

CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

**THE MISSIONARY STRATEGIES OF THE EARLY CHURCH IN ACTS 2-4
AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN
MISSIONS: A CASE STUDY OF THE GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH
AMAKOM KUMASI.**

EMMANUEL AGYEKUM

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

JULY, 2017

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BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN
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DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

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DECLARATION

I, Emmanuel Agyekum do hereby declare that this thesis project report is the result of my own original research except for sections for which references have been duly made and to the best of my knowledge 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 humbly dedicated to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Also, to my spiritual Father Rev Baffour Awuah, lovely wife Mrs. Olivia Agyekum, All church members in Christ Central Image Chapel, my parents Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Tawiah, my siblings, the extended family, and friends. Moreover, to all Students and Ministers of Christ Jesus.

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From the bottom of my heart, all that I want to say here is that, may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your spirit and soul and body be kept complete, blameless, and curtail the influx of the flaws in this world until the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. I love you all!

ABSTRACT

It is believed that the Early Church had its origins traced to the city of Jerusalem as its centre. Witnessing and discipleship began from the city of David and then to the uttermost parts of the earth. To speak of urban areas like Jerusalem means much more than a reference to masses of people. The word urban includes cultural, political and economic seats of power. The early Church began in Jerusalem with a small group of people but soon began to expand to other cities of the then known world, of the first century. It is paramount for today's church to study and learn how they got successes and the strategies they employed to be fruitful in missions. The upsurge of church planting in Kumasi seems to have caught the attention of many people including unbelievers. This calls for a scrutiny of their missionary style in the city and how effective it has been.

The study seeks to examine the missionary strategies of the early Church and to draw some implications for contemporary urban evangelistic initiatives. The main aim of the study is to examine the missionary strategies of the early Christian community in the Book of Acts 2-4 and to draw some implications for the contemporary church. The mixed method that was used for this study was both quantitative approach and qualitative.

The study found out that the early church like the church under study originated from the city with membership of diverse backgrounds and races. Since urban ministries are situated at metropolis a lot of people are brought together in lines of trade and other reasons. This means that handling and an outreach in the urban centres, it can only be successful when it is well planned to suit different kinds of people. Secondly, the mode of evangelism in urban areas has its own character. The study found out that

the most effective ways to win the heart of people in the cities are more complex or better still sophisticated. Whereas the early church shared material things in common to build a loving and a belonging family in addition to the proclamation of the gospel it is becoming more complex today. Recently, in this work, it was found that it covers good music, portable church buildings, equipments and instruments, massive humanitarian campaigns like offering of scholarships to needy students, and among others.

Mass evangelization is recommended to be the main focus in the missionary policy of urban churches to minimize lack of interest in reaching out to the lost. The policy should insist on regular and consistent witnessing that would involve the entire congregation in the church.

It is recommended that the church should teach and demonstrate more on how to evangelize in the cities. This will lift the confidence level of the church members and minimize shyness.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

As a result of urban infrastructure, most cities continue to grow at a very fast rate. These cities attract people from all backgrounds who come to seek greener pastures and to better their living conditions. Today many urban centres or cities are migrant centres where many go to find jobs and to engage in businesses. But it is significant to note that as a commercial centre, the city is not devoid of many challenges so it is with many other cities which are crippled with unemployment, poverty and other anti-social activities such as alcoholism, drug abuse and robbery. Because of the many people who live in the city, the church is called upon to reach out to the millions who seem to be without hope in their lives. The harvests in the cities are indeed ripe and many churches are attracted to the party, in fact many prefer reaching out to the cities than the rural folks.

Christians are called to respond to the needs of the millions of people in the city and to demonstrate the love of Christ in ways that can bring them to the saving grace of Jesus. Urban ministry is not comfortable. In the view of Craig Ellison, it requires the best of God's people and demands a deep, sustained, personal walk with Christ, and a willingness to take risks and to live with uncertainty, to confront evil and its destructive influences in the lives of people, and to incarnate the good news.¹ It is clear from this view that the complex nature of urban centres has implicating effects on the people and the church. Therefore it requires a potent and relevant strategy to win souls into the sheepfold of Christ. The Church in the city is called upon to adopt

¹ Craig Ellison, *The Urban Mission* (Washington DC: University Press, 1974), 25.

strategies that will help bring people to Christ. Certainly there are skills required, but the most important step is for the church to focus on what God has been doing and continues to do in the world. This introductory chapter considers the background to the study, statement of problem, research questions, aim and objectives, methodology, scope and structure, and review of relevant literature, significance of the study, and organization of chapters.

1.1 Background of the Study

It is believed that the Early Church had its origins traced to the city of Jerusalem as its centre. Witnessing and discipleship began from the city of David and then to the uttermost parts of the earth. To speak of urban areas like Jerusalem means much more than a reference to masses of people. We even mean more than the social dynamic that binds these people together. The word urban includes cultural, political and economic seats of power. The early Church began in Jerusalem with a small group of people but soon began to expand to other cities of the then known world, of the first century. It is paramount for today's church to study and learn how they got successes and the strategies they employed to be fruitful in missions.

The upsurge of church planting in Kumasi seems to have caught the attention of many people including unbelievers. Many churches are springing up all over the Garden City and many of them are spreading their wings all over the city with more branches. It seems many denominations are reproducing their kind around the same city. At times, it seems there is crowding of churches in the metropolis. The same denomination will focus on opening branches in and around the city; majority of their

missionary work is focused in the city. This also calls for a scrutiny of their missionary style in the city and how effective it has been.

The denomination selected for this work is Grace Baptist Church, Amakom Branch in Kumasi. They have been busy undertaking missionary activities in the city resulting in the opening of churches in most parts of the city. The study shows interest in how they carry out missionary work in the city; scrutinizing their missionary strategy and the implications of the missionary strategy of the early church on their activities.

Donald Anderson McGavran and others have noted that ‘the beginning of which expansion is in the heart of God.² If we began anywhere else we miss the source. Church expansion does not begin with better methods or more money. Rather, it is a continuation of redemption in the heart of God from eternity, revealed in his Son. This ministry was impacted by Christ to his disciples, energized by the Holy Spirit, and has been given to Christians today as both gift and command.

Following the event of the Day of Pentecost, it was significant that God was no more going to be a monopoly of the Jews. Thus, the coming of the Holy Spirit brought together in the unity of Jerusalem; people of all backgrounds including Jews and Gentiles. The New Testament Church that emerged soon began to expand and affected the entire city of Jerusalem and beyond. Early believers were faced with many challenges in the early days which included persecution but they were able to stand their ground. They continued to have fellowship and carried out the work of propagating the good news of salvation in Jesus. The crucial question is what motivated these early Christians to go all out and how did they achieve results? This

² Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Wm.B Eerdmans Publishing, 1970), 45.

work does not critically interpret the text as indicated in the topic but will rather look at it from the historical perspective in the book of Acts chapters (2-4). The study will make a critical look at the strategies and style of outreach practiced by the early church in urban areas specifically the city of Jerusalem and the implications it has on urban evangelism today.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The mandate of Jesus to his disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the presence of the Holy Spirit, also included the proclamation of the good news of salvation to all people beginning from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to all parts of the then known world (Acts 1:8). Following the events of the day of Pentecost, the early disciples of Jesus were empowered and united into one family in the city of Jerusalem. These disciples included those who had been with Jesus, also people from all parts of the world. Coming from diverse cultural background, these people were able to affect the city of Jerusalem with other people joining their fold. The crucial question is that how were these people able to influence the city of Jerusalem with the gospel? What was their motivation and strategy that produced thousands of converts in a short space of time? The study examines the missionary strategies of the early Church and to draws some implications for contemporary urban evangelistic initiatives.

1.3 Research Questions

The study attempts to find answers to the following questions:

1. What was the nature of the early church and the nature of the city of Jerusalem in their era?

2. What were the strategies that were adopted by the early Christians in their evangelistic and missionary campaigns?
3. What impact was made by the early Christians in their missions endeavor in the then known world?
4. How is missionsfaring in urban areas today?
5. How do the churches in the cities approach missions today?
6. What lessons can be learnt from the early missionaries by contemporary Christians in the urban environment?

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study was to examine the missionary strategies of the early Christian community in the Book of Acts 2-4 and to draw some implications for the contemporary church. The following sub-objectives directed the research to its logical conclusion:

- The study specifically examined the nature of the early church.
- It also examined the missionary methods accepted by the early Christians in Jerusalem.
- The study assessed the impact of their strategies in the evangelization of Jerusalem.
- Finally, the study attempted to draw some implications for the evangelistic campaigns of the contemporary church in urban environment.

1.5. Scope and Focus of the Study

The study was not intended to address every issue about urban ministry in relation to the early church in Acts chapters 2-4 rather it focused on the missionary methods or strategies of the early Christians recorded in the texts that enable them to affect the city of Jerusalem. Moreover, the missionary strategies of contemporary Christians were assessed. Although contemporary churches are many in the Kumasi city, Grace Baptist Church Amakom Branch was selected for the study.

1.6 Research Methodology

The method that was used for this study is the qualitative approach. This is an approach which attempts to examine the experiences, perceptions and views of people. It employed a historical enquiry into the early Church period and to find out how the situation at the time could be related to the present. The qualitative approach is aimed at gaining a deep understanding of a specific organization or event rather than surface description of a large sample of a population.³

1.6.1 Methods of data collection

Data for the study was gathered from two main sources, first from the primary sources which will include personal interviews with key personalities in the Grace Baptist Church, Amakom Branch. Secondly, the study employed the secondary sources of data gathering through publications such as books, articles in journals, magazines, and also unpublished works and internet sources. The data from the field was obtained mainly through interview guides and administration of questionnaire.

³ Strauss and Corbin, *Handbook of Basics Qualitative Research* (London: Sage Publication, 1994), 11.

