

INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP UNIVERSITY

HOUSE GROUPS AS A MEANS FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY IN THE
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY URBAN CHURCH: A CASE STUDY OF NAIROBI
MEGA CHURCHES

A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER
OF DIVINITY IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND FORMATION

BY

PETER MUIRURI NJOROGE

NAIROBI, KENYA

JUNE 2012

DECLARATION

This proposal is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other institution or university.

Sign:

Date:

	Supervisors	Sign	Date
1.	Dr.....
2.	Mr.

Copyright © 2012 by Peter Muiruri Njoroge

All Rights Reserved

To my mum Loise Wambui Njoroge, my sister Lydiah Wairimu and my brother Jimmy Njoroge and his wife and son Beth Wairimu and Kiama. Thank you for your consistent support. This is my prayer for you
οὐ γὰρ ἄδικος ὁ θεὸς ἐπιλαθέσθαι τοῦ ἔργου ὑμῶν καὶ τῆς ἀγάπης ἧς ἐνεδείξασθε εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, διακονήσαντες τοῖς ἁγίοις καὶ διακονοῦντες. Heb.6:10

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	viii
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....	ix
ABSTRACT.....	xi
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION	1
Background to the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Purpose of the Study	5
Objectives of the Study	6
Research Questions	6
Hypotheses	7
Significance of the Study	7
Delimitations and Limitations	7
Assumptions of the Study	8
Conceptual Framework	9
Operational Definitions of Terms	11
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW	14
Introduction	14
The Theoretical Framework	14
House Groups in the Twenty-First Century	15
Diversity of House Groups in Different Continents.....	16
The Meta Churches	20
Factors that Influence People to Join a House Group	23
Dynamics of Growth in the House Group Setting	27
The Outbreak of Consumerism in the Twenty-First Century Urban Centres.....	29

Transformational Leadership in the House Group	36
Summary of Literature Review	40
CHAPTER 3 EXEGESIS OF ACTS 2:42-47	42
Overview/Synthetic study	42
Key Words	42
Key Verses	42
Argument of the Book of Acts	44
Contextual Analysis	47
The Church's Life: The Effect of Pentecost (2:42-47)	49
Summary of the Life of the New Community	52
Conclusion	57
CHAPTER 4. METHODOLOGY	59
Introduction	59
Research Design and Variables	59
Location of the Study	61
Target Population	61
Sampling Technique	61
The Research Instruments	62
Pilot Study	62
Validity	63
Reliability	63
Data Collection	63
Data Analysis	65
CHAPTER 5. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	67
Introduction	67
Profile of the Respondents	67

Factors that Influenced the People to Join a House Group	68
Factors that Informed People’s Decision to Join a House Group	69
How Many People Joined the House Group	70
How many people joined house groups in the last 3 months?	71
How Many People are in the House Group	72
How Far People Live from their House Group	73
How Long People have been in a House Group	74
Age Group of the People in the House Group	75
The Involvement of the House Groups in Neighbourhood Social Justice.....	76
The Favourite House Group Activity.....	77
Factors that Encouraged People to Join a House Group	78
Interviews and Observations Analysis	79
Summary of Research Findings and Analysis.....	84
CHAPTER 6. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	85
Summary	85
Integration of Research Findings with Literature Review	87
Conclusion.....	89
Recommendations	90
Profile of the Mega Churches.....	91
Areas of Further Study	92
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	94
APPENDIX 1. HOUSE GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE OF PARKLANDS BAPTIST CHURCH	98
APPENDIX 2. FREQUENCY TABLES FOR ANALYSIS	102

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Dr. Mcknight and Bill Mumley for their dedication in refining this thesis. Thank you for your ideas and your consistent encouragement. Indeed wise men store up knowledge... Prov.10:14

חֲכָמִים יִצְפְּנוּ דַעַת וּפְיֵי אֱוִיל מִחֲתָה קִרְבָּה:

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

SPSS- Statistical Package for Social Sciences

NPC- Nairobi Pentecostal Church

HGF- Home Group Fellowships

NBS- Neighbourhood Bible Study

E-GROUPS- Ekklesia Groups

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework	9
Figure 2. Factors that influenced the people at Parklands Baptist Church to join a house group.....	69
Figure 3. Factors that informed people’s decision to join a house group	70
Figure 4. How many people joined the house group	71
Figure 5. How many people joined house groups in the last 3 months	72
Figure 6. How many people are in the house group	73
Figure 7. How far people live from their house group	74
Figure 8. How long people have been in a house group.....	75
Figure 9. Age groups of the people in the house groups	76
Figure 10. The involvement of the house groups in neighbourhood social justice	77
Figure 11. The favourite house group activity.....	78
Table 1. Factors that Encouraged People to Join A House Group.....	79

ABSTRACT

Urban mega churches in Nairobi are facing common phenomena whereby the more they increase in numbers, the more they decrease in their spiritual growth. The Church has lost its power and its voice to address moral, political, economic, physical, social, leadership and even spiritual issues facing the society today.

As the influence of the church continues to weaken, people are searching for safe places where they can share their struggles, ask questions and be accepted. They seem to be looking for answers in all the wrong places, like pubs, clubs, media, and disco theatres. For this reason the need of house groups becomes vital in their lives.

House groups, therefore, provide an opportunity for people to become more like Christ and to experience care, acceptance, and true community. The research also examines the first century church which met in homes, with specific reference to Acts 2:42-47 as the guideline of the activities of the house church.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This research is about house groups as a strategy for numerical church growth and individuals' holistic development. In this chapter the researcher explores the background of the house group concept, problem statement, intention of the study and the study significance to the mega churches in the urban centres.

Background to the Study

Reising asserts that there are two types of numerical growth, namely: (1) lateral growth by changing churches, changing doctrinal positions or church goers relocating to new areas; and (2) vertical growth by evangelization and spiritual conversion. In Acts, thousands were added to the church on a daily basis. Acts 2:41 mentions an increase of 3000; Acts 4:4, 5000; Acts 6:7, numbers multiplied; Acts 7:17, numbers grew and multiplied; Acts 12:24, the Word grew and multiplied. Numerical growth is inevitable if the twenty-first century church is to follow the first century model. Therefore, there are two ways non-believers join the actual church: (1) by coming on their own, or (2) by coming with a church goer. Even the growing usage of small group as a way of assimilating people into the congregation has the same implications that the church does.¹

Malphurs notes that churches that are not growing numerically by reaching the lost people are not growing spiritually either. Also, some churches grow numerically

¹ Richard L. Reising, *Church Marketing 101: Preparing Your Church for Greater Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006), 101.

but not spiritually.² However, this researcher would also add that some churches in the modern urban centres are facing common phenomena whereby the more they increase in numbers, the more they decrease in their spiritual growth. The Church has lost its power and its voice to address moral, political, economic, physical, social, leadership and even spiritual issues facing the society today. As the influence of the Church continues to weaken, people are searching for safe places where they can share their struggles, ask questions and be accepted. They seem to be looking for answers in all the wrong places, like pubs, clubs, media, and disco theatres. For this reason the need of house groups becomes vital in their lives. House groups provide an opportunity for people to become more like Christ and to experience care, acceptance, and true community. One of the principal functions of a house group is discipleship.³

House groups and the relationships formed within them are a powerful channel for spiritual transformation. Donahue notes that spiritual growth is a process that requires time and a willing spirit. Spiritual growth results from the work of the Holy Spirit, obedience to scripture, intimacy with Christ and accountable relationships in small communities. Thus, house group leaders create an environment that facilitates and encourages such growth.⁴ Often the problems people face cannot be adequately addressed from the podium, but can in a small group such as a house group. Therefore, to address this phenomena this researcher will engage other writers from across the globe in an attempt to explore the dynamics of the house group

² Aubrey Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting: A Guide for Starting Any Kind of Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2011), 21.

³ Bo Boshers and Kim Anderson, *Student Ministry for the 21st Century: Transforming Your Youth Group into a Vital Student Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 173.

⁴ Bill Donahue, *Leading Life-Changing Small Groups* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2002), part 6.

phenomenon and its relationship with numerical growth and holistic human development. Pertinent literature suggests that there is indeed a relationship between house groups and numerical growth and holistic growth. This research investigates the relationship among house groups, numerical growth and holistic growth in Nairobi mega churches.

Statement of the Problem

Currently, the practice in mega churches in Nairobi is to hold a communal church service every Sunday or Saturday where there is prayer, pulpit sermon, breaking of bread and fellowship. Furthermore, some churches hold daily lunch hour prayer meetings and evening public service. This research develops a model of house group from the first century church that is relevant in the urban churches today to bring the desired spiritual and holistic maturity.

It is extremely difficult to hold the congregation accountable in their spiritual life on a normal Sunday or Saturday two-hour worship service. Of course, because of time limitations, the preaching is monologue and the only verbal response from the congregation is amen and hallelujah. Moreover, some churches have a congregation of over a thousand; hence, it is nearly impossible for the pastoral team to keep an account of the members' names, leave alone their spiritual lives.

In addition, in this competitive world, especially in the urban setting, people are very individualistic and reserved. The individualistic and reserved culture in the urban setting is as a result of western cultural influence through the media and advances in information technology which minimize face-to-face contact (the most common being Facebook and Twitter). This fact is contrary to what Marah had wished for when he stated that the twenty-first century should be the defining moment for Africa and African people; it should be the period in which Africans had better

synthesize the various global cultures in Africa and proceed to Africanize the globe as Europe and Japan have Europeanized and Japanized the globe.⁵ However, although the social networking tools (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) have enhanced communication and networking, they have created 'plastic' and unreal relationships with God and people which have further isolated people. Stasinowsky reflects on Facebook and how it is a great way to connect people from the past and present and his relationship with Jesus. Stasinowsky asks, does our interaction on Facebook create a mindset of how people relate as we really are in control of what people read, see and get to know about us, because it is public? He asks do we do this with the Lord? Just as texting is changing how a generation communicates and writes, what is Facebook doing or influencing? Stasinowsky reflects that he wants more in his relationship with Jesus, he does not want to be watching him from a distance moving in the lives of others or the perceptions of others as they post in their status.⁶

Therefore, the above reflections of Stasinowsky about the impact of social networks in building plastic and unreal relationships emphasize the importance of house groups in that they are helpful in facilitating community, and accountability among the congregation. This research will argue that house groups encourage spiritual, emotional, mental, social and financial growth as the members interact with each other in applying God's word in their lives. Another dynamic of individuals' development that this study hopes to establish concerns leadership development in the house group within the Nairobi mega churches.

⁵ John Karefah Marah, *African People in the Global Village: An Introduction to Pan African Studies* (Lanham, Maryland: United Press of America Publishers, 1998), 139.

⁶ Cheryl Stasinowsky, *Deeper Relevance: A Complete One Year Daily Devotional* (Syracuse, NY: Published by 5 Fold Media, 2010), 280.

The early church began and grew from a house group perspective where they gathered in homes and searched the scriptures together and broke the bread. In addition to daily meetings in the temple, in the biblical context of Acts 2:42-45, the church sold their possessions, goods and gave to anyone who was needy. Therefore, this research hopes to learn from the first century model of house groups and use its concepts to influence the twenty first century mega urban churches in Nairobi.

To the best of this researcher's knowledge, the study may have been done in other parts of the world or other parts of the country and not in the locality the researcher is targeting, which is Nairobi urban mega churches, namely: Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road, Nairobi Pentecostal Church (NPC) Valley Road, Mavuno Chapel, Nairobi Baptist Church and Parklands Baptist Church.

Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to investigate why members of the church join a house group, analyse the biblical first century model of house groups based on Acts 2:42 and relate it to the twenty-first century dynamics of house groups. Moreover, this study seeks to analyze the dynamics of house groups in five mega urban churches in Nairobi specifically their numerical growth and holistic (physical, spiritual, social/emotional and mental development) of house group members development. Leadership development in the house group is another dimension that will be investigated as a variable captured in the holistic development. To investigate this phenomena the researcher will explore the first century church, specifically in the book of Acts and Romans, to determine the place of house groups as a tool for spiritual growth and maturity in the urban church. Moreover, the exploration will continue to Nairobi urban mega churches to investigate (1) why church members in Nairobi desire to be part of a house group, (2) how house groups were conducted in the first century

church, and (3) if there is a similarity between the first century Christian and the twenty-first century Christian in their decision to join a house group.

Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to:

1. Find out what motivates Nairobi church members to join a house group.
2. Examine if house groups reflect a biblical model for church life based on the first century church life.
3. Investigate the similarities of the motivation to join a house group between the first century Christians and the twenty-first century Christians.
4. Illustrate the various dimensions of growth in the house groups (physical, social, spiritual, financial and mental development).
5. Highlight the significance of leadership development in the house groups as a strategy for numerical growth in the house groups.

Research Questions

1. What motivates the Nairobi congregation in urban mega churches to join a house group?
2. How does the house group model in the twenty first century reflects the first century church life?
3. Are the factors that motivated the early believers to join a house group similar to today's Nairobi urban believers?
4. How are people growing in the house groups in regards to the various dimensions of growth (Physical, social, spiritual, and mental development)?
5. What is the role of leadership development in the house group and the numerical growth of the house groups?

6. Can numerical growth in the house group be the result of transformational leadership?

Hypotheses

This study shall be guided by the following null hypotheses;

H01: There is no significant relationship between what motivates people to join a house group and them joining house groups.

H02: There is no significant relationship between leadership development in the house group and numerical growth in the house groups.

Significance of the Study

The researcher intends to help the churches in urban areas to appreciate the relevance of the house group concept in their churches in building strong and mature Christians who are Christ-like and are accountable to each other. This research also develops a leadership framework that will help churches that are experiencing a shortage in transformational leadership. The house group is the ideal opportunity for adults to experience holistic growth especially as they face life's challenges and transitions. The house group is a forum where real issues that face members on a daily basis can be discussed and biblical answers given.

This research will also inform the Nairobi urban churches to realise the impact of an effective house group ministry in their church, hence enriching their pastoral care ministry in developing Christ-like congregation and increase personal and collective accountability in the church.

Delimitations and Limitations

This study will confine itself to interviewing, observation and conducting a survey questionnaire on the success of house groups in Nairobi mega churches.

Moreover, the researcher will also consult the historical data to inform this research. This research will limit itself to what motivates people to join a house group and the actual biblical model of house groups based on Acts 2:42 in relation to holistic development of house group members. However, a special emphasis will be given to leadership development and its significance to numerical growth of the house groups. Moreover, transformational leadership will be treated as a casual influence on house groups as part of the holistic development process.

This research will be conducted in five mega churches in Nairobi from different evangelical quarters thus representing the mega churches in Nairobi. Moreover, each of the churches described as a mega church has a congregation of more than two thousand people. The churches include Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road, Nairobi Pentecostal Church (NPC) Valley Road, Mavuno Chapel, Nairobi Baptist Church and Parklands Baptist Church.

Assumptions of the Study

The first assumption is that respondents will give honest answers when responding to the questionnaire. Secondly, mega churches will offer a representative sample applicable to most churches. Thirdly, the first century biblical teaching remains relevant today. Fourthly, even though most of the literature in this research comes from America, there is an assumption that it will be applicable in urban context of Nairobi churches. Finally, the researcher assumes that the Holy Spirit is at work among the churches in which research will be conducted.

Conceptual Framework

1

FIGURE 1: conceptual framework on the relationship between house groups and church numerical growth and holistic development of individuals.

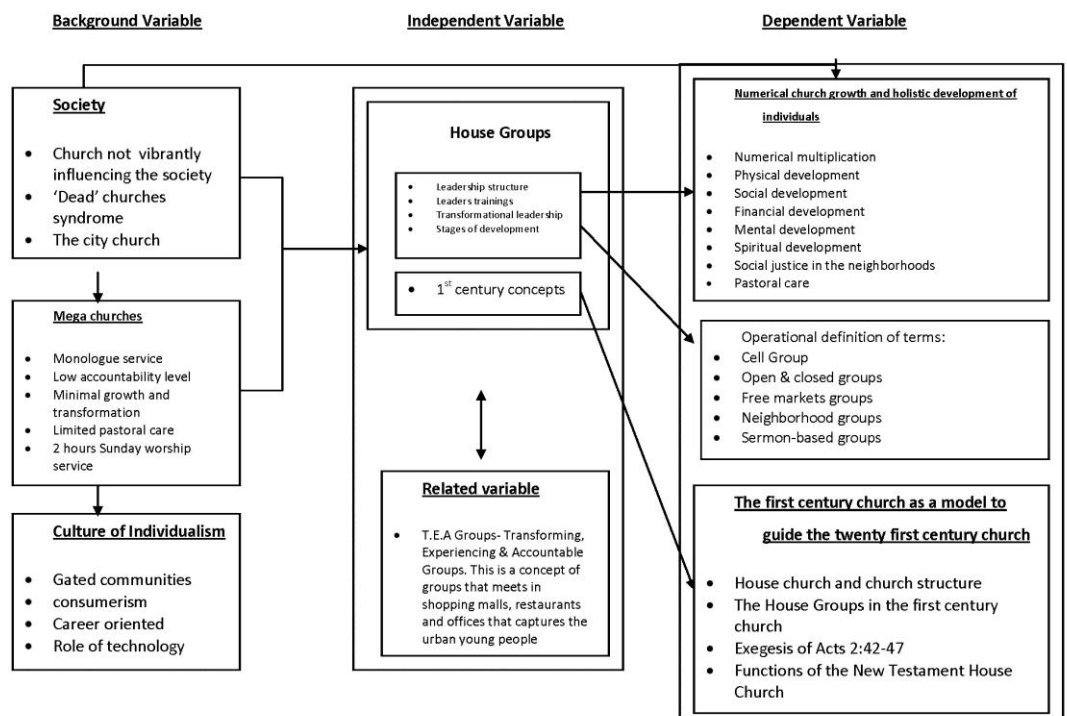


Figure . Conceptual Framework

The researcher will explore transformational leadership theory which provides a set of assumptions about how transformational leadership affects follower moral identity which can be further be explained by using Bandura's social cognitive theory.⁷ These authors suggest that transformational leaders influence followers' moral, emotional, affective, and cognitive development through modelling of positive virtues and values (e.g. "leading by example"), psychological states, behaviours, and self-development. This aspect of transformational leadership is key for leader's in

⁷ Weichun Zhu, et al., "The Effect of Leadership on Follower Moral Identity: Does Transformational/Transactional Style Make a Difference?," *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*: Vol. 18 no. 2 (May 2011): 150-163.

house groups to understand that they facilitate holistic follower's development through modelling. Moreover, the numerical growth is just a consequence of the overflow of the transformational leadership.⁸

In addition, according to Bandura's social cognitive theory, a leader's symbolic modelling could influence followers' moral judgements by portraying what is acceptable and suitable moral behaviour in the church and the society at large. Bandura further proposed familial and social transmission models for morality, which means that moral values, standards, and behavioural patterns are, transmitted via family and social networks in this case a house group setting, among which transformational leadership could be an important source of social, spiritual, and mental influence. In this regard, followers in house groups pay attention to and emulate the attitudes, emotions, values, and behaviours of leaders because they consider these leaders exemplary role models.⁹

Furthermore, transformational leadership influences the followers by selecting information that has moral relevance to each follower from a range of sources available in given situations. In this case, house group leaders apply wisdom in discerning the house group material to be used based on the maturity level and the needs of the followers. These moral socialization procedures enable followers to provide supporting justification for weighing various options when making decisions and facilitate the establishment or strengthening of the follower's holistic identity.¹⁰ As a result, followers learn how to think about their own roles, how to make their own

⁸ Weichun Zhu, et al., "The Effect of Leadership on Follower Moral Identity: Does Transformational/Transactional Style Make a Difference?," *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*: Vol. 18 no. 2 (May 2011): 150-163.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Weichun Zhu et al. 150-163.

decisions, and how to behave in accordance with their holistic identities by observing leaders' holistic lives especially in communicating, modelling, and engaging in moral behaviours. In this regard, the researcher proposes that transformational leadership is crucial for holistic development for followers in the house group which will in turn result to numerical church growth. The researcher will explore this concept further in an attempt to test this conceptual framework.

Operational Definitions of Terms

This research will define various terms of small groups that in turn define the model used in the house group ministry. The Cell Group model views small groups as the basic unit of a church congregation, much like an organic cell is the basic unit of a human body. Thus, small groups are not treated as "one program among many," but are necessary. Four key items make up the DNA of a cell group: worship, edification, relational evangelism, and discipleship. In addition, if operating properly, each cell group will grow and multiply on its own, transferring this DNA from group to group.¹¹

Open small groups have space available for visitors and new members. Most of these groups generally remain "open" all the time, meaning there is no limit to the amount of new people who can join. However, closed small groups limit the number of participants in order to focus on building trust, intimacy, and accountability between group members. Once a group starts, new members and visitors are generally discouraged from attending meetings.¹²

¹¹ [Http://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2006/nomoremrnicigroup.html](http://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2006/nomoremrnicigroup.html).accessed by this author on 24th April 2009 at 5.05pm.

