
International Forum
Vol. 18, No. 1
April 2015
pp. 66-80

FEATURE

**The Small Group: Connected for Wellness and Success
in Adventist Higher Education**

Ikechukwu Michael Oluikpe

Abstract. *Adventist education emphasizes a balanced, holistic preparation for life in varied careers and fields of study. It stresses the need for physical, mental, social, and spiritual growth, as well as health and wellness as a basis for successful living. One of the major threats to health, wellness, and success in contemporary times consists of addictions. These addictions of various kinds cut across age, gender, race, and class, not excluding students, faculty, and staff in the Adventist higher educational system. Scientific studies show that addictions can be broken through connectedness to God and fellow human beings. The small group model is one model for achieving this connectedness. This article proposes that the small group model is an effective and productive way to achieve connectedness necessary to break addictions and to enjoy success in Adventist higher education.*

Keywords: Connectedness, small group, Adventist education, addiction, success.

Introduction

The phenomenon of globalization is a significant characteristic feature that cannot be overlooked in the description of society in contemporary times. “Globalization refers to increasing global interconnectedness, so that events and developments in one part of the world are affected by, have to take account of, and also influence in turn, other parts of the world.” (Tiplady, 2003, p. 2). This definition can be narrowed down to two keywords: interconnectedness and interdependence (Oluikpe, 2013, p. 6). Since it is a description of how one part of the world affects another part, globalization has evidently brought a very high level of connectedness on a global scale. This global connectedness, however,

seems to emphasize individualism and competitiveness among persons and institutions in the corporate world. Individualism, which began in the 18th century and remains dominant in Western society (Park, 2013), has spread around the world through globalization (Oluikpe, 2013). The reflections of the French sociologist Alexis de Tocqueville describe this phenomenon:

Individualism is a calm and considered feeling which disposes each citizen to isolate himself from the mass of his fellows and withdraw into the circle of family and friends; with this little society formed to his taste he gladly leaves the greater society to look after itself. . . . There are more and more people who . . . have gained or kept enough wealth and enough understanding to look after their own needs. Such folk owe no man anything and hardly except anything from anybody. They form the habit of thinking of themselves in isolation and imagine that their whole destiny is in their hands. (Icenogle, 1994, p. 279)

Furthermore, Tocqueville continues to describe an individualistic person as one who “behaves like he is a strange to the destiny of others . . . as for his transactions with his fellow citizens, he may mix among them, but he sees them not; he touches them but he does not feel them; he exists only in himself and for himself alone. And if on these terms there remains in his mind a sense of family, there no longer remains a sense of society”(as cited in Park, 2013, p. 11).

Based on individualism, success is determined by personal effort and achievement. The dominant mantras seem to be “every one for him/herself” and “let the best man/woman/team win.”

On the other hand, there is an increasing realization that “no man is an island” in the quest for holistic success in the lives of individuals and institutions. This realization is especially significant for Christians who live and work in contemporary society. There is a need to establish connectedness for success in every aspect of life in contemporary times.

This paper proposes that the small group model is one of the most effective and productive means of achieving connectedness for holistic successful living. It defines and describes the small group model and its benefits. It also explains the significance of the connectedness in the small group experience for Adventist higher education institutions especially in the aspects of breaking addiction and foundations for future successful living at the personal and corporate levels.

Context for Connectedness

The fact that humans work in groups cannot be overemphasized. The informal gatherings of families and neighbors and the formal committee type teams at work

places (Arnold, 2004) all attest that the small group experience is a natural human phenomenon that cannot be denied.

The small group can be defined as “a face-to-face gathering of a few (three to twenty) persons to be [or exist], to share and to act for the betterment of one another and the wider good of others” (Icenogle, 1994, p. 14). A group can be said to be valid when it is able to meet the needs of the people involved in it. Since individuals differ greatly in needs, there is also a range of groups and the needs they meet (Mallison, 1996, p. 16). Discussion groups, education groups, task groups, experiential and growth groups, therapy and counseling groups, self-help groups, and support groups are examples of types of groups organized to meet the felt needs of the members (Jacobs, Masson, & Harvil, 2009). Therefore, groups are defined by their function, goal, or purpose.

There are many benefits of working in groups that are not available when persons live or work alone. Some of such benefits include efficiency, experience of commonality, and a sense of belonging among others (Jacobs et al., 2009). The fields of sociology and psychology have observed that “all human endeavor works to fulfillment and completion through small group experience” (Icenogle, 1994, p. 14). Consequently, there is a need to analyze, emphasize and enable more “face-to face relationships where two, three or more persons come together for a common purpose and life” (Icenogle, 1994, p. 14).

