

**CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

**CHALLENGES INVOLVED IN DISCIPLESHIP OF NEW MEMBERS OF
FREEMAN SOCIETY, ASH-TOWN**

**PROJECT WORK
(LONG ESSAY)**

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DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

JUNE, 2019

**CHALLENGES INVOLVED IN DISCIPLESHIP OF NEW MEMBERS OF
FREEMAN SOCIETY, ASH-TOWN**

BY

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**A LONG ESSAY SUBMITTED TO CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN THEOLOGY
WITH ADMINISTRATION**

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

JUNE, 2019

DECLARATION

I, Douglas Badu, do hereby declare that this project work report is the result of my own original research except for sections of which references have been duly made and to the best of my knowledge no 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 dedicated to my lovely wife and life partner Gloria Emma Gharthey and my son Christopher Andam Badu who deserves recognition for their contribution to all I have able to done including this work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank God Almighty the maker of the heavens and the earth for Guidance, direction and his remarking provision which has seen me through my Four years studies in Christian Service University College. May His name be highly exalted.

My sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr. S.B. Adubofuor for the measureless support and guidance he gave me. His knowledgeable direction and attention to details brought out the best in me. Thank you very much Sir. I say God bless you.

Moreover, the Rt. Rev. Christopher Nyarko Andam (Diocesan Bishop Ksi-Diocese), Very Rev. Stephen K. Owusu (Synod Secretary Ksi-Diocese), the Rt. Rev. Osei Safo-Kantanka (Past Bishop Ksi-Diocese), Very Rev. Solomon K. Bruce (Evangelism Coordinator Ksi-Diocese) and Rev. Ekow Essel McForson (Effiduase Diocese) who supported me physically and spiritually, your effort is really appreciable.

Finally, I am most grateful to Madam Diana Osaah (My Grandmother), Madam Akua Ataa (My-in-Law), Mrs. Victoria Duffour, Miss. Julliet Afia Pokuaa, Mr. Patrick Badu, Appiah Badu, Badu Kyenkyenhene and Mrs. Yaa Afrakoma Sarpong, all my colleagues and to all Diocesan Staff of Kumasi Diocese for their suggestions and inputs throughout this project. And not forgetting Mr. Richard Emmanuel Amissah and Victoria Tweneboah popularly known as “Mother” for typesetting and printing of this project work. God bless you all for being the source of my inspiration. God richly bless you all.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Washer holds that God's primary plan for the Church is for mature members to disciple other men and women into disciples.¹ In the New Testament, the last words of Jesus underscore this notion about discipleship. In what Christians call the Great Commission, we read:

Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'²

According to the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus gave this command to the apostles shortly before He ascended into heaven, and it essentially outlines what Jesus expected the apostles, and those who followed them, to do in His absence. This commission is of critical importance because of many reasons which include the fact that it is the last recorded personal instruction given by Jesus to His disciples. Also, it is a special calling from Jesus Christ to all His followers to take specific action while on this earth.

A critical look at this popular text shows that the words "go," "teaching," and "baptizing" simply serve as clarifiers that explain how the command is to be fulfilled. The end goal of missions is not going, teaching, or even baptizing, but making disciples. It is in this light that Paul Washer remarked that "regardless of our zeal or

¹Paul Washer, "Discipleship the Goal of the Great Commission" *Featured Articles* vol 1 no.80 (2010), 23.

²Matthew 28:18-20.

sacrifice, our work on the mission field will prove to be little more than hay, wood, and stubble if we are not endeavoring to accomplish the task for which we were sent – the making of disciples.”³ It is clear then that making disciples is the greatest expectation of every church and if the church fails here she fails everywhere.

Scholars have interpreted the word discipleship in many ways. Zhodiates contends that discipleship is a relationship between the one being discipled, the one who is the discipler, and Jesus Christ himself.⁴ Marshall et al affirmed the meaning of disciple as basically the pupil of a teacher. They state that since the Greek philosophers were surrounded by their pupils, they adopted the distinctive teaching of their masters; the word came to signify the adherent of a particular outlook in religion or philosophy.⁵ In view of that the followers of Jesus were referred to as disciples. This implies they were learners at the feet of their master, Jesus. Discipleship involves a personal allegiance and loyalty to Jesus. In contemporary and practical terms Wiersbe regards a disciple as one who believes on Jesus Christ and expresses this faith by being baptized to join the special family of the faithful. The person remains in the fellowship of the believers so that he might be taught the truths of the faith (Acts 2: 41-47). Such a person is able to go out and win others and teach them.⁶

Many churches and ministries today put heavy emphasis on discipleship because effective discipleship produces results. White and Acheampong attributes to the success of Lighthouse Chapel International, the largest Pentecostal Church in Ghana, to their careful planning and management in missions and therefore in discipleship. They place much emphasis on visitation and follow up of new members. Same can be

³Washer, *Discipleship the Goal of the Great Commission*, 23.

⁴S. Zodiates, *Discipleship* (Chatanooga: AMG Publishers, 1999), 34.

⁵ Douglass, & Tenney, *NIV Compact Dictionary of the Bible* (Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989), 157.

⁶W.W. Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2007), 145.

said of Christ Embassy.⁷ The mission of The United Methodist Church is “to make disciples of Jesus Christ.”⁸ The Methodist Church of Ghana has chosen the theme “go and make disciples of all nations: intensifying our teaching ministry towards disciple making” for the year 2019/2020. These alone justify the notion that discipleship is a key priority in many denominations.

Negligence of this mandate will adversely affect the future leadership and growth of the church. Bill Hulk commented that negligence of the mandate of discipleship will lead many Christians to think of themselves as an audience to be entertained rather than an army ready to march for the advancement of God’s Kingdom. Rick Warren, who sees discipleship as a vital part of building a healthy church remarks that it is not enough to make converts as a church but to grow them into disciples. Sadly, he laments that countless Christians grow older but never grow up. They’re stuck in perpetual spiritual infancy, remaining in diapers and booties.⁹ There seems to be a discipleship deficit in many churches as many churches do not have any solid information and practical application strategies to live out the mandate Jesus has laid out in the Scriptures. Even if such information is present there is little in the prioritization and activities of such churches to prove that making disciples is the pivot about which the church revolves. This can be said to reflect one of the challenges of Freeman Society of the Methodist Church of Ghana.

⁷ P. White & B.O. Acheampong, ‘Planning and management in the Missional agenda of the 21st Century Church: A study of Lighthouse Chapel International’, *Verbum et Ecclesia* 38 no.1, (2017), 1.

⁸Diana L. Hynson, *Teachers Understand the United Methodist Church*, accessed on 20th September, 2018. url: http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/The_Discipleship_Deficit_SinglePage

⁹Rick Warren, *Purpose Driven Church* (Nashville: Zondervan, 2007), 22.

1.2 Problem Statement

The researcher found out that, the Methodist Society called Freeman in Kumasi welcomes at least four or more converts every Sunday. However there is not a corresponding increase in the numbers of the church membership over time. Moreover, despite the many congregants that show up every Sunday, there are few who are matured enough and willing to pick up the task of teaching others the word of God let alone take up leadership positions. This has affected both the quantitative and qualitative growth of the Church. The Methodist Church Ghana understands and prioritizes biblical discipleship as typified in the choice of their theme for the year 2019/2020. However without effective strategies such a goal is unattainable. This research work is an attempt to examine the discipleship strategies of Freeman Society in order to unearth the challenges militating against their effort.

1.3 Research Questions

In the light of the problem stated in section 1.2 this research paper aims to provide answer to the following questions;

1.3.1 *Principal Question*

- i. What are the challenges involved in discipleship of new members of Freeman Society?

1.3.2 *Secondary Questions*

The research further seeks to answer the following questions

- i. How does the Methodist Church understand the concept of discipleship?
- ii. What are the strategies put in place by the Freeman society to disciple members?
- iii. How effective is the discipleship in Freeman Society?

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aims and objectives that guided this research are listed below.

1.4.1 *Principal Aim*

- i. The aim of the study is to identify the challenges involved in discipleship of new members of Freeman Society.

1.4.2 *Secondary Aim*

- i. To investigate the challenges involved in discipleship of new members of Freeman Society.
- ii. To examine the stance of the Freeman Society on the concept of Christian discipleship.
- iii. To assess the challenges of discipleship making of Freeman Society, Ash-Town.

1.5 Scope and Focus of the Study

The study is about challenges involved in new members with focus on the Freeman Methodist Church, Ash Town in Kumasi Diocese of Methodist Church Ghana. Geographically, the scope is limited to Freeman Society, Ash Town Kumasi.

