

CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, KUMASI

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY



**THE CHALLENGES OF RURAL CHURCH PLANTING IN THE PRESTEA
AREA OF THE WESTERN REGION.**

**PROJECT WORK
(LONG ESSAY)**

**BY
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JULY, 2015.

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**A long essay submitted to Christian Service University College, in partial
fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Arts in
Theology with Administration.**

JULY, 2015.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Long Essay has been prepared by myself, that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a degree, that the work of which it is a record has been done by myself, that all quotations have been distinguished by either quotation marks or indentation and all the sources of information specifically acknowledged by means of footnotes.

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DEDICATION

To the glory of God, this work is dedicated to my dearest wife, Mrs. Esther Opoku Asare and lovely children Evelyn and Sharon.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

There seem to be some perceptions concerning the rural environment. These perceptions are based on the fact that the rural area is a difficult terrain for all sort of activity. The rural context is seen as lacking in many social amenities, and the inhabitants are usually considered as poor. This perceived deprivation of the rural context seem poses to a great challenge to many activities including missions and church planting. Despite the many difficulties of the rural environment, the church has been mandated to carry or propagate the Goodnews of salvation to everyone everywhere. We are told in Luke 8:1 that Jesus went to every town and village to proclaim the Goodnews of the Kingdom of God. In this same sense Jesus has commanded us as a church to go everywhere including the rural areas to proclaim the gospel. Our faithfulness to the Lord Jesus is therefore measured by how we heed his call and how we walk by his example. Thus, nowhere is a “no-go” area to the gospel. Despite the seeming challenges in rural ministry, the church has what it takes to carry out its mandate of evangelism and missions. Wayne Grudem has noted that the church has a ministry towards the world, and this involves evangelism and social concern.¹ In his view declaring the gospel is the primary ministry that the church has toward the world. On his part Kenneth Gangel, has noted that evangelism is a legitimate task of the church. Every believer is responsible to communicate the gospel. He continues that Paul in Ephesians 3:8 said of himself that “I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. He adds that, in Acts 8:4 when the apostles were held at Jerusalem for some reason during a mass persecution, Luke records that the

¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 868.

church “went everywhere preaching the word”. He concludes that, the church has a mission in the world, and that the church indeed is mission in the world.²

1.2 Statement of Problem

As noted earlier, there seem to be some difficulties around the rural environment which pose some challenges to the propagation of the Gospel and Church Planting. However, the church has been mandated to proclaim the Goodnews of salvation to everyone, everywhere. We are told in Matthew 28:19-20 to go everywhere and make disciples for Jesus. This presupposes that all people irrespective of tribe, location, colour or status should hear the gospel message. There appears to be a disparity in the planting of churches between the urban and rural communities. There seem to be many churches springing up in the urban centres such as Kumasi and Accra just to mention a few. However, the same cannot be said of the rural communities where there exist fewer churches. Even the few churches that are in the rural areas tend to experience slow growth. The study therefore seeks to identify and examine the challenges that confront church planting and development in the rural communities with Prestea area as a case study.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What has been the rate of church planting in the Prestea area?
2. What challenges militate against church planting initiatives in the Prestea area?
3. How are these challenges being addressed?

² Kenneth Gangel, *Leadership for Church Education* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), 28.

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study is to identify and examine the challenges militating against church planting in the Prestea area.

- It specifically examined the rate of church planting over the years.
- It also examined the challenges that confront church planting efforts in the area.
- The study shows how these challenges are being addressed.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1. The study is significant for the church in that it will assist it in its mission and evangelistic programmes in the rural area.
2. It will help Christians generally to come to the realization the urgency of the task of the Great Commission.
3. Theological Institutions offering courses in Missions and Evangelism will also find this study relevant in the planning of their curriculum.
4. Christian non-governmental organizations will find this study useful in ascertaining which areas will warrant their support or assistance.

1.6 Research Methodology

The study which employs the qualitative method makes use of both primary and secondary sources in the gathering of data. First, the primary source entails interviews with key personalities who have relevant information. Also through participant observation, relevant data was gathered through the researcher's involvement in the study area. Secondly, the study makes use of secondary sources such as documentary sources which includes books, journals, magazines, newsletters, unpublished works as well as electronic sources such as the internet.

1.7 Scope and Focus of the Study

The study is limited to some of the rural communities around Prestea. It will not entail all the communities but will focus on some of the rural communities relevant for the study.

1.8 Literature Review

In this section an attempt is made to examine the views of some scholars which are vital to the study. These views are captured under the headings; Bible and missions, the church's mandate and rural ministry.

1.8.1 Bible and Missions

According to Verkuyl, there is the need to turn back to the Bible and pay fresh attention to the God who in the Old Testament is and to Jesus, who in the New Testament is spoken of as "the one sent from the Father." This God, concludes the author, speaks to us through the Bible.³ In the view of the author the message of God which brings salvation is enshrined in the Bible. Thus, it is in the Bible that we can find the will of God for humankind and how we as Christians can help everyone come to saving knowledge of Christ. The author however, does not tell us how we can use the Bible to declare God's voice to all humankind. Roy Pointer maintains that the Bible is the soil from which all Christian faith grows. It is the source of Christian doctrine and the manual of Christian practice. He adds that throughout two thousand years of church history, the Bible has constantly reminded the church of her distinctive message and mission. He concludes that throughout its history, the Christian church has used the Bible as the main instrument of its evangelistic activity.⁴ In the view of this author, the task of the church, in proclaiming the message

³ J. Verkuyl, *Contemporary Missiology* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), 89.

⁴ Roy Pointer, *How Do Churches Grow?* (Hants: Marshalls, 1984), 62.

of salvation is derived from the Bible. Therefore, the church's message and mission is shaped by its adherence to the Biblical record. According to Ken Gnanakan, the Bible is central to role the church is to play in missions. In his view, the mission of Israel gives us ample evidence that God uses His people to fulfill His purposes. By electing Israel, God established that He would work through a particular group of people to reveal His mission to the whole world. He concludes that it is the church that carries responsibility for God's kingdom mission.⁵ For Martin Goldsmith, the Old Testament reveals that God is the author of history. He does not merely create the world and then live it to its own devices in a deistic way. Instead he sovereignly directs the course of world history. He adds that the Bible shows God continuously at the helm of affairs and he directs the course of political, social or economic situations which may then result in becoming more open to religious change and thus to the Christian faith. He concludes that changes in society can be as much God's instrument to prepare men for his gospel as more directly evangelistic work.⁶ In the view of the author, it is the Bible which enables us to see God's purpose for the world and our place as a church working with him to bring about his plans. This is significant for the study as we examine the value of the Bible for Christian missions in our overall study of rural evangelism. Peter Wagner affirms the power of God's Word to accomplish his purpose of salvation. For him the message of the Bible is addressed to all mankind, for God's revelation in Christ and Scripture is unchangeable. Through it the Holy Spirit still speaks today, illuminates the minds of God's people in every culture to perceive its truth freshly through their own eyes and thus discloses to the whole

⁵ Ken Gnanakan, *Kingdom Concerns: A Theological of Mission Today* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1993), 201.

