

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Doctor of Ministry
Emphasis on Discipleship

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: A STRATEGY FOR DISCIPLING SABBATH SCHOOL SMALL GROUP LEADERS IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH, NGOMA, RWANDA

Researcher: Abidan Ruhongeka

Primary adviser: Sampson M. Nwaomah, PhD

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Problem

This dissertation analyzes the impact of the Sabbath School small groups in discipleship. The experience and the observation disclosed that the Sabbath School small groups are not discipling the members of Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church as it is expected.

Purpose

This project's goal is to create a training curriculum for Sabbath School small group leaders, put it into practice, and then assess it to see how well it promotes discipleship. Discipling the leaders of the Sabbath School small groups is the proper way to disciple the participants. The similar approach was utilized by God in the

Bible; before beginning any significant action for His people, He first trained the leaders. Moses' pre-mission preparation is a classic illustration of how to prepare. Therefore, it's crucial to disciple the Sabbath School small group leaders using the Bible approach before releasing them.

Method

The researcher used a qualitative approach to train the small group leaders in the Ngoma Seventh-Day Adventist congregation. The researcher created a program to train the Sabbath School small group leaders after analyzing the findings from focus group data and team observations. The Sabbath School small groups become an effective hub for discipleship when their leaders are disciplined. The program began on April 22, 2022, in the Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church, and it ended there on September 30, 2022. In order to disciple the Sabbath School small group leaders, a number of thorough training programs were implemented.

Result

The pre and post-focus groups' data examination outcomes were used to measure the program. The pre-program disclosed that the members of Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church believe that the poor quality of discipleship in the Sabbath School small groups is mainly the result of undisciplined Sabbath school small group leaders. The post-program discussion examination of data revealed that discipling the leaders of the small groups brought a positive change in discipleship and leadership in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the program has addressed difficulties with poor participation, discipleship, and leadership in the Sabbath School small group activities at the Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church. According to the program review, untrained small group leaders are to blame for the members' lack of discipleship and bad leadership. Success in leadership development is essential for success in discipleship.

Recommendations

More discoveries are needed. The project focused more on the adult and young adult Sabbath School small group leaders. But the children in the Sabbath School were not the focus. The research is needed to know what is going on in the children's Sabbath School and their challenges and find out how to minister to them effectively through the Sabbath School.

To disciple small group leaders is recommended to the churches that want to develop the Sabbath School small groups in discipleship. The success of Sabbath School small groups depends on the success of the church in discipling the leaders of the Sabbath School small groups.

Furthermore, the researcher suggests to churches that are willing to disciple church leaders consider this approach to disciple the Sabbath School small group leaders. This approach can be a way to develop many church leaders who can serve the church effectively in many capacities, with less cost.

To keep alive the Sabbath School small groups, it is necessary to disciple the Sabbath School small group leaders continually not just once but keep them growing and encourage them. It is also important to keep recruiting and training the new leaders to cover the gap that can occur in the leadership of the Sabbath School small

groups, because Sabbath School small group leaders can change responsibilities in their local church for many reasons. Therefore, to keep on training the new leaders is important.

Completing and keeping the records of the Sabbath School small group activities is important for the follow-up, the plan, and future research. How the local church in the Seventh-day Adventist Church keeps the records need further research.

Training and involving the Sabbath School small group members in personal evangelism is one of the objectives of the Sabbath School small groups. This area needs to be researched more to see how the Sabbath School small groups can be a center for church evangelism.

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A dissertation

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Doctor of Ministry

by

Ruhongeka Abidan

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APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

Primary Adviser
Sampson M. Nwaomah, PhD

Programme Director, DMin
Jongimpi Papu, PhD

Secondary Adviser
Rei Kesis, PhD

Dean, Theological Seminary
Feliks Ponyatovskiy, PhD

External Examiner
Herbert Ndlovu, DMin

Adventist University of Africa

Date: May 2023

This dissertation is dedicated to my dear wife Junis Mukamurangwa
and my children Kevin Ruhongeka, Ivan Manzi Ruhongeka,
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all the people who supported
me to accomplish it.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The mission of Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church is to follow Jesus and make disciples for Him, as recommended by Jesus through the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20). Making disciples as defined by the Great Commission is not an event, it is rather a process, it is not either an option for a follower of Jesus, it is a personal imperative “Go therefore and make disciples” (Matt 28:19). A true disciple of Jesus makes disciples for Him, this is a Great Commission to every true disciple of Jesus. Making disciples is a way of living a Christian life for a true disciple of Jesus. Making disciples is following the steps of Christ (John 17:18).

In the Christian Church, Jesus is both the originator and the example of creating disciples. Jesus used a small-group approach to train His followers and future Christian Church leaders. In order to prepare them, equip them, and send them afterward, Jesus called and appointed a group of 12 disciples to accompany Him (Mark 3:13–19; Matt 10:1). The members of that tiny group were Jesus' disciples, who served as both the group's leader and educator. Jesus used leaders as His first-line of discipleship before sending them out to make disciples of others. A small group of 12 people participated in the actual discipleship.

Jesus invited, equipped, and sent His disciples out to disciple others in small groups (Mark 3:13–15). He was copied by His followers (Acts 2:46–47). The early church leaders emulated Jesus' approach to ministry. Spending much of his time

with the twelve apostles, Jesus spent the majority of His ministry focusing on small group leadership. In the book of Mark, 51 percent of Jesus' remarks are addressed to the apostles.”¹ The early Christian Church got larger and larger because of Jesus' approach of training small group leaders (Acts 2:46-47; 5:14). Jesus expected his disciples to do what He had done for them after preparing them (John 17:18), and to lead others to God .

The way the Christian Church began its work of producing disciples by employing small groups is the way the process should continue. From the time of Jesus up until the present and until the end, the establishment of little groups in the Christian Church has been divine. The ministry of the small group is divine, according to Ellen G. White. “One who cannot err has presented to me the formation of small companies as the basis of Christian effort.”² The Scriptures, particularly the ministry of Jesus on earth and the ministry of His disciples in the early Christian Church, have made small group ministry clear.

The history of the Christian Church demonstrates the benefits of training small group leaders in the discipleship process. The Ngoma SDA Church employs a variety of strategies to develop its members and make disciples. The ministry of small groups is one of them. This comprises Sabbath School, Women's Ministries, Family Ministries, Children's Ministries, Adventist Youth Ministries, and numerous more ministries. If properly organized and led, Sabbath School Small Groups have more potential to serve as the church's educational system for forming church members.

¹ M. Scott Boren and Don Tillman, *Making Cell Groups Work: Navigating the Transformation to a Cell-Based Church* (Houston, TX: Cell Group Resources, 2002), 16-17.

² Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1948) 7:21-22.

Description of the Ministry Context

When I began going to Ngoma SDA Church in 2013 as a minister, I discovered that there weren't enough leaders to carry out and oversee the initiatives created to raise up and prepare churchgoers for mission. According to a pastoral observation, the absence of skilled and dedicated leaders is the cause of the members' lack of readiness for following Jesus and, as a result, their lack of commitment to serving Him.

According to my observations over the last ten years, roughly 55% of the church members who are present regularly attend Sabbath service at the Ngoma SDA church. About 30% of people participate in Sabbath School small groups. There are now 14 adult and youth small groups at the Ngoma SDA congregation. Small groups for Sabbath School are responsible for encouraging members to study the Bible using the lesson plan, preparing them for the mission, and fostering a sense of community among them.

A plan is required to make it easier for church members to participate in the activities that nurture, connect, and disciple them for the mission.

Statement of the Problem

One of the crucial components of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's nurturing program, particularly during the Sabbath worship program, is the Sabbath School small groups. The church uses small groups as a means of fostering and baptizing new believers. However, according to the Ngoma SDA church's record of Sabbath School small groups, the number of churchgoers who attend these action units is currently less than half that of the regular churchgoers, and attendance is steadily declining. The Ngoma SDA church board further claims that due to weak

leadership, small groups are unable to fulfill their duty of nurturing and making disciples. As a result, there is a lack of spiritual development.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this project is to develop a training program that will disciple, equip the Sabbath School small group leaders in Ngoma SDA church. The training program will enable them to effectively lead the Sabbath School small groups, by discipling its members, transform them, and lead them to follow Jesus and make disciples. Then the program will be implemented and evaluated to realize its effectiveness.

Justification

In the Ngoma SDA Church, there are Sabbath School small groups, however they are ineffective, according to a pastoral observation. The Ngoma SDA Church's Sabbath school small groups are organized, the quarterly lesson studies are affordable, and a specific period of time, usually 45 minutes, is set up each Sabbath for small group activities. However, the small groups are not making disciples as intended. Since 2013, the pastor at the Ngoma SDA Church has noticed a decline in small group attendance.

There is a conviction that using a plan to train small group leaders will result in leaders and church members growing spiritually, building relationships among them, getting more involved in the mission.

Delimitations

Even though the issue affects numerous churches in South Rwanda Field, the initiative was only focused on Ngoma SDA church. The initiative was tied to the churchgoers through the research. Despite the need for improvement in many areas of

church leadership, this project concentrated on training youth and adult Sabbath School small group leaders.

Description of the Dissertation Process

The introduction was covered in the first chapter. The second chapter was primarily concerned with the scriptural basis for training small group leaders. In chapter three, the study looked at other writings on small group leadership written by other authors to see what they had to say about disciplining the small group leaders. Discipleship, mentoring, and leadership are the main topics of the literature review.

The study of the ministry context of the Ngoma church is covered in chapter 4, along with the research strategy. Chapter 4 also described the context and worldview of the community as they relate to the ministry in the Ngoma SDA church. The South Rwanda Field and the leadership of the Ngoma SDA church were consulted for approval to carry out the research. People who worked with the researcher to carry out the research were chosen and trained. The persons chosen for the interviews are divided into three focus groups: All of the church Elders, the Sabbath School Superintendent, and Associates make up the first group. The leaders of the youth-adult small groups make up the second focus group. The final focus group is made up of 10 carefully chosen participants. The strategy was developed and implemented by training the 14 leaders of the small groups, the Sabbath School Superintendent and two associates, and all five church elders. Finally, the program was evaluated to see its effectiveness.

Chapter Five focused on the implementation of the program step by step to reach the goal of the program. In chapter six the research gave conclusions, summary, and proposed recommendations. The expectation for the program to be finished is May 2023.

Expectation

The Sabbath School small groups contributed to the church's development of more skilled, devoted, and spiritual leaders as a result of this endeavor. Second, the Sabbath School small groups developed into a social setting. Third, the members' spiritual development was aided by the Sabbath School small groups. Fourth, participation in the mission helped the Sabbath School small group members. Fifth, the small groups assisted in fostering the new members' spiritual development and sense of mission. Sixth, it aided in the decentralization of church activities because the Sabbath School group leaders were better equipped to manage various church duties inside the small groups. Finally, this program turned the small groups become the focal point of disciple-making.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR DISCIPLINING SMALL GROUP LEADERS

This chapter establishes a biblical foundation for developing leaders who can disciple others by drawing from the Old and New Testaments and Ellen G. White's writings. Strategies for helping to disciple church leaders, and small group leaders in particular, were built on top of this foundation.

The church leadership must imitate and follow God's example in order to carry out the call and mission that Jesus gave to His chosen people (Matt 28:18–20; 1 Pet 2:9). The biblical God takes His time to train the leaders who will guide His people in carrying out His mission. Jesus gave His followers the tools they needed to become effective disciples before He founded the Christian church (Matt 10:1).

Understanding Biblical Foundations on the Leadership and the Community

How God Starts a Community of Believers

God first calls individuals or groups of individuals to lead the mission when He wants to start a community of believers. Then He equips and empowers them so they can finish the job. Both in the Old and the New Testaments, there are numerous instances where God called and prepared the people before sending them on a mission. All Christians, but especially the nation of Israel, have Abraham as their father (Gen 12:1-2). Abraham was called to this role and was ready for it. In order to prepare Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, God selected him and led him on a

difficult journey (Exod 3). To lead the Israelites into the promised land, Joshua was selected by God and prepared under Moses' guidance (Josh 1:1–2). God selected Samuel as a prophet and a judge of His people, and he was trained since he was a child for that noble service (1 Sam 3:1-21). David was chosen and prepared through challenges to be the king of Israel (1 Sam 16:13).

In the New Testament, Jesus chose His disciples and trained them for three years before they launched the Christian Church (Matt. 10). Acts 9:1-31 and Gal 1:16–18 both describe how Jesus selected Paul and led him on a journey to prepare him for his mission among the Gentiles. “In the account of Saul's conversion, significant truths are revealed to us that we ought to always remember.

Christ personally took Saul into his presence. He was a person that Christ chose to be a “chosen vessel” for Him and was designated for a very significant task, but the Lord did not immediately reveal the task that had been given to him.”¹ God desires to be connected with a person for change and training before sending them on a mission. The impact on body, mind, and soul is beyond estimation when the human mind is brought into communication with the mind of God, the finite with the Infinite. The best education can be found in such communion. It is God's strategy for growth. God interacted with Paul before sending him on the mission, changed him, and provided for his education so that he would be more suitable.

When God wants to carry out a mission among his people, He begins by choosing, calling, and preparing leaders who are fit for the task. The Bible frequently repeats a pattern about the call to leadership. God did not appeal to the masses when He wanted to create His own nation. Abraham was the one leader he singled out. When He wished to free His people from slavery in Egypt, He didn't lead them all together; instead, He appointed Moses as their leader. God always enlisted a leader to

take the lead whenever He intended to accomplish something bigger. Prior to beginning a community, God chooses, summons, and prepares the leaders.

The Role of the Leadership in the Community

When God has a great mission for a community, He starts with the call of the leader. Why? The leadership in the Bible plays a big role in the life of a community of believers. If the leadership fails to fulfill his responsibility to direct the community in the way of the Lord and unite it, the community suffers. “Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem err, and to do worse than the heathen” (2 Chron 33:9).

When you start a community and you want it to stay united in the mission and united with God, you need to think twice about the selection, the preparation and empowering of its leadership in the way and will of the Lord through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. “Among the issues that can divide a Christian community is the behavior of the leader(s).”¹ A community cannot stay connected together and connected to the mission without having the leaders connected to God.

The success of the given mission depends on the church's leadership. The church is losing power in this day of unheard-of potential and abundant resources. The absence of leadership is the main cause. Leadership is crucial in everything. The purpose of leadership is to bring people together to pursue a common purpose and goal.

¹ E. A. Martens, “Community,” *Global Dictionary of Theology: A Resource for the Worldwide Church (GDT)*, eds. William A. Dyrness and Veli-Matti Karkainen (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 191.

The Analogy of the Three, Branches and the Community

Jesus compares the relationship that should exist between Himself and his disciples and amongst the disciples using the analogy of the relationship between the branches and the tree. “I am the genuine vine; you are the branches, and My Father is the one who tends the vine. You cannot accomplish anything without Me, so whomever abides in Me, I in him, brings many fruits” (John 15:1,5). Jesus claims that the disciples would produce a great deal of fruit because of their relationship. A branch receives life from the tree; all other branches share this life and are connected to it through the tree. According to Jesus, in order to be successful, you must first be connected to Him and then through Him.

The community faces a great challenge from individualism; instead of each person going his own way, everyone should submit to one another. In order for a community to survive, individuals must give up their independence. Although they have merit, the principles of “rugged individualism” or self-reliance should be moderated. Community ideals like deference and compassion lay the foundation. Each member of the community must give up their unique characteristics and look for the common objectives, purposes, and missions of the group while yet maintaining their individuality. The leadership in the Bible that the Holy Spirit directs is centered on shared objectives and missions as one body (1 Cor 1:12–17). If you are not connected to Jesus and to each other through Jesus, just as a branch is connected to a tree and to other branches through the tree, you cannot serve effectively. In the Bible, a spiritual leader succeeds through connecting with others rather than by exercising authority over a group of people.

How to Lead the Community of Believers

In the Bible, the community's leadership does not stand apart from or above the community. The community is the only thing that the leaders in the Bible have been called to do. According to Jesus' teachings for His disciples in Matthew 20:25–28, Matthew 18:4, and Phillipians 2:5-8, the ultimate measure of greatness is to serve rather than to govern.

Over against the exalted and powerful terms used for worldly rulership, Jesus substitutes ... (diakonos, 'deacon,' lit, a table servant, waiter or waitress, also used as a technical term for Christian ministry) and ...doulos, lit, a 'slave'). Rather than replacing the image of kingship (Potentially oppressive and always so in human kingdoms), Matthew reinterprets it in terms of Jesus as the revelation of God.²

Jesus does not place one leader over another when He uses the terms “diakonos” and “doulos” to describe the position of the leader in the community; rather, he is just serving them. There is no higher office in the kingdom of God than this, and every minister and Christian in general is a “deacon” who has a duty to assist others. In the kingdom of God, serving is a noble and superior work, and success will be determined by how well one performs this task (Matt. 18:4). How we serve, not how we rule, is the true test of success for God's children. In the Bible, the role of the leader is to serve the community, not to dominate it. It is incredible to consider how the exalted Lord became obedient to the manger and the crucifixion. The extent of His shame revealed His majesty. And it must be the case for us. Jesus gave us a good pattern to follow, one that emphasizes serving and being a part of the society rather than ruling it.

² Walter R. Bowie, Johnn Knox, George A. Buttrick, and Paul Scherer, “Exposition of the Book of Luke,” *The New Interpreter's Bible (NIB)*, ed. George A. Buttrick (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1954), 8:398.

Discipling Leaders in the Old Testament

This section primarily focuses on how God travels with those He calls and equips them for service. God empowers them, walks alongside them, and provides them with the tools they need to take on leadership roles. Before sending someone on a mission, there is a transformational relationship and empowerment. It is a process of becoming ready to serve. Before dispatching and throughout the assignment are spent on preparation.

According to the Bible, the timing of leadership development varies from person to person and also depends on the purpose. According to the Bible, certain people were called and prepared from an early age, while others received their call and preparation as adults (Gen 12:1-3; Exod 2; Deut 31:7,8; 1 Sam 2:18; 1 Sam 3:1-21; Gen. 12:1-2,4). The constant factor among all, regardless of when the call and preparation began, was that everyone underwent the transformative journey with God to match the mission. The examples from the Old Testament will take center stage in this section.

A Shared Leadership: God Delegated His Power after Creation

God created everything in Genesis, including people (Gen 1:1; 1:26). In Genesis 1:26, God granted humanity dominion over other living things. God gave Adam the task of giving names to the animals and birds after He had finished their creation (Gen 2:19). He was given the task of naming the animals and birds that God had made. He also gave humans the ability to reproduce (Gen 1:28). God's nature as the Creator is to give and to enable others to collaborate with Him.

What does it mean for humans to have “dominion”? to possess other creations and exercise control over them? No. It is crucial to understand that the leadership they

have received was not for exploitation but rather to serve. The term “exploitation” refers to taking advantage of the natural world, whereas “stewardship” refers to sharing in the divine rule that has been given to humanity because they were created in God's image and are therefore capable of differentiating between exploitation and stewardship.

Call for Partnership: God’s Saving Plan

The calling is where the search for a leader begins. According to the Bible, God was active in calling leaders to serve Him and dispatching them on missions to find His lost sheep after humans fell (Gen 12:1-3; Exod 2). In Genesis 1 and 2, the Bible reveals that God is the Originator and the Creator of all things. The sole source of life in the universe is God. The Hebrew word “bara,” which is used to designate an act of God rather than a human, is the source of the verb “to create.” The book of Genesis tells us that God is the origin of life on earth and the foundation of the earth, not only that it happened in the past.

Following the sin, God decided to reclaim His people and launch a mission to find lost humans and bring them back into a saving connection with Him (Gen 3:15; 12:1-3; John 3:16; Rev 21:1–5). According to Genesis 3:15's account of God's promises following transgression, the “seed” will crush the serpent's head. According to the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, God the creator carried out His plan to save his creation, which had rebelled against Him. The word “seed” was used in the singular, signifying a single person rather than a large group of the woman's offspring working together to crush the serpent's head. God is at work to save His lost children.”These observations clearly show that in this pronouncement is compressed the record of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, a battle that began in

heaven.”³ The war that started in heaven, continued on the earth between Christ and Satan.

God is at war to save the human being who is fallen into sin. God is the owner of everything and can do everything, without any human support, (Job 41:11, Ps 24:1). However, God chose to call human beings to work with Him to fulfill His will to save the lost human beings. “God could have accomplished His goal of redeeming sinners without the assistance of man, but He realized that man could not be happy without participating in the great job, so He developed the plan to enroll him as His coworker..”⁴ It was a privilege given to a human being to serve God, and it is for his good. Throughout the Bible, God is busy calling leaders by his grace and preparing them to cooperate with him to save the lost human being. Let's explore some examples of the people called and prepared by God to partner with Himself, in His mission.

When God called Abraham, He said to him that his descendants would go into exile in Egypt before coming to inherit Canaan after four generations. God called Moses to partner with Him to fulfill the promises given to Abraham (Exod 3:1-22). “Yahweh’s expression; ‘he has come down,’ that is from the place of his dwelling above heavens to this place of his appearance to Moses, and is about to ‘snatch’ his people forth from the grip of Egyptian power. This verb,, means ‘to tear away from, to snatch forth,’ often in the OT with overtones of violence in rescue.”⁵ It is clear in the Bible, that no human being has ever initiated the plan or mission for

³ “It Shall Bruise Thy Head” [Gen 3:12], *SDABC*, 1:233.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1940), 14.

⁵ John I. Durham, *Genesis*, Word Biblical Commentary 3 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 32.

salvation, only God does. God is busy calling leaders, training them, and commissioning them, to work with Him to save His people.

There is no partiality when God called a leader to send and to partner with. Every person created by God is valuable in his eyes (Col 3:25; John 3:16), and God can use everyone according to his will. But God is looking for anyone ready to surrender and follow Him and walk with Him. It is God's mission, not a human mission. "All is done in the name and by the authority of Christ. Christ is the fountain; the church is the channel of communication."⁶ If someone surrenders himself to God, He will partner with him. The life of Moses serves as a living example.

Preparation for Mission: Moses' Training

The Bible describes how God goes on a transformational journey with those He chooses for mission. Although God is aware of how crucial the skills are, they are insufficient to carry out his calling. He therefore pledged to never leave anyone He calls alone. God has promised to go with them, to bless them, and to give them strength, so He never calls someone and then sends them on their own. In other words, according to Genesis 15:1, Exodus 3:12, and Matthew 28:20, God travels with whomever He summons. The missionary journey of Moses with God will be the main agenda of this section.

Laying Foundation: Moses' Preparation with His Parents

According to what the Bible says, a person who wants to be a spiritual leader must have a solid foundation from an early age. As stated in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not stray from it." The

⁶ White, *Acts of the Apostles* [CD ROM], 122.

foundation for future responsibilities and a spiritual life is laid throughout the formative years. “The early teaching of children can be given an excessive amount of significance. The lessons acquired and the habits developed throughout early childhood have a greater impact on character development and life orientation than all of the education and training received in later years.”⁷ God knows the conclusion from the beginning, therefore preparing for leadership is a journey that begins even before conception (Jer 1:5).

God's purpose for our lives is revealed through Moses' entire life, from conception to passing away. Moses' mother's role, in particular, revealed her belief in God's purpose for them. His mother came up with a scheme so she could follow the text of the king's order to not take the child's life because she believed that God would intervene to save his life. She would put all her effort into it and leave the rest to God. She was confident and prepared to play her part as a human in good faith while leaving the rest in the care of the All-Powerful. The fact that Moses' life was preserved from the beginning demonstrated God's intention for him and his cooperation with Moses was raised by his parents, and received the basic spiritual training on the faith of the people of Israel, at a young age (Exod 2:4-10).

The mother's faith was rewarded since God had heard her prayers. She started working on her now-safe and-happily completed chore out of a great sense of thankfulness. She diligently enhanced her chance to raise her child in a God-centered environment. She had faith that he had been kept around for important job. About 12 years passed while the child was with the mother. The mother consented to follow

⁷ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 2009), 380.

God's guidance in order to ensure Moses' survival and upbringing. She successfully carried out her part in keeping the faith.

Skills Training: Moses' Preparation in the Palace

Moses acquired intellectual and military training in the palace of the king of Egypt because the instruction he had received about the religion of the God of Israel at home was insufficient. (Exod 2:11-15). Academic training and education do not conflict with religious belief; rather, they complete it. True education does not discount the importance of acquiring scientific or literary knowledge. (Exod 2:10) Moses learned from the Egyptian palace. What Moses learned from his family was completed by his instruction at the palace.

How did Moses get to the palace for instruction? Everything that God has made can be used to further his goals. God had overturned the very decision that would have killed the Hebrew children in order to prepare the next ruler of His people. We must utilize and enhance what God has provided for us. Because they wait for God to complete tasks that He has given them the ability to complete on their own, many people never reach the position that they might occupy. The strictest mental and moral training is required of everyone who is suited for usefulness, and God will help them by combining divine strength with human effort. Moses took advantage of the chance to sharpen his mental skills. He still needed more training “Moses was not prepared for his great work. He had yet to learn the same lesson of faith that Abraham and Jacob had been taught- not to rely upon human strength or wisdom, but upon the power of God for the fulfillment of His promises.”⁸ Without

⁸ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 2009), 247.

relying on God, it is impossible to fulfill His call, this should be fundamental for anyone in mission with God.

Depending on God: Moses' Preparation in Midian

The training of Moses with his mother and that he received in the Pharaoh's palace were important but were incomplete compared to the responsibility he was going to undertake. Moses had another journey of 40 years to walk with God and learn. Moses spent 40 years with his father-in-law. His father-in-law knew God. Moses got additional training from him as a worshiper of God. "The Lord directed his course, and he found a home with Jethro, the priest, and prince of Midian, who was also a worshiper of God."⁹ During that time, Moses learned to be humble, to quit the palace, a comfortable place with all facilities, and become a shepherd. He learned to live with nature, to love his sheep, to be patient with them, and to know how to take care of them and protect them.

Man would have dispensed with that long period of toil and obscurity, deeming it a great loss of time. But Infinite Wisdom called him who was to become the leader of his people to spend forty years in the humble work of a shepherd. The habits of caretaking, self-forgetfulness, and tender solicitude for his flock, thus developed, would prepare him to become the compassionate, longsuffering shepherd of Israel.¹⁰

We may think that forty years of training as a shepherd was a long period, but God was still shaping and preparing him for a great mission, as a shepherd of people who will give him a hard time as a leader.

⁹ White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 248.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 247-248.

I Will Be with You: Moses' Preparation with God

When Moses was called to lead the people of Israel from Egypt, God promised to be with him in this word” I will certainly be with you” (Exod 3:12). That was the response to Moses when he was looking at himself as the actor of the mission. “When Moses asked, who am I, God responds that he will accompany him and his plans will be accomplished. Israel will serve God in freedom. At this encounter Moses is commissioned for service, a major turning point in the life of Moses.”¹¹ This was a transforming peak in the life of leadership of Moses. He was starting a new journey walking with God on a mission. “No greater promise can come to a leader of God’s people than that given to Moses at the time he was called.”¹² To know that promise that God is with someone He calls is fundamental for a leader who is called to lead the community of God’s people.

Before sending a leader on a mission, God takes the time to guide him through the process of transformation, mold him, and equip him with the abilities and endurance required for the task. The Bible contains instances of God calling people and accompanying them on their transformational journey before releasing them to perform their task. According to what the Bible says, some people needed quite a while, while others only needed a short while. However, when God sends someone on a mission, He empowers that person and goes with them (Gen 15:1; Exod 3:12; 4:12, Matt 28:18–20).

The culmination of his preparation for his assignment is this. God appeared to him and personally showed Himself to him after he had gone through numerous

¹¹ Jack W. Hayford, *New Spirit Filled Life Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Bibles, 2002), 80.

¹² “I Will Be with Thee” [Exod 2:12], *SDABC*, 1:511.

experiences that had molded him. God is never in a rush to send, but he is actively preparing His people for mission, as seen by the statement that, “The 40 years in Midian has taught him humility and filled with utter distrust of self.”¹³ Moses was sufficiently humble and lacking in self-confidence after 40 years of training in the jungle. He was prepared to follow God on his assignment this time. Moses was personally visited by God, who also spoke with him and gave him instructions for the task. God provided him with a comprehensive overview and detailed instructions for his entire assignment (Exod 3:15-22). Direction was also provided regarding the preparations they needed to undertake for the trip. Before beginning the mission, he needed to be aware of the Owner's strategy and wishes.

Before dispatching Moses, God assured him with the consoling words, “I will certainly be with you” (Exod 3:12). God never sends anyone on a mission by themselves; rather, He stays with him and goes with him (Matt 28:20). Moses' objection should be without merit if God has promised to be with him throughout this task, as He has assured Moses. The honor will belong to God if it is acknowledged that God is at work in a mission. The collaboration with others is not prohibited by God's presence or His revelation.

Team Leadership: Moses' Preparation with Elders and Jethro's Advice

Moses was ultimately sent on a mission after an 80-year preparation and training odyssey that took him from his home to a palace and then from the palace to the wilderness. However, God sent him in a group. The Bible repeatedly emphasizes that those who have been chosen to lead in God's vineyard are not expected to do it on

¹³ “Who Am I” [Exod 3:11], *SDABC*, 1:511.

their own, but rather to mentor and collaborate with others. God instructed Moses to first meet with the elders of the Israelites before traveling to Egypt to free His people from Egyptian servitude (Exod 3:16–18). First, God sent Moses instructions to gather the most eminent and upright members of Israel—elders who had long lamented their servitude—and to convey a message from God to them. He was then required to accompany the elders before the king. God wanted Moses to understand that he wasn't sent alone, he won't lead alone, and that he must work with people in the same way that he worked with God. God is not confined to just one individual. The chiefs of numerous families or tribes, each with one or more to preside over or govern over (6:14–15, 25; 12:21; Num 2), are referred to as “the elders of Israel” (v.16).

During the exodus from Egypt, Moses received a second piece of advice on working in a team. Moses returned with the Israelites to the promised land via the intervention of God. As the leader, Moses tried his best to guide the Israelites in understanding God's laws and judging them (Exod 18:16). When Moses' father-in-law paid him a visit, he observed Moses toiling diligently to judge the people and counsel them from daylight till night. People respected Moses because he was a man of God who had direct access to God. Everyone wanted to seek his assistance because of that trust.

As a constrained human, he was unable to find the time to weigh in on every situation. Moses was overworked, the people waited a long time for justice, and the elders were denied the chance to use their skills because he presided as judge over all things, all people, and all situations commonplace, religious, and legal. According to Exodus 18:17–18, what Moses was doing was bad for both him and the people he was serving. It is possible to act righteously but improperly. Making ensuring that the proper thing is done in the appropriate way is crucial and necessary.

Moses' father-in-law offered the suggestion to delegate authority after watching how he was leading the people (Exod 18:13–26). Sharing the burdens of leadership with others is beneficial and essential since, sometimes, when you are chosen to be the leader, you assume you will do everything by yourself. believing that God is more than just you. According to this passage, it is crucial for you and the people that you delegate responsibilities to your coworkers. Something revolutionary happened after Jethro confronted Moses over his leadership methods: Moses moved from merely ministering to leading. Instead of doing all the judging himself, he released other leaders to join him and lead according to their gifts. At this point, the government of Israel grew exponentially. Empowerment was happening... Notice the changes Moses made in his methods. He changed his way of thinking and working.¹⁴

The advice of Jethro to Moses shows how to apply team working principle. There are six sections in this scenario.

Sharing Responsibility

Accepting to share responsibilities with others is the first step towards teamwork (Exod 18:21). Humans have a finite amount of knowledge in both time and space. We must work with others and share responsibilities in order to be whole (Deut 1:9). Moses realized that he must delegate authority to others throughout his time as leader. Considering his limitations as a human, he was unable to carry out the duties of leadership by himself (Exod 18:17–18). Israel's population had expanded and was too large for him to manage by himself (Deut 1:9–18). He therefore followed his father-in-law's instruction to delegate duty to others.

¹⁴ Maxwell, *The Maxwell Leadership Bible*, 89.

He needs time and energy to deal with problems because he is the top leader and has a busy office. These problems call for a lot of wisdom from above. Those who have been given leadership roles in the church by God's providence should devote their time and energy to dealing with the more serious issues that call for particular insight and big-heartedness. God does not intend for such folks to be referred to for the resolution of trivial issues that others are more qualified to manage.¹⁵ There are some tasks that need to be assigned to others and shared with them in the leadership role.

The Effective Way to Share the Responsibility

The next step is to implement the practical method of duty sharing by breaking up the populace into smaller groups (Exod 18:21). When people are seated close to one another in small groups, they listen more, participate more, and feel comfortable. Moses took Jethro's advice to share responsibilities, which brought about peace and order. As instances and problems are dealt with swiftly and without delay in their society, sharing responsibilities in small groups will bring order.

Moses loved to teach others, yet sharing responsibility provided a resolution to that problem (Exod 18:16). People will study collectively and receive evaluations from one of them. The leader's load will be lessened by sharing responsibility (Exod 18:19).

Train Leaders from all People

Selecting a group of individuals from among all the people is the third step (Exod 18:21). Leaders should be established among all categories of people. The

¹⁵ White, *Acts of the Apostles* [CD ROM], 93.

development of leaders in every area where people live, in every language, in every culture, and in every context will be aided by training leaders from all groups of people.

Every thing needs salvation. The Gospel is to be preached to every country, tongue, and tribe in the proclamation of the three angels' message (Rev 14:6). All individuals from various tongues, nationalities, and tribes should be trained to become followers who will recruit new adherents in their environment.

Choose People Who Fear God

The fourth component is picking capable leaders. According to this chapter, being able means having fear of God, learning from Him, and making a commitment to follow Him and carry out His commands. Exodus 18:21 states, “You shall choose from among all the people able men, such as fearing God, men of integrity, detesting covetousness.” You cannot create the appropriate community if the wrong leader is chosen for the people. Those who rule or administer justice, judgment, and protection are to be God-fearing, dependable, and honest.

The Bible lays out requirements for choosing those who would lead God's people. The prerequisite for selecting leaders is that they must be wise and fear God (Exod 18:21). Moses was careful to pick men of dignity, good judgment, and experience as his helpers when he later chose 70 elders to share with him the duties of leadership. He explained some of the requirements that fit a man to be a wise ruler in the church in his charge to these elders at the time of their ordination. They didn't pick anyone, but they did pick those who are prepared to serve God, devoted to following Him, and exemplify His character.