1.6 Research Methodology

The researcher employed both qualitative and the quantitative methods to solicit the necessary data and the needed information relevant for the study.

The qualitative research is aimed at gaining a deep understanding of a specific organization rather than surface description of a huge sample of a population.

The quantitative research deals with more data led approach which provides a measure of what people think from a statistical point of view.

The researcher seeks to provide a deeper insight of what is happening to the Church and to come out with necessary solution.

1.6.1 *Methods of Data Collection*

1.6.1.1 *Primary Source*

The study relied on two approaches for gathering data. The first method of data collection was through primary sources in which the researcher relied on interviews. The interviews covered churches and mission organizations working in the area. The researcher also employed participant observation by taking part in some church services and meetings in order to get firsthand information.

1.6.1.2 *Secondary Source*

The second approach of data collection was through secondary data in which publications such as books, magazines, journals, brochures, and internet sources were thoroughly examined in order to ascertain the needed information for the study.

1.6.1.3 *Sampling Technique*

A random sampling method has been used to select the leaders, lay members of the church and the clergy for the interviews.

1.7 Literature Review

In carrying out any research work, it is important to consider the views of some scholars who have made contributions to the areas similar to the study on hand. These views are addressed under the sub headings; meaning of making disciples, the relationship between evangelism and discipleship and discipleship and mission.

1.7.1 The Meaning of Discipleship

Discipleship is frequently used in the church, but the word *discipleship* never occurs in the Bible. In order to properly understand discipleship, there is the need to first define the term “disciple,” the end product of the process of discipleship.

Opoku Onyinah, the immediate past chairman of the Church of Pentecost defines a disciple as a person who believes in the ideas and principles of someone famous and tries to live the way the person did or does. In the Christian sense, a disciple is one growing to be like Christ, and conforms to his image. He further elaborates that disciples open their whole lives and subject themselves to learning to grow spiritually toward Christ-like maturity. The disciple “walks with Christ in every area of life, lives according to the word of Christ, contributes to the mission of Christ and impacts the world for Christ.”¹⁰

Lesli White defines a disciple as a follower, one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another. A Christian disciple is a person who accepts and assists in the spreading of the Good News of Jesus Christ.¹¹ To her, Christian discipleship is the process by which disciples grow in Jesus Christ and are equipped by the Holy Spirit, who resides in our hearts, to overcome the pressures and trials of this present life and become more Christ-like. Discipleship is not knowing more information about Jesus, but knowing Jesus and being transformed into His image through the constant exposure of the Gospel of grace. Discipleship calls us to live by faith in Him in the everydayness of life by the Holy Spirit’s power.

¹⁰Opoku Onyinah, “The Meaning of Discipleship,” *International Review of Missions* 106, no. 2 (2017), 2.

¹¹Lesli White, *What Discipleship Is and Is Not: Christ’s mandate to make disciples is meant for every one of His followers*. Accessed on 20th September 2018, url: <https://www.beliefnet.com/faiths/christianity/articles/what-discipleship-is-and-is-not.aspx>

It is clear from the above exposition that being a disciple encompasses more than just asking Christ in, and goes far beyond baptism. Our conversion, our acceptance of Christ as Savior, our election, is the beginning, the entrance, into the faith and Christian life. Discipleship, as we define it today, can look many different ways, but it must include this aspect of *teaching* one another to observe the commands of the Lord.

1.7.2 *The Relationship between Evangelism and Discipleship*

The Bible teaches the importance of both evangelism for converts and discipleship to mature believers in the faith. Tamara observed that many Christian churches focus heavily on one or the other, even debating, in some cases, which is more important or necessary.¹² Jesus commanded His disciples saying "Go into the entire world and preach the gospel to all creation."¹³ He also commanded them saying, "Go and make disciples of all nations."¹⁴

Dallas Willard, a philosophy professor at the University of Southern California, lecturer and author of several books on Christianity explains that evangelism the activity through which many people are brought to initial repentance and acknowledgement of their need for God. Discipleship, on the other hand, is a long-term project that involves teaching and mentoring believers along a path of growing faith to help them adopt the likeness of Christ more and more in their daily lives.¹⁵

Zac Poonen observes that these two commands are but two parts of ONE great commission. Only through a careful consideration of, and obedience to, both parts of

¹²Tamara Christine Van Hooser, *Evangelism & Discipleship*, accessed on August 21, 2018.
url:<https://bizfluent.com/12085192/evangelism-discipleship>

¹³ Mk. 16:15.

¹⁴ Matt. 28:19.

¹⁵Dallas Willard, *Evangelism & Discipleship*, 2.

this commission, can we find and fulfill the whole will of God.¹⁶ He explained that the first step obviously is to go out and preach the gospel to everyone. However, he remarked that the purpose of evangelism can be understood fully only when seen in the light of the second part of the great commission - to make disciples in every nation of the world (Matt. 28:19). This according to him is how the plan of God for the unconverted is fully fulfilled. Rick Richardson agrees that it's a problem to separate the two, because Jesus didn't separate them in his own life and ministry.¹⁷ Roy Edgemon adds that evangelism and discipleship are inseparable. This is how he puts it,

They go hand in hand and constitute the *raison d'être* for the church. They are so interwoven in the scripture that they cannot be divided. Any attempt to do so creates a dichotomy that renders both ineffective and less than authentic. Evangelism that does not lead to and include discipleship is shallow and abortive: discipleship that does not result in evangelism is ingrown and deceptive.¹⁸

Jerry Root also observes that asking the question, "Why must evangelism and discipleship go hand in hand?" is like asking, "What came first, the chicken or the egg?" Yet, on closer inspection one observes that Jesus gave the Great Commission to his disciples and told them to evangelize in order to make more disciples. Here the sequence is clear: disciples evangelize in order to produce more disciples.¹⁹

¹⁶Zac Poonen, "The Divorce & Remarriage of Evangelism and Discipleship", *The Exchange* 1, no. 1 (April 2018): 2.

¹⁷Rick Richardson, *Evangelism Outside the Box* (Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data, 1955), 43.

¹⁸Roy Edgemon, *Evangelism and Discipleship*, accessed on 20th September 2018. url: <https://doi.org/10.1177/003463738007700408>.

¹⁹Jerry Root, "Why Must Evangelism and Discipleship Go Hand in Hand?" *Lausanne World Pulse Archive* 1, no. 5 (2007): 4.

1.7.3 Discipleship and Mission

According to Peter Wagner, making disciples is the goal of the great commission from which all other mission activities take inspiration. He argued that whereas going, baptizing, and teaching are all important, they are helping verbs that ensure that the ultimate goal of making disciples is achieved. Going in itself will not fulfill the Great Commission, neither will baptizing nor teaching. No one can make disciples without going, baptizing and teaching. But they cannot be the ultimate goal. The mission effort cannot be quantified by going, baptizing and teaching. It is when disciples are made. Disciples are not those who raise their hands at an evangelistic crusade and say the sinner's prayer because from experience, many of these people do not continue as followers of Christ yet many missionaries become excited with such results.²⁰

According to McGavran, discipleship is making sure baptized believers become biblical Christians growing in their Christian lives and their lives impacted by the knowledge of the Bible and having a personal relationship with Christ. In both submissions, the writers did not make clear the relationship between discipleship and missions and at which point discipleship should take place in the mission process.²¹

1.8 Significance of the Study

The study which examines the discipleship strategies of the Methodist Church, Freeman Society is significant for the following reasons:

1. It would assist the church in the area of assessing the challenges related to discipling of new members.

²⁰Peter C. Wagner, *Church Growth and the Whole Gospel: A Biblical Mandate* (Kent: MARC. 1981), 54-55.

²¹ Donald A. McGavran and Winfield C. Arn, *How to Grow Church* (Ventura: Regal Books, 1973), 37.

2. It would enable Christians generally to come to the realization of the urgency of the task of the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20), and the centrality of discipleship.
3. This work will help the leaders of the Church, the entire membership and the clergy to re-organize the Freeman Methodist Church for membership drive.