⁶ M. Goldsmith, *Can my Church Grow?* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1980), 123-124.

church ever more of the many-coloured wisdom of God.⁷ In the view of the author, the church is the instrument of God in carrying out His purposes in the world. It therefore presupposes that God's agenda for the world largely depends on how the church carries out the mandate for mission. The church must therefore position itself in such a way as to effectively discharge its divine mandate. This study seeks to examine how the divine mandate has been carried out or is being carried out. From the assertions of Wagner, it is the Bible which reveals to us God's purposes for mankind. It opens the minds of people to understand their place in God's plan. This is significant for the study which examines rural evangelism, which aims at bringing people to the point of realizing their need of reconciliation with God.

1.8.2 The Church's Mandate

Bruce Nicholls maintains that, the gospel was revealed by command of the eternal God for one specific purpose; to bring peoples of all nations to obey the faith.⁸ Nicholls seems to suggest that the gospel is a divine command for the church. The mandate of the church to make it known to peoples of all nations. Therefore, God can only make Himself known through the church in the contexts of evangelism, missions and discipleship. This is significant for the study which is examining the church's mission mandate in the context of rural church planting. According to John Stott, the word mission concerns God's redeemed people and what He sends them into the world to do. He asserts that conversion must not take the convert out of the world but rather send him back into it, it the same person in the world, and yet a new person with new convictions and new standards. Stott concludes that if Jesus' first command was "come", his second was "go" and that is, we are to going back into the world (out

⁷ Peter C. Wagner, *Strategies for Church Growth: Tools for Effective Mission and Evangelism* (London: The British Church Growth Association, 1987), 198.

⁸ Bruce J. Nichols, *The Church: God's Agent for Change* (Cape Town: The Paternoster Press, 1986), 124.

of which we came) as Christ's ambassadors.⁹ The view of Stott underscores the meaning and purpose of mission. However, he does not disclose how the task is to be carried out. Our task in this study is to ascertain how the gospel can be extended to people of every culture. David Bosch is of the view that mission describes the total task which God has set the church for the salvation of the world. For Bosch the salvation of the world is the task of the church and this involves the communication of the gospel to people of all cultural backgrounds.¹⁰ Letty Russell points out that God invites us to join in his mission and plan for the world of restoring all men to their true humanity. Participation in this invitation of Christ to all men forms the task of the church. As all the members of the church participate in this invitation of Christ, they also become partners in extending the invitation.¹¹ The assertions of the writer are vital for the study as we examine the task of the church, to participate in God's plan for the world. However the writer did not spell out the context in which the task is to be accomplished. The study focuses on rural church planting and its challenges. Grudem is of the view that as the church proclaims the good news of the kingdom; people will come into the church and begin to experience the blessings of God's rule in their lives.¹² In the view of the author, it is a task for the church to proclaim the good news which results in people being saved. This is in line with the focus of the study. The context of the activity is however missing in the writer's assertions. The study focuses on evangelism in the rural environment. In examining the missionary burden, Samuel Faircloth sees the motif in the Book of Acts as the expansion of the faith through missionary witness in the power of the Holy Spirit. He concludes that the will of the Holy Spirit is the continuous planting of new churches throughout the

⁹ John Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (London: Falcon, 1975), 19.

¹⁰ David Bosch, *Witness to the World* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Stott, 1980), 17.

¹¹ Letty M. Russell, *Christian Education in Mission* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, no date), 25.

¹² Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Nottingham: Inter Varsity Press, 1994), 864.

world.¹³ The author sees the continuous planting of new churches as being the will of the Holy Spirit. This is the task of the church, what God desires the church to do in the world. This is in line with the focus of the study, which addresses evangelism as the task of the church. Edmund Clowney is of the view that the Lord who calls his church to worship and to nurture also sends it through the centuries and across the continents to witness for him.¹⁴ According to the author the Church exists not only to worship or fellowship but to witness to the saving power of Jesus Christ. This falls in line with the objective of the study to examine the task of the Church as the proclamation of the gospel. John Stott points out that we who claim to be God's people should share the breath of God's concerns. In particular we should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men from every kind of oppression.¹⁵ In the writer's view, Christians share God's concerns for the world when we proclaim the gospel which liberates men and women from every kind of oppression. This is useful for the study. Van Gelder writes that the challenge before the church is to reclaim lost territory in the whole of creation for the glory and purposes of God. He contends that God is not finished with the world in the midst of its sin and brokenness, but wants to bring about reconciliation in all of life.¹⁶ How would God bring about reconciliation in all of life? We are not told. But this study seeks to examine evangelism as the task of the church in bringing about the purpose of God in reconciling the world to Himself.

¹³ S. D. Faircloth, *Church Planting for Reproduction* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1991), 20.

¹⁴ Edmund P.C. Clowney, *The Church* (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1995), 155.

¹⁵ John Stott, *Making Christ Known* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996), 25.

¹⁶ Van C. Gelder, *The essence of the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000), 135.

1.8.3 Rural Ministry

According to Peter Batchelor, the greatest part of the population of developing countries is rural. Most of these people are poor. In his view, the Old and New Testaments show that the poor have rights and should be helped. The church should not only respond by helping the poor, through training and practical assistance, to become capable of meeting essential needs, but she should also work against the causes of poverty. This means that Christians must never be afraid to speak out on behalf of the poor. He concludes that “The silence of the Church, in the face of rural poverty, can be perceived as a way of keeping poor people in their miserable state.”¹⁷ Batchelor maintains that there is a correlation between the rural community and poverty. Thus, rural communities are plagued with poverty which seems to deprive them of essential and basic necessities of life. The reasons for the poverty may be due to ignorance, political, or economic. The response of the church to the plight of rural communities is a key component of her mandate towards the world, and this should never be compromised.

