

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THEOLOGY

*Factors Inhibiting Numerical Growth of Gisenyi
Nazarene Church in Rwanda from 1998-2006*

BY
JEAN BOSCO NTAKIRUTIMANA

*A Thesis Submitted To The Graduate School in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in Missions*

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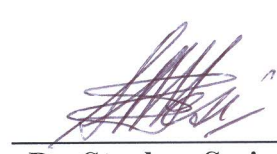
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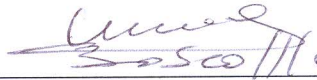
Student's Declaration

**FACTORS INHIBITING NUMERICAL GROWTH OF GISENYI
NAZARENE CHURCH IN RWANDA FROM 1998-2006**

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other College or University for academic credit.

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners.

(Signed)



Jean Bosco Ntakirutimana

July, 2008

ABSTRACT

The study stemmed from the need to comprehend the factors that have inhibited quantitative church growth at Gisenyi Nazarene Church (GNC) regardless of its location in a densely populated area in Rwanda. It became noticeable that the results of such an undertaking would provide both theoretical and practical podium for the development of sound mission strategies that would cause the church to move forward towards God's intention for it.

There are plentiful literature that covers church augmentation phenomenon and principles relevant to the biblical and practical ways that deal with churches. However, recent African scholarships have paid little attention to the church growth phenomenon irrespective of augmenting challenges that several churches are experiencing particularly in fast growing cities in Africa.

The 48 participants interviewed in the study were drawn from the GNC and other churches where former members of GNC fellowship on Sunday. The findings of the study have shown that the GNC was not quantitatively on the increase as the church expected because of the problems related to lack of commitment by church leaders especially in the area of evangelism.

It was concluded that GNC was not mounting quantitatively. This conclusion tiled way for recommendations that appeal to the need for church leadership to come up with programs that will promote togetherness and team work in the church for effective communication and common vision.

To

My late father R v Andr  Samvura and my mother Eleanie Uzamukunda, R v Simon Pi re Rwaramba, Rev John David Hicks, R v Ananie Bagaragaza and Jacqueline Wattimah.

My dear brothers and sisters:

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- Jacqueline Ishimwe
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Church growth perception has increasingly turned out to be the most vibrant issue that has gained particular concentration among scientists and leading evangelical scholars. This has led to the coming out of numerous schools of thought and the enlargement of conflicting church growth theories. For example, the Church Growth Movement led by Donald McGavran at Fuller Theological Seminary perceives the growth as identical to “quantitative church growth” implying the actual membership increase and the number of new churches planted (Baumgartner 1988, 8). This theory rose intense dissatisfactions chiefly from the proponents of holistic church growth. For them, holistic growth includes not only quantitative growth, but also growth in understanding God’s purposes and contemporary world, in societal service, liberating ministry and growth in structure and internal relationship ‘organic growth’ (Costas 1983, 95-107). These two theories have globally spread and significantly dominated theological world in particular mission strategists.

Nevertheless, the impressive increase in number of the converts and churches in Africa, Gisenyi Nazarene Church (GNC) inclusive, has not been recognized by leading missiologists and theologians as sound growing churches. As one scholar states, “the impressive statistical growth of the Christian population in Africa seems to have effect on African societies... African Christianity must be about more than numbers” (Tienou 2001, 156).

Problem Statement

Despite the fact that Gisenyi Nazarene Church emphasizes on church growth to its members, the church does not seem to grow numerically. Therefore, the problem that was addressed in this research was to find out the factors that inhibited her numerical growth from 1998 to 2006.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to discover and understand the factors that inhibited numerical growth of Gisenyi Nazarene Church from 1998 to 2006 and to propose possible solutions.

Significance of the Study

There has been no research aiming at discovering the factors inhibiting numerical growth at GNC despite evangelistic programs to target the nearby community. The findings of this study will serve as a road map for GNC to understand priorities, principles and choices that need to be articulated. This will also provide a momentum to the current church members to appropriately apply their gifts for the advancement of the kingdom of God in their community. Besides, other churches that are experiencing problems related to numerical church growth will benefit from these findings in various ways. This may compose a resource material for missionaries who seek to stimulate participation in missionary work among church members.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used in this study:

1. What were the factors that inhibited growth of GNC from 1998 to 2006?
2. What were the factors that prevented church membership retention at GNC from 1998 to 2006?
3. What were the causes of church membership exodus from GNC between 1998 and 2006?

Delimitations and Limitations

This study delimits itself to interviewing the current and former church members and leaders of GNC. For this reason, the findings applied unshakably to GNC context. The researcher regretted that he could not have adequate time and economic resources to permit for further studies mainly in churches and ministries where former members attended their worship. Similarly, findings at GNC were also limited by lack of church statistics and historical records.

Definitions of Terms

The following key terms are defined in this project.

1. **Numerical Growth:** This is the membership reproduction experienced by the church through the proclamation and living witness of the Gospel and in corporation of those who respond to the fellowship of the local congregation. This includes members who are gained through births and transfers. They should all be verified as having first acknowledged Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Asante 1996, 4).
2. **Active Membership:** These are individuals involved in meeting all financial obligations such as tithes and offerings. They must have acknowledged Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
3. **Church:** This refers to the gathering of believers in a local fellowship.
4. **Pastor:** A leader with responsibility for the local congregation and coordinates an assembly.
5. **Local Church:** Is a gathering of believers where an ordained Pastor is in charge.
6. **Gisenyi Region:** This would not be a study of churches in Gisenyi geographical set up but only Gisenyi Nazarene Church.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature reviewed in this section served as a light in relation to the topic of research and was available at the library of the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology. Part of the data was accessed from Internet and some from church record.

Substantive Literature

Church Membership

The plausible insight into the concept of church members can be borrowed from Horban who indiscriminately associates it with the local church members gathering and fellowship of believers in corporate worship (2001, 13). The underlying principle behind this approach stems from the fact that the local church belongs to God's concept, which is essential to the spread of the gospel as well as for fellowship and for the function of the gifts of the Spirit. It also includes the duty of teaching and disciplining those who become element of the body of Christ via repentance and faith in Christ. Members get to mature in their Christian faith and assume responsibilities in the church.

However, a number of Christians find it complicated to correlate with a church because they cannot afford to uphold the church requirement of leading a life of honesty at the expenses of their interests and current enjoyments. Life of honesty may include the willingness for Christians to take certain responsibilities such as faithful attendance, services to render, as well as certain financial obligation. The reception of those responsibilities is part of the costs Christians should invite as followers of

Christ. On the other hand, those who abstain themselves from such a compulsion to Christ are motivated by their own wishes. This could partially explain why those members frequently have a preference to move from one church to another. In the long run, this continuous movement of members may crystallize to a set of behavior that intertwines to dictate the pattern responsible for growth hindrances in a church.

The need for church membership to fill great needs in the lives of the people of God cannot be overemphasized. Horban states, “any one who tries to be a Christian alone gets to be a very strange person. Those who want freedom to go and give where and when they please become rootless and undisciplined” (2001, 31). If a believer is not attached to church membership the individual cannot only mature but also influence the world to love God and be part of His body. This kind of manner of a Christian being free to perform whatever he wants at his time denies a local church membership and effectiveness in the ministry, a factor which if lacked in the church, membership is likely to decline.

The Pastor and the Leadership Team

The book of Genesis reads that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of waters, and God said let us make a man in our image (Gen.1:2,26). This indicates that God’s three major tools are His Spirit, His Word, and His man. God did not bring order out of chaos without a man to maintain order. Adam was given authority over everything; he was a leader of all that God formed here on earth. Leadership has a big role to bring the church where it is supposed to be. Leadership is differently defined by various writers. Kirkpatrick in his book *Guidelines for Leadership* quotes Clinton who observes that “ A leader is a person with a God-given capacity and with a God-given responsibility to influence a specific group of God’s people toward God’s purposes for the group”(1999,23).

Therefore, leadership must be recognized as one of the road map toward church growth. The objectives of Christian leaders are to exercise leadership in order to influence the people of God toward the accomplishment of His plan for their lives. Followers are always to be considered as belong to God, they are never to be regarded as belonging to the leader. Clinton observes that:

Today there are more churches, more Christian organizations, and more missions organizations than ever before, all of which present a crying need for leadership. We need men and women whose lives imitate those people in the Bible who are worthy of the name 'leader.' The church worldwide is in need of committed group of disciples like those past leaders, who can lead the way by demonstrating through their lives a faith worth imitating. In order to imitate the faith of former leaders, we study their lives. We need to think back and remember. Are lesson learned by biblical and spiritual leaders who lived years ago applicable to us today? The answer to that question is a resounding yes. Why? Because Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. It is no accident that those words fall the admonition to 'think back' and 'imitate.' The same lesson He taught in the past apply to me today. The same Jesus Christ who enables those leaders to live a life of faith today. He is both the source of the reason for our study of leadership (1988, 39-40).

The spiritual leader is to set an example to the leadership team that he is working with. Therefore, the pastor is to authentically provide biblical ministry of proclaiming the good news, teaching, counseling and other task in relation to the pastoral work. The pastor is to be task oriented and seek to influence God's people to accomplish God's purposes for the group. However, He is also to be relations oriented, maintain friendly relations with followers and show interest in them as individuals. He must seek to be approachable and good at handling people. Wiseman observes that the idea of local church leadership is best clarified by understanding the task of the leaders in the church. The leaders provide constant study and explanation of biblical mission of the church making every ministry of the church to be evaluated by a clearly stated objective and provide daily efficient management of the church's organization property and finances (1979, 43). The sheep need a leader who knows where to go

and how to get there. Likewise, the Pastor is a shepherd that God has placed in charge of His sheep. Jesus referred to Himself as the good shepherd (John 10:11). At the end of the Gospel, He challenged Peter to feed His sheep (John 21: 15-17). This is a clear indication that the pastor works along with God. He is a co-worker with God. He facilitates the planting and watering of the church and God causes growth (1Cor. 3:16).

Jesus led with His life, not merely with his lips. He led with care and those He led, He faithfully fed. In fact, He states to the Father "... those thou gavest me I have kept and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition..." (John 17:12; KJV). I believe this is a subsequent divine pattern for leaders to follow. Dynamic church growth most often follows the hard work of God's co-laborers (1 Cor. 3:7-9). The efficiency of those who plant and water, the human leadership, immensely influences the yield (Roy 1998, 35). There are certain factors that cause people to go behind their leaders willingly and remain faithful to the church. These factors include honesty, competence and vision.