¹² [Http://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2006/nomoremrnicigroup.html](http://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2006/nomoremrnicigroup.html).accessed by this author on 24th April 2009 at 5.05pm.

Free-market groups are small groups formed around specific interests, topics, or affinities. The goal is to transform an interest group into a spiritual community through relationships and spiritual practices. The assumption is that, like businesses in a free-market economy, healthy groups will flourish while unhealthy groups will die. As a result, churches should encourage a diversity of small groups and allow things to thrive or wither naturally.¹³

The neighbourhood small group model is centred on the belief that community happens more deeply and naturally when people "do life together" on a regular basis. Thus, small groups are assembled based on geography, with people of different ages and social affinities form groups within their neighbourhoods.¹⁴

McBride defines a small group as "a group within the church that is voluntary, intentional gathering of three to twelve people regularly meeting together with the shared goal of mutual Christian edification and fellowship."¹⁵ The church as a distinction is important because small groups are used in many other contexts: education, business, government, and so on. This research focuses on the church. It is also voluntary, because people should not be forced to join, they must choose to participate. The gathering should be intentional, planned, premeditated and deliberate.¹⁶

McBride states that the purpose of the group should not be a secret for the leader alone; members who participate in groups that fit within the ideal definition should understand, accept, and actually promote common goals. Furthermore, there

¹³ <http://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2006/nomoremrnicegroup.html>. accessed by this author on 24th April 2009 at 5.05pm.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Neal F. McBride, *How to lead Small Groups* (Singapore: Navigators Press, 1992), 26.

¹⁶ McBride., 26.

can be no idle observation, only active participation. Members must view their mutual involvement as a blend of both giving to and receiving from the group. Regardless of the group's specific activities for the purposes of Christian edification-evangelism, bible study, prayer, sharing, worship should be part of the group. Everything should be directed to building people, to know, love and serve Christ.¹⁷

Finally, the sermon-based groups model links a church's small-groups ministry with the weekly sermon and worship service. Group members study the same topic or passage of Scripture that was covered in the sermon, often exploring deeper into areas not covered in detail by the preacher. However, for the purposes of this study, house group refers to any group of believers and non believers regardless of their age, gender and social class who meet once a week in their neighbourhood to study and apply God's Word on a weekly basis. Moreover, other activities such as quarterly fun days and missions are part of their activities; the preferred minimum number of a house group is four whereas their maximum limit is twelve.¹⁸

¹⁷ Neal F. McBride, *How to lead Small Groups* (Singapore: Navigators Press, 1992), 26.

¹⁸ <http://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2006/nomoremnicegroup.html>.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter examines previous literature related to house groups. The researcher will explore the house group ministry in the twenty first century urban mega church. The research will narrow down to individual's holistic development (mental, spiritual, social/emotional and physical) in the house groups, house groups as a key factor to numerical growth in the church and transformational leadership in the house group.

The Theoretical Framework

It is assumed that the transformational leaders influence followers' moral, affective, and cognitive development through modelling of positive virtues and values (e.g., "leading by example"). This aspect of transformational leadership is key for leaders in house groups to understand that they facilitate holistic follower's development through modelling. Moreover, numerical growth will be a result of the application of transformational leadership principles in the house group namely: idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation.¹

¹Weichun Zhu et al. 150-163.

House Groups in the Twenty-First Century

The small group ministry in the twenty- first century is very dynamic. The small group's ministry comprises of the home cells, house groups, the cell groups and the neighbourhoods groups. However, for the purposes of this study the research will mainly focus on house groups which meet in the neighbourhoods.

Having elaborated the dynamics of the small group ministry, the researcher concurs that three trends will affect the future of the small group movement: the desire for community, demographic trends, and how the church responds to a changing culture. With spirituality a hot commodity and congruence a challenging dream in today's world, people have a hunger to process how their inner spirituality can be expressed in their outer lifestyles. Small groups will provide that context for spiritual growth and ministry opportunity for service to the church and the community at large.²

Today's young people will significantly shape groups in the future. They will challenge house groups with their quest for understanding truth in a world of ambiguity. Their questions are ultimately religious ones to which the Christian community must respond. The attractive multiplication of mega churches offering full-service ministries within a large congregational complex make it even more necessary for people to connect in house groups within their neighbourhoods.³

The organization of the small groups that meets in the neighbourhoods depends on the type of the Christian house group church. A study suggests three general types of house church groups: 1) autonomous house churches, 2) federated

² Julie Gorman, "Small Groups in the Local Church," in *Introducing Christian Education: Foundations for the Twenty first Century*, ed. Michael J. Anthony (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 183.

³ Ibid.

house congregations, and 3) satellite home fellowships. Autonomous house churches are independent groups not structurally tied to other congregations. Federated house congregations are described as “semi-independent church groups which function separately, with their own pastors...and have their own meetings and activities yet relate in a definitive way to one or more similar groups.” Satellite home fellowships are structurally tied to a central church body though they may differ widely in content and style. For clarity purposes in this study, the researcher narrows down to satellite home fellowship structure but addresses the individual groups as house groups.⁴

Diversity of House Groups in Different Continents

Paul Yonggi Cho seems to be the first to reintroduce a successful small group concept to the church in the contemporary era 1964. He refers to them as the home cell groups. Paul Cho’s strategy was to assign people according to geographic regions in small groups and the groups were largely evangelistic in nature- that is, serving others. The thrust of the groups were growing the groups and growing the large Sunday morning worship gathering.⁵

Paul Yonggi Cho led Yoido Full Gospel Church to an average weekly attendance of more than 100,000 people, which had not been passed, or even approached, in the two millennia of the Christian era. Yet in all North America, only a half dozen prominent examples of a Cho-type church exist. The North American failure to successfully adopt Cho’s model or to experience his successes usually

⁴ C. Kirk Hadaway, Francis M. DuBose, and Stuart A. Wright, *Home Cell Groups and House Churches* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 81.

⁵ Joleen A. Willis, “The Integrated Small Group: Bible Study, Community and Mission” (DMin dissertation, Asbury Theological Seminary, 2008), 19.

receives one of three explanations:⁶ (1) Korean culture allows for a stronger centralized leader than North American culture does; therefore, it can't be done in North America; (2) Korean people, as survivors of a recent war, are more susceptible to the gospel and to spiritual leadership than are North Americans; (3) Koreans pray more fervently than affluent North American believers.

George concluded that only the third proposition is true. In relation to the three propositions, this researcher is of the view that, if the African church (specifically Nairobi mega churches) adopts Dr. Cho's model the African church would succeed since the culture is similar to that of the Korean people especially in regards to having a stronger centralized leader. Moreover, poverty in Africa has necessitated people to be more susceptible to the gospel and to spiritual leadership. Thus, the African Christian prays more fervently because of the latter reality.⁷

In reference to other churches in different parts of the world, this research explores the cultural differences which impact the dynamics of house groups in a particular church in Chicago, Caracas, Accra and Bombay. Neumann notes that effective house group ministry must remain true to biblical principles while being appropriate for specific cultures.⁸ House groups cannot be transplanted to different cultures without considering the effect of culture on ministry. A church in Chicago was unique in this study since it uses a one-on one discipleship program within the home group context. Chicago, a North American city, has a highly individualistic profile in the postmodern era. While cultural extremes are often modified by home

⁶ Carl F. George, *Preparing your Church for the Future* (Tarrytown, NY: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1991), 218.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Mike Neumann, *Home Groups for Urban Culture: Biblical Small Group Ministry on Five Continents* (Pasadena, CA: William Cary Library, 1999), 163.

groups, cultural tendencies still exist. The Chicago church tends toward the individualistic end of the continuum. The church in Caracas, at the other extreme, has a strong sense of cultural collectivism. Although both contexts are urban where people are busy with full schedules, in Caracas people are more willing to meet in groups. Prayer groups, leadership development, and special leaders groups, among others, all indicate a higher sense of the collective nature of the culture, and their house group ministry reflects that difference.⁹

Power is another phenomenon in culture that reflects the dynamics of urban house groups in different context. House group members in Accra recognize the leader's authority and follow it. Some groups have two leaders- one recognized for age and wisdom, and the other for education and small group leadership skills.¹⁰ Yukl asserts that power usually involve distinctions among different types of power, namely reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, expert power and referent power. Also, power can be widely understood as position power and personal power.¹¹

Additionally, another source of power is control over information. This type of power involves both access to vital information and control over its distribution to others. A leader who controls the flow of vital information about outside events has an opportunity to interpret these events for subordinates and influence their perception and attitudes.¹²

⁹ Neumann, 163.

¹⁰ Ibid., 164.

¹¹ Gary A. Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002), 144.

¹² Ibid., 152.

Therefore, in the house group context the leader in a sense has access to vital biblical information that the members require for daily living.

Transformational leadership mediates the effect of leader's power on follower's duty-orientation. The various theories of outstanding leadership address a wide variety of intervening and dependent variables including followers' emotional and motive arousal; and self-esteem; identification with the leader. With respect to their followers, "outstanding" leaders are expected to have at least three effects.

First, as a result of self-engagement, awareness of shared end values and motives aroused induced by the leaders, followers of outstanding leaders become committed to the vision of the leader. Second, sense of urgency and exhilaration is experienced by followers. Third, work becomes more meaningful, and followers experience satisfaction and a sense of self worth when goals are accomplished. House proposed that such leaders motivate their followers to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the team.¹³

As a consequence of their collective orientation, followers become willing to engage in self-sacrificing behaviour in the interest of the vision and the collective. Therefore, the three classes of effects of outstanding leaders described above are the immediate effects on the followers. These intervening variables mediate the relationship between outstanding leaders and the effects these leaders have on the groups they lead. Theoretically such leaders transform the strategies, the structural forms, the practice and the cultures of

¹³ Jerald Greenberg (ed), *Organizational Behavior: The State of The Science* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994), 56.

the organization and the groups they lead to fit the demands of their environments to better achieve organizational goals.¹⁴

Another distinct phenomenon is the high and low ambiguity avoidance is revealed in house group ministries across cultures. Many house groups in Accra are highly structured, often with all activities planned down to the minute. People know what to expect and are generally content with the high degree of structure. The Caracas people, who have the highest level of ambiguity avoidance, also have a well planned and structured house groups. On the other hand, in Bombay, a culture with lower ambiguity avoidance, house groups are more free flowing. Leaders feel the need to be open to what God might do at any moment and generally resist attempts to structure their meetings.¹⁵

The Meta Churches

This study intends to go further to describe the phenomena of house groups and its organization in the mega urban churches in other parts of the world especially in North America. It is assumed that most mega urban churches in different parts of the world have basic similarities.

George argues that the term Meta-Church signifies both a change of mind about how ministry is to be done and a change of form in the infrastructure of the church. Meta- and “huge” don’t necessarily go together. Meta-Church principles lead to a recognizable organizational framework, a social architecture without inherent expansion limits. If implemented properly, very large growth can result. The two most

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Neumann, 164.

visible elements of a Meta-Church are the small, home-based group and the celebration-size group.¹⁶

Carl F. George is associated with the term Meta-Church. In 1986 George introduced the Meta-Church Project at the American Society for Church Growth (“Meta-Church Project”). The Meta-Church model organizes the church into three different sizes of groups: celebration, congregation and cell.¹⁷ George believes cell groups to be “the most strategically significant foundation for spiritual formation and assimilation, for evangelism and leadership development.”¹⁸

The Meta-Church addresses pastoral care by creating an alternative social architecture. It calls for a new set of organizational priorities, a church infrastructure of systematic pastoral care that’s people centred, ministry centred and care centred. The Meta-Church system is capable of nurturing any number of individual believers to the point where they’re aware of their God-given gifts and are consistently using them to benefit others.¹⁹

Willow Creek offers five types of groups, each with a different emphasis. The disciple-making groups help members develop the spiritual disciplines and also disciple others. Community groups build community and invite new members. Service groups are task groups, responsible for a certain task. Seekers groups lead people to Christ and disciple new converts. Lastly, support groups support each other as they work through personal difficulties.²⁰ Even though these groups are varied,

¹⁶George, 59.

¹⁷George, 76-77.

¹⁸Willis, 22.

¹⁹George, 78.

²⁰ Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson, *Building a Church of Small Groups: A Place Where Nobody Stands Alone* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishers, 2001), 183.

Donahue and Robinson assert that there are two main emphases: community and spiritual growth.²¹

Anderson defines mega churches as those churches, which have two thousand and more people at a worship service each weekend; however, Meta-Churches are based on a network of small groups that function as centres for assimilation, training, pastoral care, and evangelism. Each group has a leader but also trains another leader in anticipation of generating another small group.²² The Meta-Church gathers for worship services but does not expect to accomplish most ministries through the Sunday morning gatherings. The small groups are decentralized into homes, offices and other meeting places and are led by lay leaders. A description of an urban church in Nairobi as an example of a Meta-Church can be found in the documentation of Mavuno Downtown Church.²³

The facts stated by Anderson reveal that this multi-program approach requires the church as a people to operate seven days a week in order to house and schedule a broad variety of events and programs in various localities such as homes, offices, restaurants and the church building. Anderson foresees increasingly Saturday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Monday worship services, almost all in the evenings. Furthermore, education and fellowship activities during every night of the week will also increase because it is the seven- day week church of the twenty-first century.²⁴

²¹ Willis, 24.

²² Leith Anderson, *A Church for the 21st Century* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1992), 55.

²³ Peter Njoroge, "A Case Study of Impact of Small Groups in Mavuno Downtown Church," (Research Project, Nairobi International School of Theology, 2007), 6.

²⁴ Anderson, 56.

The seven day a week church is a strategy for numerical church growth and individuals' holistic development (mental, social/emotional and physical) that will only be realized if the church focuses on developing the Meta-church concept which entails small groups that meet in the offices, shopping malls, restaurants and in the neighbourhoods. Consequently, the research will now focus on house groups or neighbourhoods groups by highlighting five characteristics of community (house group) around a common place (in the neighbourhood).

Factors that Influence People to Join a House Group

Anderson further argues that the demographics of urban centres contribute to increased loneliness and anonymity. People do not know each other and have become disconnected from everything but the internet and entertainment culture.²⁵ Thus, house groups provide a vehicle for intimacy and friendship within the context of a life purpose that is greater than the individual. Therefore, this need causes individuals to meet randomly without planning in houses which eventually results in a house group.²⁶

First and foremost, spontaneity, which refers to abrupt and random meetings, is facilitated by friendships. The friendship influence, which is spontaneous and regular, establishes a house group long before it becomes formal. Thus, house groups just evolve by default, later they may or may not formalize.²⁷

²⁵ Leith Anderson, *A Church for the 21st Century* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1992), 56.

²⁶ John Fuder and Noel Castellanos, eds., *A Heart for the Community: New Models for Urban and Sub-Urban Ministry* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009), 227.

²⁷ Randy Frazee, *The Connecting Church: Beyond Small Groups to Authentic Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 120.

Secondly, Frazee maintains that availability in form of physically being present facilitates starting of house groups. Those who have found a meaningful experience of life together discover that they are comrades ready and willing to be there for each other. These people have other important things to do, but they value each other's company and hence are available for each other. This characteristic enables the social/emotional growth of the house groups' members.²⁸

Thirdly, frequency is another characteristic that cements members commitment to a house group. From a single study, "How are Habits Formed: Modelling Habit Formation in the Real World" by Phillippa Lally, et al. in the *European Journal of Social Psychology*, the range of time it took people to form habits (specifically, to "reach 95% of their asymptote of automaticity which refers to acquiring a habit") ranged from 18 days to 254 days, the average being 66 days.²⁹

Therefore, as a general rule of thumb, then, two or three months are often going to be enough time for something that you repeat daily to become a habit. With this in mind, the frequency of the house group meetings is crucial in influencing people to join a house group and consequently cementing their involvement in a house group.³⁰

Frazee states that people who are satisfied with the experience of a house group are those who spend a great deal of time together. The big issue is how often should a house group meet—once a week or every other week? To build healthy places of community neither once a week nor every other week is enough to create the results of real community. Thus desired outcome of the "first church of Jerusalem,"

²⁸ Frazee, 130.

²⁹ Luc Reid, "How long does it take to form a habit?" <http://www.lucreid.com/?p=645> (accessed on 24/11/2011)

³⁰ Ibid.

will be achieved if the house groups are willing to put in the same level of commitment to experience the first century house group life. It would be advantageous if the house group members live in close proximity whereby it is practical to visit each other during the week for prayers, watch football or even sharing a meal.³¹

George observes that sharing a meal from an African perspective signifies close relationship. Ethnographic work indicates that sharing food has social significance. Results of the research indicates that sharing implies a positive/friendly social relationship. For this reason, common meals are vital in a house group.³²

Frazee notes that there is something vitally important and special about sharing a meal together. When we fail to practice the community value of eating together, something serious is lost in the quality of contemporary experience of community. Therefore, the fact that people meet in a house enhances the community because sharing a meal together is a common phenomenon. Again, the social aspect growth of the members is emphasized.³³

Paul Yonggi Cho divided Seoul Korea into geographic areas, an approach which made sense in light of the home visitations.³⁴ Thus, most members who attend house groups do it out of convenience and proximity. The geographical locations of the house group are key consideration in a person's decision to join a house group. However, geography based community has its share of problems and challenges.

³¹ Frazee, 130.

³² Lisa Miller, Paul Rozin and Alan Page Fiske "Food sharing and feeding another person suggest intimacy; two studies of American college Students"
http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/anthro/faculty/fiske/pubs/Miller_Rozin_Fiske_Food-Sharing_1998.pdf
(Accessed 24/11/2011)

³³ Frazee, 131.

³⁴ George, 175.

Where houses are all pretty much within walking distance, people who live there might say that they do not experience intimacy but an invasion of their privacy. Everybody knows everything about you and might even, on occasion, use their knowledge to feed the local gossip mill. This isn't true community; rather, it can be classified as "community without character."³⁵

Thus, one of the biggest challenges in the effort of establishing a house group is to convince people to choose something that may not necessarily be easy, but is nonetheless good for them. The importance of geography lies in the simple accessibility it offers people. On the same note Randy Frazee emphasizes that there are many ways of accomplishing this goal of intimate community; experience and history have proven that people who share a common place are in the best position to achieve intimacy.³⁶

Frazee's final factor to authentic Christian community is common possessions- "No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had Acts 2:45." The mindset that must be adopted is this: all that we are, everything that we own, belong to God. He is the owner; we are merely the managers, the stewards. Our goal is to be open to God's leadership in terms of how he wants us to use his resources, including how he wants us to spend our very lives. The sharing of possessions enhances the meeting of members' physical needs.³⁷

Therefore, having discussed the factors that influence people to join a house group in a certain neighbourhood, one must thus identify an effective common place if they ever hope to accomplish a worthwhile and inspiring common purpose. A

³⁵Frazee, 135.

³⁶ Ibid., 138.

³⁷ Ibid., 137.

common place is the container in which a common purpose resides. First and foremost, concentrated efforts in smaller geographic boundaries can produce greater results.

That is, if we create neighbourhood-based sub congregations within our church, with decentralized zone pastors, care structures, outreach programs, and the like, we can achieve much.³⁸

Secondly, in his work *Diffusion of Innovations*, Everett Rogers suggests that if 16 percent of a defined constituency adopts a new way of doing things, it creates a movement. The odds are in favour of the innovation- that in time upwards to 86 percent of the total population will adopt this new way of thinking and living. Therefore, in creating a culture of house groups in our neighbourhoods it only takes 16% of the church population to start a meaningful house group culture.³⁹

Dynamics of Growth in the House Group Setting

The context for disciple-making is inherent in the structure of the house group. Thus, before discussing the dynamics of growth in the house group, the research will highlight the disciples-making concept in the house group. Craigie states that churches gather crowds to eventually make disciples. Much effort is put into meetings, infrastructure, and facilities of the church. Service and sermons are valuable but they alone do not make disciples. Simply preaching on discipleship does not equate to the making of disciples. Disciples makes disciples. A serious commitment to

³⁸ Frazee, 171.

