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ABSTRACT

A LEADERSHIP STRATEGY TO TRAIN AND EQUIP AFRICAN
PASTORS AND LAY LEADERS FOR EFFECTIVE MINISTRY
TO CENTRAL AFRICAN REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS
IN PHOENIX, ARIZONA

by

Joel Mpabwanimana

Adviser: Boubakar Sanou

DEVELOPING A LEADERSHIP STRATEGY TO TRAIN AND EQUIP AFRICAN
PASTORS AND LAY LEADERS FOR EFFECTIVE MINISTRY
TO CENTRAL AFRICAN REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS
IN PHOENIX, ARIZONA

A professional dissertation
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Ministry
by

Joel Mpabwanimana

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ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

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Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: A LEADERSHIP STRATEGY TO TRAIN AND EQUIP AFRICAN PASTORS AND LAY LEADERS FOR EFFECTIVE MINISTRY TO CENTRAL AFRICAN REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS IN PHOENIX, ARIZONA

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Date completed: February 2023

Problem

Since 2010, there has been a growing number of Central African refugees and immigrants resettling in Arizona. This transition adds many other challenges to the trauma some of them have already endured. Unfortunately, there is a lack of trained pastors and lay leaders to effectively minister to them. I designed this project to develop and implement an effective strategy to train and equip pastors and lay leaders to minister to Central African refugee and immigrant communities in the Ubumwe Seventh-day Adventist Church and Glendale Seventh-day Adventist Church in Phoenix, Arizona.

Method

This project had several primary objectives: (1) to provide ways for African immigrants to grow spiritually, (2) to promote and practice effective leadership for

mission-driven service, and (3) to increase awareness of the importance of communication and relationship.

To understand my audience's needs and expectations, I conducted a pre-seminar survey. Their feedback was incorporated into the development of the seminars. I found seminars to be the most effective way to explore the project's goals. The discussions sparked meaningful interactions among participants, fostering a sense of shared ownership and allowing everyone to contribute their voice. Five African pastors and ten African lay leaders volunteered to participate by joining the following activities: (a) English as a Second Language (ESL) Bible study, worship, and prayer classes, (b) communication skills seminar, (c) seminar on the biblical images of the church, (d) relationship building seminar, (e) training for small group leaders, and (f) organisation of small groups.

Results

At the end of this project, the participants' ability to minister to their audience in Phoenix, Arizona had improved significantly, they had built trust with each other and with their primary audience, overcome prejudices based on gender and age, developed effective communication skills, particularly in English, and built strong relationships with each other and with their primary audiences. The project provided insights that suggested that God uses anyone in His ministry regardless of age or gender, thus people should be allowed to serve as leaders in ministry regardless of their gender or age.

Conclusion

This project demonstrated that the interventions made a difference among the African immigrants attending the Ubumwe Seventh-day Adventist Church and Glendale

Seventh-day Adventist Church. Similar programs most likely could also benefit other immigrant churches in the United States when they face similar problems and challenges.

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Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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March 2024

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who daily prayed for me, encouraged me to keep leaning on God's everlasting arms.

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CHAPTER 1

DESCRIPTION OF THE MINISTRY CONTEXT

Introduction

According to Bob Smietana (2016), “When it comes to helping refugees, Protestant Churches and their pastors are often separated by faith and fear. Most pastors say Christians should lend a hand to refugees and foreigners and believe caring for refugees is a privilege. But pastors also say their churches are twice as likely to fear refugees as they are to help them. Although not everyone is able to meet refugees’ needs, however, few pastors are aware of refugees in their own towns and churches. In 2010 when I was still attending the Glendale Seventh-day Adventist Church in Phoenix, Arizona, I regularly met with a small group of five refugee and immigrant families who were survivors of the Rwandan genocide, Burundian, and Congolese civil wars for spiritual support. Because all of us in that group spoke Kinyarwanda and Kirundi and have similar lived experiences, it became easier for me to relate to their stories and care for them. We formally started worshipping together in Kinyarwanda/Kirundi on June 12, 2010 at the Glendale Church. We chose to be named *Ubumwe* (unity in Kinyarwanda) because our vision was to live united regardless of our ethnic backgrounds.

With the recommendation and support of the Glendale Church, on January 13, 2018, the Arizona Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists organized the *Ubumwe*

Group as a Company of 193 charter members. The *Ubumwe* Group became the first African company organized in the Arizona Conference. Today, the average attendance is around 260. The *Ubumwe* Seventh-day Adventist Church is comprised of about 80% Tutsi and 20% Hutus. Twenty-five percent are adults and 75% are children and young adults, between 8 and 32 years old. The vast majority of them do not know how to read and write. I work in the Arizona Conference as pastor for the *Ubumwe* Church and the Tucson African Refugees and Immigrants Group which meets at the Desert Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church, Tucson, Arizona.

Ray Stern states that since 1975, 74,453 refugees have arrived in Arizona according to the Arizona Refugee Resettlement Program (2015). A 2010 article in the *New York Times* mentioned that the state has among the highest per capita refugee population in the country. Arizona took nearly twice as many refugees per capita as California and more than twice as many per capita as New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut (Stern, 2015). The same source estimated that at the end of 2017, 780 Congolese refugees were resettled in both counties, Maricopa and Pima.

Part of what I do for these refugees and immigrants includes organizing ministries that enhance healthy families and seek to be instruments of wholistic healing for hurting families.

Statement of the Problem

There is a growing number of Central African immigrants and refugees resettling in Arizona. This transition adds many other challenges to the trauma some of them have already endured. Unfortunately, there is a lack of trained African pastors and lay leaders to effectively minister to them.

Statement of the Task

The task of this project is to develop, implement, and evaluate a training strategy for pastors and lay leaders for effective ministry to Central African refugees and immigrants at the *Ubumwe* Church and the Glendale Church in the Arizona Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists.

Significance of the Project

This project holds significant meaning in three key ways. Firstly, the exploration process provided a valuable opportunity to delve deeper into the internal and external struggles that shaped my experience as a refugee in America. This introspection has significantly enhanced my understanding of these challenges. Secondly, by reflecting on my own journey, I've gained a deeper capacity to empathize with the struggles faced by the refugees I serve. This shared background allows me to connect with them on a more personal level. Thirdly, the project's focus on our shared experiences not only strengthens the credibility of my ministry but also fosters trust among the refugees I lead. This sense of trust empowers them to openly discuss their traumas, creating a space for healing that might not be possible otherwise.

Delimitations

The *Ubumwe* Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Glendale Seventh-day Adventist Church in Phoenix, Arizona will serve as the context for this project.

Description of the Project Process

To develop a leadership training for the African Immigrant Multicultural

Ministry, the following four topics were examined in both the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen G. White: Biblical Images of the Church and their Implication for Mission, Spiritual Gifts and Ministry in the New Testament, Leadership Succession in the Book of Acts and Paul's Writings, and Ellen White's Perspective on the Ministry and Mission of the Church.

The literature review included research on discipling immigrants for spiritual growth and mission, leaders' roles, expectations, and the challenges of being a leader in a multicultural African context. Included with be the impact of cultural expectations on leadership practices and team leadership and motivation of the laity for mission in a multicultural context.

I developed and implemented a strategy to train and equip pastors and lay leaders for effective ministry to central African immigrants in the North American Division. This project was implemented in the Ubumwe Church and Glendale Church. The effectiveness of this strategy was evaluated by 12 members (White, Spanish, and Black) from the Ubumwe Company and the Glendale Church. Trained facilitators, other than the pastor, conducted focus groups and two trained data recorders documented the data.

Dissertation Outline

This project was developed in the following way. Chapter 1 outline the background of the ministry context, the problem, the statement of the problem, statement of the task, delimitations, and a description of the project process. Chapter 2 reflects on the biblical and theological implications and meaning of the Church by looking at several biblical images of the Church and their implications for mission. Chapter 3 reviews literature on different meaning of discipleship in the context of immigrants, their spiritual

growth, and mission. Chapter 4 describes and explores the initiatives used to address the problem of leadership involvement and a strategy to train African Pastors and lay leaders at the Ubumwe Seventh-day Adventist Company in Phoenix, Arizona. Chapter 5 outlines the methods used in the study, the sample of the participants, results of the survey conducted, analyzes the statistics, and their implications for leadership and mission. Chapter 6 lists the conclusion, implications for how the Strategic Action Plan shapes African pastors and lay leaders, and makes recommendations for those who also desire to minister to multicultural congregations.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Introduction

The primary purpose of this Strategic Ministry Action Plan is to establish a focused and biblical foundation for effective ministry to African pastors and lay leaders of Central African immigrants in Phoenix, Arizona. Within this context, and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the focus will first be on the way God talks about His people and the way God's people experience the fulfillment and meaning available in Christ as they exercise their gifts and their callings. The main point of this section will be grounded in Matt 16:18 and 1 Pet 2:9 and its spiritual and theological implications.

Background

In mid-2012 the leadership of Phoenix Glendale Seventh-day Adventist Church helped me develop a strategic plan called Kinyarwanda/Kirundi Ministry. Out of that ministry a new group was born called Ubumwe Seventh-day Adventist Group, composed of African immigrants originating from Central Africa. Our focus was on fellowship, Bible study, worship, community services, membership caring, and legal services. Following that strategic plan, the Group moved from becoming a Group to an Organized Company and soon will become an effective and organized Church.

Mission and Vision Statements

When Phoenix Glendale SDA Church established the Refugee Ministry Plan, the following Mission and Vision Statements were set up and which remain still today.

Mission: God called Phoenix Glendale SDA Church to be a community of Christian believers that: 1. Invites, 2. Nurtures, and 3. Encourages Services.

Vision: To achieve our mission, we provide opportunities to discover and use our gifts to serve Christ and focus on spiritual development and growth.

Church and Mission

This chapter will focus on my biblical and theological understanding of church and mission with a vision to motivate African pastors and lay leaders to become more effective for church growth. It will also develop and implement various programs in response to the growth and needs of this ministry. Reinder Bruinsma (2019) wrote a book entitled *The Body of Christ: A Biblical Understanding of the Church* and in it he asked the question, “Do we still need the Church?” (12). He stated that the word “church” can have a number of very different meanings (39). In looking up the Greek word for church, I found that *ekklesia* is commonly translated into English as “church” (Danker, 2000). From the root word *ekklesia*, the Bible writers used many different metaphors and images to describe the nature and the mission of the church; however, for this context, I will limit research to only three areas: (1) the church as hospital, (2) the church as the family of God, and (3) the church as a bride. But someone may ask, What does church mean? The next section will deal with the biblical meaning of church.

The Biblical Meaning of the Church (*Ekklesia*)

It is good to look at Jesus' words to Peter, "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18 NKJV). When Jesus was speaking to His disciples, what kind of church was He referring to? Bruinsma (2009) argues that for most people today the word "church" can have a number of very different meanings. He states, "When they speak of 'a church,' they often mean a building, a denomination or religion—its worship and its institutions" (39).

In my context and theological understanding, the word "church" in *Kinyarwanda*, has two different meanings: (1) it is translated "*urusengero*," which means a church building, a temple, a synagogue or a place, and (2) it is translated "*itorero or umuryango*," which means a congregation, a community or a family (Zemback 2012). From this context and theological understanding, I therefore agree with Bruinsma's biblical focus of *ekklesia*. *Ekklesia* is specifically that of people (Bruinsma 2009). With this understanding, the interpretation of Matt 16:18 means that "the rock is Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and upon Him, "Jesus Christ," He would build His *assembly*, His *congregation*, His *gathering*, and His *Community* of redeemed people (39). Thus, Jesus was telling Peter that the church, *ekklesia*, the assembly of Christ's people will be built upon Him. My theological understanding of the *ekklesia* will play a key role for the mission that church leaders and members do in *ekklesia* and for *ekklesia*. To understand what "church" is will inspire and motivate not only the African church leaders' identity of who they are, but also their faith, calling, mission, and function.

Biblical Images for the *Ekklesia* and Their Implication for Mission

Ekklesia as a Hospital for Sinners

The thing the *Ekklesia* needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful. In Mark 2:16-17, Jesus' ministry was not only limited to spiritual: He healed the sick—physical healing; He ministered to the brokenhearted—emotional healing; and he taught and preached—spiritual healing.

In the African context, the concept of a hospital gives sick people hope for restoration and it is the restoration that gives them the hope of healing. As described in Matt 9:35 and prophesied in Isa 61:1, “Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in the synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.” The *ekklesia* is a field hospital after battle and it carries a mission to restore and heal the brokenness. When a person knows that he is sick, then he knows he needs a physician. The *ekklesia* is a place where one can go to meet with people who are called out of darkness to meet the living God, who is the pillar and the ground of truth. Ben Williams states, “Being part of the *ekklesia* makes reference to how God would have us live and interact with each other. ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all soul and with all your mind and love your neighbor as yourself’” (Matt 22:37-38 NIV). In this context, the *ecclesia* is focused entirely on taking care of the needs of its own; providing support in all aspects of life, some of which include medicine and wellness for the soul.

The *Ekklesia* is a “hospital for sinners, the place where sinners come for repentance and forgiveness (Wright 2007, 11). And Franklin (2017) draws a picture of the different views of church in his blog where he states, “The idea that the Church

[*Ekklesia*] is not a museum of saints can be very misleading because it's both a museum of saints and a hospital for sinners." In the context of this ministry, it is understood that this is about spiritual sickness, which requires a spiritual healing, from Jesus Christ the Great Physician. For such a reason, if *ekklesia* was not a museum of saints or forgiven sinners, then Rom 5:8 would be a lie. In the context of this image of the *ekklesia* as a hospital, the community must be effective in helping hurting people. It should be specialized in three areas: (1) to know its members and their needs, (2) to carry on its mission to its people, and (3) to keep them safe within the congregation.

Ekklesia as the Family of God

An Ashanti proverb from Ghana states, "The ruin of a nation begins in the homes of its people." This proverb shows how important a family is in this African culture. The family unit is one of the most powerful places for building a strong community. The father, the mother, and children gather, and great moments are celebrated. The word 'church' in the *New American Standard New Testament Greek Lexicon* (n.d.) is translated from the Greek word *ekklesia*, which means a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into an assembly. This is a fact in the African culture because strong and effective churches are composed of strong and effective families. Charles B. Nam defines family as "a key concept in social sciences and sociology. The family is generally regarded as a major social institution and locus of much of a person's social activity. It is a social unit created by blood, marriage, adoption, and sometimes close friendship, and can be described as nuclear (parents and children) or extended (encompassing other relatives)" (2004, 3). "The biblical metaphor of 'family' . . . describes what the church (*ekklesia*) would resemble—a group of people, few enough in numbers to sit around in a circle,

facing each other and sharing the joy and the benefits of togetherness” (Bilezikian 1997). This concept of family therefore helps people understand the essential for understanding the nature of the *ekklesia* as a community that has values and that is bound together and united. This bond between Christians in the New Testament was very close in that they treated each other as family members; hence, they addressed other believers as brother, sister, and mother (Boubakar 2010). In Gal 6:10, Eph 2:19, 1 Tim 3:15, and 1 Pet 4:17, Peter and Paul refer to the *ekklesia* as a family of God or of faith. These biblical images of *ekklesia* as family, or house of God, should not be divided by faith (Emerson and Smith 2000), rather it should affirm what the *ekklesia* should look like: people living together, sharing together, worshipping together, praying together, participating together, sitting together, walking together, and not divided by faith. Jesus taught His disciples, saying, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations? But you have made it a ‘den of thieves’” (Mark 11:17). Indeed, the mission of the church should be: (a) to bring all nations together, and (b) proclaim God’s praises (1 Pet 2:9).

So why did Jesus not choose to build His *ekklesia*? Why would He choose the *ekklesia*? Ed Silvano states, “The *ekklesia* was understood to mean both the institution and the system by which territories were governed by selected local leaders who had been infused with the culture and customs of Rome to rule on its behalf” (2017). However, in support of the mission of the *ekklesia*, Greg Simas (2017) suggests that Jesus chose *ekklesia* rather than the temple or synagogue because the buildings were static and that members visited them only on “specialized occasions, whereas the *ekklesia* was mobile, operating 24/7 in the seven mountains of the city for the purpose of busting down the Gates of Hades and destroying the works of the devil, transforming people, cities and

nations” (Simas 2017). The Apostle Peter wrote, “The chosen generation a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9).

