

CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

**A STUDY OF THE CHALLENGES FACING THE GROWTH OF DEEPER LIFE
BIBLE CHURCH, AHINSAN GROUP OF DISTRICT**

PROJECT WORK

(LONG ESSAY)

NIMAKO KWAKU

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

JUNE, 2019

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BY

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**A LONG ESSAY SUBMITTED TO CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY
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THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN THEOLOGY
WITH ADMINISTRATION**

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

JUNE, 2019

DECLARATION

I, Nimako Kwaku, do hereby declare that this project is the result of my original research, except for sections for 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

To the glory of God, this work is dedicated to Mrs. Precious Awura Akua Nimako, Brother Kwabena Frimpong, my late uncle Charles Asare and my Mother Comfort Ofori.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Glory be to Almighty God. I am thankful to Dr. S. B. Adubofour for comment, criticism and suggestion have enable me to come this far. Everyone who in any contributed to my University Education I say.

May God richly bless you all. Deeper Life Bible Church for given me the opportunity and sponsoring me to take this four year degree programme, and the entire lectures at the Theology Department and other departments for imparting me positively. The Deeper Life Bible Church, Ahinsan Pastor Kyei Boakye, Pastor Ebenezer Donkor, Mr. Kwabena Frimpong and Dr. Kofi Sekyere Boateng, Mr. Philip Asante, Mad. Sarah Donkor. Finally to my Father Mr. Kwabena Nimako and all the family members.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

According to the New Testament, (1 Corinthians 14:12) the church was used to describe a covenant community of members or groups whose sole responsibility is to edify one another within the community. Church growth has become something of a catchword in a great deal of current religious promotional material. In the minds of many people it is similar to an evangelism or collective renewal. According to Rick Warren, the church members are the group of official members of a particular church. They have been baptized and have made a commitment to be part of that particular church. They are now more than attenders, and they are committed to the purpose of fellowship.¹

According to Donald McGavran, Church growth is concurrently a theological belief, and an applied science which aims to combine the eternal truth of God's word with the best awareness of modern social and behavioral sciences, employing, as its initial frame of allusion to, the foundational work done.² This definition makes apparent that Church growth does not describe a total theology of mission, but has a main focus on the making of disciples and their incorporation into local Churches. As such, it is an interdisciplinary study relating missiology to ecclesiology. A second of explanation is to define exactly what is meant by a 'church growth principle'. According to Donald McGavran defines it as: "A church-growth principle is a universal truth which, when

¹Rick Warren, *Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 132.

² D. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (USA: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), 112.

properly interpreted and applied, contributes significantly to the growth of churches and denominations.”³

Church membership, according to the United Church Manual, is defined as “the children of full members, baptized children, full members or adherents, including clergy who reside in the area, not serving in that congregation”. For statistical purposes, membership herein refers to recorded members on the roll, even though average weekly attendances, the number of households, among other categories also follow the same trend.⁴

The Deeper Life Bible Church Ghana has become stagnant so far as increase in church membership is concerned. The Deeper Life Bible Church seems to have experienced a tremendous growth spurt when it started in Ghana in 1979 with fifteen (15) members and grow to three thousand (3,000) members as at the year 2015, in percentage 30%. It was claimed to be among the quickest growing Churches in the country. The growth was said to have resulted from aggressive evangelism of the gospel and soul winning by both members and leaders of the church.

Deeper Life Bible Church (DLBC) Ahinsan was established over fifteen (15) years ago by five (5) members living in and around the community at the time. Since its inception, the church has enjoyed a rapid increase in membership from five (5) to seven hundred and fifty (750) members as at 2016. They have planted many churches in towns and villages near and afar which correlate to the astronomical growth witnessed in the Church of Pentecost and Lighthouse International Church of late. But of late the DLBC at Ahinsan has experienced a dramatic decrease in its membership. For the Church to retain its status as a mother Church within the district, efforts

³McGauran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 98.

⁴ F. Bryan, *Church Marketing Manual for the Digital Age* (2nd edition) (2011) ulr, accessed 21st March, 2019.

should be made to find out the problems and causes of the downward trend in its membership.

Gene Wilson tells us that, churches are growing living organisms and therefore will naturally reproduce.⁵ If we're not reproducing, it's a sign something is not going on well in our congregation. This research will serve as an evaluation of the Deeper Life Bible Church, Ahinsan, to enable the Church introduces new measures and strategies that will make the Church healthy.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There is inertia of membership extension of the Ahinsan Deeper Life Bible Church in the Asante Region. In 2016, the Church had a total membership of more than seven hundred and fifty (750). The children attendance of the Church was one hundred eighty (180). But currently, the church membership ranges between four hundred and fifty and six hundred (450 and 600), with the number of children reducing to as low as one hundred and five (105). This is evidence of decline in the membership. The Sunday Service attendance has gone down and it has affected other Church activities. The question many people ask is “what are the possible causes of such reduction in membership”? For this reason, the researcher thinks a quick response is needed to save the Deeper Life Bible Church Ahinsan from further decline.

1.3 Research Questions

The question to be addressed in the research are as follows:

⁵Haud O. Craig & Wilson Gene, *Global Church Planting* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Publishing Group, 2011), vii.

1.3.1 *Principal Question*

- What are the challenges facing the growth of Deeper Life Bible Church Ahinsan Group of District?

1.3.2 *Secondary Questions*

- What is the origin and growth of Deeper Life Bible Church, Ahinsan Group of District?
- What are the main obstacles to the growth of the church?
- What can be done to improve the growth of the church?

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to assess the challenges facing growth of Ahinsan Deeper Life Bible Church as a case study. The specific objectives of the studies are:

- To examine the origin and extension of Deeper Life Bible Church Ahinsan Group of District.
- To assess why Ahinsan Deeper Life Bible Church is not growing in membership as the church grows in years.
- To identify measures that can help address the decline in the growth of the Church.

1.5 Scope and Focus of the Study

This Study will cover the activities of Deeper Life Bible Church in Ahinsan District, Kumasi with principal focus on factors affecting the growth of the church.

1.6 Research Methodology

Research methodology is defined as the systematic and scientific procedures used to arrive at the results and findings for a study against which claims for knowledge are evaluated.⁶ This section explains the methodological approach of the study outlining the research design, population, sample and sampling technique, procedure and tools for data collection, as well as techniques for data analysis.

1.6.1 Research Approach and Design

The study adopted the qualitative approach which involves collecting and interpreting data about some phenomena without concern for quantities.⁷ Qualitative research design takes place in natural settings and enables the researcher to develop a level of detailed understanding about the individual or place and to be highly involved in actual experiences of the participants.⁸ The study was phenomenological exploring the conception, perceptions and experiences of church members about the growth of Deeper Life Bible Church and any related perceived challenges.

1.6.2 Methods of Data Collection

In order to get a holistic picture of the research objective, unstructured open-ended interview guide was used. Interview is considered an effective means of eliciting responses from participants in a research study.⁹ They provide elaborate responses and a forum for sincere participation in a study. The interview involved two groups in order to cover a wider perspective. The first group comprised people outside the Deeper Life Bible Church to gather views on how they perceive leadership and growth of the church. The second group comprised members within the Deeper Life

⁶M. Saunders, P. Lewis, & A. Thornhill, *Research methods for Business Students* (Harlow: Financial Times Prentice Hall, 2007), 78.