Honesty

Members will go after a leader who has gained their trust by indicating trustworthiness. If he fails to earn trust, they will leave the church. When Paul addressed leaders at Ephesus he brings attention to them to be watchful over themselves and over the flock which the Holy Spirit put in their care. Leaders contribute to the augmentation of the church because of unique duty to guard and guide the flock (1Tim. 3:5; 1Pet. 5:2) and apply discipline when required. Pointer states, pastors have a task to care for the weak and needy members of the fellowship. By doing this the members feel esteemed and want to remain in the church. This is not only retaining church members but also increases attendance (Pointer 1984, 121).

Members of the congregation will follow an honest pastor. The members will render respect a pastor whose walk and talk does not disagree. A pastor who preaches one thing and does the opposite will put off people from associating with him. McGavran and Arn are very informative when they said that, “indifference and sin stain congregations until these are cleared out of the way confessed and purged nothing much is going to happen in the way of growth” (1973, 8). Those who are leaders have to live above reproach if they want to be followed and identified with by the people they lead. People are not comfortable to attend a church whose pastor has a bad reputation.

Competence

When people realize that the pastor is competent, they put their trust in him. Barna asserted that “the pastor truly became a leader to people rather than a line worker, pastors who have confidence in themselves as leaders realized that their churches were flourishing” (1991, 145). Wagner adds, “if churches are going to maximize their growth potential, they need pastors who are strong leaders (1984, 73). A leader must carry out a variety of roles that go with his position. He must show abilities to enthuse and challenge people. The pastor who has the acquaintance and skills for ministry is more likely to influence church attendance and membership retention.

On the other hand, growth of a church will be held back if the pastor and his leadership team are not trained and limit people from exercising their gifts until they have met certain prescribed period of time. Green observes that some times growth is not realized in some area because we forbid people to exercise any leadership until they have been with us for a prescribed period. It is worth remembering that some

young professional people may only stay in an area for a limited time, and if every church they join refuses their gifts they may well give up in frustration (1972, 149).

Leaders are to involve members of the church to take part in what the Lord is doing. Therefore, church leaders are to apply the leadership with wisdom and let the Holy Spirit use them to sensitize members to be practically involved in the ministry.

Vision

A pastor of a congregation must be in front line to promote the highway plan for church growth. However, some people within the church may be against the growth but despite the challenges a visionary leader should not worry even if Satan brings resistance. Miller states, pastor's leadership is essential for the church to carry out its priorities. He leads the team as he shares his vision for the work of the church. The teams; support for pastor's leadership and vision is indispensable when it comes to their implementation in the ministry (1998, 10).

In addition, Roy writes Just as Bible promises tough times, it also promises God will be present when we need further strength and motivation. Pastor's and congregation enthusiasm is desirable because it becomes duty-bound and in safekeeping the needs of new comers. This causes membership to augment and attendance to grow in the church. If a pastor and members over look this principle then, they will loose new comers. New members will feel received and treated if there is a relationship between them and the pastor. This means that the pastor is to give surety that new members bond in this congregation by giving a personal care to them until they are situated to be held accountable. Paying them a home visit is much encouraged especially during their babyhood membership stage (1998, 34-35, 150).

Vision is the capability to see both needs and possibilities as Smith said, "with vision one perceives opportunities for growth while another, lacking vision, succumbs

to complacency or depression and gives up” (Smith 1984, 45). In reality, vision is the capacity to dream. A vision of the growth of the church will relate to the numerical increase of churches and members in churches. In keeping members in the church, a pastor must be a person of hope and vision. When people believe that a church has a future and vision they can associate with, they make that church their church (Roy 1998, 36). Salter adds that, vision based on integrity and creativity in meeting the needs of the church members would earn the pastor respect and people would want to believe and serve with him. A visionary pastor should lead the members and leaders to Christ and to work for the ministry and not to himself (1990, 80). Carter demonstrated a broad grasp when he said; church members too involved in the pastor’s private life risk disappointments. They find themselves hurt because they focus on the pastor more than they do on Christ. When pastor’s charisma leads people into a church its loss drives them away” (1998, 28).

A leadership that has captured the pastor’s vision is expected to give a church a shared vision. A church ought to have a convincing and incorporated vision for what God is calling the congregation to be and to do. This gives congregation a sense of hopefulness and look forward to which enhances attendance. Lacking hope, members become unconcerned and quit the church and seek whatever ministry that may be available somewhere else. According to Barna, vision for ministry comes from God. “Vision for ministry is a reflection of what God wants to accomplish to build His kingdom...while he allows us ample latitude and creativity to articulate, disseminate and implement the vision, make no mistake about it. Visionary leaders receive their vision for the ministry from God (1992, 30). Christ within the heart of the pastor helps him to see how the society around him can be transformed into a different society more pleasing and trust God to change it through His Word.

The Pastor and Church Growth

The church has a permission from God to persuade the globe for His glory. This signifies that she must play her religious duty not only in propagating the gospel but also to hearten church attendance where converts can congregate to be disciplined and taught to go out and win others to the faith and also bring them to the church. To integrate members, the church ought to appropriately structure itself around small homogenous units. Wagner defines homogeneous unit as a “group of people who consider each other to be one kind of people (1976, 134). When people have many areas of communal interest like culture, and where they intermingle freely they grow numerically and spiritually. Evangelical churches will augment their effectiveness if they will put more efforts, on homogeneous unit. According to McGavran the theory of homogenous unity is an imperative tool to be applied in contribution to the church growth. In fact, this is categorically affirmed by the worldwide research in the church growth. The church grows best when this theory is concerted on (1970, 198).

Interestingly, Padilla (1985, 166) observes that qualitative growth of churches is a genuine concern in the Christian mission. He goes on to argue that in the early church the message was proclaimed to all human races both Jews and Gentiles and the Church cross-culturally grew up and no record in the New Testament that indicates the growth taken from homogenous unit and each church was to show oneness of its members in spite of social and cultural differences.

McGravan does not hesitate to defend his position by pointing out that homogeneous unit is simply a section of society in which all members have some characteristics in common. The common characteristics might be political, linguistic, tribal or other. The homogeneous unity is an elastic concept, its meaning depending on the context in which it is used (1970, 95). Homogenous unit is a useful tool to

contribute for the growth of the church. In the book of Debose (chapter 4, 1978), he says that the most significant strategy for church growth is the spiritual principle. Without this one all other principles have no value. And the church should be seen as the work of God and healthy growth in the work of the Holy Spirit. However this will be behind a significant leadership. He then brings in an idea of love that he refers to as Agape love, the love of God. This is a great tool for the growth to take place either in rural or urban set up. Love is able to win its way to hearts and homes in providing a study that bears heavily on church growth principles.

The early church was distinct in respect to sharing and a sense of belonging. Acts 4:32 points out that no church member or group claimed than any of his possession was his own, but they shared everything they had. These days, several Christians may not freely say they prefer some churches to others though it is clear that most of them join or support a church that gives them a sense of belonging and one that is ready to minister to them when they are in need.

Holistic Ministry Concerns

Christians' involvement of meeting the social needs of the church members as well as the community where the church is situated may form a fundamental and crucial part of promoting church growth. Christianity falls short of her biblical charges to relieve suffering and improve life when she neglects or fails to meet social felt needs. The effort of church growth ought to recognize and turn out to be conscious of the church's call to serve and this call includes evangelism, social ministry and action. The ministry of the church embraces clothing and food supply, medical, educational assistance, financial support and many others.

In doing this, the church is to be careful not to allow either evangelism or social involvement to be totally eclipsed. The scholars in church growth observe that

the church ought to uphold a balance between evangelism and social priority. On the other hand, the church needs to dynamically take lead in social concerns and actions without losing her prophetic vision particularly in extreme cases that require more unique concentration (Smith 1984, 119-120; Vaughan 1983, 97).

Holistic ministry is the whole church without any discrimination is instrumental in the determining one's commitment to the church. Whenever a church reaches out to its members, it creates and leaves a lasting impression as Milne states,

How often have Christians discovered as if for the time, the reality of the love of their brethren when they have passed through a difficult time financially and proved in a practical way how real was love of their fellow believers. Such an experience of love in practice is something which is not readily forgotten, but which goes on enriching and deepening the relationships of God's people for years to come (1978, 90).

The church growth will be affected if it fails to meet the needs of its congregation members. Every service and activity ought to be considered as an opportunity to reach people with the love of Jesus.

The Structure of the Church

The church is obliged to win people to Christ incorporating them into fellowship through baptism, building them through discipleship and sending them out into the world to win others so that the procedure may continue. The best method of doing so is through evangelism. Autrey defines Evangelism in the following word: "Evangelism is outreach of the church by confrontation with the gospel of Christ, in an attempt to lead people to a personal commitment by faith and repentance in Christ as Savior and Lord (Autrey 1966, 13). Again Thompson observes, "having a minister of missions can move the church toward Acts 1:8" (Thompson 2001, 32). In this passage disciples were promised the Holy Spirit to bold them in making Christ known to others and they boldly preached Him. Winter motivates believers to do a job that is

crucial to the kingdom concerns and thereby glorify God, like working to eliminate malaria (2007, 4).

His observation must be accepted as a motivational force to indicate that the time has arrived when every church must distinguish between what is absolutely important and what is relatively important if we are to get the job done. Our time is short. We believe that Jesus is coming soon, but even if He doesn't, our time is short because this is a dying generation. We must bend every effort, and develop a program to reach it now.

For better functioning, church growth fathers suggest that the opening stages for her to grow, the church should structure herself around five groups of the laity for her to be maintained in a healthy manner as it numerically expands. McGavran and Arn (1973, 89-92) observe that these groups of laity class one are leaders who serve the existing church. They are Sunday school teachers, deacons, elders, choir members, ushers, ladies who arrange flowers, and those who phone or visit members who are sick. They carry on maintenance ministry of the church. The group two is volunteer workers who head out way from the Church. They actively reach out to others in community who need Christ. This simply points out that this group engages in any form of outreach to non-Christians. The group three is referred to as small assemblies of Christians very important part of the church growth. Normally, each church as it begins to grow is rather a small group. We tend to feel that the only way to start a church is to have a big, beautifully appointed building. The churches that meet in small unimpressive places are important, and their leaders are class three, we need thousands of them. The fourth group is the paid, the professional of large, well-established congregation. The fifth group is the missionaries sent out by the church for field ministry in other communities. All of these various leaders groups are of

great significance to be enthusiastically engaged in the ministry for growth to take place both spiritually and physically.

Schubert observes that the society is to be transformed if the lives of the members of a society are themselves transformed (Schubert 2004, 8). The structure of the church requires a healthier relationship between the pastor and the board of the church to ensure that conversion of the new members is well taken care of. The church exists to bear witness to that specific community. If there is no vital relationship between a church and its community, there is little possibility of any meaningful ministry to the unchurched people or anything more than internal church growth through the conversion of family members.