In his book, *Sharing the Journey*, Robert Wuthnow, professor of sociology, observes that “nearly everyone in society wants to be able to share their deepest feelings, be in an accepting environment and have loyal friends that they can count on” (as cited in Park, 2013, p. 13). Wuthnow’s observation implies that the small group experience goes beyond a mere gathering of people for casual talk. A genuine small group experience involves key factors such as (1) love and acceptance; (2) empathy, loyalty and support; (3) transparent trust, openness, and confidentiality; (4) affirmation and encouragement; (5) freedom and accountability; (6) availability and sensitivity; and (7) life-related learning especially based on the truth of Scripture (Mallison, 1996, pp. 65-66; Ogden, 2003, pp. 153-154; Spangler & Tverberg, 2009, p. 75). A small group environment that incorporates these factors satisfies the human need for more than just superficial acquaintance. These essential qualities are necessary to establish meaningful connectedness in small groups. Consequently individuals with the experience of such small group connectedness go through life with meaningful support and success.

It is evident that meaningful connectedness in small groups is essential for human survival, support, emotional strength and stimulation (Arnold, 2004, p. 10). It implies that a person “who is completely isolated cannot find complete self-fulfillment” (Melgosa, 2006, p. 73). Since a meaningful small group experience is needed for fulfilling and successful living, there is a need for leaders

and educators in Adventist higher education institutions to understand the significance of connectedness for the implementation of its philosophy and policies in school life for students and staff alike.

Connectedness and the Philosophy of Adventist Education

The Seventh-day Adventist education system stands as the second largest denominational educational system in the world (Oluikpe, 2013; Wa-Mbaleka, 2013). Its basic philosophy emphasizes the redemption and restoration of fallen humanity to the original image of God (Wa-Mbaleka, 2013) through guidelines from the Bible. The main goal of this educational system is primarily mission: to reach people with the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ in preparation for His soon return (Oluikpe, 2013). Through the branch of education, Adventists strive to fulfill this uniquely Christian worldwide mission to go and make disciples, baptizing and teaching them all the commands of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19).

The purpose of Adventist education can be summarized in two: (1) to restore fallen humanity to the original image of God, and (2) to make disciples for Jesus Christ. It is noteworthy that connectedness through the small group experience is essential to accomplish this twofold purpose. The need for connectedness in order to fulfill this purpose is at the heart of Adventist education.

Connectedness and the Image of God

The creation of humanity in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-28) is found at the beginning of the Biblical record. This clearly distinguishes humans as the crowning creatures of the Genesis Creation story. While the image of God is manifested in the human ability to think, choose, love, procreate and relate directly to God as individuals, it is also seen in the human desire to relate to other human beings in community.

The summary statements of God's creation of humankind in His image (Genesis 1:26-28) reveal the two components of human community: male and female (Genesis 1:27). A subsequent and detailed creation account of the male and female progenitors of the human race shows the deep intrinsic need for companionship and community. It is noteworthy that after a series of "it was good" statements after each act of creation (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31), God observes the need for human community by stating that "it is not good for man to be alone" (Genesis 2:18). This precedes the creation of the woman who complements the man and fulfills the need for community (Genesis 2:20-23). It implies that the human community of male and female is a reflection of the image and likeness of God (Icenogle, 1994).

The relational aspect of the image of God in human beings emphasizes the need for connectedness on two levels. First, the relationship must be between humans and God on a vertical level and second, between humans on a horizontal level (Valerio, 2003, p. 28). Consequently, it can be said that “the human community exists foundationally as a small group, that is, at least one man and one woman in relationship with God” (Icenogle, 1994, p. 22). It also implies that God Himself exists in community, not only with the heavenly beings but as reflected in the doctrine of the Trinity: God in Three Persons. Human beings are created to exist in community by a God who lives in community in a small group of three (Icenogle, 1994). Icenogle (1994) believes that when two or more persons come together in a small group community, “they become an actual reflection of the image and likeness of God”—a microcosm of God’s creation community (pp. 20-21).