³⁹ Ibid.

life-on-life relationship is thus essential. The need to be about discipleship-making is emphasized by the relational, family dynamic of the house group.⁴⁰

Furthermore, to emphasize the importance of discipleship in the house group, Craigen highlights that there is a significant weakening of healthy families and communities in America and Kenya's urban centres. Compounding this is the absence of healthy male role models, both within the family structure and outside of it in many neighbourhoods. Thus, it is here that the house groups can have their greatest impact in the urban community. They can provide a second family where spiritual fathers and mothers provide the shepherding and mentoring that individual need to succeed in life.⁴¹

The house group setup encourages holistic development of every individual. It is not only about spiritual growth, which is achieved through the Bible study, prayer and fasting. Individuals experience other dimensions of growth, namely emotional/social, mental, and financial according to Acts 2:45. In Luke 2:52, Jesus kept making progress in wisdom, in stature and in favour with God and men. Luke 2:40 asserts that Jesus was full of wisdom and God's blessings were upon him. Jesus also developed physically and had favour with God and men. Jesus continued to experience increasingly the loving-kindness of his father and the friendliness of the people around him. Proverbs 3:4 states "Then you will find favour with both God and people, and you will earn a good reputation" (*New Living Translation*). The words of Prov. 3:4 were fulfilled in him.⁴²

⁴⁰ Fuder and Castellanos eds., 226.

⁴¹ Fuder and Castellanos, 227.

⁴² William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: The Gospel of Luke* (Great Britain: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1979), 186.

As Christians we are called to imitate Jesus, and part of becoming like Christ includes holistic growth and development. Therefore, having established the biblical significance of holistic growth, the research will highlight the various components of the growth and how the house group set up can facilitate the holistic development of a person.

The Outbreak of Consumerism in the Twenty-First Century Urban Centres

One phenomenon that describes the twenty- first century urban setting which is an obstacle to community is consumerism rising out of individualism and isolation. Modernity in Africa is only not associated with tradition; it is also substantially identified with westernization.⁴³ Christianity received extensive treatment in East African literature because it made itself felt at many levels, affecting the conception of knowledge and the broader interpretation of metaphysical and supernatural concerns. Western Christianity was thus a fundamental factor in the broader westernization of Eastern Africa.⁴⁴ The theme of the clash between individual and society was linked to some extent with the impact of Christianity and the Pentecostal idea of personal accountability before God, although individualism in Africa was fostered by the notion of private property which came with western capitalism. Another major promoter of individualism was the new liberal ethos which came with the western political ideologies.⁴⁵ The initial East African enthusiasm for socialist

⁴³ Albert S. Gérard (ed.), *European-Language Writing In Sub-Saharan Africa, Volume .* (Hungry: A Coordinating Committee of A Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages, 1986), 880.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 882.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 884.

rhetoric was connected with the degree to which capitalism had been an ally of imperialism. Since socialism was opposed to capitalism, and African nationalism was opposed to imperialism, nationalistic ideas in Africa found a comradeship- in- arms with socialistic ideas from elsewhere.

Consumerism is about consumption- the concentrated effort to consume things in order to meet one's real and perceived needs and wants. While in its basic form consumption is both necessary and permissible, when it is practised in an environment where the individual is sovereign, it can easily become an imbalanced obsession that kills community. As described earlier, community is the essence of the house group whereby individuals experience social development, growing in favour with man.⁴⁶

Consumerism also undermines community or social growth in at least four significant ways. Firstly, consumerism in a strong economy tempts a kind of independence that can quickly diminish community. This experience of not needing each other is known as imbalanced independence which leads to the second way in which consumerism destroys community.

Secondly, distrust; our isolation creates a distorted view of the people who live around us. Because we don't know most of the people we run into in public places, we look at them with distrust. With this attitude as our starting point, our chances of achieving true community become diminished. Nonetheless, the house groups in Nairobi suburbs like Runda, Muthiga and Lavington areas cannot avoid the situation of a mixed social class all living in one vicinity, because the reality in these areas is that they are surrounded by slums. Thus, the house group by embracing the two extreme social classes lessens the aspect of distrust and brings us closer to the first century house group concept of sharing possessions.

⁴⁶ Frazee, 177.

Thirdly, consumerism is driven by a preoccupation to meet people's needs and to protect one's property and rights. Consumerism was not a characteristic of the first century church; in contrast, they shared their possessions (Acts 2:44). However, in the twenty-first century church, the church has become individualistic. The cultural African value of community life have been abandoned and replaced by consumerism and individualism. Modern consumerism was closely associated with exposure to western contacts. African use of foreign models defines a new urban middle class. Intense interaction with the West came late in the African history, and thus much of modern consumerism is focused on the late nineteenth century onwards. This same period however, saw increased economic exploitation of many Africans, limiting their consumer potential. As in most societies economic and social divisions colored the response to consumerism, and increased attraction and growing misery coexisted in the African experience.⁴⁷ Consumerism was a central issue in a war between change and tradition, between individual and the intense communal and families ties.⁴⁸ Therefore, if the trend continues consumerism and individualism will be a reality unless the house group concept infiltrates the mega churches in Nairobi.⁴⁹

When a community is wounded and a culture of individualism takes over, people stop looking out for each other. Frazee calls this "social loafing," and it has been the case of late with western influence. Accessibility of technology has been one of the key reasons for social loafing. When social loafing occurs the needs of the poor, the homeless, and the broken go unmet. In the absence of self-sacrificial love for one's neighbour, the government is forced to step in and help. Consequently, the

⁴⁷ Peter N. Stearns, *Consumerism in World History: The Global Transformation of Desire*, 2nd edition. (New York: Routledge, 2001), 115.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 119.

⁴⁹ Frazee, 181.

need of house groups in our neighbourhoods cannot be overemphasized because such groups can help meet the needs of the society in their neighbourhood. Social justice should be part of the house group curriculum whereby the groups visits sites such as children's homes, hospitals, drug rehabilitation centres or elderly homes in their neighbourhood.⁵⁰

Frazee further explores consumerism by stating that one of consumerism's driving principles is right over responsibility. In this system, the pursuit and protection of one's right always wins out over one's responsibility to his or her neighbour; it is a natural consequence of individualism. This phenomenon is a reality among the 'gated communities' in Nairobi suburbs – e.g., Runda, Kileleshwa, Lavington, Muthaiga, Loresho and Kilimani. Consumerism, therefore, causes people not to open up their homes for house group fellowship. A combination of busy lifestyle, security and individualism are also the key reasons for consumerism.⁵¹

Acts 2:45 describes a scenario whereby the first century church, which met in homes as well as in the temple courts, shared material and financial resources. However, the twenty-first century church is characterised by individualism and consumerism which bring the notion that money and material possessions are not to be shared.

This research argues that house groups create a conducive environment to holistic (physical, social/emotional, mental and spiritual) growth just like house groups in the first century church did. They shared possession and took care of the needy. The twenty-first century church can also develop a culture of meeting the needs of its group members financially and materially. It can also address the needs of

⁵⁰ Ibid., 182.

⁵¹ Frazee, 178.

the community around them. Engaging in social justice activities (e.g, adopting a children's home, elderly home or a drug rehabilitation centre) can help meet community needs.

Christianity is dynamic; it is not verbally oriented but action oriented. Moreover, the Christian view of money is that all money is God's money (1 Chronicles 29:10-18; Deuteronomy 8:17-18) and God gives us the responsibility to manage this money as stewards. Often the things we have just purchased do not bring about satisfaction from our isolation and our loneliness. We begin to look at others, who, on the outside, appear happier and have more, or better, things than we do. We then set a goal to purchase still more items and in the process get into the trap of accumulating debts. Instead of pursuing the joy of a conversation, we pursue the purchase of pieces of plastic or metal. This pursuit pulls us away from the time-consuming pursuit of community. The popular quotation, "we love things and use people instead of loving people and using things" sums up our situation well.⁵²

Consumerism is not based on the amount of money you have to spend but the way you think about the amount of money you have to spend. In many other parts of the world the idea of success is a quiet dinner with friends, telling stories and sharing laughter and life together. In America and in Nairobi urban culture the idea of success is accumulating more things. The former strategy leads people toward community, whether it is based on Christian principles or not. The latter strategy leads people away from community in pursuit of working longer hours to earn more money so that they can purchase things that promise contentment, but never deliver.⁵³

⁵² Frazee, 184.

⁵³ Ibid., 183.

Consumerism further describes the Nairobi culture of ‘hustling,’ especially among the professionals who work long hours and also attend evening classes just to make an extra shilling or climb up the ladder. Work as a holistic growth principle emphasizes that God intended us to work and for our work to be productive. Thus, productivity does not necessarily mean working long hours. Furthermore, it is God who makes the work of our hands effective because it is God who works in and through us for His good pleasure. Pastor Patrick Lafferty defines “good works” as “human expressions of God’s character and purpose that display the worth of God to those who do them and to those who receive them.”⁵⁴

The principle of work which is part of the holistic growth has been neglected. This affects the community aspect of the church as they seek to meet in homes for fellowship. People living and working in an urban setting, especially in Nairobi, have become workaholics, possibly due to the economic pressures, work pressure, or escapism. One of the reasons people don’t attend house groups is because they are working long hours. However, most companies, organizations or work stations end at 5 pm. Therefore, when people leave work past 5 pm and extend to 8 pm it means they are working over and above the stipulated working hours for various reasons mentioned above, including consumerism.

Concerning spiritual growth, Randy Frazee states that the power of culture is tipped so strong toward individualism that it makes it very difficult for the Christians to sustain an allegiance to Christ. We claim Christ as Lord, but our actions of loving God and our neighbour are usually subservient to our own needs and wants.⁵⁵ In relation to holistic growth in the house group and the challenge that consumerism

⁵⁴ J. Lee Jagers “The Balanced Life & The Christian Life”
<http://leejagers.wordpress.com/the-balanced-life-the-christian-life> (Accessed 19/4/2010).

⁵⁵ Frazee, 178.

poses, consumerism also affects our spiritual life. Consumerism is not only a result of isolation, it also funds or fuels the continuation of the “sovereign individual” ideology. Frazee asserts that consumerism seeks to curb the negative feelings of isolation by spending increasing amounts of money in an attempt to feel better and quench our spiritual thirst. However, the more we are obsessed about applying consumerism as a solution to our loneliness and spiritual deficits, the more it feeds the individualism mindset.⁵⁶

However, having discussed the holistic dynamic of a house group, Robert Wuthnow notes some concerns relating to house groups. He says that there is a tendency to “use” groups as portable support systems to “benefit me.” In other words the house groups can be used to fuel what it purports to be destroying: consumerism and individualism. He continues to state that house groups are disposable when one no longer needs the kind of help they give. Moreover, they can make one uncomfortable by challenging one’s lifestyle if it different from the groups.⁵⁷

Wuthnow asserts that people want community but not a community that is binding. They want a sense of spirituality but not one that requires us to serve the sacred instead the other way round. Will groups of the future continue to become self-help tools that remain viable as long as they “support my goals”? Or will they hold forth a greater challenge to know and live in obedience to the higher one who created community to reflect himself? The reality is some people use house groups for convenience; if people cease to realize their selfish needs, they will leave.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Frazee, 179.

⁵⁷ Robert Wuthnow, “Small Group Ministry in the Twenty First Century,” in *Introducing Christian Education: Foundations for the Twenty first Century*, ed. Michael J. Anthony (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 183.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Transformational Leadership in the House Group

Donahue proposes that the house group ministry in a church rises and falls on the quality of its leaders. Envisioned, equipped and compassionate leaders will guide a group towards holistic growth. Godly leaders will facilitate the development of authentic relationships and create places in house groups where truth meets life.⁵⁹

In the leadership process, the more leaders mature in their skills and character in leading a house group, the more essential it is to gather them together with other seasoned leaders for focused experiences and mentorship purposes. These will ensure smooth transition of leaders for consistency purposes. Retreats, leadership trainings and exposure to veteran church leaders gives upcoming leaders the opportunity to ask questions and be challenged at new levels. Thus, leadership trainings in the house groups should consider the methods and skills for new, intermediate, and seasoned leaders.⁶⁰

Transformational leadership is defined in terms of the component behaviour used to influence followers and the effect of the leader on follower. With transformational leadership, the followers feel trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect toward the leader, and they are motivated to do more than they originally expected to do. The leader transforms and motivated followers by 1) making them more aware of the importance of outcomes, 2) inducing them to transcend their own self-interest for

⁵⁹ Donahue and Robinson, 121.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 144.

the sake of the organization and 3) activating their higher-order needs.⁶¹ A description of transformational leadership in the house group ministry is highlighted by a cell model designed by a Korean minister, Dr. David Cho. His basic principles are pray over your geographic area, find a need and fill it and raise up leaders to multiply the groups.⁶² Moreover, Northhouse defines transformational leadership as, the process whereby an individual engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower. This type of leader is attentive to the needs and motives of followers and tries to help followers reach their fullest potential.⁶³

The technical aspect of transformational leadership is described in four broad categories of behaviour: idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation. The taxonomy was identified⁶⁴ primarily by factor analysis of result from a behaviour description questionnaire called the “Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire” (MLQ). The original formulation of the theory included four types of transformational behaviour. Idealized influence refers to finding and filling a need in the neighbourhood. Idealized influence is a behaviour that arouses strong follower emotions and identification with the leader. Intellectual stimulation refers to engaging and interacting with the Holy Scriptures to understand the meaning of the passage for application. Intellectual stimulation is behaviour that increases follower awareness of problems and influences followers to view problems from a biblical perspective. Individualized consideration involves experiencing pastoral care and leadership that involves transformation from within

⁶¹ Hadaway et al., 82.

⁶² Donahue and Robinson, 148.

⁶³ Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory And Practice* (CA: Sage Publication, 2010), 170.

⁶⁴ Yukl, 261.

and without. In addition, individualized consideration includes providing support, encouragement, and coaching to followers. A revision of the theory added another transformational behaviour called “inspirational motivation,” which includes communicating an appealing vision, using symbols to focus subordinates effort, and modelling appropriate behaviours. Thus, the essence of transformational leadership in the house group setting involves inspiring, developing, and empowering followers.⁶⁵

Transformational leaders strengthen the existing vision or build commitment to a new vision. This new vision, according to Yukl, gives the work meaning, serves as a source of self-esteem, and fosters a sense of common purpose. Vision also helps guide the actions and decisions of each member of the house group.⁶⁶

George is convinced that the larger part of church ministry needs to take place in a family-like atmosphere of a small group meeting in a home. The pastor, as director, represents the pivotal link in outfitting house group leaders for their vital role. Leadership development is so essential that meta-churches cannot leave it to chance. The pastor establishes and manages a finely tuned system of linkages between the zone leader who are the key regional leaders based on the geographic mapping of the house groups and area leaders the deputies to the zone leaders down to the house group leaders resulting in the ongoing creation of effective church transformational leadership.⁶⁷

The house group setup is an environment for grooming transformational leaders. This type of leadership is vital for both numerical church growth and holistic development of the followers in the house group. Bass argues that transformational

⁶⁵ Yukl, 261.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 263.

⁶⁷ George, 120.

leadership motivates followers to do more than the expected by doing the following: (1) raising followers' levels of consciousness about the importance and values of specified and idealized goals in this case the objectives of the house group, (2) getting followers to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of biblical principles, and (3) moving followers to address higher-level needs.⁶⁸

Bennis and Nanus identified four common strategies used by leaders in transforming organizations, in this case the church and, more specifically, house groups. First, transformational leaders have a clear vision of the future state of the house group which is based on the vision of the church, specifically multiplication of groups and holistic development. The compelling nature of the vision of multiplication and holistic growth should touch the experience of followers and pull them into supporting it. Thus, with the vision it is easier for individuals within the group to learn how they can fit in with the overall direction of the group, church and even the society in general. The vision should empower them because they are a significant dimension of a worthwhile enterprise.⁶⁹

Second, transformational leaders are social architects for their groups. This means they should create and shape the shared meanings that individuals maintain within their house groups. These leaders should communicate direction that will transform their house group's values and norms. In many cases, these leaders should be able to mobilize people to accept a new group identity of transforming their lives and their neighbourhoods.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Northhouse, 173.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 180.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

Third, transformational leaders should create trust in their followers by making their own positions clearly known and then they should stand by them. Trust has to do with being predictable or reliable, even in situations that are uncertain. Leaders built trust by articulating a direction and then consistently implementing the direction even though the vision may involve a high degree of uncertainty.⁷¹

Fourth, transformational leaders should use creative deployment of self through positive but honest self-regard. Leaders know their strengths and weaknesses, but they should emphasize their strengths rather than dwelling on their weaknesses. This creates an impact on their followers that generates feelings of confidence and high expectations.⁷²

Summary of Literature Review

This review has highlighted concepts that will guide this research on the relationship of house groups to numerical and holistic growth of the church members. The research explored various concepts from different authors who have wrestled with this topic all over the world, including notable the success story of Dr. Paul Cho, who has revolutionised the cell group concept. Also worth noting is George's concept of the Meta-Church and its capacity to address pastoral care by creating an alternative social architecture. Meta-Church calls for a new set of organizational priorities, a church infrastructure of systematic pastoral care that is people centred, ministry centred and care centred. The Meta-Church system is capable of nurturing any number of individual believers to the point where they are aware of their God-given gifts and are consistently using them to benefit others.⁷³

⁷¹ Northhouse, 181.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ George, 78.

The research also highlighted the life and dynamics of a house group in terms of pursuing holistic growth on all its members namely: spiritual, mental, social, financial and material development. The last two are in reference to Acts 2:44-45. The financial development is highlighted in Act 2:45 where they selling their possessions and distributing to those in need, thus developing each other materially and financially.

Transformational leadership has been observed as the key to numerical multiplication and holistic growth in the house group. Also worth noting is the leadership development that results from transformational leadership from the house groups. The research also addressed the role and responsibility of the house group in addressing the general needs of the society in which they reside in. The needs are spiritual, social, emotional, environmental, educational, political and economic needs, bearing in mind the context of the research being an urban population in Africa.

CHAPTER 3
EXEGESIS OF ACTS 2:42-47

Overview/Synthetic study

Key Words

Apostles' teaching

Fellowship

Breaking of bread

Prayer

Key Verses

The early chapters of Acts include several important summaries of the community's life and mission in Jerusalem (4:32-5:16; 6:1-7). The primary purpose of their communion life is to nurture Christian community.¹

Luke 2:42: Luke writes stories to instruct his readers about normative matters of the faith rather than merely to set the historical record straight. The Christian norm reflected in this text, and others like it in Acts, is that believers who share a common geographical address are also to share a common religious life. The chief characteristics of this common life are listed in v. 42 and elaborated in the following verses: "apostles" teaching (v. 43 τῆ διδασκίᾳ τῶν ἀποστόλων, fellowship v.44, κοινωνία, the breaking of bread (vv.45-46, κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου, and prayer (v.47a προσευχῆς. These same characteristics are repeated throughout Acts as the hallmarks of an ever-expanding people of God. (2:47b).²

¹ Robert W. Wall., *The New Interpreter's Bible, A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 10. Acts Introduction to Epistolary Literature, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 71.

² Ibid.

Luke 2:43: That the believers in Jerusalem should “devote themselves to the apostles’ teaching” is not surprising, for the apostles are not only the principal successors to Jesus but also the principle depositories of the Spirit is power. The “many wonders and signs” (πολλά τετέρατακαὶ σημεῖα) they performed bear witness to their spiritual authority. This phrase recalls Joel’s prophecy (2:19) of the outpouring of the Spirit to mark the disciples out as important participants in a new epoch of salvation’s history. In fact, they are the heirs of Jesus authority, which he earlier demonstrated by the “wonders and signs that God did through him among you” (2:22, cf Luke 9:1-2; 24:19). The effect of their authority within the community is confirmed by both adherence to the instruction and the “awe (that) came upon everyone.” The performance of these same “signs and wonders” of Jesus is the evident result of their baptism with God’s Spirit that enables them to do and teach in continuity with their Lord (1:1-2).³

Luke 2:44; “Fellowship” (*koinonia*) is used only here in Acts, but for Paul it is an important idiom of the community that is initiated into newness of life in partnership with the Spirit (cf. 2 Cor 13:13; Phil 2:1). In this case, however, God’s gift of the Spirit to the community suggests a transforming presence that unites the different believers into common *Koinonia*. In elaboration, Luke uses a well-known phrase from Greek philosophy indicating friendship: “all things in common.” A fellowship of believers shares more than common beliefs and core values; they display a profound regard for one another’s spiritual and physical well being as a community of friends.⁴

³ Wall, 72.

⁴ Ibid.

