

CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

TOPIC:

THE IMPACT OF BIBLE STUDIES ON CHURCH GROWTH: A CASE STUDY
OF GRACE CHAPEL ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH

BY:

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DECLARATION

I, Joseph Asiedu Mintah do hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research, except for sections for which references have been duly made, and to the best of my knowledge, not part of it has been presented to this University College or any other institution for the award of a degree.

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DEDICATION

This work is warmly dedicated to the Almighty God for counting me worthy of his calling into the ministry. And also to my lovely wife Mrs. Christiana Asiedu Mintah and then to the memory of my senior pastor, the late Rev. Dr. J.E. Sackey

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ABSTRACT

Bible Studies is an indispensable component of Christianity. This is because the church thrives on biblical knowledge; however, there is a growing perception that Bible studies participation is fast becoming a challenge for most Christians today. The problem of the study was to find out the impact of Bible studies on church growth; using Grace Chapel Assembly of God Church in Kumasi as case study. The main aim of the study was to assess the effect of bible studies on church growth. On objectives; it was to examine the Bible studies program of the church, and to investigate the response of the members. It also assessed the impact of Bible studies on the growth of the church. The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative approach for data collection and analysis. The case study approach was employed and purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents. In all sixty (60) people were selected from Grace Chapel Assembly of God Church, Kwadaso for the study. Data was collected through structured and unstructured interviews and a questionnaire. The study revealed that through Bible studies several branches have been established by the church. The work found out that poor time management, lack of proper supervision and absenteeism of members were some of the challenges that the program is grappling with. It was recommended that the pastor and the church leaders should educate the leaders who are in charge of the program on effective time management in order to run the program within the stipulated time. It was also recommended that cell groups should be created for those who stay far from the church location in order for them to have convenience in the Bible studies participation.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Introduction

There is a growing perception that Bible studies participation is fast becoming a challenge for most Christians today. This development motivated this study to look into the week – day Bible study program of the church with Grace Chapel Assembly of God Church as a study Case. This introductory chapter would focus on the background of the study, the statement of the problem, research question, aims and objectives, the significance of the study, methodology of the research, the scope of the study, and then, literature review.

1.1 Background of the Study

There are diverse challenges facing the church recently affecting church growth downwards.

It seems the most worrying among believers is in respect to lack of biblical knowledge. Howard F. Vos, asserts that, “few Christians today are anything but an echo. Repetition of profound Biblical truths discovered by a Spurgeon or a Moody or a Morgan has become the accepted practice.”¹ These great men of old had contributed immensely to the spread of the Christian faith and even up to today, their names are being mentioned by pastors and Christian workers all over the world due to their exposure to the truth they discovered in God’s word. The scripture is the reservoir of knowledge which needs to be dug and found for the betterment of the Christian. With

¹ Howard F. Vos, *Effective Bible Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), 11.

this, it can be argued that both the growing knowledge in scripture and scarce knowledge of God's word have great effect on church growth.

According to Vos, many wish for the ability to utter beautiful thoughts like these great men of yester years but fail to discern God's richest blessing because they are not willing to pay the price for discovering them.² This assertion by Vos is very critical in the sense that if Christians today are not willing to pay the price for the truth, then their spiritual growth could be greatly affected. If Christians fail to search for the truth, it could create an avenue for unscrupulous pastors and prophets to propound falsehood without any resistance.

Furthermore, condition such as this could also weaken the strength of the church. Rick Warren observed that, you measure the health or strength of a church by its sending capacity rather than its seating capacity.³ The strength of every church resides in the maturity of its members, and it is when the members are taught in the word which is able to build them spiritually, resulting in their maturity and they would become useful instruments in the hands of God to reach others for Christ. In this regard, if the church members are not interested in knowing the truth of God's word, it would weaken the church and hamper its growth.

In addition, many are of the view that the church today is not making impact on the society. Those who propound this ideology accuse Christians for their emptiness of God's word. "The word of the Lord grew,"⁴ this assertion was made by Martin H.

² Vos, *Effective Bible Study*, 11.

³ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 13.

⁴ Martin H. Franzman, *The Word of the Lord Grows* (Houghton, NY: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), 1.

Franzman about how the early church influenced their society with God's word. He observed, three times in the book of Acts, Luke use these sentences to sum up a period of the history of the first church "So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). "But the word of God continued to spread and flourish" (Acts 12:24). "In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power" (Acts 19:20).⁵ A careful consideration of these biblical facts makes it prudent to put the Bible studies program to scrutiny.

According to Franzman, these words are a telling expression of the Biblical conception of the divine word.⁶ He further explained that, the word is a seed (Luke 8:11).⁷ The word of the Lord is a power and is active; it "prevails mightily," "living and active" (Heb. 4: 12), is therefore a force in history.⁸ He stated that, the word of God is God in action, for God is not a lecturer but the God who is "working still."⁹ All these assertions explained the potency of God's word to impact the society positively. This is a call for believers to study the Bible very well, both personally in private and in the church as a group. This will allow God's word to work in the believer and to use believers to work in unbelievers.

Bible study in this sense is distinct from biblical studies, which is a formal academic discipline.¹⁰ The significance of Bible Studies cannot be ignored in Christianity. Bible

⁵ Franzman, *The Word of the Lord Grows*, 1

⁶ Franzman, *The Word of the Lord Grows*, 1

⁷ Franzman, *The Word of the Lord Grows*, 1

⁸ Franzman, *The Word of the Lord Grows*, 1

⁹ Franzman, *The Word of the Lord Grows*, 1

¹⁰ A. Morgan Derham, *A Christian's Guide to Bible Study* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1963), 8.

Studies could serve as the source through which Christians know their God and His will for their lives. Many adherents believe the Bible covers deep spiritual principles, and the rewards for its careful and thoughtful study are enormous. They also believe that, through Bible Studies, Christians learn how they could live a more fulfilling and relevant life in the society. The Bible also directs Christians on how they could become more like the image of God and Jesus Christ.¹¹

It comes as little surprise that “biblical illiteracy” is on the rise; biblical illiteracy means to become ignorant of the content or misattributing the content of Scripture which leads to an error in the perception of the Bible.¹² For instance, according to a research conducted by George Gallup and Jim Castelli, they concluded that “Americans revere the Bible- but, by and large, they don’t read it, they have become a nation of biblical illiterates”.¹³ A very disturbing revelation made by The Barna Group indicated that 60 percent of Americans cannot name five of the Ten Commandments. More than 50 percent of graduating high school seniors thought Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife, and a large number of respondents to one survey indicated that the Sermon on the Mount was preached by Billy Graham, among many other distressing revelations.¹⁴ These worrying results and other issues informed the study, though the survey was conducted in America; it shows the extent at which Christians have become ignorant of the Bible. The cause could be traced to lack of Bible Studies, of which believers in Africa cannot be excluded. If this is the

¹¹ Derham, *A Christian’s Guide to Bible Study*, 9.

¹² James Riley Estep Jr., 2014. Christian Standard: www.christianstandard.com/2014/02/deep-impact-the-cultural-challenge-of-biblical-illiteracy/. Accessed on 11th December 2016.

¹³ George Gallup Jr., Jim Castelli 1990. “Americans and the Bible”, Bible Review(June); <http://member.bib-arch.org/publication.asp?PubID=BSBR&Volume=6&Issue=3&ArticleID=18>. Accessed on 10th January 2016.

¹⁴ George Barna, *What Americans Believe*, (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1991), 284.

situation, then there is the need to know what is actually happening in our society and the effect it is having on church growth.

That notwithstanding, Robert K. Aboagye – Mensah has revealed how Africans in the time past lived by the word of God and he states; “The Bible has been central to the life of the church in Africa from the earliest beginnings of Christianity.”¹⁵ According to him, “In Tertullian’s Apology, written in AD 197, he described African Christians as people belonging to a community that was fed by the ‘books of God.’”¹⁶ This rich history on how the early church had fed on the word of God makes the current perceived condition of growing ‘biblical illiteracy’ among believers more disturbing.

In Ghana, Aku Hayfron, a clinical psychologist, is of the view that many Ghanaian Christians are illiterate Christians who do not read the Bible to understand it; for that reason, they become malleable or are easily influenced by whatever their pastors say.¹⁷ The source of this condition could be that they belong to churches that are not strong in Bible Studies. This could ultimately affect their spiritual growth and the growth of the Church. If the church is full of devotees who cannot read the Bible to comprehend the contents; they cannot grow spiritually and they cannot witness to others to add up to the numbers in the church. Reflecting on all these concerns it has become clear that the Bible studies program should be assessed to ascertain its impact on church growth.

¹⁵ Robert K. Aboagye – Mensah, Saint Anthony of Africa: Lessons for African Christians Today, *Journal of African Christian Thought*, 18, no. 2, December 2015, 18.

¹⁶ Robert K. Aboagye, Saint Anthony of Africa

¹⁷ Aku Hayfron, 2016. www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/A-lot-of0illiterate-Christians-inGhana-Psyhologist-464878 Accessed on 11th December 2016.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The mid – week Bible studies program of Grace Chapel Assembly of God Church is facing a serious challenge, for many of their members do not participate in the program which is aimed to ground them in the word of God. This condition has the potential of hampering their spiritual growth. When Christians become stagnant in their spiritual growth, they are not able to sieve the chaff of doctrine that is parading the boarders of Christianity. The church strategically instituted the Bible studies to aid believers to grow in their faith and to clearly differentiate truth from error. If this condition remains unchecked, then it would affect the church in many ways, especially, their knowledge on the scriptures. As James Riley lamented that “biblical illiteracy is on the rise,”¹⁸ this should sound as a clarion call to pastors and leaders of the church to rise up and develop strategies to avert this situation in order not to hinder the growth of the church.

1.4 Research Questions

- How is bible studies run in Grace Chapel Assembly of God church?
- What is the attitude of the members of Grace Chapel Assembly of God church towards the program?
- How is the attitude of members affecting the organization of Bible studies in Grace Chapel Assembly of God church?
- What are the shortcomings in the running of the program?
- What is the impact of the program on the growth of Grace Chapel Assembly of God church?

¹⁸ James Riley, Christian Standard, accessed on 11th December 2016.

1.5 Aims and Objective(s)

The primary aim of this research is to assess the effect of Bible studies on Grace Chapel Assembly of God church. The following objectives guided this work to its logical conclusion.

- To examine the Bible studies program of Grace Chapel Assembly of God Church.
- To investigate the response of members.
- To assess the contribution of Bible studies to the growth of Grace Chapel Assembly of God Church.
- To examine the response of the church on the performance of the Bible studies program.

1.6 Significance of the study

The study investigated the issues that was causing the members of Grace Chapel Assembly of God Church from participating in their mid – week Bible studies program. The study helps to underscore how a well planned Bible studies program could impact church growth.

Also, the study is useful to pastors and church leaders who are having challenges in their Bible studies programs and are therefore, not able to influence their congregation with the scriptures as they wish. The study enlightens such pastors and church leaders to develop strategies to avert the situation.

Furthermore, future researchers who may be interested in this area of research will use it as a reference. The findings in this research will help them understand the current trend of challenges eluding believers of biblical knowledge.

1.7 Methodology

The work used both the qualitative and quantitative method for data collection and analysis. Qualitative research address objectives through techniques that allow the researcher to provide elaborate interpretations of the phenomena without depending on numerical measurement. Its focus is on discovering true inner meanings and new insight.¹⁹ Quantitative research on the other hand, addresses research objectives through empirical assessment that involves numerical measurement and analysis approach.²⁰

The research employed the purposive sampling technique to select the respondents in this study. This approach was used in order to intentionally select specific number to represent the body. And in all sixty (60) people were interviewed; 30 females and 30 males. The people that were interviewed included pastors, church leaders, professional men and women, business men and women, young professional males and females, unemployed men and women, artisans and students. These categories of people were chosen in order to have a fair representation of membership of the Church. The majority of respondents were between the ages of 20 to 60 years. Majority of the data were gathered through personal one-on-one interviews with the

¹⁹ William G. Zikmund et al., *Business Research Methods 8th ed.* (Canada: Macmillan Publishing Solutions, 2010), 133.

²⁰ Zikmund, et al., *Business Research Methods 8th ed.* 134.

respondents (40), while the remaining 20 were given a questionnaire to state their views.

1.7.1 Methods of Data Collection

Donald and Pamela quoted an unknown writer who defined data as the “facts presented to the researcher from the study’s environment.”²¹ In that regard, the researcher used the following tools in collecting data for the study.

1.7.1.2 Primary sources

The research used both unstructured and structured interviews. Both interview formats involve having personal interaction with respondents. The study followed a prepared questionnaire and interview guides to solicit information from the respondents and interviewees with regards to the structured interview. This enabled both the researcher and the respondent to build a rapport in their deliberations, creating a conducive atmosphere to receive relevant pieces of information.

