

**BUILDING UP THE CHURCH AND CHURCH GROWTH IN
KOREAN CHURCHES THROUGH THE KOINONIA
OF A SMALL GROUP MINISTRY**

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis researched the development and nurturing of koinonia in a small group setting as a way of building up a church with spiritual (qualitative) and numerical (quantitative) growth as one of the results. When considering church growth a small group ministry is an important alternative to the standard church practice.

Chapter 2 reviewed the purpose of the church, and explored the concept of building up the church using Biblical concepts as its basis for doing so.

Chapter 3 deals with the role of koinonia in building up the church and its impact on church growth. It also identifies the ministry of small groups as being the most suitable method to develop and nurture koinonia amongst members of a congregation. The ministry of small groups has a great practical potential for the church. It enables members of the congregation to identify and use their spiritual gifts and talents, and in so doing, discover their value and identity in Jesus Christ.

Chapter 4 documents the findings of empirical research conducted amongst three South Korean Presbyterian churches that practice the ministry of small groups. The views of the three senior pastors were on the value of small groups were ascertained. This was followed by a detailed study, of the workings and effects of small groups covering 205 respondents spread across the three congregations.

Based on the findings of the research, chapter 5 presents a proposed plan to build up the church, encouraging church growth through the development and nurturing of koinonia through a small groups ministry. The study proposes a seven fold approach to the implementation of a small group ministry designed to stimulate spiritual and numerical growth through the development and nurturing of koinonia amongst church members.

OPSOMING

Hierdie tesis ondersoek die ontwikkeling en beoefening van koinonia (gemeenskapsbewustheid) in klein groepe as 'n wyse om die kerk se geestelike (kwalitatiewe) en getalle (kwantitatiewe) groei te bevorder. Met die oog op die groei van die kerk is die kleingroep-bediening 'n belangrike alternatief vir die standaard kerklike praktyk.

Hoofstuk 2 bekyk die doel van die kerk, veral die opbou van die kerk volgens die Bybel se begrip daarvan.

Hoofstuk 3 handel oor die rol van koinonia in die opbou van die kerk en die invloed daarvan op die ontwikkeling van die kerk. Die kleingroep-bediening is geïdentifiseer as die mees gepaste metode om koinonia tussen die lidmate van die gemeente te stimuleer. Die kleingroep-bediening het 'n groot potensiaal vir die praktyk van die kerk. Dit stel lidmate in staat om hulle geestelike gawes en talente te ontdek, en op die wyse hulle waarde en identiteit in Jesus Christus te ontdek.

Hoofstuk 4 dokumenteer die bevindings van die empiriese navorsing by drie Suid-Koreaanse Presbiteriaanse kerke wat 'n kleingroep-bediening toepas. Die drie senior leraars se seining van die waarde van klein groepe is verkry. Daarop volg 'n gedetailleerde studie van die werking en uitwerking van klein groepe soos verkry van 205 respondente vanuit die drie gemeentes.

Op grond van die bevindings van die navorsing stel hoofstuk 5 'n plan voor om die kerk op te bou en kerkgroei aan te moedig deur die beoefening van koinonia in 'n klein groepe. Die studie stel 'n sewevoudige benadering voor vir die toepassing van 'n kleingroep-bediening wat ontwerp is om geestelike en getalle groei te stimuleer deur die beoefening van koinonia tussen gemeentelede.

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ACRONYMS

ALPHA (**A**n anyone can come, **L**earning and laughter, **P**asta, **H**elping one another, **A**sk anything)

DTS (**D**isciple **T**raining **S**tudy)

GMS (**G**lobal **M**ission **S**ociety)

LMTTC (**L**ocal **M**issionary **T**raining **C**ourse)

SMTI (**S**ooyounro **M**issionary **T**raining **I**nstitute)

YM (**Y**outh with a **M**ission)

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1 Background to the study

The South Korean church, society and economy grew substantially after the Korean War in 1950. The tumultuous whirlpool of war during the 1950's left many South Korean people without stable employment, and much of what they had accumulated over the years was destroyed. Consequently, the focus of the majority of South Korean people has been on the accumulation of wealth. This materialistic approach to life by the South Korean society at large is having a marked influence on the church, and is captivating the minds of pastors and believers.

As the membership of the South Korean churches has grown immensely, the community spirit and the sense of fellowship in Christ dwindled, and are in many instances lacking. The church in South Korea consists of groups of believers within the local community that are essentially separate from it. The majority of church members do not join in local community activities, and the community in general distrusts the church. This is the present reality of the church in South Korea.

2 Problem statement

During the 20th century, the South Korean Church experienced a remarkable explosive growth, quantitatively and qualitatively. In 1900 the Korean church had 18,081 believers (Kim 1980:80). This membership has grown to about 12,000,000 believers. Churches in other parts of the world noted the startling growth of the South Korean Church, and adopted the South Korean church practice as a model for church growth.

Worldwide church growth has begun to decline. A decrease in membership has been manifested in South Korean churches as well. The decline in South Korean church membership can be traced to the Olympic Games held in Seoul in 1988. These games marked the beginning of an economic upturn. With the increase in affluence, there has been a decrease in church membership (Lee 1997:47).

The South Korean church continually strives for numerical growth, which in itself, is an admirable objective. However, fifteen years as a pastor in this environment has convinced the author that this drive for membership has resulted in problems and difficulties for the church.

The issue causing the greatest concern is that there has been a decline in Christian fellowship (*koinonia*). The considered opinion of many thoughtful believers is that the South Korean church is demonstrating a lack of community spirit, and of fellowship in Christ. The sense of community and fellowship in Christ, which should be evident, is largely missing. This indicates a lack in the quality of the lives of the Christians involved. As a result, the present situation in the South Korean church is that, although many people attend the worship services, the church members in general have lost their spiritual power. In considering this phenomenon, Kwon (1991:9) says that “The Korean church has ignored the ‘community’ of Jesus Christ.” The spiritual relationships that should be present are not seen.

Park (2005:6) says that one of the dilemmas facing the church is a growing feeling of alienation amongst church members. The reason is that today’s churches have lost the essential sense of community and fellowship that churches have maintained for centuries (Malone 1985:14).

The church should lead all its members towards spiritual development and growth, not only through what is said, but also through the sharing of their experiences and how the word of God relates to these experiences. A church community that enjoys fellowship (*koinonia*) in Christ is experiencing God’s love through the cross event of Christ, and as a result their members should serve one another, and take on the responsibility to care for the individual members.

Brunner (1962:21) pointed out that the true essence of the church is *koinonia*: “The Ekklesia is never conceived of as institutional; but exclusively as a fellowship of persons, as the common life based in fellowship with Jesus Christ, as a fellowship of the Spirit (*koinonia pneumatos*) and a fellowship of Christ (*koinonia Christou*). To be in Christ through faith and to be in this fellowship are one and the same thing”.

At this point the church in South Korea needs to re-establish the sense of community and fellowship with Christ and with one another and, in doing so, begin to grow once again. This can be achieved by implementing a small group ministry, which can result in dynamic church growth, both numerically and spiritually.

Clemmons (1971:45) sees three areas in which small groups will provide growth towards a new life-style in the church today: (1) growth in *koinonia* – fellowship; (2) growth in personal Christian depth; and (3) growth in mission (in both ministry and witness).

The small group ministry makes possible the very essence of the church namely fellowship (*koinonia*). The recovery of fellowship (*koinonia*) through small groups follows the guidelines of the Scriptures.

Koinonia is based on biblical principles and is a feature of small groups. Icenogle (1994:14) says that “Small groups have a theological and historical role and purpose. All human endeavor works to fulfillment and completion through small group experience. The sociological, psychological and formational sciences thrive in the analysis and enablement of face-to-face relationships where two, three or more persons come together for a common purpose and life. This gathering for common life is called koinonia.”

The question is; “How could the decrease in numbers have been avoided, and how would this stimulate church growth in today’s context?” The theme of this thesis is that the use of a small group ministry coupled with an emphasis on the practice of koinonia will lead to an increase in the depth of their spirituality as well as a growth in the number of attendees.

3 Purpose of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate how small groups can affect church growth through building up the numbers that attend the local church, and stimulating the spiritual development of the congregation. It will present evidence of the relevance of various small group practices for church growth, by citing examples of the experience of a few South Korean churches.

The aims of this study are:

1. To demonstrate the effectiveness of the small group ministry as a force motivating both the numerical increase of church members and their spiritual development; that the most satisfactory way of experiencing growth in the church is through the work of small groups operating in koinonia. Small groups have generated the dynamics that lead to numerical and spiritual growth as well as personal development. Many instances of the successful use of small groups in obtaining both quantitative and qualitative growth will be indicated.

2. To show how small groups facilitate and reflect the very essence of the nature of the church, namely fellowship (*koinonia*) with God and with other Christians. The church as a community or fellowship (*koinonia*) of believers experiences God’s love as revealed through the cross event of Christ, and is an evangelical fellowship in which members serve one another and take on the responsibility of caring for individual church members. The recovery of fellowship (*koinonia*) according to Scripture can be achieved through small groups.

3. To demonstrate how small groups facilitate the spiritual growth of its members.

4. To identify the optimal type of leadership needed for a successful small group ministry. Effective leadership of small groups is obtained through the selection of appropriate

trained, spiritual leaders, and through the organization of the Church structure to support this ministry. This must obviously be done within the framework of the essential mission of the Church. Due regard has to be given to the theoretical and practical considerations of the particular needs of small groups in contrast to the needs of the larger congregation.

4 Hypothesis

Faced with the problem of gaining effective church growth in both the spiritual quality of the individual church members and their numbers, this study explores whether the use of small groups will be effective in meeting the challenge. It postulates that, if churches apply the theory of the small group ministry and the practice of koinonia within the small groups, there will be real growth both spiritually (qualitatively) and numerically (quantitatively).

The results of applying the principles of small groups in a church context will be the following:

First, there will be the systematic training of the group members by regarding the prime bible doctrines coupled with the engendering of a sense of belonging and community within the small group.

Second, there will be the realization of organic fellowship (koinonia) among church members.

Third, there will be a support group for members who are experiencing spiritual, emotional or relationship problems.

Fourth, the church will grow into an organism that is dynamic and viable.

Fifth, the small groups will not only produce the motive power to build a healthy local church, but also the power to actively drive the work of evangelism. Finally, in the church members it will create a consciousness of the church's mission.

Explorative research is needed to develop a hypothesis. Heitink (1999:230) says: "Explorative research always aims at the formulation of a theory or of certain presuppositions, which might develop in hypotheses."

5 Research gap

In recent years, the small group ministry has been one of the most researched topics amongst the South Korean churches, and the Christian media has been reporting the results of their

studies. As a result the pastors and believers in many South Korean churches are implementing small group ministries.

There are significant cultural differences between the way in which the small group ministry is practiced in South Korea and in the church at large. However, while this study will focus on the situation in South Korea, it is expected that the findings will be broadly applicable to many church groups.

Researching this topic will hopefully contribute to knowledge, guide church members to become ‘partners in the work’ with their pastor, and enable and encourage dynamic church growth.

Research is needed to explore the confusion and misunderstanding surrounding the small group ministry in general, and its influence on the use of small groups in the South Korean church. This is particularly true when considering church growth through the small group ministry.

6 Research methodology

Pieterse (1990:46) describes practical theology as "a theological, operational science". In practical theology, theological aspects are closely related to practical aspects. Practical theology has a theoretical aspect (which results in a given behaviour or practice), but the theory is not in opposition to practical knowledge. Heitink (1999:102-103) states that practical theology is a “theological branch of learning with a theory of action.”

The methodology of this study is basically a hermeneutical-empirical approach. The hermeneutical approach is a process of understanding the dynamics of the small group ministry, and the empirical approach pertains to the actual situation of the South Korean church. The hermeneutical-empirical approach is followed as being more beneficial than a systems approach or the procedure suggested by Berger (Heitink 1999:209-210).

In the empirical section, a qualitative analysis of the small group ministry will be made. The effects of a small group ministry will be investigated within a defined context. This practical theological research is based on the theological action theory as developed by Heitink (1999:148-177). This analysis will have a hermeneutical as well as an empirical perspective, and is intended to provide important insights for practical theology. The word “empiricism” derives from Greek “empeiria,” which means “experience.” “Empiricism” is the term for an epistemological approach that attempts to show that all scientific knowledge is

based on experience and can in all respects, through sense perceptions, be deduced from experience (Heitink 1999:221).

The research process suggested by Heitink has been adopted for this study. The choice of this type of research is aimed at exploring the validity of the hypothesis set out above (page 5) as well as developing a theory on which a small group ministry model can be based. The process is illustrated by the following diagram taken from Heitink (1999:165).

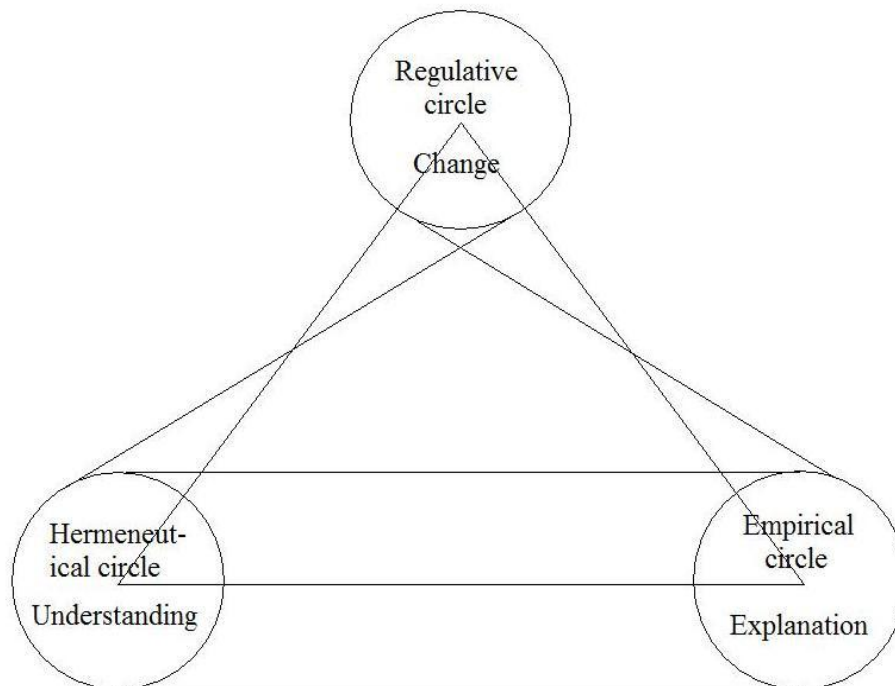


Figure 1.1 the methodology of practical theology

The figure above shows three circles: the hermeneutical circle, as the interpretation theory typical of the human sciences; the empirical circle, as the testing circle typical for the natural sciences; and the regulative circle, which is typical of the methodology of practical thinking.

I will adopt the above procedure to set up the basic framework of the study. Greater focus will be placed on the description and explanation of a small group ministry within the context of the South Korean church. This will increase our understanding of the dynamics of the small group ministry and will thus benefit church growth.

6.1 Implementing the research methodology

An appropriate questionnaire, exploring the views on a small group ministry, will be developed and sent to three individual senior pastors of South Korean churches that have an active small group ministry in place. The senior pastors of the Sooyoungro, Seoungil and Changdai churches have already willingly agreed to participate in the study. These questionnaires will explore the qualitative aspects of a small group ministry. Communication with these pastors will be by means of e-mail and the internet. In addition 150 individual members of these churches are asked to complete a questionnaire relating to their experiences in a small group.

Heitink (1999:238) summarises the research method as follows:

“observation – description – analysis – reflection – suggestions for action.”

In order to cover the research problem fully, this study will proceed as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Building up the local church
3. Koinonia in the small groups ministry
4. The empirical research: a case study of church growth through the koinonia ministry of small groups
5. Conclusion and a proposal for church growth based on the koinonia developed and nourished through a small group ministry

CHAPTER TWO

BUILDING UP THE LOCAL CHURCH

1 Introduction

Before explaining what “building up the local church” entails, it is necessary to know what the church is. There are different churches with different names, but at the end of the day, they are one church as long as they believe in Jesus Christ as saviour and Lord.

Nel (2005:17) defines the concept of building up the local church in the following terms. “Building up the local church is the ministry whereby a local church is trained and led to

- **Understand** its own nature (identity) and reason for its existence (purpose) (**Hermeneutical dimension**)
- **Evaluate**, as a body of believers, its own functions, formulate objectives accordingly, and reach these objectives in a planned manner. (**Agogical-teleological dimension**)
- **Develop**, as required and on a continued basis, structures for congregational life that will serve the Triune God and his Salvific acts in His church and in the world – to the Glory of HIS NAME. (**Morphological dimension**)”

In terms of Nel’s understanding of building up the local church, it is apparent that the role and functioning of the office-bearer, including the pastor, are key factors in this process. In this regard Nel (2005:57) notes that

“...it is necessary to stress the importance of service leaders, and to fit them into a comprehensive approach to building up the local church. A biblical view on the offices (service leaders), their relationship to the congregation, and their leadership operations, is vital to building up the local church as ministry.”

2 Understanding the local church

The word ‘church’ as a group of people has acquired different meanings by various sections of society. Church refers to the people of God. “But you are the chosen race, the king’s priests, the holy nation, God’s own people. At one time you were not God’s people, but now you are his people” (1 Peter 2:9). Paul on the other hand sees the church among other metaphors as the body of Christ. “All of you are Christ’s body, and each one is part of it.” (1 Corinthians

12:12, 27). The meaning of the word church as the people of God is found in both the Old and New Testaments.

2.1 The meaning of the word ‘QAHAL’ (assembly) in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, the word “qahal” means an assembly of the people, a gathering of the people (Exodus 3:16-18) (Russell 2003:243). Botterweck (1975:547) says “the Hebrew primary noun qahal means “congregation (Leviticus 4:14), community”, “assembly, an assembled (Exodus 12:6) group of people (Genesis 28:3).” The Hebrew Old Testament describes Israel as the qahal Jahwe to indicate them as the people of the Lord.

2.2 The meaning of the word ‘EKKLESIA’ in the New Testament

In the New Testament, the Greek word ekklesia means a congregation or a community, which is translated by the word church. “Ekklesia tou theou” means an assembly of God’s people. It is used for a local congregation (1 Corinthians 1:2; Romans 16:16) or the totality of congregations of Christians, the church (Matthew 16:18), or of house churches (Romans 16:5).

According to the explanations above, the church is regarded as the public assembly of the citizens of the kingdom of God. The word ekklesia is better explained on the basis of its usage in the Septuagint where it is used as a technical term to translate the Old Testament concept of “Qahal Jahwe” – the people of God as applied to Israel (Nehemiah 8:1-4). Unger (1981:263) comments on this passage saying “The congregation (qahal, “assembly”) of the Lord (Yhwh), like the New Testament church (ecclesia), consisted of those who were in covenant relationship to the Lord by redemption and hence had a fixed and unalterable position and a changing experience.”

In the New Testament the word ‘ekklesia’ became known as the assembly, which God has appointed and assembled. The church was assembled together during the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. At that occasion, the followers of Jesus confessed their faith in Jesus Christ and became the church bound to Jesus Christ as their head and their Lord (Acts 2:37, 38). Kung (1968:81) describes the church as the eschatological community of God. He says “In this way, the new community of disciples comes to see itself as the eschatological community called and chosen by God.” Kung says the word church comes from “Kuriake” which means it belongs to the kurios, the Lord. The church is the community of people gathered together by God, with Christ being their central figure and Lord. By taking

over the term “ekklesia”, the early Christian community claimed to be the true community of God (Kung 1968:83). This leads to the conclusion that the church as the people of God is not ultimately a human structure, but a creation and act of God in Christ. Strong (1907:887) defines the church as “The whole company of regenerated persons in all times and ages, in heaven and on earth.” It is that redeemed humanity in which God in Christ exercises actual spiritual dominion.

When speaking of the local church, one is not referring to a section or a subdivision of the real church. The local church is the church in the locality referred to in its entirety. It is not a small cell of the whole, it is the real church. Kung (1968:85) says “the whole church can only be understood in terms of the local church and its concrete actions. The church is known by her attributes which include, amongst others, missionary outreach to unsaved people, the mutual agape love of its members for each other, its striving for social justice, the purity of its faith and the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.”

It is obvious that faith in Christ is the essential tie that binds the people of God together and forms the basis for the relationship that believers have with Christ and with one another. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, refers to the church as “those sanctified in Jesus Christ, called to be saints!” (1 Corinthians 1:2). The holiness of the church results from her union with Jesus Christ. The church is the domain of the Holy Spirit, which makes it holy (1 Corinthians 6:14-7:10, Romans 1:1, 7, 15, 25).

The church is also catholic in character; her boundaries are not demarcated by place or time, but by her faith in Jesus Christ. The church is also the apostolic assembly. She is the witness of God’s saving events through Christ and the Holy Spirit. The church witnesses to the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus (Acts 1:22). The apostolicity of the church refers to its foundation on the apostolic teachings. It is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets as the recipients of God’s revelation (Ephesians 3:4, 5). The church is also a messianic community. It is the community which proclaims the coming of the kingdom of God (Luke 11:20, 11:32). It is through the church that the world senses God at work as He calls out people to be His own special possession (1 Peter 2:9). Inch (1982:94) says “The church is the signpost to direct the prodigal son home to a loving father.”

2.3 The church as mission

The church as mission means that the church has been sent. The church started its missionary work when Jesus sent out his disciples to make all peoples his disciples (Matthew 28:19-20).

Missionary work has to do with the crossing of boundaries. The work of the church as mission is mainly focused on the building up of a local church. The church lives within the sphere of mission work where it should share, serve, care and reconcile people to God, and man with his fellow man. The church as mission is not the church as a gathering of people in a building, but the church as all God's people interacting with the people in the world. The pastor is not the pastor to the people in the church building only, but the pastor to God's people in the world. God's mission work is the centre of the life of the church. God is in the world and speaks to his people through the church. He loves the world and wants the world to be saved (John 3:16). In her long range planning, the church must use her talents and spiritual gifts to serve the community with the aim of building up the local church. Mission work by the church is God's mission. Nel (1990:9) says that "Building up the local church does not only have a bearing on the goal of the church, but it is directly subordinate to God's purpose for his church on earth."

The church must continually ask herself the questions: "What is God's calling for the church, what is she to accomplish through her mission? What does God want the church to do?" The church's focus must be on fulfilling God's mission for her.

A vital part of the church's mission is its calling to bring Christ to all those who have not yet heard of Him as the king and saviour. God Himself is the initiator of all mission work. It is God Himself who sends the church to cross the frontiers and to reach out to the world, to the unchurched, to those who have not yet heard about God's salvation in Jesus Christ. When a church has been planted and grows, it reaches out to plant other churches where this has not yet been done. The fact that God initiates the church's mission work is evidenced in his creation. God created a human being to communicate his existence and love to the world, so that the world can know him. But, having initiated this important work, God placed the responsibility for carrying it forward on the shoulders of the church. God does mission work through the church led by the Holy Spirit, who moves men and women to reach out to the world, to people who have never heard the gospel and need to be told the good news that Jesus is the Lord.

Callahan (1987:124) says "The world is the centre of the mission." The church as mission has been called to communicate the gospel through the Word and by its deeds. Jesus Christ was God's missionary, and was the model for the church's mission. Bosch (1980:241) comments: "The planting of the church...has always been an important goal of mission. It is the glory and manifestation of God's divine grace."

Nel (1990:12) stresses the point that: “the building up of the local church is therefore rightly aimed at leading a congregation to an existence that attracts, and to functioning that makes possible an effective, efficient search for those who are lost.”

2.4 The church as representative of the kingdom of God

The kingdom of God is where God rules and where the will of God must be done. It speaks of God’s rule on earth as the head of his kingdom.

