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Using a Small Group Approach to Increase Church Growth in the Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church

Schadrack Nsengimana
Andrews University

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ABSTRACT

USING A SMALL GROUP APPROACH TO INCREASE CHURCH GROWTH IN THE GIKONDO SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

by

Schadrack Nsengimana

Adviser: Nancy J. Vyhmeister
Title: USING A SMALL GROUP APPROACH TO INCREASE CHURCH GROWTH IN THE GIKONDO SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

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Date completed: October 2014

Problem

Although many people are baptized at the Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church each year, about 70% leave the church shortly after baptism.

Method

The biblical principles of church growth were studied and theological reflection focused on four biblical themes. First, the call to integrate the Great Commission into the daily life and relationships of the individual believer in Christ was examined. Second, church growth as faithfulness to God was explored as a biblical teaching. Third, the view that a healthy church embraces multiplication of disciples as its core responsibility was
studied from a biblical perspective. Fourth, the role of the pastor as equipper and trainer was also studied.

Ellen G. White’s books and the writings of other Christian authors dealing with small groups were studied; literature on strategies of church growth was also consulted. Books and articles on the principles, strategies, and programs to help pastors develop small groups in the local church for evangelism and nurture were consulted.

A church growth study covering the ten previous years was conducted and then all 14 church elders and 30 additional members were interviewed to ascertain their views regarding a small group approach. All of them were open to using small groups as a basis for the church’s ministries, so a strategy was developed and implemented to start such a program. A training program was developed to train small group leaders in the Gikondo Church.

Results

The Gikondo church members learned how to use a small group approach as a basis for the church’s ministries, which led to increased church growth. The small group approach contributed to both quantitative and qualitative growth. Groups increased from 44 in 2012 to 103 in 2014. In addition, 55 pre-Christians joined the small groups and 38 of them have been baptized.

Conclusions

I discovered that for continued numerical and spiritual growth, a local church must continue to multiply its small group ministries. Intentional discipleship through a small group ministry is one way to help believers and non-believers experience God in
their lives and to support them in their journey towards becoming deeply committed disciples of Christ. Small groups have also increased the involvement of many church members in Bible study and in the different church ministries.
Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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ADVENTIST CHURCH

A Dissertation
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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my wonderful wife, Venantie Nikuze.

Without her love, patience, confidence and encouragement, my dream of completing the Doctor of Ministry would never have happened.

She has never complained during all the months I was gone to continue my course work and all the nights I spent at home studying and researching.

Thank you so much for being a good partner in ministry.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my children

Honorine,
    Joel
    Lois
    and Goel,

who missed me during this long journey.

Thank you so much for your patience and for being good children.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

When I was posted to the Gikondo Church as pastor, I discovered that the growth rate of the Gikondo Church was much lower than the population growth rate of Kigali. I conducted a study of the membership pattern from 2004 to 2013 and discovered that the growth was slow and irregular.

Some of the reasons for this slow and irregular growth are that, first of all, Kigali is a city. Most of the church members are very busy with their businesses. Second, most members have not been trained to nurture and disciple new converts after public campaigns.

Statement of the Problem

Although many people are baptized at the Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church, in Kigali, about 70% leave the church shortly after baptism.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to conduct a church growth study of the Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church between 2004 and 2013, and to develop, implement, and evaluate a strategy to increase the annual growth rate by developing small groups as a means of nurture and outreach.
**Significance of the Project**

In spite of the many public evangelistic campaigns conducted in the Gikondo Church over the past decade, the church has shown no significant increase in the number of persons baptized each year. The annual growth rate remains low.

Second, this research should help the Gikondo Church strengthen its missionary spirit by encouraging the development of small groups that are active in outreach and nurture. A small group approach to outreach requires fewer financial resources while increasing the growth rate of the church.

Third, small groups will involve many more members in the Great Commission given by Jesus to His church as found in Matt 28:16-20.

**Limitations of the Study**

The problem of loss of members is experienced in other churches in the East Central Rwanda Field. However I will limit my research to the Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church.

**Definitions**

*Small Group:* “A small group within the church is a voluntary, intentional gathering of 3 to 12 people, regularly meeting together with the shared goal of mutual Christian edification and fellowship” (Pierce, 2012). Concerning spiritual and numerical growth of the church, Stetzer and Dodson say,

Closed small groups are those that meet for a specific length of time, usually around a certain topic or book of the Bible, and do not add new people after the first couple of meetings. These groups are ideal for spiritual growth in a church, but rarely do they numerical growth. In order for a church to grow numerically using small groups, the groups must be open, inviting, and welcoming to new people. Recall the word “new” from the comeback church pastors. These churches multiplied new, open groups,
sometimes specifically targeting a segment in their community. Through a variety of new groups, the number of people involved increased. (Stetzer & Dodson, 2007, p. 154)

**Small Group Ministry:** “Small groups are group[s] of people who meet regularly for the purpose of spiritual edification and evangelistic outreach (with the goal of multiplication). They should function as parts of a local church, not as independent entities” (Severance, 2003).

**Home Group:** “I believe an operational *definition* of a biblical *home group* must take into account the relationship of the large and small *groups*. Biblically, each played a part in developing the disciples’ spiritual life” (Neumann, 1999, p. 62).

**Church Growth:** Wagner says that for McGavran, Church Growth means “all that is involved in bringing men and women who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ into fellowship with Him and into responsible church membership” (1978, p. 4). Wagner holds that Church Growth is “simultaneously a theological conviction and an applied science, striving to combine the eternal principles of God’s Word with the best insights of contemporary social and behavioral sciences, employing as its initial frame of reference, the foundation work done by Donald McGavran” (1978, p. 4).

**Personal Basis for Ministry**

**Introduction**

The Bible reveals that God created Adam and Eve in His image (Gen 1:26). But we know that every person created has a unique character, personality, and temperament. Knowing my personal spiritual journey, temperament, spiritual giftedness, personal needs and objectives, and spiritual and theological understanding of ministry applications will help to accomplish my part in the mission of God.
Knowing the self-awareness of biblical leaders is helpful to me because the Scripture shows many spiritual leaders had self-awareness. It can be seen that having a self-awareness in spiritual leadership is important. In his book *Practicing Greatness*, McNeal says:

The single most important piece of information a leader possesses is self-awareness. The dictionary uses a variety of words to portray the meaning of awareness: knowledge, mindful, vigilance, conscious, alert, to note a few. When you add the word self to these, you get a good idea what self-awareness includes: self-knowledge (knowing who you are), self-mindfulness (understanding your motives for doing what you do), self-vigilance (knowing what makes you tick and what ticks you off!), self-consciousness (knowing how you come across to others), and self-alertness (maintaining your emotional, physical, and spiritual condition. The discipline of self-awareness, then, is the leader’s intentional quest for self-understanding. (2006, pp. 10-11).

McNeal says that David demonstrates the power of self-awareness in establishing and protecting a personal sense of identity. He calls himself “the Lord’s anointed.” Paul’s autobiographical statements in Phil 3 reveal how awareness can integrate key components of a leader’s life. Even Jesus had to grow in self-awareness. He evidenced an emerging self-understanding in his temple visit at twelve. He seemed to be coming to grips with a unique relationship with his Father. So, these examples of self-awareness of biblical leaders can help me to be an effective leader in my ministry.

Life Journey and General Background

I was born in the northwest of Rwanda and grew up in a Seventh-day Adventist family. My primary studies were in an Adventist school. At that time getting into secondary school was difficult for two reasons: First, you had to be related to people in government; second, private schools were expensive and public school officials had to be bribed to enter public school where fees were affordable. My family was poor but willing
to send me to the secondary school. My parents sold everything they had but could still not afford the fees. Because I passed the test given by the Rwanda Union Mission that was required to enter secondary school, I was able to attend the Adventist Secondary School.

During my secondary school years, I had many challenges. I was sick, did not have enough food, missed classes when the fees were not paid, and for four years had no holidays. In holidays, I worked as a literature evangelist. In spite of the challenges, I was blessed by the good music, sermons, and youth programs. Before finishing I was baptized.

My first job after secondary school was as a primary school teacher (1993-1994). However my teaching was interrupted by the Rwandan war of 1990-1994, which ended with the genocide. When the Hutu majority tribe fled to the Democratic Republic of Congo, I went along as a refugee.

Later, I worked with ADRA in Goma in the Democratic Republic of Congo as a mediator between family members displaced by the war under the Department of Unaccompanied Children (2004-2006). When I was a refugee my ambition was to continue my studies in business administration. I applied to Helderberg College in South Africa and received an admission letter and a sponsorship. While I was preparing to go to school, the war started in DRC and I decided to leave.

Because I did not have money for travel, I went from the Democratic Republic of Congo by foot to Brazzaville in Congo. Many refugees died of sickness and others were killed on that long journey. Finally, after one month I reached Brazzaville. Then the war came to Brazzaville, so I went to Gabon. I was looking for a country in order to do my
best to reach Helderberg College. During my long journey I told God that if He would guide me and save my life I would work for Him. It was while I was walking on that long and difficult journey that the idea of joining the ministry was born in my heart. I was trying to think how I could become a pastor and preach the gospel of Jesus who created us and who united us through his blood. I had a passion to tell my fellow Rwandese that they needed to forgive each other because Jesus also has forgiven us while we were sinners. After a short time, Gabon repatriated me to Rwanda.

When I reached my home, I taught in a secondary school for one year, and then became the accountant of that school (1998-2000). As someone who was involved and interested in ministry, I went to the Adventist University of Central Africa (AUCA) for theological training (2000-2003). After my studies I became a district leader in the East Central Rwanda Field, where I conducted many evangelistic campaigns and training programs. I then went to the Adventist University of Africa in Kenya where I received a MA in Pastoral Theology.

I am now the pastor of the Gikondo District in Kigali, where we are building a large new church. My wife Venantie and I have three children: Honorine born in 2000, Joel born in 2003 and Lois born in 2005.

Six Subplots

God uses different ways to shape spiritual leaders; He uses many circumstances, bad or good, challenges, and blessings in order to help His ministers become effective. McNeal, in his book *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders*, talks about how God used culture, call, community, communion, and commonplace to shape the lives of Moses, David, Jesus, and Paul in order for them to be
effective leaders. Culture combines all the environmental influences: traditions, historical-geographical events, tribes, ethnic groups, languages, economy. Spiritual leaders respond to the call of God after having been convinced that the Lord wants them in His ministry for the accomplishment of His mission. McNeal says that every leader will admit to having some sense of destiny, whether great or small. In spiritual leaders, we can refer to this as the awareness of a call. The call is the leader’s personal conviction of having received some life assignment or mission that must be completed (2000, pp. xiv-xv). Every spiritual leader has his personal call, as McNeal says in his book Practicing Greatness: 7 Disciplines of Extraordinary Spiritual Leaders (2006, p. 25). For spiritual leaders, “the call” frames the central story line of their life dramas. Sometimes the call is dramatic, like Moses’ burning bush experience or Paul’s Damascus road encounter. For others the call is progressive, as was David’s long journey between the anointing at his father’s house by Samuel and the anointing as king at Hebron by the elders. Either way, leaders center their lives, their vocation, and their location around the call. The call is not an added dimension to their journey; it gives meaning to the trip. It is personal.

Leaders are also shaped by the community, by a personal relationship with God, by conflicts, the commonplace, and challenges. The six subplots have been used by God to shape me in the same ways.

Culture

As a Rwandese I looked down on females and children but the war opened my eyes as I saw how women and children played a very important role during and after the war. They helped people who were in trouble, regardless of which group they belonged
to. This influenced and shaped my life and ministry because I decided to change my attitude towards females and children. I have chosen to build relationships, to build unity and reconciliation between the three ethnic groups which were separated by culture, political, and colonial events. I hope that through evangelism and by the power of the Holy Spirit, the people who suffer from damaged emotions will be healed.

God also used the horrors of war to shape my heart by calling me to be His minister. When I returned from being a refugee, I had a passion to share the good news of salvation with my fellow Rwandese. In a culture that neglects females and where there were terrible ethical conflicts, my passion is to transform my culture through the good news of salvation.

Call

Another influence God used to shape my heart for ministry was my call to be a minister in His mission. He called me when I was a refugee and while I was facing danger and death in the refugee camp, and after enduring a long hard journey through different countries. Three years later after returning to my country I was able to attend the AUCA to study theology. After finishing my studies, God called me to be a district leader.

Community

God used my community to shape my heart. My wife encouraged me to continue my studies, prayed for me, supported me financially, and was very courageous when she took care of our family. My parents and friends who were doing theology at AUCA also encouraged me and prayed for me and offered continual words of encouragement.
Communion

God used communion to shape my heart through Bible study, morning and evening devotions. Prayer and songs were also part of my communion with God.

Conflict

God also used conflict to shape my heart. The ethnic conflicts in my country showed me how important relationships are between human beings. We were created and saved by God. We are from the same parents; all of us are united through the blood of Christ.

Commonplace

God used the commonplace to shape me through the war, and through my pilgrimage. My family was poor, my studies very difficult because of a lack of school fees. Being treated like a common animal while I was a refugee helped shape the person I am today.

Personal Assessments

Conversion and Assurance of Salvation

I was born and grew up in a Seventh-day Adventist family. In my childhood, I usually went with my parents to church on Sabbath and to the mid-week prayer meetings. I was interested in religious topics and benefited from my parents who taught my brothers and me to pray and love Jesus.

In the different stages of my education I studied the Bible and learned to love Jesus. I also attended small groups where my faith developed and over time I began to feel an assurance of salvation.
Margin in Life

We are living in the end time, characterized by economic crises, poverty, selfishness, advancement in education, complex technology, and socio-economic problems which provoke the conflicts of life. Today, many people do not sleep for working hard, day and night. Even though they overload their time, they still must find time to solve their problems. Richard Swenson, in his book *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overload Lives*, says that to be healthy, we require margin in at least four areas: emotional energy, physical energy, time, and finances. Conditions of modern living, however, have drained these margins rather than sustaining them. In emotional energy, seldom have we been so stressed, so alone, and so exhausted in spirit. In physical energy, we are overfed, underactive, and sleep-deprived. In time, our clock-dominated nanosecond culture lives us wheezing and landscape look like a fiscal Gettysburg. (Swenson, 1992, p. 78)

After studying the four areas which require margin, I discovered that all of them affect my life, but two of them have especially affected me. First, I have no margin when it comes to time because I am a district pastor with nine churches. I chair many different committees and participate in many conferences, seminars, and meetings. I often do not finish my work on time; I do not eat at the right time, and do not get enough sleep. I need margin in this area of my life. Swenson proposes some solutions for restoring margin and lists the following steps.

Expect the unexpected, learn to say no, turn off the television, prune the activity branches, practice simplicity and contentment, separate time from technology, thank God, sabotage your fuse box, get less done but do the right things, enjoy anticipation, relish the memories, do not rush wisdom, stand in line, create buffer zones, plan for free time, and be available. (Swenson, 1992, pp. 121-128)

Concerning margin in finance, the African culture requires everyone to support one’s relatives and this is challenging for me. Many times I am overloaded with financial needs. This is why I decided, along with my wife, to make a monthly family budget in
order to have margin in finance. Swenson proposes some solutions for restoring financial margin, like traveling in the right direction, living within your harvest, disciplining desires and redefining needs. Swenson also insists that we must decrease spending, increase income, increase savings, make a budget, discard credit cards, do not mortgage the future, resist impulses, share, lend, borrow, emphasize usefulness over fashion, fast, and put the kingdom first (Swenson, 1992, pp. 138-147).

**Spiritual/Devotional Life and Plans**

As I said above, when I was young I usually participated in morning and evening devotions at home and at school. I liked to participate in small prayer groups and in the annual Bible reading program. These different spiritual activities helped me to know more about the love of God, and my relationship with Him matured. Blackaby and Blackaby, in their book *Experiencing God Day-by-Day: A Devotional and Journal* say, “God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways. Knowing God’s voice comes from an intimate love relationship with God” (2007, p. 44). A relationship with God comes from a hunger and thirst and a willingness to know Him. Writing about spiritual hunger, Jon L. Dybdahl, in his book *Hunger: Satisfying the Longing of Your Soul*, says

Human hunger for God is intense and universal. Even if suppressed or denied, it cries out silently from the depths. Such hunger is not a wish to know about God, but rather a quest to encounter Him. People want to touch, experience, and feel the divine—not just discover facts about God. While the hunger affects all people, it is especially evident in the Western world, especially those places in which secularism and traditional Christianity become most prevalent. (2008, p. 10)

My spiritual path includes a passion to share with others the Word of God. The Apostle Paul says that we are ambassadors of Christ. Jesus calls us to reconcile a fallen
world with Him (2 Cor 5:20). God wants me to share with others the good news of salvation, for He gave us the Great Commission.

After finishing my secondary school, I was called to be a teacher in an Adventist primary school, and I combined that job with doing evangelism, as was recommended by the conference. Even though I was an evangelist, my relationship with God slowly died until war broke out in my country. That spiritual weakness continued until God called me in a special way when I was refugee.

My spiritual life passed through four stages: awakening, purgation (cleansing), illumination, and finally union with God. Because I was born in an Adventist family, I went with my parents to church on Sabbath without really knowing the meaning of the Sabbath or the purpose of worship. When I was in secondary school I liked to go to church and show my colleagues that I was a Christian. Because of the challenges of war, it seems that I skipped the phase of adolescence. Later, I began to meditate on the Word of God and think about my salvation, I finally entered into the fourth stage. I had no doubt about the existence of God, and today I believe and trust in God. I am waiting for the coming of Jesus, and I share this good news with others.

Today when I examine my spiritual life, I discover that there is something wrong in my communion with God. I do not spend enough time in Bible study and prayer. I have decided to have intimate time with God by waking at 4:30 in the morning to read the Bible, by having devotions with my family at 5:00 a.m., family prayers in the evening, a family retreat once a month, a family retreat with other family relatives once a year, a personal retreat four times per year, fasting once a month, and daily Bible study.
Worldview

Dybdahl defines worldview “as the deep, underlying, usually unconscious concept structures of a people or culture that is the source for their values, beliefs, and actions” (2008, p. 101).

God gave us His mission in order to proclaim His grace, to spread the good news of salvation to the entire world that has been corrupted by Satan’s powers. Before engaging in mission it is important to understand the worldview and belief system of the people we hope reach. In his book *Communicating Christ in Animistic Context*, Gailyn Van Rheenen says that “the missionary must become a culture learner in order to perceive cultural diversity. He must learn to look beyond superficial similarities to perceive ways in which people pattern their culture reality. These distinctive patterns of reality are worldviews” (1991, p. 33).

Van Rheenen also suggests that during the time of crisis a peoples’ worldviews is most apparent.

The differences in worldviews become more apparent during times of crisis, especially at times of death and illness. Each society has developed its own distinctive rituals for grappling with crisis. When the meanings of these rituals are studied, they reveal significant insights into a people’s worldview. (1991, p. 33)

There are five common worldviews: Atheist/Agnostic, Deist, Mechanical or Magical, Medieval, and Christian Theist. Mission aims to lead people to the Christian theist worldview.

Temperament

Temperament is a configuration of observable personality traits, such as habits of communication, patterns of action, and sets of characteristic attitudes, values, and talents. It also encompasses personal needs, the kinds of contributions that individuals
make in the workplace, and the roles they play in society. (Keirsey & Bates, n.d., para. 1)

Keirsey and Bates have identified four basic temperament types: artisan, guardian, rational, and idealist. Each temperament has its own unique qualities, shortcomings, strengths, and challenges and each has four traits: Guardian: supervisor (ESTJ), inspector (ISTJ), provider (ESFJ), and protector (ISFJ); Artisan: promoter (ESTP), crafter (ISTP), performer (ESFP), and composer (ISFP); Idealist: teacher (ENFJ), counselor (INFJ), champion (ENFP), and healer (INFP); and Rational: field marshall (ENTJ), mastermind (INTJ), inventor (ENTP), and architect (INTP; para. 1).

When I took the MBTI test my scores were: E = 7, S = 14, T = 12, and J = 6. This places me in the ESTJ or Supervisor group, under the Guardian group. As an ESTJ, my characteristics are: Extrovert, Sensing, Thinking, and Judging. These characteristics give me certain advantages as a leader: I am highly social and community-minded, ready to rise to positions of responsibility in school, church, industry, or civic groups. As a supervisor I have to be generous with my time and energy, and very often belong to a variety of service clubs, lodges, and associations, supporting myself through steady attendance, but also taking an outspoken leadership role. They also give me the following advantages which I must be aware of as an ESTJ. I am active, like to cooperate and interact with others. I like to work with many people and receive ideas from each member of the group or committee when I am leading it. I like evangelism through small groups because everyone is involved. I like to establish a strategic plan and follow it. These four categories help me know who I am, my personality type, and better understand the people I interact and work with. This helps to solve many challenges I meet in life and especially in my ministry. It helped me also in dealing with my project, “Using a Small Group
Approach to Increase Church Growth in the Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church.”

Because of the temperament test I better know how to conduct the training seminars, how to discover the spiritual gifts of church members, how to group people, and choose small group leaders. This study also helps me know my weaknesses in ministry. Sometimes I do not respect a strategic plan or the schedules I establish, so I need to correct that attitude. I discovered that sometimes in a discussion group, I permit long discussions without bringing them to an end, so I need to manage time better.

**Damage Factor**

I have met many challenges but there are three that damaged me in my past experienced. First, I am from a poor family and my education was hindered. Second, during the war of 1990 to 1994 in Rwanda many innocent people were killed, among them friends and family members. After 1994, my region again experienced fighting as rebels attempted to overthrow the government, and once again I saw many innocent people killed. Seeing innocent people killed damaged me. During my refugee experience I saw terrible sicknesses, hunger, and death, and I suffered myself. Seamands points out that Jesus was a “wounded healer” (1981, p. 45). “For ours is no High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses” (Heb 4:5). This is the assurance which gives me grounds for hope and healing. “The fact that God not only knows and cares, but fully understands, is the most therapeutic factor in the healing of our damaged emotions” (p. 45). I find healing for my damaged emotions in Jesus, because God has divine healing for us.

Paul wrote to Roman Christians about the Holy Spirit who “helps our infirmities” (Rom. 8:26). Many of the modern translations use weaknesses or crippling in place of the word infirmities. One meaning of the word help has a medical connotation,
suggesting the way a nurse helps in the healing process. So, it is the literal meaning of the verb, but that the Holy Spirit becomes our partner and helper, who works along with us in mutual participating for our healing. What is our part in the healing of our damaged emotions? The Holy Spirit is, indeed, the divine counselor, the divine psychiatrist, who gets ahold of our problem on the other end. (Seamands, 1981, pp. 19-20)

He suggests several biblical principles which must be followed to find healing for damaged emotions. “Face your problem squarely, accept your responsibility in the matter, ask yourself if you want to be healed, forgive everyone who is involved in your problem, forgive yourself, and ask the Holy Spirit to show you what your real problem is” (pp. 20-22). These principles have helped me find treatment for my damaged emotions.

Assessments in Relation to Others

Spiritual Giftedness

In their book Equipped for Every Work: Building a Gifts-Based Church, Dan and Barbara Dick talk about Spiritual Gifts. “They are given to us in the place and time in which we find ourselves, equipping us and empowering, in unique ways, to do the work to which God is calling us now. These are supernatural powers—given to each and to all for the building up of the body and the kingdom” (2001, p. 21). They say that “each community of faith is uniquely gifted and graced to the work of kingdom building in its place and in its time, but we are, collectedly, the body of Christ” (p. 23).

A spiritual gifts inventory is important to people because it “helps individuals to identify their God-given gifts for living faithfully as Christian disciples day by day and to find meaningful ways to use their gifts in connection with others through the community of faith. The process helps people understand the nature of spiritual gifts and ways to
enhance the effectiveness of their gifts by linking together with others” (Dick & Dick, 2001, p. 12).

After having completed the Spiritual Gifts Inventory, I discovered my top three gifts—Wisdom, Faith, and Prophecy.

Wisdom is the gift of translating life into spiritual truth and of seeing the application of scriptural truth of daily living. Wisdom applies a God-given common sense to our understanding of God’s will. Wisdom helps us remain focused on the important work of God, and it enables newer, less mature Christians to benefit from those who have been blessed by God to share deep truths. (p. 43)

Faith is “the exceptional ability to hold fast to the truth of God in Jesus Christ in spite of pressures, problems, and obstacles to faithfulness” (p. 40). Prophecy is “the gift of speaking the Word of God clearly and faithfully” (p. 42).