1.7.1.3 Secondary Sources

The study used different secondary sources including books, Bibles and Bible commentaries, theses, articles in journals, internet sources, and other sources that were relevant to the study. The research also consulted published and unpublished materials.

²¹ R. Donald et al., *Business Research Methods*, 7th ed. (New York: Graw – Hill Companies, 2001), 82.

1.7.2 Sample/Sampling Technique

The researcher employed the purposive sampling technique to select the respondents in this study. In *Research Methods Techniques of Social Research*, purposive sampling is when “the units of the sample are selected not by a random procedure, but they are intentionally picked for study because they satisfy certain qualities which are not randomly distributed but they are typical or they exhibit most of the characteristics of interest to the study.”²² Purposive sampling is also known as judgmental or non probability because the units of the sample are selected not by a random procedure, but they are intentionally picked for study. There are different types of purposive sampling, each with different goals. This study employed the typical case sampling. Typical case sampling are used when one is interested in the normality/typicality of the units, therefore, with typical case sampling, one cannot use the sample to make generalizations to a population, but the sample could be illustrative of other similar samples.²³ The people that were interviewed include pastors, church leaders, professional men and women, business men and women, young professional males and females, unemployed men and women, artisans and students; these are categories of people who form the church. In all sixty (60) people were selected from Grace Chapel Assembly of God Church, Kwadaso for the study. These respondents were selected on the basis of relevant information they possessed and opinions they held that were essential to the study.

1.7.3 Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics and multiple regressions to explore patterns of association variables. This helped quantify

²² Tom K.B. Kumekpor, *Research Methods and Techniques of Social Research* (Ghana: Son Life Press and Services, 1999), 72.

²³ Kumekpor, *Research Methods*, 75.

attitudes, opinions, behaviours, and generalise results from a larger sample population.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The impact of Bible Studies on the growth of the Church is a universal theme. There are so many activities in the church that affects church growth one way or the other but this study was limited to bible studies. Most churches that conduct bible studies as part of their tradition would be interested in this work; however, the study was limited to what is prevailing in Grace Chapel Assembly of God Church in Kwadaso, Kumasi.

1.9 Literature Review

This section of the work considered various authors who have written about the subject under consideration.

Louis Cassels shows how an individual could read the Bible for outmost benefit. He advised that one should own a Bible and preferably any of the modern translations. He was of the view that, the modern translations have another important advantage, because of the advantage made by biblical criticism and the discovery of manuscripts much older and more reliable than those used by seventeenth – century scholars.²⁴ This assumption of the writer cannot be ascertained, it is a half truth in the sense that, some of the modern translations lack clarity in their explanations.

Christopher J.H. Wright and Jonathan Lamb, makes a stand point on the solidity of the Bible. Christian faith down through the ages has been founded on the Bible. They

²⁴ Louis Cassels, *Your Bible* (New York: Division of Christian Education, 1967), 15.

assert that we do not worship the Bible, but rather the God of the Bible who has revealed Himself in these scriptures.²⁵ They affirmed that when we read the Bible, it is obviously much more than just a collection of statements and prepositions about facts that could be called true in a flat or factual sense.²⁶ The Bible has all the richness of every kind of speech and expression that human literature can include. And concluding, there is the need to recognize that the truth of the Bible makes its impact upon us in a variety of ways.²⁷ This work investigated how a Christian's life and the society as a whole is impacted through the knowledge of scriptures.

Alister McGrath explained the authority of the Bible in the sense that, it contains the whole counsel of God. Concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith for life is either expressly set down in scripture. He reiterated that scripture centers on and enfolds Christ, who can be known definitively only through its medium.²⁸ He is of the view that, Christ can be known properly only through scripture.²⁹ Although Christ could reveal himself personally to someone, the revelation of Christ is set out throughout the scripture. He emphasized that, it is a well established fact of church history that the church has always regarded scripture as authoritative both in the sense of being the origin of its foundation ideas and values.

This work found out how the scripture has helped individuals in knowing Christ the better.

²⁵ Christopher J.H. Wright and Jonathan Lamb, *Understanding and Using the Bible* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2009), 3.

²⁶ Wright and Jonathan Lamb, *Understanding and Using the Bible*, 4.

²⁷ Wright and Jonathan Lamb, *Understanding and Using the Bible*, 4.

²⁸ Alister McGrath, *A Passion for Truth: The intellectual coherence of evangelicalism* (Downers, Grove, Ill. InterVarsity Press, 1996), 53

²⁹ McGrath, *A Passion for Truth*, 53.

Josh McDowell gives out the uniqueness of the Bible in a remarkable way. The Bible was written in over a period of 1500 years, spanning through over 40 years generations. Also, it includes over 40 authors from every walks of life; kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen and scholars.³⁰ The Bible was written in different continents; namely, Asia, Africa and Europe. Again it was written in three different languages; Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.³¹ He explained that, its subject matter included hundreds of controversial subjects. He contended that, a controversial subject is one that creates opposing opinions when mentioned or discussed. Yet the biblical writers spoke on these subjects with harmony and continuity from Genesis to Revelation.³² The researcher position of this writer makes a lot of sense, the study tried to investigate into detail how the dynamics which could have resulted in confusion and anarchy in human terms had resulted in a harmonious book as the Bible.

Harold Lindsell claimed that the Bible is the source of all knowledge we have about God. He asserts that, this written word has come down to us in this form so that all men and every generation could read what God has to say. It is the permanent and enduring word that has come down to us through the ages, and would always be there for men to see and read. Its nature is such that it can never perish. It would last throughout all ages.³³ The assertion can be watered down because the universe itself portrays the knowledge of God. And even, before the Bible arrived in Ghana, our fore

³⁰ Josh McDowell, *Guide to Understanding Your Bible* (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, 1984), 4.

³¹ McDowell, *Guide to Understanding Your Bible*, 5.

³² McDowell, *Guide to Understanding Your Bible*, 5.

³³ Harold Lindsell, *God's Incomparable Word* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Victor Books, 1977), 18.

fathers knew about God and called Him names such as, “*Onyankopon Twediapon*” meaning the Almighty God. The work would investigate to find out whether the knowledge of God could only be found in the scriptures.

The Bible is the inspired Word of God. H.D. McDonald defined inspiration as direct influence of God upon the writers of the Bible in such a manner that, while they did not cease to be themselves, they were so moved, guarded, and guided by the Holy Spirit that their resulting productions constitute the one all – sufficient word of God for men.³⁴ There is obvious evidence of human and divine play in the product of scripture. He explained the process of inspiration by given the example of Jeremiah and his secretary Baruch. Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord, which had been spoken unto him (Jeremiah 36; 45: 1, 2). The mouth was Jeremiah’s, the writer was Baruch’s, and the words upon the scroll were the words of the Lord.³⁵ Although, the analogy of inspiration was good, it was not convincing enough. This research would investigate more about the process of inspiration.

Dan McCartney and Charles Clayton posed the question: is the Bible the Word of God? In trying to answer this question, they gave out three views which professed Christians have held on to throughout the ages. First, the Bible is the Word of God.³⁶ They held that, this was older orthodox view, since the Bible was directly inspired by God and thus was God’s speech to humanity. Second, the Bible becomes the Word of

³⁴ H.D. McDonald, *I Want to Know What the Bible Says About the Bible* (Drove, Eastbourne: Kingsway Publications, Llottbridge, 1979), 55 – 56.

³⁵ McDonald, *I Want to Know What the Bible Says About the Bible*, 56.

³⁶ McDonald, *I Want to Know What the Bible Says About the Bible*, 56.

God.³⁷ They were of the view that this position was what was referred to as neo-orthodoxy,. They argued that the text by itself was no more than any other human writings, but that when it encounters faith, the words of the Bible become for the believing person God's Word to him or her. The researcher agrees with the author in the sense that, atheists and others who do not believe in God, the word of God is like any other words of men and the Christian believes in God that is why he or she considers the word of God as God's word. Third, the Bible testifies to or contains the word of God.³⁸ This argument is not right in the sense that, although not all the words in the Bible was direct statements from God. Even the Bible contains the words of Satan; however, the Bible in its totality is the word of God because the writers were inspired to write everything that is in the Bible. The work found out from the field how believers perceive the Bible.

They explained that, some see the saving and revealing activity of God in the acts of Jesus Christ. They concluded that the Bible is simply the testimony of God's people in response to this self – revealing activity of God.³⁹ The writer's argument is in line with the Biblical text. "For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit"(2Peter 1: 21); "All scripture is God's – breathed" (2Timothy 3: 16a). These scriptures explained how God used human instrumentation to bring about his word. All the prophets whom God used never claimed the words they communicated were their own words, and this work would affirm the solidity of God's word.

³⁷ McDonald, *I Want to Know What the Bible Says About the Bible*, 56.

³⁸ McDonald, *I Want to Know What the Bible Says About the Bible*, 56.

³⁹ Dan McCartney and Charles Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand: A guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1994), 39.

J. Robertson McQuilkin outlines how the Bible should be studied. He explained that it is our responsibility to study the Bible as we would any other human communication to determine as accurately as possible what the author intended us to understand, believe, and obey.⁴⁰ According to him, a consideration should be made on two contexts: the historical and literary context. The historical included the physical, geographical, cultural, and ideological context of the author and the people to whom they wrote as well as historical events. The literary context included the language itself, the type of literary form, and the immediate context of the passage under considerations.⁴¹ Whereas this is good for hermeneutical studies, the approach is beyond what an ordinary Christian could use. The research found out from the field whether the believers adopt any form of approach to Bible studies.

J.I. Packer places emphasis on theology and Bible reading. He confessed that initially, he thought that there was no need for him to study theology in the sense that the Bible contains in itself the principles of interpretation and also, since the Holy Spirit who inspired it enlightens the humble heart to see the meaning of all the secrets of scripture, would yield themselves up to him if he simply prayed and read the text.⁴² He observed, this was oversimplification in the sense that, many Bible readers in the past and present could testify to precious lessons learned through soaking themselves in the text and letting one passage throw light on another.⁴³ The writer is right in the sense that, the biblical interpretation follows certain principles and failure to follow

⁴⁰ J. Robertson McQuilkin, *Understanding and Applying the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 47.

⁴¹ McQuilkin, *Understanding and Applying the Bible*, 48.

⁴² J.I. Packer, *The Act of Bible Reading* (Downers, Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press 1996), 65.

⁴³ Packer, *The Act of Bible Reading*, 65.

such principles could create room for individual interpretations. The study threw more light on proper approach to biblical interpretation.

1.10 Organization of the Study

This study is organized under five chapters. Chapter one presents general introduction. It introduced the work by giving out the background of the study, statement of the problem, research question, aims and objectives of the study, research methodology, literature review and significance of the study. Chapter two looks at the development of the Bible and its relevance to the church. Chapter three discusses the challenge of the modern Church. The chapter considered the various attitudes towards the Bible and its effect on Bible Studies and Church growth. Chapter four analyses and discusses the collected data. Chapter five gave the summary, conclusion and recommendations to the study.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BIBLE AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE CHURCH

2.1 Introduction

The first chapter gave the general introduction of this work. It considered the background of the study, the statement of the problem, research question, aims and objectives of the study, and among others. This chapter looked at the Bible, development of the Bible, the concept of Bible studies, the nature of Bible studies, the purpose of Bible studies, and the relevance of the Bible.

2.2 What is the Bible?

Many Christians and non-Christians alike tend to hold the idea that the Bible just appeared. Known as the Good Book as if it were a single volume, the Bible is in fact a collection of many individual books written over a period of 1,100 years.⁴⁴ According to Stephen L. Harris, the word Bible means “little books,” denoting its nature as an anthology or library of diverse compositions, ranging from poetry and narrative to law and prophecy.⁴⁵ Jews and Christians consider it to be a product of divine inspiration and a record of the relationship between God and humans.

According to Walter A. Elwell, the name “bible” is derived from the Greek expression *biblion*, “roll” or “book” which came into use in the early centuries of Christianity to designate the whole sacred volume.⁴⁶ In the Latin of the Middle Ages,

⁴⁴ Stephen L. Harris, *Understanding the Bible 8th ed.* (New York: McGraw – Hill Companies, 2011), 2.

⁴⁵ Harris, *Understanding the Bible*, 2.

⁴⁶ Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapid, MI: Baker Books House, 1989), 136.

the neuter plural for *Biblia* (gen. *bibliorum*) gradually came to be regarded a feminine singular noun *biblia* (gen. *bibliae*) in which the singular form of the word has passed into the languages of the Western world. The word means “The Books” by way of eminence, and therefore presents it as the sacred character of an inspired literature.⁴⁷

Emmanuel Owusu Bediako states that, this remarkable piece of literature is a collection of sixty six books...written by 40 authors over 40 generations. The authors are of various occupations, including kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, and scholars, from different places.⁴⁸ Most of the writers were unknown to each other, and the writings took place over a span of about 1600 years. The Bible is divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament has thirty nine (39) books while the New Testament has twenty seven (27) books. There was a break of 400 years between the Old Testament and the New.⁴⁹ The Bible consists of sixty six (66) different books that were authored by different writers in three different languages; Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, and under varied circumstances.⁵⁰

It is important to note that the division of the Bible into chapters and verses are human inventions that were designed to facilitate reference to it. According to Paul Lee Tan, “The first division of the Bible into chapters and verses is attributed to Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury in the late 12th Century.”⁵¹ He asserts that, Cardinal Hugo, in the middle of the 13th century, divided the Old Testament into

⁴⁷ Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 136 - 145

⁴⁸ Emmanuel Owusu Bediako, *History of the Bible* (Accra: Advocate Publishing Ltd., 2008), 20.