1.6.2 Sample Size/Sampling Procedure

Respondents for the interviews were selected through a purposive sampling procedure and simple random sampling using a semi-structured interview guide. This involved the selection of units or respondents from the population that are best suited to answer the researcher's questions. Simple random sampling was used until the chosen sampling size of twenty-five was obtained due to the time frame of the study.

1.6.3 Data Analysis

All data gathered was subjected to a careful analysis based on the experiences as views of the respondents in accordance with the study objectives.

1.7 Literature Review

A review of relevant works with respect to the church and urban evangelism and missions is done here. What scholars say about the early church and urban missionary work are reviewed below.

1.7.1 The Church and Missions

The church and evangelism is really a subject of great importance. Prill says, the theology of evangelism of a local church or a national church body, deeply impacts the evangelistic strategies that a church chooses.⁴ Evangelism can yield better results for a particular church based on how they understand evangelism as God intends them to know. In effect every church can make impact through evangelism when they have well defined way of witnessing to the lost as commanded by scripture in their own understanding of that particular scripture. He further emphasizes that any church that is committed to evangelism, needs to have a clear understanding of its theology of

⁴Prill Thorsten, "Evangelism, Theology and the Church," *Evangelical Review of Theology*, No. 4, (October 2005):84.

evangelism.⁵ This can be true but the fallout would be that the church's theology or their understanding of evangelism may be wrong thereby affecting the message as well. This work tried to identify the theology of the Christian Church today on evangelism and how impactful it has been over the years, and why?

1.7.2 Bible and Missions

According to Delos Miles, God is himself actually evangelizing through the Bible, that is, proclaiming the good news to the world...All Scripture preaches the gospel; God evangelizes through it.⁶ He is of the opinion that the Bible by virtue of its content presents the gospel to the world. It is like God preaching through a written document this case the Bible. So missions is not possible without the Bible, it is more of a textbook that the missionary or evangelist cannot do without. It is a true assertion but it doesn't mean one cannot preach the gospel without the Bible in his or her hands but the scripture in that person quoted from memory is also acceptable.

Kwame Bediako reveals, "Reading the Bible in the Two-Thirds World context of poverty, powerlessness and religious pluralism is probably the single most important characteristic of this new theology of mission."⁷ It is by thus appropriating the Scriptures and the Gospel in context, that this new theology of mission has been able to acquire fresh insights into the Gospel and into the nature of the Christian mission itself, such as the discovery that the Gospel is good news to the poor". According to Bediako the Bible should be contextualized in the area of missions where the indigenes or the recipients are presented with a gospel that they are familiar with. So

⁵Thorsten, "Evangelism, Theology and the Church", 75.

⁶ Miles Delos, *Introduction to Evangelism* (Nashville Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1983), 205.

⁷ Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of Non-Western Religion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 34.

in the poverty-stricken third world countries people should be made to understand that the gospel is for the poor.

1.7.4 The Early Church and Missions

The early church worked very hard to consolidate the missionary activities of their master, Jesus Christ. Bosch affirms that the mission of the Christian community in the book of Acts is a mission of salvation, as was the work of Jesus.⁸ He postulates that the early missionaries were out there in the streets of Jerusalem and in the homes of people for one major assignment. The assignment was to ensure that they partake in the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. All that their activities wanted to achieve was the salvation of all. They were there to ensure that both Jews and Gentiles in the city would be convicted by their gospel into repentance and belief in the Lord Jesus. This study made an attempt to reveal their method of reaching out to the people in the city that led to the salvation of souls.

According to Roy Pointer, the early church in obedience to the great commission and in submission to the Holy Spirit they evangelized and planted churches throughout the Roman Empire and beyond its frontiers.⁹ He was of the view that the early Christians in their bid to submit to the Great Commission and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit moved them to witness to all kinds of people in urban areas. As a result they planted churches all over the empire and beyond. This suggests that their motivation was the Lord's command to go into all over the earth to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:18-20); then their quest to be directed by the Spirit of God. This work sought to know whether today's missionaries in the cities are obedient to the Great Commission and the Holy Spirit.

⁸ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (New York:Orbis Books, 2001), 107

⁹ Roy Pointer, *How Do Churches Grow* (UK Hants, Marshall Morgan and Scott, 1984), 21.

The supreme command which Jesus gave to his disciples was to evangelize the whole world; after the master had ascended to heaven, and after the coming of the Holy Spirit, the apostles applied themselves to fulfilling this mission with zeal and faithfulness, in the midst of tribulations, and for some, at the cost of their lives.¹⁰ He asserts that they were not into missions just by obeying the Lord's command and the Holy Spirit. The apostles in the midst of persecutions and even with their life on the line continued to witness because of their zealousness and faithfulness to the Lord's command.

1.7.6 Urban Missions

Some people believe there is a gospel for the working classes or the urban dwellers. Roy Joslin asks, is the message we preach in our urban churches to be different from that proclaimed elsewhere? Surely, there is only one message, one gospel – Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.¹¹ Joslin argues that the message of the gospel presented to the people in the city should not be different from that of rural folks. Urban ministry has been abused in such a way that preachers make it look that there is a special message fit for the city inhabitants. The bottom line of the gospel is to save the sinner no matter the location. Although his argument is correct the methods and modes of presentation cannot be the same because urban challenges are far different from the rural situation.

Letty Russell points out that God invites us to join in his mission and plan for the world of restoring all men to their true humanity.¹² Participation in this invitation of Christ to all men forms the task of the church. As all the members of the church

¹⁰ Bruce Nicholls, ed, *The Church God's Agent for Change* (London: Paternoster Press, 1986), 93.

¹¹ Joslin Roy, *Urban Harvest* (Darlington: Evangelical Press 1983), 43.

¹² Letty Russell, *Christian education in mission* (Philadelphia, the Westminster Press, 1998), 43.

participate in this invitation of Christ, they also become partners in extending the invitation. The assertions of the writer are vital for the study as we examine the task of the church, to participate in God's plan for the world. However the writer did not spell out the context in which the task is to be accomplished. The study focuses on evangelism in the urban setting.

Grudem is of the view that as the church proclaims the good news of the kingdom; people will come into the church and begin to experience the blessings of God's rule in their lives.¹³ According to the writer, it is a task for the church to proclaim the good news which results in people being saved. This is in line with the focus of the study. The context of the activity is however missing in the writer's assertions. The study focuses on evangelism in the urban environment. In examining the missionary burden, Samuel Faircloth sees the motif in the Book of Acts as the expansion of the faith through missionary witness in the power of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴ He concludes that the will of the Holy Spirit is the continuous planting of new churches throughout the world.

The writer sees the continuous planting of new churches as being the will of the Holy Spirit. This is the task of the church, what God desires the church to do in the world. This is in line with the focus of the study, which addresses evangelism as the task of the church. Edmund Clowney is of the view that the Lord who calls his church to worship and to nurture also sends it through the centuries and across the continents to witness for him.¹⁵ According to this writer, the Church exists not only to worship or fellowship but to witness to the saving power of Jesus Christ. This falls in line with

¹³Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Nottingham: Inter Varsity Press, 1994), 76.

¹⁴S.D. Faircloth, *Church planting for Reproduction* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1991), 65.

¹⁵E.P.C.Clowney, *The Church* (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1995), 90.

the objective of the study to examine the task of the Church as the proclamation of the gospel.

John Stott points out that we who claim to be God's people should share the breath of God's concerns.¹⁶ In particular we should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men from every kind of oppression. In the writer's view, Christians share God's concerns for the world when we proclaim the gospel which liberates men and women from every kind of oppression. This is useful for the study. Van Gelder writes that the challenge before the church is to reclaim lost territory in the whole of creation for the glory and purposes of God.¹⁷ He contends that God is not finished with the world in the midst of its sin and brokenness, but wants to bring about reconciliation in all of life. How would God bring about reconciliation in all of life? We are not told. But this study sought to examine evangelism as the task of the church in bringing about the purpose of God in reconciling the world to himself.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The study is very significant for our society and contemporary missions in several ways. It would be valuable for church planters and missionaries wishing to carry out evangelistic activity or missions in the urban environment. Furthermore, it would also contribute to scholarly work on evangelism and urban ministry in general. Theological institutions would find the study, useful in planning their curricula in such areas as urban ministry, and missions. Christian and non-governmental organizations working in urban missions would also find this study useful.

¹⁶ John Stott, *Making Christ Known* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996), 25.

¹⁷ Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000), 54.

1.9 Organization of Chapters

The study is structured in five chapters. Chapter one is the General Introduction which comprises of background to the study, statement of problem, research questions, aim and objectives, methodology, scope and structure, and review of relevant literature, significance of the study, and organization of chapters.

Chapter two looked at the early church, background of Acts chapters (2-4) and the missionary strategies of the early.

In chapter three the research covered the urban missions in contemporary times.

Chapter four was all about data presentation, analysis and discussions.

Chapter five gave the summary, conclusion and recommendation.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND TO THE EARLY CHURCH AND THEIR MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES

2.1 Introduction

In the first chapter, the framework for this work was given, where the background to the study, literature review and many others were presented. This chapter looks at the history of the early church briefly, the Jerusalem Church, the nature of the Jerusalem Church, the early church's attitude to evangelism, the growth of the church, missionary strategies employed.

2.2 Brief History of the Early Church (Acts 2-4)

In this section, historical background of Acts especially chapters 2-4 is given to give meaning to this research work. On the issue of authorship, Craig sees the style and themes of Acts clearly reflect the same authorship as those of the Gospel of Luke and settled on Luke as the writer.¹⁸ The date for Acts is acceptable only when it is placed between the early to mid-70's.¹⁹

According to the book of Acts chapter 2, it is categorically clear that, the Holy Spirit appeared at Pentecost, ten days after the Ascension of Jesus, to the Apostles and disciples in the Upper Room and inspired them to proclaim the faith. In the previous chapter, the Lord had promised the Holy Spirit and the purpose of his coming (Acts 1:8). Margaret Baxter postulates that Jesus was a Jew, all His disciples were Jews; the church began in Jerusalem, and in its early days all Christians were Jews.²⁰ The

¹⁸Keener Craig, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*(USA, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2014), 314.