In the New Testament, the kingdom of God is the central theme of the preaching of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist also proclaimed the coming of the kingdom of God or the nearness of the kingdom of God (Matthew 3:2). The word translated kingdom in the New Testament is the Greek word “basileia”. Dynamically it means the rule, reign, kingship, as well as his realm, the territory governed by the king (Ferguson & Wright 1988:367). When John the Baptist and Jesus Christ proclaimed that the kingdom of God was coming or was near, they were announcing the realization of Israel’s hope, the fulfillment of the covenant promises made to Abraham and Israel. This kingdom is the new and final era, the end of the age that started with the advent of Jesus Christ. Because the time of the fulfillment of the promises of the covenant is at hand, has come, people are called to repent. “The right time has come, he said, and the kingdom of God is near (Mark 1:15).”

The church is the representative of God on earth and has an important task to perform, to inform the world about the kingdom of God. The church has been commissioned by God to preach the gospel, to tell the good news about the kingdom of God to the world (Matthew 24:14). The citizens of the kingdom of God are building up the church as the representatives of the kingdom of God. The citizens are those who, by repentance and faith, submit to the redemptive lordship of Christ (Ferguson & Wright 1988:369). The keys to open and close the kingdom of God are given to the church (Matthew 16:18-19). With her preaching of the gospel and sacraments, confession of faith and fellowship of love, the church is one of the embodiments of the kingdom of God. God rules in his kingdom with his word and spirit, and it is this same word which is preached by the church.

3 Building up the local church

Building up the local church is a metaphor indicating what has to be done in the church, in order for it to be what it ought to be as the church of God. The building up of the local church

refers to a process of leading the local church to become what it should be. It means building up the church members to the point where they, as the local church, conform to the characteristics of the body of Jesus Christ described in the New Testament, as the chosen people of God.

Examples of building up the people of God are found in both the Old and New Testament.

3.1 Building up the people of God in Old Testament

In the Old Testament the building up of the people of God focused on building up Israel. God himself does the building. The Hebrew word used in the Old Testament is “banah”, meaning to build, to erect. Botterweck (1975:168) writes: “The meaning of *banah* is to “build,” *banah* may be translated “build up,” “rebuild” “finish or improve (a building),” “add to (a building),” “demolish (a building),” “establish,” “found,” “erect,” “strengthen or fortify,” “restore,” “make or construct,” “cast up (a rampart), etc.,” So “banah” means to build a house for someone (Psalms 127:1), it also can mean to increase the family by obtaining children.

It also means extending the people of God by adding to God’s people those who accepted Jahweh (the Lord) as their God. It has a missionary perspective. Nel (2005:4) says “Similarly, there is a missionary perspective in the imagery of building in the Old Testament. The gentiles who turn to Jahwe, are built into the people of God- “and if they learn well the ways of my people, and swear by my name, ‘As surely as the LORD lives’ even as they once taught my people to swear by Baal – then they will be established among my people” (Jeremiah 12:16, Ezekiel 36:28). Feinberg (1982:105) comments on this passage saying “Repatriation is promised for Israel and the nations who have learned of God from his people, just as Israel formerly learned the worship of idols through these nations. Notice that the basis of the predicted blessing is repentance and faith.”

In the beginning, God created everything, which led up to the creation of man in his image. God created man and gave him tasks to glorify God’s name. The main objective of building up Israel is the glory of God, the complete establishment of God’s kingdom both in the hearts of believers and in the world. It was for the sake of his name that he led the children of Israel out of Egypt to Canaan. The building up of the people of God metaphor refers to the process of building up the community of God in the world.

3.2 Building up the people of God in the New Testament

The Greek word translated by the phrase building up is “oikodomeoo”. It means to build a house, to build a village, repair, and restore, reconstruct and to establish (cf. Friedrich 1967: 137). MacDonald (2000:250) says “the term oikodome does occur in 1 Cor 3:9 to describe the local Corinthian community (God’s building)”. In Eph 4:12, 16, 29 it means “up-building” in the sense of ethical edification. In the NT the verb synoikodomeo (to build up together) occurs only in Ephesians 2:22. God is the builder.

The metaphor of building up the local church portrays the fulfillment of the building up of the people of God in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, God performed his work of building through his spoken word which was passed on to His people by prophets, and by priests who performed the duty of reconciliation between God and His people (Isaiah 58:1).

In New Testament times, God performs his work of building up the local church through his son Jesus Christ. God speaks through His son, and reconciles the world to himself through his son. Nel (2005:5) says “He is the One by whom and through whom the new temple of God is built. He is the one who builds his congregation (Matthew 16:18).” Through him all things were made (John 1:3). In him God regenerates his people by renewing them by His Spirit and forgiving their sins through their faith in Jesus Christ. This is God’s gracious work in man, building up his church.

Roberts (1991:125) says “the work of building up the church is also the realization of God’s work of salvation among his people. His church is built up and his salvation is established among people when the message of salvation is carried by the missionary action of the church to the Gentiles and they then turn to the Anointed and his church.” The word of God teaches that regeneration is not the result of human endeavour, but a creative act of God’s Spirit (John 1:3). Christian salvation is the act of God building up his church (1 Corinthians 6:20, 7:23). The building up of the local church is God’s process of equipping and training believers to become true to their calling by God, to become what they ought to be in the eyes of God. When believers are well trained and well equipped, they become capable of training and equipping other believers to become what they ought to be as children of God.

Nel (2005:5) says “The congregation itself has to build... The believers are involved in the encouragement, strengthening one another, admonition, supporting one another, and building, and much more.”

Building up the local church is the act of developing the congregation so that it ultimately becomes a missionary church. Roberts (1991:124) says “to build up the body of

Christ has a missionary connotation...the up-building of the church implies here that continual missionary work will be carried out until all the members that should be part of the body have accepted the message of salvation and have become part of God's own people." The church must be in the position to cross all frontiers and perform the work which God has set for the church to do for the salvation of the world.

Bosch (1980:17) says "It is the task of the church movement, the church that lives for others, the church that is not concerned for herself, that turns her inside outwards to the world." The church, as mission, moves towards the world and brings the gospel to the whole world. God the Father is the God of mission. He went out on mission to look for Adam – "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9).

God sent out his only begotten Son to the world to proclaim the kingdom of God, thereafter, Father and Son sent the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit's work is to convince the world of sin, and proclaim that there is forgiveness for everyone who believes in Jesus Christ. When believers are well trained and equipped with the power of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit renews the church's commission to engage in mission work. The church itself has been built up through God's mission work, and now it is her turn to undertake mission work. She can do so because she is fit, matured and knowledgeable and able to cross the frontiers and bring good news to the world, and by doing so she builds other churches in other parts of the world where there is no church. Through the process of building up the local church, the triune God is glorified and worshipped, and the church manifests its love for one another and the world through its service with God. Christ sends the church into the world just as the Father has sent him (John 20:21).

4 The purpose of building up the local church

Each and every building is build with a particular purpose, and is therefore unique. The nature and functions of the local church are based on a constant foundation, but the form in which they are expressed will be influenced by the needs of the people in the area in which it is situated.

Building up the local church indicates the purpose for which the local church is being built. The way the local church is being built, gives an understanding of its nature and functions. The building work is God's activity, because through the church, God gives expression to His sovereignty over and in the lives of people. The church is the revelation of the kingdom of God, it is God's means of reaching the people in the world. The church is part

of God's redemption plan for the world. Building up the local church is the way in which God is building up his kingdom in the world. In the building process, God uses his church (people) through the inspiration and power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit witnesses to the members of the church that they are the children of God, and that they are His Holy people. It is through the activity of building that church members come to realize the different gifts given to them by God and, as they use them, become God's co-builders.

Pieterse, Dreyer, van der Ven (2002:6) say "The distinctive nature of salvation can be determined by means of two sets of paired concepts: gifts and tasks. When believers actively dedicate themselves to the cause of salvation, it is because they know God has given this task to them; God gives them the business of salvation to accomplish. The structural link between gift and task forms the basis of the gratitude with which believers perform their task, and in it they find their strength and courage to continue and persevere in the face of setbacks."

God has fully engaged himself in the building up of the local church for the sake of his name and as a provider of salvation for all who are tasked with the building of the church namely, his people. "Now then, give Israel the message that I, the sovereign Lord have for them: what I am going to do is not for the sake of you Israel, but for the sake of my holy name (Ezekiel 36:22-23)." Israel was to serve the Lord as the model for other nations. The world should have known God as the almighty through the life and example of Israel.

Nel (2005:8) says "The local congregation must reveal to the world that the triune God is the only true God as he had revealed himself through his word." This will happen, when the local church matures and grows in its holiness and love for God.

God builds up the church to be such an effective witness of the salvation in Jesus Christ to the world that the people outside the church feel a compulsion to become part of the *koinonia* that is evident in the lives of church members. God is building up his church and, as he does so, he involves people in the renewal of his covenant with his people through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

5 The content of building up the local church

God is building up the local church for the benefit of his people. God's activity in building up of the local church is to equip and train members of the church to know who they are; the children of God. They must have the capability of identifying themselves as the people of God, they must know their ultimate destination, which is to be with God for ever. Members of the church must be enthusiastic in doing what they ought to do as the church. In building up

the local church God uses a process of feeding the members of his church with knowledge of God through Jesus Christ and giving them a vision of their mission as the nation of God in Christ Jesus.

In order to understand the nature of the church it is necessary to understand that God’s purpose is to build up the local church and that this process of building up the members of the church must include not just knowledge of biblical doctrine but also the practice of koinonia amongst all believers. This process is best facilitated through the implementation of a small group ministry. Trent (2005:8-9) writes that

“The small group movement today is building up the local church by empowering the average person in the pew to affect the lives of other people in the church.”

One notices that the building up of the local church is part of God’s eternal plan that his name and kingdom would be known to all the world and that his people would be saved.

Nel (2005:111) identifies eight essential ministries, depicted below, required for the effective building up of the church. While they are all important and require integrated attention for the church to be built up, the koinonia or fellowship of believers is of particular relevance to the small group ministry, primarily because small groups develop strong relationships amongst members and are ideally suited to the nurturing, development, growth and practice of koinonia.

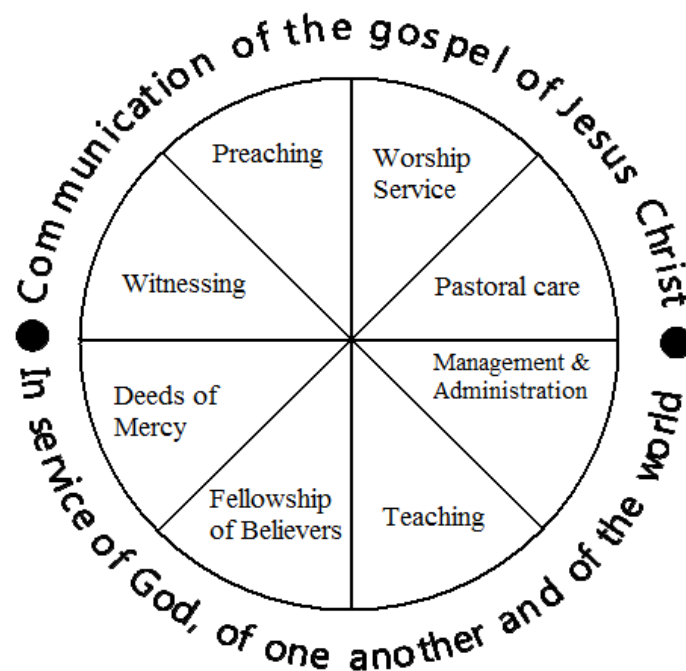


Figure 2.1 eight essential ministries for church growth

CHAPTER THREE

KOINONIA IN THE SMALL GROUPS MINISTRY

1 Introduction

One of the features of the small group ministry is the facility with which koinonia can be realized, nurtured and developed amongst members of a small group. The theme of this thesis is that koinonia is essential for the growth and health of the church. This chapter explores the concept of koinonia and its use in the small group ministry in great detail.

It deals with the theory of koinonia, and the use of a small group ministry for the development and growth of koinonia in the church. Koinonia is, in essence, the deep spiritual fellowship which all believers have with the Lord Jesus Christ and with one another. Where this fellowship is absent there can be no true spiritual dynamic or growth. Whatever else it may be, a congregation without koinonia cannot be regarded as a church. To the extent that a church practices koinonia, it reflects the results of koinonia, and this, in turn, further stimulates the members to continue and to extend their practice of koinonia. Therefore, if a church fails to practice koinonia it is incapable of truly functioning as a valid church.

Koinonia is evidenced in many different forms. Therefore the small group ministry will be viewed as one of the forms in which koinonia is manifested. Arnold (1992:31) says that when “a thoroughly planned small group ministry is implemented, the church can begin to enjoy some of many benefits.”

The members of the church as a whole have an individual and collective relationship with God. Each person in the church has been brought into fellowship with God through belief in the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through this fellowship with God there is a mutual fellowship with every other believer. It is this existent koinonia in Christ that is deepened, developed and realized through a small group ministry.

2 Understanding *koinonia*

2.1 Definition of *koinonia*

Kittel (1965:808) defines “koinonia” as “fellowship”. “In Galatians 2:9, shaking hands is an expression of the full fellowship established by a common faith in Christ.”

In general terms *koinonia* is the experience of people who have an interest in each other, as they honestly open their hearts to one another (Charles 1980:6). This is generally

understood to take place within the context of participation in fellowship, friendship and a spirit of community. To gain a clear understanding of the full meaning of the word, it is necessary to define it more precisely.

In his *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Kittel (1965:797) notes “*koinonia* is derived from the Greek word *koinos*, and its variants. *Koinos* means ‘common’, in the sense of mutual or shared. The nouns ‘*koinonia*’, ‘*koinonos*’ and ‘*koinoneo*’ express that which we possess in common.” (Stott 1982:85) The verbal form ‘*koinoneo*’ denotes that which a group of people holds jointly. It thus expresses the concept of sharing things or close friendship with others (Kittel 1965:797).

MacArthur (1973:170) says that “*koinonia* is sharing a partnership, commonness, fellowship, and communion.”

The practical outcome of *koinonia* is that those who experience the grace of the salvation of God seek close fellowship with other believers, sharing the love of God and material possessions with each other. The outcome of such a lifestyle is that other people who observe it are drawn to seeking the salvation of God, and participating in the fellowship between God and other believers.

Koinonia is the transliteration of the Greek word (κοινωνία) which means communion in the sense of intimate participation. The word is used frequently in the New Testament to describe the relationship of believers to each other in the early Christian church. It is also used when referring to the act of breaking bread in the manner which Christ prescribed during the Passover meal (Matthew 26:26-28, 1 Corinthians 10:16, 1 Corinthians 11:24).

Min (1981:564) defines *koinonia* as follows:

“When attempting to analyze its meaning (*koinonia*) the words, which express its modern meaning simply are ‘friendship’, ‘participation’ and ‘communion’.”

Jung (1979:70) says that “*koinonia*, which is generally used to express communion, also has the connotations of fellowship, association, participation, partnership, influence, etc.”

The word, therefore, has come to mean participation in the communion service, and denotes the idealized state of fellowship and community that should exist between Christian believers and between them and God.

2.2 The theological understanding of *koinonia*

Theological *koinonia* is the theological analysis of all *koinonia* events taking place in the church. Examples of *koinonia* recorded in the bible include the *koinonia* of God and Moses

needed for the Exodus, the meetings between Jesus and Peter after the resurrection, Jesus and Paul on the Damascus road, and Mark's record of the spiritual koinonia between Jesus and his disciples in the upper room. This became the platform for the events of Jesus' cross and Pentecost.

Theological koinonia is not an analysis of the general theological view of scripture; it strives to formulate the meaning of the koinonia that is evident in several crucial events that have occurred in the history of the church (Hong 2004:166).

2.2.1 Koinonia of the Trinity

The Trinity is the single Godhead consisting of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: equal in glory, coeternal in majesty. As the Father is, so is the Son and so is the Holy Spirit (Yu 2000:164).

The reason why this is possible is that the essence of the Trinity is the identical attitude, thinking, direction, power and authority of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There is a unity of purpose and fellowship that manifests itself in various ways such as joint activity in work, dedication, commission and concession. The Trinity works together in ways that always maintains complete koinonia. This aspect of the koinonia relationship is revealed in several events that are recorded in the scriptures. As the Creator said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness..." (Genesis 1:26). The risen Son said "Therefore go...baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). Paul's benediction to the Corinthians is, "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:13).

The persons of the Trinity live in koinonia with each other through their cooperation and trust in each other.

2.2.2 Koinonia between God and man

God created man as a partner with whom He could enjoy fellowship after He had completed his work of creation (Hong 2004:168). But mankind, Adam and Eve, who became living beings through the breath of life given by God, disobeyed God's clear command. They were deceived by Satan's lie that led them to disbelieve God instead of obeying Him and thereby enjoy the fellowship He planned to have with Him. The result was that Adam and Eve ate from the tree of 'knowledge of good and evil' which led to the severing of fellowship with

God. But, because of God's love and compassion for man, He enabled them to live a life in which it was still possible to have fellowship with God through sacrifice (Nel 2005:47).

After the initial evidence of God's love, God chose the nation of Israel through which to reveal his love and compassion for man. God established the sacrifices by which man could pay homage to God. When Israel faltered, God graciously continued in fellowship with His select prophets, who were entrusted with the task of bringing God's message to the people, calling them to Himself once again.

Eventually, God led man to the way of fellowship with Himself through forgiveness and reconciliation through the incarnation of his Son, his death on the cross and his resurrection from death (Hong 2004:169).

2.2.3 Koinonia between Jesus Christ and man

Koinonia between God and man becomes possible when a person faithfully responds to the call of God (Nel 2005:46). This vertical koinonia of God and man is wholly based on the promise and grace of God. This redemptive grace of God was made manifest through the incarnation. The incarnation is the most significant event that demonstrates a koinonia between Christ and man. This is clear from Philippians 2: 7-8, "but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death even death on a cross." and Romans 5:8, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Man is reconciled to God through the sacrificial death and victorious resurrection of the incarnate Christ (Ephesians 2:14-16).

Man is able to participate in a koinonia with God through the incarnation death and resurrection of Christ. It dramatically demonstrates God's love for man and his desire to have man saved and reconciled to Him.

Participation in koinonia with the resurrected Christ is nothing less than koinonia between God and man, and is brought about through the salvation of man. Paul, who was determined to destroy the infant church and the disciples of Christ, was transformed into a devoted Christian by obeying the voice of Jesus. Koinonia with Christ became the basis of Paul's theology and the union of man with Christ which comes into being through faith and conversion, is central to Paul's writings in the New Testament (Jun 1984:81).

2.2.4 Koinonia between the Holy Spirit and man

Writing about the activity of the Holy Spirit in the koinonia relationship between God and man, Paul says: “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.” (Romans 8:26). “And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.” (Romans 8:27).

Paul describes one aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit as being the mediator of koinonia between God and man (Min 1981:561) enabling man to communicate with God and experience a universal unity with all believers (John 14:16-17).

It is important to emphasize the necessity for koinonia between the Holy Spirit and man. The Holy Spirit was poured out on believers at Pentecost. This is a turning point in the history of the church because, since then, He dwells within all believers and enables them to have koinonia with God and with all other believers. His activity is seen in the selection of the seven deacons of the early church (Acts 6:5-6).

The spiritual koinonia that man needs in communicating with God, in fellowship with Jesus, and in relating to all other believers, is possible only through the Holy Spirit. The spiritual koinonia amongst believers is based on their mutual spiritual faith.

2.3 Koinonia in ecclesiology

2.3.1 The role of koinonia in the church

Dulles (1988:83, 92) classifies the organizational pattern of the Christian church using five models as follows:

“In the institutional church models, the official church teaches, sanctifies, and rules with the authority of Christ. In the communion models, the Church is viewed as God’s people or Christ’s body, growing into the final perfection of the Kingdom. In the sacramental ecclesiologies, the Church is understood as the visible manifestation of the grace of Christ in the human community. In the herald models, the Church takes on an authoritarian role, proclaiming the gospel as a divine message, to which the world must humbly listen and obey. In the servant ecclesiology, the Church reflects a consciousness of the needs of both the Church and the world.”

Dulles (1988:184) insists that the ideal church is one which combines the essentials of the five models in one fellowship, saying that the function of the church is to be an

organization dedicated to presenting a combination of kerygma, didache (or paideia), koinonia, and service.

Kerygma is the proclamation of the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. The early church was a community that shared a common belief in this good news and proclaimed it.

Leitourgia refers to the worship of the community of believers. The first church was active in worship, prayer, praise and in the sacraments. The Christian community is called ‘the people of God’ and it participates in the ministry of sharing, serving, proclaiming the gospel and worshipping the risen Christ (Nel 2005:42).

Writing about the function of the church, Park (1983:17-22) says: “The function of the modern church is comprised of both a pastoral and a missionary function.”

The pastoral function is the preaching of the gospel, the practice of the sacraments and the training of the believers. The missionary function is the work that extends the sovereignty of Christ through the witness of the lives of believers and through evangelism. The biblical words that are used to describe the various functions of the church are koinonia, diakonia, kerygma, and leitourgia. The following sections explain these concepts.

2.3.1.1 Intimacy of the body of Christ (koinonia)

Koinonia actualizes the redemptive love that gave rise to the church in an intimate fellowship of all believers in Christ. The horizontal koinonia of reconciliation among people is based on the vertical koinonia of reconciliation with God. The basic task is as follows:

The koinonia must be based on the unity of the church, which is a sign of the family of God. Believers must experience the reality of being one family, one brotherhood through the fellowship that centers on the same confession of faith in Christ, the filling of the Holy Spirit, the word of God and the communion service.

A Christian will be able to become an effective witness for Christ as he experiences the common life of the church which in turn will provide opportunities to do so (Snyder 1977:96).

Secondly, koinonia must lead to a community where believers provide mutual healing, support and encouragement for each other.

Thirdly, koinonia must result in a community in which all Christians are trained and developed to maturity in Christ.

Miller (1957:50-51) says: “Such is the Christian fellowship. It crosses all barriers of age, social status, nation, race, and interest, creating one body in Christ, a fellowship of men

who belong to each other by unbreakable ties for no other reason than that they are ‘equally condemned and equally forgiven sinners’.”

Therefore a church that is fully alive makes positive efforts to form a community of believers whose relationships are based on love and fellowship in Christ. The church members share their life experiences, have a concern for each other, resolve problems, forgive one another and are trained to share one another’s burdens.

2.3.1.2 The servant aspect of the church (diakonia)

In Greek the term diakonia means ‘service’ or ‘ministration’ (Nel 2005:38). In the New Testament it also means service, often of a humble nature, or ministry, or arrangement for support, to wait upon (serve food and drink, Luke 10:40), or contributing help by giving money (Acts 6:1). In the Christian community the word came to mean ‘ministry’ or ‘a mission and service’ (Stott 1982:49).

Barrett’s (1986:129) understanding of diakonia in mission is that it means to participate in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and he regards it as following in Jesus’ footsteps.

He insists that not only must each Christian be like Jesus, but that the church must become Christ to the world. He also points out that Jesus’ ministry was to the poor, the weak and the outcasts.

The Christian diakonia as ministry extends from the community to the individual level. When a church practices diakonia, the area where it serves will change. Diakonia was practiced at both the individual and community levels in the Moravian and Methodist Church movements, both of which had their roots in pietism (Snyder 1989:149-152). This was manifest in the social service or social welfare aspects of their missions.

They emphasized evangelism directed to the poor. Their charitable work did not stop when a person was born again, but continued as they encouraged individuals to lead pious lives, through nurturing and training them in the Christian life. Their view is that Christians are responsible to God for their neighbours, and must serve as Christ did. They must be a visible evidence of salvation to the world, recognize their responsibility to render social service to the community, and actively participate in endeavours to ease the world’s pain and suffering.

