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(54) **SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR USER MANAGEMENT AND RETENTION AND MISSIONARY WORK MANAGEMENT IN AN ECCLESIASTICAL COMMUNITY CONTEXT**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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A computer implemented user management and retention method and system is designed to provide a multi-level hierarchical organizational model controlling access to user information, user types, user grouping, user status and associated reports in an ecclesiastical community context. This categorization aims to provide the relevant information, resources, access rights and administrative privileges to the respective users to facilitate a retention system for parishioners and supporters through sponsoring by missionary couples and ecclesiastical groups.

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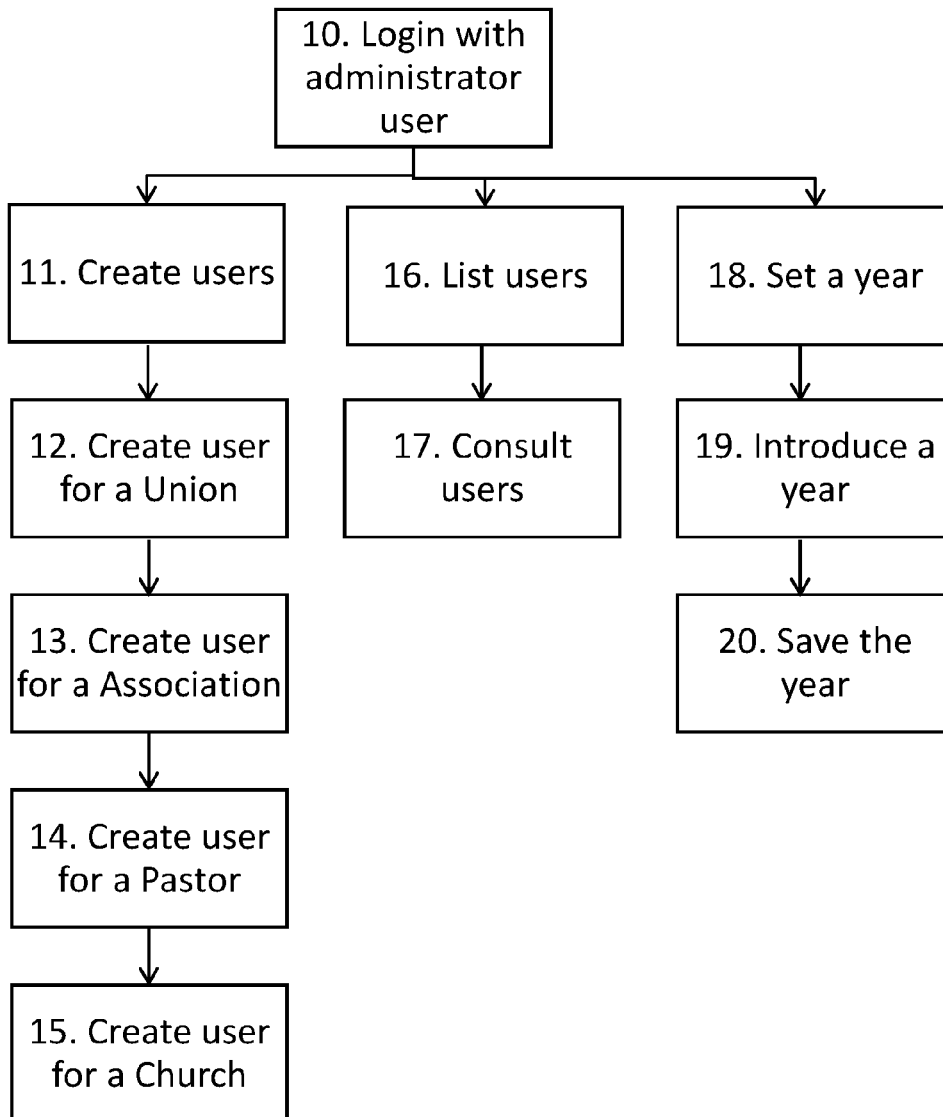