Shannon Jung and others have observed that rural communities are much more diverse than is commonly believed. Farmers, frequently thought to be the largest segment of the rural population live in greater poverty than urban families. The Church is therefore strategically positioned to initiate change in the direction of more promising futures for individuals, for human community and for the land itself.¹⁸ Jung et al point out the dilemma of the rural environment and challenge the church to rise to the task of responding to the social and spiritual needs of the people. Thus, the Church has been mandated to respond to the needs of humankind at all levels, and has what it takes to carry out this task.

¹⁷ Peter Batchelor *People in Rural Development* (Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1993), 23-24.

¹⁸ Jung, S. et al. *Rural Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 9-10.

John Perkins also contends that one of the distinguishing marks of Christian community development is its commitment to living among the poor.¹⁹ Living among the poor is a commitment that has to be made. This is very important in that it demonstrates care and concern for the plight of the vulnerable.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters. It began with an introductory chapter which addressed the background to the study, the statement of problem, the research questions, the aim and objectives of the study, the research methodology, the significance of the study and the review of the related literature and the organization of the study. Chapter two examined the background to the Prestea area and rural church planting. It examined issues such as geographical and economic profile of the area, the history and origin of the people, their social structure and political organization, and their religious life and thought. The third chapter addresses the issue of the Prestea area and challenges of rural ministry. Issues addressed in this chapter include the biblical foundations of missions, the methods of rural church planting, as well as the challenges of rural church planting. Chapter four is a theological reflection on Christianity and rural ministry. It evaluates issues such as the socio-economic issues and spiritual growth, leadership and church expansion, Christianity and cultural issues, the church's ministry of proclamation, as well as the church's social responsibility. The fifth chapter concludes the study and addressed the summary of the study, the general conclusion and some recommendations.

¹⁹ John M. Perkins, *Beyond Charity: The Call to Christian Community Development* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1993), 75.

1.10 Conclusion

The discussion here constitutes an overview of the study of the challenges of rural church planting in the Prestea area in the Western Region. It entails the background to the study, the research problem, some research questions, the aims and objectives of the study, the research methodology, the relevance of the study, the scope and organization of the study as well as the review of related literature on the study.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND TO THE PRESTEA AREA AND RURAL CHURCH PLANTING

2.1 Introduction

The introductory chapter entailed an overview of the study. It addresses the background of the study, the statement of problem, the research questions, aim and objectives of the study, the significance of the study, the research methodology, the scope of the study, as well as the review of related literature and the organization of the study. This chapter examines the background to the Prestea area and rural church planting. Issues to be addressed include the profile of the Prestea area including its geographic, economic life, the history and origin of the indigenous people of the area, its religious life and thought, as well as the biblical foundation of missions.

2.2 Background and Economic Profile

2.2.1 Location and size

According to an official document the Prestea–Huni Valley District is one of the newly created Districts which was carved out from the then Wassa West District Assembly and has its Headquarters at Bogoso. It was formally inaugurated on 29th February, 2008. Prestea-Huni Valley is a mining town situated about 33 Kilometers east of Tarkwa. It shares boundaries on the North West with Wassa Amenfi East District, on the South West with Mpohor Wassa East District, on the West with Axim Municipal Assembly, on the South with Tarkwa Nsuaem Municipal Assembly and the North by Wassa Amenfi West District Assembly. The District covers an area of about 1445.56 square kilometers and lies within the South Western Equatorial Zone.²⁰

²⁰ Official Document, Prestea Huni Valley District Assembly, 2014, 23.

Bogoso serves as the administrative capital of the Prestea Huni Valley District Assembly. It has a natural geographic advantage of concessions of both Gold and Economic trees like mahogany, wawa, odum, sapele among others. This has earned it about 4 mining companies currently. The objective of developing the town came into focus in 1957 where all political parties use Bogoso as their constituency centre.²¹ Bogoso was chosen as the District capital due to its location and to unite people of different backgrounds, belief and norms. Moreover, it was to be an integrated socio-commercial and industrial community. The District has a concentrated forest reserve of gold. Its mining success is undisputable.²²

2.2.2 Topography and Soils

The topography of the area is generally undulating with few scarps ranging between 150m to 300m above sea level. Soils in Prestea Huni Valley are composed of sand, black and clay, humus, gravel and stone. On the other hand, soils in the District are deep and open and acidic in many places due to heavy leaching of bases from the top because of high rainfall, humidity and temperatures. The acidity of the soil reduces the availability of phosphorus, calcium and magnesium. Generally, levels are suitable for the cultivation of vegetables and major crops like cassava, cocoyam, maize and yam. However, the soil supports the growing of perennial crops like cola nuts, cocoa, Rubber, Oil palm and pear among others.

2.2.3 Climate

Prestea Huni valley is in the Rain Forest Zone of Ghana. It enjoys a wet equatorial climate. The rainy season is usually from March to July (major season) and from September to November (minor season). The number of rainy days in the District did

²¹ Official Document, Prestea Huni Valley District Assembly, 2014, 23.

²² Official Document, Prestea Huni Valley District Assembly, 2014, 23.

not change very much between 2000, 2001 and 2005 but increased quite dramatically in 2003 and 2006. The highest amount of rain is experienced in March to July and October to February as the dry season. The rainy season has an important effect on the environment in creating watersheds, large expanse of stagnant water bodies, deep trenches and gullies as well as leaching the nutrient content of the soil.²³ Temperatures are high all year round with significant daily and seasonal variations. The annual average temperatures range between 26°C and 30°C in the major season. Humidity varies from 75%-80% in the wet season and 70%-80% in the dry season. Winds generally of low velocity blow over the area from the south during the day and evening and from the west in the night and early morning. The Prestea Huni valley District is one of the Districts that experience the highest rainfall in the Country. It has a mean annual rainfall of 187.83.²⁴

2.2.4 Vegetation

The District falls within the rainfall belt with the height of trees ranging between 15-40 meters high. The forest is full of climbers and lianas, which are able to reach into the upper tree layer. Economic trees include mahogany, wawa, odum sapele among others.

2.2.5 Geology

The District falls within the forest dissected plateaus physiographic region, Precambrian rocks of Birimian underlie the forest dissected plateau. The land rises from about 240m to about 300m above sea level. The Bririmian rocks are regarded as

²³ Official Document, Prestea Huni Valley District Assembly, 2014, 23.