Diakonia is a general service to society and to neighbours through behaviour which is according to the Word of God and the Spirit of Christ.

De Vries (1962:26) says: “Diakonia in all its forms leads to Leitourgia – service (worship) to God.”

Diakonia means service, and the church must be the servant representing Christ in the world. There are three aspects to the church’s diakonial function (Sel 2000:44). They are:

First, it must serve others by the word of God. Second, it must practice the prophetic ministry of a rebuke about their sin, and proclamation of hope about future life. Third, it must endeavour to improve society by combating the fabric of immorality, injustice and lawlessness in the world.

2.3.1.3 The redemptive function of the gospel (kerygma)

According to the word of God the church is called to be a witness of the gospel, and is responsible for proclaiming the good news of God to the world. After hearing and responding to the word of God, believers will have experienced a redemptive life change and, at the same time, they will have experienced both koinonia and diakonia. The next step is to urge other people to experience a similar redemptive life change by sharing the impact of this event and the word of God with them.

The purpose of the proclamation of the gospel is to declare that Jesus is the Christ, God’s son, that He is Lord and King, and is the mediator of God’s love to people (Mackay 1997:202-208).

It is important to note that it is not possible to proclaim the gospel without reference to the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ.

After experiencing faith in Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit it is possible for believers to share their experience of the kingdom of God with others, by applying the Word of God to their lives. Because of the apt way in which the word of God meets the needs of people it is appropriately termed the word of life.

Believers in Christ repent of their sins, and receive forgiveness of their sin by daily repentance and identification with Christ and throughout their lives there has to be sanctification of their lives. The church therefore has to put into practice a mission to the world based on the great commission of Christ to “go and make disciples of all nations.” (Matthew 28:19)

For a church to accomplish the commission as a messenger of the word of God, it is important that the following practices are regularly and clearly taught. Christian believers are to:

- be disciples, modeled on the example of Jesus, who is their Master and our Saviour, experience koinonia in all social relationships,
- be followers of Jesus and not be assimilated into the world,
- be prepared to introduce people to the love of God through his word of grace and through their lives,
- to worship joyfully in gratitude for salvation, God's daily care, and the prospect of the forthcoming glory of God through Jesus' second coming.

Such people are a community saved by the grace of Christ, and are the people of God in the world. Christians should proclaim the gospel wherever they go (Acts 1:8). Koinonia is fellowship, the living example of the proclamation of the gospel.

Mission is necessary for the life of the church. However, if the proclamation of the gospel is intended only for the ongoing existence of the church, the motive is wrong. The church exists to serve and to witness to the saving power of the Lord Jesus. The presentation of the gospel is the function of the whole Christian community.

2.3.1.4 The worship of the church (leitourgia)

The church is a community of worship. Worship is the act whereby the congregation consecrates itself to God. Worship is an act in which people, who have faith in Christ, and are members of the body of Christ, respond together to the word of God in obedience, and rejoice in the sacrifice of the Lord and his redemptive love.

Nel (2005:42) says that "The focus in worship is on service to God and always on the basis of Jesus Christ's redemption of us."

Worship is not a solo performance, it is a chorus. Worship is a koinonia which clearly demonstrates that the individuals meeting together are the people of God. "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing..." (Hebrews 10:25). This is why worshipping together is so important for believers. Worship is a union between the people of God and Christ at a meeting, in which the participants give and accept each other in the joy of fellowship and freedom.

Therefore liturgical renaissance, liturgical renewal and liturgical reform are of interest and importance to the modern church.

The visible church must undertake the essential task of renewal of their worship through teaching the general public about the nature of the sacrament and of its theological meaning based on the word of God. Worship is an act of faith, and confirms that Christ is Lord. It is an

act in which participants experience the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is the spiritual experience of the grace of God and the enjoyment of his response. It is the practice of bringing together the congregation with all the various fellowships, services and horizontal functions of its members.

The organization of worship is focused on the following three elements:

First is the word of God. The word of God is central to worship. Jesus is the Word of God who became man in order to reveal God to humans. People meet with Jesus through the Bible. The Bible has an essential authority because it is God's word, written by men through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Burrow 1981:62-63).

The second element is the sacraments. These are baptism and communion. Baptism is a sign of the believer's participation in the death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Communion is the participation of believers in eating bread and drinking wine, the symbols of Christ's body and blood, in remembrance of his once for all sacrifice on Calvary. It is a rite of joyful spiritual fellowship with other believers and the Lord, in which participants experience the presence of the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It is also a reminder that He will return, as He said.

The third is the Holy Spirit. The presence of Christ and the Holy Spirit is the most important factor in true worship. God enables believers to grow, develop and change. He does not limit the form of worship, but allows freedom for men to worship as led by the Holy Spirit. Worship honours God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and acknowledges his almighty power and gracious love.

Worship is an act of the community. It expresses the core values of the community, strengthens their faith which is centered on Christ, and motivates their work through the Holy Spirit. It has a common commission and renews the community's trust in God.

2.3.2 Koinonia as the essence of the church

The concept that is best able to answer the fundamental question "What is the church?" is found in the expression "The church is koinonia itself" (Hong 2004:168). This is so because the church is the place where koinonia, as an essential relationship between God and men who have been saved, takes place, and men experience the rapture of unity through spiritual fellowship with God through the Holy Spirit.

The most important function that legitimizes a church is the renewal of koinonia between God and man. Through koinonia the fundamental meaning of the church is more clearly grasped and the purpose of the church's existence is better understood. This leads the church

to become a church which fulfills its duty by introducing the gospel to the world and thus seeking to serve the world.

Therefore koinonia is regarded as a very important part of the church's function, because koinonia is an important element that leads to an increase in the size of the church and a recovery of the real motive for service.

The reasons for the need of koinonia in the church may be described as follows:

First, koinonia gives believers an opportunity for spiritual fellowship, by entering into fellowship with God. It also helps believers experience the love of God.

Second, where koinonia has disappeared or become paralyzed, the aroma of Christ disappears as a result of the decline in koinonia. The church loses its light, dissenting voices emerge, and trouble abounds, when koinonia disappears in a church. Where this occurs, the church must change. Members have to faithfully consecrate themselves to Christ and to one another in order to become a church worthy of its name church.

The church's dynamism is reactivated, and its true role as a church is recovered, when it regularly practices koinonia as a foundation for its mediatory work in the church. It is the factor that "is the lubricant leading to a peaceful church life, and helps believers to achieve harmony in their church activities (Jun 1984:78).

Jun (1984:79) says that "the church is an organization that is a community of love, comprised of faithful Christians who have all been called of God."

Therefore, Christians must have fellowship with each other, love one another, engage in dialogue with each other, and share the joy of spiritual freedom as they enjoy their faith in Christ.

Third, koinonia helps believers to participate in a closer life and walk with Christ. Through their prayers during communion and corporate worship, Christians are more closely united with Jesus. Communion is where Christians partake of the symbols of the body and blood of Christ, where the bond between Christ and the believers is demonstrated and where koinonia between the believers is strengthened.

Fourth, koinonia is love in action as Christians defer to one another in various matters (Jun 1984:79). The evidence of faith is seen in a life of true love. A believer who experiences koinonia with God through faith gives evidence of this in a life of service in the neighbourhood. The early believers formed a solid koinonia with each other for their religious life, and united in sharing their pain and suffering as well as their joy. All the believers in Jerusalem, rich and poor, shared their goods with each other, according to their individual

needs (Acts 2:44-45). Sometimes this also meant sharing in suffering (1 Corinthians 12:25-26).

People who are bound together in koinonia are at peace with God and with each other. They maintain a close relationship with each other, love each other, and open the doors of their hearts to each other.

The early church consisted of Christians in a fellowship, in koinonia. The koinonia experienced in the church is formed through God's love that produces peace, and reflects a continuous history of the work of the Holy Spirit based on the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore true koinonia is formed when Christians truly participate in the work of the Holy Spirit. Christians are able to relate to God only through the work of the Holy Spirit which enables them to have fellowship with Christ, to participate in Christ's ministry and to serve the neighbourhood.

The kingdom of God on earth is being realized through koinonia, and the church was established and grew through koinonia. Because of the foregoing this investigator believes that a small group ministry enables the existing koinonia to develop, grow and mature.

3 Biblical background of relational groups

A firm foundation on the Bible guards against the storms of change brought about by the many faddish programs that blow through churches from time to time. Although initially these fads seem exciting and potentially beneficial, they quickly subside, indicating that an essential element is missing and, as experienced in the history of church growth in some South Korean churches, the missing element is often real koinonia. Because koinonia is an important part of a small group ministry, the use of this type of ministry is better suited to sustained church growth both spiritual and numerical. Icenogle (1994:12) says "The small group is the rudimentary and simple version of the more complex human community called forth by God ... The biblical material sets the agenda for the exploration into small group life." In fact, of all the potential ministry formats available to the local church, small groups have the greatest biblical support. Consequently, it is important for every small group participant to understand and appreciate the rich biblical heritage on which small groups are based.

3.1 The Old Testament and relational “groups”

Koinonia is, in essence, a relational term. It expresses the spiritual relationship which Christians have with God and with one another. The Old Testament contains many examples of group relationships such as the family, the smallest natural group, the tribe and the nation. These groups are expressions of relationships that serve koinonia. This section explores various examples of groups found in the Old Testament.

McBride (1990:13) says “The basis of today’s small group ministries can be traced back to the Old Testament.” He even goes as far as to say that the small group begins with the very nature of God.

The word ‘God’ (Elohim) first appears in the Bible in Genesis 1:1. Elohim is plural, designating or incorporating more than one person. Although interpreted as singular throughout the Old Testament, the word expresses the unity of three persons in the one God, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These three jointly share the same nature and majesty of God, a unique relationship beyond our mere human comprehension. Yet, the trinity pictures for us the pivotal concept of relationships within a group. In this sense God is a prototype for the small group concept. Our own need for and use of groups is a logical extension of the fact that God exists within the divine form of a small group. Of course, the term small group is not used in Scripture, but neither is the word trinity.

The concept of groups is pictured further in the Old Testament record of God’s chosen people, the Israelites (Genesis 11:31-32, cf. Acts 7:2-4). Unger (1981:54) comments on this passage saying “From universal polytheism God called Abram as a purge to be an exponent of the gospel of salvation by grace.” The notion and practice of groups were tightly woven into the fabric of their individual and corporate identities. From the entire nation down to the smallest family unit, a large and small group mentality permeated the Jewish existence.

The history of the nation starts with one man Abraham and the nation grew from him and his descendants (Genesis 12:1-2). Icenogle (1994:34) says “Abram is the leader called by God to gather and nurture God’s community, a contrasting action to humanity’s self-initiative.”

In their early history the focus was on the family, notably Jacob’s twelve sons, who eventually became the heads of the twelve tribes that made up the nation of Israel. The groups of people that comprise this nation are:

3.1.1 Nation

The Israelites were a chosen people; God set them apart from all other peoples on the face of the earth to be dedicated to Him (Deuteronomy 7:6). They were a select and unique group within human society. They were chosen, not because they were large in number. They were but few in number, but they were chosen because God loved them (Deuteronomy 7:7-8). They formed a great family called “the house of Israel” (Exodus 40:38). This family identity served as the model around which the nation was internally organized (Numbers 1:2).

3.1.2 Tribe

The house of Israel, by virtue of its descent from the twelve sons of Jacob, was divided into twelve subgroups or tribes (Genesis 49). Tribes provided the leaders with a method of administering and guiding the people. These tribal sub-groups were well established by the time the land of Canaan was divided among the Israelites according to their tribes and families (Joshua 13-22).

3.1.3 Family or clan

Tribes were broken down further into groups of relatives known as clans or families. By the last year of the Israelites’ wilderness journey, fifty-seven families existed among the twelve tribes. The families were formed from Jacob’s grandchildren and by the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the twelve heads of the tribes. Numbers 26:21-49 profiles these families with their associated tribes.

3.1.4 Household

The Hebrew word *bajith* means “house”. The various clans were further divided into family subgroups or relatives living in the same dwelling, including servants and dependents. Scripture speaks of “the household of Joseph” (Genesis 50:8) or “Pharaoh and his whole household” (Deuteronomy 6:22). Households typically incorporated several generations of relatives and servants.

3.1.5 Individual families

A specific man, including his wife and children, was the smallest group within the Jewish community. The phrases “son of” and “daughter of” were common social identifiers, linking the person to his or her father. A single family unit could exist as part of a larger household or as a separate entity. Individual family units were the heart of Jewish society and were the primary small groups (McBride 1990:15).

Every Jew could (and many still can) rehearse his or her identity based on nation, tribe, family, household, and father. These identity groupings were important political, social, and spiritual designations.

In the Old Testament, a covenant is a special, binding relationship between people who have agreed on a common purpose. It is God’s nature to be in a relationship, and God wants the relationship between God and his people to be of a covenant nature. A covenant always implies community. God is always bringing things and persons together (Icenogle, 1994:37-38).

These groups are based on the relationships that the individuals have with one another and their God. As we move from the Old Testament to the present day the need is still for close relationships with others and with God. The need for relationships is responded to within the small group ministry which is based on the development and nurturing of koinonia.

It is vital to remember that today the most important Christian small group is the Christian family. In our fractured society, of broken and dysfunctional families, however, there is a need for a small group ministry aimed at healing people and families, restoring them to spiritual health and vigor, and a re-energizing of their evangelistic (missionary) zeal.

3.2 Group relationships encountered in the New Testament

3.2.1 Jesus and his disciples

Jesus Christ is pictured as the model leader in history. Jesus’ involvement in the strong, close relationships with his disciples is the most convincing rationale for local churches to seriously consider including relational groups (small groups) as an integral part of their congregational life. It is expedient to explore Jesus’ use of relationships which, in His case, were based on constant contact and interaction all day, 7days a week.

Mark 3 tells of the beginnings and purpose of this small group of twelve which Jesus called together: (1) Jesus called to himself those he wanted; (2) Jesus appointed twelve; (3)

Jesus wanted them to be with him; (4) Jesus sent them out to preach; and (5) Jesus gave them authority to cast out demons (Mark 3:13-15).

Jesus chose just twelve men on whom he was to focus his training. At the same time he conducted his public ministry by talking to crowds that grew to number thousands. But the prime focus of his ministry was on the development and training of the twelve. From time to time Jesus chose still smaller groups for special attention. Jesus frequently related to the three in his inner circle. He took Peter, James and John with him on the Mount of Transfiguration. When he healed the daughter of Jairus, Peter, James and John also entered the room with him, while the others remained outside.

Coleman (1993:26) notes “Within the select apostolic group Peter, James and John seemed to enjoy a more special relationship to the Master than did the other nine.”

Jesus selected a “motley” group to be his disciples and apostles. This term is very appropriate and important to the theological meaning of Jesus’ small group and family (Mark 3:13, 35). It was comprised of a combination of “clashing,” “heterogeneous” and “diverse” cultural elements. The group included Galilean fishermen (Peter, James and John), a tax collector (Matthew), a fiery nationalist (Simon), one of “untroubled faith” (Andrew), the “doubtful” one (Thomas), and one who eventually “betrayed” Jesus (Judas) (Mark 3:14-18).

While he often prayed alone, the scriptures record instances where he took small groups of the disciples with him when he prayed and when he was preaching (Luke 5). The Twelve were first called disciples, usually defined as “learners” or “followers.” The etymology of the word implies “one who is being influenced” (Guralnik 1982:401).

They were *mathetai* (students) of Jesus. As leader of the learning and following group, Jesus was responsible for their purpose and actions (Lohfink 1989:32).

The present day small group ministry follows the model set by Jesus with the Twelve. Under the guidance and leadership of Jesus the group of twelve disciples gave the world the leaders who, moved by the Holy Spirit, would change the history of mankind. In a much lesser degree a small group can and do help in identifying and developing future spiritual leaders where way of life and witness will have a significant impact on their family, friends, neighbours and those with whom they come into contact.

As Kraus (1979:11) has explained, “those who accepted [Jesus’] way were called *disciples* (followers, learners, apprentices), *Christians* (Christ’s people), and *dedicated ones* (set apart to God, saints), to indicate their relation to Christ. They were to ‘follow,’ ‘obey,’ ‘share in,’ and ‘imitate’ Christ.”

3.2.2 Group relationships in the early churches

From the very beginning, group relationships were integral to the church's development and success. This fact is not surprising given the background of the people involved, their social context, and the nature of the church.

The work of the twelve disciples, now aided by the direct appointment of Paul by Jesus to their number, is well described in Acts. Even though Jesus had left the earthly scene, the Holy Spirit was their guide helping them to recall all that He had taught them, opening their minds to understand the scriptures, and endowing them with power and authority. The Holy Spirit also moved the disciples to gather together in small groups. After Jesus' resurrection we read of 120 people gathering together (Acts 1:15). The numerical growth that appears in Acts is explained as being due to the difference between a simply outward (numerical) growth (Acts 2:47), to the growth of a 'meta' church, which implies that there is an inner change in the people constituting the church. George (1992:51) says "The prefix *meta* means "change." As in *metabolism*, *metamorphosis*, *metaphysical*, and the Greek word *metanoia* ("to change one's mind" or "repent"). The concept of a *meta-church*, then, is quite distinct from that of a mega church."

Later on these many believers met in homes (Acts 5:42). The family relationships already extant were strengthened by faith in Christ and extended to include others who came to believe in Christ. Thus the original group of twelve disciples grew to an innumerable number of groups of believers, which met in homes, and experienced the deep *koinonia* that flows from a relationship with God. The kingdom of God spread through the world in much the same way that yeast spreads throughout the dough when making bread. Church history confirms that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31, 11:12), these groups of believers had an incredible impact, both qualitatively and quantitatively, on the development of the church, and resulted in an almost explosive growth (Acts 16:5).

The early church gathered as a community of smaller groups united by their common faith in the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Buildings might be beautiful, splendid, and magnificent, like that of Herod's temple, but are not the true church. That is not what a church really is, it is the community of all those who believe that Jesus Christ is the living Son of God.

Jesus revealed the true meaning of what the temple was when he drove out the money changers and those selling livestock from the temple precincts, as recorded in John 2:13-22. The true temple was intended to be a house of prayer, and that is just what those first groups

of Christians did. They met for prayer and also for exhortation, encouragement and the reading of the scriptures.

Han (2002:63) says “Fellowship with God is not dependent on a temple built by hands, but is found in a community of Christians who are focused on the resurrection of Christ. The church is a gathering of people who have experienced the resurrection of Christ. ”

Therefore, the church built on the reality of the resurrection of Christ is a community, and a house group is typical of the resurrection community. Paul refers to these as “the church which is in your home (Acts 2:46).”

In New Testament times the home was the basic unit of the social system of the Jewish religion. The family also became the basic unit of the New Testament church. The home became the central unit of Christian life and formed the advance base for spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. The fracturing of the home as a unit is one of the main manifestations of a breakdown in inter-personal relationships today. Re-establishing real koinonia through the nurturing ministry of small groups will help prevent the disintegration of family life and promote a better sense of what relationships within the church could and should be.

One of Paul’s major metaphors for describing the church is the family household. He encouraged the Galatians to “do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith” (Galatians 6:10). He offered encouragement to the believers in Ephesus by reminding them that they were members “of God’s household” (Ephesians 2:19). He used this same word picture in writing to Timothy (1 Timothy 3:15).

The apostle Peter also used the household metaphor. He called the church “the household of God” (1 Peter 4:17), and “a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:5). Both Peter and Paul viewed the church as a spiritual family and the body of Christ (another favourite metaphor, 1 Corinthians 12:27). The terms house and household capitalized on this image and its inherent relationships. The contemporary resurgence of small groups as a tool for renewal and growth, is an attempt to enable the church to realize its full potential. However, the “building mentality” that views a church as a physical building is persistent, and continues to be a stumbling block for the small group enterprise.

Coleman (1991:16), founder of Serendipity House, and one of the pioneers of the contemporary small group movement, developed a baseball diamond model to help in understanding the process a group has to undergo to become a real, caring community.

To experience true koinonia, the group must reach all four bases. Coleman (1993 4:19) explains the base levels as follows: “First base is telling the story of your spiritual past. Second base is sharing your current situation, and affirming the other members of the group.

Third base is goal – setting. After a group has completed, this process together, real community can be experienced (Home base).” Each base represents a rising level of group maturity.

4 The use of a small groups ministry

Koinonia can be nurtured and developed in several different ways. One way of developing koinonia is the so called small group ministry. However, given the theme of this thesis, which is that the growth of the church is stimulated through the realization and influence of the real koinonia which can be developed in small groups, the focus of this chapter is on the nurturing and development of koinonia through the use of a small group ministry.

4.1 Definition and necessity of a small group

To understand the correct meaning of the term “small group” as currently used, requires a range of different approaches. In order to gain such an understanding the definitions of various scholars will be examined, together with the theological background of the definition and its implementation.

The dynamics of small groups have become the subject of serious study by many people. One of the difficulties related to this study is the definition of the term “small group”, as each author approaches the subject from his own perspective. It is therefore necessary to have a clear understanding of what is meant by the various terms used in relation to a “small group”. Icenogle (1994:14) defines a small group in this way:

“the small group is a face-to-face gathering of a few (three to twenty) persons to be, to share and to act for the betterment of one another and the wider good of others.”

Icenogle’s definition places the emphasis on the face to face, interactive fellowship of a few, three to twenty people.

On the other hand McBride’s (1990:24) definition of a small group reads as follows:

“A small group within the church is a voluntary, intentional gathering of three to twelve people regularly meeting together with the shared goal of mutual Christian edification and fellowship.”

McBride’s is an excellent definition in that it clearly identifies the spiritual position of the group as ‘within the church’, the optimum number of people, the regularity of the meeting, and the desired objectives. These objectives include the mutuality of purpose, the fellowship

of the believers, and the instruction and exhortation that is necessary for their growth and spiritual development.

Barlow (1972:11) says:

“The small group is a laboratory in Christian experience where serious saints and interested friends meet to explore scripture, pray, and share each other’s burdens in a mutual search to know God’s will and carry it out.”

The small group is a group where “in a word everybody knows your name.”(Chea & Lee, 2005:25).

The small group is, therefore, to be defined as a meeting of three to twelve believers who intend to meet regularly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit with the purpose of studying the word of God, in order to get to know what God has to say about the issues of life, to encourage one another to live for Jesus Christ, and to exhort one another to proclaim the gospel.

A further goal of the small group is to actively lead people to Christ as their saviour and to make them disciples of Christ. It involves the variety of gracious gifts that the Holy Spirit has bestowed on believers. The activities of the small group include identifying and using these spiritual gifts in fellowship and worship, in the healing and the recovery of those who falter, in evangelism and in mission work. Such small groups will reflect the ideal of what the church should really be, as they meet with a common purpose, a desire to serve and are led by the Holy Spirit through the scriptures.

The term ‘small group’ does not only refer to a small group of people. The term as used in this and other writings encompasses much more. In the small group people get to share their life experiences, look after and understand each other, and become intimately acquainted with each other through interaction (Gilbert 1997:65).

Therefore, small group interactions transcend the generation gap, culture and even experiences, and help the individuals in the small group to understand the similarity and otherness in the human community. The small group obeys God’s command to meet in his name. Small groups start with the core premise that God exists and that he has revealed himself to humanity through Jesus Christ his Son as recorded in the word of God – the Bible.

But churches have to consider Callahan’s comments (1987:18). He says “Local churches frequently make one of two mistakes: (1) they include too many “expands” and “adds” in their long-range plan, or (2) they move too quickly to key objectives before deciding the central characteristics that are their best major priorities as “expands” and “adds.””