It is essential that a church seek to become compatible with its community and relate to it in a positive and supportive manner. If the church is to perform its mission adequately, it must be both indigenous to the community and appropriately identified with it. In order to have this realized, the church needs to have a degree of sameness in purpose, a mutuality of overall concerns, and an attitude of helpfulness in serving the best interest of the community. A church should consider itself as the major contributor to the wholesomeness of the community. The Church is to transform the society if she is transformed. She must show her compassion by reaching out to people, proclaiming its message by engaging her new members in the life and work of the ministry. In fact, McGavran and Arn comment that "if you want your church to grow, choose many leaders from your new converts" (1973, 77). This must never be ruled out if the church is longing for growth. New converts are the peak source of good leaders. They are to be given a role to play. In fact they are the best material to reach their friends because they have such close contact with them.

Summary

The literature presented a supportive account of the ways in which a church can experience growth by using biblical principles. Some of these principles were; a church grows when she has a leader with a vision and is able to mobilize, train and work with members as a team. A growth oriented congregation increases quantitatively when the church participates in social activities within and without the church.

Nevertheless, the researcher was unable to find many literatures that had profoundly dealt with the context in which he was interested in. The majority of the books addressed contexts outside Africa. He consequently finalized that a study that could offer a clear perspective of the situation of GNC was necessary. In order to have a handle on membership problem at the church a good research methodology was sought for in. This leads to the next chapter on methodology and procedures.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter gives the qualitative research paradigm as the most appropriate method and helpful that was used to collect data. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003, 198) state: According to Glesne and Peshkin for example, “the qualitative mode of inquiry includes: ethnography, case studies, educational critiques, feminine theory, participatory research or evaluation, among several others.” Therefore, this study is designed as a case study to investigate factors inhibiting numerical growth of Gisenyi Nazarene Church in Rwanda.

Creswell observes, “description involves a detailed rendering of information about people, places, or events in a setting. Researchers can generate codes for description” (Creswell 2003, 193). The descriptive analysis was put in place to analyze the data and report the findings. The reason is because the data was gathered and written in a descriptive manner hence allowing the researcher to clarify the nature of the problem in a comprehensive and detailed way.

Qualitative research refers to an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic, picture formed with words, reporting detailed views of respondents and conducted in a natural setting (Creswell 1998,1-2). Qualitative method was used to explore and to dig out the existing knowledge concerning factors inhibiting the numerical growth of the church for it captures the complexity of human situations.

In planning to carry on a case study, the certain things need to be done prior to venture into carrying on a research. These includes, stating a research problem, selecting a case to research on, deciding what part the researcher will play in the research, and gaining entrance to a case study place (Gall et al 1996, 551-556). The investigator performed the foundation work, as stated above, prior he went to the field for data collection. As Mugenda and Mugenda observed, “Qualitative data is collected depending on kind of questions asked,” and that “a researcher may include open ended items where respondents are given an opportunity to express their views, thus yielding qualitative data” (2003, 202). The interview Questions (Appendix A, B, C) were used for the interviews with the church leaders, church members as well as the former church members. As a result, the qualitative data was collected.

Entry Procedure

The researcher having known and interacted personally with GNC’s Pastor over a period of time, he did not need an official letter of introduction from Deputy Vice chancellor for Academic Affairs (DVCAA) at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) in order to introduce him to the congregation at GNC. The fact that the researcher serves within GNC, the connection with church members, leaders and Pastor facilitated the researcher to carry on the study.

Rationale for Choice of Research Paradigm

The rationale for using the qualitative design focused on the following reasons:

1. When the research topic needs to be explored; in this case, “by using the qualitative method, researchers are able to collect data and explain phenomena more deeply and exhaustively.”

2. The need to study existing tangible realities. Studying these realities raises questions that render predictions and controls outcomes. “We can however gain a deep understanding and hence be able to interpret these realities.”
3. The need to emphasize the researcher’s role as an active learner who seriously considers the emic view of respondents. “Qualitative researchers therefore believe that studying social systems and problems should include giving voice to those who are being studied as a way of empowering them” in order to communicate their ideas.
4. The necessitate to give respondents an opportunity to state their problems the way they understand them and participate in seeking solutions to those problems and effecting such solutions

Data Collection

There are various methods of collecting data. For this research, the researcher used interviews as a tool to collect data. Creswell (1998, 203) observes that most data come from interviews with participants. In this inquiry, Weiss (1992, 3) adds, tête-à-tête interview is effective in developing information. The researcher used open-ended, semi-structured questions and adjusted questions to participants where clarification was needed.

Population

Mugenda and Mugenda observe that a population is any group of individuals who have common characteristic that are of interest to the researcher. They refer to a population as “the aggregate of all that conforms to a given specification” (1999, 9). Thus, in this study that explores factors inhibiting numerical growth of GNC, the

researcher drew sample from accessible population. The population included members and leaders of GNC as well as the former members. They were interviewed to enable the researcher to come up with information that contributed to factors inhibiting numerical growth of GNC from 1998- 2006.

Sampling of Population

The study uses qualitative approach which permits a non-probability sample, focusing on in-depth information and not making interferences or generalization (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999, 50); hence, a helpful strategy for the topic under study. The participants were selected. Choosing participants depended on their informative ability. For the purpose of analysis, the researcher targeted 48 participants who were divided into three groups. The first group consisted of 10 church leaders chosen from various church departments. The second group included 25 GNC members who have been in the church for at least two years. Both groups were interviewed for their reasons of remaining in the church. The third group was composed of 13 former GNC attendants who had been in the church for more than 8 months. They were interviewed to establish their reasons for stopping their attendance at the church.

Observations

Spradley (1980, 59) observes that it is entirely possible to collect data by observation alone. The researcher has been with the denomination, Gisenyi Nazarene Church as a member for over seven years. He participates in church activities such as missions, preaching and performs other church works. In 2005, the researcher was privileged to carry out his internship in ministry for a period of six months to fulfill the requirements for his under graduate studies. Therefore, this provided an

opportunity for him to make various observations in church services and to interact with church members and leaders who assisted in data collection. This allowed the researcher to have first hand experience with the respondents, writing information as it occurred, noticed unusual aspects and explored any topic that the respondents were uncomfortable to discuss.

Data Analysis and Procedure

Mugenda and Mugenda asserts, in qualitative analysis “researcher obtains detailed information about the phenomenon being studied and then try to establish patterns, trends and relationships from the information gathered” (1999, 117). The analysis aims to bring order, structure and meaning to the mass of information collected. The gathering of the data and its analysis can be done at the same time in qualitative research.

Reliability and Validation

Best observes, validity and reliability are qualities that are essential to the effectiveness of any data collection (1981, 153). Therefore, a qualitative study where interviews are implemented, effectiveness is in establishing rapport so that important information needed is elicited. The reliability and validity of interview questions in this research were examined and handled to at least two research experts in church growth and missiological studies.

This assisted the researcher to make necessary corrections after the interview questions were tested. Having been carefully constructed, it was necessary for the researcher to pre-test them for accurateness which was carried on a small sample of respondents as a preparatory exercise to the actual research project.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to investigate, analyze and describe the several factors inhibiting numerical growth in Gisenyi Nazarene Church (GNC), with the objective of coming up with biblical recommendations to enhance sustainable growth. By means of open-ended and semi structure questions and oral interview the researcher was able to get hold of relevant data. The analyzed and discussed findings are reported in this study.

Data Analysis

The questionnaires were administered to 48 participants in order to investigate the factors inhibiting numerical growth of Gisenyi Nazarene Church. The participants were chosen among church leaders, church members and former church members in order to pile up data, which could be used for comparison purposes.

Table 1. Interview participants

Different Categories interviewed	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Church leaders	10	20.8	20.8	20.8
Church members	25	52.1	52.1	72.9
Former church members	13	27.1	27.1	100.0
Total	48	100.0	100.0	100.0

Various factors were recognized as possible factors responsible for the instability of church growth at GNC. To investigate these factors, the researcher posited three following research questions as follows:

1. What were the factors that inhibited growth of GNC from 1998 to 2006?
2. What were the factors that prevented church membership retention at GNC from 1998 to 2006?
3. What were the causes of church membership exodus from GNC between 1998 and 2006?

Findings

The findings from frequency tables have demonstrated that 7 out of 10 church leaders have been members with Gisenyi Nazarene Church (GNC) in the past 5 to 8 years. But only 3 of them have been members for the past 2 to 4 years of church attendance as tabulated in the table 2 below: -

Table 2. Church leaders' duration in GNC in years

Church leaders	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Duration				
2years	1	10	10	10
4years	2	20	20	30
5years	3	30	30	60
8years	4	40	40	100
Total	10			

Church Leaders

Challenges

5 out of 10 selected church leaders have revealed that major challenge being faced in GNC has been the lack of commitment to church work. They have also pointed out other challenges such as poor administration and disunity in the church. On the other hand, many of them have not considered financial constraints as one of the key challenges as demonstrated in table 3 and figure 1.

Table 3. Challenges the church leaders face at GNC

Church leaders interviewed	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Lack of commitment in church work	5	50	50	50
Poor administration	2	20	20	70
Division in the church	2	20	20	90
Financial constraints	1	10	10	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	100.0

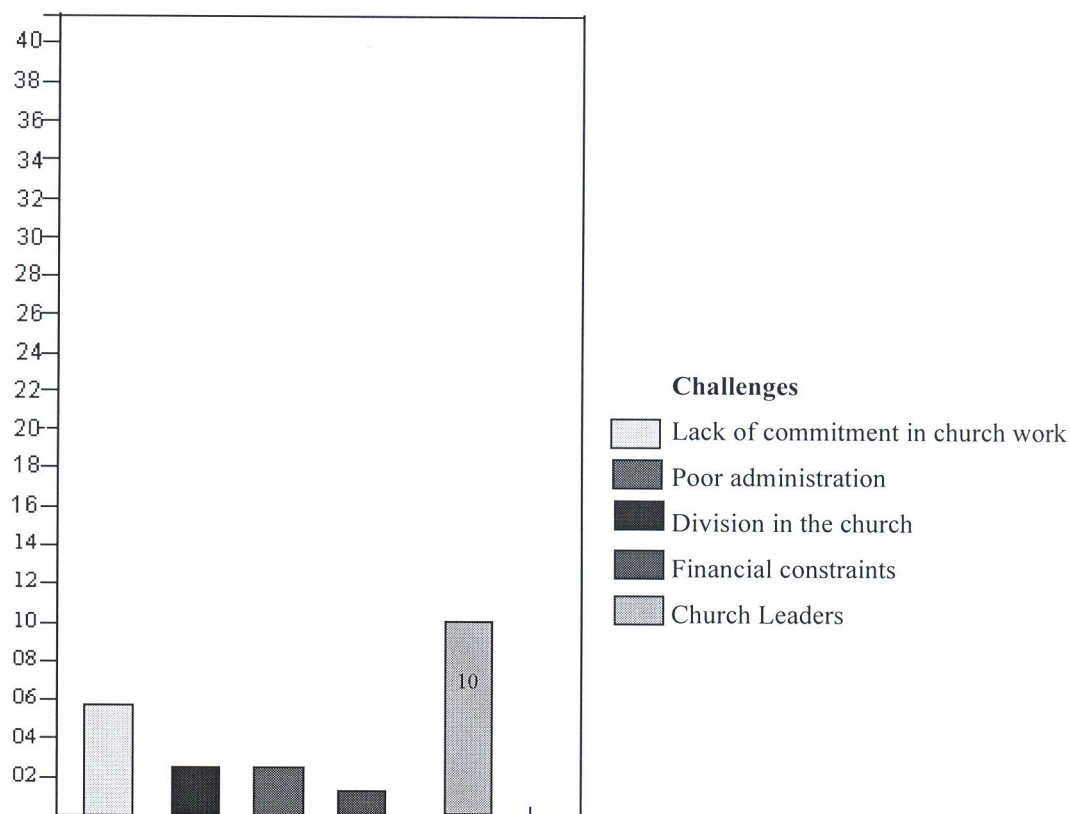


Fig. 1 Challenges the church leaders face at GNC

Coping Machinery

Several ways have been put in place to deal with the above stated challenges. The study has discovered that church leaders are more familiar with self-motivation and prayer than any other coping machinery. Coping machinery such as training worship team members, the recruitment of church members for service, tithing and offering are spelt out in table 4 and figure 2.