²⁴ Official Document, Prestea Huni Valley District Assembly, 2014, 23.

the most important formations due to its mineral potentials. Hence the existence of many Gold mining companies in the District.²⁵

2.2.6 Hydrology

Few streams flow throughout the year in the District. A number of streams however, flow through depressions into the sea during the rainy season. These streams flow into some rivers in the District. Notable among them are the Ankobra (which flows from the Ashanti Region into the Ankobra River of Ankobra Town-Prestea). Mansi (flows from Ashanti Region into Ehyireso River and Joins Ankobra). Peme (flows from Pemeso into Mansi). Opongso (flows from Opong Valley into Ankobra). Hunis (Flows from Huni Valley into Ankobra). These Rivers are fed by a number of little tributaries including Buri, Anoni, Sumin, Ayiasu drain the area.²⁶

2.2.7 The Natural Environment

The rapid population expansion in the District and Saturday as its market day has brought with its attendant environmental and sanitation problems and challenges.

In recent time, most part of the rich forest has been reduced to secondary forest through increased human activity. Human activities like, excessive opening cast mining, farming activities and indiscriminate lumbering, have impacted negatively on the natural environment. However, the District can still boast of 274.16 square kilometers as its forest reserves comprising of Bonsa Reserves (Aboso), Ben West (Huni-Valley) and Nkontoben (Huni valley).²⁷

²⁵ Official Document, Prestea Huni Valley District Assembly, 2014, 23.

²⁶ Official Document, Prestea Huni Valley District Assembly, 2014, 23.

²⁷ Official Document, Prestea Huni Valley District Assembly, 2014, 23.

2.3 Demographic Characteristics

According to the year 2000 population and housing census, the total population of the then Wassa West District was 232699 which comprised 49.2% Female and 50.8% males. Meanwhile, the Wassa West District has now been divided into two; Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipal Assembly and Prestea-Huni-Valley District Assembly.

However, our attention is on Prestea-Huni –Valley District Assembly with a total population of 114349 (49.1%) of the total population of the then Wassa West District. Males and Females comprises 58364(51.0%) and 55985(49.0%) respectively. Going by the exponential formula at a growth rate of 3.0%, the population of the District is expected to increase from 114347 to 154376 in 10years and 169356 in 13years.²⁸

Throughout the 22 communities which include smaller areas within them in the district, we observed that, Bogoso community had the highest population of 8262 from the 2000 census which constituted (7.22%) and it is expected to increase to 12227 (7.22%) in 2013. Followed by Aboso with a total population of 12117 (7.16%) in 2013. Fanti Mines is the community with the least population of 3198 (2.8) in year 2000 and it is expected to increase to 4318 (2.8%) and 473 (2.8%) in 2010 and 2013 respectively. However the rest of the communities have their population within 6000+ and 4000+ in the year 2000, 8000+ and 4000+ in the year 2010 and 10000+ and 5000+ in the year 2013.²⁹

²⁸ Official Document, Prestea Huni Valley District Assembly, 2014, 23.

²⁹ Official Document, Prestea Huni Valley District Assembly, 2014, 23.

2.3.1 Birth and Migratory Patterns

People constantly move from one place to another for varied reasons, this may be influenced by social, economic activities etc. Although there has been a considerable level of migration in the region, majority of the enumerated population of the Districts are indigenes or non-migrants. It must be emphasized however; that the mere fact a person was enumerated at his or her place of birth does not necessarily imply that he or she had never migrated. People may move from their place of birth to work in another region. Now, emphasizing more on our part of the region, we focus on Prestea-Huni-Valley District. The fairly large urban population in Prestea-Huni-Valley (35.6%) may be due to the high influx of migrants in response to the old and newly established gold mines including “galamsey” activities around these areas. Prestea, Bogoso and Aboso with active large mining operations as well as factories account for the urbanized nature of the district there by influences migration.

2.4 Major Economic Activities

Agriculture is the major force that the District relies upon in terms of employment. Basically, Agricultural development in the District is confined to subsistence farming mostly livelihood. About 60 to 70% of Prestea Huni Valley population is engaged in agricultural activities. Most of the remaining 30-40% is not engaged in any gainful activity to earn regular income. The problem of unemployment has been compounded by the fact that many people migrate from other part of the country in search of both existent and non-existent jobs in the mining engineering and other companies that offer support services to the mines. A sizeable proportion is youth (10-40%). Mostly due to migration, these youth can be seen on market days in the major towns of as shoeshine boys, truck pushers and galamsey operators.

2.4.1 Major Food Crops

The major food crops grown are maize, cassava, rice and plantain.

2.4.2 Tree crops

Cocoa, Oil Palm, Coffee, Rubber, Coconut and citrus are some of the major cash crops. Prominent among the cash crops with economic values in the district are oil palm, rubber, cocoa and coconut.

2.4.3 Non-Traditional Crops

The cultivation of non-traditional crops in the district is gaining popularity of becoming export crops. They include cola, pineapple, piper Nigrum (black pepper), mushroom, citrus and banana. These crops have a bigger potential of divesting the local economy and boost the source of income for the indigenous people.

2.5 Economic Infrastructure

The total length of road network in the Prestea Huni-Valley District is 448.6 km. 138 km of the roads network are Trunk roads, 248.6 km are Feeder roads and the remaining 62.0 km are Town/Urban roads. Because most of the communities are rural, road network is the major economic infrastructure. The road network, which is the vehicle for accelerated development, is in bad shape. There are vibrant weekly market centers located at the under listed areas. These attract large number of traders from Takoradi, Kumasi and Cape coast etc.³⁰

³⁰ Official Document, Prestea Huni Valley District Assembly, 2014, 23.

Table 1.0 Inter/Intra District Trade³¹

Market Centres	Area/Urban Council	Market Day
Akotom	Awudua	Thursday
Wassa Nkran	Aboso	Tuesday
Prestea	Prestea	Friday
Bogoso	Bogoso	Saturday
Huni Valley	Huni Valley	Friday
Darmang	Huni Valley	Wednesday
Gordon	Awudua	Thursday

2.6 History and Origin of the People

According to Nana Kwasi Abrefa, the chief linguist at the royal palace at Himan, the people of Prestea are of the Oyoko Clan who came to settle in their present location about 500 years ago Kokofu in the Ashanti region. Among the founding members are Nana Kyei Anfra Nana Nteboa, I, and Nana Kyekyer.³²

2.6.1 Social Structure and Political Organization

The people of Prestea are Wassa speaking and are the Akan stock. In respect of their social structure the people are organized around the *abusua* (family) and are of the Akan stock. In respect of their social structure, the people are organized around the *abusua* (family) and the *nton* (clan). Each family has a head who presides over every family event including child naming, marriages and funerals. Each member of a family is expected to fulfill all his or her obligations including attendance at funerals, marriage ceremonies as well as supporting the children in their education. Respect is

³¹ Source: Planning Department, Prestea Huni-Valley District Assembly.