1.9 Organization of Chapters

The study is divided into five (5) chapters. It begins with an introductory chapter which addresses the background to the study, the statement of problem, the research questions, the aim and objectives of the study, the research methodology, the scope and focus of the study, the review of related literature, the significance of the study and the organization of the study. The chapter two addresses the background of Freeman Society, Ash Town and also addressed in the chapter is the brief history of the Methodist Church Ghana. The third chapter entails a description of the various challenges involved in discipleship of new members of the Freeman Society, Ash Town. The chapter four is interpretation and analysis of data, the primary source, secondary source, interviews, questionnaires and the participation of the researcher in relation to the topic. The fifth chapter concludes the study and considers the summary of the study, the general conclusion and some recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND TO THE FREEMAN SOCIETY OF THE METHODIST CHURCH GHANA

2.1 Introduction

This chapter basically covers the beginning of the Methodism in Ghana and Asante. With focus on the factors that led to the formation, challenges faced by those who initiated it and the Asante response to the Church. It will also give an account of some individuals who for the love of God made great contributions towards the growth of Asante Methodism which include John Mills, James Hayford, Yaa Asantewaa and the two Britain representatives who started Christian meeting at the Asantehene palace before the arrival of Birch Freeman and the And the background to the Freeman Society as well. How the society was started, individuals who made a great impact on the society, the challenges, the growth and the success of the society.

2.2 Beginning of Methodism in Ghana and Asante

The Methodist Church in Ghana is a product of the work of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society from Britain. It was the request of the old students of the Anglican castle school at Cape Coast which brought the Wesleyan to Ghana.²² The student wanted Bibles and a teacher. There were clusters of such students in other Fante coastal towns like Anomabu, Discove and Dominase.²³ Thus when Rev. Joseph Rhodes Dunwell arrived in Ghana (then Gold Coast) on 1st January 1835 from England to commence work as the first Wesleyan Methodist missionary, there were

²² Celebrating the Faithfulness of God, 180th Anniversary Brochure, MCG – Wesley Cathedral, Adum-Kumasi, 29th September, 2018, 8.

²³ Celebrating the Faithfulness of God, 180th Anniversary Brochure, 8.

already-made nucleus congregations of enthusiastic young men in four localities with Cape Coast as centre.²⁴

Dunwell's life was cut short by the menace of malaria fever, but the determined Fante believers were not discouraged. They declared: 'Though the missionary was dead God lives.' The humble effort of Dunwell laid the foundation for the growth Methodism in Ghana. Within (3) months of his arrival he had won and baptized 50 converts to constitute the first Methodist congregation in Ghana.²⁵ The first Methodist chapel had been built at Cape Coast by the time Dunwell died on 2nd June 1835. Two prominent persons used by God to establish the Methodist Church in Ashanti were great representatives of the Church and the State: the missionary, Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman and Asantehene Nana Kwaku Duah 1 who reigned from 1838 to 1867.²⁶

The Methodist fellowship in the early years before Freeman in Asante, in the early years, the Asante were perceived as warlike people because of the numerous wars they waged against the coastal tribes. However, by 1831 a peace treaty had been signed by the Asante and the Coastal tribes which paved way for the promotion of trading activities. Some Fante traders who settled in Kumasi became agents of Methodism in Ashanti. One of them is John Mills. In the absence of a Methodist congregation in Kumasi, John Mills organized a number of Fante people in Kumasi and some interested Asante into a fellowship.²⁷ They held "divine services" during which stories of the Methodist work in the coastal areas were told. A prominent member of the fellowship was James Hayford who was a key figure in this instance, a Fante Methodist resident in Kumasi and the British representative who was appointed

²⁴ Celebrating the Faithfulness of God, 180th Anniversary Brochure, MCG – Wesley Cathedral, Adum-Kumasi, 29th September, 2018, 8.

²⁵ Celebrating the Faithfulness of God, 180th Anniversary Brochure, 9.

²⁶ Celebrating the Faithfulness of God, 180th Anniversary Brochure, 9.

²⁷ Celebrating the Faithfulness of God, 180th Anniversary Brochure, 9

by Governor George Maclean as the British Merchant Company Administration Representative in Kumasi.²⁸ James Hayford won the confidence of the then Asantehene, Nana Kwaku Dua 1, and was therefore permitted by the king to hold “divine service of songs, psalms, hymns, reading of the Bible and prayers”. This laid foundation for the Methodist work among the Asante.²⁹ James Hayford had been holding services of worship for the Fante living in Kumasi and for the Ashanti who cared to attend. It was through Hayford’s successful devotional activities that the King of Ashanti extended an invitation to Freeman the missionary.³⁰

Two prominent persons used by God to establish the Methodist Church in Ashanti were great representatives of the Church and State: the missionary, Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman and Asantehene Nana Kwaku Duah 1 who reigned from 1838 to 1867 Asante Methodist today for his royal patronage of Methodist work in Kumasi. He was the first Asante king to organize a royal durbar of chiefs in July 1841 to officially welcome Freeman to Kumasi as an indication of the Asante dynasty’s desire to accept Christianity. The evangelistic drive that Freeman possessed, if not that which possessed him, led him to enter Kumasi which was then described as a ‘hostile’ town. Kumasi was said to be notorious for its threats of invasion.³¹ This had made the coastal tribes fearful of her. The mention of Ashanti only sparked off negative adjectives. It was horrifying and cruel. These thoughts would naturally frighten Freeman’s congregation to allow him commence missionary work there. Besides, the people were skeptical about Freeman being accorded a warm welcome by the King of Ashanti. Contrary to these expectations, however, Freeman had a very successful

²⁸ Joseph M. Y. Edusa-Eyison, “Native Initiative in the planting of Christianity in Ghana-1835-1961” (private). *Trinity journal of church and Theology*, vol. ix, 44

²⁹ Celebrating the Faithfulness of God, 180th Anniversary Brochure, 9.

³⁰ Edusa-Eyison, “Native Initiative in the planting of Christianity in Ghana, 44.”

³¹ Edusa-Eyison, “Native Initiative in the planting of Christianity in Ghana, 44.”

missionary work in Kumasi. He arrived in Kumasi, the Ashanti capital, on 1st April 1839, founded a church and opened fourteen more stations there. Permission and land for the opening of a mission station in Kumasi was given to him by the king of the Ashanti.³² Freeman sought audience with the king; but it took him two weeks to secure it but they were not wasted weeks, though, since he held two Sunday divine services in that period, which many attended in Asante which became their divine service of the Methodist in Kumasi.³³ The seed of Methodism in Asante was planted in Kumasi through Freeman's first and the establishment of Methodism in Ashanti were seeing a sign of much growth because, the members were meeting on a regular basis with Asante's sometimes the Asante king Nana Kwaku Dua 1 in attendance.³⁴ Nevertheless, the missionary attempt in Kumasi was doomed to fail the Asante's regarded Freeman's useful intermediary between them and Maclean when Maclean was replaced by other officials, the Asante Christians got into difficulties.³⁵ The tribal wars affected the growth of Methodism in Asante; "the Methodist mission suffered much from the Asante's war and alarums between 1862 and 1874," most of the members were dispersed, and the stations, with the chapels and mission houses, for the most part destroyed.³⁶ The intermittent wars between the Asante's and the coastal tribes under British protectorate disrupted Christian missions in Kumasi until 1901

2.3 Founding of Freeman Society

The old Freeman chapel was built by the Nigerian and Sierra Leonean Methodist communities in Kumasi as a place of worship. They continued to use the facility until

³²Celebrating the Faithfulness of God, 180th Anniversary Brochure, 35.

³³ F. L. Bartels, *The Roots of Ghana Methodism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 39.

³⁴ Bartels, *The Roots of Ghana Methodism*, 37

³⁵ Hans W. Debrunner, *A History of Christianity in Ghana* (Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1967), 106

³⁶Debrunner, *A History of Christianity in Ghana*, 176

1969 when many of them had to leave this country as a result of the Aliens Compliance Order of 1969.³⁷ When they left, the chapel was used for morning devotions by members of Wesley Society (Cathedral) who lived in the neighborhood of Asante New Town (Ash-Town, Mbrom, Manhyia, K.O). The practices of morning devotions continue today. The various youth groups and intergenerational organizations and the second minister's class also used the old chapel as a meeting place. No formal services were held in the chapel on Sundays in those days.³⁸

The rise of Charismatic movement in the early 1980s with its attendant proliferation of Churches, its challenges in the style of music and the use of English language as a medium of worship led to the drift of youth in the Orthodox Churches to such Charismatic Churches. Wesley Society was not spared the exodus of the youth. It was in the midst of this, that Bro. Kwaku Kwarteng (Very Rev. Kwaku Kwarteng the past Superintendent Minister of Santasi 2018 of blessed memory) and Bro. Samuel Odarno, the then SU Travelling Secretary and a member of the Superintendent Minister's Monday Class (now Rev. Samuel Odarno of Trinity Foundation International Ministries) sought the face of the Lord and became convinced that the 'sheep stealing exercise' in the Methodist Church must be arrested.³⁹

In September 1986, Rev. Lauren Helveston, a Methodist Minister arrived in the country as a missionary under the auspices of the Trinity Foundation International Ministry. He lived with Bro. Odarno and worshipped at Wesley Society (now Cathedral) but felt out of place because of the language barrier, so he preferred

³⁷ Special Souvenir Brochure for the Dedication of Freeman Chapel, MCG-Freeman Society, Mbrom, 13th September, 2015, 18.