Moses included other people in the process of selecting the leaders. Moses instructed the people on the attributes of the people that were required and then asked

them to choose the people from among themselves. From the person who will lead 1000 people to the one who will lead 10 people, they selected the members of the community to serve as leaders at all levels (Deut 1:9–18). Not only should the people be involved in the creation of the vision, but also in the selection of their leaders.

Training the Selected Leaders

The fifth step in this passage is the advice to train the people in the way of the Lord, how to walk the talk, and how to work effectively for God and His people (Exod 18:20-21). The advice given to Moses was not only to select people or to share responsibility with them, but Moses had to teach them. In addition to that, he was advised to show them the direction to follow, and how they should behave to fulfill the responsibility before they jump into the mission. “And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them how they must walk and the work they must do” (Exod 18:20). The selection of the leaders was just the starting point, not the end.

The designated leaders' leadership path included training as a crucial component. Moses was instructed to instruct them on how to serve the Lord if he wants them to succeed before they begin their new task. We can't just jump into the Lord's work and expect to succeed. The Lord wants intelligent, thoughtful men. Jesus wants collaborators, not error-makers. God desires morally upright and wise folks to carry out the vital task required for soul salvation. There will be no success if the chosen leaders are not trained, as our partnership with the Lord in his work demands order, reasoning, intelligence, and moral training.

Humans have been designed to develop intellectually, morally, socially, physically, and morally. When someone is chosen to lead in the Lord's vineyard, he need to be dedicated to the growth as well. Men in positions of responsibility ought to consistently advance. They must not base their decisions on outdated experiences or

the notion that becoming scientists is not vital. Despite being the most twisted and defenseless of God's creations when he first enters the world, man is nonetheless capable of ongoing improvement. It is possible to develop, so take use of it.

To be effective in the service of the Lord requires a firm decision and a plan for the training. "A resolute purpose, persistent industry, and careful economy of time will enable men to acquire knowledge and mental discipline which will qualify them for almost any position of influence and usefulness."¹⁶ The way to success in God's mission is not only selecting leaders but also training them for the mission.

Support the Appointed Leaders

Taking the important issue to the next level of leadership is the sixth phase. The leader continues to help and advise other leaders who are under his leadership, rather than dictating (Exod 18:22), therefore delegation does not entail giving up everything. As a coworker of Jesus, you must be patient with people you serve, not disdaining the simplicity of the task at hand but rather focusing on the fruitful outcome. Being patient with the people a leader works with is vital since they are still learning.

Mentoring the leader who is working under his direction is the job of the high level leader. Moses was encouraged not to abandon everything but to help them, take the important items, and share them with them in order to lessen the strain on his lower-level coworkers. And let them continually assess the populace. Then, since they will be carrying the burden alongside you, they will bring every significant matter to you (Exod 18:22). Giving up is not what delegation is, but rather training in burden and goal sharing.

¹⁶ Ellen G. White, *Christian Service*, Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM] (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2006), 224.3.

Depending on God for Decision

To seek God's advice in every decision is the seventh step, the foundation of all steps, and it is highly challenging because God is the mission's owner and the Almighty (Exod 18:19). For the leadership path to be effective, it must be under God's direction and guidance. Every person can be used by God in proportion to how much of the soul temple He can use to house His Spirit. A leader is merely a conduit through which God operates; in order to be effective and successful, a leader must be in tune with God.

The success of Moses was because he was not working alone but he was guided by God and he was working with God and with his fellow leader. He was also preparing and mentoring someone to take over his heavy responsibility.

Empowering Future Leaders: Moses' Preparation with Joshua

Although Moses was a superb leader, the Israelites did not follow him forever. Although God was granting his people victory, Moses was a strong leader who was well-respected by his followers (Deut 31:3-6). Go to the summit of Pisgah and lift your eyes because you are not permitted to cross this Jordan, God instructed Moses. However, give Joshua orders, support him, and give him strength because he will advance in front of this people (Deut. 3:27–28). Moses saw the value of investing time in discipling his successor while he is still in a position of authority.

Joshua was given authority by Moses before being given new responsibilities. Moses gave him confidence by collaborating with him and delegating tasks to him. While Moses was in charge of the Israelites, Joshua was working side by side with him (Exod 33:9–11). “He had served as Moses' prime minister during their time in the wilderness, and by his quiet, unassuming fidelity, his firmness to maintain the truth in

the face of danger, and other qualities, he had demonstrated his suitability to succeed Moses, even before he had been called to the position by the voice of God.”¹⁷

Moses also empowered him before the whole congregation (Num 27: 18-23, Deut 31:7-8; 1:23). “Through the laying on of hands by Moses, accompanied by a most impressive charge, Joshua was solemnly set apart as the leader of Israel.”¹⁸

Moses was glad that he has empowered someone.

Other Faithful Leaders Exist Out There: God’s Revelation to Elijah

One of the hindrances of not developing leaders is that there are people who believe that, there is no one to take over their responsibility. After all, they don’t see them around them and said “I am the only one remaining.” The same thought was in the mind of the prophet Elijah in the time of the King Ahab and his wife Jezebel, the people of Israel were worshiping other gods, and Elijah was persecuted. Elijah thought he was alone remaining, but God told him that he has people who didn’t worship Baal (1 Kgs 19:9-18). “Elijah had thought that he alone in Israel was a worshiper of the true God. But He who reads the hearts of all revealed to the prophet that there were many others who, through the long years of apostasy, had remained true to Him.”¹⁹ As a leader it is important to know that God might have other people who are ready to serve Him, what is needed, is to ask God to reveal who are they, then disciple them to work for God.

Elijah learned his lesson, began preparing the successor, finished the job, and left. He was Elisha's instructor (1 Kgs 19:19–21). “Ministry encompasses much more

¹⁷ White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 481.4.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 463.

¹⁹ Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2009), 171.

than simply spreading the gospel. It entails molding young men in the same way that Elijah molded Elisha, removing them from their routine chores and entrusting them with smaller tasks at first and greater ones as they develop strength and experience.”²⁰ The leader's job is to seek God's guidance and discover the best candidates to train, not to whine that there aren't enough people to carry out God's task.

Finding and training the successor is a noble task that should not be neglected because there are there. “Those who undertake this training of young workers are doing noble service. The Lord Himself co-operates with their efforts.”²¹ Those who don't train the successor refuse to cooperate with God.

Discipling Church Community Leaders in the New Testament

This section will explore the 3 years of the ministry of Jesus, especially the call, the preparation, and the empowerment of Jesus' disciples for ministry in a small group of twelve. This section will explore also, the ministry of disciples of Jesus particularly Paul, for training and equipping the local church leaders to take care of the community in the early Christian Church. The discipleship process is compared to the house building in this section.

The Preparation Before Calling Disciples: House Master Plan

Jesus started His preparation for public ministry in the community of Trinity, with the baptism and anointment to the ministry by the Holy Spirit, in the presence of the Father (Matt 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21,22; John 1:32-34). Then, He went to the wildness to pray, and to be in communion with the Father and the Holy Spirit,

²⁰ White, *Prophets and Kings*, 222.4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 223.1.

to seek guidance and the help of the Holy Spirit and the Father. That connection with the heaven community was necessary for Jesus, before putting into action the plan of salvation by starting his public ministry and calling his first disciple to follow him, because He has taken human nature, He needed the strength from above (Matt 4:1-17; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1-13). “As a man, He met temptation, and overcame in the strength given to Him from God”²² Jesus was strengthened by the Father.

Baptism was not enough for Jesus’ preparation. Jesus went into wildness to retreat; to seek the power from above and the guidance from the Father and the Holy Spirit because He was going to start a journey full of challenges. Jesus knew that it was the continuity of the great controversy, therefore, He could not neglect to seek the power and the will of the Father. Ellen G. White in her book *The Desire of Ages* explains the reason why Jesus went into wildness. “When Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted, He was led by the Spirit of God. He did not invite temptation. He went to the wilderness to be alone, to contemplate His mission and work. By fasting and prayer, He was to brace Himself for the bloodstained path He must travel.”²³ Jesus went into wildness to reflect on His mission and to see the whole picture of His journey.

The Devil knew that this was the continuation of the great controversy, and he was ready to do his best to interfere and stop the preparation of Jesus, as Jesus was ready to start His public ministry, which was going to destroy the Devil. “To be tempted, from the divine standpoint, means a positive test, from the devil standpoint, it implies enticement to sin, from Jesus’ standpoint, it is a challenge from Satan to test

²² Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2005), 24

²³ *Ibid.*, 114.

God's sovereignty and plan."²⁴ The step of preparation to start the ministry is one of the challenging parts of the ministry of Jesus. Because it helps to contemplate the whole picture of the mission and helps lay a foundation for the ministry. Fail this step harms the following steps in the process, Jesus knew that. When you understand the whole picture of the building you are about to build you know the steps to follow, and the whole picture is clear even before starting the building.

Jesus went into wilderness before choosing His disciples (Matt 4:1). That shows the consideration Jesus has for the call to ministry and the importance of the task of calling to the ministry. The person called for ministry will work for God and with God, it why it is important to connect with God before ministering. Therefore, Jesus considered it necessary and important to retreat with the Father and Holy Spirit before calling the disciples for ministry (Matt 4:1).

After baptism and overcoming the temptation of the Devil in the wilderness, the Gospel of Luke and Mark tells us that, Jesus spent the whole night in prayer before choosing His twelve apostles (Luke 6:12-16; Mark 3:13-19). Choosing the disciples was an important and critical agenda for Jesus that requested Him to spend the whole night praying. "Once again Luke emphasizes the fact that Jesus prayed before critical events."²⁵ Choosing the disciples was critical for Jesus. The cooperation with the Father was necessary, because God is the initiator, and the planner of the mission for the human being's salvation, since the beginning (John 3:16). When Jesus was conceived the Trinity was there (Luke 1:35), for His baptism the Trinity was present (Matt 3:16,17). Therefore, to choose the people who will fulfill His mission to save

²⁴ Hayford, *New Spirit Filled Life Bible*, 1294.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1396.

the world, it was necessary to partner as Trinity, as They partnered in the creation and the plan of salvation (Gen 1:26; John 3:16). Jesus was not alone when He was ready to call for discipleship, He sought guidance through prayer.

The Call for Discipleship: Selecting Material to Lay the Foundation

The starting of any building is the foundation. The foundation is the key in the process of building, and this step should be well done for the success of the whole project. After His preparation, Jesus selected the material to lay the foundation of His ministry. The first step after Jesus' preparation was the call for his disciples (Mark 3:13-14) "It was at the ordination of the Twelve that the first step was taken in the organization of the church that after Christ's departure was to carry on His work on the earth."²⁶ The first step in building is selecting material for the foundation, therefore the call of the disciples, was to collect the material for the foundation in the ministry of Jesus.

When Jesus came on this earth to save lost humanity, He first took human nature (John 1:14, Heb 2:17). Second, He chose to work with humble human beings as His ministry partners. The call for discipleship requirement is to follow Jesus and take a journey with Him to be equipped to fulfill the call and be the fishers of men (Matt 4:18-20) "Passing by the self-righteous Jewish teachers, the Master Worker chose humble, unlearned men to proclaim the truths that were to move the world. These men He purposed to train and educate as the leaders of His church. They in turn were to educate others and send them out with the gospel message."²⁷ Jesus passed

²⁶ White, *Acts of the Apostles* [CD ROM], 18.1.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.1.

the educated and self-righteous men and choose those He could train and who can follow His steps, He trained the humble fishers to become fishers of men.

The root of the word disciple reveals the meaning of the call to discipleship, and what Jesus was expecting from His disciples. “Disciple, *mathetes (math-ay-tace)*; the verb *manthano*, ‘to learn’ whose root *math* suggests thought with the effort put forth. A disciple is a learner, one who follows both the teaching and the teacher. The word is used by the twelve and later Christians generally”²⁸ The disciples of Jesus knew that a disciple, follows, learns and imitates the Master.

When Jesus called His disciples, He was not a stranger to them some were acquainted with Him. This was not an introduction to them, that was a special call for them to come follow stay with Him and learn from Him (Mark 3:14; Matt 4:19). “Some of those were already met Him, but now He calls them to leave their occupations, to follow Him continuously.”²⁹ Jesus was calling them for discipleship.

Jesus wanted to give them a special call for a special ministry of being His disciples who will learn continuously from Him and who will in return make other disciples, from fishers of real fish to fishers of men (Matt 4:18,19). The task that was waiting for them requested them to be near Jesus full-time. They need to observe His character, and how He treats people. They have to listen to His teaching and imitate Him (Matt 4:19). “Until this time none of the disciples had fully united as co-laborers with Jesus. They had witnessed many of His miracles and had listened to His teaching, but they had not entirely forsaken their former employment.”³⁰ Jesus wanted

²⁸ Hayford, *New Spirit Filled Life Bible*, 1307.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1350.

³⁰ White, *The Desire of Ages*, 146.

His disciples to be with Him full-time, and see what He was doing daily to illuminate the lost human beings.

Jesus chose the people who were not self-sufficient, who don't count on their knowledge or experiences. Rather He chose the people who were ready to surrender their self and learn from Him. "It was after Peter had been led to self-renunciation and dependence upon divine power that he received the call to his work for Christ."³¹

Self-distrust is the first and most important lesson that a person who wants to become a disciple of Jesus needs to learn, to be a channel of blessings of Jesus to others. Jesus doesn't neglect education, because it is a blessing for God's work, but education alone is not sufficient. "Those self-confident people of the time of Jesus could not sympathize with humanity who needed their sympathy as Jesus was doing".³²

When you surrender all to Jesus and rely on him fully, He can give you what is needed for ministry, despite your background. These Galilean fishermen were unassuming and uneducated, but Christ, the light of the world, was more than capable of preparing them for the role for which He had chosen them. What we have should not be a source of concern, but rather our willingness and readiness to follow Jesus and absorb His teachings. Jesus choose those who were prepared to study and put into practice what was required to be a disciple of Jesus.

The disciples of Jesus were qualified in His sight in three things. Though the disciples were not educated they possessed three qualifications as prerequisites to be disciples of Jesus and to be qualified for the work of Jesus. The first one is native ability. The second they were humble, and the third qualification, they were

³¹ White, *The Desire of Ages*, 245.

³² *Ibid.*, 249.

teachable.³³ Every average human created in God's image has access to those three qualities (Gen 1:26). “Our image probably refers to the ability to relate, hear, see, and communicate, as well as attributes like reason, personality, and intellect. All of these characteristics of God, which He chose to reproduce in mankind.”³⁴ To be humble and to be teachable are also available to everyone who accepts to be guided by the Holy Spirit (Matt 11:25-30).

Jesus chose to bridge this gap by empowering His disciples with His word and Spirit since He was aware of their weaknesses when He called them to follow Him. Through these weak means, as well as His word and Spirit, He seeks to make salvation accessible to everyone. Jesus took the time to mold people according to their calling before moving any farther.

Equipping for Ministry: Building Foundation and House Pillars

In Mark 3:14, Jesus designated the twelve disciples to follow him and prepare them for mission. The Greek word appointed implies “to make someone into something. From the vast crowd, Jesus chooses the twelve to form His closest group of followers. The appointment is made in order for them to be with Him, learn from Him, and then leave with divine authority to further His work. For three years, Jesus trained the disciples in His presence. Jesus called His first disciples when He began His mission.

To make the most of His time with them, He began His ministry with them (Matt 4:18–22; Mark 1:16–20). “Some interpreters have claimed that 'being with' and 'being sent out' are mutually exclusive. However, the twelve are Jesus' representatives

³³ White, *The Desire of Ages*, 250.

³⁴ Hayford, *New Spirit Filled Life Bible*, 5.

because of a unique bond that they share with him. The Twelve will receive unique instruction from Jesus before they go on that trip. Jesus trained His followers for service by spending a lot of time with them (Mark 4:10;34). What a privilege it must have been for them to be in daily contact with the divine life for three years, from which every life-giving impulse that has graced the earth has sprung.

Jesus trained His disciples in many ways. First Jesus trained through His words. Jesus took time and taught them the will of God, and the true meaning of the Scriptures (Matt 5:1-7:29; Luke 6:20-49; Matt 13:1-52). Jesus gave the model for making disciples and recommended that in the great commission (Matt 28:20). Teaching is important in the process of making disciples.

Secondly, He trained by example through what He was doing before them such as compassionate work and forgiveness. Jesus was compassionate to everyone without segregation, without considering your status in society or how you are considered by others (Mark 10:46-52; Luke 19:1-10; John 4:46-54). His was full of actions of forgiveness (Luke 7:36-50; Luke 17:1-10; John 4:5-42). What we do speaks louder, and becomes a live testimony.

Thirdly, Jesus taught them by involving them in his actions (Matt 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-9). Practice is part of training, the theory without practice is not sufficient in the process of teaching. You cannot rely on theories without trying and seeing the outcome of what you do.

Fourthly, the training continued by sending them alone to the fields to practice their ministry (Matt 9:35-11:1; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6). In the process of teaching His disciples, Jesus sent them out alone to practice, then reported to Him. This was important because it allowed Jesus to correct them before leaving them alone.

With all those steps, the disciples of Jesus were prepared for the ministry. Someone who follows Jesus can never be the same, despite his weaknesses, when he surrenders all to Jesus, his life is transformed and strengthened by the power of God through the Holy Spirit. “God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God received into the soul, will quicken all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfill the requirements of God.”³⁵ Though the disciples of Jesus were not trained in the worldly schools they were educated in the school of Jesus, at His feet, because they were committed to follow Him and imitate Him. “Men of the highest education in the arts and sciences have learned precious lessons from Christians in humble life who were designated by the world as unlearned. But these obscure disciples had obtained an education in the highest of all schools. They had sat at the feet of Him who spoke as ‘never man spoke.’”³⁶ Jesus spent three years with His disciples shaping them for their salvation and, equipping them for the ministry.

When a disciple is prepared for ministry, he understands his call, the characteristic and the purpose of the mission, and how to accomplish it. He is also aware of the cost of the discipleship and mission he is going to undertake, and where he will get the power to fulfill the mission (Matt 28:18-20).

Jesus promised His disciples during His final sermon before dying that He would depart but that the Helper would arrive (John 16:7; John 14:16; 17). Jesus instructed His followers to go to Jerusalem and wait for the Father's promise to send the Holy Spirit after His resurrection before He ascended to heaven (Acts 1:4-6). The

³⁵ White, *The Desire of Ages*, 251.

³⁶ Ibid.

arrival of the Holy Spirit will more than make up for Jesus' absence physically. The Holy Spirit provides the power for disciples; there is no strength within them. Life and power have always come from God (Gen 2:7; John 15:5).

**Waiting for the Holy Spirit:
Ministry Connection**

Acts 1:4 instructed the disciples to hold off on bearing witness until they had experienced the Holy Spirit's baptism. because there is strength for witnessing in the Holy Spirit's baptism (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit was also present when Jesus was baptized (Matt 3:16). Jesus' ministry was anointed by the spirit. His commissioning for His messianic ministry is symbolized by this incident. The Holy Spirit was present when Jesus began His mission, and He should also be present when His disciples begin their ministry.

As instructed by Jesus, the disciples waited, but they weren't just sitting around doing nothing; according to Luke, they were praising and blessing God in the temple (Luke 24:53). Ellen G. White makes a comment about what the disciples were doing while they waited for the fulfillment of the promises: "They were praying to the Father in the name of Jesus for the fulfillment of the promise. They were repenting and confessing their unbelief. They meditate upon the holy life and character of Jesus and they committed to confess Him to the world at any cost. They put away their differences, and their desire to be great among others, they fellowship and united together. They search their heart and seek the Lord for sanctification and blessing not for themselves only but to be a blessing and means for the salvation of others. During

those days of waiting the disciples prayed and offered their supplications to the Lord for the fulfillment of the promises and Jesus added the intercession on their behalf.³⁷

After humbling themselves, confessing to God and one another, surrendering all to God, and supplication to the Lord, for the fulfillment of the promises, God answered their prayers on the of the Pentecost, and the Holy Spirit descended upon them and filled them (Acts 2:1-4). Jesus had requested them to wait for the fulfillment of the promises before witnessing because you cannot witness without the power of the Holy Spirit.

Receiving the Holy Spirit: Ministry Power of Witnessing

The effects of the Holy Spirit's arrival on the day of Pentecost have been predicted. However, their duty was to continually pray, pleading for it and reclaiming the fulfillment. The disciples were given the ability to witness incoherently that day after being filled with the Holy Spirit and given the talent of speaking in a foreign tongue, which was necessary at the moment. “The Holy Spirit descended upon those gathered, appearing like tongues of fire. This served as a symbol of the gift given to the disciples at that time, which allowed them to talk fluently in languages they had never learned before. This demonstrates how God is able to provide through the Holy Spirit in order to witness to each devoted disciple.

They were given a talent on the day of Pentecost that would enable them to carry out the Great Commission (Matt 28:18–20). The Pentecost Day's gift of the tongue allowed the disciples to continue their mission. “From this time on, whether they spoke in their native tongue or a foreign language, the disciples' language was

³⁷ White, *The Desire of Ages*, 36-37.

pure, simple, and accurate.” Through their gift of language, the Holy Spirit equipped them for mission. According to Acts 1:8, the Holy Spirit's arrival brings with it the ability to bear witness. Acts 2:41 reports a quick and strong outcome. Promise must be kept to those who would come after because, in addition to praying for His disciples, Jesus prayed for those who would believe in Him as a result of their testimony (John 17:20). The prayer of Jesus (John 17:20) indicates that the promise is still true today.

Discipling in Early Christian Church: The Power of Unit

Jesus gave His followers the authority to carry out His mission and make new disciples before ascending to heaven (Matt 28:18–20; Mark 16:15–16). By sending a Helper who will be with them, He will fulfill his promise to be with them (Matt 28:20; Acts 1:4). The Holy Spirit came upon them a few days after Jesus' ascension into heaven on the day of Pentecost.

When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended; at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit also fell on the disciples (Matt 3:16,17; Acts 2:1–4). This is how the ministry of Jesus' followers began. The disciples were powerless and unable to carry out the ministry in the group effectively without the Holy Spirit. The beginning of Jesus' and the disciples' ministries as a unifying force was the work of the Holy Spirit.

Before the coming of the Holy Spirit, the group of disciples was not yet consolidated, but through earnest prayer and confession, the Holy Spirit united them as a community of disciples (Acts 2:1). “Putting away all differences, all desire for the supremacy, they came close together in Christian fellowship. They drew nearer and nearer to God, and as they did this, they realized what a privilege had been theirs in

being permitted to associate so closely with Christ.”³⁸ The Holy Spirit unites for mission because without the unit the mission is not possible. The preparation of the leaders for the mission was the key to the success of the early Christian Church.

In addition to participating in the baptism at the start of Jesus and the apostles' ministries, the Holy Spirit continued to guide the early church through electing leaders. The Holy Spirit has chosen Saul and Barnabas (Acts 13:2-3). Saul was baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit after encountering the Lord on the way to Damascus (Acts 9:1-17-19). It is usually considered that Paul was converted three days prior when he encountered the Lord (w. 1-9). Therefore, it is important to “be filled with the Holy Spirit. This experience then, which also included his apostolic commission, was likely Paul’s initial “baptism with the Holy Spirit”³⁹ When Paul was admonishing the Ephesians elders, he reminded them also that they have been appointed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28).

The Holy Spirit was instrumental in choosing, guiding, bringing together, and equipping the leaders and their followers for ministry in the early Christian church (Acts 2:42). The priority of Christ-followers shifted toward spiritual connection with their Lord and with their brothers and sisters in Christ - within the church, the spiritual body of Christ, with the advent of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. If the disciples—the church's leaders—were not connected to Jesus and to one another, the early Christian church would not have been able to function as a unit.

³⁸ White, *The Acts of the Apostles* [CD ROM], 37.

³⁹ Hayford, *New Spirit Filled Life Bible*, 1506.

The Leadership of Jesus and the Community: The Ministry Cornerstone

The best approach that Christian leaders may use to better serve Christian communities is the approach that Jesus took. According to Ellen G. White's explanation of this approach, only Christ's way will actually be successful in reaching others. The Savior interacted with people as one who wished for their welfare. By empathizing with them and attending to their needs, He gained their trust. He then commanded them "Follow Me."⁴⁰ Jesus interacted with the people rather than dominating or controlling them.

Being able to guide others without losing sight of the goal is one of the qualities that define a leader. True to Proverbs 29:18, people perish when there is no vision. But the goal of leading isn't just to focus on the route you have to take while ignoring the followers. As a result, your attention should be on the group you are guiding rather than just the final destination. The people Jesus came to save were His main concern (John 3:16, Gen 1:26-27).

Ongoing Training and Team Building: The Ministry of Paul

The way Paul was called and commissioned has influenced him to discipling others. He was called and sent by the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:1-17-19; 13:2-3). Throughout his letters, Paul is saying that what we use for ministry is what we have received as a gift of Spirit (Eph 4:11-13; 1 Cor 12:6-8).

In his ministry, Paul trained and mentored people. He mentored Timothy and he called him, his son in faith (1 Tim 1:2; 1:18; 2 Tim 1:2; Acts 16:1,2; Acts 17:14; Acts 18:5; Acts 19:22; Acts 20:4). During his journey Paul took Timothy as

⁴⁰ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Health and Healing: An Adaption of the Ministry of Healing* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2016), 143.

companion for ministry, while working together Timothy was learning from Paul (2 Tim 1:13-14). “Timothy becomes one of Paul’s disciples and later is the recipient of 1 and 2 Timothy.”⁴¹ The training of Paul was a process, not a one-time event.

In many of his letters Paul mentioned Timothy as his fellow worker and brother and sometimes coauthor (Rom 16:21; 2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1; 2:22; Col 1:1; 1 Thes 1:1; 2 Thes 1:1; Heb 13: 23). “Paul shared authorship of 1 and 2 Thessalonians with Silvanus and Timothy. Timothy, a young Jewish understudy of Paul, also joined with Paul in the writing of 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.”⁴² Paul is confirming that he has been working with Timothy as a faithful worker for the Lord.

Paul also sent Timothy to go to some place for teaching and confirm that he is a commendable teacher who does the work of God as Paul does (1 Cor 4:17; 1 Cor 16:10; 2 Cor 1:19; Phil 2:19; 1 Thess 3:2). That shows that Timothy has been trained as a disciple of Paul to do the work of God. Paul didn’t send him immediately but, they first worked together, traveled together, and suffered together in ministry.

Besides Timothy, Paul also trained Titus and he has the same spirit of caring for the people of God with conviction as Paul (2 Cor 2:13; 8:16-17). Paul called Titus his son in faith (Titus 1:4). You cannot call someone your son in faith if he was not under you for discipling in faith. Paul is identifying Titus as his brother and coworker and partner (2 Cor 8:23, Gal 2:1). Titus learned from Paul because as Paul said they have been partnering together in mission, Titus has been associated with Paul in ministry. Paul also sent Titus on a mission to visit and strengthen churches (2 Cor 12:8; 2 Tim 4:10). Beside Timothy and Titus Paul had other disciples under his

⁴¹ Hayford, *New Spirit Filled Life Bible*, 1521.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 1684.

mentoring (Acts 20:1). Paul also trained the Elders and members to take care of their churches (Acts 20: 17-38). Paul was a good mentor.

Theological Understanding and Application

Every believer has a role to play in the ministry; everyone who accepts Jesus as his personal Savior is a candidate to share the good news of Jesus (2 Pet 2:9). Everyone has a part to play in the body of Christ according to the gift they have been given (1 Cor 12:12–31). Throughout the Bible, whenever God desired to establish a group of believers, he first chose the group's leaders and went on the journey with them in order to get them ready for the new duty. Nobody can guide people in a direction they do not understand.

God does not only equip for ministry and leave the one he equips alone, but he empowers the one He calls to fit the task, through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). God is always with every disciple called for ministry (Matt 28:20), He does not send him alone He goes with him. A disciple is never alone but is with God for guidance, encouragement, and support. God also lets disciples know that he is not alone in ministry but he is working with other disciples and God is not limited to him only, he can use anyone He wants to use to work with Him. If someone has been called by God, he has to work with others, mentor them and share with them the responsibility, even prepare them to take over his responsibility after him.

Everyone created in the image of God can be chosen as a disciple of Jesus according to the gift given, when he humbled himself, puts aside self-sufficient and depended upon God, as the owner of the mission, and accepted to be teachable.

It is very critical for the success of discipleship in Christian ministry and to be specifically in small group ministry to make sure that, the church members called to follow Jesus, are well prepared, trained, and mentored, before giving them the

responsibility to lead other members of the group to Jesus. They need to be mentored and developed to fit the mission. It is costly and challenging but it is rewarding.

Summary

This chapter has examined the biblical basis from both Testaments and from Ellen G. White's writings. The chapter learns that small group ministry is a strategy employed throughout the Bible to encourage communication and interaction between individuals working toward a common goal in the neighborhood. Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt in tiny groups. Jesus Himself instructed His followers in small groups. The early Christian church benefited from Paul's similar efforts. However, disciplining the leaders before sending them to the ministry was the key to success throughout the Bible. This chapter has explored some examples of the people who have been prepared before taking the responsibility of leading the community of people to God, in both Old and New Testaments. The preparation of the leaders has brought a positive impact on the life of those who have been called and the people they lead. They followed the Master before asking others to follow Him.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to make small groups ministry successful in terms of discipleship, this chapter will review many academic works on the subject of leadership. Although numerous authors have discussed the potential of small group ministry to make disciples, it is crucial to also emphasize how to make small group ministry successful. This chapter will examine the connection between training small group leaders and the success of small group ministry in making disciples.

In his writings, Bonhoeffer emphasizes the value of discipleship. According to the saying, “Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.”¹ As a result, a church that professes to be Christian but does not actually follow Christ is not truly deserving of the name. This chapter will show how the failure of small group ministries to generate good leaders might hinder their ability to make disciples. The focus of this chapter will be on the necessity of training small group facilitators to ensure the success of small groups in the process of discipleship.

History of Small Groups Ministry in Discipleship

This section will review different literature on how small groups have impacted discipleship, and its role in the church's growth throughout the history of the Christian church in general, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in particular.

¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 59

Survey of the Development of the Small Groups in the Contemporary Church Literature

Knowing the historical background of small groups' discipleship gives the insurance of its foundation and its importance. "Looking backward before you stare straight ahead enables you to see further into the future."² When you become lost along the journey there is a reference to redirect you. "Taking a journey into your past before exploring your future makes the trip more meaningful."³ The history of small group ministry will open the horizon, to understanding how small groups have been a successful tool to make disciples and the bad consequence of discipleship when it was neglected.

Small Groups in the History of the Early Christian Church

The ministry of the early Christian church and its expansion mostly depended on small groups. The followers of Jesus continued to worship not just in the temple but also in their homes after receiving the Holy Spirit. They continued to teach and proclaim about Jesus as the Christ every day in the temple and every home, according to Acts 5:42. The bulk of Christians who made up the early Christian church were Jews, and they continued to frequent synagogues in order to reform the church. For Jews, synagogues served as "church buildings. At first, Christians and Jews conversed in the synagogue; they saw themselves as merely a reform movement within Judaism rather than a distinct sect.

Worshipping of Christians in both synagogues and their house didn't work for a long time, the Jewish Christians were no longer wanted in Jews synagogues,

² James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge: How to Make Extraordinary Things Happen in Organizations* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 100.

³ *Ibid.*, 101.

because their teachings were not in agreement with Jews teachings about Jesus Christ as the Messiah (Acts 4:1-2; 10-12). Christians were eventually denied access to synagogues and forced to gather in private houses where there was less risk of interruption while conversing about spiritual matters and hearing the gospel. Following that occurrence, Christians began praying in their homes, referred to as “households of faith” (Acts 5:42).

Probably Christians could have started their synagogues, because most of them had Jews backgrounds, but Nero the Roman emperor became so difficult for Christianity, by his decree to banish Christianity as non-official religion. With that decree, there was no way for Christians to have a church building or an official place for gathering.⁴ “Before A.D. 300 there is but one historical reference to a building for Christian gatherings, and that building was in Persia outside the Roman Empire... Nero’s decree against Christian church buildings lasted some 250 years (from A.D. 64 to 313), but the church continued to grow anyway, meeting in homes.”⁵ Nero was not able to stop the baby Christian church by not allowing the Christian church to have church buildings.

The Christians through God’s providence found a way to continue their worship and fellowship, though it was very risky. “During this era house churches and home groups flourished, even though Christianity faced heavy persecution.”⁶ The Christian persecution was not able to stop God’s plan. The persecution failed to stop

⁴ Kurt W. Johnson, *Successful Small Groups: From Theory to Reality* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2011), 162.

⁵ Ibid., 160.

⁶ Ibid., 159-160.

the growth of the Christian church, the Church grew through home churches and small groups during that period.

What happened after the Christian church persecution failed to stop the growth of the Christian church? “In the fourth century (A.D. 313) the emperor Constantine declared Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. For the time being, persecution of Christians ended, and the church building projects began through the empire.... leaders of both church and state joined hands to promote the growth of Christianity.”⁷ It sounds very good, for Christianity to be an official religion with church buildings, and join hands with the state for church growth.

But one of the consequences of that unity between the pagan Roman empire and the Christian Church was the change of the church’s theology concerning the role of the laity and small groups. “The church's doctrine and practice regarding the position and function of the laity started to change with the legalization of Christianity. Home small groups and house churches were impacted by this change. According to John Wesley, one of the forerunners of small groups in Protestantism, the relationship between the Christian church and the Roman Empire has altered Christian doctrine.

The mystery of sin started to affect the church even in the first century, reaching a climax with Constantine's baptism, which brought about even more evil when the church and the state came together. Because the church and the state, the kingdom of Christ and the world, were then so bizarrely and unnaturally entwined, they are unlikely to ever be separated until Christ returns to rule on earth.⁸

Since the time of Emperor Constantine, the Christian Church's theology about small groups and the role of laity has changed. This change has been distorting the way the church does the ministry of making disciples.

⁷ Kurt, *Successful Small Groups*, 160.

The culture of house churches has been modified by the legalization of the Christian church. “Ministry was carried out by the elders, deacons, and other church members. The pastors were overseers- evangelists and administrators. Ministry involvement by the church members began to dwindle compared to the pre-church building days. Since Constantine the Great, the church has never been the same.”⁸ That change of the role of laity, and house churches had brought a lot of negative consequences on the training and empowering of the church laity to carry the work in the Christian church.