¹⁹Craig, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 315.

²⁰Margaret Baxter, *The Formation of the Christian Scriptures* (London: SPCK Publishing, 1988), 67.

Twelve Apostles at the Pentecost were Peter, Andrew, James, John, Matthew, Philip, Thomas, Nathaniel Bartholomew, James son of Alphaeus, Jude Thaddeus, Simon the Zealot, and Matthias. There were about one hundred and twenty persons gathered together in the Upper Room. If the disciples were still living in the upper room of Acts 1:13, they would be near the Temple courts; very large upper rooms were found only in Jerusalem's upper city, near the temple, Craig argues.²¹ This community of disciples of Jesus was the beginning of the early Church (Acts 1:12-15).

On the proofs of Pentecost, Craig says, several signs God gave on the day of Pentecost indicate that in some sense, although the kingdom is not yet consummated, its powers had been initiated by the messiah's first coming.²² Moreover, he affirms that elsewhere God used wind to symbolize his Spirit, who would revive the dead at the future restoration of Israel.²³

According Merrill C. Tenney, Acts, then does not pretend to be exhaustive account of all the events that took place in the growth of the early church.²⁴ He further revealed that no word is said of the expansion southward and eastward from Palestine, although there must have been Christians in Egypt and in Syria from an early date; there were believers in Damascus before the conversion of Paul, but no account is given of the progress of the church there.²⁵

According Merrill, the first period by the history of the early church can be characterized on that of the establishment. He further added that on the outset there is

²¹ Craig, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 322.

²² Craig, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 322.

²³ Craig, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 323.

²⁴ Tenney, Merrill, *New Testament Survey* (Michigan Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing 1961), 232.

²⁵ Merrill, *New Testament Survey*, 232.

no evidence that the believers broke sharply with Judaism because Pentecost was a Jewish feast before it became a Christian anniversary.²⁶

James Montgomery Boice noted that, the early church was model church, but this does not mean that it was perfect because there were many spots which make it clear that the early church was far from perfect.²⁷ It had hypocrites in it, as our churches also have, doctrinal errors and sinful human beings of all types as our churches do. Yet it was a model in many important respects as described in Acts 2.²⁸

The church was governed by the Spirit of God because the church is for Christ and the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the Pentecost Day empowered the believers and also motivated them to establish the church after the Pentecost Day. According to John R.W.Stott, it is incorrect to call the Pentecost Day as the birthday of the church but rather, what happened on the Pentecost Day was that, God's people became the spirit-filled body of Christ.²⁹ From this position the church was at the state of establishment and the early apostles formed the foundation of the church after the Pentecost day.

2.3 The Church in Jerusalem

According to Acts of the Apostles, the Lord appeared bodily to His disciples, after His passion, and stayed around them for forty days, strengthening their faith and preaching to them about the Kingdom of God, while at the same time He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:3-4). So it is inferred that the church received the fire in Jerusalem and began there as well. Jesus is the only foundation upon which the church is built on. After the baptism of the Holy Spirit the church entered into its purpose of pursuing the

²⁶Merrill, *New Testament Survey*, 232.

²⁷ James Boice, *An Expositional Commentary* (U.S.A: Baker Books House Company, 1997), 58.

²⁸Boice, *An Expositional Commentary*, 58.

²⁹ John Stott, *The Message of Acts* (Langham: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990), 80.

commission of Christ which was the task of the world evangelism and Jerusalem was the original centre for all the activities and missionary activities of the church. According to Craig, many Jewish nationals from throughout the Roman and Parthian worlds would gather in Jerusalem every year for the three main feasts – Tabernacles, Passover and Pentecost.³⁰ In this regard it was a good place for the church to start and the best time for Peter to convey his first sermon. Since the missionary mandate was to take-off in Jerusalem or in Judea (Acts 1:8).

Bruce. J. Nicolas says, it is striking to note that the gospel does not climax with the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord but with his giving of the Great Commission; the dominant theme of his post-resurrection teaching was his concern that men everywhere should hear the Good News.³¹ There were many congregations in Jerusalem, most of them small and would meet together for special meals and services in various homes, private rooms or small chapels, and organized them on the model of the synagogue. There was great fellowship among the believers which makes them do everything together.³²

2.3.1 The nature of the Jerusalem Church

It was well noted that the early church was originally a composition of only Jewish Christians (Acts 2:46) until later on Gentiles were also admitted into the church. From Acts 2 -4 the church was in the confined region of the city of Jerusalem alone before the dispersion. There were many characteristics associated with the early church in Jerusalem. According to William Sanford LaSor oneness of person, oneness of

³⁰ Craig, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 322.

³¹ Nicolas Bruce, *God's Agent for Change* (London: Paternoster Press, 1986), 125.

³² William LaSor, *Church Alive* (G/L San Jose: Regal Books Division, 1972), 34.

experience, oneness of goods or oneness of purpose existed among the entire community of believers in Jerusalem.³³

Furthermore, it was a learning church. Stott opines that the very initial evidence Luke mentions of the Spirit's presence in the church is that they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching.³⁴

One other characteristic of Jerusalem Church was that, it was a worshipping church, they never forgot to visit God's house. The spirit of God moves mightily upon God's worshipping people when they come together in brotherhood and unity. Boice said that, there was also a reference to formal and informal worship; every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. This temple court refers to the courtyard of the gentiles which was a very large place.³⁵ J. W. Stott added that their fellowship was expressed not only in caring for each other, but in corporate worship too.³⁶

According to the text in Acts chapter 2:47 The Jerusalem church was a happy and joyful church, gladness was there, when they lifted up holy hands, the spirit of the Lord filled them; it was the joy of their salvation. Stott affirms this fact and says that the second example of the balance of the early church's worship is that it was both joyful and reverent.³⁷ He noted that there can be no doubt of their joy, for they are described as having glad and sincere hearts which literally means in exultation and sincerity of heart.³⁸

Proclamation of the Gospel was also another characteristic of the church in which the growth and expansion of the early church in Jerusalem can be measured. In Acts 2:1-13 the apostles proclaimed the Gospel from the history of Israel, to the prophet and

³³LaSor, *Church A live*, 34.

³⁴ Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 82.

³⁵Boice, *An Expositional Commentary*, 60.

³⁶Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 84.

³⁷Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 85.

³⁸Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 85.

finally, to the works of Jesus Christ. It was a witnessing or evangelizing church that is why we find as we get to the end of these verses that the Lord added “to their number daily those who were being saved.”³⁹

According C. Peter Wagner, Peter was no novice at divine healing. He had healed many, both before and after the resurrection of Jesus. We can assume, therefore that he chose his words carefully when he said, “what I do have I give you”⁴⁰ The Epistle of James is a good example of this type of preaching. It was informal, members would partake of the service, and there were brief sermons or expositions and spontaneous, even highly emotional utterances. A visitor to one of these services would have been struck by a feeling of contagious enthusiasm and exuberant vitality. The early church was confident that Jesus was coming quickly. Boice further noted that, we know that the way God reaches people is through the spoken word and that when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, those who received the Spirit immediately began to speak about Jesus.⁴¹

The Jerusalem church preached nothing but Jesus Christ. Larson made it clear that essential to basic Christianity is the preaching of Jesus; he indicated that when the beggar was healed, the people were amazed and many were converted by witnessing this extraordinary event.⁴² The wonderful aspect of it all is that they did not attribute it to themselves but used it to direct the people to Christ Jesus.

Moreover, Larson postulates that boldness is another mark of the early church in Jerusalem. According to him, the disciples courted risk and danger; they went into

³⁹Boice, *An Expositional Commentary*, 61.

⁴⁰Peter Wagner, *Spreading the Fire* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1987), 115.

⁴¹Boice, *An Expositional Commentary*, 62.

⁴²LarsonBruce, *Wind & Fire* (Texas: Word Books, 1984), 61.

situations they knew would be dangerous and were not perturbed going back and forth to prison.⁴³

The Jerusalem Church was a praying church. Acts 1:14 shows the beginning of the praying character of the church. According to our Lord's parting instructions, the apostles were to wait in Jerusalem for the promise; and so, along with 120 other disciples, they remained in the city during the ten day wait, these disciples were with one mind "continually devoting themselves to prayer. These early Christians knew that they could not live under their own power and they didn't have to either. They always spoke with God before they spoke to men. It was a church with a reverence, fear of God and awe that each revival of history must compare itself to. It was a church where things happened just by them being there with Jesus among them. Signs and wonders were evident everywhere they met.

The Jerusalem Church was a democratic church. Tenney posits that the apostles, because of their preaching and teaching functions, were naturally the leaders, but the government of the church was essentially democratic.⁴⁴ The rule of the churches was democratic from the beginning, to be a republican as the Romans were would never have entered their mind. Decisions were made from the will of the majority, the sense of assembly, prophets bearing witness, no clergy, no laity and the members spoke as the spirit led them to speak. All the churches, the different congregations, were at first autonomous, the only bond linking them to others was fellowship. This ideal condition did not long endure. For the better administration of these early churches that were growing so fast, the early Christians chose among them at first deacons and then bishops to feed the church. This started out not as first among equals but servants among the flock. It was not until later that the church became republican and

⁴³Bruce, *Wind & Fire*, 61.