⁷J. Bowden, (ed.) *Christianity: The Complete Guide* (London: Continuum Publishers, 2005), 64.

⁸E. Babbie & J. Button, *The Practice of Social Research* (Cape Town: Oxford University, 2001), 34.

⁹G.O. Agyedu, F. Donkor, & S. Obeng, *Teach Yourself Research Methods* (Kumasi: University Press, 2010), 79.

Bible Church (i.e. regional overseer, divisional overseers, district coordinators, district pastors, district and zonal women's coordinators as well as home caring fellowship leaders, and old members. The choice of respondents for the categories involved was based on their knowledge, popularity and experience concerning the matters of the church.

1.6.3 Sample / Sampling Procedure

A sample is a representation of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study drawn from the population. Sampling on the other hand as defined by Babbie and Button, is the process of selecting a sample or an element from the entire population.¹⁰ Sample size, therefore refers to the number of units of the sample that has been chosen from which data is gathered.

1.6.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis usually involves reducing the raw data into manageable size, developing summaries and making inferences relevant to answer the study questions posed. For the qualitative data collected from interviews, analysis was made thematically from word narrations to make meaning for the study.

1.7 Literature Review

This section reviews literature and some ideas by scholars related to church growth and the challenges that hindering the growth of church and particularly the Deeper Life Bible Church in Ghana and Ahinsan in perspective. This part of the study reviews literatures on cell church model, the concept of church growth and church growth through evangelization.

¹⁰Babbie & Button, *the Practice of Social Research*, 35.

1.7.1 Cell Church Model

In both Mega-Church and Multiplication Model, it is the small group that plays a key role in growth. Since the 1990s, the Cell Church Model has attracted many church leaders' attention as a new model for Church Growth and renewal. Bowden observes that this model is developed from two contexts.¹¹ The first context is by looking at the mega-church phenomenon; second, by researching the contexts that Christianity is in area of religious suppression. Cell Church model has something common with mega-church model in the vitalization of small groups.

However, the difference lies in that a cell functions as a church in the cell church model. In a cell group church, the cell is the church. All functions of the church (such as worship, fellowship, and nurture) are integrated within the cells aiming at evangelistic small group. The cells are prevented from becoming inward-focused. Each cell is expected to multiply within 12 to 18 months as the result of winning people to Christ. If a cell functions for a long time without multiplying or planting another cell, the cell is deemed unhealthy.¹² The Cell Church Model is based on the house community in the Early Church and house churches. One of the noteworthy models of Cell Church Model is G-12 model. Each cell group consists of 12 members, like the number of Jesus' twelve disciples. Each group is expected to multiply to another G-12 group. Today this G-12 Model is affecting many churches in the world.¹³

Hong contends that the Cell Church Model aims at the mobilization of all laymen for ministry and evangelism. For example, various visitations, funeral, and baby

¹¹ Bowden, (ed.) *Christianity: The Complete Guide*, 32.

¹² Y. Hong, "Models of the Church Growth Movement" *Mission as transformation in the Twenty-First Century* 21, no. 2 (2002): 102 – 113.

¹³ Hong, "Models of the Church Growth Movement", 102-103.

consecration ceremony can be done within the cell group. Cell Church Model aims at Church Growth by the multiplication of cells. The Cell Church Model is worth noting in the future, as it puts its emphasis on the self-portrait of missionary church.¹⁴ At a big conference on the cell church movements in November 2003 in Gyongju, Korea, the participants discussed how to develop the cell church movements in the world for the Great Harvest. However, the Cell Church Model has also the tasks of how to reflect on the ecclesiology of cells and how to suggest a model of world mission, beyond the growth of the local congregations.

1.7.2 The Concept of Church Growth

The term “Church growth” was originally used by Donald McGavran as a synonym for evangelism and mission. Church growth began with the publication of Donald McGavran’s book “the Bridges of God.”¹⁵ According to Mangwana although the church has somehow not paid critical attention to the social context upon which it functioned in early years, church growth movements have hammered institutional and social factors within the church and outside the church that propels church growth.¹⁶

The internal dynamics of the church has been the focus of concentration to the neglect of the social milieu in which members and the church function. However, the external indicators have been emphasized by the church growth movement. Mangwana argued that church growth is not a man’s affair or by the wisdom of man, but by the spirit of God.¹⁷ It is the Holy Spirit that changes the heart and minds of men in order to become part of the church. Studies have shown that the church growth movement begun in the 1960s through the works of McGavran Donald, with his great

¹⁴Hong, “Models of the Church Growth Movement”, 102-103.

¹⁵McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 88.

¹⁶ M. S. Mangwana, *A Training Programme for Promoting Church Growth in the Ebenezer Baptist* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2009), 160-168.

¹⁷Mangwana, *A Training Programme for Promoting Church Growth in the Ebenezer Baptist*, 160.

philosophical ideas and principles of missionary work.¹⁸ The seminary works of Peter Wagner in the 1970s popularized the movement in the United States to be specific. In the 1980s the movement exploded and its effects were felt on the evangelical scene. According to Fagunwa the movement contributed to the understanding of church growth issues across the globe.¹⁹

Mangwana in a study indicated that little knowledge and write ups as well as empirical evidence was known about the concept of church growth in many churches across the globe regarding church planning, evangelism, organization of churches, executing outreach programs and making the gospel message become known to many people.²⁰ The movement has provided tremendous insight and in-depth understanding to the issues of how churches can grow through the development of appropriate programs and strategies.

Previous studies have identified a number of factors that prevent some churches from growing. The study by Bryan provide the following: the attitude of church leaders, pastors, founders and members of some churches; ineffective development of evangelism programs; negative feeling towards running effective outreach programs; failure to apply relevant marketing principles and tools; and limited levels of facilities. Again, Bryan sites inadequate personal resources, limited financial resources, lack of vibrant administration, and increasing complexity in church operations and activities as capable of prevent church growth.²¹

According to Wilbert Shenk, as cited in Fagunwa, the church growth movement has offered a new way of approaching the missionary work and tradition and encouraged how the history of the Christian missions can be rewritten in order to capture the

¹⁸McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*,88

¹⁹Fagunwa, *Church Growth and Information Communication Technology*, 23.

²⁰Mangwana, *A Training Programme for Promoting Church Growth in the Ebenezer Baptist*, 161.