Since Emperor Constantine legalized the Christian church, the role of the laity in the Christian church and the empowerment of the members for the mission has been lost. The Reformation started with the purpose to restore what has been lost, and make the Bible available, and making it the source of authority for every person. “One of the central goals of the reformation was to bring the Scriptures to the common person, the ‘priesthood of believers. First and far, most were small groups of lay people who met for prayer and the study of Scripture’”⁹ The reformation also brought back the priesthood of all believers (2 Pet 2:9). “The Reformation shaped everything most of us know about Christianity.”¹⁰ The Role of the Laity in the Mission of the Christian, the church has been revived, the laity was more involved.

You cannot talk about discipleship in the time of reformation and forget the role of Jonh Wesley “No other person from post-Reformation history developed

⁸ Kurt, *Successful Small Groups*, 164.

⁹ Diana Bennett, “A Brief History of Small Groups (part 2): Exploring the Development of Small Groups in the Bible and the History of the Church,” accessed 10 December 2022, <https://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2011/brief-history-of-small-groups-part-2.html>.

¹⁰ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book about Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: The Navigators Reference Library, 2006), 96.

discipleship more than John Wesley (1703-1791).”¹¹ One of the reformers who played a big role in Christian church growth with the involvement of the laity and small groups is John Wesley. “His use of class meetings and lay preachers changed people and their society, resulting in social reform. Without question, Wesley’s greatest contribution in the field of church growth was his ability to harness the laity.”¹² Method of Wesley succeeds because of his way to involve and support the laity in the mission through small groups. “His use of class meetings and lay preachers changed people and their society, resulting in social reform.”¹³ The Reformation restored the truth about the role of the laity and the small groups in the growth of the church.

Small Groups in Early Seventh-day Adventist Church Ministry

The Seventh-day Adventist Church persisted in the reformation teaching of making disciples through local groups and the lay population. G. B. Starr, a pioneering Seventh-day Adventist evangelist, describes the origins of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's mission. We haven't decided on a pastor. Nearly all of our clergy members serve as evangelists in emerging fields, and our congregations are taught essentially to take care of themselves. When the Seventh-day Adventist Church first began, both pastors and laypeople were actively involved in the church's mission. Evangelist G. B. Star keeps outlining the laity's function in the mission. “In addition to this, every church has a missionary society. Last year these numbered 10,500 members. Every one of these members does more or less missionary work, such as selling books, loaning or giving away tracks, obtaining subscriptions to our

¹¹ Hull, *The Complete Book about Discipleship*, 102.

¹² *Ibid.*, 103.

¹³ Kurt, *Successful Small Groups*, 103.

periodicals, visiting families, looking after the poor, aiding the sick, etc.”¹⁴ The involvement of the laity has increased the members in the mission at the beginning of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

A.G. Daniel, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's General Conference, explained how they had encouraged the members to feel ownership of their churches in Mark 1912 at a ministerial meeting. “In some of the very churches we have elected pastors, but on the whole we have held ourselves ready for field service, evangelistic work, and our brothers and sisters have held themselves ready to maintain their church services and carry on their church work without settled pastors,” the statement reads. In their separate locations, the laity was in charge of their jobs and was in charge of church activities. A G Daniel believed and wish that system to continue. “I sincerely hope that this continues to be the norm within these denominations. For if we stop moving forward and start settling over our churches, staying by them, and doing their thinking, praying, and work that needs to be done, then our churches will start to deteriorate, lose their life and spirit, become paralyzed.”¹⁵ Without the members' participation in the mission, A.G. Daniel comes to the conclusion that the church will suffer and even lose a life.

Ellen G. White one of the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church advised the ministers about their main role. “Just as soon as a church is organized, let the minister set the members at work. They will need to be taught how to labor successfully. Let the minister devote how to give others the knowledge they have

¹⁴ Kurt, *Successful Small Groups*, 165.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 165-166.

received.”¹⁶ A minister should know clearly that his role is to train the member if he wants to have a healthy church. “As society changes, so does the pastor’s job description and the way we organize for mission; however, the biblical direction of the pastor as an equipper should always be maintained.”¹⁷ To equip the members for the mission, and to involve them in the mission had started with the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as it has started with the ministry of Jesus and the Apostles (Matt 10:1; 5-15; Acts 1:8).

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was instructed to carry out the mission in small groups in addition to supplying the members with the necessary tools. “One who cannot wrong has brought to me the idea of small businesses being the foundation of Christian endeavour. If the church has a significant number of people, let us organize into tiny businesses to serve both church members and non-believers. God, through Ellen G. White, has advised the Seventh-day Adventist Church to use small groups to make disciples;

Your success will depend less on your accomplishments and expertise than it will on your capacity to get to the heart of the matter. You can influence people's thoughts more effectively by interacting with them and being social than by using your best rhetoric. Sermons delivered in the open air, to a moving crowd, or even in halls or churches are frequently less effective at winning souls to Jesus than the presentation of Christ in the family, by the fireside, and in small gatherings in private homes.¹⁸

Equipping the laity for the mission, and the use of small groups has been a blessing in discipleship, for the Christian church throughout history. That approach is

¹⁶ Ellen G. White, *Counsels to the Church*, Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM] (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2006), 69.1.

¹⁷ Kurt, *Successful Small Groups* 167.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 122.3.

still relevant and important in making disciples for the Christian church in the 21st Century.

Dynamics and Benefits of Small Groups Ministry in Discipleship

Small group ministry activities are not an addition to the church activities, instead, they are the essence of the existing mission of the church. The activities of small groups make the church real and live. “They are not just a way to be like the ‘cool’ churches. They are a valid expression of what the body of Christ is supposed to be doing on the earth. They are a structured expression of the doctrine of the church.”¹⁹ Good small groups fulfill better the mission of the church.

Benefits of Small Groups

Depending on the circumstances and goals of the groups, each one defines the significance of small groups as a social unit. The community of believers, on the other hand, supports its members' friendship, spiritual growth, and sharing. We are cooperating, helping one another, motivating one another, confessing to one another, and doing a billion other things in the community that the Bible commands us to do. These result in development, recovery, and transformation. Despite the fact that small groups have numerous benefits, this section will focus on how small groups are the best setting for fostering friendship, spiritual development, and spiritual gifts. Enhances Fellowship

¹⁹ Henry Cloud and John Sims Townsend, *Making Small Groups Work: What Every Small Group Leader Needs to Know* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 28.

Enhances Fellowship

The population longs to fit in. Community is a term used to describe a group of individuals who have joined together to develop a mutually supportive friendship and who have a shared objective in their personal life. The truth is that we all need God and each other in order to maintain good physical, social, mental, and spiritual health. According to Genesis 2:18, being alone is not a good thing. When someone misses the connection with God and other people he loses the purpose of life, and he is no longer balanced physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally. When a member of the body is detached from the body there is no more life. The member of the body cannot live separately from the body (1 Cor 12:12). The life of a branch, is to remain connected to the three. Jesus is the vine and we are the branches; without remaining attached to Jesus and each other there is no life (John 15:1-8).

We have been created as a community, to maintain a balanced life, we need to connect. “Studies have shown the overwhelming importance of human touch to our emotional and physical well-being. Research of children’s orphanages in England during World War II revealed that without human touch, children became morose and often died despite adequate nutrition and proper hygiene.”²⁰ The small groups help better to fulfill that need of belonging. That feeling of belonging is not the end but creates the best environment for growth.

Enhancement of Spiritual Growth Development

Human beings have been created with interdependence with other creations. No one can grow independently without cooperating with the community to support

²⁰ Cloud and Townsend, *Making Small Groups Work*, 25.

each other. The way to live in this nature is a witness that without others no one cannot survive or grow.

Nothing, with the exception of man's own selfish nature, exists in isolation. No bird that soars through the air and no animal that trots over the land do so without serving some other life. There is not a blade of grass or a humble leaf in the forest, but everything has its ministry. Without the element of life that every tree, shrub, and leaf gives off, neither humans nor animals could survive. Humans and animals, in turn, serve to support the lives of trees, shrubs, and leaves.²¹

That law of interdependence works also for spiritual growth. We become complete spiritually when we connect with others, and that connection doesn't take away our personality and individuality. "It is in the community that we are most challenged to grow up in Jesus. We don't lose our uniqueness in the community; we find it. We are most uniquely ourselves when we are with others who need us to complement the mutual picture of God that we are created. Together we become what we could not become alone."²² God created people as a community not as an isolated being (Gen 26:28).

Many things work together to help people to grow spiritually, but the small group setting is the best place to grow because it has the potential to help in growth. "Paul said that body has work to do if we are going to grow. It is work that only partly happens in a big cathedral-like room on Sunday morning. Much of that work can't happen in a big room with a lot of people at once. Much of it has to happen in a smaller setting, a more intimate, safe one. One of the best places this work happen is in a small group."²³ The best place to grow spiritually is the small group because the small group help to connect, grow, and share.

²¹ White, *Desire of Ages*, 20.2.

²² Kurt, *Successful Small Groups*, 22.

²³ Cloud and Townsend, *Making Small Groups Work*, 28.

Development of Spiritual Gifts and Ministry Involvement

We share life in the small group, because of the connection. The Bible compares our life as part of one body, as belonging to one body. A community is a place that God has intentionally created to help us to develop spiritual gifts and share life.

Life is lost when it is not shared, and life is won when it is shared. It loses its source of life like a limb that is severed from a tree. When we help others succeed, we will also succeed. We must give in order to get. What we will receive will be considerably larger than anything we could have ever accomplished on our own. Being modest and allowing others shine benefits you greatly. According to Jesus (John 15:1–8), when we abide in him, we have life, and when we do not abide in him, we lose life. Because we abide in Jesus and share our lives with Him via Him, we receive our life from Him. “To fill such requirements, God has given his people a variety of gifts. We are a body, in fact, we use these gifts together and support and encourage one another as we progress in his big vision. The small group setting is the most effective setting for developing spiritual talents and spreading the gospel and life to others. The success of the small groups' leadership development will determine how successfully they function.

Leadership Development in Small Groups

This section's main emphasis will be on the growth of spiritual leadership. In this section, the definition of leadership development and its significance will be examined. We'll also examine the connection between small group leadership development and small group success.

Definition of Leadership Development

It is important to know who is a spiritual leader. A spiritual leader is “Someone who is called by God to lead; leads with and through Christ-like character; and demonstrates the functional competencies that permit effective leadership to take place.”²⁴ This definition touches on different perspectives of spiritual leadership. The first one is to be called by God, the second is to imitate Christ, and the third one is to follow His agenda. The fourth point is to develop the capability to fulfill the responsibility.

Development of leadership is a process. Leadership is a defined set of talents and abilities as well as an observable pattern of practices and behaviors. Given the motivation and desire, practice, feedback, role models, and coaching, every skill can be learnt, strengthened, honed, and enhanced. Finding and developing emerging leaders' personalities and skills is essential for leadership development. Leadership is not static; rather, it is a process of growth. “We define leadership development as *the deliberate process of assisting in developing a new leader at every level of the ministry to evaluate and grow in their Christian character as well as to acquire, reaffirm, and hone their knowledge and abilities.*”²⁵ Developing leaders is the key responsibility of any leader, and has major importance for the well-being, and the future of the church.

²⁴ Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God's Agenda* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2011), 32.

²⁵ Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini, *Building Leaders: Blueprints for Developing Leadership at Every Level of Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 23.

Importance of Developing Leaders

This section will emphasize the value of developing leaders and the good effects a developed leader can have on the ministry. The effectiveness of developed leaders and the caliber of the ministry will be compared in this section. Some of the most significant benefits of producing leaders are outlined by Aubrey and Will in their book *Building Leaders*. They have compared them in their presentation.²⁶ The effectiveness of the ministry and the effectiveness of the leadership are related. The effectiveness of the ministry is influenced by the leadership's effectiveness: The team moves at the pace of the leader.²⁷ The ministry is qualified by the caliber of the leadership. Without first qualifying the church's leadership, a leader of the church cannot reasonably expect to qualify the church's mission.

The development of the leaders and the development of the organization are compared. "Leaders grow the ministry through developing new leaders: The leadership curve is the growth curve."²⁸ The ministry is expanded as more leaders are raised up. "A leader's role is to develop more and better leaders rather than merely gaining more followers. It is the duty of leaders to develop other leaders."²⁹ Developing leaders is the key to church growth.

No one can profess to value people without making an investment in them. A leader's responsibility to the people and attending to their needs comes first. People's value and growth go hand in hand. In the process of developing leaders, the value of people is acknowledged. Our ministry's leaders are its most important resource. Not

²⁶ Malphurs and Mancini, *Building Leaders*, 25.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

supporting their development while including them in ministry amounts to mistreating them in the end. This typically happens as a result of an unbalanced and task-focused ministry.³⁰ It is a big mistake for a Christian leader to neglect the continuing leadership development for the people who have the responsibility to fulfill the Great Commission. Every disciple has a responsibility to make disciples, therefore he has a right to be developed. Every disciple should be trained on how to work for Jesus and how to make other disciples according to his call, and the best place to train them in the small group setting.

There is a contrast between legacy and leadership growth. Without leadership development, there can be no growth or legacy. An organization's success is closely correlated with the caliber of its leaders. Organizations rarely surpass their executives.³¹ A leader must develop outstanding leaders if he intends to leave a great organization. Creating leaders is similar to a bird's wings, which enable it to fly higher. Start developing your ministry's leaders both inside and outside if you want it to expand. The development of organizations' leaders is essential for growth. Although it requires certain abilities, being a leader ultimately is more important than doing one.³² The growth of the heart, head, and hand should all be equal in size.

The effectiveness of the ministry and member engagement are directly correlated with the godly competency of the leaders. "Effective, godly leadership is and always has been the key to service."³³ A fantastic workplace develops when exceptional leaders are created exceptional workplaces are the result of exceptional

³⁰ Malphurs and Mancini, *Building Leaders*, 26.

³¹ Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 51.

³² *Ibid.*, 55.

³³ Malphurs and Mancini, *Building Leaders*, 11.

leadership. Leadership significantly affects people's performance and levels of engagement.³⁴ The level of participation of the members is greatly influenced by the leadership. “Compared to their counterparts at the other end of the spectrum, the top leaders bring forth more than three times as much talent, enthusiasm, and motivation from their colleagues.”³⁵ The ministry is affected either favorably or unfavorably by the leadership. “Most of the time, if a ministry is struggling, the issue may be linked in some manner to the leadership.”³⁶ Developing leaders has a capital importance. Jesus knew that there is no successful ministry without the call and development leaders. He called and developed His disciples.

Leadership and the Success of the Small Groups

This section explores different literature on the role played by the leadership in the success or the failure of the small group's ministry. Though other perspectives of leadership bring success, this section will focus on identifying, and developing the leaders as the keys, to the success of the small group's ministry.

The value of small groups and the church's overall mission will be questioned if competent small group leaders are not identified and developed. Many groups don't provide the participants with the transformative spiritual and interpersonal growth they crave. Members become disinterested as a result, and the small group ministry fails to expand and realize its original goals. This need not take place. Small group leaders can gain abilities and biblical procedures that improve their effectiveness.³⁷

³⁴ Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 299.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 300.

³⁶ Malphurs and Mancini, *Building Leaders*, 25.

³⁷ Kurt, *Successful Small Group*, 14.

The effectiveness of small groups is connected with the development of small group leaders. To neglect that is to destroy and betray the importance of the small groups. “Very much has been lost to the cause by the defective labors of men who possess the ability, but who have not had proper training... They have not done a tithe of what they could have done if they had received the right discipline at the start.”³⁸ There are no successful small groups without proper leadership training.

Neglecting sufficient training for small group leaders is equivalent to ignoring a divine blessing. What the Lord has placed in our disposition is not something He has promised to do. “Those who faithfully carry out their responsibilities while maximizing their skills can be certain to get divine support. Angels will appear as messengers of light to individuals who will do everything in their power to help themselves, and then trust in God to support their efforts.”³⁹ Developing leaders for the small groups will bring blessings, and will help the small groups to achieve their purpose. Proper leadership training is key for the success of small group ministry, and the spiritual growth of the members.

The fundamental cause for the church's decline in power, according to George Barna, is one of many. “The church's power is waning. The absence of leadership is the main cause. There is nothing more crucial than leadership.”⁴⁰ Small groups cannot have an impact unless they invest in the leadership development of their members. “You must make an investment in boosting everyone in the organization's capability

³⁸ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, Compete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM] (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2006), 287.3.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 288.2.

⁴⁰ Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 15.

and resolve if you want amazing things to happen.”⁴¹ The influence and the success of the church depend on the success of developing leaders.

Identifying leaders for small groups. Consideration of the identification of potential leaders as an important subject is one of the traits of a good leader. The number of seeds increases with excellent seed selection. “Finding prospective leaders is one of the main duties of a good leader. These are the individuals you want to spend time with. Finding them can be difficult, but it is an important task.”⁴² It will be wasting time growing seed that was not well selected. Good recruitment is foundational for successful small-group leadership.

Recruitment is the first step in both leadership success and failure. We learned long ago that selection is important; in fact, choosing the proper individuals accounts for 80% of leadership performance. You're not seeking for folks with only a pulse and some free time, or for “super leaders” who are eager to form a team and take charge.⁴³ The foundation for effective leadership and disciple-making is a good choice. You don't have to assume that the individuals you choose will be the finished product; rather, you should choose people who have the potential to be the finished product.

Selecting leaders is a task that requires time and effort from everyone who wishes to create leaders. “We have little choice but to get involved in the leadership recruitment market if we are to shape leaders.”⁴⁴ The foundation for success in the process of producing leaders is the selection, which is not an option. My family and I

⁴¹ Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 233.

⁴² John C. Maxwell, *The 4 Pillars of Leadership* (Cape Town, South Africa: Struik Christian Books, 2004), 91.

⁴³ Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson, *Building a Life Changing Small Group Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 99.

⁴⁴ Malphurs and Mancini, *Building Leaders*, 69.

used to reside in a location where we raised various veggies. You need seeds that will create other seeds in order to cultivate crops. When it was time to plant seeds, I recall that my mother chose which seeds to plant rather than simply scattering all of them throughout the ground. The ability to reproduce is a desirable trait in good seed. It is impossible to choose a seed for sowing to produce other seeds if its ability to reproduce has been compromised or lost. Spending time and being serious about hiring will pay off and last. If you make wise choices, the advantages multiply and seem almost unlimited. If you make a poor choice, the issues multiply and seem never-ending.”⁴⁵ As was previously stated, the seed that generates other seeds must be carefully chosen in order for it to grow properly and create healthy seeds. The continuing development of leaders enables people to flourish and the church to expand.”⁴⁶ The development of small groups and the choice of leaders are interrelated and cannot be separated. Who is qualified to be chosen and to be nurtured into a leader is the remaining question.

Do leaders develop or are they born? Many academics agree that some people are born with inherent qualities such as physical presence, eloquence, charm, and genius that can be advantageous and qualify them to lead. Families and churches should consider the inherent qualities that young people possess and nurture those traits.⁴⁷ The human being, in the opinion of many academics and writers, possesses attributes that can be enhanced and rich a high degree of leadership. The majority of academics feel that leaders are both born and made, according to the writing of contemporary leaders. People's ability to lead is influenced by certain uncontrollable

⁴⁵ Maxwell, *The 4 Pillars of Leadership*, 92.

⁴⁶ Donahue and Robinson, *Building a Life-Changing Small Group Ministry*, 99.

⁴⁷ Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 53.

characteristics including size, beauty, intelligence, and charisma. However, if additional leadership traits that are under a person's control are cultivated, they can greatly improve their leadership quality.⁴⁸ History has shown that individuals can be trained to become leaders.

“Some well-known leaders have attained the highest levels of development despite first not appearing to be suited for leadership.”⁴⁹ There seems to be little association between a man's efficacy and his intelligence, his inventiveness, or his knowledge, according to Peter Drucker, who compares the relationship between intelligence and effectiveness.⁵⁰ What qualifies someone to be a leader if knowledge, intelligence, and creativity are not the sole requirements for leadership success. Although intelligence and other qualities are necessary for success, they are insufficient. It is obvious that intelligence or talents alone cannot guarantee success.⁵¹ There are more factors to think about for excellence. “Excellence cannot be attained solely by talent.”⁵² High intelligence was not the primary requirement for certain people to succeed in their careers as leaders, according to their backgrounds. “While world-class performers are occasionally brilliant, they frequently only have average intelligence.”⁵³ Being clever is admirable and can help leaders succeed, but more is required to lead at the highest level.

⁴⁸ Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 53.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁵² Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 303.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 303.

Anyone can reach the peak of his leadership potential if he is eager to learn and grow. To be the best leader you can be, you must have a passion for learning. The desire to learn is healthy and crucial for the development of leaders. Leadership is a skill that can be learned, but not everyone wants to learn it, and not everyone who does succeeds in doing so. Why? Because becoming the best entails having a strong belief that you can learn and grow, a strong desire to succeed, the willpower to constantly challenge you.⁵⁴ In the process of developing leadership skills, discipline, perseverance, and teamwork are necessary for a leader to succeed. Age is not a barrier for anyone who wants to grow. Anyone who wants to learn cannot be restricted by their environment.

The encounter is a component of leadership development. However, your response to it, not what you have gone through, is what matters most for your leadership development. “The secret to developing leadership skills is not in the experiences—whether positive or negative—but in how people react to them.”⁵⁵ Every experience has the potential to be both a teacher and a destroying force. It will depend on how the problem is met. “When faced with difficulty, some people give up trying because they grow resentful or afraid. Similar hardships are experienced by others, but they decide to use their suffering to their advantage by developing stronger as a result of their tragedy.”⁵⁶ Another teacher for developing leadership skills is experience.

Failure due to a crisis does not automatically rule someone out of leadership; rather, it serves as a lesson. Failure and personal difficulties won't bar you from

⁵⁴ Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 302.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁵⁶ Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 66.

leading. But failing to learn from your failures and difficulties could keep you from becoming the leader God intended you to be.⁵⁷ No one can expect to win every situation and case he passes through or expect that he will not commit mistakes. Rather he can choose to learn from his mistakes and move forward and try everything and trust in God who called him. You cannot either separate the selection and development of the leaders, they complete each other.

Developing leaders for small groups. The church and the rest of the world are both experiencing a leadership crisis. The problem isn't a shortage of capable leaders; there are plenty of them. Although we have a lot of potential leaders, we are not nurturing them. The leadership crisis in our world, and the church in particular, has been sparked by this failure in development. Our leaders are incapable of developing new leaders.⁵⁸ A church leader needs to be aware that there are potential leaders within the organization, but they need to be nurtured. A lack of development processes to find and use leaders may be the main problem with leadership in an organization rather than a lack of leaders themselves.⁵⁹ Instead of complaining that they lack qualified leaders, businesses should examine their systems to see if they have implemented processes for selecting, developing, mentoring, and empowering leaders.

The fundamental action a spiritual leader must take is to ask everyone who is prepared to serve God to give all to Him for guidance and leading. "A servant who is completely obedient to God's will is a powerful tool in God's arsenal. Spiritual leaders

⁵⁷ Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 66.

⁵⁸ Malphurs and Mancini, *Building Leaders*, 10.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

do not limit their work to what they believe to be their strengths.”⁶⁰ God is aware of the ideal location for someone to serve. It is important to let God provide guidance rather than depending just on theories you learn from worldly schooling or your thoughts about the leadership position you can play because what a spiritual leader performs is God's mission, not his mission. “The world can offer the best leadership theories and the most thorough training, but without God setting the agenda for a leader's life, that person, no matter how well educated, will not be an effective spiritual leader.”⁶¹ Every person is on a mission from God, and it is their responsibility to follow that mission. However, following God's agenda does not excuse someone from receiving the leadership training they need.

How long may the formation of spiritual leadership take? “Trust in God and obedience to God's plan are two criteria that influence the amount of time it takes for God to create character worth of spiritual leadership..”⁶² If His people are prepared to put their faith in Him, listen to Him, and follow Him, God is ready to guide them. Nobody can be a leader without first being a devoted disciple, according to the saying, “A person must first be a disciple (believer) and a devoted follower. Jesus didn't immediately invite the disciples to take on the role of leaders; one might be a devoted follower without necessarily being a leader.”⁶³ Following Jesus first, becoming His disciple next, and then developing as a leader who can guide others to Christ and make them disciples are all steps in the process of becoming a leader. Making leadership development a process and a journey is how to produce leaders who will

⁶⁰ Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 66, 70.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 82.

⁶³ Malphurs and Mancini, *Building Leaders*, 66.

lead the ministry successfully. The risk is that some denominational leaders and pastors may continue to think that single initiative programs, like Bible preaching or pastoral care, are sufficient to carry out the work of the ministry. The military, which has made leadership development an integral part of their leaders' daily life and a key to success, has a perspective that our church might learn from.⁶⁴ The successful small groups must prioritize the leaders' leadership development and engage in frequent, methodical activities.

Every level of church ministry, even the lowest level of the church system, needs to have its leaders developed since each level influences and has an impact on the one above it. The goal of the church ought to be to develop as many leaders as it can and to have capable leaders at every level of ministry.⁶⁵ The success of the church in its goal of making disciples depends on the development of leaders at all levels of the ministry. The ministry functions as a chain of links. The entire chain system will be impacted if one chain is weak or poorly repaired.

Hindrances to effective small group leadership. Aubrey and Will have identified some problems from the leadership, that become hindrances for the leadership development. The fact that there is a leader in place who is unable to mentor other leaders is the first issue. The second issue is the leader who decides to run the ministry instead of grooming future leaders. The third issue is a leader who is unaware that not all disciples have reached the point of leadership development. The church leadership's inability to organize and generate chances for people to participate in the development of the church leadership is the fourth issue. The fifth issue is getting caught up in the activity at hand and failing to schedule time for training

⁶⁴ Malphurs and Mancini, *Building Leaders*, 12.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

personnel. The last one but not the least is the church who doesn't have a vision for the leadership development .⁶⁶

Without the proper leadership selection and development, the church ministries will not be able to stand the pressure of the life mode of the 21st century. The leadership development will move people to fulfill the Great Commission and make disciples.

Discipleship: The Key to the Success of Leadership and Small Groups Ministry

This section will focus on the definition and the history of discipleship. It will also explore the importance of discipleship in the Christian church, and how discipleship makes successful small group ministry and small-group leadership.

The Definition of Disciple and Discipleship

It is difficult to be a true disciple without knowing the meaning of being a disciple and its cost (Luke 14:25-33; Matt 10:38; Mark 8:34). “The term *disciple* used in the New Testament is coming from the Greek word *mathetes*, which means a *learner*.”⁶⁷ To be a disciple is to be a learner. “A disciple, *mathetes*, is a learner or follower - usually someone committed to a significant master.”⁶⁸ From this perspective, a disciple is a committed person who follows a teacher, for learning and transformation. A disciple imitates the teacher and finally becomes like his teacher.

⁶⁶ Malphurs and Mancini, *Building Leaders*, 33-37.

⁶⁷ W. Jay Moon, *Intercultural Discipleship: Learning from Global Approaches to Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 45.

⁶⁸ Hull and Bill, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 32.

Hull defines a disciple of Jesus, not only as a learner and a follower but also as a reborn person (2 Cor 5:17).⁶⁹ A disciple is someone who commits himself to leave everything, surrender all, then follow his master. Before following the master, a disciple must disconnect from the former life and connect to the new source of life, like Peter who left his net, and Matthew who left his business. In addition, to be a disciple is not a single event, is rather a process. “A disciple is not a perfect person but it is someone willing to grow in Christ. Second, a disciple is a committed follower of Christ. A disciple has understood the cost of discipleship and is willing to pay the price. Third, a disciple lives and proclaims the kingdom of God.”⁷⁰ All this process is done with the help of the power of the Holy Spirit. A disciple is also developed in a community. “*A disciple moves closer to Jesus as a learner, follower, and lover, together with other disciples.*”⁷¹ A disciple is better developed in the community. The term disciple is used in New Testament specifically in the Gospels and Acts.

Despite the fact that each term emphasizes different facets of the individual's relationships with Jesus and other believers, the term “disciple” is the one most frequently used in the Gospel to describe Jesus' followers. It is also a common noun for those known in the early church as “believers,” “Christians,” “brothers” or “sisters,” “those of the way,” or “saints.” At least 230 times in the Gospels and 28 times in the book of Acts, the phrase was used most frequently in this particular connotation.⁷²

The term disciple in the Gospels and Acts emphasizes the person who has a relationship with Jesus and his fellows. There is no discipleship without relationship and following.

⁶⁹ Hull and Bill, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 32.

⁷⁰ Ermias G. Mamo, *The Maturing Church: An Integrated Approach to Contextualization, Discipleship and Mission* (Carlisle, UK: Longham Global Library 2017), 34-35.

⁷¹ Charles A. Davis, *Making Disciples across Cultures: Missional Principles for a Diverse World* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015), 61.

⁷² Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 32.

It's also important to understand what “discipleship” means. Although the terms “disciple” and “discipleship” share a common root and certain resemblance, their meanings are distinct. Although the terms “discipleship” and “disciple” are frequently used in the Gospel and Acts, these terms were not invented by the Bible. The frequently used term “discipleship,” which represents the disciple's ongoing life, also refers to the overall Christian experience. This term is not purely biblical, but rather derived. However, the majority of Christians recognize discipleship as the method of following Jesus.⁷³ A follower or a learner, a disciple is someone who practices discipleship. “Ship means “the state of” or “contained in” when it is applied to a disciple. In other words, being a disciple is the state of being a disciple. The idea of becoming a disciple rather than having been made one is what gives the term “discipleship” a beautiful, ongoing vibe.⁷⁴ Discipleship is ongoing learning, following, and transformation. It is not a destination that can be reached and abandoned; rather, it is a continual journey.

The community is a better place to practice discipleship. Discipleship is an intentional, largely informal learning activity where two or a small group of people, usually in a community holding to the same religious beliefs, make a voluntary commitment to each other to form an intimate, long-lasting relationship so that the disciples can learn from one another.⁷⁵ The community is transformed in the likeness of Christ through discipleship, which also helps the community grow in its knowledge of God.

⁷³ Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 35.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁷⁵ Ermias, *The Maturing Church*, 30.

The community's educational journey through discipleship is where the leaders are produced. Discipleship is an educational technique that is fundamental to the church's ministry and is used to create leaders and foster real community.⁷⁶ Christianity without discipleship is the end of Christianity and spiritual leadership. Without discipleship, the rest of Christian life becomes routine and is devastating.

The History of Discipleship

This part will explore the history of discipleship in the Greco-Roman world where Christianity started, and the history of discipleship in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, Gospels, and book of Acts.

To comprehend the context of biblical discipleship, it is helpful to study the history of the educational system in the Greco-Roman culture. “Unlike the educational system of today, pupils in the Greco-Roman era sat at the master's feet and studied both formally and informally, receiving a well-rounded education that was grounded in real-world experience. The focus of the instruction was on developing real life skills rather than spreading knowledge. It was a lifelong commitment to stay with the master, to learn from him, and to provide for him over an extended period of time.”⁷⁷ The Greco-Roman culture served as the backdrop for Jesus' early ministry, and it served as the same culture for His followers.

The discipleship described in the Old and New Testaments takes place in the Greco-Roman era. “In the world of the Old and New Testament, learning was not accomplished by academic study; rather, it was accomplished by adhering to a rabbi, such as Moses (John 9:28), John (Matt 9:14), or the Pharisees (Matt 22:16). The

⁷⁶ Ermias, *The Maturing Church*, 34.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

twelve disciples were chosen by Jesus to follow Him, learn from His teachings, and carry out His commands when He entered this earth (Luke 6:12–16).⁷⁸ Jesus began his career in a Greco-Roman setting, and His disciples carried on in the same setting.

Discipleship in both the Old and New Testaments takes place inside the Greco-Roman culture. Learning in the world of the Old and New Testaments was not accomplished by academic study; rather, it was accomplished by adhering to a rabbi, such as John (Matt 9:14), the Pharisees (Matt 22:16), or Moses (John 9:28). The twelve disciples were chosen by Jesus before He entered this earth (Luke 6:12–16) to follow Him, absorb His teachings, and carry out His commands.⁷⁹ This shift that started in the time of Constantine changed clandestinely the meaning and the purpose of discipleship in Christianity.

Instead of discipling Christians, Christendom began to focus more on the quantity of converts. The institutional church appointed many leaders who were not disciples but rather persons who were seeking positions of power and authority, which was not the practice of the early church. Numerous individuals looked for different approaches to producing disciples as a result of the spiritual decay in the churches and the ensuing apathy. The monastic movement was started by people who saw where the church was going and decided to seclude themselves in order to establish a new group that offered discipleship techniques.⁸⁰

That scenario of changing the meaning of discipleship continues since the fourth century, with a lot of consequences until the time of reformation.

The Reformation began the process of restoring the light that had been lost throughout the dark ages, including discipleship, but it was unable to fully restore everything that had been lost in discipleship.⁸¹ The protestant churches with the goal

⁷⁸ Moon, *Intercultural Discipleship*, 46.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Ermias, *The Maturing Church*, 27.

of evangelization join the Reformation as its apex. The missionaries' conversion strategy was incomplete when they first set out to reach out to other countries. Missionaries did not adopt a discipleship-based evangelism strategy. The missionaries' goals were to convert people to Christianity and civilize the culture of the people they were preaching, both of which were influenced by their contemporary milieu, whether purposefully or unintentionally. Through instruction in churches and schools, they hoped to create a person who was educated and civilized.⁸² That system generally produced converts to the movement rather than disciples of Jesus.

The Christian church has expanded in terms of infrastructure, numbers, and organization as a result of this misinterpretation of discipleship, but not in terms of disciples. Instead of developing followers, this misconception created consumers of religious activity. Many individuals attempt to confine the invitation to follow Jesus to a study course, a constrained program just for new believers, or an austere way of living solely for monks, missionaries, and pastors. Even worse, a lot of people believe that being a disciple is about mastering abilities, learning new things, and accumulating knowledge.⁸³ The study of the background of discipleship as it was practiced by Jesus, His disciples, and throughout Christianity history gives a true meaning and foundation of discipleship.

Importance of Discipleship

This section will concentrate on the advantages of discipleship as a means of creating a strong Christian community, a means of producing leaders, and a means of preparing people for mission and transformation.

⁸² Ermias, *The Maturing Church*, 27-28.

⁸³ Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 52.

Education is one of the virtues of discipleship. Christian education cannot be discussed without reference to discipleship. The “effective educational method for the church” is discipleship.”⁸⁴ The fact that discipleship affects the intellect, the heart, and the hand makes it a successful technique for the church. A disciple is a learner who seeks transformation and imitating his Master, not just learning for its own sake. As a technique of education, discipleship encompasses more than just teaching; it takes a wholistic approach to instruction.⁸⁵ Every ministry of the church incorporates discipleship as the system of church education.