It is important to note that the Genesis record also shows how this original image of God in human beings was marred by an act of sin that ushered in the fall of humankind (Genesis 2:16, 17; 3:1-24). The deed of disobedience brought blame and shame to the first human couple, fear of God (Genesis 3: 8-13) and therefore distortion of the relational aspect of God’s image in human beings. This distortion of the original image of God is still manifested in contemporary times through disconnection from God and selfish alienation from other human beings. It is the evidence of the fallen nature of human beings which creates the need of divine restoration as presented in the biblical account.

Since Adventist education aims at restoring the image of God in fallen humans, there is a need to take the relational implications of the biblical account into serious consideration for implementation in school life. Contrary to the individualism of the Western worldview, the Genesis creation account leads to a view of humanity as social beings who become genuinely human only through some relationship. Humans find their true selves not as autonomous individuals but through some relationship with one another, which is based on the understanding that every human being is made in the image of God (Valerio, 2003). Through the small group model, Adventist educators and leaders can accomplish the purpose of restoring fallen human beings to the original image of God.

Connectedness and Discipleship

As part of restoring God’s image in fallen human beings, Adventist education seeks to make disciples for Jesus Christ as a central part of its divine mission (Matthew 28:19). It has been observed that discipleship is best done in the context of community. Bishop Kenneth Carder’s comment on discipleship as part of the Great Commission in the following quotation is noteworthy: “Making disciples of all nations has to do with transforming communities as well as human

hearts; the creation of communities of love, of grace, of justice and hospitality that look like Jesus Christ” (as cited in Robert, 2007, p. 19). In an attempt to fulfill the Gospel Commission, it is imperative for Adventist educators and leaders to create communities that will facilitate the disciple making process, especially through the small group model.

Research has shown that the crisis of weak social, moral, and spiritual foundations among children and young people is caused by a lack of connectedness to God and people (Beagles, 2012). In order to solve this crisis, especially among young people who make up the majority of the population in Adventist higher institutions, there is a need for communities to establish interconnectedness. These communities are defined as groups of connected “people that are committed to one another over time and who model and pass on at least part of what it means to be a good person and to live a good life” (Beagles, 2012, p. 150).

Producing faithful disciples according to the biblical standard involves two key interrelated activities (Donkor, 2013, p. 22) that are done in community. The first is personal mentoring of growing disciples, and the second is interacting in small group life where Christians intentionally gather and “commit themselves to work together to become better disciples of Jesus Christ” (Arnold, 1992, p. 18).

Mentoring is an important part of the small group benefits for the discipleship process. Beagles (2012) gives a report of a qualitative research done among college freshmen in a Christian university. The study “revealed that all the students who had steady habits of prayer and Scripture reading described having had a relationship with a mentor who modeled a love relationship with Christ” (Beagles, 2012, p. 151). Beagles (2012) also pointed out that students showed “conviction that relationships were of higher importance in the shaping of their faith than programming” (p. 151). It is therefore evident that “being a disciple is not a solitary experience . . . discipleship compels one to interact with others to bring them along the journey. . . . It is in the community of disciples that newer and younger disciples are nurtured and instructed” (Beagles, 2012, p. 151).

The small group experience provides a context for Christians to mature in faith as disciples of Jesus through relationships that nurture growth (Spangler & Tverberg, 2009, p. 74). Christian communities that practice the factors essential for the small group experience will enjoy fellowship that involves and leads to authenticity—“genuine, heart-to-heart, sometimes gut level sharing . . . They share the hurts, reveal their feelings, confess their failures, disclose their doubts, admit their fears, acknowledge their weaknesses and ask for help and prayer” (Warren, 2002, p. 139). These groups will move beyond superficial, impersonal conversation and “learn to trust one another, openly expressing their thoughts and feelings, confident that what is shared within the group will not

go beyond the group. They must also learn the art of respectful disagreement, challenging each other when necessary” (Spangler & Tverberg, 2009, p. 75).

Since discipleship is done in community, the small group model is an essential component in Adventist education needed to establish connectedness for the disciple-making process. Adventist educators and leaders need this experience and need to model it in their personal lives and school settings to accomplish the goal of developing authentic Christian disciples.

The twofold purpose of Adventist education includes restoring the fallen image of God in humans and Christian discipleship. This purpose can be achieved through connectedness and community, especially as demonstrated and experienced in the small group model. The subsequent section highlights the importance of connectedness through the small group as an effective approach for breaking addiction, a contemporary threat to health and wellness.

