a series of meetings, in which each member receives some impressions or preception of each other member distinct enough so that he can, either at the time or in later questioning, give some reaction to each of the others as an individual, even though it be only to recall that the other person was present.²

Face-to-face dialogue is central and basic in a small-group relationship. The group should not be so large it hinders deep and personal sharing of self with others, and others sharing themselves. Some researchers in small-group dynamics suggest that five may be the optimum number. W. R. Bion favors three as the minimum size. Two members have personal relationships; with three or more there is a change of quality—interpersonal relationship.³

Small groups are of special interest to a number of churchmen who are of the conviction that the small group or Koinoia movement is the key to effective church renewal and revitalization. In this context some envision the small group as eight or twelve believers gathered to minister to each other.⁴ The latter figure

Another view as to what constitutes a small group holds that there is no exact specification of how large a group may be before one no longer feels it appropriate to call it a small group. It would be misleading to attempt to name some exact number. The usefulness of the designation "small group" presumably rests on the fact that size is a condition that limits the amount and quality of communication taking place among the individual members. This factor effects the character of interpersonal orientations that members develop toward each other irrespective of group size. There is, nevertheless, the importance of optimum size as it relates to group satisfaction. A review of the literature on small groups suggests that a numerical definition favors a group size of between five and twelve persons, five being the optimum.

At a time when the traditional church is losing much of its relevance and spiritual impetus in a secular world, church leaders are seeking to discover its mission, creatively revive its spirituality, and expand its fellowship. The small-group meeting in this respect is increasingly presenting itself as one answer. The definition of a small group in its relationship to church function

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1Research shows that as the size of a discussion group is increased from five to twelve members the amount of consensus resulting from group discussion will decrease. It was found that as the group becomes larger than twelve members, the trend toward factionalism becomes more apparent. See A. Paul Hare, "Interaction and Consensus in Different Sized Groups," Group Dynamics Research and Theory, Dorwin Cartwright and Alvin Zander, eds. (Evanston: Row, Petersen and Company, 1953), p. 517.

2Hare, Handbook, p. 224.

3Ibid., p. 243.
and purpose provides background for the main area of research with which this report is concerned. Therefore two definitions of a "small group" in the context of congregational life will be considered:

A personal group is a small number of persons (four to twelve) meeting face-to-face regularly for the purpose of the study of the Bible (scriptures) and of the Christian faith, for prayer, for the exchange of experience, needs and insights, and for taking thought as to how they can best fulfill their calling as Christians to love and serve God and other people.

The small group is a laboratory in Christian experience where serious saints and interested friends meet to explore scripture, pray, and share each other's burdens in a mutual search to know God's will and carry it out.\(^1\)

The word "ecclesiola"\(^2\) is appearing in church renewal literature signifying that which may serve the essential purpose of being instrumental in relating Christian life to the major corporate structures of our modern life (e.g., business, industry, government, education, social welfare). Such an approach will allow for a Christian style of life to emerge at these points. The church as an institution does not have access to these areas of life to any significant degree, but only through its members. Lay groups, dedicated to Christian witness and outreach, do have access to these areas of society in their daily routine of work, business, and leisure. The ministry of the laity in the form of mission-oriented group activity for the spiritual nurture of those


\(^2\) "Ecclesiola" refers to groups within the Church. Discussed more in detail in section "Small-Group Evangelism in the Post-Apostolic Period."
within the church and the discipling of those without is the essence of "ecclesiolae." Such groups are called, among other names, "koinonia groups," which expresses the deep love, brotherly concern, and fellowship that was integral in early Church life. A revival of this quality of Christian relationship, centered in group fellowship lead of the Holy Spirit, is viewed as a most promising avenue to church renewal.

The Use of Small Groups

The use of the small group is being rediscovered for utilization in new capacities. In the ward of the psychiatric hospital, a patient's relation with the other patients has had therapeutic effect on his mental condition. In the classroom, it appears that the extent to which the instruction is "teacher-centered" or "learner-centered" has an effect on the learning process. In the field of sociology, researchers who formerly studied whole societies or institutions are now recording the behavior of small groups under laboratory conditions.

There seems to be a parallel between the increasing and rapid rise of interest in small groups and industrial development. As industrial development increases there is a corresponding depersonalization of society. The population shift in large urban areas following in the wake of technological upsurge has produced a dehumanizing effect on the population. Intimate interaction between people at significant levels has been largely replaced by contacts of a superficial nature in places of business,
public buildings, factories, and on crowded streets and throughfares. One refers to the "interpersonal vacuum" that this condition has caused for many people. By means of small-group activities, situations are created where meaningful relationships can be established and personal renewal realized.

Research results which come in from laboratories of institutions of learning are being supplemented by applied research in the armed services, hospitals, industrial plants, court houses, and government bureaus. These sources alone are responsible for more than one thousand books and articles relevant to the study of social interaction in small groups.\(^1\)

Increasingly, within the last few years, therapy-type group meetings have been widely used in helping many meet the problems of loneliness. Likewise, sensitivity groups, encounter groups, and T-groups\(^2\) have been employed in cases of people longing for identification, acceptance, self-expression, and meaningful contact.

It is to be acknowledged that some excesses and abuses have been practiced in the small-group field. This is expected when people in desperation are seeking a solution or relief from their personal conflicts and problems through newly conceived channels. Unskilled and untrained leaders posing as professionals have brought undesirable results to some small-group circles. Because of these abuses some have been opposed, but many others

\(^1\)Hare, \textit{Handbook}, p. vi. \quad \(^2\)Training groups.
are benefiting from them. However, this should not blind anyone to the facts of human nature—the need for one another. John Casteel has the following to say about the use of small groups:

The intensive group experience has been said to be, perhaps, the most significant social invention of this century. Certainly Carl Rogers is right in calling it one of the most rapidly growing social phenomena in our nation. Small groups have exploded into every part of our social order—institutional, and organizational, corporate, educational, and religious.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) effectively uses the small-group technique in its program. People have been struck by the rapidity with which men and women grasp the program. A new person will come into a meeting and listen to two or three talks by alcoholics who tell about what life was like before they met AA, what happened to them through AA, and what life is like now. An analysis of a number of self-help groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous; Tops; Recovery, Inc.; and Synanon, found some common features to exist among them. Among other things, it was observed that the principle of honest sharing of experience by group leaders was a common factor that was most successful in affecting behavior change. Alcoholics Anonymous uses small informal class group meetings to facilitate honesty and openness in their spiritual approach to helping people deeply in need of change.

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1 Barlow, Small Group Ministry, p. 36.
3 Barlow, Small Group Ministry, p. 38.
The truth which the group receives is experimental, a truth that is only really seen and understood by participation. The import is that alcoholics, male or female, are sometimes speaking cogently and persuasively about their AA experience a few days after it has begun. One way of learning more is to articulate and express to others what you are beginning to understand yourself. The entire group gains strength by the interaction of sharing and listening—strength to resist the temptations of alcohol by the strong desire and sense of determination to achieve the expressed victories and common goal of individual group members.

In many ways, Alcoholics Anonymous parallels small-group discipline that is proving effective in the church renewal movement. In his book Small Group Ministry in the Contemporary Church, Ed Barlow states his positive view on the use of small groups in Christian and church development.

A small-group meeting can be a laboratory in Christian experience where serious Saints and friends explore scripture, pray, and share one another's burdens. They stimulate positive change, growth, maturity, and wholeness. The need of these small-group meetings in the life of the church is becoming more obvious.¹

When one speaks of "group life" in the church, he refers to the experience in a local congregation of unity and singleness in Christ. Believers are drawn together in a shared identity as the body of Christ. There is a deep love and commitment between body members. This atmosphere is largely absent in the churches today,

¹Barlow, Small Group Ministry, p. 22.
a condition that causes Christianity to stagnate and stop growing in the family, the local community, and the world. Increasingly, churchmen are proclaiming the value of group activity in the redemption of the church. Elton Trueblood sees great contemporary significance in small religious groups. Describing these groups as the hope of the world, an alternative to the futility of the present age, he holds that Western civilization could be saved by "little redemptive societies" of spiritually concerned Christians.¹ The best chance for the renewal of the human spirit in the twentieth century, as in the first, lies in the formation of genuinely redemptive societies in the midst of ordinary society. He sets minimum requirements for society membership as seen in the following listing:

1. Commitment to Christ.
2. Willingness to witness to another.
4. Willingness to perform Christian work (vocation).
5. Personal discipline.²

In describing the ineffectiveness of the church community responding to those aspects of life now separated from areas of the residential church, Colin W. Williams observes:

The case for saying that the Church is suffering from a local "edifice complex" seems very strong. Moreover, it would seem that the form of the local residence congregation is so turned inward, that it is oftenwell nigh impossible to reverse its direction in order that its life may flow outward into the structures of the world's need.³

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²Ibid., p. 61. ³Williams, Where in the World, p. 12.
Williams offers as one of the steps in addressing the "edifice complex," which has carried over from the parish system in medieval Europe (and does not adequately encourage Christian social concern in the human sectors of present industrial and pluralistic society), the need of "small-group" life within the church.

What is now needed? Thought and experimentation seem to be proceeding in two directions; focusing on the first. First there is the development of "small group life" (often called koinonia groups)—places where opportunity is given for the discovery of self-identity in the free and open meeting of persons. Here again, we may see two bases for small group life: (i) around the Word and in seeking immediate awareness of God's will in prayer and mutual care; (ii) around a shared concern in the world—a neighbourhood, a common task, a particular problem. These are by no means exclusive bases. In fact, there is evidence that it is when these two centers coalesce—the "vertical" gathering around the Word and the "horizontal" gathering around a worldly concern—that there is a vital rediscovery of mission.¹ (Italics supplied.)

Some churchmen envision small groups as a necessary condition for the coming of the Holy Spirit, a major last day biblical phenomenon.² William T. Ham of the Church of the Savior, Washington, D.C., makes the statement:

Only where a small group of disciples is gathered in His name is He present with that peculiar power which He promised His followers. That is to say the existence of a small group of persons committed to fellowship is a necessary condition for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Large groups can ordinarily be so blessed only when there exists within them such dedicated groups of disciples.³

¹Ibid., p. 13. ¹  ²Acts 1:17 ³Barlow, Small Group Ministry, p. 29.
The Structure of Small Groups

A group in its simplest structure, and this project is concerned with the simple "small group," is a social aggregation that has a major structure of an internal and external boundary. It is evident from the following figure that there are three regions to be considered. The external boundary which separates the external or environment from the group space, and the major internal boundary which divides the group space into two areas, the leadership and membership regions. The external boundary represents those factors which meaningfully distinguish members from nonmembers and the major internal boundary represents those factors which meaningfully distinguish membership from leadership.

There are at least two other types of social aggregations: those with an external boundary with no internal boundaries (parties), and those lacking both external and internal boundaries (crowds and masses). The latter two groups have dynamics which are different from those of organized groups. However, this report will confine itself to a discussion of structured or organized groups which are characteristic of small groups, especially those employed in religious bodies. These groups include other peoples that are of academic, practical, or scientific interest. These groups have two things in common: they distinguish between members and nonmembers, as well as between leadership and membership.

The combined external boundary and the major internal boundary represent the major group structure. Being "in" the
group is determined by the position of the individual in relation to the external boundary. The group within the external boundary has a definable form or structure consisting of its membership. This includes roles, patterns of authority, and communication network. A group whether large or small may have a consistent or changing membership. Its members may be heterogeneous in beliefs, values, characteristics, and life style, or they may be homogeneous. These factors have a significant influence upon dynamics within the body of members. If it is a small group with a consistent, homogeneous membership, the group seems to

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be motivated or inhibited with greater force than a larger or heterogeneous one. The psychological factor is that psychological pressure that one person can exert on another is more pronounced in a small group. This is due to the ability of such groups to satisfy personal needs of their members more adequately. Large groups minimize the opportunity for its members to become acquainted, and those groups with weekly turnover minimize the opportunity or the potential for gratifying the needs of the group for personal interaction or group achievement.

Within the structure of groups people take on distinctive roles. Among them is the role of leadership. The leader will initiate and coordinate, plan and make decisions, and will have the greatest influence in group activities. Leadership roles may be performed by a single member or rotated among the group members in less centralized groups. The one with the greatest influence on the group (the informal leader) may not be the designated leader. A young worker in the youth department who is aggressive, discerning, and active in the activities of the youth church may in fact be the leader of the group. Other roles commonly found in groups may include the clown who brings humored relief at tense moments. Oliver Wise, the expert problem solver who has his head full of knowledge and facts to address every problem raised; Mr. Defiance, who challenges group leadership and authority; Simple Simon, who is the object of joke and criticism; and Henry Hero, who is respected and looked to for the final solution are found in almost every group. In time, these and other roles stabilize
among members of the group. This role stability contributes to
group security and process.

Irrespective of the desire and intent of group members
for equality among themselves there evolves a structure of
authority based on different influence patterns among its
members. Group influence ranges from highly authoritarian
to somewhat permissive; from a style of harshness to one that
is calm and easy going. In each group there are those who
influence others but whose manner discourages others from in­
fluencing them; and there are those who are readily influenced
but rarely influence change in fellow members.

Communication networks are structured in terms of
direction and content. The communication may be oral or written,
its direction of flow is fairly constant. Usually each person
directs the bulk of his remarks to only two or three persons,
irrespective of group size. Since communication is man's mode of
influence, the direction of its flow gives some indication as to the
pattern of influence as well as the interaction network. The
trend of individuals is to direct communication toward people
of higher status, opinion makers, and those supporting their
views. The network of group communication has much to say about
its process.

The principles of group structure which have just been
discussed combine to give advantages to small groups that are
not characteristic of large ones. It might be emphasized that
small-group structure in terms of size is an important factor.
Although the size of the natural group\(^1\) varies with the age and a number of other population characteristics of a social nature, casual work or play groups most often are composed of two (dyad) or three (triad) members. The average size for teen-age gang is about ten.\(^2\) Significantly, observers find it easier to identify leaders in discussion groups of about six members than either larger or smaller groups.\(^3\) The optimum size for a small discussion group may favor five members, since members are not generally satisfied with smaller or larger groups. In smaller groups some members may be urged to be too prominent, and in larger groups the vocal members may have frequent opportunity to speak. In the latter group the less forceful person may be ignored. Advantageously, with a numerical structure of five, strict deadlocks can be avoided and members can swiftly shift roles.\(^4\)

"Small" also suggests a structured seating arrangement which affords and encourages face-to-face relationships. If group members are to learn to trust and become trustworthy themselves, as well as to love and be loveable, they must become deeply involved in each other's lives. To develop this kind of relationship they must share themselves with one another. This demands time and is enhanced by eye-to-eye dialogue. Thus,

\(^1\) In terms of effective participation in group activity, it may be that certain group sizes are more natural and occur more frequently than others under particular conditions. Age seems to be a variable which is related to size in this way. Age maturity appears to permit effective large-group participation. Pre-school children play first individually, then in pairs, then in larger groups. See Hare, *Handbook*, p. 225.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 244.  \(^3\) Ibid.  \(^4\) Ibid., p. 245.
seating is an important factor in the dynamic relationship and communications network of a group.

The Dynamic Process of Small-Group Attitudinal and Behavioral Change

This section will discuss group change, attitude, and behavior under the impact of group forces with special emphasis on cohesion. Attention will be given to group cohesiveness as it relates to group effectiveness and church renewal. Finally, observations on the need to balance socio-psychological with spiritual factors relevant to changed or renewed church life and mission conclude the section. Successful group life must take into account the dynamics of group forces which relate to the personal interaction or those involved. Within this relationship attitudinal and behavioral change hopefully take place.

Three forces are concerned in the effective survival of a group. First, there are external forces that threaten to disrupt a group at any given time. This may include any force whatsoever that does not come from the members themselves and that threatens to intrude into group space. Secondly, there is internal agitation which arises from the action of members who tend to disorganize the group according to their individual proclivities. Thirdly, there is that force which opposes both pressure and agitation and comes from the need of the loyal members to maintain the orderly existence of the group and is called group cohesion.

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1 Berne, Structure and Dynamics, p. 71.
2 See Figure 2, page 25. 3 Berne, Structure and Dynamics, p. 72.
Helping people in an organization to develop and change is one of the important areas of emphasis in the secular approach to organizational change. This change involves more than external organizational factors such as the meeting and worship format in the case of a church organization. An external change without taking into consideration the people involved sets up a conflict with expected patterns of behavior. Behavior patterns are largely molded by organizational norms. Unless a view is taken of the people concerned, most members of a church will regard such changes as threatening. Their reaction will be one of opposition and struggle to get back to the normal church life of the past. Unfortunately, in the matter of church renewal,

1Ibid., p. 70.
changes have been initiated for which the members were not ready. The necessary attention has not been given to change in attitudes that are vital to successful change.

It is to be realized that human personality is complex, and scientists in all probability will never understand it completely. Psychologists and other social scientists suggest that the small-group discussion method of teaching is the most effective way to influence change in human behavior.\(^1\) Research shows that change strategies rely not only on changes in organizational structure but also on "normative re-education." The strategies focus on the attitudes, norms, values, and the internal and external relationships of the organization's interpersonal system. Such strategies recognize that successful change may require alteration or re-education of these and thus pay primary attention to the people in the organization.\(^2\)

It should be stressed again that the objective is to change human behavior. If teaching is aimed primarily at gathering simple facts for students to memorize, then the lecture method on occasions may be superior to group discussion. On the other hand if the aim is to change behavior and attitude, group discussion has been experimentally demonstrated to be the best teaching technique.\(^3\) Group discussion and participation effects a twofold communication process; namely,

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\(^1\)Hare, Handbook, p. 287.


\(^3\)Hare, Handbook, p. 287.
(1) To involve the people in the organization in working out their own solutions. This requires setting up structures which permit them to work together to define their goals and solve the problems that arise in trying to reach them. It also necessarily involves helping the people in the organization to learn to discuss openly their feelings and ideas about the changes that are being worked out. (2) To help the people in the organization develop personally: "release and fostering growth in the persons who make up the system to be changed."¹

According to this school of thought it is imperative that organizational change must be preceded by personal change of attitude.

The small group at this point becomes the essential, most effective medium of change strategy. Kurt Lewin, a psychologist at the University of Iowa, reports:

Perhaps one might expect single individuals to be more pliable than groups of like-minded individuals. However, experience in leadership training, in changing food habits, work production, criminality, alcoholism, and prejudice all indicate that it is usually easier to change individuals formed into a group than to change any one of them separately. If the group standard itself is changed, the resistance which is due to the relationship between individual and group standard is eliminated.²

We will now examine "group cohesiveness" in the process of change. The term revolves around the group's warmth, closeness, and attraction for its members.³ The degree of cohesiveness found within a group depends upon some of the following factors:

¹Bennis, Benne, and Chin, Planning of Change, p. 48.


Size: The smaller a group, the more cohesiveness it will have. As the size increases, the opportunity for interaction among its members decreases.

Homogeneity: The more similar the members are in experiences, values, beliefs, and other characteristics the more cohesive will the group be.

Change in group membership: A group may adapt fairly well to the addition of a few members, but cohesiveness of the group will tend to decline. Rapid growth may pose a threat to the warm and close fellowship of a small congregation.