³⁸ Special Souvenir Brochure for the Dedication of Freeman Chapel, 19.

³⁹ Special Souvenir Brochure for the Dedication of Freeman Chapel, 20.

ministering at the Charismatic Centers which were springing up in the Kumasi Metropolis - especially at the Calvary Charismatic Centre (CCC).⁴⁰

In view of the above, Brothers Kwaku Kwarteng and Samuel Odarno felt strongly that it was about time an English Society with the Charismatic flavor was started in the Methodist Church under the pastorate of Rev. Lauren Helveston. This move was not readily accepted by some members and leaders of the Wesley Society but the proponents, especially Bro. Kwaku Kwarteng, were undaunted. Eventually the Wesley Leaders' Meeting gave approval and the first ever solely English Service was held at the Freeman Old Chapel on Sunday, 8th February, 1987 with eight family units made up of the Somiahs, Odarnos, Kwartengs, Helvestons, Schandorfs, Hanis, Haiges and the Owoos. There were about 12 adults and 18 children.⁴¹

On the first day of worship (8th February, 1987) an amount of 5100.00 cedis (made up of 4000 cedis thanks offering and 1,100 cedis of collection) was realized, and this was well received by the Wesley Leaders' meeting who then saw the Society potential and so encouraged them to continue. The following Sunday (15th February, 1987) Freeman Society had eight new members to join the Church. Rev. (Maj) Rtd. E. C. Bonney, the then Superintendent Minister of the Kumasi Circuit and Chairman/General Superintendent of the Kumasi District, saw the new Freeman Society as a very promising Society because the society was recording massive increase in numbers in terms of growth every Sunday so threw his weight behind it.⁴²

⁴⁰ Special Souvenir Brochure for the Dedication of Freeman Chapel, 19.

⁴¹ Special Souvenir Brochure for the Dedication of Freeman Chapel, 20

⁴² An interview with Rt. Rev. Prof. Osei Safo Kantanka (The Immediate Past Bishop of the Methodist Church Ghana, Kumasi Diocese and Past Minister of Freeman Society, 19/05/2019.

By the end of the first quarter, the Freeman Society has increase from seventy (70) to hundred (100) congregation.⁴³

Later on, after the establishment of the Society, leaders' meeting was constituted. The following men and women formed the first leaders' meeting: Bro. Kwaku Kwarteng, Sis. Gloria Schandorf, Bro. Paul Somia and Sis Petite Haig.⁴⁴

2.4 Pastoral Oversight and Inauguration of the Freeman Society

The political climate at that time which was suspicious of all missionaries led to the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC's) order for Helvestens to leave in July 1988. With the departure of the Helvestens, the young Society had no pastoral oversight, Bro. Kwaku Kwarteng had to arrange every week for guests preachers to visit Freeman Society. At the Kumasi Circuit Quarterly Meeting held at Dunwell Chapel, New Tafo in October 1988, Freeman was received as a fully-fledged Society.⁴⁵

Freeman then requested for pastoral oversight and Rev. James Osei, the then headmaster of Wesley Day Secondary School was posted to Freeman Society in January 1989 as an auxiliary minister and remained with the Society until February 1990. From 1989 to 1990 Freeman Society had grown in numbers and increased from hundred (100) to hundred and ten (110).⁴⁶

In 1990, when Freeman was to be inaugurated as a Society, members requested that it should be known as 'Freeman Charismatic Methodist Church- FCMC' (English Society). The name sparked off a row since some members of the Circuit felt that it

⁴³ An interview with Bro George Owoo 22\05\19.

⁴⁴ Special Souvenir Brochure for the Dedication of Freeman Chapel, 18.

⁴⁵ An interview with Bro. George Akuffo Owoo A Founding Member of Freeman Society 18\05\2019.

⁴⁶ An interview with Very Rev. James Osei. 19\05\19

meant a different Methodist denomination, so the name was changed to Freeman (English) Society. Freeman English Society was inaugurated at colourful ceremony on Sunday 10th June 1990 with Rev. Lauren Helvesten from USA as a guest preacher. Lauren and a team of workers from the Church of Joy, Williamson Georgia, USA, graced the occasion together with Rev. Dr. Samuel Asante Antwi, the then General superintendent of the Kumasi District. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Asante, Superintendent Minister of Kumasi Circuit, Rev. Kofi Amponsah, Minister in Charge and the host of others.

Freeman Society started to grow steadily spiritually, financially and numerically. The Society had a prayer team which met regularly on Tuesdays and Saturdays at Bro. G.W. Akuffo Owoo's residence to intercede for members, also visit members and the entire Society meet on Mondays to pray.⁴⁷

In the early 1990's the Society soon came face to face with a number of challenges, including the following:

- ✓ Some of the leaders had to leave the country due to the political situation of the early 1990's
- ✓ The Trinity Foundation Ministries had now turned into a Church and some of the leaders had left to join it including Bro. Samuel Odarno.
- ✓ Changes in job postings resulted in some leaders leaving Kumasi to other places.
- ✓ Another wind of insecurity blew as a good number of the leaders who were supporting the society, spiritually and financially, resigned and subsequently ceased to meet in 1997.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ An interview with Bro. George Akuffo Owoo 1\06\2019.

⁴⁸ An interview with Bro. George Akuffo Owoo 1\06\2019.

In spite of the above, the fire kept on burning as new leaders and Church workers emerged with enthusiasm. There was an outbreak of the Liberian civil war, a good number of the Liberians found themselves in Kumasi. The then Kumasi District minister Rev. Dr. Samuel Asante-Antwi appointed Bro. Kwaku Kwarteng to be a pastoral oversight for those traumatized people to be a co-coordinator to the Displaced Liberians Association. As a result of Bro. Kwaku Kwarteng's association with them, a good number of Liberians joined the Freeman English Society. They formed the nucleus of the vibrant singing group called; 'Heavenly Heralds'.

As the Society membership increased, a problem that shared the Society in the face was the use of English as the sole medium of worship. A number of people who could not speak or understand the English had been attracted to the Society as a result of the form of worship, singing ex-tempore, Bible studies, snacks, visitation etc. The initial solution was for Bro. Kwaku Kwarteng to interpret the sermons on Sundays but this made services last longer than expected. So in April 1994 Freeman embarked on a new exercise-the first of its kind to conduct two services – one in vernacular (Akan) from 8:00am to 10:00am and another in English from 10:00am to 12:00 noon. By this time the membership of Freeman stood at over 150 adults, 50 junior members and a Sunday school of 120.

Another Minister who contributed to the growth of the Church was Rev. Kofi Amponsah who took over from Rev. James Osei, the then Headmaster of Wesley Day Secondary School (Now Kumasi Wesley Girl's High School). He worked between 1990-1996; he did a good work because during his time the Church saw a remarkable growth in membership to about 200, the spiritual life of the members was improved by having revival programmes with them and had enough time to pray with them. The leaders' meeting on 26th May, 1992 under the pastorate of Rev. Kofi Amponsah,

initiated and discussed the issue of site for a new chapel.⁴⁹ As the old chapel building of Freeman became too small to house members, a decision was taken to expand the chapel. On the 17th of April 1996, a letter written and signed by Rev. Kofi Amponsah was sent to Wesley Society for approval to expand the old chapel.⁵⁰ By 15th May 1996 the approval had been given by the leaders' meeting of Wesley Society. During his tenure of office, Rev. Kofi Amponsah apart from preparing for the chapel building, scriptural holiness was highlighted. Sunday School, Students' Union (FremSU), Youth Fellowship, Prayer Tower, Women's Fellowship, Susanna Wesley Mission Auxiliary (SUWMA), Community based Class Meeting was formed under his pastoral oversight. Later Bro. Kwaku Kwarteng was sent to Trinity to be trained as a minister.⁵¹ Later Rev. Kofi Amponsah became Kumasi Circuit Superintendent Minister after Freeman Society.

