

CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

**THE RESPONSE OF GHANA BAPTIST CONVENTION TO POVERTY
ALLEVIATION: A STUDY OF GRACE BAPTIST CENTRE FOR
COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT**

KULIPOE, SIMON EDEM

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

MARCH, 2017

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BY

KULIPOE, SIMON EDEM

(60000076)

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD
OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN CHRISTIAN MINISTRY
WITH MANAGEMENT**

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

MARCH, 2017

DECLARATION

I, Kulipoe, Simon Edem 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.

Signed: Date:
Kulipoe, Simon Edem
(Student)

Signed: Date:
Rev. Dr. Robert Owusu Agyarko
(Supervisor)

Signed: Date:
Dr. Samuel B. Adubofour
(Head of Department of Theology)

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Emefa my wife, for her love, support and encouragement during the period of my studies. Also to my children Fafa, Seyram and Yayra for their love and understanding during my absence from home.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank the Lord Almighty for his grace towards me to complete this thesis.

I wish to express my appreciation to Rev. Robert Asante of Grace Baptist Church for allowing me to carry out the research work in his church. I wish to acknowledge the cooperation I received from Mr. Alex Obeng of CeFORCE and all CeFORCE volunteers for the interview and relevant information I needed for this research.

My sincere thanks go to my Supervisor, Rev. Dr. Robert Agyarko who contributed to the development and the structure of this work.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGREDS	-	Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services
AIDS	-	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
BREDA	-	Baptist Relief and Development Agency
BVTC	-	Baptist Vocational Training Centre
BWAid	-	Baptist World Aid
CeFORCE	-	Centre for Community Empowerment
CSR	-	Catholic Relief Services
FOB	-	Faith Based Organization
GBC	-	Ghana Baptist Convention
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GLSS6	-	Ghana Living Standard Survey Round 6
GRAFI	-	Grace Fellowship Incorporated
HIV	-	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
LEAP	-	Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty
MDGs	-	Millennium Development Goals
NABA	-	North American Baptist Association
NCDP	-	The Nanumba Child Development Program
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization
NYTS	-	New York City Seminary
SSA	-	Sub-Saharan Africa

ABSTRACT

The research seeks to discover the contribution of the church towards poverty alleviation in the society, in order to empower the poor in the community to meet their economic and social-political needs. To achieve this purpose for the research, the biblical basis for the church's support of the poor was examined. Also programmes and activities of the church towards poverty alleviation in the community were investigated. Grace Baptist Church Centre for Community Empowerment (CeFORCE) of the Ghana Baptist Convention was used as a study and examined thoroughly. The research revealed the many contributions of CeFORCE in the area of counseling, business startup support, educational support, health care support, vocational skills acquisition and several advocacy programmes aimed at empowering the poor to meet their economic and socio-political needs. Some beneficiaries of CeFORCE programmes were doing well in their chosen trades and professions. The research further revealed that CeFORCE lacks donor support for many of its projects as the organization is solely founded by Grace Baptist Church members. This is affecting CeFORCE support for most of its poverty reduction programmes in the community. Laudable projects such as the construction of CeFORCE village for vocational and technical training, the Northern Immigrant Transit training programme designed for street girls have been suspended. It was also discovered that documentation of CeFORCE activities were poorly managed. The dissertation argues that in order for CeFORCE to continue contributing effectively to poverty alleviation in the community, it must seek donor support to fund most of its programmes and projects through collaboration with BREDA and other donor agencies. CeFORCE advocacy programmes should cover advocacy on parental neglects, a primary cause of illiteracy and unemployment resulting in increase poverty in the community.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Poverty has always been part of the human race, even in the most advanced countries where it is assumed that everyone is well to do; it is often not the case. Some of the people find themselves living on the streets and under very deplorable conditions as a result of poverty. The underdeveloped countries with the many economic problems have many people living with poverty; a large number living on less than one dollar a day. At global level, progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) has been mixed, with relatively weak performance in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and Southern Asia, even though progress might have been made on individual targets in different countries, especially as defined by their own national strategies.¹

Poverty in Ghana: An Overview

The effects of poverty in Ghana have brought untold hardship to many as a good number of the populace has poor access to good water, good health care, education and food. This has become an issue of great concern in both social and the political life of the people. This is so because poverty affects almost every area of the human life. Asante noted; “the heart of poverty is the inadequate access to productive resources for the poor.”²

¹*Ghana Millennium Development Goals, 2015 Report*, accessed April 20, 2016
www.gh.undp.org/content/dam/ghana/doc/incgro/UNDP_GH_2015MDGsReport.pdf,

²Emmanuel Asante, *Stewardship* (Accra: Willas Press Limited, 1999), 35.

In Ghana, the Government has made some strides in introducing social protection programmes like; Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP), School Feeding programmes, free exercise books and school uniforms to militate against the poverty levels in the country.³ But all these do not tackle the root cause of poverty. The difficulty associated with government's programmes in poverty alleviation brings on board the need for active participation of all stakeholders including the church and faith based organizations to minimize the effect of poverty and its associated socio-economic problems.

Poverty in Ghana: The Church Response

Christians are called out of the world and sent into the world to minister. One main responsibility of Christians towards the world is evangelism and social ministry. If Christians do not evangelize and disciple, no amount of political activity will improve society very much. In Luke 6:35-36, Jesus commanded Christians to love their enemies, do good to them, and be merciful, just as the Father is merciful. This ministry of mercy to the world includes Christian participation in civic activities and influencing government policies to make them more consistent with biblical moral principles.

Sider Ron noted, "The church is required to do holistic ministry. It must be understood spreading the kingdom of God is more than simply winning souls for Christ. It is also doing deeds of mercy and seeking justice; ordering lives and relationships, ordering institutions and communities according to God's power to

³*Ghana makes strides in poverty reduction-ministry of Finance*, Accessed, March 16, 2016 www.mofep.gov.gh/?q=new/201611.

bring down the kingdom of God.’⁴Holistic ministry overcomes the long standing divide between evangelism and social ministry by reaching out with the whole gospel in word and deed. The church must do holistic ministry because of the model and teaching of Jesus Christ, coupled with the biblical doctrines concerning the human need. In this context, Sider Ron said:

“The example, command, and gospel of Jesus Christ do not stand alone. Key biblical doctrines – the biblical view of persons, sin, salvation, conversion, heaven, and eschatology – also summon the church to holistic ministry.”⁵

Poverty alleviation can be addressed at many levels and the church have a great potential in addressing this through its holistic ministry. The church have a long history of poverty alleviation programs to improve the life’s of the people in the community in which they are located and even beyond. The church has an extensive network reaching to almost every village of the country. This makes them have easy access to majority of both the village folks and the urban population with aid and also understanding the actual need of the people.A brief look at the response of some churches in Ghana to poverty alleviation will be of help here.

Catholic Relief Services (CSR), Ghana

The Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Ghana, a nonprofit making organization which was established in 1958, has established itself as a trusted and respected partner in Ghana’s development. Since 1987, in the spirit of CRS’ mission to work with the poorest and most vulnerable populations, CRS Ghana has served people leaving in the three most in –need regions: Northern, upper West, and Upper East.CRS have

⁴ Ron Sider, *Churches that Makes a Difference* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 45.

⁵ Sider, *Churches that Makes a Difference*, 48.

improved the level of care for the communities in these regions. Support for pregnant women and mothers of newborns were mobilized to increase the child survival rate by addressing the behaviors that have shown to limit maternal and child health services in the past. To reduce the incidence of malaria, CRS have worked to increase ownership and usage of long –lasting insecticidal mosquito nets.

Again in agricultural, CRS have lent support in improving the production and livelihood capabilities of poor smallholder farmers. This was done by introducing farmers to new technologies that are appropriate to their needs, while helping them save and access credit so they can increase their profit in local and regional markets⁶.

On water and sanitation, CRS have improve sanitation coverage in schools and health facilities by working with school health clubs and sanitation advocacy groups to construct latrines, urinal and tippy tap hand washing facilities, as well as established safe water points.