Luke 2:45-46: The formation of believers into a community of goods is an important theme in Acts. According to this pattern, the redistribution of proceeds from sold property reflects the social character of God's kingdom.⁵

The reference of the joyful practice of "breaking of bread at home", the perfect evidence of life in the Spirit reflects the practice of devout Jewish families who following temple worship would share meals together as symbolic of their social and spiritual solidarity. The decisions the community makes about "bread" - how to sell it, distribute it to those with needs, and share it without rank manifest the effect of the Spirit in its common life.⁶

Luke 2:47: The community's worship is characterized by the people's praise of God. The community has no material needs, no intramural conflicts, and no broken hearts for which to petition God for tender mercy.⁷

Themes

1. Apostles' teaching
2. Fellowship
3. Breaking of bread
4. Prayer

Argument of the Book of Acts

The book of Acts, although part of the extended biblical canon, maintains its own literary, theological, and canonical integrity. Powell usefully identifies 6 literary emphases: irenic, polemical, apologetic, evangelistic, pastoral and theological. Acts

⁵ Wall, 72.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

was written to consolidate disparate faith communions. In the wider Roman culture, riddled with conflict and controversy of all kinds, a community of shared goods (material and spiritual) would embody evidence for the transforming power of God's saving grace.⁸

Acts was also written to deepen the fragile faith of new believers such as Theophilus. Luke's pastoral intent for writing this narrative may have been to characterize Christian discipleship in response to his patron's particular struggles, with implications for all who share Theophilus's social status within the church. This motive underlies several narrative themes. For example, Acts provides a basic chronology of the religious roots of Christianity that may have enabled Theophilus and other new believers to locate themselves within space and time as participants of a real historical movement. More important, Act's distinct emphasis on the community of goods and description of well-known role models, such as Barnabas, may well have commended to affluent believers like Theophilus the sharing of their wealth with the community's poor as a Christian practice (Acts 2:42-47;4:32-37;11:27-30).⁹

This and other distinctive resurrection practice envisage a counterculture that may have proved a difficult life-style for the empire's rich and famous. The book of Acts highlights how the urban congregation encouraged its to spearhead the redistribution of wealth as the guiding principle of the church's welfare program (1 Tim. 5-6). Further, the content and narrative significance of the speeches in Acts may

⁸ Wall, 8.

⁹ Ibid.

have reassured the well-educated Theophilus that the gospel has intellectual integrity (17:22-31).¹⁰

The following simplified outline is therefore suggested for Acts 2:37-47. The effects of Peter's speech were dramatic and far-reaching:

- 1) Many were cut to the heart and asked their apostles what are we to do (Acts 2:37)?
- 2) Peter told them to repent and be baptized. They would then receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).
- 3) Some three thousand were added to their number (Acts 2:41).
- 4) Christian worship began to take shape, with the teaching, the common life or fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayers (Acts 2:42).
- 5) The spirit worked signs and wonders through the apostles, as evidence of the new age (Acts 2:43).
- 6) Believers held their possession in common (Acts 2:44).
- 7) They sold their property and gave to the poor (Acts 2:45).
- 8) They continued to worship in the Temple, but they broke bread in private houses (Acts 2:46).
- 9) The church grew daily (Acts 2:47).

The purpose; as in his gospel, Luke slants the book of Acts toward Gentiles, especially those with open-minded interest in the historical origins of Christianity. In doing so, he continues to emphasize the religious piety, moral purity, and political innocence of believers in Jesus, and to portray Christianity as universal, a traditional religion rooted in Judaism but open to all. As in Luke the narrative progressed to

¹⁰ Wall, 10.

Jerusalem, the centre of Judaism, so in Acts the narrative progressed to Rome, centre of the world. The power of the Holy Spirit makes possible this progress.¹¹

B. Analytical study

Contextual Analysis

Background Information of Acts

Author: according to tradition Luke is the author of Acts. The style and themes of Acts clearly reflect the same authorship as those of the Gospel of Luke. Luke varies between Greek literary prose style and a Jewish style heavily influenced by the Septuagint.¹²

Date: Some scholars have suggested that Acts was written before AD 64 because Paul's death, believed by many to have occurred in AD 64. Others, reading Luke 21, suggest a date after AD 70, saying that Acts breaks off about AD 62 for literary reasons or because Luke only needed positive legal precedents. The evidence is not conclusive; however, most scholars date Luke after AD 70.¹³

Occasion (Reason for Writing the Book)

The "primitivism" of Acts simply reflects the ecclesial experience of the earliest church, which fashioned itself after the diaspora synagogues and other voluntary organizations of the Roman world. Worship consisted of prayers meetings and teaching, with Christian fellowship centred in the homes of believers. The

¹¹D.A. Carson, et al. eds., *New Bible Commentary* (Downers Grove, Illinois, Intervarsity Press, 1994), 298.

¹² Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1993), 320.

¹³ Ibid.

sociology of the church dramatically changed during the canonical process; these loosely confederated house congregations become in time participants of an emerging church catholic. For this reason, the ongoing interest in the images and ideas of “church” in Acts should focus on emulating its missionary vocation and prophetic message, its resurrection practices, and the nature of its spiritual leadership-important claims on any congregation in every age – rather than an replicating outward forms of governance and worship or other time-conditioned practices.¹⁴

A number of studies have demonstrated that Acts is best read as a genre of ancient historiography, itself quite fluid in form and function. Luke’s narrative is a selective account of what happened- a “history” shaped and signified according to his personal theological beliefs and pastoral purposes. History, whether ancient or modern, is almost always written with a language and within a framework that reflects the historian’s discrete perspective on the meaning of events.¹⁵

Another important interest of literary critic is to determine how the various elements of Luke’s story form a coherent plotline: How does Acts work as a narrative? Simply stated, the plot of Acts unfolds in support of Luke’s theological aim. On the other hand, he designs his story according to a specific geographic and chronological framework. The action begins in Jerusalem before moving beyond the holy city into the neighbouring provinces of Samaria and Judea before moving into the nations and people beyond Palestine.¹⁶

¹⁴ Wall, 28.

¹⁵ Ibid., 12.

¹⁶ Ibid., 13.

The Church's Life: The Effect of Pentecost (2:42-47)

Luke describes in his own narrative what happened on the day of Pentecost, and then supplies an explanation of it through Peter's Christ-centred sermon, Luke goes on to show us the effects of Pentecost by giving us a narrative of the Spirit-filled church.¹⁷

It was a Learning Church

The teaching authority of the apostles, to which they submitted, was authenticated by miracles: many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. The two references to the apostles, in verse 42 (their teaching) and in verse 43 (their miracles), can hardly be an accident. Since the teaching of the apostles has come down to us in its definitive form in the New Testament, contemporary devotion to the apostles' teaching will mean submission to the authority of the New Testament. A Spirit-filled church is a New Testament church, in the sense that it studies and submits to the New Testament instruction. The Spirit of God leads the people of God to submit to the Word of God.¹⁸

It was a Loving Church

They devoted themselves...to the fellowship (koinonia). Koinonia (from *koinos*, 'common') bears witness to the common life of the church in two sense. It expresses what we share in together. First, we share God himself, for 'our fellowship is with the father and with his son, Jesus Christ', and there is also 'the fellowship of the Holy Spirit', the third person of the God head.¹⁹

¹⁷ French L. Arrington, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), 81.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

Secondly, *koinonia* also expresses what we share out together, what we give as well as what we receive. *Koinonia* is the word Paul used for the collection he was organizing among the Greek churches, and *koinonikos* is the Greek word for ‘generous’. It is to this that Luke is particularly referring here, because he goes on at once to describe the way in which these first Christians shared possession with one another: all the believers were together and had everything in common (*koina*). *Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need (44-45).*²⁰

It was a Worshiping Church

They devoted themselves...to the breaking of bread and to prayer (42). That is, their fellowship was expressed not only in caring for each other, but in corporate worship too. Moreover, the definite article in both expressions (literally, ‘the breaking of the bread and the prayers’) suggests a reference to the Lord’s Supper on the one hand (although almost certainly at that early stage as part of a larger meal) and prayer service or meetings (rather than private prayer) on the other hand. There are two aspects of the early church’s worship which exemplify its balance.²¹

First, worship was both formal and informal, for it took place both in the temple courts and in their homes (46), which is an interesting combination. It is perhaps surprising that the believers continued for a while in the temple. They did not immediately abandon what might be called the institutional church. At the same time, they supplemented the temple service with more informal and spontaneous meetings (including the breaking of bread) in their homes.²²

²⁰Arrington, 83.

²¹Ibid.

²² Ibid.

The second example of the balance of the early church's worship is that it was both joyful and reverent. There can be no doubt of their joy, for they are described as having *glad and sincere hearts*(46.) If joy in God is an authentic work of the Spirit, so is the fear of God. Everyone was filled with awe (43) therefore; it is a mistake to imagine that in public worship reverence and rejoicing are mutually exclusive. The combination of joy and awe, as of formality and informality, is a healthy balance in worship.²³

It was an Evangelistic Church

So far we have considered the study, the fellowship and the worship of Jerusalem church, for it is to these three things that Luke says the first believers devoted themselves. Yet these are aspects of the interior life of the church; they tell us nothing about its compassionate outreach to the world. In 47b Luke writes, “*and the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved*”.²⁴ From these earliest believers in Jerusalem, we learn three vital lessons about local church evangelism. First, the Lord himself did it: *the Lord added to their number*. Doubtless he did it through the preaching of the apostles, the witness of church members, the impressive love of their common life, and their example as they were praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people (47a).²⁵

Second, Jesus did two things together: First, he added to their number: “those who were being saved.” The present participle *sozomenous* (the ones being saved) either signifies a timeless sense or emphasizes that salvation is a progressive experience culminating in final glorification. He did not add them to the church

²³ Arrington, 86.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

without saving them (no nominal Christianity at the beginning), nor did he save them without adding them to the church (no solitary Christianity either). Salvation and church membership belonged together. They still do. Thirdly, the Lord added people daily; προσετίθει, the verb, is an imperfect ('kept adding').²⁶

Summary of the Life of the New Community

The Greek verbs of the passage show continuous or repeated action in a past time. The real force of vv.43-47 becomes clear by reading "*kept*" or "*continued*" with each of the verbs: the disciples *kept* being filled with awe, *kept* sharing everything in common, *kept* selling their goods when individual needs arose, and the Lord *continued* to add to their fellowship those who were being saved.²⁷

Those believers were not "off" and "on" Christians. There was constancy about their devotion to Christ and consistency in their everyday conduct. They had a deep, abiding awareness of God's presence. There were visible tokens of the Holy Spirit power in their midst: the Pentecost out pouring and the mighty signs and miracles accomplished through the apostles. Their sharing of their goods manifested their compassion and care for one another. They gave something when some of the believers among them had a specific need and in that way they had everything in common (v44).²⁸

The new community was known for its single-hearted devotion and was highly regarded by all the people. The common meals they had in their homes were joyful occasion and expressed their love for one another. Wholly dedicated to Christ,

²⁶ Arrington, 87.

²⁷ Ibid., 35.

²⁸ Ibid.

they continued to praise God and to worship in the temple. Their fellowship continued to grow; the Lord kept on adding to their number those who were being saved.²⁹

Social Classes in Greco-Roman World

In pagan society, class strata were sharply defined. Aristocratic landowners, government contractors, and others lived in luxury. A strong middle class did not exist, because slaves did most of the work. In the Jewish society, the chief priests and the leading rabbis helped form an upper class. Farmers, artisans, small businessmen, and their families made up most of the population.³⁰

Slaves may have outnumbered free people in the Roman Empire. It was common to condemn criminal, debtors, and prisoners of war to slavery. Many of Jesus' saying and parables assume that slavery existed in the Jewish culture of his time. Many of the slaves were doctors, accountants, teachers, philosophers, managers, clerks, copyists and had greater skill and education than their masters. Some slaves bought their freedom or were set free by their masters.³¹

Social and Theological Profile of the Five House Churches

In Romans 16:3-16, Paul mentions five house churches that appear to be scattered throughout Rome. Paul knew Pricilla and Aquila since they were victims of expulsion by Emperor Claudius edict in Acts 18:2.³²

²⁹ Arrington, 36.

³⁰ Robert H. Gundry, *A Survey of the New Testament*, 3rd ed. (Carlisle, UK: The Paternoster Press, 1994), 48.

³¹ Gundry, 49.

³² Reta Halteman Finger, *Roman House Churches for Today: A Practical Guide for Small Groups* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2007), 17.

The Church in the House of Priscilla and Aquila.

This house church is the only congregation of the five mentioned in Romans 16 that is actually called a church. Perhaps Priscilla and Aquila are the only ones sufficiently wealthy to have a home large enough to handle a congregation. Aquila's name is the Greek form of Acilius, which meant that he was somehow connected to Roman Acilius family. Acts 18:2-3 tells us that Aquila was a Jewish tentmaker, which in the Roman context probably meant awning maker. Wealthy upper class people considered labour of any kind, including the skilled trades, socially beneath them, so Aquila may have been a slave or client of the Acilius family.³³

There is a biblical clue that both Priscilla and Aquila were full Roman citizens—a special privilege in those days. Paul says in Roman 16:4 that they “risked their necks” for his life. This implies that they had the political clout to intercede for him with the hostile government authorities during one of his arrests and imprisonment. Paul was thus indebted to them, his patrons. Secondly, only Roman citizens had the right to a death penalty by beheading. Non citizens could be tortured, crucified or thrown into wild animals in the arena.³⁴

We know about Priscilla and Aquila's previous works with Paul from Acts 18:1-4, 18-21, and 24-28. Thus, the church in their house was probably an egalitarian congregation with a Pauline theology and a racial mixture of Jews, Romans and Greeks. Yet their household in the first century Roman context would have been composed of members of larger Acilius family, along with clients, freed persons, and slaves under their patronage.³⁵ The diversity of this congregation emerges clearly.

³³ Finger, 18.

³⁴ Ibid., 19.

³⁵ Finger, 19.

Social Structure in the Greco-Roman World

The Greco-Roman world in the middle of the first century was characterised by great variety and vitality. Although now Rome dominated the whole Mediterranean region and the Greek culture had penetrated to the furthest reaches of the empire, not only did local patterns rule and way of life continue to survive, but relatively new trends in social organizations begun to flourish and attract an increasing number of people. Traditionally, there had been two main types of community in which people might associate themselves: *politeia*, the public life of the city to which people belonged to, and *oikonomia*, the household order into which they were born or to which they were attached.³⁶

The Oikonomia

The household was the primary structure of the Roman Empire. It was composed of a number of families and individuals bound together under the authority of the senior male of the principal family.³⁷

Koinonia

Although the household provided economic and social security for members of the Roman Empire, there was another structure which met deeper, emotional needs. People would gather with a common interest in a social or philanthropic cause, a trade, a philosophy, or a religion. These voluntary associations met the need to belong. Some were not explicitly religious, but all had religious dimensions, such as an initiation ceremony, a ritual bath, or other purification rites. The new Christian

³⁶ Robert J. Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in their Cultural Setting*, rev ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 1994), 6.

³⁷ Finger, 33.

religion benefited greatly from this model. First, it had come under the umbrella of Judaism, already viewed by Romans as a voluntary association- even international in scope and therefore recognized. Thus, Christianity gained much headway throughout the empire. Only when the church threatened the peace of the empire did it come under scrutiny.³⁸

The second concept of a radical equality in the Christian gospel was more like the structure of the egalitarian clubs in the hierarchical household structure. But many clubs were only egalitarian to those members who could afford the initial fees. This already discriminated between the poor and the rich. The Christian cell groups did not charge initiation fees; they were open to everyone. The Roman government expressed little concern about these clubs and secret societies unless their meetings posed a threat to security. The recipients of Paul's letters to Rome were well aware that the Jewish voluntary association had been in recent trouble with the empire Claudius. Seven or eight years earlier, he had expelled most of the Jews from Rome. So these house churches always had to keep an eye towards the political scene.³⁹

The Roman house churches existed on the tension between *oikonomia* and *koinonia*. Meeting in homes, they could not survive without the household structure to provide for economic and physical needs. At the same time, these groups met deeper emotional and physical needs than could the household. Even better, in *koinonia* hierarchy was wiped away and all came to God in the same way- not through wealth or status or goods works, but by responding to God's grace expressed in Jesus Christ.⁴⁰

³⁸ Finger, 38.

³⁹ Ibid., 39.

⁴⁰ Finger, 39.

Conclusion

The community of converts formed on the Day of Pentecost is a repentant people to whom the kingdom of God has been restored. God's kingdom reflects solidarity and mutuality rather than a class system; therefore, believers live together and have "all things in common."⁴¹

Teaching, fellowship, sharing goods, and prayers are the religious practices of a repentant people. Each is a concrete expression of the forgiveness of sin and the reception of the Spirit. Each is made possible only because of conversion. Together they make possible the convert's continued formation toward maturity. This is so because these practices are much too demanding to implement without the habits of a repentant mind and purified heart. They are also too demanding for the individual believer. Therefore, the initial images of conversion in Acts are those of a community of shared practices and goods.⁴²

"They would sell their possession and goods and distribute the proceeds to all" (Acts.2:45, NRSV). A distinctive practice of the community's common life is the sharing of goods. It should be noted that Luke is not interested in the production of goods but rather that these goods already possessed are now shared with other believer. In an economic culture shaped by individual acquisitiveness, this resurrection practice seems idealistic and even scandalous. All the institutions and mythologies of the present order teach us to value private property as the principle motive of hard work, invention, and national wealth. Yet for Luke the kingdom of God is the real world; there can be no economic policy more prudent, therefore, than

⁴¹ Wall, 73.

⁴² Ibid.

one that cultivates a community of goods in which class division are dismantled under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is impossible to achieve a lasting unity, no matter how much important the cause, if inequality persists. This is precisely why Luke is so keen to press the inclusiveness of God's salvation.⁴³

In Acts 2:41-43 the results of the preaching were truly amazing. The church grew from 120 to over 3000. The apostles continued their teaching and also did many wonders and miraculous signs. The new converts didn't merely add Christianity to their already busy lives, but devoted themselves to their Christian experience. Verse 42 is a compact description of Christian discipleship.

Verse 44-47 describes the Christian community in the days after the Pentecost sermon. The believers displayed a generous attitude toward possessions. But there was no blind rush to 'rid themselves of all their possessions', as if personal property was in itself evil. Instead the believers gave as there was need. The believers' financial problems were not automatically and miraculously solved by virtue of becoming Christians. Therefore, this phenomenon was more of a description of the early church policy and practice rather than redistribution of wealth.⁴⁴

The believers continued every day to meet together in the temple courts, as well as in smaller, more communal environments of their homes, where they shared table fellowship. This was short-lived period of peace, when they could apparently meet in the temple without fear and even enjoyed the favour of all the people.⁴⁵

⁴³ Wall, 73.

⁴⁴ Carson et al., 1073.

⁴⁵ Carson, 1073.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter highlights the description of the methods applied in carrying out the research study. It has been organised under the following sections: research design, variables, location of study, target population, sample technique, construction of research instrument, pilot study, data collection techniques, data analysis, logical connections and ethnic considerations.

Research Design and Variables

This research is a descriptive survey research whereby the researcher describes and surveys house groups in various mega Nairobi urban churches through interviews, questionnaire and observations and links it with the existing literature. The independent variables that motivate the congregation to join a house group are: desire for spiritual growth, accountability and friendships and relationships whereas the dependent variable is joining a house group and its consequence is individual's holistic (physical, social/emotional, spiritual and mental) development and numerical growth of the house groups.

Consequently, the dependent variables also include: physical development, social development, financial development, mental development, spiritual development, numerical multiplication and social justice.

The researcher gathered data by first of all visiting the house groups in all the five mega urban churches namely: Nairobi Chapel, Nairobi Baptist, Nairobi

Pentecostal Church Valley Road, Mavuno Chapel and Parklands Baptist Church. The researcher visited different house groups from different churches every week in a span of a month so as to evaluate and compare the observation results and experiences from different churches. Moreover, the researcher focused on house groups of a similar social class and as much possible, that they met in the same locality of Kilimani area for systematic and universality purposes during data analysis of the observations.

Secondly, the researcher conducted interviews with the respective house group pastors from the urban churches in a span of two weeks immediate after the observation from the visit to ascertain the reliability and validate the reliability of the data during the interview.