The church gains from discipleship by developing a vibrant and cohesive Christian community. Theology is expressed through discipleship, which is both a strategy for forming communities and an embodiment of Christ.⁸⁶ The community is connected through discipleship. The foundation of discipleship is a solid relationship and mutual trust between the disciples and Jesus as well as among the disciples. Discipleship is a connected community where new believers can get assistance, friendship, and maturity rather than being a personal endeavor, a self-study endeavor, or a solitary journey. Without a genuine relationship, there can be no discipleship. One essential component of Christianity that was absent from the sacrifice of missionaries was a friendship, which is the cornerstone of discipleship.⁸⁷ Discipleship cannot be termed what it is when the friendship connection is absent. To fly into invisibility is to reject the call. Jesus' sect-like community disassociated itself from him. The

⁸⁴ Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 30.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁸⁷ Ermias, *The Maturing Church*, 28.

discipleship will be seen in a group of Christians who look out for one another, encourage one another, and build one another up.

The preparation and equipping of the members and leaders to carry out the Great Commission is another advantage of discipleship. People are better equipped to serve Christ through discipleship. “Discipleship is a method of training, developing, and preparing leaders and believers for mission”⁸⁸ Discipleship is a complete process to mature people for mission. Discipleship is the best method to grow the church according to the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20). The discipleship makes disciples for Christ, not the converts to the movement.

The factors for discipleship success. Success in discipleship is costly, and needs commitments, personal and church commitments. The commitment to follow Jesus and His method of discipleship is the only way to succeed in discipleship.

The personal commitment to follow Jesus. Following Jesus throughout His earthly ministry demanded a complete dedication and was expensive. “Choosing to follow Jesus is at the heart of discipleship.”⁸⁹ Because they were devoted followers, the disciples of Jesus were successful in their ministry. Because discipleship is an essential component of Christianity, a disciple must choose to follow Jesus. A Christianity without Christ is inevitably one without discipleship.”⁹⁰ Anyone who does not have Christ is not worthy of the title of disciple of Jesus. “Being a disciple of Jesus demands more than simply accepting religious truth; you cannot be a Christian

⁸⁸ Ermias, *The Maturing Church*, 32.

⁸⁹ Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 36.

⁹⁰ Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 59.

without doing so. It entails a dedication to follow Christ every day..”⁹¹ Although knowledge is valuable and beneficial, it is not sufficient; action must also be taken.

The church will be filled with consumers rather than disciples if the disciple does not correctly take the first step of giving all to Jesus. “Does the gospel we preach produce disciples or do religious products and services produce consumers?”⁹² A disciple is a person who vows to follow Jesus and learn from him in order to imitate him. Making disciples who learn to follow what Christ commanded is a requirement of the gospel. Living a life of transformation is the proof of salvation. The benefits of redemption are the focus here, not generating salvation.⁹³ Every disciple must follow Jesus and be transformed in His image, that step is necessary for the success of discipleship. The commitment of a disciple to follow Jesus is a minimum for successful discipleship.

Church commitment to follow the method of Jesus. Jesus had two goals: to carry out God's purpose and to make disciples. Making disciples is what matters most to Jesus, not the church's elegant design or its aesthetic appeal. in every situation! Making devoted followers for Christ is what Christ ordered both then and now, rather than the agenda and politics that the modern church is involved in. Jesus advised His followers to follow His example and start making disciples.

Are the churches following the examples of Jesus, and committing themselves to make the faithful followers of Jesus? “We should dig deeper to understand the issues the people are dealing with rather than rushing to the so-called receptive places. In addition, if people are receptive, we should make sure that we train them to be

⁹¹ Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 47.

⁹² Ibid., 44.

⁹³ Ibid.

disciples not just converts. We should target holistic transformation”⁹⁴ A leader in the Christian church should follow the method of Christ, and recruit the people who are committed to learning from Jesus and following Him, if the method of Jesus is not followed in recruiting His disciples the consequences will be destructive. “To reach the lost and dying as quickly as possible, some missionaries have embraced a streamlined missiology strategy that seeks to proclaim the gospel, form the new groups into churches, and then move on. The motivation is understandable given the great need of so many lost souls and so few workers, but the result of this philosophy is devastating.”⁹⁵ Every church should check its method of making disciples, and be committed to following the method of Jesus for success in discipleship.

Jesus should be the model for every leader in making disciples. What the Bible reveals about the method of Jesus in making disciples. “It was an intentional relationship, not accidental; it was a voluntary commitment, not imposed; and it was a learning community where disciples learned from Jesus and each other.”⁹⁶ Every church leader should commit to recruiting the disciples by following the steps of Jesus, if he wants to have a successful discipleship.

Imitating Jesus' ministry and following his lead in making disciples is the key to successfully gathering and empowering the disciples. Only Christ's approach will truly succeed in winning over the populace. The Savior interacted with people as one who wished for their welfare. By empathizing with them and attending to their needs, He gained their trust. He then commanded them to “Follow Me.” Before asking them

⁹⁴ Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 37.

⁹⁵ Ermias, *The Maturing Church*, 37.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 38-39.

to follow him, Jesus created relationships based on trust and surrender with each of his disciples.

As a leader, you cannot discuss “discipleship” without discussing “relationships.” There can be no discipleship without a relationship. Jesus established a connection with them by His teachings, His miracles, and His life before He summoned His first followers. “Up until this point, none of the disciples had joined forces completely to work alongside Jesus. They had listened to His teaching and seen many of His miracles, but they had not totally given up their previous jobs. However, Jesus now implores them to renounce their prior way of life and align their goals with His..”⁹⁷ The connection between the disciples and the master instructor is made possible through this relationship. The bond that held the group together was the relationship.⁹⁸ Discipleship cannot exist without a relationship, and relationships develop over time. Relationships are the foundation of discipleship, thus a leader must be able to connect with people. “Fear and mistrust between a leader and their followers will never result in anything of lasting significance. The greatest challenges will be surmounted and a meaningful legacy will be left by a partnership that is marked by mutual respect and confidence.”⁹⁹ To be a leader is to trust and be trusted.

The practice of discipleship requires trust, just like it does in other groups or communities of people. “It is clear that if people anywhere were to willingly follow someone—whether it be into battle or the boardroom, in the front office or on the production floor—they first want to make sure that person is worthy of their trust,”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ White, *Desire of Ages*, 246.5.

⁹⁸ Maxwell, *The 4 Pillars of Leadership*, 16.

⁹⁹ Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 26.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

says John MacArthur. They want proof of the person's honesty, morals, and values. People are incapable of being led by someone they do not respect and believe in. Success in discipleship starts with the leader's behavior. Credibility is crucial.

Discipleship should be a top priority for the Christian church. “The church should prioritize discipleship over institutions, programs, and organizations in order to follow in Christ's footsteps.”¹⁰¹ Discipleship is, and should be the priority for the Christian church (Matt 28:18-20). The church should be clear on how to recruit, and equip members for discipleship; that should be the very first mission of the church. “A vibrant community of disciples who are aware of their calling and commission must support the mission.”¹⁰² Instead of generating disciples with a missional heart, the church will produce converts who don't know their calling if it neglects discipleship in favor of other activities. Numerous missionaries report the number of converts, which sparks interest and raises money, but a discipling process is more challenging to document. Truth be told, throughout the history of missions, the emphasis on going and converting has trumped training and discipling.¹⁰³ Producing disciples is costly, but it is worth it for the Christian church to do so.

Prioritizing discipleship will enable the church to create disciples rather than only movement converts. We're readily dazzled with enormous churches because we're primarily products of consumer culture. Christians who are decent people but aren't developed into the life of Christ are a specialty of the church.”¹⁰⁴ The heart must be changed for the church to fulfill its goal; not many Christians who remain

¹⁰¹ Ermias, *The Maturing Church*, 40.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 41.

¹⁰⁴ Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 253.

unaffected are produced. Discipleship is considerably more about each disciple's level of character and spiritual fervor than it is a strategy for the church's expansion."¹⁰⁵

True discipleship will produce just as converted Christians produce fruit via their labor. The message of Jesus is more than just facts to be shared; it is the ability of God to change people's lives and entire communities. The only way the situation will change is if we teach believers how to follow Christ as their leader."¹⁰⁶ The way that leads to the transformation of the heart, should be the priority of the church.

One of the factors that contributes to the success of discipleship is the church atmosphere. When the church environment is conducive to growth, the members feel more at ease and prepared to advance. "We want a location that is authentically real. We want to be open and honest about our hopes, setbacks, and differences. Why do we come out of our shells because this is such a huge deal? Because religious activity—including well-intended, well-planned, and well-led programs—can and frequently does fail when we retreat into our shells."¹⁰⁷ In a situation when you are untrustworthy and scared, how can you grow? Can I believe you? I regret to inform you that this has been the case in the majority of Christian environments. Return to your shell now; we're going!¹⁰⁸ Before becoming receptive to growth and development, the populace wants to be certain that they are in a secure environment. The foundation for transformational discipleship is a relationship of trust. We can only openly address obstacles to compliance and massive sins that prevent spiritual

¹⁰⁵ Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 37.

¹⁰⁶ Ermias, *The Maturing Church*, 41.

¹⁰⁷ Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 155.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

advancement in partnerships. Discipleship will be successful if the church is committed to creating a safe environment there.

Summary

If the church wants to be successful in discipleship, it should learn and follow the method of Jesus. “What Christ did with disciples is not just a story for study or meditation; it is a lesson from which a church can learn about success and failure in being disciples and making disciples.”¹⁰⁹ There is a direct connection between the success of small groups in making discipleship, with the quality of the leadership. “No discipleship meant no leadership and no leadership no church.”¹¹⁰ When the church develops leaders for small groups there is successful small groups ministry, then the church becomes a better community, the church develops leaders, and the church fulfills better the Great Commission.

¹⁰⁹ Ermias, *The Maturing Church*, 41-42.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH SETTING, METHODOLOGY, AND INTERVENTION

The purpose of this study is to develop concepts and strategies that will equip small group leaders in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church to maximize their potential to make disciples and fulfill the Great Commission. To provide the contextual background of the desired purpose, this chapter will survey the historical, cultural, economic, demographical, and geographical contextual background of Huye City where Ngoma Adventist church is located. Further, the history and background of Ngoma Adventist Church will be also examined, specifically in discipleship. Thereafter, the ministry context of this study is given, then the methodology for this study is provided. Finally, the presentation of the pre-program development data collection is followed.

Description of Huye City

The Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church is situated in Southern province's Huye city, Ngoma cell, Ngoma sector, and Huye district. Four provinces and the capital of Kigali make up Rwanda.

According to the census of 2012, the Huye district located in the city has a total population of 52,768, while the city of Huye alone has a total population of

42,209 with a square kilometer of 43,14.¹ According to the South Rwanda Field Statistical Report from the end of 2021, there are 3,853 Seventh-day Adventists in the city of Huye who attend the churches in Ngoma, Kaminuza, Cyarwa, and Mbazi.²

Historical Background

Two European nations, Germany and Belgium, colonized Rwanda at the time of the colonial era. A German nation was the first to colonize. From 1896 to 1916, Germany protected Rwanda; up until the start of World War I, Kigali served as the nation's capital. From 1916 until its independence in 1962, Rwanda was a Belgian colony following the First World War. After the Belgian Queen Astrid, the Belgians relocated the capital from Kigali to Huye. From 1916 until the country's independence in 1962, the city was known by the name Astrida. "History demonstrates that Astrida was the nation's most significant city until 1965. The city's name was Astrida before independence and Butare until 2005. Huye City is one of the six subsidiary cities that the Rwandan government has chosen to grow in order to support Kigali, the main city.

The government of Rwanda established its first university in Huye in 1963, where numerous leaders who served the nation in a variety of positions in earlier decades received their education. The National University of Rwanda was the name given to the institution at the time. The first Ethnography Museum in Rwanda as well as other governmental organizations are located in the city of Huye. Huye City is also home to one of the biggest and oldest Catholic cathedrals, erected in 1934.

¹ Vincent Manirakiza et al., *Huye: Social-Spatial Dynamics and Neighborhood Patterns in a Small City*, PDF file, October, 2020, http://www.centreforsustainablecities.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/SHLC_Research_Summary_07_HUYE_October2020.pdf.

² South Rwanda Field, *Statistical Report: 4th Quarter* (Kigali, Rwanda: South Rwanda Field, 2021).

Geographical Background

The Huye district has a surface area of 581.5 square kilometers, while Rwanda as a whole has a surface area of 26,338 square kilometers. There are 30 districts in Rwanda, including the Huye district. The Huye district has a density of 565 people per square kilometer. The Huye district has 14 sectors, 77 Cells, and 508 villages that make up its administration.³ The Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church area is spread across 4 cells in the Huye District's Ngoma Sector.

Huye District is found in the southern province, which has 8 Districts, as can be seen in Figure 1 below. Huye District is situated in the southernmost portion of the province and is bordered by 4 other districts from the same region. In the South, Nyaruguru, in the North, Nyanza, in the West, and in the East, Nyamagabe. Huye District is a transit hub for the Rwandan capital Kigali, Nyamagabe, and Gisagara districts. It is also a transit hub for Nyaruguru, Nyamagabe, and Gisagara districts. In other terms, Huye district is in the middle of the southern province's neighboring districts. Huye is also not too far.

Figure 1 below is the map of Huye District with 14 sub-entities called sectors including Ngoma Sector where the study was conducted.

³ Repubulika y'u Rwanda, "Huye District," accessed 28 October 2021, <https://www.huye.gov.rw/>.



Figure 1. Map of Huye District⁴

Demography

328,398 people call the Huye district home, according to the 2012 census, 52,768 people reside in the urban area, and young women and people make up the majority of Huye District's population. Males make up 46% of the population, while females make up 54% of all people under the age of 25.⁵ 86% of men and 80% of women who have completed primary school are in this group. In Huye District,

⁴ Repubulika y'u Rwanda, "Menya Huye," accessed 1 December 2022, <https://www.huye.gov.rw/menya-akarere>.

⁵ Jaganyi et al., *Rwanda: National Urban Policies and City Profiles for Kigali and Huye*, 4.

population growth from 2002 to 2012 was 33%. Huye District had 328,398 residents in 2012 compared to 246,445 in 2002.⁶

The city of Huye is where the majority of the Huye District's urban area is found. According to the census of 2012, the Huye district in the city as a whole has a total population of 52,768, whilst the city of Huye as a whole has a total population of 42,209 and a square kilometer area of 43,14. The district of Huye's largest city is called Huye. Huye City is home to over 80% of the district's urban residents.⁷

Religion Background

With numerous churches and Christian denominations, the Huye city is mostly a Christian metropolis. Among Christian churches and other denominations, the Catholic church is the most prevalent. There are representatives of other denominations, such as Islam and Jehovah's Witnesses, in addition to Christianity; nonetheless, there is almost no other known traditional religion. Catholic Church, ADEPER Church, Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Elshadai Church, Full Gospel Church, AEBC Church, EAR Church, Assemble de Dieu Church, Restoration Church, Zion Temple Church, Neo Apostolic Church, Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church, Methodist Church, and other emerging churches are the Christian denominations observed in Huye City.

The Roman Catholic Church predominates in Huye. The first location in Rwanda where a Roman Catholic mission was established was Huye (Butare) in 1900. Numerous Roman Catholic Church congregations and organizations can be found in the city of Huye. The researcher saw that Huye's Catholic population owned a

⁶ Jaganyi et al., *Rwanda: National Urban Policies and City Profiles for Kigali and Huye*, 4.

⁷ Manirakiza et al., "Huye: Social-Spatial Dynamics and Neighborhood Patterns in a Small City."

sizable amount of land. In Huye, then known as Astrida, the Jubilee of 50 Years of Roman Catholic Church Evangelization in Rwanda was commemorated in 1950. The Jubilee observed in Astrid demonstrates the Catholic Church's consideration of Butare at the time.⁸

Economical Background

The city of Huye's economy is based on local businesses, public institutions, private institutions that are situated there, and local businesses. Numerous schools in the city of Huye draw a large number of students and teachers. And the majority of those schools are residential schools with older campuses. The economies of those many schools have benefited Huye District. Huye City is described as the city of education, knowledge, and cultural history in the economic growth pole of the National Urbanization Policy (NUP) as a secondary city.⁹

The largest campus within the University of Rwanda is the Huye Campus, formerly known as the National University of Rwanda. Many patients from neighboring districts' hospitals travel to Butare Teaching Hospital, which is the referral hospital run by Integrated Polytechnic Regional College (IPRC). The National Industrial Research and Development Agency (NIRDA), the Rwanda Agricultural Board, the National Museum and Ethnography National Museum, and Kabutare Hospital are further facilities. Other private institutions include the Catholic University, the Protestant Institute of Arts and Education (PIAA), three private

⁸ Conference Episcopale du Rwanda, "Catholic Church in Rwanda: Historical Overview," Accessed 25 April 2021, <https://egliscatholiquerwanda.org/en/spip.php?article533>.

⁹ World Bank Group, *Reshaping Urbanization In Rwanda: Economic and Spatial Trends and Proposals* (Washington, DC: World Bank, December 2017), 12, accessed 6 April 2022, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/29081/122174-WP-P157637-PUBLIC-Note-1-Rwanda-Urbanization-12-07-17-rev2.pdf?sequence=1>.

clinics, several secondary schools, primary schools, and nurseries. The city's economy is significantly influenced by all of those institutions.

The commerce carried out in the city of Huye is another source of revenue. The city serves as a hub for transportation to the Gisagara, Nyamagabe, and Nyaruguru districts, and several residents who work in those areas also reside there. The intersection of the routes leading to Burundi and the DRC lies in the city of Huye.

The city has hotels as well. Numerous hotels and motels may be found, including the Mater Boni CONSILII Hotel, Credo Hotel, Bartos Hotel, Four Steps Hotel, Galileo Stadium Hotel, Casa Hotel Ltd, and Light House Hotel. The Huye International Stadium is another facility that draws visitors to the area. Despite the organizations and businesses that support the Huye district's economy, the road is still long and a substantial portion of the local populace is still considered to be impoverished.

The Huye District in Rwanda has a poverty rate of 47 percent in 2012, with a poverty rate of 25.2 percent. Huye District, one of Rwanda's 30 districts, is placed 16th because of its tremendous poverty.¹⁰ Malnutrition is a serious problem in Huye District, where in 2014, 13% of children under the age of five were underweight and 43% of children under the age of five were stunted.¹¹ Stunting negatively affects children's growth and future prospects, which is detrimental for both the child and the nation.

¹⁰ Jaganyi et al., *Rwanda: National Urban Policies and City Profiles for Kigali and Huye*, 5.

¹¹ Ndicunguye Richard, "Huye District Development Strategy (2018-2024)" July 2018, accessed 2 February 2022, https://www.academia.edu/43010268/Huye_District_Development_Strategy_2018_2024_.

The History of Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church

The Rwanda Union Mission is the name of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's administrative body in that country. 'Field' is the name of a different administrative organization that falls under Rwanda Union Mission. After Central Rwanda, North Rwanda Field, West Rwanda Field, and East Rwanda Field, South Rwanda Field is the fifth field to be established in the Rwanda Union Mission. “A decision to partition the field was made at a meeting on November 17, 1970, in Blantyre, Malawi. Thus, two fields were established: the South Rwanda Field, led by S. Sebuji Sho and based in Butare; and the Central Rwanda Field, led by A. K. Phillips and situated in Gitwe with Pastor Rutwa as his vice president.”¹² South Rwanda Field had his headquarters in current Huye District, Ngoma Sector, Butare cell. The Seventh-day Adventist Ngoma Church was established in the same compound as South Rwanda Field headquarters in 1970, the same year that South Rwanda Field was established. The South Rwanda Field headquarters office and the church building were both constructed at the same period and location. However, as of 2022, the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Rwanda Union Mission has 8 Fields. South East Rwanda Field, North East Rwanda Field, and North West Rwanda Field are the next three fields that Rwanda Union erected after South Rwanda Fields.

The Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church is the earliest in Huye and the mother of the Butare, Kaminuza, Save, and other neighboring Districts. The Butare District, which contains 4 churches, is where the Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church is situated. There are 1147 members listed as current members of the Ngoma Seventh-Day Adventist Church as of the end of 2021. Ngoma Church is one of the

¹² Jacques Kayigema, “Rwanda,” *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, January 29, 2020, accessed 3 May 2021, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=8FI0>.

245 churches that make up the South Rwanda Field of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Rwanda Union Mission. The South Rwanda Field had 245 Churches and 122,994 current members as of December 2021.¹³

The pastor of the Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church District claims that some churchgoers no longer reside in Huye and are consequently unable to attend services or engage regularly in church activities. As a result, they are not present in Huye. The pastor of Ngoma Church estimated that there are about 200 members who can be found in Huye City and frequently attend church services.”³

Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church is cosmopolitan. According to the pastor of the church, the majority of the members of the church who are not regular are not permanent residents, instead, they come from different areas with different backgrounds, and some of them came because of jobs and stay in the city get baptize and attend the church while working, and when they leave, they do not ask the transfer letters and the church doesn't know where they are and the connection is lost.

Ministry Context

In the Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Sabbath School small groups ministry is a vital resource that may unite members, aid in their spiritual development, and help them become disciples. There are two main components to the Sabbath School at the Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church. All the members assemble in the church for the Sabbath School report, the missionary report, and a gratitude offering in the first section. The participants come together for small group activities in the second section.

¹³ South Rwanda Field, *Statistical Report*.

The teacher guides the study and plans the small group activities in the second portion of the Sabbath School program, which is set aside for the biblical study that goes along with the lesson. Each member is also given a card, which is used to track attendance and care for individuals who are absent for a variety of reasons. Small group activities last for about 45 minutes. 14 organized small groups of adults and teenagers attended Sabbath School at the Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church in 2021.

Sabbath Scholl small groups in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church have the potential to connect the members, grow them spiritually, and train them for their mission. However, in my observation, despite all the potential that the Sabbath School small groups in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church have to make disciples, he is not making disciples as was expected. Besides that in my observation, there is no plan to disciple the small groups of teachers and leaders to make them the fishers of men.

Therefore, based on the biblical perspective on how God prepared His servants before sending them to the mission, how Jesus prepared His disciples for transformation and the mission, and the thoughts from different literature reviews on leadership development and discipleship, the purpose of this research is to develop strategies that will equip the small group leaders for transformation and effective ministry.

Research Design

This section chose an appropriate research methodology that helped to bridge the gap that hinder the small group's ministry to reach its potential to make disciples in the Ngoma Adventist church. The researcher selects the narrative methodology that will help to get the data from experienced selected members and leaders of Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church, and consequently the researcher will get the live

experiences of the situation of the congregation that will lead to the positive change. This research will help the Sabbath School small groups ministry in Ngoma Adventist church reach its purposes, and be effective in discipleship.

Research Methods

The researcher chose to use the qualitative method because it fits this research work. This method focuses on the group discussion and observation from the researcher, and it gives the reality from the context and, from the ground. The focus of this research is to bring change and practice not just theories.

Rationale of Selection

The qualitative method used by the researcher helps to get ideas, and thoughts, from the people, while the quantitative method gets the numbers, and logic and focuses on numeric and unchanging data. The qualitative method is important for this project because it helps the researcher to observe direct emotions and reaction from the people, which give him more information about the situation and the context of the congregation. The Doctoral of Ministry program is situated in the zone of applied theology and the objective of the program is to improve the practice in ministry and creates a link between theology and a certain area.

Selection of Participants

The participants in the research were selected carefully because the selection of the focus group affects the result of the research. The selected people are those who know what is going on, in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church, especially in Sabbath School small group activities. The first focus group is composed of the pastor who leads the church, all church elders, they are five in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church, and the leadership of Sabbath School: General Superintendent, his

assistant, and secretary. This focus group represents the top leadership of Ngoma SDA Church. The second group is composed of all 14 adult and youth Sabbath School small group leaders, this group represents the direct leadership of Sabbath School small groups. Thirdly, the focus group is composed of 10 experienced members representing other members from all groups represented in the church.

All categories of people are represented in the focus groups, the male, the female, the young and aged people, to get information from all corners. The researcher team assisted the researcher in the selection of the participants in the focus groups. The research is done using open-ended questions, with the climate of discussion guided by the interview guide, researcher, and his team.

Criteria for Sampling Procedures and Selection

The sampling procedures and selection focused mainly on two groups. The first group is the researcher group which helped the researcher get information and put the data together. The second one is composed of the focus groups who participated in the research by responding to the questions. The research group is composed of the researcher, the pastor, the head church elder, and the Sabbath School superintendent, they are the leaders of the Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church who know the members, and who are more informed of what is going on in the Ngoma Adventist church Sabbath School small groups because.

This group of leaders has been in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church for a quite long period and they have participated in many church meetings, and have access to Ngoma Seventh-day church information and members. This group helped the researcher to select the people who are more informed about the Sabbath School small group activities in Ngoma Church. This group of leaders of Ngoma Seventh-day

Adventist Church received training to facilitate the research and assist the researcher in getting information and putting together the data.

The second group is the people who participated in the research by responding to the questions. They are pastors, five church elders, 3 Sabbath School leaders, 14 Sabbath School small group leaders, and 10 representative church members. All of them are from Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church and are grouped into three focus groups.

Each focus group was assigned a time to give information by responding and discussing through interviews. The research was conducted in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church premises. The time was assigned to the focus groups as follows: First focus group to interview is composed of church leadership: The church pastor, 5 church elders, and 3 Sabbath School leaders. The second focus group is composed of 14 adults and youth Sabbath School small group leaders. The third focus group is composed of 10 selected church members.

Instrumentation

This section shows how the data were gathered. The researcher uses nine open-end questions where the participants were free to dialogue, and to express themselves in responding to the questions but with the option to add any necessary information that is needed for clarification. The interview guide has 9 questions with the purpose to guide the interviewers in the research. The interview guide was used for all focus groups and was translated into Kinyarwanda because it is the language that is well understood and used by everyone in the Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church. The venue is the Ngoma church building, the place is calm and convenient for church members to feel comfortable discussing church issues.

Data Analysis

Data gather facts that lead to a conclusion. The first step in this exercise is collecting data, then organize them, and finally analyze them. In this process there is a recording of the data, putting them together, and analyzing them to draw a meaningful understanding and conclusion. The analysis evaluates data and does a comparative exercise, builds a relationship between them, and underlines differences. Data needs to be assembled, and investigated to draw a meaningful conclusion.

Data Collection Procedures

This part describes the process of collecting data. The data were gathered from three focus groups in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church. The researcher met his team (Pastor, church head elder, and Sabbath School superintendent) on April 22nd, to plan and discuss the interview and how to organize the meetings. On April 23, 2022, at different hours different focus groups met for group discussion with the interview guide.

The first focus group is composed of the ten selected members of Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church, who met from 8:30- 10:30 am. The second focus group is composed of five church elders, the Sabbath School superintendent, his associate, and the secretary of the Sabbath School, they met from 2:30-4:30 pm. The third focus group is composed of the twelve Sabbath School small group leaders; only two were absent. The researcher met them from 4:30-6:30 pm. All the focus groups were met in the Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church premises. During the focus group discussion, the note was taken by the design secretary. The discussion was also recorded using the phone Samsung A31. The pictures were also taken using the same phone.

The researcher as someone who has been in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church was intentionally observing the Sabbath School small groups activities for around 3 years, discussing informally with the members and leaders of Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church to know what was going on in Sabbath School small groups and note their observation.

Presentation and Description of the Findings from the Focus Groups

The information received from the focus group discussion informs the researcher, about the situation and issues in the Sabbath School small groups in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church. The light received from the focus group's discussion guided the researcher to make the needed intervention to address the situation. The findings are analyzed summarized and presented in the form of tables for each focus group.

Focus Group Findings

This section is giving the global picture of the findings from the discussion with the focus group of 10 selected members of Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church. The findings are presented in the form of tables. All ten members in this focus group agreed that the attendance of the members to the Sabbath School small group activities is a challenge, and the participation in the Sabbath School lesson discussion in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church is not satisfactory. They also add that there is no intentional plan to disciple the members of the Sabbath School small group.

The main challenges underlined by this focus group are the lack of training for the small group leaders, the lack of connection among the small group leaders, and the lack of connection between the leaders of the small groups and the leaders of the Ngoma Seventh-day Church. They believe that the disciplined small group leaders are

the ones that make Jesus' disciples. They believe also that discipling the small group leaders will produce more church leaders. They suggested three solutions that can make stronger the Sabbath School's small groups. The first one is to select carefully the leaders, the second one is the training and empowering the Sabbath School small group leaders. The third one is connecting the small group leaders with Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders. Table 1 below is the summary of the responses from the focus group of the members.

Table 1. Members' Response to Focus Group Discussion

Question	Response
Can you tell us about the attendance in Sabbath School small group activities in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant number don't attend, but for the youth small groups, the attendance is very low. • People come late to the Sabbath School small group.
How is the participation of the members in Sabbath School small groups activities in your group and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation is at a low level. • The leaders don't involve the members. • Sabbath School lessons are few among the members, but for the youth groups, it is very low.
How do you observe the impact of Sabbath School small group activities in making disciples of Jesus in your church?	There is no significant implication of small groups in discipleship. The time for small groups to be together is limited, there is no time to pray together, no involvement in evangelism, no time for reclamation, but social activities are well done.
What are the current challenges the Sabbath School small groups are facing in making disciples of Jesus in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The members and leaders don't know how the small groups should work • Sabbath School small group leaders including baptismal classes leaders who are not at the level of those they are helping. • Receiving responsibilities after baptism without any training. • Little knowledge of small group leaders on how the church operates. • No connection between small group leaders and church leadership, and sometimes there is a misunderstanding in some activities. • No connection between the small group leaders to help each other.
What are your suggestions on how those challenges can be solved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipling the Sabbath School small group leaders • The connection between small group leaders and church leadership • The connection between the small group leaders
How do you see the involvement of Ngoma Adventist church leadership in preparing and supporting the leadership of Sabbath School small groups?	No support and no training from the Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership
What do you think about the relationship between small group leadership and the success of the small group in discipleship?	There is a strong connection, the success of the small groups depends on its leaders.
Do you observe any relationship between discipling Sabbath School small group leaders and discipling small group members in your church? groups?	Discipling successfully the leaders of small group mean success in discipleship.
What do you think can happen in leadership in Ngoma Adventist church, if the leaders of Sabbath School small groups are disciplined? If they are well-selected, trained, and supported?	The church will have more transformed and capable leaders

The focus group of the members contributed from the side of the members, now we turn to the group of leaders to get the side of the leadership that is closer to the members, the focus group of Sabbath School small group leaders. This section gives the summary and analysis of the findings from the discussion with this focus group. The findings from the small group leaders as presented in the summary below has a fundamental contribution to clarifying what is going on in the small groups and adding the issues that need attention for this project. The leaders of the small groups reported the low attendance and coming late of the members to the Sabbath School small groups as an issue to be considered. There is poor participation of the members in the small group activities. According to them the reason for poor participation is mainly based on some leaders who don't involve the members, and because of the members who don't have, and who don't study Sabbath School lessons.

They revealed also that, the impact of the small groups in discipleship needs improvement, especially in growing together, the connection with God, and involving and training the members to reach out for the salvation of others. The main challenges according to them that hinder the small groups to make disciples; is first the lack of discipling the small group leaders, and second the members who meet only on the Sabbath. They proposed that if the small group leaders are disciplined and involved in church activities, the small groups will be able to fulfill their mission and make disciples. The small group leaders challenged the low impact of the leadership of Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church in Sabbath School small group activities. They said that the small group leaders are not supported and guided, they take care of themselves, without training, without practical support and connection with Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership.

They agreed that if the church want to be successful in discipleship, needs to start by discipling successful, Sabbath School small group leaders. They continued saying that the behavior of the Sabbath School small group leaders affects positively or negatively the small groups. One of the leaders of the small group said that if the leader is strong in faith the members are likely to be strong in faith, if the leader is weak in faith, the members are likely to be weak in faith. They all agreed that if the church builds strong small groups, the church will be also strong. They also agreed that if the leaders of the Sabbath School small groups are well selected and trained the burden of the church leadership will be more less. The success in discipling the small group leaders will give the members of Ngoma church the opportunity and the capacity to serve, and many gifts needed for the church ministry will be revealed and used. The responses are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Small Group Leaders' Responses to Focus Group Discussion

Question	Response
Can you tell us about the attendance in Sabbath School small group activities in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance is not satisfactory • The people come late • Attendance is very poor in youth Sabbath School small groups
How do you see the participation of the members in your Sabbath School small group activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation needs to be improved • The leader of small groups doesn't involve the members. • Sabbath School lessons are few among the members, and you cannot participate without having the lessons, without studying the lesson. • Participation in the youth groups is very low.
How do you observe the impact of your Sabbath School small group activities in discipleship?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Togetherness facilitate discipleship • There is no mobilization and involvement of members in evangelism • No time to pray together, no time to pray for each other. • The Sabbath School lessons are not enough among the members
Are your Sabbath School small groups facing challenges in discipleship? If yes, what are those challenges?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of spirituality among leaders and members • No time for preparation of Sabbath School lessons. • A long time of no follow-up and laissez- aller of the leadership of the Sabbath School and church leadership.
What are your suggestions on how those challenges can be solved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipling the small group leaders
What do you think about the relationship between small group leadership and the success of the small group in discipleship?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the small group leader is committed the members also are likely to be committed. • When members realize that the leader knows what he is doing the members take it seriously • The behavior of the leader has an impact on the response of the members to his teachings. • When a leader is weak the group is weak, when a leader is strong the group is strong.
Do you observe any relationship between discipling Sabbath School small group leaders and discipling small group members in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the leader is well disciplined the small group members will be also disciplined.
How do you see the involvement of Ngoma Adventist church in discipling the leaders of Sabbath School small groups?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church leadership doesn't prioritize the Sabbath School small group leaders training.
What do you think can happen in leadership in Ngoma church, if the leaders of Sabbath School small groups are disciplined? If they are well-selected, trained, and supported?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The burden of the church leadership will be less. • The gifts of the members will be uplifted. • The small groups will grow.

This section is going to present in the table below the discussion from the leadership in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church, analyze and summarize them. The findings from the leadership discussion will help to have a complete picture of the situation of the small groups in the church and they will help to know what is going on, and what is needed to make the small groups successful in discipleship. The church elders and Sabbath School leaders agreed that the attendance is not satisfactory, the attendance of the members is not well recorded by the small group leadership some of the members don't even want to be registered. They reported that the participation of the small group members mainly depended on the teacher of the lesson. They also revealed that, if the teacher has prepared well the lesson, he involves in the discussion of the members. They added that, when the members are involved, they are motivated to prepare themselves for participation. This focus group of the leaders affirms that there is no clear vision and plan to involve the small groups in discipleship, and the Sabbath School time alone is not enough for discipleship. However, they agree that social activity as part of discipleship is well done in many groups.