Table 4. Coping machinery adopted by GNC leaders

Church leaders interviewed	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Self motivation	5	50	50	50
Prayer	3	30	30	80
Recruiting church members for the service	1	10	10	90
Tithing and offering	1	10	10	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	100.0

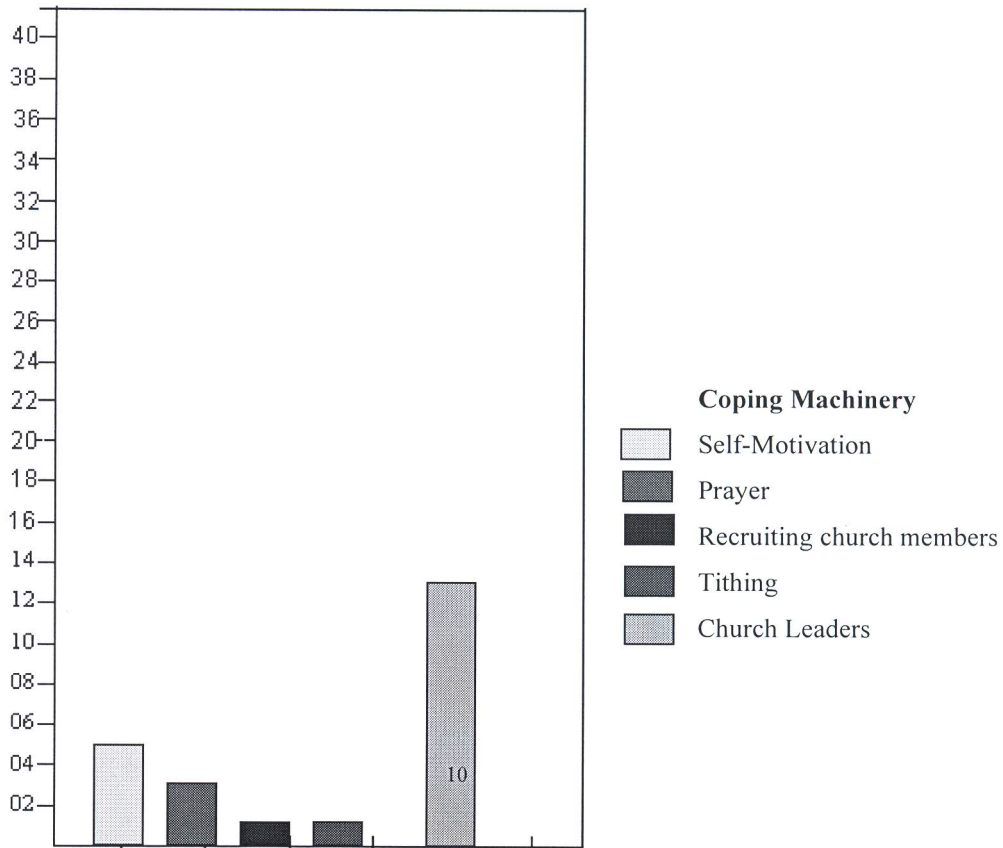


Fig. 2 Coping machinery adopted by GNC leaders

Factors Inhibiting Church Growth

The church leaders' participants have singled out many factors inhibiting numerical growth in GNC. The poor evangelistic methods, attention to peoples' needs, were along with other factors that caused inhibition of church growth (Table 5 and figure 3).

Table 5. Leaders opinion of hindrances to church growth

Church leaders interviewed	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Insufficiency of evangelism	6	60	60	60
Failure to attend to people's felt needs	4	40	40	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	100.0

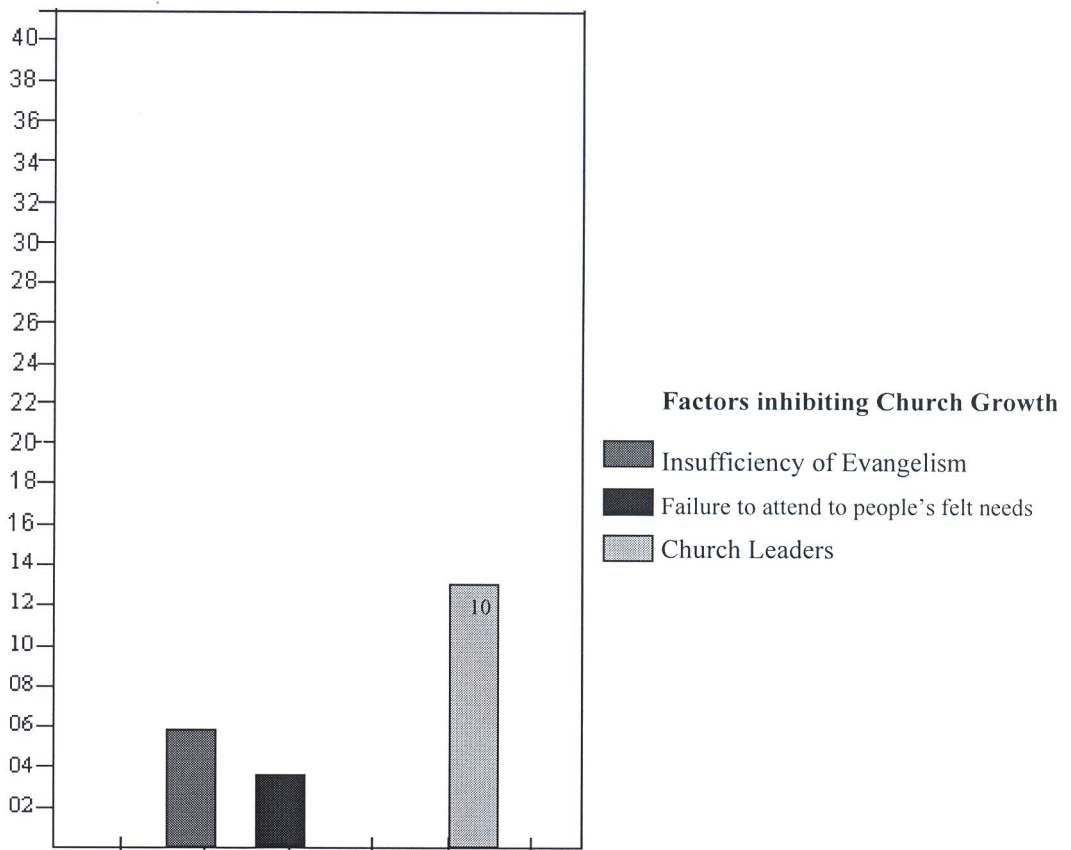


Fig.3. Leaders opinions of hindrances to church growth

Suggestions for Church Growth

Prayers and dependence on the Holy Spirit was central to church leaders' strategies for overcoming growth hindrances at GNC. The importance of the advertisement of the church was recommended for this specific need. Some voices were supportive of meeting social needs and improvement of church attractive programs (Table 6 and Figure 4).

Table 6. Suggestions offered by the church leaders for the growth of GNC

Church leaders interviewed	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Meeting social needs	3	30	30	30
Prayers and dependence on the Holy Spirit	5	50	50	80
Advertising the church	1	10	10	90
Church's attractive program	1	10	10	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	100.0

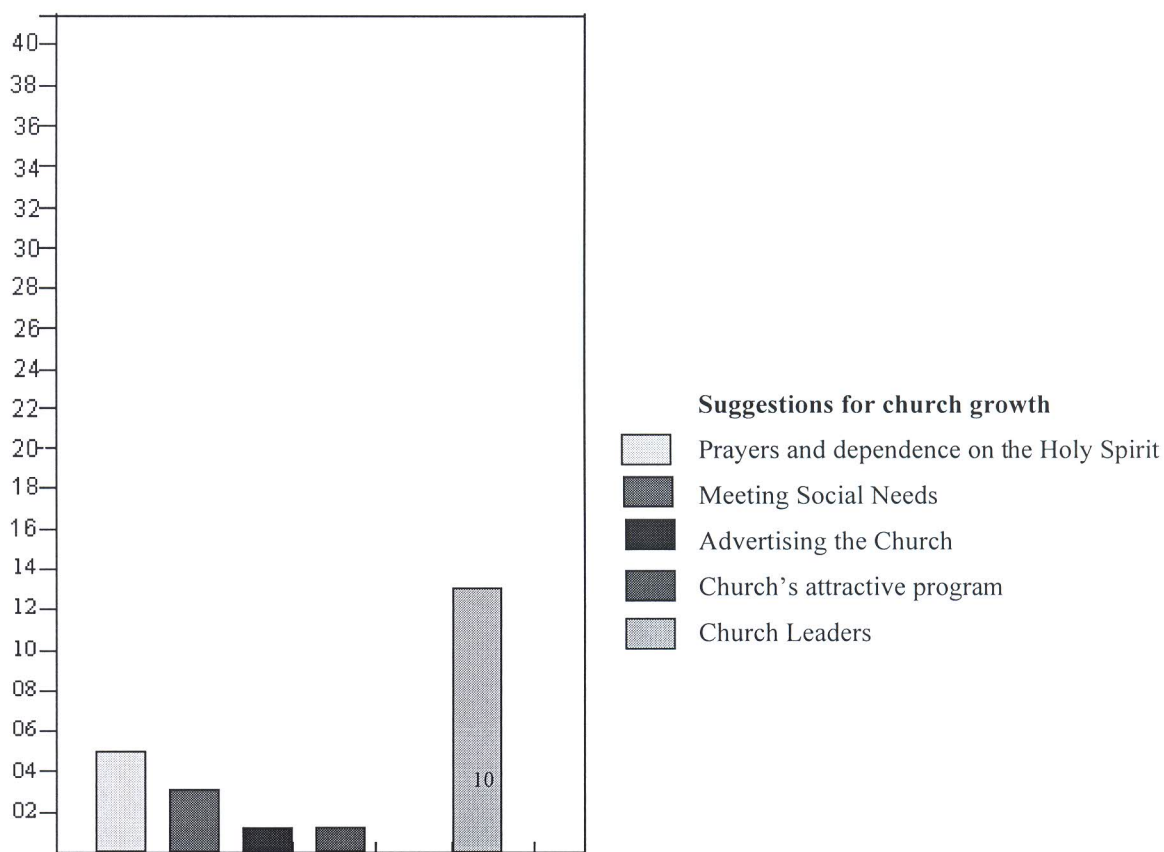


Fig.4. Suggestions offered by the church leaders for the growth of GNC

Conversion Experience

The findings have pointed out that the majority of church members were converts from Roman Catholic Church. They were followed by those from Baptist Church but the number of converts from Seventh Day Adventist Church was only two. However, eight of the twenty five interviewed were new converts who were not churched before. (Table 7 and Figure 5).