I will use these spiritual gifts to help church members accept the Word of God and live in biblical ways. My project seeks to use a small group approach to increase Gikondo church growth, so my gifts should help with this project.

Leadership/Interaction Styles

“The Leadership/Interaction Styles examines how people behave together in various settings. Looking at behavior, rather than personality, helps to explain what happens when we work together, why there is often tension, and how to be more effective in setting where differing styles are present” (Dick & Dick, 2001, p. 12).

Leadership/Interaction Styles (LIS) is a tool to help leaders identify their dominant styles and develop an appreciation of the dominant styles of others (2001, p. 57). Each of the four styles represents a combination of behaviors dealing with a person’s focus (either on the task or people) and the person’s approach to ways of sharing information (either by asking or by telling).
There are four different ways that people choose to work together: directors, dreamers, pleasers, and thinkers. According to Dick and Dick, I am a Director. I like to encourage committee members to feel comfortable giving their ideas, and after hearing everyone, I help the committee make a decision. As a director I tend to be task oriented, focused on results, and getting the work of God done. I respect the agenda, calendars, and the clock. I do my best to begin and end every task at the assigned times. I expect others to speak clearly and concisely, staying on the topic and getting to the point quickly. I am a logical, linear thinker who tends to value reason over intuition. I encourage practices that yield measurable and tangible results.

As director, I hope to help the Gikondo church grow by using a small group approach. I will permit everyone to contribute their ideas to the strategic plan before it is approved by the church board. I will also seek to have every task finished on time, will help the church members discover their spiritual gifts, and will help them to use these gifts in God’s ministry.

**Spirituality Type (Spirituality Web)**

Dick and Dick suggest that there are six different approaches to experiencing the divine.

The Spirituality Web offers a way to appreciate the richness and beauty in six different approaches to and experience of the divine, viewed through the lens of the means of grace. Deeper understanding of what it means to be a spiritual community can be achieved by identifying different ways that people relate to God (2001, p. 12).

The six types are Head, Heart, Pilgrim, Mystic, Servant, and Crusader spirituality. In *Head Spirituality*: the study of Scripture is central, worship and education define church, God can be known, faith is rational, and the Christian’s life has practical benefits.
For *Heart Spirituality*: the focus is on a relationship with Jesus, faith sharing is essential, there is a strong commitment to pray for others, and there is a praise orientation. In *Pilgrim Spirituality*: a person seeks meaning and looks for answers, a person accepts what makes sense, and faith formation is a process—a journey. For *Mystic Spirituality*: the focus is on the mystery of God, prayer and meditation are central, retreats or renewal is important, and God is listened for. In *Servant Spirituality*: people are doers, not hearers, the outlook is anti-institutional and Christianity means being like Jesus with prayer being secondary. For the *Crusader Spirituality*: Time, energy, and resources are committed to success while spiritual disciplines provide focus (Dick & Dick, 2001, p. 74).

My Spirituality Web types are Heart and Pilgrim spirituality. After learning this I have decided to integrate my life and ministry with my spirituality type. I will also use all these types in my project. The small group ministry in my church will profit by understanding the various spirituality web types since different people express spirituality in a variety of ways.

**Task Type Preferences**

“Task type preferences describes four different ways that people choose to work together to perform a wide variety of jobs” (Dick & Dick, 2001, p. 12). *Project*: People who prefer the project type of task like to see programs, ministries, or events through from start to finish—planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating all aspects of a project. *Work*: People who prefer the work type of task like to do hands-on work, without having to be bothered with the planning and organizing. This group wants to be active on the front line. *Process*: People who prefer a process task type enjoy doing the brain-work
around the committee table with pen, paper, and planning. This group hands work tasks off to those who prefer them. *Fellowship*: These people prefer fellowship and a sense of community and common purpose. The work done is secondary to the sense of connection and shared experience (Dick & Dick, 2001, p. 90).

I enjoy fellowship type of work and it fits well with my project to develop a small group approach to increase church growth. Fellowship helps people work together and encourages people to use their spiritual gifts.

**Overview of the Paper**

This research will begin by studying the biblical principles of church growth followed by theological reflection focused on four biblical themes. First, God’s call to integrate the Great Commission into the daily life and relationships of individual believers; second, church growth as faithfulness to God; third, the view that a healthy church embraces the multiplication of disciples as its core responsibility; and fourth, the role of the pastor as equipper and trainer. Ellen G. White’s writings dealing with groups and literature on strategies of church growth will be consulted. Books and articles on the principles, strategies, and programs to help pastors to develop small groups in the local church for evangelism and nurture will also be studied.

Permission to conduct this research will be requested from the East Central Rwanda Association and the Gikondo church board. A church growth study of this church during the ten previous years will be conducted. All 14 church elders, the 8 directors of the departments of the church, 10 members of the church between the age of 20 and 30 years, and the 3 pastors who previously directed the Gikondo Adventist Church will be interviewed. The community context in which the church is located will
be analyzed. A strategy will be developed and implemented to form small groups, followed by a program to train small group leaders in the Gikondo Church. Small groups will be formed in 2013, and the number of small groups and the growth rate of the Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church during 2012 will be noted. A report of this experience will be shared with other Seventh-day Adventist churches in Kigali and a written report will be part of my doctoral project.

Chapter 2 will develop a theological basis for the small group ministries at the Gikondo Church.
CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF
SMALL GROUPS

Introduction

This chapter suggests a biblical foundation for the scriptural mandate for growth by examining three major aspects of growth: general growth principles as developed in small groups, organizational growth through small group leadership development, and spiritual growth via discipleship in small groups. Several theological approaches are crucial to the issues of church growth, particularly concerning small groups. The Bible offers several examples, illustrating the importance of organizing God’s people into small groups. From a biblical perspective, the Old Testament and New Testament stress the importance of the home and small family group, but the Old Testament does not talk about church growth through small groups. The New Testament records several stories about discipleship or soul winning through small groups.

People play important roles in the church and are needed for many reasons, mainly to help people experience each other in community. A small group provides a place where people can worship together, fellowship, pray, witness, support each other, offer encouragement, and break bread together. A small group is a place where we can freely love our neighbor. A small group also provides encouragement and a place of rest where the group can recharge and share how God is working through His servants. A
small group ministry is a powerful way for making and developing disciples of Christ by encouraging the Christian community in prayer, worship, Bible study, outreach, and mission. This chapter will focus only on the small group ministries as described in the New Testament and on a theological foundation for a small group ministry.

### New Testament Foundations for a Small Group Ministry

The New Testament offers several accounts of small groups in connection with Jesus’ mission and describes many events, showing how the early church grew through small groups. There are small groups as an evangelism team, a prayer team, and a team to support one another. The New Testament describes also the mission of Jesus as involving small groups in homes and in the mission of His disciples. The book of Acts mentions the role played by small groups in promoting church growth.

**Jesus and the Twelve**

The New Testament highlights the ministry of Jesus when He called twelve disciples for His ministry. In the three synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the twelve disciples constituted a small group. Jesus called this small group for the purpose of spreading the gospel into the entire world. He started by calling four fishermen, followed by a tax collector. Then He appointed seven others.

Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means “sons of thunder”), Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. (Mark 3:15-19; NIV, used throughout; see also Matt 10:1-4; Luke 6:12-16)

Summers (2008) says that Jesus appointed twelve, designating them apostles that
they might be with Him. He also wanted to send them to preach and to have authority to drive out demons (Summers, 2008, p. 214). Jesus knew the importance of small groups. Many disciples followed Him, but He chose the twelve apostles as the small group who could accomplish His mission. Warren talks about the ministry of Jesus in a small group. He says “Jesus ministered in the context of a small group of disciples. He could have chosen more, but he knew twelve is about the maximum size you can have in a small group if everyone is to participate” (2002, p. 139).

**Jesus Sent Out the Twelve**

Before sending out His disciples on their first mission, Jesus spent time teaching and training them. Because Jesus knew the importance of support, He did not send them out alone, but divided them in smaller groups of two. “Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits” (Mark 6:7; 12, 13).

Concerning the choosing of the twelve disciples and their mission, Matthew sees things in a different way than Mark does. Mark talks about the steps used by Jesus when He called the twelve. Matthew talks about the call of the twelve as happening at the same time and underlines the authority and the power given to them by Jesus before sending them out to do mission.

Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphæus, and Thaddæus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. (Matt 10:1-4)

Henry (2014) states that just as God did to the righteous men of the Old
Testament, Jesus bestowed the Holy Spirit on the twelve for a specific time and duty. Jesus also uses this as a demonstration for us believers, so we will be able to drive out demons and lay hands on the sick to heal them (Henry, 2014, p. 118).

**Jesus Shared the Lord’s Supper With the Twelve**

When Jesus was reaching the end of His mission on this earth, He shared the Lord’s Supper with His twelve disciples. He asked them to eat the bread and drink the cup until His Second Coming, in order for them to remember what He had done for them.

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. (1 Cor 11:23-25)

**Jesus and the Seventy-Two**

Another time Jesus sent out a larger group of His disciples for evangelism. Because He knew the importance of what a small group could do rather than a big group, Jesus sent 72 disciples out on a mission trip two by two. “After this the Lord appointed 72 others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field’” (Luke 10:1, 2).

Essex (2011) says “After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. Therefore said he unto them, the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few” (p. 31)
Jesus in Small House Groups

Jesus and His disciples continued to study together, pray together, eat together, and minister together in a small group. The small house groups played a large role in the early church. One of the important things about small house groups is that it develops deep relationships among the members. Notice the following activities involved in small gatherings and small group activities:

Jesus prayed in a small group (Mark 14:32-41). Jesus ate dinner in a house with tax collectors and sinners (Matt 9:10-13; Mark 2:15-17; Luke 5:29-32). Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper (Matt 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9. John 12:1-8); Jesus healed a paralytic in his home (Matt 9:2-8; Mark 2:1-12); Jesus healed many persons at Simon Peter’s house (Matt 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-34; Luke 4:38-41); Jesus stayed at the home of Zacchaeus, the tax collector (Luke 19:1-10). Jesus visited Martha and Mary in their home (Luke 10:38-42). Jesus forgave a sinful woman at the Pharisee’s home (Luke 7:36-50).

In summary, in the small group experiences of the twelve with Jesus the following themes can be observed: The group visited in the home of group members and became part of a new family (Mark 1:29; 2:15; 3:31-34; 6:1-16). Jesus healed a group member’s relative and sent out the group to heal and cast out evil spirits (1:30-31; 5:1-13; 6:7-13; 16:7). Occasionally the group lived with Jesus in isolated places (1:35-37; 1:45); the group was questioned by officials about their activities and behavior (2:16). The group lived under constant scrutiny and criticism (2:18). The group was often pressed by large expectant crowds (3:7-10). The group shared the message and ministry of Jesus, but sometimes failed (3:13-15; 6:30; 9:17-29; 9:38-41). The group often went hungry for lack
of space or time to eat (Mark 3:20). The group was taught secrets that the crowd could not bear to hear (4:10); the group often lived in danger, fear, and conflict and was accused of breaking the law (2:24; 4:37-38; 7:5-12; 8:31-33; 10:13-16).

The group experienced the power of Jesus over the elements and the power of the Holy Spirit (Mark 4:39-41; 11:13-25; 14:32-34; 14:43-48; Acts 1:8). The group was asked to leave villages and regions, to feed large crowds with few resources, and to maintain confidentiality with Jesus (5:17; 6:37; 8:30). The group shared in rigorous travel (5:21). The group coped with Jesus’ intense sense of reality (vv. 30-34). The group was called away by Jesus to rest (6:31); the group was sent out alone without Jesus (v. 45). The group was shocked by Jesus’ surprising words and actions (6:49-50). The group missed the point of Jesus’ teaching (7:17-19).

The group served the crowd at the direction of Jesus (Mark 8:6-8); the group entered into dialogue and discussion, answering questions posed by Jesus (vv. 16, 27). The group asked Jesus for insight about how to do healing (9:28-29). The group was often alone when taught by Jesus and often misunderstood His teaching (9:31-32; 9:35-37; 10:23-26). The group argued about who was the best leader next to Jesus (9:33-34; 10:35-45; 14:10, 11). The group did theological reflection with Jesus (10:10); the group was surprised with Jesus’ direction (v. 32). Jesus directed the group members to perform specific actions and say specific words (11:1-6). The group participated in learning processes with Jesus (13:1-4). The group engaged in observation and reflection with Jesus (vv. 1-4). The group prepared for and participated in special celebrations (14:12-16). The group regularly ate together, experienced difficulties together, and sang together (14:18; 14:22-25). Jesus confronted the group with the truth about themselves,
the world, and their lack of truth, loyalty, and faithfulness (Mark 14:16-21; 14:27-31; 16:14). The group fell asleep in the middle of Jesus’ most difficult emotional pain (Mark 14:35-41). The group deserted Jesus when he was arrested (vv. 50-72).

Mallison (1979) confirms the use of private houses by Jesus as missionary strategy. He says, “The use of private houses was undoubtedly a development of the missionary strategy of Jesus. At the beginning of his public ministry Mark tells us that after Jesus left the synagogue he “entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John” (p. 26).

Through their accounts of Christ’s conduct, the Gospels reveal what it means to bear the created image of the triune God. Jesus’ entire public ministry models what it means to live in community. His pattern shows us why community—most particularly, community experienced through small group relationships—is a necessity, not an option, for those of us who bear his name. (Donahue & Robinson, 2001, p. 26)

Home Groups in Acts

The book of Acts describes various kinds of activities by the apostles as they worked to fulfill the Great Commission. The Holy Spirit was with them, helping them convert many people to Christianity. Acts talks about the importance of home groups and mentions that many of the early experiences took place in homes (or the upper room): the commissioning of the apostles (Acts 1:8); replacing Judas (vv. 15-26); giving the gift of tongues (Acts 2); organization of new churches (6:1-8); spreading the gospel beyond its original cultural, national, and racial groups (Acts 10); and changing church practices (Acts 10).

Jones (2004) notes that churches during the New Testament era were often small gatherings that met in private homes (p. 55).
Christians used the temple and their houses for prayer meetings (Acts 2:41; 5:42).

The conversion of Lydia and her household most likely took place in her home (16:14, 15). The Philippi jailer and his family were converted in their home (16:23-32). Paul repeatedly talks about house church meetings (Rom 16:3-5; Col 4:15; Acts 2:46; 12:12; Phil 2).

Donkor describes the importance of home groups in the New Testament as worship, teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer.

_Worship service_. Acts 2:42 provides a list that seems to indicate an agenda for early Christian worship. The list includes teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer—needful activities in the worship experience of any religious community.

_Teaching_. Although the first Christians taught in the temple court and took part in the prayer services there, that did not prevent them from engaging in their own teaching activities in the houses.

_Fellowship and breaking bread_. The word for fellowship is _koinonia_, which connotes a God-given unity of heart and mind and signifies a close connection among the believers for mutual support and involvement in each others’ lives, both spiritually and materially (2:44, 45; 4:32-37).

_Prayer_. In the list referred to above, prayer is in the plural. It hints, at least, at two possibilities on the prayer practices of the early believers: as a critical part of the bread-breaking event, possibly at the end of it, or as an imitation of the Jewish prayer times in the house setting.

_Mission and house churches_. The power of the house-church setting as an evangelistic strategy should not be missed. Acts 5:42 reports that in the temple and from house to house the believers kept on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

Githii (2008) states that the church in the home provided the most dynamic setting for the distinctively unique Christian fellowship and worship. The household structure provided a natural setting and enabled Christians to gather together for worship and fellowship (p. 73).

**Fellowship Through Small Groups**

After the ascension of Jesus Christ, His apostles and believers usually gathered together in small groups for breaking bread, for fellowship, and prayer. They shared what
they had with those who were in need. God added to their number daily and the church grew.

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)

Icenogle (1994) confirms that the twelve could speak of Jesus from first-hand experience. They were in his group together. They lived together. They shared pain together. They had conflicts with one another. They shared ministry together. They imitated Jesus together. They experienced the incarnate together (p. 123).

Arnold and Black (1992) confirm that the Christian community is a place where we can practice the Christian life together. Community offers a place where we can succeed and fail in an atmosphere of acceptance and adherence to God’s law (pp. 87-88).

The Ministry of Paul in Small Groups

In Paul’s evangelistic journeys, he worked with Priscilla, Aquila, and Barnabas. These four people formed a small group for ministry in which everyone was free to use his or her talents in God’s work.

Paul with Priscilla and Aquila

Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila worked together in reaching many areas with the gospel. They preached the good news in synagogues, established new churches, and then on later trips visited the new groups of believers—all steps that make sense in the area of church growth.
Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchreae because of a vow he had taken. They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined. But as he left, he promised, “I will come back if it is God’s will.” Then he set sail from Ephesus. When he landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch. After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. (Acts 18:18-23)

Paul with Barnabas

God chooses people for His mission. Acts 13:1-3 is an example of the role played by the Holy Spirit in choosing a person for mission. Paul and Barnabas were appointed by the Holy Spirit for God’s work.

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13:1-3)

Nathan (2013) says that we see that they were responsive to God when he spoke: The Holy Spirit said, “Set me apart Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.” The early church listened to the Lord (p. 74).

Church Growth in Acts as a Consequence of Small Groups

When the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, they began to spread the good news everywhere. As a result the church grew. Acts 1:15 tells us that there were 120 disciples in the upper room. After that, God added 3,000 new converts (Acts 2:41, 42), and soon 5,000 men were numbered as believers (4:4). Acts 5:14 talks about more and
more people believing, the number of believers increasing (Acts 6:1, 7), and growing in numbers (9:3). The churches were planted (16:5), and many thousands committed their lives to Jesus (21:20).

McIntosh says that Luke’s description of the numerical growth of the church is scattered through Acts. Following the pattern of Acts 1:8, he traces this growth, beginning in Jerusalem (2:47; 4:4; 6:1, 7), through Judea and Samaria (9:31; 12:24), and into uttermost parts of the earth (16:5; 19:20) (p. 166).

Githii (2008) confirms that a small group in the church facilitates new additions. He says, “A small group in the Church can cause many souls to come to the Lord. What is required is for that group to be in fire of the Holy Spirit. With fire, the group will become the light” (p. 72).

Barker (1985) confirms the role played by the twelve in small groups. He says, The twelve decided to create a small group of seven with a specific objective—to serve food at tables and distribute it to Hellenistic widows who had been previously neglected. The task was by nature mundane. But even simple tasks may help bring spiritual results, for we read that “the number of disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem.” (p. 110)

Home Groups in the Epistles

The Pauline epistles highlight the role that small groups played in church growth. Paul talks about the ministry of churches planted in different houses (Rom 16:3-5; 1 Cor 16-19; Col 4:14; Phil 2).

“One Another Texts” and the Importance of Small Groups

Several texts in the New Testament are called “one another texts.” These talk
about actions of love, friendship, and fellowship in a small group. Jesus exhorted us to do good things for one another.

In the one another texts the following themes can be seen: God’s people are to love and not be in opposition to one another (John 13:34, 35; 15:12, 17; Rom 13:8; 1Thess 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thess 1:3; 1 Pet 1:22; 4:8; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11, 12; 2 John 1:5; Rom 12:5, 10; Eph 4:2; 1 John 1:7; Gal 5:17; Heb 10:24). They will wash one another’s feet (John 13:14); make peace, live in peace and not hate one another (Acts 7:26; Rom 14:19; 1 Thess 5:13, 15; Titus 3:3; Jas 5:9, 16). They may be separated from one another (Acts 15:39); be of the same mind and acceptance of one another (Rom 12:16; 14:13). They must stop judging one another (Rom 14:13) and show care and service for one another (1 Cor 12:25; Gal 5:13). Christians should not have lawsuits with one another (1 Cor 6:7), they should stop depriving each another (1 Cor 7:5) and wait for one another (1 Cor 11:33). They are to greet one another with a holy kiss (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Pet 5:14). While not provoking one another (Gal 5:26), they should bear one another’s burdens (Gal 6:2; Col 3:13). Disciples shared one another (Eph 4:25; 5:19; Jas 4:11), and were kind to one another (Eph 4:32). True followers of Jesus should be subject to one another (Eph 5:21), with humility of mind regarding one another better than themselves (Phil 2:3; 1 Pet 5:5). They are admonished lie to one another (Col 3:9). With all wisdom, and teaching, they should admonish one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs (Rom 15:14; Col 3:16). Christ’s followers should comfort and encourage one another (1 Thess 4:18; 5:11; Heb 3:13; 10:25), and be hospitable and serve one another (1 Pet 4:9, 10).

The Christian family is to be with one another in love. Just as Jesus came as Emmanuel (God with us; Mt 1:23), so the new family was called to be with Jesus and
with one another. Members of the house group were called alongside one another, to live life together, to walk beside one another and to be full humanity for one another. As Paul described it in a letter to Philemon, they supported one another in love, joy, encouragement and refreshment. (Icenogle, 1994, pp. 314-315)

When Christians live together, they share everything; there is no unselfishness, they love one another, they encourage one another, and help one another.

Warren (2002) wrote about New Testament “one another verses.” He says that it is experiencing life together. It includes unselfish loving, honest sharing, practical serving, sacrificial giving, sympathetic comforting, and all the other “one another” commands found in the New Testament (p. 138).

**Principles From the Writings of Ellen G. White**

In her books Ellen White wrote much about small groups. She underlined the importance of small groups, described the origin of small groups, and told about prayer and Bible study in small groups. She emphasized the importance of small home groups, and said that much can be accomplished in fulfilling the great commission through the use of small groups. She stressed the importance of using small groups in ministry for winning converts.

**The Origin of Small Groups**

The formation of small groups in the church is according to God’s command. If you want to accomplish the mission of God, you have to respect the command of Jesus by dividing the church into small groups. In order to serve the church members and unbelievers well, the solution is to use a small group ministry. White said that the formation of small companies has been presented by the Lord Himself.
The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort has been presented to me by One who cannot err. If there are a large number in the church, let the members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church members, but for unbelievers. If in one place there are only two or three who know the truth, let them form themselves into a band of workers. Let them keep their bond of union unbroken, pressing together in love and unity, encouraging one another to advance, each gaining courage and strength from the assistance of the others. (White, 1948, 7:21)

Prayer and Bible Study in Small Groups

Prayer is important for every human being, for it is the way to express thanks, make requests, and praise God. Prayer plays an important role when the people of God face challenges; prayer is important in the accomplishment of God’s work.

White talks about the role of small companies that gather in the evening and in the morning. She underlines the importance of Bible study and prayer in small groups.

Let small companies assemble together in the evening or early morning to study the Bible for themselves. Let them have a season of prayer that they may be strengthened and enlightened and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. This work Christ wants to have done in the heart of every worker. (1948, 7:195)

It is important to know that when two or three persons gather in one place they can form a small group which can help others to know about Jesus Christ. When they work and pray together, they will be fruitful and their number will increase.

If in one place there are two or three who know the truth, let them form themselves into a band of workers, let them labor in Christ-like love for those outside the fold, forgetting self in their endeavor to help others. As they work and pray in Christ’s name, their numbers will increase; for the Savior says: “If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven” (Matt 18:19). (1948, 7:21, 22)

The Importance of Small Home Groups

White also stressed the importance of small groups in the church. She said that God’s people are laborers together for Christ and that they need to reach the people
where they are. To accomplish this task they should be organized in small companies of
workers to preach the gospel house to house.

I saw that the sale of “Object Lessons” opened the way for the establishment of
missions. In the church there was a revival of the missionary spirit. An earnest desire
to learn how to work for the Lord was shown. Small companies gathered for prayer
and Bible study. All moved forward with harmonious action. Believers went to places
where the people have no opportunity to hear the word of God, and gathered the
children for Sabbath school. Efforts were made to help isolated families. Plans were
laid for these families to meet with other families for Bible study. Thus, the way was
opened for light to shine forth from the word of God. (White, 1902, para. 8)

Concerning sustainability in mission through small groups White said, “Our
missions must be sustained; new missions must be opened. Houses of worship are
needed, where the people may be invited to hear the truths for this time” (1948, 5:46).