⁴⁹ Geoffrey Wigoder, *Illustrated Dictionary & Concordance of the Bible* (U.S.A: The Jerusalem Publishing House, 1986), 183 – 184.

⁵⁰ Wigoder, *Illustrated Dictionary & Concordance of the Bible*, 136 – 145,

⁵¹ Paul LeeTan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (Rockville, Maryland: Assurance Publishers, 1980), 186.

chapters as they stand in our translation.⁵² Again, he further states that, “In 1661, Athias a Jew of Amsterdam, divided the section of Hugo into verses. And in 1561, a French painter divided the New Testament into verses as they are now.”⁵³ According to Herbert Lockyer, the present protestant Bible is divided into 929 chapters in the Old Testament and 260 chapters in the New Testament. This gives us total of 1,189, chapters in both testaments. Also, the Old Testament verses stands at 23,214, and the New Testament verses 7,959, making a total of 31,173 verses in both testaments. Then again, the Old Testament has 592,439 words, and the New Testament 181,253 words, making a total of 773,692 words in both testaments. In addition, the Old Testament has 2,728,100 letters, and the New Testament also has 838,380 letters, making a total of 3,566,480 letters in both testaments.⁵⁴

2.3 The Development of the Bible

According to Dennis Bratcher, when it comes to the development of the Bible; phrasing the question about when the Bible was “written” raises issues because it “does not consider that much of Scripture, including the Gospels, probably were circulated in the community of Faith as oral tradition or as separate pieces of written tradition long before the Bible took shape as a collection of books.”⁵⁵ This makes it difficult to speak of a specific time when the Bible was written. According to him, a

⁵² Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times*, 186.

⁵³ Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times*, 186.

⁵⁴ Herbert Lockyer, *All About Bible Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: The Zondervan Corporation, 1977), 66.

⁵⁵ Dennis Bratcher, 2016. *The Development of the Bible*. Christian Resource Institute, : 2016. The Voice. Biblical and Theological Resources for Growing Christians. www.crivoice.org/bibledate.html Retrieved on December 20, 2016.

better way to phrase the question is “What was the span of time during which the Bible developed.” He acknowledged that “The Bible was not just written; it grew.”⁵⁶ The Bible was basically developed through events and experiences; oral tradition and written tradition. Walter A. Elwell, defines tradition as “process by which normative religions truth are passed on from one generation to another.”⁵⁷ The Bible grew through the revelations about God in the lives of the Jewish people and the early Christians. Historical events and experiences like the journey of the people of Israel from Egypt to Canaan, their conflicts with other nations, and the revelation about the life of Jesus Christ contributed to the development of the Bible.⁵⁸

With respect to Oral Tradition: many of the stories and events in the Bible were in the form of oral tradition before they were written down. Oral tradition does not record the exact chronology of events as one would find in historical books, neither does it record the exact quotes of conversation as one would find in articles. It rather groups stories around a theme.⁵⁹ Oral tradition is one of the surest ways that enabled the survival and development of the Bible.

Written Tradition on the other hand, is the next level of development. As writing became common, oral tradition concerning important events and experiences were documented in writing. Written stories were developed from oral tradition of important events and experiences. Documented accounts of stories were rare because mass printing was not in existence at the time that biblical stories were first written

⁵⁶ Bratcher, *The Development of the Bible*. Retrieved on December 20, 2016.

⁵⁷ Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 1104.

⁵⁸ Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 1104.

⁵⁹ Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 1110.

down.⁶⁰ For that reason, the oral and written traditions existed side by side for a long time. Again, the Edited Tradition, the Bible went through a phase of editing where oral and written stories were collected and merged together into a book. Original biblical stories may have been slightly altered to reflect new events or address religious questions that arose during the time.⁶¹

The last is the Canon; according to Walter, the term ‘canon’ in Christianity simply refers to a group of books that Christians regard as divinely inspired Scripture acknowledged by the early church as the rule of faith and practice.⁶² In the early history of the Church, more writings were considered to be included in the Bible than are currently present in it. In the early Church, different opinions existed regarding what books should be included or excluded from the Bible. The Christian communities decided on what books to be included in the New Testament by the early fifth century. The Catholic Church also decided on the books to be included in the Catholic Bible in the sixteenth century. The list of books that were officially recognized as the inspired Word of God is called the canon.⁶³

In summarizing the development of the Bible, Dennis Bratcher writes that it is likely that the Bible began to take shape as Scripture as the earliest written traditions began to be collected into books around 1000 BC, about the time of King Solomon. The Old Testament, in roughly the form that we identify it today, did not appear until after the return of Israel from Babylonian exile around 500-450 BC. In AD 90, the entire Old

⁶⁰ Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 1114.

⁶¹ Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 1115.

⁶² Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 140.

⁶³ Tremper Longman III, *The Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2013), 86.

Testament canon reached an “official” codified form in Judaism during the Council of Jamnia. This was largely a Jewish response to Christianity that was producing new writings (New Testament) to add to what was already authoritative in Judaism.⁶⁴

Bratcher asserts that the New Testament underwent a similar process of development, although in a much shorter space of time. The first letters of Paul were written around AD 45-50, the first Gospel (Mark) around AD 60, and the last of the canonical Epistles around AD 90-100. However the New Testament did not become an entire body of collected writings until the third century AD. Even then, there were debates over the authenticity of certain books.⁶⁵

Although the New Testament took shape over roughly 50 years and was virtually complete by the early second century AD, it took another two to three centuries for the church to begin defining the canon of the New Testament. However, the Christian canon was not “officially” closed until tensions erupted during the Reformation period concerning the exclusion of the Apocrypha by the emerging Protestants; which led to the Catholic Council of Trent in AD 1546. This Council officially defined the Catholic canon to include the apocryphal books. It is this debate over the basis of authority between the Catholic/Orthodox traditions and the Protestant tradition that has led to two similar yet different canons of Scripture for these two traditions.⁶⁶ There are seventy-two books found in the Catholic edition of the Bible; forty five in

⁶⁴ Bratcher, *The Development of the Bible*, Retrieved on December 20, 2016.

⁶⁵ Bratcher, *The Development of the Bible*, Retrieved on December 20, 2016.

⁶⁶ Bratcher, *The Development of the Bible*, Retrieved on December 20, 2016.

the Old Testament and Twenty seven in the New. The Protestant Bible has sixty six books in both the Old and New Testament.⁶⁷

In discussing the development of the Bible, it is important to stress that the Bible was work in progress over hundreds of years. In the Christian tradition, the development of the Bible proved that their understanding of God grew and changed as they progressed through the early Church to the period of the late writings.

Again, the writers used their own style of writings and personalities to show the nature of God and how to relate with Him. For this reason, it is equally important to understand both the writers and audience for whom the messages were originally written. Through this, readers can better understand the original events behind the writings and the intentions of the writers. This will help reveal the purpose of God through these writings.

Finally, the development of the Bible shows that it is a communal book. The development of the Bible reveals the enormous contribution of several faith-filled people whose efforts made the Bible what it is today. It appears that Christians can discover the rich meaning of the Bible through association with a community of believers.

2.4 The Relevance of the Bible in Contemporary Christianity

It may be true that not all Scripture, for instance the law on leprosy in Leviticus 13,⁶⁸ may apply to Christians of today. However, it is important to note that such Old

⁶⁷ Bratcher, *The Development of the Bible*, Retrieved on December 20, 2016.

Testament Scriptures are not a matter of relevance but application; because those Scriptures are still useful to today's Christian.

There are so many reasons that make the Bible relevant. In 2Timothy 3:16-17, the Apostle describes the Bible as God-breathed. In Hebrew 4:12, the writer refers to the Bible as living and active. Also, John 1:1, the writer indicates that the word of God is God Himself! Christians believe that, the word of God is the very manifestation of the nature of God. God has exalted His Word above anything else in the world. The life of the Bible includes its ability to penetrate the spirit, soul, the thought and intents of the hearts of the reader.⁶⁹

Furthermore, the Bible is accurate in its presentation. The Bible contains accurate historical and geographical details. It is interesting that no factual data from the Bible has been disproved by historians or archaeologists. On the contrary, archaeology substantiates the historical accuracy of the Bible. Archaeologists have consistently discovered names of government officials, kings, cities and festivals that are mentioned in the Bible. For instance, the Gospel of John tells of Jesus Christ healing a cripple next to the Pool of Bethesda.⁷⁰ The text goes ahead to describe five porticoes (walkways) that leads to the pool. Some Scholars did not believe that the pool existed,

⁶⁸ Leviticus 13: 1- 4, "The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "When anyone has a swelling or a rash or a shiny spot on their skin that may be a defiling skin disease, they must be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons who is a priest. The priest is to examine the sore on the skin, and if the hair in the sore has turned white and the sore appears to be more than skin deep, it is a defiling skin disease. When the priest examines that person, he shall pronounce them ceremonially unclean. If the shiny spot on the skin is white but does not appear to be more than skin deep and the hair in it has not turned white, the priest is to isolate the affected person for seven days.

⁶⁹ Harris, *Understanding the Bible 8th ed.*, 14.

⁷⁰ Strobel Lee, *The Case for Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 132.

until archaeologists found it lying forty feet below ground.⁷¹ According to Nelson Glueck, the renowned Jewish archaeologist, “It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted biblical reference.”⁷²

The wisdom of the Bible is timeless in nature. It still marvels believers to read about the wisdom of Jesus Christ, King Solomon and other important characters in the Bible. The Bible is inundated with extraordinary wisdom and insight into human conditions, and the world that remains true today. Though it has travelled through centuries to reach believers, the wisdom contained in the Bible has never become obsolete. It is always up – to – date and meets today’s need.⁷³

The message of the Bible is clear, compelling and current: The central message of the Bible remains as clear, compelling and current as when it was first written. The Bible explains the original plan of God, how that plan was corrupted and how God has provided an avenue for the restoration of man through Jesus Christ. The Bible gives significance and meaning to man. The message of Love and Faith as taught in the Bible is still a fresh subject for today. It is so complete in its coverage of all human conditions that no one has ever written a chapter to add anything new to it.⁷⁴

The Bible is valuable and true without contradictions and falsehood. Christians believe that the Bible is the unadulterated Word of God to men. It is the most valuable treasure on earth. In Psalm 119:160, the psalmist says that the Word of God is true

⁷¹ Lee, *The Case for Christ*, 133.

⁷² Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert* (New York: Grove Publishers, 1960), 31.

⁷³ Lockyer, *All About Bible Study*, 15.

⁷⁴ Lockyer, *All About Bible Study*, 15.

from the beginning. Every Christian ought to live his life according to the standards of the Bible.

2.5 The Concept of Bible Studies

A. Morgan Derham is of the view that ‘Bible Study is one of the most frequently praised and most consistently neglected activities in the Christian community today.’⁷⁵ Bible Studies is the personal investigation into the meaning of the Bible. It is an individual grappling with the biblical text in order to understand it better.⁷⁶ Bible Studies can also be defined as the study of the Bible by ordinary people as a personal religious or spiritual practice. Some denominations may refer to it as devotion or devotional acts. As already stated, Bible Studies is distinct from biblical studies: which is a formal academic discipline.⁷⁷ Today Bible studies is the general discussion of biblical texts by the entire congregation in a selected day of the week aside Sunday.

2.5.1 The Nature of Bible Studies

It seems Christians are quick to equate Bible Studies with other religious and non religious activities. For that reason, it is important to identify the nature of Bible Studies in order to understand it better. Bible study is different from Bible reading: It is true that one cannot study the Bible without reading it; yet it is possible to read the Bible without studying it. Although Bible reading is an essential part of a Christian life, it is not to be confused as being equal with Bible studies. For instance, when one reads a novel, the reader does it basically for enjoyment. He will glance through as

⁷⁵ Derham, *A Christian's Guide to Bible Study*, 8.

⁷⁶ John W. Baigent, *Bible Study - Methods and Means*. Christian Brethren Review 31, 32. 1982. Pages:123-136.

⁷⁷ Derham, *A Christian's Guide to Bible Study*, 8.

quickly as possible so as to be swept along by the action of the story. On the other hand, when one commits to study on a subject, he first reads through a few times and then studies it. He finds out about the author and the purpose for the writing. Therefore, the Bible must be read for the facts around it.⁷⁸ In essence, studying the Bible is much deeper and engaging than merely reading through it.