Assemblies of God Relief and Development Service (AGREDS)

The Nanumba Child Development Program (NCDP) is a child focused program initiated by AGREDS-Ghana in 1999. NCDP operates in the Eastern corridor of the Northern Region of Ghana. Its activities cover three of the most deprived districts in Ghana, namely the Nanumba North, Nanumba South and Yendi Districts.⁷

With resources mobilized from international organizations like the Christian Children’s Fund of Canada (CCFC) and local churches, District Assemblies and communities, NCDP has implemented programs in Education; Health and Nutrition;

⁶ Catholic Relief Services – Wikipedia://en. Wikipedia/Catholic_Relief_Services accessed, 15th February, 2016

⁷Assemblies of God Relief and Development services-Ghana, accessed, February 16, 2016. Acdep.org/site/index.php/regions/northern-region?catid=85&id=144...20

Water and Sanitation; Micro credit and Micro Enterprise Development and Community Advocacy in eleven deprived communities with children and women as their primary target groups.

Baptist Relief and Development Agency (BREDA)

BREDA, a non-profit making organization of the Ghana Baptist Convention (GBC), has over the years been involved in advocacy programmes, the establishment of vocational schools in Tamale and Frakadua to train less privileged girls in those communities. BREDA has set up citrus plantation at AgonaAsafo to create employment and a hospital at Nalerigu and the Mafi Early Childhood development project at Aflao.

Centre for Community Empowerment (CeFORCE)

CeFORCE of Grace Baptist Church, Amakom-Kumasi is the center that offers counseling and direction to people in the community for meeting their economic and socio-political needs. It is a project of Grace Fellowship Incorporated (GRAFI).

GRAFI is the registered NGO of Grace Baptist Church for the promotion of holistic ministry. All economic and socio-political programmes of the church come under its promotion and supervision.

This and many more reasons go to buttress the point that the church's response to poverty alleviation cannot be over emphasized. Perhaps society have not fully utilized and explored the potential of the church in development process of the community. The church therefore becomes one of the most important places to begin the road map to the journey of creating sustainable communities and alleviating poverty in the society.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Poverty has always been part of the human race, even in the most advanced countries where it is assumed that everyone is well to do; it is often not the case. The underdeveloped countries with many economic problems have many people living with poverty; a large number living on less than one dollar a day. In Ghana people find themselves living on the streets and under very deplorable conditions as a result of poverty. There are many NGOs and faith-based organizations working towards poverty alleviation. One way of assessing such organizations is to look at their contributions, programmes and activities to determine whether they are actually working towards poverty alleviation or not.

1.3 Research Questions

Are the programmes and activities of CeFORCE of Grace Baptist Church towards Poverty Alleviation appropriate? And are these programmes and activities contributing effectively towards improving the Economic and Socio-Political needs of the people in the community?

1.4 Scope of the Study

Ghana Baptist Convention through BREDA has several programmes towards poverty alleviation. But this study is limited to CeFORCE of Grace Baptist Church Amakom. Other poverty alleviation bodies will be mentioned but the focus is on CeFORCE.

1.5 Methodology

The researcher used the qualitative approach to undertake the study. This enabled the researcher to gain in-depth knowledge into the contributions of church's towards

poverty alleviation. The method of sampling was purposive limiting the study to a specific case and to focus on a particular area for in-depth analysis. CeFORCE of Grace Baptist Church located at Amakom, Kumasi, is the selected area. The study was selected to access the response of Grace Baptist Church to poverty alleviation in the community. For the purpose of this study, both primary and secondary sources of information were employed.

Primary Sources

Primary data were collected from some CeFORCE office Counselors and Volunteers. Twenty questionnaires were distributed to Grace Baptist Church members and non-church members as well as ten beneficiaries of CeFORCE programmes.

Personal interviews were conducted for ten people through posing of questions following with an explanation to the question(s) by the interviewee. People interviewed included Alex Obeng, Director CeFORCE, Deacons---, Church members and beneficiaries of CeFORCE programmes.

Secondary Sources

On this, the Annual Session reports of the Ghana Baptist Convention, internet sources brochures, CeFORCE data on beneficiaries, thesis, activities and other relevant documents and papers were also consulted.

1.6 General Objective

To identify the contribution of CeFORCE programmes, tailored towards poverty alleviation and to access its impact on the people living in the community.

1.6.1 Specific Objectives

- a) To identify CeFORCE counseling, vocational and technical skills acquisition programmes for the poor.
- b) To assess CeFORCE contribution towards education, health care and financing of the poor for business start ups in the community.
- c) To assess the effect of CeFORCE support in the lives of the beneficiaries.
- d) To examine the relationship between CeFORCE and BREDA and to assess how they are funded.

1.7 Literature Review

Poverty Profile in Ghana (2005-2013)

From the publication of the latest analysis of the living conditions of Ghanaian household and the poverty profile based on the six round of Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS6) conducted in 2012/2013 by the Ghana Statistical Service, the report groups poverty into three different dimensions namely: consumption poverty, lack of access to assets and services and human development. The report analyzes macroeconomic developments in the country since 2005, focusing on Growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), trends in inflation, balance of payment and public expenditures. It also discusses social protection interventions aimed at reducing poverty and programmes being implemented towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).⁸With the Ghana Living Standard Survey Round 6 (GLSS6), it became necessary to recalculate new poverty lines.

A methodology used produced an extreme poverty line of 792.05 Ghana cedis and an absolute poverty line of 1,314.00 Ghana cedis per equivalent adult per year in January

⁸ Ghana Millennium Development Goals, 2015 Report, accessed April 20, 2016
www.gh.undp.org/content/dam/ghana/doc/incgro/UNDP_GH_2015MFGsReport.pdf

2013 prices of Greater Accra Region. The absolute poverty line indicates the minimum living standard in Ghana while the extreme poverty line indicates that even if a household spends their entire budget on food, they still will not meet the minimum calorie requirement. This report is relevant to this work as it clearly defines the poverty line levels in Ghana. This definition sets a guideline in measuring poverty among the populace.

Talking about the role of the church in development, Bryan Myers noted that, “any vision of a better human future that is Christian must include a vibrant, growing, living, Christian community that is eagerly and joyfully serving God and the community. It is impossible to imagine a transforming community without a transforming church in its midst.”⁹ Myers further mentioned three critical contributions to Christian development that the church can provide. First, the church is a servant and a source of encouragement, not a commander or judge. Second, the church is the source of value information within the community, and these values formed by the church must be of the kingdom of God. Third, the church is a hermeneutical community that reads, hears, lives, reveals and applies the word of God in the community and thus challenges the evils of society.

The Micah Declaration on the Integral Mission also recognizes the unique position that the church has been placed on the account of its presence among the poor. The church is called upon “to restore their God –giving dignity by enabling them to produce their own resources and to create solidarity networks.”¹⁰ This implies that in

⁹ Bryan Myers, *Walking with the poor: Principles and practices of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll: OrbisBooks, 2000), 127.

¹⁰ Tim Chester, “What makes Christian Development Christian?” Paper presented at Global Connection Relief and Development Forum in May 2002, in Spurgeon’s College and Authors, *Christian Community Development* (London: Spurgeon’s College, 2003), 8.

addressing poverty, the local church must work closely with the poor in meeting their needs.

Sugden on his part notes that people can find their human dignity “in the context of the call of God to give their allegiance to him”, and that “the development of self-worth is the foundation for every other growth.”¹¹

This sense of self –worth is not developed through economic projects. Rather, it is the Gospel that makes it possible for people to develop their sense of self-worth. The local church is well placed to work with the poor, and its work is likely to be sustainable in the long term.¹²For it is considered as the largest grassroots movement in the world and has the capacity to last for years than any other local agency in a local community.

According to Mark Russell, “holistic mission is for some a battle cry of the true purpose for Christ church and for others a time draining distraction from the primary task of evangelism.”¹³ Some lament the lack of emphasis in personal evangelism in mission today and criticize the tendency to consider all missionary endeavors as important as evangelism. While they acknowledge the increasing need of relief and developmental work, they worry about a variety of activities acting as a substitute for evangelism.¹⁴ There are many who will express this viewpoint in a variety of way.

Some point out those ministries which are development focus and a lack of emphasis

¹¹Christopher Sugden, *What is Good about the Good News to the Poor?* In Samuel, V. and Sugden, C., (eds), *Mission as Transformation: A Theology of the Whole Gospel* (Carlisle: Regnum Books, 1999), 239.

¹²SamuelBoapeah, *Principles of Church Management: Managing People, programmes, and Possessions in the Local Church* (Kumasi: Faith –Alive Services, 2006), 27.

¹³Mark Russell, "Christian Mission is Holistic," (*International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 25, no. 2 2008), 93.

¹⁴Russell, "Christian Mission is Holistic", 93.

in evangelism are just making people's rides to hell more comfortable. Others criticize a heavy handed emphasis on evangelism as being unbiblical, ineffective and not taking into consideration the various ways that Christ worked among people.