Breaking Addiction: Connected for Wellness

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity” (as cited in Pacific Northwest Foundation, n.d., p. 1). On the other hand, “wellness is the active process of becoming aware of and making choices towards a successful existence” (Pacific Northwest Foundation, n.d., p. 1). These two seemingly synonymous and interrelated words may be confusing. It is important to point out that while one is a state at a point in time (health), the other is a process which takes a period of time (wellness). The definitions of both words carry in them the need for the overall well-being of a person especially including the dimensions of life –physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual. This also implies that success or failure in one aspect of life affects another part of life positively or negatively respectively. These two words deal with a holistic perspective of human beings.

Types of Addiction

Addiction is one among many of the challenges that negatively affect health and wellness in contemporary society. It has been noticed on an increasing rate across all genders, ages, races, and classes of people. “Addiction can be defined as the continued use of mood-altering addicting substances or behaviours despite adverse consequences” (Angres & Bettinardi-Angres, 2008, p. 696). This definition is significant because it shows that addiction is not only limited to addictive substances but involves behavior as well. The implications of this definition for health and wellness especially for Adventist educators and leaders is considered here.

Addiction has usually been associated with substance abuse, especially alcohol and drugs. These addictive substances have greatly affected many young people in institutions of higher learning, including Adventist colleges and universities. Despite “the restrictive and protective environment of an Adventist school, some [youth] will experiment with alcohol, tobacco and other drugs” (Vanderwaal, Mayer, Cooper, & Racovita-Szilagyi, 2014, p. 40). Consequently, many youth are negatively affected in the health and wellness of every aspect of their lives because of the use of these mind- and mood-altering substances. This trend among young people even in church schools and institutions is a matter of concern that needs to be addressed swiftly and meaningfully.

In addition to substance abuse, contemporary society has seen the rise of non-chemical addictions, also known as drugless or behavioral addictions (Escandon & Galvez, 2005). Examples of these include addictions to gambling, gaming, sex, work, Internet, food, media, shopping, violence and noise among others (Escandon & Galvez, 2005, pp. 122-137; Young, 1996, p. 900; Young, 1999, p. 2).

Among the many non-chemical addictions, Internet addiction seems to be one of the most prominent. As a result of the digital age, most activities at work and in daily life are successfully done and drawn from online sources and application. The Internet has become seemingly indispensable in this day and age for many people, ranging from students in school to professionals at work. Since the Internet is a technological tool that contains many benefits, is highly promoted and brings advancement and success in work and life; it is not easily criticized as addictive and this attitude makes Internet addiction difficult to diagnose (Young, 1999, p. 2). In addition, it is easy to deny this addiction by claiming to use the Internet for academic or employment-related work (Young, 1999, p. 2). Though the negative health effects of Internet addiction are minimal compared to those of substance abuse, it is noteworthy that their end result still affects the health and wellbeing—physically, mentally, socially, and professionally (Young, 1999, pp. 3-6). This addiction needs to be understood and addressed effectively since students, faculty, and staff in Adventist institutions of higher education are not exempt from the dangers and effects of Internet addiction.

Connectedness and Overcoming Addiction

While there are different approaches for dealing with addiction, a healthy social environment is a very important factor for breaking addictions. Connectedness is significant when dealing with this threat to personal health and wellness. The Twelve-Step program is one of the programs used to help

addicts in their condition. The principles of this program can be traced to an organization called Alcoholics Anonymous (also known as AA).

The AA had two cofounders, Bob Wilson and Dr Bob Smith, in June 10, 1935. Both were alcoholic addicts who needed recovery. After some time of study and sharing, they put together the Twelve Steps that lead to their recovery (Angres & Bettinardi-Angres, 2008, pp. 705-706). The Twelve Steps are as follows: (1) We admit we are powerless over our addiction—that our lives have become unmanageable. (2) We have come to believe that a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity. (3) We make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand him. (4) We make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. (5) We admit to God, to ourselves, and another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. (6) We are entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. (7) We humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings. (8) We make a list of all persons we have harmed, and we are willing to make amends to all of them. (9) We make direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so will injure them or others. (10) We continue to take personal inventory and when we are wrong, promptly admit it. (11) We seek through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out. (12) Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we will try to carry this message to other addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The principles of the Twelve-Step program are usually carried out in small groups where addicts agree on and share the following: "The belief in a loving God as the ultimate authority and source of power, total sobriety as the aim, commitment to help others who wish to abandon dependence [addiction], and confidentiality of participants" (Melgosa, 2011, p. 133). As a result, they enjoy psycho-social support through shared pain. This support is an important factor for breaking both chemical and non-chemical addictions. Alcoholics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Sexaholics Anonymous are examples of self-help groups patterned after the Twelve-Step program which have enjoyed a high success rate because involved individuals can fight addiction with much more tenacity when joined together with others who have the same problem (Angres & Bettinardi-Angres, 2008; Escandon & Galvez, 2005; Melgosa, 2011).