A Bible study is different from meditation. Meditation means to concentrate on a verse or phrase in the Bible and reflecting over it. It means to consciously dedicating time to ponder over Scripture; considering how it applies to your life, and allowing it to make an impression on your heart to produce a response towards God. Lockyer asserts that the Bible is not to be hurried over, we must think long and deeply over what we read and meditate upon it.⁷⁹ Meditation is an important spiritual exercise, but it is not the same as Bible Studies but essential part of the process.

Bible studies is different from reading books about the Bible: In the quest to understand the Bible, one may refer to various books written about the Bible; but such endeavour should not be mistaken as equal to Bible Studies. It is believed that reading books about the Bible whether commentaries, introductions, expositions, or daily explanatory notes, among others can contribute immensely to understanding the Bible,⁸⁰ but it is not Bible study. Rather it aids Bible study.

Bible study is different from listening to Bible addresses. It is important that Christians should listen to the word of God from preachers who are gifted to minister

⁷⁸ Herbert Lockyer, *All About Bible Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: The Zondervan Corporation, 1977), 14.

⁷⁹ Lockyer, *All About Bible Study*, 17.

⁸⁰ Lockyer, *All About Bible Study*, 15.

to the church; however, that alone is not a substitute to the personal Bible study of the Christian. Listening to Bible teaching is no substitute for personal Bible study.

2.5.2 The Purpose of Bible Studies

The Bible is God's word to believers and through it Christians learn to understand and obey God, and with respect to that, T. Norton Strerrett asserts, "we cannot fulfill these purposes if our Bible remains closed and hidden away."⁸¹ There are good reasons why Christians are encouraged to study the Bible.

First, it is an act of obedience to God; in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, God commands His children to study His Word. The verse begins with the words "*Hear O Israel*," which is the Jews cry to know their LORD. The following verses are the imperatives of memorizing, knowing and doing the word of God. In other words, God is commanding his children to study His word. Bible Studies is therefore an act of obedience to God. According to Lockyer, obedience is the best commentary on the Bible...Reading the Bible involves not only great eagerness, candid and careful meditation, faith in all it declares, reliance upon its promises, willingness to allow God to speak directly to the heart, but the desire to obey every command, promptly, exactly, unquestioningly, and joyfully.⁸²

Again, Bible Studies is to help Christians understand the Bible. It is not unusual to read the Bible and not understanding it. It is dangerously easy to misinterpret or misapply a statement of Scripture by taking it out of context and failing to understand

⁸¹ T. Norton Strerrett, *How to Understand Your Bible* (Downers Grove, Illinois: University Press, 1974), 13.

⁸² Lockyer, *All About Bible Study*, 17.

its function within the total purpose of that particular book of the Bible. Bible study aims to give the correct understanding of the meaning of the Bible to ensure that its devotional use and the attempt to live by the Bible are achieved. This demands a strenuous effort as Lockyer observes, there is not easy way by which we can master the Bible...we must pray and trust as if everything depended upon God – we must read and study as if light depended upon ourselves.⁸³

Furthermore, one other purpose of Bible Studies is to be able to teach others. In 2 Timothy 2:2 Apostle Paul instructs Timothy to entrust the message of God to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” Teaching and making disciples is a core mandate for Christians. To be able to do this, Christians ought to study the Bible. Clearly, this call to make disciples also motivates Christians to study the Bible. This exercise also helps the Christian to retain what is learnt from the study, “we retain what we give”⁸⁴ Lockyer affirms.

Another purpose for studying the Bible is for education. The Bible instructs Christians to study to show themselves approved in 2 Timothy 2:15. Education is very important in Christianity. The Bible is the best source of knowledge to Christians. By studying the Bible, Christians educate themselves in order not to be deceived by false doctrines emanating from pulpits in these times. According to Lockyer, “the Bereans searched the scriptures daily (Acts 17: 11) and when we have a convenient time, and the mind is clearest; we should follow their example, we must read it, and read it.”⁸⁵

⁸³ Lockyer, *All About Bible Study*, 17.

⁸⁴ Lockyer, *All About Bible Study*, 18.

⁸⁵ Lockyer, *All About Bible Study*, 15.

Also, Bible Study helps Christians to check up on their preachers. In Acts 17:11, the writer of Acts commends the people of Berea as being ‘more noble’ than those of Thessalonica ‘for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul taught them was true’. No Christian teacher or preacher is infallible. What he says (or writes) must be tested by reference to the Bible. No belief should be held and no practice adopted which the individual Christian is not fully convinced is scriptural. To be able to know the truth in these matters, it is imperative for the Christian to know the Bible.⁸⁶

Bible Studies is to help the Christian personalise the Bible. Through experience, it has been confirmed that if one discovers something for himself, he is much more likely to remember it. One strong advantage for studying the Bible is for the individual to engage with the text in such a way as to come to a personal appreciation of it.⁸⁷

Another purpose of Bible Study is for Deep Transformation. By studying the Word of God, it is expected that the life of the reader will be profoundly changed for the better. The purpose of Bible Study is not just to learn, but to allow one’s self to be transformed by God by having an intimate relationship with Him through His Word.⁸⁸

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the development of the Bible and its relevance to the church. The work indicated that although the Bible is divinely inspired, it did not just appear but rather it is a collection of many individual books which was written over

⁸⁶ Lockyer, *All About Bible Study*, 16.

⁸⁷ Lockyer, *All About Bible Study*, 16.

⁸⁸ Lockyer, *All About Bible Study*, 17.

a period of 1,100 years. The authors were with different backgrounds including scholars and laymen in a period covering over 40 generations. The development of the Bible went through many stages including oral, written and edited traditions to become what it is today. Many people study the Bible for various reasons but in Christianity Bible study is done by ordinary people as a personal religious practice. There are different activities that relate to the Bible but that may not be actual Bible studies, such as reading the Bible, meditating on the content and others, which may be part of the process but not necessary Bible study. The purpose of Bible studies helps to educate the Christian to obey God and also, helps him or her to apply the learned truth to life. The next chapter will focus on the challenges of the modern church.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HISTORY AND GROWTH OF GRACE CHAPEL ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH

3.1 Introduction

In chapter two, the discussion centered on the development of the Bible, the relevance of Scripture, and among others. This third chapter presents the history and growth of Grace Chapel Assembly of God. It further considers the doctrines, church polity and governance and the membership structure of Assemblies of God. And finally, a brief history of Bible studies in Grace Chapel Assembly of God is assessed.

3.2 History and Growth of Grace Chapel Assembly of God

The Grace Chapel Assembly of God Church, Kwadaso is an affiliate of the Assemblies of God, Ghana which came to Ghana in 1931. The church subscribes to the set of fundamental truths of the organization and regulated by the constitution and bye – laws of Assemblies of God, Ghana. The establishment of this church was made possible by Rev. Nichollas Opuni, the then senior pastor of Central Assembly of God Church, Akwatia Line. Tradition has it that, he approached Mr. Emmanuel Apraku and wife, Grace Ivy Manu Apraku at Peters Educational Complex Teachers’ quarters in 1981 to establish Assemblies of God church at Kwadaso. The couples welcome the idea wholeheartedly and started preparing the grounds for effective work.⁸⁹

Consequently, a crusade was organized at Kwadaso, from which many souls were won to start the church, the souls won included Mr. Isaac Kofi Danso and Adwoa

⁸⁹ Grace Chapel Assembly of God, 25th Anniversary Celebration and Dedication of New Church Building Brochure, 30th December, 2007. 6.

Tawiah (now Mrs. Dora Danso), who have been very instrumental for the progress of the church till now. Thereafter, several crusades were organized which yielded many souls, thereby increasing the work load for effective work. Pastor Ralph Nunoo, (1981 – 1983) then a student pastor was brought in to support the members. He named the church as “Grace Assembly of God” with biblical reference from Acts 4: 33,⁹⁰ which was later changed to Grace Chapel Assembly of God by Rev. Joseph Ernest Sackey, one of the subsequent pastors.

Pastor De-Love Frimpong (1983 – 1984) took over from Pastor Ralph Nunoo. Their focus was on fasting and prayers, Bible teachings, all – nights and evangelism programs. Through these activities, many other souls were won for the Lord, including Mr. Joseph Anane, Mr. James Bosomtwe, Sister Emelia and Sister Philomina. These individuals also contributed immensely to the progress of the church.⁹¹

However, since there was no substantive pastor then, they were put under Upper Room Revival Assembly of God, South Suntreso, under the leadership of Pastor John B. Ghartey (1984 – 1986) who was in – charge of the two churches. In respect of this, the two churches exchange a lot of programs and had meetings together. The entire church board was represented by Pastor John B. Ghartey, Mr. J. E. Acquaye, Mr. Owusu Sekyere, Mr. Emmanuel Apraku, Mr. Isaac Kofi Danso, Mr. James

⁹⁰ 25th Anniversary Celebration and Dedication of New Church Building Brochure.6

⁹¹ 25th Anniversary Celebration and Dedication of New Church Building Brochure.6.

Bosomtwe, Mr. Kofi Amankwah, Mr. Paul Nyamekye, Mr. Ennin, Mr. Gyau, Mr. Nkrumah and Mr. Joseph Anane.⁹²

In the course of time, Pastor J. W. Awuni, (1986 – 1996) a student pastor then, was asked to take care of the church and as a result of his schooling; most of the pastoral duties were carried out by Mr. Owusu Sekyere. This and many others contributed a lot in sustaining the church. Upon completion of his studies, Pastor J. W. Awuni took over as a substantive pastor and established their own church board in line with the organizational structure of Assemblies of God Church, and managed the activities of the church independently.⁹³

The church grew immensely under the leadership of Pastor J. W. Awuni and he was later transferred to Pentecostal Assembly of God, Tarkwa – Markro, and Rev. Joseph Ernest Sackey (1996 – 2016) took over as a substantive pastor. During all these years, the church was worshipping in a classroom of Ohwimase L/A Basic School. The church experienced a tremendous growth under the leadership of Rev. Sackey and they have moved to their own ultra – modern church building situated at Kwadaso North (Nsuom). Unfortunately, in the cause of this work, Rev. Sackey, the senior pastor was called on to glory, and now the church is being pastured by Rev. Samuel Kwadwo Adogbla, who was an associate pastor to Rev. Sackey.

3.3 The Doctrines of Grace Chapel Assembly of God Church

These are non-negotiable Tenets of Faith of Grace Chapel Assembly of God Church.

⁹²25th Anniversary Celebration and Dedication of New Church Building Brochure. 6 – 7.

⁹³ 25th Anniversary Celebration and Dedication of New Church Building Brochure.6.

3.3.1 The Scriptures Inspired

The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally Inspired of God and are the revelation of God to Man, the infallible, authoritative rule of Faith and conduct. 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 1:21⁹⁴

3.3.2 The One True God

The One True God has revealed Himself as the eternally Self-Existent "I AM," The Creator of heaven and earth and the Redeemer of Mankind. He has further revealed Himself as embodying the Principles of Relationship and Association as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10, 11; Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:22; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; John 14:16-17⁹⁵

3.3.3 The Adorable Godhead

The terms trinity and persons, as related to the godhead, while not found in the scriptures, are words in harmony with scripture, whereby we may convey to others our immediate understanding of the doctrine of Christ respecting the Being of God, as distinguished from "gods many and lords many."

Therefore, speak with propriety of the Lord our God, who is One Lord, as a Trinity or as one Being of three persons, and still be absolutely scriptural (Matthew 28: 19; 2Corinthians 13: 14; John 14: 16, 17).⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 6.

⁹⁵ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 6.

⁹⁶ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 7.

3.3.4 Distinction and Relationship in the Godhead

Christ taught a distinction of persons in the godhead which He expressed in specific terms of relationship, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but this distinction and relationship, as to its mode is inscrutable and incomprehensible, because unexplained (Luke 1: 35; 1Corinthians 1: 24; Matthew 11: 25 – 27; 28: 19; 1Corinthians 13: 14; 2John 1: 3,4).⁹⁷

3.3.5 Unity of the One Being of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Accordingly, therefore, there is that in the Father which constitutes Him the Father and not the son; there is that in the Son which constitutes Him the Son and not the Father and there is that in the Holy Spirit which constitute Him the Holy Spirit and not either the Father or the Son. Wherefore, the Father is the Begetter; the Son is the Begotten; and the Holy Spirit is the one proceeding from the Father and the Son. Therefore, because these three persons in the godhead are in a state of unity, there is but one Lord God Almighty and His name one (John 1: 18; 15: 26; 17: 11, 21; Zechariah 14: 9).⁹⁸

3.3.6 Identity and Cooperation in the Godhead

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are never identical as to person, nor confused as to relation; nor divided in respect to the godhead, nor opposed as to cooperation. The Son is in the Father and the Father is in the Son as to relationship. The Son is with the Father and is with the Son, as to fellowship. The Father is not from the Son, but the Son is from the Father as to authority. The Holy Spirit is from the Father and

⁹⁷ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 7.