Callahan (1987:19-22) claims that the use of his ‘12 central characteristics theory’ leads to the most effective planning for the future growth of a church.

“The best plan does not necessarily have the longest list of objectives. The best plan lists those few key objectives related to expanding current strengths and adding new foundational strengths among the central characteristics of an effective church. Thus it makes good sense for each planning team to be given ample opportunity to think through these strategic decisions constructively and creatively.”

Small groups meet the need for believers to have fellowship, to study God’s truth in the Bible, and to discuss the problems they experience in their lives as they follow the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the small group as an outlet, people can share with others the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit in their changed lives.

4.2 Expressions of koinonia in the New Testament

The life of the early church as reported in Acts 2:42-47 indicates the special elements needed to nurture and develop koinonia. The early believers were devoted to four characteristic elements essential for vibrant Christian life: nurture, worship, community and mission (Nicholas 1985:23). It is the practice of these elements that deepens and enriches the koinonia brought about by faith in Jesus Christ.

4.2.1 Nurture

Believers were devoted to the apostles’ teaching (Acts 2:42), which is now the integral part of the New Testament. Through their devotion to the inspired words they received the spiritual guidance needed for healthy Christian growth, growth to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13).

Mallison (1981:13) points out that, while the Bible emphasizes that the various, different spiritual gifts of believers should be utilized for the edification of all the other Christians in a church or group, this is often overlooked in practice.

In a church’s small group ministry the sense of responsibility of members to identify and use their spiritual gifts should be nurtured and developed. Therefore the standard of genuine success of all church meetings is the degree to which they make disciples of believers, and enable them to reach their optimum spiritual potential as effective workers for Christ.

In Ephesians 4:11-12, the apostle Paul identifies the special gifting of people for the essential tasks of Christian ministry – apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. An important responsibility of the senior pastor is to help believers identify their spiritual and natural gifts and talents, and to determine where these can be effectively used within the church’s activities. Having done this he needs to ensure that each person receives adequate discipleship training so that they become fully effective. Snyder (2004:227) says “Seek to nurture all the people.”

There is a need for continual training. This is primarily to ensure that there are adequately trained leaders for emerging new organically growing small groups. In order to meet these needs, new trainees should be identified and recruited for training by the existing small group ministry leaders. There is also a need for the ongoing training and development of already qualified leaders and, as a minimum, this should consist of monthly meetings with the senior pastor for the discussion of problems and the encouragement of the leaders. This is in line with the suggestions for effective small groups made by George (1997:43) who emphasized the need for recruiting people for training as ‘reserve’ leaders.

Nurture involves growth in both mind and spirit (Romans 12:2). God can nurture us through Christian literature, films, tapes, lectures, sharing Christian experiences and many other sources (Nicholas 1985:23), but especially through the reading and study of the Bible – the word of God (Sel 2000:153).

4.2.2 Worship

According to Romans 12:1, worship is giving yourself, committing your whole person as God’s new creature to God, concretely expressed with your whole “body” in everything you do, say and think toward other people.

As Christians continually take God’s word into their lives, their knowledge and love for God increases and, as a result, worship springs forth. Worship is the second essential element in the lives of the believers in a small group (Nicholas 1985:24), which is true of all believers. It flows from their growing knowledge of God and is manifested in praising and honoring him (Aldrich 1981:111). It is adoring and worshipping Him for who He is, and giving expression of their love for Him by loving one another (Ephesians 5:19-21). Worship unites like nothing else. Arnold (1992:139-141) describes the six reasons why worship is essential as follows: “First, God is worthy of our praise, thanksgiving and offering of self. Second, there is joy in

worship. Third, worship is essential to life. Fourth, we are practicing for heaven. Fifth, it is a sin not to worship. Sixth, the devil hates it when we worship God.”

At the centre of worship has always stood the triune God, and at the centre of the life of the congregation one finds the worship service (Nel 2005:265).

4.2.3 Community

Snyder (1977:74) emphasizes that “the priority of community is in two directions: in relation to the individual believer and in relation to witness.”

Devotion to systematic, sound teaching and the response to God in worship are closely related to the fellowship we enjoy in the Christian community. Community is the third essential element in a dynamic Christian small group. Christian community is not merely a subjective feeling of belonging. Christian community is more akin to the commitment of love and obligation we have toward members of our own family. It is devotion to one another based on the experience we share of God at work saving us from the corrupt generation around us, and knitting us into effective teams of change agents in the world. The outcome of life in community is that we are knit together in love and built up as a whole people (Ephesians 4:12-16). This happens as we share needs, confess sins and faults, bear each other’s burdens, encourage each other, listen with care and intercede in prayer (Nicholas 1985:25). According to Ephesians 4-6, it entails speaking the truth, quitting anger, doing honest work, giving to the needy, forgiving one another, living sexually pure, unity in marriage, obedience to parents, loyalty to employers, battling evil.

Barth (1958:627) rightly points out that when the New Testament speaks of up-building, it “speaks always of the up-building of the community.”

4.2.4 Mission

Miller (1957:69) says that “Mission is not a special function of a part of the church. It is the whole church in action. It is the body of Christ expressing Christ’s concern for the whole world. It is God’s people seeking to make all men members of the people of God. Mission is the function for which the church exists.”

Mission is the fourth element needed for vibrant group life. Christian groups exist to reach out and share the good news of Christ’s love to people in need. We are the body of Christ, his avenue for extending his love and power to transform individuals and society. As

Christians interact with those around them, the Spirit operates in their lives bringing them face to face with the reality of eternity and their present condition before a holy, righteous and loving God. The flow of God's grace through believers may first make an impact on the people closest to the group, but its power can extend unto the ends of the earth. The concept of mission includes such things as evangelism and social action (Nicholas 1985:26).

Small groups, the home church of the New Testament, developed into the large congregations we encounter today. With this growth came a sense of the lack of *koinonia*. To meet the need of belonging, the small group ministry was initiated. This ministry focuses on the spiritual relationships that can develop between individual small group members and with the Lord Jesus.

For the small group ministry to be effective it must have a broad vision that extends beyond its present comfort zone, otherwise its effectiveness will be limited by the extent of the church community (Mallison 1996:18).

In any city there are a large number of different subcultures based on characteristics such as ethnic origin, age, social standing, education, earning capacity, location (which is likely to be influenced by the preceding factors) and even the professed 'nominal' religion. When a small group team has a vision for non-Christians, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, establishes small groups to target individuals in one or other subculture, not currently associated with its activities, it is engaged in mission. This is where 'outsiders' are sought and through the power of the Holy Spirit, the witness of the word of God and the testimony of the small group members are brought in to be 'insiders' in Christ. Where this practice is adopted by the whole church, it effectively becomes engaged in mission that will extend to the people of other nations in other parts of the world. The church will become the source of worldwide missionary activity.

The First Community Baptist Church in Singapore has such a vision of cross-culture mission by way of a small group ministry. In order to keep the burning zeal for mission alive, the church holds an annual mission conference and conducts a Weekend Mission Exposure program for small groups. The church also participates in other outreach programs such as Operation Barnabas and Year of Mobilization. The focus on the small group ministry as a means of reaching out to other cultures has resulted in the church sending out over 100 mission teams to other parts of the world during a four year period. (Khong 2004:240-243).

4.3 Koinonia and leadership in the church

4.3.1 *Οικος* as expression of koinonia

The Greek word *οικος* can also refer to the ‘extended family’, to those who stay in a house. It can include relatives, friends, neighbours, companions, club members, etc., as well as employees or visitors. The meaning is much wider than usually understood today (Lee 2001: 21).

Louw and Nida (1988:81, 113, 115, 560) noted “*οικος* means a building or place where one dwells – ‘house, home, dwelling, residence’...the family consisting of those related by blood and marriage, as well as slaves and servants, living in the same house or homestead – ‘family, household.’...persons of successive generations who are related by birth – ‘lineage, family line.’...possessions associated with a house and household – ‘property, possessions.’”

These relationships can be further categorized as an ‘individual *οικος*, an ‘expansible *οικος*, and ‘latent *οικος*.

Individual *οικος* refers to people who spend at least an average of 30-45 minutes a week together, these people are those with whom we form a relationship.

Expansible *οικος* refers to each person in a given *οικος* who is also a member of another *οικος*.

Latent *οικος* describes people who have the right to form a relationship with one another, but who have not yet met.

4.3.2 The necessity of *οικος* leadership and its definition

Οικος leadership is defined as the ability of persons to interact with people with whom they come into contact, in a way that forms a relationship with the leader and enables him, or her, to effect a change in their thinking or behaviour. The great advantage of small groups is that people are able to establish close personal relationships that could not be expected in larger groups. Therefore *οικος* leadership is necessary to influence the members of an *οικος* positively, either directed towards evangelizing them or, through forming a close koinonia connection with them, encouraging them to grow spiritually and reach out to those around them.

Some leadership theories lead to confusion when potential leaders try to apply them. This is because these theories tend to be very extensive and not always very clear as to how

they should be applied in practice. It is therefore vital that a small group ministry leadership theory should be specifically developed so as to maximize the potential advantages of a small group. It must also take the character and dynamics of a small group into account. Because of its characteristics *oikoc* leadership is considered the best leadership style for the small group ministry.

4.3.3 Important factors in *oikoc* leadership

It is necessary to understand and develop several key concepts in order to apply *oikoc* effectively.

4.3.3.1 The homogeneous unit principle

This principle postulates that small groups should be composed of people with similar interests, backgrounds, social standing, etc.

This principle has been criticized by several scholars because it fails to recognize the unity of the body of Christ. Unity in Christ is the theological concept that all believers are part of the one body of Christ whether Jew or Greek, slave or freeman (1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Ephesians 2:11-22).

Oikoc and *koinonia* belong together. *Koinonia* in New Testament is non homogeneous in that dissimilar people are all one in Jesus Christ. The outsider becomes the insider because of Him.

The author acknowledges and supports this view and agrees that church small groups must, at all times, be aware of, and reflect the unity of all believers in Christ. However the spiritual gifts and talents given to individual believers are varied, and so are their circumstances. For example there are single people, young married couples and older retired people, all with very different interests and needs. Therefore when small groups are formed within the church context both these aspects should be kept in mind. This is especially true of the circumstances in South Korea.

Natural grouping should be encouraged, and within each small group the distinctive spiritual gifts of individual members must be recognized and used to the mutual benefit of the group.

Understanding and applying the homogenous unit principle is an essential part of small group ministry leadership.

4.3.3.2 The sense of unity and fellowship

In a small group the sense of unity and fellowship is of prime importance, and is a pressing need. It is an important characteristic of small groups that distinguishes them from larger groups. One of the major factors that led to many small groups becoming weak and ineffective, and even dying out, is the lack of their sense of unity and fellowship.

Therefore the small group leader must be keenly aware of the necessity for this sense of unity and fellowship, and develop suitable ways for the small group members to have their sense of unity and fellowship strengthened. The leader must create opportunities for this sense of unity and fellowship to be tangibly demonstrated (Oman 1972:30).

4.3.3.3 The maximization of spiritual gifts

In the present age of diversification or specialization each member of a church wants to receive recognition for, and make good use of, the spiritual gifts that have been given to him or her. In a large group these gifts are easily overlooked and ignored, and it is difficult for a gifted person to be recognized even though they make every effort to identify and use their gifts. In a small group, however, it is easy to recognize the spiritual gifts and talents of the various members, and to make good use of the unique gifts that each person has. In the exercise of their gift the individual members will gain much satisfaction, and their ministry will be to the benefit of all in the group. Training the small group ministry leaders to recognize and develop spiritual gifts is an important task that can have a significant impact on the success or failure of a small group and the church as a whole.

4.3.3.4 The continuous development of relationships

An important factor in the development of a small group is the continuous nurturing and strengthening of relationships within the group. As stagnant water becomes putrid, restricted relationships within a small group lead to a weakening of its life force, and this eventually results in the group degrading into a nominal social gathering with no real spiritual life.

Therefore the leader of a small group must be keenly aware of the necessity of developing and maintaining a climate in which the relationships between members and between the leader and members are continually nurtured and developed. The leaders must

also ensure that they and all the members of their groups are given opportunities to demonstrate their relationships in practical terms.

4.3.3.5 Spiritual visionary

The leader that excels is one who identifies a spiritual need and has a vision of what is required to meet that need. He also has the ability to maintain that vision firmly in his mind and not allow his ministry to be diverted from the goal he has set under the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Vision is the ability already to see the reality that can and should be attained in the future.

Nanus (1992:14-15) pointed out “the only common feature of respectable leaders is the possession of a vision”.

The pastor sees the spiritual destination set by God, and walks the indicated road to that destination with God. In this situation the pastor must cope with his role as a spiritual visionary.

When he studied the life and ministry of spiritual visionaries Clinton (1989:330) interviewed more than 1500 people. He says that spiritual visionaries pass through three major steps.

First, there is the laying of a foundation for the ministry. Here the stress is on the personal spiritual growth of the spiritual visionary.

Second, there is the growth of the ministry. Here the visionary, using the methods applicable in his general ministry, builds on the foundation that has been laid.

Third, there is the development of a unique ministry. This takes place as others realize that they, too, can effectively carry on the visionary’s ministry program.

4.3.4 Leadership of small group activities

There are many important factors that impact on the activities of small groups. But the driving force that blends them together and makes the group grow is the quality of the leadership of the small group.

Leadership is not simply management (cf. Nelson 2004:39). There is a need to have a vibrant ongoing program of leadership development which includes the nurturing, training and replication of small group leaders.

Haggai (1991:32) says that leadership training is “training to display a special influence.” He goes on to say that leadership is ‘the power of effect.’ Yukl (1981:3) defines leadership as; “intentional influence exerted by the leader over followers.”

Hershey and Blanchard (1988:5) also emphasize the important of influence in leadership; “Leadership occurs any time one attempts to influence the behavior of an individual or group.”

A very important factor in the leadership of a small group within the church must be the spiritual influence of the leader. It must be emphasized that the leader of a church small group must be a person who has a positive Christian influence on the members (Malphurs 2005:101). Wright Jr. (2000:2) considers that understanding the importance of relationships is a key element in the leadership of small groups. He comments as follows:

“If by leader we mean one who holds a position of authority and responsibility, then every Christian is not a leader. Some are – some are not. But if by leader we mean a person who enters into a relationship with another person to influence their behaviour, values or attitudes, then I would suggest that all Christians should be leaders. Or perhaps more accurately, all Christians should exercise leadership, attempting to make a difference in the lives of those around them.”

A positive change in the spiritual condition of the members of a small group is proof of the effectiveness of the group. Accordingly the leader should always check the spiritual development of the group’s members looking for those changes in understanding and behaviour that indicate spiritual growth (Craig & Worley 1992:25). The leader should also encourage group members to realize that each of them has an influence on the other, and that this can and should be for their mutual encouragement and spiritual growth (Swindoll 1985:19-20). Therefore a leader who loses sight of the relationships between members within the group and with himself cannot guide the group to dynamic growth, even with excellent spiritual talent within the group. Such a group will lack unity, and will gradually weaken, losing power and dynamism. The best example of a relationship is the family.

With the factors mentioned above kept in mind, leaders will be able to create an environment that will enable small group members to exert a positive influence on each other in the same way that family relationships enable members of the family to exert a positive influence on of other family members.

4.4 Types of small groups

A small group is the grouping of people who have developed a significant relationship of sharing and caring for one another. It may include people from a range of relational, vocational, sociological, geographical, and genealogical neighbourhoods (Callahan 2000:115). There is a remarkable variety of small groups. Four different kinds of small groups are reviewed in this section: serendipity groups, discipling groups, covenant groups, evangelism and nurturing groups with a view to identifying which kind of small group is best suited to the development and growth of koinonia.

4.4.1 Serendipity group

The founder of this approach is Lyman Coleman, who has been a small group leader for some four decades (Coleman 1993: 4:17). Coleman was especially influenced by Sam Shoemaker, the pastor of Calvary Episcopal Church in New York City. Sam believed that all the people around his church were his parish. His church grew in their vision to reach out to the entire parish. This vision to reach out to all people has greatly influenced Lyman Coleman (Coleman 1993: 4:17). Coleman (1993:4:19) says, “The heart of the Serendipity type is the broken people at the door...the intention is to create a small group system where people outside the church can find a place of entry and be transformed”.

Coleman (1993: 4:19) illustrates his approach by using a baseball diamond. To experience true koinonia, the group must reach all four bases. Lyman explains the base levels in this manner, “First base is telling the story of your spiritual past. Second base is sharing your current situation, and affirming the other members of the group. Third base is goal – setting. After a group has completed this process together, real community can be experienced”. Each base represents a higher level of group maturity. The time frame to complete all four bases is one year (Coleman 1993: 4:19).

Perhaps this is best understood by the characteristics that distinguish it from other models:

- There is a definite beginning and end

Although his earlier models consisted of shorter time period groups, Coleman now suggests a one year time period. Coleman (1993: 4:21) says, “The end is marked by a period of releasing where everyone responds to his new calling.”

- A democracy of options

People can be in a group whether or not they are members of the church or even attend the worship services. Coleman (1993 4:21) believes that this is a distinct difference compared to Paul Cho's model.

- Integrated model

This differs from a model which places small groups only as an appendage to the other programs in the church. There is a place for all kinds of groups in the church. "This model can also include the traditional Sunday school, where people who are already involved can find a place for sharing and caring" (Coleman 1993: 4:21)

- Collegiate system

This approach is similar to the old Sunday School system where there is a definite departure from one class and entrance into another class (Coleman 1993: 4:21). "This model has a two-semester structure, with kicks off twice a year and closure at the end of each semester. There is also a graduation/celebration at the end of the year" (Coleman 1993: 2:21).

4.4.2 Discipling small groups

The biblical foundation of the discipling small-group is taken from Jesus' own ministry, and is evident in his dealings with the twelve disciples. Jesus selected a small number, concentrated on training them by his example and by his words. The disciples of Jesus became united together as the "ekklesia", as a called community of God. Matthew 28:18-20 records Jesus' commissioning of his disciples for their task on earth; "...All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all I have commanded you."

Discipling small groups give the participants an objective, and cultivate the desire to work sacrificially, in order to proclaim the gospel to unbelievers. A typical model of discipling small groups is found in the church structure of the Agape Church in Korea (Lee 2003:73).

Myung (2001: 65) describes the character of a discipling small group as follows:

(1) This type of small group focuses on encouraging a change in lifestyle by the reading of the word of God – the Bible – rather than attempting to do so by means of dogmatic teaching. (2) The emphasis is on one-on-one training, or on a leader dealing with a small number of 'trainees' rather than using lectures. (3) Members are encouraged not only to attend the 'official' church meetings, but also to take time to engage in other contacts between

members in order to promote fellowship and encouragement. (4) The group functions as a small group and is characterized by having one leader. (5) The members continually check on the spiritual condition of the others in the group. The focus is on the way the word of God is being applied in the lives of the members, rather than on the underlying theory.

The discipling small group has the power to develop devoted disciples of Christ, but at the same time, has a weakness in that people generally find it hard to participate and adapt to the discipline required.

4.4.3 Covenant small groups

The biblical foundation of a covenant small group is based on Paul's example in using the lecture hall of Tyrannus to teach a dedicated group of believers in Ephesus (Acts 19:8-10). Paul had expounded his teaching about the kingdom of God for three months in the synagogue in Ephesus. But there were people who slandered the word of God that he preached. When this happened, Paul, and those who were prepared to listen, moved to the lecture hall of Tyrannus, where they met to consider how the word of God spoke of Jesus, the Christ of prophecy.

The difference between this type of small group and a general small group is that, at the start of the group the members set a goal and commit themselves to reaching that goal. The meetings are then planned in such a way that members will be led and encouraged to reach that objective. This gives each individual member a sense of owning the purpose of the small group, thereby giving them the motivation to actively pursue the goal, and to enter into all the activities of the group wholeheartedly.

A covenant small group is one in which members may be surprised at the outcome, as it is often far beyond their expectations. This type of small group is often found in USA churches where members of the group meet to achieve some specific objective, e.g. detailed knowledge about a book in the Bible, a Bible subject (covenant), or a topic such as how to witness to atheists. An example of a covenant small group is the DTS of YM. In this program of disciple training an objective or goal is set before the group starts, and members covenant to attend all the meetings, be diligent in studying the relevant bible passages and participate in all the group's activities. On this basis DTS may be termed a sort of covenant small group.

It is evident that a covenant small group requires self-sacrifice on the part of its members. Because of this, it is important that members are aware of what the course will entail before

they start, and that they promise to fulfill all the requirements; hence the name, a covenant small group. (Myung 2001: 67).

4.4.4 Evangelism and Nurturing Groups

Neighbour (1975:20-21) emphasizes target-group evangelism as follows.

“Target-Group Evangelism: scratching people where they itch!...Target-Group ministries differ from traditional church evangelistic methods in three ways. First, the impact of Christ dwelling in the believer becomes the focal point for witnessing, rather than simply the distribution of tracts and the sharing of canned, memorized speeches. Therefore, this type of evangelism demands the use of Spirit-led believers. Second, TOUCH ministries frequently involve the utilisation of small groups, rather than using a one-to-one ministry. Third, TOUCH ministries utilise a cultivative approach in which believers and unbelievers share a relationship for many weeks.”

The Biblical foundation of an evangelism and nurturing group is demonstrated in the record of Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth, whom Paul evangelized while in Philippi (Acts 16:14-15). Lydia received the word of God, believed the gospel of Jesus Christ, and was baptized by Paul. She then asked Paul and his companions to stay in her home. During his stay there, Paul taught the basic truths of the gospel to Lydia. Lydia was evangelized and nurtured by Paul and later played an important part in building up the church in Philippi. The Alpha Course is also a typical model of an evangelistic and nurturing group. The Alpha Course was originally developed by the Holy Trinity Church of England in Brompton, and was very successful in reaching people in the community who did not normally attend church services. Since its introduction the Alpha Course has been successfully used in over 10 000 churches covering a wide variety of denominations throughout the world.

4.4.4.1 Various evangelism approaches

4.4.4.1.1 Peter Wagner’s approach

Wagner (1987:117-122) considers there to be three distinct approaches to evangelism. First is what he terms presence evangelism. This takes place when a Christian tells those who have not experienced the salvation of God, about the gospel, and does this either in a one to one situation, or shares his faith with a small group of people.

The second approach is termed proclamation evangelism. This takes place where the gospel is preached or proclaimed to an audience in which there are many who have not experienced the salvation of God. A typical example is the preaching of the gospel to congregations mixed of believers and unbelievers. Examples are rallies, youth meetings, open air preaching, camps, etc.

The third category is persuasion evangelism. This includes actions that persuade non-believers to respond positively to the gospel of the grace of God.

4.4.4.1.2 Elmer Towns' approach

Towns (1986:47-54) has identified ten categories of evangelism.

The first of these is personal evangelism. This is termed 'gospel evangelism' by evangelistic churches, and 'soul winning' by fundamentalist churches. The typical materials used in this type of evangelism are the tract "Four spiritual Laws" and the book "Evangelism explosion".

The second is the use of mass rallies or crusades, which strive to reach non-believers through invitations to attend meetings where the gospel is proclaimed by an evangelist. Very often there is a program, such as that provided by a music group, designed to attract people who are not believers but have an interest in music. In other cases it may just be the topic that is addressed, for example the analysis of current events in the light of Biblical prophecy.

His third category is mass media evangelism, where various media are used for the presentation of the gospel. Typical media include radio and TV programs and, more recently, the internet.

The fourth category is termed saturation evangelism. This makes simultaneous use of all the available evangelistic methods so as to reach the maximum number of people in the shortest feasible time.