The mission of the *ekklesia* would be of primary importance, to fulfill the greatest commandments, showing whole-hearted love for God and others, with affection and action. For this clear purpose, Luke states, “Therefore, when they [Jesus and His disciples] had come together [as family]” (Acts 1:6), Jesus said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father [family] has put in His own authority [leadership]’” (Acts 1:7). As it is within a nuclear family, “*ekklesia* seeks to provide a place where all can learn about, participate in, contribute to, and become a part of the coming together” (*Ekklesia* 2008). It is in the context of Matt 28:19-20 that Jesus commissioned His *ekklesia*. “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The imperative “go” in Matt 28:19-20, as translated from the Greek, shows that the *ekklesia* is mobile—it impacts every part of society (culture); it influences everyone around it; it becomes relational; and everyone is responsible and reproducible (Simas 2017). Blount and Tisdale (2001) point out that the church today seeks to bridge the gaps and unite all people in worship, without threatening their personal or cultural uniqueness rather than to be a divided family of God in accordance with the *ekklesia* mission.

In short, it is the *ekklesia* of God, gathering together as His own people and family for His mission. To be an effective *ekklesia* requires faith in God’s ability to reveal His will to His people. It also requires that His people grow and dedicate

themselves to learning how to become more effective leaders and decision-makers.

Ekklesia as a Bride of Christ

Earlington and Evelyn Guiste share “one of the most beautiful images Paul paints of the body of Christ in his writings is that of the church being Christ’s bride” (2015, 72). Floyd Mackler also makes a point: “It is also helpful to see the position of the *ekklesia* by noting that it is a feminine noun and represents a feminine aspect” (1986, 5). Joel Ryan writes that the Bride of Christ is another prominent symbol and image used in the Bible to describe God’s relationship with His beloved bride, the church, *ekklesia* (2019). To understand God’s love for His people, His *ekklesia*, His people must first understand their relationship with Him through the covenant He made with them. God promised to be faithful to *ekklesia* and He described His expectations for the *ekklesia*’s relationship with Him as His bride. Paul identifies the *ekklesia* as Christ’s bride in 2 Cor 11:2 and Eph 5:22-32. These passages naturally apply to the relationship between a husband and wife but also extends to the relationship between the *ekklesia* (the bride) and Christ (the bridegroom). For this reason, Guiste (2015) affirms that Christ expects His body, followers, disciples, and saints, to live pure lives. This emphasizes the idea of identity as well as authority as Ryan (2019) suggests that the *ekklesia* must submit to the authority of Jesus Christ and surrender to His Lordship.

In this context, pastors and lay leaders are called to experience the powerful expression available to learn proper bride (feminine) qualities that point toward a “trustful communication, warm and loving relationship” (Guiste and Guiste 2015, 72). It means, as African pastors and African lay leaders, to better serve Christ and have an effective ministry, it is necessary to understand that in our lives with Christ we are

responsible, submissive, receptive, and cooperative. From Christ the husband of the church, power is given to pastors to bear fruit for God (Rom 7:4). To Christ' bride (the church), leaders can offer their very beings as vessels for His use and glory (Eph 1:18).

In an African culture, especially for people from Burundi, Congo, and Rwanda, femininity is not a very familiar quality to most of us raised in a masculine-oriented culture. So-called masculine qualities are much more apparent, and aggressiveness, successfulness, control, dominate. To highlight femininity is to thrust most of us into a whole new learning experience (including the feminists whose view of femininity is often Amazonian). To some that does not happen until they have been forced by life's situation to be more passive. Even then it is submitted to only grudgingly, with no real display of fruitfulness or abundant energy. Apparently passive/active motifs are not very accurate for identifying feminine and masculine qualities. Better for the feminine side to regard it as inward surrender. To choose this route is the privilege and glory of the *ekklesia* as Christ's bride. (Mackler 1986, 6)

The above three biblical images of the Church, *ekklesia* as a hospital, and as a family of God, and the bride of Christ, all point to the fact that *ekklesia* is not a building or a place or a set of organized programs and activities of individuals. The *ekklesia* is an assembly, a congregation, and a group of people called out. Ellen White states that "the members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to the 'principalities and powers in heavenly places'" (2015, 23). As the salt is different from the food it flavors, *ekklesia* must be different from the world it serves. Paul states, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom 12:2). God has called the *ekklesia* to be a people with a renewed mind and separated from sin who do not engage with the world (1 Pet 1:16; Eph 5:7). The church family is to embrace fellowship with other believers and be a light to the world (Acts 2:42; Matt 5:16). The *ekklesia*, as a family, is to love and care for each other with a

brotherly and sisterly love that comes from Christ and, consequently, will bear more fruit for God. The next section will reflect on a biblical understanding of the use of spiritual gifts and how they were used for growth in the *ekklesia* in the New Testament.

Spiritual Gifts and Ministry in the New Testament

Spiritual gifts can help the Christian ministry team identify, appreciate, and employ the God-given abilities of their members. God has given every Christian at least one spiritual gift, and the purpose of each gift is to help fellow Christians grow in Christlikeness and build up the whole body of Christ, the *ekklesia*, so that it becomes mature (Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 12:7-11; Eph 4:11-16). For the purposes of this chapter, I will limit myself to only a few of these spiritual gifts in the New Testament and their implications to ministry. One can read in the Bible that God demands His people, the *ekklesia*, to use their gifts as stewards (1 Pet 4:10; Matt 25).

Leading a multicultural team is a complex task and comprises huge challenges (Hibbert and Hibbert 2014). Over the past 20 years, as my roles have changed from being a hospital chaplain to a full-time Seventh-day Adventist pastor for the African immigrants in Phoenix, Arizona, as well as organizing and planting new congregations in many cities in the United States in the African refugee and immigrant communities, I struggled with many challenges. Many of the African pastors and lay leaders have the same difficulties. One leader told me, “I have been pastoring many congregations, but since I have been with these groups with many ethnicities, I was asked ‘is this group of ethnicities worthy of being led?’ I would say no as my answer.” Another lay leader stated, “At a certain point in our team leadership I began to doubt the real value of these

multi-ethnic groups/churches. There is so much hard work with little payoff in terms of ministry effectiveness.”

These two leaders are not unique in questioning whether the effort involved in multicultural or multi-ethnic mission is worth it. Despite these challenges and barriers, newly planted churches are continuing to be born. Thus, it is necessary that new creative answers to these hard and complex problems be answered so that these multicultural and multi-ethnic group churches can survive and thrive. In order to be effective leaders for these ministries, everyone needs to be committed to the great commission (Matt 28:19-20) and be able to cope with the demands of ministry in this changing world. Therefore, for the next few pages, practical and biblical models of intercultural harmony will be discussed. Some of the challenges faced in these ministries are commonly found in the area of communication, decision-making, conflict management, and leadership. The issue of communication and how this issue can be turned into a great gift for the growth of *ekklesia* will be looked at first.

Communication

Demise Vaneck argues that one of the most important skills of a leader is the ability to communicate well and that communication is a big part of God’s strategy for saving humankind. He continues by saying that “communication can also have a dark side” (2005, 122). Evelyn and Richard Hibbert warn that multicultural and multi-ethnic group churches have the potential to become exceptionally effective but also to experience serious conflicts caused by “poor communication” (2014, 141). From this context of understanding, George Yancey suggests that a core principle of “Christian faith is the concept of the sin nature” (2006, 80). Since the Bible says, “For all have

sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23) this means all were born with a sinful nature (Rom 5:12, 6:23). For this reason, Yancey continues saying that it is our sinful nature that blinds us to the ways in which we protect the interests of our racial group and also influences us to blame others for the problems we cause ourselves (Yancey 2006). God, speaking through the Prophet Jeremiah, cautions that as the Ethiopian cannot change his skin or the leopard its spots, so we cannot do good because we are accustomed to evil (Jer 13:23). Proverbs 12:18 says, “Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.” It is true that a person’s words can bless or they can injure. Bad hearts produce bad communication; thus, the great need of the Holy Spirit to lead to change and transformation of the heart.

Before a person receives the Holy Spirit in his or her heart, communication was the product of their sinful nature, which is referred to in the New Testament as “the flesh” (Gal 5:19-21). Fleshly communication includes lying, greed, sexual immorality, and those result in selfishness, hatred, and divisions. When a professed Christian, pastor, or lay leader uses their natural gifts given by God to communicate blasphemy and profanity, they are sinful. On the contrary, in a repentant, righteous Christian, the heart is changed by the Spirit to reflect the nature of God, resulting in godly communication. Christian communication is motivated by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and self-control (Gal 5:22-23) (Compelling Truth n.d.).

These attributes describe the work of the Spirit and the ways in which Christ Himself communicated. For communication to be effective, it must resemble the communication of Christ Himself. To be an effective African pastor and lay leader,

White (2002) suggests several qualifications for successful Christian service. The two first qualifications she mentions are “efficiency and cultured speech.”

The Gift of Communication in the New Testament

The New Testament reveals the talent of the Apostle Paul. Saul, even before he encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus, was a skilled communicator, but when he became Paul, he excelled at conveying information, truth, and guidance. Paul surprised the believers and proved himself to be a strong communicator for the Christian faith.

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. All those who heard him were astonished and asked, “isn’t he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn’t he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests? Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ. (Acts 9:21-22)

Paul was also surprisingly effective at communicating with gentiles of all sorts (1 Cor 9:19-27). When he visited the city of Athens, he saw the town was filled with devout worshippers of all kinds of gods. Dale Roach speaks about Paul’s talent of communication as follows, “As he preached in and spoke in the marketplace, he was approached by some scholars to come and present this new teaching to their assembly” (2020). Indeed, Paul is a good example of a communicator to those who struggle to communicate with those who are not from same faith and culture. When Paul arrived in Athens to present the Gospel, he said,

Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknowing I am going to proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. (Acts 17:22-25)

Roach extracts from the passage above the following seven significant communication skills that reveal Paul's character.

¹Paul was able to connect with a group outside of his culture. ²He was able to connect with the intellectual and scholars. ³He was gifted to engage non-believers in the gospel message by referring to the evidence of nature and Creator. ⁴He was able to appeal to their desire to worship the things that point to God. ⁵Paul could talk with people in the marketplace outside of a temple building. ⁶He was able to speak to them in their terms. ⁷He was gifted enough to use quotes from their writers and philosophers to convey the message of the Gospel. (2020)

The New Testament reveals Christ, the Great Communicator. As mentioned before, the success of a leader's ability to lead and his relationships with others depends a great deal on his ability to communicate. However, many of the great thinkers are not leaders. Why? They cannot communicate. Leadership rests on the leader's ability to connect with people, share her idea and vision, and motivate them to join with her. One former teacher used to say, "If I could start all over again, I would go back to school and learn to communicate."

In Matt 13, an example of an effective communication style can be seen. Christ, the Great Communicator, teaches how to relate truth to the people of today. From the biblical lessons, the significant communication skills Jesus used for His audiences can be learned.

First, Jesus shared most of His messages through parables and stories. Matthew 13 has seven of them in this chapter alone. Using the parables and stories make something complicated into something simple. He gave them the point for their head and a picture for their heart. The big lesson that can be learned from Jesus is that it is not just what a person says, but how they say it. African pastors and lay leaders must learn to know how to say things in a manner that will be understood and accepted. Second,

“‘Have you understood all these things?’ Jesus asked. ‘Yes,’ they replied” (Matt 13:51 NIV). After Jesus taught, He asked, “Have you understood these things?” He was probing to make sure they could apply the truth. The second lesson to be learned is to not only pay attention to what you say, but also how the hearer responds.

The third lesson comes from Matt 13 verses 53-57:

When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there. Coming to His hometown, He began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. “Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother’s name Mary, and aren’t his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren’t all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?” And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home.”

In His teaching, “Jesus spoke from His convictions. His convictions enabled Him to conclude that ‘a prophet is not without honor except in his own country’ (Matt 13:57). . . . [Jesus] had nothing to lose, and nothing to hide. . . . When He spoke, His words always had great meaning” (Maxwell 2008, 43). The lesson leaders should learn from Jesus’ example is that it is not just what you say, but why you say it, and how you express it.

In addition to these characteristics of effective Bible leaders, White adds that “those who have been most successful in soul-winning were men and women who did not pride themselves on their ability, but who in humility and faith sought to help those about them.” She continues, saying, “Jesus did this very work. He came close to those whom He desires to reach” (2002, 117). She concludes that “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me’” (White 1942, 143).

It is clear that Paul, when he received the power of the Holy Spirit that brought him to conversion, became an effective communicator of the truth of God. At Jesus's baptism, the Holy Spirit descended from heaven as a dove and rested upon Him (Matt 3:16). To be an effective communicator like Paul and Jesus, one must receive anointing from the Holy Spirit.

People can be grateful to God for giving them new hearts to replace their formerly sinful "heart[s] of stone" and the ability to hear His Spirit, in order that they may follow His commands and obey them (Ezek 11:19-20). Additionally, people have the gift of Jesus, sent so that they would be reconciled to God through the blood of Christ (Rom 5:6-12; 1 Cor 15:21-22; 2 Cor 5:21). Jesus now serves as an advocate, whose sacrifice guarantees that God will hear and respond to people's prayers (Heb 4:14-16; Matt 6:7-13; John 15:7-8). In people's pursuit of living a life worthy of Christ, they can call on the Holy Spirit to guide them in every aspect (John 14:26). African pastors and lay leaders should seek first to be led by the Holy Spirit and allow Him to enable them to live as Christ lived. As they continue to strive to live as Christ lived, they become new creations in Him (2 Cor 5:17) (Compelling Truth n.d.).

Because the ability to communicate effectively is an essential skill and gift in today's world, especially for multicultural and multi-ethnic group church growth, African pastors and lay leaders will be trained and given resources that will enable them to remove barriers to communication and learn about new communication skills that will enable them to become more effective ministers.

Decision-Making and Conflict Management

Over the past 20 years, I have seen many ministries and churches being destroyed and often the failure of a ministry or a church has led to a devastating experience for all involved. When there are chronic conflicts that are not well managed and resolved, they often result in damaged relationships. Indeed, Hibbert and Hibbert (2014) state that conflict and misunderstanding are normal between people in all contexts, but in intercultural interaction they are greatly amplified. Team leaders, specifically, need to be skilled at managing intercultural conflict on their teams. As has been observed, one major cause of conflict in multicultural teams can be the difference between the cultural values of the teams. Culture will not be defined here, but as noted by Paul Hiebert (2009), culture affects all dimensions of human experience. However, as mentioned earlier, God has chosen His *ekklesia* through which His will and love have to be manifested. According to the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, “God is a God of order as evidenced in His works of creation and redemption.” It continues, “in order for [the SDA Church] to be a successful ecclesiastical organization at the service of the Lord and humanity, it needs order, rule, and discipline. Scripture affirms that ‘all things be done decently and in order’ (1 Cor 14:40)” (2016, 15). Two examples of conflict resolution in the Bible are as follows.

Jewish and Gentile Christians (Acts 15). There was a great divide within the church, *ekklesia*, between the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians. Some of the Jewish Christians felt that the Gentile Christians needed to keep the ceremonial laws of Moses, even to the point of becoming circumcised as adults. Already the seeds of conflict can be seen. When Paul and Barnabas “came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the

church [*ekklesia*] and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done through them. But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them keep the law of Moses’” (Acts 15:5 ESV). There were many discussions about this issue. James, one of the leaders of the *ekklesia* at Jerusalem, after listening to everyone, resolved this conflict by concluding, “that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, but should write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood” (Acts 15:19-20). It seemed like a satisfactory solution for the *ekklesia*, and the elders, so they decided to send word to the whole *ekklesia* at large, using Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, to carry the news (v. 22). Conflict solved.

Paul and Barnabas Conflict (Acts 15:36-41). A serious conflict arose between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark. Paul was upset over Mark’s decision in Pamphylia to leave them and their work, and this led to a definite breach between them. To African pastors and lay leaders, making application to ministry today, there will always be times when good brethren will disagree in matters of opinion. But when it happens, Wayne Jackson says the important thing is to keep focused on doing the will of Christ as Paul and Barnabas did. As a result, perhaps even more work was accomplished for the Lord because of the way their disagreement was handled. Hibbert and Hibbert emphasize that conflict is normal by saying that “the only place there is no conflict is the cemetery” (2014, 134). No conflict means there is no life. Bill Hybels says:

The popular concept of unity is a fantasy land where disagreements never surface and contrary opinions are never stated with force. We expect disagreement, forceful disagreement. . . . Let’s not pretend we never disagree. . . . Let’s not have people hiding their concerns to protect a false notion of unity. Let’s face the disagreement

and deal with it in a godly way. . . . The mark of community—true biblical unity—is not the absence of conflict. It’s the presence of a reconciling spirit (1993, para. 4).