In our churches let companies be formed for service. In the Lord’s work there are to
be no idlers. Let different ones unite in labor as fishers of men. Let them seek to
gather souls from the corruption of the world into the saving purity of Christ’s love.
(1946, p. 115)

Success in evangelism is not dependent on our effort or our knowledge, but on the
presentation of Christ in the family gathered together in private homes.

Your success will not depend so much in your knowledge and accomplishments, as
upon your ability to find your way to the heart. By being social and coming close to
the people, you may turn the current of their thoughts more readily than by the most
able discourse. The presentation of Christ in the family, by the fireside, and in small
gatherings in private homes is often more successful in winning souls to Jesus than
are sermons delivered in the open air, to the moving throng, or even in halls or
churches. (1915, p. 193)

Home groups provide an excellent place to work for the salvation of souls and to
conduct Bible studies.

My brethren and sisters study your plans, grasp every opportunity of speaking to them
from books that contain present truth. Show that you regard as of first importance the
salvation of the souls for whom Christ had made so great a sacrifice. In the home
circle, at your neighbor’s fireside, at the bedside of the sick, in a quiet way you may
read the Scriptures and speak a word for Jesus and truth. Precious seeds may thus be
sown that will spring up and bring forth fruit after many days. (1948, 9:130)
White stressed the importance of reaching people by going house to house.

We are laborers together with God. Spiritual workers are needed not only to labor in the pulpit but to do personal work among the people. Too much time is devoted to the churches in preaching. This is not attended with the best results. The work of the Lord’s ambassadors is to organize companies of workers to hunt for the souls who need help. Hours are spent in preaching that might better be devoted to house-to-house labor. In the spirit of Christ, with a heart all aglow with His love, seek to win the hearts of those in the families you visit. Give faithful admonitions and instruction from the Word of God. (White, 1898, 12:240-241)

White gave an example of small companies being sent out for witnessing to the people about what God had done for them. She underlined the importance of small companies as a manner of encouraging people.

In New York there should be several small companies established, and workers should be sent out. It does not follow that because a man is not ordained as a preacher he cannot work for God. Let such ones as these be taught how to work, then let them go out to labor. On returning, let them tell what they have done. Let them praise the Lord for His blessings, and then go out again. Encourage them. A few words of encouragement will be an inspiration to them. (1946, p. 389)

In the Review and Herald of 1895, White encouraged the setting up of small companies in order to reach out to and minister to lost people.

God’s work is to be done in his way and his Spirit. In various places small companies are to consecrate themselves to God, body, and spirit; and laying hold of the throne of God by faith they are to work zealously, keeping their souls in the love of God. The vital current of his love will make itself felt, and will be recognized as from heaven in the good works of his people. Those little companies who know the truth, with one voice should bid their minister go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Each one who has tasted the goodness, the mercy, and love of God, cannot be excused from working for the souls of others. (White, 1895, para. 5)

White underlines the importance of having Bible study and prayers in small groups. When God’s people gather in homes for the purpose of reaching the people, the presence of Christ in that family will be seen and experienced. She encourages the church to preach less, and educate more by holding Bible readings and praying with families and little companies.
Wherever you can gain access to the people by the fireside, improve your opportunity. Take your Bible, and open before them its great truths. Your success will not depend so much upon your knowledge and accomplishments, as upon your ability to find your way to the heart. By being social and coming close to the people, you may turn the current of their thoughts more readily than by the most able discourse. The presentation of Christ in the family, by the fireside, and in small gatherings in private houses is often more successful in winning souls to Jesus than are sermons delivered in the open air, to the moving throng, or even in halls or churches. (White, 1915, p. 193)

Importance of Gathering in Small Group

Small groups should include both spiritual and social activities in order to help people in their daily life. When people are involved in a small group they can encourage one another, share their experiences, help each other overcome temptations, and increase peace and joy.

We meet together to edify one another by an interchange of thoughts and feelings, and to gather strength, and light, and courage by becoming acquainted with one another’s hopes and aspirations; and by our earnest, heartfelt prayers, offered up in faith, we receive refreshment and vigor from the source of our strength. . . . All who are pursuing the onward Christian course, would have, and will have, an experience that is living, that is new and interesting. A living experience is made up of daily trials, conflicts and temptations, strong efforts and victories, and great peace and joy gained through Jesus. A simple relation of such experiences gives light, strength and knowledge that will aid others in their advancement in the divine life. (1948, 2:578, 579)

There are many advantages for a person who meets in a small group, because the group is like a school where Christ can help a person overcome fear and where the person can be trained and educated to witness for Christ.

Although the social meeting is a new thing, yet they are learning in the school of Christ and are overcoming fear and trembling. We keep before them the fact that the social meeting will be the best meeting in which they may be trained and educated to be witnesses for Christ. (1894, pp. 3-5)

Even where there are only two or three believers, they can work in small groups for the salvation of lost people.
Why do not believers feel a deeper, more earnest concern for those who are out of Christ? Why do not two or three meet together and plead with God for the salvation of some special one, and then for still another? In our churches let companies be formed for service. Let different ones unite in labor as fishers of men. Let them seek to gather souls from the corruption of the world into the saving purity of Christ’s love. (White, 1948, 7:21)

In *Early Writings* White said, “I saw the saints leaving the cities and villages, and associating together in companies, and living in the most solitary places. Angels provided them food and water, while the wicked were suffering from hunger and thirst” (1882, p. 282). She encouraged a Los Angeles church to organize into small groups to help the members to obtain grace for themselves and to further the work of God.

And to the church in Los Angeles, over a year ago, when the Lord was mightily stirring the people through the tent meetings in progress, was sent the word: “Let the Los Angeles church have special seasons of prayer daily for the work that is being done. The blessing of the Lord will come to the church members who thus participate in the work, gathering in small groups daily to pray for its success. Thus the believers will obtain grace for themselves, and the work of the Lord will be advanced. (1946, p. 111)

**Principles From Other Christian Authors**

Many Christian authors talks about the importance of having small groups in the church because it encourages discipleship, offers support to the group members, strengthens the group members through Bible study and prayer time, and provides lasting friendships. Other Christian authors have also seen various benefits in small groups. Below I have highlighted just a few ways others have used this type of ministry.

**The Size of Small Groups**

Missah (2005) suggests that even though the group is small in size it is not small-minded, for small groups can accomplish big things.

A small group has to grow, but when the group grows big, it has to divide into small groups again. Even though the small group is small in size, it is not small-minded. It
does not have a narrow or selfish attitude. It does not think about its own self. It is designed for service. In order for the small group idea to be accepted and supported in our youth ministry, we need to have some sense of what a small group is, who is involved in it, and what its goals are. The strength and effectiveness of our youth ministry can be tested through the small groups in it. (Missah, 2005, p. 369)

According to Missah, the size of the group should not go beyond twelve people.

The best size is between six to twelve persons.

Our world is divided into nations, kindred, tongues and tribes. As a result of these diversities, there are diversities of needs. For this reason small groups have to provide them with an atmosphere in which they can come together and share things together. When Jesus was here on earth, He sent out His disciples by twos. Six to eight people in one company, or even 12—the number of Jesus’ disciples—is applicable to the needs. Through these small groups they could feel strength in ministering. (2005, p. 371)

John Wesley also suggested that the size of a small group should be limited to not more than twelve, and if the number of people exceeded twelve, it should be divided to begin another group.

During the great English revival John Wesley saw the benefits of small groups and had his converts placed in groups of no more than twelve in order that they might be truly discipled. When the number exceeded twelve the group was to divide and begin another one. This approach proved to be very successful and was implemented across the Atlantic where its influence was felt in our church. (Gane, 2005, p. 126)

It is important to limit the size of a small group so that people feel comfortable interacting with each other, so everyone knows everyone else in the group, and so people can fellowship comfortably together as they study and pray together. Gane notes:

Some people have misunderstood what a small group is. It is a small number of people who meet together, but a group is two or more individuals in face-to face interaction, each aware of his or her membership in the group. A Koinonia fellowship is a community of persons practicing a Christ-like life toward one another creating an environment that is safe. Here people can share their struggles and victories, sorrows and joys. (2005, p. 126)

The Importance of Small Groups

Small groups are flexible and can adapt to all types of situations and can minister
in many different settings. They are effective for teaching new believers how to study the Bible, how to pray, how to witness. Burrill writes:

Ellen White has given the Adventist Church a ringing endorsement of small relational groups meetings together for prayer, Bible study, testimonies, mutual encouragement, and care. All these small group experiences result in believers’ working together for others in evangelism. To oppose a small group ministry in the church is to reject the counsel that God has given the Seventh-day Adventist Church through the pen of Ellen White. (1998, p. 200)

Burrill also believes that Jesus recognized a small group approach as the best means to accomplish mission, for He chose a small group of disciples and sent them out to spread the Gospel of salvation to the world.

At the heart of Jesus’ small group ministry is the idea of community. The small group does not exist for the sake of a small group. It is merely the vehicle for the establishment of community. Jesus recognized that the small group is the best means for the accomplishment of that goal. Throughout His ministry Jesus was concerned that community be developed among His followers. (1998, p. 103)

One of the purposes of a small group ministry in a church is to share leadership responsibilities and free the pastor from being responsible for everything that happens in the church. Small groups promote the priesthood of all believers.

It is God’s plan and Jesus’ desire that Christians grow in small groups. The purpose of small groups is to give away the priesthood. Decentralization means giving away the priesthood. On this basis churches need to evaluate their small group structure. Do they give away power or concentrate it? Genuine small groups that build community give power rather than centralizing it in the pastor or another controlling person in the church. Leaders who give away the priesthood will have more time for their families. (Burrill, 1998, p. 99)

Jesus worked through His small group of twelve disciples—the origin of the church or gathered community. The Bible says that where two or three are gathered in Christ’s name He is there with them. Burrill further notes:

Jesus would manifest Himself in this community gathered in His name. When Jesus thought of church as the ecclesia or gathered community, He had the small group in mind. Today we use this text in an apologetic fashion when attendance is sparse.
Jesus proclaimed these words to help us understand that the small group is the very essence of church. We cannot have a church without the small group as the special place where Jesus dwells among His people. (Burrill, 1998, p. 103)

Small groups are the place where people can share their life in Christ, where members and newcomers can receive affirmation and discipleship.

Since these relational groups are the place where people share their life in Christ with each other, the place where members and newcomers both receive affirmation and discipleship, the leaders of these small groups are actually lay pastors who assist the pastor in the care of the flock. If the church is to return to God’s plan for it, in which the laity instead of the pastor cares for the flock, then the small group approach must be utilized, even as it was in the early days of Adventism. At that time, the laity additionally pastured the churches, leaving the preachers free to evangelize and raise up new congregations. (Burrill, 1993, p. 123)

Burrill believes that a small group is the perfect place to bring new people. He discovered in his ministry that you rarely lose a person who joins a small group. One of the best ways to solve the retention problem is to involve Bible interests in a small group even before they join the church.

Ideally, the small, caring group is also the perfect place to bring new people. In my experience, I have discovered that we rarely lose a person who joins a small group. Why? Because the relational bridges have been built. Most of assimilation of new members has been doctrinal, though few people leave because of doctrine. The reason for the loss of members is relational. Small, relational groups could be a big help to us in stemming the tide of apostasy. Even before people join the church, they should be involved in a small group, so that relational ties are built from very beginning. (Burrill, 1993, p. 123)

Small groups can also be used to minister to one another, provide opportunities for people to use their spiritual gifts, learn about the teachings of Christ, and learn how to show love and compassion to others.

Small groups of people, Growth Groups, are foundational to the structure and success of the New Testament Church. They are small enough to allow individuals to minister to one another, use their spiritual gifts, and be discipled in the teachings of Christ. They are vibrant life-giving communities where pre-believers can watch loving and compassionate believers in action. (Adams, 2009, p. 14)
Icenogle states that a small group gathered in the nature and character of Jesus live out a pattern he established with the disciples. They are called together by Jesus to watch, pray, learn, live, imitate, and practice the disciplines and life that Jesus lived with Abba God (1994, p. 127).

A Place to Build Relationships Between Believers and Unbelievers

A small group is a perfect place to build relationships with people who have not yet committed their lives to Jesus Christ. A small group environment is non-threatening and allows for a natural way for people to get to know each other and have the opportunity to ask questions.

The New Testament model indicates that disciples are best made in relationship with other disciples, which thereby indicates that ideally all new believers should be made a part of a small group and all small groups should consists of both believers and unbelievers. Involvement in the group must be seen as a part of the evangelistic process. No longer must we evangelize in isolation, for disciples are made in relationships. (Icenogle, 1994, pp. 73-74)

Development of Spiritual Gifts in Small Groups

The New Testament indicates that the use of small groups helped those early church members develop their spiritual gifts. If we want to see the spiritual gifts of our members developed and operating in our churches, McCallum suggest that we divide the members into small groups.

The need for effective small group ministry is implied in the New Testament. If the local church is to truly develop the spiritual gifts of its members, and mobilize the terrific power of the Holy Spirit to work through a trained and experienced laity, if it is to facilitate true relationship-based community, it will need to organize smaller groups where these can be fostered. (McCallum, 2012, para. 1)

Spiritual gifts are given to build up others, to be a blessing to the church, and to
be used for helping unbelievers come into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

The small group must be a place of evangelistic activity. Small groups that only nurture themselves and fail to reach out to others will die. Navel-gazing groups are dysfunctional. When people belong to a small group, they are empowered by the Holy Spirit to reach out and touch other hurting people, bringing them into the restorative, redemptive atmosphere of their small groups. (Icenogle, 1994, p. 231)

Small Groups—A Place of Reconciliation

Many Christian authors emphasize that forgiveness and reconciliation can more easily be fostered in a small group than in large gatherings of people. Many who struggle with forgiving someone find it difficult to talk about the situation with large groups of people, but in a small group many feel safe and can open up and talk about their hurts and problems. This says Icenogle, is when the church can be the church—help with healing and forgiving.

The words church (Ecclesia, v. 17) and assembly (v. 20) are contextually identified with the promise that “wherever two or three are gathered” Jesus will be present with them in their gathering. Such a small group gathering has exceptional influence, power, and accountability. Jesus’ response to the disciples in this context suggested that there was not one who was greatest, but that “wherever two or three are gathered”—wherever there is a small group gathered in childlikeness, agreement, forgiveness, reclamation and reconciliation—Jesus in their midst would bring greatness to them together. (Icenogle, 1994, p. 227)

In the book, Color Your World With Natural Church Development, Schwartz describes the benefits that believers receive from small groups, such as intimate community, help, spiritual interaction, discussion of daily issues, and Bible study.

Growing churches have developed a system of small groups where individual believers can find intimate community, practical help, and intense spiritual interaction. In these groups, people not only discuss biblical texts and listen to their leader’s interesting explanations, but they apply biblical insights to the questions the participants have about everyday life issues. (Schwarz, 2005, p. 116)

Small groups can also offer Christian-based counsel and advice on all types of
topics—there are no boundaries. And even more important is the fact that people who join a small group do so voluntarily because they want to grow.

Lead small groups though astounding growth with principles from the best-selling books, *How People Grow* and *Boundaries*. No matter what need brings a group of people together—from marriage enrichment to divorce recovery, from grief recovery to spiritual formation—members are part of a small group because they want to grow. (Cloud & Townsend, 2003)

**Small Groups—A Place of Transformation**

“Like nothing else, small groups have the power to change lives. They’re the ideal route to discipleship—a place where the rubber of biblical truth meets the road of human relationships” (Donahue & Willow Creek Community, 2002).

The book, *Building a Church of Small Groups: A Place Where Nobody Stands Alone*, talks about the importance of small groups as a place where people experience powerful and transforming community. Donahue and Robinson give an example of the Willow Creek Community Church in which small groups played a pivotal role in their organizational strategy.

Church should be the last place where anyone stands alone our hearts were made for deep, authentic relationships, for community. And like nothing else, small groups provide the kind of life-giving community that builds and empowers the body of Christ and impacts the world. At Willow Creek Community Church, small groups are so important that they define the core organizational strategy. Willow Creek has gone from being a church with small groups to being a church of small groups. Sharing insights from that transition, its two chief architects tell how your church—whatever its size and circumstances—can become a place where people of all ages can experience powerful, transforming community. (Ortberg, 2014)

Concerning church organization Donahue says that the end result is that since 1992, Willow Creek has gone from a church with small groups to being a church of small groups. Instead of ten to fifteen percent of the congregation connected with a small
group, it has become a place where over 18,000 individuals are connected in 2,700 small groups (Donahue, 2002, p. 14).

Small groups were an integral part of the early church structure. They were small enough to allow individual members to minister to one another, use their spiritual gifts, and be disciplined in the teachings of Christ. In addition, they were vibrant and life-giving communities where evangelism could take place and unchurched people watched a loving and compassionate community in action. Small groups not only built up the church as the first living examples of biblical community but were vehicles for reaching a lost world for Christ. (Cloud & Townsend, 2003, under “Small Groups in New Testament, para. 2)

Small Groups—A Place to Love and Support One Another

Small group leaders play the role of a shepherd to their members. However, they also need support and should gather together to pray and fellowship together.

Small groups transform churches and lives. Small group leaders often feel the weight of shepherding their members. But who shepherds the shepherd? And what are the best ways to provide that support and guidance? These are the questions answered in Coaching Life-Changing Small Group Leaders. (Small Group Ministry, 2014)

The small group is also the place where every member can experience the love of Christ, and can find encouragement in the faith.

Support groups are designed for individuals with special needs. These needs are usually short-term, with the numbers going on to join another type of group. Examples of support groups are groups focused on divorce, grief recovery, addictions (alcohol, tobacco, eating disorders, etc.). The groups are for support, not therapy. If an individual needs therapy, it should be received from a professional Christian counselor. (Johnson, 2011, p. 48)

Small Groups Enable Leaders to Accomplish Their Tasks

The organization of the church in small groups enables leaders to accomplish their many tasks. Small groups allow every member to have personal encouragement, receive individual support and help, and when a small group member has a problem they do not need a pastoral visit since they already have a personal support group. All this can be
accomplished if there are capable small group leaders.

The small group ministry in a church rises and falls on the quality of its leaders. Envisioned, equipped, and compassionate leaders will guide a group toward spiritual growth, mutual care, and spirit-empowered service. Godly leaders will facilitate the development of authentic relationships and create places in small groups where truth meets life. (Donahue & Robinson, 2001, p. 123)

Small Groups as Centers of Love, Friendship, Fellowship, and Discipleship

The people who are part of a small group have many privileges and advantages. They meet for prayer, Bible study, and fellowship. They have opportunities for outreach, they live in loving relationship, they enjoy meaningful friendship, they encourage one another, and they accept and forgive one another. The home cell groups also provide friendship and fellowship for new converts who join the groups, to help the church grow in both quality and quantity.

Donahue and Robinson state said:

First, the home group setting provides more fellowship than the regular church setting. And people need fellowship. In a church situation, people may visit with each other before and after service, but this barely meets the definition of true fellowship which requires sharing, warmth, caring, and healing. Second, the informal and relaxed environment of the home provides for free and open discussion and involvement. Even those not ready to identify with our church feel comfortable in the non-threatening atmosphere of a home group. Third, the home group meetings in a very personal way care for the three areas in which people who come to worship need help: the inreach in which God reaches into people through His Word, the outreach in which people reach out to people through witness, and the upreach in which people reach up to God through prayer. (p. 10)

When the small group members allow Christ to be among them, He provides the dynamic for the small groups, the relationships and fellowship grow, then the Holy Spirit comes upon them.

We go on to share how we are experiencing Jesus in our lives. It is Christ who provides the dynamic for the small group. Seeing Jesus in others, we find hope and are freed to trust Him more. When we have this kind of relationship with other
Christians, our fellowship with Christ grows, too. The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit works through members of the Body of Christ to build up each individual part (Eph. 4:11-13). (Donahue & Robinson, 2011, pp. 32-33)

Arnold states that every small group member is a minister of Jesus Christ. We are his hands, his feet, and voice. Far too many Christians hide their lamp under a bushel or bury their one talent in a field. As if we could get away with being absentee servants! In reality we must minister in our communities and indeed in our world (1998, p. 108).

Johnson says that small groups are a powerful mechanism to accomplish the mission of God’s church in the world today. Small groups, as we have seen, embody a biblically based, God-given methodology. Small group ministry incorporates the elements for developing disciples—friendship, support, Bible study, prayer, equipping, and sharing Jesus (2011, p. 181).

Small Groups in Mega or Meta Churches

When a church is organized in small groups, the plan permits both spiritual and numerical growth. Small groups are a good way to accomplish the ministry or mission of Jesus Christ in both small churches and in mega or meta-churches. Saddleback and Willow Creek are examples of huge churches that have grown, largely because of small group ministries. George and Bird write the following:

Saddleback Church also features small groups very early in their approach to developing disciples, as seen in the church’s well-known “baseball diamond” analogy for developing strong Christians. Their four objectives (or “bases”) for people are Knowing Christ, Growing in Christ, Serving Christ, and Sharing Christ. These four objectives are related to four commitments they envision for people—commitment to membership, Maturity, Ministry, and Mission. (1994, p. 90).

“Within Saddleback’s small group emphasis, some 200 groups meet in a typical
week, involving 2,600 people—over one-half of Saddleback’s 4,600 membership”

(Hunter, 1996, p. 91). Hunter continues to write

Saddleback followed that model for several years, but backed off. Like New Hope (and many other churches), Saddleback discovered that recruiting people to join groups is (much) easier than recruiting people to lead groups; their groups ministry has grown only as fast and as the number of gifted, trained, and willing group leaders has permitted. (pp. 91-92)

The small group leaders have helped in the organization of the church by training the laity and by helping people discover their spiritual gifts, and as a result the church has become much more decentralized.

Willow Creek’s leaders discovered that the change from a church with small groups to a church of small groups rearranges virtually every ball on the billiard table. The most strategic people in the whole system now are not the paid staff, but the small group leaders. The staff’s role changed from primarily doing ministry to primarily facilitating the ministries of the laity. Organizationally, the church become much more decentralized, and since the whole church is now a church of groups, the old department of small groups closed shop. Willow Creek organized their already extensive cadre of laity doing ministries into groups doing ministries, and they emphasized the training of persons gifted to be group leaders. The result, after three years, is about 8,000 people involved in about 1,100 groups. (pp. 93-94)

In the book, The Coming Church Revolution: Empowering Leaders for the Future, George and Bird say that a cell is a place where there is sustainability and intimacy. Everyone is involved in ministry. Cell groups facilitate spiritual development.

A cell is a place where people have enough social reference points to find themselves sustained emotionally and spiritually. It’s a context for meeting needs for intimacy and trust. As such, the Meta-Church defines cell in a way that goes beyond the traditional notions of “class.” A cell is the premier vehicle for leadership development: the managed leader is (1) being supervised, (2) developing an apprentice leader, (3) facilitating one-another ministry, and (4) taking responsibility for evangelism. (George & Bird, 1994, p. 69)

The small groups play a role also of fellowship and Bible study; it is a place where everyone is involved in different activities. Warren (2002) says, “The life of the Body of Christ, like your body, is contained in the cells. For this reason, every Christian
needs to be involved in a small group within their church, whether it is a home fellowship group, a Sunday school class, or a Bible study” (Warren, 2002, p. 139).

**Missiological Implications for Small Group Ministries**

The study of biblical and theological foundations for small group ministries in this chapter produced information on the origin of small groups. The roles played by small group ministries in Old and New Testaments were briefly reviewed. It was noted how important small group ministries were to both the community and the church. Even today God has a purpose for small group ministries in His church.

**Conclusions**

The issues discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation are centered on the theological foundations for small groups. The biblical record permitted us to better understand that Jesus was highly committed to the use of small group practices in the training of the twelve. I discovered how the New Testament church was organized in small groups. In a special way the mission of Jesus and His disciples involved the use of small groups. Ellen White underlined the importance of using small groups in order to be more effective in outreach and evangelism. Other Christian authors have also emphasized that the mission of God will always be more successful if it is done in small groups.

Chapter 3 will look at the background and the cultural and religious contexts where this project will be implemented.
CHAPTER 3

POLITICAL, CULTURAL, AND RELIGIOUS ANALYSIS
OF GIKONDO IN RWANDA

Introduction

After understanding that each culture has its own worldview and background, and knowing that the communication of the gospel is possible only when the evangelist or missionary understands the worldview of the community, this chapter analyzes the political, cultural, and religious contexts of Rwanda. Specifically I need to analyze the situation in the Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church. This analysis will discover the barriers to effective evangelization. Gathering the data will help to build bridges to forward the development of the project’s strategy.