²¹ Bryan, *Church Marketing Manual for the Digital Age*, 32.

growth theme.²² Through the movement, churches have come to appreciate and accept the cognate tools of other disciplines such as statistics and other social sciences. It has given better view of how the church can be evaluated in order to propel people for evangelization and development. Lastly, the church growth movement is regarded as a pioneer of the study of church growth, underpinned by theories and conceptual models. According to McGavran cited in Fagunwa, church growth is regarded as evangelism given birth within the missiological milieu.²³

1.7.3 Church Growth through Evangelization

Within the context of Christianity, evangelization is a means of spreading the gospel and winning souls for Christ. Through evangelization the church is able to increase its numbers as a result of new converts coming.²⁴

The word evangelism originated from Greek word “italics” which means a “preaching of, or an enthusiastic effort to spread the gospel or the zeal to propagate the cause” Webster cited in Englo,²⁵ that evangelism is a means of preaching the gospel and winning new converts for the church, using the word of God, biblical ideologies and methods. Englo posited that the foremost duty of every Christian is to go into the world and present the “good news or spread the gospel message to all creation.²⁶ This was the commanding message given by Christ Jesus as stipulated in (Mark 16:15-16, in the Bible). It is a truism that, one basic concept that has been part of the church’s mission and agenda is evangelism. Diverse strategies, methods and techniques exist in the spreading of the gospel including one on one witnessing, discussion in churches,

²²Fagunwa, *Church Growth and Information Communication Technology*, 24.

²³Fagunwa, *Church Growth and Information Communication Technology*, 44

²⁴ J. E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor, *Spirituality and The Changing Face of Evangelicalism in Ghana*, Department of Religious Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, (2008).110

²⁵ B. Englo, *Evangelism, Growth of Churches and Healing* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2004), 45.

²⁶Englo, *Evangelism, Growth of Churches and Healing*, 45.

using a tribe head, and many more.²⁷ Despite these techniques, strategies and methods, recent methods of evangelism have changed the principal focus of soul winning resulting in a decline in mass evangelism across the globe and making more people secularized in recent times.²⁸ It is important to understand that evangelism has a central focus of winning souls and growing the church. Converting people and growing the church is therefore considered as the fundamental work of the supreme God (Holy Spirit) through the activities or duties of men and women within the church. It is therefore important to posit that evangelism goes beyond the superficial procedures that people go through. It is regarded as an instructional process which takes into cognizance the intellect rather than the psychological underpinning of the convert. A study by Kuwornu-Adjaottor indicated that although evangelism means different things to different people in Ghana, the effect of evangelism on church growth is significantly positive.²⁹

1.8 Significance of the Study

The following are the significance of the study:

- The findings of the study could educate the church authorities on what to do to ensure the growth of the Deeper Life Bible Church.
- Again, the study could be useful for church members and leadership to enrich their knowledge on church growth and to deal with challenges and promote factors responsible for church growth.
- The study report could guide the church to develop effective strategies towards improving the growth of church.

²⁷Englo, *Evangelism, Growth of Churches and Healing*, 46.

²⁸Kuwornu-Adjaottor, *Spirituality and The Changing Face of Evangelicalism in Ghana*, 143.

²⁹Kuwornu-Adjaottor, *Spirituality and The Changing Face of Evangelicalism in Ghana*, 144.

- Again, the study would serve as a secondary source of data for other scholars and researchers interested in carrying out further research in related fields.

1.9 Organization of the Study

This study is arranged in five chapters. The first chapter is an introduction to the entire study. The chapter two addresses the background issues, thus the genesis and the growth of Deeper Life Bible Church in Ahinsan District. The chapter three looks at the Deeper Life Church Ahinsan, the founding members of the church, how the church started and the kinds of leaders the church started with. Also, the historical situation of Deeper Life Church Ahinsan. Chapter Four of the study report interprets and analyses findings of data collected for the study as presented in the earlier chapter. The interpretations and analyses are presented in line with the study objectives and draw relations between the key variables of the study, with reference to literature or findings in previous studies. Chapter five summarized study findings outlined conclusion and stated recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

BRIEF HISTORY OF DEEPER LIFE BIBLE CHURCH IN GHANA

2.1 Introduction

The chapter two of the work gives an account of the history and the growth of Deeper Life Bible Church (DLBC) in Ghana, Nigeria and history the Deeper Life Bible Church Ahinsan District with focus on the factors that led to the formation, the challenges faced by those who initiated it. It will also give an account of some individuals and who for the love of God made great contributions towards the growth of Deeper Life Bible Church Ghana, the individuals include Douglas Frempong, Yaw Owusu Achiaw and Yaw Asante, and the Kumasi town fellowship of scripture union.

2.2 Origin of Deeper Life Bible Church in Nigeria

The commencement and growth of the Deeper Life movement in Nigerian was based on the evangelistic zeal of its founder – leader, Williams Folorunso Kumuyi. According, to Dr. S.B Adubofuor his evangelical Pentecostal background derives from his association with the Anglican Church (as a student, and as later teacher and SU patron of Mayflower School Ikeno), apostolic faith church, and the Christian unions of the Lagos Universities where he undertook undergraduate and postgraduate studies respectively.³⁰ After this, if any of them had any questions they could see him for counseling in order to curtail the regular attendance to individuals. This was agreed upon and based on this, in 1972, the group met at his residence at the University flat where he was residing. This was how the first Bible Study meeting started with fifteen members from different Christian denominations. The founder

³⁰ Samuel B. Adubofuor, *Evangelical Parachurch Movements in Ghanaian Christianity* (C.1950-Early 1990s), 324.

started with this fifteen-member non-denominational Bible study class in his apartment or flat in the University of Lagos where he taught as a lecturer in Mathematics.³¹

The deeper life movement started in the mid – seventies, as the climax of informal Monday evening bible studies initiated early 1973 by Kumuyi in his campus residence at Lagos.³² His association with the university CU as patron increased the participation of CU members. Membership growth led to a more public operation, with the commencement of off – campus meetings by the late 1975 in a near – by auditorium of redeemed Christian Church of God, an indigenous Pentecostal church.³³ The new location offered proximity advantage which extended Kumuyi’s influence, with membership of the group embracing Charismatic ministries were established which were later turned into churches.

2.3 History of Deeper Life Bible Church in Ghana

According to Dr Samuel B. Adudofour an International conference facilitated personal contracts between Ghanaians preachers and their foreign colleagues. One of such contracts led to the introduction of deeper life movement in Ghana. In 1978 a Ghanaian evangelist, Douglas Okono Frempong attended a Morris Cerullo world evangelism conference in Kenya where he had acquaintance with a Nigerian Pentecostal preacher, brother Godwin. In the same year, following the initial contact at its meeting in Kumasi.³⁴ He was accompanied by Kumuyi who expressed desire to undertake a crusade in Kumasi. The deeper life movement in Ghana thus commenced

³¹ Adubofuor, *Evangelical Parachurch Movements in Ghanaian Christianity*, 324.

³² Adubofuor, *Evangelical Parachurch Movements in Ghanaian Christianity*, 324.

³³ Adubofuor, *Evangelical Parachurch Movements in Ghanaian Christianity*, 324.

³⁴ Adubofuor, *Evangelical Para church Movements in Ghanaian Christianity*, 325.

with a crusade at Jackson Park in Kumasi and series of Easter and Christmas retreats between 1978-1981.

The Deeper Life Mission in Ghana involved the collaboration of local evangelists (particularly Douglas Frempong, Yaw Owusu Achiaw and Yaw Asante), and the Kumasi Town Fellowship of Scripture Union, with colourful pastors and handbills, and free transport offers, boarding and lodging (the first time ever in the context of the prevailing economic hardship), many people were attracted to the deeper life retreats at Prempeh College, Kumasi. The retreats were used to introduce “holiness” teachings of Kumuyi which generated much controversy and isolated the movement.