⁴⁴Merrill, *New Testament Survey*, 239.

introduced the idea of clergy and laity, diluting the authority of Christ among them by destroying the unity of the five-fold ministry with Jesus as the Head. Lastly, the first church in Jerusalem was not a highly organized one, owning property and maintaining a strong ecclesiastical system.⁴⁵

2.4 Their Attitude to Evangelism

Immediately after the Pentecost experience in Acts chapter two, their eagerness to seek for the salvation of lost souls were displayed. Smith points out that the early Christians were not only concerned with the winning of the lost, but also with the establishment, local church fellowship and mobilization of the saved.⁴⁶ Larson writes that the disciples witnessed, not to a theology or doctrine or the scriptures, but to an event: God in Christ reconciling the world to himself.⁴⁷ He further noted that they bore witness about the Lord Jesus wherever they went to. But we know that the way? Reaches people is through the spoken word and that when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, those who received the Spirit immediately began to speak about Jesus.⁴⁸

2.4.1 Growth in the Church

With the exception of M. Green's *Evangelism in the Early Church*⁴⁹ the subjects of evangelism and church growth in the Book of Acts have been unaccountably neglected in recent years. Church growth writers refer to Acts rather consistently to support their theology and practice, but no detailed work has come from the movement.⁵⁰ Most evangelistic works approach Acts from a theological perspective, building a biblical

⁴⁵ Merrill, *New Testament Survey*, 239.

⁴⁶ Ron Smith, *The ABC of Follow Up* (Kent, England: Send The Light Trust, 1979), 11.

⁴⁷ Bruce, *Wind & Fire*, 61-62.

⁴⁸ Boice, *An Expositional Commentary*, 61.

⁴⁹ Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 13.

⁵⁰ Peter Wagner, *Strategies for Church Growth* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1987), 47-49.

apologia for the mandate of evangelism, Evangelism must find its orientation in the Bible. A return to the principles and practices unfolded in the Book of Acts. The church and evangelism is really a subject of great importance. Prill is on the view that, the theology of evangelism of a local church or a national church body, which deeply impacts the evangelistic strategies, the church chooses.⁵¹ Evangelism can yield better results for a particular church based on how they understand evangelism as God intends them to know. So in effect every church can make impact through evangelism when they have a well defined way of witnessing to the lost as commanded by scripture in their own understanding of that particular scripture. He further emphasizes that any church that is committed to evangelism, needs to have a clear understanding of its theology of evangelism.⁵² This can be true but the fallout would be that the church's theology or their understanding of evangelism may be wrong thereby affecting the message as well. This work historic to identify the early church theology of evangelism and how impactful it has been over the years, and why?

2.4.2 The Missionary Strategies employed

From 2.2 where the brief history of the early church was dealt with, and the birth of the church after the Pentecost day was well noted with personalities who were the founders of the early church specifically the apostles of Jesus Christ popularly known as the Disciples of Christ. It was well noted from 2.3.1 on the nature of the Jerusalem church. The Jerusalem church came into being an evangelizing, teaching, worshipping, serving, fellowship of the people of God through the agency of the Holy Spirit. But there were strategies that were adopted to put in place of the futures associated with the growth and expansion of the church in Jerusalem. Even though

⁵¹Thorsten, "Evangelism Theology and the Church", 309.

⁵²Thorsten, "Evangelism Theology and the Church", 307.

there were many challenges and problems associated with the early Christian after the death of Christ. Following the event of the Pentecost day the disciples of Jesus were able to affect the city of Jerusalem with other people joining the church every day. The study examines the missionary strategies of the early Church used in their evangelism.

Unity among the believers at known time is one of the strategies used by the Apostles of Christ. There was strong unity among themselves in all their movements. They move together and do everything together which was their strong motivated factor. In (Acts 2:32) And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common) this was a great bonding relationship which motivated the early apostle to affect the city of Jerusalem. They were not only teaching oneness and unity but showing it in their life also cause many people listening and accepted their teaching. By Merrill, the burden of this preaching was the necessity of belief in the risen Messiah, repentance both personal and national, and the receiving of the Holy Spirit. It was accompanied by instructions, so that as the number of believers increased, they were bound together in common knowledge and in common action⁵³ (Acts 2:42).

Proclamation of the gospel was also one of their strategies. Their increase in numbers everyday was base on what they communicated to the people and how their message was proclaimed to the people. They were not ignorant of the composition of the Jews because the early church after the Pentecost was all Jews. They therefore structured the proclamation through the appeal to the history of Israel. Jewish Christians knew that a time will come where the hope of Israel will be restored because of the coming

⁵³Merrill, *New Testament Survey*, 239.

Messiah. According to Bruce, God intended that Israel as the covenant nation descended from Abraham should be a light to nations, which salvation may reach to the end of the earth.⁵⁴ And they proclaimed that the history has fulfilled because the Messiah has come to save human kind and has reconciled all sinners back to Yahweh. In Acts 2:16-18 reveals the appeal to the prophets which was another strategy used by the missionaries of the early church in Jerusalem. Jewish Christians believe in the Old Testament prophets, when the missionaries proclaimed the Gospel through the channels of the Prophets and their prophecies, it drew the attention of the Jewish Christians. The Prophets have spoken about the coming of the Messiah, the end times, and the Spirit of prophecies upon all flesh by Joel. The message they proclaimed was so powerful and historical to cause realization to people at Jerusalem which affected the growth of the Church daily with new convert. Keener noticed that, because the future age was to be inaugurated with the Messiah's coming, it has inaugurated in at least some sense because the Messiah, Jesus had come a point outpouring of the Spirit on his followers is meant to demonstrate.⁵⁵ Tenney noted that, the Apostles preaching were strongly biblical in content. The New Testament had not been written at this time, but the addresses were saturated with Old Testament quotations and prophecies.⁵⁶

Proclamation of the Gospel through the work of Christ as an appeal also contributed mightily to the growth of the church in Jerusalem. This was also another strategy adopted under the proclamation of the gospel by the early church after the Pentecost day. The works of Christ were so obvious and well noted that everybody knew about the miracles and the manifestation of signs and wonders involve in the works of Christ. (Acts 3:1-11) This was the foundation through which the Apostles also

⁵⁴Bruce, *God's Agent For Change*, 122.

⁵⁵ Craig, *Bible Background Commentary*, 323.

⁵⁶Merrill, *New Testament Survey*, 239.

continued to proclaim boldly about and also demonstrated the living power of the Holy Spirit.

According to William Neil, the incident of healing of the cripple is not necessarily the first wonder and signs (Acts 2:43) the Apostles were able to perform in the power of the Spirit. It was recorded as one example among others.⁵⁷ Reading through the text in Acts 3:1-11 are recorded uncountable miracles performed by the Apostles all in the name of Jesus. Whenever they proclaimed about the good works of Christ they also demonstrated the living power and the continuity of the power of the Holy Spirit.

Devotion to Christ was also a powerful strategy used by the early Apostle to affect the church in Jerusalem positively. Bible study and prayers empowered them to move ahead no matter the circumstances that confronted them in the missionary works. The early believers saw themselves as vessels to be used for the propagation of the works of the kingdom. According to (Acts 2:42-47) *they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.)*

The early churches were motivated to suffer for Christ which was also their strategy which also contributed greater influence in the city of Jerusalem. They were not afraid

⁵⁷ William Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles* (London:Butler & Tanner Ltd.), 82.

to die for the purpose of the Gospel and that was their greatest motivation. Early Christians expected suffering. Christ had died on the cross, so there was no higher honor than to imitate that death through accepting martyrdom (witness by one's blood). The Jewish legacy portrayed, in writings such as the Fourth Book of the Maccabees, the glorious nature of death rather than renunciation of Israel; even without this, Christianity would inevitably have held the martyr's death in high esteem.

2.5 Conclusion

The chapter gave the humble beginning of the early church and how they were able to affect the city of Jerusalem as the foundation of the church with Jewish Christians before the Gentile admission. There is clear indication that the early church lived to achieve its purpose of exploring the foundation of the works of Christ. It has also ruled out in terms of the strategies adapted to get to the expected end of affecting the confined religion of the city of Jerusalem massively.

CHAPTER THREE

A CONTEMPORARY URBAN CHURCH: GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

AMAKOM KUMASI

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, a lot of work was done on the history of the early church's missionaries' activities in Acts 2-4. From that chapter it was revealed also that the church begun after the day of Pentecost and through the early missionaries' effort on evangelism, affected the entire city of Jerusalem. The church grew numerically, and infrastructure wise. In this third chapter, the researcher looks at background of the Grace Baptist Church, Amakom Kumasi, the nature of its urban ministry, the members understanding of evangelism, position on missions, the challenges they face on their outreach activities, the impact of their missionary activities, and contribution so far.

3.2 Background of the Grace Baptist Church Amakom Kumasi

The church began as an English-speaking fellowship in the Baptist reading room, Kumasi and on the 9th day of July 1964 at the invitation of two Baptist missionaries namely, Rev Maurice Smith and Miss Evelyn Stone who also led the fellowship up June 1965. Rev Maurice Smith was replaced by Rev W.A, Arnold at the time the number of baptized member of the fellowship had risen to 60.

In 1967, after Rev Maurice Smith had finally left Ghana for Furlough in America, Mr. Emmanuel Ephraim was elected leader of the fellowship and it was under his leadership that the church was organized as a church called Ebenezer Baptist Church on 30th June 1968 with 68 members mostly the Alata people

In November 1969, while painstaking efforts were being made to acquire a plot of land for the construction of a church Building, fortune smiled on Grace Baptist

Church, when in a rather painful manner the Aliens Compliance Order was invoked by the government of Ghana to flush out all illegal immigrants. This decision led to the exit from Ghana of virtually all Yorubas who constituted the membership of Ebenezer Baptist Church whose auditorium and Sunday school buildings were nearing completion. These buildings were entrusted to the field Evangelist, Rev Smith at whose request Grace Baptist church agreed to assume responsibility for the completion of the constructional work on the building and their furnishing with the view of moving in for worship services and bible studies. Grace Church finally moved into the buildings on February 2, 1970 while their construction and furnishings were completed in June 1970 together with the landscaping. Up to this time the church had remained her strictly English service because of the Alata people from Nigeria. Twi was however introduced in January 1972 at the Sunday school level. During a great part of this period the church was led by Mr. Joseph Quansah under whose tenure the church progressed tremendously culminating in the decision of calling the first Full time Pastor.