Rwanda has diverse historical, political, social, religious, and cultural contexts. In order to understand the setting for this project, each context will be studied. This contextual analysis will inform my ministry style and my strategic planning for the political, cultural, religious, realities, as well as ministry challenges, and opportunities prevalent in my context.

This chapter will be built around the country context analysis and the project context analysis. The country context analysis will cover the geographical description, historical, political, social, and cultural aspects of Rwanda. The project context analysis will focus on the location of the project, the history of the Gikondo Seventh-day
Adventist Church, and a critical description of the conditions on site. Because there is no written history of the Gikondo Adventist Church in Rwanda, the project context analysis will rely on oral history. Data will be collected from first generation Adventists, such as church elders, some church members, and pastors who led the Gikondo District.

Country Analysis

This section examines the geography, history, political, social, and cultural contexts of Rwanda.

Geographic Description

Rwanda is one of the smallest countries in the world and overpopulated. At 26,338 (10,169 sq mi), Rwanda is the world’s 149th largest country. It is comparable in size to Haiti or the state of Maryland in the United States. The entire country is at a high altitude: the lowest point is the Rusizi River at 950 meters (3,117 ft) above sea level (Geography of Rwanda, n.d., para. 1).

Concerning location and geography, Adekunle says that Rwanda is located in east-central Africa, in the Great Lakes region. Stretching from latitude 1°04' to 2°50' south and from longitude 28°50' to 30°53' east, it shares boundaries with Uganda to the north, Burundi to the south, Tanzania to the east, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the west. The Akanyaru River separates Rwanda from its sister state, Burundi (2007, p. 1).

Briggs and Booth describe Rwanda as a “land-locked country in Central Africa. Also known as a “Land of a Thousand Hills,” Rwanda has five volcanoes, many lakes, and numerous rivers. The country lies 1,270 km west of the India Ocean and 2,000 km
east of the Atlantic, literally in the heart of Africa” (Briggs & Booth, 2001, p. 3).

Figure 1 is a map of Rwanda, showing the national capital, prefecture capitals, towns, villages, international boundaries, roads, and lakes.

Figure 1. Political map of Rwanda, 2011. Taken from http://www.vidiani.com/?p=9639

Historical Background

The historical background of Rwanda can be divided into four periods. These are the pre-colonial, colonial, independent, and post-genocide periods.
Pre-Colonial Period

Rwanda was organized before the coming of the colonizers. Earnest and Treagust state that “the history of pre-colonial Rwanda has been passed down through oral tradition. Before colonization, toward the end of the 19th century, most of Rwanda was a monarchy ruled by a king” (2006, p. 129).

When the Europeans arrived, Prunier says, “Von Götzen and all the other whites who followed him were immediately struck by the importance of the kingship institution. The mwami (king) lived at the center of a large court and was treated like a divine being” (1995, p. 9).

While Tutsi and Hutu lineages lived in interdependent cooperation under the nominal control of the king, there was a contract known as ubuhake. The Hutu farmers pledged their services and those of their descendants to a Tutsi lord in return for the loan of cattle and use of pastures and arable land, creating a relationship somewhat similar to serfdom. However, membership in ubwoko and class were fluid. Affiliation was determined by paternal ancestors. Intermarriage and multiple marriages were common. Some Hutus took Tutsi status and some Tutsis lost their status as Tutsis. Most rural Tutsis enjoyed few advantages over rural Hutus (The Free Library, 2011, Background note: Rwanda, under “History section,” para. 1)

Colonial Period

When the first Europeans came, they found Rwanda inaccessible because the Rwandese authorities refused to let them enter. Briggs and Booth say: “The kingdom of Rwanda was isolationist and closed to foreigners (also to many Africans) until the 1890s. The famous American explorer, Henry Stanley, attempted to enter several times but was
forced to retreat under arrow attack” (Briggs & Booth, 2001, p. 9).

At the Berlin Conference of 1885, what is now Rwanda, under the name of Ruanda-Urundi, was assigned to Germany as part of German East Africa, although at that stage no European had set foot there. The first to do so formally was the German Count Gustav Adolf Von Götzen on May 4, 1894, although an Austrian, Oscar Baumann, had previously entered privately from Burundi in 1892 and spent several days in the south of the country (p. 9).

The Germans stayed in Rwanda a short time and were replaced in 1916 by Belgium colonizers. After World War I, Belgium was officially entrusted with the administration under a League of Nations mandate in 1919, later confirmed in 1923 (p. 9).

**Independence Period**

General elections were held in 1961, the monarchy was abolished, a presidential system was introduced, and independence was gained in 1962. Independence was followed by heightened ethnic tensions between Hutus and Tutsis, causing flows of Tutsi refugees from Rwanda to Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Earnest & Treagust, 2006, p. 130).

Gregoire Kayibanda, leader of the PARMEHUTU Party, became Rwanda’s first elected president, leading a one-party government chosen from the membership of the directly elected unicameral National Assembly. . . . On July 5, 1973, the military took power by force under the leadership of Maj. Gen. Juvenal Habyarimana, who dissolved the National Assembly and the PARMEHUTU Party and abolished all political activity. (Background note: Rwanda, 2011, under “History section,” para. 4)

In 1975, President Habyarimana formed the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND). It was Rwanda’s only legal party.
On October 1, 1990, Rwandan exiles banded together as the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and fought against the Rwanda government from their base in Uganda. The team of the rebel force was composed primarily of ethnic Tutsis who had not been permitted to return to Rwanda under the Kayibanda or Habyarimana regime. They accused the government of failing to democratize and resolve the problems of some 500,000 Tutsi refugees who lived in the Diaspora around the world. The war dragged on for about two years until a cease-fire accord was signed July 12, 1992, in Arusha, Tanzania, fixing a timetable for an end to the fighting and political talks. The Rwanda government and rebel force made an agreement leading to a peace accord. They decided to share power and to authorize a neutral military observer group under the Organization for African Unity. A cease-fire took effect July 31, 1992, and political talks began August 10, 1992. The talks concluded in a peace accord that was not implemented (Background note, 2011, under “History section,” para. 8).

**Genocide and Afterwards**

On April 6, 1994, when the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi were coming from Arusha for negotiation with the Rwandese rebels, the airplane which carried them was shot down; both presidents were killed. After that military and militia groups began to kill all. Tutsis and political moderates, regardless of their ethnic background. The Rwandan prime minister and her 10 Belgian bodyguards were among the first victims. The killing rapidly spread from Kigali to the whole country between April 6 and early July 1994. The victims of the genocide were estimated at 800,000 Tutsis and a moderate member of Hutus. (Background note: under “History section,” para. 20).

Twenty years after the genocide ended, Rwanda has undergone remarkable
changes, emerging from the holocaust of genocide. The population in the capital city, Kigali, has more than tripled from around 258,000 in 1994 to over 908,000 in 2009; shining new skyscrapers are emerging on the skyline of the downtown (Burnet, 2012, p. 37).

Political Context

Since before the colonial period, there have been three ethnic groups in Rwanda with fragment clashes between the Hutu and Tutsi as they struggled for power. After the genocide in 1994, Rwanda had several political parties and Paul Kagame won the presidential elections. He did to reduce ethnic tensions was to remove ethnic information on people’s identity card.

On May 26, 2003, Rwanda adopted a new constitution that eliminated reference to ubwoko and set the stage for presidential and legislative elections in August and September 2003. The seven remaining political parties endorsed incumbent Paul Kagame, who was elected to a 7-year term on August 25, 2003. Rwanda held its first-ever legislative elections September 29 to October 2, 2003. A ninth political party formed after these 2003 elections. In the spring of 2006, the government conducted local non-partisan elections for district mayors and for sector and cell executive committees. Elections for the Chamber of Deputies occurred in September 2008; the RPF won an easy victory in coalition with six small parties, taking 42 of 53 directly-elected seats. As provided in the constitution, 24 seats were also accorded to women candidates in indirect elections. Women now hold 45 of the 80 seats in the Chamber. (Background note: Rwanda, 2011, History section, para. 25)
Social Context

When the Belgians proclaimed that the Tutsi were the superior ethnicity, a difficult situation developed. This became a source of misunderstanding between Tutsis and Hutus. Historically, the Hutus were a subjugated social group, but when the Belgians propagated the myth that Tutsis were superior, tensions between the two groups intensified, leading to the Rwandan genocide.

The largest ethnic groups in Rwanda are the Hutus (about 75% of the population), the Tutsis (24%), and the Twa (1%). Starting with the Tutsi feudal monarchy rule of the Tenth century, the Hutus were a subjugated social group. It was not until Belgian colonization that the tensions between the Hutus and Tutsis became focused on race, the Belgians propagating the myth that Tutsis were the superior ethnicity. The resulting tensions would eventually foster the slaughtering of Tutsis in the Rwandan genocide. Since then, government policy has changed to recognize one main ethnicity: “Rwandan.” (Ethnic Groups in Rwanda, n.d., para. 1)

Leadership Patterns

Leadership patterns in Rwanda include authority and power. Authority is to exercise power. Power is the influence that controls the behavior of others (Howell & Paris, 2011, p. 150). The Rwandese Republic revised its constitution in May 2003, to do away with the ideology of genocide and all its manifestations; eradication of ethnic, regional, and other divisions and promote national unity; it also established equitable sharing of power and equality of all Rwandans, clearly, between women and men, etc. (Republic of Rwanda, Country Report, 2002, p. 3)

Social Differences

Besides the social differences caused by tribal issues, there are major differences caused by family and marriage. Also, the position of women is an important difference.
The Family

In Rwandese culture, the family, which is the basic unit of society, is composed of husband, wife, and children. Adekunle says that because the husband and father is regarded as the head of the family and exercises certain powers, he controls many of the affairs of the family: economic, religious, and social. His responsibilities also include taking care of and protecting the household. Cooperation often exists within the family circle, but there is always distinction in gender roles (2007, p. 98). While the size of the families may differ because of the number of children, without children a family is not considered complete (p. 98).

The Position of Women

From long ago the female sex was neglected in Rwandese society and in leadership. After the genocide, President Kagame promulgated equality between females and male, that way women have come to positions of leadership (under Rwanda: Women’s Rights, 2012).

However, the place of women still has a low ranking, according to the Gender Inequality Index of 2011. At that time Rwanda ranked 82 of 146 countries in the Gender Inequality Index 2011, despite ranking 166 of 187 countries in the Human Development Index (Department for International Development, 2013).

Population of Rwanda

Table 1 shows the population of Rwanda in the year 2010, followed by projections for 2020 and 2030. Even as the annual growth slows somewhat, the density of the population increases substantially.
Table 1

*Population of Rwanda, 2010-2030*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Annual Growth</th>
<th>Density</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>10,277,212</td>
<td>2.71%</td>
<td>390/sq km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>13,233,373</td>
<td>2.42%</td>
<td>502/sq km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>16,104,452</td>
<td>1.87%</td>
<td>611/sq km</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Rwanda had a massive 23% population loss in 1994-95 through the massacres of the genocide (nearly 1 million), and flight of refugees (over 1 million). Most of these have returned. The capital of Kigali has 939,425 inhabitants. Urbanites are 18.9%. The population under 15 years is 42%. Life expectancy is 49.7 years (Mandryk, 2010).

Figure 2 shows the population growth from 2002 to 2012. While at the national level the average annual growth rate is 2.6%, it is substantially higher in the Eastern Province (4.3%) and in Kigali (4.0%) and remarkably lower in the Northern Province (1.0%). The average annual population growth rate of Rwanda is 2.6%. Table 1 shows the number of persons per square kilometer by province in 2002 and 2012. According to the provisional results of the 2012 population and house census, the population density has increased from 321 in 2002 to 416 people per sq in 2012. This places Rwanda among the most densely populated countries in the world.

Table 2 shows the population growth by province and sex from 2002-2012. Table 3 shows in 2012 the Gasabo District was most populated in Kigali, followed by Kicukiro District. Between censuses (2002-2012), the population of Kigali grew by about 48.4%.
**Table 2**

*Population Growth by Province and Sex, 2002-2012*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kigali City</td>
<td>401,461</td>
<td>363,864</td>
<td>765,325</td>
<td>585,379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>969,974</td>
<td>1,088,700</td>
<td>2,058,674</td>
<td>1,242,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>962,225</td>
<td>1,081,330</td>
<td>2,043,555</td>
<td>1,169,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>733,163</td>
<td>827,699</td>
<td>1,560,862</td>
<td>819,931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>812,625</td>
<td>887,512</td>
<td>1,700,137</td>
<td>1,257,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>3,879,448</td>
<td>4,249,105</td>
<td>8,128,553</td>
<td>5,074,942</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

**The Population Growth in Different Areas of Kigali During the Same Decade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyarugenge</td>
<td>236,990</td>
<td>148,282</td>
<td>136,578</td>
<td>284,860</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gasabo</td>
<td>320,516</td>
<td>274,342</td>
<td>256,565</td>
<td>530,907</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kicukiro</td>
<td>320,516</td>
<td>162,755</td>
<td>156,906</td>
<td>319,661</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kigali City</td>
<td>765,325</td>
<td>585,379</td>
<td>550,049</td>
<td>1,135,428</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

Size and Distribution of the Population of Gikondo Sector in 2002 and 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>2002 Total Population</th>
<th>2012 Population</th>
<th>Population Change (%)</th>
<th>Sex Ratio</th>
<th>Average Annual Growth Rate</th>
<th>Population Density (sq.km)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gikondo</td>
<td>21,199</td>
<td>8,850</td>
<td>7,949</td>
<td>16,799</td>
<td>-20.8</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cultural Context

Culture is defined as the total reality that people experience. Culture includes the behaviors and assumptions common to a group, which distinguish one group from others (Howell & Paris, 2011, p. 25).

Several aspects make up the cultural context. Most prominent are economy, language, and religion. Within the Rwandan culture, relations between Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa are based on perceptions of historical group origins rather than on cultural differences. All three groups speak the same language, practice the same religions, and live interspersed throughout the same territory.

The Rwandan culture includes not only the population of Rwanda but people in neighboring countries particularly Congo and Uganda, who speak the Kinyarwanda language.

Economy

A recent description of Rwanda portrays the present situation. Rwanda does not have many economical resources because it does not have mineral resources, strong industries, or strong agriculture.

Coffee, tea, and aid still dominate as income sources, although the government plans to wean the nation off foreign aid, upon which it is so dependent, by developing Kigali into an economic and information-tech hub for East Africa. Over-population and distance from the sea inhibit development. The terrible events of 1994-95 decimated the economy. Restoring, restructuring, and privatizing the economy have been the emphases of the last decade. Rapid urbanization also sees a rise in unemployment and, as a result, crime (Mandryk, 2010, p. 719).
In fact, in 2011 Rwanda had a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per person of only $585 International Monetary Funds (IMF), making it one of the poorest countries in the world (Campioni & Noack, 2012, p. 133).

Language

Language is a system of verbal and nonverbal symbols used to communicate (Howell & Paris, 2011, p. 62). The literacy rate in Rwanda is 64% and the official languages are French, English, and Kinyarwanda. The entire population speaks Kinyarwanda.

Religious Context

There is full freedom of religion in Rwanda. Christianity is dominant. The Roman Catholic Church, whose first missionaries were the “White Fathers” at the end of the nineteenth century, is the dominant group, with 65% adherence. Pope John Paul visited Rwanda in 1990.

Some 9% of the population consider themselves Protestants. Among this group some Evangelical sects have been gaining ground. Approximately 25% of the population follows traditional beliefs. Some of these seem to have absorbed elements of Christianity. Rwandans traditionally believe in a supreme being called Imana. While Imana’s actions influence the whole world, Rwanda is home where he comes to spend the night (Briggs & Booth, 2006, p. 25).

Table 5 presents the religious situation in Rwanda. Christians are nearly 90% of the population with an annual growth rate of 2.7%. Table 6 presents the different Christian denominations in Rwanda, their membership, and annual growth comparison to
the population. The Catholic Church comes first with 4,650,000 affiliates and annual growth of 2.4%. Table 7 presents the mega-bloc, congregations, members, and affiliates. This shows that the Seventh-day Adventist Church comes in second place with a membership of 450,000 after the Catholic Church. Table 8 presents the distribution of the resident population by religious affiliation by age group in Kigali city, according to the Fourth Population and Housing Census. The Adventist Church is third place.

Table 5

*General View of the Religious Situation in Rwanda*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religions</th>
<th>Percent of Population</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Annual Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>89.12</td>
<td>9,159,051</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>534,415</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethno-religionists</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>390,534</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-religious</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>174,713</td>
<td>-1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baha’i</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>18,499</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6

Rwandan Christianity in General

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Christians</th>
<th>Denominations</th>
<th>Percent of Population</th>
<th>Affiliates</th>
<th>Annual Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24.68</td>
<td>2,537,000</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.73</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>55,000</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.44</td>
<td>765,000</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 7

Specific Christian Denominations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Churches</th>
<th>MegaBloc</th>
<th>Congs</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Affiliates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Church</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>1,597</td>
<td>2,554,945</td>
<td>4,650,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican Church</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>300,300</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh-day Adventist</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>450,000</td>
<td>620,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal Church</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>3,526</td>
<td>264,423</td>
<td>550,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist Union</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>265,000</td>
<td>477,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>281,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Methodist Church</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>130,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Methodist Ch</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>66,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehovah’s Witness</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>16,400</td>
<td>55,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comm of Chr Chs in Af</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>21,850</td>
<td>43,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assemblies of God</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>14,500</td>
<td>43,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran Ch of Rwanda</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>18,261</td>
<td>42,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of the Nazarene</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>38,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other denominizations[42]</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1,447</td>
<td>139,051</td>
<td>284,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Christians[56]</td>
<td></td>
<td>10,0964</td>
<td>4,371,300</td>
<td>8,393,680</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8

*Distribution of the Resident Population by Religious Affiliation by Age Group, Kigali City*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province and Age-group (Years)</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Protestant</th>
<th>Adventist</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
<th>Jehovah witness</th>
<th>Traditional/Animist</th>
<th>No religion</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Not Stated</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kigali City</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-17</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>448.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-49</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>615.145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>69.486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1.132.686</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3 shows the distribution (%) of the resident population by religious affiliation (national level). The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the third place in members with 12% after the Catholic Church which has 43.7% and Protestant with 37%.


The Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church

As a background to information on the Gikondo Adventist Church, a few words about the history of the Adventist Church in Rwanda are appropriate.

The first Adventist missionary to what is now Rwanda, was Belgian David Delhove who came shortly after the First World War. He laid the foundations for the
Gitwe Mission, where he remained until 1940. In 1920 H. Monnier started a mission which was moved to Ruhengeri in 1921. The Rwankeri dispensary was started in 1923. Here the first baptism took place in 1924. In 1934 the first local pastors were ordained (Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia, 1996; Rwankeri, 1996, p. 486-487).

Today, Rwanda is a union mission, part of the East-Central Africa Division, with headquarters in Kigali. It comprises seven fields. Mugonero Hospital is its chief medical institution. Two secondary schools and the Adventist University of Central Africa operate in its territory. The membership for the country was, according to the 2013 Yearbook, 543,587; these members were meeting in 1,612 churches throughout the country (General Conference, 2013, p. 54)

Against this backdrop, follows a brief history of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Gikondo and the church situation during the last ten years. Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church is located five kilometers from Kigali, toward the south of the city, near the Gikondo sector office, as seen in Figure 4, a Kigali city map.

History

According to the information given by Apotre Habimana and Aaron Ndarifite, who were Nyamirambo Seventh-day Adventist Church members before transferring to Gikondo, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Gikondo was born in 1978, when Pastor Hesron Byiringiro was Nyamirambo District leader in Kigali. The motivation which pushed the birth of Gikondo Church was that Nyamirambo was the only Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kigali. The church was full of members and it was impossible for all to worship on Sabbath at the same time. Thus, some members gathered from 8 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. in the morning; another program started at 12 noon and went to 4 p.m. From that situation, the idea of planting the Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church was born in the hearts of four members who lived in Gikondo and were attending Nyamirambo Seventh-day Adventist Church for worship every Sabbath. The names of those persons are: Athanase Ngarambe, Come Nshimyumukiza, Rose Nyirahirwa, and Aaron Ndarifite. They asked the church leaders to extend the Nyamirambo church by planting an additional company.

In 1981, the Rwanda Union executive secretary, at that time Thomas Rwamiheto, bought land to build the Gikondo Church. In 1983, the church members who lived in Gikondo and went every Sabbath to Nyamirambo Church, together with other Nyamirambo church members, gave 300,000 Rwandan francs for building the Gikondo Church. In 1985, the construction was finished; in 1986 the church was organized. The first district pastor was Samuel Nayigiziki.

Table 10 shows the pastors at the Gikondo Church from its birth until the present.
Gikondo Church Growth

The growth of the Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church from 2004 to 2013 shows progress, as is shown in Table 9. The report shows that the Gikondo Church is active in evangelism, but not always successful. For example, in 2006, the growth was low because of evangelistic campaigns which did not take place. But during the following years evangelistic activities did take place.
Table 9

*Gikondo Church Growth, 2004-2013*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Members January 1</th>
<th>Baptisms</th>
<th>Transfers in</th>
<th>Transfers out</th>
<th>Profession of faith</th>
<th>Missing</th>
<th>Dropped or Apostasies</th>
<th>Died</th>
<th>Members December 31</th>
<th>Growth rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>-15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>968</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>968</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1034</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1034</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1192</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1192</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1540</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1540</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1640</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Quarterly Statistical Reports, 2004-2013, Kigali, Rwanda. Adapted from East Central Rwanda Field.
Pastoral Leadership in the Area

The Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist church grew during the last 10 years even though there are some years in which the growth rate diminished as can be seen in Table 10.

Table 10

Pastoral Leadership in the Gikondo Church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name of Pastors</th>
<th>Observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986-1987</td>
<td>NAYIGIZIKI Samuel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-1991</td>
<td>MPAYIMANA Hiram</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-1992</td>
<td>TWAGIRAYESU Manassé</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-1994</td>
<td>HAKIZIMANA Thomas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1994 to 1995</td>
<td>NSENGIYUMVA Valens et HABIMANA Apôtre</td>
<td>These men were church elders who replaced pastors while these were refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-1996</td>
<td>NSANA Zablon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-1998</td>
<td>NDEKEZI Onesiphore</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-1999</td>
<td>MUSANGO Eraste</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2001</td>
<td>NGARAMBE Athanase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2005</td>
<td>NIYONZIMA Jean Baptiste</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January to September 2006</td>
<td>KAGOYERA Siméon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2006-2013</td>
<td>NSENGIMANA Schadrack</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Adapted from Gikondo elderly members and East Central Rwanda Field Officers.

Gikondo Church Finances During the Last Five Years

Table 11 shows the financial situation of the Gikondo Church. Data from the cashbook shows the budget for evangelism was established for the years 2009 to 2013 (Quarterly Report 2009-2013). The church cashbook shows how the budget reserved for evangelism was distributed from year 2009 to 2013.

Table 11 shows the offerings in a relatively static situation. According to
information provided by the church officers, the church needs each year at least 1,000,000 Rwandan francs just for training and equipping officers and small group leaders. The sums indicated are used for all church expenses.

Table 11

Financial Situation of the Gikondo Church for 2009-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rwandan Francs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>530,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>615,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>700,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Adapted from Gikondo Church Cashbook, Year 2009 to 2013.

The money reserved for evangelism each year was not enough even for two evangelistic campaigns. At the same time the goal of Gikondo church was to conduct four evangelistic campaigns per year or one per quarter.

Table 12

Gikondo Church Income During the Last Five Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tithes</th>
<th>Offering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>25,548,000</td>
<td>1,750,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>26,321,345</td>
<td>1,783,455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>28,302,500</td>
<td>1,794,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>29,567,605</td>
<td>1,807,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>23,840,000</td>
<td>1,602,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Adapted from Gikondo Church Cashbook, Year 2009 to 2013.
Gikondo Church Activities

The Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church has many activities which contribute to evangelism. The main religious activities in the Gikondo Church are youth ministry, women’s ministry, and lay ministries.

Youth Ministry

In general, the Gikondo Adventist youth are active in evangelism, but the participation is becoming slower because of the time, now youth are involved in entertainment such as movies, the Internet, or games. Today, young people are looking for jobs and for money and are not interested in church activities.