Openness and frankness of communication: If group participation is in an atmosphere of mutuality, love and deep fellowship, there will be the willingness to share thoughts, feelings and personal life freely. Such interpersonal relationship develops strong cohesion bonds.¹

The impact of cohesiveness on group effectiveness is significantly important to church renewal and group attitudinal change. When group members demonstrate confidence in each other, as well as affection for one another by sharing themselves, there evolves a deep bond of acceptance and change of interpersonal attitude among them. There is an accompanying behavioral change providing an ideal context for church renewal.

In recent years many people have found a void in their psychological life created by the diminishing strength of the family unit. Unable to find fulfilling personal interaction with others, many have been gripped with a sense of personal anxiety and dissatisfaction. The church now has the opportunity and the responsibility to fill this void by developing small, close, sharing groups among its members.²

Renewal in the church first demands renewal in the lives of individuals in the congregations. Significantly, the impact of the small group on the spiritual life of the congregation can be equally as effective as it is on psychological life. Reasonably,

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 96.
it holds that the more concrete the tasks of a group, the easier it is to measure whether or not the members of a church are growing spiritually. However, to appreciate group effectiveness, the problem must be studied as it relates to group cohesiveness. The more cohesive the group, the greater its impact will be realized on the group in all aspects of individual behavior, notwithstanding performance. A group that is lacking in cohesiveness tend to perform at different levels of efficiency.

Stanley Seashore has shown in his research that performance levels will be rather close in highly cohesive groups. Whether the level be high or low, determined by group goals, each person in his respective group will produce about the same as all others in the group. It was observed that favorable relationships with the organizational leaders favor high goals as well as high performance. This has meaning for the church in that the ideal group situation for the church is one in which interpersonal relationships, attitudes, and goals uphold ideals and changes in the context of a highly cohesive group.

The small-group dynamic as it relates to church renewal needs balance because along with socio-psychological factors are the spiritual factors. The group receives depth from devotion and prayer, and dimension from witness and work. As an agency of spiritual renewal to nurture the church within and evangelize without the small group must be facilitated and guided by the

spiritual processes of prayer, Bible study, fellowship (sharing), and witnessing. These processes are imperative to group life and congregational change in the course of church renewal.

The fostering of spiritual maturation within the church is of the highest significance to the fulfillment of the church’s mission. The principles of Christian development and church growth are founded on the aforementioned elements. At the same time these processes are open to innovation as to the ways they can best be implemented in each local church. Although some methods of application may be generally used, the most effective approaches will vary from group to group and from time to time. Creativity and imagination in developing new approaches to these spiritual processes is the promised work of the Holy Spirit.

Then said He unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.¹

It should be axiomatic for Christians that it is only in the attitude of common dependence upon the Holy Spirit and of common responsibility of behavior toward one another in prayer and fellowship that the Holy Spirit provides His people with those graces which will enable them to increase the knowledge and understanding of the Word among people. Such attitude and behavior will build faith and be used for the service of God in the world.

The life and ministry of Christians in small groups has a long history. In the following chapter examples from selected periods are cited.

¹Mt 13:52.
CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SMALL GROUPS IN THE
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Small-Group Evangelism in the
Ministry of Christ

The Christian church had its informal beginning or roots
in the work of Jesus Christ with a small group of men. The twelve
disciples composed a special nucleus of an undetermined number of
Christ's disciples. The twelve were being prepared for a special
task. "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city
of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep
of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom
of heaven is at hand" (Mt 10:5-7).

It was the strategy of Jesus to meet these men regularly
in learning and interpersonal situations for the purpose of
teaching them lessons in God-like living and their future work
of evangelism. Love and fellowship were at the heart of His
teaching.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one
another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.
By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye
have love one to another. ¹

¹Jn 13:34-35.
Genuine love takes on increased meaning in proportion to one's understanding of his neighbor's needs and weaknesses. These are best made known through an interpersonal small-group relation­ship such as Jesus sought to establish with His disciples. Face­to-face relationship characterized the greater portion of the personal ministry of Jesus. This observation attests to the suggestion that many of His evangelistic efforts were small-group situations which could only permit such intimate association. Christ spent much time in private homes ministering to families and the small audience that may have gathered there.

Our Saviour went from house to house healing the sick, soothing the afflicted, speaking peace to the disconsolate. He took little children in His arms and blessed them, and spoke of comfort to weary mothers. . . . He met every kind of human woe and affliction.¹

New Testament records indicate that these small, private gatherings significantly served as evangelistic media for Christ's gospel outreach (Mt 9:23-36, 26:6-13; Mk 2:1-5, 15-17; Lk 10:38-42; Jn 20:19-22).

Jesus appointed seventy "other" disciples to His fellowship (Lk 19:1-11), organized them into dyads, and sent them forth as evangelists. However, it was the particular training of the twelve that mainly exemplified small-group evangelism in the ministry of Christ. In His relationship with them were present all the ingredients of "koinonia":

In the narrative of the gospel as given in Mark chapters 8-10, Jesus took these special acquaintances of His apart from the crowd and instructed them in the ways of discipleship. He was deliberately training them for the future leadership of the church after His departure to heaven. It was not the crowds who received the most intense preaching and instruction but the little group of men who became the foundation stones in the early Church.

Small-Group Evangelism in the Early Church

A review of the life of the early Church will show that its approach for evangelism or outreach stressed community. The early Christians found their strength and witnessing power in the commonality of faith, and in bringing others into the Christian community centered around Christ. They conceived of evangelism through community as the primary function and purpose of the Church.

It was nothing else than witnessing to the gospel of Jesus Christ and renewing the divine life by worship and service in the Christian brotherhood. In whatever station of life Christians were, slave or free, they felt themselves to be in the world, but not of the world. They had tasted the salvation of God and little else about earthly circumstance mattered, save the spreading of that gospel and the work and worship of God in the life of the Christian community.1

Early Christians did not regard the church as an institution; rather it was viewed as a group of holy people, a "congregation of saints." It was their practice to gather in small companies and meet in various houses (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Phm 2). As components of the whole body of Christ, they gathered for fellowship and edification, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). From these meetings they went forth scattering and sharing the faith in market places, towns, villages, and cities of the Roman Empire—even to the emperial palace in Rome (Php 4:22). Robert Raines in his New Life in the Church has observed:

There is no question that the witness of laymen is the most powerful weapon in the church's arsenal. It was this lay witness as described in Acts that was the strength of the Early Church. It is lay witness which promises a renewal of the church in our time.2

To this statement one may add from the work The Layman in the Church:

In the early church, Christians formed groups or communities within a pagan society, and Christianity spread by a quality of enthusiastic preaching, example, and suffering which was catching. In its freshness, beauty, and revolutionary quality, it simply caught on.3


Early congregations took on the pattern of a "scattering church."
The history of the book of Acts relates that Christians were con­tinually involved in spreading the good news of the gospel in the temple, in their homes, and in the streets.¹ The record of Acts is firmly substantiated by the historical works of the celebrated historian Neander:

The first Christians assembled daily either in the Temple, or in private houses; in the latter case they met in small companies, since their numbers were already too great for one chamber to hold them all. Discourses on the doctrine of salvation were addressed to believers and to those who were just won over to the faith, and prayers were offered up.²

The spiritual impact that these gatherings had on the life of the group is further described:

As the predominant consciousness of the enjoyment of re­demption brought under its influence and sanctified the whole of earthly life, nothing earthly could remain untransformed by this relation to a higher state. The daily meal of which believers partook as members of one family was sanctified by it. They commemorated the last supper of the disciples with Christ, and their brotherly union with one another. . . . Thus every meal was consecrated to the Lord, and at the same time, was a meal of brotherly love.³

The house churches of the New Testament period were centers of evangelism as new or unchurched persons were brought into their circles of love.

¹Acts 5:28, 42.
²Dr. Augustus Neander, History of the Christian Church (London: Henry G. Bohn, York Street, Covent Garden, 1851), p. 23.
³Ibid.
Small-Group Evangelism in the Post-Apostolic Period

The post-apostolic period witnessed the rise of the institutionalized church. During this period, although "churches" were built, they were not "local" or residential churches. These structures were built at the main crossroads of social intercourse—in market towns or at places of central government. From these central points Christians radiated out in a variety of "gathered" forms, often still in homes.¹

Small-group evangelism lost its early church character as other forms of church life began to appear with the institutional church. The church was institutionalized in buildings to express its responsibility to Christianize the visible culture.

It should be noted, however, that it was thought necessary to set up monasteries which in their cloister effect did preserve some idea of a "special group" or "community." Church writers point out that it was small monastic fellowships which produced the power to awaken the Church from the doldrums of the Dark Ages.²

The time came in the Middle Ages when the secular world settled down to small, local community life. The life of the community was centered around the local parish church. It was here that the familiar world of the parish with its local congregation, central church building, and ordained clergy first appeared. This form of church life, the residential congregation housed in

¹Williams, Where in the World, p. 4.
²Raines, New Life, p. 79.
the residential church, has now lasted for almost ten centuries. However, over the past two or three hundred years there has been a sporadic and gradual resumption of small-group emphasis in church life. In the latter half of the seventeenth and the first of the eighteenth centuries, Philip Jacob Spenser, a Lutheran clergyman, founded German Pietism. He believed that the Word of God should be more widely diffused through religious gatherings (collegia pietatis) of lay people where the Bible was read and discussed under the guidance of the pastor. The mission involvement and brotherly concern that early church groups manifested for one another in their communities and for the world outside was encouraged by Spenser. It was his belief that

The Christian lay-people should be encouraged to take a more active part in practical church work, such as religious instruction, mutual edification, and care for the salvation of others.\(^1\)

His position quickened interest in small-group activities, such as prayer meetings and Bible study, and encouraged private devotional meetings.\(^2\)

Spenser with August Herman Francke, in connection with the Pietistic movement, promoted the formation of "ecclesiola in ecclesia" (smaller groups within the constituted church) to serve as spiritual leaven for the larger church by promoting a "living Christianity."

John Wesley, who was much influenced by Francke, organized a "small society" of young men for the cultivation of personal

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\(^1\) Qualben, *Christian Church*, p. 364.  \(^2\) Ibid.
piety and doing good. One of the four Oxford gentlemen in the group besides John Wesley was his brother Charles. Later George Whitefield met with them. The impetus John Wesley received from this small group was the beginning of his great Methodist movement. They disciplined themselves in Bible study, prayer, and Christian witnessing.

One of their rules required that they should frequently "interrogate themselves whether they have been simple and recollected; whether they prayed with fervor, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and on Saturday noon; if they have used a collect at nine, twelve, and three o'clock; duly meditated on Sunday, from three to four, on Thomas a Kempis; or mused on Wednesday and Friday, from twelve to one, on the passion." They frequently partook of the communion. They visited almshouses and prisons, and were diligent in efforts to instruct and console the suffering.¹

The place of small groups in the early Church parallels somewhat the later history of the Advent movement during the first half of the nineteenth century. After the "Great Disappointment of 1844" when Christ did not return to earth as the Adventists expected, the years 1845-48 were a period of intensive Bible study for the leaders. Determined to discover the error in their expectancy, they organized a series of Bible conferences.² Of course, these conferences were essentially small groups of believers, praying together, studying together, and sharing their spiritual insights and biblical findings. The end point


of the whole experience was for the purpose of fulfilling what
their church believed was its gospel mission to the world.

Throughout the post-apostolic period some Christian
believers have united in small-group relationships in seeking
spiritual growth, scriptural understanding, mission achievement,
and God's direction and care in their lives. Though not all
such examples can be traced in this study, there is enough
support for the position that:

In this free impersonal relationship of the ecclesiolae;
the waiting upon the truth that the Holy Spirit brings to
His people through the Word and the readiness to hear what
this offers and demands in life today there lies the first
secret that opens the way to renewal. It is within the life
of a small group sharing insight that this path to growth
into Christ is most likely to be discovered.¹

Concluding this historical investigation of backgrounds
of small groups in various periods of Church history, it is now
necessary to turn to some important theological considerations.

¹Williams, Where in the World, p. 66.
CHAPTER IV

THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS WITH RESPECT TO SMALL GROUPS IN THE CHURCH

The Doctrine of Man

Man was created a personal being which presupposes a life of relational experiences. With a social personality, man came forth from the hand of God prepared to occupy a unique and central position in the earth. However, God did not consider man complete in himself, "And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make an help meet for him" (Gn 2:18). With the creation of Eve for a social companion after Adam's own nature, human relationships had their beginning. Of this relationship it is said:

God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided "a help meet for him,"—a helper corresponding to him,—one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him.¹

The nature of man betokens an appreciation for love and sympathy which are manifested through relational experiences—a social nature. The physical, mental, and spiritual makeup of man

indicate he was created for such experiences. The desire for companionship and social relationship are universal and basic desires.

The writer of Patriarchs and Prophets comments on this aspect of man's nature.

Man was not made to dwell in solitude; he was to be a social being. Without companionship, the beautiful scenes and delightful employments of Eden would have failed to yield perfect happiness. Even communion with angels could not have satisfied his desire for sympathy and companionship. There was none of the same nature to love and to be loved.\(^1\)

Human companionship and sociality realize their richest fulfillment in the context of family life. The doctrine of man has its most significant meaning in the concept of the family relationship. This would be expected as man was not only created in the image of God, but was created to ultimately exist in relationship (as his Creator exists in a relational context between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost); "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." (Gn 1:26).

In the New Testament there is no dogmatic discussion of human nature and its problems anymore than in the Old Testament. What is found is a new center around which the ideas of the Old Testament can arrange themselves. This new center is the personality of Jesus, around whom all the problems of God and man ultimately gather. The new features in the teaching of Jesus are due rather to a redistribution of emphasis than to a change of content. In the Old Testament, the fellowship of God and man

\(^{1}\text{Ibid.}\)
rests on the two cardinal conceptions of divine kingship—"For the Lord most high is terrible, He is a great king over all the earth" (Ps 47:2)—and divine fatherhood—

Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath brought thee? hath He not made thee, and established thee? (Dt 32:6)

Jesus brings the concept of fatherhood into the forefront, emphasizing the family relationship among men (Lk 15:32; Mt 23:8-9). The whole idea of the family—fatherhood, sonship, brotherhood—is the unifying concept in His doctrine of human nature.

This emphasis on the family relationship implies social relationships one with another. The life of the individual Christian, as he conceives it, necessarily expands into social relationships; the resultant obligations can be adequately discharged only in the spirit of love prompting mutual service (Mt 25:35-36). The particular problems of duty are to be solved by the principle that spiritual interests are supreme and that the heart of those interests is found in the attitude of love to all men. Especially is this attitude related to the Christian society.

The family conception of the doctrine of man requires the involvement of the Church in the process of calling men into God's family relationship (Mk 16:15; Jn 15:16). It is out of the concern for mankind's spiritual and social welfare that the Christian, viewing all men as potential members of God's family, reaches out to help. Small groups may be the best means of this outreach.
The Incarnation

The incarnation was an act of redeeming love that was experienced through the medium of fellowship. Fellowship presupposes involvement without which the following purposes of the incarnation could not have realized:

1. To reveal God to the world (Jn 1:14, 18; 17:6, 26; 1 Ti 3:16)
2. To bear sin (Is 53:6, 11; 1 Pe 2:24; Heb 9:28; Jn 1:29)
3. To destroy the devil and his works (Heb 2:14; 1 Jn 3:8; Jn 12:31; 16:33; Rom 8:1-4)
4. To bring God and man together (Gn 28:12; Jn 1:51; 1 Pe 3:18)

Christ's involvement in our lives as represented by the incarnation challenges Christians to become involved in the lives of one another. Fellowship and involvement complement each other. One cannot be devoid of the other. Sharing and burden-bearing are part and parcel of fellowship.

He is despised and rejected of men: a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.¹

Christ came to experience the deepest fellowship with mankind. It is through sharing deep feelings, personal experiences, conflicts, trials, and spiritual life that one knows and becomes known. It is through such understanding that one can truly

¹Is 53:3, 4.
fellowship and become his brother's keeper. Only when one understands his fellow man, his fears, and problems can intelligent and appropriate help and ministry to his needs be given.

In the same way it is only by such an attitude of mutual concern on the part of others toward all that all can be effectively ministered to. The importance of this form of fellowship is clearly emphasized in Scripture: "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal 6:2) and "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another" (Jas 5:16).

The incarnational fellowship of God through Jesus Christ finds expression and meaning in the koinonia experience of Christians. Koinonia as an in-depth group relationship presents itself as possibly the most promising hope for the spiritual renewal of the contemporary church. It is the particular small-group relationship of koinonia where the purposes of the incarnation find meaning in an atmosphere of love, devotion, prayer, and mutual concern.

**Doctrine of the Church**

The body of Christ is the chief metaphor employed by the Apostle Paul to draw out a theology of the Church. It is no mere organization, but a definite organism analogous to a living body. The Church does not exist only in the realm of

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1Rom 12:1-5; 1 Cor 12:1-27; and Eph 4:4, 12-13, 15-16.
ideas, but it is a divine-human, visible-invisible phenomenon—the body of Christ.¹ It is presented as a plurality, or a body of individual members, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body; so also Christ" (1 Cor 12:12). Paul further states in Eph 4:8-12 that the Holy Spirit works through the members of the body of Christ to build up each individual part. In this respect, the church is a body of believers working for the development and growth of the whole body. One's understanding of this church-body metaphor will inform the doctrine of the church and its relationship to small groups.

To this end, it is important to emphasize that unity, and interdependence are highly valued principles of relationship between the members of the church body (1 Cor 12:20-21). The extent of this relationship within the church body is given special stress by J. W. C. Wand.

... Within this society, all people of whatever race, colour, or tongue were made one because they had become members of Christ, and thus shared in the unity of His person. ... In it the single person and the whole of humanity achieved the destined end of their being.²

Paul's body-image of the church points to some basic characteristics which emphasize the nature of the Christian's relationship to Christ and to one another. In his many sided

¹ 1 Cor 12:27.
body-metaphor of the church are the following principles which are fundamental in the doctrine of the Church.

1. The Church is analogous to the human body.
2. It has a common dependence on Christ the head.
3. It partakes jointly of His Spirit.
4. The membership is interdependent.
5. Christ is the central figure of unity.
6. Responsibility for mutual service is centered in Christ.¹

With respect to the historical introduction of these doctrinal principles into Christian theology, Alan Cole makes this observation:

... In saying this we do not deny that the concept of a "body" and its "parts" was widespread at the time, especially in Stoic cosmology, nor that Paul may well have met it in that context (though, as we have said, it seems to have roots in dominical teaching); but we assert that what was determinative for Paul in his development of the metaphor was the thought of believers' common, or rather collective, relationship to their Head, Christ; and this makes his use of it distinctively Christian.²

However, the origins or roots of the doctrine of the church are secondary to the more important issue of fellowship and unity among the believers. Throughout the bulk of Paul's writings on the nature of the church this outline of thought can be traced. When the church at Corinth was threatened with division this was to him an anomalous situation as reflected in the body of Christ, the symbol of Christian union. In his epistle to the Corinthians he

²Ibid.
poses a question on division in the context of Christ: "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor 1:13) It is impossible and inconceivable that Christ Himself should be divided. Likewise the Christian body of whom Christ is the head is an indivisible fraternity.