Table 7. Church members conversion experience

Church members interviewed	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Roman Catholic Church	10	40	40	40
Baptist Church	5	20	20	60
New Converts	8	32	32	92
Seventh Day Adventist Church	2	8	8	100.0
Total	25	100.0	100.0	100.0

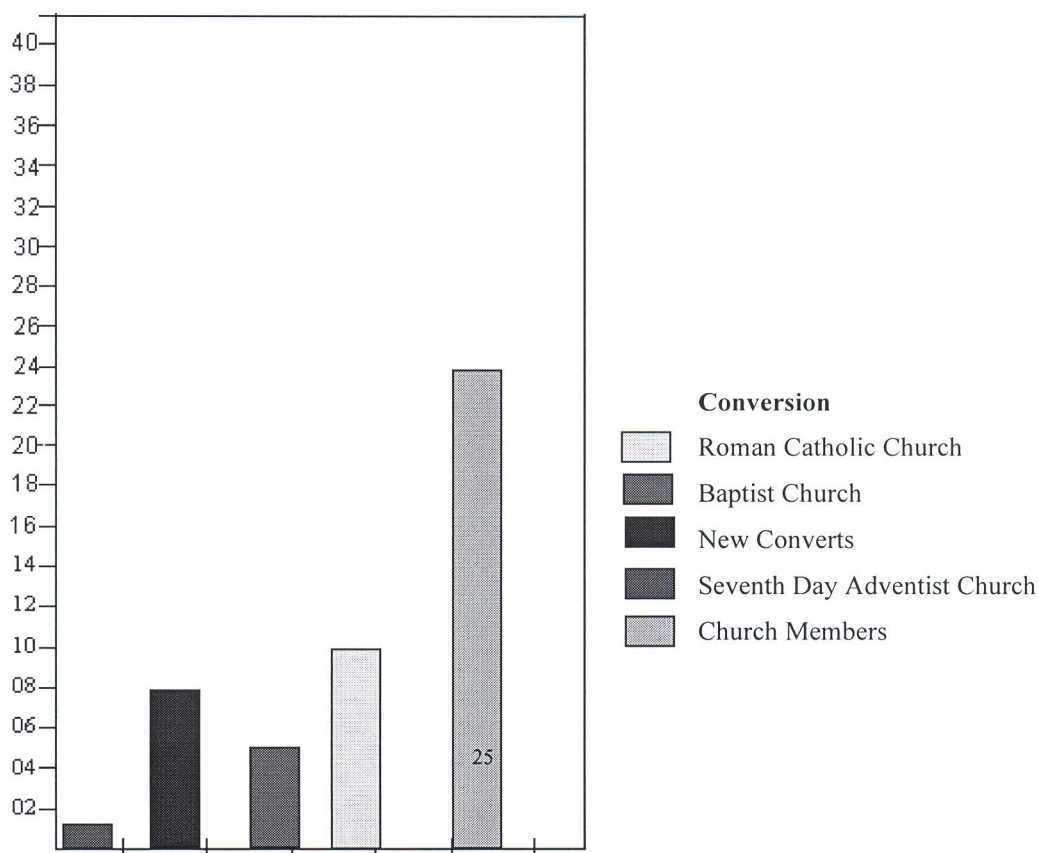


Fig.5. Church members conversion experience

Christian Growth Experience

Several members at Gisenyi Nazarene Church accredited discipleship and Bible study as key factors for Christian growth at personal level. Unfortunately, prayer was not given an adequate consideration among the respondents (Table 8 and Figure 6).

Table 8. Church members' growth experience at GNC

Church members interviewed	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Discipleship	8	32	32	32
Bible study	14	56	56	88
Prayer	3	12	12	100.0
Total	25	100.0	100.0	100.0

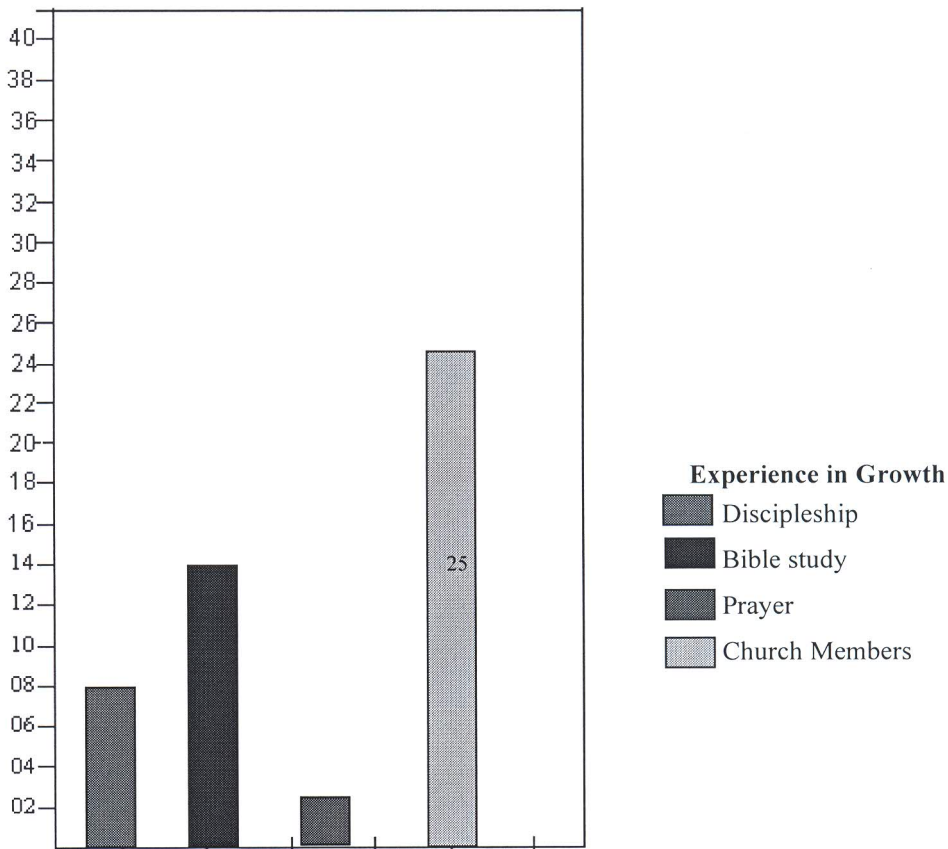


Fig.6. Church members' growth experience at GNC

Reasons for Remaining at GNC

The participants singled out that the major cause that strongly motivated them to remain at Gisenyi Nazarene Church was good preaching, loving and caring attitude in the Church (Table 9 and Figure7).

Table 9. Reasons church members worship at GNC

Church members interviewed	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Loving and caring church	9	36	36	36
Good preaching	16	64	64	100.0
Total	25	100.0	100.0	100.0

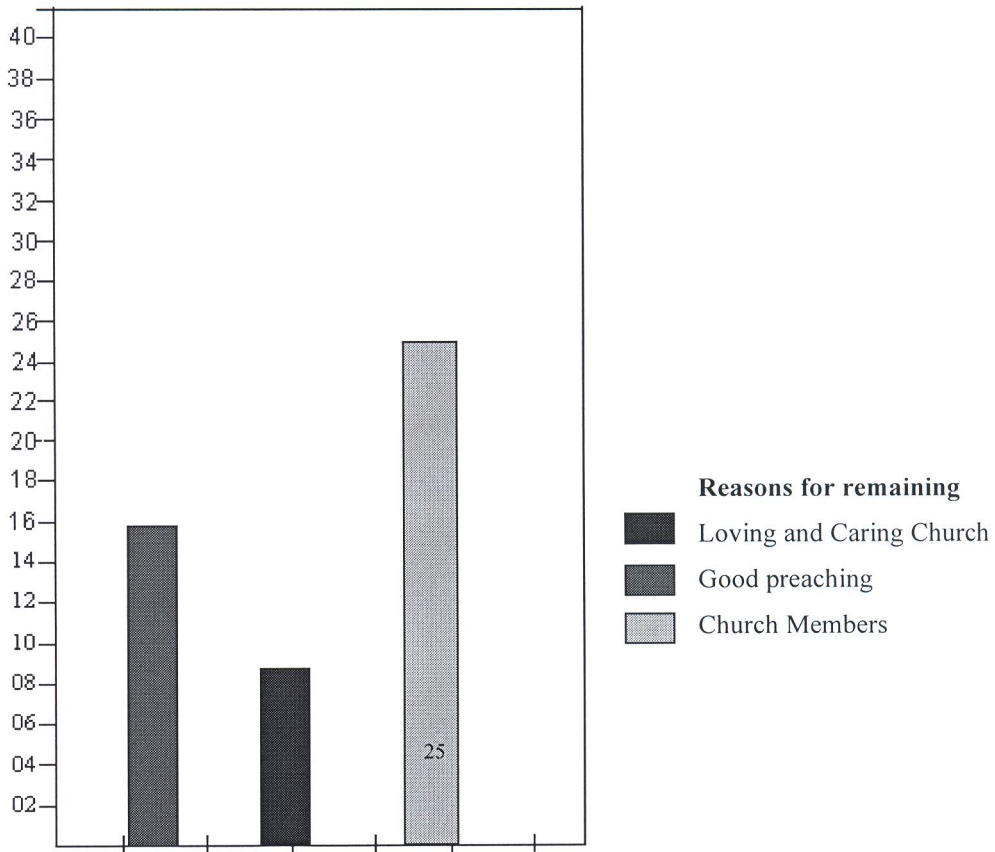


Fig.7. Reasons church members worship at GNC

Enhancement Areas for GNC

Members at Gisenyi Nazarene Church who participated in this study pointed out some of the areas where improvement is needed for the growth of the church. For example, much consideration was put on training more musicians, choir practice and improve instruments which are currently in use. (Table 10 and Figure 8). For the church to experience a rapid growth, the sufficient time is to be allocated to the above activities.