Finally, the researcher administered a questionnaire survey to thirty house group leaders and thirty five house group members of Parklands Baptist Church. However, the researcher conducted a pilot study to test the validity and reliability of the research instrument. Moreover, the researcher conducted the research of the leaders in one sitting where the researcher will be available to clarify any misunderstandings to ensure the research tools is valid and reliable. However, the researcher visited the house groups to conduct the questionnaires and also be available for any questions concerning the questionnaire. The measurement of the data was done through a narration in relation to the observations and the interviews, however with the questionnaire the researcher used a scientific computerized tool called SPSS to analyze and interpret the questionnaires and use the bar graphs and charts to draw conclusions.

Location of the Study

This research targeted the entire congregation of the selected churches, which are located specifically in Nairobi urban areas including Westlands, Ngong road, Valley road and Mombasa road areas. This research also includes children, teens, college students, young adults, single parents, married couples and senior citizens. However, the research focused more precisely on the dynamics involved with the young adults and the career married couples in the house groups.

Target Population

In addition, the researcher narrowed down the study to people 20-50 years old because they represent the majority population of the congregants. This target population is also ideal because it represents and characterizes the issues discussed earlier. Moreover, the target population represents development of the current Nairobi City culture.

Sampling Technique

This research used the probability research design, specifically the multi-stage sampling, because the study highly relied on the geographical location of the sampling objects. Pre-testing of the tools was an important part of the research process for a variety of reasons; test accuracy, reliability and validity of the study. The researcher used this opportunity to observe the respondents' reactions such as long pauses, scribbling, changing the responses frequently, boredom, etc. Mugenda asserts that these reactions could indicate confusion about particular items. After the pre-test, the researcher had a debriefing session with the respondents in which they commented on each item and gave suggestions. It was particularly important to observe the time taken by the respondent to complete the tool. The pre-test tool was then revised

according to the results of the pre-test. The researcher used a sample of house group leaders putting into consideration certain factors such as their place of residence, age and other demographic factors of their house group. The researcher administered the questionnaire for the purpose of pre-testing.¹

The Research Instruments

Research instruments have three sets of questions open ended, closed questions and comparative questions. This research instrument has nineteen questions and it seeks to find out why people join a house group and what actually happen in a house group in relation to the first century life of house groups. The pilot study conducted with the leaders ensured that there were no error components in the research instruments that affected the outcome of the study. Moreover, the research instruments were protected from error since the interviews were conducted before the questionnaires thus the response of the responses informed the validity of and reliability of the questionnaire. The leaders were chosen randomly so as to address the issue of reliability however; the interviews were conducted systematically targeting the pastors of the house groups or their equivalent among the five churches so as to ensure its validity.²

Pilot Study

The pilot study was carried out at Parklands Baptist Church among the house group leaders and their house groups scattered in Nairobi suburbs. The pilot study tested the validity and reliability of the variables, the practicality of the research and also test the preciseness of the questionnaires. The researcher observed that some

¹ Abel Gitau Mugenda, *Social Science Research: Theory and Principles* (Nairobi: Kijabe Printing Press, 2008), 243.

² Mugenda, 249.

questions in the questionnaire were not clear and some were irrelevant and thus removed them and restructured some questions for clarity.

Validity

Validity is the accuracy, truthfulness and meaningfulness of the data collected. The research findings confirm that data collected was accurate. The reality in the house groups was confirmed through the interviews, observations and the questionnaire and thus the findings were not inconsistent to the reality. Moreover, the validity of the study was confirmed through observation and interviews apart from the questionnaire.³

Reliability

Reliability is a measure of how consistent the results from a test are. The research conducted in five different churches confirmed consistent results because the results were consistent with the interviews and observations. Moreover, the research at Parklands Baptist Church was done twice with the same people (the zone leaders) to confirm the reliability of the research instrument. Some questions were deleted while other were clarified based on the interaction the researcher had with the respondents.⁴

Data Collection

Direct observation of behaviour is, of course, not the only method by which the researcher can obtain data; interviews and questionnaires, projective techniques, and available records can be substituted for the researcher's own observation. Selltiz

³ Mugenda, 256.

⁴ Donald Kisilu Kombo and Delno L. A. Tromp, *Proposal and Thesis Writing* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006), 97.

et al. assert that perhaps the greatest asset of observational techniques is that they make it possible to record behaviour as it occurs. Other research techniques depend entirely on people's retrospective or anticipatory reports of their own behaviour. Nonetheless, even an observation of regular daily occurrence may become difficult because of the possibility that unforeseeable factors will interfere with the observational tasks. However, this research requires the observation technique so as to gather supplementary data that may qualify or help to interpret findings obtained from the use of the questionnaire. In this case the researcher will participate actively in the house group especially at Parklands Baptist Church. But in other churches the researcher's presence will be unknown to some or all of the people he is observing. This researcher video recorded some house group sessions for later observation and analysis.⁵

Lee states that the researcher must decide not only what is to be studied, but where and when the observation will take place. In this research the researcher carried out observations in Parklands Baptist Church, Nairobi Chapel, Mavuno Chapel, Nairobi Baptist and Nairobi Pentecostal Church Valley Road. Observation in this research is critical because the environment of the house group plays a key role in group dynamics. Some of the things to be observed are the general and specific location of the house group, the space and seating capacity in the house group, lighting, colours, furniture, surrounding environment, and the needs of the neighbourhood. This information is critical as it inform the conclusion, recommendation of this research.⁶

⁵ Claire Selltiz et al., *Research Methods in Social Relations* (MI: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1959), 204.

⁶ Raymond M. Lee, *Unobstrusive Methods in Social Research* (Buckingham, USA: Open University Press, 2000), 44.

The questionnaire and interviews approach provides ones information that covers perception, beliefs, feeling, motivations, anticipations, and future plans. Therefore, this researcher used interviews and questionnaire as research instruments. These were constructed based on the research variables considering the research population and the research sampling design.⁷

Data Analysis

The purpose of data analysis is to summarize the completed observations in such a manner that they yield answers to the research questions. Moreover data interpretation seeks to search for the broader meaning of these answers by linking them to other available knowledge. The researcher has therefore used, graphs and bar lines to interpret the data collected and analysis of the two variables namely; numerical growth and holistic development.⁸

Mugenda emphasizes that the types of statistical techniques used to analyze data are largely determined by the researcher's hypotheses and the level of measurement of the variable. This researcher summarized the data on all variables using descriptive statistics which include measures of central tendency (mean, mode and median), measures of dispersion (variance, standard deviation and the range) and measure of association.⁹ After the data was collected, it was checked and coded accordingly. Data entry templates were developed for this exercise. This included typing all the data collection instruments into SPSS Data Entry Builder.

Data was analysed to facilitate meeting the research objectives namely: (1) the role of house groups in numerical church growth; (2) How some of the dimensions of

⁷Selltiz et al., 237.

⁸ Ibid, 386.

⁹ Mugenda, 289.

holistic growth (physical, social, spiritual, financial and mental development) are enhanced through the house groups; and (3) asserting whether numerical growth in the house group can be the result of transformational leadership?

Quantitative data was coded and analysed descriptively using frequencies, percentages, pie charts, bar graphs and cross tabulations. This was useful in explaining variable distributions, summarising and organizing data to make meaning and observe trends. Qualitative data arising from interview and observations was summarised in the form of a narrative and presented as part of the results of the study. SPSS version 17.0 was used to compute and test for the difference in means and variances of selected pairs of independent categories. Findings were presented in form of tables, bar –charts, pie – charts, descriptions and summary narratives from the interviews and observations.

Coding is the technical procedure by which data are categorized. The value of the categorization of data depends entirely on the soundness of the categories employed. Categories must be well defined from a conceptual point of view and must be relevant to the purpose of the research.¹⁰

¹⁰Selltiz et al., 404.

CHAPTER 5

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

The objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between house groups or small groups as a strategy for numerical church growth and holistic development (physical, mental, spiritual, and social/emotional) of its members.

In this chapter, data obtained from group interviews, interviews with home group pastors/small group pastors, questionnaires and observation from five different churches (Nairobi Chapel, Nairobi Baptist Church, Mavuno Chapel, Nairobi Pentecostal Church Valley Road and Parklands Baptist Church), are organized and systematically analysed and findings documented.

Profile of the Respondents

The researcher distributed 80 questionnaires and conducted three interviews with the pastors in charge of the small groups/home groups. Sixty five respondents recorded their opinions out of the 80 originally anticipated. The three interviews conducted included; Home Group Pastor of Nairobi Baptist, Life Group Pastor of Mavuno Church, and Neighbourhood Bible Study Pastor of Nairobi Pentecostal Church Valley Road. Moreover, the researcher also conducted group interviews and observations. The respondents also included group members of Nairobi Chapel Home groups (E-Group) where the researcher visited to observe how it is conducted, Nairobi Baptist Home Group Fellowships (HGF) where the researcher conducted group interviews with the members of the group, Mavuno Chapel (Life-Group), Nairobi

Pentecostal Church Valley Road where the researcher observed the group members. Finally, the researcher interviewed and observed House Groups at Parklands Baptist Church.

The key areas highlighted in the questionnaire and interview questions which the researcher was interested with were: what factors influenced the congregation to join a house group, which age group they belong to, how far they live from their house groups, how did they join the house group, how long have they been members of their groups, house group members favourites activities, and how many new members joined their house groups in the last three months.

The following covers the scope of the research of analysing the house groups as a strategy of facilitating numerical multiplication of the church and holistic development of individuals notably: spiritual, mental, emotional/social and physical growth.

Factors that Influenced the People to Join a House Group

Figure 2 below indicates the factors that influenced the congregation of Parklands Baptist Church to join a house group. Notably, 35.4% were influenced to join a house group because of their desire to growth spiritually and experience intimacy with God, 32.3% were influenced by fellowship, 15.4% joined because of accountability, 7.7% joined specifically for spiritual growth and 9.2% joined for togetherness purposes. There is redundancy in the findings because it was an open question. This finding reveals that 43.1% (a sum total of the 35.4% who desire to grow spiritually for intimacy and the 7% who sought spiritual growth) joined a house group to grow spiritually, while 41.5% (a sum total of the 32.3% seeking fellowship and the 9.2% seeking togetherness) joined a house group for fellowship and togetherness. The remaining 15.4% joined for accountability purposes.

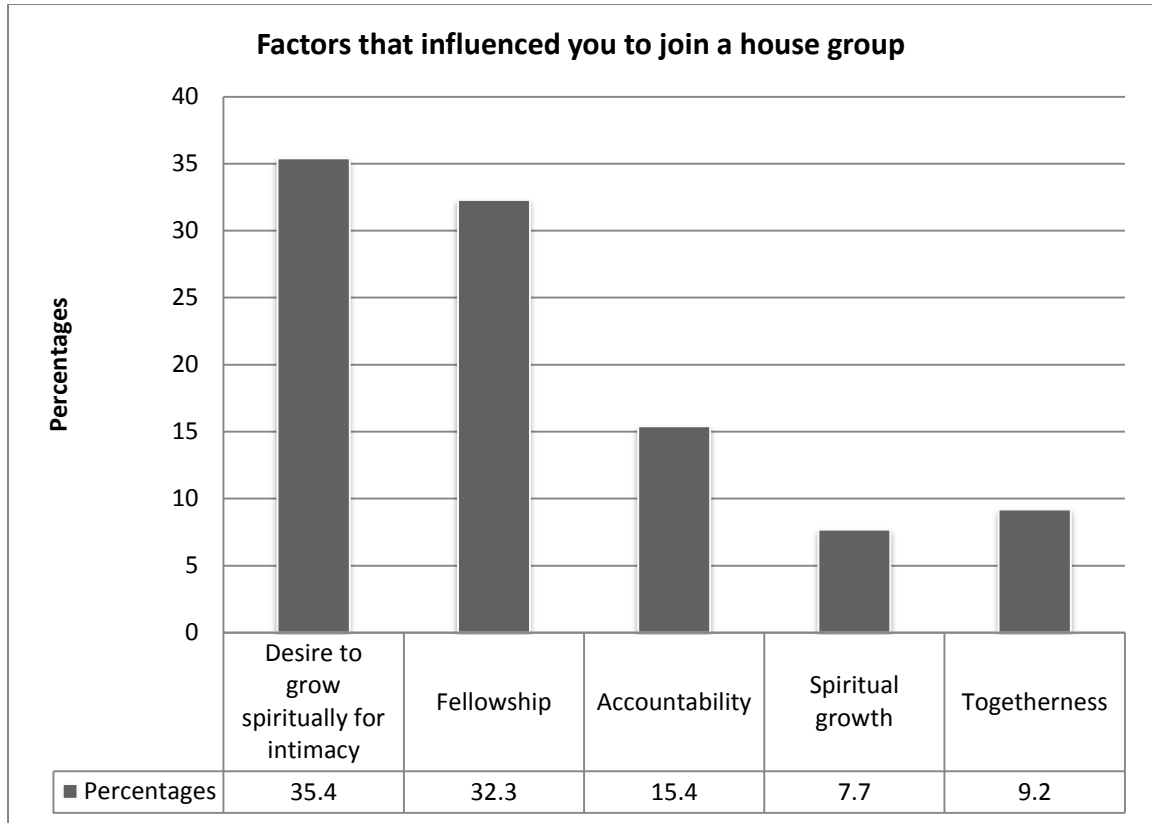


Figure . Factors that influenced the people at Parklands Baptist Church to join a house group

When further analysed, 55.6% of the leaders compared to 10.3% of the members joined the house group with a desire to grow to grow spiritually. Whereas 62.1% of the members compared to 8.3% of the leaders joined the house group with a desire for fellowship.

Factors that Informed People's Decision to Join a House Group

Figure 3 below shows 51% of the respondents joined house groups to grow spiritually through studying God's word. Forty six percent joined to build genuine and authentic relationships, 2% joined house groups to get an opportunity to serve the community and 1% joined house groups to build business and career networks.

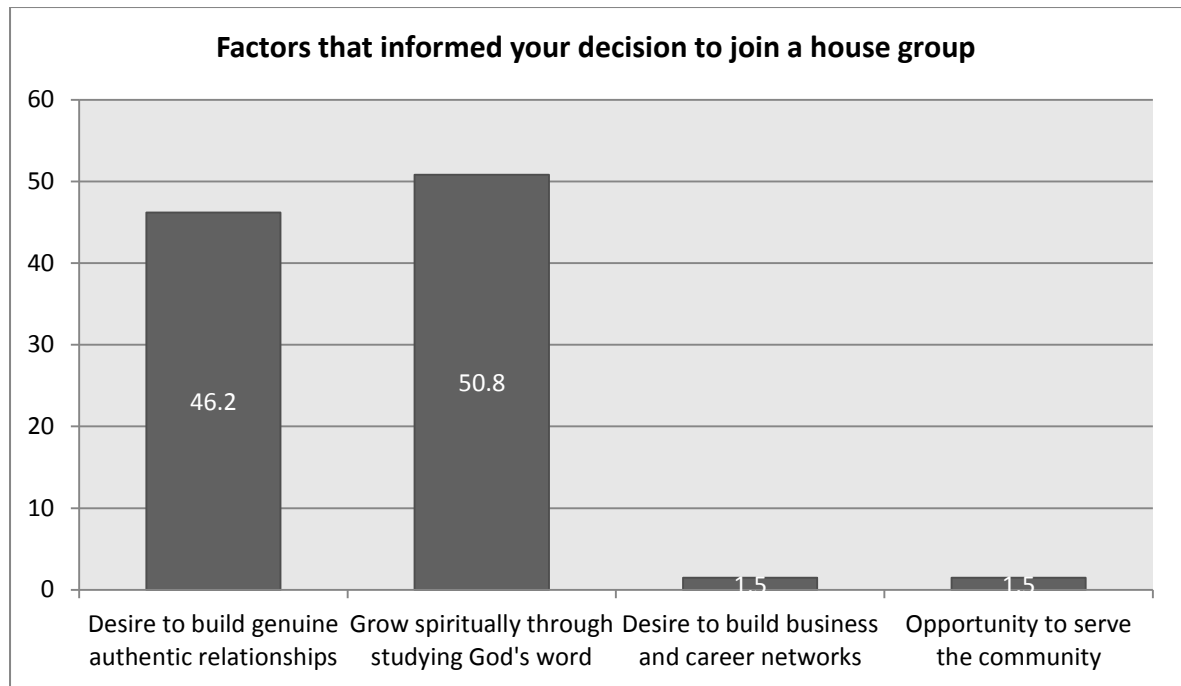


Figure . Factors that informed people's decision to join a house group

The research also reveals that 52.8% of the leaders as compared to 37.9% of the members desired to join a house group to build genuine and authentic relationships, whereas 58.6% of the members as compared to 44.4% of the leaders joined the house group to grow spiritually through the word of God.

How Many People Joined the House Group

Figure 4 below indicates how many people joined house groups. Fifty two percent joined through the church bulletin, 23% joined through a friend, 11% were encouraged to joined from the pulpit, 9% joined through membership class, 3% joined from the neighbourhood and 2% joined from the church website. The findings clearly indicates that more than half of the respondents joined the house group through the print media in form of the church bulletin; ironically, only 2% joined through the media information of the church website.

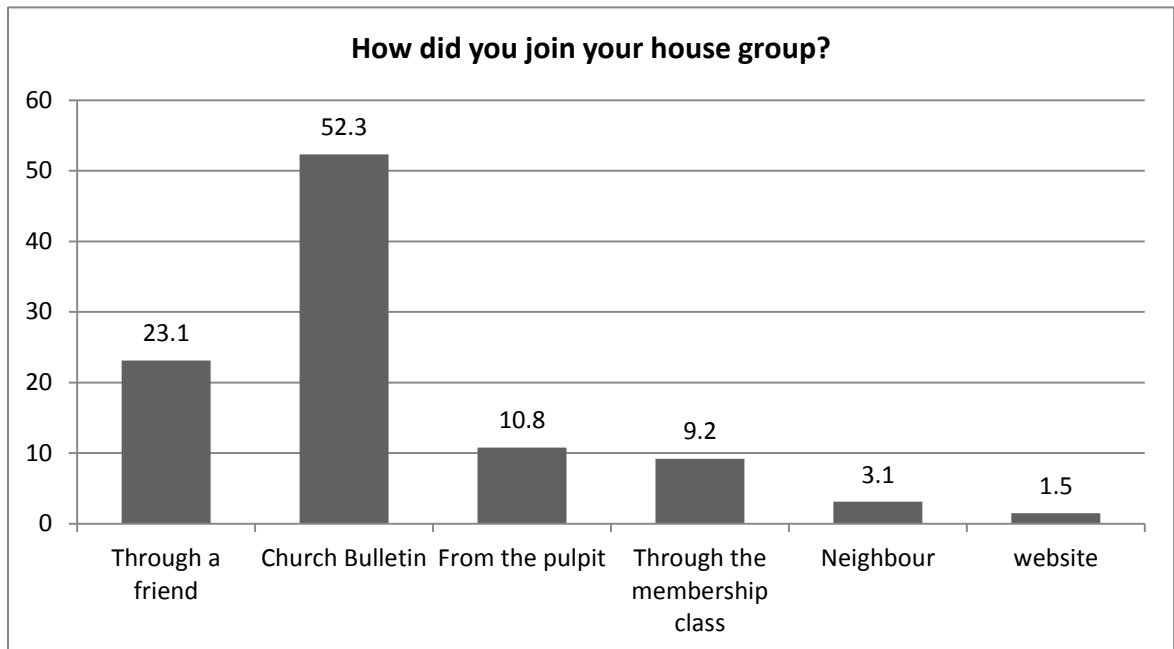


Figure . How many people joined the house group

How many people joined house groups in the last 3 months?

As seen in the figure 5 below, 29% of the respondents said that 2 members joined their house group in the last three months, 23% said 1 member joined in the last three months, 20% said 3 members joined in the last three months, 11% said 5 new members joined their house group in the last 3 months, 9% said 4 new members joined, and 8% said 6 and above new members joined their house group in the last three months. Therefore, this data reveals the frequency of people joining a house group which is also tied to the group's ability to accommodate new people, the leaders capacity to challenge the group members to invite new people and the general health of a house group in relation to spiritual multiplication.

The findings indicates 72% of the respondents say there are 3 or less new members in their house groups in the last three months, meaning that there is one new member every month in the house group on average.