Initially (1979-1981), the movement functioned as a Para church group designated deeper life Christian fellowship.” It limited its activities to mid – weekly evening area fellowship meetings, a harmonious arrangement which avoided clash with Sunday afternoon fellowship meetings of SU. It allowed the participation of interested SU members who were attracted to deeper life because of its Christian fellowship identity. Dr. Samuel B. Adubofuor however stated that in 1982 as a process towards independency and consolidated of membership, there was a redefinition of operation and modification of identity. Deeper life Christian fellowship thus became deeper Christian life ministry’, establishing a separatist identity with teachings that regulated the lifestyle of members. It organised separate Sunday evening meetings in addition to the mid – week one. The leadership exerted control by centralising fellowship meetings at one new location, Santasi, where large wooden auditorium had been erected’’. Deeper life members took an aggressive form of evangelism and publicity

in attracting people in regular meetings and retreats, by distributing gospels tracks and handbills in public transport in Kumasi particularly those born for Santasi.³⁵

The new identity of Deeper Life was a stage in a transition towards forming a formation. In 1984 the movement was renamed “deeper life bible church.” Its membership was boosted by Ghanaian deportees from Nigeria, already converted to the movement.

Deeper life was established with most Nigerian leadership. Through a scholarship scheme some Ghanaians were selected for bible training in Nigeria. By 1980 deeper life bible centres had been establish in Lagos as an interdenominational institution, offering a nine month multi lingual programme, with tuition, in English, French, Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. The first set of twenty West African students included Ghanaians with Boham Owusu Ansah as a prominent product. It was a means towards the development of an indigenou leadership

The Deeper Life Bible Church like her contemporary New Religious Movements has a history of its inception and development in Ghana. The church which was formerly tagged the “Deeper Christian Life Fellowship” emerged in Ghana from Nigeria in 1978. The founder, W.F. Kumuyi as reported by one of Ghana’s News Papers started what has now become a church in 1973 in Lagos-Nigeria.

According to Isaacson, this happened because Kumuyi was involved with the Scripture Union, where people invited him to come and give messages at different places and others also came for counseling.³⁶ From then, people were being directed to him to have their questions answered in understanding various portions of the

³⁵ Adubofuor, *Evangelical Para church Movements in Ghanaian Christianity*, 325.

³⁶ A. Isaacson, *The Extraordinary Growth of the Deeper Life Bible Church* (Kent: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, 1990), 93.

Bible. Meanwhile, he was still a lecturer at the University of Lagos. Attendance to people and explaining the scriptures to them took most of his time and he had not enough time to prepare for his lecture notes and carry on with his research work. This made him to inform those who came to him regularly that they should all meet once in a week in the evening to study the scriptures together.

Isaacson, commenting on the growth and progress of the Deeper Life Bible Church in Ghana, emphasizes that the church in Ghana apart from the headquarters church in Nigeria is now the second largest church of Deeper Life in the world.³⁷ Missionary work outside Nigeria first started in Ghana. Isaacson estimates the numerical strength of the church in Ghana alone as having 1,340 branches.³⁸

The success that attended the early operations of deeper life in Ghana was due to its initial identification with scripture union. But the SU deeper life link was severed due to controversies surrounding deeper life deeper life teachings. In 1985 the Deeper Life Ministry purchased 105 acres of land at Pakyi number two, a major farming community near Kumasi (and 8 miles from Santasi), for development as a national convention centres. Recently, the payment of GH¢2m. (About £2000) for acquisition of additional 300 acres by the movement has generated a fierce dispute, now a court case between the Pakyi II locals and the Christian group.

A part from basic evangelical tenets, deeper life introduced teachings to regulate the life of adherents, with emphasis on restitution as evidence of genuine repentance. Some aspects of its code of ethics conflicted with Akan culture. It prescribed a particular style of dressing and haircut. The wearing of clothe in in the traditional Akan way (like the Roman toga) by males was discouraged because it left the shoulder and a side of the chest exposed. The teachings encouraged segregation of the

³⁷ Isaacson, *The Extraordinary Growth of the Deeper Life Bible Church*, 101.

³⁸ Isaacson, *The Extraordinary Growth of the Deeper Life Bible Church*, 102.

sexes by forbidding the exchange of greetings between males and females. These and deprecatory remarks condemning Christian use of ornaments, particularly weddings rings, generated controversy within SU fellowship. The strictures led mainline evangelical to perceive deeper life as an evangelical sect, a “holiness movement” which rejected all other Christian groupings as deviant.

Samuel B. Adubofour stated that official S.U response rejected the legalism and doctrines of sanctification. S.U collaboration with deeper life ceased. However, the conversation of Florence Yeboah (former S.U travelling staff) to deeper life had influence SU members to join the group, though she later withdrew, along with many others. It is against this background that symposium organised in the early 1980s at S.U Easter house party in Kumasi to examine the “controversial” features of the deeper life Church The deeper life strictures on the uses of wedding rings reflects the views of those who advocate a radical departure from marriage traditions inherited from Europe.³⁹

Isaacson quoted that the regulations regulated with Kumuyi as Ojo (1988, 146), indicates: “Kumuyi I stands in a conspicuous and significant position in the life of deeper Christian life ministry. As founder and leader, he has formulated all the doctrinal teachings and has dictated all the religious practice by which members are guided. Up until 1982 Kumuyi rigidly the doctrinal emphasis and religious practice by which members are guided. For example, until the early 1980. Kumuyi was prescribing the mode of dressing, the pattern of haircut, what attitude to adopt to friends, and the opposite sex, and what luxuries are to be allowed in homes.⁴⁰ The rigid regulation of DLCM is attributed to Kumuyi’s previous association with the

³⁹Adubofuor, *Evangelical Para church Movements in Ghanaian Christianity*, 327.

⁴⁰Isaacson, *The Extraordinary Growth of the Deeper Life Bible Church*, 102.

apostolic faith church in Lagos, particularly the doctrines of holiness and sanctification (associated with the three stages salvation) which earned him the nickname: “Holiness preacher and gave deeper life a separatist image in the 70s, and degrading other Christians “as sources of pollution.”