As a community of fellowship and love, the church forming the body of Christ has the function of continuing the work of Christ. It concerns human beings in community. Its main function is to manifest Christian agape, or love, which is nothing less than the determined effort to serve the highest good of all men. Thus the church continues the work of Christ and brings to men the experience of God's love. Small groups seem to be an ideal situation for Christian fellowship and community.

As already noted, the Church newly founded by Jesus Christ was composed of a body of only twelve men which He sought to nurture into a fellowship of love. This fellowship later took the form of interpersonal ministries among early church groups after the ascension of Christ. The house churches (Acts 5:42; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Phm 2) experienced the reality of scriptural injunctions to fellowship. They followed the course of receiving or welcoming one another (Rom 15:7), bearing each other's burdens (Gal 6:1), and provoking one another to love and good works (Heb 10:24). It is imperative to its spiritual health that the church body continue to mediate these dimensions of relationships.
The church of the Scriptures is essentially a distinct community of closely bound believers. Paul's body metaphor of the church affirms this, and the first century church was characterized by the love of its members for one another. Group life was evident in their relationship.
CHAPTER V

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Motivation

The opening phase of the project involved the initial task of creating a desire on the part of the members of the Calvin Center Seventh-day Adventist church to participate in the program of Bible evangelism through small-group methods. Arrangements were made with the church pastor and lay activities leader to request their cooperation in the project. Both consented to give full support to the program hoping that it would help the spiritual life of the congregation and the church's Christian outreach. These initial contacts were held in January 1976.

Over the next four Sabbaths following this meeting efforts were put forth to motivate the congregation toward a deeper commitment to lay evangelism. The efforts included the preaching of a sermon on Lay Activities Rally day, special announcements, the showing of a lay activities film followed by a feedback session, and the distribution of a questionnaire on

1 The congregation was predominantly a black rural middle-class constituency.

2 The pastor was later transferred to another pastorate. He was succeeded by a new appointee who was in office for approximately the last six months of the project.
These activities were followed by a church growth seminar for the church board.

Board members discussed the church's growth profile from large charts. The suggested remedy to the unhealthy condition of the church's growth was personal evangelism through laymen trained to work in "small groups." A renewed emphasis on evangelism was encouraged on both the pastoral and laymen levels. While the pastor planned for public- and large-audience outreach, the laymen were to be trained for private, informal, small-group meetings within homes. Over the period of the training sessions this pastor-laymen evangelistic relationship was emphasized.

On the final Sabbath of the four-week period, feedback on the forty-four questionnaires was reported to the congregation to obtain their reaction. The time factor of ten to fifteen minutes during the lay activities period did not permit adequate time for much dialogue. However, it was stressed to the congregation that the questionnaire responses had indicated that a large majority of the church was dissatisfied with the state of the church's membership growth.

As a result seventeen people indicated verbally or by signed slips their desires to enroll in the program of Bible evangelism. The previous showing of the lay activities film The Challenge of a New Conquest may also have contributed to this

1 See appendix, exhibits 1 and 2.
2 See appendix, exhibits 3 and 4.
The first T-group (training group) met on the fifth week, and continued for thirty-seven weekly meetings from the month of February to December.

During the month of May, as an outgrowth of a lay activities sermon enlarging on the church's social concern, a Community Services project was approved. It involved the renovation and conversion of several old wooden buildings into a Community Services center. Over the next six months, the Bible training group played a leading role in the remodeling activities of the buildings. This work ran concurrently with the Bible training sessions.

Periodically films for the purpose of motivating the congregation toward more participation in lay Bible evangelism were used. The film Conversion Plus, focusing on lay evangelistic responsibility, was used to this end. Literature conferences were also found useful for motivating the group's confidence in group evangelism and ministry. Elizabeth O'Connor's Journey Inward, Journey Outward, as well as her Call to Commitment, were used during separate periods of literary review and discussion.

On the basis of the group's spirit of participation and verbal reaction, the writer was impressed that these motivating instruments were especially meaningful. The Community Services Center, and the possibilities it opens up for future Bible

1 Produced by International Audio-visual Service, Newbury Park, CA 91320.

2 See appendix, exhibits 5-7.
evangelism outreach, was an encouraging "spin-off" of the project.

Workshops

The seventeen trainees decided that a two-hour period each Sunday morning would be most convenient for them to participate in a series of workshops. The first meeting was held in a private home, but later meetings were moved to the lower auditorium of the church.

On the first session the group of five men and twelve women was introduced to the concept of koinonia. Handouts, "Ideas for Groups" and "Aspects of the Small Group as the Church," were distributed. Each trainee was also given a manila folder in which to keep handouts as well as a tentative meeting schedule. Each meeting began with the selected theme song, "The Family of God," which helped in our developing sense of group fellowship. Each workshop session followed a format which allowed an experience in the elements of koinonia as follows:

1. Prayer

2. Relational Bible Study

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1 Because of the personal nature of the workshop sessions first person will be used in descriptive detail. This section will discuss procedures and activities. Feedback and reactions will come under "Evaluation of Project."

2 See appendix, exhibits 8 and 9.

3 See appendix, exhibit 10.

4 Singing helped to introduce a devotional atmosphere and a feeling of Christian fellowship.
3. Sharing (personal testimonies)

4. Mission (these reports on field practicums did not come until later in the program)

During the early sessions, brief presentations utilizing the Spirit of Prophecy, historical and contemporary literature were made to the trainees on the importance of small groups. These provided the group with insights into the purpose of our relationship.

This report will not attempt to relate what took place in each of the thirty-seven or more sessions, for much was a continuation of what had been started in the previous session. However, an account will be given of sessions which introduced new materials, experiences, and results of a significant nature, and which had a bearing on the development of the group for its task. During one of the early sessions (the third), we did some group reading and discussing from L. O. Richard's *A New Face for the Church* and from the booklet *Lead Out* on the purpose or function of small groups. The object was to build group confidence and acceptance of the small-group approach to Christian life and ministry. Copies of statements from the works of E. G. White which support this aspect of Christian outreach and nurture were distributed. Special emphasis was given to the importance of "sharing" self as well as the Word in Christian group ministry.

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1Navigators: P.O. Box 1619, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

2See appendix, exhibit 11.
A film strip, "Beyond the Milky Way," emphasizing the infinity of distance that Jesus traversed in order to identify and share Himself with man was shown. The five ingredients or processes of group ministry (Identification, Affirmation, Exploration, Concentration, Adoration) were illustrated on a large chart.

The group was informed on the meaning of the various ingredients as outlined:¹

1. **Identification:** (a) We need to experience our identity as human, and thus spiritually inadequate. (b) We need to experience our identity as Christ's persons in whom Jesus lives and works.

2. **Affirmation:** Is to communicate to another person that they are important and loved.

3. **Exploration:** Is to study the Bible with an open mind to discover God's point of view, and to bring our life, thoughts, and actions into harmony with Him and each other.

4. **Concentration:** To share our experience of Jesus, and to concentrate on helping each other to see just who He is to us.

5. **Adoration:** To worship God in Word and with our lives.

In another session, as group facilitator, I wanted to test my own honesty and willingness to share my life in depth. I drew an "S" shaped figure in a horizontal position which gave a mountain and valley appearance. Two rather personal experiences in my life were related to the group. One had lifted me up to the mountain

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¹Richards, 69 Ways to Start a Study Group and Keep it Growing, chaps. 2–6 passim.
top and the other had threatened to lower me into the valley. With my taking the lead on this level of sharing, the trainees divided into groups and did likewise. However, I had feelings that trust levels had not sufficiently developed within the group to expect deep sharing at this point. When I raised the question of genuine and deep sharing the group expressed the opinion that their trust and confidence in each other would have to undergo further development.