Fifth, a super-aggressive evangelism in which the believer forcefully creates a situation in which he proclaims the gospel, even though the people in the situation may not want him to do so. This action requires the clear guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Life-style evangelism is the sixth category. Here the normal Christian lifestyle, as described in the Epistles, reflects a way of life that is different to that of the average person, and is so attractive that they desire to learn more about the reasons for the difference.

The seventh category is typified by what is termed ‘bussing evangelism’. The Christians in an area secure the services of a bus operator so that children from a given area can be taken to Sunday school or to some evangelistic meeting.

Termed ‘front door evangelism’, the eighth category is simply identifying an area, and having Christians call on every house in that locality in order to personally speak of Christ Jesus to the family living there.

The ninth category, ‘side door evangelism’, makes use of the normal, natural relationships that Christians have with other people. The church provides guidance, and direction as to how these contacts can be used in the evangelization of an area. An example is a Christian, living in an old age home, who arranges prayer meetings or Bible studies with fellow residents. Another would be a house wife who joins with others in some cultural or practical activity (cross stitch, book club etc.), and uses the contacts as a basis for invitations to various church activities.

Finally there is the *οικος* evangelism, which motivates believers to use all sorts of social relationships so that their friends and relatives can see the evidence of the power of the Gospel, in their changed lives and positive lifestyle (Kang & Lee 1982:132-143).

The ways in which these similar yet diverse methods of evangelism are used depends on the circumstances of the population in proximity to the church building. The method or methods most appropriate to the needs and interests of the people to be evangelized should be selected. This identification of specific approaches has been shown to be very effective in modern church evangelism.

4.4.4.1.3 Other approaches to evangelism

The character, disposition and gifts of the evangelist (or person doing the work of an evangelist) and the person to whom he is speaking will have an impact on the nature of the witness. It is important to remember that the guidance of the Holy Spirit is the crucial determinant of how the interaction between the two is conducted. Concrete examples of the diversity that can be experienced are: confrontational evangelism (Acts 2:14-41), intellectual evangelism (Acts 17:16-34), testimonial evangelism (John 9:25), relational evangelism (Luke 5:29), invitational evangelism (John 4:28-30), service evangelism (Armstrong 1979:64, Acts 9:36), power evangelism (Matthew 9:23-31), presence evangelism (Kim & Park 2003:200-201). Other evangelistic methods or approaches can be used by making creative use of the

situation in which the evangelist and the person to whom the evangelist is witnessing find themselves.

4.4.4.2 Relational and incarnational evangelism through the small group ministry

One of the reasons for a small group ministry is relational and incarnational evangelism, and they are important because it sustains a healthy church. These are especially true of relational and incarnational evangelism which has become one of the most important and effective methods of reaching out to people in the context of modern business practice and personal lifestyles, and therefore needs to be an integral part of any effective plan of evangelism. Because of its relevance to people today relational and incarnational evangelism is all the more desirable as an effective strategy for reaching those who are yet unsaved (Armstrong 1979:55-75).

A recent Korean Gallop poll investigation into ‘the activity of Korean protestant and faith consciousness’ posed the following question; “Who is the person who evangelized you?” The results indicated that over 95% of the respondents had accepted Jesus Christ as their saviour as the result of personal relationship evangelism. The specific findings were as follows: A friend or older person 29.7%, parents 20.9%, a neighbour 17.1%, a spouse 11.5%, brother or sister 10.5%, a relative (not immediate family) 8.2% (Church Growth Institute 2006:148). Gilbert (1994:14) says “Existing relationships are the key to growing the church.”

4.4.5 Healing and Recovery Groups

The biblical foundation of a healing and recovery small group is found in the name of the God “Jehovah Rapha”. This name, Jehovah Rapha, means ‘the Lord heals (Exodus 15:26). This type of meeting is illustrated by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the disciples gathered in the upper room on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1).

When Jesus died on the cross at Calvary the disciples scattered to their homes. But when Jesus was raised from the dead he brought them joy and peace (John 20:19-20), He healed their aching hearts and confirmed Thomas’ faith. The disciples were made perfectly whole (Myung 2001:73-74). The number of people who experience emotional pain due to the manifold vices of modern society is steadily increasing. Many experience the toxic symptoms of alcoholism and drugs, of internal hurts that are due to an adverse change in the family

home, of various mental pathologies that arise from the stress of modern lifestyles, etc. (Chea & Lee 2005:39).

All these people need to experience the therapeutic liberation that comes from ‘holistic healing’. It is called holistic healing because it leads to a restoration of man to what he was intended to be – a being made in the image of God on the physical, mental, and spiritual levels. Holistic healing starts when individuals meet God personally. This healing becomes possible as people recount their individual experiences of finding the joy of sins forgiven through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the son of God, and others follow the same path.

4.4.5.1 Understanding necessary for holistic healing

It is difficult to approach the concept of holistic healing within the traditional church. The reason is that the church is wary of the various controversial points that can arise from the introduction of what is seen as humanitarianism. The approach of the majority of churches to holistic healing is to unconditionally reject it. This attitude is based on preconceived ideas, which lack a real understanding of what holistic healing involves. The following is an attempt to present a better understanding of what holistic healing entails.

4.4.5.2 The meaning of holistic healing

Holistic healing presupposes a situation in which there is an unhealthy spiritual and physical condition which needs to be changed from disease to health.

In the Old Testament the terms *arukhah* and *marpe* are used for healing. The former is used in Jeremiah 8:22, 30:17 and 33:6 to convey the concept of the new flesh growing on a wound (Kohler & Baumgartner 1958:84). The latter word is used to convey the thought of ‘recovery, healing, cure and vigor’ in Jeremiah 14:19 and 2 Chronicles 21:18. In Proverbs 4:22, it is used to convey the idea of ‘health to a man’s whole body’. In the New Testament the words *Therapeuō* and *Iaomai* are used. The first primarily signifies to serve as an attendant and then to care for the sick, to treat, cure or heal. The second is used of physical treatment, and figuratively of spiritual healing, both of which carry the thought of healing. Moreover, these concepts originally have nonreligious connotations which relate to the ideas of ‘service, help and willingness’ (Shin 1985:7). *Shalem* is another relevant Hebrew word. It indicates a harmony of body and mind and is derived from the Hebrew word *Shalom* (peace) (Sung 1972: 100).

4.4.5.3 The Significance of holistic healing

In addition to reaching out to those who do not know Christ, the Christian worker's mission is to care for believers, and to help them grow in terms of their spiritual, moral, intellectual, and social lives (Adams 1980:111-113). It is important that this care relates to all aspects of the person's life and not just to Bible knowledge and changed attitudes. Therefore, the ultimate objective of the various ministries in a church using small groups must be the health of the whole personality of all the believers in the church, and indeed, all those who attend the church services. A healthy personality is one in which both the spirit and body are healthy.

Hwang (1995:29), who has a bachelor's degree in preventive medicine, deals with holistic health, by dividing the effects of disease into four dimensions, namely spiritual, mental, physical and social. This fourfold division is based on Luke 2:52.

The concept of service evangelism has an important place in holistic healing as it is based on meeting a person's needs, and these include all his or her circumstances. Armstrong (1979:64, 81) writes "Service evangelism is motivated by a genuine interest in other, not by self-interest...is more than what has been popularly called "friendship evangelism", which as it is generally practiced is not need-oriented and requires little or no follow-through." The intention is to identify the person's need and then try to meet it, not as a social worker, but as one who genuinely cares for the person's circumstances and who wants them to come to know Jesus Christ as Lord.

4.4.5.4 The relationship between the small group and holistic healing

The small group ministry has a fundamental advantage in holistic healing as it is based on the full use of all the communication skills mentioned above. It results in smooth, heart to heart discussions and genuine understanding of the complex problems that can arise. This is only possible in small groups.

One of the important functions of small groups is healing; and this healing is accomplished through interpersonal learning.

Clinebell (1972: 212-213) writes:

"The counseling pastor walks in the footsteps of the great pastors of the past. He seeks to follow the example of one who was called the 'Great Physician' whose healing influence brought release to the captives of inner conflict, recovery of sight to the spiritually blind, and liberation of the broken victims of mental illness. To some, it must have seemed that he

devoted a disproportionate amount of time to the sick. But he knew that it is the sick that need a physician, those in crises are both more in need and more open to help. The counseling pastor works beside the modern Jericho roads traveled by people robbed of happiness and beaten by their fears, their guilt, and by the savage cruelty with which disease, pain, and death often strike.”

A small group should provide an environment in which it is possible for the group to act as a therapeutic community. The concept of a therapeutic community was developed in psychiatry. It is based on the evidence that a schizophrenic is able to change when under the influence of an interventional environment. The basic premise of this treatment is that the environment itself becomes the tool that leads to a cure. According to this logic, the various experiences and personal relationships developed in a small group have the potential to effect a curative process in those who are not “healthy”.

A small group meeting is an eminently suitable environment for this sort of personal fellowship.

Arnold (1992:31) says: “As a thoroughly planned small group ministry is implemented, the church can begin to enjoy some of many benefits. Among these are the discovery of spiritual gifts, the development of lay leadership, effective congregational care, worship, evangelism, and spiritual and numerical growth.”

4.5 TALK strategies and their implementation

Chae and Lee (2005:47-60) introduced what they termed the TALK strategies. TALK is the acronym for four strategies, which are intended to enable leaders to manage the dynamics of small group interaction. These strategies are not only closely interconnected, but are also complementary to each other.

T refers to the ‘triangular prism strategy’, which is based on three essential factors – mission and evangelism based on bible study, the development and growth of the group, and a willingness to accept newcomers into the group.

The study of the Word of God is the most important element needed for a healthy small group, especially as it relates to mission, evangelism and personal spiritual growth (Timothy 2:15). The second essential factor is the development of the group through the ‘fellowship of mutual care’ that results in building up the group, and the emergence of a sense of ‘group identity’. To attain this sense of unity and united effort requires time, effort and self-sacrifice on the part of all the members of the group, but especially of the leader (Colossians 3:12-17).

The third essential factor is the growth of the group. The aim is that the love and service existing among the members of a small group should be extended to others, so that they feel comfortable in joining the group.

A is for amplify. This is based on the ‘empty seat strategy’. The implementation of this strategy is very simple – there is always an empty chair at every meeting of the small group. This is to vividly remind all group members that the group or meeting is open to everyone who wants to come. It becomes a symbol of the need for every member to be part of the outreach activities of the group, and places an emphasis on mission and evangelism, and on activities that need to be developed and encouraged in a small group ministry.

L stands for ‘life cycle strategy’. This strategy places emphasis on the position of the target group in terms of their life cycle; child, teenager, single young adult, young married, middle age, older people and the aged. Within these groups there should also be room for widows, widowers and single parents.

The last letter of the acronym, **K**, is for the koinonia that should be developed and nurtured in the group. The purpose is to ensure the continuation of an effective small group. One way of explaining the implementation of this strategy is to use the analogy of a baseball field. The diamond shape of the baseball park equates well with the essential steps towards the realization of fellowship and the development of such a fellowship can be represented by a home run around the diamond. The first base represents the time for members to get to know each other, here each member introduces himself to the group. At the second base there is a group response which leads to mutual sharing of life experiences, and how these are, or should be, influenced by the Word of God. As a result this interaction goes beyond the simple sharing of information, and leads the formation of relationships, as mutual experiences and difficulties are related, and people share how these difficulties were handled. The third base typifies the stage where the group has a common vision of what God is calling the group to do, and as a result, has developed a united corporate goal. The members have become bound together in spiritual fellowship. Such a group is well placed to be sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit to undertake a new, and perhaps different, mission and evangelistic project. This leads to the home base where there is a rich, real koinonia (Chae & Lee 2005:56-60).

5 Using small groups to develop and grow koinonia

5.1 Reasons for choosing discipling small groups

The focus of a discipling small group is the development of devoted disciples of Christ – men and women who are totally committed to following his teaching and being obedient to all his commands. Therefore a koinonia community is brought into being through a teaching ministry that trains all believers with a view to bringing them to maturity in Jesus Christ (Sel 2000:66). This process requires a sincere and growing fellowship, koinonia, and of all the various types of small groups reviewed, this type of small group is well suited to the expression of koinonia. The biblical record contains examples of the development and growth of koinonia (Acts 2:42-47).

5.2 Understanding discipleship

The general concept of discipleship was by no means new when Jesus called men and women to follow him. It is therefore not surprising that, although the verb ‘disciple’ (*matheteuein* – to make disciples or to be a disciple) occurs only 4 times in the New Testament (Moulton & Geden 1957:608), while another word for teaching, *didaskhein*, is used four times as often (Nel 2005:99). The according to Watson (1981:19), the noun ‘disciple’ (*mathetes*) used about 250 times in the Gospels and Acts (some say 259 times; Lawson 1981:51). Scholars say this is because the verb ‘to follow’ (*akolouthein*) is the word used most often to describe the New Testament disciple (Rengstorf 1967:406). In secular Greek the word *mathetes* meant an apprentice in some trade, a student of some subject, or a pupil of some teacher (Nel 2009:2).

Such a finding does not imply that teaching and instruction are treated as unimportant in the New Testament. The New Testament teaching, however, differs from the rabbinical emphasis on mere intellectual teaching and instruction. Jesus neither merely conveys information, nor does he tend to enshrine reigning attitudes. Rather, he seeks to awaken an unconditional dedication to, and bonding with, himself (Nel 2009:2).

The noun refers to those who are committed to Jesus as their master or rabbi. Such is indeed the main point of New Testament discipleship – ‘disciple’ implies the existence of a personal bond, which determines the whole life of the individual. The bond is clear in respect of which of the two (the teacher or the pupil) has the power and influence to change people (Rengstorf 1967:441).

Therefore, New Testament discipleship reminds us of the Old Testament bond between God and his people. What distinguishes New Testament discipleship is the person and work of Jesus, who calls people to become his disciples (Nel 2009:2).

5.3 Discipling principles

A parent helping his wife/her husband and children grow is the most basic of all disciple building. So the church must create the right environment and conditions to allow the disciples of Christ to grow and develop (Moore 1981:30-32).

Developing the kind of fellowship that will be conducive to the spiritual growth of a disciple is one of the most important aspects of disciple building. The New Testament word *koinonia*, translated “fellowship,” comes from the Greek verb *koinoneo*, which means “to share.” Therefore, the word *koinonia* refers to those sharing – those who have something in common. *Koinos* means “common”; *koinonos* means a “partner, or shareholders. The basic idea is people who share with each other (Wilson 1976:184, see chapter 3, 2.1).

Coleman (1993:23-24) describes eight stages in the discipling ministry of Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels. They are: “selection, association, consecration, impartation, demonstration, delegation, supervision and reproduction... which asserts the overarching importance of the Twelve as a small group community in their discipleship with Jesus.”

5.3.1 Selection and association

Jesus’ ministry was directed to choosing men who would be able to continue his ministry (Matthew 4:21, Mark 1:19, Luke 5:27-28, John 1:38-40) (Coleman 1993:24). His disciples were ordinary men from a variety of different social and economic backgrounds (Wilson 1976:171-172). Through the training He gave them, these men were able to serve Jesus during his life and, after his death. This training, empowered by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, enabled them to lead men to salvation. This was Jesus’ strategy. After calling his chosen followers to be his disciples, He lived with them, enabling them to learn from the way He lived and from what He said (Park 1983b:179). The church should therefore strive to develop mature disciples who are trained to serve the Lord. It is better to concentrate on developing a small number of mature disciples who are able to train other believers, than to run programs designed to try and nurture large numbers of people. While it is not possible to develop

koinonia in the mass, it is possible to develop and grow koinonia in the intimate fellowship of a small group

5.3.2 Consecration and impartation

The disciples were devoted to following Jesus and were prepared to leave all to follow Him. (Mark 1:18, 20). Jesus also expected his disciples to be obedient to Him, rather than to rely on their own wisdom and experience. This is because those who obey their leader reflect his personality. In spiritual terms obedience to Jesus Christ reflects the fact that believers have died to their own desires and are now living their lives in accordance with his will.

The life that Jesus gave the disciples was a sharing of the life that God had given Him (John 17:8). Jesus gave his disciples peace (John 16:33), the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:19) and what was more, he gave his life for the disciples (John 10:11) (Coleman 1993:66-72). The church must therefore teach disciples to be obedient and prepared to offer Jesus sacrificial service.

5.3.3 Demonstration

Jesus showed his disciples a model of absolute obedience to God's will (John 4:34, 5:30), prayer (Luke 9:28-29), healing (Mark 1:41-42) and teaching (Mark 11:27-33) (Lim 1988:142). In the case of prayer, Jesus did not only use verbal instruction, but gave them an example of what it means to pray. Because of this instruction by example, the disciples were able to learn the practice of evangelism. A leader needs to be able to persuade his followers to adopt his methods without using force to get their willing obedience to his principles (Coleman 1993:86).

5.3.4 Delegation

Jesus prepared his disciples for their ministry of evangelising the world through his ministry to them. He brought his disciples into a vital relationship with God by showing them how to practice this life of commitment, and then letting them imitate what He was doing (Coleman 1993:88). He called the twelve to be with Him, and then sent them out two by two (Mark 6:7). After words, He appointed seventy-two disciples and sent them two by two (Luke 10:1)

(Wilson 1976:143). Jesus entrusted his ministry to disciples who were trained (Horne 1978:249).

5.3.5 Supervision

Jesus made His disciples rest after they had been out on an evangelistic mission (Mark 6:31). He cautioned them not to rejoice in the spiritual power that they had been given over demons, but rather to rejoice because their names were recorded in heaven (Luke 10:20). He also gave clear directions as to what the disciples were to do (Mark 14:13-21), reprovved their wrong attitudes (Luke 9:54-56), and instructed them in new ways of viewing a situation (Mark 9:19-24). Jesus made use of their experiences to instruct the disciples. He does not expect his followers to do more than they can. He only expects them to do the best they can (Coleman 1993:105-106). The strategy of correcting misapprehensions and error as and when they occurred is the most effective field training for developing the intrinsic qualities of disciples or followers. A caring leader must therefore continually work at supervising and evaluating his followers. It should be emphasized that the success or failure of discipling depends on personal supervision and persistence in training.

5.3.6 Reproduction

Jesus expected the world to be evangelised through the disciples that He had chosen. New believers have the image of Jesus reproduced in themselves through the work of the Holy Spirit which commences immediately they acknowledge Jesus as Lord and Christ. Jesus commanded the church to “make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). Therefore the ultimate need in the church is a ministry directed at nurturing and training new believers so that they can come to spiritual maturity. The success or failure of the church’s ministry depended on how many true disciples were reproduced (Coleman 1993:107-108).

As active reproduction takes place, it will eventually become necessary for the small group to divide into two. As this is a critical step, it must only be taken under the wise guidance of the pastor.

Schwartz (1996:13) lists eight important ways in which church growth can take place. His book is based on 4,200,000 responses to an investigation that covered 1000 churches in thirty two countries. His conclusion is that the most effective method of stimulating church growth is the implementation and multiplication of small groups.

The ultimate goal of implementing the discipling principles of Jesus is to strengthen the *koinonia* which will lead to the fulfilment of his command to evangelise the world.

Therefore the church should undertake a comprehensive study of Jesus' discipling principles if it wishes to succeed in its task of world evangelism.

5.4 Group discipling

The church urgently needs to return to the New Testament way of training men to build disciples so that they obey the Lord. He commissioned his followers not only to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them," but to "teach them to observe all things" He commanded (Matthew 28:19-20).

Watson (1981:66) says "a disciple is a follower of Jesus." Watson (1981:67-69) summarized for the need discipling as follows:

First, many Christians, especially in some of the mainline churches, have been deeply disturbed by the lack of doctrinal and moral discipline within the church.

Second, there is a desperate lack of commitment on the part of numerous professing Christians, and a corresponding reluctance in Christian preaching to speak freely about the cost of following Jesus.

Third, there is a depressing lack of direction in numerous churches.

Fourth, with the renewed Biblical emphasis on every Christian being involved in the ministry of the church, and with increased openness to the gifts of the spirit, confusion and excess inevitably arise where there is not firm leadership and wise pastoral control.

Fifth, according to the tradition of the church, there has been either gross neglect in the area of evangelism, or an overdependence on the big-time evangelist to do the job committed to the church.

5.4.1 Disciples are made intentionally

Just as Christians do not grow up without personal care, or learn mathematics on their own, so discipleship will not occur without faithful Christians being intentional about meeting together. Disciple-making is a dynamic relationship between fellow Christians and their Lord, and it is marked by continued progress. It must be the goal of all ministries that people will come to faith and then grow to maturity as Christ's disciples. This first principle will become a reality in the church or fellowship if even just a few people take seriously Christ's command

to make disciples and start acting on that basis (Arnold 1992: 24).

In building up the local church this process should become a rhythm: making disciples that make disciples (Nel 2005:101-103, see Coleman 1975:46-47)

5.4.2 Disciples are growing into the likeness of Christ (2 Corinthians 3)

New Testament writers, most notably Paul, speak of a far higher goal: that Christ may be formed in us. In small groups and with other believers, we “practice” the Christian life together in community; then, Scripture teaches us, the Spirit of God works to apply lessons learned into the deepest recesses of our hearts. We become, in the deepest sense, like Christ. Modern Christians may have difficulty perceiving themselves as disciples. In the early church followers of Christ were simply called disciples. Later, in Antioch, Jesus’ disciples were called ‘Christians’ and the name has persisted ever since (Act 11:26). There is nothing wrong with using the word Christian as it is properly understood: Christian means “belonging to Christ”.

5.4.3 Discipling based on relationships

There is no example in the Scriptures of a lone disciple. Even Paul, after his dramatic conversion, went to Jerusalem and associated himself with the apostles and later with the church at Antioch (Acts 9:26-30; 11:25). He always seems to have travelled in the company of others. At different times he formed a team relationship with Barnabas, Silas and Timothy, among others. The relational, community-based way of disciple-making had been demonstrated by Jesus and the disciples, and this was followed by Paul and the New Testament church. We need a community of fellow disciples who can help us learn to live a life transformed by the Holy Spirit.

Nel (2005:108) says that “The relationship with the other disciples who have been called by the same Person, is then the natural result.”

A small group lends itself to meeting the needs of the individual while also meeting the needs of the group. The leader can focus on the individual needs of each person in the group. This relationship is not possible in large congregational meetings. In a small group there can be both lecture and discussion. The group gives the sense of belonging and intimacy. Within its structure questions can be asked and answered in greater depth and personal application can be stimulated. The most important reason for using the small group is that it allows the

leader to easily observe several individuals in such a way as to know which spiritual truth is needed in their lives. The interaction among the disciples created an atmosphere where learning was stimulated. A small group of people maximizes the ability of the group members to understand the thinking, vision, and methods of the leader. Lee (1960:227) says “The minister’s problem is the recruiting and training of teachers.”

Paul preached publicly and from house to house and ministered to the churches that met in houses. These small groups differ from many modern churches in that they were informal and personal and they involved the leader in the life of the disciple (Wilson 1976:177-178).

In the next chapter the empirical qualitative and quantitative research procedures will be described and the findings analysed and discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

EMPERICAL RESEARCH: A CASE STUDY OF CHURCH GROWTH THROUGH THE KOINONIA MINISTRY OF SMALL GROUPS

1 Introduction

The empirical perspective of church growth stimulated by the koinonia ministry of small groups is of particular importance to the research project as it examines the outcome of the practical implementation of the focus on koinonia in a small group ministry. The empirical research concentrates on counting and measuring in order to formulate and test the hypothesis of the project. The empirical circle (figure 1.1 page 6 chapter 1) is based on observations of the strategy that was adopted and its results.

2 The empirical research

2.1 Understanding empirical research

To resolve a problem, various solutions have to be considered and tested preliminarily, and the one that proves to be most effective will then be implemented extensively. It is necessary to consider what has already been done in other areas to determine what has proved to be unsuccessful and what has produced some measure of success. Based on these past experiences a hypothesis can be formulated for the circumstances surrounding the problem to be investigated.