⁹⁸ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 7 – 8.

the Son proceeding, as to nature, relationship, cooperation, and authority. Hence, no person in the godhead either exists or works separately or independently of the other (John 5: 17 – 30, 32, 37; 8: 17, 18).⁹⁹

3.3.7 The Title, Lord Jesus Christ

The appellation Lord Jesus Christ is a proper name; it is never applied in the New Testament either to the Father or to the Holy Spirit. It therefore belongs exclusively to the Son of God (Romans 1: 1 – 3, 7; 2John 3).¹⁰⁰

3.3.8 The Lord Jesus Christ, God with Us

The Lord Jesus Christ, as to His divine and eternal nature, is the proper and only Begotten of the Father but as to His human nature, He is the proper Son of Man. He is, therefore, acknowledged to be both God and man; who because He is God and man, is “Immanuel,” God with us (Matthew 1: 23; 1John 4: 2, 10, 14; Revelation 13: 17).¹⁰¹

3.3.9 The Title, Son of God

Since the name Immanuel embraces both God and man, in the one person, our Lord Jesus Christ, it follows that the title Son of God describes His proper deity, and the title Son of man, His proper humanity. Therefore, the title Son of God belongs to the order of time (Matthew 1: 21 – 23; 2John 3; 1John 3:8; Hebrews 7: 3; 1: 1 – 13).¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 8.

¹⁰⁰ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 9.

¹⁰¹ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 9.

¹⁰² Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 9 – 10.

3.3.10 Transgression of the Doctrine of Christ

Wherefore, it is a transgression of the doctrine of Christ to say that Jesus Christ derived the title Son of God solely from the fact of the incarnation, or because of His relation to the economy of redemption. Therefore, to deny that the Father is a real and eternal Father and that the Son is a real and eternal Son, is a denial of the distinction and relationship in the Being of God; a denial of the Father and the Son, and a displacement of the truth that Jesus Christ came in flesh (2John 9; John 1: 1, 2, 14, 29, 49; 1John 2: 22, 23; 4: 1 – 5; Hebrews 12: 2).¹⁰³

3.3.11 Exaltation of Jesus Christ as Lord

The Son of God our Lord Jesus Christ, having by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, angels and principalities and powers having been made subject unto Him. And having been made both Lord and Christ, He sent the Holy Spirit that we, in the name of Jesus, might bow our knees and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father until the end, when the Son shall become subject to the Father that God may be all in all (Hebrews 1: 3; 1Peter 3: 22; Acts 2: 32 – 36; Romans 14: 11; 1Corinthians 15: 24 – 28).¹⁰⁴

3.3.12 Equal Honor to the Father and to the Son

Wherefore, since the Father has delivered all judgment unto the Son, it is not only the express duty of all in heaven and on earth to bow the knee, but it is an unspeakable joy in the Holy Spirit to ascribe unto the Son all the attributes of deity, and to give Him all the honor and the glory contained in all the names and titles of the godhead

¹⁰³ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 10.

¹⁰⁴ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 10.

except those which express relationship and thus honor the Son even as we honor the Father (John 5: 22, 24; 1Peter 1: 8, 9; Revelation 7: 9, 10; 4: 8 – 11).¹⁰⁵

3.3.13 The Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Eternal Son Of God. As God's Son, Jesus was both human and divine. The scriptures declare:

- His virgin birth (Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:31; Luke 1:35).
- His sinless life (Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22).
- His miracles (Acts 2:22; Acts 10:38).
- His substitutionary work on the Cross (1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
- His bodily resurrection from the dead (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:39; 1 Corinthians 15:4).
- His exaltation to the right hand of God (Acts 1:9; Acts 1:11; Acts 2:33; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:3).¹⁰⁶

3.3.14 The Fall of Man

Man was created good and upright; for God said, "let us make man in our own image, after our likeness." However, man, by voluntary transgression fell and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God (Genesis 1:26, 27; Genesis 2:17; Genesis 3:6; Romans 5:12-19).¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 11.

¹⁰⁶ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 11 – 12.

¹⁰⁷ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 12.

3.3.15 The Salvation of Man

Man's only Hope of Redemption is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ The Son Of God. Salvation is received through repentance toward God and Faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, being justified by grace through Faith, man becomes an heir of God, According to the hope of eternal life (Luke 24:47; John 3:3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 2:8; Titus 2:11; Titus 3:5-7). The inward evidence of salvation is the direct witness of the Spirit (Romans 8:16). The outward evidence to all men is a life of righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:24; Titus 2:12).¹⁰⁸

3.3.16 The Ordinances of the Church

There are two ordinances given to the church: The ordinance of Baptism by immersion is commanded by the Scriptures. All who repent and believe on Christ as Saviour and Lord are to be baptized. Thus they declare to the world that they have died with Christ and that they also have been raised with Him to walk in newness of life (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 10:47, 48; Romans 6:4).¹⁰⁹

The Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements – bread and the fruit of the vine – is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1: 4). A memorial of His suffering and death (1 Corinthians 11:26, And a Prophecy of His second coming (1 Corinthians 11: 26); and is enjoined on all believers “Till He come!”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 12.

¹⁰⁹ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 13.

¹¹⁰ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 13 – 14.

3.3.17 The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the father, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian church. With it comes the endowment of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry (Luke 24: 49; Acts 1: 4, 8; 1 Corinthians 12:1 – 31). This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12 – 17; Acts 10: 44 – 46; Acts 11: 14 – 16; Acts 15: 7 – 9). The baptism in the Holy Spirit comes with such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit (John 7: 37 – 39; Acts 4: 8), a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2: 43, Hebrews 12: 28), an intensified consecration to God and dedication to his work (Acts 2: 42), and a more active love for Christ, for his word and for the lost (Mark 16:20).¹¹¹

3.3.18 The Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

The baptism of believers in the Holy Spirit is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance (Acts 2: 4). The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues, but is different in purpose and use (1 Corinthians 12: 4 – 10; 1Corinthians 12: 28).¹¹²

3.3.19 Sanctification

Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil, and of dedication unto God (Romans 12: 1, 2; 1Thessalonians 5: 23; Hebrews 13: 12). The scriptures teach a

¹¹¹ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 14.

¹¹² Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 15.

life of “holiness without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12: 14). By the power of the Holy Spirit we are able to obey the command: “Be ye holy, for I am holy” (1 Peter 1: 15, 16). Sanctification is realized in the believer by recognizing his identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, and by the faith reckoning daily upon the fact of that union, and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6: 1 – 11; 6: 13; 8: 1, 2, 13; Galatians 2: 20; Philippians 2: 12, 13; 1Peter 1: 5).¹¹³

3.3.20 The Church and its Mission

The Church is the body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of her great commission. Each believer, born of the spirit, is an integral part of the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in Heaven (Ephesians 1: 22, 23; Ephesians 2: 22; Hebrews 12: 23).

Since God’s purpose concerning man is to seek and to save that which is lost, to be worshipped by man, to build a body of believers in the image of his Son, and to demonstrate his love and compassion for the entire world, the prior reason for being part of the Grace Chapel Assembly of God Church is:

- To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world. Acts 1:8 Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:15,16
- To be a corporate body in which man may worship God. 1 Corinthians 12:13

¹¹³ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 15.

- To be a channel of God’s purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the image of his son. Ephesians 4:11-16 1 Corinthians 12:28 1 Corinthians 14:12
- To be believers who demonstrate God’s love and compassion to the world (Psalm 112: 9; Galatians 2: 10; 6: 10; James 1: 27).¹¹⁴

3.3.21 The Ministry

A divinely called and scripturally ordained ministry has been provided by our Lord for the fourfold purpose of leading the Church in:

- Worship of God (John 4: 23, 24).
- Evangelization of the world (Mark 16: 15 – 20).
- Building a body of saints being perfected in the image of his Son (Ephesians 4: 11 –16).
- Meeting human need with ministries of love and compassion (Psalms 112: 9; Galatians 2: 10; 6: 10; James 1: 27).

3.3.22 Divine Healing

Divine healing is an integral part of the gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement, and is the privilege of all believers (Isaiah 53: 4, 5; Matthew 8: 16, 17; James 5: 14 – 16).¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 16 – 17.

¹¹⁵ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 18.

3.3.23 The Blessed Hope

The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the imminent and blessed hope of the church (1 Thessalonians 4: 16, 17; Romans 8: 23; Titus 2: 13; 1Corinthians 15: 51, 52).¹¹⁶

3.3.24 The Millennial Reign of Christ

The second coming of Christ includes the rapture of the saints, which is our blessed hope, followed by the visible return of Christ with his saints to reign on earth for one thousand years (Zechariah 14: 5; Matthew 24: 27, 30; Revelation 1: 7; 19: 11 – 14; 20: 1 – 6). This millennial reign will bring the salvation of national Israel (Ezekiel 37: 21, 22; Zephaniah 3: 19, 20; Romans 11: 26, 27), and the establishment of universal peace (Isaiah 11: 6 – 9; Psalms 72: 3 – 8; Micah 4: 3, 4).¹¹⁷

3.3.25 The Final Judgment

There will be a final judgment in which the wicked dead will be raised and judged according to their works. Whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life, together with the devil and his angels, the beast and the false prophet, will be consigned to everlasting punishment in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Matthew 25: 46; Mark 9: 43 – 48; Revelation 19: 20; 20: 11 – 15; 21: 8).¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 18.

¹¹⁷ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 18.

¹¹⁸ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 19.

3.3.26 The New Heavens and the New Earth

“We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein righteousness dwelled.” (2Peter 3: 13; Revelation 21 & 22).¹¹⁹

3.4 Requirement for Membership

The Grace Chapel Assembly of God has a requirement for accepting new members into their congregation, the requirement is underlined below:

- A clear experience of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and a confessed purpose to follow Him faithfully (Romans 10: 9, 10).
- A successful completion of the new members’ course as run by the local church.
- Baptism in water (Matthew 28: 19; Acts 2: 38).
- Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues or earnestly seeking this experience (Acts 2: 4).
- Filling of a membership form, being interviewed and approved by the church board.¹²⁰

3.4.1 Requirements for Continued Membership

Membership of the church shall continue as long as the members do not conduct their affairs in a manner inconsistent with the under listed ideals of the church.

- Maintaining a life consecrated to God and separated from unscriptural practices and worldliness (1John 2: 15 – 17).
- Holding sound doctrine taught by the church.

¹¹⁹ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 19.

¹²⁰ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 37 – 38.

- Regularly attending church services (Hebrews 10: 25), and supporting the church with one's tithes and offerings.
- Living in harmony with fellow believers, respecting and co – operating with the recognized authorities in the church (Hebrews 12: 14; 1Thessalonians 5: 12, 13).
- Strictly adhering to the pattern of monogamous marriage and abstaining from fornication and adultery (1Thessalonians 4: 3; Ephesians 5: 2, 3).¹²¹

3.5 Responsibilities of Members

The responsibilities of members shall include the duty to:

- Maintain an open and clean life in the (1Peter 2: 9 – 12; 1Thessalonians 5: 22; Matthew 5: 13 – 16).
- Seek to give the word of God to the unsaved and pray for their salvation (2Corinthians 5: 18 – 20).
- Visit and pray with the sick, help those in need, seek to comfort and cheer those in distress and in general promote harmony and goodwill among the members (1Thessalonians 5: 14; James 1: 27; Matthew 25: 35 – 40).
- Pray and counsel with a brother or sister who falls into error (1John 5: 15; Galatians 6:1).
- Avoid all those who cause dissension and division among the brethren (Romans 16: 17).
- Keep Sunday holy unto the Lord in service and devotion (Acts 20: 7; 1Corinthians 16: 1).

¹²¹ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 38 – 39.

- Establish a “family altar” in the home.
- Maintain an attitude of reverence while in “the house of the Lord,” teach the children the same, abstaining from bad conversation and refrain leaving the building while the service is in progress (1 Timothy 3: 15).
- Cast one’s vote in the various business sessions of the church.
- Support the church with one’s thither and offerings.¹²²

3.6 Privileges of Members

Members of the church shall be entitled to the following privileges:

- Receiving visits, spiritual counseling and help from the church.
- Partaking of the Lord’s Supper.
- Partaking in the activities of the church.
- Being eligible for an office in the church, if qualified.
- Receiving a renewed membership card annually upon the approval of the church board.
- Receiving a letter of recommendations showing that, one is a member in good standing when he or she moves from one community to another.¹²³

3.7 The Governance of the Church

The Grace Chapel Assembly of God is governed by their polity concerning the administration of the church. The church is governed by a church board which consists of the pastor in charge as chairman, the senior associate pastor, and the

¹²² Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 39 – 40.