Table 1 Team roles in problem solving

| Problem-Solving Stage | Most Helpful Team Role(s) |
|----------------------------------|--|
| | Whole Team |
| 2. Gathering Information | Resources Investigator |
| 3. Analyzing Information | Monitor-evaluator |
| 4. Generating possible Solutions | Plant |
| 5. Selecting best Solution | Monitor-evaluator |
| 6. Planning for implementation | Resources Investigator and Implementor |
| | Whole Team, esp. Coordinator and |
| 7. Implementing the Solution | Implementor |
| 8. Testing the Solution | Monitor-evaluator |
| 9. Finishing off the details | Completer-finisher |

Source: Hibbert and Hibbert (2014).

In short, team members expect their leaders to be able to deal with conflict, and team leaders should be able to resolve conflicts. Team leaders need to mediate to help resolve conflict, and to help the whole team talk about the issues that are causing the conflict. See Table 1 above for an illustration of how teams can work together to solve problems. This section described how and why conflicts develop, how culture influences conflict, and how different people resolve conflicts in different ways. While conflict may damage relationships, conflict is also an opportunity to bring glory to God by trusting and obeying Him through it (Hibbert and Hibbert 2014).

Leadership Succession in the Book of Acts and Paul’s Writings

Leadership is challenging in any field, but there are particular difficulties inherent to of leading African multicultural and multi-ethnic group churches. As mentioned from previous sections, ethnic group churches are more complex and difficult to establish than

mono-ethnic group churches. The major problem faced in leading them is related to value differences between cultures. There are many that are easily visible, such as differences in languages, tribes, culture, food, beliefs, values, dress, appearance, etc. Other value differences are not so easy to see. Some ethnic group churches may refuse to be led by an unknown leader or someone who does not speak like they do. Another problem could arise when the leader is from one culture and all the members are from another.

There is a need to develop and implement a plan that will provide tools for effective African pastors and lay leaders for leadership succession for the African Ministry in Phoenix, Arizona. As an ancient Chinese Proverb stated, “A person who does not worry about the future will shortly have worries about the present.”

The next few pages offer some tools and resources to African pastors and lay leaders to help them become better cross-cultural leaders and more effective ministers. There will be training that will raise their awareness of potential areas of value conflict. A good multicultural team leader enables all members of the team to become fully participating members of the team. This requires training, for learning to become an effective multicultural leader is like learning to play music. Beside talent, it demands persistence and the opportunity to practice (Hibbert and Hibbert 2014).

Leadership succession has been a big issue in many churches, especially in multicultural and multi-ethnic group churches. The appointment of relatives to important positions or not appointing them can create conflicts. This section will focus on succession and the process of transition in the *ekklesia* and the problems that can occur due to that process. The *Acts of Apostles* will serve as a guide to leadership within a multicultural and multi-ethnic community of believers. In reading this book, it shows

how pastors and lay leaders should lead in a diverse community and how leadership succession should take place. Acts also gives an overview of Peter's leadership, and how the process for the replacement of Judas was initiated (Acts 1:15). Steven Ger (2004) explains that the Acts of the Apostles is a story that helps us understand the principles that ought to govern the church in any age.

Peter's Leadership (Acts 1:14)

Acts gives guidelines for leadership from Peter's life, despite his inexperience. Jesus gave him the job description to "make disciples of all nations" and then He left without leaving any further instructions. Peter had no resources, education or qualifications, and had many obstacles in his way. What would you do as a leader in his situation? Father Michael White (2010) outlines the steps Peter took in taking the role of leader. I will mention four:

1. *Prayer and preparation.* "They all joined together constantly in prayer. . . ." (Acts 1:14 NIV). Under Peter's leadership the church, *ekklesia*, prayed constantly. They waited on the Lord and the gift of the Holy Spirit, and through prayer, made themselves available to the leadership of God. All disciples were waiting and available and preparing for the time when God would use them to do a great work.

2. *Staffing.* Peter said, "May another take his place of leadership.' Therefore, it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time" (Acts 1:20-21). While they were waiting and praying, part of their preparation took the form of filling that position. Peter leads the process to replace Judas with "another to take his place of leadership" as an apostle.

3. *Preaching and teaching.* "Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd" (Acts 2:14). As a leader, Peter's first public action was preaching the word of God. He makes it very clear from the very beginning that the Church, *ekklesia*, will operate under the authority of the word of God.

4. *Leading people to life change.* "When the people heard [Peter] . . . they were cut to the heart and [asked], 'What shall we do?' Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized. . . . Those who accepted his message were baptized, about three thousand" (Acts 2:37, 38, 41). After his preaching, thousands had a change of heart. A change of the heart leads to changed lives. Leadership is always going to lead people somewhere and if you bring them to a life changed, that is successful and fruitful leadership." (M. White 2010)

As shown in the biblical examples, a good leader will nearly always face opposition and conflict. Disputes are common when teams of people try to work together, and a leader should prepare for challenges in this arena. Leaders should keep in mind the probability of being called to an account of the leadership they have shown at some point during their ministry. Peter faced many difficult leadership challenges, and he showed courage and gained in maturity as a leader. African pastors and lay leaders should do the same.

The Process for Replacement of Leaders

This biblical passage is about the selection and process of Matthias to replace Judas.

And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said “Men and brethren, this Scripture has to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David, concerning Judas who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry. . . . And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Mathias. And they prayed and said, “You O Lord who know the hearts of all, show which of these two you have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.” And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles. (Acts 1:15-17; 23-26 NKJV)

Before looking at this succession process to replace Judas, first consider what biblical leadership is all about. “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judg 17:6). During the time of the Judges, Israel was without a leader. Israel was like sheep without a shepherd, and they wandered aimlessly. “He who leads with diligence” (Rom 12:8); a biblical leader leads with diligence. “This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and

profitable to men” (Titus 3:8). Based on these few verses, a good leader has three jobs: (1) giving the people direction and vision, (2) helping each person to see what part he or she must do (Neh 3), and (3) solving conflicts and helping people get along harmoniously (Neh 4-5).

There is no question that in Acts 1:15-26, Peter proposes two men who met the necessary criteria for leadership. The first, Joseph, was also known as Barsabas, which is Aramaic for “son of the Sabbath.” The second man was Matthias, who had nothing written about him other than his name. It appears that both men were equally qualified to fill the position. The first thing the Apostles did before the process of replacement for Judas was to pray. Steven Ger (2004) specifies that they sought the Lord’s divine guidance in their prayer, and that they recognized that God had already made His choice and would reveal to them who He had chosen. Bill Scheidler (2018) adds that this process was handled with both natural and Holy Spirit direction. Revelation 21:14 calls this qualification “unique.” It was unique because of a unique group of leaders (Eph 2:19-22). The method used for choosing Matthias was by lot and of the Lord (Acts 1:26).

Why was Paul not qualified for this process? Why were no women nominated? Paul was God’s choice to fill an apostolic void at a different time. There were women who saw Jesus after His resurrection who also were qualified for this position. But Peter, with the entire group of Apostles, appointed one man from them. In addition, Jesus imposed one additional restriction on his choice of apostles, which never seems to enter into discussion. He not only limited his apostolic choice to men, but He restricted His choice to ethnically Jewish men. That would certainly narrow the effectiveness of ministry and the field of potential candidates for ministry.

The early Christian church was founded by itinerant apostles and their teams. The Bible says that when a need arose, suitably qualified people would be considered by the local church with prayer and fasting (Acts 13:1-3). There is little practical documentation of how prospective successors and key leaders were trained. It is sometimes argued that the *Didache* (*The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*), which is dated by most scholars to the late 1st century, disproves any documentation. Chapter 15 in Acts contains the words: “Therefore, appoint for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are humble and not avaricious and true and approved for they too carry out for you the ministry of the prophets and teachers.” Some observers see the words “for yourselves” a more democratic process but at the same time a process that creates more conflicts and damages relationships, especially with multi-ethnic group churches.

Having tried searching on this subject, this paper remains incomplete on what and how leadership successions happened in the early Church. An open window of search continues with those who will read this project.

The Appointment of Elders

“Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church [*ekklesia*] and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust” (Acts 14:23 NIV). Why is leadership so important? In Luke 6:40 (NET), Jesus said, “A disciple is not greater than his teacher, but everyone when fully trained will be like His teacher.” After teaching about prayer and the roles of men and women in the Church, *ekklesia*, in 1 Tim 2, Paul moves on to leadership in chapter 3. In verses 1-7, Paul lists the qualities of an overseer or an elder. It is clear throughout the epistle that the Ephesians had leadership problems.

Decision-making around leadership and succession is difficult everywhere, but it can be especially challenging in a church setting, due to family relationships, volunteer ministers, and other factors. Churches would do well to learn lessons from the business world about planning for leadership succession. To avoid a future crisis in leadership succession, here are some key steps to follow when planning for business, suggested by Wayne F. Cascio (2011), and adapted by myself for ministry: (1) Ensure that the African pastors and lay leaders understand the importance of the ministry and make it a priority; (2) Focus on an organization's future needs, not its past accomplishments; (3) Encourage differences of opinion; (4) Provide access to everyone for spiritual growth.

Ellen White's Perspective on the Ministry and Mission of the *Ekklesia*

“Wherever hearts are open to receive the truth, Christ is ready to instruct them. He reveals to them the Father, and the service acceptable to Him who reads the heart” (White 1942, 154).

If we were quick in discerning the opening providences of God, we should be able to see in the multiplying opportunities to reach many foreigners in America a divinely appointed message into all the nations of earth. God in His providence has brought men to our very doors and trust them, as it were, into our arms, that they might learn the truth, and be qualified to do a work we could not do in getting the light before men of other tongues. (E.G. White 1914, 3)

Adventists Should Minister to Refugees

To demonstrate God's heart and missional intent. Acts 17: 26, 27, “And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward Him and find Him. Yet He is actually not far from each one of us...”

Thousands of people have fled from their countries of origin, mainly Burundi, the

D. R. Congo, and Rwanda, retreating from heavy fighting to seek safety in neighboring counties. Pastor Joel Mpabwanimana, Coordinator and Church Planting Consultant Advisor for Kinyarwanda/Kirundi Ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist North American Division is also pastoring the Ubumwe Seventh-day Adventist Company in Phoenix, Arizona. Joel can relate to those he ministers to because he fled from the D. R. Congo to Michigan in 1999 to escape the civil war. Joel's ministry involves discipling and teaching refugees and immigrants from Central Africa who speak Kinyarwanda and Kirundi. His ministry started with a small group of five families at Glendale Adventist Church in Phoenix, Arizona in 2012. His call came to him after six years working as a full-time Hospital Chaplain at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center in Phoenix, Arizona.

Ministering to refugees and immigrants is not easy work because of the lack of educational opportunities for young adults and parents, cultural barriers, legal problems, and many other issues related to transitioning to a new life. During the past eight years Pastor Joel has organized 21 ethnic group churches and one organized church. At this moment, there are 31 ethnic group churches across the North American Division. Supported by local Conferences, Unions and the North American Division, Pastor Joel believes that God is using him through these moments of hardship to spread the message of the three Angels in Rev 14:6-12. Today, Joel's ministry is equipping African pastors and lay leaders, especially in Phoenix, Arizona, and elsewhere in the NAD, to spread the gospel, both in the USA, and back in the people's home countries (Matt 28:19-20).

I trust that God is going to use this ministry in many different ways and that it will become successful. The purpose of this project is to make sure that this ministry has

African pastors and lay leaders who are qualified and have the necessary resources to use them in a successful ministry. For growth in ministry, it is important to invest in people and build for the future.

Ellen White's resources are very supportive and will be used for training and to support the growth of this ministry. She emphasizes asking leaders to provide opportunities to reach out to many foreigners in America and extend the third angel's message into all the nations of the earth (White 1914, 1). In addition, her writings motivate leaders to plan for big results (White 1942, 154).

Self-Supporting Missionaries and Ellen G. White

In many places self-supporting missionaries can work successfully. It was as a self-supporting missionary that the apostle Paul (Acts 20:18-35) labored in spreading the knowledge of Christ throughout the world (White, 1914). She mentions methods to be used for effective ministry among our communities and overseas, such as visiting people, praying for the sick, ministering to the sick, singing, and teaching the Bible. Training people for medical missions for a foreign country should be encouraged. Working with people learning a language will soon enable them to reach the simple truths of God's word. Indeed, when God's plan is the first to reach the heart, God's work will be effective and strong.

The fact is that due to their stateless status, refugees and immigrants are unable to secure paying jobs or to be educated for their self-supportive ministries. Opportunities to minister to this population abound: Social activities such as sports, fellowship and friendship, carpentry, accounting, and worship services; providing food for the needy and the foreigner and opening doors to the traveler (Lev 19:9-10; Job 31:32); fighting for

justice for foreigners (Mal 3:5); inviting the stranger in (Matt 25:25-36); loving and showing mercy to the neighbor (Gal 5:14; Luke 10:29-37).

Jesus told His disciples and followers the qualities that should reflect Him, and to treat strangers with dignity and love. He said, “I was a stranger and you invited me in” (Matt 25:25), and all foreigners belong to the *Ekklesia* of God. Consequently, no one is a foreigner and stranger, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of His family.

Conclusion

As the numbers of refugees and immigrants resettled in the United States continues to grow, particularly in light of the large number of African refugees fleeing the civil wars, refugees and immigrants will continue to need help. For that reason, attitudes toward refugees and immigrants must change. In this movement of refugees and immigrants, God’s hand is upon them sending them effective ministers and leaders who will invite them into the kingdom of God and be disciples of Jesus.

It is true that the Strategic Ministry Action Plan set forth in this document will be challenging but also rewarding for everyone involved. Effective ministry to African pastors and lay leaders of Central African Immigrants in Phoenix, Arizona, and elsewhere, is needed. It is essential to develop concrete examples of how this ministry can be realized. This ministry will be most successful when it has a solid foundation in the scriptures, as described above.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

My priority for almost ten years has been the challenge of leading the Central Seventh-day Adventist African immigrants in Phoenix, Arizona. For decades now, researchers have been predicting that globalization, increased technology, civil rights legislation, and changing demographics would create new challenges for leaders who must manage a diverse workforce (Chrobot-Mason et al., 2007). Recently, Evelyn and Richard Hibbert (2014) stated that churches and mission agencies are increasingly characterized by cultural diversity and there are no trained leaders for them. Richard Hibbert argued that many Christians found themselves working as part of a multicultural team without trained leaders. However, leading these teams is a complex challenge that requires team leaders to understand how to help multicultural teams thrive.

Yancey (2006) and the Hibberts (2014) attractively set the context of this research when they argue that education is now a crucial battleground for multiculturalists, and that the role of multicultural leaders will increasingly become more important over the next twenty-five years. In fact, Yancey (2006) drew an analysis of what had gone wrong in the past as a detriment to the growth of churches and their mission. He argued that Christians have long struggled with racial issues and have often contributed to the

problem. By contrast, Brian K. Blount and Leonora Tisdole (2001) adopted a different approach that resulted from leadership weaknesses in the system. They believe that the table is one of the most powerful places for building community. Indeed, their argument about the table introduces a most important idea about a family gathering, holding reunions, celebrating great moments, teaching, training, and learning. At a table, the community itself is shaped and formed. Despite humanity's differences of faith and beliefs, the table can break down all barriers that divide people. However, "the poor have not come to our worship services in great droves. Nor have children or youth or people of other cultures always been made to feel welcome and included in our worship communities" (Blount and Tisdole 2001, 32). These factors have significantly increased the need that workers from various nationalities and ethnic backgrounds, including pastors and lay leaders from Central Africa, be required to work together for the Kingdom of God. This study will integrate insights from the Bible and a variety of authors to help train pastors and lay leaders from Central Africa to have a more effective ministry to a culturally diverse community as immigration from Central Africa continues.

Discipling Immigrants for Spiritual Growth and Mission

Richard Krejcir's (2005) article on church leadership entitled "The Importance of Discipleship and Growth" states that "growing in Christ is the key to growing a church". This is all about being a good, effective witness, whom Christ is, and what He has called the church to be and do. Followers of Jesus Christ, ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and Christians believe that all humans are made in the image of God and are, therefore, worthy of dignity and respect. Christians are called to love (see John 13:35) so that they will be known as Jesus' disciples, as they show love for one another. Before going

further, there must be clarity in understanding how Jesus used the term “disciple.” What is the meaning of *ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ* in the New Testament? *The Greek New Testament*, 5th ed. shows that the term *μαθητής* (*mathētēs*) refers generally to any “student,” “pupil,” “apprentice,” or “adherent,” as opposed to a “teacher”. In the ancient world, however, it was most often associated with people who were devoted followers of a great religious leader or teacher of philosophy.