The leaders noticed the discipleship challenges of Sabbath School small groups in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church. The first one is the limited time, and how the time available is used. The second one is the teacher who doesn't prepare well the lesson. Third, there is no plan and guidance in discipleship. They proposed a solution to set other times besides the Sabbath time for discipleship. They challenged also the role of the leadership of Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church in the small group's activities. Once the leaders are elected there is no training or guidance, the Sabbath School small group leaders lead as it pleases them. During the discussion, the member of this focus group affirms that the way the small group leaders work is the

way the members work. The understanding of the small group members is not beyond the understanding of the leaders of the group. During the discussion, the members of this focus group affirmed that the training and empowerment of the leaders of the Sabbath School small groups will have a positive impact on the whole church leadership. The church will have more capable leaders at all levels. The Sabbath School small groups will have leaders who don't have many church responsibilities. The mission of the church to make disciples will be decentralized up to the small groups, and the leaders of the Sabbath School small groups will be more acquainted with the mission and vision of the church. The church leaders' responses are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. The Church Leader's Response to Focus Group Discussion

Question	Response
Can you tell us about the attendance in Sabbath School small group activities in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance is not satisfactory • Some don't want even to be registered probably because they come late or don't attend regularly. • The attendance record on Sabbath School small group cards is not done correctly.
How do you see the participation of the members in the Sabbath School small group activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The participation is motivated by the leader of the Sabbath School small groups when he has prepared well the lesson. The participation is mainly based on the teachers, when the members are involved, they participate.
How do you observe the impact of Sabbath School small group activities and making disciples of Jesus in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no vision, no plan for evangelism in small groups • The social activities are done well • There is no time to study deeply the Bible together and pray together.
What are the current challenges the Sabbath School small groups are facing in making disciples of Jesus in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The time is not used wisely • Leaders who don't prepare the lesson well • There is no plan and guidance on Discipleship.
How those challenges can be solved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The time for small group activities should go beyond the Sabbath meeting. It must be coordinated by the church.
How do you see the involvement of Ngoma Adventist church in preparing and supporting the leadership of Sabbath School small groups?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the election, the leadership relax and leave every small group activity in the hand of small group leaders without training and follow-up. • The small group leaders lead it to please them. • There is a gap between church leadership and small group leadership.
What do you think about the relationship between small group leadership and small group discipleship in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the Sabbath School works is related to how the leader works • The understanding of Sabbath School small group members is proportionally related to the understanding of the leaders of the group
Do you observe any relationship between discipling Sabbath School small group leaders and discipling small group members in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success in discipling the small group leaders means success in discipling members. • Failure in discipling small group leaders means failure in discipling members
What do you think can happen in leadership, if the leaders of Sabbath School small groups are well disciplined? Well selected, trained, and supported in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church mission will be put into action easily. • The church will have many qualified leaders • The church mission will be on the shoulders of many people not just few

Analysis and Evaluation of the First Data

The result from the focus groups data analysis, and the observation demonstrate that 3 areas need attention to have a successful Sabbath School small group: the members, the leaders, and the church. The first area concerns the members.

There is a low attendance and coming late of the members of the Sabbath School small groups. There is low participation of the members in the Sabbath School small group activities and study. There is also a small number of members who buy the Sabbath School lessons to facilitate their study.

The second area that the data has revealed that needs to be considered, is the lack of training of the small groups' leaders. The teachers and leaders of the small groups do not prepare well the lesson and consequently, they don't teach well the lessons, they don't involve the members as they should, and they don't use the time wisely. And many teachers and leaders of Sabbath School small groups take responsibility without knowing Jesus and the mission of the church.

The data shows that the third area to be addressed is Ngoma church leadership. The data revealed the lack of support and connection between small group leaders and Ngoma church leadership. The church doesn't have a clear vision and plan for the Sabbath School small groups. The church doesn't select well and doesn't disciple the small group leaders before giving them responsibility. The church leadership doesn't follow up and support the small groups. The church doesn't connect the church leadership with the small group leaders and doesn't connect the small group leaders to help each other. The small groups, especially the youth small groups don't have an appropriate venue for study and discussion.

The researcher and his team after reviewing and analyzing the concerns from the data, and finding out that they are relevant, proposed an intervention to address them and make the small groups a better place to make disciples of Jesus. The researcher and his team designed the following intervention to address those challenges demonstrated by the data.

Designing the Intervention

The major objectives of this intervention are first, to sensitize Ngoma church members church board and the pastor of the church on the importance of Sabbath School small groups in discipleship. The second intervention is to create a Sabbath School council, with the purpose to plan and coordinate the Sabbath School small group activities. The council has to connect Sabbath School small groups, to the rest of church activities and train the teachers. The third intervention is designing a program to train the Sabbath School small group leaders and other Sabbath School leaders and make them disciples who can make other disciples. The fourth intervention is looking for the best venue that will facilitate the study of the Sabbath School lesson.

The design of the intervention is based on the issues revealed by the data, the data informs the intervention. The following intervention design considered the thoughts from the main idea from the focus group discussion and observation.

Recruiting, Training, and Planning Sessions

This section consists of recruiting and training the team that will partner with the researcher to put into action the intervention, and planning sessions. The researcher needs the partnership with people from the leadership of the local church, who are acquainted with the people and situation of the Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church and especially who are informed of what is going on in the Sabbath School small groups. This took place at the beginning of the program (May 1-2). The team was composed of the Sabbath School director from South Rwanda Field, the Pastor of Ngoma Church, the head church Elder, the Sabbath School superintendent, his assistant, and the secretary of the Sabbath School. This team received the

information about the project and was trained on how to partner with the researcher for intervention.

The researcher and the team after analyzing the data agreed that the first intervention will focus on putting in place the Sabbath School council and training its members on their responsibilities and duties. The second intervention is the rearrangement of the venue of the Sabbath School small groups, in a way that will better facilitate the study and the discussion of the lessons. The last intervention proposed is discipling the small group leaders. All of this intervention will be done in partnership with the pastor and church board of Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church.

Organizing the Sabbath School Council

This section consists of putting in place the Sabbath School Council and training the members on their duties. The Sabbath School Council is the administrative body of the Sabbath School. Ngoma SDA church doesn't have that body, to coordinate the Sabbath School activities. The first activity is to put in place the council, after the guidelines of the Sabbath-school handbook. "The Sabbath School superintendent is the chairperson of the council, the Sabbath School secretary serves as secretary of the council. The members are the following: assistant superintendent (s), assistant secretaries, Sabbath School division leaders, investment secretary, lay activities leader, vacation Bible school director, an elder, and the pastor."¹⁴ The members of the Sabbath School council were selected and, trained to work with the researcher. The council was organized on May 3, 2022.

¹⁴ North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, *Sabbath School Handbook* (Lincoln, NE: Advent Source, 2004), 16.

The members of the Sabbath School Council will be trained on their duties. (May 10-11, 2022). The Sabbath School Council has an important role to play in the organization, training, and monitoring of the Sabbath School activities. Some of their duties are the following: “Appointment of officers of the Sabbath School not elected by the church board, the appointment of the teachers of the Sabbath School small groups, adjustments in class membership, development and scheduling the training, providing material and equipment, approval of the promotion from one division to another, and scheduling special days.”¹⁵ The council was trained on the mission, objectives, and history of the Sabbath School. The training focused also on the Sabbath School organization, policies, and spiritual leadership.

Arrangement of the Venue

This section focuses on the rearrangement of the venue where the Sabbath School small groups meet for small group activities. The data show that the place where the classes meet is an ingredient for the success of the Sabbath School small groups. Ngoma Adventist church has the opportunity to have a Seventh-day Adventist primary and nursery school on the premises of the church with enough classes for each group. The researcher and his team will talk with the leadership of the school and request their permission to use the school classes during the weekend for the Sabbath School small group activities. The Sabbath School council with the researcher and his team will allocate all the Sabbath School small groups a place to meet.

The group leaders will partner with the team that allocated each small group a place to meet. The Sabbath School council will request each Sabbath School small

¹⁵ North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, *Sabbath School Handbook*, 16-17.

group leader to arrange the place to meet in a way that will allow the members of the group to face each other and allow the coordinator to facilitate the discussion during the meeting.

Selecting the Leaders

This part deals with the process of selecting the leaders to be trained. A good selection is key for the success of the training. It is why those in charge to choose the people to be trained should follow the example of Jesus when He was selecting His first disciples to train them for the ministry. In selecting His disciples, Jesus chose the people who were committed to surrendering all of Him and being committed to learning from Him and serving him. “God takes men as they are, with the human elements in their character, and trains them for His service, if they will be disciplined and learn of Him. They are not chosen because they are perfect, nor because of withstanding their imperfections, that through the knowledge and practice of the truth, through the grace of Christ, they may become transformed into His image.”¹⁶ Jesus chose the ordinary men who were ready to learn from Him, committed to being guided by Him, and who was not self-centered.

The first step of this exercise is selecting the leaders of Sabbath School small groups to be disciplined. The selection of the people to be trained is done by the Sabbath School council and the researcher and approved by the Ngoma Adventist church board, starting by inviting those who are already serving as Sabbath School small group leaders. The church will make also an announcement inviting the members who are interested in Sabbath School small groups ministries to come for the orientation and training. But first of all, they need to be registered with the the

¹⁶ White, *Desire of Ages*, 294.4.

Sabbath School secretary to control the number that the training will be able to accommodate.

Scheduling the Sessions

The training will be done during the weekend because the majority of the members are busy for the rest of the week except the weekend. This alternative to scheduling the training during the weekend will help to increase attendance in training. The training will take 8 weekends in total, 2 weekends every month, to give room to other church activities, because the training will take the majority of the Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership.

The training will be done at Ngoma SDA church. The place is comfortable and enough for the training. The people are familiar with the place for worship training, and socializing. The projector and screen will be used during the training. Each participant will be requested to bring a bible, pen, and notebook for recording.

Developing a Content for Training

This section focuses mainly on the material to train the adult and youth Sabbath School small group leaders. The material content will disciple and give skills that are needed to teach and lead Sabbath School, small groups. The material mainly comes from the material recommended by the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church through the Sabbath School and personal ministries department to train the Sabbath School small group teachers. The training will take 4 months and will be done on the weekends to facilitate the people who are busy during the week to attend.

The courses will be for adult and youth teachers. Course one is Adult Sabbath School Teacher: The Key for Success. Course two is Inductive and Relational Bible

Study. Course three is Basic Teaching Skills. Course four is Sabbath School Small Groups Action Unity. Course five is Teaching Youth Sabbath School. Course six is SDA Bible Doctrines. Course seven is Denominational History. Course eight is Principles of Ministering Youth. And course nine is Current Youth Issues.

Limitations of the Research

The researcher wished to address all the findings from the Sabbath School small groups, but the focus was limited only to adult and youth Sabbath School small groups because of the limitation of time and resources. There are issues discovered in other Sabbath School divisions, especially children and teenagers Sabbath School divisions that need to be improved. Children and teenagers Sabbath School divisions have good material produced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide that needs to be translated into Kinyarwanda to help many teachers and students who don't understand English. There also is a need for training and mentorship of the teachers and leaders of the children's Sabbath School small groups.

Another area that was discovered in the Sabbath School that the research was not able to tackle is the system to take the Sabbath School records, analyze them and keep them. The Sabbath School as a religious education school for the members, needs to keep its records and do regular analyzes to know what is going on in the school. Though the research was not able to address all the issues but what was discovered has important information for future research.

Summary

The Sabbath School small groups activities in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church as many other Seventh-day Adventist churches have a time dedicated to the Sabbath School small groups activities around 1 hour. There is no other department

that has such time every Sabbath during the worship time for their activities, except the divine service that has almost also the same time of 1 hour. Besides that, the Sabbath School department is the only department in the Seventh-day Adventist Church that has a quarterly comprehensive material that facilitates and guides in bible study. There are two lessons for teachers and students. In addition, the Sabbath School department is organized in a small setting that facilitates the connection of the members and the study, with a comprehensive reporting system of their activities. However, the research discovered that discipling the Sabbath School small group leaders is the key to the success of the Sabbath School small groups. The production of Sabbath School lessons is necessary and imperative in the Sabbath School, providing regular time for Sabbath School lesson discussion in the small setting is also needed. But without discipling leaders of the Sabbath School small groups, the result expected to disciple the members through the Sabbath School small groups will not be achieved. The designed program was the result of the outcome of the focus group discussion and observation. The project is expected to address some of the problems discovered in the research. After the implementation of the program and disciple of the small group's teachers and leaders, there is an expectation that the Sabbath School small groups will be able to start the journey to disciple the Sabbath School small group members. Any contribution that will help this program to be successful is welcome. Discipleship has many angles, any person, group, or organization that is willing to address other corners of discipleship is appreciated.

CHAPTER 5

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter gives the details of the implementation of the program step by step. The researcher and his team after analyzing the outcome of the investigation, implemented the program. The discovery from Biblical foundation, Ellen G. White writings, literature review, and the outcome from the focus groups discussion, have been the foundation of the inspiration to disciple the Sabbath School small group leaders. The Bible is clear on how God prepared the people He want to send. Jesus was intentional in preparing His disciples before sending them to make disciples. Ellen G. White advises the church to follow God's example and take seriously the preparation of the leaders before sending them. The literatures reviewed by the research affirm that the development of the leaders is the key for success. All this journey helped to build and implement the program.

The program was implemented in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church. Before starting the program, the request was granted by South Rwanda Field (1) and Butare District (2). The outcome from the focus groups revealed the following needs: The first one is the unsatisfactory attendance and the unsatisfactory participation of the members in Sabbath School small groups activities. The second one, there is also few Sabbath School lessons among the members. The third is the teachers of the Sabbath School lesson who are not at the level to teach the lesson, the teachers who don't prepare well the Sabbath School lessons. The fourth one is the lack of connection between the Sabbath School small group leaders and the leaders of Ngoma

Seventh-day church and the lack of connection between the Sabbath School small group leaders. The fifth one, there is no plan and vision for Sabbath School small groups. The sixth one is the venue and the setting of Sabbath School small groups classes that are not appropriate. After analyzing those data from focus groups, the intervention in chapter 4 addressed those issues mentioned for six months. The next paragraphs mentioned the implementation narrative step by step.

Program Implementation Narratives

The project to disciple the Sabbath School small group leaders started from April 1, 2022 to September 30, 2022. The implementation of the program was done careful because it was the time of action and bring changes following the data discovered. Discipling the Sabbath School small group leaders has to follow steps in order to move smoothly, and to reach the goals of the project. The next paragraph shows how the implementation started step by step, with some interventions to start with and others that follow.

Editing and Printing of Sabbath School Manual Handbook in Kinyarwanda

The Sabbath School manual handbook was already translated by Rwanda Union Mission but not yet edited and printed. In cooperation with Rwanda Union Mission, on April 1, 2022 the book was given to the person to edit the book. End June 30, 2022 the book was edited, ready for printing. The book is now in printing process, the launch January 2023. The book will help in giving direction on how the Sabbath School should work, and all the leaders in Ngoma Adventist church use Kinyarwanda and majority of them don't use English. It is important to have the book in the language that the leaders of the Sabbath School understand.

The Sabbath School handbook manual clarifies the mission and the objectives of the Sabbath School, the members of the Sabbath School counsel and their responsibilities, and the role of Sabbath School teachers and their training. The book gives direction on how to select the personnel of the Sabbath School and the importance of leadership development in the Sabbath School, to name just few. The book will help local church to organize the Sabbath School in a fruitful and better way.

Organizing the Sabbath School Council

The second step is to put in place the Sabbath School council. Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church has not an organized Sabbath School council. This lack of Sabbath School council has made a gap in running of the Sabbath School activities. The Sabbath School council is an organ of the local church that runs all activities of the Sabbath School including the selecting and the training of the Sabbath School teachers.

The researcher on April 29 April met the Pastor Ngoma church board and agreed to put in place the Sabbath School counsel. The following are the members of Sabbath School Council: General superintendent, assistant superintendent, secretary, Division leaders, investment secretary, personal ministries director, one selected church elder, and the district pastor as it is in the Sabbath School handbook manual. The Sabbath School council members met on May 1,2022 to brief them about their responsibilities, ask them their commitment, and plan their training together. The Researcher, the Pastor of Ngoma District and the Superintendent, arrange with the members of the team counsel one day training to be held at Ngoma church on May 7 and 8, 2022.

The training of May 7 and 8, 2022. The training on May 7, 2022 took place in the afternoon from 15:00-19:00 all members of the council were available. The Training focused on Sabbath School mission and objectives, and Sabbath School policies. Sunday training started at 15:30-18:30 at Ngoma church. The members of the council were available except the secretary of the Sabbath School. The meeting was conducted by the researcher, assisted by the Sabbath School director in south Rwanda field and district pastor. That training focused on how to organize the Sabbath School in the local church; responsibilities of Sabbath School personnel; Sabbath School program, and special Sabbath School ministries.

Arrange the Venue for the Sabbath School Small Groups Classes

Where and how the people sit has an impact on the study and participation. Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church has a privilege to have a primary and nursery schools in the premises of the church available on the Sabbath. The school has enough classes that can fit all the Sabbath School classes. On May 23, 2022 the researcher, the Pastor and the first elder met the school director and agreed that the classroom can be used by the Sabbath School small groups during the Sabbath School small groups activities.

The church of Ngoma has 14 Sabbath School small groups of youth and adult. The researcher and Ngoma Sabbath School council has assigned each Sabbath School small group a classroom. They proposed also that each small groups should arrange the class in way that they face each other during the Sabbath School small group meetings.

Training the Sabbath School Small Groups Teachers and Leaders

The Sabbath School small groups have the objective to disciple its members and make them the disciples of Jesus and train them to serve him. One of the major discipleship challenge in the Sabbath School, revealed by the focus groups, is the teachers of the small groups who are not at the level to disciple their members. To make disciples of Jesus you need to be first a disciple of Jesus. The researcher, the Pastor of the church, and the Sabbath School council, selected the people for training, approve the training material, and the timetable for training.

On May 8, 2022, the Sabbath School council choose 30 names of the people to be trained as the teachers of Sabbath School small groups plus the members of the Sabbath School council. The names were submitted to the church board and approved on May 14, 2022 by the church board, and the people to be trained were consulted for their commitment. The training material that was selected to train the Sabbath School small groups teachers are the one recommended by the General Conference through the Sabbath School Department. The time for training proposed by the Sabbath School council was one weekend per month for a period of four months.

The first weekend was May 13-15, 2022, from Friday to Sunday. The training took place in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church. The attendance for the first meeting of May 13, 2022 was satisfactory with 25 people, from 3:00-6:00 PM. The lesson was “Adult Sabbath School teacher: Key for success.” The lesson focused on the role and the qualification of the Sabbath School teachers. The teachers and the members of the council knew that knowing their role, without being qualified is vain, there reason why they have been trained on how to prepare the lesson, the method of teaching and the power of teaching.

May 14, 2022 from 3:00-6:00 PM. The number of the people who attended was 25. The lesson was the second part of the training about “Adult Sabbath School teacher: the key for success.” The lesson focused on how the teacher should grow continuously in order to help the members of the class to grow spiritually and be transformed not just pass to them the knowledge.

On Sunday May 15, 2022 from 3:00-6:00 Pm the lesson was “Inductive and relational bible study and teaching.” They learned the purpose to study the Bible, the method of studying the Bible, understanding the inductive method, the apprehending and application of the truth of the Bible.

The month of June, 2022 the weekend of training was on date of 17,18,19. Training for June 17 started from 3:00-6:00PM. The attendance was high, 28 people out of 30 attended the training. The lesson for Friday untitled “Teaching Youth Sabbath School.” The course has explored different ways in which to improve learning in the youth Sabbath School class, and how to implement the new approaches to learning. They resolved to implement the principles learned.

The lesson for Saturday focused on “Current youth issues.” There are different issues among the young people. There are youth and health, youth and the media and entertainment, the most influence on today’s youth. They explored also the distinctive Adventist youth culture issues. Finally, they explored the future of youth ministry.

The lesson for Sunday is “Principles of ministering to youth.” They have learned 7 principles that will lead to success in youth ministry. The first one was to let the leader in the Sabbath School know that if he wants to grow spiritually, he must grow spiritually first himself. They noticed in this principle one that, unless a youth leader is growing spiritually, he will not lead the youth to victory. The principle two was to equip them for leadership, because the proper leadership play a big role for

success. The principle 3 learned in ministering to youth is nurturing relationship. The people learn best when there is good relationship. The principle four explored how to plan with purpose, to know where you are going and how to get there lead to success. The principle five was to know how to empower others as an important part in ministering youth. When you don't know how to empower other, you are a leader without legacy and future. The principles six was to learn how to promote the youth ministry. The principle seven was to know how to mobilize for evangelism, because a true disciple makes disciples.

For July 2022, the training was done from 15-17. The lesson for Friday, June 15/2022, was "Denominational history." They examined the development process in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in mission, lifestyle, institution, and doctrine. The course showed the relevance of Seventh-day Adventist history to the current youth issues and how he can connect personal faith and belief system and personal experience.

Saturday, July 16, 2022, the training focused on "SDA Bible Doctrine", they got the spiritual and intellectual benefits of studying the bible doctrine. Sunday, July 17, 2022, the lesson was. The lesson was "Basic Teaching Skills." The purpose of the lesson was to focus mainly on the purpose of teaching. The goal for teaching the Sabbath lesson is to bring change and transformation. They leaned also about the barriers to transformative change, especially in the Sabbath School small groups.

The last month for training was August 2022, the weekend of 20,21 was for two days and 28 people attend the training. Saturday, August 20, 2022. The lesson was "Sabbath School Small Group Action Unity" The training focused on the importance of small groups in bible study, fellowship, and evangelism. The course also focused on how to organize a successful Sabbath School small group action unit.

Sunday, August 22, 2021, was the last day reserved for graduation and commitment. All 28 people who followed the course graduated. They were committed to making Ngoma Sabbath School small groups a place to make disciples of Jesus. They committed themselves to follow Jesus first, lean from Him, be teachable, and invite others to do the same by God's grace.

Focus Groups' Discussion after the Program

The three focus groups were invited to evaluate if the program has reached the expected result. The same nine open-ended questions were used to see at which level the implementation of the program has brought a change. The observation from focus group members is listed below.

The table below represents the data from the discussion of the member focus group, after the implementation of the program to train the Sabbath School small groups teachers, to provide material, and to organize the Sabbath School small groups.

The members affirmed that after the program, attendance has increased and the number of people who come late has reduced. The members of the Sabbath School small groups are more participating in lesson discussion after the program because the leaders are involving them and the copies of Sabbath School lessons has increased among the members. The members are more involved in discipleship by inviting their friends to their small groups and other church meetings. Next to that, the members understood that the main objective of the Sabbath School small groups is to be a disciple who makes disciples.

They observed that the small group leaders have been discipled and commissioned to make the members of their small groups the disciples of Jesus and

challenge them in return to be involved in personal evangelism and make disciples. However, they said that the time for praying and studying the bible and fellowship together is still limited.

Besides that the members of the small groups said that the level of teaching and leading of the teachers has increased and they have observed the connection between the small groups' leadership and Ngoma church leadership. They affirmed that success in discipling small group leaders will bring success in discipleship in the Sabbath School small groups. Table 4 below indicates the responses of the members to the focus group discussion.

Table 4. Members' Responses to Focus Group Discussion

Can you tell us about the attendance in Sabbath School small group activities in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The attendance increased for both adults and youth. • The number of people who come late to the Sabbath School small group has reduced significantly.
How is the participation of the members in Sabbath School small groups activities in your group and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation has increased. • The leader has increased the involvement of the members in the Sabbath School lesson discussion and other activities. • The number of Sabbath School lessons has increased
How do you observe the impact of the Sabbath School small group activities in making disciples of Jesus in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The members started inviting friends in their small groups. They started the distribution of religious books and invited friends to the evangelism campaign and another church program. But the time is still limited to pray together in small groups, and the involvement in evangelism needs to be improved. The social activities are well done.
What are the current challenges the Sabbath School small groups are facing in making disciples of Jesus in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The members and leaders knew already that the main purpose of the small groups is discipleship. However, they need to improve their commitment to the mission, increase their knowledge and keep working together. • Sabbath School small group leaders received training on how to teach and lead the Sabbath School small groups. • The knowledge on how the small groups works and how the church operates have increased. • There is a connection and cooperation between small group leaders and church leadership through the Sabbath School Council. • The small group leaders meet every week for lesson preparation.
What are your suggestions on how those challenges can be solved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipling the Sabbath School small group leaders has been the solution for small group discipleship. • The connection between small group leaders and church leadership has been done through the Sabbath School council and helped in building discipleship. • The connection between the small group leaders through the preparation of the Sabbath School lesson is an important element in discipleship.
How do you see the involvement of Ngoma Adventist church leadership in preparing and supporting the leadership of Sabbath School small groups?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church is supporting and training the small group leaders and teachers.
What do you think about the relationship between small group leadership and the success of the small group in discipleship?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is strong connection, the success of the small groups depends on its leaders.
Do you observe any relationship between discipling Sabbath School small group leaders and discipling small group members in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipling successfully the leaders of small group mean success in discipleship.
What do you think can happen in leadership in Ngoma Adventist church, if the leaders of Sabbath School small groups are disciplined? If they are well-selected, trained, and supported?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If this program to disciple the small group leaders continues, the church will have more transformed and capable leaders at all levels of the church.

This section in the table below presents the data from the Sabbath School small group leaders after the implementation of the program. The discussion from this focus group shows that the program brought a significant change in the discipleship done by Sabbath School small groups. They all agreed that the attendance has changed positively, the majority of the members of the Sabbath School small groups are coming on time even in young people small groups. In addition, the small group leaders appreciated the training they have received. They affirmed that now there is a change in how the Sabbath School lesson is discussed in small groups, and how they plan together. They all agreed that now they know the objectives of the Sabbath School small groups; reach up, reach across, and reach out. They know also how to involve the members in Sabbath School lesson discussions and small group activities including mission. Besides that, the Sabbath School lessons ordered by the members have increased.

Furthermore, as shown in Table 5, the Sabbath School small group leaders said that the venue of the meeting has changed positively and facilitated the discussion. The people sit well and face each other during the Sabbath School small group discussion. The weekly meeting with the small group's teachers to review the lesson was very helpful because it connected the teachers and increased their knowledge. They said that Ngoma church leadership is now supporting and interested in the Sabbath School small group activities. They all agreed that discipling small group leaders had two positive impacts: Making the church members the disciples and preparation of more church leaders. However, they requested that the training of the Sabbath School small group leaders and teachers should be regular, as well as the connection between the Sabbath School small groups and the Ngoma church. The

time for the Sabbath School small groups is often used for other purposes, this should be regulated by the Sabbath School council.

Table 5. Small Group Leaders' Responses to Focus Group Discussion

Can you tell us about the attendance in Sabbath School small group activities in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance is increasing gradually • The number of people who come has late reduced. • The number of young people who attend is growing.
How do you see the participation of the members in your Sabbath School small group activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The participation of the members is positive • The teacher knew now how to involve the members. • Sabbath School lesson ordered by the members has increased, increased also the participation even among young people in small groups.
How do you observe the impact of your Sabbath School small group activities in discipleship?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Togetherness facilitate discipleship • The members are more involved in evangelism. • Not time to pray together, not time to pray for each other.
Are your Sabbath School small groups facing challenges in discipleship? If yes, what are those challenges?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After discipling the leaders there is a growth of spirituality among leaders and members • The weekly Sabbath School small groups teachers meeting to review the lesson has increased the preparation of the Sabbath School lessons. • There is now a follow-up of the church leadership through the Sabbath School Council.
What are your suggestions on how those challenges can be solved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipling the small group leaders has been the solution to many challenges that the was facing church.
What do you think about the relationship between small group leadership and the success of the small group in discipleship?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the small group leader is committed the members also are likely to be committed. • When members realize that the leader knows what he is doing the members take it seriously • The behavior of the leader has an impact on the response of the members to his teachings. • When a leader is weak the group is weak, when a leader is strong the group is strong.
Do you observe any relationship between discipling Sabbath School small group leaders and discipling small group members in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the leader is well disciplined the small group members will be also disciplined.
How do you see the involvement of the Ngoma Adventist church in discipling the leaders of Sabbath School small groups?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the sensitization of Ngoma church leadership, the church prioritizes the Sabbath School small group leaders training.
What do you think can happen in leadership in Ngoma church, if the leaders of Sabbath School small groups are disciplined? If they are well-selected, trained, and supported?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The burden of the church leadership will be more less. • The gifs of the members will be uplifted. • The small groups will grow.

The data in the table below contains the summary of the discussion with the leaders of Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church after the implementation of the program. The same nine questions were asked to them again to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. Like other focus groups, they observed that the attendance has improved significantly after the implementation of the program. The record of the attendance is well done, and the sitting in the small groups was well arranged in a way that allow everyone to participate. The vision and plan were made for discipleship, the social activities are well done. However, in all focus groups they said that the time of 45 minutes every Sabbath is not enough to strengthen the group in reaching up, reaching across and reaching out. They said that they need more time beside 45 minutes of the Sabbath for small group activities.

Concerning the small groups teachers, they have been trained, and they meet weekly to discuss with other teachers about the weekly lesson, and because after they prepare well the lesson. Because they have prepared the lesson, they know where they are going, they don't waste the time as it is used, they affirmed. They observed that after the implementation of the program there is a strong connection between the Sabbath School small groups and the leadership of the church trough the Sabbath School council.

Furthermore, according to Table 6, all members of this focus group affirmed that when the leader is strong spiritual and strong in Bible study, then the small group will be strong in Bible study and spiritual. Therefore, failure to disciple the small group leaders is failure to disciple the members. They agreed that developing the small group leaders has developed many church leaders.

Table 6. The Church Leader's Response to Focus Group Discussion

Can you tell us about the attendance in Sabbath School small group activities in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance has improved • The record cards are kept and recorded but need improvement.
How do you see the participation of the members in the Sabbath School small groups activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The participation was motivated by the leaders of the Sabbath School small groups, because they started preparing well the lesson. The participation is mainly based on the teachers, when the members are involved rightly, they participate. • The way the small groups is sitting also motivate the participation.
How do you observe the impact of the Sabbath School small groups activities and making disciples of Jesus in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision and plan for discipleship are becoming clear in the Sabbath School small groups. • The social activities are well done. • There is not time to study deeply the Bible together and pray together.
What are the current challenges the Sabbath School small groups are facing in making disciples of Jesus in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The time is no longer wasted as before. • The majority of leaders prepare the lesson before teaching • There is a plan for discipleship.
How those challenges can be solved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The time for small groups activities should go beyond the Sabbath meeting. But it must be coordinated by the church to avoid confusion.
How do you see the involvement of the Ngoma Adventist church in preparing and supporting the leadership of Sabbath School small groups?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leadership of the church through Sabbath School council plan and train and evaluate the small groups activity. • The small group leaders received support from Sabbath School council. • There is a connection between the church leadership and small group leadership.
What do you think about the relationship between small group leadership and the small group in discipleship in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the Sabbath School works is related to how the leader works • The understanding of Sabbath School small group members is proportionally related to the understanding of the leaders of the group
Do you observe any relationship between discipling Sabbath School small group leaders and discipling small group members in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The success in discipling the small group leaders means the success in discipling members. • Failure in discipling small group leaders means failure in discipling members.
What do you think can happen in leadership, if the leaders of Sabbath School small groups are well disciplined? Well selected, trained, and supported in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church mission will be put in action easily. • The church will have many qualified leaders • The church mission will be on the shoulders of many people not just a few.

Data Evaluation after the Implementation

This section comprehensively evaluates and analyzes the data from the 3 focus groups after the implementation of the program, as part of the research process of the project. After analyzing and evaluating the post project data from the 3 focus groups,

there are many similar answers to the same questions, and some unique observation from each focus group.

Three focus groups observed the increase of the attendance and participation of the members in the Sabbath School small groups activities. All three focus groups have also observed the positive impact of the Sabbath School small groups in discipleship in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church. The members of the three focus groups have witnessed the positive outcome in the working of the Sabbath School small groups in discipleship, because of discipling the small group leaders and because of the connection between the small group leaders and Ngoma church leadership, and the connection between the small group leaders to share and to shape each other.

In addition to that, the involvement of Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership in training the small groups leader and follow up of the Sabbath School small groups activities have been observed by all focus groups. They affirm that the success in discipling the small group leaders is foundation for success in discipling the members of the small groups. They said that when the leader is weak spiritually and weak in knowledge the members will be weak spiritually and biblically. Therefore, they said that the success in discipleship of the members of the small groups depend on the success in discipling the small group leaders. Beside of that they all agreed that discipling the small group leaders will produce more leaders for the Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church.

On the other hand, they have observed a challenge of the time reserved to the small groups on the Sabbath which alone is not enough for the growth of Sabbath School small groups members. They said that they need to set other time for Bible

study, for praying together, for training for evangelism, for connecting together and for taking care for each other.

However, it was interesting to notice that after the implementation of the program the focus group of the members have observed the change among their teachers. On the other hand, the focus group of the Sabbath School small group leaders noticed the positive change of the Ngoma church leadership on how they work and support the Sabbath School small groups, including the training of the small group leaders. In addition, the focus group of Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church have observed on their side, the positive change of the Sabbath School small groups system for discipleship.

The members observed the change among their teachers on the increasing of their knowledge to teach, and their understanding on how the church operates. The members recognize also the connection between the church leaders and small group leaders. They agreed that discipling the small group leaders is the solution for many challenges of Sabbath School small groups. They agreed that when the small group leader is committed the members will also be committed. When the members realize that the small groups leader knows where he is leading them, they follow him easily. When the small group leader is weak the group will be weak also.

On the other hand, the small group leaders observed the change in church leadership. Through the Sabbath School council, the church is following up what is going on in the Sabbath School small groups. They noticed also that the positive change in preparing the Sabbath School lesson, because of the weekly meeting organize by the leadership of Ngoma church of all Sabbath School leader to prepare the lesson. They noticed also the growth of their members in spirituality because of the training given by the church to the small groups' leaders.

On the side of the Ngoma SDA church leadership, they have observed more the improvement of the leadership system in the Sabbath School small groups, because of discipling the small group leaders. The recording cards is now done properly, how people sit in their Sabbath School small groups is favorable to the study. In addition to that the Sabbath School small groups have vision and plan to reach in, to reach across and to reach out for others.