³² Interview with Nana Kwasi Abrefa, *The Chief Linguist At The Royal Palace At Himan*, 18th July, 2014.

to be accorded to all members of the family including the uncles, nieces, nephews, and aunties. The marriage system in the Prestea area falls in line with the Akan marriage pattern, however, with some variations. The bridegroom is expected to bring along a bottle of drink usually schnapps to his in-law's house. This is often described as the *knocking rites* (knocking rites). The aim of this is to announce the intention of the bridegroom. After serious investigations have been carried out by the families of the would-be couple, and satisfaction has been achieved, a date is fixed for the marriage rites. The bridegroom is expected to finance marriage feast indirectly and is also expected by custom to pay amount of twenty-five Ghana pesewas (GH¢0.25) to the lady's family. This notwithstanding, does not nullify the gifts which the bridegroom is expected to give to the lady's family periodically.³³ After the customary rites had been performed, the lady, accompanied by her sisters and an elderly woman nominated by her family, is taken to her marital home to begin her marriage journey. In the Prestea area, funerals are cherished by the people. This is against the background that they are an indigenous people who believe in traditions laid down by their forebears. Like any other African society, the people of the Prestea area, put much premium on the celebration of funerals which emphasizes their belief in life after death. When one dies, the family of the deceased is expected by custom, to first report the event to the *Nananom* (royal family). They are to present a bottle of drink usually schnapps to the *Okyeame* (chief linguist) at the royal palace, which will give them the burial rights in the community.³⁴ A dead person is usually buried on Saturday after which the family and sympathizers will disperse. Final funeral rites are usually observed on Sundays in the afternoon, irrespective of whether the deceased is

³³ Interview with Nana Kwasi Abrefa, *The Chief Linguist At The Royal Palace At Himan*, 18th July, 2014.

³⁴ Interview with Nana Kwasi Abrefa, *The Chief Linguist At The Royal Palace At Himan*, 18th July, 2014.

a Christian or not. In terms of donation, notwithstanding the donations of well-wishers and sympathizers, every community member is expected to pay an amount of twenty pesewas (GH¢0.20p) as funeral donation. This amount is paid to the community secretary who records it in the community register bearing the names of all members of the community. In terms of political organization, the Prestea or Himan Stool is of divisional status subject to the Omanhene (Paramount Chief). The first chief to occupy the stool was Nana Kyei Anfro who was among the founding members. The current chief is Nana Nteboa Pra IV who is assisted by a council of elders and also an *Odikro* (subchief) of the surrounding communities. The Omanhene of Wassa Fiase traditional area Osagyefo Kwamina Animil IV whose royal palace is located at Tarkwa. The traditional set-up is the same trend for all the areas. The Hierarchy runs as follows; Divisional Chief, Ebusuapanyin, Queen Mother, Tufuhene, Gyasehene, Benkumhene, Nifahene, Adontenhene, Gyantuahene, Mbrantehene, Akyeamhene, Ahenkoraa.

2.6.2 Ethnic Diversity

The area has many ethnic groups. Apart from the Wassa people, who are indigenous and occupy about 50% of the area in general, the remaining 50% is a mixture of Akans especially Fantes and Nzemas consisting of 30%. About 15% are Ewes, Gas, Krobos whilst the remaining 5% are Northerners.³⁵

2.6.3 Religious Life and Thought

The people of Prestea area are predominantly indigenous and practice their indigenous religion as tradition carried over from succeeding generations. Like all Africans, the people believe in the Supreme Being, the ancestors and the lesser gods.

³⁵ Interview with Nana Kwasi Abrefa, *The Chief Linguist At The Royal Palace At Himan*, 18th July, 2014.

They also believe in the power of spirits, both malevolent and benevolent ones which affect the everyday life of humans. The cardinal point of the belief system of the people of Prestea is the belief in the ancestral cult which is widespread in many areas especially the rural communities. The ancestors are believed to be the custodians of the people. In the view of Nana Akwasi Abrefa, the belief in the ancestors is very prominent because it is believed that they have the power to bless with fertility, long life, and prosperity, and also to curse with barrenness, poverty, diseases and even death. As a result of this strong belief in the ancestors, shrines dedicated to these ancestors are located in the homestead to indicate their nearness to their living descendants. This is also an indication of the dependence of the living on their ancestors whom they see as mediators between them and the Supreme Being.³⁶ The belief in the lesser gods is also widespread among the people. These gods are believed to be involved in the everyday life of the people especially in their role as messengers. They can be found in almost every rural communities and tend to influence life in the rural areas. Asuo Kofi and Asuo Panin are believed to be the major shrines in the area and they are so much revered. In the light of this reverence, some days are set aside as taboo days during which worship is offered to these shrines. Prestea and all the rural communities, Friday is dedicated to the spirit of the earth during which no activity is to be undertaken on any land. It is believed that it is a day on which mother earth is at rest and need not to be disturbed with any activity. Despite the indigenous religion prevalent in the area, there has been an influx of Christian groups and denominations. Notable churches in the area include the Assemblies of God Church, the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Church of Pentecost, the Christ Apostolic Church, Roman Catholic Church, Apostolic Faith Mission International, International

³⁶ Interview with Nana Kwasi Abrefa, *The Chief Linguist At The Royal Palace At Himan*, 18th July, 2014.

Central Gospel Church, The Ghana Baptist Convention Churches, and a host of other independent Charismatic churches and African independent churches. Some of these churches have bigger congregations in the big towns such as Bogoso, and some branches in the rural communities. Again, there exist in Prestea and its rural communities some adherents of the Islamic faith. The Sunni and Shiate sets are all evident in Prestea and the other communities. According to Mallam Kasim Abdulai, the leader of the Tijaniyya sect in Prestea, there are the Ahmaddiyya, Tijaniyya and the Al-Sunna groups in the area who have a total of fifteen (15) mosques.³⁷ The Muslim population is made up of mostly settlers from Northern Ghana and some West African alien communities. These have attracted to the area because of cocoa farming and mining.