Table 10. Areas church members wished for improvement

Church members interviewed	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative Percent
Training more musicians	10	40	40	40
Choir practice	7	28	28	68
Instruments improvement	8	32	32	100.0
Total	25	100.0	100.0	100.0

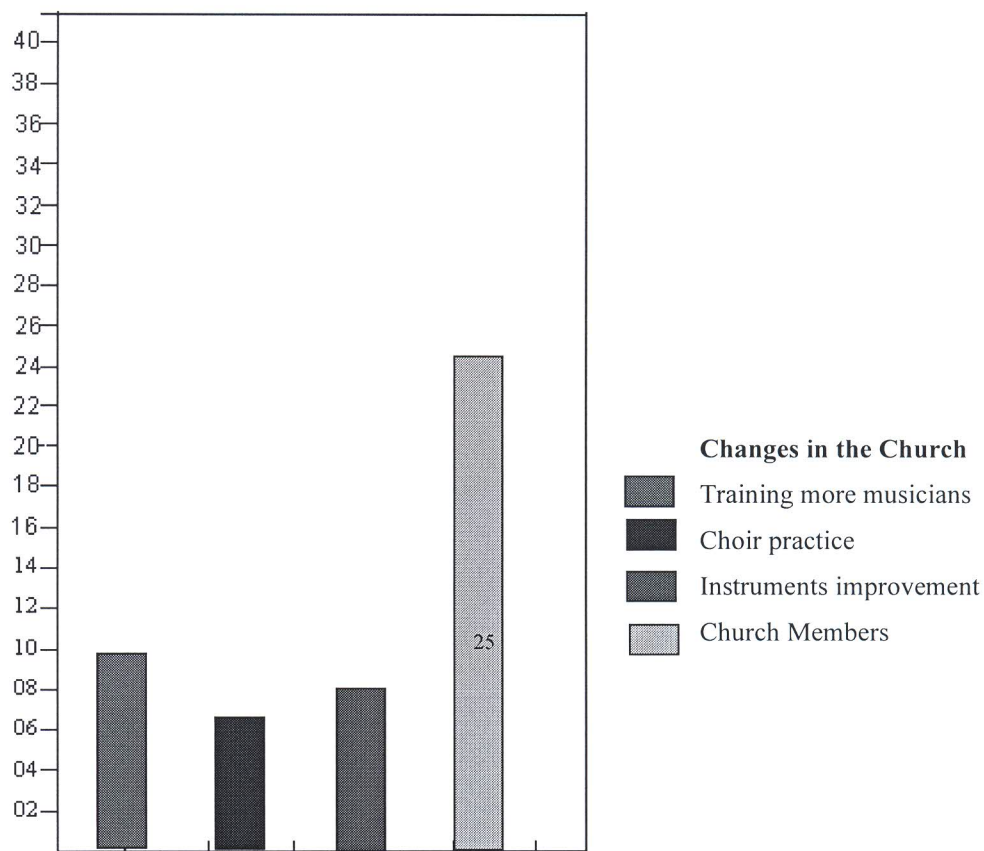


Fig.8. Areas church members wished for improvement

Former Church members Experience at GNC

Experience of Former Church Members at GNC

Most of former members of Gisenyi Nazarene Church interviewed, pointed out that prior joining their present churches, their experience was encouraging, loving and caring one (Table 11 and Figure 9). They also recognized the ministry support from pastor.

Table 11. Experience of former church members at GNC

Former Members interviewed	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Support from pastor	6	46.2	46.2	46.2
Loving and caring church	7	53.8	53.8	100.0
Total	13	100.0	100.0	

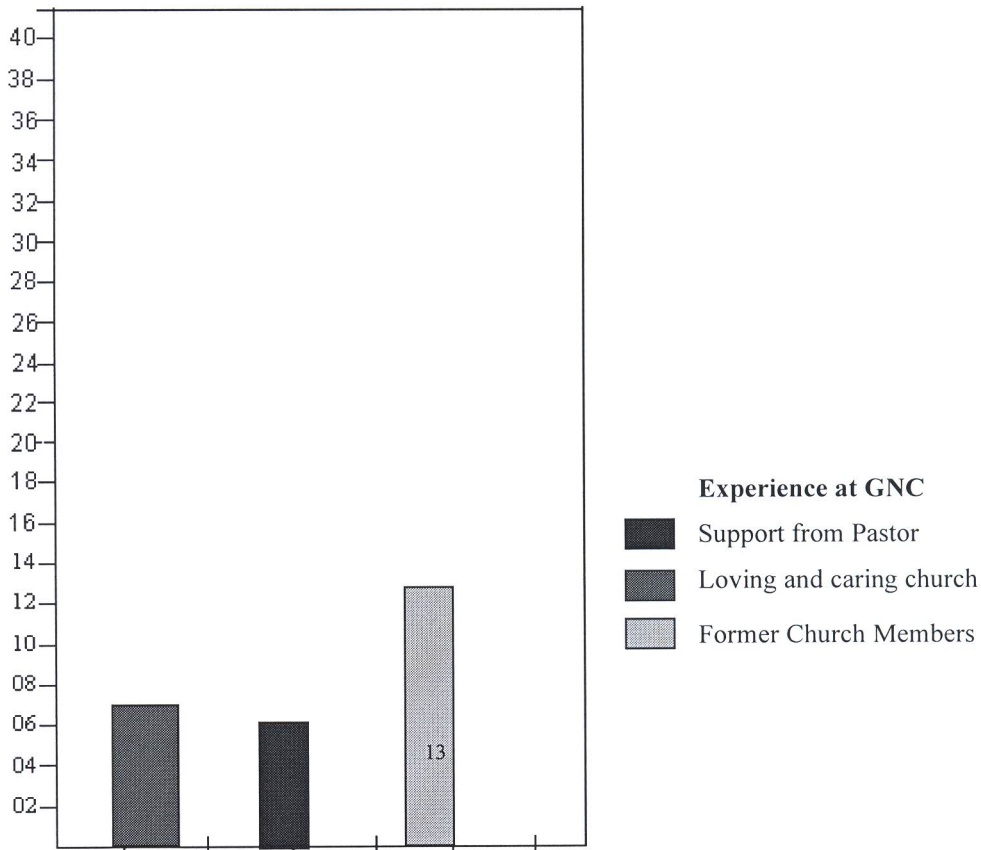


Fig.9. Experience of former church members at GNC

Reasons for Leaving GNC

The findings in (Table 12 and Figure10) from interviewees pointed out that former church members left because of less involvement in the program of the church. It was also unveiled that some left the church as a result of conflicting ministry vision. Nevertheless, others left the church since the leaders were arrogant with constant hurting speeches. Only three of the thirteen former members interviewed attributed their deserting to issues related to marriage. This affected ladies for they were the ones to leave the church and join their husbands' denominations

Table 12. Reasons for former church members to leave GNC

Former Members interviewed	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Incompatible visions	2	15.4	15.4	15.4
Inactive participation in the ministry	2	15.4	15.4	30.8
Marriage	3	23.1	23.1	53.9
Hurting members	6	46.2	46.2	100.0
Total	13	100.0	100.0	100.0

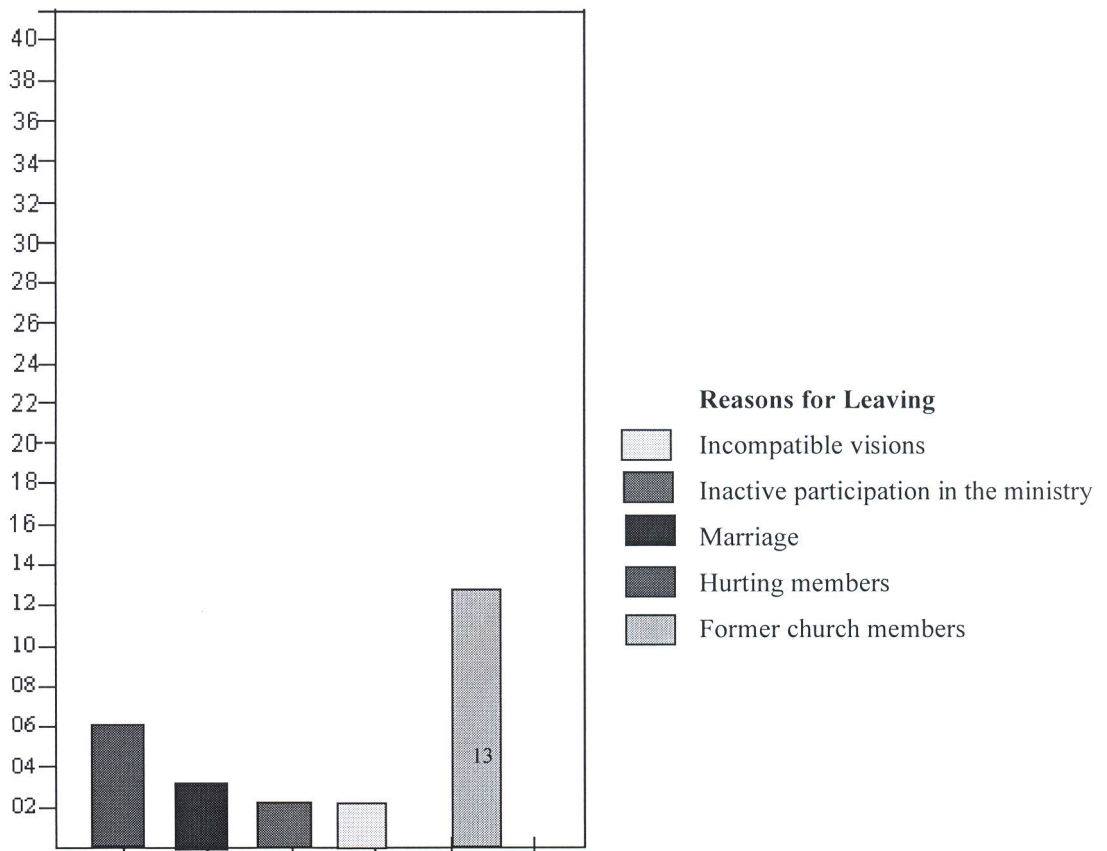


Fig. 10. Reasons for former church members to leave GNC

Favorite for Former Church Members

Table 13 and Figure 11 point out what former church members like most in their churches was participation in ministries that agree with their visions. Some of interviewees were enthusiastic with their current church kindheartedness.