¹²³ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 40 – 41.

deacons and deaconesses. The board is the policy – implementation body of the church as well as the disciplinary body of the church.¹²⁴

3.7.1 Polity Concerning Meetings

The underlined bulleting are their polity regarding meetings:

- The church board shall meet at least once every month at a time and place determined by the pastor.
- Members shall be notified at least one week prior to a meeting.
- Members who fail to attend meetings without just cause shall be reprimanded by the board. Three (3) of such reprimands in one's term of office shall disqualify one for re – election.
- Two – thirds (2/3) of the members of the board shall constitute a quorum for regular board meeting.
- One – third (1/3) of the members of the board shall constitute a quorum for an emergency board meeting.¹²⁵

3.7.2 The Board Chairman

The pastor is the chairman of the board and he has these functions:

1. He is an ex – officio member of all committees in the church.
2. May request any member of the church to investigate any matter of concern to the church and submit a report.

¹²⁴ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 42.

¹²⁵ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 43 – 43.

3. In the absence of the chairman, the senior associate pastor or, where there is no associate pastor, a deacon may be appointed by the board to act as chairman; but in any such case no major decision shall be taken.
4. In the absence of the chairman the church board shall operate under the supervision of the district pastor.
5. The chairman shall be the principal signatory to all church cheques.¹²⁶

3.7.3 The Board Secretary

The church polity has it that, the church board shall elect one of its members to serve as secretary and he shall:

1. Keep accurate records of board meetings and other meetings of the church.
2. Be the third signatory to all cheques of the church.

3.7.4 The Board Treasurer

The polity also has it that, the board shall elect one of its members to serve as treasurer and he shall:

1. Keep proper books accounts.
2. Be the second signatory to all cheques of the church.
3. Pay out any sum of money authorized by the board.
4. Submit monthly financial report to the church board.
5. Have his books ready for auditing once a year.
6. Submit final audited accounts at the annual business meeting, and a copy sent to the General Council through the regional treasurer.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 75.

3.8 A brief history of the Bible studies program

Grace Chapel Assembly of God had been in existence for about 35 years and 10% of the persons interviewed had been in the church for over 28 years. This implies that, they were in position to give fair assessment of the exercise. Rev. Samuel Kwadwo Adogbla had been in the church for over 30 years. He had risen through the ranks to become the substantive pastor. When he was asked on how Bible studies were conducted in the past, he recounted that Bible studies contributed immensely to the growth of the church. He reiterated that, although they were few in those days but majority of the members about 60% were actively participating in the Bible study program.

When asked how the program was organized, he recounted, the pastor at that time scheduled the program on Tuesday 7pm to 8:30pm. The lessons taught during that time were so helpful to the members that it attracted other church organization members to participate in the program. These people have now become leaders in their various organizations to the extent that some have become pastors leading their churches. This explains how Bible studies can help Christians to grow spiritually and become useful in the kingdom business. Again, failure to participate in the Bible studies will also serve as a detriment of the growth of a Christian.

He further explains that, in the course of time, the pastor divided the members into home cell groups. When he was asked the motive behind this arrangement, he explained that, it was done to further improve the growth of the program. Some

¹²⁷ Assemblies of God, Ghana: *Constitution and Bye – Laws*, 76.

people are of the view that, when a Bible study is conducted among a smaller group, it is more effective than with the larger congregation. The reason being that, the leader can easily reach out to every member of the group, but on the contrary, in the larger group, one can escape the view of the leader, and in that sense, it is possible such a person cannot make any meaningful contribution to the studies, either in the form of a question or contribution.

According to him, the pastor selected leaders to take care of the various cells and also charged them to see to the growth of the cells. When a question was posed on how these leaders were trained he said that, the pastor prepared them every Thursday evening and took them through the lessons that would be taught on Tuesdays. This action was very good and it is in line with what Paul encouraged Timothy to do. “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others” (2Tim. 2: 2).

When asked how the program impacted the church at that time, he answered that, three centers were created and it improved the relationship among the members massively. Aside the sole aim of studying the Bible together, members also had the liberty to plan for extra biblical activity such as Christmas parties and so on. He further explained that because the members were more interested in the program, it enhanced their spiritual lives and as a result, many of the members have now become church leaders and even pastors.

It was also gathered that, these three centers have eventually grown into branch churches under the Assemblies of God Church namely; The Word Temple Assembly of God, Jesus Power Assembly of God, and Amazing Grace Assembly of God. It is on record that the church growth and expansion occurred as a result of the effective participation of the Bible study program run by Grace Chapel Assembly of God.¹²⁸

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher looked at the history of Grace Chapel Assembly of God. The church started in a small beginning and has grown to become a large church, and it was realized that various pastors has contributed to the growth of the church. Also, the doctrines of the church were considered. The church subscribes to the fundamental truth of Assemblies of God Ghana. The distinctiveness of every church organization depends largely on the doctrines it adhere to.

Furthermore, to be part of the church requires biblical procedure especially; the experience of new birth and strictly maintaining a life of holiness and that is what the church demands of those who want to be members of Grace Chapel Assembly of God. Again, the church is regulated by the general polity and governance system of Assemblies of God Ghana of which the local church is governed by a board with head pastor as chairman. Finally, the chapter considered the history of Bible studies in Grace Chapel Assembly of God Church. It was discovered that three branch churches of Assemblies of God had been established through the activities of the Bible studies.

¹²⁸ Rev. Samuel Kwadwo Adogbla, Interviewed, 20th January, 2017

Also, it was revealed that, some of the people who participated on the program have now become pastors and church leaders taking care of other churches.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE STATE OF BIBLE STUDIES IN GRACE CHAPEL ASSEMBLY OF
GOD CHURCH

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the discussion centered on the challenges of the modern church, and other related issues about the church. This present chapter focuses on the presentation of field data and analysis on of the raw data of Grace Chapel Assembly of God Church.

4.2 Findings on Bible Study Program in Grace Chapel Assembly of God Church

Field report and findings on the general perception of members of Grace Chapel Assembly of God Church on the Bible studies program of the church is presented beneath.

4.2.1 General Perception of Members towards Scriptures

In order to ascertain how the members of Grace Chapel Assembly of God perceive the scriptures, they were made to answer questions which relates to the written word of God.

When the interviewees and respondents were asked about the role of the Bible in the society; they gave different views on the position of the Bible on society. 20% of the interviewees assert that, the greater number of the people does not attend church and also, many are not exposed to the truth of scriptures therefore, the Bible has little or no influence on their lives. 11.7% were of the view that, majority of the people in the

society do not attend church services, therefore, the only way they could hear God's word is through the radio and television. Unfortunately, some of the ministers of the gospel who had had the opportunity to be on radio and television do not preach God's word, but rather do their own thing making the word of God ineffective on the society. The points raised by the respondents and interviewees are true in the sense that, if there are preachers on radio and on television whose interest are not to preach the unadulterated word of God to the masses but rather projecting themselves and making merchandise of the gospel; then the gospel cannot affect people as it should.

Also, 18.3% have issues with how some Christians also portray themselves to the society. They complained that a larger number of Christians live double standard lives of which their lifestyle does not serve as examples to the unbelievers to emulate, making the word of God of non – effect on the society. The issue raised by personalities interviewed and respondents is a matter of concern. Scripture admonishes adherents of the Christian faith; they are the written code that the world reads. Unfortunately this study has revealed that quite number of Christians do not live by the biblical standard for a Christian but had compromise their faith by leading a worldly lifestyle both in their offices and in their homes.

The remaining 38.3% people interviewed were of the view that, it looks as if the Bible is losing grip on the society. Their explanation was that if a consideration is made on the rampant social vices in the society, one would be tempted to say that the Bible is not making impact on the society. Although, many social vices such as armed robbery, prostitution, drug abuse and many others are on the increase, which alone

cannot negate the influence of the Bible on the society. There are quite number of God fearing people who are helping the needy and contributing much to the progress of the society, these generous acts of God fearing people can be inferred, that the Bible is still influencing the society. From the data gathered, it is perceptible that very significant percentages of members of Grace Chapel Assembly of God are very positive about the role of the Bible on the society. The Bible on its own cannot affect society but those who carry it should practice what it commands to influence their environment.

The study tried to find out their closeness to the Bible, a question was asked about how the members study the Bible on their own. Whiles all the sixty (60) respondents acknowledged that the Bible is essential to spiritual growth and to the life of a Christian; the research revealed that there were differences in the number of times that members of Grace Chapel Assembly of God Church study the Bible. 70% of the respondents indicated that they study their Bible at least once a day, for they acknowledged that the scriptures are the food for the soul therefore, they need to feed their souls. 20% of the interviewees answered that they study the Bible at least once a week; their assertion was that, they prayed everyday therefore; it was enough for their spiritual nourishment. 10% responded that they study their Bible once in a while, and according to them, they hear the word of God every Sunday therefore it was enough for them. Among the different age groups, those from the ages of 50 and above are the most avid Bible readers within the 70% who studied the Bible at least once a day. It seems the youth are distant from their Bibles. The data suggests that the older people

are closer to their Bible. This is a dangerous situation because the society needs the energetic youth to demonstrate good morals which assure a pleasant society.

4.2.2 Examining the Bible Study Program of the Church

In an attempt to find out the knowledge of the members concerning the Bible study program of the church. A question was posed to find out whether they are aware of the Bible study program of the church. All the sixty (60) respondents answered that, they are aware of the Bible studies program being run by the church because the church secretary announce it every Sunday. The literate among them also made reference to the notice board and sign board of the church. This means that there are adequate avenues to inform membership of the Bible study running in the week – day, it can be argued that any excuse for non – participation cannot include poor communication of the time and day it is scheduled. The general knowledge of the members concerning the program is very good in the sense that, information flow of any group or organization promotes the wellbeing of it. In any giving situation where there is a break either in communication or information flow, there is always adverse effects on the organization. In that regard, the awareness of the members about the program is on the positive side.

It was revealed by the respondents and personalities interviewed that the church has gone another mile to put information at the door step of members. According to Rev. Samuel Kwadwo Adogbla,¹²⁹ apart from their Sunday announcement, they make use of the other social media platforms. Therefore, those who are on WhatsApp, a group

¹²⁹ Rev. Samuel Kwadwo Adogbla, Interviewed, 20th January, 2017.

platform have been created for them through which they channel information about church activities including Bible studies to the members. This activity is very useful in the sense that it creates the opportunity for the members who could not attend service on Sunday morning to know the activities of the church for the week. It is imperative for the church to use technology to its advantage.

It is important for pastors and church leaders to make use of the various social media platforms for advancement of the church. In the advent of technology, there are others means by which the church can use to communicate church activities to the members and even to the outside world. For instance, the internet is a great avenue for the church to benefit from; churches which have their own website have an advantage over those who do not have. Tony Morgan, the chief strategic officer and founder of The Unstuck Group (Dallas) has given out ten (10) reasons a church should have a website.¹³⁰

1. A church website brings people to your church.
2. A church website connects people.
3. A church website organizes church events.
4. A church website answers questions about the church.
5. A church website is the church's testimony.
6. A church website broadcasts your message globally.
7. A church website saves you money on advertising.
8. A church website stores your media.
9. A church website increases your church income.

¹³⁰ Tony Morgan, <https://tonymorganlive.com/2011/06/23/10-reasons-why-your-church-should-have-a-website/> accessed 20th March, 2017.

10. A church website gives your church the relevance necessary to communicate today.

When these means are used effectively, it can contribute immensely to the growth of the church. The world is changing therefore; the church should vary their approach in doing things to meet the current trend.

When asked to explain why they have interest in the Bible studies program, 13.3% of the interviewees answered that, it helps enlighten them to walk faithfully as believers. 25% responded that, the Bible studies offers them the opportunity to ask questions about the things they do not understand and also create the avenue for them to contribute to the discussion. 11.7% emphasized that Bible study is the key to salvation. 36.7% explained that it helps them to know God the more and understand things better by studying together than to study alone. The remaining 13.3% mentioned that Bible studies afford them the opportunity to associate with other church members.

The 13.3% interviewees who affirmed that the Bible studies program helps enlighten them to walk faithfully as believers explained, Bible studies has helped them to understand the subject of sin in the biblical point of view. In that regard, some of the things that they were involved in and thought that it was right has been exposed by the studies as wrong so they have distanced themselves from it and are now living right with God. Many people in the church are living contrary to the standard of the faith because they do not know the truth of God's word. Indeed, Bible studies offer people the opportunity to know the truth as the scriptures say "The entrance of thy words

giveth light, it giveth understanding unto the simple,” (Ps. 119: 130). When people are exposed to the truth their lives will be influenced by it.

With respect to the 25%, they were of the view that, a lot of people come to church on Sundays, participate fully during the service including the sermons that is preached from the pulpit; in the instance where they do not understand the message preached or any other thing during the service, where do these members get answers to the issues bothering them? Bible studies afford them the opportunity to have these issues resolved and also, create the avenue for them to share their insight and experiences with others. Clearly, spiritual growth can be achieved when people regularly participate in Bible studies.