By dividing the group into smaller groups of four (for the purpose of sharing exercises), foundations were being laid for relational Bible study which the groups were being trained to conduct. The exercise followed the card sequence presented below. The contents of the first card, What is the Heart of the Gospel? was read to the group.

```
What is the Heart of the Gospel?

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man."
Eccl. 12:13

The heart of the gospel is right relationships, and not ideas.
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A second and third card containing statements were given to each group of four persons. The second statement on Sharing from the writings of E. G. White was for the groups' reflection in terms of Christian relationships.
Sharing (Spirit of Prophecy)

We meet together to edify one another by an inter-change of thoughts and feelings, and to gather strength, and light, and courage by becoming acquainted with one another's hopes and aspirations; and by our earnest, heartfelt prayers, offered up in faith, we receive re-freshment and vigor from the Source of our strength. . . . All who are pursuing the onward Christian course, should have, and will have an experience that is living, that is new and interesting. A living experience is made up of daily trials, conflicts, and temptations, strong efforts and victories, and great peace and joy gained through Jesus. A simple relation of such experience gives light, strength, and knowledge that will aid others in their advancement in the direction of life.

2T, pp. 578, 579.

The purpose of the third statement, Sharing Discussion, speaks for itself as it forms the basis of the group's sharing relationship.

Sharing Discussion
Gal 6:2, James 5:16
Rom 15:1

Am I, in the light of scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy, prepared to "share my burdens" with my group members? If not why? (be honest).

Does our group need to build more trust, confidence, and love one for another through prayer?

If needed, end your discussion with each member praying, for power to be worthy of his or her fellow members' trust.
After the Bible study and sharing, we returned to our large, informal circle for a time of comments and reactions to the small group-sharing experience.

In our sixth session we gave special attention to the place of "affirmation" in group ministry. The trainees, after forming their respective groups, were requested to "write one word that best describes the most admirable quality that has thus far stood out in the group member on your right." The groups shared the written remarks among themselves. Back in the large circle some of the statements were shared with the general body. The point was to develop a sense of acceptance among them for their fellowman's humanity in terms of mistakes, failures, and imperfections, affirmation was to assure them in spite of these faults that they were still loved and valued by God and "me."

Up to this session our Bible study had taken the form of a lead text being introduced and discussed in free conversational style. Various members of the group gave a general scriptural understanding and interpretation. There was no particular attempt to detect in the passages a message of self-application, speaking to their own personal life and Christian experience. This approach was initially taken simply for the sake of informality and to stress group participation and interaction. However, the attention of the group was gradually directed to the spiritual benefits of the self-application, or the relational aspect of Bible studies.
The seventh session convened and the group was formally introduced to relational Bible study by means of the following literature, which was given to them for review and discussion:

1. Relational Bible Study (study outline)
2. Spirit of Prophecy Quotations (from writings of E. G. White)
3. Objective of Relational Bible Study (study guide)\(^1\)

With the relational Bible study outline two forms were provided for responses to questions.\(^2\) One set of questions was for the personal study of those preparing to lead the Bible study. A second set was discussion questions. Both personal and discussion questions were designed to convey the relational format of Bible study by posing three questions in reference to the text under study:

1. What does it say?
2. What does it mean?
3. How does it apply to me, and what am I going to do about it?

Members of each group wrote their responses on slips of paper and submitted them to the main circle for discussion.

In endeavoring to build a deep sense of community relationships several approaches or ways of sharing were employed. These varied from the sharing of a group member's personal feeling

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\(^1\)See appendix, exhibits 12-14.

\(^2\)See appendix, exhibits 15 and 16.
about his spiritual life to the relating of a daily experience. One sharing exercise was in the form of group cooperation in solving a group problem. The exercise helped the participants to become more aware of their own behaviors, and they were asked to share the attitudes which influenced their behavior during the exercise.

The group was introduced to conversational or group prayer as a means of enhancing a spirit of togetherness and community. The principles and procedures of this form of praying were prepared in handout form and distributed. In addition, the group felt the necessity of adopting the decision to conform to four group disciplines as indispensible to effective group function. This, as well as an outline of group and growth goals, facilitated the group's further development.

It was realized by the eighth session that six months would not be sufficient time for the program to develop to the point where a significant report could be made on its effectiveness. A number of senior citizens and other members of the group were involved in other church activities which occupied their time and attention. Also the two-hour period permitted only the minimum amount of time for each phase of the session's agenda.

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1 See appendix, exhibit 17.
2 See appendix, exhibit 18.
3 See appendix, exhibit 19.
4 See appendix, exhibit 20.
Although it varied from time to time, the following format was representative of the meetings.

**Meeting Order**

- **Announcements** 10 min.
- **Song and prayer** 5 "
- **Relational Bible study** 30 "
  (formation of small groups)
- **Full-group discussion** 30 "
  (each group presented conclusions of their study to full group)
- **Sharing** (personal experiences, testimonies, exhortations, verbal interchange) 30 "
- **Prayer requests and closing prayer** 15 "

To provide more background on small-group evangelism before venturing out on field practicums a retreat was planned which would revolve around the showing of Christian Witness, a church renewal filmstrip series, and an overhead projector study on Christ's Method of Soul Winning. Portions of the narration for Christian Witness were assigned to various group members for presentation. Film discussion sessions, as well as group activities, filled the day.

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1By Cathedral films. Set of six color/sound filmstrips. Shows potential of small-group fellowship in evangelism. Order from TRAV, 341 Ponce De Leon Ave., N.E., Atlanta, GA. 30308.

2Original study prepared by Eoin Giller, Doctor of Ministry student of Andrews University, 1976.
Group Retreat  
May 23, 1976  
Cassopolis, Michigan  
(Schedule)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 A.M.</td>
<td>Prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00-8:50</td>
<td>Relational Bible Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-9:50</td>
<td>Film-Discussion (Room Full of Miracles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-10:50</td>
<td>Team Building (Discovery)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00-11:50</td>
<td>Film-Discussion (People Who Like People)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-1:00</td>
<td>Sharing/Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-2:00</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00-2:50</td>
<td>Film-Discussion (Point of Contact)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00-3:50</td>
<td>Goal Setting (Discovery)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00-5:00</td>
<td>Christ's Method of Soul Winning-Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benediction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The retreat's emphasis on interpersonal relations had already been highlighted one week previous to the retreat before the group. On that occasion my project supervisor was present at our eleventh session and led a group discussion on "The Relevance of Interpersonal Relations to Christian Outreach."

By this time some group members had shared in the leadership of Bible discussions, thus preparing the way for assigned in-group practicums (class practicums). In this capacity trainees began their roles as facilitators of in-group study. They continued in these roles over the last seven months of my presence with them. However, from time to time I assumed group leadership
for the purpose of presenting new material, leading a discussion on group development, or becoming involved with the group in a matter of problem solving. During the last seven months of my association with the group as project director the actual group leadership was facilitated by the lay activities leader who rotated the leadership among himself and other members of the group. Each member was expected to lead in one 20th Century Bible lesson and in one shorter textual Bible study based upon a text of their own choice.\(^1\) Both were to be conducted as relational Bible studies.

It was felt that our community relationship and spirit of small-group ministry would be greatly enhanced by familiarizing ourselves with the small-group activities of other church groups and organizations. Therefore it was decided to conduct a book discussion session on Elizabeth O'Connors' *Call to Commitment*. Each member of the group was assigned a chapter to read, and each was asked to discuss his reaction with the class. The deep commitment for which the small-group ministries of the famous Church of the Saviour in Washington, D.C., are noted posed a challenge to the group. Since Bible evangelism is a ministry of the highest order, and effective work calls for the deepest sense of commitment on the part of the worker, it was encouraging to know that there are committed groups elsewhere who are making the Christian life a vital experience for their members and their community through an active spiritual and social concern for others.

\(^1\)The 20th Century Bible Course was selected to give group members experience in applying the principles of relational study to Seventh-day Adventist doctrines. See appendix, exhibits 21 and 22.
Later, another encouraging influence was a matter of accident. The group, however, interpreted it as especially significant, maybe a token of divine affirmation and meaningful to the morale of the group. The incident happened during a particular Sunday meeting of the group. I was absent and the group was conducting its own session. As the speaker was giving her review of her reading assignment in *Call to Commitment*, the side door of that particular lower auditorium room leading out to the parking lot was opened. An unknown, neatly dressed, Caucasian lady, estimated to be in her forties, entered the room. She walked over and sat down in a chair near the group. Shortly someone from the group walked over and engaged her in conversation. She explained that she had come into the vicinity seeking the house of a friend with whom she was to attend church that day. However, she became lost and, on seeing this church with the cars in the parking lot, decided to come in. In the meantime, while sitting near the group and listening to their discussion, she became interested in what was being discussed. On being invited to sit in with the group she asked permission to make some remarks. To the astonishment of the group, she informed them that she was familiar with the Church of the Saviour, having attended worship there, and personally knew some of the persons mentioned in *Call to Commitment*. She then informed the group of some interesting aspects of the church's organization and about the committed and dedicated membership. The group felt blessed by her presentation and by the beautiful
prayer with which she closed. The lady returned with some friends on one other occasion to attend a musical program given at the church. Impressed and encouraged by some members of the group I wrote her a personal letter of gratitude for her presence and contribution to the group session on that day. The following correspondence took place:

Dear Mrs.____________________^1

For some weeks, I have been planning to write to you. It was during my absence from one of our weekly small-group meetings which we conduct at our church that you, under rather unusual and interesting circumstances, happened into the meeting. The group reported the pleasant incident to me.

Inasmuch as the group is training for the work of lay evangelism, your familiarity with the outstanding work by the Church of the Saviour, as well as the brief report you gave to the group on its work, was deeply appreciated. Why was it that you so unexpectedly dropped in at the very time we were reviewing Elizabeth O'Connor's Call to Commitment, and you gave such an impressive testimony of the committed lives of laymen associated with the above church? There is a feeling that your appearance was a providential affirmation of the group's being and purposes.

On Saturday Oct. 9 at 5:30 P.M., a film will be shown entitled Conversion PLUS, showing how evangelism happens in a small group. We thought you might be interested, and we want you to visit with us again anyway. Please feel free to bring your friends again, we would love to have them. Also, we would enjoy having you give further information on the activities and the Christian outreach of those committed people who are members of the Church of the Saviour.

The place of the meeting will be at our church where you visited. May the Lord's richest blessings be with you in your Christian witnessing.

If for any reason you cannot attend, please inform us (but we hope you will do your best to attend, we'll make it

^1Name and address of the lady have been deleted from the letter.
a subject of prayer). We would appreciate your reply in any event.

From a fellow Christian,

Pastor J. D. Johnson
Group Leader

Some days later a reply was received:

Dear Pastor Johnson,

Have received your letter and am honored to have you ask me to return. But I am to be in Fort Wayne that week end at a Faith at Work Conference.

Yes—in God's economy every move is meaningful. I too feel that I was given a special spiritual gift to have dropped in unexpectedly at that moment. All the people were lovely to take me to their heart and I am still warm from the experience.

I really would enjoy to see the film and hear what you have to say but! We did enjoy the lovely singing group so how much more could one get on one goofy driving experience.

As to my telling you much more about the Church of the Saviour—I think I'd have to pad it to keep it going. Now you can consider yourself lucky that I am gone that weekend. Please remember me to my lovely sisters and brothers.

In His Name

The reply was read to the group, and they accepted it as further evidence that the visitor's presence was a providential act of affirming the group. The following week after receiving the reply the group conducted a film-discussion session and invited all the members of the church. An introduction to the film was first distributed.¹

¹See appendix, exhibit 23.
Conversion Plus was produced to show how a person's life can be changed through Christ. It is presented in the framework of group and personal evangelism, and demonstrates that conversion is but the beginning of a process by which a life becomes totally committed to God.

After the film "A Self-Examination on Evangelism," a form was distributed for self evaluation and discussion. It brought into focus the fact that conversion means more than profession of faith, that it calls for commitment better expressed in terms of personal and group evangelism.

Through the use of a film "Conversion Plus" the congregation was introduced to small-group evangelism. An announcement was made that in two weeks or so we would be conducting study-prayer groups during the mid-week prayer meeting time. The study-prayer format was introduced to both the Calvin Center and Dowagiac churches. In their respective churches the congregations first assembled in one large group to receive study guides (Group Study in the Ministry of Prayer) and an outline on "The Importance of Studying Faith and Prayer." Small groups of six people were then formed for study-discussion. Each group was requested to write a relational statement as to what the study said to the group as a whole. The groups then reassembled to the large circle for the interchange of their statements. The session was closed with sharing (testimonies) and special prayer requests (the group joined hands and prayed for one another).

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1 Conversion PLUS, produced by TIDINGS, Materials for Christian Evangelism, 1908 Grand Avenue, Nashville, Tennessee 37203.

2 See appendix, exhibit 24.

3 See appendix, exhibits 25 and 26.
In the meantime our Bible evangelism program had advanced to the stage where some trainees had begun their field practicums. The group paired off into teams of dyads, choosing their own partners and planning whether to conduct relational Bible studies in their own homes or in the homes of the contactees. It was hoped that as a result of our Wednesday night study-prayer groups we could expand this evangelistic outreach in time.

However, this element of our small-group methodology mission or task lagged far behind prayer, Bible study, and sharing. Since it is imperative to viable group life that all four elements be actively experienced there was feeling that our program was becoming stagnated on the point of mission. Only half of the eight teams formed were able to make arrangements for their practicums. After reviewing the responsibility of mission or task, we sought to reevaluate the goal of the group in preparation for the work of Bible evangelism. In seeking to determine whether or not the group wanted to continue to pursue the goal or terminate the group experience the group was asked to reflect on the statement of Ed Barlow in making its decision:

Many groups begin with all participants enthusiastic and eager. Then after several weeks the steam goes out of their meetings and no one seems to know why. This may be very natural. Some groups should die and be quietly buried without apology. Others ought to be kept alive for the positive ministry they provide for the participants.¹

Our discussion resulted in the group making the decision to:

¹Barlow, Small Group Ministry, p. 123.
1. Keep the group alive as it was proving a positive blessing to the members. However,

2. The 8:00 A.M. Sunday meetings will be eliminated. These meetings will be held from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. Days of meetings will be alternated between Saturday evening after M.V., and Sunday mornings weekly.

3. Reaffirmation of building a trust community in the group.

4. Appointment of co-leader Ruth White (however, principle of shared leadership places the responsibility of leadership upon any group member as the occasion arises).

At this point some description should be given of how group processes were used in the program. The Bible training sessions were characterized by an informal atmosphere. The participants in subgroups of five or six members recognized that they were free to probe, to ask, to challenge, to explore, to listen, or to contribute. Skills development in group consensus and decision making emerged particularly in connection with disagreement of interpretation of scripture passages and group leadership.

Issues and problems pertaining to group leadership became the medium for a good learning experience. There was a strong feeling within the group over leadership. During the reevaluation of the group goal previously mentioned, the appointment of a co-leader to assist the designated leader resolved a leadership problem which had threatened the group's stability. Here the
allocation of roles and the distribution of power processes were evident.

The group felt strongly that it should continue to function and pursue its goals of church renewal and outreach through Bible evangelism. Therefore, it unanimously decided in favor of continuing to function. This decision is an example of the effective use made of the goal-setting process.

During this phase of the program's group proceedings and decision-making the writer's role in the interaction was that of participant and resource agent.

The dedication of the Community Services center, which was largely the group's project as they worked in conjunction with church Lay Activities department, was a rallying point for new group inspiration and evangelistic outreach. Almost all the members of the group signed forms for active service in the Community Services program as an expression of their social concern and a practical extension of their evangelistic outreach. Total mission (evangelism) involving spiritual and social concerns had been the keynote of the center's dedicatory sermon. Affirmation of the group's evangelistic thrust was pointed out through handouts showing the parallel between the observations of contemporary church-growth researchers and what E. G. White had stated years earlier.

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1 See appendix, exhibit 27.

2 See appendix, exhibit 28.

3 See appendix, exhibit 29.
I met with the group over a ten-month period. Although my presence was recognized, during the latter half of this period sessions were generally outlined and conducted by the lay activities secretary who functioned as leader. However, he shared his leadership on a week to week rotation basis with the other group members.

During the latter half of the period cited above, the group field practicums were also being reported. This involved establishing contacts for Bible studies with nonchurch members. For various reasons almost half of the teams had problems in maintaining the team outreach. Illustrative cases in this regard will be cited in the next section where attention is focused on an evaluation of the project.
CHAPTER VI

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Evaluation Questionnaires

The evaluation of the project consists of the indicative results of evaluation instruments, rather than exact test results under controlled conditions.

The training sessions were tape recorded for the purpose of aiding my recall at a later date on the details of the meetings and an evaluation of the dynamics of the meetings. Also I maintained a written report of the highlights of each session.

As previously indicated the project involved a black church with a predominantly rural, middle-class constituency. Although the group represented four members with college degrees or higher and one with professional secretarial training, the majority presumably represented various levels of elementary and secondary school education. This situation somewhat disfavored the use of sophisticated evaluation tools.\(^1\) Simple ones were devised, which will later be discussed and illustrated.

For the sake of removing tension and relaxing the participants, the group was not required to respond to open-ended

\(^1\)Evaluation tools such as group cohesion measurement or students' personal evaluation of their influence-power in the group were deemed too sophisticated in this study.
questions requiring lengthy answers. Questions were confined to response categories associated with relational Bible studies. One written summative evaluation, however, was made at the end of the training period from anonymous responses to general questions. Previous to this some feedback had been received as the results of a pilot test of the instruments.

The continued interest and attendance of the group with few absentees over the ten months of the training period was some indication of the group's satisfaction with the overall program. From this viewpoint an evaluation might be made about the success of the program. It may be termed successful to the extent that a program for Bible evangelism was developed and completed as the project proposed. The impact of the program on the spiritual life and outreach of the trainees, and the church as a whole, will be discussed in the following sections.

Soon after the program began it was realized that the original six-months program schedule would be wholly inadequate to obtain substantial data for meaningful evaluation. The maturation of ideas, concepts, attitudes, and leadership skill requires time for development. In order to allow time for more significant evaluation, I was afforded an opportunity to extend the training period to ten months. This extension provided

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1 Some senior citizens in the group with lower educational levels gave evidence of tension in the process of expressing themselves literally.

2 See appendix, exhibits 30-32.

3 Due to an extension of the writer's study leave.
more time for course input, learning, and, subsequently, more opportunity for the desired results.

For the evaluation process five instruments were constructed; however, only three were used. A contactees' questionnaire and a statistical survey to study the possible increase of church activities (Bible studies, baptismal class enrollment, church attendance, etc.) due to the program's impact on the church's spiritual life were canceled.1 Our attention will now be turned to the three evaluation instruments which were used.

A desired result of the project was for the successful establishment of "koinonia" relationships through relational Bible studies. Also a personally subjective assessment was to be given of the program's impact on trainees' spirituality, the effectiveness of its methodology (contactees' reactions), its aid to learning, and its contribution to the church's spiritual renewal. Sample responses to these areas of inquiry are represented through the use of three instruments (pp. 74-76, 78, and 80).

Generally, comments were expressions of appreciation and positive views of Bible evangelism employing small-group methods. The final inquiry of the questionnaire called for "any additional remarks or observations." Below is the written comment of the lay activities leader who assumed the eventual leadership of the group. "This has been a boon to me, 'a break through' in and

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1Field contacts were not of sufficient regularity and time duration to obtain significant feedback, nor did the church records show increases in the various areas of activities with which the survey was concerned.
Instrument #1

Trainees Evaluation Questionnaire
for Lay Bible Evangelism Program

**Question:** In what way has this method of study been of the most personal help to you spiritually?

**Sample responses:** (a) "I have learned to be more sympathetic of others' problems; especially those who demonstrate definite negative characteristics which I find objectionable."

(b) "The relational questions asked about whatever I read causing me to get more out of my Bible studying. I feel God's leading more in my life."

**Question:** How would you evaluate the effectiveness of the method in your field practicum—what was the reaction of the contactee to your methodology?

**Sample responses:** (a) "The persons with whom I worked apparently had never had studies of any kind before, but they seemed to have enjoyed the informality of our relational studies."

(b) "I have noticed heightened interest whenever this methodology of Bible study was used."

(c) "It worked well to begin with, but the enemy seems to have put a dampness on it."

**Question:** To what extent was your Biblical learning facilitated by this method?

**Sample responses:** (a) "The small group helped me to feel more like participating in the discussion."

(b) "It caused me to study more deeply each of our texts applying (1) What did it say? (2) What does it mean? (3) What am I going to do about it?"

(c) "It was facilitated in the sense that I got fuller meaning from Bible passages when others participated in it."

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1Contactee's family opposed studies.
Question: How effective do you think the approach used for the studies will be as a means of spiritual renewal and stimulating more church social concern and action than the Calvin Center church has heretofore experienced?