In 1995-1997 Rev. Kwaku Kwarteng, a founding member of the Society was attached to his own people after his commissioning as an ordained minister of the Methodist Church Ghana while serving as Diocesan Chaplain to hospitals and prison with additional responsibilities, the Society was growth in number from two hundred (200) to two hundred and fifty (250) due to his monthly revivals and seminars.

From 1997-2003 the Society increased from two hundred and fifty (250) to four hundred (400) under the auspices of Rev. W.H.Y Ametefe (1996-1999) and Rev. I.K. Twum (1999-2003) he also contributed to the growth of the Society and it was the tenure of office for Rev. Twum that he strengthened the Prayer Tower and Deliverance Team of the Society.⁵²

⁴⁹ Leaders Meeting Minutes Book, 26th May, 1992.

⁵⁰ Interview with Bro. George Owoo, 2\06\2019.

⁵¹ Interview with Bro. George Owoo, 2\06\19

⁵² Leaders Meeting Minutes Book, 4th April 2009.

In 2003-2009, Another Minister who effort helped the growth of the Society is Rev. Prof. Osei Safo-Kantanka, he took over from Rev. I.K Twum and continued the project with zeal and by Easter 2004, the basement had been completed and the members moved into it as a place of worship. Other basement was also constructed and this paved the way for the main hall (superstructure) to be constructed. All the energies of Rev. Prof. Kantanka and his leaders were channeled to the chapel project, in other to complete the project in time.⁵³ At the Leaders' Meeting on 26th October 2005 a decision was taken to demolish the old chapel and it was resolved peacefully. The Wesley Cathedral morning devotion and Association of Christian Chiefs and Queen mothers are currently using the basement for their meetings.⁵⁴ The year 2003 to 2009 was also increase in numbers and growth of the Society, the members was increase from four hundred to five hundred and seventy due to the revivals and mid-week services he organized.⁵⁵ In 2005, a workshop on Batik Tie and dye was organized for the unemployed members of the Society with seed capital to start their own businesses. In other to solve the problem of cohabitation in many marriages, in 2006 a colourful mass wedding ceremony initiated by Prof. himself in society for such members. Church Choir and singing band were established under his leadership.⁵⁶

From 2009 to 2019, Rev. Seth Afful Sackey 2009-2011 and Rev. John Oppong Yeboah took over from 2011-2013 and Rev. Ekow Essel McForson 2013-2017 During these three ministers tenure of office, Freeman Society saw rapid growth because people were joining the Church at every meeting and membership increased at a faster rate such that the total membership (920). Adults (670) and children

⁵³ Interview with Bro. George Safo-Kantanka, a formal steward of Freeman 1\02\2019

⁵⁴ Leaders Meeting Minutes Book, 26th October 2005.

⁵⁵ Leaders Meeting Minutes Book, 18th May 2016.

⁵⁶ Interview with Bro. George Safo Kantanka 1\02\2019

(250).⁵⁷ He initiated many programmes like, 1. Good Morning Holy Spirit (Mondays 5am- 6am) 2. Blazing Altar (Sundays 5pm-7pm) 3. Total Freedom (Every public holidays 9am-12noon) 4. Mid-week services (Wednesday 5pm-7pm) and he also strengthened the Friday MPRP (Methodist Prayer Renewal Program) with seasonal preachers on board. With these program he organized it, boost the growth of the Society both the members and the outsiders who attends the program prayers were been met by God. The numerical growth in terms of the membership of Six hundred and seventy (670).⁵⁸ According to an informant who is a leader in Freeman said, one sad news is that from the year 2017 till date there has being a decline in membership, the members of the Society has declined from nine hundred and twenty (920) to seven hundred (700) both the Adults and the children due to the challenges involved in discipling of new members of the Society.⁵⁹

2.5 Conclusion

In summary this chapters briefly captured the beginning of Methodism in Ghana, the Asante and some key people who contributed to the Methodism in Asante and Ghana as well. The genesis of the Freeman Society, their growth both numerical strength spiritual strength and the impact on the members and not forgetting their challenges, their downfalls and their success.

⁵⁷ Leaders Meeting Minutes Book, 18th May 2019.

⁵⁸ Leaders Meeting Minutes Book, 6th February 2019.

⁵⁹ Interview with an informant in Freeman Society, 22nd May 2109.

CHAPTER THREE

DISCIPLESHIP STRATEGIES OF NEW MEMBERS IN FREEMAN SOCIETY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided the background to the Freeman Society of the Methodist Church Ghana. This chapter primarily focuses on the challenges faced by the church in making disciples. To achieve this purpose, the church's understanding of the concept of discipleship and the strategies put in place to ensure effective discipleship are discussed in this section. The challenges discussed in this chapter include lack of proper care for New Convert, Methodist Prayer and Renewal Program and ineffective Class System.

3.2 Methodist Teaching on Discipleship

Who is a disciple? In Methodist definition of disciple is someone who is living out the decision to follow Christ in everyday life. He or She is a person who knows Christ inwardly and is committed to living outwardly in love and obedience to Him.⁶⁰

Principles of Discipleship

- ✓ Principle 1: Disciple making is most effective when it is an intentional response by the local church to the Great Commission.
- ✓ Principle 2: Disciple making is most effective when focused on the oikos of existing Christians.
- ✓ Principle 3: Disciple making is most effective when based on and permeated with love and caring.

⁶⁰ The Methodist Church Ghana, School of Continuing Education for Superintendent Ministers Manual (June 2019): 2.

- ✓ Principle 4: Disciple making is most effective as a natural and continuing process.⁶¹

Discipleship is central to the Methodist Church Ghana. This underscores the church's theme for this year; "Making disciples of all nations". However, it is needful to ask if such an attitude is same in the Society in the Methodist Church Ghana. In an interview with the Rt. Rev. Christopher Nyarko Andam, the bishop of the Methodist Church Ghana Kumasi Diocese here said discipleship is the backbone of the Methodist Church Ghana and Kumasi Diocese as a whole, that is why in his term of office as bishop in Kumasi, he has adopted a strategy to increase the number of the church so he introduced 'Bring one to the Lord project' and the aim is to disciple and Book has been launched to help with the discipleship and the book is called 'Bring one to the Lord Booklet – A Guide to Discipleship'.⁶² Since every believer has a role to play in the advancement of God's kingdom, it is binding on the church to train converts adequately to assume their respective roles. He explained that this task of making disciples require planning and well laid down strategies on the part of the church. Even where there are well laid down strategic plans only with a careful implementation of these strategies can the church effectively disciple its members.⁶³

3.2.1 Discipleship Strategies of Freeman Society

These are the main strategies to disciple the member in the Freeman society.

1. The New Convert Class
2. Home Cells
3. MPRP
4. The Bible Class System

⁶¹ The Methodist Church Ghana, School of Continuing Education for Superintendent Ministers Manual (June 2019): 2.

⁶² Interview with Bishop Andam, Bishop of Kumasi Diocese-MCG, 23\5\19.

⁶³ Interview with Bishop Andam, Bishop of Kumasi Diocese-MCG, 23\5\19

3.2.1.1 *The New Convert Class / New Members*

Evangelism is an important mandate which has not been abdicated by the Freeman Society. Almost every Sunday, the church welcomes new converts who are fresh in the faith.⁶⁴ The new convert class is designed to train these new converts or new members in the faith that they have been accepted. According the resolutions of the Freeman Society for the year 2019, the convert class is held on every Sunday, between the hours of 9:15am and 9:50am. This is a 30minutes class. There are two leaders who have been assigned for this special task namely Brother Opoku and Sister Diana. The task of these leaders is to lay some doctrinal foundation in the converts. There is a course outline that the new converts are to complete before graduating from this class. A quick glance through this outline will show that it cover the basic doctrine of Christianity.

From the interviews conducted it was found out that the church losses many new members because of lack of adequate care for them. The new members are warmly welcomed on Sundays with cheerful smiles, hugs and shouts of Joy every Sunday.⁶⁵

The Society records at least five new members every Sunday but lack of proper care for the new members, the Society keeps decline in the members.⁶⁶ However, the situation is not same when the church is over. According to the Methodist Church's Constitution, such converts are to be enrolled in the new convert class and to be given tutors.⁶⁷ It was discovered that the new convert class was not as effective as expected. They don't meet regularly as expected. Some of the Leaders do not visit their members who are sick and in trouble. Even though the leaders are mostly present, due to poor organization of the new converts often fail to turn up. Probably, this challenge

⁶⁴ Leaders Meeting Minutes Book, 20th May 2019.