Evangelicals, whose very name implies an emphasis on evangelism, have struggled to find cohesiveness on this delicate issue. Samuel Moffett discusses the historical shift in emphasis in the church on this issue. He said "there was a time when most believed that evangelism was the only priority. Then the church swung too far the other way. The only Christian priority for some has been social justice through reconstruction."¹⁵ For protestant America these tensions developed around the turn of the 20th century when many became fascinated with many philosophies imported from Europe. The idea was that we have progressed beyond the belief in supernatural phenomena. As the scriptures become demythologized; Christians focused on offering social services and left out all talk about heaven, hell, conversion and greater spiritual reality. This reconstruction version of Christian mission became known as the Social Gospel. This work is relevant to this research because it brings out the history behind the church and its attempt to involve itself in social work to improve the lives of the poor.

Rev. Fr. Nyarko, commenting on Oduyoye's thesis, noted that for Oduyoye Africans were drawn to the Gospel because of its claim to inclusiveness, wholeness, as well as its complete dependence on God for sustenance. Oduyoye also noted that Africans were drawn to the gospel for utilitarian reasons – to get their needs met. His work looked at what the church is doing to alleviate the suffering of the poor in Ghana and

¹⁵Russell, "Christian Mission is Holistic", 93.

whether it is making the needed impact on the people. Whereas Christianity brought the sacredness of life into sharper focus, the challenge of secularism and globalization in the socio-political system is eroding confidence in God.¹⁶

Asante relates poverty to lack of opportunities to develop one's potential, to control one's own life resulting in economic deprivation, political injustice and disorientation of lives.¹⁷ According to Asante, the heart of poverty is the inadequate access to productive resources for the poor. Therefore poverty alleviation should aim at the fundamental changes in the structural imbalances which do not favour the poor. Asante asserts that, illiteracy, inadequate medical care, diseases, mental disorder due to poor nutrition, lack of housing and stress are the effects of poverty.

Asante was of the view that it is the socio-environmental conditions that point to the existence of poverty. According to him poverty accelerates environmental degradation. This he said is so because the poor have very limited economic alternatives to improve their lives, while the affluent in society controls and manipulates the economic and political system to the disadvantage of the poor. He concludes that at the heart of poverty is the question of structural injustice resulting in impoverishment and depriving the poor of their rights.

Again there are other non-poverty activities like mining that degrades the environment and that poverty alone is not the contribution factor to environmental degradation. This work rather looked at the response of the church towards factors

¹⁶Godfred Adjei Nyarko, "Poverty in Ghana: Theological Reflection on the Response of Some Churches in Kumasi Metropolitan Area," PhD diss., School Of Graduate Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology-Kumasi, 2012.

¹⁷ Asante, *Stewardship*, 30.

that cause poverty and how effective those policies are. It examines whether the church can partly be blamed for the present state of poverty in Ghana.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The research work is divided into five main chapters. Chapter one which is general introduction to the work gives a broad idea of what the research is about. The statements of problem, research question, methodology, objectives of the study, the limitation of the study and literature review are stated. Chapter two considers the Biblical and Theological basis for the role of the church in poverty alleviation.

Chapter three, deals with the background, nature and functions of CeFORCE of Grace Baptist Church. It looks at how it was founded, its modus operandi, funding, ongoing projects and its challenges. Chapter four considers the presentation of data collected on the field of study for analysis of the structure, programmes and activities of CeFORCE. Chapter five of the study entails the summary, recommendations and conclusion of the work.

CHAPTER TWO
BIBLICAL BASIS FOR THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO
POVERTYALLEVIATION

2.1 Introduction

From chapter one, it has been realized that poverty is a major problem facing the world in general and confronting many people in Ghana as well. The effect of poverty in Ghana is a major drawback and has brought untold hardship to many people as it has contributed to their impoverishment. A good number of the populace has poor access to good drinking water, good health, and education, clothing and good food as result. This calls for a concerted effort from all stakeholders including the church to address it. Social involvement is rooted in the character of God. He is the God who upholds the course of the oppressed, who provides for the poor and liberates the prisoner; he sustains the marginalized and the vulnerable. Our understanding of poverty is fundamentally related to our understanding of God. It is a question of what kind of God we worship. According to Ron Sider, concern for the poor is not ` merely an ethical teaching': "it is first of all a theological truth, central doctrine of the creed,a constantly repeated biblical teaching about the God we worship. The biblical insistence on God's concern for the poor is first of all a theological statement about the Creator and Sovereign of the Universe."¹⁸

Is social involvement a legitimate activity of the Christian? Does it have biblical and theological support? The chapter two will look at the biblical basis which makes it obligatory for the church to actively involve herself in addressing issues of poverty confronting its members and the larger population as a whole. This shall be done by

¹⁸ Ron Sider, *Evangelism and Social Action* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1993), 23.

reviewing how God through some Old Testament prophets, Jesus Christ and the Apostles addressed the issues of poverty and injustice that was confronting God's people.

2.2 The State of the Poor in the Old Testament

The poor in the Old Testament era were normally characterized with affliction, suffering, and subjection to hard labour and ill treatment from the society. They were the vulnerable, whose right to basic need and social right were denied them.¹⁹ Poverty in Israel was as result of invasion through wars, drought which resulted in food scarcity and bereavement of supporting family members. According to Asante poverty in Israel were the results of the fact that most of the people were landless peasant farmers who were heavily taxed and often were at the mercy of the money lenders. Asante pointed out that at the lowest end of the poverty ladder were the beggars, widows and orphans. The rich always took advantage of the poor and worsened their plight to satisfy their greed by selling those in debt into slavery.²⁰ The poor were forced to mortgage their fields, vineyards and homes to get grain during the famine while others had to borrow money to pay taxes collected on their field and vineyards.²¹ These taxes which were levied on the people placed heavy burden on the poor in addition to food and wine which were collected, depriving the people of their means of income.²²

¹⁹Deut 26:6-9.

²⁰Lev. 25:39, Deut. 15; 12.

²¹ Neh.5; 3-5

²² Neh. 5: 18.

Some rich people in Israel, lived in luxury through the gain from their oppression of the poor, dishonest business practices and bribery resulting in the perversion of justice in the courts.²³

2.3 God's Concern for the Poor in the Old Testament

In the Mosaic Law, God made his concern for the poor clearly known by embodying it in the law. In Deut 15:11 reads:

‘The poor shall never cease out of the land: Therefore I command thee, saying, thou shall open thy hand wide unto thy brother, to the poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.’

Many laws serve as protection for the poor concerning their needs and dignity. An example is the law of gleaning: The corners of fields were not to be reaped or the vineyards stripped of their fruit to enable the needy to freely have access to them.²⁴ Land owners were not to carry away produce missed by their initial harvest but to leave them so it could be gathered by the poor enabling them to provide for themselves and not to depend on charity.

Israel's laws protected the poor from unlawful interest charges.²⁵ Loans to the poor were to be interest free in order not to allow people to profit from their circumstances. Furthermore, when a coat or milestone was taken as a guarantee for a loan, it was to be returned when it was needed.

In Deut 23:24-25 individuals were allowed to pluck grain or eat grapes belonging to another, provided they carried nothing away during the Sabbath year which is the end of every seven years, debts were to be cancelled. In the year of Jubilee, debts are

²³ Amos 5:11

²⁴ Lev. 19:9-10, 23:22.

²⁵ Ex 22:25, Lev 25.

forgiven and slaves are liberated and lands returned to their original owners during the fiftieth year. All these laws were set up to serve as protection to the poor and aimed at establishing God's concern for the poor.

It is sometimes said that God is biased to the poor; others also speak of His preferential option for the poor. But such statements are opened to misunderstanding. It is not that God is biased towards the poor, or the poor are more deserving because of their poverty. But rather because he is the God of justice and he sides with the victim of oppression. In the view of Vinoth Ramanchandrain a sinful world where life is biased towards the wealthy and the powerful, God's action will always be perceived as counter-biased. In the case of exploitation, it is the cause of the oppressed that God upholds. And God expects us to do the same.

2.4 God Speaks for the Poor through the Prophets

Certainly the most grievous examples of poverty and severest rebukes come from the prophets. It should be noted, however, that the prophets were not primarily spokespersons for the poor or the oppressed peoples; they were spokespersons for God. The key terms for "poor" are used almost exclusively by Isaiah, Amos, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah while Hosea and Micah, who also showed great sensitivity to the needs of their people, do not use the terms at all. Prophets clearly called attention to the misuse of riches and the abuse of the poor but they were primarily messengers of the Lord. Attempts to narrow the agenda of the prophet to one interest group or another have not understood the largess of God and his concern for all persons.