Sample responses: (a) "It has helped to draw us closer together. We see that there are members whose hearts are aching for love and encouragement."

(b) "This approach will prove to be highly effective because it is not just theology, but it puts to practice what has been learned and shared."

(c) "The little we have done to relate our Christian love to human needs through Community Services has helped the church already. Additional people want to join our group."

Question: What is your opinion about the "koinonia" relationship and climate that was purposely developed as an integral part of the studies—did it enhance, retard, or have no effect on the Bible studies?

Sample responses: (a) "It helped me to see the needs of other people. Thus we can make the Bible study more meaningful."

(b) "The koinonia relationship or togetherness enhanced my studies. I felt the closeness of a family. Though we are far from perfection in our trust of each other, yet there is a band of love."

(c) "I have found that people are more concerned with me as a person than as a Bible teacher. Also once they know me as a person they become more receptive to Bible study."

(d) "Did not enhance as much as I wanted it to."

Question: In what way were the studies conducted differently from Bible studies you are accustomed to? If this is your first time of being involved in Bible studies, write "first time" in the space below.
Sample responses:  
(a) "This method is less formal, permits the individual to share what he knows, feels, and understands concerning Bible texts presented."

(b) "These experiences in relational Bible study have been easier and more practical as it gives everyone a chance to express himself and to make a commitment that may be more meaningful than the other method."

(c) "The difference—this one involves having the individual state what it means to him and making a decision as to what he'll do about it."

Comments by two other trainees appear below:

This study has meant much to me. I am determined to become more involved with my spiritual relationship in my community both in service and giving Bible studies.

Some people have been calling me and telling me how the group has aroused them to their need of reconsecration in their lives. People have confessed to me how the group has made them to love others. One lady said she did not see herself until this class started.

There was one point of dissent with regards to meeting time as it appears in writing below: "I like the meetings, just wish we did not have to meet every week." However since a consensus opinion of the group had favored a weekly meeting they had followed this schedule.

The goals of the project include the development of an understanding and appreciation for relational Bible studies. One question was designed to probe their negative or positive effect upon the attitude of the trainees.

Question: Since beginning the studies what significance does making Bible studies relational have for you?
Sample responses:  
(a) "The relational study means that there is a practical understanding of what the word of God means and says to me and others with whom I work; and both of us can determine what we want to do about what we have learned."

(b) "I feel it is the ultimate way to study and be encouraged to put principle learned into practice."

(c) "A deeper appreciation of the meaning of what it says, and what it means to me, and what I will do about it."

On the basis of the trainees' overall responses to the questionnaire, I felt they had experienced an appreciable increase of theological and theoretical insights pertaining to relational Bible study in small-group settings. No one knows as well as the trainees themselves how much attitudinal change, skill, and learning they have experienced from the program. However, I am of the opinion after working with and observing the group that the transfer of these acquirements into a concerted program of church renewal and Bible evangelism will depend upon the quality of future group leadership and pastoral involvement.¹

This second instrument attempted to evaluate the impact of group activity on some general aspects of church life. Responding to general questions which were rated on an assessments scale, the responses were anonymous. This evaluation instrument is reproduced below with tabulation. The tabulation represents thirty-two respondents.

¹The ministry of the laity favors the pastor's role as group facilitator and as a resource for the encouragement of new lay ministries.
Instrument #2
Church Members Evaluation Questionnaire for Lay Bible Evangelism Program

Questions

What in your opinion is the value of the present program for Lay Bible Evangelism in the following respects (extents):

1. Has helped the spiritual growth of the church.
2. Has improved missionary witnessing and community outreach.
3. Has helped to increase brotherly love and interpersonal concern among the members.
4. Has helped to increase church attendance.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Small</th>
<th>Appreciable</th>
<th>Large</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Remarks (Any additional comments or observations).

Sixty-three percent of the total responses were of the opinion that the impact of the small group activities fell in the categories of "small" and "appreciable" while 5 percent felt there was "no" impact. Eighteen percent indicated "large" while 13 percent proved to be undecided.

The responses also reveal that the instrument indicated a congregational awareness of the group's activities as well as the
feeling that they had "some" influence on the life of the church. This is hopeful for the future growth and spiritual development of the church as it raises some vital aspects of church life to the level of congregational consciousness. Such consciousness is a prerequisite to church renewal and evangelistic outreach. A church must realize or sense a need before a plan to meet the need can be devised.

The plan of action in the case of the Calvin Center church was partly centered in the experimental program of Bible evangelism. The relational Bible study conducted in a small-group koinonia relationship brings into consideration socio-emotional values. The total person is addressed in terms of his social, physical, and spiritual needs. The evaluation instrument sought to sample the group's influence on the church's outreach in meeting the above needs. Responses tend to suggest some impact in the three directions.

Positive remarks made by two members emphasize the social (interpersonal) and spiritual aspects of the program.

I think it has greatly increased the spiritual aspect of the church. There seems to be more togetherness, and everyone is eager to attend the classes. I believe that because of this Bible study class the church will be greatly blessed.

It has produced an awareness of each other and of the closeness and concerns needed as a church family working together.

The above views seem to be an echo of other optimistic voices within the church. While visualizing the possibilities of the program, yet they are aware of its present limitations.
The following instrument was designed to obtain an open-ended evaluation of the group's impact on church life as viewed by the church pastor and lay activities leader.

Instrument #3

Church Pastor's and Lay Activities Leader's Evaluation of an Experimental Program for Lay Bible Evangelism

Question: Please give your evaluation of the impact, if any, which the program for Lay Bible evangelism conducted by the Lay Activities department has had upon the Calvin Center Seventh-day Adventist church over the past six months? Draw upon statistical facts if possible (how many people do you have coming to church now that were not attending before the lay Bible outreach program?, etc.)

Responses:

(Church pastor)

It has awakened the members (especially those in the group) to the possibilities that they have for soul winning. I think the average age of the members at Calvin Center would naturally require more time since they are largely in the senior citizen bracket.

It is hard for me to evaluate the program because I haven't seen one conducted before. I honestly had looked for more response, but it may that "one has planted" and the water and harvest may be left for another.

We have considered Elder Johnson's work necessary and beneficial.

Pastor Byron Hill

(Lay Activities leader)

Three persons are now in the baptismal class. Many more are receiving studies with interest. Those in the Bible study group appear to be more deeply committed to soul winning than ever before. I believe great things are just ahead in soul winning. The planned workshop on spiritual gifts should enable group members identify and develop their gifts, and thus increase the service activity of the group.¹

¹The church was invited to participate in a group sponsored post-session workshop on Spiritual Gifts.
The affect of the Lay Bible Evangelism program conducted at the Calvin Center S.D.A. church can be termed successful. It has brought to those who participated a sense of self-worth which has enabled them to better appreciate the worth of others. This has led to a more selfless outreach to others, expressed by the participants in their cooperation to establish a community service center.

The material, visual aids, and exercises used to prepare those who took part in the experience must be given a definite GOOD-PLUS rating.

Pastor R. L. Smith

These evaluations strengthen the perspective of the program as a possible contribution of significance to the spiritual renewal of the Calvin Center church in terms of its soul winning "inreach" and "outreach." Because of the pertinent relationship of the pastors and lay activities leader to the general church program, their evaluation is of special import and meaningful.

However, in final evaluation I will present my own reflections upon the impact of the program and its value to the church and to my own professional growth.

**Personal Reflections of the Writer**

My personal evaluation will be made from the standpoint of the four-fold expectations of this project. It is in relation to these objectives that the evaluation of this project has meaning. The expectations written below will be reflected upon individually in view of the writer's participant-observation experience in the program.

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Expectations of the Project

1. It is hoped that the program will make a worthwhile contribution to the Calvin Center church's lay witnessing outreach.

2. Favorable results in this project may encourage other churches to explore the utility of small-group methods in lay evangelism and other areas of church ministry.

3. It is believed that the project will add to the writer's professional improvement and, as the project develops, will instill in him a deeper appreciation for the ministry of the laity.

4. It is desired that the program and professional practice may serve to inform similar programs in selected urban Seventh-day Adventist churches in Nigeria upon the writer's expected return to that country as a mission worker.

Expectation #1

The lay activities department of the Calvin Center church has been introduced to a somewhat unorthodox approach to Bible evangelism employing a methodology (small group) which is acclaimed by some churchmen as indispensible to church renewal. To develop a core of workers thoroughly acquainted with the program's purpose and trained in its procedures is in itself a worthwhile contribution. The experience has laid the foundation for possible utilization of a method of Christian witness which historical and contemporary sources laud.¹

¹See chapter III.
Presently, the group's influence has not permeated the church. However, its possibilities are realized by the pastor and members of the congregation alike.

It can be expected that innovations will take time to get a following or to get the congregation "onboard," for first they must be "onboard" in mind before they are in body— that is in active participation. Most of the church members' reactions to the program were positive in terms of verbal feedback. However, active participation and involvement in the application of learning has been lagging on both the group and congregational levels. Responses to Remarks on at least two church evaluation questionnaires noted this observation:

I feel that we as members of the group haven't truly developed close interpersonal relationships, that is true concern for each other.

In evaluating the impact of group activity on the general aspects of church life, a second respondent wrote the following: "I have not seen any change."

These responses suggest that it will require more time and continued leadership before the impact of group learning can be fully realized in the active Christian witness of the church. This will require a sustained in-depth involvement by the church pastor. This type of relationship was not evident for varied reasons, such as a change in pastors and failure to program in such a way as to tie the pastor into the program.

Trainees were not able to report that formal koinonia relationships resulted from their field practicums mainly because
of time factors or various irregularities in the studies. The following cases are examples:

One person established a contact in Chicago where she was living during the week. Her associate resided in Cassopolis, and the two, being unable to arrange for a local weekend study at that particular time, were inoperative on a team basis. Another team member reported that he had a contact with whom he was studying, but due to the particular temperament of the contactee, it would be better for him to work on a one-to-one basis for a period of time. Later it was planned to introduce his associate.

Some senior citizens, with which at least one team was conducting studies, found it difficult to effectively participate in the relational method. Their inability to read well and to reason in the line of the self-application of Bible texts posed a problem. The study tended to shift toward a teacher-student relationship rather than one of participation and sharing.

One young lady, according to a class report on a field practicum, was contacted for studies and arrangements were made accordingly. Two team members began to meet with her in her home for weekly studies. It was soon learned that she was being harassed by some members of her family because of the Bible studies. The relational-group approach had to be abandoned and changed over to outlined studies which could be left for the young lady to review in private. Although she could write statements of relational import at the conclusion of her outline, the face-to-face interchange which is important in the group process and relational study was lost.
Another case was that of contactees traveling or canceling out because of personal engagements and family business matters. Also some contactees became suddenly disinterested for reasons best known to the persons themselves. One team explained this latter experience in the statement below.

When the relational studies were given, the person liked coming to the meeting, but when we started the studies where the person had to write out the answer, she stopped coming.

Class practicums were simultaneously conducted with the field practicums. The four operative field practicums were irregularly held and intermitently reported to the group. The positive side of these reports, however, were sources of spiritual encouragement and affirmation which assisted in keeping the group alive.

Nevertheless, in the course of ingroup, or class practicums, a climate of koinonia and cohesiveness made some impressions, as noted in the remarks by two trainees.

**Question:** What is your opinion about the "koinonia" relationship and climate that was purposely developed as an integral part of the studies; did it enhance, retard, or have no effect on the Bible studies?

**Responses:** (a) I feel that the "koinonia" relationship definitely enhanced my Bible studies. I am only sorry that I did not have this climate before.

(b) Very definitely the "koinonia" relationship enhances Bible studies.

Out of the group of seventeen all except one felt that they had experienced a feeling of togetherness, or koinonia. Although it
"Did not enhance as much as I wanted it to," as stated by the one voice, a significant degree of appreciation was noted by the majority.

Expectation #2

An attempt to evaluate the influence, or the extent to which the program for lay evangelism at the Calvin Center church has encouraged other churches to explore small-group methods in lay ministry, cannot be presently determined for obvious reasons. The most apparent is that the program has yet to become an integral part of the church's lay outreach. It should be said, however, that another church pastor and a church lay activities leader became acquainted with the special training program at Calvin Center, requested all the literature that we were presently using in the workshops. Although there was no subsequent evidence that the material was implemented in their church program, a definite interest was shown toward giving study to it with a view toward possible future utilization.

Expectation #3

My experience with this project has brought me to the realization that successful lay evangelism is best effected where the pastor is personally involved in the training process. I have benefited from the instructional material presented, as well as from the small-group processes employed in the experiment.  

1Here again the writer will use the first person.
They have better prepared me to introduce and facilitate group activities related to Christian witness in my future ministry. I have gained deeper insight into the important roles of the pastor as teacher, leader, and facilitator and the impetus these roles give to full congregational participation in the outreach program. This imposes upon the pastor the necessity to involve church members in the instructional process. E. G. White confirms the importance of this responsibility.

The best ministers can give the members of our churches is not sermonizing, but planning work for them. Help all to see that as the receivers of the grace of Christ, they are under obligation to work for Him. And let all be taught how to work.¹

Especially has the project sharpened my awareness of the need to work for and to value a mutual working relationship between pastor and laity. The research for the project has helped me in viewing the ministry not as the prerogative of the clergy, but rather of all the laity in all areas of their lives. This envisions greater possibilities for my ministry in terms of a more expansive and varied ministerial outreach to be achieved through a shared ministry.

My conception of the ministry has been broadened for God calls all people into service. He not only calls them to serve in the ordained ministry but calls them to serve with equal importance in industry, government, teaching, farming, and countless other places and in different capacities. I can

¹White, Testimonies for the Church, 6:49.
appreciate the fact that God has given to the laity different spiritual gifts which the creative pastor can help discover and explore in the interest of evangelism. As a result of this project experience, I feel that I have gained some skills in small group ministries designed to heighten awareness and mobilize those spiritual gifts into the program of the church.

Expectation #4

Close family relationships characterize the Nigerian way of life. Tribal and agrarian life emphasize close interdependence of family life as a matter of survival. Families are highly collective in outlook. Their life style is exercised on the basis of the family approach to problems. Nigerian families largely discuss and solve problems as a family group. They share goods, services, and responsibilities.

As opposed to the American way of life, where culturally people are individualistic in orientation, Nigerians are highly interpersonal in this respect. This situation favors small-group evangelism in Nigeria. Although Nigeria is rapidly passing through an era of modernization and development, continuity accompanies this change. Much of the traditional and tribal way of life is being supplanted by contemporary thought and practices. Yet, much of the "traditional" remains in vogue. Among those traditions maintained is the strong cohesive African family and group relationship. Group Bible study, therefore, fits into this accustomed social pattern.
In a few selected churches located in the larger cities in Nigeria, programs for Bible evangelism employing small-group methods may hopefully find an opportunity for introduction and development by the writer. Nigeria, the largest populated nation in Africa, is ripe for the gospel, and it is through the resources of the laity organized for total evangelism that the gospel task will be finished.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter will attempt to assess the possible significance of the project in the form of conclusions based on the results of three evaluation instruments and the personal reflections of the writer. Recommendations will then be made relevant to the future development and effectiveness of a program for small-group evangelism. The chapter will conclude with a consideration of implications for pastor, local church, denomination, and the writer.

Conclusions from Instrument #1

The conclusions of this instrument seem to suggest that the project had a positive impact on the spiritual and social "concerns" of the trainees. It encouraged in them a renewed sense of responsibility to church and society. The involvement in relational Bible study gave opportunity within the group for the development of an understanding of the importance of interpersonal relations and the meaning of koinonia in the Christian life. Although an in depth relationship of koinonia did not develop, the concept was introduced, planting the seed for its possible future maturation. It should be noted that to an
appreciable degree koinonia was realized and acknowledged. The
technique approach increased opportunity for the sharing of
spiritual experiences and facilitated Bible study through the
process of interaction.

Through in-group practicums and other group activities,
the trainees demonstrated that they had conceptualized and
grasped the methodology of relational Bible study. Questionnaire
responses and the observations of the writer confirmed the same.
The development of the program for Bible evangelism was successful
to this extent. On the other hand the evaluation questionnaire
indicated that the out-group field practicums were not so
successful in fact due to reasons explained earlier in the report.
It might be added, however, as the writer reflects on his own
observations, that the program could have been greatly strengthened
if its design had facilitated more participation of the church
pastor. In viewing his own errors, the writer feels that his
planning and facilitation of more group self-evaluation sessions
would also have been helpful in strengthening the program.

Recommendations

The conclusions presented above would appear to suggest
the following recommendations:

1. As preparation for Bible evangelism laymen should be
   thoroughly introduced to the concept of koinonia and the prin-
ciples of relational Bible study supported by E. G. White
   references.
2. The local church pastor should assume the responsibility to first learn and then instruct his congregation in the methods of small-group witnessing.

3. Local churches might implement on-going training programs for instruction in lay Bible evangelism, employing small-group methods. These programs should initially be under the instruction and supervision of the church pastor and lay activities leader until other leadership has been adequately trained.

Conclusions from Instrument #2

It can be concluded from the indications of the above instrument that the impact of the project on the general church program and the interpersonal relations of the members was "small-appreciable." As previously suggested, time limitation is an important factor in the learning process. Adequate program time must be allowed for training, assimilation, and reflection. Due to the writer's mission field commitment and departure from the States, the program was accelerated to an extent which may have affected the results.

However questionnaire data suggests that some new ideas and concepts were developed. The relevance of witness and spiritual growth to daily life and the place of interpersonal relations in church and society is a case in point. It is the observation of the writer that the church's financial and moral support of the group's Community Services project indicated a new outlook of the church to community outreach and responsibility.
Recommendations

The data and conclusions tend to justify the recommendations below:

1. Group leaders should encourage group support for the church program as well as specific group tasks, thus presenting the group as a creative and positive ministry within the church.

2. Group members, as often as deemed advisable, should invite other nongroup members from the church and the community to sit in on some sessions, especially when special films, workshops, weekend retreats, and other informative occurrences relating to the "group movement" are being presented.

3. The group's evangelistic concern for the total person through involvement in visible community social outreach should find expression in some group selected task.

Conclusions from Instrument #3

The conclusions suggest a corroborative view of instrument #1, namely, the program had a greater impact on the "group" than on the church body. The instrument interpreted this evaluation in terms of "seed planting." It was expressed that the program may have possibly planted the seeds for the church's spiritual awakening to evangelistic outreach or soul winning. The church pastors and lay activities leader responding to this questionnaire enlarged on the expectations which the program offers to the church's spiritual and social outreach.
As a point of observation, the baptismal (or pastor's) Sabbath school class was reactivated at the initiative of the group. Thus it would seem fair to conclude from the observation of this instrument and from the writer's formative evaluation that the project seemingly awakened some optimism concerning soul winning and community outreach.

Recommendations

From the data and the above conclusions came the following recommendations:

1. Initiate Wednesday night study-prayer groups as an introduction of church members to relational Bible study.

2. Educate church members in evangelistic methods making available Spirit of Prophecy literature on small groups and relational Bible study.

3. Encourage members to meet in small groups within their homes for the purpose of prayer, Bible study, and sharing personal Christian witness experiences.

4. Invite qualified persons to conduct workshops or present films on "group concepts."

5. Maintain a weekly pastor's class for instruction-discussion leading to baptismal candidacy.

Implications

For pastor. The first implication of the recommendations for the pastor is the need to see the roles that he can play as teacher and facilitator. However, he must first conceptualize the
theory of small groups before he can conscientiously present it to his congregation and fulfill the above roles. This further implies that the pastor must be willing to study and experiment with group methodology. Not only must he prepare to lead training sessions and workshops, he must become skilled in this leadership and plan opportunities for the involved response of the congregation.

It is imperative that the pastor be a living demonstration of what he desires his parishioners to become. In the development and application of his expertise in group leadership, he exemplifies and encourages group responsibility and outreach as it may apply to evangelism. When a pastor reaches this goal, the Christian witness on the part of the members will be more vibrant and outreaching.

For the congregation. Implications of the recommendations for the church presents the local church with the responsibility of ministering to the total person. Spiritual values find their deepest meaning and utility in the spheres of interpersonal relations and social necessities. To fulfill its task, the church must provide ministries in these two areas.

New life without new mission is a misconception. The two must complement each other. The new mission of the church takes the church into the world and does not wait for the world to come to the church. Through the witness of the laity the local church brings the redemptive influence into the area of man's social needs. Spiritual and social concerns are part and parcel of the church's mission to the world community.