The term *μαθητής* does not occur in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (i.e., the Septuagint [LXX]). This does not mean, however, that other terms are not used or that the concept and practice is not there. Indeed, it seems that it is. Several traditions within the national life of Israel make it reasonable to assume that the concept and practice of personal discipleship existed. Isa 8:16 states, “Tie up the scroll as legal evidence, seal the official record of God’s instructions and give it to my *followers*” (תְּקַבְּלֵהוּ). Greg Herrick (2004) offers his interpretation:

The Hebrew term for *followers* is from *לָמַד* which means ‘to learn’ or ‘instruct’ and may indicate that Isaiah had built up ‘a circle’ of disciples whom he personally instructed and who could promulgate his teachings among many in the nation. As Watts says, it seems that Isaiah wanted to deposit “his treasure of warnings and teachings with his disciples.” That is, while he may not have had a formal school, as we see in the case of Elisha (1 Kings 20:35; 2 Kings 2:3-15; 4:1-38), he, nonetheless, gathered around himself certain men and passed his teachings on to them. In Isaiah 50:4, the writer says that God wakes him every morning and gives him attentiveness so that he can listen and learn. In this way he is *like a disciple* (כְּלִמּוּדִים). Therefore, involved in the concept of being a disciple is a willing, listening, and obedient heart.

The following ideas are designed to provide practical help in developing a leadership strategy for making immigrants disciples (King 2006).

1. Plan with the end in mind: Determine what characteristics you believe are marks of a maturing disciple.

2. Evaluate current spiritual maturity: Determine where people are now in their spiritual journeys.

3. Design a plan: Develop a process to help people grow from where they are now toward the characteristics you believe mark a maturing disciple. Overall, the goal of this project is to move African pastors and lay leaders from being non-mature to being maturing disciples.

4. Spiritual growth is a life-long journey: This project will help each leader determine the next step he or she should take in his or her spiritual journey. People do best when they can achieve one small step at a time.

5. Discipleship is relational: People learn and grow from more mature believers whom they know and trust. Mentorships are the conduit through which discipleship flows.

6. Discipleship is reproducible: This project will guide leaders to grow in spiritual maturity in such a way that as they grow, they can help others grow (King 2006, 31).

Plan with the End in Mind

King (2006) explained that the goal of discipleship is disciples that are maturing in their faith. As leaders think about what characteristics they believe are marks of a maturing disciple, they should consider the following characteristics:

1. Spirit-filled Living (Eph 5:18). Christ-centered living evidenced by persons who:
 - a. Love God (Matt 22:36-40)—expressed in worship and holy living, and
 - b. Love Others (Matt 22:36-40)—expressed in fellowship and forgiveness.
2. Spirit-gifted Serving (Rom 12:4-6a). Ministry to others.
3. Spirit-empowered Witnessing (Acts 1:8). Evangelism.

4. Multiplying Disciples (2 Tim 2:2). Making reproducible disciples who can make disciples of others.

These characteristics are spiritual fruits that are built from our real, godly relationship and commitment to Christ as Lord. John says that Jesus must increase and we must decrease (John 3:29-30) and in order to exhibit good character, the flow from the fruit of the Holy Spirit must be accessed and developed (Gal 5:22-23).

Evaluate Current Spiritual Maturity

From a leader's own prayerful observation, he can gain much insight about the level of spiritual maturity among believers in his church. A "Spiritual Growth Assessment," such as that developed by *Lifeway*, is a useful tool to help persons evaluate their current spiritual maturity (Lifeway 2014).

Design a Plan

God's Word presents steps that can be taken toward growth and spiritual maturity by Bible study, patience, and diligent practice of good works. Many scriptures describe the need to grow and mature spiritually (King, 2011).

1. Ephesians 4:14-15—Be no longer children, but grow up in Christ.
2. 2 Peter 3:18—But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
3. 2 Thessalonians 1:3—The Thessalonians grew exceedingly in faith.
4. Philippians 1:9—Paul prayed for their love to abound and more.
 - a. Be positive under pressure (James 1:1-2)
 - b. Be sensitive to others (James 1:12)

- c. Be master of his or her mouth. Control what you say (James 3:2)
- d. Be a peacemaker
- e. Be a prayerful person (James 5:16) (King, 2011).

Spiritual Growth Is a Life-Long Journey

Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger (2006) and Avery Willis (1997) agree that discipleship is a process, while holding different opinions about the order in which to take some steps. Willis (1997) defined discipleship as a process of moving persons from being non-believers to being maturing disciples. Rainer and Geiger (2006) stated that it is helpful to consider the process in smaller steps.

Steps in Becoming a Maturing Disciple

Rick Warren (1995) mentions six steps to become a mature disciple: (1) nonbeliever to believer, (2) believer to church member, (3) church member to growing Christian (Spirit-filled Christian), (4) growing Christian to serving Christian (Spirit-gifted service), (5) serving Christian to witnessing Christian (Spirit-empowered witness), (6) witnessing Christian to multiplying Christian (Disciple-maker). Leaders need to ask themselves; Does my church have a plan or process in place to help persons take each of these steps?

Description of Discipleship

The following *means* are the most helpful for spiritual growth:

1. Spiritual Disciplines (2 Tim 2:3-7).
 - a. Daily Quiet Time, Prayer:
 - (i) for self, (ii) for others, and (iii) with fasting.

- b. Scripture:
 - (i) reading, (ii) study, and (iii) memorization.
- 2. Discipleship Groups (discipleship in small groups).
 - a. Personal growth: include topics such as building a relationship with God, having a quiet time, how to study the Bible, strengthening family life, and personal finances.
 - b. Training for service: include topics such as discovering spiritual gifts, training for a specific ministry, teacher training, and evangelism training.

Discipleship Methods

The following *methods* will be used to make disciples. These methods will increase levels of involvement and spiritual growth:

1. Pulpit/Preaching: Listening to biblical preaching can motivate persons toward desiring spiritual growth and will help people take the first steps in spiritual growth. Jim Wilson (2009) argues that preaching alone does not provide relationships; personalized teaching, or accountability are necessary for the next steps in discipleship.

2. Sabbath School class (open, small-group Bible studies): This is for foundational discipleship through Bible study and relationships with other Christians. Sabbath School classes train in-depth discipleship as groups become closer and assimilate new people.

3. Discipleship Groups (small groups specifically for discipleship/accountability): Small groups that meet for a set time for a particular study are the most effective.

4. The way to facilitate spiritual growth is through teaching, meeting together and having great relationships and accountability.

5. One-on-one Mentoring or Coaching: This method can provide intense personalized teaching and accountability. Wilson (2009) points out some limitations of this approach: (a) in growing churches, there are often not enough leaders for one-on-one training, and (b) in small groups, the relational interactions help persons to learn from their peers as well as from the teacher.

6. Ministry Involvement: The maximum spiritual growth occurs when people put into action what they have learned by being involved in ministry or evangelism.

This project aims to equip African pastors and lay leaders for multicultural ministry by maximizing their spiritual growth through this discipleship program. Most will move through church programs in the following order of increasing commitment and growth potential: worship service; Sabbath school (open, small-group Bible study); discipleship group (discipleship small groups); ministry team (place of service); witnessing team (evangelism ministry).

Leaders' Roles, Expectations, and Challenges

Leadership Teams in a Multicultural Church

When I received the call to plant a church in the North American Division in 2012, my perplexing question was where to begin. While the establishment of a new ministry can be exciting and stimulating, it brings with it some prayerful consideration over exactly where one starts. In Phoenix, Arizona, I began by seeking a building, a mother Church, and the Glendale Seventh-day Adventist Church welcomed me. A group of five began in 2012 and continued to grow with two different culture backgrounds—Hutus and Tutsis—tribes that have been divided and torn apart because of civil wars from which

hatred and divisions reside. Organizing and leading such community brought me a sense of awareness and accountability about the needs of multicultural ministry. Almost two years after I began this ministry, internal problems began to appear in the church, which caused me to feel overwhelmed and exhausted. The answer was to develop a leadership team. I began seeking counsel and direction in choosing faithful servants for church leadership.

Leader's Roles and Expectations

It is difficult to organize and plant a monocultural church in the United States. Early on, I realized that failing to define goals and mission would weaken the impact of my ministry. Any business that claims to be goal-driven must have leaders who not only set but achieve their goals. The goal for this training is that African pastors and lay leaders, should not only know how to set goals, but also how to achieve them. In doing so, they will make priorities for both them and their churches. It means these leaders will be motivated, innovated, and collaborative.

The Hibberts (2014) state that “the rule in multicultural teams, especially where members come from different cultures, is that everyone will have to accept compromise” (17). They also argue that the leader’s role is to facilitate the processes of mutual negotiation and compromise at the same time as building a strong and healthy team community able to manage its conflicts.

One of my primary goals is that African pastors and lay leaders will unite both tribes and enable all members at the Ubumwe SDA Company in Phoenix, Arizona, to become fully participating members of the church. Geert Hofstede describes multicultural leadership in the following way.

Learning to become an effective leader is like learning to play music: Besides talent, it demands persistence and the opportunity to practice. Effective monocultural leaders have learned to play one instrument; they often have proven themselves by a strong drive and quick and firm opinions. Leading in a multicultural and diverse environment is like playing several instruments. It partly calls for different attitudes and skills: restraint in passing judgment and the ability to reorganize that familiar tunes may have played differently. The very qualities that make someone an effective monocultural leader may make her or him less qualified for a multicultural environment. (2005, ix)

Men and women appointed to this unique group of leadership should adhere to the scriptural qualifications addressed in 1 Tim 3 and Titus 1. Their primary duties will include, but will not be limited to, the following: being sensitive to the desires and needs of the people who make up the congregation; helping with regular service duties such as song leading, pianist, pulpit supply if needed, announcements, visitation, etc.; leading the group in steps toward incorporation under law; giving training for future leaders such as elders, deacons, deaconesses, etc., along with the pastor; keeping the church focused on the essentials and main purpose of the church (Rodgers 2007).

I remember the first church board meeting I organized and led. I began by stating my expectations of all the members present. When I finished my meeting, I asked if there were any questions, and one of the board meeting members asked me, “Do you know what are our expectations of you?” As this was my first leading role, the question took me by surprise. To be honest, I did not, because I had not ever thought about leadership from the perspective of the other. It came through understanding their perspective and what was expected of me that allowed me to improve my leadership. There are a few things teams or churches expect from their leaders: Integrity, clarity, opportunity, involvement, commitments, respect, honesty, praise, teamwork, punctuality, and firmness.

Leadership Challenges

Brian Buffini (2017) states, “When you leave your home country and move to a different one, you become a stranger in a strange land. Nothing is familiar, nothing feels comfortable, and the simplest of tasks can present difficulties” (7). He goes on to say that “whether you encounter barriers from the differences in culture, language, or customs, you face challenges that can make you feel like a vulnerable child” (7). Immigrants struggle with the new culture, lack of established relationships, issues of few or even no assets or resources, lack of choices about where to start, and the lack of mentors or role models. These issues create challenges for leaders who must lead a multicultural church. According to Thabisile Dlomo (2003), “Language varieties can cause communication problems when people who use these varieties have interests” (20). Kaschula and Anthonissen (cited in Dlomo 2003) argue that “these levels of communicative and linguistic competence have major impact on the fluency of the speakers in the spoken language” (6).

In addition to the above challenges, racism could be another impediment to this ministry. Through eleven face-to-face interviews I organized after watching the movie *Race: The Power of an Illusion* (Pounder et al. 2003), the majority of them addressed the problem of racial chasm. Ed Stetzer (2017) wrote about challenges to becoming a multicultural church and states, “One of the biggest issues in our culture is race relations.” He continues, “I write about it often, and the latest incident reminds us of the brokenness we face in this area” (para. 2). Emerson and Smith (2000) affirm, “Because evangelicals view their primary task as evangelism and discipleship, they tend to avoid issues that hinder these activities” (p. 21). By contrast, Yancy (2006) discussed

multiculturalism as the most promising way to solve racial conflict. Christian faith would benefit from discussions on how multiculturalism and Christianity could help decrease the impact of racism. This project will attempt to make few provocative remarks on some of the key African debates forming around these issues. It will help African pastors and lay leaders become visionary leaders for effective ministry to the Central and Multicultural African Refugee and Immigrant ministry in Phoenix, Arizona.

Impact of Cultural Expectations on Leadership Practices

African pastors and lay leaders should understand multiculturalism has differing effects on places and people (Swanson and Holton 2009). Since these pastors' and lay leaders' ministry functions and responsibilities are more complex and difficult, a future-oriented and flexible leadership style is required. This section focuses on both: character qualities of the multicultural team leader, the things the leader needs to be and the competencies of good multicultural team leaders, the things the leader needs to be able to do (Hibbert and Hibbert 2014).

Develop Self-Awareness

Identifying Self-Strength and Weakness

Multicultural church leaders need to conduct a self-awareness test or assessment to identify self-strength and weakness (Dubrin 2004). It is important to understand their individual reactions to situations and approaches to decision-making. Knowing self-limitations (i.e., strengths and weaknesses) and behavioral patterns can help the leaders perform more effectively in cross-cultural settings (Frost and Walker 2007). Being able

to overcome stereotype and capitalize on one's advantages are keys to global leadership practice.

Appreciate Individual Differences

In a multicultural context, good leaders should appreciate individual's uniqueness (Holt and Seki 2012). Each individual has particular behaviors that are shaped by cultural background, life experience, and values (Parvis 2003, 37).

It is important to identify a cultural gap by looking at similarities. Focusing on differences between oneself and others is not a good way to solve interpersonal problems. Brenda Kowske and Kshanika Anthony (2007) identified that leadership competence is conceptualized similarly when individuals have similar geographical regional background (e.g., Hutu and Tutsis). Looking at similarities (also commonalities) rather than differences in people can be a good approach in assisting multicultural leaders to communicate and lead more effectively (Cranford and Glover 2007). African Leaders can thus build relationships and close the culture gap within a group or a church.

The following additional qualities and competencies will be expanded on later: understanding cultural stereotypes, humility, integrity, patience, listening and being approachable, always learning, trying new ways of doing things, inclusiveness, and belonging.

To be able to lead, first needed is leadership skills. Second, these skills need to match the values of the culture where the person works. Finally, authority is needed to exercise those skills. Tim Bryce wrote, "All companies have a culture. In order for employees to function and succeed, it is essential they understand and believe in the culture" (Bryce n.d.). The concepts of "organizational culture" and leadership are not that

simple. There is much debate around the meaning of each of these terms. In this section, I will ensure that African pastors and lay leaders clearly understand their tasks and responsibilities, and how their work contributes to the overall ministry in a multicultural church context.

Team Leadership and Motivation of Laity for Mission in a Multicultural Context

If the true measure of a church's success is the number of people it has in ministry, then the central focus of pastoral care should be placing and supporting people in ministry (Anderson 1998). How did my ministry get started at the Ubumwe Seventh-day Adventist Company? Our church was started by laypeople meeting together in a volunteer Bible study. It was a group of refugees who came from Africa, who experienced a lot of trauma and loss in their lives. As many refugees joined, the group became more organized in a traditional fashion with different programs and committees. As the group grew, the choice was between more structure with more committees or less structure and more ministry. We chose to go with less structure and more ministry. Leith Anderson (1998) compared the church structure to a human skeleton and stated that if you do not have it, you have got a serious problem. The Ubumwe Church has many different ministries: Sabbath School Ministry, Women's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Children's Ministry, Men's Ministry, Deacon and Deaconess's Ministry, Choir Ministry, a ministry that helps relocate refugee families, Food Ministry, Transportation Ministry, and more. These ministries take place multiple times each year and are all guided by lay leaders.

It is my goal that African pastors and lay leaders be trained and equipped for this

multicultural ministry. “As Jesus called twelve men and provided the best possible education for them (theory and practice), not isolation from the people but in the context of rubbing shoulders with those whom they were going to lead and thus avoided the development of a superior attitude in these future leaders” (Guiste and Guiste 2006, 113), God expects His Church to discipline and fit its members for the work of enlightening the world. “What is needed now for the upbuilding of our churches is the work of wise laborers to discern and develop talent in the church, talent that can be educated for the Master’s use” (White 2002, 58).

My assumption for this project is that no one has all the gifts. But all Christians have spiritual gifts, they should know what they are, and should use them. I will organize a yearly spiritual gifts seminar, in which people’s gifts will be matched with various ministries at the Ubumwe Church. Although the main challenge is for people to find time for ministry involvement, another challenge is financial. In a church that has a really strong laity ministry, in many ways the pastor will be less important.

In these pages, leaders will discover their own talents and gifts and how leaders are not always who we expect them to be. They will learn to integrate their hearts with the skills of leadership. And they will discover how Jesus, David, Stephen, Philip, and others journeyed on the leadership and mission path so they can join them too.