2.4.1 Prophet Amos, God Desire Justice for the Poor

Amos is quite graphic in his portrayal of the oppression of the poor. The poor are bought and sold, trampled, crushed, oppressed, forced, and denied justice by those who are in a position to do otherwise. Their treatment is a striking example of the waywardness of God's people from the covenant obligations and their unique relationship with the Lord. Amos underscores this situation: "They sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals. They trample on the heads of the poor as upon the dust of the ground and deny justice to the oppressed"

Amos 2:6-7 thus saith the Lord; for three transgression of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes:
That pants after the dust of the earth on the heard of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go into the same maid to profane my holy name.

To walk with the Lord says Chris Wright, 'is a summary of the Old Testament ethics.'²⁶ 'The God who upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry 'expect us to walk in his ways. He expects his people to share his concern for justice. The indictment of the Old Testament prophets against Gods people was both that they have turn from God to idols and have not upheld social justice. As Prophet Amos said:

For as much therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stones, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall drink wine of them.
For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: They afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right.(Amos 5: 11-12).

The emphasis of the prophetic invective fell upon the leaders. Instead of defending the poor and upholding the Law of God they took bribes and gifts to pervert justice.

²⁶ Chris Wright, *Deuteronomy*, NIBC, (London: Hendrickson/Paternoster, 1996), 145.

2.4.2 Prophet Isaiah, God will not answer the Prayers of Oppressors of the Poor

In Isaiah, the people of God complain that God does not hear their prayers or respond to their fasting. It seems as if God is indifferent. But the problem, says Isaiah, is the people's indifference to the cry of the poor:

Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please, And exploit all your workers. Your fasting ends in quarrelling and strife. And with striking each other with wicked fits. You cannot fast today and expect your voice to be heard on high. Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, Only a day for a man to humble himself? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed. And for lying on sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, A day acceptable to the LORD? Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: To loose the chains of justice. And untie the cords of the yoke. To set the oppressed free. And break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry? And to provide the poor wanderer with shelter. When you see the naked, to clothe him, And not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? (Isaiah 58:3-7)

God in this context admonished the people of Israel through the prophet Isaiah that: it is inconsistent to legally fast, and at the same time be hard on their laborers, refusing to feed the poor, and even refusing to care for one's own family.

God will not hear the people when they ignore the claims of the poor (Isaiah 1:10-17). The appropriate response to the God who upholds the poor is for us likewise to uphold the cause of the poor. This is the truly religious activity of those who follow the God of the Bible. In Jeremiah 22: 16, God addressed King Jehohaz through prophet Jeremiah and reminded him of how his father Josiah defended the cause of the poor and the needy, and as a result all went well with him. 'Is that not what it meant to know me?' declares the LORD.

As part of his arguments during the trials of Job, Job, required from God peace in his life on the grounds of his care for the poor, fatherless and the widows.

Job 31: 16-22 reads:

'If I withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless have not eaten thereof; From my youth he has brought up with me, as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb; If I have seen any perished for want of clothing,

or any poor without clothing; If his lions have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; If I have lifted up my hands against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate: Then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.'

2.4.3 Prophet Ezekiel, God condemns the shepherds of Israel

Ezekiel reminded the people that they had joined with the leaders in oppression of the poor. *'The people of the land have used oppression, and have vexed the poor and the needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.'*²⁷

Ezekiel, pointed out the primary responsibility of the individual was to obey God.²⁸

In Ezekiel 34, God condemns the Shepherds of Israel; they have failed to care for the people and instead have exploited them for their own gain. He says:

*'You have not strengthened the weak or heal the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the stray or searched for the lost. You have ruled the harshly and brutally.'*²⁹

Ezekiel, in this chapter gives a picture of a self-centered leadership that was concerned only with their own well-being. The Shepherds in this context were the kings, princes, priest and elders of Israel. They have ruled by domination. The less they cared for the flock, the greater the severity of their domination in order to maintain their base of support and control over the people. They thus use the sheep as an opportunity to satisfy their own thirst for power and control. These leaders failed to serve the flock of God. A shepherd is no shepherd at all if he has his own interest at heart. God's shepherds should lead by service not command so God says that he is against the shepherds of Israel and instead he himself will 'Strengthen the weak':

*I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.'*³⁰

²⁷ Ezekiel 22: 29.

²⁸ Ezekiel 18:16-17.

²⁹ Ezekiel 34:4.

³⁰ Ezekiel 34: 16.

2.5 New Testament

Most of the teachings about the poor in the New Testament are found in the Gospels. The New Testament speaks more about the grace Christians have received from God and are to reflect the experience of grace they have received to the poor. Christians are to be gracious because God have been gracious to them. In the Old Testament, the Mosaic Law was rooted in the people's experience of redemption. The Israelites were to act towards the immigrant, the vulnerable and the poor in the light of their own experience of deliverance from slavery. Likewise, the New Testament expects the same, and more from a people who have experience salvation and have been rescued through grace from their spiritual poverty and powerlessness.

2.5.1 Jesus Concern for the Poor

In Luke 14: 12-14,

Jesus said to his host, 'when you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.

Luke emphasis is on the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind. Luke compares his command to welcome the poor with the parable of the great banquet in verses 15-24. In the parable, God invites people to the great eternal banquet. The rich and respectable people declined to come. Rather, the good news is received by the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind. Luke is pointing out here that, Christian's attitude to the poor should reflect God's grace towards them. God has welcome Christians to his banquet despite their poverty and powerlessness. In the same way, Christians are to welcome the poor and marginalized. If Christians become preoccupied with their

religion and ignore the needs of the poor, then the true nature of God is not revealed in them.

The character of God is ultimately revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. During his three years of ministry, he understood the reality of poverty in society and showed concern for the poor.

In Matthew 26: 9-11 Jesus reminded his disciples of the presence of the poor in society. It reads *'for this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.*

When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, why trouble ye the woman? For she hath wrought good work upon me.

For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always'.

Jesus affirms from this verse the need for the poor to be always cared for in the society.

He exemplified this in Matthew 4: 23 as he went about in Galilee, teaching and preaching about the kingdom of God and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases among the people. In Mark 12: 43-44, Jesus recognizes the difficulties of the poor when he sat at the treasury and observed as people cast money into the treasury. Jesus said to his disciples that the poor widow has cast in more than any other. While others cast in of their abundance, she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

Not only did Jesus recognize the difficulties of the poor, he also stressed the need to give to the poor and to provide for them. When the rich young required of Jesus what he ought to do in order to gain eternal life, Jesus said unto him;

‘If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven: and come and follow me’.³¹

The only thing that was required of the rich young ruler after he has obeyed all the commandments was to give to the poor of all his possessions in order to qualify for eternal life from Jesus.

Jesus, still stressing the need to give to the poor in Luke says:

‘Sell that ye have and give to alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither mote corrupteth.’³²

2.5.2 The Apostles Concern for the Poor

During the early days of the existence of the church, the widows were being cared for without the designation of any committees to do the distribution of the food.

However, when a problem of racism developed among the disciples, as the Hellenists who were Greek speaking Jews born outside Palestine were discriminated against by the Judean-born Jews. It was necessary that an unprejudiced group of men make sure that the regular distribution of supplies equally goes to all widows of the church in Jerusalem. The Apostles demonstrated their concern for the poor and gave a general directive to solve this problem. A plurality of men full of the Holy Spirit were selected and delegated responsibilities by the church to make decisions concerning the daily distribution of food and supplies to the widow’s impartially.(Acts6:1-7).This

³¹ Matthew 19: 21.

³² Luke 12:33.

attitude of the Apostles showing care and concern for the poor resulted in the growth of the church as their decision pleased the whole multitude.

Apostle Paul's concern and sensitivity to the poor is unparalleled with the teachings of Jesus and the agenda of the early church. Paul understood that the word of Jesus cuts across sociological boundaries and the church was made up of both poor and the rich.

Paul speaking to the Galatians about their equality before God said;

‘There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one Christ Jesus.’³³

Paul practically demonstrates his concern for the poor as he stressed collection be made for the Jerusalem church.

‘But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia, to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.’³⁴

In the New Testament, God emphasize the equality of all men before him.

The most powerful statement of the equality between the rich and the poor came from

James the Apostle. James emphasizes God's sensitivity to the poor and their faith.

Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him. But, ye have despised the poor. Do not the rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called? If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scriptures, thou shall love thyself, ye do well.³⁵

³³ Galatians 3: 28.

³⁴ Romans 5:25-26.

³⁵ James 2:5-8.

James notes that the discrimination between the rich and the poor is both sin and against God. And also is an insult to the poor. He identifies the nature of the pure and undefiled religion that is pleasing to God. He says;

Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this, to take care of orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.³⁶

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter reveals the truth about God's special love and concern for the poor. If the church of Christ is to follow and obey God; then churches and their members ought to think of caring for the poor has an eminent grace and excellent duty. For Christ is glorified and the gospel is honoured when we care for the poor. In fact there is one of the priorities of Christian communities because it is main way we show a gospel of Christ to the poor.

³⁶ James 1: 27.

CHAPTER THREE

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH RESPONSE TO POVERTY ALLEVIATION

3.1 Introduction

This Chapter deals with the background and the structure of CeFORCE. It will also look at what Grace Baptist Church Centre for Community Empowerment (CeFORCE) is doing towards poverty alleviation including its programmes and projects in its bid to reduce poverty in the Kumasi Metropolis.

3.2 A Brief History of Grace Baptist Church

The Grace Baptist Church began as an English speaking fellowship in the Baptist reading room, Kumasi on the 9th of July, 1964. It was started by two missionaries; Rev Maurice Smith and Miss Evelyn Stone. They both led the fellowship up to 1965. Rev Maurice Smith was replaced by Rev. W.A Arnold at a time the number of baptized members of the fellowship had risen to sixty (60).³⁷ In 1967, Rev. Maurice Smith left Ghana for Florida in America and was subsequently replaced by Mr. Emmanuel Ephraim. It was under the leadership of Mr. Ephraim, with sixty eight (68) members that the fellowship was organized as a church with the name; Grace Baptist Church. In 1975, Rev. Akuamoah was appointed as the first Ghanaian full-time pastor. He later left for the United States and was replaced in 1977 by Rev. Mike Shokley. After Rev. Shokley came Brother Frank Kankam and Frank Adams as church leaders. But in 1981, Frank Adams was called to pastor the church after completing the seminary education at Abuakwa. Church planting started under the leadership of Rev. Frank Adams and in 1982, Asokwa and Nkawei Baptist Churches were

³⁷Grace Baptist Church Amakom, 40th Anniversary Brochure, 2008, 8.

established. Again in 1984, Bomso, Buokrom and Fumesua Baptist Churches were established. As the work load increased, Rev. K. Osei-Wusuh was invited in 1985 from USA to take up an Associate Pastor position in the church to support Rev. Frank Adams. He later became the substantive pastor as Rev Frank Adams left the same year for further studies in Switzerland.

Church planting activities continued under the leadership of Rev. K. Osei-Wusuh. The Church grew in numerical strength at a very fast pace under Rev. K. Osei-Wusuh. In 1991, there was the need to have a second Sunday service which was in Twi, but was the third service since the church was already having two English services.

The increase number of church members came with its many challenges. Most of the youth were unemployed and had many economic challenges. The church painstakingly started to search and research into the ways and forms in which these economic and socio-political needs of its members could be met. The outcome of this research led to the birth of the Centre for Community Empowerment (CeFORCE) to counsel, direct and support members of the church and the community in meeting their economic and socio-political needs. The church is located at Amakom, in the heart of Kumasi. It's surrounded by suburbs such as Aboabo, Fante New Town, and Akwatialine etc.

3.3 Grace Baptist Church Centre for Community Empowerment(CeFORCE)

3.3. 1 Brief History of CeFORCE

The origin of the Centre for Community Empowerment (CeFORCE) can be traced back to an intensive research by the Grace Baptist Church, Amakom- Kumasi in the early 1990's for a more effective way of ministering practically and holistically to the needs of its members and the community at large. The centre was piloted as a form of a demonstration project submitted by the then Director of the centre- Rev.Dr. KwajoOsei-Wusuh to the New York Theological Seminary (NYTS). This was in partial fulfillment for the requirement for his doctoral degree. Its working objective was to create awareness and guidance for the self-development of individual members in the community in meeting their economic and socio-political needs.³⁸

The concept of the centre within the vision of the Director was translated into its present concrete and practical form through the collaborative work of two committees. The committee was made up of Old Grace Baptist Church members who were based in New York, USA and in Kumasi. The first chairman of this committee was then Deacon Ben Opong now Rev Ben Opong, a minister of the church.

The basic philosophy underlying its establishment was the desire to retain through the Centre the advantages of communal-care inherent in the collapsing Ghanaian traditional community within which everyone was taken care of. Theologically its mission is based on the theme of the new community in Christ (Acts 2:42-47), seeking to be each other's keeper in community care. The Centre was officially open on 19th April 1997 by the then minister of Education, Dr. Mrs. Christian

³⁸ Grace Baptist Church, www.gracebaptistghana.org/ceforce accessed, 20th September, 2016

AmoakoNuamah. Since its inception the centre has ministered practically to various needs of the people within the Kumasi community and beyond through multiplicity of programmes and activities which include: career counseling, vocational guidance and skills acquisition; business and entrepreneurial training, career fair, workshops and seminars on all kinds of subjects including HIV/AIDS, Human-rights, gender and spousal abuse, as well as the granting of soft loans to trainees for start-up businesses. Since its inception up to the end of 2015, the Centre through its activities has served twenty seven three hundred and twenty-nine (27,329) people in both physical and social needs with fifteen thousand three hundred and eighty-five (15,385) directly receiving training on various skills and vocation from the centre free of charge. The records indicate that nine thousand five hundred and ninety-seven (9,597) people have been counseled on individual need on education, health, legal aids, human rights, investment and on career guidance. On top of these, the centre out of its meager financial resources has supported eight hundred and five (805) peoples in small soft loans and has given financial assistance to nine hundred and three (903) people out of those trained to start up their own businesses.

The Centre has been registered under an NGO- Grace Fellowship Incorporated (GRAFI). GRAFI is the registered NGO of Grace Baptist Church and its main objective is the promotion of holistic ministry. All economic and socio-political programmes of the church come under its promotion and supervision.

3.3.2 Aim and Objectives of Centre for Community Empowerment (CeFORCE)

CeFORCE is a community information, counseling and guidance centre of the Grace Fellowship Incorporated, an NGO of the Grace Baptist Church.

a) Aim:

The main aim of CeFORCE is to bring awareness of self-potential in individuals and to offer guidance for personal self-development of these individuals both in the community and in the church leading to meeting their economic and social political needs

b) Target Groups:

Targeted groups are individuals in the community, predominantly the semi-literate/illiterate youths. There are mostly unskilled, unemployed, ignorant, poor, exploited, underprivileged and alienated. Also included in the group are people from all walks of life who may have some economic and social-political needs of a casual nature.

c) Objective:

The objective of CeFORCE is to provide individuals in the community with social life information, counseling, guidance and access to acquisition of skills that would empower them at all times to:

- Discover and make use of one's self potential for better living.
- Be conscious of, and preserve one's self- worth as a human being with a high self-esteem.
- Protect and defend one's fundamental human rights against abuse.
- Fight and defend one's self against all social injustices.
- Take advantage of all educational, cultural and socio-political opportunities and facilities available for personal benefits.
- Have access to economic resources and guidance that exist, in order to be able to make sound economic decisions for self-development.

3.4 Focal Areas of CeFORCE

CeFORCE activities may be summarized into five main areas. These are:

1. Information Supply

The centre supplies on request general information that individuals may need on Education, Health, Legal Aid, Jobs, Human Rights, investment etc.

2. Counseling

Counselees are taken through counseling that challenge and help them overcome self-defeating beliefs, in order to live a transformed and hopeful live.

3. Career Guidance

Individuals receive guidance in exploring their circumstances educationally and economically to be able to develop objectives in order to plan towards achieving one's dream in life.

4. Social Guidance

The hurts, pain and anxieties of the afflicted, exploited and the abuse in the community are giving empathetic hearing. The victims are then guided as to how to seek redress for their pain.

5. Economic Projects

Under this unit, the empowered individuals are helped to take their lives in their own hands through group or cooperative income- generating ventures with access to skill acquisition, loan facilities and supervision.³⁹

³⁹CeFORCE Brochure, 2012, 2.