2.7 Conclusion

The discussion focuses on the background information relating to the Prestea area. It captured the geographical, economic, social and political organization as well as religious life and thought of the people.

³⁷ Interview with Mallam Kasim Abdulai, *the leader of the Tijaniyya sect in Prestea*, 18th July, 2014.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PRESTEA AREA AND CHALLENGES OF RURAL MINISTRY

3.1 Introduction

The previous discussion entailed an overview of the Prestea area. Among the issues addressed are the geographical and economic profile, the social structure and political organization, as well as the religious life and thought. In this chapter, an attempt is made to examine the nature and challenges of church planting in the rural areas of Prestea. Issues discussed here include the biblical foundations of missions, the church and its ministry, the nature and methods of rural church planting, and the challenges of rural ministry.

3.2 Biblical Foundations of Missions

3.2.1 Mission in the Old Testament.

From the traditional understanding of mission, which is seen as sending preachers to distant places to cross religious and geographical frontiers to win others to faith in Yahweh, one wonders if there is any indication of mission in the old Testament. This however is not the case even though the Old Testament seems to portray that God's love for Israel was particular and exclusive for them alone. The intention of God was to elect Israel to serve the other nations. Abraham was called to leave all that was precious to him and go to a new land. (Genesis 12:1). He was to be blessed as a privilege but he also carried a big responsibility to all the nations“- in you shall all the nations of the world be blessed”. Israel was chosen by God and made God's people by a covenant of 'grace' (Deut 5:6) and God's requirement for life for them was the Law (Deut 7:1-6). They were to love God as one and only God and be examples in

portraying God's love and light to the other nations. They were to be a witness of God to the whole world (Isaiah 49:6ff).

3.2.2 Mission in the New Testament

Mission in the New Testament is embodied in the life and ministry of Jesus. The gospels portray the missionary agenda of Jesus. For instance Luke 2:9-10 portrays his birth as good news that shall be for all people. This includes the birth of Jesus to be a savior and Messiah to his people. The ministry of Jesus also portrays his character of involvement in the lives of ordinary people with the aim of bringing them to him. This includes the call of the twelve disciples, as well as the multitude that followed him. His teachings demonstrated his resolve to appeal to people concerning God's kingdom. In the book of Acts, mention is also made of the early expanding their burden with the entry of new people. The new people added to their number daily through their lifestyle and preaching. Later we read of the apostle Paul arising the then world with the message of Christ which produced many churches in the Roman and Greek territories.

3.3 The Methods of Rural Church Planting

The methods employed by the various denominations in planting churches in the rural areas of Prestea are very variant. These include open air meetings popularly called crusades, house to house visitation, and prayer fellowships. According to Rev. J. C., Agbeshie the church of Pentecost usually employs the open air meetings strategy which normally covers a period of one week. Before the commencement of the meeting, an advanced team is sent to the community, to announce the intentions of the church to organize the meeting.

At each meeting, the Word of God is often proclaimed and an altar call or invitation is made for people to surrender their lives to Christ. All who will do so are handed over to a team of counselors who after counseling them, take their contacts and follow on them to ensure that they are rooted in the faith. At the end of the meeting, all converts are brought together to begin the church which usually meet in a local school building or a shed.³⁸ On the part of Kwaku Atta Amoateng, the Methodist Church commenced work at Abotare Ye in 1999. Before then he and others used to attend church service at Bawdie, which is close to Abotare Ye. In the course of time, the idea of opening a branch at Abotrare Ye came up and through an open-air programme and house to house visitation, the church was established. Presently the church has a permanent chapel, but in the early years they began meeting under a shed roofed with palm fronts.³⁹ In the same way, Mr. Joseph Osei, the local lay worker of the Assemblies of God Church, narrates that the church established its presence at Tarkwa Bremang, in 2010. The area is a surface mining or “galamsey” site and the church used prayer meetings with the miners to establish the church. They began meeting at a local cocoa shed moved into a wooden structure and now have their own chapel.⁴⁰ On his part, Elder Antwi Boasiako maintains that, the church of Pentecost began work at Fantikrom in 2002. Through an open air meeting organized by the mother church at Bonodie five days, the church was established. They began meeting under a shed but now they have their own chapel. From an initial membership of 27 but now their membership has increased to 110.⁴¹ According to Elder Ernest Boamah Manu, the Catechist in charge of the Roman Catholic Church at Dwummugum the church employed house to house visitation method to establish their presence at Dwurugum.

³⁸ Interview with Rev. J. C. Agbeshie, *District Pastor*, The Church of Pentecost, Prestea-Himan District B.

³⁹ Interview with Rev. J. C. Agbeshie, *District Pastor*, The Church of Pentecost, Prestea-Himan District B.

⁴⁰ Interview with Mr. Kwaku Atta Amoateng, *Caretaker*, the Methodist Church, Abotare Ye.

⁴¹ Interview with Elder Antwi Boasiako, *Presiding Elder*, Church of Pentecost, Fantikrom, 18th July, 2014.

Before, then there were 27 members who used to travel to Prestea Nkwanta Parish for worship. From the initial membership of 27, the church at Dwurugum now has 87 people, who meet in a permanent chapel.⁴² According to Elder James Kwaku, the elder in charge of the Apostolic Faith Mission International at Techimantia the Mother Church at Prestea led by Rev. Castro Opoku Asare came to the area in 2012 and through prayer fellowship which he initiated the church was established. The Techimantia branch began with 17 but now the membership has increased to 85 adults.⁴³

3.4 The Challenges of Rural Church Planting

Despite the success in establishing churches in the rural areas of Prestea, there are challenges which need to be addressed. These include infrastructural, socio-economic, spiritual and leadership challenges.

3.4.1 Infrastructural Challenges

It has been established that the rural communities lack the basic amenities such as good roads and electricity, which seem to hamper the growth of the churches. Because of the climatic conditions in the Prestea area, with the high incidence of rainfall, the road network in every community is deteriorated. This has a residual effect on transportation, making commuting between communities very difficult. Again, it becomes very difficult for senior pastors to visit their rural churches often citing transport as a major challenge. Electricity is also lacking in most of the rural communities and this has a bearing poverty levels of the communities. Some communities also lack health facilities and good drinking water which become a

⁴² Interview with Elder Ernest Boamah Manu, *Catechist Roman Catholic Church*, Dwurugum, 21st July, 2014.