However, it is remarkable that from 2009 to 2013, in the total amount of the annual baptisms, nearly 60% were young people. In addition, the youth activities were few and not enough because the youth like evangelistic campaigns, retreats, youth camps, and camporees. Also, in comparison to the youth who were baptized from 2009 to 2013, the number of youth involved in ministry is low. Furthermore, there is a need for a program such as a small group ministry, which can involve young people in evangelism.

Tables 13 and 14 show the participation of Gikondo Church youth in the activities specially prepared for them. However, Gikondo Church youth are still not active in ministry. Thus special training and equipping are required.
Table 13

The Gikondo Church’s Youth Statistics, 2009-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of youth clubs (6-35 years)</th>
<th>Number of young adults 20-35 years</th>
<th>Number of ambassadors 16-19 years</th>
<th>Number of Pathfinders 10-15 years</th>
<th>Numbers of Adventures 6-9 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Adapted from Gikondo Church Quarterly Statistic Reports, years 2009 to 2013.
Table 14

*Gikondo Church’s Youth Activities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Young Baptized</th>
<th>Number of youth invested</th>
<th>Number of evangelistic campaigns</th>
<th>Number of retreats</th>
<th>Number of youth camps</th>
<th>Number of Camporees</th>
<th>Number of youth involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Adapted from Quarterly Statistic Reports year 2009 to 2013. Kigali, Rwanda: Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church
Women’s Ministry

The Women’s Ministry in the Gikondo Church is becoming very strong, playing an important role in evangelism. At least once a year the women prepare an evangelistic campaign. They also support other church ministries. They invite talented women for evangelistic campaigns to retreats and training programs. The crucial issue is that the Rwandan culture has neglected women for a long time. Even women neglected themselves, feeling that they were the weaker sex. Fortunately, this culture is changing.

Lay Ministries

Without lay people in the church, no one can accomplish God’s mission. Today, the lay ministry in Gikondo Church plays a good role in evangelism.

The department in charge of lay activities prepares and conducts an evangelistic campaign at least once a year. They gather money to visit persons in prisons, in hospitals, and to help church members or unbelievers who are poor or sick.

Felt Needs of the Gikondo Church

The Gikondo Church is one of the largest Adventist churches in Kigali; it has 1,571 members (Quarterly statistical reports. (2004-2013). The management of such a church is not easy and requires a small group approach to help it grow. For this reason the felt need of the Gikondo Church is to install a small group ministry which will help the church to grow numerically and spiritually.

After studying the political, social, cultural, social, and religious situation in Kigali, where the Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church is located, it is evident that a strategy must be created to reach and to nurture that community for Christ. As there are
members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church located in that community, home cell groups can be formed in their neighborhoods. While meeting together in their homes for Bible study, prayer, and fellowship, their neighbors may join them. By using their spiritual gifts they can minister to one another. With good spiritual leadership, within a very short time the number of members will increase. As the numbers increase, the cells will also be multiplied. So the church will grow numerically and spiritually.

Summary

This chapter dealt with the country context analysis and the project context analysis. The country context analysis covered the geographical description, historical, political, social, and cultural aspects of Rwanda. The project context analysis focused on the location of the project, the history of the Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church, and a critical description of the conditions on site.

The historical background of the Gikondo Church and its ministries were studied in order to help in the contextualization of the message. A small group ministry is probably the best tool for reaching the people of Rwanda and especially of the Gikondo Church in Kigali. A strategy to develop and implement small groups will be discussed in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER 4

STRATEGY TO IMPLEMENT A SMALL GROUP MINISTRY
IN THE GIKONDO ADVENTIST CHURCH

Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the political, cultural, and religious contexts of Rwanda and especially Kigali, where this project will be implemented. Understanding the Kigali context with its obstacles for reaching and nurturing people has provided the background for designing a strategy to use a small-group approach to increase church growth in the Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church. In Chapter 3 I mentioned that the growth rate of the Gikondo Church is much lower than the population growth rate of Kigali, so I suggested that we needed to begin by recruiting and training leaders and members for church growth. In developing a strategy for a small-group ministry in the Gikondo Church, a tool known as the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) will be employed (Ortengren, 2004). I will also use a Gantt chart to describe the strategy.

General Methodology: Logical Framework Analysis and Gantt Chart

Logical Framework Analysis

The “LFA, the Logical Framework Approach, is an instrument for objective oriented planning of projects. The method may also be used for analysis, assessment, follow-up and evaluation of projects. What the method is used for depends on the role of
its users and their needs” (Ortengren, 2004, p. 3).

NORAD says: “The Logical Framework Approach (LFA) . . . is a way of structuring the main elements in a project, highlighting logical linkages between intended inputs, planned activities and expected results” (1999, p. 2). Using the LFA helps to clarify the purpose of, and the justification for, a project, to identify information requirements clearly, define the key elements of a project, analyze the project’s setting at an early stage, facilitate communication between all parties involved, and identify how success or failure of the project should be measured (p. 9).

The logical framework is an important tool which shows the strategic plan of a project, its implementation, and its evaluation process. The logframe model was developed in the United States and has since been adopted and adapted for use by others (BOND, 2003, para. 1).

A logframe (also known as a Project Framework) is a tool for planning and managing development projects. It looks like a table (or framework) and aims to present information about the key components of a project in a clear, concise, logical, and systematic way. A logframe summarizes, in a standard format, what the project is going to achieve, what activities will be carried out to achieve its outputs and purpose, what resources (inputs) are required, what the potential problems which could affect the success of the project are, and how the progress and ultimate success of the project will be measured and verified (BOND, 2003, para. 1-2).

The logical framework or logframe is an analytical tool used to plan, monitor, and evaluate projects. It derives its name from the logical linkages set out by the planner(s) to connect a project’s means with its ends (Logframe Methodology, para. 1).
According to the *Business Dictionary* (n.d.), The logical framework is Management by objectives (MBO) applied to program or project design, monitoring, and evaluation. This approach consists of four steps: (a) establishing objectives, (b) establishing cause-and-effect relationships (causal linkages) among activities, inputs, outputs, and objectives, (c) identifying assumptions underlying the causal linkages, and (d) identifying objectively verifiable measures for evaluating progress and success. It gets its name from the 4 x 4 matrix (frame) employed in its mapping: the columns and rows.

The Logical Framework Analysis provides the following summary: why a project is carried out (who/what will benefit?), what the project is expected to achieve (utilization of services), how the project is going to achieve its outputs/results (measures executed), which external factors are crucial for the success of the project (risks and frame conditions), how we can assess the success (indicators), where we will find the data required to assess the success (means of verification) (LFA, n.d., slide 11).

**Narrative Summary**

The Narrative Summary has four main components:

*Goal:* The development goal describes the developmental benefits which the respective target groups can expect to gain from the program or the project.

*Project Purpose:* The purpose of a program or a project describes the changes in behavior, structures or capacity of the target groups which directly result from the utilization of the deliverable outputs the project will be expected to yield.

*Outputs/Results:* The outputs or results describe the goods and services, the direct deliverables which are contributed from the project. Outputs or results must express the nature, scope, and intensity of support being sought.
Inputs/Activities: The tasks carried out by the project in order to achieve and obtain the outputs (LFA, n.d., slide 11).

Objectively Verifiable Indicators

For each cell of the narrative summary, indicators need to be developed. Objectively Verifiable Indicators or OVI must be:

Measurable: An indicator must be able to be measured in either quantitative or qualitative terms.

Feasible: An indicator should be feasible in terms of finances, equipment, skills and time.

Relevant and Accurate: An indicator should reflect what it is trying to measure in an accurate way.

Sensitive: An indicator should be capable of picking up changes over the time period of the project.

Timely: An indicator should be able to provide information in a timely manner.

Indicators should show who is benefiting from the project and allow for evaluation of the intended and unintended impact of the project on various social groups and stakeholders. This requires the collection of information separately for men and women, for different ethnic groupings, for different age groupings (children, adults, elderly) and for different economic classes (rich, poor), and social groupings (agriculturists, pastoralists, businesses) (LFA, n.d., slide 11).

Means of Verification

Once indicators have been developed, the source of information and means of
collection (Means of Verification, MOV) should be established for each indicator. A MOV should test whether or not an indicator can be realistically measured at the expense of a reasonable amount of time, money, and effort. The MOV should specify: the format in which the information should be made available (e.g., reports, records, research findings, publications), who should provide the information, and how regularly it should be provided (slide 11).

Assumptions

The reason for specifying assumptions is: (a) to assess the potential risks to the project from the initial stages of project planning, (b) to support the monitoring of risks during the implementation of the project, and (c) to provide a firm basis for necessary adjustments within the project whenever that should be required.

In Figure 5 below a logical framework example is provided that includes detailed descriptions of the various parts (slide 11).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVES (What we want to achieve)</th>
<th>INDICATORS (How to measure change)</th>
<th>MEANS OF VERIFICATION (Where / how to get information)</th>
<th>ASSUMPTIONS (What else to be aware of)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The long-term results that an intervention seeks to achieve, which may be contributed to by factors outside the intervention.</td>
<td><strong>Impact Indicators</strong> Quantitative and/or qualitative criteria that provide a simple and reliable means to measure achievement or reflect changes connected to the goal.</td>
<td>How the information on the indicator will be collected (<em>can include who will collect it and how often</em>).</td>
<td>External conditions necessary if the Goal is to contribute to the next level of intervention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes The primary result(s) that an intervention seeks to achieve, most commonly in terms of the knowledge, attitudes or practices of the target group.</td>
<td><strong>Outcome Indicators</strong> As above, connected to the stated outcome.</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>External conditions not under the direct control of the intervention necessary if the outcome is to contribute to reaching intervention goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outputs The tangible products, goods and services and other immediate results that lead to the achievement of outcomes.</td>
<td><strong>Output Indicators</strong> As above, connected to the stated outputs.</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>External factors not under the direct control of the intervention which could restrict the outputs leading to the outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities The collection of tasks to be carried out in order to achieve the outputs.</td>
<td><strong>Process Indicators</strong> As above, connected to the stated activities.</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>External factors not under the direct control of the intervention which could restrict progress of activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 5. Logical framework sample. Taken from IFRC Logical Framework (logframe).*
Gantt Chart

Sava (2007) gives a summary of the meaning and origin of Gantt chart, suggesting that a Gantt chart is a horizontal bar chart developed as a production control tool in 1917 by Henry L. Gantt, an American engineer and social scientist. Frequently used in project management, a Gantt chart provides a graphical illustration of a schedule that helps to plan, coordinate, and track specific tasks in a project (para. 1).

A Gantt chart is constructed with a horizontal axis representing the total time span of the project, broken down into increments (e.g., days, weeks, or months) and a vertical axis representing the tasks that make up the project (e.g., if the project is outfitting your computer with new software, the major tasks involved might be: conduct research, choose software, install software). Horizontal bars of varying lengths represent the sequences, timing, and time span for each task. (Rouse, 2007, para. 3)

Gantt charts are useful for planning and scheduling projects. They help assess how long a project should take, determine the resources needed, and plan the order in which tasks must be completed. Gantt charts are helpful for managing the dependencies between tasks and are also useful for monitoring a project's progress once it is underway. A project manager can immediately see what should have been achieved by a certain date and, if the project is behind schedule, the manager can take action to bring it back on course (Gantt Charts—Project Management Tools, n.d., fig. 2, para. 2). See sample Gantt chart below in Figure 6.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feasibility analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement stage 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement stage 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Silva (2012, under “Gantt Chart Advantages”) says that “there are five reasons to use Gantt Charts for Project Management.

1. *Avoid Completion Confusion:* Gantt charts were created to keep users on track, providing a visual timeline for starting and finishing specific tasks. By providing a visual overview of milestones and other key dates, these charts offer a more understandable method of maintaining timescale-based tasks and deliverables whether tracked on a daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly basis. The diagram below shows the power of visualization found in Gantt charts. In a glance you can see that when the interviews are done, there is still 50% more to do, in training, etc.

2. *Keep Everyone on the Same Page:* Where there is a visual framework for the work to be done, there are fewer chances for misunderstanding, especially when it comes to highly complex tasks. Using a Gantt chart allow all types of stakeholders to have the same information, set mutually understood expectations, and conduct their efforts according to the desired protocol.
3. **Understand Task Relationships**: These charts can make clear how various tasks are interrelated and rely on the completion of other tasks to meet specific objectives. These task relationships revolve around understanding the timing of each task, which then impacts other tasks. This helps optimize work flow, productivity, and overall project success.

4. **Effectively Allocate Resources**: By being able to look ahead on the Gantt chart, users can clearly discern where resources need to be anticipated, allocated, or shared to maximize the use of resources. The more closely the chart is followed, the better chance there is of keeping project costs within budget while also better assuring on-time completion.

5. **Get a Handle on the Future**: While it is often easy to get caught up in day-to-day tasks as detailed on a chart, Gantt chart advantages include helping decision-makers look farther ahead to ensure each given project is working toward the achievement the organization’s long-term strategic objectives.

**Description of Mission Strategy**

**Application of Logical Framework Analysis**

The concept of a small group ministry is not new in the Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church. For a long time the Seventh-day Adventist Church has used small groups for the Sabbath School lesson study. Because the groups only met once a week, church members did not study the Bible often enough, did not use their spiritual gifts, did not witness, did not encourage one another, did not share experiences and meals, and did not help one another when in trouble. These missing activities are obstacles to spiritual and numerical church growth.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Measurable Indicators</th>
<th>Means of Verification</th>
<th>Important Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL:</strong> The Gikondo Church adopts the small-group concept of witnessing.</td>
<td>Number of people in small groups increased from 45 in 2011 to 85 by December 2014</td>
<td>Sabbath committee minutes forming groups in file PPCM List of group and group members on file</td>
<td>Political and economic stability and religious freedom in Kigali City allow free movement and gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PURPOSE:</strong> Small-group approach to increase church growth in the Gikondo Church developed and implemented</td>
<td>Number of small groups increases from 20 to 40 by 2014</td>
<td>Weekly and monthly small group record cards</td>
<td>Gikondo membership willing to use small group for outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OUTPUTS:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Study small group concept</td>
<td>Contextualized training materials developed by June 2013</td>
<td>Training materials on file</td>
<td>Members are willing to be trained and work in small group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Leaders and members trained and equipped with the training materials</td>
<td>• 70 small group leaders trained by March 2013</td>
<td>Survey instrument on file</td>
<td>Trained leaders ready to sacrifice time and means to teach members and form small groups in Gikondo Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Spiritual gifts inventory done and members grouped according to their spiritual gifts</td>
<td>• Thirty percent of the members identify their spiritual gifts and are grouped according to their giftedness by June 2014</td>
<td>Spiritual gift identification questionnaire in file</td>
<td>Members are willing to take a test and join groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Members grouped according to their geographical locations</td>
<td>• Gikondo church organized into small groups and 40 home prayer cells organized by December 2014</td>
<td></td>
<td>Church board provides support mechanism and members willing to release their sitting rooms to house cell groups meetings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7—Continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Measurable Indicators</th>
<th>Means of Verification</th>
<th>Important Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACTIVITIES:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1. Study the concept</td>
<td>INPUTS</td>
<td>See Budget</td>
<td>Members are willing to contribute financially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2. Contextualized materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The conference will be willing to provide quarterly competent trainers and material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3. Write a manual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Funds will be provided at the church level and the latter will provide weekly study material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1. Recruit and train leadership for small groups. Hold training session for leaders.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3. Equip leaders and members with materials for fellowship and outreach programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Administer spiritual gift inventory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Group members according to their spiritual gifts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Obtain map</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Assign group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Set small groups to witness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Gather reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.1 Quarterly reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1 Annual report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2 Mid-term evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Evaluate reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1 Midi-term Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2 Final Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7. Application of logical framework matrix.
Overall Goal

The goal of this project is to have the Gikondo Church adopt the small group concept of witnessing.

This project will help the Gikondo Church develop a missionary spirit that will allow its members to joyfully participate in outreach programs. Also, the project will increase the leaders’ and members’ knowledge of the skills needed to reach out to people in the community. Furthermore, the project will not only help me develop my leadership and equipping skills as the pastor in the Gikondo district, but it will also help members remove or decrease the obstacles which can prevent church growth. Finally, the project will help the East Central Rwanda Association, the Gikondo District, and the Gikondo Church realize sustained church growth through the relational communities formed by the new small groups.

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to use the small group approach to increase church growth in the Gikondo Church. To do this, it will be important to develop and implement a strategy to train, organize, and mobilize the Gikondo Church for small group ministries. The work plan or the schedule which sets out the activities and resources necessary to achieve the purpose of this project, if effectively monitored and strategically implemented, will definitely fulfil this purpose of the project. The project purpose is fundamental to the whole process. Its achievement will demonstrate that a small group ministry has the potential for witnessing and nurturing in the Gikondo Church.
Outputs

In the logframe matrix the expected outputs are: study of small group concept completed leaders and members trained and equipped with the training materials, spiritual gift inventory for members administered and members grouped according to their spiritual gifts, members grouped according to their geographical locations, monitoring and evaluation of project activities completed.

Measurable Indicators

The measurable indicator for the overall goal is to increase the number of people active in small groups from 45 in 2011 to 85 by December 2014. The project purpose is to increase the number of small groups from 20 in 2011 to 40 in 2014. The measurable indicators for the outputs are contextualized training materials developed and distributed by August 2013. Seventy small group leaders trained by March 2013 and thirty percent of the members have identified their spiritual gifts and are grouped according to their giftedness by June 2014. Similarly, the Gikondo Church will be organized into small groups and 40 home prayer cells will function by December 2014. These measurable indicators will ascertain that the objectives of this project have been achieved.

Means of Verification

The means of verification for the project goal are the Conference Personnel Ministries Department and the baseline survey. The project purpose is verified by weekly and monthly small group record cards. The means of verification for the outputs include the developed curriculum, implemented activities, and distribution records. In the same way, the spiritual gifts inventory report analysis, attendance records, and local church
personal ministries statistical reports showing the numbers of small groups organized in the church are additional means of verification. The means of verification for the development objective of this project are essential because they inform outsiders that the objectives of the task have been attained.

**Important Assumptions**

Some external factors or assumptions that have been identified as essential for the overall goal to be realized are political and economic stability and religious freedom in Kigali, which allow for free movement and gatherings. An important factor that could influence the project is the willingness of members to improve relationships with nonmembers.

Other important assumptions for the outputs include members’ willingness to be trained and work in small groups, trained leaders ready to give of their time and means and to provide servant leadership, members in each group committed to encouraging attendance, prayer, Bible study, witnessing, sharing meals, and outreach ministries, and members willing to open their homes for cell home group meetings.

**Inputs**

The inputs of this project include the budget developed and funded. The project director will depend on the local church, the district, and the conference for funding for the project. Personnel is also needed, such as, the church pastor, elders, and ministry directors in the church officers. The inputs of the project researcher’s family are also indispensable for the project.
Implementation of Strategy (Gantt Chart)

The implementation plan details the specific tasks of the intervention, identifying who is responsible for each task, the resources required, and the timeline within which the task should be completed. The question answered are how, who, when, and with what? Evaluation planning should occur in parallel with implementation planning to ensure the two processes are linked (Implementation Planning, n.d., slide 2).

The Gantt chart in Figure 8 is the schedule which describes the activities and resources necessary to achieve the goals and results of this project. Each output, together with the activities related to it in the logframe has been noted in the Gantt chart.

The activities for this project are divided into five sections. The time assigned for the completion of each activity is indicated in the chart. Monitoring and evaluation tools will be used at the completion of the activities. According to the schedule of activities, curriculum for training on the biblical and Ellen G. White foundation for small group ministries and contextualized educational materials will be designed and implemented.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Output 1 Small group concept studied</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 1.1 Study the concept</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1 Biblical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2 E. G. White writings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3 Other Christian authors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 1.2 Contextualize materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 1.3 Write a manual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Output 2 Leaders and members trained</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 2.1 Recruit and Train Leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Recruit leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Train leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3 Equip leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 2.2 Recruit and train members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 Recruit members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2 Train members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Output 3 Spiritual gift Inventory</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 3.1 Administer spiritual gifts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1 Prepare materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2 Administer to leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3 Administer to members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 3.2 Group according to their gifts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Output 4 Groups geographically assigned</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 4.1 Obtain map</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 4.2 Assign groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 4.3 Set small groups to witness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.1 Visit homes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.2 Conduct revivals in units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Output 5 Project monitored &amp; evaluated</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 5.1 Gather and reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.1 Quarterly report</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5.1.2 Annual report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 5.2 Evaluate reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1 Mid-term evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2 Final evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 8. Gantt chart, year one.*
### Figure 9. Gantt chart, years two and three.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>YEAR 2</th>
<th>YEAR 3</th>
<th>ONE IN CHARGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>A B C D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Output 1 Small group concept studied</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 1.1 Study the concept</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1 Biblical</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1.2 E. G. White writings</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1.3 Other Christian authors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity 1.2 Contextualize materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity 1.3 Write a manual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Output 2 Leaders and members trained</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 2.1 Recruit and Train Leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Recruit leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Train leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3 Equip leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 2.2 Recruit and train members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 Recruit members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2 Train members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Output 3 Spiritual gift Inventory</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 3.1 Administer spiritual gifts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1 Prepare materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2 Administer to leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3 Administer to members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 3.2 Group according to their gifts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Output 4 Groups geographically assigned</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 4.1 Obtain map</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 4.2 Assign groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 4.3 Set small groups to witness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.1 Visit homes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.2 Conduct revivals in units</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Output 5 Project monitored &amp; evaluated</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 5.1 Gather and reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.1 Quarterly report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.2 Annual report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 5.2 Evaluate reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1 Mid-term evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2 Final evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key:**
- A= Researcher
- B= Church Elders
- C= Departmental directors
- D= External Evaluator
Small Group Concept Studied

In the third and fourth quarter of 2012, I will study the concept of small groups from the Bible, Ellen G. White writings, and other authors. On the basis of that study I will contextualize materials and write a training manual.

Survey and Training Materials Developed

The survey questionnaire plays a role in finding out to what extent a small group ministry can become an important part of the Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church. The survey questionnaire will also help to know the degree of need for a small group ministry in the church. The questionnaire consists of both open-ended and specific questions.

Survey Conducted

The church elders and small group leaders will be informed concerning the survey to be conducted on a Sabbath morning, and on the next Sabbath the survey forms will be distributed after explaining the instructions regarding the questionnaire to assure correct answers. The questionnaire will be administered in December 2012. The questionnaire will be collected and the data analyze.

Survey Analysis

After collecting the data from the questionnaire, I will immediately do both a qualitative and quantitative analysis. After that I will write the results and keep them for implementation.
Training Materials Produced

I will produce training materials concerning the Spiritual Gifts Inventory and on small group activities by October 2012.

Leaders and Members Trained

In the first and second quarter of 2013, I will recruit leaders and church members for the training, using the manual produced for training and equipping leaders and church members.

Spiritual Gift Inventory Survey Administered and Analyzed

After preparing materials for the Spiritual Gift Inventory Survey in the first quarter of 2013 (a Gifts Inventory Score Sheet, Spiritual Gifts Inventory Statements, Gifts Inventory Key and Definitions), I will administer the survey to the leaders in the second quarter 2013 and to the members in the third quarter 2013. At the end of the exercise it is hoped that everybody will be able to identify their spiritual gifts. The next thing will be to analyze the inventory forms, which will be done in October 2013. Then I will group church members according to their gifts.

Groups Geographically Assigned

In the third quarter of 2013, after grouping church members according to their gifts and territories and after obtaining a map of their location, I will establish small groups to witness, worship, study the Bible, encourage one another, share meals, visit, and help one another, according to the needs.
Project Monitored and Evaluated

From January to April 2014 I will gather the data and reports from the implementation. In March, I will prepare a quarterly report; in April I will do the annual report. I will do a mid-term evaluation in February 2014 and a final one in April 2014. For this project the external evaluation team consists of the conference president, the secretary, and the researcher.

Summary

A small group ministry is important in a church’s daily life. This project was designed to recruit, train, organize, and mobilize the members of the Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church for small group ministries in order to help the church to grow. The completion of this task is divided into five phases. The first output is to produce materials on small group ministries, built on a foundation of the Bible, the writings of Ellen G. White, and the writings of other Christian authors. These materials will then be used to train leaders and members. After the members are trained, they will be convinced that a small group ministry is urgently needed in their local church and they will eventually choose to be involved in this program.