The factors that had a bearing on the success of previous investigations need to be compared with the factors involved with the present situation, and the outcome of the chosen way to a solution evaluated in terms of its desirability. The experience gained can lead to further insights, increase knowledge and lead to the formulation of further hypotheses for the solution of the problem.

The empirical perspective of research has inductive and deductive elements. The inductive element develops a hypothesis from available data, while the deductive element formulates testable predictions based on conclusions drawn from the hypothesis (Heitink 1999:231).

This thesis is concerned with the following questions:

- Are the present circumstances the same or similar to previous problems?

- Has the proposed solution been tried in those circumstances?
- What was the outcome of the small group ministry over time?
- Did it produce the desired results?
- Were any other factors involved in the outcome?
- What were the other factors?
- What is the impact of the other factors on the current hypothesis?

Of the three churches selected for the empirical research one is regarded as a model of the successful implementation of a small group ministry. The other two are churches where the author worked as an assistant pastor and, on the basis of his personal experience, considered them suitable for investigating the practice and outcome of a small group ministry.

2.2 The deductive phase of the empirical research

The main issue is the testing and evaluating of the hypothesis as it relates to the research problem.

In order to assess the validity of the hypothesis both qualitative and quantitative empirical research was undertaken. Three South Korean churches affiliated to the Presbyterian Church were selected to participate in the research project. These are the Sooyoungro, Seongil, and Changdai churches, first of which is located in Busan and two of which are located in Seoul. Each of the senior pastors of these churches has implemented a koinonia focused small group ministry, and they all agreed both to participate in the study and to their congregation's participation in the project. Communication with these pastors has been by means of e-mail and the internet.

Broadly the two essential components of empirical research are the qualitative and quantitative elements.

Qualitative research probes the emotions and feelings of the respondents in order to ascertain those factors which are important to them – the 'why' of the way they think, feel and behave. Generally this process identifies several key ideas or concepts which are considered to be important. This is often done by focusing on just a few respondents but probing their views in depth. Once these have been identified a significant number of people are asked questions exploring their views of or opinions about the identified key factors. These quantitative results enable the researcher to say which of the factors are most important or

what percentage of the whole population group are likely to have similar views or behave in a similar manner when exposed to a given situation.

The senior pastors completed a questionnaire relating to the qualitative aspects of their church's growth and provided information relating to the numerical growth experienced since the introduction of the koinonia focused small group ministry.

It was also necessary to draw up a questionnaire that would explore the impact of a koinonia small group ministry on the spiritual growth of church members, and the influence, if any, that this had on the numerical growth of the church in South Korea.

The quantitative element of the research project is based on a questionnaire which was completed by 205 individual members of these churches. This questionnaire was designed to elicit how they relate to the small group ministry in their church, and what their experiences in the group have been.

3 Qualitative research

3.1 Introduction

Qualitative research elicits how respondents think about various issues without attempting to quantify the results. Its main objective is to gain preliminary insights into the attitudes of the respondents and to indicate the problems and opportunities facing the researcher. (Hair et al. 2003:212). Leedy (1993:140) states that the qualitative research approach is a creative, scientific process that necessitates a great deal of time and critical thinking, as well as emotional and intellectual energy. The researcher must have a true desire to discover meaning, to develop understanding and explain phenomena in the most thorough way possible.

An appropriate questionnaire, exploring their views concerning a small group ministry, was developed and sent to the three senior pastors of the Sooyoungro, Seongil and Changdai churches in South Korea, dealing with the active small group ministry of these churches.

The questionnaire is given below and is followed by a summary of the responses from each church. In the following section these responses are analysed and conclusions drawn.

The questionnaire requested the following information:

First, when was the Church established?

Second, when did you (the senior pastor) commence your ministry at this Church?

Third, when did you start implementing the small group system at this Church?

Fourth, what are the main reasons for applying the small group system?

Fifth, how does the small group system operate in your congregation?

Sixth, what has been the outcome of the small group ministry over time?

3.2 The small group ministry of the Sooyoungro Church in South Korea

Q1. When was the church established?

The Sooyoungro church was established by Pastor Jung Phil-Do with some Christians in June 1975. The aim was to evangelize the immediate local vicinity and, in time, to extend the evangelistic thrust to include the nation and eventually the world.

Q2. When did you commence your ministry at this church?

Pastor Jung Phil-Do commenced his ministry in the Sooyoungro church in 1975.

Q3. When did you start implementing the small group system at this church?

From November 2001 the Sooyoungro church spent about two months reviewing its leadership structures in preparation for initiating their small group ministry, which was aimed at the conversion of those who did not know Jesus Christ as saviour. This process was the fulfillment of the senior pastor's desire, and had been zealously driven forward by the assistant pastors. Up to that time the regional meetings of the Sooyoungro church had not been directed towards leading non-believers to become Christians, to enter into fellowship with the church or to engage in evangelism. The whole focus of the fellowship had been on worship.

The church was made aware of the various issues involved, and was asked to accept the new emphasis on conversion of the unsaved. This required the development of an inner maturity on the part of the congregation, in order to accept and support the new direction. As a result of resolutely focusing on the prime issues affecting the switch to a small group ministry, the number of church units was reduced from about 570 'regions' to 357 Sarangbang (small groups).

For a small group ministry to be successful it is important that the traditional style of leadership by the pastors changes to one more suited to the demands arising from the needs of the small group leaders and members. In starting a small group ministry the Sooyoungro church could draw on the human resources that had been developed in the church. There were many lay leaders who were already familiar with small groups in general. There were also

many members who had completed the one-on-one discipleship training program, attended the united prayer school, and attended one of the many seminars that the church conducted on small groups or had completed a spiritual leadership program.

Q4. What are the main reasons for applying use of the small group system?

After two years of preparation the Sooyoungro church commenced with the new small group ministry on October 2001. During this period a new church building had been erected and had been completed. In computer terms the church building is regarded as the hardware that will enable the church to grow further. Next the church had to design the appropriate software that would be the most suitable and efficient medium for maximizing the usefulness of the hardware and produce the desired spiritual and numeric growth. The most appropriate ‘software’ was considered to be a small group ministry.

In essence the whole procedure was designed to create a style of pasturing suitable for the 21st century.

Q5. How does the small group system operate in your congregation?

(1) The change of the regional character

Table 4.1: The regional character

	Focus of the previous ‘regions’	New Sarangbang* focus
Emphasis	Worship	Welcome Worship Word Works

(* Small group)

Previously the church “regions” met at a fixed time each week and focused on worship. This had the advantage of cementing the relationships amongst the church members in that region. The negative aspect was that the group had already met together with the whole church for worship the previous Sunday. The form of worship was the same, the only difference being the size of the congregation.

Worship is very important, but it was considered that a regional meeting should not exist solely for worship; it should include teaching, sharing spiritual experiences, training in spiritual matters and leadership development.

The emphasis of the Sarangbang (small group) meetings is to ensure that the small group is a fellowship in which members are trained to lead men and women to Christ as saviour, are

encouraged to study the word of God (at a time), regularly in which there is a spirit of praise, worship and care for one another and for others.

(2) What is a Sarangbang small group?

The Korean word *Sarang* means a reception room, a room in which the head of the house receives guests. These rooms are a feature of the Korean culture. In the past the Sarang was a place where the host and his guests would engage in friendly talk and share their experiences of life together. The Sooyoungro church decided to use this word to describe a place where one could meet church members (believers) and guests (unbelievers) and share the love of Christ with one another.

The structure and functions of a Sarangbang are set out below.

Table 4.2: Sarangbang Characteristics

	Contents
Emphasis	Sarang meeting to change to dynamic small group meetings
Strategy	Use worship, fellowship and evangelism to double attendance at meetings
Role of the leader	The spiritual leader must be able to care for the Sarangbang members and encourage the mutual sharing of their spiritual experiences. This role is like that of a pastor of a small church
Group size	Up to 12 persons categorized as follows: A group (4-5 persons) – people who used to attend both regional and main Sunday worship meetings, B group (4-5 persons) – people who used to attend only the main Sunday worship meeting, and C group (3-4 persons) – people who have been absent from church meetings for a long period.
Meeting program	1. Fellowship while sharing coffee and a light snack, 2. Praise 3. Discussing the word of God (last Sunday's sermon) 4. Sharing Christian experiences (relating how God has been active in their lives during the past week and sharing prayer requests) 5. Offering (support for mission and church expenses) 6. Intercessory prayer (for non-Christians and missionaries)
Main features of the meeting	1. Sharing Christian experiences and prayer requests 2. Spiritual growth through studying the word of God 3. Emphasizing evangelism with a view to doubling the number of Sarangbang members 4. The leader's devotion to the members and his task.

(3) The nurture system of the Sooyounro church

The Sooyoungro church's nurturing system has a clear purpose. It trains believers to mentor one other person (at a time) in the Christian faith. Training to be the mentor of another person is clearly a nurturing function. Nobody is exempt from this training process. The nurturing system used by the Sooyoungro church is focused on the small group, evangelism and mission ministries. Its purpose is not just to produce Christians with extensive Bible knowledge, but to encourage believers to strive towards the goal of being workers of the kingdom of God, a worker whose whole moral fiber has been changed by the influence of, and obedience to the Holy Spirit. The nurturing program is presented in two parts, a compulsory course and a voluntary course aimed at deepening the spiritual life of those attending the course.

All new believers enroll in the 4 weeks compulsory course. Any believer who wants to become a worker in the church must complete the six weeks basic course.

● **The compulsory courses**

- **New believers**

New believers are required to complete a compulsory course which takes four weeks of study and covers the basics of the Christian faith.

- **Church members**

All Sooyoungro church members who desire to become workers in the church are required to take a six week course that prepares them for their future task. There are no exceptions. New believers who complete the first course of study may be regarded as fairly well settled while those who complete the second, six week course are considered to be fully settled in the church.

- **Leadership course**

This course is compulsory for everyone who wants to become a small group leader. The leadership course provides the training that is essential for a small group leader.

● **The advanced courses**

There are three advanced leadership courses which may be attended after completing both the four week new believer course and the six week course required for church membership.

The first advanced leadership course offers a choice of either one to one discipleship training, attending the Sooyoungro Bible College, the united prayer school, or various seminars such as those on praise, the home and prayer

The second advance leadership course may only be attended by those who have completed the first advanced leadership course. This course requires one to one training and is concentrated on developing the skills needed to nurture other people.

The third leadership course allows participants to choose courses such as training in counseling, attending an Evangelism Explosion training course, following LMTC training, a spiritual leadership training program.

These advanced leadership courses are intended to help participants mature as spiritual leaders.

Through this ongoing program of training, believers are nurtured into becoming members of the church and develop into small group leaders. The church accepts those who have completed the necessary six week course as full members of the church. All important officials of the church must have at least completed the second leadership course. The Sooyoungro church has a rule that, in order to be appointed as a small group leader (servant, guide, and shepherd), a person must have completed all three advanced leadership courses.

(4) The small group ministry of the Sooyoungro church

The small group ministry of the Sooyoungro church is organized and implemented in various ways.

The first organizational category is the parish. Each parish serves and evangelizes a clearly demarcated geographical area through the Sarangbang small groups in its domain. These small groups meet once a week, and non-Christian households are invited to attend. These meetings are opportunities for collective evangelism. The ultimate goal of the church is to have 10000 actively functioning Sarangbang.

The second category is the Bible Study and nurturing group. As mentioned above, membership of such a group is preceded by six courses. The Biblical foundation of Bible study is found in 2 Timothy 3:16-17. "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

The goal of these Bible study groups is to encourage believers to become disciples who are strong in their faith through individual Bible study and the nurturing of the group leader.

The third important category is the Sunday school at the Sooyoungro church which is divided into eleven sections. Each section is composed of many small groups. The objective of the Sunday school is to lead the children to become disciples of Christ and to nurture their spiritual growth in Jesus Christ.

The fourth category is composed of the evangelism and mission groups. Evangelism and mission are the foremost commissions given by Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8). The Sooyoungro church has 11 types of evangelistic small group teams. These are directed to the evangelization of the following groups of people:

various parishes (defined local areas), blocks of flats, roadside meetings, hospitals, old age homes, transport terminals, army bases, army hospitals, police stations, prisons, and university campuses.

Arnold (1992:177) says of mission, “Mission is engaging in God’s plan to redeem the world by extending his kingdom into every race, language and nation.” The collective witness of a small group is very important. If the ministry of the word of God in the small group is directed towards the members it is termed an “inward” ministry, whereas if it is aimed at evangelism and mission it is termed an “outward” ministry. The Sooyoungro church’s vision is to have 10000 operating Sarangbang. It has also developed a strategy whereby these 10000 Sarangbang will eventually send out and support 5000 missionaries.

In order to realize this vision the Sooyoungro church has established three mission training courses. These are the LMTC, SMTI and T’aekwondo mission courses.

The LMTC course is a training course for people who will be operating in the local South Korean area, working in a short term mission enterprise, or who have specialist skills which they desire to use in short term mission work. The course is also intended to identify and energize mission resources as well as collecting information relevant to short term mission activity.

The SMTI course is designed to train 5000 lay men and women as missionaries in terms of the church’s vision. This is done through community training camping for a period of three months before they are sent out to strategically located mission areas.

T’aekwondo is the Korean martial art of empty-handed self-defense and is the name given to the third mission course. The aim of this course is to use T’aekwondo lessons as the “bait” to draw people to self-defense lessons at which the gospel will also be proclaimed. The T’aekwondo teacher becomes the missionary fulfilling the vision of preaching the gospel to all the world.

Q6. What has been the outcome of the small group ministry over time?

The Sooyoungro Church experienced the following results of a koinonia based small group ministry as follows:

First, since 2002 the Sooyoungro Church has been growing in numbers at an annual average rate of about 2000 members.

Second, the work of the spiritually mature leaders was very successful.

Third, missionary efforts became very effective too. In addition to the successful local church growth, missionary work was undertaken in 85 other countries. In this area 113 Sooyoungro missionaries were sent out, and 829 other missionaries receive financial and prayer support. There are 92 missionaries operating in South Korea and an additional 92 missionaries are engaged in specialized outreach activities.

The Sooyoungro church conscious of its responsibility as representative of the church of God and the body of Christ, plans, with the help of the Holy Spirit to realize the following vision for the 21 century.

The Sooyoungro church is located in Busan, the second largest Korean city, and the first objective is to evangelize and bring the healing power of the gospel to this city and the surrounding area.

The church also plans to send out 5000 missionaries recruited and supported by 10000 Sarangbang where the word of God is studied, real fellowship experienced and the members are committed to service and mission.

The third element of its vision is to prepare a special welfare program for the society and the neighbourhood in order to meet the needs of those who need a helping hand stretched out to them.

3.3 The small groups ministry of the Seongil church in South Korea

Q1. When was the church established?

The Seongil church was established on 19th January 1958. In the early stages the Seongil church's ministry was focused on three elements, the word of God, mission and building up the local church. This focus resulted in the establishment of one other local church, the founding of the Logos Bible Academy and the sending out of two missionary families. By 1995 the church's membership had grown to 500.

In spite of the evident growth, this early phase of the church's existence was a difficult period, primarily because there was a large turnover in the leadership with 6 senior pastors serving during its first 38 years.

Q2. When did you commence your ministry at this church?

In March 1996 pastor Won Young-Sik became the senior pastor of the Seongil church. The previous senior pastor had been ill and unable to attend to the needs of the congregation as he would have liked. Another problem was the discord among some church members. Adding to these difficulties, the church had become mired in the traditions of a typical formal church. In spite of the problems, the church's membership had grown to 500.

In order to address the various problems that faced him, pastor Won placed emphasis on the koinonia generated by the introduction of a small group ministry. This led to the church membership's growing to 1300 by the year 2006.

Q3. When did you start implementing the small group system at this church?

Pastor Young-Sik Won implemented the small group system in the Seongil church in 1997.

Q4. What are the main reasons for applying the small group system?

All the ministries of the Seongil church exhibited the characteristics of what could be termed traditional behaviour and thinking. The church had adopted a variety of stereotyped practices with which they had become accustomed. Believers were constantly urged to evangelize others. Pastor Won spent time objectively examining the state of the individual church ministries, and to consider what the church should be focusing on. He came to the conclusion that the state of the Seongil church was a reflection of the Korean church as a whole (Park 2005:30).

He came to the conclusion that what was needed to rectify the situation was a dynamic small group ministry and he therefore switched from the traditional Korean church system to the small group ministry approach in 1999. He also became convinced that his insights could be of benefit to the whole Korean church community.

Q5. How does the small group system operate in your congregation?

(1) Nurture system of the Seongil church

The Seongil church practices a nurturing program for all its members. The church uses the ALPHA training course to win disciples for Christ and develop them into people who could change the world through their witness. The course has four essential steps.

The first step is termed ‘Win’ and is focused on leading people to salvation in Christ. In this step people are taught the basis of salvation by faith over a period of six weeks. They are encouraged to become believers and to continue with the training they are receiving. They are also taught to look for and experience the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The second step is termed ‘consolidation’ and is intended to make them feel settled in their new spiritual environment. In this step the new disciples are given foundational teaching relating to church life over a period of five weeks. They practice training in how to deal with others in an encounter situation, and how to follow-up on it by training in post encounter practices.

The third step is termed ‘discipling’. This training involves three terms at a leadership school, and is intended to help church members to become competent lay leaders.

The fourth step is termed ‘send’ and is designed to encourage believers to identify and use all their spiritual gifts and talents for the benefit of other believers.

(2) The small group ministry of the Seongil church

The small group ministry of the Seongil church is organized and implemented in various ways.

The first category is age. There are 17 age groups and each consists of a dynamic community that is able to approach people in the same age category, at the same level of common interest. Members can readily share their experiences, and understand the attitudes and feelings of those they seek to win for Christ.

A further category is the parish. The church is divided into three local or parish areas. Each of these consists of thirty small group meetings. These small groups meet together once a week for a regional meeting. Non-Christian households are invited to these regional meetings which are an opportunity for collective evangelism. These large regional meetings are an encouragement to the small group members, and a powerful factor in increasing their faith. The regional meetings result in steady growth year by year.

Another important category is the Bible study group. Membership of such a group is preceded by the four steps. The goal of these groups is to disciple believers, leading and training them to become mature Christians and effective lay leaders.

The Sunday school at the Seongil church has seven sections. The senior pastor Won and the church leaders emphasize the importance of the small group ministry in each of these.

Q6. What has been the outcome of the small group ministry over time?

The results of the koinonia based small group ministry at the Seongil church are as follows

First, when Pastor Won became the pastor of this church in 1996 the membership of the Seongil church was 500 people. By 2009 the membership has grown to 1500 people. The lay group leaders did very successful work.

Secondly, strong fellowship bonds were developed between church members.

Thirdly, the church was very effective in establishing new believers as church members.

Fourthly, missionary efforts became very effective. At this church, in addition to the successful local church growth, missionary work was undertaken in 5 other countries. In this activity 6 Seongil missionaries were sent out and 24 other missionaries receive financial and prayer support. There are 18 missionaries operating in South Korea and an additional 6 missionaries are engaged in specialized outreach activities.

The Seongil church plans to realize the following vision by 2020:

Firstly, the pastors want to have 5000 believers on the register and an average of 3000 worshippers attending services on Sundays.

Secondly, they want to have 3000 Sunday school students on the register with at least 2000 of them attending the Sunday service.

Thirdly, a network of five hundred small groups should be in existence.

Fourthly, the mission element of the work must include ten missionary families, ten chaplains, ten campus workers and ten lay missionaries.

Fifthly, 50% of the church members must have participated in nurturing courses and disciple training.

The Seongil church is preparing to achieve this vision through the following activities:

- The realization of dynamic worship.
- The church growth strategy through small groups.
- The implementation of a revitalized prayer movement.

- The diverse ministries already enumerated and the fostering of koinonia fellowship.
- The continued discipling of all members.
- Restructuring the church region in line with the overall church objectives.
- A single ministry for each member.

3.4 Small groups ministry of the Changdai church in South Korea

Q1. When was the church established?

The Chang-Dai church was established in Seoul by Pastor Choi Sung-Ku and 5 members, in December 1978. When Pastor Choi began his ministry at the Changdai church, he had a pastoral vision of believers as ‘full wheat’ (Matthew 3:12) and that the church would be dynamic.

Pastor Choi emphasized both prayer and evangelism as the main driving forces for church growth. The church regularly has seasons of prayer when the members pray five times a day for periods of up to 100 consecutive days. During this time the members also fast. On three separate occasions the church has collectively engaged in a forty day fast. There is also an organized daily prayer network consisting of a hundred groups of church members. In addition there are forty groups of church members that undertake to fast and pray for special circumstances.

Backed by this volume of prayer and fasting, the church has five groups of church members who are actively evangelizing various localities in the city of Seoul. Since 2000, the church has conducted three worship services with an average attendance of 1500 each Sunday.

Q2. When did you commence your ministry at this church?

Pastor Choi Sung-Ku has now retired and the leadership of the church has been taken over by his son Choi Young-Do who is a fourth generation pastor in the family, and has been ministering at the Changdai church since 2003.

Q3. When did you start implementing the small group system at this church?

Pastor Young-Do Choi implemented the small group system in the Changdai church in 2003, the year he started ministering there.

Q4. What are the main reasons for applying the small group system?

The Changdai church did not previously practice koinonia through a small group ministry. Pastor Choi Young-Do had ministered in a church where this was practiced in the U.S.A. and, upon returning to South Korea, decided to implement a similar practice in the Changdai church, for all its many benefits. He desired to generate the same enthusiasm among the Changdai church members that he had witnessed in the U.S.A.

Q5. How does the small group system operate in your congregation?

(1) The nurturing system of the Changdai church

Church members are encouraged to undergo nurturing programs designed to make them aware of the need for and benefits of nurturing, and how to successfully implement the nurturing process. The focus of their efforts is not only the immediate church locality but also the wider outside world.

At present the Changdai church conducts five nurturing courses.

The first course is a Bible study course for new believers. They are taught the basics of faith in Jesus Christ and church history for a period of five weeks.

The second course is for church members who have completed the initial Bible study program. It takes sixteen weeks to complete and includes laying the foundation of church life and training in the basic doctrines of the Christian faith.

The third course is a one year course for lay leaders.

The fourth course is designed to train lay leaders as assistants for the church pastors. A key feature of this year long course is that the lay leaders are trained to use their spiritual gifts and talents in the church's small group ministry.

The fifth course is also a one year training course for those who are already leaders in the ministry of the church.

(2) The small group ministry of the Changdai church

There are several aspects to the Changdai small group ministry.

Firstly the small groups are classified by age, and these groups undertake street evangelism once a week focusing on people of the same age. These groups have joint regular

prayer meetings and meet for early morning worship, each age category taking turns to lead the service.

Secondly the 47 small groups currently operating in the church are grouped into three regions. The small groups that comprise a region hold regular ‘regional meetings’ at which family problems are discussed and the individual’s faith in Christ is stimulated. These regional meetings have proved to be extremely motivational in terms of personal spiritual growth and, flowing from this, there has been significant church growth as well.

A third aspect of the lay believer training group is Bible study groups. The goal is to encourage discipleship and to encourage Christians to grow in spiritual maturity and leadership. At present there are 17 small groups engaged in this program. Richards (1970:32) says, “Every believer will minister to others in the free, sharing relationship of the growth groups. Here talents can be developed, recognized by the church, and each individual moved into leadership on the basis of spiritual maturity and gifts.”

A further aspect is found in the Sunday School where the importance of the small group ministry is emphasized. It is here that future generations of church members and leaders are trained. Currently there are nine divisions in the Sunday School.