However not all challenges have been addressed by this program. The challenge of the time to fulfill all the obligation of the small groups in discipleship. All the three focus groups suggested that there should be another time for small groups activities, not only rely on the time given to the Sabbath School small groups activities. The extended time for Sabbath School small groups, they suggest that it should be coordinated by the church to keep the order and safety of the members of the Sabbath School small groups.

Final Evaluation of the Intervention

The researcher and his team met on October 1, 2022 to evaluate the success of the program. The evaluation and comparison of observation and the data from chapter 4 and 5, showed that the result was positive despite some challenges met (Many programs in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church that make the people busy, the selection of the people for the training, some leaders who are satisfied with the routine). The post implementation evaluation responses in this chapter compare to the responses of the chapter 4 showed the positive change in mind of the people, on the role played by the Sabbath School small groups and their leaders in discipleship. In this chapter the observation and the data demonstrated that discipling the Sabbath School small groups leaders has improved the way the Sabbath School small groups work in discipleship.

Observation

It was observed that discipling the Sabbath School leaders increased their connection with God, their capacity for discipleship and leadership. In return the small groups leaders helped the members to improve their connection with God, the connection between members, and the connection with the people outside the church. It was also observed that the Sabbath School council built the bridge that was missing before the program, and connect the small groups leaders and Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership. In addition, it was observed also that the Sabbath School council strengthened the culture to plan and do follow up in the Sabbath School small groups which was missing before the program. The Sabbath School leaders meeting on every Sabbath to discuss the Sabbath School lessons before teaching, and share some issues from small groups, had also built up the capacity of teaching and leading in the Sabbath School small group ministry. Before the implementation of the program each leader was alone in his corner without knowing what was going on in other groups and without any external support or idea. The observation revealed also that the rearrangement of the venue and the sitting in Sabbath School small groups has increased the participation of the members to Sabbath School lesson discussion.

Focus Groups Discussion

The comparison and analyses of chapter four and five showed that the image in chapter four has change positively in chapter five. There are two different pictures before the implementation and after the implementation of the program. The data in chapter four demonstrated the attendance and the participation as the challenges in Sabbath School small groups, where the members of the Sabbath School small groups were coming late, one leader was complaining that some members of his group came when the small groups activities was about to finish, and he added that even those

who come most of them to don't participate in discussion, they just keep quiet, especially in youth small groups. But in this chapter the data showed that the attendance and participation have changed positively, even in youth small groups there is an observable improvement.

The data of chapter 4 showed that the leaders didn't involve the members in the small group's activities because of their method of leading, one member added that they don't participate because the leaders don't involve them. Nevertheless, in this chapter the leaders try to involve the members in almost all activities of the small groups including the Sabbath School lesson discussion. In chapter 4 the members were complaining that some of the leaders of the small groups were not at the level to lead the Sabbath School lesson, and are not able to lead the small group activities. Even many leaders of Sabbath School small groups in chapter 4 agreed with the members that they lead without any training, without any support or follow up. While in this chapter the Sabbath School small groups leaders accepted that they have been trained on how to lead and to facilitate the study of the Sabbath School lesson, and they agreed that now they know the purpose of the Sabbath School and how to lead the Sabbath school small groups.

The data in chapter 4 were the complains about the lack of spirituality among the leaders of the small groups and the its negative on the spirituality of the members. They agreed that when the leaders are weak spiritually it affects the spirituality of the members, and they don't have good examples to follow. While in this chapter the members of the small groups agreed that discipling the leaders has been the key of the growth of their spirituality, because of the good example of their leaders. One member said that "When we see our leaders practicing what they say, it is a

motivation for us to put in action what they are saying.” Leading by example was the result of discipling the leaders of the small group.

The comparison of the pre implementation of chapter 4 and post implementation of the current chapter concerning the vision and plans shows that before the implementation of the program in chapter 4 there was no vision and plan for discipleship, they were just following the routine without any plan to make disciples. One member in focus groups commented that, before the implementation of the program each Sabbath School small group leader, did what he thought was correct. On the other hand, in this chapter they agreed that through the Sabbath School council and church board the vision and plan for the Sabbath School ministry are done well, and communicated well through the Sabbath School council and church board.

In chapter 4 the people were complaining about the lack of connection with the church and the lack of the support from the Ngoma Seventh-day church. They also complained that there is no guidance and follow up from the Ngoma church board. In this chapter, after the implementation of the program, there is connection and support from the church leadership because of putting in place the Sabbath School council to connect the leaders of the Sabbath School and the leaders of Ngoma church. In addition, they affirmed that the weekly meeting of the Sabbath School small groups leaders to review the Sabbath School weekly lesson had connected the small groups leaders and increase their experience and knowledge in teaching the Sabbath School lessons.

The pre-program in chapter 4 showed that the venue was not comfortable and didn't facilitate the communication. One member emphasized that the most challenges of the venue are in the Sabbath School small groups of youth, the place they sit are not appropriate for small groups activities. But they said in this chapter

that after the implementation of the program, they choose and arrange the venue for each Sabbath School small group in the way that each person face each other. That has brought a good communication and participation in the Sabbath School small groups.

The comparison of the pre and post- implementation responses from the participants shows that, to be more organized the Sabbath School needs guidelines. In chapter 4 the small groups leaders were saying that they were doing what they thought were correct, because of the lack of guidance. But in this chapter, after the Sabbath School manual handbook is available in Kinyarwanda, they agreed that small groups leaders had a better understanding of the Sabbath School small groups ministry and now better, how to accomplish their responsibilities.

Finally, the researcher, his team, and the focus groups members and members have concluded that the implementation of the program has been successful because of:

1. They increased the attendance in the Sabbath School small groups.
2. The more participation of the members in the Sabbath School small group's activities.
3. The leaders have improved how they lead the Sabbath School lesson discussion.
4. The number of Sabbath School lessons has increased.
5. The Sabbath School manual handbook in Kinyarwanda improved the Sabbath School organization.
6. The Sabbath School council took over the planning and training in the Sabbath School.

7. The members are now more involved in personal evangelism through the Sabbath School small group.
8. The church has now many people trained for discipleship and leadership.

Report of the Result

The report of the outcome from the implementation of the program have been presented to Ngoma SDA church Board and South Rwanda Field leadership on October 1, 2022. They received with gladness, and read to apply it to other churches.

Summary

The Great Commission given by Jesus to all Christians is to make disciples. However, there are steps to follow before making disciples. Those steps have been followed by Jesus during His ministry in this world. He chose carefully His disciples; He trained them and then send them to the mission. That process of Jesus led to success of the ministry of the 12 disciples of Jesus. Jesus knew that the prerequisite in making disciple is first to be a disciple, follow Jesus and learn from Him, before you ask others follow Him. The Sabbath School small groups ministry has the mission to make disciples. Therefore, to have a successful Sabbath School small groups ministry, it is necessary to follow the steps of Jesus in making disciples.

The selection of the small group leaders who are willing and committed to follow Jesus and learn from Him have been recruited and trained, and accompanied in journey of transformation and discipleship. The willingness and the commitment for following, learn from Him and serving Him was the key for selection. The printing of the Sabbath School manual handbook in Kinyarwanda has been also a great support for the better organization of Sabbath School small groups. The organization of the Sabbath School council that meet monthly built the connection between the Sabbath

School and Ngoma church leadership and board. The weekly meeting of the small group leaders to prepare the lesson together has been a good continual leaning system. The arrangement of the venue for the Sabbath School small groups facilitated the good communication between the members themselves, and between them with the leader of the small group. The method of Jesus to disciple the disciple before sending them will always succeed.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The dissertation was a learning, experiential, and discovering journey that finally touches an end. The program brought a positive change in the ministry of the Sabbath School small groups to make disciples of Jesus in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church. The process and result of this dissertation may help others who will pass the same way.

Summary of Dissertation

The Sabbath School is the Seventh-day Adventist Church member's religious education system. The lack of leaders has been one of the major challenges in the ministries done in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church, especially the leaders of the Sabbath School small groups. This challenge motivated the researcher to develop a program to disciple the Sabbath School small group leaders following the bible example models. Considering how God had prepared the leaders before sending them, was an inspiring example. In addition, the ministry of Jesus in discipling His first disciples before sending them was studied closely and followed.

It is clear in the bible, that when God wants to start a community of believers, He starts with the call of the leaders and their preparation for the mission. “When God decided to raise a nation of His own, He didn’t call upon the masses. He called out one leader - Abraham. When He wanted to deliver His people out of Egypt, He didn’t guide them as a group. he raised a leader to do it- Moses... Every time God wanted to

do something greater, He calls a leader to step forward.”¹ There are many examples in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament, where God called and prepared the leaders before starting a community of believers or a mission.

There are several instances of leaders who were chosen by God, trained by God, and then sent on a mission. In Genesis 12:1–2, Abraham was referred to as the father of all believers and the founder of the country of Israel. God selected Moses as His instrument to deliver the Israelites from Egypt (Exod 3:3). God then selected Joshua to succeed Moses and prepared him before entrusting him with the duty of leading the Israelites to the promised land (Josh 1:11). Samuel was predestined by God to serve as a judge and prophet from an early age (1 Sam 3:1–21). God appointed David as king at a young age, but it took him years to prepare through many hardships and protracted journeys before succeeding King Saul (1 Samuel 16–13).

Ellen G. White's writings were of great help in the design of the program. She commented on the call and preparation of people called by God in different capacities. When God called Abraham for the mission, He separated him from his family for the training. “So that God might qualify him for his great work as the keeper of the sacred oracles, Abraham must be separated from the associations of his early life. The influence of kindred and friends would interfere with the training which the Lord purposed to give His servant.”² God is intentionally in preparation for the leaders He has chosen. Besides the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White, other writers were also consulted and were helpful. George Barna confirms that the leadership in the church is very important to fulfill the mission of the church. “In this time of unprecedented opportunity and plentiful resources, the church is losing influence. The

¹ Maxwell, *The Maxwell Leadership Bible*, vi.

² White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 126.

primary reason is the lack of leadership. ... Nothing is more important than leadership.”³ Before sending the persons He had chosen, God carefully prepared them in order to prevent any bad effects that might have resulted from their lack of training as qualified missionaries. The replies from the three focus group participants also gave additional background from the Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist culture. Therefore, the inspiration from the biblical illustrations, the guidance from Ellen G. White's writings, the learnings from various literature reviews, and the findings from the research carried out in the Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church all helped to inspire the idea to develop a program to train the Sabbath School small group leaders.

As the program is ending, the change is palpable in the Sabbath School small groups. The preparation of the Sabbath School small group leaders has brought a positive change in discipleship and leadership in the Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church. The testimonies from all three focus groups, and the observation after the implementation of the program confirmed that, the attendance in the Sabbath School small groups activities has increased, the way the people study the Sabbath School lesson has improved, the Sabbath School small group ministry is now more organized, and there is more involvement of the members in the outreach and fellowship. The church is getting more leaders because of the training received through the Sabbath School small group leadership. Discipling the leaders of the Sabbath School small groups was proved by the dissertation as one of the major keys to the success of the Sabbath School small groups ministry.

³ Maxwell, *The Maxwell Leadership Bible*, v.

Final Evaluation of the Intervention

The researcher and his team met on October 1, 2022, to evaluate the success of the program. The evaluation and comparison of observation and the data from chapters 4 and 5, showed that the result was positive despite some challenges met (Many programs in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church that make the people busy, the selection of the people for the training, some leaders who are satisfied with the routine). The responses of chapter 5 compare to the responses of chapter 4 showed the positive change in mind of the people, on the role played by the Sabbath School small groups and their leaders in discipleship. In Chapter 5 the observation and the data demonstrated that discipling the Sabbath School small group leaders has improved the way the Sabbath School small groups work in discipleship.

Observation

It was observed that discipling the Sabbath School leaders increased their connection with God and their capacity for discipleship and leadership. In return the small group leaders helped the members to improve their connection with God, the connection between members, and the connection with the people outside the church. It was also observed that the Sabbath School council built the bridge that was missing before the program, and connect the small group leaders and Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership. In addition, it was observed also that the Sabbath School council strengthened the culture to plan and follow up in the Sabbath School small groups which were missing before the program. The Sabbath School leaders meet on every Sabbath to discuss the Sabbath School lessons before teaching, and share some issues from small groups, had also built up the capacity of teaching and lead in the Sabbath School small group ministry. Before the implementation of the program, each leader was alone in his corner without knowing what was going on in other groups

and without any external support or idea. The observation revealed also that the rearrangement of the venue and the sitting in Sabbath School small groups has increased the participation of the members in Sabbath School lesson discussions.

Focus Groups Discussion

The comparison and analyses of chapters four and five showed that the image in chapter four has changed positively in chapter five. There are two different pictures before the implementation and after the implementation of the program. The data in chapter four demonstrated the attendance and participation as the challenges in Sabbath School small groups, where the members of the Sabbath School small groups were coming late, and one leader was complaining that some members of his group came when the small groups activities were about to finish, and he added that even those who come most of them to don't participate in the discussion, they just keep quiet, especially in youth small groups. But in Chapter 5 the data showed that attendance and participation have changed positively, even in youth small groups there is an observable improvement.

The data from Chapter 4 showed that the leaders didn't involve the members in the small group's activities because of their method of leading, one member added that they don't participate because the leaders don't involve them. Nevertheless, in chapter five the leaders try to involve the members in almost all activities of the small groups including the Sabbath School lesson discussion. In Chapter 4 the members were complaining that some of the leaders of the small groups were not at the level to lead the Sabbath School lesson, and are not able to lead the small group activities. Even many leaders of Sabbath School small groups in Chapter 4 agreed with the members that they lead without any training, support, or follow-up. While in Chapter 5 the Sabbath School small group leaders accepted that they have been trained on how

to lead and facilitate the study of the Sabbath School lesson, and they agreed that now they know the purpose of the Sabbath School and how to lead the Sabbath school small groups.

The data in Chapter 4 were the complaints about the lack of spirituality among the leaders of the small groups and the negative on the spirituality of the members. They agreed that when the leaders are weak spiritually it affects the spirituality of the members, and they don't have good examples to follow. While in Chapter 5 the members of the small groups agreed that discipling the leaders has been the key to the growth of their spirituality, because of a good example of their leaders. One member said that "When we see our leaders practicing what they say, it is a motivation for us to put into action what they are saying." Leading by example was the result of discipling the leaders of the small group.

The comparison of chapters 4 and 5 concerning the vision and plans shows that before the implementation of the program in chapter 4 there was no vision and plan for discipleship, they were just following the routine without any plan to make disciples. One member of the focus groups commented that before the implementation of the program, each Sabbath School small group leader did what he thought was correct. On the other hand, in chapter 5 they agreed that through the Sabbath School council and church board the vision and plan for the Sabbath School ministry are done well, and communicated well through the Sabbath School council and church board.

In Chapter 4 the people were complaining about the lack of connection with the church and the lack of support from the Ngoma Seventh-day church. They also complained that there is no guidance and follow-up from the Ngoma church board. In Chapter 5, after the implementation of the program, there is connection and support from the church leadership because of putting in place the Sabbath School council to

connect the leaders of the Sabbath School and the leaders of Ngoma church. In addition, they affirmed that the weekly meeting of the Sabbath School small group leaders to review the Sabbath School weekly lesson had connected the small group leaders and increased their experience and knowledge in teaching the Sabbath School lessons.

The pre-program in Chapter 4 showed that the venue was not comfortable and didn't facilitate communication. One member emphasized that the most challenges of the venue are in the Sabbath School small groups of youth, the place they sit is not appropriate for small groups activities. But they said in Chapter 5 that after the implementation of the program, they choose and arrange the venue for each Sabbath School small group in the way that each person faces the other. That has brought good communication and participation in the Sabbath School small groups.

The comparison of chapters 4 and 5 shows that, to be more organized the Sabbath School needs guidelines. In chapter 4 the small group leaders were saying that they were doing what they thought were correct, because of the lack of guidance. But in chapter 5, after the Sabbath School manual handbook is available in Kinyarwanda, they agreed that small group leaders had a better understanding of the Sabbath School small groups ministry and now better, how to accomplish their responsibilities.

Finally, the researcher, his team, and the focus groups members and members have concluded that the implementation of the program has been successful because of:

1. They increased the attendance in the Sabbath School small groups.
2. The more participation of the members in the Sabbath School small group's activities.

3. The leaders have improved how they lead the Sabbath School lesson discussion.
4. The number of Sabbath School lessons has increased.
5. The Sabbath School manual handbook in Kinyarwanda improved the Sabbath School organization.
6. The Sabbath School council took over the planning and training in the Sabbath School.
7. The members are now more involved in personal evangelism through the Sabbath School small group.
8. The church has now many people trained for discipleship and leadership.

Conclusion

The dissertation project that was developed, implemented, evaluated, and written was a helpful tool for discipleship in the Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church. Discipling the small group leaders, building their capacity to disciple the members of the Sabbath School small groups, and following the model of Jesus in discipleship. This project can be a helpful instrument in other churches that have similar challenges like those of Ngoma SDA church. The project can assist them to maximize the potential of the Sabbath School small groups in discipleship and the preparation of the leaders. This dissertation project could also be a helpful instrument for the Sabbath School department in general to disciple the small group leaders, and make the Sabbath School small group a center of discipleship.

The implementation of the project in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church to disciple the Sabbath School small group leaders changed positively the way the Sabbath School small group leaders are fulfilling their mission in the Sabbath School small groups. After the program, the disciple's Sabbath School small group leaders are

leading their group with purpose, vision, and confidence. Besides that, the project awoken the interest of the church leaders who were considering the Sabbath School small groups as just a church routine and are now supportive because they see now the importance of the Sabbath School small groups in discipleship and leadership preparation.

God was intentional throughout the bible preparing the people He want to send before starting an important mission. The ministry of Jesus on earth was concentrated on the preparation of His disciples before giving them the great commission. Jesus spent the whole night praying before selecting His disciples. Jesus spent 3 years with them, moving with them, sleeping with them, doing miracles with them, teaching with them, training them, correcting them, and letting them learn from Him in that transformational journey. Discipling the leaders of the Sabbath School small groups was the key to the success of the Sabbath School small group in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church. Providing time, and producing Sabbath School lessons for Sabbath School small groups are good initiatives, but alone was not enough to produce success without discipling Sabbath School small group leaders. After the implementation of the program and disciple of the Sabbath School small group leaders, the following is the outcome.

First, the program increased the capacity, spirituality, and confidence of the Sabbath School small group leaders for discipleship. The leaders of the Sabbath School small groups received the training necessary for leading, and teaching the Sabbath School small groups, and being the example in the small groups. In addition, there is a weekly meeting of the small group leaders to review the lesson together before teaching. That exercise helped them to understand more the lesson and to lead the discussion with confidence and target. Further, the monthly meeting of the

Sabbath School council discusses all the challenges of the small groups, then gives support, direction, and training.

Second, the program increased the participation of the members in the Sabbath School small group activities and other church activities. The Sabbath School lesson is more interesting because the teachers prepared well the lesson and involve the members in the discussion. The number of lessons among the members increased because they are requested to participate in the discussion. Everybody gets the time to share or to ask a question, not just a few members. In addition, the presence of everybody was valuable, his participation was appreciated and his presence was recognized. One member commented that he feels at home in his small group because he is involved, he is cared for.

Third, the program increased the fellowship among the members, because the leader knew the importance of the fellowship and how to organize them. The members are connected in their Sabbath School small groups, when one member of the group is absent, they want to know the reason and plan to visit him, when one member has challenges, they are involved, when a member has marriage or another event they celebrate together. They plan regularly to eat together whenever possible, and they participate in activities to support each other.

Fourth, the program increased the involvement of the members in the outreach, especially in personal evangelism. Every Sabbath in each Sabbath School small group, every member is requested to give his report on outreach weekly. One member said that before the program he didn't know that it is his responsibility to do personal evangelism, he thought that supporting public evangelism was enough. Every member receives a basic knowledge of personal evangelism through the Sabbath School small groups. Their result is promising, because they started inviting

their friends to the Sabbath School small group activities, giving Bible study, and distributing the church literature.

Fifth, the program trained more leaders for the church at less cost. The church of Ngoma had challenges in getting leaders in different capacities. The small group leaders and other Sabbath School leaders in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church were disciplined for discipling the members of the Sabbath School small groups. They have received the skills that can help them to serve the church in many capacities. Therefore, the church will have more leaders through the continuation of discipling more small group leaders.

Sixth, the program increased the decentralization of church activities. Currently, most of the responsibilities that used to be centralized were put in the hand of the Sabbath School small group leaders. For example, the church informs the Sabbath School of small groups of all the church activities to be shared with the members and gives the report. That system made the burden of the church leaders easier, and the members also received easy communication from their small group leaders.

Seventh, the venue where the people meet for the Sabbath School small group activities had changed positively, the place for study is quite convenient for each class. The people are more comfortable and face each other during the Sabbath School lessons. The good arrangement of positions on how the people sit facilitated the participation of the members and better learning.

Eighth, the Sabbath School manual handbook translated into Kinyarwanda gave the Sabbath School small group leaders in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church the opportunity to know how the Sabbath School is organized because most of

them use the Kinyarwanda language. Many important things were not done because of ignorance, but now they are clear in the manual.

Finally, after developing, implementing, and evaluating the program, the project was successful compared to the expectation of the project in the beginning. The researcher is planning to introduce the same program in other churches but consider their context. He hopes to have the same result. Discipling small group leaders is the key to the success of Sabbath School small groups in discipleship, and the local church leadership development.

Recommendations

The samples in the 3 focus groups were well selected, but there might be some ideas that were missed because of the limited number in sampling. More discoveries are needed.

The project focused more on the adult and young adult Sabbath School small group leaders. But the children in the Sabbath School were not the focus. One member of the focus groups suggested that there should be training for the children of Sabbath School leaders according to their division and groups. The research is needed to know what is going on in the children's Sabbath School and their challenges and find out how to minister to them effectively through the Sabbath School.

To disciple small group leaders is recommended to the churches that want to develop the Sabbath School small groups in discipleship. Because the success of Sabbath School small groups depends on the success of the church in discipling the leaders of small groups.

Furthermore, the researcher suggests to churches that are willing to disciple church leaders consider this approach to disciple the Sabbath School small group

leaders. This approach can be a way to develop many church leaders who can serve the church effectively in many capacities, with less cost.

To keep alive the Sabbath School small groups, it is necessary to disciple the Sabbath School small group leaders continually not just once but keep them growing and encourage them. It is also important to keep training the new leaders to cover the gap that can occur in the leadership of the Sabbath School small groups because Sabbath School small group leaders can change their responsibilities in the local church for many reasons. Therefore, keep training new leaders is important.

Complete and keeping the records of the Sabbath School small group activities is important for the follow-up, the plan, and future research. It was so hard for this project to get information from the records of the Sabbath School small group cards in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church. How the local church in the Seventh-day Adventist Church keeps the records need further research.

Training and involving the Sabbath School small group members in personal evangelism is one of the objects of the Sabbath School small groups. This area needs to be researched more to see how the Sabbath School small groups can be a center for church evangelism.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTERS

Letter to Butare District Leader

Pastor Ruhongeka Abidan
Doctor of Ministry Student AUA
Email: ruhabidan2009@yahoo.com
Tel: +250785504140

Huye 20/12/2021

Object: Permission to conduct a Research Program at Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church/Butare District/South Rwanda Field of SDA.

Pastor Habineza Ignace
Butare District Leader

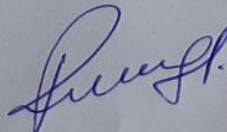
Dear Pastor,

I Would like to request the permission to conduct a research project program with the topic: A strategy for discipling the small groups leaders in Ngoma Seven-day Adventist Church, from 1 April, 2022 to 31 September 2022 for my doctor of ministry dissertation.

Thank for your assistance and support in this project.

Sincerely

Pastor Ruhongeka Abidan
Doctor of Ministry Student AUA



Letter to South Rwanda Field President

Pastor Ruhongeka Abidan
Doctor of Ministry Student AUA
Email: ruhabidan2009@yahoo.com
Tel: +250785504140

Huye 20/12/2021

Object: Permission to conduct a Research Program at Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church/Butare District/South Rwanda Field of SDA.

The Pastor Hakizimana Elie
South Rwanda Field President

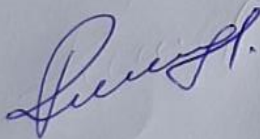
Dear Pastor,

I Would like to request the permission to conduct a research project program with the topic: A strategy for discipling the small groups leaders in Ngoma Seven-day Adventist Church, from 1 April, 2022 to 31 September 2022 for my doctor of ministry dissertation.

Thank for your assistance and support in this project.

Sincerely

Pastor Ruhongeka Abidan
Doctor of Ministry Student AUA



Letter from South Rwanda Field President

Pastor Hakizimana Elie
South Rwanda Field President
Huye

Object: Permission to conduct a Research Program at Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church/Butare District/South Rwanda Field of SDA.

Pastor Ruhongeka Abidan
Doctor of Ministry Student
Adventist University of Africa

Object: Permission to conduct a Research Program at Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church

Dear Pastor,

I Would like to inform you that your request to conduct a research project program with the topic: A strategy for discipling the small groups leaders in Ngoma Sevent-day Adventist Church, from 1 April, 2022 to 31 September 2022, has been granted.

We wish you the success for your project

Sincerely

Pastor Hakizimana Elie
South Rwanda Field President



[Handwritten signature of Pastor Hakizimana Elie]

Letter from Butare District Pastor

Pastor Habineza Ignace
Butare District
Ngoma Church

On 30 March, 2022.

Object: Permission to conduct a Research Program at Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church/Butare District/South Rwanda Field of SDA.

Pastor Ruhongeka Abidan
Doctor of Ministry Student
Adventist University of Africa

Object: Permission to conduct a Research Program at Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church

Dear Pastor,

I would like to inform you that your request to conduct a research project program with the topic: A strategy for disciplining the small groups leaders in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church, from 1 April, 2022 to 31 September 2022, has been granted.

We wish you the success for your project

Sincerely

Pastor Habineza Ignace
Butare District Leader



APPENDIX B

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

1. Can you tell us about the attendance in Sabbath School small group activities in your church?
2. How is the participation of the members in Sabbath School small groups activities in your group and why?
3. How do you observe the impact of Sabbath School small group activities in making disciples of Jesus in your church?
4. What are the current challenges the Sabbath School small groups are facing in making disciples of Jesus in your church?
5. What are your suggestions on how those challenges can be solved?
6. How do you see the involvement of Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership in preparing and supporting the leadership of Sabbath School small groups?
7. What do you think about the relationship between small group leadership and the success of the small group in discipleship?
8. Do you observe any relationship between discipling Sabbath School small group leaders and discipling small group members in your church?
9. What do you think can happen in leadership in Ngoma SDA church, if the leaders of Sabbath School small groups are disciplined? If they are well-selected, trained, and supported?

A Pre-program Focus Group Discussion with Church Members

1. **Researcher:** Can you tell us about the attendance in Sabbath School small group activities in your church?

Respondents: Daniel in his response to the question said that “The participation is not satisfactory to the Sabbath School small groups. Among those who come some are marked absent while they are just late. Zilipa commented on that saying “They are those who are written on the list of members while they have already left in other places.” Abraham added that “We have another category of the people who don’t attend regularly because they are weak spiritually. “Esther has observed also that “In the regular time the attendance is decreasing, the people come in big number when there is a special program.” Daniel commented that “The people come late because they wake up late on the Sabbath and they don’t value the spiritual matters.” Jonas

has observed that “The attendance among the young people is alerting, just few attend the Sabbath School small groups activities.”

Daniel added that “Even those who have responsibilities are among those who come late.”

- 2. Researcher:** How is the participation of the members in the Sabbath School small groups activities in your group and why?

Respondents: Jonas in his response said “The participation is around 50%, but there are no other activities after the class.” Esther commented on the participation and said “Because most of the time our small group leaders had another assignment, we arrange ourselves on how to lead the group and teach the lesson. And that was helpful to us, as members because it increased our talents”

Abraham contrary to others confirmed that “In our group the participation in the Sabbath School lesson discussion is good. Even the time for discussion is not enough, we wish to continue.”

Daniel in his response said, “In our group, those who participate are few, because the people who can lead the Sabbath School lesson are few.”

Mary Said “ In the Sabbath School small groups of young people the participation in the Sabbath School lesson discussion is too low. The youths are just observers.”

- 3. Researcher:** How do you observe the impact of Sabbath School small group activities in making disciples of Jesus in your church?

Respondents: Esther commented that “The Sabbath School pray a big role in discipleship. When you receive the responsibility, your fear to speak in public is overcome slowly by slowly, until you can even preach.” Zilipa added, “ In the Sabbath School small groups the love for others increased.” To respond to the question Jonas said “ You get new friends in the Sabbath School small groups because in the small groups, you feel nearer and connected to others.” Mary has observed the challenge among the youth small groups and said “In the youth, there is less relationship because many don’t know each other and those who have Sabbath School lessons are few.”

- 4. Researcher:** What are the current challenges the Sabbath School small groups are facing in making disciples of Jesus in your church?

Respondents: Daniel responded to the question by saying “We didn’t receive training and we don’t know much about our responsibility.” Jason added that “The leaders of the small groups need to be trained first to increase their level of teaching.” Peter added the concern from the families of origin and background and said “Some people have little knowledge about the church. The family where we come from sometimes don’t have the same faith, and have not opportunity to study the bible at home.” Daniel added that “The members of the baptismal class don’t receive enough training from those who teach them. The small group leaders must be trained first to the level to teach and lead the small groups.” Daniel added also that “Sometimes there is a

controversial between the small group leaders and the church leadership on some social programs.”

5. **Researcher:** What are your suggestions on how those challenges can be solved?

Respondents: Abraham suggested that “Let us create a strong connection to share communication between the small group leaders and church leaders.” Jonas added that “The church elders should not be far from the Sabbath School small group they should be near the group, support and themselves participate.

6. **Researcher:** How do you see the involvement of Ngoma Adventist church leadership in preparing and supporting the leadership of Sabbath School small groups?

Respondents: Zilipa confirmed immediately that “The training for the small group leaders is almost not there, the accompaniment of the new believers and young people is also very low.” Esther added that “The Sabbath School small group leaders don’t have any support, don’t have anyone to care for them and train them.” Mary suggested that “There is a big gap between the small groups and the church that needs to be filled.”

Esther observed positively what the church has started doing “The church has started doing something positive for the small groups by giving them the responsibility to be in charge of preparing the Sabbath program.”

7. **Researcher:** What do you think about the relationship between small group leadership and the success of the small group in discipleship?

Respondents: Jonas commented on the question saying “When the leader of the small group is strong the group becomes strong, when the leader is weak the group becomes weak.” Daniel added, “When the leader is awakening the members will awaken also.”

8. **Researcher:** Do you observe any relationship between discipling Sabbath School small group leaders and discipling small group members in your church?

Respondents: Abraham said that “If the leaders of the small groups are well disciplined that can have a positive impact on lifting other members.” Then Esther responded to the question by saying that “The training will help the church to remain united and not fall in the dissident” Mary believed that “if the leaders of the small groups are disciplined there is hope for the future of the church.”

9. **Researcher:** What do you think can happen in leadership in Ngoma Adventist church, if the leaders of Sabbath School small groups are disciplined? If they are well-selected, trained, and supported?

Respondents: Zilipa said that “If the leader of the small group is well trained, he will have confidence in himself as a leader, and he will consider himself as a leader.” With confidence, Daniel responded that “It will not be difficult for the church to get the leaders because many gifts among the members will be

revealed. Jonas added that “There is hope for the future, and the spring of the leaders will remain there, and it will bear fruits.”

Focus Group Interview with the Sabbath School Small Group Leaders

1. Researcher: Can you tell us about the attendance in Sabbath School small group activities in your church?

Respondents: Joseph in responding to the question said that “The attendance is not good because many of them come as visitors, and spent many weeks without coming back. Those who came regularly are few.” Jean Damascene has noticed in his group that “The people attend but the problem is that they come late.” Mark added that “There are those who don’t come because they are old or sick.” Marie Jose has observed that “In the young people small groups, it seems that some young people do not have where they belong, they change the groups every Sabbath.”

2. Researcher: How is the participation of the members in the Sabbath School small groups activities in your group and why?

Respondents: “The church is currently involving the members in giving each Sabbath School small group the responsibility to organize the Sabbath program.” Said, Clementine. Mark confirmed that “we have some people in my group who participate in the Sabbath School lesson discussion.”

3. Researcher: How do you observe the impact of Sabbath School small group activities in making disciples of Jesus in your church?

Respondents: In the response to the question Thacienne said “When you are together it is possible to know each other, and you love each other. When you learn together you help each other.” Justin added that “The small groups help people to socialize and be together and create connection” Clementine confirmed that “The small groups revealed the problems that were not easy to know. In addition to that it is in the Sabbath School small groups that the members order the Sabbath School lessons.” Samuel had observed some challenges and said “We are not yet at the level to meet as Sabbath School small group to study deeply the word of God together or pray for each other.”

4. Researcher: What are the current challenges the Sabbath School small groups are facing in making disciples of Jesus in your church?

Respondents: In the response to the question Mark noticed that “Currently, the people are self-centered, because of the life in this world.” Jacqueline added that “The small group leaders are not connected and they don’t receive training.”

5. Researcher: What are your suggestions on how those challenges can be solved?

Respondents: Justin Suggested that “The Sabbath School small group leaders should be connected because they don’t know each other.” Uzziel added that “When they are connected, they share.”

6. Researcher: How do you see the involvement of Ngoma Adventist church leadership in preparing and supporting the leadership of Sabbath School small groups?

Respondent. In response to the question, Clementine suggested that “The church should organize the Sabbath School small group leaders training to develop them in teaching and leadership. Mark added that” The small group leaders take care of themselves and don’t have other resources that can help them, they don’t have other support to guide them and to lead them.”

7. Researcher: What do you think about the relationship between small group leadership and the success of the small group in discipleship?

Respondents: Thacienne noticed that “When a leader of the Sabbath School small group is not spiritual and doesn’t have knowledge in spiritual matters, consequently the small groups will be less spiritual and less in knowledge in spiritual matters. Uzziel added that “The way the small group leaders behave to have a negative impact or positive impact on the people he leads.”

8. Researcher: Do you observe any relationship between discipling Sabbath School small group leaders and discipling small group members in your church?

Respondents: In response to the question Solange confirmed that “When the small groups are well taught and led, the whole church will be well in all.” Justin added that “The church will be well in fellowship between members, the church will be good in evangelism, and the church will be well in the knowledge of the word of God and relationship with God.”

9. Researcher: What do you think can happen in leadership in Ngoma Adventist church, if the leaders of Sabbath School small groups are disciplined? If they are well-selected, trained, and supported?