FIG. 1

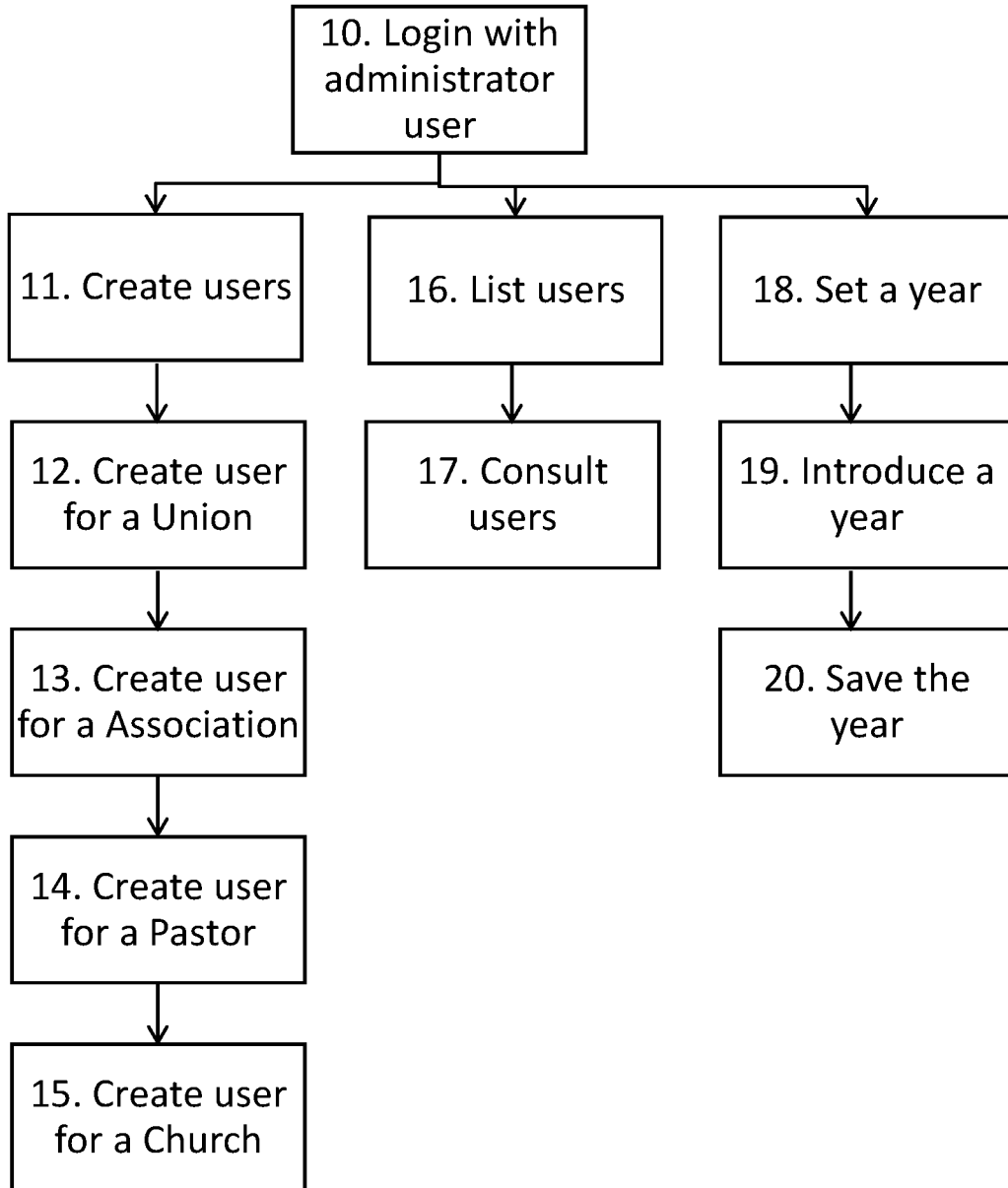


FIG. 2

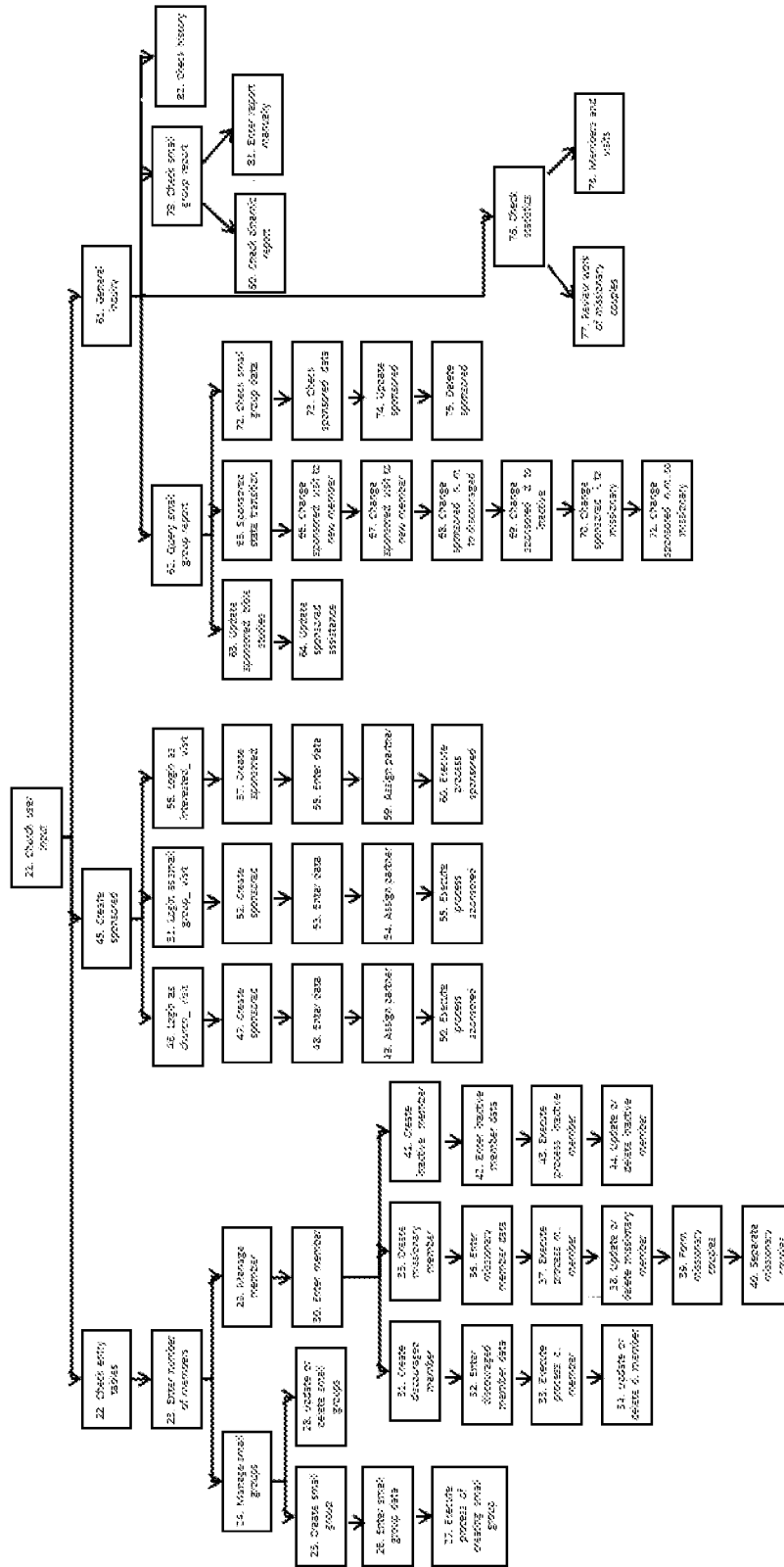