There are also seven groups, one for each evening of the week, that meet to pray for various concerns such as church growth, the pastors, evangelistic activity, non-Christians and the surrounding society in general. Arnold (1992:158-159) says of prayer, “you could pray for any of the following: personal needs shared in the group, family and friends of group members, the needs of your church or fellowship group, for sick, shut-in suffering and /or bereaved people that group members know, non-Christian friends, family and/or neighbors, missions and missionaries, and don’t forget worship.”

Finally there are the evangelistic efforts of small groups. In the Changdai Church there are five evangelism teams operating daily in five different areas in Seoul. Arnold (1992:163) says, “Evangelism is sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with another.” Many unbelievers in the nearby areas come to faith in Christ through these teams.

Q6. What has been the outcome of the small group ministry over time?

The Changdai church obtained the following results by focusing on the development of koinonia in small groups:

(1) Growth

Since 2003 the average annual growth rate has been about 200 members.

(2) Spiritual maturity

The lay group leaders were very successful in their work for the Lord and through their efforts and leadership strong fellowship bonds were developed between church members.

(3) Mission activity

Currently missionary activity is carried on in 17 other countries. 4 Chandai missionaries were sent out and 62 other missionaries receive financial and prayer support. There are 23 missionaries operating in South Korea and an additional 5 missionaries are engaged in specialized outreach activities.

(4) The Changdai church's vision

The Changdai church's vision has four key elements:

1. Discipling believers through the study and application of the word of God,
2. Establishing a Christian heritage which will endure through future generations,
3. Healing broken and troubled families, and
4. Reaching out with the gospel to people in other areas of South Korea, and on to other countries.

The ultimate goal of the missionary activity is to lead people to Christ and then to disciple them, encouraging them to serve God wholeheartedly and to implement the church's vision in their own area.

In support of the Changdai church's vision it has established six ministry goals. These are:

- First, the establishment of a deep and sincere personal worship pattern,
- Second, the provision of training that moulds believers into vessels 'fit for the Master's use',
- Third, engendering the personal and collective practice of true prayer and supplication,
- Fourth, evidence of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the lives of church members,
- Fifth, stimulating witnessing and evangelism as a way of life, and
- Sixth, nurturing and developing fellowship and unity in the body of Christ.

3.5 The outcome of the qualitative research

In the light of their personal responses the researcher has come to the conclusion that the senior pastors of the three Presbyterian churches who agreed to participate in the study did so with commendable zeal and fervour. This was also demonstrated in their willingness to allow their congregation to participate in the quantitative element of the empirical research.

The qualitative research results can be summarized as follows:

- The three senior pastors have a strong desire to see the members of their congregation grow spiritually and that the numbers of those attending the services grow. They are convinced that the way to achieve these objectives is through the koinonia developed in the small group context.
- The three churches where there has been the nurturing of koinonia through a small group ministry have all experienced numerical and individual spiritual growth each year from the commencement of this ministry.
- The church structures were designed and have developed to cater for a small group ministry.
- Ordinary members of the congregation who have recognized the importance of the small group ministry in developing koinonia, are positive about it and participate enthusiastically in the ministry.
- The participating believers have formed strong relational bonds of fellowship through the discipleship training provided.

4 The Quantitative research

4.1 Introduction

Quantitative research, according to Hair et al (2003:211), is commonly associated with surveys or experiments. It places a heavy emphasis on using formalized standard questions and predetermined response options in questionnaires or surveys administered to large numbers of respondents. Leedy (1993:248-249) asserts that in the meanings that lie hidden within the data, it is possible to discern certain potentials and dynamic forces that may be clues to areas that warrant further investigation.

In conjunction with the department of statistics at the University of Pretoria and in keeping with the objective of the thesis a questionnaire was developed and designed to elicit the regarded information from the respondents.

This questionnaire was completed by a randomly selected group of respondents from each church. The administration of the questionnaire was done by well briefed colleagues who ensured that the respondent selection was random and that all the questionnaires were completed within the same time frame on the same day.

The quantitative research findings are presented in tables and figures. Below every table and figure, there is a brief explanation and discussion of the elicited data. It should be noted that, in most of the tables, there is an “unidentified” percentage of the data. This represents the respondents who did not indicate their rating or comments, but continued to complete the rest of the questionnaire.

The chapter concludes by discussing the overall findings, verifying the results, and synthesizing and interpreting them.

4.2 Quantitative research design

4.2.1 Scope

The survey respondent base was drawn from 3 South Korean Presbyterian churches. Three of which are located in Seoul. The respondent sample is comprised of

- 17 Assistant Pastors,
- 20 Evangelists,
- 17 Elders,
- 22 Exhorters,
- 85 Deacons, and
- 44 Members

4.2.2 Objective

The objective of the survey is to establish the validity of the thesis, that the degree of koinonia evident / expressed in a church has a marked impact on the positive growth of the church, and that koinonia is best developed and nurtured via a small group ministry.

4.2.3 Methodology

First, the senior pastors of the Sooyoungro, Seongil and Changdai Presbyterian Church were contacted. They approved that their churches participate in the survey and responded to the qualitative survey conducted during the last few months of 2009.

Second, assistant pastors were asked to complete the questionnaire as three of the South Korean Presbyterian church members.

Third, church members were canvassed to respond to the questionnaire (see appendix) during the month of June 2010. Colleagues in South Korea printed the questionnaire and distributed 70 at each church. The distribution spread over both the morning and evening services (35 at each service). Respondents were asked to complete and return the questionnaire the same day before leaving the church. 205 members of the three churches completed the questionnaire. This means that 97.6% of the questionnaires distributed were completed and returned.

4.2.4 Data analysis

The accessed data was analyzed to ascertain whether and how the results support the thesis.

(1) Gender composition of the sample

Table 4.3: Gender distribution

Gender	Church 1		Church 2		Church 3	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Male	24	36%	27	39%	38	54%
Female	42	64%	42	61%	32	46%
Total	66	100%	69	100%	70	100%

This table reflects the gender composition of the sample. Overall 116 of the respondents were female, comprising 57% of the overall results and 89 or 43% were male. It is interesting to note that, while the proportion of respondents at the Church 1 and Church 2 are very similar with females outnumbering males two to one, the split at the Church 3 is roughly equal with the male respondents in the majority.

(2) Age

Table 4.4: Age distribution

Age	Church 1		Church 2		Church 3	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
< 30	10	15%	2	3%	15	21.5%
31 – 40	12	18%	22	32%	10	14%
41 – 50	21	32%	20	29%	15	21.5%
51 – 60	17	26%	13	19%	25	36%
> 61	6	9%	12	17%	5	7%
Total	66	100%	69	100%	70	100%

This table indicates the age distribution of respondents at the participating churches. It is of interest there were few respondents under 30 from the Church 2. If this is a true reflection of the membership, there is cause for concern as this indicates that the younger population is not being reached. Overall, though, about a third of the total respondent base is under 40.

(3) Position

Table 4.5: Position distribution

Position	Church 1		Church 2		Church 3	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Assistant Pastor	7	11%	5	7%	5	7%
Evangelist	8	12%	7	10%	5	7%
Elder	4	6%	6	9%	7	10%
Exhorter *	5	7%	6	9%	11	16%
Deacon	27	41%	36	52%	22	31%
Member	15	23%	9	13%	20	29%
Total	66	100%	69	100%	70	100%

* An alternate name translates ‘church mother’ and is the equivalent of a feminine elder.

(4) How long have you been a member of the church?

Table 4.6: Length of church membership

Number of years	Church 1		Church 2		Church 3	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 10	48	73%	31	45%	21	30%
11 – 20	12	18%	16	23%	20	29%
20 – 30	4	6%	13	19%	29	41%
> 30	2	3%	9	13%		
Total	66	100%	69	100%	70	100%

This table 4.6 indicates that, while 53% of the total respondent bases have been church members for less than 10 years, there are quite significant differences between the churches as far as the number of respondents who have been members for less than 10 years. Church 1 reflects a shorter membership.

(5) Church attendance

Table 4.7: Church morning service attendance distribution

Number of times per month	Church 1		Church 2		Church 3	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Five times	25	38%	37	54%	27	39%
Four times	32	48%	28	41%	38	54%
Three times	2	3%	1	1%	3	4%
Twice	5	8%	2	3%	2	3%
Once	2	3%	1	1%		
Total	66	100%	69	100%	70	100%

This table indicates that over 90% of the respondents attend morning church services four to five times a month.

(6) Church attendance

Table 4.8: Church evening service attendance distribution

Number of times per month	Church 1		Church 2		Church 3	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Five times	9	14%	23	33%	18	26%
Four times	23	35%	16	23%	33	47%
Three times	4	6%	6	9%	4	6%
Twice	4	6%	6	9%	5	7%
Once	26	39%	18	26%	10	14%
Total	66	100%	69	100%	70	100%

This table indicates that the respondents attend evening service less frequently than morning services. Overall, according to these results, church members seem to regard the evening service less important than the morning service. However it could be that their circumstances are such that it is more difficult to get to an evening service than one held in the morning. On the other hand, the Church 1 has four services which are held at 7:00, 9:00, 11:00 and 14:00 and so some respondents said that they attended an evening service (meaning the service held at 14:00) only once a month.

(7) Small group ministry practice in the church

Table 4.9: Small group ministry practice in the church

Small group practice	Church 1		Church 2		Church 3	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	59	89%	66	96%	67	96%
No	7	11%	3	4%	3	4%
Total	66	100%	69	100%	70	100%

While each of the churches has a small group ministry, a surprising 6% of the respondents claimed that their church did not have such a ministry. This indicates that, in spite of the importance placed on this type of ministry some respondents remained unaware of it.

(8) Small group attendance

Table 4.10: Small group ministry attendance distribution

Small group attendance	Church 1		Church 2		Church 3	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	47	71%	57	83%	62	89%
No	18	27%	12	17%	7	10%
Total	65	98%	69	100%	69	99%

Two respondents did not answer this question but of the 203 who did, 82% were involved in a small group ministry and attended the meetings.

(9) Degree to which the group can be summarised by the words “sharing and caring”.

Table 4.11: The degree of sharing and caring in church distribution

Statement	Very poor (Frequency and percentage)	Poor (Frequency and percentage)	Good (Frequency and percentage)	Very good (Frequency and percentage)	Total (Frequency and percentage)
Church 1					
With your pastors	5 7%	24 36%	29 44%	6 9%	64 96%
With your leaders	4 6%	15 23%	35 53%	11 16%	65 98%
Among the believers in your church	3 4%	19 29%	33 50%	11 17%	66 100%
Church 2					
With your pastors	6 9%	17 24%	35 51%	11 16%	69 100%
With your leaders	3 4%	15 22%	40 58%	11 16%	69 100%
Among the believers in your church	6 9%	15 22%	39 56%	9 13%	69 100%
Church 3					
With your pastors	4 6%	22 31%	27 38%	16 23%	69 98%
With your leaders		21 30%	31 44%	18 26%	70 100%
Among the believers in your church	3 4%	19 27%	31 44%	16 23%	69 98%

In summary the percentage of respondents who consider that the level of sharing and caring evidenced by the pastors, leaders and fellow members at the three participating churches is as follows:

	Pastors	Leaders	Members
Church 1	53%	69%	67%
Church 2	67%	74%	69%
Church 3	61%	70%	67%

The findings indicate that many of the members of the Church 1 do not think that their pastors show much “caring” or “sharing” with them. Overall close on a third of the respondents consider that there is a lack of fellowship from their leaders and other church members.

(10) Experience of the small group ministry in church

Table 4.12: Experience of the small group ministry in church distribution

Statement	I strongly disagree (Frequency and percentage)	I disagree (Frequency and percentage)	I agree (Frequency and percentage)	I strongly agree (Frequency and percentage)	Total (Frequency and percentage)
Church 1					
The small group helps me experience the fellowship (sharing and caring) of believers		1 2%	32 48%	33 50%	66 100%
The small group ministry helps the spiritual growth of believers		1 2%	31 47%	34 51%	66 100%
The small group ministry enables me to grow spiritually			39 59%	27 41%	66 100%
The small group ministry influences church growth positively			28 42%	36 55%	64 97%
The Korean church needs the small group ministry			26 39%	40 61%	66 100%
The senior pastor implements the small group ministry effectively			39 59%	25 38%	64 97%
Church 2					
The small group helps me experience the fellowship (sharing and caring) of believers		2 3%	38 55%	29 42%	69 100%
The small group ministry helps the spiritual growth of believers		1 2%	36 52%	32 46%	69 100%
The small group ministry enables me to grow spiritually		2 3%	33 47.5%	33 47.5%	68 98%
The small group ministry influences church growth positively		2 3%	32 46%	35 51%	69 100%
The Korean church needs the small group ministry		1 1%	23 33%	44 64%	68 98%
The senior pastor implements the small group ministry effectively	1 2%	5 7%	38 55%	25 36%	69 100%
Church 3					
The small group helps me experience the fellowship (sharing and caring) of believers		1 1%	42 60%	27 39%	70 100%

The small group ministry helps the spiritual growth of believers	1 1%	1 1%	37 53%	30 43%	69 98%
The small group ministry enables me to grow spiritually		2 3%	39 56%	29 41%	70 100%
The small group ministry influences church growth positively		3 4%	34 49%	33 47%	70 100%
The Korean church needs the small group ministry		1 1%	28 40%	40 57%	69 98%
The senior pastor implements the small group ministry effectively		1 1%	38 55%	31 44%	70 100%

This table indicates that over 90% of the respondents gave positive answers to each of the questions posed.

(11) The main reason why the South Korean church has decreased in numbers

Table 4.13: The main reason for the South Korean church's decreased membership

The main reason for South Korean church's decrease	Church 1		Church 2		Church 3	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
The tendency to consider other churches as being of no value	15	23%	6	9%	11	16%
The absence of faith training	9	14%	9	13%	12	17%
The lack of spiritual power	14	21%	20	29%	8	11%
The loss of church influence in the local community	8	12%	16	23%	13	19%
The absence of leadership characteristics in the current designated spiritual leader	19	29%	14	20%	12	17%
The poor relationship between members and the local churches	1	1%	4	6%	9	13%
Other (specify)					5	7%
Total	66	100%	69	100%	70	100%

This table indicates that 29% of the respondents of Church 1 considered the main reason for the lack of church growth to be the absence of leadership characteristics in the current designated spiritual leader, followed by 23% who felt that the cause was the denigration of other churches. 29% of the respondents of Church 2 indicated the lack of spiritual power was the main reason while 23% thought that it was due to a loss of influence in the local community. The members of the Church 3 considered that the main reasons were spread over

four factors:

- The loss of church influence in the local community,
- The absence of faith training,
- The absence of leadership characteristics in the current designated spiritual leader, and
- The tendency to consider other churches as being of no value.

(12) The degree of harmonious fellowship

Table 4.14: The degree of harmonious fellowship between members

The degree of harmonious fellowship		Very poor (Frequency and percentage)	Poor (Frequency and percentage)	Good (Frequency and percentage)	Very good (Frequency and percentage)	Total (Frequency and percentage)
The degree of harmonious fellowship (sharing and caring) between the church members in your church is	Church 1		13 20%	49 74%	4 6%	66 100%
	Church 2	2 3%	27 39%	34 49%	6 9%	69 100%
	Church 3		22 32%	38 54%	10 14%	70 100%

The table reflects a difference in perception by the members of the three churches investigated. The percentage of respondents who consider that the degree of harmonious fellowship to be good to very good is as follows:

Church 1 80%

Church 2 58%

Church 3 68%

It is clear that the Church 1 has cultivated a greater sense of fellowship than the other churches. The pastors at the Church 2 and Church 3 need to focus on this aspect of their work.

(13) The reason for the poor rating given to harmonious fellowship (12)

Table 4.15: The reason for poor harmonious fellowship

The reason for the choice in question	Church 1		Church 2		Church 3	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Self-centeredness	22	33%	20	28%	28	40%
A negative view of the church	3	5%	3	4%	4	6%
Church members are not open with one another	16	24%	33	48%	32	46%

Church members are not trained and do not learn how to enter into and nurture fellowship (sharing and caring)	14	21%	18	26%	10	14%
The life styles of church members are too different	6	9%	3	4%	15	21%
Church members do not attend the various small group meetings	26	39%	10	14%	10	14%
Other (specify)			3	4%	1	1%

This table indicates the prime reasons why harmonious fellowship (sharing and caring) between the church members in the churches is rated as ‘poor’. Although there are differences between the churches that warrant further investigation by each church, two key elements are that members are not considered open with one another and exhibit self-centeredness.

(14) Experience of the small group ministry

Table 4.16: Elements that contribute to harmonious fellowship

Statement	Not very important (Frequency and percentage)	Not important (Frequency and percentage)	Important (Frequency and percentage)	Very important (Frequency and percentage)	Total (Frequency and percentage)
Church 1					
Unity of mind			35 53%	27 41%	62 94%
A positive view of the church		1 1%	33 50%	26 39%	60 90%
Church members must be open with one another			31 47%	31 47%	62 94%
Church members are trained to nurture and develop fellowship		4 6%	29 44%	24 36%	57 86%
Church members care for one another			31 47%	31 47%	62 94%
Church members must attend the small group meeting		3 4%	31 47%	26 39%	60 90%
Other (specify)				2 3%	2 3%
Church 2					
Unity of mind	1 1%		23 33%	43 63%	67 97%
A positive view of the church	1 1%		30 43%	37 54%	68 98%
Church members must be open with one another		2 3%	21 30%	43 62%	66 95%
Church members are trained to nurture and develop fellowship		3 4%	35 51%	27 39%	65 94%

Church members care for one another	1 1.5%	1 1.5%	29 42%	36 52%	67 97%
Church members must attend the small group meeting		4 6%	30 43%	32 46%	66 95%
Other (specify)					
Church 3					
Unity of mind			41 59%	29 41%	70 100%
A positive view of the church			36 51%	31 44%	67 95%
Church members must be open with one another			32 46%	38 54%	70 100%
Church members are trained to nurture and develop fellowship	1 1%	2 3%	38 54%	26 37%	67 95%
Church members care for one another	1 1%	1 1%	29 42%	37 53%	68 97%
Church members must attend the small group meeting		5 7%	32 46%	28 40%	65 93%
Other (specify)					

This table indicates that the majority of respondents considered each of the statements to be very important for harmonious fellowship.

(15) The following statements are true of your church

Table 4.17: The validity of the statements concerning the respondent's church

Statement	Church 1			Church 2			Church 3		
	Yes (Frequency and percentage)	No (Frequency and percentage)	Total (Frequency and percentage)	Yes (Frequency and percentage)	No (Frequency and percentage)	Total (Frequency and percentage)	Yes (Frequency and percentage)	No (Frequency and percentage)	Total (Frequency and percentage)
The church is growing numerically	61 92%	4 6%	65 98%	50 72%	19 28%	69 100%	55 79%	14 20%	69 99%
The church is growing spiritually	57 86%	9 14%	66 100%	53 77%	16 23%	69 100%	56 80%	13 19%	69 99%
My church establishes and supports other local churches	60 91%	5 7%	65 98%	61 88%	8 12%	69 100%	57 81%	13 19%	70 100%
The talents (gifts) of each believer are used in the church	56 85%	10 15%	66 100%	56 81%	11 16%	67 97%	52 74%	18 26%	70 100%
The senior pastor shares his ministry with lay leaders	58 88%	8 12%	66 100%	57 83%	11 16%	68 99%	62 89%	8 11%	70 100%

I understand the pastoral philosophy of the senior pastor	59 89%	7 11%	66 100%	63 92%	5 7%	68 99%	64 91%	6 9%	70 100%
I understand the church's vision	62 94%	4 6%	66 100%	61 89%	7 10%	68 99%	64 91%	6 9%	70 100%

This table reflects significant differences in perception between the senior pastor and some members of the congregation. For example 28% of the respondents from the Church 2 and 20% from the Church 3 do not think that the church is growing numerically while the senior pastors seem satisfied with the growth experienced. This study was not directed to the obvious question as to why there is this difference in viewpoints, but it would be worth exploring further as it may indicate a need for better communication of church goals and the criteria used to measure those goals. A similar analysis could be made in respect of each of the statements evaluated. From the viewpoint of this thesis it appears that one of the expected results of a small group ministry, an increase in church growth, numerically and spiritually, through the development and nurturing of koinonia, is not perceived to be happening by a significant proportion of the church members in Church 2 and Church 3.

(16) Factors influencing church growth

Table 4.18: The importance of factors thought to influence church growth

Statement	Not very important (Frequency and percentage)	Not important (Frequency and percentage)	Important (Frequency and percentage)	Very important (Frequency and percentage)	Total (Frequency and percentage)
Church 1					
Pastoral leadership			24 36%	42 64%	66 100%
Disciple training	1 1%		37 56%	27 41%	65 98%
The gift (talent) of ministers		5 8%	41 62%	20 30%	66 100%
The role of the church member			39 59%	27 41%	66 100%
The church's structure		7 11%	40 61%	19 28%	66 100%
The various facilities of the church		20 30%	39 59%	7 11%	66 100%
The church's vision	1 1%		29 44%	36 55%	66 100%
Cultivating caring and sharing among members			27 41%	39 59%	66 100%
Other (specify)					



Church 2					
Pastoral leadership			15 22%	54 78%	69 100%
Disciple training	1 1%		37 54%	31 45%	69 100%
The gift (talent) of ministers		4 6%	43 62%	22 32%	69 100%
The role of the church member			41 59%	28 41%	69 100%
The church's structure	1 1%	2 3%	45 65%	21 31%	69 100%
The various facilities of the church		7 10%	50 73%	12 17%	69 100%
The church's vision			20 29%	495 71%	69 100%
Cultivating caring and sharing among members			26 38%	43 62%	69 100%
Other (specify)					
Church 3					
Pastoral leadership			20 29%	50 71%	70 100%
Disciple training	1 1%		41 59%	28 40%	70 100%
The gift (talent) of ministers	1 1%	6 9%	43 61%	20 29%	70 100%
The role of the church member	1 1%	3 4%	44 63%	22 32%	70 100%
The church's structure		5 7%	46 66%	19 27%	70 100%
The various facilities of the church	1 1%	16 23%	42 61%	10 15%	70 100%
The church's vision		1 1%	29 42%	40 57%	70 100%
Cultivating caring and sharing among members			34 49%	36 51%	70 100%
Other (specify)					

What is of interest in this table are the factors which some of the church members do not consider important for church growth. These include the church facilities by members of the Church 1 and Church 3. The rest of the factors explored are all considered to be important by the vast majority of church members. The respondents are unanimous that sharing and caring is important and this finding supports the view that fellowship is a vital part of the Christian experience.

(17) Is there a program designed to stimulate individual spiritual growth of church members

Table 4.19: Awareness of a church program designed to stimulate individual spiritual growth

A program designed	Church 1		Church 2		Church 3	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	62	94%	59	86%	66	94%
No	4	6%	10	14%	4	6%
Total	66	100%	69	100%	70	100%

A small group ministry can be a powerful element in stimulating individual spiritual growth, and the overall finding that 7% of respondents are not aware of any church program intended to stimulate individual spiritual growth indicates that in general the church is meeting its aims. However at 14% the incidence of unawareness at Church 2 is twice as high as the overall average and indicates a need to communicate the availability of this type of ministry better.

(18) The spiritual growth of an individual church member stimulates church growth

Table 4.20: The stimulation of church growth of an individual member distribution

The stimulation of church growth of an individual member	Church 1		Church 2		Church 3	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	64	97%	69	100%	66	94%
No	2	3%			4	6%
Total	66	100%	69	100%	70	100%

97% of the respondents consider the spiritual growth of an individual church member to stimulate church growth. It is clear that individual church members are convinced that personal spiritual growth will result in overall church growth. The implication is that an emphasis on personal spiritual growth will have an impact on church growth. As this individual spiritual growth is fostered by the koinonia developed in a small group it lends credence to the thesis.