Small-task groups are helping in this respect. However, in a multi-centered and problem-ridden society much is still to be achieved. Each local church must give continued study to the development of groups where interaction between church members can stimulate deeper involvement in community outreach and inward spiritual nurture.

**For the denomination.** The implications for the denomination are several. Included is the continual research of God's Word through study and prayer for the purpose of discovering how to best fulfill the responsibility of God's ministry to the world. This ministry addressed to the total life of society, means the preparation of the laity to witness within the structures of society. The presence of the laity in accomplishing the above task is indispensable. Thus the church "scattered" as well as the church "gathered" becomes a major focus of ministry.

In this respect there is a need to develop the broad potential of the lay ministry to serve in the world. It is expedient that denominational leadership provide special encouragement and departmental assistance to ordained ministers in their roles of helping to train and guide church members in various forms of ministry.

**For the writer.** The conclusions and recommendations of this project have vividly confronted me with a new awareness as to the importance of the pastoral role and with a new desire for greater achievement in evangelistic outreach. The research in "small-group" activities and outreach has provided new insights
into the possibilities of lay evangelism. My vision of the church's mission has been broadened to give more specific attention to social concerns as an integral part of that mission.

Thinking back over the course of my project, it has not been without personal mistakes in phases of my project activity. Programming designed to obtain more feedback (verbal and written) would have helped me to better understand our group's strengths and weaknesses. The understanding would have favored better activity planning and, hence, better group development. More attention given to linking the pastor in the developmental stages of the group process would have strengthened the program immeasurably. Nevertheless the total experience supplied me with leadership skills in group work which will serve me in future small group-programs.

The laity in the structured form of a group, or in the primary form of a one-to-one relationship, is the most potent force in the visible church. To assist in unleashing this force for effective Christian service is true pastoral leadership. My involvement in the project has provided needed preparation for the performance of that responsibility. I am impressed that my future ministry must endeavor to design small-group experiences in the context of koinonia and relational Bible study that will facilitate the personal spiritual growth and social outreach of the church members.
Appendix
Lay Activities and Church Growth Questionnaire

Dear Fellow Member,

Your response to the following questions will give the Lay Activities department of this church new insights in how to better plan its program for soul winning, church growth, and lay training to hasten the finishing of the Lord's work and His soon return.

Thank you for your help.

Check One Response Only (encircle)

1. How do you feel about the Lay Activities program of your church?
   a. Not meeting needs - ineffective
   b. Barely passing
   c. About average
   d. Meeting needs - effective

2. Which of the following activities should receive more emphasis?
   a. Bible study - Christian education
   b. Lay Bible evangelism
   c. Dorcas welfare service
   d. Home visitation

3. I find mid-week prayer service:
   a. Dull and uninteresting
   b. Average
   c. Inspiring and helpful
   d. Routine

4. My present relationship with the church program is:
   a. Involved in lay activities
   b. A passive member
   c. A strong support of the church program, but weak in lay activities
   d. An average member

5. My preference in lay outreach is:
   a. Dorcas work
   b. Jail band
   c. Bible studies
   d. Literature band
   e. Home visitation
   f. Personal Christian help work
   g. Other: ___________________
6. **Encircle as many responses as apply to your case:**

Because of my personal evangelistic outreach there are persons who:

a. Have joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church by baptism  
b. Are now in our church's baptismal class  
c. Are interested in becoming Seventh-day Adventist  
d. Are presently attending church services  
e. I know of no person who I have been instrumental in getting to join or become interested in joining church

Indicate your first two priorities by numbers 1 and 2 (check no more than two responses)

7. I believe, honestly, that as a Seventh-day Adventist expecting the soon return of Christ, I should:

   ( ) Study my Bible more  
   ( ) Pray more  
   ( ) Work for souls more  
   ( ) Attend mid-week prayer meeting regularly

8. Which of the following church programs provide you with the most spiritual strength?

   ( ) Reading Spirit of Prophecy books  
   ( ) Sabbath preaching service  
   ( ) Prayer meeting  
   ( ) Lay activities  
   ( ) Sabbath School

9. Which of the following conditions most characterize your church's lay evangelistic outreach?

   ( ) We have made little realistic effort to reach the unsaved in the surrounding church community  
   ( ) We have very limited, or no specialized program for training in lay evangelism  
   ( ) We have had training, but inadequate leadership  
   ( ) An outreach with great potential if developed in connection with a lay leadership training program

10. My two strongest feelings about the writings of E. G. White are:

    ( ) They are being followed in our church lay evangelistic program planning  
    ( ) The emphasis they put on church members being trained to give Bible studies is the chief secret to church growth  
    ( ) They are not closely followed in our program planning  
    ( ) They contain principles which if followed in planning lay evangelism, the program will be effective
11. Which of the following programs do you feel are most basic to a soul winning program and church growth?

( ) Mid-week prayer meeting
( ) Spirit of Prophecy emphasis
( ) Lay training program
( ) Dorcas welfare service

Underscore your response with a straight line (underline one)

12. What potential do you feel your church has for growth?

a. Poor
b. Limited
c. Average
d. Excellent

13. Are you satisfied with your present church growth?

a. I have not given it any serious thought
b. I have felt that our membership should be more than it is
c. I am not satisfied
d. I am not familiar with the full meaning of church growth

14. If a church grows it must equip its membership for evangelism

a. I have already taken the initiative in preparing myself for some form of lay evangelism and would welcome further training
b. I have not given any serious thought to any particular form of lay evangelism
c. I would be interested in doing Bible evangelism if I had some training

15. Prayer, brotherly love, and united effort in Christ are the keys to successful lay evangelism and church growth.

a. I share this view
b. Unity in Christ is sufficient
c. Prayer and brotherly love are sufficient
Data on Lay Activities and Church Growth based on questionnaires

The forty-four adults who filled out the questionnaires represented approximately 50 percent of a total church membership of eighty-nine members. In response to a question relating to the church's growth rate, twenty-two or 50 percent indicated that they were "not satisfied" with the growth of the church. Another eighteen persons, or 41 percent checked the response, "our membership should be more than it is." Significantly, 90 percent of the people responding to this question, "Are you satisfied with your church's present growth?," indicated negative feelings.

Although, the questionnaires did reveal latent feelings within the congregation about church growth, there was a definite lack of church growth "thinking." This opinion was deduced by the writer from many conversations with the membership related to church affairs. Otherwise, there was no verbal evidence that church growth was a problem, and needed to be addressed. The relationship between evangelism and church growth was suggested in the questionnaires. In response to the statement, "If a church grows it must equip its membership for evangelism," 32 members indicated that they would be interested in doing lay evangelism if they had some training. These were significant responses for two reasons, first it indicated that possibly the motivation procedures were working; and secondly, the respondents would provide the selectees for beginning the training program.
Yearly Growth Rate
Calvin Center SDA Church
1966-1975

Yearly Growth Percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
<th>YEARS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>66-67</td>
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<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>67-68</td>
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<td>70</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>74-75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exhibit 4
Calvin Center SDA Church
Community Services

Before

After
Before

After
IDEAS FOR GROUPS

WHY GROUPS

1. Faces recalled

My first response to the question of “Why groups?” is faces recalled, not reasons marshalled. It is Claire saying, “I never felt forgiven until you people convinced me I’m forgiven.” Young Kim surprised, “I never felt God until tonight.” A Trappist monk grateful, “Thanks for showing me a new way of experiencing Christ.” Dr. M., the educator saying, “I’m back in touch with me, and now at work I can feel my students’ struggles; they are no longer as trees walking.” Chuck, the asphalt man, saying, “For the first time I’m caring about people.” Jean declaring, “I could never have faced him with the truth except for your support and holding me accountable.” Dev exulting through tears, “With others in God’s presence.”

2. It’s koinonia that’s central.

Actually we are not advocates of “groups.” We are advocates of “koinonia.” Groups can mean many things. But every Christian has a root need to participate in koinonia. It is not optional like singing in the choir.

3. What is “koinonia”?

“Koinonia” is one of three Greek words for “church” in the New Testament. It means “mutuality” or “commonality” (like having all things in common). It was integral to early church life: “(They spent) . . . their time in learning . . . taking part in koinonia . . . and sharing in life meals and the prayers.” (Acts 2:42) We translate this word “fellowship,” but its meaning is the deep end of that English word. It is depth community of love and honesty with others in God’s presence. It is “walking in the light,” “with open hands,” or “open heart,” as Henri Nouwen puts it. In koinonia the central issues of the Gospel, (“Man where are you?” and “Where is your brother?”) are not only discussed, but experienced. Here the “Word becomes flesh,” human, personal. Koinonia is to the Gospel what marriage is to love.

4. Fear and the loss of koinonia

Adam and Eve had koinonia with God before the Fall . . . nothing hidden . . . mutuality . . . delight. But guilt destroyed koinonia: “I was afraid, so I ran and hid!” This is what is deadly to human existence . . . no way to handle our shattered innocence, except to hide and to self-justify. When you don’t measure up, what else can you do? But the call of God echoes along the corridors of history: “Man (Adam) where are you when I come to be with you?” That is the koinonia question.

Jesus “hung in” in our place of hiddenness, failure, shame, to give us the courage to be open there. In that place, at last, love prevails over judgment, and it’s safe, though painful, to come into the open, take off our sickly and contrived coverings and walk again in sunlight. This place where fear is overcome by love is the restoration of koinonia. And the Church’s life is the continued expression of that place.

5. How does it differ from other places?

Koinonia comes when we start being personal, in Bible study, for instance, we do not stop with asking, “What do you think?” or “Do you agree?” But we go to ask, “How does this work out in your own personal life?” We seek the replacement of symbolic satisfaction with life questions. Thinking, then, is not the only possibility, but also, feeling, intuition, relationship. The aim is no longer new concepts only, but also accountability, encouragement, prayer, confronting, experiencing. Because it takes the

But koinonia needs a home base. I cannot live it by myself any more than I can experience love without relationship. I need you to keep me growing in God’s love and truth . . . to open my eyes to myself, to you, to Him, to a larger world . . . to come with my desperate need to get free of the deceptions of self-justification, to be affirmed in new hope of continuing, if costly, acceptance, and to discover my own gifts to bless you and others when I offer myself to you in Him. In such koinonia we can become the liberating and liberated sons of God the creation groans in travail waiting for.
The purpose of a small group is to help each one in it to reach his full potential. This is a game where everyone must win—everyone must come out on top.

And the way this is done is called enabling. The word enable means to pull forth from, to call forth, to allow to emerge, to realize the potential of. This is what a small group is all about.

Most people realize about 10 percent of their potential. The other 90 percent lies beneath a pile of fears, failures, broken dreams, painful childhood memories and guilt feelings that add up to make us feel that we are not going to make it in anything we do. And with that kind of outlook, we definitely will not.

This is where a small group comes in. In the company of sympathetic, caring, loving people, we are able to open up and talk about our hangups and fears as well as our hopes and dreams for the future. Instead of getting negative feedback from others, we get positive feedback—affirmation. I affirm you in this venture... I affirm this gift... I affirm this task in your life... Slowly, the affirmation from those we have come to love and trust overcomes the negative feelings we have fed into our computers over the years... and we are able to say, I am worthwhile... I have unique gifts... I can accomplish the thing... I will try again...

Three levels of sharing

All of us yearn for fellowship where we can feel a oneness and call forth the best in each other. In a word, to minister to one another as the Body of Christ. Before this can happen, however, we must run the risk of being known—and this is scary. We are afraid that if people find out who we are inside they will reject us. So, to cover up the real person inside, we talk about the weather, about football, about the latest joke in town. And all the while, down deep inside, we are crying out for love.

But love is the result of knowledge, and knowledge comes when we are willing to let another person know us as we really are.

One of the best ways to bring a group face to face with their level of commitment to each other is to ask them to evaluate their experiences according to the three levels of sharing: (1) mouth-to-mouth, (2) head-to-head and (3) heart-to-heart. The mouth-to-mouth sharing is simply conversational doodling—the weather, football, etc. The head-to-head sharing is more serious in that it is exchanging ideas and concepts—but the exchange is strictly as ideas detached from the persons. The heart-to-heart sharing, on the other hand, lets the other person know where you stand in relation to ideas and how you feel about them on the inside. The heart-to-heart sharing might be referred to as communing... and communing is the stuff from which community is born.

A small group can very easily sit and play verbal volleyball with each other, and this is okay. But don't expect real Christian community in this atmosphere. Community happens when one person dares to say, This is the way I feel... In all honesty, this is where I am... This is me... see me... know me... I want to be a part of you...
IDEAS FOR GROUPS -- 3
and I want you to be a part of me . . . I want you to know me . . . I want to know you—deeply. When this starts to happen in a group, watch out.

Four tips to keep in mind

When one person in a group takes the leap and decides to let the others in on his life, the group is under a real obligation as the Body of Christ to be the ministering servants to this person.

First, don't interrupt. Keep your mouth shut—and let the person talk. The chances are that he has never had anyone in his life to really listen to him. The greatest thing we can offer is our ears. Many times this is all a person needs—and wants. Remember, the greatest counselors are the ones who say the least.

This may mean dispensing with the agenda in your small group and giving over the entire session to a person who really needs to share how he is really feeling and hurting on the inside. After all, the purpose of the group is to enable each other, not to cover the agenda. The leader of the group should be sensitive at this point and be prepared to adjust the schedule. He can ask, Have you said all that you have to say about this? or, Would you like to add anything before we go on? or, Are you trying to tell us something? These questions are enabling questions that let a person go a little deeper in his sharing.

Second, don't probe. There is a thin line between listening and probing, but it is a very important one. To listen is to enable a person to say all that he wants to say. To probe is to make a person share what he does not want to say—and should not reveal at this time. A probing question takes the initiative away from the person who is sharing—and this is bad.

If someone in the group starts to probe, the leader should step in immediately with, Let's let Bill tell it the way he sees it or, Why don't we give Bill a chance to finish what he has to say?

Third, don't give advice. The cheapest thing in the world is advice. Very often, the person with the least information is the most free in his advice—and the results are disastrous. If someone in the group has had a similar experience, he can share his experience—without telling the other person what he ought to do.

If someone in the group starts to give advice, the leader should break in immediately and say, Why don't you share your experience but let Helen make her own application? or, Let's hold off on the advice and stick just to our own experience!

Fourth, don't judge. If the group is really one, some sensitive areas of disagreement in lifestyle, theology and outlook are going to come up. Here is the place where love is going to be put to the test. When you violently disagree with another person, can you give him the right to his own viewpoint? Can you not only affirm him, but release him to be himself to think as he must? This does not mean giving in or making concessions. This means telling him, I cannot see it the way you see it. . . . but I love you and I accept you just as you are and with what you believe.

When this kind of listening, caring, loving, accepting thing happens in a group, you will know it . . . and so will everyone else. This is what it is all about.

Remember, "to enable" is to call forth the best in another person, to see the best in him, to affirm the best in him. Are you an enabler?
Why These Group Sessions?

In these group sessions we are first learning how to build fellowship (Koinonia), so we can share it with those to whom we are preparing to impart the words of God (Mission outreach). We want to accept them into a personal relationship, or fellowship of love which gives living witness, and support to our gospel ministry. Healthy evangelism requires this. However before we can meaningfully fellowship with others, we must first develop it among ourselves.

How To Work As A Group

There are three ingredients to a vital small group: (1) personal growth, (2) group building, and (3) task or mission. These three function like the three legs of a stool. Try to do without any one of the three and the whole thing collapses.

Personal growth has to do with the whole matter of discovering yourself as a person—your unique gifts, strengths and weaknesses; your spiritual and intellectual formation, etc. In a word, to come to terms with yourself as an individual; to be a "whole" person.

Group building has to do with the matter of becoming a team—a community of love, trust, and acceptance where you feel a part of each other and can minister to each other as the body of Christ. In a word, to discover the meaning of "koinonia." But let us give attention to a very important point. A group does not become a group merely by sitting down together. It takes time to become a group—and it takes caring, sharing, forgiving and affirming. Just like marriage.

Task or mission has to do with the matter of taking responsible action individually and collectively to share your life with others. This can be anything from a weekend lay-witness mission to involvement in community welfare service, etc. In the case of this group, all are preparing to do lay Bible witnessing and it should grow in impetus out of our life together.

The trick is to keep all three of these emphases in perspective. Unfortunately, a lot of small groups will emphasize one of the ingredients to the total exclusion of the others. For instance, one group will spend all of their time in study and prayer and end up with spiritual indigestion - while another group will spend all of its time sitting around trying to figure out what to do about poverty and end up spiritually bankrupt. One possible solution to this problem is to assign an equal amount of time at every session to each emphasis. This will keep a group in balance.

Three stages of group building:
(a) History giving.
This means giving each person a chance to share his personal concerns, fears, failures, hopes, dreams, spiritual ups and downs, his present hurts and joys. The group must take time to know each other in depth, and thus offset misunderstanding, etc.

(b) Affirmation.
This means responding as a community of love, trust, acceptance, and forgiveness. It means bearing up each other, and enabling.

(c) Worship.
This automatically follows when "koinonia" happens. Worship as a community means responding collectively to the Spirit of God... "in one mind, in singleness of heart"... (Acts).
Read the following text of scripture and then answer one of the three questions following. Take five minutes to write or note down your answer. Then each member take two minutes to share his or her response with the group.

"When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants did), he called the bridegroom over."  John 2:9  
(Living Bible)

1. In what specific situation have I experienced water being changed into wine? That is, what boring, scary or even tragic circumstances have been transformed in such a way that in them God has revealed Himself to me?

2. At this moment what particular thing is causing me pain, or anxiety? What if any, hope do I have that the water may be changed to wine and the glory of the Lord revealed?

3. What means do I see God using to transform my trying experience and that of others into a good, that is to turn water into wine?
IDEAS FOR GROUPS --6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Relationship</th>
<th>My Present Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Receiving</strong> (Rom.14:1)</td>
<td>I know others who accept and value me as I am.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. &quot;</strong></td>
<td>I freely accept and appreciate others, even when they seem &quot;different&quot; from me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Provoke (encourage)</strong> (Heb.10:24)</td>
<td>I have friends who encourage and stimulate me to keep on growing when I feel low.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. &quot;</strong></td>
<td>I am being used to motivate others to fresh trust when they are discouraged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Forgive</strong> (Eph.4:32)</td>
<td>I freely confess faults to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. &quot;</strong></td>
<td>I have found freedom to forgive others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. &quot;</strong></td>
<td>I am close to others who do ask forgiveness when they hurt me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8. Bear burdens</strong> (Gal.6:1)</td>
<td>I am praying for burdens others have shared with me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9. &quot;</strong></td>
<td>I have recently shared my burdens and know others are praying for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10 Impact</strong></td>
<td>I have a warm feeling that I'm not alone in the Christian life- I'm experiencing what it means to be one of many brethren.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. **Study Groups**: "As we approach nearer the end, I have seen that in these meetings [camp meetings] there will be less preaching and more Bible study. There will be little groups all over the ground with their Bibles in their hands, and different ones leading out in a free, conversational study of the Scriptures." 6T 87.

2. **Fellowship, "Koinonia"**: "From a chapter entitled "Social Meetings." We meet together to edify one another by an interchange of thoughts and feelings, and to gather strength, and light, and courage by becoming acquainted with one another's hopes and aspirations; and by our earnest, heartfelt prayers, offered up in faith, we receive refreshment and vigor from the Source of our strength." 2T 578.

3. **Christian Work Groups**: "The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort has been presented to me by one who cannot err." 7T 22, 23.

"If there is a large number in the church, let the members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church members, but for unbelievers." 7T 22.
Tentative Schedule
For
Training Course In Lay Bible Evangelism

Feb.
29 Intro. to concept of Koinonia

Mar.
7 Intro. to Relational Bible Study
11 Group building (Non-doc. Bible study; identification, affirmation)
21 " " ( " ; enabling, sharing)
28 " " ( " ; sharing, etc.

Apr.
4 Intro. to Doctrinal Study, Sharing, Conversational Prayer
11 " " " "
18 " " " "
25 Weekend Retreat (Introduction to Mission: Field Practicums)

May
2 Field reports, Doc. study, prayer (ongoing group maintenance,
9 " " " (outreach, mission
16 " " " "
23 " " " "

June
6 " " " "
13 " " " "
20 " " " "
27 " " " "

July
4 " " " "
11 " " " "
18 " " " "
25 " " " "

Aug
Guidelines and Counsel For
Personal Interaction in Small Groups
(E.G. White)

"The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort has
been presented to me by one who cannot err." 7T, pp. 21, 22.

Let small companies assemble in the evening, at noon, or in the early
morning, to study the Bible. Let them have a season of prayer, that
they may be strengthened, enlightened, and sanctified by the Holy
Spirit. . . . If you yourselves will open the door to receive it, a
great blessing will come to you. Angels of God will be in your
assembly. You will feed upon the leaves of the tree of life. What
testimonies you may hear of the loving acquaintance made with your
fellow-workers in these precious seasons when seeking the blessing of
God. Let each tell his experience in simple words." 7T, p. 195.

"If there is a large number in the church, let the members be formed
into small companies, to work not only for the church members, but
for unbelievers. . . . Let them keep their bond of union unbroken,
pressing together in love and unity, encouraging one another to advance,
each gaining courage and strength from the assistance of the others.
Let them reveal Christlike forbearance and patience, speaking no hasty
words, using the talent of speech to build one another up in the most
holy faith." 7T, p. 22.

"We meet together to edify one another by an interchange of thoughts
and feelings, and to gather strength, and light, and courage by
becoming acquainted with one another's hopes and aspirations; and by
our earnest, heartfelt prayers, offered up in faith, we receive
refreshment and vigor from the Source of our strength . . . All who are
pursuing the onward Christian course, should have, and will have, an
experience that is living, that is new and interesting. A living
experience is made up of daily trials, conflicts, and temptations,
strong efforts and victories, and great peace and joy gained through
Jesus. A simple relation of such experiences gives light, strength,
and knowledge that will aid others in their advancement in the divine
life." 7T, pp. 578, 579.

"Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God (Isa. 43:12). Our