⁶⁵ Leaders Meeting Minutes Book, 8th March 2019.

⁶⁶ Leaders Meeting Minutes Book, 8th March 2019.

⁶⁷The Methodist Church Ghana, *Constitution and Standing Orders* (Accra: MCG Press, 2000), 111.

has risen out of lack of follow ups and visitation. It is the mandate of the leaders to pay regular visits to the new converts and new members as well till their feet are well planted. Many of the interview respondents remarked that the leadership hardly pay them visits at home. Doris Oteng, who is two months old in the Freeman Society, remarked that she was absent from the church for a month, but no one followed her up or call her and because of that, she don't feel happy coming to church.⁶⁸

Table 1.0 Shows the New Converts baptized from 2017-2019

Year (2017-2019)	Number of People Baptized	Number of People Maintained	% Maintained
2017	45	11	24.4
2018	32	4	12.5
2019	43	6	13.95
Total	120	21	17.5

Source: Freeman Society Leaders Meeting Report 20/05/2019

3.2.1.2 *Methodist Prayer and Renewal Program (MPRP)*

Prayer and bible study are very crucial in the process of making disciples. As the name suggest, the MPRP is an initiative by the Methodist General Directorate for ministry for the purpose of a nationwide renewal within the Methodist Church.

In 1996 when many concerns were raised concerning lack of religious zeal and stagnation of the church, the MPRP was born to deal with this issue. In the first place it was an attempt to involve the whole church in prayer and bible study to underscore the relevance of these activities in the spiritual build-up of the Methodist Church in Ghana.⁶⁹ It was projected that if the MPRP was successful, the zeal and passion of the Wesleyans will be stirred for evangelism, an important mandate of the church.⁷⁰ Every Society has this program in operation and Freeman Society is not an exception.

⁶⁸ Interview with Doris Oteng, Two Months Old Member, 1st March 2019.

⁶⁹ The Methodist Church Ghana, 35th Conference: Representative Session Agenda (Winneba, 1996), 122.

⁷⁰ The Methodist Church Ghana, 35th Conference: Representative Session Agenda, 122.

The MPRP is held on every Friday morning from 6am to 8am. These meetings mainly focus on word ministration and prayer. Effective organization of this program can afford the society the opportunity to disciple its members effectively. The prayer was very effective previous years but of late the interest and the desire has drastically decreased⁷¹. An interview with Madam Rose Ansah, the MPRP has loose its effective because of the following factors: the kind of speakers invited for the programme, lack of involvement of the leadership, the schedule time of the programme, the distance between the church and the work place and lastly the new prayer groups emergence in the Kumasi metropolis like MOGPA etc.⁷²

3.2.1.3 *The Bible Class System*

The Methodist Church is known for its Class System. It is an important discipleship process which all members in the church are required to be part of.

According to Rt. Rev. Samuel Kofi Osabutey, “every follower of Christ must at once be a Bible believing and practicing Christian; the goal of the Bible is not just for information or acquisition of knowledge but for a better life-becoming like Jesus’.⁷³

To be effective, Bible study must involve three basic things: Observation, Interpretation and Application. In observation we are answering the question, ‘what do I see?’ in interpretation, the question is, what does it mean?’ and in application, the question is what does the Bible ask us to do or be?”⁷⁴

The Bible Class System is also known as Sunday Bible Class also afford the leadership the opportunity to educate the entire church on certain important doctrines and issues. It is enshrined in the constitution and standing orders of the Methodist Church that a class is a small company of believers in which spiritual experiences are

⁷¹ Interview with Vincent Azumah, A Class Leader in Freeman Society 28th May 2019

⁷² Interview with Madam Rose Ansah, 29th May 2019

⁷³ Samuel K. Osabutey, *It is Written: A Guide to Personal Bible Study* (Accra: Sonlife Printing Press, 2007), 8.

⁷⁴ Osabutey, *It is Written: A Guide to Personal Bible Study*, 8.

shared and members try to help one another.⁷⁵ It is also enshrined in the constitution that all members of the Society should have their names entered into the class book, and should be placed under the tutelage of a class teacher.⁷⁶ The bible class is held every Sunday before the main church service from 9:15am to 9:50am. There are outlines that are followed. Usually these outlines are designed by the Methodist Church Ghana and are for the entire Methodist Church Ghana and it mostly borders around the theme of the year, our day to day activities and sometimes elections are also considered and it is called Weekly Bible Lesson (WBL). Interestingly the theme for the year is on discipleship. It was then clear that the Methodist Church Ghana has purposed that every Society should disciple its members in this very year and the years ahead. The Bible classes also afford the members the opportunity to ask any question bordering their mind on any issue and the topic discuss. It also helps the leaders not to lose pastoral oversight of members.

However there are several issues affecting the success of the class system. The first problem borders around punctuality and regularity of the members. Most of the members are not punctual to the Sunday Service and therefore misses the Sunday class. In an interview with two former class leaders, Stephen Amankwah and Emmanuel Boahene it was discovered that on the average, only half of the members of a class attends the class meeting.⁷⁷ These challenges result from lateness to church on the part of many members and sometimes the leaders or the teachers. In an interview with Richard Twumasi, a secretary to the coordinating office of the ministries of Freeman Society, he remarked that the challenge of lateness to services

⁷⁵ The Methodist Church of Ghana, *Constitution and Standing Orders*, 111.

⁷⁶ The Methodist Church of Ghana, *Constitution and Standing Orders*, 112.

⁷⁷ Interview with Stephen Amankwah and Emmanuel Boahene, Former Class Leaders of Freeman Society, 30th March 2019.

is very acute.⁷⁸ Not just the Sunday service but the weekly services and special programs of the church are all affected by the time that members and the leaders too also report.⁷⁹ This complicates the role of the class teachers as many of their class members are lagging behind. From the interview conducted with an informant, it was also discovered that some member intentionally decide to be late to avoid the class meeting. The main reason for this attitude is to avoid financial pressures that are placed on them during the class meeting. It was discovered that the class systems was also used as a means of collating funds to support the ministry.⁸⁰ The class teachers were tasked to ensure that members of their class fulfill all financial obligations expected of them and also some teachers do not read through the manual and understand what they will teach the class system before they come to church to teach.⁸¹ And also the church assigned Saturday evening for the teachers, for them to come to discuss the topic for the next day and understand before they can teach and it is call preparatory class and it is not functioning well because 70% of the teachers do not attend this class on Saturday evening.⁸² And for this matter some teachers come unprepared so it makes the teaching boring and unattractive to the students. As a result some purposely skip the class meetings to avoid these confrontations. In the long run, many are they that skip important lessons that are learnt in the class meetings.⁸³ An interview with some students in one of the bible class called “Mercy Class”, some of the leaders use the class as a preaching field, instead of discussing the

⁷⁸ Interview with Richard Twumasi. 17\03\19.

⁷⁹ Interview with Nana Yaa Adusa, a Steward in Freeman Society, 18th March 2019.

⁸⁰ Interview with an informant in Freeman Society, 21st March 2019.

⁸¹ Interview with an informant in Freeman Society, 21st March 2019

⁸² Interview with an informant in Freeman Society, 21st March 2019.

⁸³ Interview with an informant in Freeman Society, 21st March 2019.

topic for the student to bring their ideas, the leader talks till the time for the lesson ends so it makes the students idle and boring to the class.⁸⁴

Despite all these structures that have been instituted to ensure effective discipleship, it was found that, there was a discipleship deficit in the Society. The numbers of disciples that are realized at the end of each year fall short of the number of convert and new members that are made. In a survey conducted it was found that certain factors are militating against the success of the church in disciple making.⁸⁵ The main challenges encountered by the Society in its discipleship mandate have been discussed.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the discipleship in Freeman Society and its challenges facing the Society. The goals of the church in discipleship of its members as well as the structures to realize these goals have also been described. More importantly, the challenges that are affecting the success of the Society in its discipleship activities were the main focus of this chapter and these are the challenges: ineffective of new convert class, non-functional of home cells, ineffective participation of M.P.R.P and lastly the ineffective class system. The next chapter attempts to analyze the findings presented in this chapter.

⁸⁴ Interview with Focus Group Discussion, 6th June 2019

⁸⁵ Leaders Meeting Minutes Book, 16th March 2019.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHALLENGES INVOLVED IN DISCIPLESHIP OF NEW MEMBERS IN FREEMAN SOCIETY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter entails the challenges involved in discipleship of new members of freeman society. Particular attention was paid to the follow up of Converts, Lack of manual for teaching converts, inadequate time and preparation of teachers for the Sunday bible class and Low attendance of M.P.R.P.