FIG. 3

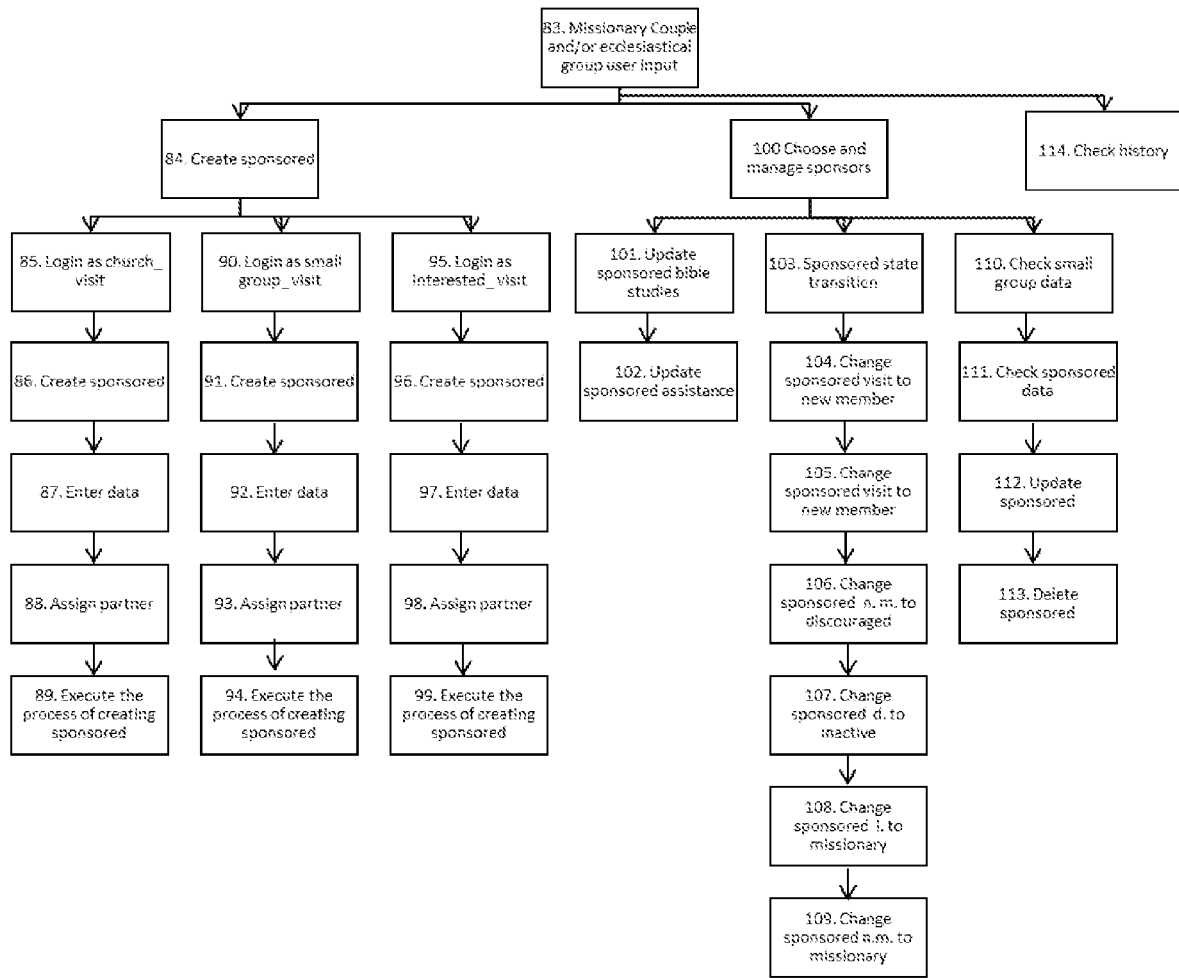


FIG. 4

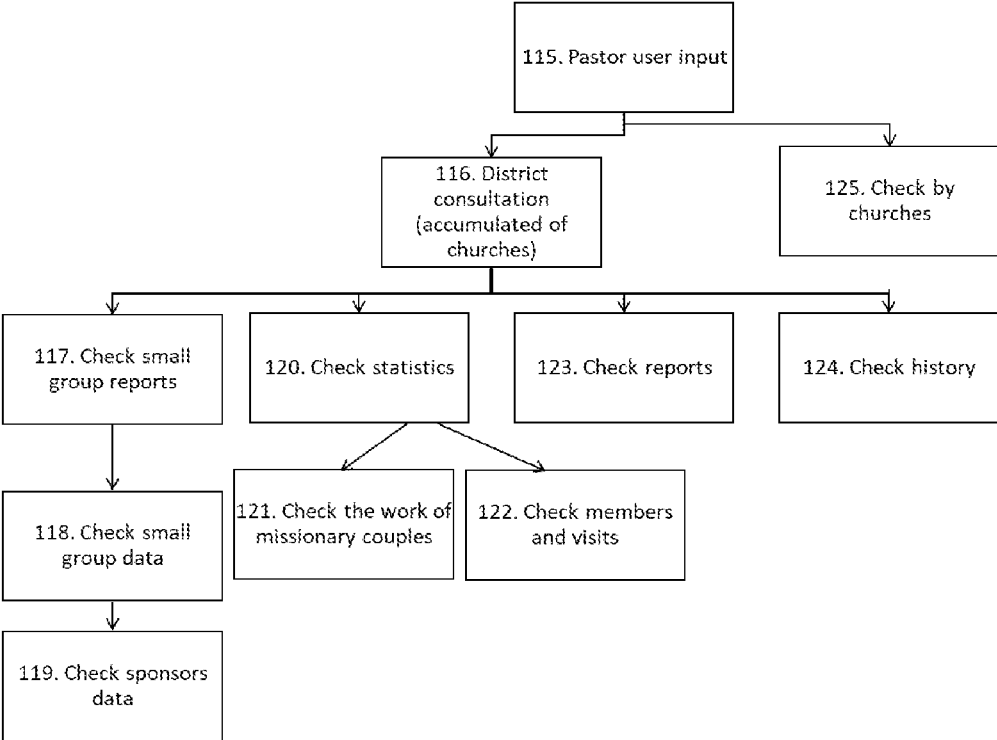