confession of His faithfulness is Heaven's chosen agency for revealing
Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known
through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is
the testimony of our own experience . . . These precious acknowledgments
to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christlike
life, have an irresistible power, that works for the salvation of
souls." N.H., p. 100.

"Let not pride, self-esteem, or self-righteousness keep anyone from
confessing his sins, that he may claim the promise 'He that covereth
his sins shall not prosper: but whose confesseth and forsaketh them
shall have mercy' (Prov. 28:13). Keep nothing back from God, and neglect
not the confession of your faults to your brethren. 'Confess your
faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed'
"Confess your sins to God, who only can forgive them, and your faults to one another." S.C., p. 37.

"In many of our religious awakenings, mistakes have been made in regard to confession. While confession is good for the soul, there is need of moving wisely." 5T, p. 645.

"As the disciples waited for the fulfillment of the promise, (the Holy Spirit at Pentecost) they humbled their hearts in true repentance, and confessed their unbelief. . . . Putting away all differences, all desire for the supremacy, they came close together in Christian fellowship." A.A., pp. 36, 37.

"New converts should be taught to ask counsel from those more experienced in the work as well as from God." 7T, p. 20.

"You will often meet with souls that are under the stress of temptation. You know not how severely Satan may be wrestling with them. Beware lest you discourage such souls, and thus give the tempter an advantage. . . . Do not make the experience more bitter by needless censure. Unkind criticism brings discouragement, making life sunless and unhappy. My brethren, prevail by love rather than by severity. When one at fault becomes conscious of his error, be careful not to destroy his self-respect. Do not seek to bruise and wound, but rather to bind up and heal." 7T, p. 265.

"What Might Have Been" 8T, pp. 104-106. This is the story of a vision Ellen White had in which she described a meeting where the Holy Spirit fell upon the brethren and they were moved to make public confession of their sins. It is a beautiful story of what could have been but did not occur because of the pride in their hearts and the lack of courage to humble themselves before each other and tell of their personal needs.

Compiled by Edward & Letah Banks
Objective:

The purpose of this method of Bible study is to confront the searching open-hearted believer in Christ with some of the issues which we must face in our Christian growth, and to offer a passage of scripture as the basis for personal investigation and group discussion.

Spirit of Prophecy on relational Bible study:

Students should be led to think for themselves, to see the force of truth for themselves, and speak every word from a heart full of love and tenderness. Urge upon their minds the vital truths of the Bible. Let them repeat these truths in their own language, that you may be sure that they clearly comprehend them. Be sure that every point is fastened upon the mind. This may be a slow process, but it is ten times more value than rushing over important subjects without giving them due consideration. It is not enough that the student believe the truth himself. He must be drawn out to state this truth clearly in his own words, that it may be evident that he sees the force of the lesson and makes application.

Counsels to Teachers, p. 434

Procedure:

After the passage has been read over slowly a couple of times to get the whole idea in mind, meditate on the meaning, and write out the answers to the three following questions.

(a) What does the passage say (paraphrase)?
(b) How does it apply to me?
(c) What is my personal response?

Example: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16

Answers:

(a) Because God loved the world, He gave His Son to die for it.
(b) He died for me.
(c) I want to believe in Jesus, and accept Him as my Saviour.
Students should be led to think for themselves, to see the force of truth for themselves, and to speak every word from a heart full of love and tenderness. Urge upon their minds the vital truths of the Bible. Let them repeat these truths in their own language, that you may be sure that they clearly comprehend them. Be sure that every point is fastened upon the mind. This may be a slow process, but it is of ten times more value than rushing over important subjects without giving them due consideration. It is not enough that the student believe the truth himself. He must be drawn out to state this truth clearly in his own words, that it may be evident that he sees the force of the lesson and makes its application.

--- *Counsels to Teachers*, p. 434

One passage (of the Bible) studied until its significance is clear in the mind and its relation to the plan of salvation is evident is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained.

--- *Steps to Christ*, p. 90

The mere hearing of sermons Sabbath after Sabbath, the reading of the Bible through and through, or the explanation of it verse by verse, will not benefit us or those who hear us, unless we bring the truths of the Bible into our individual experience.

--- *Ministry of Healing*, p. 514

As we approach the end, I have seen that...there will be less preaching, and more Bible study. There will be little groups all over the grounds (at campmeeting), with their Bibles in their hands, and different ones leading out in a free, conversational study of the Scriptures.

--- *Gospel Workers*, pp. 407, 408

Many can tell what the great and good men of generations past have done, and dared, and suffered, and enjoyed. They become eloquent in setting forth the power of the Gospel, which has enabled others to rejoice in trying conflicts.... But while so earnest in bringing forward other Christians as witnesses for Jesus, they seem to have no fresh, timely experience of their own to relate. .....what have you to say for yourselves? What soul conflicts have you experienced that have been for your good, for the good of others, and for the glory of God?...

What have you seen, what have you known, of the power of Christ?

--- *Gospel Workers*, p. 273
OBJECTIVE OF RELATIONAL BIBLE STUDY

The purpose of this method of Bible study is to confront the searching open-hearted believer in Christ with some of the issues which we must face in our Christian growth and to offer a passage of scripture as the basis for personal investigation and group discussion.

The study of these passages can be seen as developing in at least four parts.

A. Paraphrase - After the passage has been read over slowly a couple of times to get the whole idea in mind, then meditate on the meaning of each verse by words, phrases and sentences until the whole passage is covered. For example: 1 Corinthians 13:1

"though I speak" What is he getting at here, must be talking about my conversation, language
"tongues of men" This must mean special ability to speak...a great vocabulary and a dynamic way of putting it over. All of this is done very rapidly. You must train yourself to ask such questions as who? what? why? when? where? to get down to the real meaning.

B. Problems and Questions - While doing your paraphrase you will probably run across some questions or problems you would like to discuss. Try to avoid the temptation, however, of raising purely theological questions which only produce confusion and concentrate on problems which touch on your everyday life.

C. Cross Reference - As you grow more familiar with scripture, other passages will come to mind which touch on the truth of the passage you are studying. You may find it helpful to jot these down.

D. Action and Response - The crucial question remains, what response will you make to the passage? There are several forms this response can take.

(1) Prayer
Confession - "Dear Father, forgive me for..."
Thanksgiving - "Lord, I want to thank you for..."
Petition - "Father, please help me to..."

(2) A Record
Next to prayer this is the easiest. This would be a written statement in which you record the blessings of the passage or a particular spiritual experience you had during your study. This is especially valuable for review and evaluation later on and is a wonderful "starter" for group discussion.

(3) A project
That is something that you are definitely going to carry on during the coming week, from writing a letter of apology to a friend to painting at the school. But whatever it is it should be written down and then checked a week later to see if it has been done. The individual projects can be shared with the group, prayed over together, and reported on the next week.
**Personal Study of Chapter**

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QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION

Reorder from The Navigators, P.O. Box 1659, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80901.
DIMENSIONS OF COOPERATION - THE FIVE SQUARES

Purposes:

1. To help group explore what it means to cooperate in solving a group problem.

2. To help participants become more aware of their own behaviors which may help or hinder group problem solving.

Sequence:

1. Share purposes of design.

2. Ask each person to reflect on experiences back home, especially in his local church, when he was involved in a cooperative effort of some kind. It might be a committee engaged in carrying out some task. What difficulties in cooperation did he experience? What behaviors facilitated good cooperation and what behaviors blocked? Write some of these down.

3. Find two or three others to share these ideas with. Combine your lists of helping and hindering behaviors in effective cooperation.

4. Ask each small group to share with whole group their lists. Write these on two sheets of newprint, one headed, "Helping Behaviors" and the other, "Hindering Behaviors."

5. Explain that they will have an opportunity to test out these behaviors in an exercise.

   a. Have each small group join with another to form groups of 6 or 7 members.

   b. Ask each group to appoint a leader to receive further instructions from you.

   c. Meet with the leaders

      (1) Your leader has five sets of pieces for a puzzle, and he will give a set to each of you. (Note: Only one group can play. The leader and any extras are observers, silent except when the leader enforces the rules.)
(2) The task of the five of you is to form five squares of equal size. The task is completed when each person has before him a perfect square.

(3) There are three rules that must be observed. Your leader will enforce them.

   a) No member may speak.
   
   b) No member may ask another for a piece of puzzle piece or signal in any way that he wants it.
   
   c) Members may give others pieces they have, putting in their hands, not their puzzles.
   
   d. Have the groups proceed with the exercise. Allow about fifteen minutes or until all groups have completed the puzzles. It may be necessary to halt the work on the puzzles if it takes much more than the time allotted.
   
   e. Ask each group to reflect on their experience. Ask each group leader to guide this discussion.

   (1) What feelings were experienced or observed?
   
   (2) When a person kept pieces that others needed to complete their puzzles, how did members of the group feel? What were your feelings?
   
   (3) When a person did not see the solution as quickly as others, how did others seem to feel toward him?
   
   (4) What evidences of cooperation and/or competition did you see?
   
   (5) In what ways does this exercise reflect the reality of some of our back-home groups?
   
6. Bring all the groups back together to share learnings.

   a. What were some of your key learnings about cooperation?
   
   b. Let's review our original lists of helping and hindering behaviors in cooperation to see what can be added?
   
   c. Did this listing help your group do the exercise? Is there a difference in knowing how to cooperate and actually cooperating?
   
7. Summarize the discussion, emphasizing behaviors needed for effective cooperation, and applications back home.
In summarizing, the trainer briefly stresses the relationship of the experiences with squares and the discussion to the points which were previously developed on the chalkboard and to back-home situations.

Instructions to the Group:

In this package are five envelopes, each of which contains pieces of cardboard for forming squares. When the trainer gives the signal to begin, the task of your group is to form five squares of equal size. The task will not be completed until each individual has before him a perfect square of the same size as that held by others.

Specific limitations are imposed upon your group during this exercise:

1. No member may speak
2. No member may ask another member for a card or in any way signal that another person is to give him a card
3. Members may, however, give cards to other members.

Directions for Making a Set of Squares:

One set should be provided for each group of five persons. A set consists of five envelopes containing pieces of cardboard which have been cut into different patterns and when properly arranged, will form five squares of equal size. To prepare a set, cut five cardboard squares of equal size, six by six inches. Place the squares in a row and mark them as below, penciling the letters a, b, c, and so on lightly so they can later be erased.
A NEW FORM OF GROUP PRAYER

Prayer is usually thought of as an individual experience, and it is. But prayer can also be a corporate experience in which the members of a group unite in a common concern. If there is already a oneness established, corporate prayer can become the highest level of sharing in a small group.

But to realize the full potential of group prayer, a small group may have to rethink some of the old patterns of prayer and consider new approaches where a group can think together in prayer—not as four or five separate individuals each in his own closet, but as four or five people in one closet—with "one mind, one accord, in singleness of heart" as it was said of the house church in the first century.

The secret to group prayer is the same as the secret to group life—honesty. And along with honesty, a childlike simplicity. This is the reason why group prayer is so difficult among strangers and why it is so natural in a same-level small group where relationships have already been established on the basis of honesty and simplicity.

Simply Tell It Like It Is

Once we have come to the place where we can be open and honest about our lives with others in a small group in the presence of God, we should be able to be open and honest about our lives with God in the presence of a small group. And when we reach this point, we are on the verge of a breakthrough in corporate prayer.

No longer will we have to pray in special religious words and phrases. We can simply relax in the presence of God and talk about the real feelings on our heart, the real troubles on our mind, the real issues in our lives—as though God were sitting across from us.

And, when we pray as a group, we can simply talk together about our common feelings, our common troubles, and our common concerns—just in the same way we talked about them with each other in the time of sharing—except that this time the sharing is enlarged to include God in the conversation.

Conversation in prayer. This is probably the best way to describe this kind of corporate prayer. Because it is a conversation—a give-and-take, back-and-forth dialogue with God and with each other.

Piggyback On The Thought:

To start off in conversational prayer, one member of the group should begin with a statement out of the deepest level of his own feelings at that moment: "Lord, I love you." It need not be long or shrouded in beautiful phrases. The simpler, the better.

At this point the others in the group simply unite their thinking with what has been said and make it their own prayer. And as the thought explodes in their thinking, someone else may want to pick up the words and build on them, adding to what has already been expressed: "And that goes for me too, Lord; I want to tell You how much You mean to me...."

Four Simple Ground Rules

Here are four things to keep in mind for conversational prayer:
1. Pray in the first person—"I, me, my, etc."—not "Forgive us our many sins"... but "Lord, about my temper, I need your help...."

2. Pray specifically—naming names, habits, attitudes, relationships, etc.—not "Lord, make me a better Christian..." but "Lord, give me the courage to live at work with the boss that is always on my back...."

3. Pray on the same subject until the subject has been exhausted. For instance:
   Jim: "Lord, about my relationship with my wife, make me more sensitive to her point of view."
   Jack: "And that's for me too, Lord. Show me how to give in when I'm wrong with my wife."
   Jim: "And to admit that I'm sorry."
   Bill: "And to be this way with my children also."
   Jack: "Yeah, I don't know what it means to be this way with my son. I've always thought of myself as manly—but I don't know what it means to be firm and still understanding."

4. Pray for each other specifically. When someone brings up a need or concern in his life, allow the Holy Spirit to move the others to pray for his need as well. For instance:
   Jim: "Lord, give me the grace to share what is happening in my life with my next-door neighbor this weekend when we will be together on a fishing trip."
   Bill: "And I want to pray for Jim this weekend—that You will give him the right words."

In A Nutshell
The important thing to keep in mind here is simply to be natural. You can keep your eyes open, your head up, your hands at your side. You can stand, you can sit, or even lie down.

Simply relax as a group. Lean back. Focus your thoughts together—and let one person start out on the deepest level of his feelings. Then, as the Holy Spirit moves through his statement to quicken the others in the group, let them join in and share back and forth in honest, specific, personal sharing—"I, me, my...."
BUILDING A TRUST COMMUNITY IN BIBLE STUDY GROUPS

Group Disciplines

1. Be present and on time to all of the group meetings.

2. If you can't be there, tell the group ahead of time that you can't be there and why, or call one of the group members.

3. If for some reason you plan to leave the group permanently, tell them you are leaving and why so they can explore with you and themselves what this means to everyone concerned.

4. What is said, and ALL that is said, in the group is confidential and should not be talked about outside the group, even with group members.
GROUP GOALS

1. To learn to study the Bible in ways that help us apply it to our personal needs and relationships.

2. To learn to support one another in prayer.

3. To learn to share and trust others in ways that are supportive and enabling.

4. To gain skills that enable us to talk comfortably with others about our experience in Christ.

5. To make new friends.

GROWTH TOGETHER

1. God has made every individual a person of unique worth and has given him amazing gifts.

2. Self-worth and personal awareness are best realized in a supportive community where each person is committed to the others.

3. A certain amount of self-disclosure or history-giving is necessary before the supportive community can enable one another.

4. The way to call forth the best in each other is by affirming each other's strengths, not by pointing out each other's faults.

5. The spiritual dimension must be realized for a person to discover his total selfhood.

6. Jesus Christ is the link between God and man and between men.

7. The Holy Spirit is the enabling presence of God which energizes man's spiritual life.

8. The presence of the Holy Spirit is best felt when "two or three are gathered together" in openness toward Jesus Christ and one another.

9. The Scripture is the living account of the Holy Spirit's activities.

10. Celebration is the natural result when love, trust and acceptance are expressed by a community of people committed to Jesus Christ and one another.
1. **Prayer**

2. **Group relational Bible study:** *20th Century Bible Course*, lesson #3 will be conducted in the manner below:

   **Exercise**

   As a group study the listed questions assigned to your group.\(^1\) Then

   a. Write in one paragraph a group consensus of the inclusive message implied through the questions.

   b. Each member of the group write in one brief statement his personal reaction to the message.

   c. Smaller groups assemble in one large group and share statements.

3. **Group interaction: "In Event of Fire."**\(^2\)

   **Purpose:** To discover your values in life and set a goal for your future.

   a. List ten things in order of value that you would save in case of a fire (10 minutes).

   b. **Sharing** (15 minutes).

      1. Share with your group why the first seven are important.

      2. Pick one article to give to each group member and tell why.

4. **Goal-setting and affirmation** (15 minutes).

   a. Think for a moment about the question: "If I knew I could not fail, what is the one thing I would like to most do in my life?

   b. Now share your goal with those in your group.

   c. Affirm the one to your right in conversational prayer.

5. **Prayer request and benediction.**

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\(^1\) The general group was divided into three smaller ones.

\(^2\) Selected from *Discovery* by Lyman Coleman.
Bible Evangelism Workshop
June 6, 1976

1. Prayer

2. Relational studies: 20th Century Lesson

James Harvey 9
Ruth White (group leaders) 30
Mae Cooper 5

(After each study have each member of your group write one sentence stating what the study said to them personally).

Assemble in large group, and present statements for group reaction).

3. Sharing: Divide into groups and read Mt 6:13 and then answer the question, "What is the greatest temptation and evil that you would like the Lord to deliver you from?" After having stated their desires, each member of the group offers a prayer of affirmation for the person on his right.

4. Reassemble to large group, and close with prayer requests with conversational prayer.
Introduction to CONVERSION PLUS

Exhibit 23

When a person is converted, when he accepts the salvation offered in Jesus Christ, many things have to happen, both before and after the event. This movie is about these happenings in one person's life.

The movie is not presented to entertain, though it will do so. It is not primarily for inspiration, although it will inspire. It is presented to confront each one of us with some real, some vital questions concerning our own lives. We have prepared these questions to be given to you for your personal evaluation after seeing the film. Take the questions home with you and live with them a few days.

a. You will first meet, in this film, the question of "lostness" - or as Jeff Summers says, a lack of purpose in life. He is very typical of our times; every one of us has had such a feeling sometimes - or often. We must, if we are to be Christians, and particularly if we are to be Christian evangelists, reach our own answer to the question: Do I have any real purpose in life? And, if not, what does faith in Jesus Christ have to offer in place of the feeling of purposelessness?

b. Second, we will find some ideas presented as to the how of conversion, as well as some careful discussion of what it means. In the home of David and Frieda, you will see what a Christian group can do in opening up, for themselves and for the non-Christian, the meaning of becoming a Christian.

c. This film also presents the ways in which Christians can help others to find a living faith. There is no doubt left, after seeing the film, that within the family, or within the covenant community there is one way to help the non-Christian: through loving concern that puts the Christian into a partnership of search, backed up by witness and made effective by the work of the Holy Spirit. Watch the loving honesty of Fran Summers as she helps her husband, and the searching earnestness of Christians in their discussions. Then the question will come: Is this the way I witness to my faith?

d. As Jeff Summers finds a faith, you will see that he faces some real questions about the relationship of faith to business ethics. It forces us to ask whether we side with Jeff or with Honest Dan, who declares, "Religion is good business, it never hurt me a bit. But serious religion and serious business just don't mix."

e. We meet the real Christian businessman, Frank, who does his best to answer the question: "What sort of change does conversion bring?" Can we do better by way of an answer?

f. Jeff poses some real questions for us all the way through, and not all are answered. He asks: "Do you ever feel like you're in a squirrel cage..." and we know what he means. He says: "I'd give my right arm to be sure about anything... Is what I'm doing supposed to be the whole meaning of life?" He asks in wonder: "If faith is responding to God's love, is that what changes things?"

g. And I am certain we'll share Jeff's self-criticism as he comes to understand that he has been trying to live his new-found faith through his own strength. He runs into an ethical problem as he tells his wife: "We ran head on into each other...There was lot's of give - I gave." And he declares, in despair: "There's no one else to turn to..." and then realizes that he has left God completely out of the picture. Do we?

h. And finally we see that Jeff finds he cannot be Christian without becoming involved in the lives of others, living his new faith. This is the real test. How do we measure up to it?
CONVERSION PLUS - - - A Self-Examination on Evangelism

In the light of what I have seen and heard of the experiences of Jeff and Fran Summers as they live through the process of conversion to faith in Jesus Christ, what is my response:

I. As a person:

1. Have I faced, as Jeff did, the question: "What is the real purpose of my life?"
2. What does my sense of purpose have to say about the depth of my Christian faith?
3. Can faith in Jesus Christ give purpose to life?
4. Is lack of a Christian purpose creating problems for me, setting up tensions within me, that injure my relationships with my family and with others?
5. If I believe I have a Christian purpose in living, has it made itself manifest in a sense of my involvement in the needs, both spiritual and physical, of others?

II. As a member of a family:

1. What steps can I take to seek help, or to give it to another in the family, to find a faith to live by?
2. Is there a way which I can, like Fran Summers, help another to find faith in Jesus Christ? Do I recognize that this help must be given, without badgering or nagging from a basis of real love as we seek together for the foundation on which family and personal happiness can be built?
3. Do I do my part in making the family's atmosphere the sort in which members of the family can discuss freely and helpfully the real issues and purposes of life? Or do I close the door to living concern, as Jeff did for a time, by refusing to talk about faith or lack of it?

III. As a Christian in the world:

1. Are my home and my time available for Christian evangelism as were those of David and Frieda?
2. Am I too shy to witness to my faith in Christ, or do I seek opportunities to share my faith with others?
3. Do I testify to my own humanity and need for Jesus Christ, and to what He has done for me?
4. Do I try to do the work of evangelism all on my own, as Jeff did at first, not realizing that the power of God, the love of Christ, and the presence of the Holy Spirit are working with me?
5. Do I accept, as the result of my Christian commitment, a sense of responsibility for my actions toward others, and a sense of involvement with their needs?
6. What am I now going to do about all this?
Exhibit 25

The Circle of Faith and Prayer
(Group Study in the Ministry of Prayer)

Format

Opening remarks:  
(Divide into groups)

1. Read opening statement from Spirit of Prophecy referring to "Study Groups," and think on it for one or two minutes (also give special note to statement on prayer).

2. Turn to lesson outline The Importance of Studying Faith and Prayer.

3. Group members take turns in reading audibly each topical section including S.F. statement, and following textual notes.

4. After each reading, the group takes one minute to reflect mentally.

5. By turn each member tells what personal meaning he or she received (if one desires to read text in detail the person may do so).

6. Close study session by each member making a personal prayer request that relates to their personal need in the light of the study.

7. Prepare a one-sentence statement of what the study said to the group as a whole.

8. RETURN TO LARGE PRAYER CIRCLE