Table 13. Reasons given out for GNC members like their current churches

Former Members interviewed	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Involvement in the ministry	4	30.8	30.8	30.8
Kindheartedness in the ministry	6	46.2	46.2	77
Good church leadership	3	23.1	23.1	100.0
Total	13	100.0	100.0	100.0

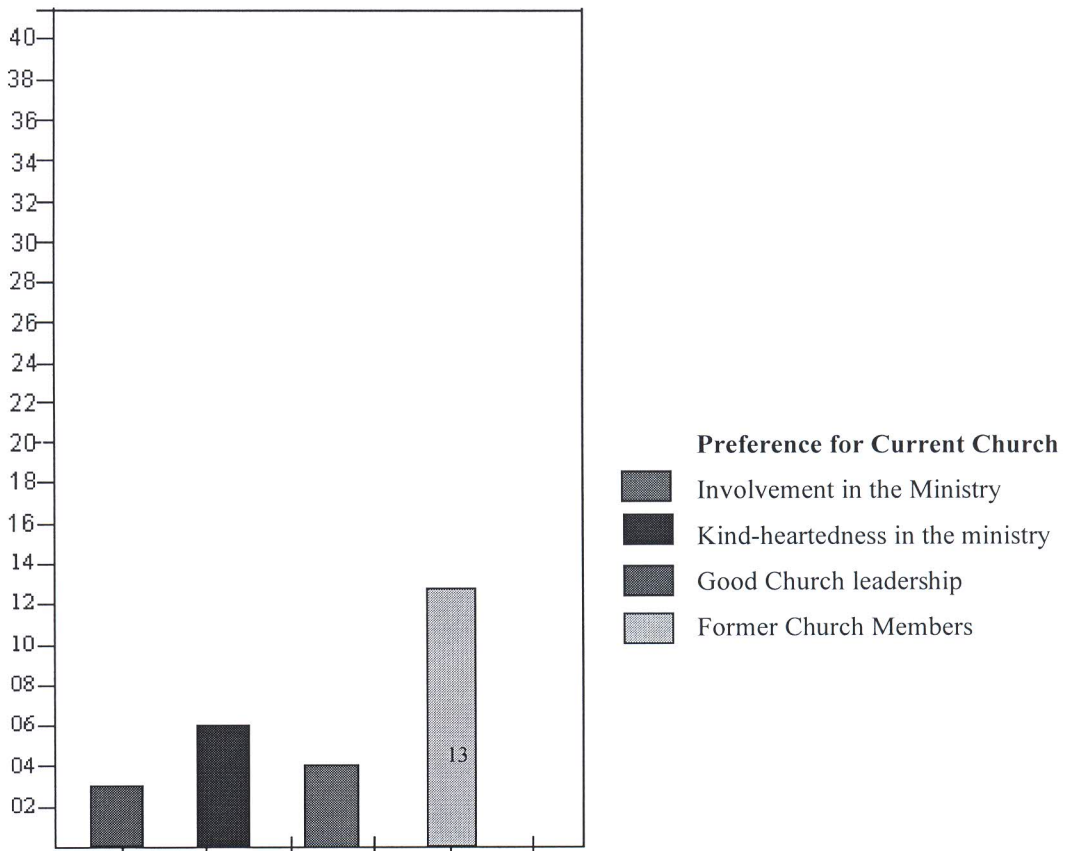


Fig.11. Reasons given out for GNC members like their current churches

Suggestions for Growth by Former Church Members

Nine out of thirteen former church members interviewed pointed out that Gisenyi Nazarene Church needs to engage in more prayers, follow-ups and strengthening discipleship in order to uphold her church members. However, four of

them categorically stated that members' active participation in the church should be implemented (Table 14 and Figure 12).

Table 14. Growth suggestions from former members of GNC

Former members interviewed	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
More prayers	3	23.1	23.1	23.1
Follow- ups	3	23.1	23.1	46.2
Strengthening Discipleship	3	23.1	23.1	69.3
Active participation in the ministry	4	46.2	46.2	100.0
Total	13	100.0	100.0	100.0

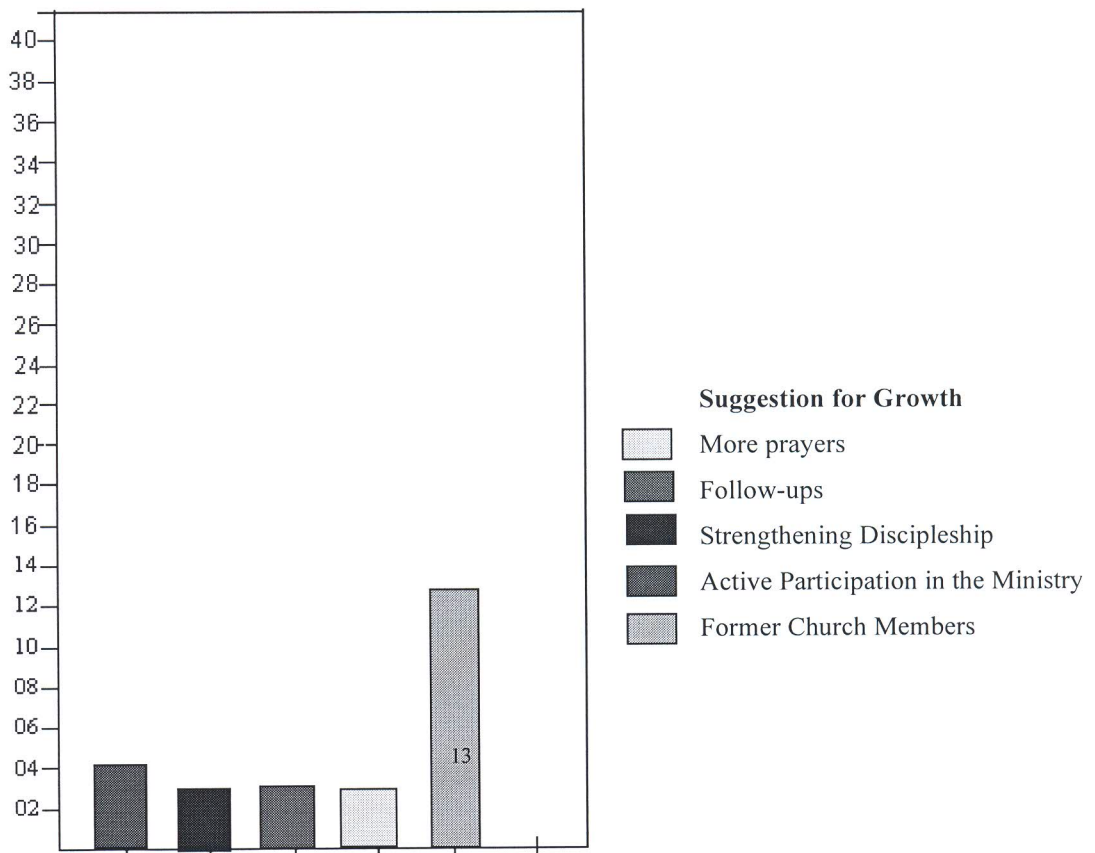


Fig.12. Growth suggestions from former members of GNC

Factors Affecting Church Membership at GNC

Conversation with church leaders at GNC revealed that GNC was growing qualitatively and quantitatively since its naissance in 1998. This church was very useful in encouraging and supporting people in various ways in regard to God's unfolding intentions for them (Field notes 2007). The findings of this research, has discovered various dynamics that have negatively influenced the initial growth attendance at GNC. Factors like lack of commitment in the church, poor of church administration and disunity in the church have been reported to inhibit growth at GNC.

Lack of Commitment in the Church

The findings have shown that many members are not actively involved in church activities at Gisenyi Nazarene Church. However, many of church leaders pointed out that only a small number of church members are committed to prayers, Bible study, and Sunday school curriculum. They also pointed that lateness in attending to church ministries is an aspect that needs to be dealt with by most of the people in the church.

The pastor of the church stated that some of the church members and leaders were not devoted in serving in the Lord with their tithes and offerings. This has affected the stipulation for Christian learning materials such as Christian literature especially in organizing seminars, erecting church structure where various programs can take place at the same time. One of the church leaders stated, "with fund we can be able to reach many people with God's Word and be in a position to assist those who are in physical needs. Having fund, we are able to have field set apart for the sports as we welcome young people to come and play. This could serve as an

opportunity to introduce them to Christ” (field notes). One of ex- church members pointed out that he had his child in Sunday school and he had to leave the church and go where his child will be taught together with the children of the same age and level of education. He added that the church had few Sunday school materials. So if the church is to grow the attention should be given to Sunday school children and engages many members in their diverse ministries. However, it takes huge financial commitment for a church like GNC to have materials and properties that can encourage various activities.

Church Leadership

The researcher’s result at GNC demonstrated that there was lack of purposeful, goal-directed, and achievement-oriented leadership. One of interviewee reflecting on the church leadership said:

As members of the church, we see most of the leadership team to have run away from their responsibilities. They don’t know the significance of being a leader in church set up. They do not bother to visit members of the church. The degree of caring for one another in the church is very low (field notes 2007).

The above statement indicates that the presence of the pastor or other leader in the church serves as a motivator and adds strength to church business enterprise. In addition, Roy (1998, 34) observed that, “When people believe a church has a future and a vision they can identify with, they will make that church their church.” The church must look forward to offer hope to people who are searching for answers to their questions in life. Unless the church leadership addresses people’s needs church growth may not be realized.

The research has demonstrated that leadership takes a vital function in church growth. The Scripture instructs that Jesus Christ acts through people, particularly God’s obedience servants. The teachings of the New Testament narratives have revealed that Jesus was perfect model of leadership of people of His time. For Him,

leadership implied the godly manner of servanthood. Leaders and pastors as well are to be people who have vision and determination and realize God's intention toward church growth and commit themselves toward expansion of God's kingdom on the globe. Arn observes, in any local congregation that is growing, a significant degree of impetus is discernible within the spirit of its lay leadership (Arn 1979, 137). The leadership team is to influence the congregation to work toward God's purpose in becoming active stewards of Christ.

Furthermore, study on leadership abilities in the church pointed out that the act of guiding, stirring and influencing the church to carry out its responsibilities was one of the factors that inhibit the church growth. When the church members get discouraged they depart and those who remained in the church as members became diminutive in their personal involvement in the growth of Gisenyi Nazarene Church.

The result of the study pointed out that poor church leadership has not been a channeling a smooth and effective operation in the life of the church to augment quantitative church growth. Therefore, this was regarded as one of the factors that promote quantitative growth deficiency at GNC. The leadership of the church has not put in place ample concentration on identifying people's gifts and skills for diverse church assignments. Not everybody comprehends his assignment. Deprived coordination of actions could partly explain the incompetence of the ministry.