The evangelical parachurch movements by S. B Adubofour reviews that, with the restrictive regulations deeper life assumed a distinctive sectarian identity, alienating it from mainstream evangelism in Ghana. Nevertheless, its proselytizing zeal, with emphasis on holiness and sanctification continued to make a significant appeal. The phenomenal expansion of the movement, particularly in Nigeria, led to a later relaxation of the regulation.⁴¹

2.4 The Genesis of Deeper Life Bible Church, Ahinsan Group of District

In tracing the Genesis and origin of the Deeper Life Bible Church-Ahinsan Group of District, Ahinsan group was established in 2004 with some key personalities such as Opanin Kyei Boakye, Mr. Kwabena Frimpong, Madam Sarah Donko, Mr. Ebenezer Donko and Sister Comfort Ofori who championed the course. According to Opanin Kyei Boakye, the Ahinsan group started as a small local Church which was called Christian Life Fellowship on the 3rd May, 2004, with the people mention above, with the intension of establishing Deeper Life Bible Church in Ahinsan (DLBC). The congregants met to study the bible and make intercessory prayers at Opanin Kyei Boakye’s house. Gradually, through house to house evangelism the membership size increased from five (5) to Sixteen (16) in November 2004. After that, they resorted to

⁴¹Adubofuor, *Evangelical Para church Movements in Ghanaian Christianity*, 328.

have their usual meeting sessions on Sunday at Joy Standard School classroom, Ahinsan.⁴²

In giving credence to the pioneers, Opanin Kyei said that, the church has been in existence for the past Fifteen (15) years from efforts of Opanin Kyei Boakye who is now the head of district coordinator and Mr. Ebenezer Donkor who successfully established the church in 2004. Subsequently, the leadership of the church devised a strategy to make the bible teachings and prayers closer and more accessible to the local people. Therefore, members from the nearby localities were made to hold their regular church gatherings at their vicinity and congregate at the central church at Ahinsan periodically. As a result, local churches were established as Atonsu group, Jesus only group, Bokro group, Monaco group, Gyinaese group and these units combine with the Ahinsan local to form the Deeper Life Bible Church – Ahinsan Group of District currently being understudy.⁴³

Concerning the progression of the growth of the Deeper Life Bible Church (DLBC) Ahinsan, as narrated by Mr. Ebenezer Donkor, a pastor and a founding member of the church said the other five (5) various groups which was listed above established was as a results of mechanism adopted by their church for growth. The researcher discovered that the method which was adapted by the church was what brought the growth.⁴⁴ According to the Church Annual report, the history progression of the Church was Massive. When the Sunday Church stated in the year 2005 the 2nd Month of January after the December retreat done at Pakyi No.2 the membership move from sixteen (16) to Forty five (45), from two thousand and five (2005) to two thousand

⁴² Interview with Opanin Kyei Boakye, 30/5/2019.

⁴³ Interview with Opanin Kyei Boakye, 30/5/2019.

⁴⁴ Interview with Mr Ebenezer Donkor, 3/6/2019.

and ten (2010) the member has move to four hundred and ten (410) and that was as a results of the other five (5) groups established.⁴⁵

In the year 2007 when the Church members was increasing, Mr. Ebenezer Donkor who was the proprietor of the Joy Standard School, Suggested the church is growing and we need our own building so he gave his own land which was closer to his school at Ahinsan as a seed for the church to have his own auditorium. By the year 2009, the church building project was completed which can take about four hundred members and commissioned in 15th March, 2009 by the then Regional overseer Pastor E.K Aduodu who was Santasi.

Since the year 2009 the church continues to grow, until when the auditorium could no more hold the members, in Opanin Kyei Boakye who is now the residence pastor said there was an overflow during every Sunday morning service because of this the church should plan and build a bigger auditorium.

The Church committee met to plan the new building project. They Concluded the on the note that every member should contribute a quota to support the building project. The man was to pay One hundred cedis (GH¢100) and the woman were to pay Fifty cedis (GH¢50). The Church also contributed in various forms to build the project which can take about Nine hundred (900) church members a day, and in the year 2015 the new Church building was commission under the leadership of Pastor Kyei Boakye and his leaders.

The year 2008 to 2016 saw a boast on the growth of membership where the Church actively engage in their respective activities.

⁴⁵ The Church Annual Report.

2.5 The Activities of Deeper Life Bible Church (DLBC)

The major activities of the Deeper Life Bible Church (DLBC)-Ahinsan, as planned by the leaders of the church was massively patronized by the members. Pastor Kyei Boakye narrated. The activities are scheduled within the week. On Mondays from 5:30 to 7:30pm is bible studies, in this the various groups meet at their usual meeting places for their studies separately with a leader as their pastor. The bible studies are done through a set light service from Nigeria ministering by the general superintendent Pastor W. F. Kumuyi. On Tuesday various leaders of the groups come together to Ahinsan District for leaders meeting from 6:00 to 8: 00pm. On Thursday, there is a revival services at Ahinsan and all the various groups comes together and participate, this include prayer, worship, praises and word ministration at 6:00 to 8:00. On the last Friday of every month, all the groups come to Ahinsan and have a watch night service from 9:30pm to 4:00am. Saturday were the days were the days scheduled for evangelism, this was done by various groups within their geographical environment. Finally on Sunday, all the group meet at the Ahinsan District to fellowship together, that is from 7:30am to 12:00pm every Sunday. During the last Sundays of every month the regional overseer, Pastor Osei Assibey from Santasi visit and revived the congregation.⁴⁶ Pastor Donkor affirmed that those Church massively attended these activities and the church is strong and spiritually growing in membership.⁴⁷

2.6 Evangelistic Activities of Deeper Life Bible Church (DLBC), Ahinsan Group

The evangelistic activities adopted by the church is said to be what boosted the growth of the Deeper Life Bible Church (DLBC), Ahinsan Group. Pastor E. Donkor

⁴⁶ Interview with Pastor Kyei Boakye, 3/6/2019.

⁴⁷ Interview with Pastor Ebenezer Donkor, 3/6/2019.

on assumption of duty, he met a membership of ten (10) who were then meeting in a classroom, but was able to mobilize more members through visitation, follow ups, encouragement and many outreach programs, and membership increase. According to Pastor Ebenezer Donkor, he told the church that, evangelism is the task of every believer, he mobilizes members and trained them how to win souls, minister healing and lead others to Christ. The result is that members embark on vigorous evangelism, one on one, house to house, do outreach programs, life crusade in every two months. ten people from every group was well trained as counselors who was specially prepared to do follow-up and visitation thus some church members try to do follow-up if a new converts stays in their geographical area. Pastor Ebenezer Donkor affects it that what brought the growth of the Deeper Life Bible Church Ahinsan.

2.7 Conclusion

Deeper Life Bible Church (DLBC), Ahinsan started, from a very difficult point as one can see, passing through many challenges and difficulties at a point in time. One can also find out that there were great contributions by some individual Christians like Opanin Kyei Boakye, Mr. Kwabena Frimpong, Madam Sarah Donkor, Mr. Ebenezer Donko and Sister Comfort Ofori help the growth and expansion of the Deeper Life Bible Church (DLBC), Ahinsan. It is through their effort that, Deeper Life Bible Church (DLBC), Ahinsan stands in this current form by the Grace of God.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CHALLENGES FACING THE GROWTH OF DEEPER LIFE BIBLE

CHURCH AHINSAN

3.1 Introduction

In chapter two the researcher looked at the historical background of the DLBC Ghana, the origin of the church and the Genesis of the DLBD Ahinsan group of District and some of their activities when started. In this chapter the researcher present some of the challenges facing the growth of the DLBC Ahinsan, these are perception of church doctrine that affect the growth, style of worship, leadership in efficiency, emergency of new charismatic churches, unhealthy attitude concerning marriage, weak church-community relationship, lack of growth consciousness, donors fatigue, inability to maintain new members and migration from the community and other involved factors.