3.5 Activities Undertaken by CeFORCETowards Poverty Alleviation

3.5.1 Daily Career Guidance and Counseling

Considering a period of ten (10) years of operation, from 2005 to 2015, the Centre has counseled a total number of five thousand, four hundred and ninety five (5495) people. Areas in which beneficiaries were counseled include:

➤ Educational / Career selection

Many counselees were guided on how to select their courses in the second cycle schools and also at the tertiary level. This mainly is based on their strength and weaknesses not forgetting the individual interest of the counselees'. Resource personnel from various professional bodies are invited to support the centre to do this. In view of this, the centre in 2014, organized a career guidance seminar for students and artisans in the Kumasi Metropolis which was well attended. (see appendix III)⁴⁰

➤ Social Guidance

Individuals in the community who are abused and over exploited are given empathic hearing and guided to seek redress for their pain.

In view of this, the centre, in 2014, organized psychological counseling seminar for pastors, church leaders, community leaders, Assembly members, Teachers etc. The purpose of this seminar was to aid these leaders in the community with requisite counseling skills to assist the people in the community to overcome their psychological problems as a result of excessive abuse and neglect. Areas emphasized include; spousal abuses, neglect of parental cares and love, Abuse at the office and abuse of house helps. The seminar was well attended and impressive

⁴⁰CeFORCE Activities Report from 1997 – 2015, 1

3.5.2 Advocacy

HIV/AIDS prevention and management, CeFORCE has been part of the campaign against the spread and the prevention of HIV and AIDS by developing programmes to prevent HIV transmission and to reduce its impact on the individual, the family and the general society. This is done through advocacy, information, education, communication and counseling. Even though outside the period of study, it is worth noting that in 2003, CeFORCE organized a health workshop on HIV/AIDS for all Baptist pastors in the metropolis. In 2004, the centre organized HIV/AIDS seminar on behavioral change and produced an HIV/AIDS film (heralds of HIV/AIDS) which was donated to Ghana AIDS Commission for campaign against infection and stigmatization.

3.5.3 Health Care

CeFORCE operates a First Aid Programme on Sundays. Those who come to the health facility are treated free of charge including the supply of drugs. During church service, should any member show signs of ill health, such ones are quickly attended to by the health team free of charge. The health team is made up of church members who are Doctors, Nurses and other Para medical supporters. Patients whose condition requires further medical support are referred by the medical team to OkomfoAnokye Hospital. CeFORCE supports financially those who might not be able to foot the bills at OkomfoAnokye Hospital to have their medical conditions attended to. All health advocacy programmes comes under the medical team and they are either the resource personnel or facilitate in getting a resource personnel for a particular advocacy programme. Any individual that desire counseling on any medical condition is referred to the medical team for the appropriate attention.

3.5.4 Educational Support

The Centre has a Scholarship Scheme which is used to support students who are not able to afford the cost of their education. CeFORCE is currently supporting many students through its scholarship scheme at all levels of education up to first degree level. The Church is privileged to have its own school that runs from KG1 to JHS3. Scholarships have been given to the wards of some under privilege members of the church and in the community.

3.5.5 Vocational Training

CeFORCE has Vocational Training Centre's at Akwatialine and Asawasi that trains members to acquire skills without paying any fees. As part of the church's programme to help the poor, Grace Baptist Church through Grace Fellowship Incorporated and CeFORCE operates the Grace Baptist Illiteracy School, embroidery and tailoring shop as well as restaurant and catering services. Many beneficiaries of the vocational Training Centre have received training in Batik and Textile, Training in catering Services, snail and mushroom farming, Beads and hat making, glasscutter farming, soap making etc.

Data collected from the CeFORCE indicate that fourteen thousand six hundred and sixty two (14662) beneficiaries have received direct training from the centre free of charge. Trainees with accommodation problems were provided with accommodation and given some money for their daily care. At the end of the training, some beneficiaries are giving start up tools like sewing machines, and undisclosed seed money, in the area of their training to enable them set up their own businesses after the extensive training.

3.5.6 Financial Support

It is worth noting that the Church has a Credit Union and members of the church with financial needs are given credit facilities at no interest to start their own businesses. But this is subject to an undertaking that the money would be paid over an agreed period of time. This is to allow for the fund to be revolving in order to support other needy ones.

A total of eight hundred and thirty nine (839) people have so far benefited from this facility from 2005 to 2015, the period under consideration.

3.5.7 Development Projects

Water is necessary for healthy life and the need for good drinking water cannot be over emphasized, therefore the Church has a bore-hole which supplies water for the benefit of the community. This mechanized bore-hole was constructed in front of the Queen Mother's house at Amakomby CeFORCE and handed over to the Chief and people of Amakom. Currently the management of the bore-hole is under the Assembly man of the area. A token of fifty (50) pesewas per a bucket of water is collected in order to pay for the cost of pumping the water from underground with electricity.

3.5.8 Supporting Agencies and Sponsors of CeFORCE

Every Faith Based organization strives successfully on adequate funding of its projects and programmes.

CeFORCE of Grace Baptist church since its inception has received support from some donor agencies to promote its activities. Its major financier is the Grace Baptist Church. The last support CeFORCE received from a donor agency was in 2008 from Mustard Seed Foundation. The foundation is a Christian family foundation

established in 1983 under the leadership of Dennis W. Bakke and Elieen Harvey Bakke. The foundation prioritizes grants primarily to churches worldwide that are engaged in ministry, including outreach, discipleship, and economic empowerment. The foundation also awards scholarships to Christians pursuing educational degrees in preparation for leadership roles in society.

Master Seed approved an amount of \$21,000 under its Church-Based Grants programme to support CeFORCE poverty alleviation programmes. This fund is part of the money that was used to set up the revolving fund to support the beneficiaries of CeFORCE programmes to set up their own businesses. Since then, all the activities of CeFORCE have been solely sponsored by the church.

As a result of the lack of donor support, on 29th April, 2009, Grace Baptist Church under the leadership of the Head Pastor, Rev Robert Asante launched an educational and skill training fund to support needy members in skill training. In addition to the skill training, another component of the fund is the scholarship scheme to support brilliant but needy members of the church in their education even to the tertiary level.

It is worth mentioning that in 2006, one beneficiary of CeFORCE also gave ten thousand Ghana cedis (GH¢ 10,000) to support CeFORCE. This was after he was counseled and guided to revamp his business that was at the verge of collapsing. The beneficiary was not a church member, but from the community, took advantage of the CeFORCE free counseling programme on career guidance. He benefited immensely from it and therefore gave this amount to show his appreciation for the support enjoyed freely from CeFORCE.

Since the church has many other responsibilities and projects to attend to, it is not able to honor all its financial obligation to CeFORCE and this is impacting on the work of the centre.

3.6 Management of CeFORCE

CeFORCE comes directly under the management of Grace Fellowship Incorporated (GRAFI). A non-governmental (NGO) and a non-political organization of Grace Baptist Church, Kumasi-Ghana. GRAFI was established in 1983 for community and human development. GRAFI has a management committee set up by the GRAFI Board. It is under this management committee that all projects under GRAFI including CeFORCE come under. All though the GRAFI Board has an autonomous status, the Board submits to the “supervisory influence” of the Church Council through the submission of its half-yearly evaluative reports on all activities of GRAFI. The policy of GRAFI is that all its projects and programmes are managed for the benefit of all people in the community without any discrimination on the basis of sex, tribe, nationality, religion, creed or political affiliation.

3.6.1 Human Resource Management

CeFORCE has only one permanent staff. Mr. Alex Obeng is the centre Officer and Executive Director of CeFORCE. Mr. Obeng has occupied this position for the past thirteen years and counting. All other workers of the centre are volunteers from the church. The volunteers are recruited as and when they are needed and dissolved after the programme or the particular project for which they were recruited comes to an end. The Management Committee recruits, train, appoint volunteers or helpers and determine the appropriate emolument for them. It is worth noting that the volunteers sees volunteering as part of their calling and charges no fee for their support to CeFORCE.

3.6.2 CeFORCE Project Management

A project is a temporal endeavor undertaken to create a unique, services or result. A project is temporary as it has a defined beginning and end in time. It also has defined scope and resources.

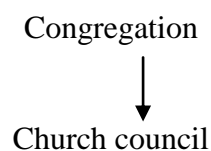
All projects and programmes of CeFORCE are subject to the approval of the GRAFI Board and the Church Council. At the beginning of every year, CeFORCE submits its programme of activities and associated budget to the GRAFI Board.