4.2 The Challenges involved in Discipleship of New Members of Freeman Society

In the attempt to find out the causes of challenges involved in discipleship of new members of the Freeman Society, three different sets of interviews were done: one for ministers and lay leaders of the Society, one for members of the Society and another for former members to solicit their reasons for leaving the Society.

On the question of the challenges of discipling new members of Freeman Society, respondents were given the free will to enumerate. The views of the members are expressed as follows

Follow ups of convert, ii. Lack of manual for teaching converts, iii. Inadequate time and preparation for the Sunday Bible class, iv. Low attendance of M.P.R.P

4.2.1 *Follow up of Converts*

It was observed from the interviews that following up on converts are very poor done in Freeman Society. This is one of the main reasons why most converts are not retained in the society. Many of the respondent admitted that they seldom got a phone

call from the leadership of the church.⁸⁶ None of responded admitted that she or he was visited in his or her home. Most of them lamented that they only received calls few minutes to the convert class as a reminder. Some Charismatic Churches do not downplay the significance of follow up.⁸⁷ They leave no stone unturned to check up on converts and pressure them to patronize their services. They have special SMS alert system used to send messages to their converts to appreciate their efforts and encourage them in their new found faith. They are also called intermittently for check up on their wellbeing. Even visits to their homes are done. Such follow ups increase the sense of belongingness, acceptance and love among the converts. It was observed that all of these efforts seen in the charismatic efforts are missing in Freeman Society.⁸⁸ Therefore, it is important for the leadership to throw more efforts at following up on the new converts. It is the follow up that will increase the commitment of the converts to the convert class.

4.2.2 Lack of Manual for Teaching Convert

Foundations are important and the doctrines taught in the new convert class are crucial in the disciple making process. In the Methodist Church, it is the converts' class that handles the important task of educating converts on basic doctrine of the Christian faith. It was observed that the convert class in Freeman Society was not effective as it is supposed to be. It was observed that due to the fact that converts are not followed up, they hardly turn up for the class.⁸⁹ Aside this challenge, it was observed that there was no prescribed manual for the teaching of the converts. Unlike other churches with comprehensive manuals dealing with topics like Assurance of faith, How to be born to again, Sanctification, Sharing your testimonies, Growing in

⁸⁶ Interview with Abigail Osei, a six month old member 20\05\19.

⁸⁷ Interview with Abigail Osei, a six month old member 20\05\19.

⁸⁸ Interview with Frank Osei, A leader at Freeman Society 18\05\19.

⁸⁹ Interview with Dora Awuah, A teacher at Convert Class 12\05\19.

Christ, Relationship through prayer and among others, the leaders of the Freeman Society's convert class teach from the bible directly.⁹⁰ As the researcher probed further into this issue it was observed that the leaders get the scanty knowledge they have from seminars that are seldom held for them.⁹¹ From participant observation it was observed that the teachers of the convert class are not well vexed in the basic doctrines they tried to teach. Also they lacked teaching skills required of them. It was discovered that there are more experienced teachers but they were unavailable because it is these same leaders who handle almost all programs of the church.⁹² Looking at the importance of the convert class it is expedient for the society to pay keen attention to the convert class. Dedicated stewards who are well vexed with the covert class' lesson should be appointed and motivated to take care of the converts that show up in the church. Without a firm grounding of these converts in the basic doctrines, they are bound to be drawn away from the church or backslide at worse. Since this is integral to the mandate of the church, the church must channel energy and resources to ensure it get the best out the class and a good and doctrinal manual should prepare for the student at the class.

4.3 Inadequate Time and Preparation of Teachers for the Sunday Bible Class

The class system was introduced by John Wesley and his brother Charles Wesley as a means of reviving the Church of England. However, due to friction between the Wesleyans and the Church of England, the converts from their evangelistic activities were not welcomed in the church.⁹³ As the Wesleyan revival swept many into the faith, the class system was introduced to ensure that converts keep their faith. The

⁹⁰ Interview with Dora Awuah, A teacher at Convert Class 12\05\19

⁹¹ Interview with Bro. Opoku, A teacher at Convert Class 12\05\19

⁹² Interview with Adams, A Student at the Convert Class 12\05\19

⁹³ Robert Aboagye-Mensah, *John Wesley and the Methodist Church* (Accra: Adwinsa Publishers, 1998), 93

class system was also instituted to help the leadership not to lose oversight of the members. It was a means by the spiritual growth of member were monitored.⁹⁴ This strategy has been part and parcel of the Methodist Church for ages, a strategy that serves at the backbone of the church. The Methodist Church Ghana still make use of this strategy of small groupings. This is the reason behind the Sunday class system and the home cell groups. They were set up to play such a crucial role in the disciple making process of the church. It was discovered from the field work that the Sunday class is not as effective as the leadership intended. Punctuality and regularity is a problem for the Sunday class. This affects the learning process. More importantly it was discovered that there was not much preparation on the part of the leadership of the class. In an interview with the resident minister Rev. Nkyi Asamoah, he explained that the class leaders are supposed to meet on Saturday evening for a discussion of the lessons to be taught on Sunday.⁹⁵ However with time it was realize only few were making it to the preparation class so it was moved to Sunday morning. Even with that, everything is done in a rush and this does not give enough room for proper understanding of the lessons. This then affect negatively the realization of the goals of the Sunday class.⁹⁶ Therefore it is necessary for the leadership to pay much effort in reviving the class system.⁹⁷ Members should be educated and motivated to fully participate in the class system. The leadership should also be given proper education on the roles of the class system in the building of the church.⁹⁸ Even if possible; the financial pressures that deter some from attending the class should be minimized in the society.⁹⁹

⁹⁴Aboagye-Mensah, *John Wesley and the Methodist Church*, 93

⁹⁵ Interview with Rev. Nkyi Asamoah, The Society Minster of Freeman Society, 20th March 2019

⁹⁶ Interview with Rev. Nkyi Asamoah, The Society Minster of Freeman Society, 20th March 2019

⁹⁷ Interview with Bro. Opoku, A teacher at Convert Class 12\05\19

⁹⁸ Interview with Dora Awuah, A teacher at Convert Class 12\05\19.

⁹⁹ Interview with Dora Awuah, A teacher at Convert Class 12\05\19.

4.4 Low Attendance of M.P.R.P

Prayer and bible study are very crucial in the process of making disciples. As the name suggest, the MPRP is an initiative by the Methodist General Directorate for ministry for the purpose of a nationwide renewal within the Methodist Church. Before the inception of these programs it was the prayer groups that functioned in the Methodist Church. An erroneous notion and attitude towards the prayer fellowship was that it was the preserve of a few in the church who had the burden to pray. In 1996 when many concerns were raised concerning lack of religious zeal and stagnation of the church, the MPRP was birth to deal with this issue. In the first place it was an attempt to involve the whole church in prayer and bible study to underscore the relevance of these activities in the spiritual build-up of the Methodist Church Ghana.¹⁰⁰ It was projected that if the MPRP was successful, the zeal and passion of the Wesleyans will be stirred for evangelism, an important mandate of the church.¹⁰¹ Every Society has this program in operation and Freeman Society is not an exception. The MPRP is held on every Friday morning from 6am to 8am. These meetings mainly focus on word ministration and prayer. Effective organization of this program can afford the society the opportunity to disciple its members effectively.¹⁰² One of the factors which has been the challenges involved in discipleship of new members of Freeman Society is the low attendance of the Methodist Prayer and Renewal Programme (M.P.R.P) which was very active in the Society three years ago. Through this programme many joined the society and became members because many spiritual needs were being met.¹⁰³ But recently desire and interest to join the programme has drastically gone down. Three (3) years ago, the society records two hundred (200) in

¹⁰⁰ The Methodist Church Ghana, 35th Conference: *Representative Session Agenda*, 122.

¹⁰¹ The Methodist Church Ghana, 35th Conference: *Representative Session Agenda*, 122.