3.2 Challenges / Obstacles to Church Growth

The Church lacks dynamic leaders who can take her to the next level. To convert the reaped harvest and integrate them into the main life of the church, a new generation of leaders must rise to the surface, if the church is to do its job, then these key issues must be faced and solved.⁴⁸ Warren suggests that if churches are going to move on from strength to strength and see a greater move of God, then they need to rectify these leadership problems that are threatening the forward march of the church. These issues are not theoretical but practical leadership problems that every careful observer can see. They are not particular to one church or denomination, but they spread across the landscape of the church, and hence there is no need folding our arms pretending as

⁴⁸ Warren, *Purpose Driven Church*, 64.

if they do not exist. The future of the work demands that churches address them squarely today.

As part of the study’s objectives, the researcher delved into issues that serve as obstacles to the growth of the church. Interviews with some respondents disclosed the perceptions that the church does not have strong desire for membership growth but it is only a wish. Explaining this assertion, some respondents reported that:

They see evangelism as the main activity potential to bring converts but it is rarely done.⁴⁹ Sometimes too, the few converts we are able to get from our evangelism and outreach activities are not properly nurtured and they go back.⁵⁰

A probe to ascertain if lack of evangelism training has a stake in the assertions above, some respondents agreed and added that only a few elders take upon themselves to visit new converts but their efforts are not adequate.

“More of the youth should be trained to manage regular visitation and nurturing of new converts”. “The attitude of concentrating authority among the elders was cited as contributing to the church’s inability to step up growth rate”.⁵¹ I suggest more men and women should be involved in house visitation of new converts, whilst sometimes involving other new convert’s in house visitation activities to close back doors. Once they are fully involved in such activities it becomes difficult to backslide.”⁵²

Challenges	Ministers	Lay Leaders	Church Members	% Of Total Respondents
1. Perceptions of Church Doctrine	1	5	18	
2. Style of Worship	1	2	15	
3. Leadership Inefficiency	0	4	11	
4. Emergence of New Charismatics	1	2	20	

⁴⁹ Interview with R19 on 26/5/2019.

⁵⁰ Interview with R18 and R11 on 26/5/2019.

⁵¹ Interview with R10 and R9 on 26/5/2019.

⁵² Interview with R13 on 26/5/2019.

Church				
5. Unhealthy Attitude concerning Marriage	0	3	17	
6. Weak Church community relationship	1	6	14	
7. Lack of growth consciousness	0	4	13	
8. Donor fatigue and low church attendance	2	6	19	
9. Inability to maintain new converts	1	4	15	
10. Migration from the community	2	10	20	

3.2.1 Perceptions of Church Doctrines that Affect Growth

The study further assessed the perceptions of members regarding some doctrines they think might affect the growth of the church in areas of marriages, leadership, biblical teachings and way of worship. It was gathered that the Deeper Life Bible Church-Ahinsan group of District has teachings that encourage marriage between fellow members but does not actual prohibit inter-denominational marriage. Some respondents were quoted as saying that:

We agree to inter-denominational marriage but it does not help us most especially when our females get married with males from different religious denomination. They end up leaving the church to follow their spouses said by four (4) respondents.

There were no specific doctrines in leadership of the church observed in the study. Though the church allows youth leadership but strategies for empowerment has not been adequate for the youth. Similarly, respondents reported that most leadership roles are taken up by the men with few women involvement. No special doctrines are practiced to sideline female leadership but they are not adequately encouraged.

Touching on the church's style of worship and biblical teachings respondents did not cite any adverse effects on discouraging growth in membership.

Further interrogations with some non-members of the church within the local area affirmed low membership growth rate in the past 2 or 3 years. A respondent reiterated that:

“Oh I do not see much with membership growth of Deeper Life Bible Church at Ahinsan, perhaps due to emergence of many religious denominations around.”⁵³

This has been noted to be the emergence of the new charismatic churches within the area. It seems they are competing with the Deeper Life Bible Church. Not only that, but other orthodox churches are also facing these challenges as their members are moving into these charismatic churches.

Other non-member respondents were of the view that the biblical teachings of the Deeper Life Church at Ahinsan are not that bad to discourage people from joining them.

3.2.2 Style of Worship

Respondents expressed concern that the church may rather bring life in their way of worship. One non-member respondent indicated that:

“their worship looks dull and might affect their quest to win souls because youth of the day usually like church worship full of drumming and dancing”.⁵⁴

⁵³ Interview with R18 on 26/5/2019.

⁵⁴ Interview with R18 on 26/5/2019.

Respondents also expressed their view that though almost 80% are self-employed but, since the nation faces with business, political and financial instability, their business has decline resulting in lower income and not able to give to the church as they are supposing. For that matter my unfamiliar form of fund raising by a visiting pastor possess a challenge they complain.⁵⁵

Suggesting some moves that are capable of boosting up membership drive, other non-members of the church cited vigorous intercessional prayers and inspirational worship in a charged atmosphere. However, growth retardation was partly attributed to the springing up of many religious denominations.

Some non-members of the church interrogated during the interview also expresses misgivings about the obligation to fulfill financial demands in the church if one becomes a member of the church.

Migration is one major challenge facing the Deeper Life Bible Church Ahinsan (DLBC). According to the interviews with some respondents, the researcher found out that this can be attributed to, work, marriage, school and outskirts land for building issues. A number of people migrate because they found new work or job that is far from the community, other also as a result of marriage where partners are not within the communities, they join their spouse where they are, others also attend schools that are located miles away from the community, and aging others, since they can't get land within these communities they move to the outskirts of the metropolis to purchase land and build their houses there. These are many factors cause some members to migrate from the community leaving the church and as a result experiencing doctrine.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Interview with R9, R10 and R14 on 26/5/2019.

⁵⁶ Interview with R5,R6 and R7 on 26/5/2019.

3.2.3 Leadership Inefficiency

Typically, findings in chapter three (3) of the study affirm Fagunwa's submission that churches must solve leadership problems in their quest for growth, which might include proper assimilation of young adults in church leadership roles. Young adults are naturally energetic so once nurtured well into leadership roles the youthful exuberance would sufficiently complement the efforts of the experienced old members to achieve the growth targets. It is true that the growth of any organisation is depend on its leadership. Because the DLBC lack dynamism in their leadership. It seems always, things are done in the old fashion way, which is not modern trend of growth. This as a result has made the church not been able to meet the evangelism style, and not knowing how to mature the youth to also take up leadership positions. The lack of leadership dynamism has also resulted in the few church members not been able to communicate the gospel to others through the new technological way to win them

3.2.4 Emergence of New Charismatic Churches (Exodus of the Youth)

The emergence of new charismatic churches within Ahinsan community was also cited by respondents as a challenge for the growth of Deeper Life Bible Church (DLBC-Ahinsan). The situation was different in the earlier stages of the Church's existence where there were just a few churches in the Ahinsan community. Similar to the findings in, these numerous up-coming churches look so aggressive with meetings in their well-furnished permanent church buildings whilst others even converge in temporary structures, open football pitches and school classrooms. Nonetheless, these churches keenly compete for same prospective members within the community and thus limit the rate at which DLBC-Ahinsan grows, since they claim to greater

percentage. This limit the rate at which the Deeper Life Bible Church Ahinsan grows, since they are claiming a greater percentage of the people. The lack of charismatic in the church has resulted, significant member of the church membership moving into these new established charismatic churches.