The 11.7% interviewees stated emphatically that Bible studies hold the key to salvation. They were of the view that, when one’s understanding is opened to the truth of the scripture; he or she can then assess his or her salvation in the light of scriptures. It is a common knowledge that many people are in the church but they are not sure of their salvation. Assurance of salvation is only realized with a firm grip of the word without any doubt. As Paul assured Timothy of his knowledge of the word which was able to lead him to salvation. “And how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2Tim. 3: 15). This scripture reveal that the knowledge of the truth assures one of his or her salvation. A person can only give what he or she has so when they are saved they can also lead others to Christ.

Again, the 36.7% interviewees admitted that Bible studies help them to know God the more and understand things about him better. According to Dan McCartney and Charles Clayton, “the Bible is simply the testimony of God’s people in response to this self – revealing activity of God.”¹³¹ Owing to the facts of these authors, God have revealed Himself in the scriptures and it is only through the scripture that one can know God better and also understand divine principles accurately. Many are those who prefer the Christian faith but they do not live by the principles of God and this can only be done when one is exposed to the truth of God’s word.

The remaining 13.3% interviewees mentioned that Bible studies afford them the opportunity to associate with other church members. The health of every church depends on how the members are knit together. It is not surprising these days as the world is moving out of the communal society to individualistic privacy for one to come to church on Sunday without interacting with anybody. This situation could also be possible during Bible studies on Tuesday but with less probability. There is a need for all believers to heed to the admonishing in the book of Hebrews to promote the health of the church. “not giving up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the day approaching.”(Heb. 10: 25, NIV).

4.2.3 Perceived Shortcomings of the Bible Studies Program

Here, interviewees were asked if they have identified any shortcomings concerning the running of the Bible studies program. Out of the sixty (60) people interviewed,

¹³¹ Dan McCartney and Charles Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand: a guide to interpreting and applying the bible* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1994), 38 – 39.

fifty five (55) of them acknowledged that, there were shortcomings in the running of the program. The remaining five (5) said there was nothing wrong with the program.

15% of the fifty five (55) who acknowledged short coming with the program explained that poor time management was affecting the program. 25% of the fifty five (55) indicated that, on some occasions, some of the leaders who were appointed to lead the program did not show up. 13.3% of the fifty five (55) people interviewed complained about some leaders who sometimes denied members to freely air their opinions during discussions. 15% of the interviewees also disclosed that lack of supervision is not making the program successful. 23.3% out of them also said that, quite number of the members also come to the program without their Bibles.

With respect to the 15% who acknowledge shortcomings with the program, they were of the view that when they closed from their various places of work, they preferred coming to Bible studies straight away than to go home and come afterwards. Unfortunately, the service mostly starts late and as a result prolonged beyond the stipulated time, which is 6: 45pm to 8: 15pm. This situation according to them discourages them to be part of the program on regular basis. If this persists, it can create uneasiness for members and can even affect marriage couples whose spouses are not members. Poor time management can affect or kill the motivation of people in any adventure.

During an interview with Mr. Kwadwo Ofori,¹³² an elderly man who works at the automotive repairs centre called Suame Magazine revealed that, he preferred going to church immediately after work. The reason being that, he might be late to the service when he decides to go home and take supper before coming to the program. He bemoaned that when the service prolonged beyond the stipulated 8: 15pm, in many cases he had to go to bed without a meal, for eating late in the night was not good to his health he revealed. Naturally people would not sacrifice their dinner frequently for the sake of somebody's disrespect for time.

In this vein, Mr. Bright Amo Kwarteng¹³³ a banker who works with Nwabiagya Rural Bank Barekese branch, and also a deacon of the church affirmed that, due to the distance of his workplace and the location of the church, he preferred coming to the program immediately after work. Therefore, when the service goes beyond the stipulated time, he reached home very late which was according to him, do not encourage him to attend again, killing the participation of the program.

Mr. Emmanuel Opoku,¹³⁴ one of the deacons in the church in responding to the shortcomings of the program bemoaned this same issue. He works at the vehicle licensing office at Aboabo and also stays at Abuakwa Maakro. The distance between his house and workplace is about one and half hours journey due to traffic congestion which normally happens during the evening time. The church is also located at Kwadaso in – between these two locations, and according to him; he preferred making time for the program before he goes home after work, since it was not possible for

¹³² Mr. Kwadwo Ofori interviewed, 19th January, 2017.

¹³³ Mr. Bright Amo Kwarteng interviewed, 21st January, 2017.

¹³⁴ Mr. Emmanuel Opoku interviewed, 21st January, 2017.

him to make it to the program if he decides otherwise. Therefore, when the service goes beyond the stipulated time, he reached home late and it discourages him from attending. On a more serious note, it can take parents from their wards because before they go home their wards are already asleep.

Owing to the facts presented, there is therefore the need for Christian leaders to be mindful of how they organize the activities of the church. Myron Rush, in advising Christian leaders to take Jesus' example in time management asserts, "He made the best possible use of His time. As a result He was able to say to the Father, 'I have brought You glory on earth by completing the work You gave Me to do (John 17: 4).'"¹³⁵ Jesus our perfect example planned his activities well and he was able to finish on – time. Myron again bemoaned, "many modern Christian leaders fail to place the same importance on time that Jesus did. In fact, apathy regarding waste of time is one of the most serious sicknesses infecting our nation's organization."¹³⁶ Christian leaders need to plan their activities well in order to help their members who are in similar conditions.

With regards to the 25% interviewees who indicated that, some of the leaders who were assigned to lead some aspect of the program sometimes, did not show up. This is a matter of priority; some of the leaders place little or no importance on the program. It is out of place for someone who is supposed to lead certain aspects of a program to just absent him or herself without given any form of notice to the organizers or the

¹³⁵ Myron Rush, *Management A Biblical Approach*, (Colorado, Springs: David C. Cook, 2003), 160.

¹³⁶ Rush, *Management A Biblical Approach*, 160.

leaders. It is a sign of irresponsibility and therefore should be discontinued to make the program more meaningful.

The importance attached by the leaders to the program is reciprocated by the participants. So this picture can really send a negative signal to the entire church.

23.3% of the interviewees also complained about the inability of the leaders to allow some people to air their opinion during the discussion. It always serves as disincentive to deny people of their contribution. Bible studies are meant for discussion therefore any attempt to deny people would cause them to lose interest in the program. In an interview with Daniel Agyei,¹³⁷ he said, he was discouraged when in one of their meetings the leader refused to allow him to make his contribution to the discussion. He complained that such an act can impede the flow of knowledge that characterize Bible studies program. The views should be allowed because it could either add to what is been taught or expose their ignorance so that they could be corrected.

Again, 15% of the interviewees complained that lack of supervision was affecting the program. They explained that, in many instances the questions and contributions that emerge during the discussions are not biblically sound. Daniel Agyei¹³⁸ affirmed this phenomenon and added, “Some of the members listen to radio preachers and many of them propound false teachings they hear from these preachers unknowingly.” He continued that some of the comments that the members share and the questions they asked attest to the fact that they regularly listens to these preachers. He was of the view that the leaders should see to it that doctrinal sanctity is preserved in order not to

¹³⁷Daniel Agyei Interviewed, 19th January, 2017.

¹³⁸ Daniel Agyei Interviewed, 19th January, 2017.

allow any adulterated doctrines to infiltrate the church. He observed that, on many occasions such unwarranted questions and contributions are not corrected. This assertion could not be ascertained in the sense that the pastor and the church leaders do participate in the program; therefore lack of supervision as claimed by these interviewees is not feasible. Again, an interview with Rev. Adogbla revealed that, he often leads the program; therefore it is an imaginable for such situation to prevail without any necessary correction.

4.2.4 Participation of Members in Bible Studies

In the quest to find out the members attitude towards the program, the members were asked to rate their participation in the program. The criteria for rating was (poor), (fairly poor) and (very poor). Ten (10) out of the sixty (60) interviewees rated the program as poor. Eighteen (18) out of the sixty (60) interviewees rated the program as fairly poor. And then, thirty two (32) out of the sixty (60) interviewees rated the program as very poor.

Rating	Respondents	Average Attendance of main service on Sundays	Participants on Tuesdays Bible studies	Percentage
Poor	10	500	100	20%
Fairly Poor	18	600	80	13.3%
Very Poor	32	800	60	7.5%

Table 1.1

In giving explanations to various ratings that was made as shown in table 1.1. The respondents on the first two were not accurate in terms of the average attendance on Sundays. According to Mr. Emmanuel Opoku¹³⁹ who keeps the records of the church, the average attendance of the church is eight hundred (800), and assessing from the records given, it reveals that less than ten percent (10%) of the members participate in the Bible studies program, which also shows that, their participation are indeed very poor.

Rose Kwakye added her view to this rating and bemoaned on the general attitude of Christians in this modern day towards Bible studies programs run by the various churches. She exclaimed, “All that is important to some Christians is prophecy.”¹⁴⁰ That is Christians in modern times are more interested in being prophesied to than to know the truth of God’s word, therefore if you organize prophetic meetings, they would come in huge numbers but to come to Bible studies for indebt knowledge of God, they would not show up. Many Christians today cherished the prophetic ministry than anything that is done under the umbrella of the Christian faith. Therefore, it is not surprising to see prayer centers being filled to their full capacities whereas Bible studies participating are waning down. Can the blame be placed only on the door steps of the members? The church should accept responsibility and do what is necessary to win their interest in the studies.

¹³⁹ Mr. Emmanuel Opoku interviewed, 21st January, 2017.

¹⁴⁰ Rose Kwakye Interviewed, 15th January, 2017.

Frank Amoako,¹⁴¹ the chief usher of the church, frowns on this poor attitude of the members towards the Bible studies program. He mentioned that, many Christians today could not identify their spiritual gift because they are not exposed to the truth of God's word. He argued that if Christians are not participating in the Bible studies, how could they know what God have given to the church in terms of spiritual gifts? He complained that many Christians are not operating in the spiritual gifts because they are not aware of how the Spirit operates in the church. Bible studies afford Christians the knowledge of God's word in order to make themselves available for God to use them.

With regards to the eighteen (18) people who rated the program as fairly poor participated, when they were asked to give reason for their rating this was what they said. If a church which has an average attendance of six hundred (600) people could have eighty (80) people attending Bible studies on Tuesday, then it is not proper. Their argument stemmed from the numbers that are participating Bible studies program which constitute 13.33%, this also implies that about 86% are not participating in the program.

Tweneboah Kodua¹⁴² lamented this phenomenon of low participation in Bible studies of which he cried out; materialism had become the order of the day, and as a result, a sizable number of Christians are more interested in physical things than spiritual things. He said that those who hunger for spiritual things will make it to the Bible studies at any given circumstances, whereas those who are thirsty for material things

¹⁴¹ Frank Amoako Interviewed, 21st January, 2017.

¹⁴² Tweneboah Kodua , Interviewed, 22nd December, 2016.

would not even keep the scheduled time of Bible studies in their schedule for the week to attend when the time is up. His assertion can be true in the sense that, a quite number of the members are not making time to participate in the Bible studies but the same people would make every effort to pursue what they want in this life.

In respect to the thirty two (32) interviewees who rated the participation of the program as very poor, gave this explanation for their rating. An average of eight hundred (800) members attends church service on Sundays, and only sixty (60) regularly attends the Bible studies program on Tuesdays. This rating implies that 7.5% out of the total number participate in the program.

Daniel Agyei,¹⁴³ found it difficult to come to terms with this kind of attitude on the part of the members in their participation of Bible studies. He was of the view that the members who could give excuses why they could not make it to Bible studies would make time for prayer programs. He attributed this attitude to the priority they placed in developing themselves as Christians, and bemoaned how Christians in recent time are not making impact on the society.

The information gathered shows that there are no proper records concerning the running of the program, since the respondents gave different figures concerning the participation of the program and even with respect to the average attendance on Sundays, and more to the point, their ratings was based on these figures.

¹⁴³ Daniel Agyei, Interviewed, 19th January, 2017.

4.2.5 How is their Attitude Affecting Bible Studies?

The survey revealed that the general attitude of the members of Grace Chapel Assembly of God towards the Bible studies program was not encouraging. In this section, the study would consider how the various categories of members participate in the Bible studies program. When the members were asked about the categories of people who regularly participate in the program, there were different views.

83.3% interviewees attributed it to the youth and 16.3% attributed it to the adults. Those who attributed it to the youth revealed that, the youth who are between the ages of twenty (20) and thirty (30) are those who regularly participate in the program. They explained that most of the youth in this category are students. They explained that their participation were not always constant, the reason is that, when the students are on vacation, most of the them come home to spend the holidays with their parents and as a result, increases their participation in the program. This also implies that, whenever schools reopen, their participation adversely dwindles because most of them have to return back to their various schools. It should be noted as stated earlier that, the adult are avid readers of the Bible, the youth are the ones who regularly participate in the Bible studies.

When the interviewees were asked about the participation of the youth in this category who are not students, they responded that those who are not students are mostly artisans and petty traders. They were of the view that their participation to the program were constant with the reason that, they are always around especially the ladies among them who are pursuing apprenticeship in dress making. When they were

asked about the youth professionals, they revealed that majority of them are teachers and nurses who are stationed outside the jurisdiction of the church and therefore, they are not able to participate in the program since they come home on weekends.