Respondents: Damascene affirmed that “When the leaders of the Sabbath School small groups are well selected and trained the church leadership will be decentralized and the burden to the church leaders will be not heavy.” Marie Jose also added that” many church members will have the opportunity to serve” Mark said that “the gift of many members will be developed and used.”

Focus Group Discussion with the SDA Ngoma Church Leaders

1. Researcher: Can you tell us about the attendance in Sabbath School small group activities in your church?

Respondents: Joakim responded that “There are those who do not want to be registered and some of them in the end accept to be registered in the small groups. Françoise noticed that “The people attend the Sabbath worship but they came late to the Sabbath School small groups. They are some Sabbath, when they come in big numbers depending on the program of the day” Jason added that “The attendance for the young people is low because they are unstable.”

2. Researcher: How is the participation of the members in the Sabbath School small groups activities in your group and why?

Respondents: The Pastor of Ngoma District Ignace responded to the question by saying that: “The Sabbath School is the time to share your idea, it is not like a sermon it is the time to feel free to discuss and to participate. Some

Sabbath School small groups tried to do it correctly. But other small groups do not involve the members because of the leaders of the small groups who do not involve the members. “Elder Jason added that: “When the members are involved by the teacher they participate.” The Sabbath School superintendent suggests that “There are some Sabbath School small groups that need teachers that can revive them and involve the members. When you give room to the members to participate, they participate.” Elder Francoise had noticed that: “The participation is challenged by the way the people sit in the Sabbath School small groups. But for the social activities the members participate.” Elder Markel stated that: “For the social activities the members participate willingly, but for other church activities the participation is not good.”

3. Researcher: How do you observe the impact of Sabbath School small group activities in making disciples of Jesus in your church?

Respondents: “They are some activities done by the Sabbath School small groups in the church. But to be involved in evangelism something needs to be done to involve the members in evangelism. There is no time to study together and to pray together in small groups.” Said Francoise. Then Markel added “The people are busy that they don’t find time for evangelism. The members don’t have the model to follow, the mobilization is needed to let the members know their call.” The Sabbath School superintendent Joakim noticed that: “The time reserved in the Sabbath School is not used wisely. If the leaders of the Sabbath School small group knew how to use the time properly the program can run much better.”

4. Researcher: What are the current challenges the Sabbath School small groups are facing in making disciples of Jesus in your church?

Respondents: “The people didn’t know what to do in discipleship and neglect it. The guidance and direction haven’t been given to follow.” Said Joachim the Sabbath School superintendent. Pastor Ignace has observed that: “the main problem is the leadership that does not give direction.”

5. Researcher: What are your suggestions on how those challenges can be solved?

Respondents: “The small group should not meet only on the Sabbath; they need to plan in their small groups another time to meet study the word of God and participate in another church program.” This was the suggestion of the Sabbath School superintendent Joachim. To make that program clear Elder Markel added that: “The program to meet other days except the Sabbath should be planned by the church program.”

6. Researcher: How do you see the involvement of Ngoma Adventist church leadership in preparing and supporting the leadership of Sabbath School small groups?

Respondents. The Sabbath School superintendent Joachim to answer the question stated that “There is no practical involvement of Ngoma church leadership in the selection, preparation, and support of the Sabbath School small groups.” Elder Samson had noticed that: “There is no training for the

Sabbath School small group leaders. If it was there, it was for a long time ago. “Elder Francoise added that “The Church of Ngoma didn’t put the emphasize on those issues to disciple the Sabbath School small group leaders.” Pastor Ignace added that: “The connection between the Ngoma church and the Sabbath School small group leaders is not strong.”

7. Researcher: What do you think about the relationship between small group leadership and the success of the small group in discipleship?

Respondents: “When the leadership of the small groups is well organized, consequently the small group will be organized. The well-being of the small group is connected to the well-being of its leaders.” stated Elder Markel Elder Jason concluded that “If the leadership of the small groups is strengthened, the small group will be strong as well.”

8. Researcher: Do you observe any relationship between discipling Sabbath School small group leaders and discipling small group members in your church?

Respondents: “If the church is awakened on the Sabbath School small groups, it will help the well-being of the whole church spiritually.” Confirmed Pastor Ignace. Elder Jason added, “When the leaders of the Sabbath are disciplined the church will have many people who understand how the church operates.” Elder Markel suggested that “It would be good if the church disciple many people.”

9. Researcher: What do you think can happen in leadership in Ngoma Adventist church, if the leaders of Sabbath School small groups are disciplined? If they are well-selected, trained, and supported?

Respondents: Elder Samson said that: “The lighter will lighten.” Then Francoise to respond to the question said that. “It can decrease the burden of the church leaders” Joachim the Sabbath School superintendent added that: “It can be much easier to get people to replace others, or occupy other church positions. The Sabbath School small groups can be a place to develop leaders and to get leaders for many church responsibilities. The church can have more leaders and all the time.”

A post-program Focus Group Discussion with SDA Ngoma Church Members

1. **Researcher:** Can you tell us about the attendance in Sabbath School small group activities in your church?

Respondents: “Currently there is improvement in attendance, because of the improvement of the way the Sabbath School small groups are working. The teachers of the small groups had improved the way they lead the group and the way they teach the Sabbath School lesson with participation. But more improvement is needed, especially for some who are still coming late.” Daniel Answered the question. Zilipa added that “The leaders of the church are better now in the attendance to the Sabbath School small groups activities compare to the pre-program attendance.” Jonas has noticed an improvement in attendance among the youth with some challenges. “The attendance among the

youth has increased but there is a problem with those who are not regular in the church.”

2. **Researcher:** How is the participation of the members in the Sabbath School small groups activities in your group and why?

Respondents: Mary in his response said: “There is a change in the participation of the members in the small groups. The Sabbath School leader has changed the way they involve the members. The members prepared the lesson consequently because they know that they will be involved in the lesson discussion.”

Abraham commented that: “The members who buy the Sabbath School lessons have increased significantly because they use them to study and to prepare the discussion of the lessons. Esther Said that: “Among the young people there is improvement but the journey is still long, those who are not regular don’t participate.”

3. **Researcher:** How do you observe the impact of the Sabbath School small group activities in making disciples of Jesus in your church?

Respondents: Zilpah commented that “As I said before in the last interview the Sabbath School plays a big role in discipleship and leadership. Now among the small group leaders we have those who can now preach well in the church.” Daniel added, “We observe better relationship in the church, because many members have joined the Sabbath School small groups where they connect.”

Esther has observed the change and the challenges “Among the young the relationship has increased but there are still challenges of the many people who are not regular because they are permanent in the city.”

4. **Researcher:** What are the current challenges the Sabbath School small groups are facing in making disciples of Jesus in your church?

Respondents: Daniel observed the positive change among the leaders of the small groups. “The challenge was the leaders of the Sabbath School small groups who were not at the level to lead the small groups. But currently, there is a big change. The leaders of the small groups have improved a lot in their teaching, leadership, and spirituality. We appreciate that.”

Abraham noticed the area that need to be improved “The leaders of the Baptismal class also need special training to know how to lead those who want to be baptized.”

Mary noticed the importance of the Sabbath School council and said “The Sabbath School council has connected the Sabbath School small group leaders and Ngoma church leadership. There is no longer much controversy between the small group leaders and the church leadership”

5. **Researcher:** What are your suggestions on how those challenges can be solved?

Respondents: Jonas suggested that: “The Sabbath School leaders have received the basic training needed to fulfill their responsibility. But I would like to suggest that that training should continue at least, every year for the

new leaders and refresh those who remain as Sabbath School leaders. Zilipa suggested also that “The Sabbath School council has solved the problem of the communication and connection of the Sabbath School small group leaders and the church leaders.”

6. **Researcher:** How do you see the involvement of Ngoma Adventist church leadership in preparing and supporting the leadership of Sabbath School small groups?

Respondents: Esther confirmed that “The church has been involved in training for the small group leaders.” Mary added that “The Sabbath School small group leaders are taken care of through the Sabbath School council and the plan of the small groups are known and respected in the church and the plan of the church are known and respected by the small groups”

7. **Researcher:** What do you think about the relationship between small group leadership and the success of the small group in discipleship?

Respondents: Abraham confirmed that “When the leader of the small group is strong the group becomes strong, when the leader is weak the group becomes weak.” Jonas added, “When the leader is awakening the members will awaken also.”

8. **Researcher:** Do you observe any relationship between discipling Sabbath School small group leaders and discipling small group members in your church?

Respondents: Daniel said that “If the leaders of the small groups are well disciplined that can have a positive impact on lifting other members.” Then Mary responded to the question by saying that “The training will help the church to remain united and not fall in the dissident” Zilpah believes that “if the leaders of the small groups are disciplined there is hope for the future of the church.”

9. **Researcher:** What do you think can happen in leadership in Ngoma Seventh-day Adventist church, if the leaders of Sabbath School small groups are disciplined? If they are well-selected, trained, and supported?

Respondents: Esther said that “As I said in the first interview the training of the Sabbath School small group leaders empowers the whole church and increases the confidence of the leaders because they do what they understand” Daniel added that “It is so easier to get leaders when you train the Sabbath School small leaders in discipleship and leadership. With the small groups system, you identified and develop many gifts from the members.” Zilipa added that “With the training of the Sabbath School small groups there is hope for the future of the church strong in spirituality, discipleship, and leadership.

Focus Group Interview with the Sabbath School Small Group Leaders

1. **Researcher:** Can you tell us about the attendance in Sabbath School small group activities in your church?

Respondents: In responding to the question Clementine said “The attendance has changed positively. The number of people who attend are growing in my

small group, even in other groups.” Thacienne added that “Though we still have people who come late we have people who used to come late, who are no longer coming late, because their presence and participation are appreciated in the group. The challenge we still have is those who are old and are not able to attend because of their age. But as a group, we are planning the way we can involve them in our group by visiting them.” Mark has observed the improvement and challenges in a small group of young people “In young people small groups, the presence has increased but there are those who are not yet connected to one group, because when they attend, they joined any group, because they are not regular.”

2. **Researcher:** How is the participation of the members in the Sabbath School small groups activities in your group and why?

Respondents: Jean Damascene noticed the change in participation “The participation in the Sabbath School lesson discussion is good, and I hope that it will continue to be good, because of the way the lesson is discussed and the way each one has the opportunity to share. Justin confirmed that: “The number of the Sabbath School lesson has increased in my small groups. During the lesson discussion, it is interesting to see the people using and quoting from the lesson”

3. **Researcher:** How do you observe the impact of Sabbath School small group activities in making disciples of Jesus in your church?

Respondents: Clementine commented that “The connection among the members helped our small groups in fellowship, and when you are together you know each other, you love each other and you help each other.”

Thacienne noticed the change in outreach “The impact of the small group in evangelism is now visible because each Sabbath every member or group of members reported personal evangelism during the week. And the outcome is promising, the people are more involved.” Mark noticed the change in Sabbath School lessons and the improvement needed. “The number of the Sabbath School lessons had increased among the members because they are involved in the discussion, and they are motivated to buy the Sabbath School lessons. But the time for deeper study and prayer together for each other is not yet enough.”

4. **Researcher:** What are the current challenges the Sabbath School small groups are facing in making disciples of Jesus in your church?

Respondents: Mark responding to the question said. “The challenge was the lack of spirituality among the leaders and members, but currently there is a shift, the small group leaders started the journey of commitment to God and His word, and we invite the members of our small groups to be also connected to the Lord through His word. Justin added that “The weekly Sabbath School small groups teachers meeting to review the lesson has increased the preparation of the Sabbath School lessons.”

Uzziel Confirmed that “There is follow up of the church through the Sabbath School council”

5. Researcher: What are your suggestions on how those challenges can be solved?

Respondents: Clementine suggested that “Discipling the small group leaders has been the solution for many challenges that were facing the Sabbath School small groups, and I suggest that the training should continue at least every year.” Mark added: “The Sabbath School council must strengthen and continue to plan and do follow up of what is going on the Sabbath School”

6. Researcher: How do you see the involvement of Ngoma Adventist church leadership in preparing and supporting the leadership of Sabbath School small groups?

Respondents. Thacienne has observed the change in Ngoma church leadership and said “The Ngoma church leadership through the Sabbath School council is planning training and do follow up for the Sabbath School.” Marie Jose confirmed the change she observed in Ngoma church leadership “The Sabbath School small groups have become the prioritize for Ngoma church leadership.”

7. Researcher: What do you think about the relationship between small group leadership and the success of the small group in discipleship?

Respondents: Mark commented, “I have been the leader of the small group for 3 years I have observed that when the small group leader is committed to the gospel the members also are likely to be committed.”

Clementine confirmed that “When members realize that the leader knows what he is doing the members take it seriously”

Thacienne added, “The behavior of the leader has an impact on the members and how they receive his teachings.”

Uzziel observed that; “When a leader is weak the group is weak, when a leader is strong the group is strong.”

8. Researcher: Do you observe any relationship between discipling Sabbath School small group leaders and discipling small group members in your church?

Respondents: Marie Jose responded to the question by saying. “When you disciple the leaders of the small groups, they will in return disciple the members. I have observed that the change is when the leader is trained. In our small group before the revival in the small groups, the way I was leading the group was not satisfactory. the influence on the member was minimal”

Clementine added that “After changing the way I treat them, the way I respond to them, the way I involve them, the way I guide the discussion, I saw the positive change in the behavior of the members.”

9. Researcher: What do you think can happen in leadership in Ngoma Adventist church, if the leaders of Sabbath School small groups are disciplined? If they are well-selected, trained, and supported?

Respondents: Jacqueline confirmed that “The burden of the church leadership will be less. Many small group leaders are now capable to fulfill well many responsibilities without the intervention of the church elders.”

Justin added that “Through the involvement of the members in Bible study and evangelism, many gifts are visible and developed.”

Mark in responding to the question said. “Because of the leadership and decentralization, the small groups are now growing.”

Focus Group Interview with Ngoma SDA Church Leaders

1. 1. Researcher: Can you tell us about the attendance in Sabbath School small group activities in your church?

- **Respondents:** In his response to the question Elder Jason has noticed that “The record of the attendance has been corrected. The attendance and other activities are well recorded in Sabbath School small groups. This is very helpful for follow-up and archives. The Sabbath School council and small group leaders will use this information for a better plan.” Joachim the Sabbath School Superintendent in Ngoma SDS church, confirmed that the attendance of the members in the Sabbath School small groups has improved.

2. Researcher: How is the participation of the members in the Sabbath School small groups activities in your group and why?

- **Respondents:** Francoise noticed that change in Sabbath School's small group leadership. “The participation was motivated by the leaders of the Sabbath School small groups, because they started preparing well the lesson “Pastor Ignace the district leaders confirmed that “The participation is mainly based on the teachers, when the members are involved, they participate.” Elder Oswald added, “The way the small groups are sitting also motivates the participation.”

3. Researcher: How do you observe the impact of Sabbath School small group activities in making disciples of Jesus in your church?

Respondents: Elder Samson noticed that: “The vision and plan for discipleship are more applicable in the Sabbath School small groups setting” Joachim the Sabbath School superintendent confirmed that “The members of the small groups easily participate in the social activities and community service”

Elder Markel observed the challenge to be addressed “There is not enough time for Bible study together. The time to pray for the request from the members of the small groups is almost not there.”

4. Researcher: What are the current challenges the Sabbath School small groups are facing in making disciples of Jesus in your church?

Respondents: “In the past, the 45 minutes was not used wisely but it is no longer wasted as before.” Said Pastor Ignace Habineza the district leader. Joachim the Sabbath School superintendent confirmed that: “The majority of leaders used to teach the Sabbath School lesson without preparation but currently they prepare the lesson before teaching. Before there was no vision and plan for discipleship. Because of the training, we have plans for discipleship in all the Sabbath School activities including the small group activities.”

5. Researcher: What are your suggestions on how those challenges can be solved?

Respondents: Elder Markel had noticed that “The most challenges we faced isn’t mainly the members but the leadership. How the Sabbath School works is related to how the leader works. Discipling the leaders of the small groups has changed the way they fulfill their responsibilities. Elder Oswald added that: “The understanding of Sabbath School small group members is proportionally related to the understanding of the leaders of the group. It is important for the church to discipling the leaders of the small groups and keep increasing their understanding and their spirituality”

6. Researcher: How do you see the involvement of Ngoma Adventist church leadership in preparing and supporting the leadership of Sabbath School small groups?

Respondents: Joachim the Sabbath School Superintendent noticed the change and said “The Sabbath School council has brought the change in the Sabbath School relationship with the church leadership. Almost every month there is a joint meeting with the church leadership to plan and evaluate the Sabbath School activities.” Elder Francoise added that “The small group leaders received support from the Sabbath School council. I can say that there is a connection between church leadership and small group leadership.”

7. Researcher: What do you think about the relationship between small group leadership and the success of the small group in discipleship?

Respondents: In responding to the question Elder Samson said “How the Sabbath School small groups work is related to how the leader of the small groups work” Elder Muniyabakwiye Damascene added that “The understanding of Sabbath School small group members is proportionally related to the understanding of the leaders of the group”

8. Researcher: Do you observe any relationship between discipling Sabbath School small group leaders and discipling small group members in your church?

Respondent Kayonga Mark the Associate Sabbath School Superintendent noticed that “The success in discipling the small group leaders means the success in discipling members. The fact that the church has successfully trained the small group leaders, will lead to the success of the small groups.” Pastor Ignace concluded that: “The failure in discipling small group leaders means failure in discipling members”

9. Researcher: What do you think can happen in leadership in Ngoma Adventist church, if the leaders of Sabbath School small groups are disciplined? If they are well-selected, trained, and supported?

Respondents: Muniyabakwiye Damascene confirmed that: “The church mission will be put into action easily.”

Elder Jason added that “The church will have many qualified leaders because of the training of the small group leaders. Because they are many compare to

other church leaders and the program to train them is comprehensive for discipleship.”

Francoise added that “The church mission will be on the shoulders of many people not just a few. The decentralization will be possible in Ngoma church because of the training of the small group leaders.”

APPENDIX C

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Activities	Description of Activities	Objectives
1. Introduction of the program	Meet the pastor and the church board to introduce the program	Partner with the church in the program
2. Selection and training of the team	Training the supporting team about the program	Partner with the church leadership to get the facts of the program from the members
3. Pre-program interview	Meet the focus groups 1, 2 and 3	Get the facts of the program.
4. Selection for training	Selection of the people among the church members to be trained to lead the small groups.	Have qualified and committed people for training
5. Training	Train the selected church members in the Sabbath School small groups	Disciple the small group leaders
6. Post-program interview	Meet the focus groups 1,2 and 3	Get the facts about the program

APPENDIX D

SABBATH SCHOOL SMALL GROUP LEADERS
TRAINING PROGRAM DAILY SCHEDULE

Time	Activity	Coordinator
15:00-15:30	Devotion	Facilitator
15:30-17:00	Training	Facilitator
17:00-17:20	Question and Answer	Facilitator
17:20-17:30	Break	Team member
17:30-18:30	Training	Facilitator
18:30-19:00	Question and answer	Facilitator

APPENDIX E

LECTURE/TRAINING MATERIALS

LESSON 1: SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER- KEY TO SUCCESS

The Role of the Sabbath School Teacher

Introduction: The results demonstrate a yearly decline in Sabbath School small group attendance. In 30 years, the attendance at Sabbath School decreased from 80% to 40% due to differences between churches. There is a sizable disparity between those who attend the Sabbath service and those who attend Sabbath School. It continues to be difficult to get everyone involved in the various Sabbath School small group activities.

There are many reasons given, why the people don't attend the Sabbath School. Lack of fellowship; uninteresting Sabbath School small groups; people who don't study the lesson; people who aren't involved; boring program; incompetent teachers; disputes in the church; and people whose spiritual needs aren't addressed. The majority of those issues can be resolved by the Sabbath School teachers, which is why it is crucial to disciple them.

Understanding the Sabbath School objectives.

The study of God's word is the first goal. It aided in my acquisition of information about the Bible, my love for the truth, and my application of it. The second goal is the members' fellowship, which serves as the foundation for making collaboration easier. The third goal is to educate and involve the members in outreach. The members must understand that they are missionaries for God's kingdom as Christians. Supporting the global mission is the fourth goal. The Sabbath School must fulfill its objective for existing.

Which change is needed in Sabbath School?

It is necessary to break out of the routine and turn the Sabbath into a tool for creating disciples who are dedicated to creating disciples. Our Sabbath Schools are not what the Lord would have them to be because there is an excessive amount of reliance on form and machinery and a lack of manifestation of the life-giving power of God for the conversion of the souls for which Christ died. If our Sabbath Schools are to fulfill their intended function, the existing order of things must be altered (CSW, p. 157)

The importance of the role of the teacher.

The teacher is important because of his responsibility. He is the leader, the shepherd, the teacher, the pastor, the feeder, and the protector of the members of his group.

Teacher's qualifications: It is important to cultivate the gift of teaching. The teacher needs to focus on the following four crucial issues:

- a. Spend time with the Bible
- b. get to know the Holy Spirit.
- c. Pray a lot;
- d. have a lot of deep contemplation.

Personal qualification for a successful teacher:

- a. A knowledge of Christ.
- b. A knowledge of the bible.
- c. A knowledge of the students,
- c. Knowledge of the self.

The Spirit of the Sabbath School Teachers:

Teacher of Sabbath School, The Spirit

The following virtues are listed in order of importance: a. the spirit of love; b. the spirit of faithfulness; c. the spirit of courage; d. the spirit of patience; e. the spirit of enthusiasm; f. the spirit of sympathy; g. the spirit of reverence; h. the spirit of prayer; i. the spirit of discernment; j. the spirit of youth; k. the spirit of learning; l. the spirit of learning;

The Teachers' Qualifications

God's call to Christian teachers: Teaching is a gift from God (Rom 12:6-8). Each teacher should feel the sacredness of his call and he should commit himself to fulfill his responsibility with all his might (Eccl. 9:10). And the gift should be cultivated and developed in other ways it will not bear fruits. Teaching is an art to learn.

The Characteristics of Sabbath School Teacher.

Reflect Christ is the secret of power to your members, who we are will talk more than what we say.

The Spirit of the Sabbath School Teachers: a. The following are the many types of spirits: love, faithfulness, courage, enthusiasm, patience, sympathy, reverence, discernment, youth, and the spirits of love, faithfulness, courage, patience, and enthusiasm. The following qualities should be present in everyone: the attitude of learning, humility, tolerance, and compassion.

The success of the small groups depends on the teacher. **The Steps in the Lesson**

Preparation: The first is to pray and ask God to guide you, and the second is to keep an open mind and teach others through the inductive method. Third, use the Bible to teach the lesson rather than the leaflet. Recite the text of the Bible in all its translations. Read the lyrics in the context to completely comprehend the writer's intention. To hear God's voice, listen. When the truth is revealed and its significance comes to mind, jot it down with a pencil on paper or in the Bible to make it simpler to find it later. The Bible atlas, bible commentaries, and the spirit of prophecy are a few additional resources to investigate. Make careful to put the important details in writing. got. **Plan What the Lesson Will Cover:** Set the session's objective and the week's overall lesson in advance. Next, select 3 to 4 topics that the lesson will cover and list them in writing. Thirdly, use what you've learnt to improve your current situation. To gain more knowledge and expertise, read various sources. **Checklist of the lesson's preparation:** 1. possess thorough comprehension of the lesson 2.

Introduction as planned. 3. A prepared tract for discussion (identify focal themes and thought-sequences) 4. A prepared spiritual application made personally. 5. Selected information and appropriate pictures. 6. Carefully crafted inquiries 7. Meticulously planned time 8. A request

Points to Note When Preparing a Lesson: Think yourself don't only rely on what you read. Notice that there is a lighter to come.

The Preparation for Teachings

This lesson's objectives are to instruct the adult Sabbath School class while also examining the features of adult learning and planning and preparing for learning. Heaven, the nature of God, the nature of man, the problem of sin, and Salvation are some of the big themes or concepts we develop in Sabbath School. These concepts will result in attitudes, which in turn will have an impact on behavior. Therefore, we must develop the ability to communicate complex ideas in the most readable and appealing way possible. We are doing more than just disseminating information; we are transforming lives. Sabbath School is a venue for spiritual growth, instruction, and introspection. **Characteristics of adult learning:** Each adult in your group has a unique temperament, set of skills, background, and abilities. And everyone has a special talent. Adults are searching for answers to their issues. Give them the solutions to their issues and wants by drawing on the Bible and your own experience. Jesus' approach was to provide for the needs of the populace. Members will always attend classes taught by a teacher who is concerned about their needs.

Some of the tasks of young adults: a. Finishing or continuing school; b. Finding love; c. Adjusting to life with a spouse; d. Beginning a family; e. Raising children; f. Managing a home; g. Beginning a career; and h. Assuming civic responsibilities. i. Joining a friendly group of people

Planning and Preparation for Teaching

1. The need for a teaching plan: A. completing or continuing education B. choosing a mate C. learning to coexist with a spouse D. starting a family F. managing a home G. beginning a career H. assuming civic responsibility 1. Joining a friendly, social group

2. In developing a plan of study, these question needs to be asked as you prepare to teach (What does this lesson tell us about God's nature? What connection does it have to the gospel message and the epic struggle between Christ and the devil? How can I glorify Jesus, His righteousness, His atoning death, and His return? How does this lesson connect to the one from last week and the quarter's topic? **3.** Write the central truth. A complete, thorough statement that can be applied, assessed, and expressed in writing. The following are a few suggestions for accuracy checks on the central truth: (1) Does the sentence capture the essence of the section in the lesson? (2) Does the claim present a fundamental tenet of biblical truth? (3) Does the statement address a concern, issue, or need in the present? (4) Is the assertion appropriate for your class, in your opinion?

4. The Basic Macro-Micro-Macro Principle. In actual teaching circumstances, this is the use of the fundamental fact or core idea. Therefore, the main idea must be presented succinctly in the opening of the class discussion. The lecture is then divided

into its component elements, each of which is discussed in depth. The main idea is reiterated at the conclusion of the class as a summary and application. **5: This is how to form the aims that teach**

1. “He [the teacher] should have a distinct plan in mind, and should know just what he desires to accomplish before attempting to teach a subject” (Education, p. 233). The most significant and determining element in the teaching-learning process is the goal.

2. What is a teaching aim? a.

The teaching goal is a declaration of the objectives you have for the class period.

It specifies the student's expected behavior following the teaching session.

a. Talk about the following teaching objectives in the seminar:

The goal should be communicated in clear, action-oriented language.

3. Advantages of stating teaching aims

a. It provides direction for study, material selection, and teaching method choice.

b. Teaching objectives help to keep the session on course and cut down on time waste d on unimportant topics.

4. Kinds of aims

Teaching aims can be classified into three general areas: a. Knowledge b. Attitude c. Conduct -response

The Knowledge Level: Learning starts with understanding what the Bible says.

The foundation of all learning are facts.

The student groups the information into concepts as he begins to comprehend them.

The Feeling Level: Knowing, understanding, and conceptualizing facts mold our feelings.

The Conduct-Response Level: The third level of learning is the behavioral or conduct response.

5. Write your aim: Assign the participants to small groups of five to six people and ask them to develop a Sabbath School teaching objective based on this week's lesson. Request that the group leader present the report to the class for discussion.

6. Use your aim to evaluate a. Has my instruction been effective? b. What has occurred? c. Has the makeup of the students changed? Do they have new information or alternative opinions? Does their conduct or way of life have changed?

The Power of Teachings

This lesson's goal is to help the students comprehend some of the ideas that, when applied with the power of compassion and the authority of God's word, have the potential to transform their lives.

Step 1. The need for building relationships

No matter how skilled the teacher or effective his methods, research shows that a child who feels uncomfortable, afraid, or aggressive typically struggles to learn. When a youngster feels that “here is one person who cares about me, here is one person I can trust,” the teacher may begin to build on the relationship, and the child's mind appears to open up and he can start to learn. A child may resist learning the multiplication table even after being repeatedly taught it—until sincere love enters the scene. The child's mind is then miraculously liberated, allowing learning to advance at an incredible rate.

The same idea applies to adult learning. We bring our anxieties, uncertainties, and animosity to Sabbath School. Despite the fact that we might be seated next to someone else, we might feel alone. The environment for learning needs to be taken into consideration. You should make an effort to get to know your classmates. You must spend time expressing your love and care for each person.

As a result, hostilities end, prejudice and indifference vanish, and there is a willingness to learn.

Optimal teaching-learning situation—Family School: Deut. 6:6,7 Moses demonstrates how a family environment is one in which younger family members are equally heard and appreciated as older ones, and where the transfer of knowledge, values, and ideas across generations occurs spontaneously. A supportive environment and love for all Sabbath School students are essential for adult learning. Everyone feels like a member of the family at that point.

Jesus also used the family model: Jesus never rushed through a speech or sermon. He spent time blessing moms and children. He healed a blind guy while having dinner with the tax collector. How many of us consider the excellent stuff we still have to cover as we glance at our watches? Without giving our students' needs and feelings much consideration, we go right into the lesson as if the subject were everything. In addition to spending time with His disciples, Jesus also shared knowledge with them and stayed and slept with them. According to instruction, p. 16, "Love, the basis of creation and redemption, is the basis of true education."

If you want to instill religious truth in their hearts, you must gain their affection. Basics of Christian Education, page 68)

Creating Family Sabbath School Classes: It's crucial that everyone in the Sabbath School class feels loved and cared for. A teacher who is friendly and accepting will go a long way toward making his class seem like a family.

It is advised to create family Sabbath School classes using the framework below:

A. Greet and introduce each visitor B. Deliver a succinct mission appeal highlighting the class objective. Place your gift inside the envelope, then distribute it to the class members. Have someone count the donation.

c. Record your own attendance and designate members to call on all regular and potential members who are absent. Every week, someone should check in on each missing member.

b. Promote regular lesson study. "How many are following the daily lesson study plan?" is a good question to ask. Place a checkmark in the box next to the reporting number.

a. Explain to the class how much was offered today. Compared to the offering objective.

c. Report on Personal Ministries.

g. Pray. Encourage your group to pray for one another. Say a prayer for the missing. Say a specific prayer for growth. Finally, pray for the class's schedule.

Step 2: The power to transform lives is in the words of the living God

We may entertain, we may impress, we may even inspire, but what the people need is the living word.

Eight Ways to Lead Your Class into the Word:

Scripture Search: Pose a problem. The solution should be found in the biblical passages discussed in your Sabbath School class. The issue should be relevant to your class's requirements and age range. It could be a problem in life or a doctrinal issue. Make it pertinent and interesting. It might be made up or real.)

Bible Paraphrase: Provide sheets of paper with a key passage from the Sabbath School lesson written at the top.

Critical thinking, classifying, or comparing: This activity's goal is to teach the students how to categorize, contrast, and evaluate Scripture..

Research and Report: A research issue relevant to the class the next week is presented by the teacher.

The teacher prepares a written statement or delivers a brief lecture on a circumstance, issue, or Bible incident during this exercise. This is provided to the students, who then discuss it for a while in class. The students seek out biblical answers.

Resolving Conflict: Pose opposing viewpoints on a subject related to your Sabbath School lesson. Lead the class on a search through the Bible to find a solution.

Support an Opinion or Belief: This is an effective method for introducing your class to the Bible. The instructor guides the class via intentional Bible study to advance a viewpoint or opinion.

Conciliate Various Points of View: In a Sabbath School lesson, two conflicting viewpoints on a certain topic could be presented. deliver the opposing viewpoints in a quick talk to engage the class in a Scripture search, and then instruct them to research the issue and be prepared to deliver their findings.

LESSON 2: BASIC TEACHING SKILLS

How the Sabbath lesson is produced: The title is chosen by the Sabbath School World Curriculum Committee through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The editor chooses an author who has been a long time studying the subject with the help of the Holy Spirit. Then the Sabbath School teacher is selected to teach the lesson. Then God speaks to the students through the topic, author, teacher, and classmates. The Bible and the Holy Spirit are the helpers in the process of learning.

Transformative teaching roadblocks. They are many methods used for teaching the lesson, but the challenge for every teacher is this, are the members of the call leave the class transformed? The change should start with the teacher. The key in the ministry is not mainly what the teacher accomplish is first what God accomplishes in him, this should be in the heart of every teacher before.

Searching the Scripture: To get the knowledge from the Scripture you need to deep dip with the teachable spirit and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In the Sabbath School small groups, the way to study the bible is the discussion. The teaching has a purpose to change the whole person from the head to the heart and all these to be effective should lead to a change of actions.

Involve all the members: Encourage them to speak by motivating and appreciating those who contribute anything. And know how to deal kindly with the people who monopolize the word or who go out of the order. Know how to answer and deal with the difficult questions.

Know the need of your students: The better way to help someone is to know him first. Find the better way to find his need by using the health conversation and anonymous questionnaire. Inventory them carefully with your team using many ways that can help you to discover who they are and their need.

Involve and train your student on how to reach out: Ephesians 4:11-According to verse 12: “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

The purpose of all our teaching is to teach our students how to minister to each other and the world. The call of the teacher of the Sabbath School small group is to train his students, then the responsibility of the students is to evangelize. The purpose of equipping is for good work (2 Tim 3:16-17).

The group needs to pray to God to guide them where He wants them to minister. The training and the coach are needed for anyone who wants to be involved in the ministry. Sometimes it is appropriate to challenge the members with the ministry assignment.

On the last Sabbath of the quarter, the group meets to plan for the project of the quarter and to evaluate the project of the last quarter. It is important also to consider the spontaneous ministry where the Holy Spirit leads.

LESSON 3: PRINCIPLES OF MINISTERING TO YOUTH

Grow Spiritually (Mk 1:35, Ps 119:15, John 25:5)

A youth leader needs to grow spiritually in other ways he is cheating the youth and himself. Don't say that you are smart enough to lead without being connected to Jesus. You need to know how to make a good relationship with Jesus. It is necessary to stay connected to Jesus (John 15:5). Your ministry will impact others if only you remain connected to Jesus. If you are connected to Jesus, you limit what God can do through you. Remaining with through the study of His word, through prayer, through witnessing.

Principle 2: Equip for Leadership (2 Chron. 1:10; 2 Sam 23:3,4)

How do you know that God wants you to lead? There are some ways that God can use to reveal to you that He wants you to lead. Some of them are passion, recognition of others, life experience, and actions. You need to realize first that God is calling you. But you should not stop there, you need to be equipped for leadership. Attending seminars, reading books, connecting with other leaders, and learning from them.