The success of the Twelve-Step program can be traced to two key components of connectedness: the vertical connection with God and the horizontal connection with others with the same addiction (Griffin, 2014). Julian Melgosa, a professor of psychology, clearly states that the principles of the Twelve-Step program has been effective "partly due to the human support provided by other ex-addicts and partly because of the divine help received

by those who are willing to receive this power” (Melgosa, 2011, p. 132). This perspective stresses the importance of Christian spirituality that involves “having a strong healthy relationship with God through Jesus Christ (a vertical relationship) and a strong healthy relationship with other persons (horizontal relationships)” (Rasi et al., 2014, p. 4). Based on the Twelve-Step program, addicts can break free from their addiction by having “an honest relationship with themselves, with others and a connection to a power greater than themselves” (Angres & Bettinardi-Angres, 2008, p. 706). Therefore it can be said that “commitment to an addiction-free life is a spiritual decision” (Rasi et al., 2014, p. 4).

Addiction and Connectedness in School Programs

Since addiction is a major threat to health and wellness even in Adventist institutions of higher education, there is a need to establish operational structures and policies that will enable students, faculty, and staff to deal with it meaningfully. Research has shown that school programs that promote connectedness to God (through religious and spiritual activities) and to other people (through interpersonal relationships) are beneficial in helping. Such connectedness is especially needed for young students to deal with both chemical and non-chemical addictions (Baltazaar, Conopio, & Moreno, 2014; Fisher & Titus, 2014; Vanderwaal et al., 2014).

The social connectedness that is helpful in overcoming addictions can be practiced in two major ways: the mentoring experience and the small group experience. One of the ways that Christian schools can help young students deal with addiction is by developing and expanding mentoring relationships which involve faculty, staff, church community, and alumni, especially for the first year college or university students (Fisher & Titus, 2014). A mentor can be any caring adult (such as teachers, ministers, youth leaders, and neighbors) in the faith community who is mature, emotionally stable, competent, and sensitive to the need of the young person who is being mentored. Those who volunteer to be mentors need to engage those they mentor in individual and group activities, monitoring their activities and encouraging them to apply their craving for risk taking to positive social, emotional, and intellectual situations instead of experimenting with dangerous substances and activities (Baltazaar et al., 2014; Vanderwaal et al., 2014). It is important to note that the mentoring experience will only work when the mentor first models a good behavior backed by a strong and consistent concern for the young person (Vanderwaal et al., 2014).

The small group experience usually involves active participation in fun social activities either conducted by adult leaders and mentors or by fellow students and peers (Fisher & Titus, 2014). Apart from formal forums for discussion and sharing, the young students need small groups that will give them time

to relax, reflect, and connect with peers and adult leaders. These groups will provide spaces and opportunities for the youth to be themselves, share with others, and grow by learning about themselves, others, and God in an atmosphere of trust. Such groups, when operating under some ground rules, create bonding and connectedness between the young members, which is essential for breaking and staying free from addictions (Rasi et al., 2014). Through the intervention of an improved social environment (which includes meaningful social connectedness in mentoring and the small group experience), drug-endangered children or youth can be changed and kept from dangerous vulnerability and negative life trajectories that their natural home environment may have poised them for (Randall, 2014).

Addiction is a real problem, yet many addicts go undiagnosed or untreated (Angres & Bettinardi-Angres, 2008). This fact is probably true to many young people in Adventist schools. Adventist educators and leaders need to seriously consider planning and implementing programs and policies that will promote and enhance vertical and horizontal connectedness, necessary for producing and preserving freedom from addiction in the church's higher education institutions. This will ensure that students, faculty, and staff enjoy optimum health and wellness in an environment especially free from addictions.

Connected for Success

While success can be seen as single accomplishments such as good grades, promotion at work, receiving awards, among others, it is important to note that it is about finding and enjoying fulfillment in every aspect of life. Success in academic or professional work without success in marital and family relationships, for example, cannot be regarded as complete success. This is because failure in one area will definitely affect the other.