⁴³ Interview with Elder James Kwaku, *Elder in Charge*, Apostolic Faith Mission International, 21st July, 2014.

disincentive for the youth. According to Elder Antwi Boasiako, Fantikrom lacks electricity, health post and good drinking water and as a result many people are leaving the community for the urban centres.⁴⁴ Elder Ernest Boamah Manu is also of the view that lack of portable drinking water is a major challenge for Dwurugum community.⁴⁵

3.4.2 Socio-Economic Challenges

Most of the rural communities also face socio-cultural challenges. For instance, because these rural communities are usually farming communities they are usually at the mercy of middlemen and women who come to their doorsteps to buy their farm products at unattractive prices. This explains why most rural dwellers are often poor. Other communities also lack educational facilities, and as such the children have no access to quality education. Elder Ernest Boamah Manu maintains that, Dwurugum has poor access to communication network such as telephone and the internet. Because of this most of the youth are migrating to the urban centres for greener pastures thus reducing membership in the churches. Most of the rural communities also suffer at the hands of chain saw operators who destroy their farms. The timber logs that are felled tend to destroy cocoa, and food crop farms. The small scale miners are also a problem in the rural communities. Their activities are also a nuisance as most cocoa farms and food crops are destroyed. The mining operations also pollute springs and rivers which serve as sources of drinking water for most rural communities.

⁴⁴ Interview with Elder Antwi Boasiako, *Church of Pentecost*, Fantikrom.

⁴⁵ Interview with Elder Ernest Boamah Manu, Dwurugum.

3.4.3 Spiritual Challenges

Most of the rural communities have major shrines which have become their backbone for many years. The indigenous nature of these rural communities makes them adhere strongly to their traditional religious practices. Therefore any call on them to leave their traditional religion and commit themselves to the Christian religion is often met with excuses and strong resistance. This might be attributed to the fact that the Christian message that is often communicated calls on its audience to break off with their “past” meaning their indigenous religion and to accept the Christian religion. The shrines in the rural communities have priests and priestesses and cult attendants who see themselves as the custodians of the people. The activities of these personnel tend to put fear in the people hence their resistance to accept any Christian message. Also, the people are predominantly farmers, they spend long hours on their farms which tend to affect the participation in evening church programmes, such as Bible studies and prayer, thus reducing their levels of spirituality. Elder James Kwaku is of the view that, because most of the church members are not well rooted in the scriptures, they often patronize the shrine secretly in times of trouble.⁴⁶ On his part Elder Antwi Boasiako maintains that pastoral visits by minister from the big towns is not the best. As a result of this, the rural churches lack motivation, and which also affect their growth.

3.4.4 Leadership Challenges

Leadership seems to be a major problem for rural churches. These rural churches tend to hang on the shoulders of one or two leaders who are not well motivated to handle them. It is not surprising to find leaders in rural churches who are polygamous, drunkards, lotto agents, and traders in alcoholic beverages. In that instance they

⁴⁶ Interview with Elder Ernest Boamah Manu, Dwurugum.

become bad examples for the churches. Lack of training, motivation are the major obstacles to leadership in rural communities. Some rural churches are sometimes lucky enough to have teachers or national service personnel in their midst and in that case the churches will benefit from their services. The rural-urban migration syndrome seems to have a negative impact on rural church leadership. Promising leaders who leave the rural communities for the urban centres tend to create vacuums in most rural churches which can affect their growth.

3.5 Conclusion

The discussion in this section centered on the Prestea area and church planting. It addressed issues such as the biblical foundation of missions, the methods of rural church planting and the challenges of rural church ministry. It can be concluded that despite the challenges, the churches in the rural communities can be assisted to better their lot and grow. Churches in urban areas should “come over to Macedonia and help” the rural churches.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON CHRISTIANITY AND RURAL MINISTRY

4.1 Introduction

The previous discussion, focused on the Prestea area and church planting. It examined issues such as the methods of rural church planting, the challenges of rural church planting, as well as the biblical foundation of missions. In this chapter, an attempt is made to evaluate and analyze the issues in connection with Christianity and rural ministry from a theological perspective. Issues addressed here include socio-economic issues and spiritual growth, leadership and church expansion, as well as Christianity and cultural issues.

4.2 Socio-Economic Issues and Spiritual Growth

The church exists to worship God, minister to itself in fellowship and to reach out to the outside world through evangelism and missions. Every local church, no matter where it is situated, is to carry out this biblical mandate. However, the church in the rural environment is faced with many social and economic challenges. These challenges, to a large extent, affect the spiritual growth of the church. The issue of poverty prevents many from church participation, some other rural dwellers have to travel long distance to their farms. Some do not have opportunity to participate in week-day activities. Due to the lack of employment opportunities in most rural communities, many of the youth tend to migrate to the urban centres. Issues of church life and nurture are saddled with many challenges. Bible studies and prayer meetings tend to receive poor patronage in the rural setting. Due to the high poverty levels in

most rural communities, many cannot afford to buy Bibles, which is an essential tool for spiritual nurture.

4.3 Leadership and Church Expansion

Leadership is very critical to the growth of every institution. Most rural churches tend to rely on the services of lay leadership who are sometimes untrained in theological issues. It is evident that poor leadership is a bane to the growth of rural churches. What can an untrained leader bring to bear on the growth of the church? Most denominational leaders are sometimes guilty of not visiting their rural congregations and this tends to demotivate the lay leaders of the rural churches. It is on record that, most rural church leaders are often accused of immoral lifestyles such as alcoholism, polygamy, co-habitation, concubinage, and lotto staking. Some church leaders are also operators of drinking spots. The question is, if leaders who are supposed to show the way in spiritual matters, are guilty of these immoral behaviour, what can they bring together to bear on their churches in terms of expansion and spirituality?

4.4 Christianity and Cultural Issues

Christianity is a religion that transcends all cultural barriers. The good news of salvation is to be proclaimed in all settings, thus cross cultural missions lies at the heart of God's eternal purpose for humanity. There are some customs and traditions which sometimes pose a challenge to the rural church. If such cultural issues are not handled with much care, it can bring about serious problems for the rural church. For instance, how can the rural church cope with the issue of taboo days in the rural community? Again with regards to funeral celebrations and the issues of burial items (adesiedie), what line can be drawn between what the church can do and not do? What is the response of the church to the issue of chieftaincy and Christianity, when it comes to the occupation of a vacant stool, in which the candidates includes some

members of the rural church? On the issue of marriage, can the Christian parent who is an abusuparin (head of family) as a matter of custom, demand his would-be in-law to bring to him drinks and sacrificial animals as part of the customary rites of his daughter?