Conclusion

The above suggestions may also not be radically different from what some other writers have recommended. There are many principles of leadership that have been applied. Recent studies have shown increasing awareness of these important factors (Kuada 2010). The practice needs to be modified to suit the context. In this context, there

is a great need for African pastors and lay leaders for a large African community in Phoenix, AZ. By teaching the basic material and modeling how to teach it to others, this project will equip African pastors and lay leaders with all they need to facilitate them to become qualified ministers and leaders for a multicultural African church in Phoenix, Arizona. White suggested that “Christ’s methods alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me’” (2003, 143).

Lay people will be trained to go to the people. White wrote, “We must seek people where they are. The disciples were to work earnestly for souls, giving to all the invitation of mercy. They were not to wait for the people to come to them, they were to go to the people with their message” (2002, 121-122).

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGY

Introduction

This chapter describes and explores the initiative used to address the problem of leadership involvement and strategic planning to train African Pastors and lay leaders at the Ubumwe Seventh-day Adventist Church in Phoenix, Arizona. The first step of this project will begin with my observation that when Seventh-day Adventist African Immigrants arrived in Phoenix, church leaders did not have a plan of introducing and acclimating them into ministry opportunities that impact their needs. Second, the intervention described in this chapter was an attempt to step into that need. It sought to explore using several means and tools to collect information necessary to implement a strategic approach to develop and maintain an effective leadership at Ubumwe Seventh-day Adventist Church.

This project is a qualitative study that includes social and cultural research. As a part of the process, semi-structured interviews will be conducted to acquire primary data that will be used to develop and implement an effective strategic plan for Ubumwe Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders in Phoenix. As a qualitative study, this becomes important as it helps the researchers explore a specific group of participants in their natural settings for an in-depth analysis of the topic (Merriam, 2002). In order to gather

information in qualitative research, researchers use semi-structured interviews to allow participants to freely express their thoughts (Aspers and Corte 2019).

Objectives

The project has several primary objectives: (1) to acknowledge African immigrants’ presence in Phoenix, Arizona, and to provide ways for them to grow spiritually; (2) to promote and practice effective leadership as a result of mission-driven service training; (3) to increase awareness of the importance of communication and relationship issues in areas such as alphabetization, family of origin, and worship (Brantley, 2020). Table 2 provides strategic plan, activities, instruments, and results of the methodology.

Table 2. Strategic plan

| Strategy | Activities | Instrument | Impact |
|-----------------|--|--------------------|---|
| ESL Strategy | ESL Bible Study, Worship, and Prayer Classes | 10-Question Survey | If accomplished, these activities will equip pastors and lay leaders to be effective leaders to Central African immigrants in Phoenix, Arizona. |
| | Communication Skills Seminar | Focus Groups | |
| | Seminar on the Biblical Images of the Church | | |
| | Relationship Building Seminar | | |
| | Training for small Group Leaders | | |
| | Organization of Small Groups | | |

I will build the foundation of this strategic plan on my theological reflection, literature review, and a ten-question survey (see appendix A). The survey will be designed to not only elicit information but also to strengthen relationships, make connections, and build strong foundations for a stronger ministry. God calls leaders for this ministry to first love Him and second love their neighbors. In this context, neighbors refer specifically to the African refugees and immigrants who are disadvantaged by their relocation in a new culture. As Buffini affirms, “To them, nothing is familiar, nothing feels comfortable, and the simplest of tasks can present difficulties. Coping with culture shock is one of the biggest challenges that immigrants face, and there are many complicated layers to that issue” (2017, 7-8). From my experience as an African refugee, and now an immigrant, there are many other problems immigrants face, such as family matters, lack of network, language barriers, and lack of assets or resources. Given that they often do not have mentors or role models in the new context, they struggle with how and where to start.

In numerous instances, they are often perceived as a financial burden, and coupled with the fear that terrorists may be hiding among them, refugees and immigrants are easily classified as threats, regardless of their origin (Lohrmann 2003). In the beginning, my plan will be to form and organize small groups, then recruit their leaders, and third, help those leaders build strong relationships. Building strong relationships cannot happen unless there is a strong organization. I will begin by organizing three small groups of refugees and immigrants of ten persons per group for Bible studies. The aim of these Bible studies is to help leaders develop a personal relationship with God and with one another. Through the planned activities, Bible studies, prayer group meetings, worship

services, and ESL classes, this project will achieve three major results: develop and organize an effective, excellent church-based ESL ministry, thereby (1) strengthening relationships, (2) making connections, and (3) building strong leadership.

ESL Bible Studies

Alphabetization Seminars

Supported by the Glendale SDA Church, I will organize 12-week sessions of ESL classes, with meetings four times per week, (Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday). The purpose of these classes will be to teach immigrants English in order to address the language barrier challenge and connect with each other through effective communication. The English classes also set off some of them toward achieving their academic, economic, and personal goals. In addition, this strategic initiative also taught refugees and immigrants the basics of Adventist faith. Our first free 12-week sessions of ESL Bible study will begin with worship and prayer meetings. We will have a total of 48 ESL, classes on regular ESL topics, devotional habits, prayer, Bible study, and worship

Table 3. Schedule of ESL Bible study, worship, and prayer classes

| Class/Service Name | Day / Times | Location |
|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| English as Second Language (ESL) | Sunday: 6:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. (180 minutes) | Fellowship Hall Glendale Church |
| Bible Study and Prayer Group | Wednesday: 6:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. (180 minutes) | Fellowship Hall Glendale Church |
| Devotional Habit and Prayer Group | Friday: 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. (120 minutes) | Room One Glendale Church |
| Worship Service | Saturday: 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (210 minutes) | Fellowship Hall Glendale Church |

services, which will be organized as it is shown in Table 3. In providing these services and classes, my strategic goal is to target youth, young adults, and some older adults. The aim was for them to acquire linguistic literacy. I will organize 3 small groups of 5 participants, and I selected a leader of each group. The goal of the group leader will be equipped with the use of necessary tools to address each participant needs and enhance his or her will of learning with caring and attentive leadership, clear descriptions of the program guidelines, keeping the group focused and on time, facilitating students' learning through the various exercises, promoting group learning through sharing and discussion, and sharing personal experiences and prayer.

Writing, Reading, Listening, and Speaking

This section will be limited to only Bible-based ESL books and Bible-based ESL curriculum (Dormer, 2011). These studies are designed to disciple old and new Christians who are desiring to learn to speak English for a special ministry. In this context, the African immigrants learned English as their Second Language. Seeking to build a strong community for effective ministry, I felt that humility should be the first lesson to learn.

Community Building (Class Discussion)

1. Small talk: How are you? How was your week? Introduction of new participants in the group.
2. What does the word 'humility' mean to you? What is the word for humility in your language? Students write on board in their own language.
3. Dictionary definitions. What does it mean? Do your words mean the same as the English 'humility'?

4. Reading. Students read silently with the following instructions. Write any words you do not know. Write any words that do not make sense to you. Each student chooses two or three words to share with the class. Are there any words you do not understand?

5. ESL Bible study. Imagine in the Bible an example where ‘humility’ is applied (Phil 2: 3-11).

6. Application. Are there any words that have same meaning as ‘humility’? Ask students to write them into their book notes. What do you learn from Phil 2:3-11?

7. Ask students to write many sentences using these words. (Humble, pride, humility, crown, cost, meek, way, snap, ruin, wise....).

Beginner ESL English Class

This strategic plan will be built on the skills learned during the class discussion as they outlined above (see Table 3). It will cover pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary related to the giving Bible verses. We will begin with words related to effective communication, and we instructed how to write and pronounce these words. I will focus on English Grammar, vocabulary, and conversation. Bible studies, worship and prayer occasions were used to enhance their skills of learning (see Appendix A).

Communication: Assertiveness and Active Listening

There are two important communication skills pastors and lay leaders should acquire. The first one is a speaking skill called “Assertiveness”, and the second is a listening skill called “Active Listening” (William 2008, 67). Assertiveness is the ability to express your feelings and ask for what you want in a relationship. An assertive

individual expresses his or her feelings and becomes responsible using “I” statements. Active listening is the ability to let the other person know that you understand him or her by reframing his or her message. Both listen attentively, without interruption, and reframe or restate both the content and the feelings communicated by the other person. Healthy communication including assertiveness and active listening strengthens relationships (Williams 2008).

Through this strategic learning plan, 14 activities will be created in order to ascertain the real needs and felt needs of all participants. They are: write a phrase, draw a picture, play an instrument, sing, dance, take a walk, play a game, cooking, talk to someone you trust, set boundaries, say “no”, spend time with friends, serve someone in need and reading. I will need a quality time with each participant to be able to teach each of the participants become active listener and assertive leader who controls his or her skills.

Seminar on the Biblical Images of the Church

The aim of this seminar will be to help small group members understand the most important images that make up the church. Following the ESL Bible study method of learning, this will be an ongoing program through which the students or participants will study and discuss significant Bible passages such as Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4. As the leader, I will encourage the group to draw out the following implications:

1. *Church as Community*: From my observation, I realized that each

person has his or her personality. To facilitate the understanding of the deep and spiritual meaning of community, this study will challenge participants to learn to be self-aware and relational. Rick Warren suggests that “community is built not on convenience (‘we’ll get together when I feel like it’) but on the conviction that I need it for spiritual health” (2002, 150). Two weeks of Bible study classes will assist the members of the small groups to share their true feelings (authenticity), encourage each other (mutuality), support each other (sympathy), forgive each other (mercy), speak the truth in love (honesty), admit our weaknesses, (humility), respect our differences (courtesy), not gossip (confidentiality), and make group a priority (frequency). (151).

2. *Church as a Body*: through ESL Bible study lessons, each member learnt that he or she was vital, formed a living body with other members, and understood that each member of the group should be connected to one another. Students learnt that Christ is the Head of the body, which is the Church. Therefore, the Church is the Body of Christ and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body so also is Christ (1 Cor 12: 12–27).

A social-cultural analysis of African refugees and immigrants revealed that they live in close-knit communities based on “love, comfort, support, care, encouragement, companionship, protection, structure and values” that are family-like, even if the members are not related by blood (Buffini 2017, 17). Based on their availability, I will schedule at time of two weekends, Saturday after-noon and Sunday after-noon from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on the subject of Church as the Body of Christ. This will inspire the group members to understand, believe, and get a sense of belonging that gives meaning to each participant. These Bible study classes motivated participants to know that following

Christ is not just a matter of believing, it also includes belonging and bonding to each other in love. Jesus said, “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:12).

Additionally, Peter exhorted that, “above all, show sincere love to each other, because love brings about the forgiveness of many sins” (1 Pet 4:8). The Apostle Paul, speaking to the Church at Ephesus points it out this way, “submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Eph 5:21). In the context of the Body of Christ, being a member of church means (1) “being a vital organ of a living body, indispensable, interconnected part of the body of Christ” (Warren 2002, 131), (2) no isolated member is the body of Christ on his/her own because each member needs others to express that it is together, not separated, that the church is the body of Christ; (3) “Christ has a unique role for everyone to play in his body”; (Ibid, 134), and (4) everyone in the body of Christ is a value irrespective of gifts (Dick & Miller 2005, 29) and needs to live in interdependence with others (Van Gelder 2000, 108).

3. *Church as a Family*: Brian Buffini pointed out that “one of the hardest things about leaving home is leaving your family behind” (2017, 17). In the context of the Ubumwe SDA Church, many members left their countries of origin knowing that they may not see them again. In this context of belonging, each member of the family “is created to be part of it” (Warren 2002) and is valuable with equal opportunities. “Because God is love, he treasures relationship” (117). This two-week seminar emphasized 1) belonging and loving one another, (2) community, (3) fellowship and relationship, and (4) unity.

The New Testament presents Christ, the head of the Church, calling his disciples to belong, find meaning through belonging, and unite through servanthood. Being himself the head of the church, he did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life (Matt 20:28). As a member of the same family, each person has responsibilities to minister to his or her own family and to others in love as Christ loved us. In this context, becoming a member of a church is not confined to any class. Rather it is a privilege, for all members, despite the diversity of spiritual gifts, are equal although different in roles and responsibilities.

Seminars on Gifts-Based Ministries

I will use three weeks to teach and impart knowledge about the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts, their purpose, and importance for the edification of the church. This section of the ESL Bible study seminar lessons highlighted the spiritual gifts mentioned in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4. My goal was to train leaders on how to train others based on their spiritual gifts.

The Bible points out Paul's example to Timothy, "the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Tim 2:2). Some Scripture passages, such as Matthew 25:14-30 and 1 Peter 4:10 were examined in the context of nurturing each church member to become an effective leader for an effective ministry.

Survey (See appendix A)

A power point presentation on planning strategic became an educational journey for those five African pastors and ten lay leaders. In the culture of the effectiveness of

leadership, the survey questions highlighted the importance of self-care before caring for others, presence of trust, conflict management, accountability, and commitment. As Bugbee (1995) points out, “Your role as a Pastor or ministry leader is changing as a result of the increased self-understanding of the believer. As the participants expectations increase for ministry, leaders became different and effective” (p. 128).

Before I Started This Project

This section describes some details and steps taken before initiating this program.

Membership Transfer and Pace for Meeting

I transferred my Church membership from Camelback SDA Church to Glendale SDA Church. To start and implement this project I needed the support of the Glendale Church. A meeting was held with Pastor Gary Venden, the senior church pastor and Myles Reiner his assistant pastor. In this meeting, both pastors agreed and approved room B in the building of the Glendale Church to be used for the Kinyarwanda/Kirundi Group meeting.

After receiving an approval, Sabbath June 5, 2014, the first small group of 5 members was organized, presented, and welcomed at the Glendale SDA Church for the first time. The same day, I presented the plan and its benefits to the members of this small group. There was special Scripture reading and the dedication prayers for this group.

Announcements

In order to inform the local Church members, flyers and announcements were designed and distributed among the Church members. I was elected to be one of the

Church elders and I was a Church board member as well. The group became part of the Glendale SDA Church members.

Prior Evaluation

After four sessions, I did an evaluation, (see appendix A), to see the condition in which the members were interested in change or carried it out and implemented it. In order to do this, I organized a seminar in which an evaluation covered almost all the most possible areas of this project. In this way, I was aware of their interaction and the effectiveness of the program.

Attendance

To obtain the major profit of the program, it was very important that all participants attend each session. The daily attendance helped the evaluation of the program to make it possible. What I sought was not only the attendance but also to instruct each member and help them internalize the learned concepts for use in their lives.

Assessing Learning

At the end of each session, I provided a brief summary and emphasized which aspects should be reviewed and applied. At the end of each session, participants were asked to evaluate the presenters and the program itself included the resources used and the activities. Using this method helped me to identify how participants were interested into this implementation of the project.

Final Evaluation

At each step of this strategy, Pastor Gary Venden, the Glendale SDA Church was

consulted about his opinion on the implementation of it and how it could be improved for the church. In doing so, the seminars, the trainings and Bible study classes became more useful. The final evaluation considered the extent to which the project's objectives, purposes, and measurements were reached. This evaluation was done not only by me but also by the Arizona Conference Executive Committee, based on questionnaires supplied to the participants or members. The questionnaires contained four areas of evaluation: the theoretical, spiritual, practical, and the effectiveness of the program.

Theoretical and Effectiveness Aspects

It was important that the participants expressed their opinions on how the strategic plan fulfilled their expectations. Participants asked questions to say if their spiritual growth and commitment to intentionally enrich their daily life and that the leaders needs were sustainable.

Practical and Spiritual Aspects

The evaluation of the program analyzed if the practical aspects reached positive results. To evaluate the practical aspects, participants were asked how devotional habits, meditations, small group programs, communication, and Bible study classes improved their daily skill of communication, spiritual lives and became sources of building strong relationships within their communities. From this learning, participants discovered that they had a strong spiritual life and discovered meaning in difficult moments of life.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project is to train and equip African pastors and lay leaders to become effective leaders at the Ubumwe Seventh-day Adventist Church, Phoenix,

Arizona. It was developed with its objectives, purpose, and measurements within a period of three years.

Because this was a three-year project, during the first year, four seminars on the biblical concept of ministry among African immigrants were developed and conducted. The first two seminars focused on communication skills using ESL Bible Studies, learning about different biblical concepts of the church, as a community, as a body of Christ, and as a family. The last two seminars explored the perspectives of the community building and gifts-based ministries for especially youth.

The second year was concerned with developing small group ministry and its resources. Twelve small group Bible study lessons were developed, using ESL Bible Studies, as well as sharing vision and objectives. The project leader recruited, trained, and equipped 20 small group leaders and 5 young adults for higher education.

The third, and final year's focus was on implementing, organizing, and forming new small groups at the Ubumwe Seventh-day Adventist Church. We held outreach and community ministry, organized leadership seminars, and implemented evaluation tools to assess and measure the results of the project.