You are not all: You need to know how to complete each other, it is rarely to be a leader that can combine all to reach all. There is visionary leader, mentor leader, organizer leader, role model leader, advocate leader, servant leader, and charismatic leader. You need also to know how to recruit volunteers.

Characteristics of an effective leader: A leader should be available physically and emotionally; he should be someone who accepts all categories of people. Besides that, he should be authentic, open, and honest with his youth.

Leadership approaches: There is a hand on approach when it is necessary to give instructions, and there is a handoff approach when you need to step aside and let the

thing run without you. There is also a shared approach when you exercise shared leadership.

Developing young leaders: If you choose to use them you will keep them, but if you choose another way to leave them outside you will lose them. To keep them it is important to keep them relevant invests in the future of the church, and give them a reason to stick around.

Principle 3: Nature relationship (2Chron. 1:10; Heb. 13:20,21)

Because relationships are so important to youth, leaders need to become experts in this area. Good relationships not only make a successful youth group, but they are also the foundation for teaching your youth about a relationship with Jesus. Jesus knew the only way to communicate the Father's love was through a face-to-face encounter. It wasn't enough to be God. It wasn't enough to speak from the heavens. To gain our trust He would have to develop a personal relationship with us here on earth. He was longing to do it!

Principle 4: Plan with a purpose

Setting your direction

Knowing where you're headed and understanding how to get there are essential to keeping your youth group moving and on track. How do you develop such a plan? It takes some effort. But with time in prayer, a little brainstorming, and the Holy Spirit's guidance, you'll set a course for your group that will give meaning and purpose to everything you do.

Two essentials defined

Vision Statement: This is your group's dream. It states where you are headed and what you hope will be. Maybe your group desires to be "Growing in God's Word and Sharing in God's World." That's a vision. It's about having a destination in mind.

Plan with Purpose

Action Plan: A vision is great, but as of yet you have no idea how it will be accomplished or specifically what you will do to get there. You need an action plan. This consists of specific actions you will perform to fulfill your vision. For instance, to grow and share your youth group could: (1) include Bible study and prayer in all of our activities, (2) creatively share the Scriptures each month with the church, and (3) conduct Bible activities for neighborhood kids three times a year. Can you see how these actions help fulfill your group's vision? An action plan and vision work together.

Principle 5: Empower others (Mat 9:37; 10:1; Acts 6:2-4)

Delegate Tasks: The Jethro Principle

Remember what we said about Moses in Principle Two? How God made up for his deficiencies with the help of others? One of those was Jethro, a priest and the father-in-law of Moses (see Ex 18). Moses was leading God's people through the desert to the Promised Land. Like most large groups of people, the Israelites had their share of disagreements. And like most societies, a court system was put in place. There was just one problem. Two million people had only one judge—Moses.

Empower Others While visiting the Israelite camp, Jethro noticed his son-in-law was overloaded and on the verge of burnout. Moses was handling hundreds of minor

disputes. Jethro told him if he didn't delegate some responsibility, he would be no good to himself or his people. What was Jethro's advice? Find some honest, capable men who loved God. If they were empowered to handle the simple day-to-day problems, Moses could be free to focus on the "big picture." Moses followed Jethro's plan and set up a system of judges to share the load. It worked! Not only did the new structure help Moses, but many other Israelites also gained valuable leadership experience. Do you feel Moses' pain in your youth ministry? Are you overworked and ready to throw in the towel? Why not discard the idea that says, "If you want something done right, do it yourself?" Put young people in charge of church programs and community events. If you already do, that's great! This chapter will help you become even more effective. If you're still going it alone, now is the time to empower you

Principle 6: Promote your ministry

Have you ever put hours of planning into a program only to have very few people show up? Even though good things happened for those few, so many more might have been blessed. What can you do? You might want to take a look at your communication plan. Do you have one? Could it be more successful? Do you communicate enough, employ the right methods, and provide enough advance notice? The following ideas may help you as you work to improve communication. Good communication is simple. Get the word out as often as you can, in as many ways as you can, to as many people as you can. It may feel like you're announcing your programs a few too many times, but keep doing it. Stay on your message. You'll gain the most support from your church, the largest possible turnout from your youth, and the most help from volunteers.

Principle 7: Mobilize for Service Evangelism

Evangelism is simply doing whatever it takes to spread the good news of God's love. Paul says, "The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose...For we are God's fellow workers..." 1 CORINTHIANS 3:8-9. In other words, evangelism is a team effort! WHY IS SERVICE IMPORTANT? Of all the ways to share the gospel, service finds the most common ground with unbelievers. High schools have added service activities to their curricula. Colleges offer service trips during spring breaks. The value of service is something many people agree on.

Let's look at five Biblical principles regarding why serving others is at the heart of our Christian experience. 1. We are created for service 2. Service puts our faith into action. 3. Services establish our priorities 4. Service is an encounter with Jesus 5. Services let our light shine 6.

LESSON 4: DOCTRINE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CREED

Why do we need the SDA Faith?

Is it to know doctrines or Adventism? Is it to know Adventist faith? The benefits to know Adventist doctrine are both spiritual and intellectual.

Definition

A doctrine is a statement that one makes and holds to be true. The doctrine requires some sense of formulation, system, logic, and persuasiveness. Can we get along

without doctrine? Not really. Sometimes we figure doctrine is an arbitrary thing. And sometimes it seems to be arbitrarily taught. Doctrines can often be quite contradictory

Which doctrines shall we study and why?

Along with the beliefs that all Christians share, certain groups also hold beliefs that set them apart from other groups. Studying the beliefs that convey unique Adventist interpretations of the good news of salvation in Jesus is the focus of this session. The “Cosmic Conflict” will be the study's initial primary topic, followed by “From the Beginning to the End.”

Cosmic Conflict

That event indicates that God had made known how much He detested the rebellious ideas. Heaven as a whole witnessed God's justice being displayed in both the condemnation of Satan and the rescue of mankind. Every transgressor must be permanently excluded from the Creator's favor since, according to Lucifer, the law of God is unchangeable and its penalty cannot be abated. He had asserted that the sinful race was beyond salvation and that it was therefore his proper victim. However, the argument for humanity made by Christ's death was unassailable. Man was free to accept Christ's righteousness and to live a life of penitence and humiliation in response to the law's punishment falling upon Him who was equal to God.. But it was not merely to accomplish the redemption of man that Christ came to the earth to suffer and to die. He arrived in order to “magnify the law” and “make it honorable.” It was intended to show all the worlds of the cosmos that God's law is unchangeable, not just so that the people of this world may view the rule as it ought to be. If its claims had been rejected, the Son of God would not have been required to give His life in order to atone for its sin. Its immutability is demonstrated by Christ's death. Nothing less than this atonement plan could have demonstrated to the entire cosmos that justice and mercy are the cornerstones of God's law and governance, yet immeasurable love moved the Father and the Son to make the sacrifice necessary for sinners to be atoned for.

From Beginning to the End

1. All About Souls: Creation & Fall, Death, and Resurrection

What did it look like at first? In other words, it was respect for humanity, holy pride for God, and ecstasy, pleasure, and delight for everyone. Gen 1:26, 27; 2:7-9, 15–25. It was life in its most ideal forms, abundant and brilliant. As the Creator, Jesus was, in the words of John, “in Him was life, and the life was the light of humanity” (1:4). However, Satan's uprising altered everything for everyone who succumbed to his trickery and came under his sway. God gives people all the instruction they need to distinguish between Satan's deceptions and God's truth, despite the fact that he has been just as pushy with his lies on earth as he was in heaven. Jesus reveals the loving nature of a life-giving God in irreconcilable contrast with the devil's chaotic and lethal malice via both creation in Eden and the redemption accomplished by His incarnation and passion (Gen 2:17; 1 Co 15:22; Rev 5:1-9, 10-14; 12:10, 11).

2 Freedom to Rest: Sabbath Serenity

Despite the fact that the basic Sabbath is the seventh day of the week (Ex 20:9), it is clear that other sabbatical institutions like the sabbatical year and the year of jubilee

(25:8–10) are constructed upon this fundamental idea. Shabbat + Shabbaton denotes a deepening of the significance of the Sabbath. As a result, the frequent occurrence of the combination in relation to the seventh-day Sabbath emphasizes how specifically the Bible designates the seventh day of the week as the day of “restful ceasing.” These facts show the Sabbath to be a unique requirement, a heavenly treasure that God wants us to enjoy, rather than something that may be arranged by one person or one of many alternatives. In fact, Rice's text (p.410)

3 Doctrine of the Sanctuary

The author of Hebrews notes significant parallels between the heavenly antitypes and the Mosaic types. He points out, for instance, that the heavenly sanctuary is reflected in various ways on earth, including the requirement for both earthly and heavenly priests to be chosen [5:4-6] and the existence of both earthly and heavenly fathers [12:5-11; see also 5:7-9]. The carcasses of sacrificed animals were disposed of outside the camp [13:11, 12], once more in keeping with Christ's death outside the city. Paul draws attention to a number of discrepancies as well as these parallels. And if we take a moment to reflect on some of the following contrasts, we might be able to better appreciate the book's message concerning Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. The aforementioned comments make it clear how the SDA interprets the doctrine of the sanctuary. We believe that the Day of Atonement ritual (Lev 16), in the context of Daniel's explanations (8:14; 9:24-27), leads to Jesus initiating a specific period of judgment in the second compartment of the heavenly sanctuary on October 22, 1844. This belief is based on our study of the patterns and rites of the earthly sanctuary. Daniel was informed by the angel Gabriel that now was the time for the occurrence of the event, also known as the cleansing of the sanctuary. Some have challenged this interpretation by asserting that Hebrews (9:8, 12) states that the ascension of Jesus into heaven is analogous to the admittance of the earthly high priest into the most holy place of the sanctuary. They draw the conclusion that any such readings of Scripture are incorrect and that no unique period of heavenly sanctuary judgment commenced in heaven on October 22, 1844. The fact that the author prefers to discuss the sanctuary as a whole rather than a specific sector or sort of ceremony, however, indicates that in Hebrews he is dealing on a large scale with the reality of Christ's ministry. He doesn't make a distinction between the various sections of the heavenly or earthly sanctuary in his words in 9:8 and 12. These remarks adhere to a general pattern set out by the LXX, which calls attention to the entire structure by using the plural noun *hagia* [holies]. Paul is merely stating that Jesus has now entered the heavenly sanctuary, or the holies, in the capacity of an earthly man.

4 Bride and More: Metaphors of the Church

As the body is tied to its head, so is church theology to our salvation. Because Christ, our Lord and Savior, refers to Himself as our Head and the church as His body. It is true that His visible body on Earth must be distinguished from the overall number of devoted truth-seekers. This is so because only God has the ability to read human hearts, and as a result, only He can determine if someone is being serious or not. Having stated that, we can identify Christ's body on earth by its conformity to the enduring rules of divine rule established for earth in Eden, specifically by its

institutional collaboration with the head. This collaborative group will join Him in celebrating at the wedding banquet when Christ comes.

5 Taking total Care: Stewardship from Eden to Eden

Question: Who is a steward? Answer: In 1 Corinthians 4:1, 2 the term “steward” is translated from the Greek word oikonomos, which is formed by combining two smaller ones>>oikos, meaning “house,” and nomos, meaning “arrange.” The words just discussed suggest that the steward manages a house or business.Lk 12:42: A faithful, sensible steward runs his master’s house faithfully, sensibly

Lk 16:1-7: An undisciplined steward is a squanderer, schemer

Lk 16:8-13: Jesus wants us to be single-minded schemers about his business

Question: In the context of this Jesus Business, what are we in charge of?

1Co 6:19, 20: “our body” 3.5.3b Ephesians 4:1-7: Spiritual gifts

Everything in 1 Co 4:7

The brief comments in square brackets in the following passage may help us better understand what is meant by “all that we have”:

COL 328: Not all of the talents in the story [of Matthew 25:14–30] are the unique gifts of the Spirit. It encompasses all talents and endowments, whether they are acquired or natural (such as wit, sex appeal, ball skills, enormous biceps, dramatic abilities), or spiritual or natural. Everyone will work in X's service. When we accept His invitation to become His disciples, we give Him everything we are and have. He purifies and elevates these gifts before giving them back to us, where they can be used to bless others for His glory.

Question: What kind of stewardship is the steward exercising? A) 1 Co 10:31: “Do everything for the glory of God” B) Paul kept his body under rigorous control (1 Co 9:27). BUT C) Jn 11:18, 19 – Jesus was referred to as a party animal because of how freely He lived. WHAT THEN? D) Mt. 11:19, concluding verse: Wisdom is confirmed by her deeds E) Lawfulness must be evaluated against appropriateness (1 Co 6:12; 10:23–29). F) 1 Co 10:33; 9:19–22 – Our aim is to save as many people as we can.

6 A Gift of Guidance: SDA & The Spirit of Prophecy

What function does the Spirit of Prophecy serve? The following reply is taken from the third volume of Selected Messages [3SM]. A) “to guide people toward a greater light.”[p. 30, par. 4] B) “to abandon men and women without justification” [p. 31] C) “to draw attention to guiding principles”[p. 31] 53 D) “not as a new revelation, but a) that He may set before us the plain lessons of His Word, b) that errors may be corrected, c) that the right way may be pointed out, d) that every soul may be without excuse.” [p. 31] E) “to specify what is true and to correct fictitious errors.” [p. 32, par 2] F) as an addition to Bible study and prayer [p. 38, par

7 How All Will End: The Second Advent and Beyond

1. By means of angelic direction and explanation: angels' utterances are always cited [3SM 49, last sentence] 2. Through the portrayal of scenes [3SM 41, 42-these are persons you are visiting; cf 1SM27, “shown faces I had never seen”] 3. By making oneself present yet going unseen [3SM 43, last par., p. 47, par. 2: Cf. Eze 8:3, 9-11] 4. By means of symbolism [p. 42: you were portrayed as a general riding a horse] 5. The

material transcends the container like a bolt of lightning [sometimes reminding of the prior discovery, whether while giving presentations or getting ready to record]. The prophetic revelation is self-authenticating, and while the messenger is valued, he is not elevated to sainthood. (Author's emphasis on page 31, col. 2) 6. In contrast, God's ideal and man's replacement are shown [p. 45, "Contrasting Scenes"] 7. In the course of developing understanding [p. 46: "Will my brethren suggest that Sister White has been such a stupid learner that her judgment in this regard is no better than before she attended Christ's school, to be trained and disciplined for a unique work? Am I no less 55 knowledgeable about the responsibilities and dangers facing God's people than are those to whom these things have never been explained? Details of minimal relevance for 5T 686g—p. 12. "Integrity of the Testimonies" on pages 26, 27, and about reliance on sources.ce—p. 38 12. "Integrity of the Testimonies" on pages 26, 27, and about reliance on sources.] 8. Houses and lands, trades and business, autobiography without the aid of journals, letters to children, requesting Bro C. to come to Australia, etc. are examples of non-common material. [See 1SM 39; 1 Co 1:13–16 on memory; James 5:17 on humanity] 9. Irrespective of human influence [3SM 63, failed to read some letters and articles] 10. With regards to infallibility-1SM 22, 23, and 37 11. With regard to minor details, see page 38 12. "Integrity of the Testimonies" on pages 26, 27, and about reliance on sources.

Lesson 5: Inductive & Relational Bible Study & Teaching

Why study the Bible?

As the only source of freedom and life in this world, the primary goal of Bible study is to come to know Jesus existentially. It starts from the heart, from a seasoned, reliable relationship.

If you do not know the Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek of the Bible, it is always a good idea to compare multiple translations in order to better comprehend the texts in question.

The translator goes to great lengths to bridge any gaps that could exist between the ancient text and the reader of today.

It is crucial for the study to make use of more recent professional translations that are more faithful to the original languages' meanings.

Methods of Studying the Bible

Some characteristics of the Bible: The New and Old Testaments of the Bible are a collection of two inspired books. The Bible was also written by people. The Bible also atones. The Bible uses oral and Semitic language to express itself. Therefore, it's crucial to read the Bible while: Considering the literary genres of the passages under study; looking for mnemonic devices (parallelisms, chiasms, concentric parallelisms, oppositions, repetitions, etc.) that highlight each text's key message; and reminding oneself that it's crucial to use concrete language to express abstract ideas: language, symbolism, and hyperbole

The Deductive Method

This technique is applied when someone who is knowledgeable about a subject teaches it to someone who doesn't care. A centrifugal movement might be used to illustrate this method. It starts with the problem's solution and then provides

justifications for that answer. When presenting the findings of personal research to someone who did not conduct the same research, this strategy is particularly effective. It frequently appears in doctrinal analyses of biblical faith. However, it does not make it possible to examine Bible texts.

The Inductive Method

This type of inquiry tries to get within a subject. It can be visualized as a centripetal movement where one leaves the obvious, changes situations, and looks for various facets of the subject to find the core. This approach can be compared to the discovery of a fruit. You take a far view of it. You must cut it open to fully appreciate its characteristics, such as a fruit with a nut or seed, luscious or compact flesh, color, perfume, etc. In other words, you can't taste it until you consume it. It is an exciting approach since it starts with the unknowable, but there is a chance that no firm solution will be found.

“You are not to try to interpret the Scriptures as you search them,” the Bible says.

A. The inductive approach starts with a specific idea—a biblical text—and concludes with a general idea—the lesson it teaches, which may or may not be found in other texts. It does analysis first, then synthesis. Before adding commentary, reactions, and discussions of its comprehension, as well as before leading to a commitment to put what has been understood into reality, it demands a serious and respectful assessment of the text.

B. Discerning

C. The initial stage is now. It is essential and requires more effort and focus than one could generally anticipate. In this stage, you'll strive to explain what the text means and how it's said.

D. Apprehending

E. The more carefully, precisely, and comprehensively the observations are made in the first phase, the easier it will be to come to a strong and credible comprehension in the second phase, which focuses on the first phase's findings and asks what the text indicates.

F. Application

Reading the Bible won't progress beyond pure information if the third and final step isn't included. The application of what one learns from the book to one's own life, the life of the group as a whole, and the life of the church is essential. The following are the key inquiries: What does this text today teach us? What specifically does this text reveal to me?

Lesson 6: Current Youth Issues

Teenagers are more than just “little adults” (Elkind, 1984:18). They are complicated people who are struggling to adjust to the amazing changes that have occurred to their bodies, minds, and emotions. They are going through a period of change and development as they transform from being a newborn bundle of potential into a fully developed, useful member of the community and the church. Parents and the church are in a special position of duty to help in this process.

In spite of the world's compromising culture, youth ministry's goal is to encourage young people to develop a relationship with God and to get part in the Great Commission. Matt. 28:16–20

I. Health / Temperance

Scripture for Guidance

1. “Don't you know that the Holy Spirit, who lives inside of you and whom you received from God, is a temple in your body? You were purchased for a price; you are not truly your own. So, revere God with your body. (NIV) 1 Corinthians 6:19–20.

Therefore, whatever you do—eating, drinking, or otherwise—do it all for the glory of God. (NIV) 1 Corinthians 10:31

3. “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.” (NRSV) Proverbs 20:1

Smoking, Drinking, and Abuse

Adult society made smoking acceptable before youngsters thought it was cool. Youthful drug and alcohol abuse is a reflection of persistent media representations of careless use and is impacted by persistent marketing messages. Teen addicts not only emulate adult addicts but also grow up in addiction-related social circles. Teenage curiosity, suffering, risk-taking, rebellion, and peer pressure may also be at play. Teenagers and increasingly younger youngsters throughout the world have become more addicted to drugs than ever in recent years. Young people smoking is all too common. Street kids with their glue cans, “ravers” (those who go to parties where narcotics are sold) taking pills, and binge drinking are all too frequent. Smoking is typically followed by drinking, then by using both soft and hard substances. However, it is an important pattern for those who slip into drug use, and those who work with addicts understand how it works. Some people argue properly that this is not the pattern for everyone. Most addicts started with smoking, then progressed to binge drinking, marijuana use, and heavy drug use.

Why do you think young people in your community and church take drugs, drink alcohol, or smoke tobacco?

Some substances reward you physically or emotionally: caffeine in coffee, tea, or sodas, sugar, chocolate, Alcohol in beer, wine, and stronger alcoholic beverages; nicotine in cigarettes, cigars, and smokeless tobacco products; Depressants, stimulants (or uppers, speed, meth, bennies), marijuana, inhalants (household cleansers and petroleum products), and depressants Drugs (cocaine and crack made from coca leaves or heroin made from opium), LSD, acid, PCP, angel dust, ecstasy, or MDMA are examples of hallucinogens.

How can we help an addicted young person?

The power of Alcoholics Anonymous and related programs is that they allow alcoholics and addicts to hear others' stories; however, how can you talk to someone who does not want to be talked to? Your only option may be to listen and set clear boundaries; however, this takes time. The person who does not want to hear your advice may not even be aware that they do not want to hear it. Keep in mind that if you don't care more for a young person than they do, you might not succeed. Romans 2:1 and Matthew 7:1-2 both urge you to adopt a nonjudgmental, accepting attitude

and manner. You must also be knowledgeable about the problems and the location of this specific young person. Finally, you need to have reference resources and active listening abilities. Above all, you need to be there every day when he's ready and be ready to put in a lot of follow-through time.

II. Sexual Moral

Scripture for Guidance

1. "God made them male and female from the beginning of creation," stated Jesus. (NRSV) Mark 10:6

2." Get away from sexual misconduct. All other crimes a man commits are external to his body, but sexual transgression is an internal sin. (NIV) 1 Corinthians 6:18

Rape and sexual assault cause pain and suffering for the rest of one's life. These transgressions, in contrast to many others, leave behind profound, permanent emotional wounds. The world is consumed by numerous immoral sexual temptations. These temptations are among the devil's most potent weapons for compromising, discouraging, and destroying young people growing up in the twenty-first century. However, in general nowadays, the public acceptance of sexual behavior and moral standards of what is acceptable and wrong seem to be nearly anything goes, and Christians are expected to overlook sexual deviations because they are "personal and private matters." Regarding premarital sex, both adults and children appear to be unsure of what is appropriate and inappropriate.

What can your church do better to help a young person stay morally pure?

Concerning these issues affecting our young people, there is a global viewpoint. The family structure and societal norms around the world are changing quickly due to urbanization, globalization, and shifting economy. We could go on and on about how each nation is degrading its moral standards, but instead, let's look for solutions.

Ways to help young people stay morally pure.

More education is one option for assisting youth in overcoming many sorts of sexual temptation. This generation discusses topics that your generation has never considered since you haven't seen them in movies, read about them in books or magazines, or had friends who have tried them and then talked about them. Discussion by a knowledgeable individual in the appropriate venue with parental approval constitutes proper education.

III. Entertainment/ Media

Scripture for Guidance

And finally, brothers, consider what is excellent or praiseworthy: whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is beautiful, whatever is admirable. Philippians 4:18."For he is what he thinketh in his (heart's) mind," (KJV) Proverbs 23:7

Film, art, and literature

Film has the ability to engulf us in a story that is not our own and carry us away on an experience that goes beyond our own lives, much like literature and all other forms of art. We enter a different universe when the lights go off. And it is crucial to keep in mind "to not leave our minds at the box office" or in the home video tape player, in Steve Garber's words. We enter the realm of film because Good art – whether painting,

literature, music, or film – fires up the imagination with truth, goodness, and beauty. “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.” Philippians 4:8

The scripture warns us not to be startled when lies are presented as reality since we live in a fallen world with individuals who do not share our deepest principles. Keep in mind that our values are shaped by what we worship, and our perspectives on life and the universe are shaped by the things we cherish and live for. Whether the idol is Baal, consumerism, or Hollywood, that is what idolatry is all about. As Christians, idolatry diverts us from our long-term spiritual objectives. Matthew 6:33 says, “Seek first the kingdom of God.”

IV. Who has the most moral Influence Over Today’s Youth?

Scripture for Guidance

Therefore, if you pass judgment on someone else, you have no justification because whenever you do so, you are also passing judgment on yourself because you do the same things. (NIV) Romans 2:1

Train up a child in the way they should go, and when they are old they will not stray from it (Proverbs 22:6). (NIV) Proverbs 22:6

3. “Don't judge or you'll be judged too. Because you will be judged in the same way that you judge others, and you will receive what you give in return. (NIV) Matthew 7:1-2

Most parents and youth leaders struggle greatly with the hard task of guiding young people through their adolescent years. The adolescent condition is getting harder and harder every year in practically every way. Suicide among teenagers has grown so significantly over the past few years that it is now the second greatest cause of death for those between the ages of 14 and 20. Drug misuse, youth delinquency, teenage pregnancies, STDs, and depressive thoughts are all statically excessive.

Course 7: Denominational History

I. Introduction

Adventism did not develop overnight. It was a movement that emerged in America in the nineteenth century and was shaped by that specific era and society. It is crucial to comprehend the setting in which Adventism developed by taking a broad, comprehensive look at Nineteenth Century America.

It was a time of diversity and transformation in the social, political, and religious sectors of American society during the nineteenth century. The adjustments have both favorable and unfavorable effects. The benefits include: a) an increase in human knowledge; b) a better comprehension of the universe; c) new inventions; d) increased productivity and more commodities for people; e) faster travel; etc. The detrimental effects include: a) urbanization b) few people getting rich c) New focus: (from God to money)

II. Millerite Adventism through 1844.

As was mentioned above in *The Roots of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, the French Revolution rekindled hopes for the imminent return of Christ. The Advent Wakening would spread throughout the world, but William Miller, a Baptist believer, was the one who gave it its greatest impact in North America.

As sweet as honey at first, the Millerites' preaching soon turned "bitter in the belly" (Rev. 10:8–10). Thousands waited for the Savior to show up in the sky on October 22, 1844. But the day passed without anything occurring. Millerism was completely lost, discouraging, and unclear. The majority of Millerites abandoned their belief in the Second Advent. Millerism split off into a few different factions. Various leaders emerged, bringing "new light and "new interpretations" of the "truth" concerning the Second Coming of Christ. Out of this chaos and confusion would appear the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (But no one could have predicted that development in 1844).

The Millerite movement gave rise to three primary factions. The split was based on several accounts of what transpired on October 22, 1844. Spiritualizers, primarily fanatical organizations, were the first. The Himes' organization, Albany Adventists, came in second. The third group was the Sabbatarian Adventists, who would later become Seventh-day Adventists. The second coming was not what happened on October 22nd, according to Sabbatarian Adventists, even though the time was right. The smallest of the three groups was this one. Nevertheless, they regarded themselves as the movement's legitimate heir.

The Second Coming is one of the Sabbatarian Adventists' distinctive doctrines, which they adopted from Millerism. They persisted in holding fast to it and had faith that Christ would return soon. 2. The doctrine of sanctuary. 3. The Prophecy Gift. Also first hesitant to accept the call to be a Prophetess, Ellen Harmon (White) does so in the end. The seventh day. 5. Conditionally Eternal Life.

III. Steps Toward Organization (1848-1863).

The majority of Early Sabbatarians opposed all forms of ecclesiastical organization. However, a number of things contributed to the anti-organizational mindset among Sabbatarians. When Charles Fitch first urged people to "come out of Babylon," Sabbatarians would view any organized religion as Babylon. Second, the "Christian Connection" organization, which was an interchurch movement rather than a formalized denomination, also had an impact on them. James White and Joseph Bates, two of the Sabbatarians' three founders, were members of the Christian Connection movement.

2. The necessity for structure was caused by: a) By 1848, there was agreement on the fundamental distinguishing doctrines. b) A new mission: to communicate their unique

beliefs. b) The impact of the disappointment is lessened. d) The Sabbatarian community's expansion.

IV. Further Developments: Lifestyle and Institutions (1863-1888)

2. Factors driving the demand for structure include: a) By 1848, agreement on fundamentally diverse ideas. b) A new mission: to spread their unique viewpoints. b) A reduction in the effect of disappointment. d) Increase in the number of Sabbatarians.

V. Time of Crisis and Educational Reform (1888-1900)

By 1888, SDA had its own doctrines, structure, and distinctive way of life. They enjoyed sharing their special or peculiar doctrines (such as those relating to the law, the Sabbath, the Sanctuary, etc.). They did not consider it necessary to communicate universal “gospel” truths to other Christians. However, this bias resulted in a crisis in 1888. New theological interpretations were offered by two younger Seventh-day Adventist theologians: i. A. T. Jones offered a new reading of the 10 horns in Daniel 7. In Gal 3, E. J. Waggoner offered a fresh interpretation of the law. He held that the law mentioned in verse 25 (as previously understood by Seventh-day Adventists) was a moral rule rather than a ceremonial law. Theological differences were not what bothered E. G. White; rather, she objected to the conference's unchristian atmosphere and in particular, the attitudes of Smith, Butler, and their supporters. She nevertheless joined Jones and Waggoner in praising Jesus because she saw how important their Christ-centered message was to many people. However, for Ellen White, this was not a “new light,” but rather a “old light” that had been misplaced.

The 1890s saw expansion and reform in education. 38 Adventist education will grow and undergo change in the 1890s. 1. In 1891, in Harbor Springs, Michigan, a Bible teacher's institute marked a turning point in Adventist education. Speaking on the value of establishing a personal relationship with Christ and the centrality of Christ in our educational preparation was Ellen G. White.

VI. Reorganization and Internal Crisis (1901-1910)

A. The next reorganization's context. 1. The Seventh-day Adventist Church had outgrown its 1863 organizational structure by the start of the twentieth century. It was no longer useful for the larger denomination. On the first day, Ellen White delivered the keynote speech. If the work had not been so constrained by obstructions on both sides and here and there, it would have advanced in its majesty, according to her, who stated that “there must be a renovation, a reorganization; power and strength must be brought into the necessary committees” (GCB, 1901, 26).

VII. Becoming a Global Church (1910-present)

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was predominately a North American denomination up to the turn of the twentieth century. As a result of progressive transition, more than half of Seventh-day Adventists will reside outside of North America by the early 1920s. Today's Seventh-day Adventist Church is a truly international, multiethnic group of Christians.

Challenges: Issues Facing the Seventh-day Adventist Church Today (1955-present)

Present-day issues facing the Seventh-day Adventist Church are various. Here are a few of the topics that are currently being debated most in the church.

Organizational Problems

1. Reorganization: Is it necessary?
2. Interaction between other Christians and Seventh-day Adventists

B. Differences in doctrine

Issues with Culture and Lifestyle

Conclusion 3: 1. The Church has enormous potential despite its difficulties. a) The church has faced difficulties throughout its history (see the Seventh-day Adventist Church's history, which we looked at). b) Despite all of the challenges, we should make a conscious effort to keep our attention on the Seventh-day Adventist Church's potential rather than its issues. While it's crucial to not disregard the issues, it's also crucial to approach and analyze them with a constructive mindset. c) Adventists have traditionally been a faithful and hopeful group of people. Despite the various difficulties James White and the early Sabbatarian leaders faced, they did not dwell on them but rather saw them as chances for improvement. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a movement of faith and optimism in the impending return of Jesus Christ because of this. Consider the opportunities rather than the issues.

Lesson 8: Action Units

What would a perfect Sabbath School look like? It is a place where new and seasoned members alike can find the spiritual, emotional, and motivational support they require to deal with the challenges of daily life. Missing class members are first attended to there, and the class outreach leader then leads everyone out as they all share the pleasures and difficulties they had while sharing Jesus with others during the course of the previous week using their class outreach plan.

Last but not least, it is a place where prayer requests are updated, soul-winning training that is suited for the upcoming week's outreach requirements is conducted, and where full involvement in the lesson's discussion as it is applied to real-life situations and possibilities for witnessing that week takes place. This is a succinct explanation of the straightforward Sabbath School Action Unit plan that has been implemented to equip, organize, and mobilize the church to carry out its mission and to help both new and active long-standing members. It is a ground-breaking, all-

encompassing strategy that addresses all the goals and fundamental components of Sabbath School, and its wide-ranging perspective can cover all facets of Personal Ministries.

Results.

At least seven areas have seen enormous improvements as a result of this plan:

1. Numerous reports of immediate or quick gains in Bible study. It has frequently been said that 90 to 100 percent of students study every day. Members carefully study so they can share when they have the time and chance to do so and have the satisfaction of doing so.
2. A climate of love and compassion emerges, which is crucial for healthy church growth. The majority of churchgoers who resign do so not because of doctrinal disagreements but rather due to a loss of genuine connection and caring community.
3. It has been reported that attendance has increased by up to six times. Members of the enthusiastic action unit are successful in getting their friends to come to class.
4. A significant number of missing and ex-members of the church and Sabbath School have returned. Bringing them back is prioritized by several troops.
5. The level of membership involvement in all forms of outreach, especially Bible study work, is astounding. Of course, the main goal of a “action” unit is to accomplish this.
6. The aforementioned results in a lot of good baptisms. The people who educated the newly baptized do not leave them to fall backwards; rather, they immediately invite them to join their Sabbath School Action Units. Here, they are given follow-up assistance and witness training in order to develop into powerful soul victors.
7. Sabbath School offerings reportedly more than doubled in several places quickly, and tithes grew up to eight times in three years. Each unit naturally devotes more time to study and prayer when they are enthusiastic about the Lord and His work, in addition to providing more resources to promote the spread of the gospel.

How to get started—and continue.

The following 10 components are necessary for effective Sabbath School Action

Units:

1. Groups of six to eight individuals.
2. Student ambassadors in each class.
3. A plan for student outreach in each subject.
4. Classes last an hour.
5. Five minutes to attend to absent students.
6. A twenty minute outreach period.
7. 35 minutes for discussion and application of the material.

8. Weekly meetings with the leader.
9. Monthly or weekly company sharing.
10. A monthly assessment of the home fellowship.

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VITA

Name: Abidan Ruhongeka

Family: Married to Junis Mukamurangwa with 4 children

Background: I was born in Western Province in Karongi District, Mubuga Sector.

Academic History

2017- to Date: Adventist University of Africa (AUA), Doctor of Ministry Candidate

2008-2010: Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS), Master of Ministry

1996-1999: Adventist University of Central Africa (AUCA), Bachelor of Arts in Theology

1989-1996: Gitwe Adventist College, "0" level

Ordination

2004 Ordained in West Rwanda Field with Ministerial Credential

Work experience

2021- Date: Rwanda Union Mission - Sabbath School and Personal Ministry Director & Adventist Possibility Ministry Coordinator

2012-2021: South Rwanda Field- President

2011-2012: Rwanda Union Mission- Youth and Chaplaincy Director

2005-2008: Rwanda Union Mission - Youth and Chaplaincy Director

2001-2005: West Rwanda Field- Youth, Education, Chaplaincy, and, Communication Director

2003-2004: West Rwanda Field- District Pastor

1999-2000: West Rwanda Field - District Pastor