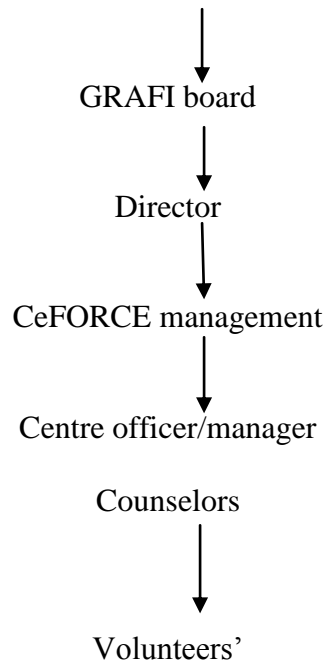
This projects are further discussed at the Church Council level and when approved submitted to the Finance Committee for the release of funds for the projects. Mostly, approval of programmes and projects depends solely on the economic benefit to the community and the availability of funds. Projects and programmes that receive approval are jointly implemented by the GRAFI management committee and the CeFORCE Director. As a result of non-availability of funds, many good poverty alleviation programmes of the centre are not able to be carried out.

3.6.3 The Oganogram of CeFORCE

Every organization has a structure which gives an idea of the organization's operation and management. It is important for all organization to have organizational chart indicating graphically how it is being managed. The organogram of CeFORCE is shown below;

CeFORCE ORGANISATIONAL CHART





3.7 The Relationship between CeFORCE and BREDA

As established already, CeFORCE is the Faith based Organization of Grace Baptist Church, a member of the Ghana Baptist Convention. CeFORCE is fully owned, funded and managed by Grace Baptist Church and its main purpose is to empower members of the community in meeting their economic and socio-political needs. BREDA on the hand is the Faith based Organization of the Ghana Baptist Convention. It is the Convention's Agency responsible for providing Relief services and Developments projects aimed at affecting the community positively. BREDA is managed by the Ghana Baptist Convention and any financial donations to BREDA are made through Ghana Baptist Convention which in turn disburses same to BREDA for its projects. The Convention will then account for the money to the donors during the Annual Session of the Ghana Baptist Convention. The Annual Session comprises of every Baptist Church registered under the Ghana Baptist Convention.

According to Mr. Alex Obeng of CeFORCE, there is no working relationship between CeFORCE and BREDA and that each organization operates independently of the other. CeFORCE reports only to the GRAFI board, Church Council and members of Grace

Baptist Church and does not receive any support from BREDA through the Ghana Baptist Convention.

3.8 Baptist Relief and Development Agency (BREDA)

Baptist Relief Development Agency is the Faith Based Organization of Ghana Baptist Convention. According to Jarvis Dzokoto, the Director of BREDA, it is the brain child of Clement Somuah, a University Professor who was the Chairman of the Socio-Economic Development Board of the Ghana Baptist Convention. Somuah's aim was to help the Ghana Baptist Convention have an agency through which it can positively affect society through relief services and development projects.⁴¹

The preamble of the BREDA constitution which state that "the Ghana Baptist Convention in her effort to reach the lost for Christ through a holistic ministry takes preferential for the plight of the poor, oppressed and marginalized in fulfillment of the great commission." Sets the Biblical basis for its establishment.⁴² The Baptist Relief and Development Agency was thus established in June 2000 as a Non- Governmental Organization and registered as a corporate body under the company's code, 1963 (Act 179).⁴³

3.8.1 The objectives of BREDA

The following are the objectives of BREDA:

1. Assist under privileged communities in the fight against poverty
2. Empower women to be self-supporting through income generating activities.
3. Assist with emergency relief and rehabilitation

⁴¹ Michael Sebastian Aidoo, Towards effective of faith based organizations, MPhil Thesis submitted to Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, 2010, 42.

⁴² BREDA *Constitution*, May 2003, 2.

⁴³ BREDA Report, master plan committee of the socio economic development board. June 2003, 2.

4. Assist and educate rural communities in the areas of sanitation, health and nutrition.
5. Assist in the fight against injustice, competition and violation against human rights.

Mission Statement of BREDA

“Reaching the Needy and the Lost for Christ under the auspices of the Ghana Baptist Convention through a holistic ministry in collaboration with Churches and other partners

Core Values of BREDA

The acronym of BREDA stands for its core values

B- BREDA is a Christian Non-Governmental Organization and therefore places value on Christian principles based on BIBLICAL TRUTHS.

R- Relief service to victims of natural and manmade disasters. In this regard, BREDA seeks to mobilize support from local and foreign churches as well as other donors to help in rendering this relief service.

E- Education and Empowerment as important tools of BREDA to improve the lot of the deprived and marginalized in communities.

D- Development projects in rural communities of our mission fields.

A- Assistance to women to engage in income generating projects in our effort to alleviate poverty. (BREDA report, June 2003:3).⁴⁴

3.8.2 Focus Area of BREDA’s Activities

⁴⁴BREDA *Constitution*, June 2003, 3.

The seven main activities BREDA focuses on are:

1. Health care
2. Child Development projects
3. Vocational Training
4. Development projects
5. Relief service
6. HIV/AIDS programmes
7. Education and Capacity Building

3.8.3 Projects undertaken by BREDA in 2015

Health Care

1. BREDA assisted a ten (10) year old boy, Edmund Tetteh to undergo a series of facial surgeries which were necessitated by Buruli ulcer infection.⁴⁵
2. A canteen facility was constructed at Obom Health Centre near Amasaman to serve Buruli ulcer patients who visit the clinic. This facility was commissioned by the President of the Convention on 23rd March 2015.
3. Gbulahagu CHPS compound renovated and upgraded with solar lights and solar fridge for safe storage of medicines contributed to the renovation of staff accommodation at Kasuliyili clinic.

Development projects

Early Childhood Development Centre (ECDC)

Early childhood Development Centre project is handled by the First Baptist Church, Tamale on behalf of the Convention in the Northern Region of Ghana. One of the

⁴⁵Ghana Baptist Convention Report to the 52nd Annual Section, 2015, 12.

goals of this project is to improve the living standards of communities through the empowerment of vulnerable families. Intervention projects undertaken by the project include education, health and nutrition, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Sustainable Livelihood Development (SLD). The project acquired a vehicle to facilitate its activities.

Held community sensitization on water and sanitation programmes in operating communities

- Sanitation materials was provided for the operating communities
- Developed water project for Kasuliyili and Wantugu communities

Three boreholes constructed in the operating communities

The project operated loan scheme is growing and about 20 new groups have been formed. Through the loan scheme, groups are able to offer tractor services and provide other farm inputs throughout the year.

Baptist Vocational Training Centre (BVTC)

In November 2014, twenty-three (23) girls graduated from the Centre including 9 ex-Trokosi victims and 14 less privileged girls. The ex-Trokosi victims were each given start-up equipment and seed money to enable them start their own businesses in their chosen vocation. 15 Trokosi girls were rescued from 4 shrines in October 2014 for the 2014/15 Academic year. This was made possible through the effort of Ps. Obani who visited 4 shrines and negotiated for the release of the girls.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Ghana Baptist Convention President to the 52nd Annual Section, 2015, 11

There are thirty-six (36) other less privileged girls from the surrounding villages being trained at the Centre (these girls pay a token fee for their tuition). The total number of students on roll is 51. 15 more ex-trokosi girls were targeted to be rescued in October for the 2015/16 academic year. The centre is also soliciting for support to admit and train boys of Trokosi women who live in the shrines.

Education and capacity Building

Girl-Child Education Support

The Ghana Baptist Convention provides financial support for brilliant but needy girls in Senior High School with funding from the BWAid. BWAid approved an amount of \$10,000.00 to support the project this year. The programme was advertised through our churches. A number of applicants did not submit their applications on time before the beginning of the academic year. 11 girls were supported to pay their school fees for the 2014/15 academic totaling GH¢ 5,220.00.⁴⁷

Two rural schools provided with 20 desktop computers which has benefited 1,132 children

- provided 4 schools with classroom furniture (40 dual desk, 16 ECD round desk and 80 chairs)
- A Three (3) classroom block with store and an office has been constructed for Gbulahagu community.
- Kpachi Methodist School renovated

Provided hot lunch for six Early Childhood Development Centres. This has increased school attendance

⁴⁷ Ghana Baptist Convention President Report to the 52nd Annual Section, 2015, 13

Awareness creation about child rights has influenced the release of about 100 children as livestock herd boys to the classroom. The Kunguri Early Childhood Development Centre was provided with a new block while its Primary block was renovated.