9. Each group present group statement of reaction (circle now open for comments, reactions, and testimonies).

10. Making of special prayer requests, following by final round of prayer.

Opening Statement

Study Groups: "As we approach nearer the end, I have seen that in these meetings (camp meetings) there will be less preaching and more Bible study. There will be little groups all over the ground with their Bibles in their hands, and different ones leading out in a free, conversational study of the Scriptures." GT 87.

"The greatest victories to the church of Christ or to the individual Christian are not those that are gained by talent or education, by wealth or the favor of men. They are those victories that are gained in the audience chamber with God, when earnest agonizing faith lays hold upon the mighty arm of power" (PP 203).
The Importance of Studying Faith and Prayer

The Importance of Prayer and Faith

"Only the work accomplished with much prayer, and sanctified by the merit of Christ will in the end prove to have been efficient for good" (DA 126).

We find that prayer and faith has been the keynotes of success in any number of experiences involving the church and people of God as recorded in annuals of Biblical and church history. Especially do we note the place of prayer in the following references.

- Jacob's experience (Genesis 32)
- Moses' experience at Rephidim (Ex. 17)
- Prayer in the curriculum in the schools of the prophets (Prov. 9:10)
- The disciples experience (Luke 11:1-13)
- Prayer preceding Pentecost (Acts 1:14)
- Priorities following Pentecost (Acts 6:1-4)
- Martin Luther's experience
- The need of the remnant.

From the prayer life of Jesus we draw valuable lessons

"No other life was ever so crowded with labor and responsibility as was that of Jesus; yet how often He was found in prayer!" (DA 362)

The prayer habit of Jesus (Mark 1:35)

- Christ our example (1 John 2:6)
- Christ's invitation (Mark 6:31)
- A promise that is also a caution (1 Cor 3:9)

"As activity increases and men become successful in doing any work for God, there is a tendency to pray less, and to have less faith." (DA 362)

The Importance of Faith

"Every failure on the part of the children of God is due to their lack of faith" (PP 657)

- "Lord increase our faith" (Luke 17:5)
- Faith's unfailing foundation (Isa. 54:17)
- Faith's potential (Hebrews 11)
- Laodicea's fourfold need: faith, love, white raiment, eyesalves (Rev. 3:17)
- Promises with no limit but our faith (Eph. 3:20)

Potential Benefits From a Study of Faith and Prayer

"Prayer and faith are closely allied, and they need to be studied together." (Ed 257)

Benefits available through faith and prayer include:

1. Completeness in Christ (Col. 2:10)
2. Heaven's storehouse opened (John 14:14)
3. Angel's come to work by our side (Ps. 34:7)
4. Angel's go to minister to others (Heb. 1:14)
5. Children and possessions hedged about (Job 1:10)

Heaven's standing invitation (Luke 11:9)

"It is part of God's plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not ask thus" (GC 525)
Calvin Center Community Services  
(Band Organization)

Bands Function
Visitation and Interviewing Band. To visit appropriate homes, businesses, industries, and other locations where clothing, food, and other donations might be obtained for distribution to the needy. Supplies will contribute to center's stockpile for distribution. Also band members will interview referrals made to the center for assistance in order to determine the nature and extent of assistance needed.

Clothing Collection Band. To collect clothing, foodstuffs, and other donations contributed to center.

Clothing repair Band. To repair and discard clothing brought to the center in preparation for its distribution.

Clothing Distribution Band. To distribute clothing at center, and take to outside locations of need.

Disaster relief Band. To box and prepare emergency relief packages for local disasters, and prepare for foreign shipment if workable.

Health Education Band. To cooperate closely with visitation and interviewing band in securing names of those in need of medical missionary service. To promote first-aid, home nursing, and healthful cookery classes.

Publicity Band. To collect from each band chairman, the interesting happenings, and unusual developments for newspaper and church publications.

I desire to join the ________________________ band(s), and pledge full cooperation.

Name: ____________________________ Date: __________________
Keynote Address: Community Services Dedication

The Adventist Message and Mission
Rev. 14: 6-12

Introduction:

The intent of my message this morning is not to appeal to your emotions as such, simply to "stir up your pure minds," as Peter says, "by way of remembrance," You know as the church of God we have a definite mission assigned to us, and we must keep it in mind lest we forget. That mission is focused on the message of Rev. 14: 6-12 and includes presenting it to the world. Let us read it together.

In an era when thousands of world leaders scan the political, economic, and social horizons of this contemporary hour and see no real solutions for the perplexities and confusion of the times, when the hope we put in new presidents, and human plans begin to fizzle out, what is the mission of the church? When over one million dollars is spent on one jet fighter plane, yet half the world's population is starving, what does the church have to say?

The world is saying the church is unconcerned, detached, and irrelevant to its social and humanitarian problems, what is our redress? Does the community visualize us as good Samaritan or self righteous Pharisees passing by its problems with an attitude of pity and yet aloof? I am so happy that we have established our little Community Services center to offset such an image of the Calvin Center church. However, is each of us as a church member working up to our capacities, and doing our responsible share of the Lord's work?

Finally to stir up our pure minds, to what extent are we united with our Saviour and great teacher Jesus Christ in preaching the gospel to the poor, healing the brokenhearted, preaching deliverance to the captives, helping the blind to recover their sight, setting at liberty them that are bruised, and preaching that today is the day of salvation? These Christian services carry both a spiritual and social responsibility. As a barometer of our relationship in this respect, to what extent would this church be missed in the community as providers of the forementioned Christian services if we were to disappear from this location over night? Does the Christian witness of this church really bespeak that "Jesus is coming soon?"

My central question this morning is this, are we on both an individual and church-wide basis fulfilling the mission of the church? And to this end, we might ask ourselves, what is the mission of the church, and what is the central hope of that mission to the world?
What is the Mission?

It is the very nature of the church that it has a mission to the world. That mission is our participation in the work of God which takes place between the coming of Jesus Christ to inaugurate God's kingdom on earth, and His coming again in glory to bring that kingdom to its consummation. It was Jesus who said, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16). There are many lost sheep in the world today just waiting to be found, waiting to hear the message of Rev. 14: 6-12 and the great Sabbath truth. We as undersheperds have the privilege of helping the Master-shepered to call them into the fold through the preaching of the three angels' messages in words and works.

This is His word to us; this is His work in which we are engaged with Him. For He whose coming we expect is also He who is already present. Our work until His coming again is but the result of our share in His work which He is doing all the time and everywhere; namely, reclaiming the lost. God has bequeathed to us through Jesus Christ a share in this work with Him in the name of evangelism. Thus, it is to be noted that the church's mission of evangelism is the most important thing that is happening in history and points to Jesus Christ as the central hope of the world (not H. Kissinger, J. Carter, or any other renowned human personage).

The true disciple of Christ will fully accept this privilege of working with the agencies of heaven in soul winning, and keep before the church the ringing commands of Christ: "Go ye . . . and make disciples of all nations . . ." (Mt. 28:19) for the hour of His judgment is come.

Stating the Problem

However, as we look about the church world today there are alarming indications that the church is not playing its responsible role in the mission of God. This is inclusive of God's remnant church.

"God's people must take warning and discern the signs of the time. The signs of Christ's coming are too plan to be doubted; and in view of these things every one who professes the truth should be a living preacher. God calls upon all, both preachers and people to awake. All heaven is astir. The scenes of earth's history are fast closing. We are amid the perils of the last days. Greater perils are before us, and yet we are not awake. This lack of activity and earnestness is the cause of God is dreadful. This death stupor is from Satan." (T. Vol. 1 pp. 260,261)
Now what is E.G. White talking about? She makes it clear in the following words:

"If every soldier of Christ had done his duty, if every watchman on the walls of Zion had given the trumpet a certain sound, the world might have ere this have heard the message of warning. But the work is years behind. While men have slept, Satan has stolen the march on us." (T. Vol. 9 p. 29)

In other words, except for those individuals who are exceptions (and we always find a faithful few), generally speaking and largely so, the church has lost its sense of mission to an uncomfortable or dangerous degree. Yes, we preach our Lord's mission and second coming, but how much mission do we live and witness to in our community and among our neighbors on a one-to-one basis? That is what really counts. How involved are church members themselves in the every day world of human needs?

Jesus ministered through personal action to beggars, extortionists, prostitutes, and thieves; the blind, crippled, insane, and devil possessed; also to tender children, the poverty stricken, and widows. He reached up to the wealthy and educated in the rich young ruler and Nicodemus, and down to traitors and cowards in Judas and Pontius Pilate. He even extended His mission of mercy to the minority classes in the woman (Samaritan) at the well. Jesus was a real missionary in His community. Now what can we say for our missionary involvement in this community, and what is the church's?

The charge is that the individual Christian and the church does not show the concern in these matters of human welfare and healing that they should, and that is why people are losing or have already lost confidence in the church—it is not addressing itself to human needs. The overall results of this situation is that it poses a major hindrance to the work of evangelism. When people are hungry, naked, sick, suffering and we are not prepared to bring them some relief from their problems, they are not prepared to listen to our message.

When the World Council of Churches held their sessions in Evanston, Illinois in 1954, the first report on the main theme, "Jesus Christ—the Hope of the World," stated:

"With radical changes of structure and organization, our existing Churches will never become missionary Churches which they must if the Gospel is to be heard in the world."
If we want the world to hear our gospel we'll have to show it to them first.

"Only if our churches succeed in being with their laity in the struggles of our present world will the laity in their turn become genuine representatives of the Church in areas of modern life at which the Church has no access."

The church must encourage and give way to the ministry of the laity.

In short, the time has come when pastor-centered churches must become laymen-centered. This does not mean that the pastor becomes any less important. It means, however, that the responsibility of the church ministry is shared and the pulpit ministry need not feel threatened by it. Favorably, it affords the pastor more time to develop and train various ministries in the church. The book Welfare Ministry (E.G. White) lists some fifteen categories of ministry. Although the Spirit of Prophecy speaks of the time when dedicated laymen will come forward to take a leading role in finishing the work of the gospel; by the same token laymen must be ready and prepared to assume responsibility. Note that the designation "laymen" places some responsibility on all church members.

"Let no one think he is a liberty to fold hands and do nothing..." Christian Service p. 83.

"The Lord now calls upon Seventh-day Adventists in every locality to consecrate themselves to Him, and do their very best according to their circumstances to assist in His work" Christian Service p. 84.

The gospel is to be communicated in words and works.

Message and Mission to all the World

Realizing that the mission of our church is evangelism (the winning of disciples), and that it can only succeed with the help of laymen taking a leading role, we address ourselves to the shape of the mission. What form will the church's mission of evangelism take? How shall we work?

Unless the church is constantly aware that it is not fulfilling its own mission but is participating in God's mission, it will repeatedly forget that the mission is given definition by God's missionary activity in Christ. We are to work the way God worked through Jesus Christ ("Have this mind among yourselves which you have in Christ Jesus,"
Phil. 2:5), and the goals towards which God is working ("He made known to us... the mystery of His will according to His purpose which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fulness of time..." Eph. 1:9-10). The shape or form must follow the method of Christ.

The basic clue to the method Christ used during His life is made clear to us in the temptations. The temptations centered around the question of methods Christ was to use in His missions. The temptations presented to Him good aims. They suggested to Him that He can use His divine power to save the world by a direct attack on some of man's basic needs.

Luke 4:5 "The devil showed Him in a flash all the kingdoms of the world." "All this dominion I will give to you, and the glory that goes with it." (i.e., The temptation here is for Jesus to take control over the political and military institutions of the world.)

Luke 4:9 "The devil took Him to Jerusalem and on the top of the temple." "If thou be the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down, for the scriptures say, 'I will give His angels orders to take care of you!'" (i.e. Here the temptation is to use the medium of the most spectacular mass communication -- public propaganda -- to convince men of His supernatural power and divine authority.

These temptations were temptations because they did in fact point to some real needs to which God's mission is directed--worldly needs. God is not unconcerned about economic justice and political institutions (He ordained government). He is not unconcerned about communication (Preaching is mass communication). He did not reject these temptations on the grounds that He was divorcing religion from worldly concerns. The temptations are rejected, however, because they seek to meet these needs by the wrong method. The devil tempts Jesus to use divine power, self-assertion, rather than the role of a suffering servant whose mission it is to save the world by the way of self-effacing, humble servant love.

This becomes a central theme in the ministry of Christ--to bring His disciples to the awareness that their participation in His mission must be through the way of servant love (evangelism through love).

"Our Saviour went from house to house healing the sick, soothing the afflicted, speaking peace to the disconsolate. He took little children in His arms and blessed them, and spoke words of comfort to weary mothers... He met every king of human woe and affliction." Christian Service p.114
Christian friends, this is the shape of the church's mission. The church form must change from that of an introverted community of saints within four walls, to an outgoing family of servants of Christ in the world, seeking to be avenues of healing, unifying, and fulfilling love at the points of the world's needs.

Conclusion:

The missionary structure of the church must take structures best suited to the service of this mission of God. Mission has taken the structure or form of radio, and TV evangelism, health education, family life, and marriage seminars. On the personal and group level it takes the form of Bible readings, home visitation, literature distribution, Christian help work (according to your individual gift of the Spirit), and other undetermined forms. Yes, we may form our little groups and give ourselves as humble servants in these respects, carrying the gospel in words and works to others in the Cassopolis area—to those lying in sickness and ill health, to those in loneliness, or to the unchurched and poverty stricken in migrant labor camps operated by fruit and vegetable farmers in this area. Whatever and wherever the need in our community, let us be prepared to go to the points calling for Christian need and action.

Along with emphasizing "come to church," we must emphasize our willingness to "go to the people" in a relationship of love and service. Let them see the Christ of love and concern in our lives, and we will thus in effect (and with more effective results) "show them the church."

"There is need of coming close to people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing and more were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen." Christian Service p. 117

This church is making a fresh and impressive start in its community relations and Christian service by way of the little white and green houses (Community Services buildings) down the road. The entire congregation must join in following it up with the total involvement of our membership in some area of Christian witness. Lay evangelism is the secret of church growth.

We find as we study church growth around the world that the church grows best when every Christian is trained in and works at evangelism. How to Grow a Church p. 82 Donald A. McGavern

Evangelism is our mission and our message is that of the three angels of Rev. 14. Let us not simply talk it, but more
important live it. My appeal this morning in the light of our Message and Mission is that we rededicate ourselves to the cause of evangelism through participation in some phase of community service and Christian outreach in order to enhance the spiritual renewal and congregational growth of this church.

Time is short, soon the night cometh and no man can work. To this end our Saviour worked, let us do likewise.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>McGavran</strong></th>
<th><strong>Christian Service</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How To Grow A Church (1973)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Parallels between McGavran and E.G. White On Lay Involvement in Church Growth</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>One secret of New Testament church growth was that leaders were trained in and by the church in action. This remains a secret of church growth today. p.79</td>
<td>Every church should be a training school for Christian workers. Let the teachers lead the way in working among the people. p.59</td>
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<td>The most effective training, I believe, is first hand experience. A skilled pastor or lay leader reproduces in a &quot;Timothy&quot; these qualities of life in Christ which are in return reproduced in others. p.79</td>
<td>They should not only be teaching, but actual work under experienced instructors. p.59</td>
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<td>This sort of training of leaders marked Pastor Kennedy's work at Coral Ridge. He took people one by one and trained them to present the gospel effectively. The results in his church have been outstanding. p.79</td>
<td>The best that ministers can give the members of our churches is not sermonizing, but planning work for them. Help all to see that as the receivers of the grace of Christ they are under obligation to work for Him. And let all be taught how to work. (White, OT p.49)</td>
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<td>The local church is obligated to train its leadership. p.80</td>
<td>Every church should be a training school for Christian workers. p.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We find as we study church growth around the world, that the church grows best when every Christian is trained in, and works at evangelism. p.32</td>
<td>Every church should be a training school for Christian workers. Its members should be taught how to give Bible readings... how to work for the unconverted. p.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The church must be willing and ready to meet people where they are. ... True evangelism loves persons, recognizes their needs and tries to help them. p.107</td>
<td>It members [church] should be taught how to help the poor, and to care for the sick, and how to work for the unconverted. p.59</td>
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<td>I believe that leadership training, from the New Testament church until today, has been a chief secret of growing churches. p.107</td>
<td>It is training, education that is needed. Those who labor in visiting the churches should give the brethren and sisters instruction in practical methods of doing missionary work... In every church the leaders should be so trained that they devote time to the winning of souls to Christ. pp.58, 61</td>
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Compiled by: J.D. Johnson
Trainees
Evaluation Questionnaire
for Lay Bible Evangelism Program

Please respond to the following questions briefly and candidly. It is to be understood that all questions are in reference to the method of Bible study that we have been recently involved in.

1. In what way were the studies conducted differently from Bible studies you are accustomed to? If this is your first time of being involved in Bible studies, write "first time" in the space below.

There was more person-to-person relationship rather than merely studying in the regular question-by-question method.

First Time

2. To what extent was your interest in Bible knowledge increased, or decreased by this method?

My interest in Bible knowledge has been greatly increased by applying the three-point consideration of each Scripture: What the scripture says - what it means to me - what am I going to do about it.

3. Since beginning the studies, what significance does making Bible studies "relational" have for you?

I discovered this is the method Christ used — showing concern, etc. — not so much by formal exposition alone, but coupled with human kindness and love for others by deeds alone.

4. To what extent was your Biblical learning facilitated by this method?

It increased my desire to study more fully because of greater understanding.
5. What is your opinion about the "Koinonia" relationship and
climate that was purposely developed as an integral part
of the studies, did it enhance, retard, or have no effect
on the Bible studies?

It enhanced the Bible studies; this type of setting is the best I have
seen thus far.

6. How effective do you think the approach used for the studies
will be as a means of spiritual renewal, and stimulating more
church social concern and action than the Calvin Center church
has heretofore experienced?

I believe there will be a definite
renewal and concern more quickly
than by any other method.

7. How would you evaluate the effectiveness of the method in
your field practicum, what was the reaction of the contactees
to your methodology?

I have not engaged this method
in field work as yet.

8. In your opinion what is the strongest, and weakest points in
the method?

The idea of koinonia is its strongest point
to me.

I have's thought my weaknesses
in the method thus far; perhaps
after closer observation and
practice greater strengths can be
discerned.
9. In what way has this method of study been of the most personal help to you spiritually?

It has aided me in trying to understand those who affect me negatively. In new endeavoring to overlook their unfavorable traits, character, and see the good points they have, I can now see more clearly how God has used them in our sins.

Use the balance of this sheet for any additional remarks, or observations.

I am very thankful for Pastor Johnson's interest in our church and for introducing this method of Bible study evangelism.

My desire is to go into activity and continue to gather information and remain in touch with Sabbath-to-Sabbath church goal with an indefinite plan and program for reaching others.
Dear Church Member,

We want you to share in the blessing of assisting the church to improve its spiritual growth and evangelistic outreach. To this end, please answer the following few questions. Your candid response will provide information that will help our program planning.

Questions

What in your opinion is the value of the present program for Lay Bible Evangelism in the following respects (extents)? Check one.

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<tr>
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<th>None</th>
<th>Small</th>
<th>Appreciable</th>
<th>Large</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Has helped the spiritual growth of the church.</td>
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<td>2. Has improved missionary witnessing, and community outreach.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Has helped to increase brotherly love, and interpersonal concern among the members.</td>
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<td>4. Has helped to increase church attendance.</td>
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Remarks (Any additional comments or observations)

The greatest blessing that I have observed is #3. There is a much greater feeling for and understanding of one another. There is also the great step forward toward more community involvement in the clothing bank trust distribution center that the members are working in—located on Calvin Center Road.
Church Pastor's and Lay Activities
Leader's Evaluation of an Experimental Program for Lay Bible Evangelism

Please give your evaluation of the impact, if any, which the program for Lay Bible evangelism conducted by the Lay Activities department has had upon the Calvin Center Seventh-day Adventist church over the past six months? Draw upon statistical facts if possible (how many people do you have coming to church now that were not attending before the lay Bible outreach program?, etc.)

One thing that has impressed me is the importance that the participants see in the program. Some of the things they are doing in the small groups are completely new yet they seem willing to experience them. The attendance of the group members is very good especially for the time it demands.

The program is equipping them for a lifestyle of evangelism and also a nurturing type of ministry within the church.

At present there are no definite results as for as come within the church but this is not discouraging, it seems that something is about to break in the Calvin Center Church as it never has before. I'm very happy about the program and believe it will be the pivotal program for mission outreach.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


**Periodical**


**Bible**

King James version.
Johnny Durant Johnson

June 1977

Johnny Johnson was born August 13, 1921 in Evanston, Illinois. He received his elementary and secondary school education in the public schools of Evanston and Chicago and completed the latter in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. A former professional boxer, he was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist church in 1943.

He graduated with a B.A. degree in religion from Andrews University in 1954 and from the University of Illinois in 1956 with an M.A. in Teaching Social Studies. He and his wife Ida were called to West Africa as missionaries in 1957 where he worked for eleven years as pastor-teacher. In Ghana he was ordained to the ministry in 1964 where, in the same year, he and his wife became the parents of their only child, a daughter Afriyie. He returned to Andrews University in 1968 and graduated with the Master of Divinity degree in 1970.

After serving for five years as pastor-chaplain-Bible teacher at the Ile-Ife mission hospital in Nigeria, he returned to Andrews University in 1975 to begin studies leading to the Doctor of Ministry degree.