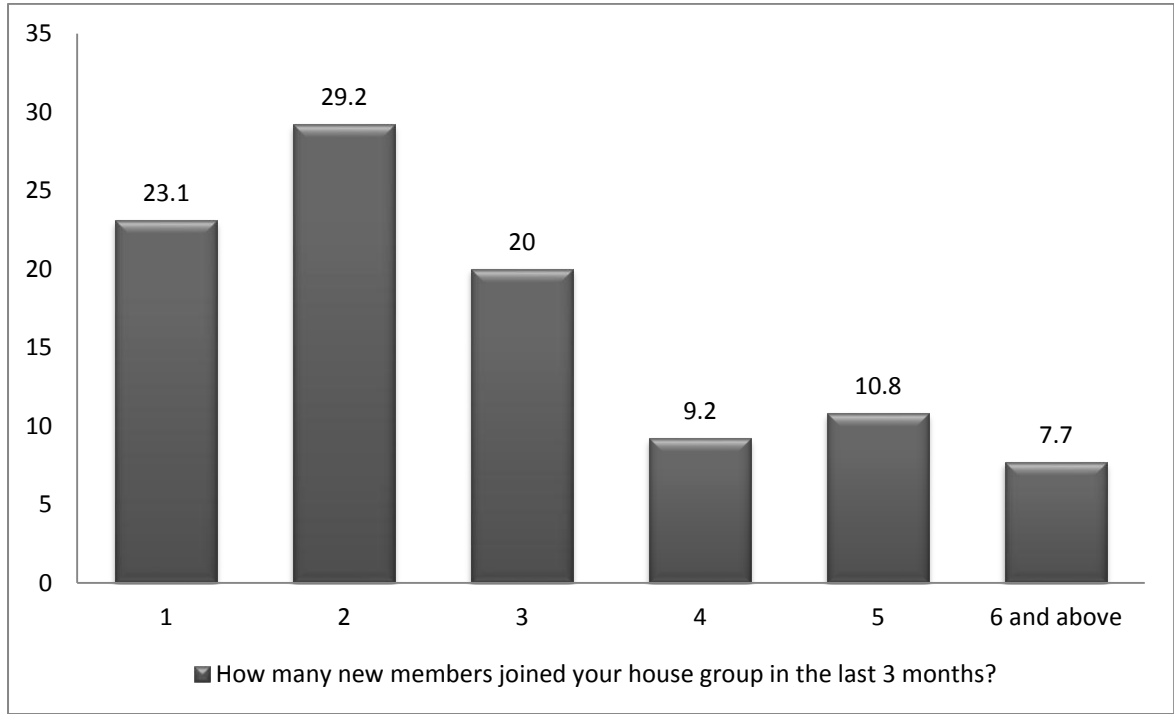


Figure . How many people joined house groups in the last 3 months

How Many People are in the House Group

The researcher noted that 29% of the house groups have 9-10 members, 25% have 13 and above members in their house groups, 23% have 11-12 members in their groups, 20% of the house groups have 6-8 members and only 3% of the house groups have 3-5 members. This finding reveals that 48% of the house groups have more than 10 members.

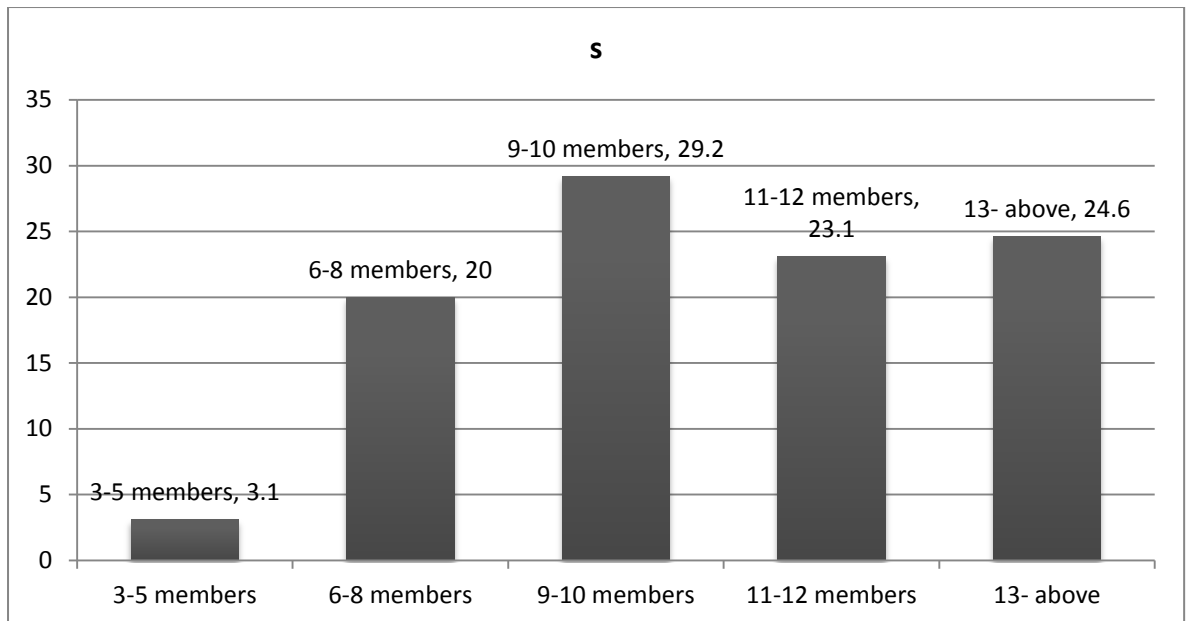


Figure . How many people are in the house group

Thus closely related to the previous finding of new members to the house groups in the last 3 months to be low specifically the findings indicated that 72% of the respondents said that there is one new member every month. This could be because there is no space for new members since the assumed maximum limit of a house group is 12 members.

How Far People Live from their House Group

The researcher noted that 46% live less than a kilometre from their house group, 23% of the respondents live between 1-2 kilometres, 11% live between 2-3kilometers from their house group, 9% between 3-5 kilometres, 5% 5-10 kilometres, 3% 10-15 kilometres, 1% between 15-20 kilometres and 2% of the respondents live between 25-30 kilometres. The findings highlights that 46% live within a walking distance from their house group. One of the questions to be discussed in the next chapter is, whether there is a relationship between the distance of the house group and the membership of the house group.

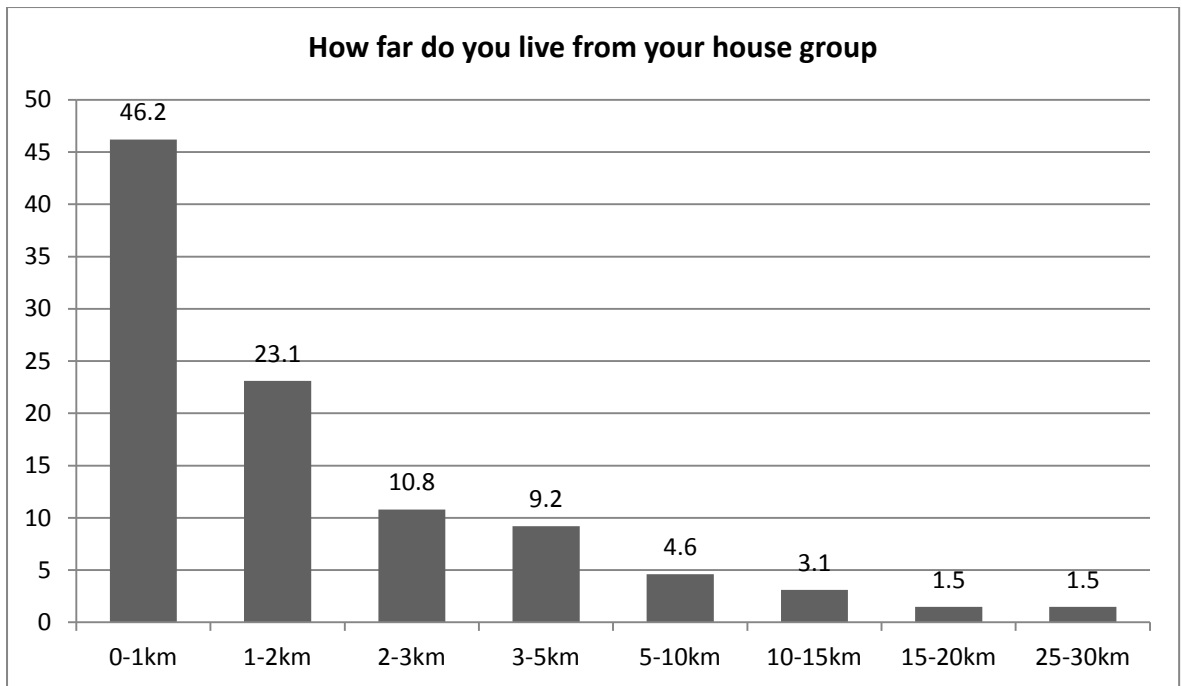


Figure . How far people live from their house group

How Long People have been in a House Group

Closely related to the question how many members are in a house group is how long has one being a member of a house group. The finding reveals that 49% of the respondent has been members less than a year; closely following them is 19% are those who have been members between 1-2 years, 14% of the respondents have been members for more than 5 years, 12% have been members 2-3 years and 6% of the respondents have been members between 3-4 years. The data reveals that the distance of the host of the house groups determines the motivation to join a house group the nearer to the host the more motivated people will be to join a house group.

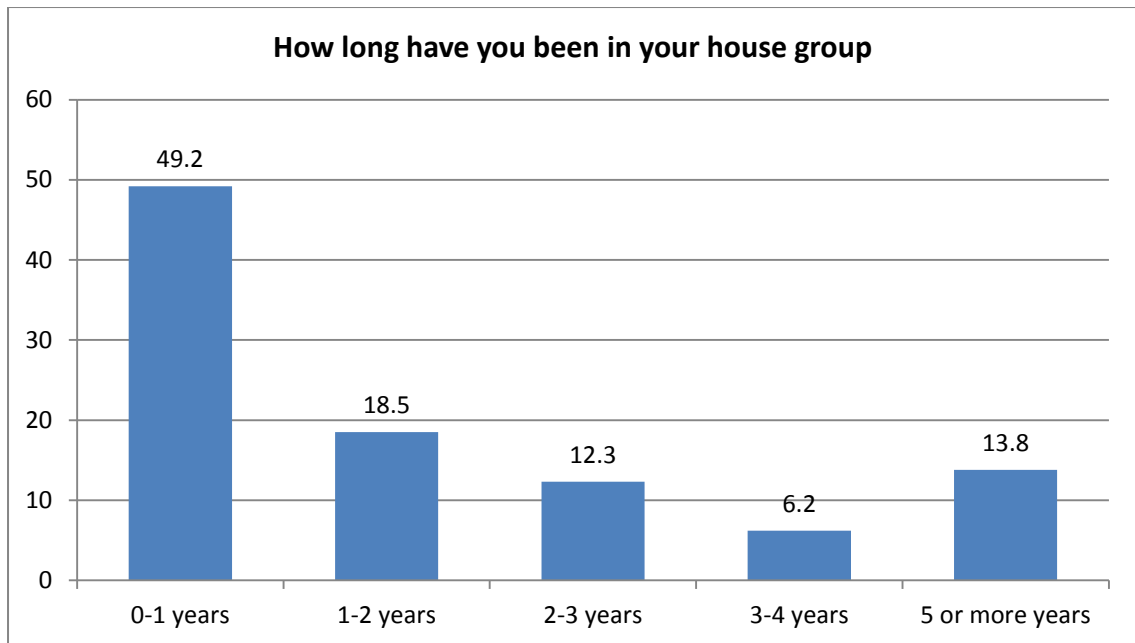


Figure . How long people have been in a house group

The findings above indicate that 68% of the respondents have been members for less than 2 years. If 49% of the respondents are new members (less than 1 year), how does that relate to figure 4 which describe how many new members joined the house groups in the last 3 months? Seventy two percent of the respondents said that there is one new member every month in the house group.

Age Group of the People in the House Group

Figure 9 below indicates that 23.1 % of the respondents are between ages 25-30 years, 18.5% are ages 30-35 years, 15.4% are ages 35-40 years, 13.8% of the respondents are ages 20-25 years, 10.8% are between ages 40-45 years and 45-50 years 7.7% are 50 years and above. The findings therefore reveal that 36.9% of the respondents are below age 30, compared to 7.7% who are 50 years and above. It is clear that 70.8%, the majority of the members in the house groups, are young and middle adults who are age 40 years and below. The research indicates that the majority of the people in the house groups are young adults and middle aged people

and their characteristic need is to belong. Thus affirms one of the key motivations to join a house group, which is to belong.

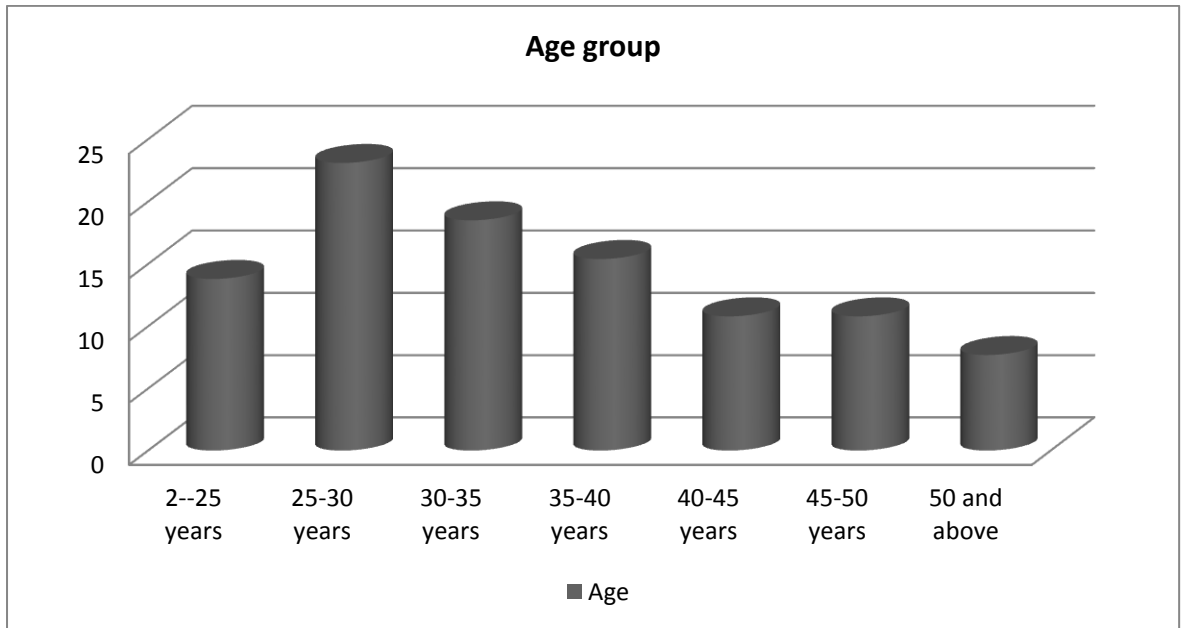


Figure . Age groups of the people in the house groups

The Involvement of the House Groups in Neighbourhood Social Justice

Concerning social justice, figure 9 below indicates that 45 % of the respondents are involved in social justice, 26% are rarely involved, 15% have never been involved in social justice, and 14% are frequently involved in social justice.

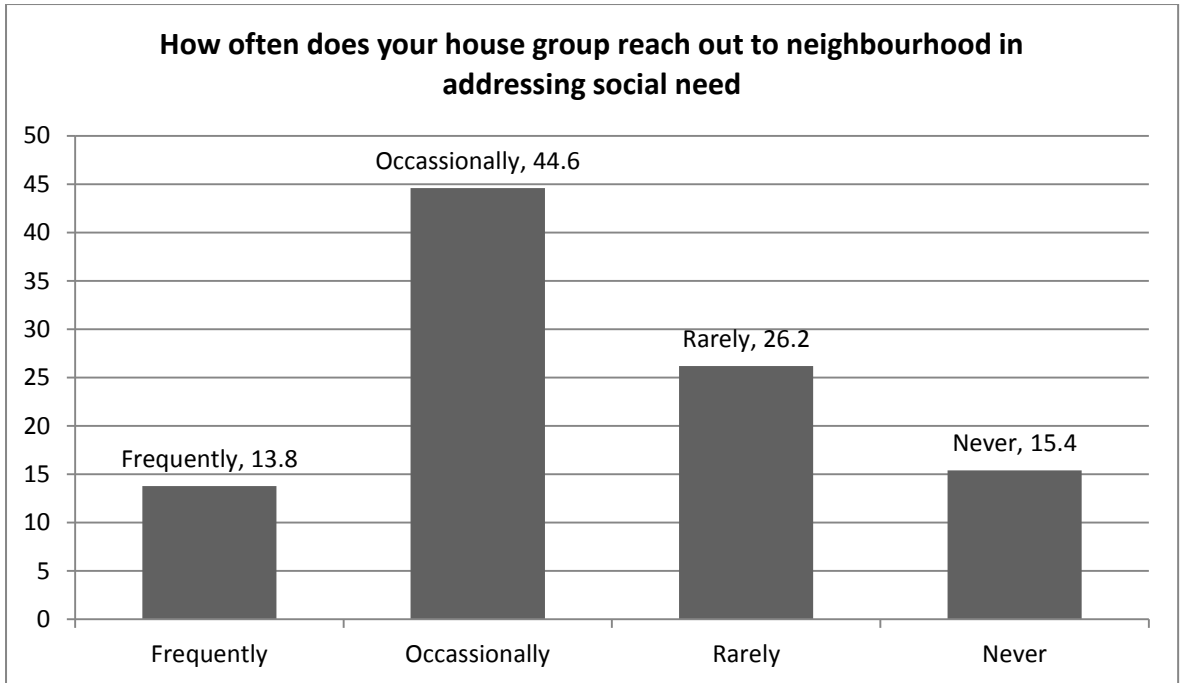


Figure . The involvement of the house groups in neighbourhood social justice

It is obvious that the majority of the respondents (86%) have never being involved in neighbourhood social justice or are rarely and occasionally involved.

The Favourite House Group Activity

Apparently, 30.8% of the respondents prefer the prayer and fasting month, followed by 29.2% of the respondents who prefer the outdoor adventures, 16.9% like house group parties, 10.8% prefer house group missions, 6.2% of the respondent's favourite's activities is birthday celebrations and social justice. The findings confirm the phenomenon in figure 8 where 86% have never being involved in neighbourhood social justice or are rarely and occasionally involved. This is reflected in the figure below where only 6.2% of the respondents would prefer to go out for social justice.

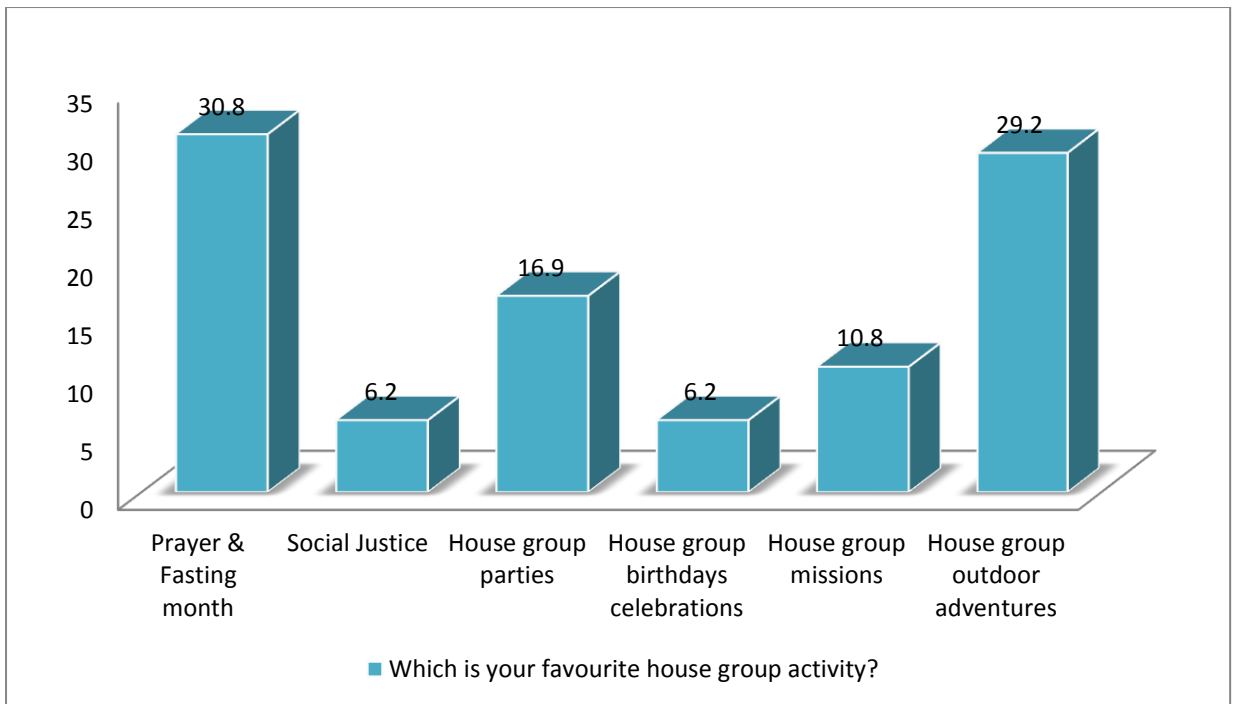


Figure . The favourite house group activity

The highest percentage of leaders is 25% who prefer outdoor adventure compared to 34.5% of the members. Thus, the highest percentage of members is 41.1% who prefer prayer and fasting as compared to 22.2% of the leaders.