Division in the Church

The findings indicated that disunity in the church due to favoritism was another basis for lack of growth. One informant pointed out that emotional expression of some of the leaders within the church has highly contributed to the factors inhibiting membership growth. He adds that one leader once told a member, "if you want to leave the church you are free to do so, my family and I shall continue

serving God” (Field notes 2007). One person also added that leaders like to associate themselves with the people who are materially doing good. On the other hand, there was differing opinions in regard to lack of union in which others referred to as biasness. “I don’t see any discrimination in our current church leadership. If any one utters that there is nepotism then that personal is biased” (Field notes 2007). From researcher’s point view, in spite of the above factor that was pointed out by some church leaders an attempt to bear out the truth among other church leaders and members demonstrated that what other leaders perceived to be disunity could be personal differences with people in the church and not something to generalize and address it to most church members at Gisenyi Nazarene Church. Nevertheless, the pastor of the church alluded to this fact when he stated, “one among various challenges that I am encountering in this church is to make decisions toward related to solving conflicts.” The researcher as one of the member of the church doesn’t think that this factor has been there for lengthy to have caused the church not to experience numerical growth as it does not seem to be well presented among congregational members.

The staff members must work as a team to show others maturity as they realize their purpose for God at GNC. In this manner, the church needs to imitate Christ’s life while here on terrain. His life demonstrated that Christian’s ambition does not focus on self-satisfaction but rather focuses on advancing God’s kingdom interest.

Evangelism

For the effectiveness of the ministry, the church is to depend on God’s divine involvement. The method must be put in place to facilitate reaching the communities with the gospel and have them disciplined. Gisenyi Nazarene Church has a program put

in place for evangelism but many members are not actively involved in evangelism (field notes, 2007). This demonstrates the fact that most members of GNC are from other denominations such as Roman Catholic, Baptist and seventh Day Adventist Church. This may mean that a good number of the members of GNC were not renewed to Christ by means of evangelistic endeavor of the church. Mostly, members were gained by transfer. Transfer is important to God's kingdom, conversion must be given a more high-flying position in the church for it is by conversion growth that God's kingdom increases speedily (Smith 1984, 22). The church begins to turn down in membership if she rules out the evangelism pattern. Pawson observes, the church can be only God's tool if she evaluates and examines how she moves on in reaching the lost ones. The church is to have more evangelists to kindle the curiosity that can show the way to consecration and transport people to Christ (Pawson 1968, 70). The findings make the researcher to put forward that the growth at GNC has been affected by deficiency in developing evangelists and engaging the members of the church in winning the people to Christ that they come in touch with.

Wagner (1976, 75) asserts, "It is obvious that the one gift above all others necessary for church growth is the gift of evangelist." On the other hand, he augments that gift must be used along with others concurrently. This study reveals that the current GNC's members have been unproductive in influencing their friends and relatives to bring them into their church. If GNC had been vigorously caught up in evangelizing the present church growth would have increased quantitatively. It goes without saying that the combinations of evangelism with discipleship programs are central for church growth.

Retention and Membership of the Church at GNC

The data analysis segment has powerfully portrayed through the informants that their remaining at GNC is due to the love and care they obtain in the church. This had been a factor promoted fellowship among the present members. Good preaching was much emphasized and given great contemplation. Some of the church record for the past years was not available but the most of members have pointed out that there has been slow but firm growth the church gained about fifteen members in the last three years since 2004. The researcher as a participant member from 2004- 2006 deep-rooted the legitimacy for the fact that the church membership is improving.

The members interviewed affirmed that pastor's Christian character in exposing evil doings serve as motivating character for their stay in the church. One youth pointed out that when he misbehaved, the pastor continued to encourage as he prayed with him for his restoration (Field notes 2007). It can be noticed that when the pastor correctively relates to the members of the church, then it serves as a factor that causes members to remain in the fellowship. Furthermore, the church growth researches inform that for the people to actively remain in the church they must have trusted in their leader and among themselves. (Engstrom 1976, 19). When a congregation enjoys staying together as one family, its influence in the community will be highlighted. Offering true fellowship is one of ways to maintain members in the church.

Former Church Members and Desertion

Former church members uttered out various factors for leaving GNC and end up joining other denominations. Factors that were spelt out by respondents included inactive participation in the activities of the church, disagreeing of visions, marital

status, and deficiency of needed empowerment from church leadership. The church's hindrance of quantitative growth could be partially explained by not setting up a program to enable those who are willing to reach people of the other faith within the community. One family asserts:

My family and I made up our mind to leave the church (GNC) because we realized that we were inactive as far as the ministry is concerned. Our vision was to reach the community through gospel music performance in which nonbelievers are to be invited to attend and in return we pray with them. We had also talked with some of our extended family who had the same vision and accepted to join us in serving the Lord in that capacity. When we shared with church leaders about our vision for the ministry, there was no response, and the matter was even more complicated. With the passion that we had for the Lord we moved on to look for a church which had the same burden for winning the people to Christ through gospel music performance (Field notes 2007).

The respondents articulated their enthusiasm and satisfaction as a result of the testimony of the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in their practical life activities and in their various ministries. This could explain that the GNC misplaced a grand chance of cooperating with those visionary evangelists who could have taken part in training, challenging and stirring other Christians to seek the lost ones for Jesus Christ. The other reasons a former member gave was that of some of the leaders who are brutal in conversing with members. In addition, the other former members attributed their leaving to other churches to change of their marital status. The tradition in most of churches in Rwanda require that the wife is to relocate her membership to the husband's local church.

Summary of Findings

The findings can be summarized that an adequate leadership role has inhibited church growth at Gisenyi Nazarene Church. This stems from lack of commitment and obedience by the church to the Great commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, discipleship, concrete vision, and members' cooperation in the church. The activeness of members in the ministry has also been reduced to only a few individuals who are self-motivated to sacrifice their time to pray, study the Bible and make use of their spiritual gifts effectively.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Gisenyi Nazarene church cannot rule out the task given by God to prepare the members in making use of their gifts and talents useful in the church if she wants to witness both qualitative and quantitative growth taking place. There is a ray of hope for the church to grow. The fact that church leaders, members were supportive in the research findings was a clear clue of their eager desire to welcome changes in their ministry at Gisenyi Nazarene church. This section focuses on the conclusion as the product of findings and discussions of the study. These conclusions led to recommendations that embark upon the need for sound church augmentation at GNC, and the areas for further study.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that poor church administration and deficiency of commitment have been pointed out as the essential factors inhibited the increase of membership in GNC. This was irreconcilable to get along with the wish of the majority of those who wished to fellowship with the church.

Unshared ministerial vision among the leaders in the church, has resulted to unproductive missiological goals in which GNC encounters the challenges to efficiently communicate Christ to nonbelievers. Nonbelievers who have been graciously brought to the congregation cannot be encouraged. In reality, the greater part of congregation is made up of converts from other denominations.

The eagerness of members to participate in several activities within the church where their talents and gifts fall, have been affected by weak leadership. The ex-church members ascribed their departure from GNC to the other churches as an outcome of lack of effective outreach ministry that would provide for Christian adulthood through the programs of discipleship, visitation and receptivity to the felt needs of the new converts.

Suggestions for Membership Growth at GNC

Leadership team at Gisenyi Nazarene Church should be contextual, planners and life-time learners who delegate and empower the laity for mission. The pastor must empower the church to make ethical and moral decisions that will impact the community around the church and beyond.

People in the leadership of the church are to motivate members and encourage them to comprehend that their contribution is imperative in the church. This is a route to enthuse people to be loyal to the church work. This can be performed via recognition and encouragement.

Pastor will have to build up relationship and have time spent with experienced and successful ministers to share with him more insights as far as the church growth is concerned. He also needs to read books on the growth of the church so that he can receive direction and understanding that would help to enhance church membership attendance.

GNC can develop a program that promotes social activities. For example, Gospel music concert, volley ball, football and all sorts of fun activities to catch the

attention of both Christians and non-Christians to move toward one another. This can provide the ground to make Christ known to nonbelievers. The discipleship training is to focus on practical mission work by the entire church at least thrice a year.

As far as the relationship between new members and the church is concerned, the church is to hand over each new member into small group so that members can be accountable in contacting and supporting the new members. To make sure that new members are catered for, the pastor's role of giving special consideration to all new members is vital. The pastor is supposed to visit their homes during babyhood period of membership, and organizing program that will usher them into churches activities.

The church is to speed up the praying life to give an opportunity the power of the Holy Spirit to be actively involved in the church and in the world as well. "But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto me... (Acts 1:8; King James Version). By depending on the Holy Spirit, He will direct church's growth plan to be fruitful; and this will uphold both qualitative and quantitative growth in the church.

The church is supposed to seek on how to establish financial goals for economic empowerment via professional investment advisors. The church can be advised on how prudently use her financial resources to meet the felt needs of her members and build up the surrounding community. For instance the church can come up with projects that generate income such as farming, keeping animals, building institutions such as hospitals and schools among many others.

Recommendations for Further Research

The following recommendations were made for further research.

To begin with, the researcher suggests a study that can assess the quality of existing church program at Gisenyi Nazarene church and find out the level of participation in Christian education, adoration and stewardship.

Secondly, a multiple case study is greatly suggested to be carried on in order to understand the dynamics growth of other denominations especially those recently started in Gisenyi Region.

Thirdly, examination concerning the attitude of the surrounding neighborhood towards the Gisenyi Nazarene Church or the Church of Christ would be instructive in strategizing for missiological work.

In conclusion, the researcher recommends more studies in order to embark upon issues that challenge the entire denomination of International Church of the Nazarene.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDING QUESTIONS WITH CHURCH LEADERS

1. How long have you been in Gisenyi Nazarene Church and what is your leadership responsibility?
2. Are there some challenges are you facing in your leadership at GNC?
3. How are you coping up with the above challenges?
4. According to your survey, what do you think is inhibiting GNC from growing numerically?
5. What do you think should be done to improve numerical growth?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WITH CHURCH MEMBERS

1. Kindly share with me your conversion experience and how you have been growing in the faith?
2. What are the major reasons that have kept you in Gisenyi Nazarene Church (GNC)?
3. According to your observation, what do you think GNC needs to improve on to grow numerically?
4. What do you think you can do to enhance the growth of GNC?

APPENDIX C

GUIDING QUESTIONS WITH FORMER CHURCH MEMBERS

1. What was your experience while you were a member at GNC?
2. Why did you decide to leave the Gisenyi Nazarene Church?
3. What do you like in your current church that you did not find at GNC?
4. What suggestions can you offer for GNC to grow numerically?

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