This holistic understanding of success is essential for educators and leaders as they prepare students for the real world. Since Adventist education is the harmonious development of the physical, mental, social, and spiritual faculties, it is an education that lays the foundation for good and successful living in daily life and work.

Connectedness is an important part of human life. This connectedness can be facilitated especially through small groups. When programs and policies that enable the small group experience are incorporated into school life by Adventist educators and leaders, the school environment and experience can help students learn the important skills and practice for successful relationships for life and work. "The stimulation of learning through close, personal relationships between individuals, partners, small groups, and a larger community offers opportunities for learning which appeals to the deep social, emotional,

psychological needs of humanity” (Beagles, 2012). Connectedness is therefore highly encouraged through the small group model.

In the area of academics, students can have the small group experience by studying and doing projects together. It can also include discussion of class or course topics in study groups. The creation of and participation in academic families where students and faculty members work together on research writing and publication to achieve academic excellence is another example of the small group experience in the area of scholarship. Indeed, “learning together in a group is the basis of all learning” (Melgosa, 2006, p. 73). That is the powerful of the small group experience.

In the area of health and wellness, students and faculty can create programs that promote healthy living. It can include exercising in groups, such as having jogging or gym partners, or cooking healthy recipes in cooking class sessions. The team work emphasized here can serve as motivation to encourage positive and healthy lifestyle choices and changes, therefore, laying the foundation for future success in health and wellness.

It is important to point out that the positive transforming experience of an individual in a small group can have a ripple effect on people who come within the sphere of that individual’s influence, both on a personal and organizational level. For example, reconciliation and healing in a small group becomes the foundation for other healing processes—personally and socially. “As people experience reconciliation and peacemaking behavior in a small group context, they will practice such patterns in the macrosystems of world corporations and governments” and as a result, “organizations can be opened to healing through the healing experience of individuals in small groups” (Icenogle, 1994, pp. 302-303). Consequently, the small group experience established in the school can bring great positive change to the society at large.

The small group pattern established in Adventist schools can also become a medium to turn the strong tides of individualism, which is dominant in society and is infiltrating the Church. While the individualistic trend of the Western world spread by globalization is causing many ordinary community settings to disintegrate and disappear, the practice of the small group model in Adventist education institutional systems can produce disciples of Jesus that will intentionally reproduce the pattern. This experience would help preserve genuine community in society and provide the needed healing of a society that is starving for community (Icenogle, 1994).

When Adventist educators and leaders follow the small group model in their work, they satisfy the human hunger for reconciliation with God and others and provide a space for welcome, worship, confession, forgiveness, healing, mutual recovery, freedom, service, and hope (Icenogle, 1994, pp. 14, 303). They will be like salt (Matthew 5:13), that is, agents of divine

transformation from within. These graduates of Adventist educational institutions will exemplify a different pattern for holistic successful living that is in line with the values of Jesus—opposing individualism and promoting genuine community. They will show that true success does not come from working in isolation and competition but from cooperation and collaboration. When the small group experience is implemented in all aspects of school life, the students will learn that team work and networking are important ingredients for successful living.

Conclusion

Though globalization has connected the world, every contemporary person has to choose what mantra to follow: “Every man for himself” or “No man is an island.” Connectedness is essential for human life and success in every sphere. The small group is one effective way of establishing connectedness on many levels of human life and work. Adventist higher education institutions are encouraged to follow and foster the small group model to provide an environment for students, faculty, and staff to break addictions and enjoy good success. Above all, this pattern can help make disciples for Jesus Christ for life and the work place in the 21st century.

References

- Angres, D. H., & Bettinardi-Angres, K. (2008). The disease of addiction: Origins, treatment and recovery. *Dis Mon* 54, 696-721. doi: 10.1016/j.disamonth.2008.07.002.
- Arnold, J. (2004). *The big book on small groups* (2nd ed.). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Arnold, J. (1992). *The big book on small groups*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Baltazaar, A., Conopio, K., & Moreno, J. (2014). Protecting youth from health risk behaviours. *Journal of Adventist Education*, 76(2),11-16.
- Beagles, K. (2012). Growing disciples in community. *Christian Education Journal*, 9(1), 148-164.
- Donkor, K. (2013). *Discipleship: Towards a biblical approach*. A paper presented at the Adventist Office of Archives, Statistics and Research (ASTR) Summit on Nurture and Retention, Silver Springs, Maryland.
- Escandon, R., & Galvez, C. (2012). *Free from addictions: In the face of drugs, AIDS and other enemies of society*. Madrid, Spain: Editorial Safeliz.