Concerning the way of worship, some respondent said, the church lack adequate and vigorous intercessional prayers, inspirational worship and adequate praises. Since corporate worship should be dynamic, the strict method of worship that does not allow force movement of the spirit, has resulted many members of the church complaining, that, the way of worship is bored, especially new convert who comes to church and are familiar of the Pentecostal and charismatic way of worship, leave without coming back again.

3.2.5 Unhealthy Attitude Concerning Marriage

Five respondents said, not only the doctrine of marriage, but doctrine of women hairstyle and women dressing, are also another doctrinal factors that have brought drastic decline in the church membership. This is because most of the people, sees these doctrine as legalism and so strict to abide in it and therefore leave without coming back again.⁵⁷

3.2.6 Weak Church-Community Relationship

Respondents in the chapter three (3) study are of the view that families and the community are fundamental components of the church. This implies that if the church will position itself well by empowering people in the community with resources such as education, health and skills promotion they would at best be able to win their

⁵⁷ Interview with R4,R6,R9,R10 and R12 on 26/5/2019.

membership to fellowship with them.⁵⁸ Respondents therefore did not see much of these discerning church-community relationship. By so doing the church do not advertise the presence only but also set a good example as a place humans well-being are cared for. Therefore, drawing others to join. Lack of this has resulted the church not being recognise by community.

3.2.7 Lack of Growth Consciousness

This was supported by the assertion that only a few people embark on growth activities and that efforts to close back doors are not strong to maintain new converts. The findings imply that only a few people get committed into strategies that seek to win souls. These devoted members are not enough to evangelize for new members and to ensure continuous visitation to sustain their interest so that they do not slip back. According to Foli, the inability of the Church members to visit new converts, absentee members, the sick and the elderly are significant challenges contributing to the decline in Church membership as the members feel rejected by the leaders and members and tend to join other churches.⁵⁹

3.2.8 Donor Fatigue and Low Church Attendance

Some non-members of the church interrogated during the interview also expresses misgivings about the obligation to fulfill financial demands in the church if one becomes a member of the church, whether one is gainfully employed or not. Some people therefore find the financial demands of the Church too burdensome and therefore leave. Some also abhor the way fund raising is conducted in the Church by

⁵⁸B. C. Essamuah, *A History of Methodist Church Ghana 1961-2000* (African World Press Inc. Eritrea, 2010), 121.

⁵⁹R. Foli, *Hindrances to Church Growth in Ghana* (Accra: Trinity of Church and Theology. Trust Publishers, 2006), 23.

some visiting ministers. This has resulted many members coming and leaving the church without coming back again.

3.2.9 Inability to Maintain New Converts

Some key members of the church also disclosed and attributed the decline in membership to the inability of the leaders and members of the Church to maintain new converts. Corroborating prior research findings this study found out that majority of new converts slip back after few months' even if they are baptized. To substantiate this assertion, a leader of the church disclosed that about 65% of new converts has stopped fellowship with them within the recent three years. Is a result of this, out of the total converts, majority do not stay and since non look for them, they don't come back again?

3.2.10 Migration from the Communities

The migration from the community has resulted the Deeper Life Bible Church (DLBC), losing a great member of people and potentials who were supporting the church immensely. Again new covert not staying in the church for long since they come and leave. Those well trained when they leave, the branch has to go through long process to train other members to take up their positions. This seems the church is going through setback and experiencing stagnation.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has so far discussed the challenges facing of the Deeper Life Bible Church (DLBC), Ahinsan. These challenges are: the perception of church doctrine, style of worship, leadership inefficiency, emergence of new charismatic churches,

unhealthy attitude concerning marriage, weak church community relationship, lack of growth consciousness, donor fatigue, inability to maintain new convert and migration from the community.

CHAPTER FOUR

IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHALLANCES FACING THE GROWTH OF DEEPER LIFE BIBLE CHURCH AHINSAN

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter three the researcher discussed the perspectives of the challenges and obstacles, suggested measures required to address the growth of Deeper Life Bible Church, Ahinsan (DLBC). It was found from the data collected that the founding members adopted various evangelical strategies for church growth which included public crusades, retreats and in-house visitations. This chapter four (4) of the study gives an account of the implications of the challenges for the growth of Deeper Life Bible Church, Ahinsan (DLBC).

4.2 Decline in Church Attendance

According to Elder Dominic Boateng because of the fore mention challenges the Ahinsan church of Deeper life is facing with a drastic decline in the church membership.⁶⁰ Most of these people leaving the church as they makes fellow up, complains of the style of worship in the Deeper Life Bible church at Ahinsan. This is because those who join the church at Ahinsan are the few who migrated to the neighborhood who previously has been in Pentecostal, and Apostolic and Charismatic churches before so when they come and experience a kind of dull worship style they feel uncomfortable and therefore leave the church.

⁶⁰ Interview with Elder Dominic Boateng, Church Elder, 26th May, 2019.

4.3 Exodus of the Youth

The researcher's interview with some of the youth in DLBC Ahinsan and those who has left indicates that, the kind of messages preach on every Sunday is not reviving.⁶¹ others also claimed that the church must preach prosperity messages and since the church is not preaching such messages they leave to places where they can find such message. It was also mention that the style of worship in the church is not modern, since most of the youth are university graduate and other student. They prefer foreign songs. While the youth love to hear foreign gospel that touches the souls the elderly prefer hymns and the local Twi songs.

4.4 Drastic Decline of Church Finances

According to Elder Dominic Boateng he said for some years now since the church started facing the fore mention challenges and some members leaving the church is going through financial challenges.⁶²

Madam Afia Nyarko complain that it was the vision of the church to help those who gets admission to the various tertiary school, but because they are not meeting the demands of the church, the vision has not been able to be fulfilled.⁶³

Some of the elders interview, said, the church for sometime has not been able to meet the financial demands of the church, that is they are not able to pay their bills and to buy new instruments, and even to repair the spoiled equipment. And this is as a result of the crises facing the church.

⁶¹ Interview with Brother Kofi Nyarko, Member, 16th May, 2019.

⁶² Interview with Elder Dominic Boateng.

⁶³ Interview with Madam Afia Nyarko, Church Member, 26th May, 2019.

4.5 Unable to meet Financial Obligation

Some of the members of the DLBC-Ahinsan said because of the decline in their finances, the church now cannot meet their financial obligation. It is the vision of the church to build ultramodern children service building, toilet, car place and walls around the church premises. But since the church is going through challenges they are not able to meet these financial obligations. Respondent R- said, this is making the church lack behind and stigmatic in her progress in their activities.

4.6 Emergence of New Charismatic Church

The DLBC-Ahinsan is known to be one of the pioneer's churches that was established in the area. Because of that more people were attracted to her and they increased rapidly at her establishment in members. Since the perception others have concerning the doctrine of the church, the style of worship, their attitude concerning marriage and their inability to maintain new members. Some of the Pastors who migrate to the area saw it as an advantage, to establish new churches with the modern technological and charismatic approach to attract and win these youth and members of these look warn church.

As a result of the DLBC-Ahinsan inactiveness more charismatic churches see it as an advantage and are trooping into the area to establish new churches and are drawing most of the members of DLBC-Ahinsan to their new established churches.