The administration of the spiritual gifts inventory survey will help to gather members into small groups, based on their spiritual gifts. The grouping will take into account their geographical location. The Logical Framework Approach, together with the Gantt chart, will be used to develop a strategy for the completion of the project. Monitoring and evaluation tools will be used to verify the success of the endeavor. My hope is that the implementation of this project will help to remove or at least decrease the obstacles to church growth. In addition, the project will be beneficial to the East Central
Rwanda Field, as well as to the Gikondo District, and the Gikondo Church to create sustained church growth through the relational communities formed through the small witness and discipleship groups.

In the next chapter a narrative summary of the implementing process will be described, followed by a list of the lessons learned and recommendations.
CHAPTER 5

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION, LESSONS LEARNED, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this project was to develop and implement a strategy to train, organize, and mobilize the Gikondo Church for small group ministries to help the members remove or decrease the obstacles which prevent church growth. The general goal of the project was to help the East Central Rwanda Field, the Gikondo District, and the Gikondo Church to achieve sustained church growth through relational communities formed through new small groups.

Summary

In Chapter 1, I summarized the self-assessment process in which I discovered that I have some weaknesses and some strengths in my life and in my leadership skills. Sometimes I have been discouraged when facing challenges in my daily life or in my ministry, for example, when I see cases of injustice, ethnic conflicts, and families living in poverty. Sometimes I am not right with my God. For example, I have failed to use my time, talents, and money, in the best ways that benefit my family and my ministry. My time for prayer, Bible study, friendship, and fellowship has not been adequate. But I praise the Lord because He has given me a love for His ministry. After finding out my weaknesses, I decided to improve my relationship with God in order to have strength.
where I had weaknesses. I pray that the power of the Holy Spirit may lead me in everything I do, and everywhere I go in the ministry of my Savior.

The issues discussed in Chapter 2 of this project document are centered on the theological foundations of small groups. The biblical records permit us to better understand that Jesus was highly committed to the use of small group practices in the training of the twelve. I discovered how the New Testament church was organized in small groups. In a special way, I realized that the mission of Jesus and His disciples involved the use of a small group. I discovered that Ellen White underlined the importance of using small groups in order to be more effective in outreach and evangelism. Other Christian authors have also emphasized that the mission of God will always be more successful if carried out in small groups.

The third chapter considered the country of Rwanda then analyzed the context of the project. The country context analysis discussed the geographical, historical, political, social, and cultural aspects of Rwanda. On the other hand, the project context analysis focused on the location of the project, the history of the Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church, and a critical description of the conditions of that church.

The fourth chapter of this project suggested a plan to recruit, train, organize, and mobilize the members of the Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church for small group ministries in order to help the Gikondo church grow. The completion of this task was divided in five phases. The first phase was to produce materials based on the Bible, the writings of Ellen G. White, and on other Christian writings concerning a small group ministry. In the second phase, these materials were used to train leaders and members. After the training, members were fully convinced that a small group ministry was needed.
in their local church and they chose to be involved in the program.

The administration of the spiritual gift inventory survey helped to group members into small groups based on their spiritual gifts. Also, the grouping, according to their geographical location, was implemented. The Logical Framework Approach and the Gantt chart were tools used in developing a strategy for the carrying out the project. Monitoring and evaluation tools were used to verify the success of the project.

**Report of Implementation**

Prior to the implementation of my project, I sought authorization from the East Central Rwanda Field President. Permission was granted in writing on September 14, 2012.

After receiving permission for the project implementation from the East Central Rwanda Field, I informed the church elders, small group leaders, and some church members concerning the survey to be conducted. I did this in order to know if they shared my interest in the church being organized into small group ministries.

Table 15 lists the responses of the Gikondo Church elders concerning the importance of small groups. Table 16 shows the responses of the Gikondo church members concerning the personal benefits they believed could be realized from small groups. The questionnaire about the training programs conducted for the church members and church elders in Gikondo is listed in Appendix B.
### Table 15

**Questionnaire Addressed to Fifteen Gikondo Church Elders**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Small groups can build relationships between members</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Small groups can help meet everyone’s needs</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Small groups can facilitate Bible study and prayer</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Small groups can facilitate sustainability</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. In small groups no one should feel alone</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Small groups can foster Christian love between believers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Small groups can encourage believers</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Small group permit outreach and discipleship</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Small groups facilitate church growth</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Small groups help to grow spiritual gifts</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>126</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information given by the Gikondo church elders indicated that small groups are important because 126 of 150 responses or 84% strongly agreed that small groups are very important in various ministries.
Table 16

Questionnaire Addressed to Thirty Gikondo Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am currently in a small group</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I feel I would benefit from a small group</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I believe small groups can be effective in changing my life</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I feel uncomfortable sharing my personal issues in a small group and listening to others share their personal issues.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I believe small groups help assimilate people in the body of Christ</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I need to be a part of a small group.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I feel personal Bible study and prayers are more effective than a weekly or bi-weekly meeting with people who hold me accountable.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I feel small groups are just another program, and I don’t see the relevance for my life.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I do not have time to be in a small group</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The responses given by the church members show that the 50% of the respondents already participate in small groups. This means that more small groups are needed in the Gikondo Church. Concerning the benefits that members could receive from small groups, 100% of the respondents believed they could benefit. In general, many members felt that to be in a small group is helpful to the Christian life.

After presenting my proposal to the Gikondo church leadership, the church board approved my small group project in October 2012. In November 2012, I presented my plan to the board of elders to get their assistance and had a prayer session with them for
the project. In December 2012, I contacted the small group leaders and shared with them the vision of using a small group approach to increase church growth. I also invited them to pray and consider this project and gave them a schedule of the various seminars planned for small groups.

Accomplishments

1. *Training Materials Produced:* The Bible, literature, articles, Ellen White books, and other Christian books were used to develop and produce training materials. The production of the training manual took place from the third quarter to the fourth quarter of 2012. We produced 220 copies of the materials; thus we were able to give one copy to each participant. See Appendix B for the training manual of various seminars and topics dealing with small groups.

2. *Leaders and Members Trained:* Because the membership of the Gikondo Church is 1,500 and is split into 11 locations, it is not easy to implement a small group ministry at all the branches at the same time. That is why I preferred to begin the project implementation with one location which served as a model for the other locations. The training seminar of small group leaders and church officers from Kagunga was conducted on January 25, 2013. The training seminar for members took place on April 1, 2013. After three months, the members were organized into small groups of twelve people each. When the remaining church leaders and church members discovered what was going on in Kagunga, they were interested in also starting small groups. On July 30, 2013, I conducted a training seminar for small group leaders for the remaining localities. On August 28, 2013, it was time to train the members. The program schedule and the outline of the seminars are in Table 15. This training program encouraged and motivated
the participants to be actively involved in small groups. Table 17 gives a summary report on the small group ministry seminars.

After presenting my proposal to the Gikondo church leadership, the church board approved my small group project in October 2012. In November 2012, I presented my plan to the board of elders to ask for their assistance and to spend time in a prayer session with them for the project. In December 2012, I contacted the small group leaders and shared with them the vision of using a small group approach to increase church growth. I also invited them to pray and consider the project. I also gave them a schedule of the various seminars on small groups.

Table 17 shows the various seminars conducted in the Gikondo Church from 12 January to 14 September 2013. The seminars that I conducted were first of all to train the church elders, and second church officers including Youth Ministry leaders, women, families, children, lay activities leaders, family ministry, health, and Sabbaths school committees. In the third place, the training was held for choir members, small group leaders, and other church members.

The topics of the seminars were: biblical foundations for small group ministries, small group ministries according to Ellen G. White and other Christian authors, spiritual gifts in the church, and leadership and small group activities. Table 17 shows the attendance of every seminar.
### Schedule of Various Seminars on Small Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Conducted</th>
<th>Type Participants</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 12, 2013</td>
<td>Church elders</td>
<td>Biblical foundations for small group ministries and small group ministries according to Ellen G. White and other Christian authors</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 12, 2013</td>
<td>Church elders</td>
<td>Spiritual Gifts in the church</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 26, 2013</td>
<td>Church elders</td>
<td>Leadership and small group activities</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2, 2013</td>
<td>Church officers</td>
<td>Biblical foundations for small group ministries and small group ministries according to Ellen G. White and other Christians authors</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 9, 2013</td>
<td>Church officers</td>
<td>Spiritual Gifts in the church</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 23, 2013</td>
<td>Church officers</td>
<td>Leadership and small group activities</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2, 2013</td>
<td>Youth ministry, women, family, children, lay activities, health, and Sabbath school committees</td>
<td>Biblical foundations for small group ministries and small group ministries according to Ellen G. White and other Christians authors</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 9, 2013</td>
<td>Youth, women, family, children, lay activities, health, and Sabbath school committees</td>
<td>Spiritual Gifts in the church and small group activities</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 30, 2013</td>
<td>Youth, women, family, children, lay activities, health, and Sabbath school committees</td>
<td>Spiritual Gifts in the church and small group activities</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Conducted</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 4, 2013</td>
<td>Choirs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Biblical foundation for small group ministries and small group ministries according to Ellen G. White and other Christian authors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11, 2013</td>
<td>Choirs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership, spiritual Gifts in the church, and small groups activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 25, 2013</td>
<td>Small group leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td>Biblical foundations for small group ministries and small group ministries according to Ellen G. White and other Christian authors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 24, 2013</td>
<td>Small group leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td>Spiritual Gifts in the church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 25, 2013</td>
<td>Small group leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership, small group activities, and equipping the home cells groups for outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 1, 2013</td>
<td>Members</td>
<td></td>
<td>Biblical foundations for small group ministries and small group ministries according to Ellen G. White and other Christian authors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 7, 2013</td>
<td>Members</td>
<td></td>
<td>Spiritual Gifts in the church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 8, 2013</td>
<td>Members</td>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership and small group activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 14, 2013</td>
<td>Members</td>
<td></td>
<td>Revival and outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pulpit preaching series on small groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. *Spiritual Gifts Inventory Survey Administered:* On Sabbath afternoon, October 12, 2013, all church members were invited to participate in a spiritual gifts inventory test. Attendance was 680 people. After explaining the spiritual gifts inventory test and its importance, only 387 participated by answering the 200 statements on their spiritual gifts score sheets. The explanation of each statement and the definitions of various gifts were given in order to help the participants answer the questions (see Appendix C). The following the Sabbath, October 19, 2013, a survey on spiritual gift clusters and gifts mobilization was conducted, with 325 members in attendance, but only 256 participated in the survey. The survey was analyzed and the report is shown in Table 18. The table shows the various outreach groups, the aims of each group, and the number of people in each group.

4. *Groups Geographically Assigned:* After obtaining a map showing where members lived, October 2013 was reserved for grouping them according to their geographical location. This became the official launching of the small group ministries. When members are grouped geographically, they share their daily life experiences, they visit each other, and they share meals, testimonies, prayer, Bible study, outreach, and discipleship. In November 2013, the house-to-house visits began. December 2013 was reserved for revival meetings by small groups.

5. *Small Groups Inaugurated:* The new small group leaders were chosen and the small groups were officially launched on October 12, 2013 with a sermon entitled “The power of the Holy Spirit through Small Group Ministries.” After the sermon, the ceremony was closed by a prayer of dedication. Table 19 shows the names of all the cell group territories, the number of families, and the numbers of individuals in each family.
Table 18

**Spiritual Gifts-Based Small Groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Outreach Group</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>No of Groups</th>
<th>No of people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Branch Sabbath School</td>
<td>Bible Study in new area</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Seminar group</td>
<td>Conduct evangelistic seminars</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Prison group</td>
<td>Visitation and evangelism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hospital visitation</td>
<td>Assistance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Literature ministry</td>
<td>Evangelism by distributing literature</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Children ministry</td>
<td>Minister to children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Youth ministry</td>
<td>Minister to youth people</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>House to house ministry</td>
<td>Bible study and prayer at home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>School visitation</td>
<td>Minister to students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Communication ministry</td>
<td>Follow up medial interest</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Evangelistic/outreach</td>
<td>Reach unchurched people</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Bible study group</td>
<td>Bible study</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Prayer group</td>
<td>Pray for the ministries/members</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Choir</td>
<td>Sing in choir</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Counseling team</td>
<td>Counsel church members</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Elders fellowship</td>
<td>Strengthen unity among elders</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Personal ministry group</td>
<td>Involve in evangelism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Deacons/ Deaconesses</td>
<td>Strengthen the unity among them</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Public relation</td>
<td>To project the image of the church</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Visitation group</td>
<td>Visit old and new members</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Divorce recovery</td>
<td>To share experiences</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Social action</td>
<td>Support the people in vulnerability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Family ministry</td>
<td>To help families love one another</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>New believers</td>
<td>Use of their spiritual gifts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Financial management</td>
<td>Help on family good management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Women’s ministry</td>
<td>Evangelism</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Evangelism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 19

*Home Cell Groups Territories and Members*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name of Home Cell</th>
<th>No of Family</th>
<th>No of Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Abraham</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Isaac</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Reuben</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Elijah</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Elisha</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Marc</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Luka</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Samuel</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Job</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Joshua</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Moses</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Esther</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Abigail</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Lois</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Nehemiah</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Ezra</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Ezekiel</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Priscilla</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Joel</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Hosea</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Shalom</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Zion</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Gideon</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Goel</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Gad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 19—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name of Home Cell</th>
<th>No of Family</th>
<th>No of Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Naomi</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Bethsaida</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Josiah</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Amos</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Noah</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Samson</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Abel</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Seth</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Enoch</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Japheth</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Jephthah</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Miriam</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Eden</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Canaan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Hallelujah</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Jehovantis</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Alpha</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Omega</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Bethlehem</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Nazareth</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Galilee</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>347</td>
<td>681</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. **Project Monitored and Evaluated:** The church elders, local church personnel, departmental directors, and I conducted a mid-term monitoring and evaluation through weekly visits to each small group and monthly small group meetings with the local leaders where they reported on what was going on in their small groups.

Table 20 shows the Gikondo Church growth during the four previous years.
Table 20

*Gikondo Church Growth During the Four Years of Project Implementation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Before Implementation</th>
<th>1 January</th>
<th>Annual Baptism</th>
<th>31 December</th>
<th>Annual Growth Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td></td>
<td>763</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td></td>
<td>840</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td></td>
<td>876</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>968</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td></td>
<td>968</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>1034</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>During Implementation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td></td>
<td>1034</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>1192</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
<td>1192</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>1540</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
<td>1540</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>1640</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td></td>
<td>1640</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

before the implementation of the project and the Gikondo Church growth during the four years of implementation. Members who transferred in or joined by confession of faith are listed in Table 9.

Table 21 shows the members of small groups from 2011 to 2014.

Table 21

*Gikondo Church Growth Small Groups, 2011-2014*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Small Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unaccomplished Tasks

The president and secretary of conference were to help with the evaluation process, but they did not have time to evaluate the implementation of the project. Therefore, the church pastor and I did the final evaluation.

Conclusions and Lessons Learned

After implementation of the project and reflecting on what took place the following lessons were learned:

1. I have learned how to use the planning tools (Logical Framework and Gantt chart), which helped me know how to carry out the activities in a systematic way and in the time assigned. I have learned how very important planning is. Therefore, I discovered that the logframe and Gantt chart are tools to be used by all ministers.

2. Collaboration with church officers contributed to the success of the project. I have learned to work with people, to work as a team, and to develop good relationships with those with whom I work.

3. The use of a spiritual gifts inventory was an interesting exercise for everyone. The church members were happy to learn about their gifts and learn how to use them. This tool has increased my skills in planning and implementation.

4. After conducting the surveys concerning using small groups, I have learned that when members are encouraged, motivated, trained, and mobilized, they are ready to work.

5. I discovered that if you want the church to grow numerically, as well as spiritually, you must use and expand small group ministries in the church.
6. The small group ministries are an excellent place to discover and develop one’s spiritual gifts.

7. Because church growth constantly involves additional human needs, a variety of kinds of small groups are required in order to meet people’s needs and to continue reaching as many people as possible.

8. During the training, leaders can help motivate group members toward forming a new group.

9. Regular training of small group leaders helps church growth.

10. Successful small groups involve close relationships; persons who are alike can build intimacy more easily than those who have little in common.

11. A system for continual multiplication of small groups is useful as a means of avoiding stagnation of groups and assuring that groups can receive new people.

12. When the small group environment is effectively used, group members have more opportunities to interact with one another. Group members are encouraged to share their experiences, thoughts, ideals, opinions, views, and perspectives. Through dialogue, group members learn a lot from one another. In some cases, group members share their secrets, feelings, pains, and emotional wounds at a deeper level.

**Future Impact**

The replication of this project will be possible in a church that is interested in the use of a small group ministry. Other important activities for consideration are the following: contacting church leadership for planning a proper time for the implementation of the project, creating a budget in collaboration with the church board, preparing training materials for leaders and members, and preparing the spiritual gifts.
inventory. In addition, small group leaders and assistants of the project director must be named, and a committee to help be created. Of course, the program must be officially announced in the church.

The overall goal of this project was to mobilize the Gikondo church members to work in small group ministries, to witness and make disciples to increase church growth. By April 2014 the number of small groups has increased from 45 to 83. This was achieved as a result of 21 spiritual gifts-based small groups and 62 home cell groups established by the Gikondo Church. As an immediate result, other pastors in Kigali are introducing small group ministries in their own churches and they often invite me to train their members and leaders for small group ministries.

**Recommendations**

Based on the experience obtained in implementing this project, seven recommendations will be considered to improve future planning.

1. **Recommendations to the Project Director:** The project director should keep the newly formed small groups in mind in his daily prayers, that they will receive the power of the Holy Spirit. He must make sure that all church members are organized, trained, and mobilized for small group ministries. As a human being, he must know his weaknesses and accept that he does not know everything. He must be willing to ask questions whenever something is not clear and be flexible and patient towards everyone.

2. **Recommendations for Implementing a Similar Project:** To implement a similar project, I recommend that the project director have enough knowledge about small group ministries and be personally interested in small groups. Seminars and training programs must be organized. The Logframe and Gantt chart tools should be used...
for implementing the program. Collecting adequate materials is required. The use of a spiritual gifts inventory and a home cell survey are also important and necessary.

3. **Recommendation to the Elders of the Gikondo Adventist Church:** The Gikondo church elders should increase the outreach and growth of the church through the development of small groups. They must know that regular training of leaders and weekly small group meetings will help to achieve effective relationships which will help the church to grow.

4. **Recommendation to the East Central Rwanda Field:** The East Central Rwanda Field should organize training programs so all pastors in the field can learn about small group ministries. The field executive committee should do a follow-up of the use of the small group approach for church growth throughout the entire field, and should supply materials for the implementation of such a program. The field should also help all pastors develop a biblical foundation for small group ministries and know its impact in the local church today. The conference should have someone in charge of small group ministries in order to supervise the functioning of small group ministries for Bible study, fellowship, prayer, witnessing, visiting, helping, discipleship, and outreach in local churches.

5. **Recommendation to the Rwanda Union Mission:** Because the Rwanda Union Mission does not have many experts in ministry, I recommend that it send students to the DMin program in order to have enough leaders who will help train church leaders on small group ministries for church growth.

6. **Recommendation to the East-Central Africa Division:** Given the enormous task of reaching people and discipling new members in this division, the ECD leadership should train and equip leaders at all levels for small group ministries and make sure that
the use of the small group approach for church growth is used.

7. **Recommendation to Andrews University**: After discovering that small group ministries are the most affective programs for church growth, I recommend that Andrews University encourage students in future DMin cohorts to prepare and implement projects involving small group ministries and facilitate research on the topic.

**Conclusions**

The Gikondo Adventist congregation was a large group meeting for worship split into a few small groups. There was also very little church growth. However, after the implementation of this small group ministries project, I discovered that for continued numerical and spiritual growth, a local church must continue to multiply its small group ministries. Intentional discipleship through a small group ministry is one way to help believers and non-believers experience God in their lives and to support them in their journey towards becoming deeply committed disciples of Christ. This project of “using a small group approach to increase church growth” was effective in helping the Gikondo Adventist Church grow numerically and spiritually.

The lack of involvement by many church members in Bible study and in different church ministries shows the need for church members to identify their spiritual gifts and to be encouraged to use these spiritual gifts in ministries.

As a result of this project the Gikondo church members become more involved in the congregation and in using their spiritual gifts. The willingness to serve other people, to reach out, and to witness was increased. The small groups encouraged the members to use their spiritual gifts and many more members become active in outreach activities. This program attracted visitors who later joined the groups, thus increasing the ministry
outreach of the church. Through the small group ministries intimacy and relationships were built and the church became a place where no one felt alone.
APPENDIX A

LETTERS

AUA ETHICS REVIEW BOARD

I, Schadrack Nsengimana, a student of the AUA/Andrews DMin Program, do hereby submit to the Ethics Review Board my project dissertation proposal, together with the questionnaire/survey/interview schedule (choose one) I will use. I am hereby asking permission to go ahead with my research, with the full intention of collecting data in an ethical manner, without harm of any kind to those who will give me information.

Title of the project: USING A SMALL GROUP APPROACH TO INCREASE CHURCH GROWTH IN THE GIKONDO SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Place where the project will be carried out: GIKONDO CHURCH IN EAST CENTRAL RWANDA ASSOCIATION

I agree to obtain the informed consent of the persons whom I will interview or survey. I will avoid causing any harm to these subjects. I also agree to maintain the confidentiality of those interviewed/surveyed. Finally, the information gathered will be used exclusively for my project dissertation. After my defense, I will destroy the collected data.

Signature of student

Bruce L. Bauer

Date

Signature of adviser

Permission has been granted

For the ETHICS REVIEW BOARD of AUA

Signature

Date

Position

[Stamp] Adventist University of Africa

Private Bag Mbagathi
00203 Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: 254 208530730/208530720

Adventist Hill, Mbagathi Road, Ongata Rongai

Email: info@aua.adventist.org

Website: www.aua.adventist.org

[Stamp] Thsological Seminary

Office of the Dean

23 JUL 2011
Pr Schadrack NSENGIMANA
Gikondo District
P.O BOX 1690 Kigali, Rwanda
14 September 2012

President of East Central Rwanda Association
P.O BOX 247
Kigali, Rwanda

Application for Implementation of the Project

Dear Sir,
This is an application to undertake a period of implementation of my DMin Project in Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist Church. So, I would like to ask you the permission to implement my project as it's the requirements for every student who does Doctor of Ministry Program. I am at present, a student in Doctor of Ministry Program from Andrews University, I have finished my first session. I would like to use the period from January 1rst 2012 to December 31th 20 14.
I hope that the implementation of my project will be helpful to me, to the Gikondo Church and to other churches around from East Central Rwanda Association.

Enclosures:  My Permission to do a research Project
My Logical framework and Gantt Chart
East Central Rwanda Field
B.P. 247
Tel.: 5755806
Kigali-Rwanda

May 22, 2014

Subject: Your project implementation

Dear Pastor NSENGIMANA Schadrack, according to your letter you wrote to East Central Rwanda Field President, we are happy to let you know that you are accepted to implement your D Min project in Gikondo Seventh-day Adventist church as you have required by the Andrews University from January 1st, 2012 up December 31st 2014.

We hope your work will be helpful to Gikondo church members to go forward and be more involved in God’s work.

May God bless you as you work in His vineyard.

Pr. NDWAIYE Isaac
ECRF President

Télégramme: EAST CENTRAL RWANDA FIELD
Avenue de la justice-Nyamirambo
APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRES

I. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR A FOCUS GROUP OF THE TEN GIKONDO CHURCH ELDERS

We would like to know what sorts of small groups would interest you. There are many ways to bring together a small group to explore faith – we have some examples already at Gikondo Church. One is study of the Bible, as is done every morning, in the Wednesday morning Bible study. Another is to take up discussion topic – sometimes the Sunday morning classes develop into a functioning small group. Small groups can be built around exploring faith through service, such as occurs in our committees or the music program. There is no fixed format. Small groups can meet wherever best suits their focus.

1. Would like to see more groups in the Gikondo Church?
2. What kind of groups you would like to see in Gikondo Church?
3. What training would you say leaders of small groups needs?
4. How can do this training?
5. What part would you like to take in this training of group leaders?
6. Do you have anything to add?

II. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FORTY FIVE LEADERS OF SMALL GROUPS OF GIKONDO CHURCH

1. How long have you been a small group leader in Gikondo Church?
   A. Under 1 year
   B. 1-3 years
   C. 4-5 years
   D. 6-10 years
   E. Over 10 years.

2. What is the nature of your group?

III. What kinds of training or education did you receive to be a small group leader in Gikondo Church? Put marks on every point applicable to you.
   A. I learned through seeing my small group leader as an apprentice or a member.
   B. I took a systematic training for being a small group leader which consisted of at least 3 classes.
   C. I took training for being a small group leader which consisted of one or two classes.
   D. I took counselling with the senior pastor or a minister in charge of small group ministry to be a small group leader.
E. I have learned systematically how I lead a small group meeting.
F. Others: (write down any training or education which you received.)

IV. From whom (from what) did you learn the most about jobs and attitudes of a small group leader?
A. A systematic small group leadership development program
B. A guiding principle of the senior pastor
C. A minister in charge of small group ministry
D. The small group leader when I was a small group member or an apprentice
E. Fellow small group leaders
F. I really have not learned anything about jobs and attitudes of small group leaders
G. Others: __________________________________________

V. How do you rate the development of small group leaders in GIKONDO Church?
Give grade by circling number with 1 being highest.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
About the previous question, explain ____________________________________________________________

VI. What kinds of support does GIKONDO Church give you for doing job of a small group leader? Put marks on every point applicable to you.
A. Systematic follow-up training
B. Teaching you what you teach at a small group meeting
C. Connection with a mentor or coach
D. Assistance of prayer
E. Financial support
F. Others: __________________________________________

VII. Whom do you call when you have difficulties as a small group leader first of all?
A. The senior pastor
B. A minister in charge of leading you.
C. People appointed your mentor or coach by the church
D. Predecessor
E. Fellow small group leader
F. No one
G. Others: ____________________________

VIII. What do you want GIKONDO Church to give you as an effective small group leader? Choose two.
A. Systematic follow-up training
B. Spiritual training through prayer meeting or retreat
C. Practical techniques for leading a small group
D. Connection with a mentor or coach
E. Assistance of prayer  
F. Financial support  
G. Others: ________________________________  

IX. Why do the members attend small group meetings?  
A. They are impressed by the small group meeting.  
B. The meetings are official gatherings of the church.  
C. Because of the relationship with the leader of other members  
D. The leader or members encourage them through visiting or calling if they don’t attend.  
E. Others: ________________________________  

X. Why do other members not attend small group meetings?  
A. They are not impressed.  
B. They are busy.  
C. Because of resistance of family  
D. They don’t feel they belong to the small group.  
E. Others: ________________________________  

XI. Do you think you need more training to lead the small group meetings more effectively?  
A. Yes  
B. No  
F. (If yes, go to question 12. If no, do not answer question 12.)  

XII. In what five areas do you need more training? Prioritize them by placing numbers one through five in the blanks next to the area. One is most important and five is the least important.

____ A. Prayer  
____ B. Teaching ability  
____ C. Counselling  
____ D. Visiting and calling  
____ E. Building relationships  
____ F. Leading small group meetings  
____ G. Administration  
____ H. Loving and serving the members  
____ I. Personality  
____ J. Building the relationship with God  
____ K. Other ________________________________
XIII. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EVALUATION OF TRAINING PROGRAM

1. What is the strategy for small group leadership development which you regard the most important?
2. What do you think makes it the most effective?
3. Which are you going to adopt of the programs of strategies presented in your church for small group leadership development in the near future?
4. How can you help the small group leaders of your church to do their ministry more effectively?
5. What are the three things that are absolutely necessary to small group leaders? What has been your church or fellowship’s experience with small groups in the past six month?
6. What happened in your Christian life after belonging to a small group?
Table 1  
*Questionnaire Addressed to Thirty Gikondo Church Members*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVALUATION</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Small groups can build relationship between members.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Small groups can help to meet the needs of everyone.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Small groups can facilitate Bible study and prayers.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Small groups can facilitate sustainability.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. In small groups there is no one stay alone</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Small groups can bring love one another</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Small groups can encourage one another</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Small group can permit outreach and discipleship</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Small groups can facilitate church growth</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Small groups help to spiritual gifts growth</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2  
*Questionnaire Addressed to Fifteen Gikondo Church Elders*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVALUATION</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am currently in small group</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I feel I would benefit from a small group</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I believe small groups can be effective in changing my life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I feel uncomfortable sharing my personal issues in a small group and</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listening to others share their personal issues.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I believe small groups help assimilate people in the body of Christ</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I need to be a part of a small group.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I feel personal Bible study and prayer are more effective than a weekly</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or bi-weekly meeting with people who hold me accountable.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I feel small groups are just another program, and I don’t see the</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relevance in my life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I do not have time to be in a small group.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In your church’s small group ministry, how often do group leaders and members meet for
the purpose of training?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>At least once a year</td>
<td>At least Once a Quarter</td>
<td>Once or twice a month</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within your church’s small group ministry, how many groups currently include a
member who is training to be a leader?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>Few</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Most</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A. Biblical foundations for small group ministries

“Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good. Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer.” (Hebrews 10:24, 25, GNB)

1. Small group concept study

What is a small group?

- A small group within the church is a voluntary, intentional gathering of 3 to 12 people regularly meeting together with the shared goal of mutual Christian edification and fellowship. Small Group Home. (Small Group Ministry, para. 2):

Definition of Small Group Ministry

Any discussion of small group ministry must begin with a working definition. Although the definition differs somewhat according to the group’s purpose, all true small groups share certain characteristics. Small groups are “group[s] of people . . . who meet regularly for the purpose of spiritual edification and evangelistic outreach (with the goal of multiplication).” They should function as parts of a local church, not as independent entities. Comiskey lists several things small groups are not: They are not cliques, only once per week, merely neighborhood Bible studies or prayer groups, or separate from the church. Ott suggests the acronym “WIFE” as a description of the aspects of small groups. It stands for “Worship, Instruction, Fellowship, and Expression. Severance (n.d.,para 2).

Definitions of Small Group According to Icenogle

1. The small group is a generic form of human community that is trans-cultural, trans-generational and even transcendent. The call to human gathering in groups is a God created (ontological) and God-directed (theological) ministry, birthed out of the very nature and purpose of God’s being. God as Being exists in community. The natural and simple demonstration of God’s communal image for humanity is the gathering of the small group (p. 13).

2. Small groups are microcosms of God’s creation community. Wherever two or more persons come together, they become an actual reflection of the image and likeness of God. Small groups are the basic arena for either imaging the redeeming presence of God or projecting destructive human systems. Every small or large gathering of humanity in this tension of manifesting an inhuman
structure or embodying divinely redemptive relationships ((Biblical Foundations, Icenogle, P).

3. Why Small Group Ministries?

It is Biblical
1. Moses followed the counsel of his father-in-law, Jethro, in having small groups of tens (Exodus 18).

2. Jesus started His ministry by calling a small group of twelve disciples (Matthew 4:18-22).

3. The Early Church grew in numbers although they did not have a big church building. They met from house to house (Acts 2:42-47).

What is the Biblical Goals for Small Group Ministries?

1. Foster Biblical Love (John 13:35; 1 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 5:2; 1 John 4:7, 11, 21).

2. Promote Fellowship and Unity (Acts 4:32; Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12, 25; Eph. 4:3, 5, 13; 1 John 3, 6-7); John 13:35, 36; 1 Corinthians 13:13; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 5:2; 1 John 4:7, 11, 12; Acts 4:32, Romans 12:5, 1 Corinthians 12:12, 25; Ephesians 4:3, 5, 13

3. Build the Body (Rom. 14:19; Eph. 2:19-22; 4:11-16; Col. 1:10-12, 28; 2:6-7).

4. Nurture Spiritual Gifts (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor.12:4-11).

What are the core values needed for successful small groups
How to Begin a small group ministries?
Training Program
Suggested Small Group Fellowship with those who come early:

B. small group ministries according to Ellen G. White

Small group ministry is based on the Counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy. Ellen G. White says “The formation of small companies as a basis for Christian effort is a plan that has been presented before me by One who Cannot err. If there is a large number in the Church, let the members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church members but for unbelievers also” (Evangelism, p. 115).
Christ’s Way of Reaching People

“Every worker who follows the example of Christ will be prepared to receive and use the power that God has promised to His church for the ripening of earth’s harvest. Morning by morning, as the heralds of the gospel kneel before the Lord and renew their vows of consecration to Him, He will grant them the presence of His Spirit….As they go forth to the day’s duties, they have the assurance that the unseen agency of the Holy Spirit enables them to be ‘laborers together with God’” (The Acts of the Apostles, p. 56).

“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour 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’” (The Ministry of Healing, p. 143).

“Your success will not depend so much upon your knowledge and accomplishments, as upon your ability to find your way to the heart. By being social and coming close to people, you may turn the current of their thoughts more readily than by the most able discourse.” Gospel Workers, 193

“In our churches let companies be formed for service. Let different ones unite in labor as fishers of men. Let them seek to gather souls from the corruption of the world into the saving purity of Christ’s love.” T. Vol. 7 p. 21-22

Visitation and making friends with people are very important

“Hundreds and thousands were seen visiting families and opening before them the word of God. Hearts were convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a spirit of genuine conversion was manifest. On every side doors were thrown open to the proclamation of the truth. The world seemed to be lightened with the heavenly influence.” 9 Testimonies p. 126.

– Matthew 4:14: Jesus loved people and never failed to help them (Mark 1:41; 6: 34)
– Jesus was able to be friendly to all kinds of people (Matthew 9:10; Mark 2:15)
– Jesus showed interest in every one he met and tried to give them spiritual help (John 3:1,2, John 4:7)

“How can the great work of the third angel’s message be accomplished? It must largely accomplished by persevering, individual effort, by visiting the people in their homes” Welfare Ministry, p. 97

“There are families who will never be reached by the truth of God’s word unless His servants enter their home.” Evangelism, pp. 435,436
C. Leadership in Small Groups

Seven Ways To Nurture Your Small Group Leaders (Eastman)

Make them feel loved b) Include them in something weekly c) Insist on praying in the moment d) Share your hurts and hopes e) Thank them for serving f) Envision them in some small way g) Remind them of their value.

Work in Small groups

We shall now divide into small groups to exchange ideas about what we can do to find sinners like the lost sheep, the lost drachma and the eldest son; and how to recover the one who had gone far away. After ten minutes, each group will

1. Prayers move the life of the church
2. Assistants are developed at every level

Small group leaders According to Cox (pp. 60-70).

“We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the Gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.” (1 Thessalonians 2:8 NIV)

Why do small groups need leaders? It might seem a strange question to ask, but it is sometimes suggested that a small group doesn’t need to have a particular leader - small groups run themselves and “everyone can take it in turn.” Well, some groups have tried doing it that way, and it doesn’t work. In his small group leadership training course, Colin Marshall addresses the “myth of the leaderless group,” and points out that in fact, there is no such thing as a group without a leader, and where a leader is not appointed, “any kind of group will generate its own leadership.”52 The “myth of the leaderless group” actually stems in part from the fear that some leaders will dominate their groups and stand in the way of free and open sharing between groups members - the very thing small groups are supposed to provide. So they do need leaders, well-chosen and well-trained. Without them, small groups will tend to be unstable, lacking direction and long-term motivation. Even worse, they could end up being leader dominated! Remember, small groups are not intended to be casual, unstructured gatherings of Christians who simply enjoy meeting together for one activity or another; they are to be part of the transforming ministry of the church. They are the means through which the laity (the people of God) can fulfill the ministry for which God has ordained them, and in these days become part of the final reformation needed in the church, without which it cannot fulfill its mission in the world. Small groups can help take the church from where we are to where God wants us to be. And that requires leadership.

It may well be that in the Adventist congregation of the future, the most influential people in its life-changing ministry, along with pastors and elders, will be small group leaders. Perhaps small group leaders will be the church elders. For sure, small group leaders will be church leaders in the fullest sense of the word.
Qualities of small group leaders

The New Testament profile of church leaders described in Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus (I Timothy 3:1-13; 5:17-25; Titus 1:5-16) includes the following qualifications: they should not be recent converts, but mature in the faith they should be known for their consistent Christian lifestyle and Christlike behavior they should be gentle they should be hospitable they should be thoroughly familiar with Christ’s teaching they should be able to teach Small group leaders, then, as church leaders, should be both example and teacher within the group.

He small group leader as example

Since the first purpose of small groups is to develop disciples, the leader should be an example of a disciple among other disciples. Who qualifies? Fortunately for us, Jesus chose His first first twelve disciples from among ordinary people, just as they were. They all had their faults. But even as they were growing in discipleship, they were commissioned to continue the work that Jesus began. That’s encouraging for today’s disciples. As examples to their groups, group leaders cannot claim and should not pretend to be perfect, but can confidently claim to be sinners saved by the matchless grace of God. Christian leaders have their faults. They have their struggles, their doubts, their discouragements and their fears. But they have something else besides, that helps them to deal with these things - that helps them to pick themselves up when they fall, inspires them to rise above their failures, and gives direction to their lives even in the midst of their doubts. That something, of course, is Jesus.

I mention this here because small groups depend on authentic leaders for their effectiveness. People are not impressed and won’t follow phonies. Authentic leaders acknowledge both their sinfulness and the forgiveness of God (I John 1:8,9). Everyone knows that the sin problems is universal; to deny it makes us liars. What people want to know is how to deal with it. Small group leaders must be able to point such people in the right direction. acknowledge both their sinfulness and the forgiveness of God (I John 1:8,9). Everyone knows that the sin problems is universal; to deny it makes us liars. What people want to know is how to deal with it. Small group leaders must be able to point such people in the right direction.

Leaders, then, don’t have to be perfect. But as the Bible says, “Love covers over a multitude of sins.” (I Peter 4:8) It’s not surprising, then, that effective small-group leaders are loving people. In fact we might say that they have three great loves in their lives:

· They love Jesus, and are secure enough in their relationship with Him that they don’t need the leadership position for their identity. They have a clear, simple story to tell of what he has done in their lives.

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They love people, and can relate well with them. That doesn’t necessarily mean that they will be extrovert, “life of the party” socialisers. It does mean they care for others, are sensitive to their needs, and can communicate with them on a spiritual level, aiming to reflect God’s unconditional love for us. They are shock-proof, and they have a kindly sense of humour.

They love the church, and they probably don’t see themselves as qualified to lead it. Nevertheless they are enthusiastic about what it stands for, and are willing to give their best for it. Such giving of ourselves is important. Group leaders be willing to share their own lives, as well as the Gospel. This was part of Paul’s approach to ministry, and was no doubt one reason for his success. Beyond that, group leaders must “lead” by example in the way that that they expect group members to participate and relate with each other. If they expect them to be affirming, available, open, honest, and sensitive, etc., toward each other (as described in part four of this manual) leaders must be willing to “model” these values also. This is one of the most critical areas of small group leadership. Especially during the first few meetings of a new group, its members will probably be reticent to say too much about themselves. If one person (e.g. the leader) shares a personal experience, however, others will readily follow, and the pattern for the future dynamics of the group will quickly be established.

The small group leader as teacher. Effective teaching in a small group context involves two skills: understanding and communication.

Understanding. Small group leaders are not expected to know all the answers, and they should never give the impression that they do. So while being a teacher, the group leader is also a learner, eager to learn from others in the group, and encouraging maximum participation. The best group learning takes place, as we have already seen, as every member of the group share together their questions, insights, and experiences. However, leaders must have a good, all-round understanding of Scripture, it’s background and structure, it’s basic teachings, and it’s great themes. In fact it is an understanding of the great themes of the Bible that make Bible study, especially in groups, so exciting and challenging. Being able to defend our twenty-seven fundamental Bible doctrines is one thing; being able to relate the Scriptures to the overall scheme of things, fit its teachings together as pieces of a divine jig-saw puzzle, and relate them to the much larger challenge of knowing who God is and relating to Him personally, is another.

Communication. It may be stating the obvious to say that the ability of leaders to teach is largely dependent on their ability to communicate. But there is more to it than that. Even though they are teaching through discussion, leaders must be able to guide the group through possible conflict to right conclusions. Communication involves both the giving of useful information, and the building of bridges to enable others to receive and process that information. In practical terms, according to Colin Marshall,

Communication, as the above diagram shows, is more than words. What we say is less important that how we say it. Body-language - facial expression, eye movements,
leaning forward or backward, etc. etc. - is even more important. But who we are is the most important language of all, as we make ourselves known by our attitudes, words and actions combined.

We build communication barriers when we make ourselves out to be something we are not, assume a superior level of importance, and exhibit a condescending or patronising attitude toward those around us. On the other hand we build bridges when we take time to learn and use people’s names, take a genuine interest in their lives outside of group meetings, give them a genuine sense of being important to us, get involved with the informal conversation during refreshments, and convey the idea about ourselves that “what you see is how I am.” It is significant in this connection that in Paul’s counsel to Timothy regarding leaders, he places “able to teach” next to “gentle and peaceful.” (I Timothy 3:2,3). A small group leader does not force people to participate, but gently seeks to draw them in.

The small group leader’s job description.

Beyond the roles of example and teacher, the small group leader usually carries the following specific responsibilities:

a. Cares for the group’s overall goals, agenda and growth in love and unity
b. Leads in Bible study, but often shares this with others
c. Identifies abilities and gifts in others and finds ways to use them in group ministry
d. Manages conflict within the group
e. Develops awareness of the spiritual state of each group member, whether Christian or non-Christian, and seeks to facilitate growth
f. Works in consultation with church pastor and others to deal with matters beyond the scope of the group
g. Communicates the aims and vision of the group with the larger church, and those of the larger church with the group where appropriate
h. Keeps the goal of growth through conversion fresh in the minds of members, or delegates this responsibility to someone else
i. Trains assistant leader for readiness to assume leadership in new group
j. Works as a team with the host/hostess. This person should be someone who demonstrates a genuine care for people, and the ability to put people at ease. He/she is responsible for one or more of the following, according to ability and time available (duties not undertaken by the host/hostess should be delegated to other group members, not carried by the group leader):

welcoming group members leading the “ice-breaker” or initial sharing period the prayer ministry of the group general pastoral care of members

Too hot to handle? All that has been said in terms of group leaders’ qualifications and responsibilities may just look too daunting, and would-be leaders could easily be discouraged from even trying. The consolation is that everyone called by God to lead feels the same way! We should remember that the development of small group ministry is all about opening real ministry to the “ordinary” Christian. And God loves taking ordinary things and doing extraordinary things with them.
Small group meetings

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” (Acts 2:42 NIV)

A typical small group meeting will normally last from one hour to an hour and a half, and while in many respects there should be no such thing as a “typical” small group meeting (may they never be predictable, “same as usual” events), certain details will feature in most meetings.

The place of meeting will usually be a house, rather than the church. The lounge is the most suitable room, with chairs and perhaps floor cushions arranged in the semblance of a circle. Some groups prefer to sit around a table in the dining room. The room will be comfortably warm (not too hot, not too cold) and well-ventilated.

As guests arrive, they are warmly welcomed by the host/hostess. Refreshments are served if people have come straight from work or for other reasons would welcome a hot or cold drink. The host/hostess informally introduces those attending for the first time, and creates a friendly, relaxed atmosphere as group members chat together before the meeting proper starts.

Meeting formats vary between groups, but all follow a certain basic outline, including an ice-breaker exercise of some kind to begin with, Bible study and (usually) prayer, and refreshments. Many groups also include a specific period of time for praise and worship through singing. At the close of the meeting, details of the following week’s meeting are shared, along with any other group activities planned. Now let’s take a closer look at the essential parts of a small group meeting.

a) The Ice-Breaker

The meeting begins with ten to twenty minutes of sharing within the group, based either on a pre-prepared ice-breaker question or two, or simply on group members’ experiences during the previous week. This “warm-up” period is a very important part of every small-group meeting, and we must resist the temptation to “get into the Bible study” as quickly as possible. Pre prepared questions are useful, especially during the first few weeks of a new small group’s life, because they enable everyone (even the most shy) to say something.

The ice-breaker section may well be led by the host/hostess of the group, although other group members can share this responsibility.

b) The Bible Study

This may last for 30 - 45 minutes (or more if the group has previously agreed on a longer time period), and will be led by either the group leader, or one or more group members appointed beforehand. A large number of pre-prepared Bible study guides are available which take a lot of work out of preparation. They cover most levels of Bible study, from very simple introductory studies on the basics of Christianity, to advanced studies for more knowledgeable groups. They also cover a wide range of topics. Several guides have been specifically designed for a group to use for their first six or eight meetings, to help members get to know each other and build relationships among them. These simple guides help people to become familiar with the style and dynamics of relational Bible study, and I strongly recommend them to new groups and new group leaders. At the start of the Bible study, every member of the group should be given a
copy of the outline, and pens or pencils should be made available if written answers are required. (Bible study guides vary, but come with full instructions for the leader.) In most cases, Bible texts are included in full, so Bibles are not needed, and non-Christians are spared the embarrassment of not knowing where to look for a text.

If you decide to use some of these pre-prepared materials in your group, don't think there is nothing for you to do before the meeting. Study leaders must always be well prepared, even if this means simply going over the outline in detail and making sure that you are familiar with the subject and the aim of the study. Groups which choose to do without pre-prepared material should guard against a too casual, unfocused approach to Bible study, even though the “Bible only” method is probably the best for able and experienced leaders. The Serendipity Bible57 is excellent for this purpose: it consists of the NIV Bible text, and plenty of small-group style questions in the margins - right from Genesis to Revelation. As a general rule, a short passage of Scripture - not more than a chapter - is better than a long passage for each group meeting. Many single chapters can be studied more than once. Each person in the group should have a Bible. For groups that wish to create a “safe” environment for unchurched people, a contemporary English version should be used, such as the Good News Bible or the New International Version. The church should purchase a number of identical Bibles for this purpose, so that page numbers for the texts can be given rather than the references. Once a group is familiar with the Bible, it is an advantage if different members use different translations. No-one should be asked to read aloud until it is quite obvious that the person is free and willing to do so.

Unless the group is following a very basic outline, group members should be encouraged to do a certain amount of homework between meetings. Reading the assigned passage every day between meetings is a good form of homework. Different individuals can be asked to research and share findings on small segments of the passage.

Whatever the approach to Bible study, the topic for a given period of time should be chosen by the group or core group, not just the leader. In summary, Bible study in small groups should aim to be: relational - designed to build relationships, not just pass on information relevant to group members’ needs and interests challenging, intended to change lives memorable - leaders should use teaching aids such as flip charts, O/H projector, etc

The right kind of questions

Good questions are essential to dynamic small group Bible study. Actually, there are only two basic questions involved in relational Bible study. The first is a question for the mind, and it asks: “What is the Bible actually saying?” All true Bible study must ask this question. Often with the help of various Bible study aids, the aim is to discover what actually happened, what God was actually saying at the time, to whom He was saying it, and why. The second question is for the heart, and it asks: “What is God saying to me/us through this scripture?” Bible study will make no difference to our lives or our relationships - with God or with other people - if we do not apply it. Through relational Bible study we learn to ask such questions as: “Where am I in this story?” “According to this passage, what does God want me to feel/say/do in order for my/our
relationship with Him and with each other to grow?”
The two basic questions mentioned above will, of course, be asked in many different ways. Other questions will also be used to create dialogue and discussion. Good questions for this purpose include those that are:

a) Open-ended, not closed (e.g. “What is involved in becoming a disciple?” not “What are the four steps we must take to become a disciple?”)

b) Not leading - they don’t suggest the answer (e.g. “What is this verse saying about Jesus?” not “Jesus was the Messiah, wasn’t He?”)

c) Singular, not multiple (e.g. Why is it important to be baptised?” not “What does it mean to be baptised, why is it important, and what can we learn from the baptism of Jesus?”)

Simple, not complex. Questions may be profound, but they shouldn’t be unnecessarily complicated (e.g. “What’s wrong with just keeping the rules in order to be saved?” not “In Paul’s letter to the Galatians, what theological problem did he imply those first century Christians were struggling with in terms of the relationship between justifications and sanctification?”)

