

Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa

Here is the English version of the article “Petites communautés chrétiennes en Afrique de l’Est” that was translated into French in the November-December 2022 issue of the publication *Les Réseaux des Parvis* that you can find under “France” under “Europe:” [Catalogue \(smallchristiancommunities.org\)](http://smallchristiancommunities.org)

These two texts document the important development of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Eastern Africa (English speaking). The two authors are both members of the Eastern Africa Small Christian Community Training Team and regularly participate in international gatherings in which Parvis is associated. Alloys Nyakundi is a young Kenyan who introduces himself. Joseph Graham Healey is a missionary priest and specialist of SCCs as teacher, researcher and writer. He is also a specialist of communication with over 50 years of experience in Eastern Africa.

1. My name is Alloys Nyakundi, a graduate from Loyola University New Orleans, LA, USA where I got a Masters in Pastoral Studies with a focus on [Small Christian Communities](http://smallchristiancommunities.org) from the perspective of young adults because of my passion for leading and promoting Young Adults Small Christian Communities in nine countries of Eastern Africa under the AMECEA Pastoral Department. While doing my undergraduate studies at Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya, I gained insight into the needs of Young Adults through the Small Christian Communities for Young Adults that I facilitated at the Christ the Teacher Parish, Kenyatta University.

There was a disconnect between the elderly folks and the young people. At this point we realized the huge gap between young and elder Adults, and this was the genesis of the Online Young Adult Seekers Small Christian Communities Gatherings that comprise young people from the four continents.

During the 2021-2024 Synodal Process many people have been searching for ways to attract and involve Young Adult Catholics. In 2016 Father Febian Pikuti, the AMECEA Pastoral Coordinator, conducted a survey about where you find Catholic youth and young adults on Sunday morning in Nairobi, Kenya, the largest city in East Africa. The results: “You do not find them outside of the Catholic Church after mass. You find them on social media.” The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA)’s Research in the USA in 2020-2021 shows that 60% of Catholic Young Adults' Faith Community Activities are outside the parish, many on social media. This is confirmed by our research in Eastern Africa.

2. In Eastern Africa we feel that Small Christian Communities (SCCs) are a “New Way of Being/Becoming Church.” Here are some helpful “descriptions” gathered over the years:

- A SCC is a small group of around 10-15 people who meet weekly usually in their homes (but sometimes in a parish, a school or another institution) and/or online to reflect on the *Bible* especially the Gospel of the following Sunday, and connect it to their daily lives in Eastern Africa.
- A SCC is the church in the neighborhood in Eastern Africa where Christians share the same local situation with other neighbors not only during weekly meetings but on a day-to-day basis.

- A SCC is a caring, sharing, faith reflecting, praying and serving community in Eastern Africa in which ongoing Christian formation and practical pastoral and social outreach takes place.
- A SCC is a small group that focuses on Scripture, faith-sharing and prayer and service to the greater community in Eastern Africa.
- A SCC is a small group of people who come together in the most basic and personal unit of the parish in Eastern Africa. The community gathers in the available homes of its members to discuss their lives in the light of the gospel and share their Christian faith through prayer and service to others.
- A SCC is a small community that engages in evangelizing its members so that subsequently they can bring the Good News to others; prays and listens to God's Word; encourages its members themselves to take on responsibility, learns to live an ecclesial life; and reflects on different human problems in the light of the Gospel.

Presently we have 190,000 SCCs in Eastern Africa (the nine countries of the AMECEA Region).

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