4.5 The Church's Ministry of Proclamation

John Stott has noted that we who claim to be God's people should share the breath of God's concerns. In particular, we should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men from every kind of oppression. In his view, justice, reconciliation and freedom is more and more the object of human quest in today's world. But these were God's will for society long before they became man's quest.⁴⁷ God loves the good and hates the evil. Stott's assertions presupposes that the church owes it's a duty to carry out God's purpose and will for society, and that is seeking to reconcile lost man to God to create a society for the good of humankind. But how does the church do this? Firstly, the church must incarnate the good news it proclaims. It must not only proclaim the gospel but also live it. People must see Christ in the lives of those who profess to be Christians. Living Christlike lives demonstrates what Jesus referred to as the salt and light of the world (Matt 5:13). Christians must strive to bring people into church fellowship where they can be discipled in their faith. It is essential that the good news of Jesus Christ is proclaimed and that individuals place their faith in Christ for salvation. There should not be any discrimination in the proclamation of the gospel. The Great Commission demands that the gospel be proclaimed everywhere, with the rural area inclusive. But how can we handle the growing tendency in the urban centres and neglecting the rural areas?

⁴⁷ J. Stott, *Making Christ Known* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996), 25.

4.6 The Church's Social Responsibility

It is significant to note that, the gospel is wholistic. It responds to people as whole people, it does not single out spiritual or physical needs and just speak to those. People transformed by the love of God, are to respond to God's call to share the gospel not only through evangelism, but also through social concern, economic development and justice. The crucial question is, can a gospel that reconciles people to God without reconciling people to people be the true gospel of Jesus Christ? Our love for Christ should break down every barrier be it ethnic or economic. This is what John Fuder means when he says "our acts of love for the disadvantaged authenticate the genuineness of our faith. When we touch the disadvantaged with our love, we touch Jesus Christ."⁴⁸ It therefore imposes on us the duty to love the poor irrespective of their background, be it racial, ethnic, economic, level of education, rich or poor. By demonstrating love and compassion towards the lost and the poor we show that we belong to Christ and are his obedient servants. Thus the rural areas deserve much attention, and should not be neglected. How can the church respond to the tendency whereby annual church conventions are now being organized in the urban centres and no more the rural areas?

4.7 Conclusion

The discussion involves an evaluation of the issue of Christianity and rural ministry. It addressed issues such as the socio-economic issues and spiritual growth, leadership and church expansion, and Christianity and cultural issues.

⁴⁸ J. Fuder, *A Heart for the City* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 54.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The study which set out to examine the challenges of rural church planting in the Prestea area of the Western Region, is divided into five chapters with some subdivisions where necessary. It began with an overview and an examination of some background issues. These include the background to the Prestea area which emphasized the geographical and economic profile of the area, the history and origin of the people, their social structure and political organization, as well as their religious life and thought. Moreover, the study considers the Prestea area and some challenges in rural church planting. The challenges considered included infrastructural, socio-economic, spiritual and leadership challenges. Also considered was the nature of church planting in the rural areas of Prestea with emphasis on the methods used in the church planting process. The study also evaluated the issue of Christianity and rural ministry from a theological standpoint. The evaluation and analysis was carried out on the basis of the socio-economic issues and spiritual growth, leadership and church expansion, as well as Christianity and cultural issues. The work concludes with a summary of the entire study, a general conclusion to the study, and makes some recommendations.

5.2 General Conclusion of the Study

The study examines the challenges of rural church planting in the Prestea area of the Western Region. It was established that church planting had been carried out in the Prestea area under severe constraints ranging from socio-economic, cultural, infrastructural, spiritual and leadership. Moreover, it was discovered that these

challenges or constraints impact negatively on the rural churches in terms of spiritual growth, numerical growth, and incarnational growth. Despite these seeming challenges, the rural churches can be assisted to thrive if serious consideration is given to the mitigating of these challenges. In so doing, the rural environment can purge itself of the notion that it is a place of deprivation and backwardness.

5.3 Recommendations

In the light of the discussion on the challenges of rural church planting in the Prestea area of the Western Region, the following recommendations are being put forward:

5.3.1 Lay leaders Training Programme

Against the backdrop of the quality of leadership in the rural churches, it is being suggested that competent and efficient leadership be put in place through regular and periodic training. This training regime can be carried out through seminars, sandwich programmes, conferences, retreats and theological training in recognized institutions for promising leaders with scholarship packages.

5.3.2 Bridging the Rural-Urban Gap

Through annual conventions and camp meetings. This can be made possible if church leaders consider the plight of the rural area as a matter of priority. Also a well structured system of support should be put in place to assist the rural churches.

5.3.3 Regular Visits of Church Leaders in the Urban Centres

Regular and periodic visits by church leaders in the urban areas is essential in motivating rural church workers and congregations. It will also provide guidance and direction to the rural churches in order to keep them on track.

5.3.4 Social Responsibility

Denominations can also liaise with government institutions such as the District Assemblies and non-governmental agencies in providing social amenities for the rural areas. These include portable drinking water, access roads, provision of health facilities and schools for the rural folk.

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PERSONALITIES INTERVIEWED

Nana Kwasi Abrefa, *The Chief Linguist At The Royal Palace At Himan.*

Mallam Kasim Abdulai, *the leader of the Tijaniyya sect in Prestea.*

Rev. J. C. Agbeshie, *District Pastor, The Church of Pentecost, Prestea-Himan District B.*

Mr. Kwaku Atta Amoateng, *Caretaker, the Methodist Church, Abotare Ye.*

Elder Antwi Boasiako, *Presiding Elder, Church of Pentecost, Fantikrom.*

Elder Ernest Boamah Manu, *Catechist Roman Catholic Church, Dwurugum.*

Elder James Kwaku, *Elder in Charge, Apostolic Faith Mission International.*

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When was your church established?
2. How was it established?
3. What are some of the challenges that confront your people in the rural community?
4. What is the effect of these challenges on the church?
5. How are these challenges being handled?
6. What can be done to help your church cope with these challenges?

APPENDIX II

RELEVANT PICTURES



Apostolic Faith Mission International, Bawdie-Techimentia



Assemblies of God Church, Dwurugum



The Beginnings of Apostolic Faith Mission International, Prestea