FIG. 5

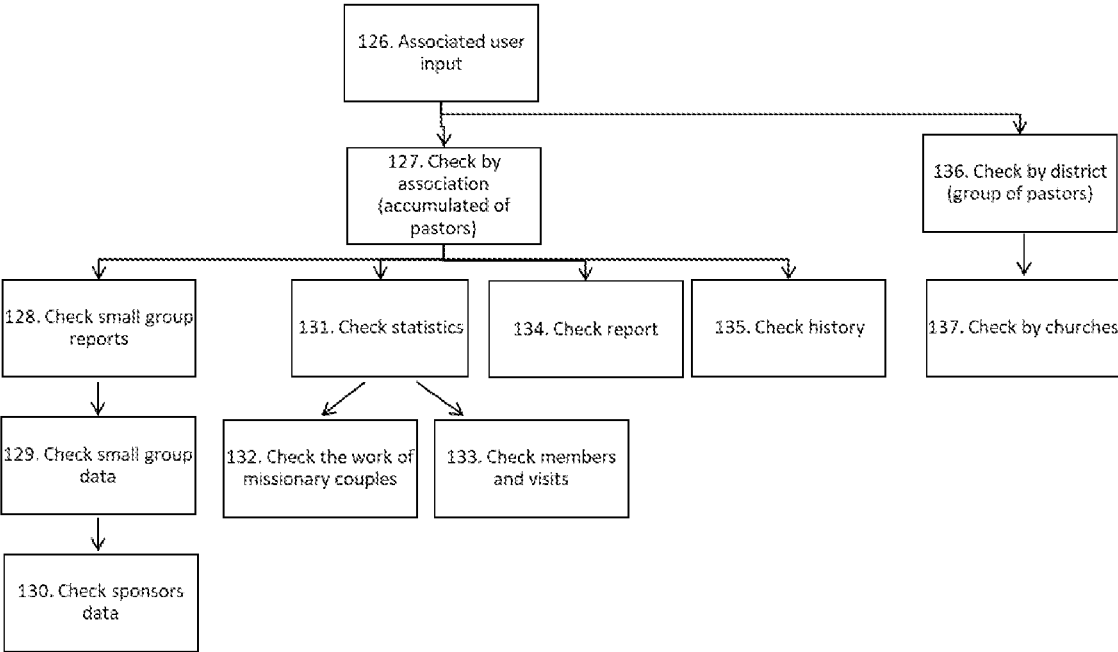
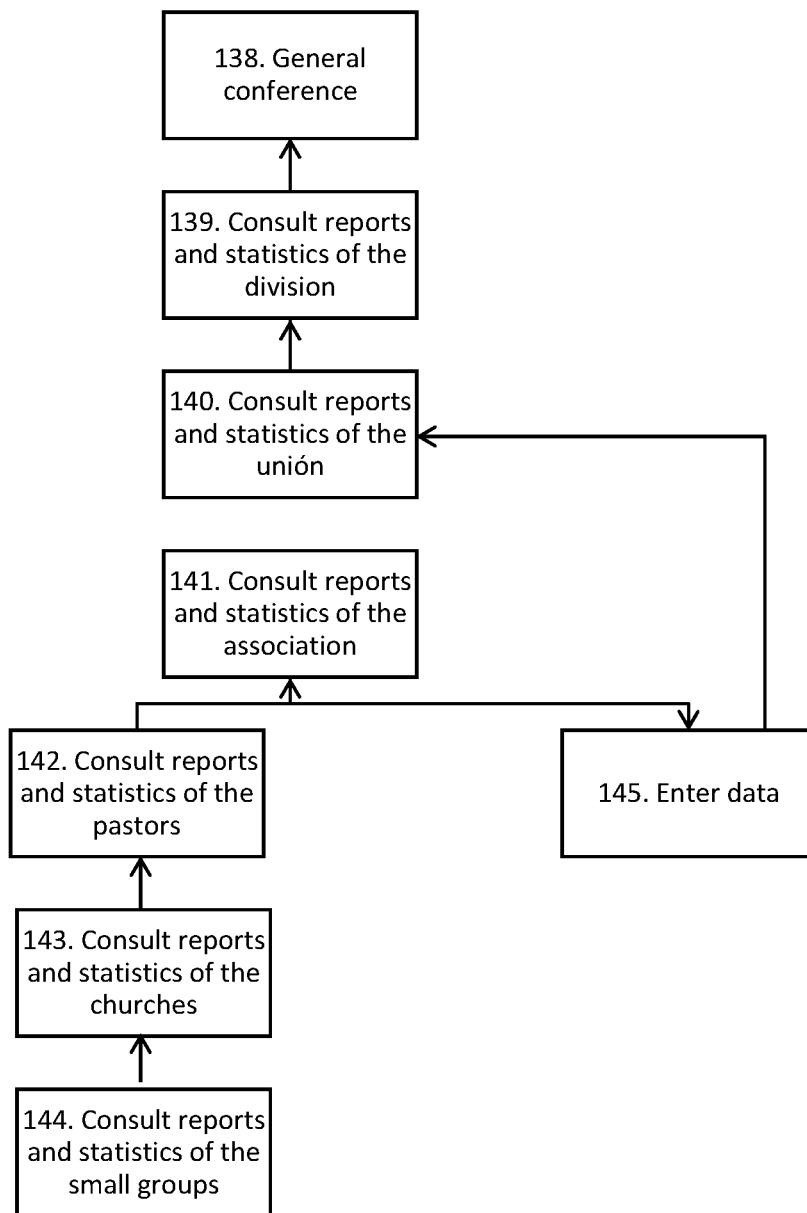