3.2.1 The Development Grace Baptist Church (1975-1985)

The first Ghanaian full time inducted in 1975 was Rev. Akuamoah. His appointment, however, was short-lived as he resigned the following year and left for the United States of America. The mantle of leadership then fell on Rev. Mike Shockley, a Baptist missionary, who was asked to pastor in 1977.

After him came Rev. Frank OheneKankam now on pension and Frank Adams as church leader and associate church leader respectively. Their leadership was also cut short by their decisions to resign and concentrate on their studies at the Ghana Baptist

Seminary, Abuakwa where they were been trained as Pastors. Rev Dr J.A Boadi was therefore, invited to Pastor the church.

After his seminary education at Abuakwa, in 1981 Pastor Frank Adams was called to Pastor the church. Under the able leadership of Rev Frank Adams they embarked on church planting and two churches –Asokwa and Nkawie Baptist churches were established in 1982 whilst three others –Bomso (victory Assembly), Buokrom and Fumesua Baptist Churches were also established in 1984.⁵⁸

3.3 The Nature of the Grace Baptist Urban Ministry

Questions were posed to respondents and interviewees about the way they go about evangelism. They have already indicated that they have been evangelizing to the lost so the researcher wanted to find out how they have been going about it? It was revealed that they have their means of evangelism which is through personal souls winning, regular visitation, and through their church program called visitors day celebration where a day is set apart for all visitors. One respondent, evangelist Eric Agyapong said⁵⁹ they also used mass evangelism, musical and weddings as another means to win the souls for the kingdom. Pastor Justice Appiah⁶⁰ also added that, the expansion of their auditorium and the running of their services into segments every Sunday also stand to be one of their means of souls winning. Pastor Justice further said that their breaking down of service into English, Twi, and the Teen's service helps to locate their visitors immediately. According to Deacon George Adamah⁶¹, church planting is also another way used to win souls. The church has instituted some groups called kingdom warriors which are purposely trained for the planting of

⁵⁸ Brochure of 40th Anniversary Celebration of Grace Baptist Church (1968-2008)

⁵⁹ Eric Agyapong, interview by Emmanuel Agyekum, Grace Baptist Church (12th March, 2017)

⁶⁰ Justice Appiah, interview by Emmanuel Agyekum, Grace Baptist Church (12th March 2017)

⁶¹ George Adamah, interview By Emmanuel Agyekum Grace Baptist Church Premises (12th March 2017)

churches and always seeking for ministry opportunities to plant churches for the expansion of the souls. Kingdom warrior is also strong follow up groups used to evangelize and also visit new people who may come to the church either as visitors or new member within forty eight hours.

Some respondents referred to community meetings as a means of reaching out to the lost.⁶² This is a group of church members who meet in their vicinities to share the word of God like home cells. So they try to make sure they invite other people who are not members to participate and in a way win some to the Grace Baptist Church. It was also learnt from the respondents that church programs such as bible week, Christ the king week, occasional seminars, and retreats are organized as a way of evangelism.⁶³

A section of the respondents said evangelism is done by helping the needy ones around our environment example our neighbours. It was revealed that some members have their own or personal evangelism program. They go about the streets doing personal witnessing, talking to anybody around the streets.

3.4 What is Christian Missions?

Some questions were posed by the researcher to know their understanding on mission and their policy or program for missions and how they go about it. Almost all the respondents see mission as the same as evangelism and church planting. According to M.r Emmanuel WirekoBrobby in Grace Baptist, missions and Evangelism move together, Whiles they move out for winning souls they also have evangelism and mission's board in the church who also seeks around and break grounds for church planting opportunities. Like sowers and school ministry, mostly sowers go to the field

⁶² Daniel Duodu interview by Agyekum Emmanuel, Grace Baptist Church premises (12th March, 2071)

to prepare the ground for church planting which stand to be the works of missions.⁶⁴ Mr. Kwame Yeboah also revealed that Christian missions is all about outreach to people with the gospel either within the internal or external geographical areas.⁶⁵ Two respondents indicate that their missions are done through grouping and personal outreach but most of the members do not participate of the missions or their outreach.

Mr. Christian Danso also added that their missions are done primarily through bible teaching, crusades and church planting. He further said that Grace Baptist has instituted some groups of people who are the soles responsibilities for the plating of churches and their target is to build one or two churches every year. One of the Associate Pastors Rev. Justice Appiah Agyapong concluded it all by saying that planting new churches through crusade, teaching, and social support that they give to some of the people in many areas like hospitals and usually organize free screening programs for people who are around the geographical centers where they witness to them through their screening programs and finally end up with the planting of churches at the end.⁶⁶

3.5 What is Evangelism?

Almost all the respondents and interviewees attempted to give their own definition of evangelism. Different views were expressed by them in their own words. Some were of the opinion that evangelism is a way of spreading the gospel and taking the gospel to the lost. Going by this definition one can infer that evangelism is all about putting the gospel at the door step of every member of a particular society or every corner

⁶⁴ Emmanuel Brobby, interview by Emmanuel Agyekum Grace Baptist premises (12th March 2017)

⁶⁵ Kwame Yeboah, interview by Emmanuel Agyekum, Grace Baptist premises (12th March 2017)

⁶⁶ Justice Agyapong interview by Emmanuel Agyekum Grace Baptist church premises (12th March 2017)

where Tom, Dick and Harry will come into contact with it. It may have a direct target which is those who have not accepted Jesus as their Lord.

Others see the act of evangelism as sharing Christ with others and reaching out to people with the word of God. This opinion refers to people who have had an experience with the new birth in Christ and thereby trying to introduce it to those who have not had that experience. Such an activity will let the audience have a picture of what they the evangelists have had after accepting the gospel. It also involves a vigorous exercise of trying to get into contact with everybody on the streets to present them with a message from Scripture.

Some respondents assume that witnessing is the act of preaching the word of God to the lost world and in effect winning souls for Christ. The respondents and interviewees were of the view that the goal of evangelism is basically to preach to the lost in communities in order to bring them to the saving knowledge of Christ Jesus. One leader who was interviewed said, infact evangelism is all about preaching the gospel to the people with the aim of winning souls for Christ. The church also uses different dimension and approaches like educational method and charity as some effective ways of winning souls. Making people aware of the love of God is another meaning some respondents and interviewees gave to evangelism. However, this reveals that some members of the church believe evangelism is the act of making people know that the Holy God loves the sinner although he hates sin. Then they are saying that it is not about telling people or scaring people about the wrath of God but how God has loved them. So if he has loved the sinner that much then they have to reciprocate that love by coming to Christ. Some respondents believe that evangelism is a means of letting others know the doctrines of the Christian faith. What this means is that when people are not aware of what you believe, they cannot be part of it. In this

respect, the respondents and interviewees think the teaching of the things that educate people about the pillars of the Christian faith would evangelize the unbelieving members of society. It also worth considering the argument that one would not need all that before making the decision to accept the Christian faith but rather after salvation then they would be taught all that.

3.5.1 How Active are they in Outreach?

At this point the researcher wanted to know from respondents and interviewees whether the church is really doing business for the Lord in terms of reaching out to lost souls. When the question was posed to them whether their church was poised in doing outreach and how active are they. There were various and contradicting responses as follows:

Two people indicated that the church is not active in evangelism. They believe the church is not reaching out to the lost communities on regular basis. Furthermore, they indicated that the church rarely goes out to fish for souls outside its premises.

Seven respondents affirmed that the church is very active in reaching out to the lost. A lot of programmes were mentioned by these respondents and interviewees that make them convinced that the church is active. Where the church falls short has to do with what we call agents of evangelism, people who will be well informed and willing to undertake evangelism and mission. The church falls short on that “we don’t have men and women who are ready for evangelism, in fact if we talk about agent of evangelism the first people that comes in mind will be the kingdom warriors and the few individual so the task is becoming more unbearable now and therefore the kind of target set cannot be met because of the shortage of the personnel to carry the evangelism activities”

In another development four respondents said that evangelism activities are done occasionally or once in a while. These people observe that the church's approach and attitude towards witnessing cannot be described as very active. Although there is a slow and unusual commitment, somehow souls are approached with the gospel of Jesus Christ once in a while.

Based on data from the field, few of the respondents and interviewees said that the church does not have any particular program or time table for evangelism. This means that the church has not committed itself to any blueprint that will guide the activities of evangelism. The church lacks any policy direction that will ensure regular and consistent responsibility towards the lost in society. It seems it is not well treated as a very important agenda or evangelism has not being prioritized by the church.

Three respondents were also asked whether the church is active in evangelizing the lost? And they said the church is not active. These are people who do not see any tangible activity but think certain practices have the potential to attract new comers to the church.

3.6 Grace Baptist's Position on Evangelism

Members of Grace Baptist church who responded to the questionnaire and interview had this to say with respect to the church's position on evangelism.

Some respondents gave the church's position as explaining the doctrine of the church to the public. They were of the view that the church has developed a habit of trying to explain their doctrine to the general public. As to how they go about it or the channel they use to do that and how often they do that they were very silent about it.

Some group of people also indicated that the church envisages converting of others to Christian faith. They meant that the church has been able to plant in the minds of the

members the picture of soul winning. That picture is always at the back of their minds so the drive to preach the gospel is always there. But when they were asked how often they evangelise as individual members of the church there was nothing to write home about it.

Other respondents said, the position of their church on evangelism is to help everyone to know Christ practically. For some of them it is to work on the congregation to stand firm in Christ. This is a clear case of trying to protect and establish those in the net before thinking about the yet to be enrolled. They observe that the church's concentration is on the current members to be deeply rooted in the faith.