The focus and purpose of this project is to train and equip African pastors and lay leaders to become effective and be more active in ministry to the African immigrants in the city of Phoenix. The next chapter is the outcome of this strategic plan, its challenges, and recommendations for the future strategic planning.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH RESULTS

Introduction

The primary objective of this project was to address the problem of inadequate trained African pastors and lay leaders to effectively minister to Central African immigrants and refugees resettling in Arizona. This population of Central African immigrants and refugees faces several challenges such as trauma brought about by the transition from their African culture to the new American culture. Thus, this project was intended to address the problem by developing, implementing, and evaluating a training strategy for the pastors and lay leaders to effectively minister to Central African refugees and immigrants in Arizona. In the previous chapter, the methods used for recruiting participants, developing a new strategy, and training them were discussed. In this chapter, the results pertaining the impact of the strategy used will be reported.

This chapter is organized into four sections. In the first section of the chapter, an overview of the methods that were actually used in the study will be presented. Section two of this chapter will contain a description of the sample of participants used in the study. Descriptive statistics and information pertaining the participants will be provided. In section three, results of a survey conducted on the participants will be presented. The results will touch on the effectiveness of the strategy used to train the pastors and lay

leaders included in the study. In the last section, results of semi-structured interviews conducted on the participants will be presented.

Overview of the Methods Used

To accomplish the objectives of this study, I first recruited 30 Central Africa immigrants and refugees resettling in Arizona. I divided the sample into three small groups of 10 persons each. After creating the groups, I recruited from them 5 African pastors and 10 lay leaders to manage and minister to the three groups.

I organized English as a Second Language (ESL) classes that ran for a period of 12 weeks, with meetings taking place four times a week (Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday). The purpose of the ESL classes was to teach the immigrants English as a second language in order to enhance their ability to communicate effectively with other people in the area. ESL classes were also intended to help the immigrants to achieve their economic, personal, and academic goals. For the entire 12-week period, there was a total of 48 ESL classes. Key activities that the participants engaged in during ESL classes include writing, reading, listening, and speaking in English. The ESL lessons were restricted to the context of Bible study. As such, any reading material used in the ESL classes was purely based on Biblical and Christian values. For instance, the first ESL lesson focused on humility as an important trait for Christians, pastors, and lay leaders. During ESL lessons, students engaged in active classroom discussions in English, and active reading that involved noting down any new words they did not understand. Students also engaged in ESL Bible study.

As part of the ESL classes, participants were also trained on two critical effective communication skills, assertiveness, and active listening. Assertiveness referred to the

ability of a person to express their feelings clearly so that they are understood. Active listening, on the contrary, refers to the ability of the other person to know that you understood them. These two skills were critical as they formed the foundation of effective communication especially among leaders. I ensured that I spent enough time with each participant in order to teach them assertiveness and active listening.

The ESL classes also included seminars on Biblical images of the Church. These seminars were important as they would assist participants to understand the overall church make-up as illustrated in the scriptures. I focused on three key aspects as far as the Biblical image of the church is concerned: the church as a body of Christ, the church as a community, and the church as a community.

At the end of the 12-week period, data was collected to evaluate the efficacy of the ESL strategies implemented in improving the participants' ability to minister effectively to the Central African immigrant and refugee population in Arizona. The survey instrument used is attached in appendix A. The instrument consisted of 16 questions intended to measure three outcomes of the ESL training program; (a) the ability of participants to build trust and overcome cultural barriers, (b) participants' perceptions of others in terms of age and gender, and (c) ability of participants to communicate effectively and build strong relations. The survey was conducted via Qualtrics, an online survey platform.

Apart from surveys, qualitative data was also collected through focus group discussions. The qualitative data was collected using a semi-structured interview. The interview protocol used is attached to this document as appendix A.

Description of the Sample

Demographic Information

The sample included in the study consisted of 15 participants. Of these participants, 10 were lay leaders while 5 were pastors. Four of the participants were between 40 and 50 years, and 11 participants below 35 years. The sample also consisted of five females and ten males.

Ability of Participants to Build Trust and Overcome Cultural Barriers

Participants' ability to build trust and overcome cultural barriers was measured using eight items rated on a five-point Likert scale. In particular, participants were requested to indicate the extent to which they agree with each of the eight statements shown in the first column in Table 1. For each item, participants would select one of the following options: *Strongly agree* = 1, *agree* = 2, *neutral* = 3, *disagree* = 4, and *strongly disagree* = 5. Thus, high values on the raw data represented lower agreement levels while low values represented higher agreement levels. The raw data was reverse-coded to generate new data that would make intuitive sense. After reverse-coding, higher scores on each item represented higher levels of agreement while lower scores represented lower agreement levels.

The average score on each of the eight items was greater than 4.5, indicating a high level of agreement. For instance, the item 'ESL Bible study enables me to function and grow stronger' had an average score of 4.93 ($SD = 0.26$). This high score implies that participants strongly agreed that the ESL Bible study enabled them to function well and grow stronger. Participants also strongly agreed that they felt confident, loved, and cared

for during the program ($M = 4.933$, $SD = 0.26$). The average score on all the eight items was 4.92 ($SD = 0.22$) (Table 4). Thus, participants strongly agreed that the ESL program assisted them to build trust and overcome cultural barriers. This was an important achievement as it would assist them to minister to the Central African refugees and immigrants more effectively. The findings indicate the pastors and lay leaders were more capable to minister to the Central African immigrants and refugees after implementation of the ESL strategy.

Table 4. Ability to build trust and overcome cultural barriers

| | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|---------|---------|------|-------------------|
| ESL Bible study enables me to function and grow stronger | 4 | 5 | 4.93 | 0.26 |
| I felt confident, loved and cared for | 4 | 5 | 4.93 | 0.26 |
| Openness to one another is very meaningful for my growth | 4 | 5 | 4.87 | 0.35 |
| I feel having an open mind about how to live with others | 4 | 5 | 4.80 | 0.41 |
| I learned to be respectful and humble | 4 | 5 | 4.93 | 0.26 |
| Writing, reading, listening are most skills I learned | 5 | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| At the beginning I felt frustrated and embarrassed when I was asked to | 4 | 5 | 4.93 | 0.26 |
| Group leaders were most concerned about my learning growth | 5 | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| Average | | | 4.92 | 0.22 |

The second category of questions focused on how the ESL Bible study program I implemented assisted participants not to view others with bias and prejudice. There were two questions in this category. The first question focused on the degree to which participants believed God can use anyone in His ministry regardless of their gender or age. On average, participants strongly believed God can use anyone in His Ministry ($M = 5$, $SD = 0.0$). The second question focused on the extent to which participants developed a positive attitude towards other people after undergoing the ESL Bible study training. Participants strongly agreed that since they learnt ESL Bible study, they felt positive towards others and their reaction changed ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 0.35$).

Table 5. Questions about gender and age

| Item | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|---------|---------|------|----------------|
| God can use anyone person in His ministry regardless of gender or age | 5 | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| Since I learned ESL Bible study, I feel positive toward others and my reaction has changed | 4 | 5 | 4.87 | 0.35 |
| Valid N (listwise) | | | | |

The third aspect focused on communication and building of strong relationships as an important outcome of the ESL Bible study intervention. There were six items that focused on the degree to which the ESL Bible study helped pastors and lay leaders to communicate more effectively and build strong relationships with other people. On average, participants strongly agreed that the ESL Bible study program helped them to

enhance their communication skills and build strong relationships ($M = 4.9, SD = 0.19$). The first item, 'I listen attentively my leader during the ESL Bible study,' explored ESL Bible study's effectiveness on improving pastors and lay leaders' listening skills. The participants had an average score of 5 ($SD = 0$) on this item, indicating they strongly agreed that the ESL program helped them to improve their listening skills by paying attention to their leader.

The second item, 'I write and read my ESL Bible study assignment regularly,' was intended to examine the extent to which the ESL Bible study training helped the participants to develop better reading and writing skills. On average, participants strongly agreed that they were able to read and write their ESL Bible study assignments regularly ($M = 4.87, SD = 0.35$). Thus, the findings imply implementing the ESL Bible study training is likely to improve the reading and writing skills of Central African pastors and lay leaders who are residing in Arizona. Reading and writing are crucial communication skills that will boost the ability of these pastors and lay leaders to minister to the Central African population living in Arizona.

The third item, 'I actively participate in the discussion of ESL Bible study, answering exercises and clarifying the meaning of the Bible 1 verses that I did not understand,' was intended to examine the degree to which the ESL Bible study training helped the pastors and lay leaders to improve their ability to participate in Bible study related activities and collaborate with others. On average, participants strongly agreed that during the ESL Bible study training sessions, they actively participated in discussions ($M = 5, SD = 0$). When ministering in the real world, the pastors and lay leaders will be expected to engage their audience particularly during Bible study sessions.

Thus, the ESL Bible study training equipped them with the necessary skills to actively engage their audience in Bible study sessions.

The fourth item, 'I communicate with native colleagues who speak English more,' focused on the ability of the Central African lay leaders and pastors to effectively integrate into the local American culture and communicate with natives in English. The pastors and lay leaders surveyed strongly agreed that the ESL Bible study training helped them to communicate with native colleagues who speak better English ($M = 4.8$, $SD = 0.41$). One of the key ingredients of the ESL Bible study training was teaching the pastors and lay leaders to communicate more fluently in English. Effective communication in English will assist the pastors and lay leaders to connect with each other and remove language barriers that limit this connection. English language will also assist them to further their academic and career goals and give them exposure to different sources of information that they integrate in their ministry.

The second-last item, 'I spend more time with my colleagues during ESL Bible Study,' focused on how the ESL Bible study program assisted the participants to connect better with each other. Participants strongly agreed that during the ESL Bible study lessons, they spent more time with their colleagues ($M = 5$, $SD = 0$). By spending more time with colleagues, lay leaders and pastors were able to connect with each other better. Better relationships with each are important for effective ministry since the pastors and lay leaders can consult each other on various issues concerning ministry.

The last item was 'The ESL Bible Study met my needs of learning English and become more efficient and effective leader.' This item focused on the effectiveness of the ESL Bible study program on improving English language skills of the pastors and lay

leaders. Participants strongly agreed that the ESL Bible study program helped them to acquire English language skills, which, in turn helped them to become more efficient and effective ministers ($M = 5, SD = 0$). As indicated earlier, better English language skills will assist them to connect not only with local natives but also with each other by removing the language barrier problem.

Table 6. Communication and building strong relationships

| Item | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---------|---------|------|----------------|
| I listen attentively my leader during the ESL Bible study | 5 | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| I write and ready my ESL Bible study assignment regularly | 4 | 5 | 4.87 | 0.35 |
| I actively participate in the discussion of ESL Bible study, answering exercises and clarifying the meaning of the Bible 1 verses that I did not understand | 5 | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| I communicate with native colleagues who speak English more | 4 | 5 | 4.8 | 0.41 |
| I spend more time with my colleagues during ESL Bible Study | 5 | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| The ESL Bible Study met my needs of learning English and become more efficient and effective leader | 5 | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| Average | 4.67 | 5 | 4.94 | 0.13 |

T-test Results

One-sample t-test was conducted to determine whether the ESL Bible study program improved the ability of the pastors and lay leaders to minister to their congregants. A one-sample t-test involves comparing the sample mean to a hypothetical value. The goal is often to determine whether significant differences exist between the sample mean and the hypothetical value. In this study, the hypothetical value to which the sample means would be compared was 3. This hypothetical value was chosen based on how the questions and the Likert scale were framed. The questions were rated on a five-point Likert scale such that lower values, after reverse coding, represented lower agreement levels while higher values represented higher agreement levels. Values 1 and 2 thus indicated participants generally disagreed that the ESL Bible study program assisted them to minister to their audience better. Values 4 and 5, on the contrary, indicated participants agreed that their ability to minister to Central African immigrants and refugees in Arizona improved as a result of the ESL Bible study program. The value of 3 indicated a general feeling among the participants that the ESL Bible study program did not affect their ability to minister to their audience in any way.

On each of the 16 items, participants selected the 'agree' or 'strongly agree' options, indicating that in generally, they agreed that the ESL program improved their ability to minister as lay leaders and pastors in Arizona. The participants' ability to minister effectively was thus much lower before they underwent ESL Bible study training. Values 1, 2, and 3, which correspond to the 'strongly disagree,' 'disagree,' and 'neutral' options respectively, are thus appropriate hypothetical values that can represent the overall ability of participants to minister to their congregants before undergoing the

ESL Bible study program. For this study, the hypothetical value chosen was 3 as it would result in more robust findings.

Table 7 contains findings of the one-sample t-test. As per the findings, the average score on participants' ability to build trust and overcome cultural barriers was significantly higher after implementation of the ESL Bible study program than what it had been hypothesized to be prior to implementation of the program ($M_{diff} = 1.93, p = 0.00$). Based on the findings, the ESL Bible study program significantly improved the participants' ability to build trust and overcome cultural barriers.

Findings in Table 4 also indicate the average score on participants' ability to overcome prejudice based on gender and age was significantly higher following implementation of the ESL Bible study program compared to what it was before implementation of the ESL program ($M_{diff} = 1.93, p = 0.00$). Thus, the ESL Bible study program had a significant positive impact on the participants' ability to overcome prejudice particularly based on gender and age. Participants, after undergoing through the ESL Bible study program, learnt to view other people as equally important and capable of ministering regardless of their age or gender.

Lastly, findings in Table 5 indicate participants' average score on their communication and ability to build strong relationships was significantly higher after being given the ESL Bible study training than before ($M_{diff} = 1.94, p = 0.00$). As per the findings, participants were more capable of communicating more effectively with their colleagues and audience after undergoing the ESL Bible study training than before. Overall, the ESL Bible study program significantly improved the participants' ability to minister to their audience in Arizona by assisting them to overcome cultural barriers,

build trust with each other and with their primary audience (African immigrants & refugees), overcome prejudice based on gender and age, develop effective communication skills particularly in English, and build strong relationships with each other and with their primary audience.

Table 7. One-sample T-test Results

| | T | df | Sig | Mean Diff | Lower 95% CI | Upper 95% CI |
|---|-------|--------|-----|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Ability to build trust and overcome cultural barriers | 94.31 | 1 4 | 0 | 1.93 | 1.88 | 1.97 |
| Ability to overcome prejudice based on gender and age | 42.56 | 1 4 | 0 | 1.93 | 1.84 | 2.03 |
| Communication and Building Strong Relationships | 92.60 | 1 4 | 0 | 1.94 | 1.90 | 1.99 |

Qualitative Results

A qualitative thematic analysis was conducted to determine participants' views regarding the effectiveness of the ESL Bible study program on their ability to minister effectively. Qualitative data gathered from focused group discussions with participants was analyzed using NviVo version 12 software. Braun and Clarke's (2019) six-step process was followed in conducting the qualitative thematic analysis.

The first step involved reading and re-reading the focused group transcript in order to become familiar with the qualitative data gathered. According to Braun and Clarke (2019), this step is important as it allows the researcher to become immersed in the data and increases their ability to detect text segments that are closely related to the

research question being answered. The second step involved generating initial codes in Nvivo. During this stage, I read through the focused group transcript more carefully, identifying lines or segments of text that were related to the effectiveness of the ESL Bible study program on participants' ability to minister effectively to the Central African immigrants and refugees living in Arizona. I conducted In-vivo coding to ensure I do not lose any meanings from the coded segments. The end result of the second step was a list of open codes related to the overall objective of this project.

The third step involved grouping similar codes together into categories and assigning names to those categories. Names assigned to categories were consistent with the meanings of the underlying open codes. Where possible, I collapsed categories further to form higher-level categories (themes). In some cases, I retained the initial categories as they were. The end result of this third step was a list of initial themes.

The fourth step involved reviewing the themes. The main purpose of reviewing the themes was to ensure that they would help achieve the objective of the study, which was to evaluate the effectiveness of the ESL Bible study program on improving lay leaders and pastors' ability to minister effectively. The themes were also reviewed for coherence. In thematic analysis, coherence refers to the internal consistency and logical connections within a theme. A theme is considered coherent if it is clearly defined and all of the codes or subthemes within the theme fit together and make sense in relation to each other. Coherence is an important aspect of thematic analysis because it helps to ensure the validity and reliability of the themes identified in the data. It was deemed that the themes were coherent.

The fifth stage involved assigning names to the themes reviewed in the fourth stage. Names assigned were consistent with the meanings of underlying codes and categories. In the last stage, a report of the findings was generated.

Summary of Findings

Table 8 contains a summary of the qualitative findings obtained. The table illustrates the key themes and categories obtained from the qualitative data. In particular, five themes were obtained. A detailed review of the themes is conducted in the results section.