FIG. 6



**SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR USER
MANAGEMENT AND RETENTION AND
MISSIONARY WORK MANAGEMENT IN AN
ECCLESIASTICAL COMMUNITY CONTEXT**

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/947,467, filed Dec. 9, 2019, which is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The present invention relates in general to the field of user management systems, and, more specifically, to systems and methods for organizing a multi-level hierarchical user management and retention system and missionary work management system in an ecclesiastical community context.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Many churches now invest large sums of money in evangelism to baptize large numbers of people, 50% of new converts leave the ranks in the first year and another proportion do so in the following years. One of the main reasons for this decrease that leads to desertion is inactivity in missionary work, which will remain in the past, that this invention has designed a system to assign each parishioner his missionary work by forming missionary couples. Which will oversee accompanying and being in the care of each of their sponsored persons, whether they are visitors, interested or simply newly baptized members, discouraged members or inactive members.

[0004] The churches have sought many ways to keep track of the administration of their study groups inside and outside the churches and for this many of them have tried to keep this control through paper records, notebooks, agendas, posters, or sometimes formatting made of thick paper. Others think that they can keep a mental record, that their mind can keep for a long time and this is difficult for the cares of life. The churches and their study groups realize that with the resources mentioned, the work is very difficult, since many of them lose their aesthetics, stain, fix themselves, etc. They are also very uncomfortable to take them to different parts where it is required to take them, in addition to these papers fail to provide them with the greatest amount of information required in real time to act promptly and effectively.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] The present invention refers to a computer implemented user management and system involving a plurality of mobile devices, that will allow churches to effectively manage their user and user groups in view of a plurality of parameters of those users and groups and of the administrative authority that each user has in consideration of those parameters, with the purpose of promoting user retention and impulsing missionary work. The small groups or Church Homes will be organized in such a way that each church leader, each pastor, or each administrative entity, will keep a real-time report of their groups and churches. It is basically a shared mechanism for categorizing and administering user information including a hierarchical taxonomy of user types,

user grouping, user statuses with their respective administrative permissions, allowing for the generation of meaningful statistics and reports.

[0006] This invention also refers to the fact that church leaders, pastors who are in charge of one or more churches and administrators, can have clear, effective, and real-time information on hand for each member, visit, interested, group Small, church or church system, just by entering the mobile application.

[0007] This invention relates to the fact that each leader at their respective level can also have a statistic of the respective missionary information having their mobile device at hand.

[0008] The invention aims to lead the administration of small groups, study groups that are carried in and out of the church, houses, etc. In addition, create and manage small groups, generating a retention system for parishioners and supporters through sponsoring by missionary couples that make up the mobile application.

[0009] The invention seeks to keep church leaders, pastors and administrators informed in real time about each sponsored person, small group, church, or church systems that oversee a pastor. In addition to this, the mobile application also seeks to give a general report and provide a statistical report that will allow complete information on the churches, or church systems, in order to make decisions promptly and thus make improvements to the church or avoid fatal consequences at the same time.

[0010] One of the main objects of this invention is to reduce the high dropout rate, through the retention system of members, visitors and interested parties, thus generating a missionary culture in each parishioner, small group, or Church. This invention also has the purpose that leaders and pastors have at hand a tool with which to work, and thus make visits in a timely manner knowing necessary information of the people who want to visit, in order to obtain a previous preparation.

[0011] This can be achieved by combining some or all of the following elements:

a) A multi-level hierarchical taxonomy for organizing user types, specifically tailored for the specific needs and requirements of Church community environments, categorizing the users in adequate categories for the “user type” parameter including some or all of:

- [0012]** 1. Administrator
- [0013]** 2. Church User
- [0014]** 3. Member User
- [0015]** 4. Pastor User
- [0016]** 5. Association User
- [0017]** 6. Union User

And where multiple levels can exist within each user type.

b) A dynamic user grouping system allowing for the agroupation of users of different types in adequate group categories including some or all of:

- [0018]** 1. Small groups
- [0019]** 2. Ecclesiastical groups
- [0020]** 3. Missionary couples
- [0021]** 4. Church

And where the users can have different levels within the groups, and the groups can be hierarchically nested within other groups.

c) A dynamic user status administration system allowing for the categorization of users of different types within different groups, in adequate categories for the “status” parameter including some or all of:

- [0022] 1. Visitor Status
- [0023] 2. New User Status
- [0024] 3. Sponsored User Status
- [0025] 4. Active User Status
- [0026] 5. Discouraged User Status
- [0027] 6. Inactive User Status
- [0028] 7. Missionary User Status

d) A relevant user information database for storing and managing user information of different kinds, including some or all of:

- [0029] 1. User Parameters (type, level, group membership, status, etc)
- [0030] 2. User’s Profile information
- [0031] 3. User’s Visits information
- [0032] 4. User’s Bible Studies information
- [0033] 5. User’s Supplementary information

e) a secondary database said users’ administrative authority and interactions among users in which the administrative features accessible to the respective users depend on the user’s type, status, and group or groups to which the user pertains, following the relationships established by this secondary database, in which these relationships are designed to provide a User Retention System through Sponsorship and follow up of Users in consideration of their respective User Status.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0034] FIG. 1 represents the access rights and administrative features accessible to Users in the Administrator user type in an embodiment of a User Management and Retention System in accordance with the present invention.