In relational dynamics, even when group members ask questions, the leader ought not to answer them. The leader’s task is to lead - lead the group to discover truth and gain insight by thinking and working things out for themselves. Often, the best way to answer a question, or to go deeper into a previous question, is to ask another question, using:

1. Extending questions (“Would you like to say anything else about that?” or "Could you go into a bit more detail?)

2. Clarifying questions (“Could you explain that a bit more fully? What do you mean by that?”)

3. Justifying questions (“Why do you think that is true?”)

4. Re-directing questions (“What does the rest of the group think?” “Jane, what do you think/feel about this?”)

5. Reflecting questions (“That’s an interesting point. Are you saying that....?”)

Excellent material on developing good question skills can be found in several small group manuals, such as the Willow Creek guide.

c) Prayer

At least ten minutes will be set aside for prayer, usually after the Bible study. Some groups will regularly want to spend much longer than this; with other groups it may become apparent to the leader during a particular meeting that more time is needed for prayer than usual, so the time given to Bible study may be shortened; with still other groups, such as those just beginning with several non-Christian guests, there may be no prayer at all during the meeting.

The prayer time in small group meetings can be led by the host/hostess or another designated prayer ministry leader, and there is advantage in the prayer leader keeping a written record (journal) of prayer requests and answers. Prayer in small groups can follow a variety of forms, including.

Conversational prayer, which is probably the most popular, and the best suited to small group dynamics and values. Conversational prayer is exactly that - a conversation between the members of the group and God. It consists of

1. A single prayer with one beginning and one ending. All who wish to can make short contributions to the prayer once or several times as the prayer leader introduces different aspects of prayer such as adoration, thanksgiving, confession and petition. The prayer leader ends the prayer with “Amen.” In conversational prayer, spoken prayers can be interspersed with suitable prayer songs started spontaneously by any member of the group. Periods of silence may be quite common, as the group seeks an awareness of God’s presence or a knowledge of God’s will. Time spent in this very relaxed form of prayer may vary from a few minutes to a much longer period.

2. Chain prayer, which involves each person praying in order around the group. Embarrassment for those who do not wish to pray can be avoided by suggesting that such individuals can simply touch the next person as a signal that the prayer can move on.

3. Written prayer, which is especially helpful for those who are nervous about praying in public. The entire group can occasionally be asked to prepare written prayers beforehand as a way of bringing creativity and variety into the prayer life of the group. Responsive prayer, which is also prepared beforehand, copied, and distributed among the group. In this form of prayer, the leader expresses adoration, praise, petition, etc., and the whole group follows together with appropriate responses.

4. Prayer in two’s or three’s, which enables group members to spend more time praying for each other. Be sure everyone is comfortable with praying in public before suggesting it.

5. Communal prayer such as the Lord’s Prayer, which is read or recited by the whole group together. Such prayers are useful if they add variety without replacing the more informal styles mentioned above. As mentioned earlier, one of the features of the small group meeting is the presence of the empty chair. Christian members of the group will pray constantly that the group will grow as God fills that empty chair.

**The position chosen for prayer**

Should also be in harmony with the informal nature of small group life. As a general rule, prayer that is offered before and during Bible study, or the shared prayer after Bible study that may continue for some time, is best offered while the group is seated. Groups seeking to build a sense of fellowship and mutual support find much help if group members join hands while prayer is offered. There is no need to insist that everyone should kneel for prayer.

Occasionally, a member of the group may mention a special prayer need. In such cases there is much to be gained if the other members of the group can gather round that person while they pray for her, and, if it is appropriate, the two or three individuals who are nearest can lay their hands on the shoulders of that person. This kind of special prayer ministry, however, must always be conducted sensitively. Not everyone, especially newcomers, will feel comfortable with it.

**Refreshments**

These are usually served at the end of the meeting, allowing group members the option to leave, or stay and chat informally. Refreshments can be served at the beginning of the meeting instead, especially if some members arrive straight from work, or have to
arrive over a period of time. The advantage of ending with refreshments is that it enables the group to “wind down” from the study/prayer period. Either way, a refreshment period is an important element to successful small group meetings, and should be included whenever possible. It helps people to relax while talking, and sometimes causes barriers to be broken down that would otherwise inhibit the growth of relationships. For this reason, some groups make their first meeting a social one at which strangers can get acquainted through a pot-luck type of meal followed by suitable games.
A word of caution: keep the refreshments simple. Except for special occasions, cold and hot drinks and biscuits are enough.

Watch the time
Whatever else the typical small group meeting might include, and however the time might be divided (once the group has decided how long meetings should last) two final rules should be faithfully observed if the small group is going to grow:
Rule One: Start on time
Rule Two: End on time

THE SMALL GROUP LIFE-CYCLE
At the outset, congregations developing small group ministry should understand that small groups mean constant change as they grow and divide, and fulfill their usefulness to the church. One reason why small groups have not worked in the past, and why some church members have not wanted to belong to a small group, is that commitment to a small group is seen as a permanent thing. It is not. Small groups are temporary.

The life expectancy of small groups is limited. Like body cells, small groups don’t last forever. Small-group churches which have gained experience over several years generally agree that a fairly average small group has a life expectancy of from twelve to eighteen months. Generally speaking, groups should not continue longer than two years. The life of a small group consists of four stages, as follows:

Adventure
During this first stage, most group members are highly motivated, eager to learn, and confident that the group will result in blessings all round. Some have called this the “honeymoon” stage, and like any honeymoon, it is temporary, and should be enjoyed, however unrealistic the expectations may be.

Discovery
In this stage, there is a return to reality - the world of real people. We discover that group members are human and all have their warts. “No gain without pain” now looks closer to the truth; concepts of accountability and growth look more like hard work than fun, and the idea of getting together regularly for several weeks or months means real commitment. Leadership may be challenged. Some group members drop out, possibly to find another group more to their liking. This stage has to be accepted for what it is, and the group has to realise that a “perfect” small group with no problems is probably the one small group where no growth or changes for the better can take place.
**Development**

Once initial problems have been resolved and group members have accepted the rough with the smooth, growth can begin to take place as the group’s strengths are set against its weaknesses, and its varied talents and gifts are identified and matched with its goals and targets. At this stage the group leader can begin to share some of his leadership responsibility with other members. The group may also start looking for ways in which it can serve the community in a more general way, as well as its own interests. The role of the leadership team during this period is to recognise the possibilities for development and help it to happen.

The development stage is by far the longest of the four stages. This means that it has potential for stagnation instead of growth, and degeneration into routine predictability instead of ongoing challenge. For this reason some small group experts are now advising that the group should meet during this stage for several short periods, following a sequential series of Bible study units, rather than attempt to continue without a break for the duration of the group’s life.

**An Example of Sequential Bible Study Units for Small Groups**

- **Unit One** Six studies to build group identity
- **Unit Two** Six studies to explore basic Christianity
- **Unit Three** Six studies the Gospel of Mark
- **Unit Four** Six studies on the Gospel of Mark
- **Unit Five** Eight studies with help and hope for every day
- **Unit Six** Twelve studies on living in the end
- **Unit Seven** Six studies on prayer
- **Unit Eight** Ten studies on great teachings of the Bible
- **Unit Nine** Six studies on Ephesians (focus on Church)

A parents’ group, for example, could meet during term time then break for the school holiday periods. Each unit of six, eight or ten weeks could then be devoted to a different topic of general interest. These units might cover, say, a total of sixty-two weeks out of a seventy-seven weeks (eighteen months) period, allowing time for breaks in between. Remember that the group chooses the topics as they go along; they are not chosen beforehand by the leader (except for the first series of studies, which is usually chosen by the leadership team). The advantages of this approach are: members are more willing and able to commit themselves; members can leave the group at the end of a unit if they are unhappy with the group; new members are only added to the group at the commencement of new units. This saves the group from the disruption of the deepening fellowship that takes place if visitors are constantly joining.

**Maturity**

In the majority of cases it is probably true to say that a small group can only do so much for its members and no more. After a number of people have spent eighteen to twenty-four months together in weekly Bible study and fellowship, it is time for them to move on to the challenges of a new group, in which further growth can take place. In this fast-moving world, we quickly get bored and complacent. Without a timerelated goal to work towards, the earlier enthusiasm can easily fade. A pre-determined termination point can serve as that goal in time. Even if the group does not grow
numerically or conversions do not take place, members can enjoy the sense of satisfaction of knowing that they have stayed the course, and have grown together in their relationships with each other and with God. The value of such growth in the long-term cannot be measured.

Most groups, however, can expect tangible things to happen. And they are much more likely to happen if they are planned for and prayed for within a certain period of time, than if no time element is involved. Many groups can expect to grow from a starting point of, say, eight members, to their full capacity of ten to twelve members within a period of eighteen months. And the group must be ready for this culmination period when they will decide whether to form two new groups, or separate and join other existing groups.

Naturally, there will usually be some reluctance to terminate meetings. But the trauma of the experience can be minimized if:

a) the group is reminded occasionally that this will happen
b) a celebration event is organized for the last meeting to recognize what has been achieved, and thank God for it.

c) group members are reminded that friendships continue, even if the group doesn’t a reunion gathering is organized a few weeks later
d) occasionally all groups meet together for thanksgiving and sharing, and Sabbath worship is frequently used as an opportunity for informing the congregation of what God is achieving through small group ministry.

From a practical point of view, when a group has reached the point where it is ready to divide and spawn a second group, the assistant leader of the original group becomes its leader, and the leader of the original group becomes the leader of the new group.

Both groups can, if there is sufficient space, continue meeting in the same home for a period of time, using different rooms. After several weeks, there should be no difficulty in moving one of the groups to a new home.

D. Spiritual Gifts Inventory

The spiritual gifts listed below are found in three passages: Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; 28-30, and Ephesians 4:11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administration</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apostleship</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discernment</td>
<td>Mercy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evangelism</td>
<td>Miracles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exhortation</td>
<td>Pastor/Shepherd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Prophecy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giving</td>
<td>Serving/Ministering</td>
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15. **Knowledge**: I Corinthians 12:8; 1 Corinthians 1:4-7; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; 1 Corinthians 12:8; Romans 15:14; 2 Corinthians 2:14.

16. **Leadership**: Romans 12:8 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 1Timothy 3:5; Romans 12:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; 1 Timothy 3:4-5, 12; 5:17.

17. **Mercy**: Matthew 18:33; Ephesians 2:4-6; Romans 12:15; Galatians 6:2; Romans 12:8, Matthew 5:7; Luke 10:30-37; James 3:17; Jude 22-23.


E. Spiritual gifts inventory According to Dick and Dick

Read each statement through twice. Have participants answer what first comes to mind in reaction to each statement (don’t “over think” responses). Not every statement fits comfortably with the 7–1 scoring; this is by design to generate greater differentiation. All statements reflect specific reference to the New Testament and the understanding of spiritual gifts in the early church of the first three centuries following the resurrection of Jesus Christ, translated to our modern day context.

A spiritual gifts inventory for individuals and congregations

For each statement, rate yourself on scale of 1 to 7.
7 Always — 6 Almost Always — 5 Often — 4 Sometimes — 3 Rarely — 2 Almost Never — 1 Never

Inventory Statements

1. I am able to help people make choices and clarify decisions.
2. I am aware of things without having to be told by anyone.
3. I easily delegate authority and responsibility to others.
4. I enjoy sharing my faith with the homeless and impoverished to offer hope.
5. I enjoy teaching the Bible to a small group.
6. I believe that God will help anyone in need.
7. Through prayer, I see God's miraculous work in my life.
8. I do not mind being made fun of for what I believe.
9. I am able to organize human and material resources to serve the needs of others.
10. I enjoy giving money to support the work of God.
11. I like to work with people who are considered by others to be outcasts in their communities.
12. Praying for the sick is a critical part of their healing.
13. I can tell when Christian speakers or groups are being honest and faithful.
14. I listen to others as carefully as I want them to listen to me.
15. I would rather be a secretary in a group than the leader or chairperson.
16. Whenever I share my faith, I ask others to share theirs as well.
17. I help anyone in need, regardless of whether they deserve or appreciate the help.
18. I am ready to counsel people who have spiritual, emotional, or physical problems.
19. I can speak a foreign language fluently.
20. I can follow the conversation of a foreign language I never studied.
21. I am good at seeing many different sides to an issue and helping others see them as well.
22. Things I understand by faith are confirmed by facts, experiences, or information.
23. When I make a decision, I stand firmly behind it.
24. I enjoy being part of ministries that didn’t exist before.
25. I am an effective mentor to other Christians.
26. I see God at work in both good times and bad.
27. I am aware of God’s miracles every day.
28. Others tell me I am a good public speaker.
29. Working with others to minister to the physical needs of people is more enjoyable than doing the same thing by myself.
30. I have enough money to give generously to important causes.
31. I like to visit people wherever they are – at home, in the hospital, in prison, or in nursing homes.
32. I believe that the healing power of God manifests itself in many different ways, not just in physical healing.
33. I am able to identify the flaw in an argument, idea, or presentation.
34. I learn best when I can discuss what I read in Scripture and share insights and ideas with others.
35. I am good at attending to the ‘busy work’ that others tend not to enjoy.
36. An invitation to Christian discipleship should be extended to people whenever they gather to worship or study.
37. I give practical, material assistance to those who are in need.
38. I will work hard to support any group that is fully committed to a good cause.
39. Foreign languages are easy for me to learn.
40. I intuitively understand the meanings of most foreign words and phrases.
41. Others are surprised by the depth of my understanding and the integrity of my advice.
42. I am good at sensing other people’s moods and concerns just by being with them.
43. I am effective at organizing projects for ministry.
44. I desire the opportunity to be a missionary.
45. I feel a strong responsibility to point out dangerous or erroneous teachings to others.
46. I pray for people who have lost their faith.
47. I believe that God works miracles through the faith of Christian believers.
48. I find practical applications to real world situations when I read the Bible.
49. I find it easy to ask for help from others for worthy projects.
50. I feel a strong desire to give money to Christian ministries.
51. I want to help as many people as I can, regardless of the reason for their need.
52. I pray for healing for the sick and afflicted.
53. I know when a preacher or speaker is accurately presenting the gospel or spiritual teaching.
54. It troubles me when people are misled or persuaded by inaccurate, biased, or false messages about the Christian faith.
55. I give whatever time and energy is needed to finish a project or meet a deadline.
56. I feel comfortable sharing the importance of Christian belief with non-Christians.
57. I prefer working in the background rather than in the spotlight.
58. I am patient and tolerant of others who are less mature in their spiritual development.
59. I communicate easily with members of other races, cultures, or generations.
60. I understand and easily accept the values, behaviors, and interests of generations other than my own.
61. When others seek out my counsel or advice, I am confident that what I say will be helpful and valuable.
62. People are surprised by how well I understand them.
63. I offer good leadership to a project or group.
64. It is easy for me to share my faith with people from other cultures and foreign lands.
65. I strive to create harmony and unity whenever I am part of a group.
66. I trust in the promises of God, even when they are improbable or unlikely.
67. I feel the power and presence of God’s Holy Spirit when I pray.
68. My faith gives me the courage to speak out, even to those in positions of authority.
69. I design and plan strategies for ministry both in and beyond the church.
70. I know whether or not an appeal for money is legitimate.
71. My compassion for others often takes precedence over my own personal needs.
72. I participate in the healing of others through prayer.
73. I intuitively sense elements of truth or error in other people’s teachings.
74. I enjoy creating lessons, classes, and projects that illuminate and illustrate biblical truths.
75. Pastors and other key church leaders seek my opinions and advice on important issues.
76. I feel comfortable talking about my faith in non-Christian settings.
77. I make sure that everything runs as smoothly as possible.
78. People are willing to listen to what I say because they understand that I have their best interests in mind.
79. I communicate well with everyone, no matter how different from me they might be.
80. I am able to interpret what someone says to others who do not understand.
81. God grants me insights into the significant decisions that other people struggle with.
82. My knowledge of the Bible and spiritual teachings provide me with answers to many of life’s questions.
83. I help others discover, develop, and use their spiritual gifts.
84. I am proud to let people know I am a Christian everywhere I go.
85. I like helping others apply Christian principles and practices to their daily lives.
86. When I pray my prayer becomes a channel for God’s grace to meet other people’s needs.
87. God uses us as instruments of spiritual and supernatural power.
88. I see how biblical truths apply as much to today’s world as they did in their original context.
89. Others refer to me as an effective leader.
90. I seek the counsel of family, friends, or my spiritual community when I make a donation to charity or church.
91. I listen to those who need someone to talk to.
92. When I pray, I specifically name those who are in physical, spiritual, or emotional need.
93. I know when a Christian leader is more ‘self-interested’ than focused on God.
94. I require evidence or proof before I accept something as valid or true.
95. I am a better assistant than leader.
96. The idea of sharing the gospel with others is very exciting to me.
97. It is of great importance to me that my actions make other people’s lives easier or better.
98. People go out of their way to please me.
99. I can explain my spiritual practices to people of other cultures and backgrounds.
100. I understand the meaning and significance of foreign rituals and practices, and can help interpret them for others.
101. I know some things without fully understanding how I know them.
102. I see potential problems that others are unaware of.
103. I focus on the ‘big picture’ instead of the details.
104. I am comfortable with non-Christian lifestyles and customs.
105. I look for ways to help others grow as Christian disciples.
106. I spend long periods of time in prayer.
107. I pray for things that other people feel are impossible.
108. I enjoy showing people how the Bible relates to everyday life.
109. I enjoy participating in ministries for the poor, needy, and marginalized.
110. I am a cheerful giver of money.
111. I am drawn to people suffering physical, emotional, or spiritual pain.
112. When I pray for someone’s healing, I do not put limits or restrictions on how God might work in that person’s life (I do not believe that a physical healing miracle is the only answer to prayer).
113. I know when people are speaking by the power of God’s Holy Spirit.
114. I see and understand the connections between the Old and New Testaments.
115. Being thanked is not important to me; I serve regardless of recognition.
116. It is important to me to introduce others to God and Jesus Christ.
117. I am more interested in meeting people’s physical needs than their spiritual needs.
118. People seek out my opinion and advice on personal matters.
119. I can speak (or sign) a language that I never formally studied.
120. I am accepting of thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors of other people even when they are contrary to my own. Spiritual Gifts Inventory Statements
121. I have a clear sense of the choices other people should make.
122. My intuitions are strong, clear, and correct.
123. I work best under pressure.
124. I would like to represent the church in a foreign country.
125. When Christians lose faith, it is my responsibility to try to help them recover it.
126. Others tell me that I have a strong faith.
127. When I pray, I petition God to change present circumstances.
128. I speak the truth, even when what I say is unpopular or divisive.
129. In groups, I emerge as a leader.
130. My money management skills are of value to a church or group.
131. I look for people who are suffering to offer my help to them.
132. Others have told me that I have a healing touch or presence.
133. I am deeply troubled by spiritual teachings that lack a solid theological or biblical basis.
134. I am energized and excited when I teach others.
135. I enjoy making work easier for other people.
136. It is easy for me to extend an invitation to others to make a commitment to Christ.
137. I prefer doing a job to planning a job
138. Others tell me that I am a good listener and counselor.
139. I am able to communicate my faith and beliefs to people who speak other languages.
140. I feel a kinship and connection to people of other faiths and cultures.
141. When I am faced with hard life decisions, I turn to the Bible for guidance.
142. I can sense when people are upset or angry, no matter how well they try to hide their feelings.
143. I am a good judge of other people’s gifts, skills, and passions for ministry and service.
144. I want to learn a new language to enable me to be in ministry in a foreign land.
145. I enjoy working with those who are new to the Christian faith.
146. I see the image of God in every person I meet.
147. I believe prayer yields tangible results, not just a good feeling or spiritual satisfaction.
148. I talk to people about their beliefs concerning salvation, the afterlife, and God’s will.
149. I like directing and leading projects better than participating in them.
150. My financial giving is anonymous.
151. I reach out to people who are in trouble.
152. When I see people in pain, I immediately pray for them.
153. I know when a person is being dishonest.
154. I would rather read Scripture or theology than inspirational stories or Christian fiction.
155. I like having a task defined for me rather than having to figure out a task for myself.
156. I tell people what Christ has done in my life.
157. I will do what I believe is right, even if it means that I have to break the rules.
158. I challenge people with hard truths and discomforting information, even when it makes me unpopular.
159. I am called to share my faith with other cultures, races, and faith traditions.
160. I have the ability to automatically translate or interpret foreign words and phrases.
161. God allows me to see the world from God’s own perspective.
162. I am able to apply difficult biblical concepts to real-world situations.
163. I encourage others to use their gifts and talents to serve people beyond the church.
164. I seek the opportunity to share the gospel with those outside the Christian faith or those who have not heard it before.
165. I guide others in their discipleship journey and spiritual growth.
166. I find that God’s promises in the Bible have widespread validity in today’s world.
167. I help others see the miraculous in ordinary, everyday experiences.
168. The Bible speaks directly to the political, economic, and justice issues of our day.
169. People say that I am well organized.
170. There is no limit to what I am willing to give to or do for others.
171. I am very sensitive to the feelings of others.
172. I encourage people to pray for the sick or afflicted.
173. I find inspirational and spiritual meaning in secular books, films, speeches, and programs.
174. I primarily read the Bible to learn and understand God’s will.
175. I prefer following to leading.
176. I invite others to become active in a Christian faith community.
177. I enjoy doing jobs that other people consider less important.
178. I am first to offer an encouraging or supportive word to others.
179. I have spoken a language without knowing what it was.
180. I am able to share complex theological ideas with people of other races, cultures, and backgrounds.
181. People tell me they are impressed by my insights.
182. I look at issues from as many different points of view as possible.
183. I enjoy organizing and managing human and material resources to accomplish a goal.
184. I study other cultures and traditions to more effectively relate to people who are different from me.
185. I want to get to know the people I serve and care for.
186. Even when I grow discouraged, I never doubt or lack trust in God.
187. My first reaction to problems or difficulties is to pray.
188. I believe that God speaks through me.
189. I experience God more in day-to-day living than in prayer, Bible reading, or going to church.
190. I am prepared to give financial support to, or help raise funds for, any cause I believe in.
191. Physical touch or the laying on of hands is an important part of spiritual healing.
192. My faith is made strong by the miracles of God I witness in our world.
193. I am able to help people gain a clearer understanding of God and the Bible.
194. I enjoy creating lessons, resources, and tools for studying and discussing the Bible and the Christian faith.
195. I make sure preparations are made so that meetings, programs, services, and projects run as smoothly as possible.
196. I am more effective sharing my faith one-on-one than in front of a large group or crowd.
197. My ministry is in my actions and behaviors more than in my words.
198. I help people develop spiritual practices and disciplines that build their faith.
199. People who speak other languages have little trouble communicating with me.
200. I feel that God is leading me to involvement with other cultures, races, generations, and backgrounds.

Once you have completed the entire survey, total each horizontal line of the score sheet. Enter the total number in the boldface column at the end of the row. Your top score (scores if there is a tie) is your primary gift. The other two scores are secondary, or complementary, gifts. You can match the numbers on the score sheet with the names of the gifts using the “Spiritual Gifts Inventory Key and Definitions” handout, which also gives descriptions of each gift.

For congregations, tally the number of individuals who discovered each of the gifts as either a primary or secondary gift. The top three primary gifts provide the core congregational giftedness. The next four gifts (whether primary or secondary) provide secondary or complementary giftedness. These seven can offer an indication of the gifts for ministry within a particular congregation. (Dick & Dick, 2011, p. 31-37)
Table 22

**Spiritual Gifts Inventory**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7-Always</th>
<th>6-Almost</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>5-often</th>
<th>4-Sometime</th>
<th>3-Rarely</th>
<th>2-Almost Never</th>
<th>1-Never</th>
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Name:
REFERENCE LIST


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Summers, O. E. (2008) What is God up to? Why earth? Why eternity? Retrieved 10 June 2014, from http://books.google.co.ke/books?id=_S1IwzVMPygC&pg=PA214&dq=As+Jesus+walked+beside+the+Sea+of+Galilee,+he+saw+Simon+and+his+brother+Andrew+casting+a+net+into+the+lake,+for+they+were+fishermen&hl=en&sa=X&ei=TwafU6PnC8jB0QXD20net%20into%20the%20lake%2C%20for%20they%20were%20fishermen&f=false


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2006 Gasiho District Pastor, East Rwanda Association
2003-2005 ASPESKA District Pastor, East Rwanda Association
1997-2000 Accountant at BUKA Secondary School
1993-1994 Teacher at Mbandari Adventist Primary School