According to other views, the church wants every member to believe in sharing the gospel. There is a deliberate effort by the church according to some of the respondents to encourage the entire congregation to accept soul winning as a Christian duty. The church is looking at attracting more members to their fold and to admonish them to stay in the Lord. The position of the church is not to be complacent about the few thousands in their midst but to stretch out their hands to all souls especially unbelievers and to pull them towards Christ.

According to the Pastor Johnson of Grace Baptist Church, Amakom Kumasi, it is the aim of the church to evangelize not a portion of people but the entire memberships of God's people both in and outside the environment.⁶⁷ Now with the effect on soul winning, a lot of effort has been put in place to make it more realistic. This means that the church sees all human beings as God's people and they are willing to extend to them the right hand of fellowship no matter their status in society or background. To the church, evangelism must be both within and without because there are still some members who must be assisted to accept Jesus.

⁶⁷ Pastor Johnson, interview by Emmanuel Agyekum, (12th March 2017)

3.7 The Impact of the Missionary Activities

The church has no proper records on effects of their outreach duties. It was difficult to pinpoint the numbers who have been won by Christ through their evangelistic strategies assignments. According to Evangelist Agyapong and other Deacons, a lot of young men and women have been won into the church over the years.⁶⁸ Some social outcasts have benefitted from the programs because they have been relocated from their old dirty lifestyle to a new life in Christ and a new way of making ends meet. Rev Justice Appiah revealed that through establishment of residential fellowships, and zonal fellowships the environment has been mightily impacted through the visitation of members in their residences, and even the Zonal areas. He further explained about the benefit that the Amakom environments have benefitted through the impact of the grace Baptist church. This is based on the establishment of basics schools, library and literacy program for both adults and the youth⁶⁹. George Adamah also said another impact through the community projects which the borehole water is created by the church for the support of the community⁷⁰. One respondent said their presence in the area is felt through their constant visitation and also the majority of the members in their environment forms part of their members in the same vicinity.

3.8 Challenges of Urban Centers

The researcher asked questions related to the challenges and better still difficulties in their evangelistic campaign. First, this has got to do with the willingness and the availability of people to offer themselves to be trained for the evangelism activities.

⁶⁸Evangelist Agyapong and Deacon Frank, interview by Emmanuel Agyekum, Grace Baptist Church Amakom Branch Kumasi (19th March 2017)

⁶⁹ justice Appiah, interview by Robert Mensah, Grace Baptist Church premises (19th March 2017)

⁷⁰ George Adamah, interview by Emmanuel Agyekum, Grace Baptist Church premises (19th March 2017)

The second aspect has got to do with finances. Money and evangelization move together, and at certain points certain tools are needed to be more effective. According to some respondents and interviewees, for instance over there, one of the strategies of the church is the setting up of an institution, for example training institutions to do the work of evangelism also train people to carry out the evangelistic activities but this training institution sometimes lack some of them and lack the requisite tools, the materials to be more effectively. So at times they may have the person alright but for instance in terms of mobility, the person probably to move from one place to another to do the work; and because of the lack of these kinds of facilities the person may not able to function well. There is a pure financial constraint which in effect has being the cause of the church not able to meet their target on evangelism.

Now the next aspect has to do with motivation, people need to be motivated to make themselves available for the work of evangelism. Some of the leaders interviewed revealed that some people have been assigned that duty but because of lack of motivation, they cannot devote all their attention to the work of evangelism so the church could have taking up some of the responsibilities of those people to enable them have more attention for the work of evangelism.

Another factor has to do with comprehensive evangelization plan. Most of the respondents and interviewees were of the opinion that they have to get a well-drawn up plan that is very comprehensive. “The church actually has a universal plan for evangelization but when it comes to local implementation that is where some of these short falls come, in the sense that you may have a policy for the whole church that is relevant and should be applicable to some area and may not be applicable in other areas in Ghana. We have different cultural environment for instance there are certain places where even the Bible has not been translated into their local language.” So they

have the leaders alright but the bible have to be translated to their local language for the people to be able to grab it and teach it well for the people for instance some of these evangelization documents needs to be printed in a simple English and other languages which they cannot read it.

It also came to light that apathy and negligence to evangelization is another challenge. Evangelization has got to do with people and you cannot evangelize people unless you take into consideration certain basic needs of the people. In the ministry of Jesus, he preached the message of the gospel to the people after taking care of their physical needs. So in effect he got their attention. The interviewees explained that the church is found negligent of certain basic needs of the people and therefore the people are not well prepared for sowing of the word of God. The cultural needs, physical needs and the social needs of the people are to be catered for before the message is incorporated into those comprehensive needs of the people.

The church needed to take into consideration all these physical, cultural, social, in fact psychological needs of the people but the church was negligent of all that. The only concern was to impart the message to people while the ground was not prepared.

3.9 Grace Baptist's Major Contributions to Evangelism now in Urban

Environment

At this stage respondents and interviewees were given the opportunity to comment on the contribution of the Church towards evangelism. In their response they indicated that Grace Baptist Church sees evangelism as a very comprehensive task. "Now if you look at the church's contribution to evangelism. There has been an improvement in this service whereby by now the church does not necessarily build institution but rather the church supports evangelization through human support in the form of

material or financial support to the individuals. For example scholarships to needy and brilliant students and so forth and also to children in more deprived areas. These are some of the things the church is doing so that those people can also have access to their needed materials not forgetting the water borehole build for the Amakom environment.

On the field of health they have this to say, there is an annual health program which is on health screening. Through this exercise they create an avenue to evangelize; this where the church take full charge of all the beneficiaries and those targeted through their outreach campaign. This kind of service to society is full week free health screening and together with many other health's assistance is held annually. Many people are attracted to attend to their health needs in are offered the chance to accept Jesus as their Lord and also added to the church.

In another development, respondents and interviewees made it known that the church has instituted a program for the aged to ensure they are well motivated to serve at their last days on earth. Most of the time these people are neglected and left out of church activities by both the family and the church so Grace Baptist has introduced some percentage of fund to keep it somewhere for support of aged when the need arises. They socialize with them and make them feel that they are part of the church. However, respondents and interviewees believe that the church depends very much on the youth for the future. One of the major contributions they have made so far is to entice the youth to come to the church and to stay. In achieve this Grace Church have a whole program set up for youth with many beneficial programs to educate and entertain the youth in the church. These include mobilization and have some kind of spiritual program for them.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter reports the findings of field work with much emphasis on Grace Baptist Church and their connection to evangelism and missions. Report from the field reveals that respondents have various definitions to evangelism in their own understanding. It was also clear from their responses that some of them are very much aware of their church's stance on missions. On the activeness of the church towards outreach there were differing views as some said the church is active, others voted for not active while some think they are not very active and consistent. It also came to light that the evangelistic activities of the church are founded on the Scriptures to fulfill the God's given mandate to the church. Again, different ways of presenting the gospel were discovered from the respondents and interviewees when they were called to give the nature of their evangelistic campaigns; from personal evangelism to revivals. On the impact of evangelism, it covered various fields such as education, social interventions and others. The work was not completed without discussing the challenges Grace Baptist has encountered in their quest to honour the great commission. Data from the field brought to light that soul winning has become capital intensive, personnel needed to be trained as fishers of men are not available and people are not motivated to take full responsibility of that assignment.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MISSIONARY STRATEGIES OF THE EARLY CHURCH AND THE GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH AMAKOM KUMASI

4.1 Introduction

The discussions in this chapter are based objectively on the field data; it is directed at the research objectives for this work. In chapter three, the issues concerning contemporary urban missions were looked at. Chapter four presents analysis, and assesses the contribution of Grace Baptist Church to missionary work and examines their missionary strategies.

4.2 Research Approach

The data presentation and analysis underneath was guided by the following:

The study sought to examine the missionary strategies of the early Church and to draw some implications for contemporary urban evangelistic initiatives.

Again, the study attempted to find answers to the following questions:

- i. What were the nature of the early church and the nature of the city of Jerusalem in their era?
- ii. What were the strategies that were adopted by the early Christians in their evangelistic and missionary campaigns?
- iii. What impact was made by the early Christians in their missionary endeavor in the then known world?
- iv. How is “missions” faring in urban areas today?
- v. How did the churches in the cities approach missions today?

- vi. What lessons can be learnt from the early missionaries by contemporary Christians in the urban environment.

The main aim of the study examined the missionary strategies of the early Christian community in the Book of Acts and to draw some implications for the contemporary church. The following objectives were set to direct the research to its logical conclusion:

- The study specifically examined the nature of the early church.
- It also examined the missionary methods accepted by the early Christians in Jerusalem.
- The study also assessed the impact of these strategies in the evangelization of Jerusalem.
- Finally, the study attempted to draw some implications for the evangelistic campaigns of the contemporary church in to urban environment.

The method that was used for this study is the qualitative approach. This is an approach which attempts to examine the experiences, perceptions and views of people. It would employ a historical enquiry into the early Church period and to find out how the situation at the time could be related to the present. The qualitative approach is aimed at gaining a deep understanding of a specific organization or event rather than surface description of a large sample of a population.⁷¹

Data for the study was gathered from two main sources, first from the primary source which will include personal interviews with key personalities in the Grace Baptist church Amakom branch. Secondly, the study will employ the secondary sources of data gathering through publications such as books, articles in journals, magazines, and

⁷¹ Strauss and Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research*, 11.

also unpublished works and internet sources. The data from the field was obtained mainly through interview guides and administration of questionnaire.

Respondents for the interviews were selected through a purposive sampling procedure and simple random sampling through a semi-structured interview guide. This involved the selection of units or respondents from the population that are best suited to answer the researcher's questions. Simple random sampling was used until the chosen sampling size of twenty-five is obtained due to the time frame of the study.

All data gathered will be subjected to a careful analysis based on the experiences as views of the respondents in accordance with the study objectives.