(19) Identification of personal spiritual gifts (talents)

Table 4.21: Were your spiritual gifts (talents) identified?

Your spiritual gifts (talents)	Church 1		Church 2		Church 3	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	53	80%	53	77%	54	77%
No	13	20%	16	23%	16	23%
Total	66	100%	69	100%	70	100%

This table indicates that 78% of the respondents had had their individual spiritual gifts identified, leaving 22% who were unaware of the spiritual gifts and talents. Put another way there are about one fifth of the congregation who are not aware of how they can be most effective in their personal Christian service. A further observation is that they need the counseling and guidance that is available within the fellowship of a small group.

(20) How individuals become aware of the spiritual gifts (talents)

Table 4.22: How individuals discovered their personal spiritual gifts (talents)

How	Church 1		Church 2		Church 3	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Through disciple training	13	20%	8	12%	13	18.5%
Through prayer	13	20%	22	32%	16	23%
Through the ministry of the word of God	12	18%	10	14%	13	18.5%
Through attending a small group	12	18%	11	16%	7	10%
Other (specify)	3	4%	2	3%	5	7%
Total	53	80%	53	77%	54	77%

This table indicates the wide variety of ways in which individuals discovered their personal spiritual gifts and talents. Disciple training is generally undertaken in a small group context, and when this response is coupled with those who claimed that their gifts were identified in a small group setting, we find that overall 40% of the respondents who answered this question (31% of the total respondent base) discovered their spiritual gifts and talents in a small group environment. It is noteworthy that a further 32% of those who answered the question had their spiritual gifts and talent identified through prayer (25% of the total respondent base), a

practice that is encouraged in a small group setting. From the foregoing it is evident that a small group context is well suited to the identification and practice of personal spiritual gifts and talents.

(21) Is there a well developed ministry by lay members?

Table 4.23: The incidence of a well developed lay member ministry

A well developed ministry of lay members	Church 1		Church 2		Church 3	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	59	89%	58	84%	60	86%
No	7	11%	11	16%	10	14%
Total	66	100%	69	100%	70	100%

This table indicates that 86% of the respondents consider that the church they attend has a well developed ministry of lay members to assist other church members. This finding tends to indicate that either the small group ministry is perhaps not as well attended or promoted as it could be, or that it is not using lay members to the fullest.

(22) Church growth

Table 4.24: Continuing church growth

The church will continue to grow	Church 1		Church 2		Church 3	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	64	97%	67	97%	65	93%
No	2	3%	2	3%	5	7%
Total	66	100%	69	100%	70	100%

This table indicates that 96% of the respondents expected their church to continue growing.

(23) The growing of the Presbyterian Church in South Korea

Table 4.25: The future growth of the Presbyterian churches in South Korea

The Church will grow	Church 1		Church 2		Church 3	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	52	79%	59	86%	56	80%
No	14	21%	10	14%	14	20%
Total	66	100%	69	100%	70	100%

This table indicates that overall, 81% of the respondents thought that the Presbyterian churches would continue to grow, while 19% did not think it would do so.

This is in contrast to 96% who expected their own (Presbyterian) church to grow. It would be interesting, and enlightening, to explore their reasons for this view.

(24) The need for a small group ministry for ongoing growth of the South Korean Presbyterian churches during the 21st century

Table 4.26: Perceived need for a small group ministry for ongoing growth

For ongoing growth during the 21 st century	Church 1		Church 2		Church 3	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	65	98%	68	99%	70	100%
No	1	2%	1	1%		
Total	66	100%	69	100%	70	100%

This table indicates that over 99% of the respondents considered that a small group ministry was needed for ongoing growth in the 21st century.

(25) The greatest perceived need for both spiritual and numerical growth in the South Korean Presbyterian churches

Table 4.27: The greatest need for both spiritual and numerical growth

The greatest need for both spiritual and numerical growth	Church 1		Church 2		Church 3	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
A small group ministry where fellowship is cultivated	34	52%	36	52%	27	38%

Supporting the establishment of other local churches	19	29%	9	13%	4	6%
The efforts of the pastor, church leaders, individual church members	39	59%	33	48%	39	56%
Identification and use of individual church members' spiritual gifts and talents	26	39%	30	43%	25	36%
Prayer for growth	23	35%	29	42%	30	43%
Regular evangelistic meetings	11	17%	18	26%	13	18%
Other (specify)	2	3%	1	1%	3	4%

This table indicates the respondents' view of the South Korean Presbyterian Church's greatest needs for both spiritual and numerical growth:

Efforts of the pastor	54%
A small group ministry	47%
Identification of individual spiritual gift	40%
Prayer for growth	40%
Evangelistic meetings	20%
The establishment of other local churches	16%

This finding serves to underline the importance that a small group type ministry can play in church growth.

4.3 The outcome of the quantitative research

The results of the quantitative research of this study give an indication of the future direction church leaders should take to promote healthy spiritual and numeric growth in the churches. There are some findings, specific on each participating church, which suggest that a corrective is necessary, and these have been noted. The general trend of the findings is as follows:

- There is a healthy fellowship of sharing and caring at the participating churches where a small group ministry is practiced (see table 4.11, 4.12).
- It is necessary that the senior pastor shares the ministry with other believers to spread the load. Church members must understand and support the pastor's vision for the church and his pastoral philosophy (see table 4.7, 4.17).
- There are well developed programs designed to promote the individual spiritual growth of church members at all three participating churches (see table 4.19).

- There is a need for ongoing meetings at which counselling and guidance are given as far as the identification and subsequent use of personal spiritual gifts and talents is given (see table 4.22)
- Senior pastors should have a procedure whereby the gifts and talents of lay church members are utilised to the best advantage of the church as a whole (see table 4.27).

The next chapter deals with a proposal for church growth based on the koinonia developed and nourished through a small group ministry. The suggested program is based on the results of the qualitative and quantitative research detailed in this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND A PROPOSAL FOR CHURCH GROWTH BASED ON THE KOINONIA DEVELOPED AND NOURISHED THROUGH A SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

1. Introduction

In Chapter 4 the research findings of the empirical research relating to church growth and the relationships between pastors, lay leaders and church members conducted among respondents from the three participating churches were presented and evaluated. Particular emphasis was placed on the actual or potential influence of the ministry of small groups.

This thesis explored the development and nurturing of koinonia in a small group setting as a way of building up a church, both spiritually and numerically, as one of the outcomes.

When considering church growth, a small group ministry is an important alternative to the standard church pattern.

In this chapter the author presents plans, based on these findings, for the church's spiritual and numerical growth through the koinonia developed and nurtured through using the ministry of small groups.

2 Applying the ministry of small groups

The development and nurturing of koinonia is a key element in the ministry of small groups and this is favored by the principles applicable to small groups. A small group ministry that does not apply the principles relating to small groups is not really a ministry but simply a concession to a theory. Therefore small groups must be structured in a way which enables the principles relating to small groups to be applied, and where the three essential elements (Fellowship, Bible study and evangelism or expansion) of a small group ministry are actively pursued.

On the basis of the theory relating to a small group ministry and his empirical research, the researcher has identified seven elements that lead to church growth based on the koinonia developed and nourished through a small group ministry.

2.1 Training the lay leaders

The responsibility of the church as a whole and the pastors in particular, is to identify and train small group leaders. This work requires much time and prayer and the diligent pastor will make this activity part of his regular routine. This work never ceases. Pastors who desire to develop a successful small group ministry must exert themselves in setting up mechanisms which will enable them to identify spiritual men and women who are capable of teaching and make appropriate arrangements for them to be trained as leaders. The pastors of the three churches participating in the empirical research all put the training of lay leaders into practice, knowing that this training was important in ensuring good relationships between believers. (see section 2.3.3 chapter 3; pages 71, 76, 79 and table 4.17 chapter 4).

It is of key importance that this identification and development of potential spiritual leaders is given a high priority by the pastor working in consultation with the various small group leaders. The development of leaders is essential for the spiritual power and growth of the church. A responsible small group leader will assist the pastor by making every effort to identify, develop and train potential leaders within his or her own small group

In order to correctly identify potential future leaders, there has to be an ongoing personal evaluation of the spiritual development of every small group member, coupled with prayer for guidance in this difficult but essential task.

The way in which the evaluation of the spiritual development of members of a small group is done should be based on Titus 1:6 – 9.

- They must be believers who are spiritually qualified to lead (Titus 1:6 – 9).
- They must be believers who regularly attend more than one Sunday service.
- They must be attending a small group on a regular basis
- They must be believers who understand and agree with the pastoral philosophy of the senior pastor.
- They must support the church's vision and the objectives of its small group ministry.
- They must be believers who have identified appropriate spiritual gifts for this ministry.
- Design and implement a course directed towards developing leaders who are able to conduct small groups.
- Train lay leaders as assistants to the pastors.
- Train whole man healing counselors – these leaders must complete a suitable education program which includes the study of theology.

One of the reasons why many pastors fail in the task of cultivating effective small group leaders is that they often initiate a discipling or training program without taking heed of Paul's advice to Timothy, to first identify 'reliable men', and then to put time and effort into developing these men.

2.2 Discipling

Discipling is essential for the church's spiritual and numerical growth. One of the elements of the church's commission is to make disciples (Matthew 28:19).

The ultimate principle of discipling is to nurture new believers and lead them on to becoming strong mature Christians capable of standing firm in the faith. Therefore the church has to ensure that new believers are carefully nurtured and disciplined. (see section 5 chapter 3; table 4.18, 4.22 chapter 4).

An active discipling program results in the following positive developments:

- Discipling leads lay believers to actively participate in the ministry of the church (1 Peter 2:9).
- Discipling results in both individual qualitative growth and corporate numerical growth (see each Q6 pages 74, 77, 81 chapter 4)
- Discipling provides an opportunity for personal instruction in the way to spiritual awakening and revival within the church. (see each Q6 Ibid).
- Discipling creates the need for the church to develop a variety of educational programs.

Therefore the South Korean church needs to identify what type of discipling programs are currently needed to best meet these objectives and so realize their desire for qualitative and numerical growth, always bearing in mind the requirement that they should strengthen the oikos and koinonia needs of the trainees.

The researcher proposes that the discipling program be based on the nurturing aspects of the training courses mentioned in chapter 4 pages 72, 73, 76, 79, table 4.18;

The practice of discipling takes place in 4 steps as follows:

The first step is a five week course. This step follows a "New Believer's Course" and is intended to lay a solid foundation of faith in Jesus Christ. Christians learn to trust Jesus Christ for their salvation and the basics of a life of faith in Jesus that leads to discipleship. The

timing and content of the course will vary and be dependent on the current situation in the church.

The second step is an eight week course in relationship training. In this step Christians are taught about prayer, healing, spiritual warfare, nurturing and the kingdom of God, etc. in greater depth. A feature of this relationship training program away from the usual venue is an all day meeting in which participants experience the koinonia they will be seeking to foster in their discipling groups.

The third step is a five week course in which the trainee is taught to value each individual highly and to practice nurturing with two other people. The course includes a period of three nights and four days in which the participants are trained to serve one another. This aspect of the course is intended to lead the trainee to decide to adopt a true spiritual servant attitude and to resolve to be a servant minister to the people in his group and in his church.

The fourth step is a twelve week course in which the trainee is taught the theory and practice of evangelism. At the end of this course there is a three week period in which the trainees practice what they have been taught. Here they make use of either the Evangelism Explosion method or the simple Four Spiritual laws booklet.

2.3 Establishing a koinonia community through believer's gifts

In order to grow spiritually and numerically the church must establish a community in which koinonia is experienced. In doing so it must use the various spiritual gifts of its members and also create a sense of unity amongst members as the body of Christ (see table 4.12, 4.14 chapter 4).

To do so requires a type of Bible study which is not usually practiced in churches today. It is more like the worshipping community of the early church which would listen to an exhortation from the word of God on the Lord's Day and then put it into practice in their lives throughout the days that followed. (see section 2.3 chapter 3)

When believers attend a koinonia community of teaching, caring, serving, sharing, mission and evangelism, a church can experience healthy growth through the use of the spiritual gifts of its members. In these circumstances the believer experiences the true love of God and the result is a life of service that "washes one another's feet" (John 13). New believers have their faith strengthened through fellowship and true love and all believers become more spiritually mature striving for the full measure of the fullness of Christ.

The church is a community of spiritually gifted people. Therefore the pastor and individual members of the church help one another to identify the gifts they have received from God and to put them to use mutual service for the benefit of the whole congregation.

The author proposes the following program for establishing a koinonia community through using the spiritual gifts of believers.

- Implement a program or seminar designed to identify individual believer's spiritual gifts (see table 4.22 chapter 4).
- Guide church members to a small group where their own spiritual gifts can be used in ministering to the benefit of others in the group (see table 4.22 chapter 4).
- Operate a special consultation room where individuals can receive help in identifying their spiritual gifts.

2.4 Whole man healing as a small group activity

In spite of the numerical growth of the South Korean church, church members have experienced emotional harm as a result of problems at home, financial difficulties, the education of their children, health and a variety of diseases and accidents etc.

In the South Korean church both ministers and members are in need of spiritual and whole man healing if there is to be healthy church growth. Because there is no healthy church growth there is no whole man healing (see section 4.3.5 chapter 3; table 4.15 chapter 4). One of the important functions of a small group ministry is healing. Therefore the author proposes the following program for establishing a koinonia community for whole man healing.

- Build or set aside rooms to be used specifically for counseling individual believers by trained whole man healing counselors.
- Include annual seminars on the practical application of the whole man healing in the church calendar.
- Arrange regular small seminars designed to provide fathers and mothers with biblical guidance for healthy family living.

2.5 Nurturing and training

All church members grow spiritually and, as a result, numerically through nurturing and

training (see section 5.3.6 chapter 3; table 4.13 chapter 4). Therefore the church must encourage nurturing and training through carefully designed programs.

- Modify the church structure to incorporate and facilitate a small group ministry.
- Develop a training system which will ensure the nurturing of new believers but is appropriate for the specific needs and situation of the church (see each Q5 pages 69, 76, 79 chapter 4).
- Organize the small groups on the basis of shared interests or values such as age, standard of living, similar workplace experience, working couples, and gender, etc, (see Q5 pages 76 chapter 4).

2.6 Evangelism and mission

The great commission that Jesus gave to His church involves evangelism and mission (Matthew 28:18-20). Therefore these two activities, evangelism and mission are fundamental to the church's activities (see section 4.4.4 chapter 3; table 4.27).

The author therefore proposes the following program of dynamic evangelism and mission by the church.

- Ensure that the preaching program includes regular sermons and seminars on the importance of local and distant mission.
- Provide practical mission training for both long and short term service using such programs as the following (cf. Q5 page 73 chapter 4):
 - GMS mission training provided by the Korean Presbyterian Church (six month full time)
 - LMTC mission training course for local churches (one year part time)
 - Specific mission training programs applicable to the church's needs and goals
- Encourage the sending out of long and short term missionaries (see each Q6 pages 74, 77, 80 chapter 4).
- Plan supporting missionaries who work both at home and abroad (see *ibid*).
- Support mission to a specific group of un-reached people of the 10-40 window.
- Provide ongoing, practical training in evangelism using such aids as the four spiritual laws, Evangelism Explosion and other appropriate materials.
- Organize and train local evangelistic teams.

2.7 Caring for local society

One of the reasons for the numerical decrease in the membership of the South Korean church is that it did not exhibit an interest in the local society in its immediate environment and, as a consequence, it did not have any influence on it. (see table 4.13 chapter 4). The church must demonstrate the love of God in its service to the local community. Therefore the author proposes the following church program for serving and influencing its local society

- Establish a study room and library for poor and needy children and young adults.
- Create a scholarship for deserving poor and needy children and teenagers.
- Provide social welfare support for old people who live alone and have no relatives.
- Support multi culture families and alien workers who are in spiritual or physical need.

3 Conclusion

Some time ago several churches rediscovered that a small group ministry is one of the lasting ways God has been pleased to use for reinvigorating the spiritual life of a church. The use of small groups became the subject of great interest to the Christian community since the beginning of the twentieth century. In the twenty-first century, however, the ministry of small groups has moved forward from being of interest to Christians, and has become a necessity.

Many churches today have a deep interest in church growth. Provided that the benefits of a small group ministry are considered and assessed apart from the emotions often evoked in response to the designation “small group” the value of the contribution of a small group ministry will be evident. Further, where the small group ministry is directed to mission and the church provides scope for this activity, the growth and renewal of the church will be greatly facilitated.

In particular, a ministry configured on small groups suitable for the churches in South Korea would benefit from the freedom of fellowship amongst the church’s membership. The small group ministry envisaged may be uncommon or even new to some of the South Korean communities for which they are intended but as shown, this type of ministry is well suited to their needs and the need for church growth. In addition, taking the approach to another level, the participation of small group leaders in the affairs of the church will relieve the current over emphasis of a single dominant pastor in church affairs.

Following the suggested approach of using the seven different kinds of small group ministries mentioned will lead to church members developing mature spiritual relationships in Christ, the emergence of well trained lay leaders and, through the sharing and caring stimulated within the small groups, a healthy, vigorous church life and growth.

APPENDIX

Questionnaire: A survey of the small group ministry in the South Korean Presbyterian Church

Respondent number

V1 1

Please answer all the questions by drawing a circle around the appropriate number in a shaded box or writing your answer in the shaded space provided.

1. What is your gender?

Male	1
Female	2

V2 5

2. What is your age (on your last birthday)?

V3 7

3. What is your position in your church?

Pastor	1
Evangelist	2
Elder	3
Exhorter (Church Mother)	4
Deacon	5
Member	6

V4 10
V5 12
V6 14
V7 16
V8 18
V9 20

4. How long have you been a member of this church (Please indicate days or weeks or months or years)?

V10 22
V11 25

5. On average how often per month do you attend a morning Sunday Service?

Five times a month	1
Four times a month	2
Three times a month	3
Twice a month	4
Once a month	5

V12 27

Question 6 follows on the next page...

6. On average **how often per month** do you attend **an evening** Sunday Service?

Five times a month	1
Four times a month	2
Three times a month	3
Twice a month	4
Once a month	5

V13 29

7. Does your church **practice** a small group ministry?

Yes	1
No	2

V14 31

8. Do you **attend** a small group?

Yes	1
No	2

V15 33

9. Fellowship may be summarised by the words “**sharing** and **caring**”. Please rate **the degree** to which you experience fellowship sharing and caring in your church.

	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very Good
With your pastors	1	2	3	4
With your leaders	1	2	3	4
Among the believers in your church	1	2	3	4

V16 35

V17 37

V18 39

10. Based on your **experience** of the small group ministry in your church please evaluate each of the following **statements** and indicate how you feel about them.

Statement	I strongly disagree	I disagree	I agree	I strongly agree
The small group helps me experience the fellowship (sharing and caring) of believers	1	2	3	4
The small group ministry helps the spiritual growth of believers	1	2	3	4
The small group ministry enables me to grow spiritually	1	2	3	4
The small group ministry influences church growth positively	1	2	3	4
The Korean church needs the small group ministry	1	2	3	4
The senior pastor implements the small group ministry effectively	1	2	3	4

V19 41

V20 43

V21 45

V22 47

V23 49

V24 51

Question 11 follows on the next page...



11. Recently, the South Korean church has decreased in numerical membership. In your opinion what is **the main reason**? (Please circle a **single** number)

The tendency to consider other churches as being of no value	1
The absence of faith training	2
The lack of spiritual power	3
The loss of church influence in the local community	4
The absence of leadership characteristics in the current designated spiritual leader	5
The poor relationship between members and the local churches	6
Other (specify):	

V25 53

12. Please rate the following statement.

	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very Good
The degree of harmonious fellowship (sharing and caring) between the church members in your church is	1	2	3	4

V26 56

13. Please indicate your **reason** for the choice you made in question (12). (You may select **more than one** answer)

Self centeredness	1
A negative view of the church	2
Church members are not open with one another	3
Church members are not trained and do not learn how to enter into and nurture fellowship (sharing and caring)	4
The life styles of church members are too different	5
Church members do not attend the various small group meetings	6
Other (specify):	

V27 58

V28 60

V29 62

V30 64

V31 66

V32 68

V33 70

V34 73

V35 76

Question 14 follows on the next page...



14. **How important** do you rate each of the following statements with respect to their contribution to harmonious fellowship? (You may select more than **one** answer)

Statement	Not very important	Not important	Important	Very important		
Unity of mind	1	2	3	4	V36	79
A positive view of the church	1	2	3	4	V37	81
Church member must be open with one another	1	2	3	4	V38	83
Church members are trained to nurture and develop fellowship	1	2	3	4	V39	85
Church member care for one another	1	2	3	4	V40	87
Church member must attend the small group meeting	1	2	3	4	V41	89
Other (specify):					V42	91
					V43	94

15. Consider **each** of the following **statements**. Is this true in your church?

Statement	Yes	No		
The church is growing numerically	1	2	V44	96
The church is growing spiritually	1	2	V45	98
My church establishes and supports other local churches	1	2	V46	100
The talents (gifts) of each believer are used in the church	1	2	V47	102
The senior pastor shares his ministry with lay leaders	1	2	V48	104
I understand the pastoral philosophy of the senior pastor	1	2	V49	106
I understand the church's vision	1	2	V50	108

16. Rate **the importance** of each of the following statements with respect to church growth.

Statement	Not very important	Not important	Important	Very important		
Pastoral leadership	1	2	3	4	V51	110
Disciple training	1	2	3	4	V52	112
The gift (talent) of ministers	1	2	3	4	V53	114
The role of the church member	1	2	3	4	V54	116
The church's structure	1	2	3	4	V55	118
The various facilities of the church	1	2	3	4	V56	120
The church's vision	1	2	3	4	V57	122
Cultivating caring and sharing among members	1	2	3	4	V58	124
Other (specify):					V59	126
					V60	129

Question 17 follows on the next page...

17. Does your church offer a **program** designed to stimulate the individual spiritual growth of church members?

Yes	1
No	2

V61 131

18. Do you think that **the spiritual growth of an individual** church member stimulates church growth?

Yes	1
No	2

V62 133

19. Have you identified your spiritual **gifts** (talents)?

Yes	1
No	2

V63 135

20. If so, **how** did it come **about**?

Through disciple training	1
Through prayer	2
Through the ministry of the word of God	3
Through attending a small group	4
Other (specify):	

V64 137

21. Does your church have a well **developed ministry** of lay members to assist other church members?

Yes	1
No	2

V65 139

22. Do you think that **your church** will continue to grow?

Yes	1
No	2

V66 141

23. Do you think that the Presbyterian Church in South Korea will **continue to grow**?

Yes	1
No	2

V67 143

24. Does the Presbyterian Church in South Korean need a small group ministry for **ongoing growth** during the 21st century?

Yes	1
No	2

V68 145

Question 25 follows on the next page...

25. What do you think is the South Korean Presbyterian church's **greatest need** for both spiritual and numerical growth? You may select more than **one** answer

A small group ministry where fellowship is cultivated	1	V69	<input type="checkbox"/>	147
Supporting the establishment of other local churches	2	V70	<input type="checkbox"/>	149
The efforts of the pastor, church leaders, individual church members	3	V71	<input type="checkbox"/>	151
Identification and use of individual church members' spiritual gifts and talents	4	V72	<input type="checkbox"/>	153
Prayer for growth	5	V73	<input type="checkbox"/>	155
Regular evangelistic meetings	6	V74	<input type="checkbox"/>	157
Other (specify):		V75	<input type="checkbox"/>	159
		V76	<input type="checkbox"/>	162
		V77	<input type="checkbox"/>	165

Thank you for your time and co-operation in answering the questions

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