Factors that Encouraged People to Join a House Group

The researcher found out that the majority of the respondents joined a house group because of their desire to know God and had the highest percentage of 62, followed by 60 to intellectually understand the Bible. The need to belong and to experience friendship and care tied with 54 marks. Proximity was another strongly influential factor of joining a house group with 26 marks. Joining a house group to build business networks had 14 marks. There was a tie of 11 marks for publicity from the pulpit and to handle stress and pressure better as strongly influential factors. The influence of the pastor was 7.7, while lastly the influence of friends was the lowest with 1.5. Seventy two point four percent of the members joined house groups to intellectually understand the bible better as compared to 47.2% of the leaders.

Table .Factors that Encouraged People to Join A House Group.

	Not at all influential	Not very influential	Somewhat influential	Influential	Strongly influential
Intellectually understand the Bible	3	5	11	22	60
The Pastor encouraged me	31	12	26	23	7.7
Many of my friends attend	49	12	28	9	1.5
To handle stress and pressure better	42	9	32	6	11
The need to belong	6	9	14	16.9	54
Experience friendship and care	3	6	19	18.5	54
Build business networks	31	20	28	8	14
Deep desire to know God	5	3	18.5	12	62
Publicity from the bulletin	20	14	30.8	25	11
Closeness to home/proximity	22	11	29	12	26

Interviews and Observations Analysis

The researcher was able to interview three pastors of house groups, namely:

(1) Pastor Noah, Nairobi Baptist Home Group Fellowship (HGF) Pastor; (2) Pastor Sam, Mavuno Chapel Life Group Pastor; and (3) Pastor Nicholas, NPC Valley Road Neighbourhood Bible Study pastor. In addition to the individual interviews, the researcher also conducted group interviews and observations with the small group

members of Nairobi Chapel, Nairobi Baptist, NPC Valley Road, Mavuno Chapel and Parklands Baptist Church.

NPC Valley Road has 3000 people in Neighbourhood Bible Study (NBS). The congregation, however, is 12,000 people; therefore 25% of its members are in NBS Groups. This compared with Mavuno Chapel, which has a congregation of about 3000 people with 2000 in Life Groups; thus, 66.7% of the church are attenders in small groups. Parklands Baptist has a congregation of 6000 with approximately 800 people in house groups, which means 13.3% of its members are in house groups, Nairobi Baptist has a congregation of 5000 with 800 people in the small groups; thus, 16% of its congregation are in Home Group Fellowships. Nairobi Chapel has a congregation of about 4,000 people with 900 people in E-Groups; thus, 22.5% are in Ekklesia Groups.

The above data paints an overview picture of the state of small groups that meet at home in all the five Nairobi Mega Churches. Moreover, the researcher collected more information from the pastors in charge of small home groups.

At NPC Valley Road, the pastor has been a member of the church for more than 20 years and he is above 50 years. He highlighted that their Neighbourhood Bible Study identify leaders from other church ministries e.g. men's ministry, ladies ministry, youth ministry etc.

NPC Valley Road strategy of mobilizing the congregation to join the Neighbourhood Bible Study groups is through ministry fair an occasional event where all ministries show case their activities, weekly advertisement at the pulpit and they have a desk every Sunday to register new members.

Neighbourhood Bible Study focuses on the Bible whereby their study varies from expository study to topical, textual and Narrative. The NBS use materials

published by an organization called Focus. Once a quarter they also engage in sermon series studies whereby they reflect on what the preacher said during the week. The main factor that influences people to join is to grow spiritually through studying God's word. The need to belong makes the people stay in their groups.

Apart from Bible study the groups are engaged in neighbourhood social justice once a quarter. In fact when the researcher visited the group that meets in State House Road they were planning their next social justice activity. The researcher also observed that it is a charismatic though composed group, having a lot of emphasis on the word of God. There was minimal social time and the group members were keen on time. The pastor shared that they are planning a massive multiplication campaign of 600 groups by the end of the year and their strategy is to allow the deputy leaders to take charge of the groups while the leaders go and start another group. However, a peculiar phenomenon was that they only have two trainings for their leader.

Home Fellowship Bible study groups at Nairobi Baptist are discipleship groups according to the pastor in charge, Pastor Noah. The emphasis is on discipleship which is also in line with the theme vision of the year. The pastor highlighted that Nairobi Baptist emphasizes and encourages their members from the pulpit to join them. Nairobi Baptist has a desk every Sunday to register new members and issue out weekly materials which are developed by the church. Nairobi Baptist is 50 years old therefore; most of the people in the congregation are above 50 years. The interview asserted that this fact posed a challenge of experiencing regular bereavements; the pastor is overwhelmed with funeral services and bereavement visits.

Nairobi Baptist has currently 80 Home Group Fellowships. It has been a challenge to grow the numbers, mainly because the groups rarely reach out to their

community, their focus is discipleship and sometimes multiplication as a result of discipleship takes time.

The researcher also noticed from the group interview and observation in one of their groups in South C that 99% of the members were more than 50 years old and were ladies. The group was also peculiar because they emphasized on Scripture memorization as their first activity and later on mainly focused on the study material without room for discussion and application. The concerns and prayer point were mainly related to health issues or bereavements and there was a lot of emphasis on eschatology.

Nairobi chapel *ekklesia* groups are mainly formed from *mizizi* which is a ten-weeks curriculum that covers the basics of the Christian faith. Members of the congregation are regularly encouraged to join small home groups (*ekklesia*); the common terminology used is *plug-in*. One of the main reasons that encourages members of Nairobi Chapel to join small home groups is the need to belong. The church demographic reveals that the majority of the congregation are young professional and middle adults. E-Groups are regularly involved in social justice at least once a quarter, and this type of involvement is highlighted in their *mizizi* curriculum. Nairobi Chapel's small groups mainly do expository study with a lot of emphasis on real life application. The researcher attended one of the *ekklesia* groups and noticed that most of the members hold high profile jobs. Thus, the group was very professional with a lot of emphasis on the material (Experiencing God). The researcher noticed that the group was more objective oriented such that members were more concerned in saying the right answers rather than how the answers apply to their lives. Most of the application examples were about other people, not themselves.

Life Groups at Mavuno Chapel are similar to that of Nairobi Chapel, the entry point is that same *mizizi*. The church conducts *mizizi* entries trice in a year. During the entry stages a lot of publicity is done, especially from the pulpit, to attract people to do *mizizi*. A class of *mizizi* can have 100 people. After the ten weeks the people are dispersed and start their Life Groups based on where they reside. Moreover, in week four the leader of the upcoming Life group is chosen by the pastors. One of the pastor among the Life group pastors highlighted that most of the people joining the Life Groups are either new believers or unbelievers.

Nairobi Chapel and Mavuno Chapel have a similarity in regards to their small group ministry because Mavuno Chapel is a daughter church of Nairobi Chapel. Thus, the reasons for joining Life Groups at Mavuno are similar to that of Nairobi Chapel because of demographics. A primary need is the need to belong; thus, many people join for relationship purposes. The pastor highlighted that Mavuno's key mandate was to give pastoral care to every member of their church. Spiritual growth was secondary as compared to other churches, notably NPC Valley Road.

Mavuno Chapel has 66.6% of its members in small home groups, a remarkable number and the envy of many churches. However, a lot is left to chance as the church strives for numbers instead of spiritual depth. The pastor noted that one of Mavuno's key challenges is leadership. The entry point for joining a Life Group is through *mizizi* where it takes ten weeks. However by week four the facilitators should have already identified other leaders who will lead the Life Groups that meets in various homes. Therefore, the process of choosing these leaders based on personality traits and general involvement in the discussions might not be the best strategy. As a result many leaders who are not born again or are have double lifestyles have been chosen to lead Life Groups.

Similar to Nairobi Chapel, Mavuno's Life Groups are highly involved in social justice in their neighbourhood and community work. Their curriculum is similar to Nairobi Chapel because they begin with Mizizi, then *Ombi* and then *Hatua*. All of these studies combined take almost one year. The second year Life Groups use sermon series material whereby they emphasize real life application.

Finally, Parklands Baptist Church is the beneficiary of this research because all the questionnaires were conducted in their house groups. The congregation at Parklands Baptist Church joined house groups for two main reasons, for fellowship and to grow spiritually through studying God's Word. Activities of House groups at Parklands Baptist Church are missions, Bible Study, worship, fun days, Lord's Table and prayer. Their key verse is Acts 2:42-47. In conclusion, the researcher noted that there is little emphasis given on the pulpit about the house groups ministry.

Summary of Research Findings and Analysis

In response to question 1 which was an open-ended question, it was interesting to discover that 67.7% of the respondents joined house groups for fellowship and desire to grow spiritually for intimacy with God.

Moreover, it was also interesting to find out that 33.9% of the respondents have been members of Parklands Baptist Church for less than 2 years, a similar percentage with that of congregants who have been members for more than 8 years. Furthermore, 49% of the respondents have been members of the house group for less than a year. Also worth noting is that only 14% of the respondents reach out to their neighbourhoods to address a social need.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will summarize the previous chapters, integrate research findings with research questions and the literature review, draw conclusions from research findings and present appropriate recommendations.

Summary

In Chapter 1, the researcher asserted that churches in the modern urban centres are facing common phenomena whereby the more they increase in numbers, the more they decrease in their spiritual growth. The Church has lost its power and its voice to address moral, political, economic, physical, social, leadership and even spiritual issues facing the society today. As the influence of the church continues to weaken, people are searching for safe places where they can share their struggles, ask questions and be accepted. They seem to be looking for answers in all the wrong places, like pubs, clubs, media, and disco theatres. For this reason the need of house groups becomes vital in their lives. House groups, therefore, provide an opportunity for people to become more like Christ and to experience care, acceptance, and true community. One of the principle functions of a house group is discipleship.

The studies suggest that there is indeed a relationship between what motivates people to join a house groups and them actually joining a house group. Also, there is a relationship between leadership development in the house group and numerical growth in the house group. The evidence from the questionnaires, conducted observations, and group and individual interviews shows that there is a significant

relationship between what motivated Christians to join house groups in the first century church and what is motivating the twenty first- century urban Christian to belong to a house group. Recommendations about the investigated phenomena of house groups or their equivalent in the Nairobi mega churches will be highlighted in this chapter.

In chapter 2, the researcher assumed that the transformational leadership theory explains how house groups' leaders affect follower moral identity and holistic growth, which is further explained by using Bandura's social cognitive theory. Likewise, transformational leaders influence followers' moral, affective, and cognitive development through modelling of positive virtues and values (e.g. "leading by example"). This aspect of transformational leadership is key for leaders' in house groups to understand that they facilitate holistic follower's development through modelling. Moreover, numerical growth will be a result of the application of transformational leadership principles in the house group namely: idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation.

Having elaborated the dynamics of the small group ministry, the researcher concurs that three trends will affect the future of the small group movement: the desire for community, demographic trends, and how the church responds to a changing culture. With spirituality a hot commodity and congruence a challenging dream in today's world, people have a hunger to process how their inner spirituality can be expressed in their outer lifestyles. Small groups will provide that context for spiritual growth and ministry opportunity for service to the church and the community at large.

Transformational leadership is recommended as the key to numerical multiplication and holistic growth in the house group. Also worth noting is the

leadership development that results from transformational leadership from the house groups should be deliberate through training and mentorship. The research also addressed the role and responsibility of the house group in addressing the general needs of the society in which they reside in. The needs are spiritual, social, emotional, environmental, educational, political and economic needs bearing in mind the context of the research being Africa's urban population.

In chapter, 3 the researcher examined the first century church which met in homes, with specific reference to Acts 2:42-47 as the guideline of the activities of the house church. Moreover, the researcher considered on the house church in Rome, specifically that of Priscilla and Aquila in Romans Chapter 16.

In chapter 4, the researcher outlined (1) the methodology he used in data collection, (2) the basic procedures applied and their rationale, (3) the population sampled, and (4) the analysis technique used to interpret data collected.

In chapter 5, the researcher recorded and discussed the research findings and analysis of the data collected from the field. The findings revealed most people joined house groups for two main reasons; spiritual growth and fellowship.

Integration of Research Findings with Literature Review

In the literature review, the following observations were made: demographics of urban centres are a contributor to increased loneliness and anonymity. People do not know each other and have become disconnected from everything but the internet and entertainment culture. Thus, house groups provide a vehicle for intimacy and friendship within the context of a life purpose that is greater than the individual. The research findings revealed that most people joined house groups for two main reasons; spiritual growth and for fellowship and the fact that they are continuing to join house groups and are participating in the house group is a testament that their needs are

being fulfilled. Therefore, it can be concluded that social dynamics of friendships, networks, and the building of small, intimate groups appears to be one of the basic needs, especially of communities that are individualistic and have weak group ties, such as in modern cities like Nairobi. This reality is in contrast with the traditional African community in the rural areas whereby social dynamics of friendships, and neighbourliness was a lifestyle and thus the norm.¹

In the literature review it was noted that transformational leadership theory explains how house groups' leaders affect follower moral identity and holistic growth which is further explained by using Bandura's social cognitive theory. The research revealed that the leaders of the house group should play a key role in facilitating holistic members development and numerical growth.

In terms of favourite house group activity, 30.8% of the respondents prefer the prayer and fasting month, followed by 29.2% of the respondents who prefer the outdoor adventures, 16.9% like house group parties, 10.8% prefer house group missions, 6.2% of the respondent's favourite's activities is birthday celebrations and social justice. Therefore, this finding demonstrates that people are joining house groups for spiritual growth and for fellowship. Transformational leaders should therefore, influence followers' moral, affective, and cognitive development through modelling of positive virtues and values (e.g. "leading by example"). This aspect of transformational leadership is key for leaders' in house groups to understand that they facilitate holistic follower's development through modelling.

Numerical growth should be as a result of the application of transformational leadership in the house group. The researcher noted that 48% of the house groups

¹ Paul Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 331.

have more than 10 members. In relation to the previous finding of how many new members joined a house group in the last 3 months. The findings indicated that it was low, to be specific 72% of the respondents said that there is one new member every month. Could this be as a result of no space for the new members since the assumed maximum limit of a house group is 12 members, or is it a transformational leadership problem? Transformational leadership behaviours that should thus be embedded in the house groups are; intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, idealized influence and individualized consideration.

Closely related to the question of how many members are in a house group is how long one has being a member of a house group, a clear litmus test of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership ensures holistic growth that consequently leads to numerical multiplication. The findings indicate that 68% of the respondents have been members of house groups for less than 2 years. If 49% of the respondents are new members (less than 1 year), how does that relate to figure 4 which describe how many new members joined the house groups in the last 3 months? Seventy two percent of the respondents said that there is one new member every month in the house group. Possible explanation include: (1) house groups have transformational leaders who are multiplying themselves in other; and (2) members of the church are frequently joining the house groups from the pulpit, bulletin announcements or just their own initiative for nurture their spiritual lives or they have a deep need to belong.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between house groups as an independent variable and what motivate people to join house groups. Furthermore, the research also sought to synchronize similarities between the first

century church life and the twenty-first century church life in regards to house groups and its various aspects based on Acts 2:42-47. From the investigation, it emerged that there is a massive recruitment of people to join house groups from the leadership and that the pulpit and bulletin advertisements are as a result of that leadership. Moreover, there is a deep hunger of growing spiritually among the members and need to belong that fuels the members desire to join house groups after receiving invitations from the leadership through the media outlets. Transformational leadership among house group leaders is minimal if the findings of social justice participation and numerical growth are to be accepted.

This finding is an indictment on five mega churches in Nairobi that are at the forefront on house group fellowships. In these mega churches it appears that house groups numerically facilitate church growth. Moreover, the members are experiencing holistic growth in the following are; spiritual, mental, social/ emotional and physical. However, special attention has been on house groups at Parklands Baptist Church. From the investigation, the importance of transformational leadership emerged as a facilitator of holistic growth of members (spiritual, mental, social/ emotional and physical) and numerical multiplication as a result of the holistic transformation.

Recommendations

House Groups ought to be evaluated on a regular basis so as to embed the culture of holistic growth (spiritual, mental, social/ emotional and physical) of its members and consequently result to numerical growth of the house groups and the church at large.

The researcher noted that most house groups have specialized only on spiritual growth. Very few house groups are involved in social justice that focuses on social development, outdoors activities that should build the members' physical

development, and to engage in intellectual studying of the Scriptures to build the members' mental development. This means that house groups should experience a paradigm shift that stops focusing only on spiritual growth to promote holistic growth (spiritual, mental, social/ emotional and physical) in an attempt of changing the world around them using kingdom principles.

The researcher recommends transformational leadership as the catalyst to bring the recommended paradigm shift from spiritual growth to holistic growth. Therefore, transformational leadership should involve an exceptional form of influence that moves group members to accomplish more than what is usually expected of them. It is a process that often incorporates charismatic and visionary leadership. Therefore, if the house group invests in transformational leadership trainings, the groups will experience incredible holistic growth that will manifest itself in numerical growth evidently seen in Act 2:47.² This approach will ensure house groups are consistent with the biblical first century model of the church found in Acts 2:42-47.

Profile of the Mega Churches

It has emerged from this investigation that, Nairobi Pentecostal Church Valley Road has 3000 people in Neighbourhood Bible Study. The congregation, however, is 12,000 people; therefore, 25% of its members are in Neighbourhood Bible Study. This compares to Mavuno Chapel, which has a congregation of about 3000 people with 2000 Life Groups, which is 66.6% of the church are in small groups.

Parklands Baptist has a congregation of 6000 with approximately 800 people in house groups, which means 13.3% of its members are in house groups. Nairobi

² Northhouse, 169.

Baptist, on the other hand, has a congregation of 5000 with 800 people in their Home Group Fellowships. Thus, 16% of its congregation are in Home Group Fellowships. Nairobi Chapel has a congregation of about 4,000 people with 900 people in E-Groups; thus, 22.5% are in Ekklesia Groups.

Areas of Further Study

Taking a brief look at the research questions/hypothesis and the evidence from the research findings, the researcher suggests the following areas for further study:

1. The first research question was to investigate the role of house groups in numerical church growth. Evidence from the research indicates that indeed house groups are the pillars of the church a good example is Mavuno church. However, churches must either decide to be a church of house groups or a church with house groups. Further research on this statement is recommended so as to grow strong groups.
2. The second question was to find out the dimensions of holistic growth in the house groups, which are physical, social, spiritual, financial and mental development. Findings from the research indicate most house groups are only focusing on the spiritual growth and neglecting the other areas. Further research on how house groups can engage in physical, social/emotional and mental growth is recommended.
3. Finally, the third research question was to examine the role of transformational leadership result to numerical and holistic growth. The findings clearly indicate the lack of transformational leadership; thus, few people in all the churches are actively engaged in the house groups. However, a study needs to be undertaken to investigate the technical

aspect of transformational leadership principles that leads to its practice in the house groups in a vivid and obvious manner.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, Leith. *A Church for the 21st Century*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1992.
- Arrington, French L. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988.
- Aubrey, Malphurs. *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992.
- Banks, Robert J. *Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in their Cultural Setting*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group.
- Barker, Steve, Judy Johnson, Jimmy Long, Rob Malone, and Ron Nicholas. *Small Group Leaders' Handbook*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1982.
- Benson, Warren, S. and Mark H. Senter III, eds. *The Complete Book of Youth Ministry*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1987.
- Boshers, Bo, and Kim Anderson. *Student Ministry for the 21st Century: Transforming Your Youth Group into a Vital Student Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992.
- Brookfield, Stephen D. *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995.
- Carl, George F. *Preparing your Church for the Future*. Tarrytown, NY: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1991.
- Carson, D. A., R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, and G. J. Wenham, eds. *New Bible Commentary*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1994.
- Chadwick, Henry. *The Early Church*. London: Penguin Books, 1967.
- Christian Education Journal. *Published by Talbot School of Theology in Journal of Leadership and Organizational studies*, 2009. Vol. 18 Number 2 May
- Donahue, Bill. *Leading Life-Changing Small Groups*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2002.
- Donahue, Bill, and Russ Robinson. *Building a Church of Small Groups: A Place Where Nobody Stands Alone*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 2001.