4.3 Signs of Church Growth

Interviewees were asked whether they have observed any form of numerical increase for some time now. Except one person all those who were interviewed indicated that Grace Baptist Church has enjoyed uninterrupted increase in membership numbers since they joined the church. Some have been in the church for a period of 20 to 35 years and the rest between 4 to 10 years. They are people who have a clearer picture of the trends over the years and are in the position to give the true state of growth.

If the church has added souls to their assembly over these years then they are walking in the footsteps of the early church as has been recorded in Acts 2-4. In chapter two, it was revealed that they were adding to their fold very often. There was a time that it was multiplication of souls. So how were they growing, through the instrumentality of what? This question was answered below.

4.4The Means of Numerical Growth

Although one deacon was of the view that the number is not growing due to drained love for evangelism and cold follow-up approach, the rest of the interviewees disagreed and stated that they were adding up. It can be concluded that since he is the only who saw differently his assertion is untrue; but it may be that he is seeing what the rest has failed to see.

The study tried to find out how souls have been added to the church since the interviewees have been in the church. An evangelist and a pastoral assistant said that it is through the mode of one-on-one evangelism, mass evangelism, musicals and weddings. Clearly this comment means that church growth was achieved not only through witnessing but other activities in the church caught the attention of people and drove them to the church. He was of the view that members practiced personal evangelism. That is where they go to the streets, houses, shops and other places to engage people one-on-one individually to bring people to the saving knowledge of Christ. In this regard personal evangelism contributes to increase numbers. The mass evangelism is where the entire church moved into a community and engages the indigenes through the sharing of tracts and preaching. This means that evangelism is not delegated to the few but the entire membership storms the town with the gospel and many are reached. If such a huge number moves out there is the tendency that large numbers would be reached. It is an effective mode of increasing numbers and makes the church the mobile group as Jesus intended it instead of being stagnant water. Again, he observed that musical concerts attracted lost souls into their midst to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and personal savior. Any role that any person plays in the church should not be rubbished because of the fact that music department can also bring in more souls. Furthermore, frequent wedding celebrations in the church at

some point attracted the singled-youth especially ladies to come and register their membership. When people also attend wedding ceremonies at their end they loved their worship so much that they would come the following week and be part of the church. It can be argued with much stress that some people may not yield to the gospel but rather ceremonies in the church. In the Book of Acts 2-4 it was seen that people were attracted by the speaking in tongues but the apostles took the opportunity to present the gospel to them and about three thousand people were converted. So it requires of the church to minister the gospel to those who were attracted in order not to fill the church with unconverted souls and unsaved members.

According to Pastor Appiah-Kubi, the expansion of the church auditorium, the holding of two services and teen service also improved the numerical strength of Grace Baptist Church, Amakom. The expansion of facilities and infrastructure in the church is also a proof that limited facilities can hinder church growth. He indicated that when the original church auditorium was expanded to accommodate more people than it used to take. This led to an increase in membership. On the other hand, after the expansion project they also introduced two-services on Sundays. More people got the opportunity to attend their services whether first or second service. It is clear that when the church creates space God will fill it. He also affirmed that the teenagers were separated from the adults to form what is termed as Teen's service. Although this kind of approach is not recorded or practiced in the early church it has proven to be very effective to increase the numbers in the church. This was for only those between the ages thirteen and nineteen years old, and this group also grew in number. They find fulfillment and joy in worship among their peers than being mixed with the adult church.

One Danso, a pastoral assistant, revealed that another means that have aided growth is effective follow-up and visitation. When members surrender to Christ they make sure somebody is assigned to help them grow and would be always there for them; assisting on all spiritual matters. They are well monitored and aided to integrate into the new family without any struggle but rather build a sense of belonging as soon as possible. According to Acts 2, the church was together and shared everything in common so it was difficult for members to be out of fellowship. This character of the church closes the back door thereby maintaining the members and continues to add to the numbers.

Some persons interviewed also mentioned Bible studies or the bible teachings in the church as one of the sources that has helped lifted the number of worshippers. Visitors fall in love with what they teach and they become members. On the other hand members are established through the ministration of the Word of God. In the Book of Acts it is recorded that the members devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and the breaking of bread. This is an indication that that when scripture is well expounded to the understanding of members it aids numerical increase. People grow in their spiritual life and more are attracted by the life changing power of the word of God.

Another means that came up during an interview with a member who have been with the church for about five years is social action or what he termed as social support. The church has been involved in giving back to society and helping so many communities in various ways to minimize social ills and discomfort or lack of important amenities. In Acts they were helping themselves or one another by sharing things in common. If this enabled the church to grow then extending it to the entire community as being done by Grace Baptist could be very effective in church growth.

A 29 year old member, who is now a deacon, also raised the issue of visitor's day celebration as very fruitful means of attracting more people to worship with them. This opens the church up to all persons in society and disabuses the mind of others that the church belongs to some group of people alone.

4.5 The Urban Environment and Christian Missions

The personalities interviewed were asked whether Grace Baptist Church is into missionary work in its urban location. All of them answered in the affirmative and added that the church has a policy or program that directs their missionary endeavours. This refers to the fact that they consider the urban centres as also ripe for harvest.

As a church in the city which has an obligation to pursue missions in the urban areas they have developed plans to that effect. The interviewees made it clear that the church has a policy to plant a church every two years. Evangelist Agyapong said that the church always plants one church in every two years. One of the pastors interviewed indicated that at first, it was, establish two churches a year and it was reviewed. Now, build an auditorium for a new daughter church before establishing a new church. Since the urban demands differ from the rural areas there are certain cost intensive decisions that are required to ensure the fruition of missionary activities to result in a church. In Acts the early church were mostly meeting in one place or in their homes but in contemporary missions in the cities today a portable auditorium would be an advantage.

On the issue of financing urban missions, the personalities interviewed said that the church has a policy to that effect. Deacon Adamah indicated that about 20% of the income accrued in the church is allocated in the budget into missions. Missions in

contemporary times especially in the urban setting is highly cost intensive. Building an auditorium has just been mentioned and it is clear that it will include modern equipment and facilities to make the people saved feel at home. It can be argued that even the monetary allocation of 20% is not adequate.

4.6 The Missionary Strategies and Church Growth

It has already been established that Grace Baptist is a mission's oriented church. So interviewees were asked how the church pursues their missions' agenda. The majority of them that were interviewed observed that missionary work in the cities is different from the remote regions so the approach differs. Since they are more into urban missions and evangelism, their ways of doing things are more sophisticated than those in the rural areas.

Church planting is one of the strategies they use to push their missionary ambition to fruition. In order to reach out to people in other parts of the city and beyond they have resorted to establishing churches. It has already been revealed that they have a policy of planting at least a church every two years. They have a group of members who have been well trained to spearhead the church planting commission, called "Sowers Ministry". According to evangelist Agyapong, in addition to the Sowers; they also have another group known as "Kingdom Warriors" who complement the work of the sowers by following the new members till they are well rooted in the faith. It is of much importance that the entire church is involved in the missionary mandate as was done in Acts 2-4. The church must be proactive and not passive by leaving their missionary responsibility to a few people. The big plus here as compared to Acts 2-4 is that they plant churches in various parts of the city where as the early church in their early period was coiled to one place but had a loud voice over the entire city of

Jerusalem. They also had many congregations in Jerusalem most of them small and met in various homes, private rooms or small chapels for special meals and services as stated in 2.3 of this work.

Another missionary strategy they employ is hospital visitations. The above mentioned groups within the church and others visit various hospitals to interact with patients on admission and in the process share the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ with them. They do other things to assist them physically and also comfort them through words of encouragement and prayer. The persons interviewed observed that it is like creating a church within the four walls of the hospitals. There is no record in Acts about the apostles and the early believers reaching out to the sick but rather healing the sick. So here today, the church visits various health facilities and minister the gospel in kind and through the preaching of the Word of God. They were busy healing the sick and preaching at the same time. It is on record that in Acts 3 Peter and John healed a cripple and it led to the salvation of many in the Solomon's porch. Modern missions would be very effective if healings and miracles are added to the preaching of the word and social action and the rest.

In addition to the above strategies, they make good use of the social media to win the youth. Some of the persons interviewed were on record that they have created whatsapp groups and Facebook pages to reach out to mostly the youth who are always caught there. A pastoral assistant interviewed revealed that they use the various social networks to present the love of Christ and to invite people to join them in worship. Food vendors are located at where people can easily be attracted to buy. In the same manner the outreach strategy of the church should always target any location where souls can be found. In contemporary times one location where millions of people gather especially the youth is the internet or social media. Even though in the early

church they mostly gathered people and located many at the Temple area and the market places they had no access to the internet but it doesn't make it wrong for today's church to invade the social media for souls. People live in the social media for the whole day. So it is an innovation that the church has come up with and laudable one.

Furthermore, pastor Appiah-Kubi made it known that they involve all church members in what they termed as mass witnessing on Sunday morning once a year. He also added that open crusades are also part of their strategies to win souls in the city of Kumasi, and its environs and other parts of Ashanti region. As was already discussed above it will be in the interest of the church and its missionary ambition to disabuse the minds of the membership that missions is the responsibility or occupation of a few. At least four times a year mass evangelization would produce outstanding results than one. It might also work on the psychology of the church and make it a duty. It can be deduced that apart from the open crusade-like style of outreach strategy of the early church they were all witnessing about their new found faith daily. That is the reason for the daily addition of brethren as indicated in Acts 2. Interviewees also made mention of "Operation Andrew" as a missionary strategy practiced by the church. When asked to explain, the personalities who mentioned it in the interview said that it is a program where members are encouraged to go out to issue an invite to the unchurched or family members just as Apostle Andrew did to his brother Peter. This is a great mechanism which seems to say that if you are happy with the good news of the savior, go and bring your friends and loved ones because good news should be shared. In Acts 2, after the preaching of Peter after the Pentecost experience, the people said, what shall we do? And not what shall I do? Believers

should be encouraged to receive the gospel collectively because scripture says that when Christ saves a person he also saves his household.