4.7 Conclusion

Taking cognizance of the views expressed by the respondents, it could be said that, causes and implications of the challenges and obstacles of the church growth could be attributed to following issues: decline in church attendance, leadership inefficiency,

emergence of new charismatic churches, exodus of the youth, unhealthy attitude concerning Marriage, Weak Church-Community relationship, lack of growth consciousness, donor fatigue and low church attendance, inability to maintain new Converts and Migration from the Communities.

CHAPTR FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The study is conducted to examine the challenges facing the growth of Deeper Life Bible Church-Ahinsan group of District-Kumasi. The study looked at the origin and history of the Deeper Life Bible Church, both Nigeria and Ghana. It looked at the Genesis and some activities of the DLBC-Ahinsan Group.

With the help of interviews the researcher discovered some challenges and obstacles facing the growth of the DLBC-Ahinsan which are the perception others have concerning the doctrine of the church, style of worship, leadership inefficiency, emergence of new charismatic churches, unhealthy attitude concerning marriage, weak church communication relationship, lack of growth consciousness, Donor fatigue, inability to maintain new members, and migration from the community.

As a result of these of these challenges, the researcher also discovered some of the implication that has befall the DLBC-Ahinsan, which is decline in church attendance, exodus of the youth, drastic decline in church finances, unable to meet financial obligations and emergence of more charismatic churches.

5.2 Conclusion

From the information gathered in the study, it could be established that the key growth strategy of the church is public crusades/evangelisms supported by in-house visitations on converts. This however, has not been carried out quite frequently in the recent times. Again, church growth is seen as being challenged by the church's inability to close back doors because most of the new converts are not properly maintain but eventually backslide. Inappropriate assimilation of young adults in

church leadership roles and the church's non-discerning community relationship do not give adequate projection and positioning of the church in the community, capable of inducing prospective members.

As perceived by respondents, the study found that the church lacks dynamism in corporate worship in terms of preaching, music, and passionate communication. Much is not seen with vigorous intercessional prayers and inspirational worship within the church. Over all, it can be concluded that the church lacks innovativeness in its growth strategies and approaches. There is no particular policy framework, planning and evaluation processes for the church's membership drive.

5.3 Recommendations

Following from the findings and conclusion outlined, the following recommendations are made for stakeholder considerations:

1. The DLBC-Ahinsan board must ensure regular public evangelism and crusades and strong committee of members who undertake appropriate steps to reach out to converts to see to their sustenance. This solves the problem of back doors to forestall the incidence of drawbacks.
2. In addition, the DBLC Bible teachings, revivals and prayers must be intensified to enhance the spiritual growth of the members so that they do not move out to join other emerging prayer groups.
3. The youth must be encouraged to participate in leadership roles, including the involvement of new converts.
4. The DBLC-Ahinsan must have programs to strengthen its relationship with the community by way of social and environmental program interventions such as cleanliness and health campaigns. Other church members with special skills in

economic ventures must also volunteer to introduce skills training for members to entice prospective converts.

5. The DBLC-Ahinsan board must have comprehensive growth policy guidelines that descend into strategic planning backed by adequate funding to embark on membership drive. This approach must be supported by assessment and evaluative activities to monitor and measure success.
6. The DBLC-Ahinsan must organize leadership and personal evangelism training sessions must be organized for church members because it is the duty of all believers (Matt. 28 19-20) and not church leaders alone to evangelize.
7. Other innovative approaches such as the use of social media like the Facebook, are also recommended for sharing sermons, inspirational contents, and post updates about the church and its events.

5.4 Suggestion for Further Research

From the foregoing conclusion and recommendations, it is further recommended for a future study into how effectively women are involved in the growth strategies of Deeper Life Bible Church, Ahinsan Group of District.

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INTERVIEWED PERSONALITIES

Mr. Ebenezer Donkor, 3/6/2019.

Pastor Kyei Boakye, 3/6/2019.

Pastor Ebenezer Donkor, 3/6/2019.

Elder Dominic Boateng, Church Elder, 26th May, 2019.

Brother Kofi Nyarko, Member, 16th May, 2019.

Madam Afia Nyarko, Church Member, 26th May, 2019.

Opanin Kyei Boakye, 30/5/2019.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DATA COLLECTION

I am Nimako Kwaku, a final year student of Christian Service University, conducting a research to study “the challenges facing the growth of Deeper Life Bible Church- Ahinsan Group of Districts. As part of my data collection, you have been selected as a respondent. I should be grateful if you could spare about fifteen (10) minutes of your precious time to respond to these questions for me. I want to assure you that it is purely an academic exercise and therefore any information you provide will be held highly confidential. Again, there is no right or wrong answer but must be to the best of your knowledge. You also have the right to participate or refuse participation. Thanks for your patients.

Section A: Demographic features

1. Gender:
2. Age (approximate years):
3. Religious denomination:
4. Marital status:
5. Occupation:

Section B: Origin and Growth of Deeper Life Bible Church, Ahinsan (*Church members*)

1. For how many years has the church (DLBC) been in existence at Ahinsan District?.....

2. Please, mention any of the pioneers and their significant contribution to the survivor of the church

.....

3. Do you see DLBC growing in the recent past 2-3 years?

.....

Justify:

.....

.....

4. Which category of the age group do you see the church growth:

a. Children ()

b. Youth ()

5. May you give an estimate of the number of converts joining the church within the current year

.....

6. Do you consider evangelism as contributing to church growth?

.....

Explain

.....

7. Do you think outreach programmes are well organised to contribute to church growth?

How?

.....

8. Does the church promote growth through organised home bible studies?

.....

Explain how

9. Highlight any other church programmes or activities that promote church growth

.....
.....

10. In your opinion, which of these programmes or activities have the greatest contribution to church growth? Assign 1st, 2nd, 3rd

- a. evangelism ()
- b. Outreach programme ()
- c. Bible studies ()

Section C: Obstacles to Church Growth

11. Do you perceive that the church's desire for conversion affects church growth?

.....
.....

12. How do you explain that church leaders' lack of evangelism training affects church growth?

.....
.....

13. Is the church growth affected by church leaders' negative attitude?

.....
.....

14. Is growth challenged by the church's inability to involve newcomers in church activities?

.....
.....

15. Would you consider that the church lacks strategies to close back doors?

.....
.....

Section D: Ways of improving church growth

16. Suggest strategies or practices that the church can put in place to promote church growth

.....
.....

Section E: Members' perception

17. Does the church have any doctrine relating to marriage that has effect of church growth: Outline:

.....
.....

18. Outline any church doctrine on leadership that affects church growth.

HINT: Gender bias

Youth empowerment

Etc

19. Do you relate church growth to style of worship and biblical teachings?

Explain,

.....
.....

For Non-Church Members

1. What has been your observations in the growth of Deeper Life Bible Church (DLBC) at Ahinsan District in the recent 2-3 years

.....
.....

2. Explain how any of these practices or doctrines can influence you into joining the DLBC at Ahinsan:

- a. Biblical teachings
- b. Evangelism
- c. Style of worship
- d. Youth empowerment in leadership.....

3. What do you suggest as:

- a. promoting growth of DLBC, Ahinsan
- b. causing the decline of DLBC, Ahinsan