[0035] FIG. 2 represents the access rights and administrative features accessible to Users in the Church user type in an embodiment of a User Management and Retention System in accordance with the present invention.

[0036] FIG. 3 represents the access rights and administrative features accessible to a Group Administrator in an embodiment of a User Management and Retention System in accordance with the present invention.

[0037] FIG. 4 represents the access rights and administrative features accessible to Users in the Pastor user type in an embodiment of a User Management and Retention System in accordance with the present invention.

[0038] FIG. 5 represents the access rights and administrative features accessible to Users in the Association user type in an embodiment of a User Management and Retention System in accordance with the present invention.

[0039] FIG. 6 illustrates the flow of information reports in a multi-level hierarchical categorization of user types in an embodiment of a User Management and Retention System in accordance with the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION AND BEST MODE OF IMPLEMENTATION

[0040] Disclosed are Systems and Methods for organizing a multi-level hierarchical user management and retention system in an ecclesiastical community context, that allows churches to effectively manage their user and user groups in view of a plurality of parameters of those users and groups

and of the administrative authority that each user has in consideration of those parameters. The small groups or Church Homes will be organized in such a way that each church leader, each pastor, or each administrative entity, will keep a real-time report of their groups and churches. It is basically a shared mechanism for categorizing and administering user information including a hierarchical taxonomy of user types, user grouping, user statuses and other user parameters with their respective administrative authority, allowing for the generation of meaningful statistics and reports.

[0041] In the context of the present specification and claims, “administrative authority” refers to the power that a particular User has of creating, viewing, editing and/or deleting Users, User parameters, Groups and/or group parameters, all this in consideration of the particular User’s own User Parameters, as well as the parameters of the users and/or groups that the particular User wants to create, view, edit, and/or delete, or of whom he or she wants to modify their User and/or Group parameters. The User parameters include User information, User’s Type, User’s level within the types, and User Status. User types, User levels within the types, and User status. The group parameters include Group information, group rules, (for example the number of members that are allowed and the user parameters that those group members can have) and group structure (what levels exist within the group, for example, regular member and leader member). The User/Group group parameters define the relationship between users and groups, including the user’s membership to a group as well as their level within the group. This administrative authority is regulated by a secondary database that establishes the administrative rights associated with the users in consideration of the above-mentioned parameters. With respect to groups, the particular user’s membership to a particular group, and his or her level within the particular group, together with any other relevant parameters, will determine his or her administrative authority specifically within that particular group. Users can have authority over groups of which they are not members, as long as their user parameters so determine it in the secondary database.

[0042] The system comprises some or all of the following features:

[0043] 1. System to create and administer in an organized way small groups inside or outside churches. Since small groups create a foundation for each church, it becomes necessary for support and growth, a system that creates and manages the groups so that the church becomes more stable.

[0044] 2. Retention system for church parishioners through sponsorship of visits, and interested parties in addition to discouraged members, new members and inactive members through a system of creation of missionary couples, not only for evangelization but also for sponsorship of visits or members that require it in a church or small group.

[0045] 3. Rescue system for parishioners or inactive members, through the organization of the said systems, these missionary couples will be in charge of searching not only for people in the neighborhood, or for families, but they will also have the mission of rescuing church members who are already they are discouraging as well as those who are already discouraged, who are inactive.

[0046] 4. Pastor_parishioner identification system, through detailed informative data of the groups, sent by a

person responsible for directing them. They send the data to the people who have the leadership in the churches as well as their pastors and administrators. Each report contains a detailed report of each member who becomes an identifier of the pastor to each of his parishioners, whether they are members, visitors, or supporters.

[0047] 5. Biblical studies control system given to each sponsored person. This system will also allow each leader and pastor to keep track of the biblical studies that each sponsored person has taken in or out of a small group or church, in order to report in real time, when it is finished, or abandoned. System is suitable for making timely decisions.

[0048] 6. Missionary reporting system for church systems, with effective and real-time and quarterly information conditioning the needs of the church dynamically and manually. The dynamic automatically generates the required information as the application runs systematically. Another option that the church has is to send a manual report directly without carrying out the established process. With this process the user only needs to know the data to be sent and enter it manually and directly to the upper levels.

[0049] 7. Statistical control system on missionary work in each church or church systems. This system makes known in real time about the missionary work that is being carried out in its churches or small group, knowing data such as how many Bible studies each missionary couple carries and how they are distributed, whether with visits, interested parties or members; also the studies carried out by churches or set of churches by a pastor.

[0050] 8. System of extending information to the different hierarchical levels of the church administration. An example of an organized structure was chosen as the Adventist church which, so far, both in the General Conference, and the North American division, its unions and conferences with pastors and churches of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, have not yet adopted this program that could give good results to their organized way of working.

[0051] Some general aspects of the present invention have been summarized so far in the first part of this detailed description and in the previous sections of this disclosure. Hereinafter, a detailed description of the invention as illustrated in the drawings will be provided. While some aspects of the invention will be described in connection with these drawings, it is to be understood that the disclosed embodiments are merely illustrative of the invention, which may be embodied in various forms. The specific materials, methods, structures, and functional details disclosed herein are not to be interpreted as limiting. Instead, the intended function of this disclosure is to exemplify some of the ways -including the presently preferred ways—in which the invention, as defined by the claims, can be enabled for a Person of Ordinary Skill in the Art. Therefore, the intent of the present disclosure is to cover all variations encompassed within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims, and any reasonable equivalents thereof.