Table 8. Summary of qualitative findings

| Themes and Categories | No. of participants | Frequency |
|--|---------------------|-----------|
| Theme one: ESL assisted them to build trust through love, care, & openness towards each other | 8 | 9 |
| ESL assisted them love each & live together as family | 2 | 2 |
| Humility & caring towards each other | 3 | 3 |
| Openness to each other | 4 | 4 |
| Theme two: ESL assisted them to communicate in English effectively | 14 | 21 |
| Acquired listening skills | 5 | 5 |
| Gained ability to communicate effectively in English | 4 | 5 |
| Speaking and Reading most influential skills they acquired | 9 | 11 |
| Theme three: Embarrassment, lack of confidence, & lack of effective time management were key challenges encountered during initial stages of ESL training | 5 | 18 |

| | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Initially did not have enough time for ESL and other activities | 3 | 3 |
| Initially felt embarrassed during ESL lessons | 5 | 6 |
| Initially lacked confidence | 3 | 3 |
| Initially lacked patience | 3 | 3 |
| Initially unable to interact with native speakers | 3 | 3 |
| Theme four: Support from their leaders assisted them to complete the ESL training successfully | 11 | 14 |
| Group leaders helped them interpreting the meaning text during ESL lessons | 5 | 5 |
| Leaders were concerned about their growth & understanding | 3 | 4 |
| Leaders were generally supportive | 5 | 5 |
| Theme five: God can use anyone regardless of age and gender | 2 | 3 |
| Give women and young people opportunity in leadership | 1 | 1 |
| God calls anyone regardless of gender | 1 | 1 |
| God can use anyone regardless of age | 1 | 1 |

Results

Theme one: The ESL Bible Study program assisted participants to build trust through humility, respect, love, care, and openness towards each other. The first theme identified from the qualitative data was that the ESL Bible study program assisted pastors and lay leaders who participated in the study to build trust with each other. Lack of trust among the lay leaders and pastors is likely to reduce corporation thus adversely affecting their ability to minister effectively to their audience. This trust was built through love,

care, humility, and openness towards each other. This theme received support from eight of the 15 participants.

Participants C, K, L, and N held that the ESL program assisted them to develop openness towards each other, which helped building trust. For instance, participant C mentioned that “Openness to each other is very meaningful for our growth.” Participant K and L also reiterated the importance of maintaining openness among the lay leaders and pastors: “We feel having an open mind about how to live with others. Through open and trustful communication, we care for each other.” Participant N held that the members did not criticize each other “We do not criticize each other.”

Participants F, G, and L held that ESL helped them to develop humility and respect towards each other. In his submission, participant F acknowledged that in the course of the ESL Bible study program, all participants had affirmed that they would be humble and respectful to each other: All participants (A to O) affirmed to be respectfully and humble to each other.” Emphasizing the humility they had maintained towards each other, participant G quoted Peter 5:5 (NIV) as follows: “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Participant L held that they cared for each other particularly through open and trustful communication: “Through open and trustful communication, we care for each other.”

Lastly, participants A and I held that ESL assisted them to love each other and live together as family. Participant A mentioned that ESL assisted them “...to love one another and live together as one family, one body and one community.” Participant I gave the example of Christ being the head of the Christian family, and His followers being his children who live together in harmony. Participant I stated that the ESL program had

helped him to learn the essence of Church members maintaining cohesion regardless of race, age, and color of skin: “Christ is the Head of the family. Therefore, as children live together in a home setting, it is a vital lesson I learned that as one of the Church members, attachment to each other regardless race, age and color is important.”

Theme two: The ESL Program assisted lay leaders and pastors to communicate in English effectively. The second theme obtained from the focused group data was that the ESL program helped the participants to acquire effective communication skills particularly using the English language. Cultural barriers such as language barrier can also hinder them from communicating with their congregants. In essence, ministering majorly involves passing the message of God across to people. Considering Central African immigrants and refugees, and pastors and lay leaders speak different languages, effectively ministering to them becomes difficult. Thus, ESL Bible study gave the pastors and lay leaders a standard language they can use to effectively communicate with each other and with their congregants. Participants indicated they were able to listen attentively, read, write, and speak English thanks to the ESL program. This theme received support from 14 of the 15 participants.

Participants A, C, F, I, and J held that the ESL program assisted them to acquire listening skills. For instance, participant A stated that “I learnt to listen while talking to each other.” Participants C and I stated that listening, alongside homework, was among the most influential skills they acquired through the ESL program: “Listening and home works were the most aspects that influenced our learning.” Participant F also stated that listening, alongside reading and writing, was among the most influential skills he acquired through the ESL Bible study program: “Writing, reading, and listening are the

most important skills I gained.” Lastly, participant J stated that he can listen and understand when someone speaks in English, thanks to the ESL Bible study program: “I can write, read, communicate, and listen in English.”

Participants F, G, J, and O indicated they gained the ability to communicate effectively in English, thanks to the ESL Bible study program. Participant F and J indicated that reading, writing, and listening are the most important skills acquired through the ESL program: “Writing, reading, and listening are most skills I gained.” Participant F also added that he learnt to hold a basic conversation with natives in English just after few weeks of attending ESL Bible study lessons: “I learned from two ways: how to greet people in English and how to say, “Are you O.K? What is your name? What is your favorite food?” Participant G indicated that learning English through ESL assisted him to pass his citizenship test and acquire American citizenship: “I passed my citizenship test and I’m now an American citizen.” Lastly, participant O held that he can write in English: “I can write a phrase in English. I can write to my friend a letter in English.” Participants A, D, E, H, I, K, L, M, and N indicated that speaking and reading were the most influential skills they acquired: Speaking and reading influenced most our growth.”

Theme three: At first, embarrassment, lack of confidence, and lack of effective time management skills were key challenges lay leaders and pastors experienced. The third theme obtained from the focused group interviews was in regard to the challenges the participants encountered while attending the ESL Bible study lessons. Participants confessed that embarrassment, lack of confidence, and lack of effective time management

skills were the most crucial challenges they encountered at the beginning of the ESL program.

Five participants contributed to this theme. Participants B, D, and E. indicated they initially felt embarrassed attending ESL lessons. Participant B indicated that he did not understand English. Whenever he was requested to read even one Bible verse in English, he would feel extremely embarrassed: “When asked to read just one Bible verse in English, I felt the need to use restroom. I felt embarrassed.” Participant D also contended that he initially felt scary and embarrassed attending ESL lessons because he could neither read nor write in English effectively. However, with time, he acquired English language proficiency and can read and write in English: “I first felt scary and embarrassed, but now I am able to read my Bible in English. I can read and understand better the meaning of a Bible text.”

Participant E also indicated that he used to feel embarrassed at the beginning of the lessons. Alongside not having enough time, participant E mentioned the embarrassment he used to feel as one of the main challenges he encountered during the ESL lessons: “At the beginning of these lessons, we felt embarrassment, lack of enough time.” Participants E, G, and O mentioned that lack of confidence was among the most critical challenges they encountered. Lack of confidence is also associated with the embarrassment they faced.

Apart from embarrassment and lack of confidence, participants did not have effective time management skills. Three of the participants, E, G, and O, mentioned being impatient with the ESL lessons. The same participants also mentioned they lacked enough time to devote to ESL lessons.

Theme four: Support from leaders assisted lay leaders and pastors to complete the ESL Program successfully. The fourth theme was that support from leaders (teachers) assisted the lay leaders and pastors to complete the ESL Bible study program successfully. The implication of this theme is that when ESL program is implemented in the future, it is important that people leading the program provide unlimited support to the trainees. This theme received support from 11 participants.

Participants A, D, H, and J indicated that their leaders supported them with exploring the depth and meaning of text during Bible study readings and discussions: “group leaders helped them explore in depth the meaning of the text.”

Participants B, C, and K held that their leaders were concerned about their understanding, growth, and improvement: “Our leaders/teachers were most concerned about our understanding, growth and improvement.”

Lastly, participants E,F, G, K, and L held that their leaders supported them positively and without getting tired. Participants E and F stated that their leaders never got tired of supporting them: “They did not feel tired of us.” Participant G indicated that the leaders were always positive, patient, and supportive: “The group leader appeared positive, patient, and supportive.” Lastly, participant L attributed the successful completion of the ESL program to the commitment of the group leaders: “the leaders were the most important factor.”

Theme five: God can use anyone in His ministry regardless of age or gender. The last theme obtained from the qualitative data was that God uses anyone in His ministry regardless of age or gender. This theme, however, did not meet the saturation requirement since it received support from just three of the 15 participants. Participants O and N

indicated that “God calls anyone regardless of gender or age. He called David at his earliest age. He Called Deborah to the highest position in Hebrews culture. He also calls women and young people to represent Him today.” Participant C added that people should be given an opportunity to serve as leaders in the ministry regardless of their gender or age: “They should be given opportunity through which they will exhibit their effectiveness in leadership.”

Conclusion

This chapter is organized into four sections. In the first section of the chapter, an overview of the methods that were actually used in the study was presented. Section two of this chapter contains a description of the sample of participants used in the study. Descriptive statistics and information pertaining to the participants were provided. In section three, the results of a survey conducted on the participants were presented. The results touched on the effectiveness of the strategy used to train the pastors and lay leaders included in the study. In the last section, results of semi-structured interviews conducted on the participants were presented. My conclusion was that ESL classes assisted the participants to build trust through love, care, openness towards each other and live together as family. ESL assisted them to communicate in English effectively, overcome embarrassment, time management and prejudices. This strategy method has been implemented in this chapter and I will focus on the results, evaluation and recommendations in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The problem addressed dealt with the growing number of Central African immigrants and refugees resettling in Arizona, which included other traumas and challenges that some of the new arrivals already endured. Unfortunately, there was a lack of trained African pastors and lay leaders to effectively minister to them. The primary purpose of this Strategic Ministry Action Plan was to establish a focus and biblical foundation for effective ministry to African pastors and lay leaders of Central African immigrants in Phoenix, Arizona. This study was conducted to develop leadership training for an African Immigrant Multicultural Ministry to help address the challenges of a lack of trained African pastors to minister to Central African immigrants in Phoenix, Arizona. A mixed method was adopted in this study. The sample for the study consisted of 15 participants. Of these participants, 10 were lay leaders while 5 were pastors. T-test analysis and thematic data analysis techniques were used to analyze the data.

The findings demonstrated that the ESL Bible study training program significantly improved the participants' ability to minister to their audience in Arizona by assisting them to overcome cultural barriers, build trust with each other and with their primary audience (African immigrants and refugees), overcome prejudices based on gender and age, develop effective communication skills, particularly in English, and build strong relationships with each other and with their primary audience. The qualitative

results revealed that the ESL Bible study program assisted pastors and lay leaders in building trust with each other. Similarly, the qualitative findings also revealed that the ESL program helped the participants to acquire effective communication skills, particularly using the English language, which helped them overcome cultural barriers such as a language barrier that could hinder them from communicating with their congregants. Participants established that embarrassment, lack of confidence, and lack of effective time management skills were the most crucial challenges they encountered at the beginning of the ESL program. Apart from embarrassment and lack of confidence, participants did not have effective time management skills.

Research findings also indicated that support from leaders (teachers) assisted the lay leaders and pastors in completing the ESL Bible study program successfully. The implication is that when an ESL program is implemented in the future, the persons leading the program should also provide unlimited support to the trainees. The results revealed that God uses anyone in His ministry regardless of age or gender, thus people should be allowed to serve as leaders in the ministry regardless of their gender or age. Lack of trust among the lay leaders and pastors is likely to reduce cooperation, thus adversely affecting their ability to minister effectively to their audience. Chapter Six includes an interpretation of the findings, recommendations, implications, and conclusion.

Interpretation of the Findings

The discussed findings were based on the following themes. Theme 1: The ESL Bible Study program assisted participants in building trust through humility, respect, love, care, and openness towards each other. Theme 2: The ESL Program assisted lay

leaders and pastors to communicate in English effectively. Theme 3: At first, embarrassment, lack of confidence, and lack of effective time management skills were key challenges lay leaders and pastors experienced. Theme 4: Support from leaders assisted lay leaders and pastors to complete the ESL Program successfully. Theme 5: God can use anyone in His ministry regardless of age or gender.

Theme One: The ESL Bible Study Program Assisted Participants
in Building Trust through Humility, Respect, Love, Care,
and Openness towards Each Other

The findings analysis revealed that the ESL Bible study program significantly improved the participants' ability to build trust and overcome cultural barriers.

Concurring with the quantitative findings, the qualitative data revealed that the ESL Bible study program assisted pastors and lay leaders in building trust with each other. As per the participants, lack of trust among lay leaders and pastors is likely to reduce cooperation thus adversely affecting their ability to minister effectively to their audience. Such trust can be built through love, care, humility, and openness towards each other during training and in ministering service. This theme addressed the research problem by establishing that ESL training programs promote pastors' and lay leaders' ability to build trust and overcome cultural barriers.

The current study's findings are consistent with what Paul taught when he suggested that leaders are to nurture each church member to become an effective leader for ministry through love and trust. The Bible points out Paul's example to Timothy, "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Tim 2:2). Some Scripture passages,

such as Matthew 25:14-30 and 1 Peter 4:10 were examined in the context of nurturing church members to become an effective leader for effective ministry.

In addition to these characteristics of effective Bible leaders, Ellen White adds that “those who have been most successful in soul-winning were men and women who did not pride themselves on their ability, but who in humility and faith sought to help those about them.” She continues, saying, “Jesus did this very work. He came close to those whom He desires to reach” (2002, 117). She concludes that “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me’” (1942, 143).

Looking at similarities rather than differences in people, can be a good approach to assisting multicultural leaders to communicate and lead more effectively, which also builds trust through love, care, respect, and openness toward each other (Cranford and Glover 2007). Through ESL training, African church leaders can thus build relationships, trust, and close the culture gap within a group or a church, understand cultural stereotypes, humility, and integrity, be patient, listening and approachable, always learning, try new ways of doing things, inclusiveness, and increase people’s sense of belonging. The findings contribute to previous research by establishing that the ESL Bible study program significantly improved the participants’ ability to build trust and overcome cultural barriers.

Theme Two: The ESL Program Assisted Lay Leaders and Pastors to Communicate in English Effectively

The quantitative data demonstrated the importance of ESL Bible study training by

indicating that the participants' average score on their communication and ability to build strong relationships was significantly higher after being given the ESL Bible study training than before. Similarly, the qualitative study revealed that the ESL program helped the church leaders to acquire effective communication skills, particularly using the English language since cultural barriers such as a language barrier hindered them from communicating with their congregants. Ministering effectively involves passing of God's message God to people. Considering that Central African immigrants and refugees and pastors and lay leaders speak many different languages, effectively ministering to them becomes difficult. Thus, the ESL Bible study gave the pastors and lay leaders a standard language they could use to effectively communicate with each other and with their congregants. This theme addressed the research question and research problem by establishing that the ESL program helped lay leaders and pastors acquire effective communication skills, particularly using the English language.

The current study's findings have also been reported in other studies which indicated that training enhances communication (Guiste and Guiste, 2015, p. 72). These attributes describe the work of the Spirit and how Christ Himself communicated. For communication to be effective, it must resemble the communication of Christ Himself. To be an effective pastor and lay leader, White (2002) suggests several qualifications for successful Christian service. The two first qualifications she mentions are "efficiency and cultured speech" to communicate with congregants from various cultural backgrounds.

In Matthew 13, an example of an effective communication style can be seen. Christ, the Great Communicator, teaches how to relate truth to the people of today. From

these biblical lessons, the significant communication skills Jesus used for His audiences can be learned.

Denise Vaneck (2005) argues that one of the most important skills of a leader is the ability to communicate well and that communication is a big part of God's strategy for saving humankind. She continues saying that "communication can also have a dark side" (122).

Evelyn and Richard Hibbert warn that multicultural and multi-ethnic group churches have the potential to become exceptionally effective but also to experience serious conflicts caused by "poor communication" (2014, 141). The current study's findings confirm the previous studies by establishing the need for an ESL training program, which helps church leaders acquire effective communication skills, particularly using the English language to communicate with their congregants.

Theme Three: At First, Embarrassment, Lack of Confidence and Lack of Effective Time Management Skills Were Key Challenges Lay Leaders and Pastors Experienced

Research findings demonstrated various challenges experienced by lay leaders and pastors while attending ESL training programs including embarrassment, lack of confidence, and lack of effective time management skills. Apart from embarrassment and lack of confidence, participants indicated that they did not have effective time management skills. The majority of the lay leaders and pastors were embarrassed attending the training as they could not read the English Bible when requested. The findings imply that lay leaders and pastors lacked confidence and effective time management due to the disparity in cultural practices including the language barrier. This theme has addressed the research problem by revealing various challenges experienced

by lay leaders and pastors when attending ESL training programs including embarrassment, lack of confidence, and lack of effective time management skills.