Moreover, interviewees also related to the study the one-on-one witnessing as one of the channels used to execute the missionary mandate of the church. With this the interviewees put on record that members are given materials or gospel tracts like “there is New Life for you” to proclaim the gospel to individuals they could reach. This is also a very easy approach to witness during missions. The material in hand guides the one evangelizing to present an orderly and accurate account of the gospel to the lost. In the city you just cannot say anything and go your way it must be profound.

Also, according to Danso, a pastoral assistant of the church in an interview, residential fellowships and zones are aiding mission’s big time. The church has been divided into residential fellowships and zones depending on one’s place of abode. These groups have been challenged to reach out to the people in their vicinity to add to their numbers. This is just like the small groups in the early church or the small house fellowships. When they increase in number the whole congregation increases in number.

In a more modern day approach, a deacon in the church revealed that a day has been set aside annually as visitors’ day. This is where members are advised to invite unbelievers and backsliders to church. During this service the visitors are introduced to the saving knowledge of Christ and afterwards given a mouthwatering treat. Lots of people are won for Christ and become members of the church afterwards. The disadvantage here is that many could just cross-carpet from their churches to join them instead of the target which is the lost and backsliders.

4.7 Impact on its Immediate Environment

Since missions go beyond proclaiming the gospel to the lost in the community the work found out other areas that the church has affected the society. Majority of the personalities interviewed were quick to point to education. According to them they have built a school to add to the few schools in and around Amakom to widen the chances of children of school going age to gain access to education. On top of it they provide scholarships to needy children to also enjoy the privilege of schooling. It also came to light that the church has established a basic school library and literacy programs for semi-literates and illiterates. Missions are more than preaching and witnessing but the social needs of the host community also come into play. This makes it a holistic approach to missions.

Other interviewees were also proud to say that the church has made frantic efforts to make available to the society potable drinking water. They made it known that Grace Baptist Church has funded borehole drilling water project in areas where hygienic drinking water were scarce. It is interesting to know that even an urban area like Amakom were in need of potable drinking water but for the intervention of the church they were exposed to water borne diseases. The church can heal, give healthcare but it is better to use missions to prevent ill-health. In an interview with one Yeboah, a member in the church, the study discovered that they have also provided a health facility to the host community. A hospital to cater for their health needs.

4.8 Contribution to Outreach

Here the study sought to find out the major contributions of Grace Baptist Church to missions in the society in general as of now. The interviewed audience brought to light the support the church renders to Bible Society to facilitate Bible translation and

other related work on the Bible. They emphasize the financial assistance to African Enterprise and other organizations in missions. So they are not into missions themselves but have made it a duty to assist other groups to make sure missionary work is kept alive all over the cities.

4.9 Challenges Facing Missions

It is on record that there are some challenges and forms of difficulties meddling with their pursuit of missions. Majority of the interviewees affirmed that a large portion of the membership has a low drive to missionary activities or outreach. Most of them believed that some of the believers in the church are still spiritual babes and others are simply not heeding to the call to witness. Others also gave the reason that the apathy was incited by the fact that some people have been trained to undertake evangelistic activities. Another interviewee stated clearly that their interest has died down. It is the duty of the church to involve them regularly to revive the interest in missions. It was stated earlier that the church should avoid the situation where members would feel it is not an obligation but to the few. A football player who is always on the bench would soon become rusty.

A pastor responded by saying that it is not a new thing but outreach apathy has been with them for a long time and all what they do is to give flimsy excuses. A leader in the church pointed out that some of the members have grown cold with the things of God in general.

According to evangelist Wireko-Brobby, many people in the church are not active in their missionary activities especially soul winning due to shyness. A deacon who was also interviewed on the matter reiterated the views already shared by saying that it is a

big challenge to the church. The entire congregation must be made to accept that it is a biblical mandate that should be done on daily basis.

4.10 Conclusion

This has been an interesting chapter interacting with the views of people in the field. It was revealed that missions are more than proclamation of the gospel of Christ but the needs of society too. Urban centres like Amakom and Jerusalem demands a different approach from their counterparts among the rural folks. It was also known that people are not attracted to be saved only by the gospel but ceremonies in the church could bring them to be saved. Also it came to light that good music in the church can drive unbelievers into the fold of believers to taste the saving grace. Whilst the church today is reaching to those on the sick beds the early church was busy healing them. Similarities and slight differences in the missionary strategies of the early church and contemporary urban missions were seen. Lastly, the challenge of apathy towards missions today was over emphasized. Many believers today have lost interest which the church should not take lightly. In the next chapter, summary, conclusion and recommendations would be presented to conclude the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study sought to examine the missionary strategies of the early church and drew implications for contemporary urban evangelistic initiatives. The qualitative approach was employed to source for data from the field and for analysis of the acquired data. Data collection instrument was mainly interview guides and a questionnaire was administered to a few people to sample information from the field. The summary of findings is discussed below as follows:

First, the early church like the church under study originated from the city with membership of diverse backgrounds and races. Since urban ministries are situated at metropolises a lot of people are brought together along the lines of trade and other reasons. This means that handling and an outreach in the urban centers can only be successful when it is well planned to suit different kinds of people.

Secondly, the mode of evangelism in urban areas, the study found out that the most effective ways to win the heart of people in the cities are more complex or better still sophisticated. Whereas the early church shared material things in common to build a loving and a belonging family in addition to the proclamation of the gospel it is becoming more complex today. Recently, it was found that it covers good music, portable church buildings, equipments and instruments, massive humanitarian campaigns like offering of scholarships to needy students, and among others.

Thirdly, their impact on society. It was revealed from the study that in the cities the success of missions could be determined by the benefits the society has enjoyed from the church. The early church attracted their society's attention by their love for all and

even strangers. Today, it is mostly social action like the drilling of boreholes, schools, hospitals and libraries. Very cost effective projects.

Lastly, the work found out that missionary strategies vary in the urban areas. In the early church the most powerful strategy was the demonstration of the supernatural especially the wrought of miracles. It was observed that today's missions and evangelistic campaigns have few of the miraculous and healing of the sick. They have adopted hospital ministry in contemporary evangelistic outreaches. A well-rehearsed team to follow-up and visit new converts; and also evangelize on regular basis so when the mass evangelism fails to work the church would not cease to witness.

5.2 Conclusion

The study was a very educative and thought provoking exercise that brought out many issues that could be of immense benefit for the church today with respect to missions. Clearly, approach to missions in the cities since the period of the early church till now demands almost the same thinking. But it is also quite feasible that today's approach is getting more complex and sophisticated. Which means that it requires more financial boost to arrive at a successful and strategical end? Moreover, the preaching of the gospel continue to lead a lot of people to Christ but on the field it was seen that indoor ceremonies like weddings have attracted many to the faith. This means that the church should be very pragmatic in both outdoor and indoor business. Then also, the ascendancy of evangelism apathy and aversion for personal and mass witnessing has become a headache for the church in contemporary times. Under intense persecution the early church were joyfully witnessing but with little or no persecution believers today are running from the Great Commissions.

5.3 Recommendations

After a careful study of the outcome of the work, the following recommendations have been outlined to assist the missionary activities in urban areas as follows:

- Mass evangelization is recommended to be the main focus in the missionary policy of urban churches to minimize lack of interest in reaching out to the lost. The policy should insist on regular and consistent witnessing that would involve the entire congregation in the church.
- It is recommended that the church should teach and demonstrate more on how to evangelize in the cities. This will lift the confidence level of the church members and minimize shyness.
- Budget allocation for missions must be increased so as to increase the intensity of evangelism and to sustain it all through the year
- It is also recommended that programs like visitors day must go with the tag “bringing a lost friend”. This will disabuse the minds of the members from thinking that anybody can be invited so that they will refrain from inviting their friends from other churches. It should be strictly unbelievers and backsliders.
- Great care must be taken not to sideline the needy in the church and move out to assist those in the community who are yet to be members. You may get them to respond but you might be losing some people who are already members.

5.3.1 Further Studies

Recommendation for further studies on the findings of such a study should be encouraged to ensure that the church grow stronger in missions and evangelism. So it

is recommended that in future: “A Comparative Study of the Effect of Persecution and Trials on Missions between the Early Christians in the Book of Acts and Contemporary Ministry” be looked at.

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Justice Appiah, Grace Baptist Church, 12th March 2017.

Kwame Yeboah, Grace Baptist premises, 12th March 2017.

Pastor Jonson, Grace Baptist church premises, 12th March 2017.

APPENDIX I
CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, KUMASI
DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction:

My name is Emmanuel Agyekum, MA in Christian Ministry and Management candidate who is working on the topic “The Missionary strategy of the early church in (Acts 2-4) and their implications for the contemporary urban missions: A case study of Grace Baptist Church Amakom Kumasi.

1. Name

2. Position/Rank.....

3. Please for how long have you being this church?

4. Have you observed any signs of growth in your church numerically?

.....

If yes, by what means?

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If no, why?.....

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5. Please, is your church into missions?

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6. How do you go about it?

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7. Do you have a particular policy or program for missions?

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8. If yes, please share with me:

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9. Anything more you want to add on the missions?

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10. Please can you share with me what you know about evangelism in your church?

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11. In your opinion what is evangelism?

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12. What is Grace's Baptist view on evangelism?

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13. How do you evangelize in your church?

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14. Which group of people are your targets for missions and evangelism?

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15. What strategy or ways do you use to evangelize in your church?

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16. Is the entire membership of the church active in evangelizing the lost?

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17. If no, why?

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18. How has your church impacted its immediate environment through soul winning?

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19. What are Grace Baptist major contributions to evangelism now?

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20. From your opinion how different is Grace Baptist evangelistic strategy from other churches?

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