[0052] FIGS. 1 to 6 illustrate an example of what functionalities and administrative features are available to different types of Users depending on their User parameters, in an embodiment of the present invention, but this is not intended to be limiting. On the contrary, other user parameters can be considered, as well as a different configuration of their administrative authority as defined by the secondary database, without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

[0053] Referring to the drawings in more detail, FIG. 1 represents the access rights and administrative features accessible to Users in the Administrator user type in an embodiment of a User Management and Retention System in accordance with the present invention. In order to access the system as a User categorized by the “Administrator” User Type, an user must log in as an administrator (10) with an administrator username and password. This takes the user to another interface to create the unions that link the associations to be created, also the latter are the ones that support the pastors to create and these in turn link the Church to create. The administrator has the right to create users (11), including the creation of users of several User Types including, in the illustrated embodiment, creating users in the Union User Type (12), creating users in the Association User Type (13), creating users in the Pastor User Type (14), and creating users in the Church User Type (15). The administrator also has the rights to List these users (16) and to consult these User’s data (17) with the possibility to visualize all the stored information in an organized way and to modify and eliminate data. If the administrator chooses to create a Union User (12), the system asks him or her for union data, which are: email, password, and name. Similarly, if he or she starts to create an Association User (13), the same data is asked but also demanding to associate it with one of the unions already created. For the creation of a Pastor User (14), the administrator needs to choose the association to which they will belong. Another option that the administrator type of user has is the configuration of the year (18) for which the current year (19) is entered, which updates the mobile application (19) and then the year is saved (20).

[0054] FIG. 2 represents the access rights and administrative features accessible to Users in the Church user type in an embodiment of a User Management and Retention System in accordance with the present invention. In order to access the system as a User categorized by the “Church” User Type, a user must log in as a Church User (21) with a Church User’s username and password. The user can check the entry table (22) then enter the number of active parishioners (23) enter the numerical value of the number of active members that the Church has, which when carrying out internal operations to provide information and updated statistics necessary for decision-making, then the small groups are administered (24) where it should be created each small group of the church (25) entering the data such as email, password, group name, telephone, address, meeting day, group leader (26), then the button create small group (27) is pressed. This process can be updated or removed (28) after this operation the user can go to members administration (29) where he or she is asked to enter or select a member, which is a user of the Member User Type associated to that Church (30). Churches can also be configured as Groups instead of Users in other embodiments, in which different levels of membership are defined, each having different administrative rights. The Church Users also have the administrative right to create new users within his Church, which can be categorized in several statuses: Discouraged (31), Missionary (35) and Inactive (41). When creating a discouraged member (31) their data such as name, phone number, address, is entered, also making the observation that or additional information that is considered relevant for leaders or pastors to read about said sponsored person and choose a missionary couple that will sponsor

them (32) and then tap the create missionary button (33). The information entered in this way can afterwards be edited, updated or deleted (34) by the same user that created it or by any other user having the sufficient administrative rights. A similar process takes place for the creation of missionary members (35), the data is entered: name, telephone, address (36) to execute the creation (37) in case an error has been made, the missionary can be updated or deleted (38), after the creation of the missionary there is a special and particular process with the missionary that consists in forming a missionary couple as the button (39) with which he will work in the mission registers. Missionary couple that could disassociate at some point (40). The creation of the inactive member (41) has the same process as that of the discouraged member already described.

[0055] Another important process of this type of user is to create sponsors (45), a sponsored person is someone who needs someone to support him in his spiritual life, to study with him, to encourage him, etc. and missionary couples become the godparents of these people. There are three categories. The first category includes the visits that frequent the church (46), the second category refers to the visits that do not attend the church but that attend a small group in the houses (51) and the third category contains those that do not attend any of the previous ones but who sympathize receiving studies in their homes (56) after choosing the category, the step shown in the buttons (47, 52 or 57) is chosen, then the data is entered as indicated by the buttons (48, 53 or 58). After this, a missionary couple is assigned (49, 54, or 59) and finally the Sponsorship is created (50, 55 or 60).

[0056] Another process accessible to this type of user is also general consultation (61) which is important since the same user can consult three types of data. The first has to do with the administration of the sponsorship process, where this user is informed of the data sent by all the users' small groups that he formed and that sends him a detailed report of the visits_church, visits_groups and interested groups from his own homes or from groups within the church. It also consults the data of the members who are discouraged or inactive, of those who have left the church or the visits that no longer study (62). This user has the privilege of updating the number of biblical studies that each sponsored person has, just by touching their record, they can increase or subtract one unit of study (63), they also have the privilege of updating the members' assistance, just by touching their record Increase or subtract an assist unit (64). In addition to directly consulting each sponsor, this user is also responsible for modifying the status parameter of each member (65). This means that if a visit does not leave the studies and makes the decision to be baptized, it must change from status to visit as a new member, and if this new member passes the test process it goes to the missionary category, also if there is a discouraged, this can become a missionary status or it can become inactive, if it becomes inactive, it could return to the previous status of discouragement or it could also become a former member. As steps (66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71) show. This user also has the option to consult (71) both small group data, (72) and detailed data of each sponsored of different small groups (73), as well as the power to update this data (74) and delete it (75).

[0057] A very productive factor of this user is to be able to consult the statistics of the church (76) can press the button of the work of missionary couples and realize the detailed work that each missionary couple is doing both in

numerical value and in percentages (77), this user can also consult the statistics of the church regarding members and visits (78). Additionally, this user type can also consult and find out about the general quarterly report of all evangelistic, missionary and study data in small groups inside and outside the churches (79). History consultation is another important step that allows the user to recover valuable rescue information (82).