In respect to the adults, Rev. Adogbla,¹⁴⁴ in an interview revealed that, the majority of the elderly people between the ages of fifty five (55) and beyond do not participate in the program. The reason he gave was that, most of them complained of the difficulty in getting out from home in the night. Also, he asserted that, majority of the members stay out of the locality of the church therefore; it makes it difficult for them to attend evening services including the Bible studies program. He also complained about the security situation in Kumasi metropolis where armed robbers attack people in the night as one of the reasons that deters some members to come to the program, that notwithstanding, others also just stay home and watch television.

The information gathered revealed that there were issues affecting the participation of the Bible studies program. Although there are genuine reasons why some of the members could not participate in the program, however, it seems most of the excuses made are sheer denial of interest in Bible studies. There is the need for the leaders to develop strategies to arouse membership interest in the Bible studies program. The growth of a church can only occur when the membership work together as occurred in Acts 2: 41 – 47, as cited in chapter three of this work. In the instance where the members are not following the example of the early church, it can impede the growth

¹⁴⁴ Rev. Adogbla, Interviewed, 20th January, 2017.

of the church. The program was meant for their individual growth and church growth in the long run.

4.2.6 Impact of Bible Studies on Church Growth

It is important to study how Bible studies relate to church growth. It could be inferred from the data from the field so far that, Bible studies contribute immensely to church growth. The history of the Bible studies program of Grace Chapel Assembly of God had revealed that through the program, three branch churches had been established. This implies that when the members of the church participate well in the program, the growth of the church would be consistent.

This is the essence of the Bible studies, it is meant for the membership to have scriptural knowledge which would in turn result in their spiritual growth. When the members grow spiritually, the rippling effects is that, it result in numerical growth and that also automatically result in the financial growth of the church. In the instance where the main source of the organic growth which is the spiritual affected, it means all the other sectors of growth in the church would also suffer.

When the respondents were asked about the contribution of members who regularly participate in the program to the church, it was revealed that, most of the church workers are those who participated in the program regularly. The workers are those who have dedicated themselves to the services of the church and are playing major roles in the church. This can be inferred that if greater percentage of members were to

participate in the program, more workers would be available to the church which could also cause the growth of the church.

The survey also revealed that, the workers in the church were mostly those who regularly participate in the Bible studies. The implication is that, the program was able to produce leaders for the church. When Paul was advising Timothy about the appointment of leaders, he instructed him that novice should not be given a chance (1Tim. 3: 6),¹⁴⁵ Paul's reference to novice was not a matter of children, but the one who is not matured in the Lord. Maturity comes only through the study of the word and proper understanding of scriptures. Many churches seem to be in disarrayed because their leaders were not matured enough to handle things in its rightful manner. This also implies that Bible studies produce quality leaders to handle the affairs of the church for its growth.

The history of the Bible studies in the church has also revealed that some of the members and the leaders who were leading the program have now become pastors taken care of churches. This is what Bible studies is expected to achieve; to produce spiritual leadership for the church. When the leaders of the church are spiritually inclined, they perform their duties well to the growth of the church.

Also when the leadership is knowledgeable in the word, they are able to "rightly divide the word of truth."¹⁴⁶ The church today is grappling with doctrinal issues

¹⁴⁵ 1Tim. 3: 6, "not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil."

¹⁴⁶ 2Timothy 2: 15, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

because there are leaders who are not well versed in the scriptures and are making assumptions into scriptures which also have potential for creating problems and hampering the growth of the church. A sound biblical disposition solidifies the church in its attempt to reach out to other people especially, those of other faith.

Again, some of the workers are also in the missions or (evangelism) team. When members are exposed to the truth of God's word, they are able to share the gospel with others in confidence and willingness. It seems the church is generally facing serious challenge in this matter, because a lot of Christians in our time do not share the gospel with others. The reason is that, many of them do not know what to say, and even some are afraid they might disgrace themselves when they are not able to present the gospel well or could not give an appropriate answer when a question is posed to them. If all the members could regularly participate in the Bible studies program, it would equip them to evangelize others which would result in the growth of the church.

Furthermore, the survey again revealed that, the majority of the members were not participating in the program, and also, there was an indication that, the regular participants were mostly the workers in the church, implying that, the church was losing in terms of workforce. It looks as if there are many people in the church who are not contributing their quota to the growth of the church. If a larger number participate in the program, there would be more people to avail themselves for services of the church to promote its growth. Table 1.1 indicated that there are greater number of members who are participating in the program.

In addition, some of the respondents revealed that Bible studies had enlightened them about sin, and as a result they are now living right with God. This also implies that, some of the members might be in the same situation but would not know they are living in sin. It could be inferred that, because the program is not well attended, some of the members could compromised their faith and live double standard lives of which in a long run, impede the growth of the church because their lifestyle would deter others from joining the church. In an instance where Christians practice the scriptural teachings, it brings growth to the church.

Moreover, the survey revealed that, the regular attendants were mostly the workers in the church. It is an indication that, the program had helped these members to commit themselves to the Lord and his church. According to Rick Warren, “A Great Commitment to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission will grow a Great Church.”¹⁴⁷ One of the key ingredients of church growth is commitment, and when the members are not committed, the church would not grow.

It could be concluded that growth happens naturally, when the right things are done. It has been seen from the survey that Bible studies is a contributing factor to church growth. The analysis had revealed that church growth occurs in direct correspondent with the spiritual growth of the members. When the members grow spiritually, they reach out to people resulting in both numerical and financial growth. When members are exposed to the truth, they are more likely to avail themselves for the task of the

¹⁴⁷ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 102.

church, by playing various roles in the church. They would become the workforce and potential leaders of the church, expanding its growth.

4.3 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to examine the data obtained from interviews conducted and their consequences or implications to church growth. The survey revealed that, the general perception of the members towards the Bible studies was positive. Many of the participants portrayed knowledge on the Bible and the position of the Bible within the society. Moreover, some were concern about the impact of Bible in the society since there are social vices within the society. On the contrary, others were of the view that the Bible is still influencing the society positively.

Also among other things, the field work revealed that, there were shortcomings hindering the progress of the program such as lack of effective time management, lack of supervision, denying people from airing their views and others. Such issues does not auger well for the progress of the program which is organize to help the members grow in the word of God to enable them to contribute their quota to the growth of the church.

The survey also revealed that, the youth were among those who regularly participate in the program. That notwithstanding, many would have wished to be part of the program but circumstances beyond their control is making it difficult for them, especially those who stays far from the location of the church.

Also, it was revealed that those who regularly participate in the program, majority of them are playing major roles in the church which also suggest that, if a quite sizable number could have participated in the program, the church could have had greater workforce to work with.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The problem this study sought to investigate was the challenge faced by the running of mid – week Bible studies program of Grace Chapel Assembly of God Church. For majority of their members do not participate in the program. The objective of the study was to analyze the cause of the condition and also, to assess how their participation could contribute to the growth of the church. The study employed the purposive sampling technique to select the respondents for the work. This approach was used in order to intentionally select specific number to represent the body. And in all sixty (60) people were interviewed; 30 females and 30 males. The people that were interviewed included pastors, church leaders, professional men and women, business men and women, young professional males and females, unemployed men and women, artisans and students. These categories of people were carefully chosen in order to have a fair representation of membership of the Church.

5.2 Findings

The study found out that the Bible studies program run by Grace Chapel Assembly of God is facing some challenges for all the sixty (60) people interviewed admitted to this fact. The members are aware of the program run by the church, for there are various platforms the church communicates the program to the members, such as Sunday announcement, on the sign post of the church, and on WhatsApp platforms to mention a few, that notwithstanding, majority of the members does not participate in the program which is intended for their spiritual growth.

Also, the study found out that there some issues which does not auger well for the running of the program. Some complained that sometimes, the program go beyond the stipulated time of closing which discourages those who comes straight away from the close of work to attend. Others were of the view that sometimes, those who lead the program refuse to allow them to share their thought which according to them serves as disincentive. In addition, some also complained that there were instances where those who were supposed to lead some aspect of the program failed to attend.

Furthermore, the study made discovery of views and counter views on some of the issues, for some made an excuse that they stay far from the location of the church therefore, it was not possible for them to participate such an evening Bible study program. Contrarily to this assertion, others complained that these same people would made it to the church when there is a week or two long prophetic or prayer programs in the evenings, which implies that their interest is not in getting to know God's word but to be prayed for or prophesied to.

Moreover, it was discovered that there are few ardent participants of the program. When they were asked to explain why they have interest in the Bible studies program, some of the respondents answered that, it helps enlighten them to walk faithfully as believers. Others responded that, the Bible studies offers them the opportunity to ask questions about the things they do not understand and also create the avenue for them to contribute to the discussion. Also, some stated categorically that Bible study is the key to salvation. Others opined that it helps them to know God the more and

understand things better by studying together than to study alone. Furthermore, some also mentioned that Bible studies afford them the opportunity to associate with other church members.

5.3 Conclusion

The research work focused on the impact of Bible studies on church growth. The study revealed that Bible studies is important because it is the source through which Christians know their God and His will for their lives. Bible Studies enable Christians to live a more fulfilling and fruitful life. The research discovered that Bible studies is an essential part for church growth; and so it behoves on churches to implement effective Bible study programs to ensure the physical and spiritual growth of the church.

It was discovered from the field that Bible Studies is an indispensable part of Christianity. The findings from the research data revealed that the members of Grace Chapel Assembly of God consider the Bible as sacred and the participation in Bible studies program is essential to Christian growth. That notwithstanding, it was discovered that there were quite number of issues that faces the running of the program. It was discovered from the field that poor time management was discouraging many of them from participating the program. It was realized late night Bible studies have the potential to create problems for members whose spouses are not members of the church, the reasons is that, when the program prolong beyond the stipulated time, there is the tendency for one to reach home late which could be

misinterpreted against them. Also, there are those who stays far from the location of the church therefore could not participate in the program.

5.4 Recommendations

This section makes recommendations based on the findings to assist the church bring out the best measures that will help improve the Bible study program. It is recommended that:

- There must be a consistent and effective supervision from pastors and church leaders to make the program successful by starting early and close on time.
- Church members should be given roles and responsibilities in the program so that they will feel involved, and in the process arouse their interest.
- The church must train Bible studies teachers on good facilitation skills so that the Bible studies discussions can be lively and involving.
- Aside from making announcements on Sundays and pasting it on the notice boards, the church must devise other ways of informing and reminding church members about the Bible study program. They may use other options like sending messages through WhatsApp, emails, bulk text messages.
- Cell groups can be created for those who stay far from the church location in order for them to have a convenience in the Bible studies participation.
- The church must keep proper records of the attendance of Bible studies in order to know the growth of the program.
- The church leaders must educate the leaders in charge of the program about effective management of time.

Finally, I recommend that further studies should be conducted fully on the causes of apathy towards Bible studies participation and its rippling effects.

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Mr. Emmanuel Opoku interviewed, 21st January, 2017.

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Daniel Agyei Interviewed, 19th January, 2017.

Rose Kwakye Interviewed, 15th January, 2017.

Frank Amoako Interviewed, 21st January, 2017.

APPENDIX

Interview guide for the Pastors

1. Do you have bible study program in your church?
2. What is the purpose for organizing the program?
3. What day and time is the program scheduled? Give reasons
4. Are the members aware of the program and how is it promoted?
5. Who are those who lead the program?
6. What are the criteria for choosing the leaders?
7. What is the curriculum for the program?
8. How do you see the attendance: is it declining or increasing? Give reasons
9. Does it have any effects on church attendance as a whole? Explain
10. What effects does it have on the spiritual growth of the church?
11. Does it have any bearing on the numerical growth?
12. In your view, what is preventing many people to attend the program?

Questionnaire for the Members

1. Are you aware of the bible study program run by the church? Yes [] No []

2. How did you get to know?

A. Through the announcement []

B. Through the notice board []

C. No idea []

3. How long have you been in the church?.....

4. Do you attend regularly?

A. Regularly []

B. Once a while []

C. Not at all []

Give reasons.....

.....

.....

Do you study the bible on your own? Yes [] No []

A. When

B. How

C. Not at all []

Give reasons.....

.....

.....

5. Do you have interest in the bible study program? Yes [] No []

Explain

.....

.....

Is there any shortcoming about the running of the program? Yes [] No []

Give reasons.....

.....

.....

6. How do you rate the members' participation of the program?

A. Poor []

B. Fairly Poor []

C. Very Poor []

7. Do you remember anything that you were taught that have had any immense benefit on your spiritual life? Yes [] No []

If Yes, what is it?

.....
.....
.....
.....

8. Do you have any idea why many are not participating in the program? Yes []

No []

Give reasons.....

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.....
.....

9. What do you think can be done to improve the participation of the program?

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