- Fisher, J. B., & Titus, O. (December 2013/January 2014). Creating effective substance-use policies for Seventh-day Adventist campuses. *Journal of Adventist Education*, 76(2), 4-10.
- Griffin, V. (2014). *The mind and body connection-Part 1: Connection and community in Women's mental health training--Thinking well, living well*. Silver Spring, MD: Women's Ministries Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.
- Icenogle, G. W. (1994). *Biblical foundations for small group ministry: An integrational approach*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Jacobs, E. E., Masson, R. L., & Harvil, R. L. (2009). *Group counseling: Strategies and skills* (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.
- Mallison, J. (1996). *The small group leader: A manual to develop vital small groups*. Adelaide, Australia: Openbook Publishers.
- Melgosa, J. (2006). *Less stress!* Madrid, Spain: Editorial Safeliz.
- Melgosa, J. (2011). *Positive mind: A practical guide for any situation*. Madrid, Spain: Editorial Safeliz.
- Ogden, G. (2003). *Transforming discipleship: Making disciples a few at a time*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Oluikpe, I. M. (2013). Globalization and Christian spirituality: Implications for Adventist higher education institutions. *International Forum*, 16(2), 5-21.
- Pacific Northwest Foundation. (n.d.). *Definitions of health/wellness*. Retrieved from www.pnf.org/Definitions_of_Health_C.pdf
- Park, J. H. (2013). *Conversion, community and caregenuity*. A paper presented at the Adventist Office of Archives, Statistics and Research (ASTR) Summit on Nurture and Retention, Silver Springs, Maryland.
- Randall, K. F. (2014). *Drug-endangered children: Risk factors & neuropsychological and psychosocial development*. A paper presented at the 2nd Global Conference on Health and Lifestyle held in July 7-12, 2014, Geneva, Switzerland.
- Rasi, H., Muganda, B., Garcia-Marenko, A., Flowers, R., Handysides, A., Hopkins, G., Kuntaraf, K., (eds.) (2014). *Youth alive participant manual*. Berrien Springs, MI: Institute for the Prevention of Addictions & Silver Spring, MD: General Conference Health, Youth Education and Family Ministries Departments.
- Robert, D. L. (2007). *The great commission in an age of globalization*. Retrieved from www.bostontheological.org/assets/files/01_roberts.pdf

- Spangler, A., & Tverberg, L. (2009). *Walking in the steps of Rabbi Jesus: How the Jewishness of Jesus can transform your faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Tiplady, R. (2003). Introduction. In R. Tiplady (Ed.), *One world or many: The impact of globalization on mission* (pp. 1-9). Pasadena, CA: William Carey.
- Valerio, R. (2003). Globalization and economics: A world gone bananas. In R. Tiplady (Ed.), *One world or many: The impact of globalization on mission* (pp. 13-32). Pasadena, CA: William Carey.
- Vanderwaal, C. J., Mayer, A. R., Cooper K., & Racovita-Szilagyi, L. (December 2013/January 2014). Balancing justice and mercy: Redemptive ways of dealing with adolescent substance use. *Journal of Adventist Education*, 76(2), 40-47. Retrieved from <http://circle.adventist.org/files/jae/en/jae201376024008.pdf>
- Wa-Mbaleka, S. (2013). Philosophy of Adventist education in time of war: The case of Congo. *Journal of AIAS African Theological Association*, 4, 5-15.
- Warren, R. (2002). *The purpose-driven life: What on earth am I here for?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Young, K. S. (1999). Internet addictions: Symptoms, evaluation and treatment. In L. VandeCreek, & T. L. Jackson (Eds.). *Innovations in clinical practice* (Vol. 17). Sarasota, FL: Professional Resource Press. Retrieved from www.netaddiction.fusionxhost.com/articles/symptoms.pdf
- Young, K. S. (1996). Psychology of computer use: XL. Addictive use of the internet: A case that breaks the stereotype. *Psychological Reports*, 79, 899-902. Retrieved from www.netaddiction.com/articles/stereotype.pdf

Ikechukwu Michael Oluikpe, PhD
Lecturer, Theology Department,
School of Theology and Religious Studies
Bugema University, Kampala, Uganda
mikechukwu@gmail.com