¹⁰² Interview with John Sarpong, An evangelist of Freeman Society 20\05\19

¹⁰³ Interview with Vinncent Azumah 20\05\19

attendance on Fridays M.P.R.P but of late it has decreased to seventy (70) in attendances.¹⁰⁴ This work has revealed that, the decline in church membership in the area of M.P.R.P is not peculiar to Freeman only but De-Graft Memorial Methodist Church at Asawasi rather, it is something which affects the Asawasi Methodist Church in general. It was very active some years ago but of late the interest and desire to join the programme has drastically decreased to the extent that, at times the Church doesn't organize the programme.¹⁰⁵ The researcher found out that, the desire and the interest in the programme has decline due to the following factors:

4.4.1 The Kind of Speakers

The kind of speakers being invited for the programme was noted that, some of the speakers comes with the motive to collect money from the members in refer to directions and some spiritual directions to break curses etc. for this reason many has stop coming to the programme because at first it wasn't so.¹⁰⁶

4.4.2 Lack of the Involvement of the Leadership

It was discovered that, the leaders are not involving themselves in the Fridays prayer activities and some evening programme so some members saw the programme as irrelevant that is why the leaders are not partaking in it so some have decided not to come again. For this reason the programme has gone down in numbers.¹⁰⁷

4.4.3 The New Prayer Groups Emergence in the Kumasi Metropolis

In an interview with Mr. Boateng, he said that the time for the prayer session is scanty, two (2) hours has allocated for the programme. Some members don't come early so the programme starts at 6:40am and it supposed to close 8am. So the remaining one hour, twenty minutes is for worship and praises, testimony session,

¹⁰⁴ Leaders Meeting Minutes Book 23\05\19

¹⁰⁵ Isaac K. Boahene, "The causes of Decline in Church membership: A case study of De-Memorial Methodist Church, Asawasi-Kumasi." (Long essay, CSUC, July 2015),

¹⁰⁶ Madam Constance Osaah 25\05\19

¹⁰⁷ Focused group discussions 26\05\19

preaching of the word of God and prayer session and everything is done in a rush so they don't get enough time for the programme so he prefer attending MOGPA at Cultural Center and Kuntense which he can get enough time to pray. He said MOGPA starts at 8am in the morning and close around 1pm.¹⁰⁸ Madam Asantewaa respondent that, there is no fundraising at MOGPA, you only come and prayer but in Freeman society M.P.R.P, too much of money is being requested and demanded for direction from the invited speakers, so she will prefer MOGPA to Freeman society M.P.R.P.¹⁰⁹

4.4.4 The Time Schedule for the Programme

The researcher interviewed a group of nurses and some bankers and it was noted that, the time for the starting and the closing of the programme will not favor them due to the nature of their work, because they are working for an organization and there is rules and regulation on their work activity. They are supposed to be at work place exactly 7:30am in the morning and the programme ends at 8:00am and at times 8:30am. For this reason it is affecting the programme negatively.¹¹⁰

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed the challenges presented in the previous chapter. Welcoming converts, the convert class and the Sunday class was the primary focus of this chapter. It was highlighted on the factors which has affected the interest of the members not to fully participate in the M.P.R.P programmes and some crucial factors associated with the decline in numbers in terms of New converts class and also too much demand of money in the class meeting. The subsequent and final chapter focuses a summary, general conclusion of the study and some recommendations.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Mr. Kyei Boateng 27\05\19.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Madam Asantewaa 27\05\19.

¹¹⁰ Interview with group of nurses and bankers 28\05\19.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study examined the challenges involved in discipling of new members of Freeman Society of the Methodist Church Ghana, K.O. Mbrom.

The study considered some background issues which include: the genesis and the growth of Methodism in Asante, the background of Freeman Society. Through interviews, the challenges involved in discipleship new members were discovered. They include: Inadequate time and preparation of teachers for the Bible class, Low attendance of M.P.R.P, Lack of manual for teaching convert and follow ups of converts.

5.2 General Conclusion

This research has proven that discipleship is very important to Wesley faith and to Freeman Society in particular. Even the choice of theme of the Methodist Church Ghana, attests to this fact. Apart from having a sound biblical understanding of the concept of discipleship, it was observed that the mandate of making disciples is the reason behind the activities of Freeman Society. There are various strategies put in place to ensure that converts in the church mature in the faith. The leadership of the church uses the new convert class, Sunday class system, bible study and prayer meeting during the week days as the platform for training their members. However despite these structures it was discovered that there is a discipleship deficit in the society. The number of converts that are welcomed on Sundays does not reflect in the numerical growth of the church. Probing further into this issue it was discovered that

lack of proper care for new converts, ineffective Sunday Class Systems and ineffective of M.P.R.P are impeding the success of the church in making disciples. Proper care of new converts, reviving the class system and the Methodist Prayer and Renewal Program the society can effectively disciple its members. The researcher presupposes that the society would capitalize on the choice of theme of the Methodist Church Ghana for this year, 'making Disciples of all nations' to restructure and revive its disciple making strategies.

5.3 Recommendations

This Study has brought to the lime light some factors which have led to the challenges involved in discipleship of new members in Freeman Society. With regards to the implications of the findings, the following are the recommendations that the researcher made.

It is recommended that the leaders in the church should be educated on the concept of discipleship. The understanding of a concept influence how people respond to it. In addition, it is recommended that the time for the Sunday Class should be extended and if possible the Sunday should be change to other day. Since the Sunday class play an important role in the realization of the goals of the church, the time should be fixed to a point where all and sundry can participate in it.

Concerning follow ups of new converts and visitation of inactive members, it is recommended that the members and organizational heads be provided with the telephone numbers and addresses of new converts and inactive members to make follow ups very easier.

The researcher recommends that the Society should make a manual for teaching converts available and the leaders of the Society should see through that the teachers for the Bible class fully participate in the preparation class before they teach.

Finally, it was recommended that prayers, revivals and Bible teaching must be intensified, especially the M.P.R.P to enhance the growth of the members spirituality so that they do not move out to join other prayer groups who are emerging. The Society should find another day which will be more appropriate for the majority of members to attend the programme instead of normal Friday morning and proper speakers, time should be scheduled for the M.P.R.P and the leadership should participate the M.P.R.P.

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Abigail Osei, A six months old member in Freeman Society, 20\05\19

Adams Emmanuel, 12\05\19

Asiedu Michael, A Leader in Freeman Society, 23\03\19.

Bro. George Owoo, A Leader Freeman Society, 27\03\19

Bro. Opoku, A teacher at convert class, 12\05\19

Doris Oteng, Two Months Old Member, 1\03\19.

Dora Awuah, A teacher at convert class, 12\05\19

Focus Group Discussion, 6\06\19

Frank Osei, Aleader at Freeman Society 18\05\19

George Bonsu, A Class Leader in Freeman Society, 17th March, 2019.

George Safo Kantanka, 1\02\19

Informant in Freeman Society, 22\05\19.

John Sarpong, An evangelist at Freeman Society, 20\5\19

Nana Yaa Adusa, a Steward in Freeman Society, 18\03\19.

Nurses and Bankers, 28\05\19

Mad. Rose Ansah, 29\05\19

Mad. Asantewaa, 27\05\19

Mad. Constance Osaah, 25\05\19

Mr. Kyei Boateng 27\05\19

Richard Twumasi, A leader in Freeman Society 17\03\19

Rev. Joseph Nkyi Asamoah, The Society Minister of Freeman Society, 20\03\19.

Rt. Rev. Christopher Nyarko Andam, Bishop of Kumasi Diocese-MCG 24\05\2019.

Rt. Rev. Prof. Osei Safo Kantanka, The Immediate Past Bishop of the Methodist
Church Ghana, Kumasi Diocese and Past Minister of Freeman Society,
19\05\2019.

Stephen Amankwah and Emmanuel Boahene, Former Class Leaders of Freeman Society, 30\03\19.

Sister Diana, Class Leader, 30\05\19

Very Rev. James Osei. A past minister in Freeman Society, 19\5\19

Vinncent Azumah, A class leader 20\5\19

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONS

1. Name:.....(optional)
2. Age: (a) 18-29 (b) 30-39 (c) 40-49 (d) 50 and above
3. Marital Status: (a) Single (b) Married (c) Divorced (d) Widow
4. Do you hold any position in the Church? Please specify.
5. How long have you been or serve in the Church?
6. On the average how many converts are welcomed every week?
7. How does the church welcome these converts and visitors on Sunday?
8. Does converts stay in the church till they are matured enough to handle leadership positions?
9. How will you define discipleship?
10. How often does the church teach on the concept of discipleship?
11. How effective is the Sunday class?
12. How many times do you attend the Sunday bible class in a month?
13. Why are people not regular and punctual to the Sunday class?
14. Have you ever attended a convert class?
15. What are some of the lessons been thought in the convert class?
16. How often does the convert class meet?
17. Do you attend the weekday services of the church?
18. Do you enjoy the MPRP services?
19. Have you ever been visited by the church in your home?
20. Does the church call to check up on you?