The findings are consistent with previous research, which demonstrated that some of the challenges faced in ministries are commonly in the area of communication, decision-making, time management, conflict management, and leadership skills. Organizing and leading such a community contributes to a sense of awareness and accountability about the needs of a multicultural ministry. The Hibberts (2014) stated that the rule in multicultural teams, especially where members come from different cultures, is that everyone would have to accept compromise. They also argue that the leader's role is to facilitate the processes of mutual negotiation and compromise, while also building a strong and healthy team community able to manage its conflicts. However, a lack of confidence and time management skills can be challenging for church leaders. This study confirms that pastors and lay leaders face multiple challenges in their ministries such as embarrassment, lack of confidence, and lack of effective time management skills.

Theme Four: Support from Leaders Assisted Lay Leaders and Pastors to Complete the ESL Program Successfully

The findings revealed the need for support for lay leaders and pastors to complete their ESL training program. According to the participants, support from leaders (teachers) assisted the lay leaders and pastors in completing the ESL Bible study program successfully. The implication is that when an ESL program is implemented in the future, the leaders leading the program must provide unlimited support to the trainees to enhance the successful completion of the program. Leaders should provide support to lay leaders and pastors in exploring the depth and meaning of the text during Bible study readings.

Successful completion of the ESL program can be attributed to the commitment of the group leaders. The research findings addressed the study problem by identifying the need for unlimited support from leaders during the ESL training sessions for lay leaders and pastors.

The current research findings can also be found in previous research, which demonstrated the need for support in terms of resources to help the trainees in their ministries including (White 1914, 1). Ellen White's resources are very supportive and were used for training and to support the growth of ministry among both lay leaders and pastors. Ellen White emphasizes asking leaders to provide opportunities to reach out to many foreigners in America and extend the Three Angels' Messages to all the nations of the earth (1914, 1). In addition, her writings support and motivate leaders to plan for big results (White 1942, 154).

If the true measure of a church's success is the number of people it has in ministry, then the central focus of pastoral care should be placing and supporting ministry leaders and helping them do the work of ministry (Anderson 1998, 10). A social-cultural analysis of African refugees and immigrants revealed that they live in close-knit communities based on "love, comfort, support, care, encouragement, companionship, protection, structure and values" that are family-like, even if the members are not related by blood (Buffini 2017, 17). Hence, increased support in attending ESL programs would help create more leaders with the ability to care, love, and respect others and who value the importance of a ministry to African immigrants.

Theme Five: God Can Use Anyone in His Ministry Regardless of Age or Gender

The current research findings indicated that the ESL Bible study program had a significant positive impact on the participants' ability to overcome prejudice, particularly based on gender and age. The findings indicate that after undergoing the ESL Bible study program, pastors and lays learned to view other people as equally important and capable of ministering regardless of their age or gender. The qualitative data indicated that God also uses anyone in His ministry regardless of age or gender. The findings imply that God calls people regardless of gender or age and thus no one should be discriminated against and limited from ministering.

The Bible indicates that God called David at an early age; He Called Deborah to a high position in Hebrew culture. In this regard, people should be allowed to serve as leaders in a ministry regardless of their gender or age. The research findings imply that God calls those capable of ministering regardless of their age or gender. This theme addressed the research problem and research question by establishing that the ESL Bible study program had a significant positive impact on the participants' ability to overcome prejudice, particularly based on gender or age.

The research findings concur with previous literature findings, which revealed that those who have been most successful in soul-winning were men and women who did not pride themselves on their ability, but who in humility and faith sought to help those about them (White 2002, 58). White also indicated that as Jesus did His ministry that leaders were trained as He came close to those whom He desired to reach (White 2002, 58).

Implications for Positive Social Change

Church leaders may use this study's finding to implement ESL training programs for young and upcoming ministers to minister to their congregants. Such programs could help create more lay leaders and pastors who minister to Central African immigrants. The goal of this training was that African lay leaders and pastors should not only know how to set goals but also how to achieve them. In doing so, they would make it a priority for both them and their churches to be motivated, innovative, and collaborative, and thus benefit the entire community of Central African immigrants in Phoenix, Arizona.

Churches should use these findings to develop future African lay leaders and pastors who can minister to refugees and immigrants. It is not easy work because of the lack of educational opportunities for young adults and parents, cultural barriers, legal problems, and many other issues related to transitioning to a new life in a new country. Developing future leaders reduces various challenges encountered by Central Africans or African immigrants who may need spiritual nourishment and guidance and may desire to be led by an African pastor. Church leaders should propose different individuals for leadership and ministerial roles in the church. There is no question that in Acts 1:15-26, Peter proposes two men who met the necessary criteria for leadership. The first, Joseph, who was also known as Barsabas, which is Aramaic for "son of the Sabbath" while the second man was Matthias. It appears that both men were equally qualified to fill the position. Steven (2006, 3) specifies that they sought the Lord's divine guidance in their prayer and that they recognized that God had already made His choice and would reveal whom He had chosen.

Developing church leaders also would help in effective ministry among local

communities and overseas if people were trained to visit people, pray for the sick, minister to the sick, and teach the Bible. Training people for medical missions in foreign countries should also be encouraged. Helping people learn a language will also enable them to teach the simple truths of God's word. Indeed, when God's plan of salvation is the first to reach the heart, God's work will be effective and strong. The fact is that due to their stateless status, refugees and immigrants are unable to secure paying jobs or to be educated for self-supportive ministries. Opportunities to minister to this population abound. Social activities such as sports, fellowship, friendship, carpentry, accounting, and worship services, providing food for the needy and foreigner and opening doors to the travelers (Lev 19:9-10; Job 31:32), fighting for justice for foreigners (Mal 3:5); helping stranger (Matt 25:25-36), and loving and showing mercy to the neighbor (Gal 5:14; Luke 10:29-37) are things that God desires.

Recommendations

Based on my reflections on this project, I propose the following recommendations to better serve refugees and immigrants within the North American Division (NAD):

1. Strategic Implementation by the Adventist Refugees and Immigrant

Ministries: The Adventist Refugees and Immigrants Ministries (ARM) should consider piloting some of this project's strategies with specific refugee groups within the NAD. Analyzing the effectiveness of these strategies could inform broader implementation across the Division.

2. Equipping Young Adults: Ethnic churches within the NAD should actively create platforms where young adult refugees can develop skills to navigate life's challenges. This could involve workshops, mentorship programs, or support groups.

3. **Holistic Discipleship:** The approach to refugee and immigrant discipleship should be more holistic, encompassing spiritual, emotional, social, physical, and missional dimensions. Churches can explore incorporating programs or resources that address these various needs.

4. **Trauma-Informed Environments:** Church leaders should acknowledge the presence of refugees and immigrants who have experienced trauma. This includes creating safe learning environments that are sensitive to these experiences and promote healing.

5. **Family Integration Resources:** Local church leaders should become more proactive in providing resources for refugee family integration. This could involve support groups, language classes, or cultural competency training for church members.

Conclusion

This Strategic Ministry Action Plan was to establish a focused and biblical foundation for effective ministry to African pastors and lay leaders of African immigrants in Phoenix, Arizona. It sought develop leadership training for an African Immigrant Multicultural Ministry to help address the challenges of lack of trained African pastors to minister to African immigrants in Phoenix, Arizona. The Bible study training program significantly improved the participants' ability to minister to their audience in Phoenix, Arizona, built trust with each other and with their primary audience, overcame prejudices based on gender and age, developed effective communication skills, particularly in English, and built strong relationships with each other and with their primary audiences. The research indicates the need to support lay leaders and pastors in ministry. This project provides insight that suggests God uses anyone in His ministry regardless of age

or gender, thus people should be allowed to serve as leaders in a ministry regardless of their gender or age. The need to develop confidence and build trust can enhance leadership in ministry that can provide ministers to minister to the African immigrants who need spiritual and physical support. This Strategic Ministry Action Plan is crucial for the church not only in Phoenix, Arizona, but also in many places where similar challenges exist.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY

Participants' feeling about ESL Bible Study Lessons

Date of Birth...(Optional) Young Adult.....

Cell phone.....(Optional).....Gender.....

Participant instructions and factors. Please rate yourself honestly based on what you learned and give statements using the following scale:

1 – Strongly Agree 2 – Agree 3 – Neutral 4 – Disagree 5 – Strongly Disagree

| Building Trust and overcome culture barriers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. ESL Bible study enables me to function and grow stronger | | | | | |
| 2. I felt confident and love while discussing in class on gender issues | | | | | |
| 3. Openness to one another is very meaningful for my growth | | | | | |
| 4. I feel having an open mind about how to live with others | | | | | |
| 5. I learned to be respectful and humble | | | | | |
| 6. Writing is the most skill I learned | | | | | |
| 7. Reading is the most skill I learned | | | | | |
| 8. Listening is the most skill I learned | | | | | |
| 9. At the beginning I felt frustrated and embarrassed when I was asked to read | | | | | |
| 10. Group leaders were most concerned about my learning growth | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Questions about gender and age | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. God can use anyone person in His ministry regardless of gender | | | | | |
| 2. God can use anyone person in His ministry regardless of age | | | | | |
| 3. Since I learned ESL Bible study, I feel positive toward others and my reaction has changed | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Question about Communication skills and building strong relationships | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. I listen attentively to my leader during the ESL Bible study | | | | | |
| 2. I write and read my ESL Bible study assignment regularly | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 3. I actively participate in the discussion of ESL Bible study, answering exercises and clarifying the meaning of the Bible verses that I did not understand | | | | | |
| 4. I communicate with native colleagues who speak English more than before and build strong relationship | | | | | |
| 5. I built stronger relationships with native colleagues who speak English than before | | | | | |
| 6. I spend more time with my colleagues during ESL Bible Study | | | | | |
| 7. The ESL Bible Study met my needs of learning English and become more efficient | | | | | |
| 8. The ESL Bible Study met my needs of becoming an effective leader | | | | | |

APPENDIX B
AUTHORIZATION LETTERS

**Institutional Review Board – 8488 E Campus Circle Dr Room 234 - Berrien Springs, MI 49104-0355
Tel: (269) 471-6361 E-mail: irb@andrews.edu**

January 28, 2024

Joe Mpabwanimana
Tel. 602-908-9641
Email: joelmp2001@yahoo.com

RE: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

IRB Protocol #:24-001 **Application Type:** Original **Dept.:** Doctor of Ministry
Review Category: Exempt **Action Taken:** Approved **Advisor:** David Penno
Title: A leadership strategy to train and equip African pastor and lay leaders for effective ministry to Central African Refugees and immigrants in Phoenix, Arizona.
Your IRB application for approval of research involving human subjects entitled: “*A leadership strategy to train and equip African pastor and lay leaders for effective ministry to Central African Refugees and immigrants in Phoenix, Arizona*” IRB protocol # 24-001 has been evaluated and determined Exempt from IRB review under regulation CFR 46.104 (2)(i): Research that include survey procedures and in which information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subject. You may now proceed with your research. Please note that any future changes made to the study design or informed consent form require prior approval from the IRB before such changes can be implemented. In case you need to make changes please use the attached report form. While there appears to be no more than minimum risks with your study, should an incidence occur that results in a research-related adverse reaction or physical injury, this must be reported immediately in writing to the IRB. Any research-related physical injury must also be reported immediately to the University Physician, Dr. Katherine, by calling (269) 473-2222.

We ask that you reference the protocol number in any future correspondence regarding this study for easy retrieval of information. Best wishes in your research.

Sincerely,

Mordekai Ongo, PhD.
Research Integrity and Compliance Officer



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Office of the President

October 24, 2023

Andrews University
8975 Old 31
Berrien Springs MI 49104

RE: An Institutional Consent Letter

To whom it may concern:

This is to certify that Pastor Joel Mpawanimana is fully supported to conduct his research at Glendale and Ubumwe Seventh-day Adventist Churches for this dissertation is **“A Leadership Strategy to Train and Equip African Pastors and Lay Leaders for Effective Ministry to Central African Refugees and Immigrants in Phoenix. Arizona.**

His research will consist of 15 participants, pastors, lay leaders from Glendale and Ubumwe churches. The task of this project is to develop, implements and evaluate a training strategy for pastors and lay leaders for effective ministry to Central African refugees and immigrants at the Glendale and Ubumwe SDA church in the AZ Conferenced of the Seventh-day Adventists.

Pastor Joel is a faithful, committed, and loyal servant of the Lord. He has a deep love and burden for people and souls. A unique ability to understand and explain God's Word and an ability to emotionally engage people both public and private.

If you have any questions, please contact my office at (480) 991- 6777.

Sincerely,

Ed Keyes
President

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY
8975 Old 31, Berrien Springs, MI 49104

Informed Consent Form for Recruitment

Title of the Project: A Leadership Strategy to Train and Equip African Pastor and Lay Leaders for Effective Ministry to Central African Refugees and Immigrants in Phoenix, Arizona

Principal Investigator: Joel Mpabwanimana, Doctoral Candidate, Andrews University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older and must be either a lay leader or a pastor at the Ubumwe Company and the Glendale Church in the Arizona Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to develop, implement, and evaluate a training strategy for pastors and lay leaders for effective ministry to Central African refugees and immigrants at the Ubumwe Company and the Glendale Church in the Arizona Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists.

In line with this task, the project has several primary objectives:

- (1) to acknowledge African immigrants' presence in Phoenix, Arizona, and to provide ways for them to grow spiritually;
- (2) to promote and practice effective leadership as a result of mission-driven service training; and
- (3) to increase awareness of the importance of communication and relationship issues in areas such as alphabetization, family of origin, and worship.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Participate in ESL Bible study, worship, and prayer classes.
2. Participate in communication skills seminar.
3. Participate in seminar on the biblical images of the church.
4. Participate in relationship building seminar.
5. Participate in training for small group leaders.
6. Participate in organizing small groups.
7. Complete 10-question survey.
8. Participate in focus groups.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted and all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Soft-copies of data or any recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then deleted. The researcher and members of his doctoral committee will have access to these recordings.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate or not will not affect your current or future relations with Ubumwe Company and the Glendale Church. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Joel Mpabwanimana. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at (602) 908-9641 and at joelmp2001@yahoo.com. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Boubakar Sanou, at sanou@andrews.edu and Andrews University IRB at irb@andrews.edu.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record and/or video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

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VITA

Name: Joel Mpabwanimana

Background: I was born on January 4, 1960, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Africa and raised up there. I was raised up in the Seventh-day Adventist Church by loving parents who both passed away. I was baptized at the age of 16 in 1976 while I was attending a Seventh day Adventist High School. I was called to ministry at the age of 19 in 1979.

Family: I married Francine Mpabwanimana on August 12, 2012. I have two children, a 28 year old son and a daughter of 24 years from my first marriage and two twin stepchildren a boy and a girl both 11 year-old. We foster a boy of 11 years and a girl of 16 years both twins.

Ordination: Ordained by the West Congo Union Mission of the Seventh-day Adventists in 1996 and I currently hold ministerial credentials from the Arizona Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists.

Education:

- 2005 – 2008 Board Certified Chaplain, (BCC) from the APC
(Association of Professional Chaplain)
- 1991– 2005 MA in Religion, MDiv, both from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University
- 1984 – 1987 Université Adventiste d’Afrique Centrale, BA in Religion (Minor in Leadership and Administration)

Experience:

- 2014 - Full Time Pastor at Ubumwe Seventh-day Adventist Company, Phoenix, AZ and at Tucson African Seventh-day Adventist Group, Tucson, AZ
- 2008 – 2014 Hospital Chaplain, Phoenix, AZ and Church Planter Pastor, AZ Conference
- 2005 – 2008 Full -time Hospital Chaplain, Covenant Hospital, Saginaw, MI
- 1999 – 2005 Evangelist Student at Benton Harbor, Andrews University, Michigan
- 1995 – 1999 Evangelist Church Planter Pastor in Equator, for West Congo Union
- 1994 – 1995 Evangelist Church Planter Pastor in Kinshasa, West Congo Union
- 1991 – 1994 Evangelist Student at ASWA (Nigeria, West Africa, West Africa Division)
- 1989 – 1991 Education and Evangelism Director of the East Rwanda Association, (RUM)
- 1987 – 1989 District Pastor of 17 SDA Churches, Muhima and Kagugu (ERA, RUM)
- 1984 – 1987 Evangelist Student at Mudende (North Rwanda Association, RUM)
- 1978 – 1984 Intern Pastor of the Masaka SDA Church (East Rwanda Association, RUM)