- Egan, Gerard. *Face to Face: The Small-Group Experience and Interpersonal Growth*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1973.
- Finger, Reta Halteman. *Roman House Churches for Today: A Practical Guide for Small Groups*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2007.
- Fraze, Randy. *The Connecting Church: Beyond Small Groups to Authentic Community*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.
- Fuder, John E., and Noel Castellanos, eds. *A Heart for the Community: New Models for Urban and Sub-Urban Ministry*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009.
- George, Carl F. *Prepare Your Church for the Future*. Tarrytown, NY: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1991.
- Gérard, Albert S., ed. *European-Language Writing In Sub-Saharan Africa, Volume. Hungry: A Coordinating Committee of a Comparative History of Literatures In European Languages*, 1986.
- Gorman, Julie. "Small Groups in the Local Church." In *Introducing Christian Education: Foundations for the Twenty first Century*, edited by Michael J. Anthony, 176-84. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.
- Greenberg, Jerald. ed. *Organizational Behavior: The State of the Science*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc Publishers, 1994.
- Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*. 3rd ed. Carlisle, UK: The Paternoster Press, 1994.
- Hadaway, Kirk C., Francis M. DuBose, and Stuart A Wright. *Home Cell Groups and House Churches*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987.
- Hendriksen, William. *New Testament Commentary: The Gospel of Luke*. The Banner of Truth Trust, 1979.
- Hengel, Martin. *Property and Riches in the Early Church*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974.
- Hiebert, Paul. *Transforming Worldviews*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.
- <http://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2006/nomoremnicegroup.html> accessed by this author on 24th April 2009 at 5.05pm.
- Jagers, J. Lee "The Balanced Life & The Christian Life"
<http://leejagers.wordpress.com/the-balanced-life-the-christian-life> (accessed 19/4/2010).
- Jane. *How are habits formed: Modelling habit formation in the real world*" in the *European Journal of Social Psychology*.

- Keener, Craig S. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press.
- Kenneth R. Thompson Senior editor. Sage Publication Production: Sulakshana Pandita. 2011.
- Kombo Donald Kisilu and Delno L. A. Tromp. *Proposal and Thesis Writing*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006.
- Lally Phillippa, M. Cornelia H., Jaarsveld, van., Potts Henry W. W., and Wardle,
- Lee, Raymond M. *Unobtrusive Methods in Social Research*. Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2000.
- Lisa Miller, Paul Rozin, and Alan Page Fiske. "Food Sharing and Feeding Another Person Suggest Intimacy: Two Studies of American College Students." http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/anthro/faculty/fiske/pubs/Miller_Rozin_Fiske_Food-Sharing_1998.pdf (accessed 24/11/2011)
- Malphurs, Aubrey. *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting: A Guide for Starting Any Kind of Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2011.
- Marah, John Karefah. *African People in the Global Village: An Introduction to Pan African Studies*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1998.
- McBride, Neal F. *How to Lead Small Groups*. Singapore: Navigators Press, 1992.
- Miller, C. John. *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986.
- Mugenda, Abel Gitau. *Social Science Research: Theory and Principles*. Nairobi: Kijabe Printing Press, 2008.
- Neumann, Mikel. *Home Groups for Urban Culture: Biblical Small Group Ministry on Five Continents*. Pasadena, CA: William Cary Library, 1999.
- Njoroge, Peter. "A Case Study of Impact of Small Groups in Mavuno Downtown Church." Research Project, Nairobi International School of Theology, 2007.
- Northouse, Peter G. *Leadership: Theory And Practice*. CA: Sage Publication, 2010.
- Peck, Andy. "2020 Vision." *A Journal of Christianity* (2006): 1-56.
- Prestholdt, Jeremy. *Domesticating The World: African Consumerism And The Genealogies of Globalization*. University of California Press, 2008.
- Reid, Luc. "How Long Does It Take To Form A Habit?" [Http://www.Luc Reid.Com/?P=645](http://www.luc Reid.Com/?P=645) (accessed On 24/11/2011).

- Reising, Richard L. *Church Marketing 101: Preparing Your Church for Greater Growth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006.
- Ryan, Dana. "Helping You Grow in Christ," *A Discipleship Journal* 169 (2009): 1-82.
- Scott, F. Ernest. *The First Age of Christianity*. London: Macmillan Company, 1926.
- Selltiz, Claire et al. *Research Methods in Social Relations*. USA: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1959.
- Stasinowsky, Cheryl. *Deeper Relevance: A Complete One Year Daily Devotional*. USA: Cheryl Stasinowsky, 2010.
- Stearns, Peter N. *Consumerism in World History: The Global Transformation of Desire* 2nd edition. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Tenny, Merrill C. *New Testament Times*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965.
- The New Interpreter's Bible, A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*. Vol. 10. Acts Introduction to Epistolary Literature, Romans, 1 Corinthians.
- Venkat Krishnan R. "Discussion Effect of Transformational Leadership and Leader's Power on Follower's Duty-Oriented and Spirituality." http://www.greatlakes.edu.in/pdf/GL_Herald2_Effect-of-Transformational.pdf 23/11/2011 (accessed November 23rd 2011).
- Williams, Connie ed. "Helping You Grow in Christ." *A Discipleship Journal* 167 (2008):1-82.
- Willis, Joleen A. "The Integrated Small Group: Bible Study, Community and Mission." A Dissertation. Asbury Theological Seminary, 2008.
- Wuthnow, Robert. "Small Group Ministry in the Twenty First Century" in *Introducing Christian Education: Foundations for the Twenty first Century* ed. Michael J. Anthony Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.
- Yukl, Gary A. *Leadership in Organizations*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002.
- _____. *Leadership in Organizations* 7th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2009.
- Zhu, Weichun. Ronald Riggio E., Bruce Avolio J. and John Sosik J., "The Effect of Leadership on Follower Moral Identity: Does Transformational/transactional style make a difference?" *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*. Vol. 18 no. 2 (May 2001): 150-163.

APPENDIX A

HOUSE GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE OF PARKLANDS BAPTIST CHURCH

Section A

Please put a tick on your answer.

1. What factors influenced you to join a house group? Please comment

2. Are you a member of Parklands Baptist Church?
Yes No
3. If yes for how long?
 0-2years 2-4years 4-6years 6-8years 8-10years
4. Have you attended the membership classes?
Yes No
5. Which age group do you belong to?
 20-25years 25-30years 30-35years 35-40years 40-45years
 45-50years 50 and above
6. How far do you live from your house group?
 0-1km 1-2km 2-3km 3-5km 5-10km
 10-15km 15-20km 20-25km 25-30km 30 km and above
7. How did you join your house group?
 Through a friend Church bulletin From the pulpit
 Through the membership class Neighbour Family week
 Website
8. How long have you been a member of your house group?
 0-1years 1-2years 2-3years 3-4years 5-10years

9. Which is your favourite part of the house group meeting?
- Prayer Singing Bible study Social time after Bible study
- Tea & snacks Social time before Bible study Lord's Table
10. Which is your favourite house group activity?
- Prayer & fasting month Social justice House Group parties
- House group birthdays celebrations House group missions
- House group outdoor adventures
11. Which is your favourite house group ministry activity?
- Prayer & fasting month Annual retreats House Group fun day
- Visiting our pastors Trainings (counselling & leadership)
12. How often does your house group reach out to your neighbourhood in addressing a social need?
- Very frequently Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
13. How many new members joined your house group in the last 3 months?
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 and above
14. How many people are in your house group?
- 3-5 6-8 9-10 11-12 12 and above
15. In your decision to join a house group, which was more influential; pulpit announcement or the many people you know who are attending?
- Pulpit announcement Many friends attending.

Section B

16. Which one of the following factors informed your decision to join a house group?
- Build genuine and authentic relationships
- Grow spiritually through studying God's Word
- Build business and career networks
- Opportunity to serve the community
- My friends attend so I attend
17. Which of the following factors encouraged you to join a house group? (Check all that apply)

- Experience friendship and care
- Intellectually understand the Bible better
- The pastor encouraged and challenged me
- Many of my friends attend
- To handle work stress and pressure better
- The need to belong
- Deep desire to experience God intimately
- Publicity from the bulletin
- Build business/career networks
- Closeness to home/proximity

18. Rate each of the following factors that have been shown to have some influence and encouraged you to join a house group. Using your own experience for each factor please tell us whether the factor was; ‘strongly influential’ ‘influential’ ‘somewhat influential’, or not at all influential’ ‘not at all’.

	Strongly influential	Influential	Somewhat influential	Not very influential	Not at all
Intellectually understand the Bible					
The pastor encouraged me					
Many of my friends attend					
To handle stress and pressure better					
The need to belong					
Experience friendship and care					
Build business networks					
Deep desire to know God					
Publicity from the bulletin					
Closeness to home/proximity					

19. Please rank-order your factors from the following list based on their influence in encouraging you to join a house group. Use 5 to indicate the most encouraging factor, 4 the next most encouraging factor, etc.

- _____ Experience friendship and care
- _____ Intellectually understand the Bible better
- _____ The pastor encouraged and challenged me
- _____ Many of my friends attend
- _____ To handle stress and pressure better
- _____ The need to belong
- _____ Deep desire to experience God intimately
- _____ Publicity from the bulletin
- _____ Build business/career networks
- _____ Closeness to home/proximity

FREQUENCY TABLES FOR ANALYSIS

	Frequency	Percent
Leaders and New Leaders	36	55.4
Members	29	44.6
Total	65	100.0

1. What factors influenced you to join a house group? Please comment

	Frequency	Percent
Desire to grow spiritually for intimacy with God	23	35.4
Fellowship	21	32.3
Accountability	10	15.4
Spiritual growth	5	7.7
Togetherness	6	9.2
Total	65	100.0

2. Are you a member of Parklands Baptist Church?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	59	90.8
No	6	9.2
Total	65	100.0

3. If yes, for how long?

	Frequency	Percent
0-2years	20	33.9
2-4years	11	18.6
4-6years	5	8.5
6-8years	3	5.1
8 or more years	20	33.9
Total	59	100.0

4. Have you attended the membership classes?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	46	70.8
No	19	29.2
Total	65	100.0

5. To which age group do you belong to?

	Frequency	Percent
20-25years	9	13.8
25-30years	15	23.1
30-35years	12	18.5
35-40years	10	15.4
40-45years	7	10.8
45-50years	7	10.8
50 and above	5	7.7
Total	65	100.0

6. How far do you live from your house group?

	Frequency	Percent
0-1km	30	46.2
1-2km	15	23.1
2-3km	7	10.8
3-5km	6	9.2
5-10km	3	4.6
10-15km	2	3.1
15-20km	1	1.5
25-30km	1	1.5
Total	65	100.0

7. How did you join your house group?

	Frequency	Percent
Through a friend	15	23.1
Church bulletin	34	52.3
From the pulpit	7	10.8
Through the membership class	6	9.2
Neighbour	2	3.1
Website	1	1.5
Total	65	100.0

8. How long have you been a member of your house group?

	Frequency	Percent
0-1years	32	49.2
1-2years	12	18.5
2-3years	8	12.3
3-4years	4	6.2
5 or more years	9	13.8
Total	65	100.0

9. Which is your favourite part of the house group meeting?

	Frequency	Percent
Prayer	19	29.2
Singing	4	6.2
Bible study	35	53.8
Social time after Bible study	6	9.2
Social time before Bible study	1	1.5
Total	65	100.0

10. Which is your favourite house group activity?

	Frequency	Percent
Prayer & fasting month	20	30.8
Social justice	4	6.2
House Group parties	11	16.9
House group birthdays celebrations	4	6.2
House group missions	7	10.8
House group outdoor adventures	19	29.2
Total	65	100.0

11. Which is your favourite house group ministry activity?

	Frequency	Percent
Prayer & fasting month	17	26.2
Annual retreats	13	20.0
House Group fun day	13	20.0
Visiting our pastors	6	9.2
Trainings (counselling & leadership)	16	24.6
Total	65	100.0

12. How often does your house group reach out to your neighbourhood in addressing a social need?

	Frequency	Percent
Frequently	9	13.8
Occasionally	29	44.6
Rarely	17	26.2
Never	10	15.4
Total	65	100.0

13. How many new members joined your house group in the last 3 months?

	Frequency	Percent
1	15	23.1
2	19	29.2
3	13	20.0
4	6	9.2
5	7	10.8
6 and above	5	7.7
Total	65	100.0

14. How many people are in your house group?

	Frequency	Percent
3-5	2	3.1
6-8	13	20.0
9-10	19	29.2
11-12	15	23.1
13 and above	16	24.6
Total	65	100.0

15. In your decision to join a house group, which was more influential; pulpit announcement or the many people you know who are attending?

	Frequency	Percent
Pulpit announcement	55	84.6
Many friends attending.	10	15.4
Total	65	100.0

16. Which of the following types of small groups do you prefer? (Open new members can join, while closed is where there is restriction).

	Frequency	Percent
Open group	63	96.9
Closed group	2	3.1
Total	65	100.0

17. What kind of Bible Study do you prefer in your group

	Frequency	Percent
Expository study	24	36.9
Topical study	27	41.5
Textual study	8	12.3
Narrative study	6	9.2
Total	65	100.0

18. What kind of material do you prefer in your group

	Frequency	Percent
Sermon-based material	6	9.2
Discipleship materials	15	23.1
Real life application materials	44	67.7
Total	65	100.0

19. Has the house leadership structure of Zone leaders, Area leaders, House group leader and Deputy House group leaders facilitated leadership Development?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	61	93.8
No	4	6.2
Total	65	100.0

19b.Explain your answer at Q19a

	Frequency	Percent
Leaders identify potential leaders	11	16.9
Trainings	12	18.5
Role model	6	9.2
Motivation	4	6.2
Shared Responsibility	4	6.2
Not mentioned	28	43.1
Total	65	100.0

20. Do you think transformational leadership in the house group influences the member's moral, spiritual and mental development?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	64	98.5
No	1	1.5
Total	65	100.0

20b. Briefly describe

	Frequency	Percent
Willingness to know more about teachings	3	4.6
learn more about scripture	8	12.3
Ability to lead and solve problems	5	7.7
Environment is relaxing creating confidentiality	1	1.5
Develop both spiritually and mentally	6	9.2
Not mentioned	42	64.6
Total	65	100.0

21. Which one of the following factors informed your decision to join a house group?

	Frequency	Percent
Desire to build genuine and authentic relationships	30	46.2
Grow spiritually through studying God's Word	33	50.8
Desire to build business and career networks	1	1.5
Opportunity to serve the community	1	1.5
Total	65	100.0

22a Which of the following factors encouraged you to join a house group-Experience friendship and care

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	49	75.4
No	16	24.6
Total	65	100.0

22b Which of the following factors encouraged you to join a house group- Intellectually understand the Bible better

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	38	58.5
No	27	41.5
Total	65	100.0

22c Which of the following factors encouraged you to join a house group- The pastor encouraged and challenged me

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	10	15.4
No	55	84.6
Total	65	100.0

22d Which of the following factors encouraged you to join a house group- Many of my friends attend

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	2	3.1
No	63	96.9
Total	65	100.0

22e Which of the following factors encouraged you to join a house group- To handle work stress and pressure better

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	8	12.3
No	57	87.7
Total	65	100.0

22f Which of the following factors encouraged you to join a house group- The need to belong

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	39	60.0
No	26	40.0
Total	65	100.0

22g Which of the following factors encouraged you to join a house group- Deep desire to experience God intimately

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	40	61.5
No	25	38.5
Total	65	100.0

22h Which of the following factors encouraged you to join a house group- Publicity from the bulletin

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	11	16.9
No	54	83.1
Total	65	100.0

22i Which of the following factors encouraged you to join a house group- Build business/career networks

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	6	9.2
No	59	90.8
Total	65	100.0

22j Which of the following factors encouraged you to join a house group- Closeness to home/proximity

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	17	26.2
No	48	73.8
Total	65	100.0

23a Intellectually understand the Bible

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all influential	2	3.1
Not very influential	3	4.6
Somewhat influential	7	10.8
Influential	14	21.5
Strongly influential	39	60.0
Total	65	100.0

23b The pastor encouraged me

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all influential	20	30.8
Not very influential	8	12.3
Somewhat influential	17	26.2
Influential	15	23.1
Strongly influential	5	7.7
Total	65	100.0

23c Many of my friends attend

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all influential	32	49.2
Not very influential	8	12.3
Somewhat influential	18	27.7
Influential	6	9.2
Strongly influential	1	1.5
Total	65	100.0

23 To handle stress and pressure better

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all influential	27	41.5
Not very influential	6	9.2
Somewhat influential	21	32.3
Influential	4	6.2
Strongly influential	7	10.8
Total	65	100.0

23e The need to belong

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all influential	4	6.2
Not very influential	6	9.2
Somewhat influential	9	13.8
Influential	11	16.9
Strongly influential	35	53.8
Total	65	100.0

23f Experience friendship and care

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all influential	2	3.1
Not very influential	4	6.2
Somewhat influential	12	18.5
Influential	12	18.5
Strongly influential	35	53.8
Total	65	100.0

23g Build business networks

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all influential	20	30.8
Not very influential	13	20.0
Somewhat influential	18	27.7
Influential	5	7.7
Strongly influential	9	13.8
Total	65	100.0

23h Deep desire to know God

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all influential	3	4.6
Not very influential	2	3.1
Somewhat influential	12	18.5
Influential	8	12.3
Strongly influential	40	61.5
Total	65	100.0

23i Publicity from the bulletin

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all influential	13	20.0
Not very influential	9	13.8
Somewhat influential	20	30.8
Influential	16	24.6
Strongly influential	7	10.8
Total	65	100.0

23j Closeness to home/proximity

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all influential	14	21.5
Not very influential	7	10.8
Somewhat influential	19	29.2
Influential	8	12.3
Strongly influential	16	24.6
8	1	1.5
Total	65	100.0

24a Experience friendship and care

	Frequency	Percent
1	2	3.1
2	1	1.5
3	1	1.5
4	3	4.6
5	9	13.8
6	3	4.6
7	9	13.8
8	7	10.8
9	14	21.5
10	16	24.6
Total	65	100.0

24b Intellectually understand the Bible better

	Frequency	Percent
1	4	6.2
2	2	3.1
4	2	3.1
5	14	21.5
7	1	1.5
8	9	13.8
9	15	23.1
10	18	27.7
Total	65	100.0

24c The pastor encouraged and challenged me

	Frequency	Percent
1	9	14.1
2	6	9.4
3	7	10.9
4	3	4.7
5	20	31.3
6	3	4.7
7	7	10.9
8	4	6.3
9	4	6.3
10	1	1.6
Total	64	100.0
Missing System	1	
Total	65	

24d Many of my friends attend

	Frequency	Percent
1	18	27.7
2	8	12.3
3	4	6.2
4	2	3.1
5	24	36.9
6	4	6.2
7	1	1.5
8	2	3.1
9	1	1.5
10	1	1.5
Total	65	100.0

24e To handle stress and pressure better

	Frequency	Percent
1	7	10.8
2	6	9.2
3	12	18.5
4	4	6.2
5	29	44.6
6	2	3.1
8	2	3.1
9	1	1.5
10	2	3.1
Total	65	100.0

24f The need to belong

	Frequency	Percent
2	2	3.1
3	6	9.2
4	2	3.1
5	27	41.5
6	8	12.3
7	4	6.2
8	6	9.2
9	8	12.3
10	2	3.1
Total	65	100.0

24g Deep desire to experience God intimately

	Frequency	Percent
1	3	4.6
2	3	4.6
3	2	3.1
4	1	1.5
5	29	44.6
6	2	3.1
7	3	4.6
8	3	4.6
9	8	12.3
10	11	16.9
Total	65	100.0

24h Publicity from the bulletin

	Frequency	Percent
1	3	4.6
2	5	7.7
3	1	1.5
4	6	9.2
5	35	53.8
6	3	4.6
7	4	6.2
8	5	7.7
9	2	3.1
10	1	1.5
Total	65	100.0

24i Build business/career networks

	Frequency	Percent
1	9	13.8
2	6	9.2
3	2	3.1
4	6	9.2
5	37	56.9
6	3	4.6
7	1	1.5
10	1	1.5
Total	65	100.0

24j Closeness to home/proximity

	Frequency	Percent
1	4	6.2
2	2	3.1
3	4	6.2
4	7	10.8
5	38	58.5
6	4	6.2
7	3	4.6
8	3	4.6
Total	65	100.0