[0058] FIG. 3 shows the access rights and administrative features accessible to Group Administrator in an embodiment of a User Management and Retention System in accordance with the present invention. This group, in the embodiment shown, can be a Missionary Couple and/or an ecclesiastical group. To enter with the Group Administrator access rights, a user associated to the group with the sufficient administrative authority in relation to the group must enter with user and password (83). One of the important processes of this type of user is to create sponsors (84). A sponsored person is someone who needs someone to support him in his spiritual life, to study with him, to encourage him, etc. And missionary couples become the godparents of these people. There are three categories. The first category includes the visits that frequent the church (85), the second category refers to the visits that do not attend the church but that attend a small group in the houses (90) and the third category contains those that do not attend any of the previous ones but who sympathize receiving studies in their homes (95) after choosing the category, step (86, 91 or 96) is chosen. Then, the data is entered as indicated by (87, 92 or 97), and then a missionary couple is assigned as recorded by (88, 93, or 98) and finally press the create sponsored button as shown in (89, 94 or 99).

[0059] Another process accessible to the Group Administrator is the change of status of Sponsored Members (103) which can consult three types of data. The first has to do with the administration of the sponsorship process, where this user is informed of the data sent by all users small groups that he or she formed and that they send him or her a detailed report of the visits_church, visits_groups and interested groups from their own homes or from groups within the church. Also consult the data of members who are discouraged or inactive, those who have left the church or visitors who no longer study (100). This user has the privilege of updating the number of biblical studies that each sponsored person carries, just by touching his or her record, he can increase or subtract a study unit (101), in addition, he or she has the privilege of updating the member's assistance, just by touching his record increase or subtract an assist unit (102).

[0060] In addition to directly consulting each sponsor. This user is also responsible for making the transition of status of each member (103) This means that if a visit does not leave the studies and makes the decision to be baptized, it must change status Visit to New Member status, and if this New Member passes the test process goes to the Missionary category, also if they enter a Discouraged, it can go to the Missionary status or it can go to the Inactive status. If it goes to the Inactive status, it could return to the previous Discouraged status or it could also go to the status of former member. As steps (104 to 109) show. This user also has the power to consult (109) both small group data, (110) and detailed data of each sponsored of the different small groups

(111) as well as the power to update (112) these data and delete (113). Here it is also important to consult the history (114).

[0061] In FIG. 4 the access rights and administrative features accessible to Users in the Pastor user type are shown. To enter with the type of Pastor user type, the user must write the username and password of the Pastor User. Once logged in (115) the user can choose to consult each of the churches that the pastor manages individually or specifically church by church (125). He can also make a general or district consultation (116) consulting the accumulated of all the churches, as for the small groups (117), the data of the small groups, the sponsored ones. This type of users can also consult the statistics (116) both works done by the missionary couples (121) as well as about church members and visits (122).

[0062] It is important to mention that the Pastor User can consult the reports of each of its churches individually (123) and finally it also has this type of user allows to see the history of accumulated ex-members and abandoned visits (124).

[0063] FIG. 5 shows the access rights and administrative features accessible to Users in the Association user type. To enter with the type of User Conference or Association, the user must write a username and user code Conference or Association, that is defined as accumulated by the pastors. Once the user has entered the appropriate username and password (126) he can choose to consult each of the pastors who manage the conference in a manner individual or specific pastor by pastor (136). The user can also choose to consult each of the churches administered by the pastor individually or specifically church by church (137). Another option is to make a general or district consultation (127), looking for the accumulated of all churches, in terms of the small groups (128) the data of the small groups and the sponsored ones. This type of user also allows us to consult statistics (127). Both the work done by the missionary couples (132) and about members and church visits (133). It is important to mention that the Pastor User can consult the reports of each of his churches individually in a single file (134) and finally also has this type of user allows to see the history of accumulated ex-members and abandoned visits (135). The Associations and Unions can also be configured as groups in other embodiments.

[0064] FIG. 6 refers to a general scheme carried by an ecclesiastical organization with a suitable system to adopt this invention and is given by way of example to see how this invention could be applied to its work system. This figure is a sample of the hierarchical levels that can feed this invention. One of the movements that has this structure by levels is the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which can benefit from this invention with the purpose that the admin-

istrators of the churches at the local, district level, by association, by union, by division or conference general. Also have timely information on each of their subjects in charge. This information is generated by the same mobile device working from the conference or association levels to the level of the general conference, only using the part required for it. We see for example that the report received by the user association (set of Pastors) (141) and the system of this user accumulates to send the user union (set of Associations) (140) and the union system accumulates to send them to the user division (139) (set of Unions) and in turn the system of this feeds to the general conference (set of Divisions) (138). It is important to mention that all these types of users could see everything in a tabular or graphical way. Such a structure can be achieved by multi-level classification of users or by nested user groups.

[0065] The description as set forth is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise form disclosed. Many modifications and variations are possible in light of the teachings above without departing from the spirit and scope of the forthcoming claims.

What is claimed and desired to be secured by patent is as follows:

1. A computer implemented user management and retention method and system designed to provide a multi-level hierarchical organizational model controlling access to user information, user types, user grouping, user status and associated reports in an ecclesiastical community context comprising:

- a) a multi-level hierarchical taxonomy for organizing user types, categorizing a plurality of users in user type categories including Administrator, Member User, and Pastor User;
- b) a dynamic user grouping system allowing to group users of different user types in group categories including Small groups, Ecclesiastical groups, and Missionary couples;
- c) a dynamic user status administration system allowing for the categorization of users of different types within different groups, in status categories including Visitor Status, New User Status, Sponsored User Status, Active User Status, Discouraged User Status, Inactive User Status and Missionary User Status;
- d) a user information database for storing and managing user information of different kinds, including User's parameters, User's Profile information, User's Visits information, User's Bible Studies information, and User's Supplementary information; and
- a) a secondary database organizing said users' administrative authority in view of said users' parameters.

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