- Gburimani ECDC renovated

Sponsors and Donors

Several individuals, churches and organizations donated to the centre in the course of the year. These include:

Local (cash)

Bethel Baptist Church

First Baptist Church, Tema

Calvary Baptist Church, Adabraka

Calvary Baptist Church, Adenta

Adenta Baptist Church, Adenta

Deacon Isaac Addai (Triumphant Grace Baptist Church, Tema)

Mrs. Owusu-Koranteng (in kind) – food items

Mrs. Amihere (in kind) – food items

1st Baptist Church, Men's Ministry (in kind) 2 desktop computers

Everyday Ministry refurbished the BVTC dormitory and fixed kitchen cabinets at the centre. A total of GH¢ 6,660.00 was raised locally for this project.⁴⁸

Foreign (cash)

Everyday Ministry, USA

Karios Ministry, USA

⁴⁸ Ghana Baptist Convention President Report to the 52nd Annual Session 2015, 12.

First Baptist Church, Midland, USA

Southern Hills Baptist Church, USA

Shiloh Baptist Church, USA

Ms. Abney, USA) *American Baptist Churches International (ABC) Ministries*

A renewed partnership agreement was signed between ABC International Ministries and ABC Metro Chicago in March and May 2015 respectively. American Baptist Churches International Ministries donated a total of \$24, 326.00 to the Baptist Vocational Centre, Frankadua during the period.

North American Baptist Association (NABA)

This year a total sum of \$8000 was received from the North American Baptist Association (NABA) of the Ghana Baptist Convention to support the Early Childhood Development Programme in the Mafi area in the Volta Region. \$ 15, 410.00 was raised externally during the year to support the centre.⁴⁹

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher presented information on Centre for Community Empowerment (CeFORCE) gathered from interviews conducted during the research period and available data at the CeFORCE department of Grace Baptist Church, Amakom-Kumasi. I have discussed briefly the history of Grace Baptist Church and the need or basis for the establishment of CeFORCE.

I have also discussed the aim and objectives of CeFORCE, its focus areas and the various poverty alleviation projects that have been undertaken under these focus areas. I further discussed CeFORCE collaborating agencies and lastly took a look at

⁴⁹ Ghana Baptist Convention President Report to the 52nd Annual Section, 2015, 12.

BREDA and its various activities undertaken in 2015. The information gathered from this chapter will aid the discussion in the next chapter in examining how effectively CeFORCE have contributed to poverty alleviation in Kumasi metropolis as a member of Ghana Baptist Convention.

CHAPTER FOUR
ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSE OF CeFORCE OF GRACE BAPTIST
CHURCH TO POVERTY ALLEVIATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter involves analysis on the contributions of CeFORCE of Grace Baptist Church to poverty alleviation. This comprises of analysis of the various activities, programmes and projects of CeFORCE towards poverty alleviation.

This is based on literature gathered in Chapter three and Biblical basis for the church response to poverty alleviation as discussed in chapter two of this research. It includes interviews granted by personalities and beneficiaries of CeFORCE programmes. In discussing the contribution of CeFORCE to poverty alleviation, it is important to remember that the church is required to provide for both spiritual and material needs of people through integral mission or holistic ministry. This is what Jesus Christ came to do and the Church is required to do same. The Micah Declaration on integral mission rightly states that;

“It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. If we ignore the world we betray the word of God which sends us out to serve the world. If we ignore the word of God we have nothing to bring to the world.”⁵⁰

4.2 An Assessment of the Management of CeFORCE.

⁵⁰Tim Chester, *Justice, Mercy and Humility: Integral Mission and the Poor* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000), 3.

In chapter two, discussing the biblical bases for the church's response to poverty alleviation, Luke emphasized how Jesus expressed the need to consider the poor which were always around and give alms to them.

Considering the aims and focus areas of CeFORCE activities, one could rightly conclude on their obedience to Jesus 'call to support the poor in society.

CeFORCE has influenced a lot of people over the years through their skill training programmes and financial support to the poor in improving their socio-economic lives. All projects of CeFORCE over the years have been non-profit oriented living up to their name as a centre for economic empowerment by offering guidance and support to personal development, leading to an improvement in the economic and social lives of individuals.

4.3 An Assessment of CeFORCE Contribution in Education of the Poor

Knowledge and skills are important in human life and can be achieved only through formal and non-formal education system. There are significant differences between formal and informal education. Every individual receives informal education from parents, peers, religious/cultural discourse, work and mass communication.

Formal education is received from schools, colleges, universities etc. The rise in technological advancement has placed a demand on specialist for today's job market which requires a formal education to attain such fit. The need for formal education can therefore not be over emphasized in today's modern society. Unfortunately, the accompanying high fees has disadvantage many poor families the privilege of sending their wards to schools for formal education.

In order to respond to the educational needs of the poor in the community, Grace Baptist Church through CeFORCE has set up the Grace Preparatory and JSS School which is registered with the Ghana Private Schools Association (GPSA). The school caters for pupils in the community from Kindergarten to Junior Secondary School. The fees charged are moderate in order to support the needy.

Grace Baptist Church also has an Adult Literacy Class which is held twice a week for all adults and formal school dropouts in the community free of charge. Participants are taught to read and write and how to use the knowledge acquired in daily life. The church has further provided a community library where members of the community can walk in and use the facility free of charge.

Alex Obeng, programme manager of CeFORCE of Grace Baptist Church said, Grace Baptist Church has an Educational fund which offers scholarship to students to support their education. The contributions are mainly from church members and outsiders. Mr. Alex Obeng indicated that CeFORCE supported five people through their educational carrier to become lawyers. Some were members of the church where as others were from the community.

According to Alex Obeng, the center also supported four medical students who have now completed and practicing their profession as medical doctors. The center is still taking care of some students, right from the basic school to the tertiary institutions.

4.4 An Assessment of CeFORCE Contribution in Vocational Training of the Poor

Technical and vocational education has the potential of improving the socio-economic lives of people and the community as a whole. Grace Baptist Church in response to the skill and man power development need of the poor in the community has over the years trained many people to acquire such skills through CeFORCE programmes. Data from CeFORCE office indicates that many people have been trained in mushroom and grasscutter farming, soap making, beads and hat making, snail farming, hair dressing, batik textile training, catering services etc. Most of the trainees are under privileged people in the community who receives these training free of charge to better their socio-economic lives. The church had embroidery and tailoring shop as well as restaurant and catering service. Unfortunately, as a result of poor management by church staffs, the church has given them to private management. Beneficiaries through CeFORCE are given free training at these centers. Most of the beneficiary after going through the training programmes are given start up or seed money to start their own business. Data from CeFORCE office indicates that from 2005 to 2015, a total of fourteen thousand six hundred and forty two (14642) people received direct training from the center. According to Alex Obeng, most of the people were drawn from the community. Alex Obeng said, people who come for the skill training programmes and do not have accommodation are provided with accommodation and with their daily pocket money for feeding for the full duration of the training. With the exception of CeFORCE short programmes which takes between three days to two weeks, those who are sponsored for the apprenticeship programmes spend between two to three years in training. Currently there are apprentices receiving direct training at CeFORCE vocational centers located at Akwatialine and Asawasi.

4.5 An Assessment of CeFORCE Contribution in Financing the Poor

Mr. Alex Obeng, indicated that, the church in its quest to support the poor has set up a Credit Union. Credit facility is offered to support people who desire to set up their own businesses but have financial challenges. This group of people is not CeFORCE direct trained apprentices but those with trade or vocational skills already. CeFORCE counselors will assess the viability of the business before committing funds to it. Credit facility is most often interest free but has to be paid back within a convenient period. This is to make the fund revolving in order to support others in need.

For CeFORCE direct trained apprentices, some have their tailoring or hairdressing shops set up for them free of charge by CeFORCE while others are provided with the necessary tools and equipments to set up their own shops. In addition to the credit union, the church has a welfare scheme for members which is used to support the poor in their times of need including bereavement. Mr. Alex Obeng stated that the fund is supported by the monthly contribution of members and from the church's annual harvest.

Data from CeFORCE indicates that from 2005 to 2015, eight hundred and eighty one (881) individuals received soft loans from the Credit Union (see appendix IV). Again within the same period, eight hundred and thirty nine (839) individuals received financial assistance from CeFORCE.

4.6 An Assessment of CeFORCE Contribution to the Health Needs of the Poor

On how the church is contributing to good health in the community, Mr. Alex Obeng said, the church through CeFORCE has provided a mechanized bore hole at Amakom in front of the Queen mother's palace to provide clean water to the people in the community. After completion of the project, CeFORCE handed over the management

of the bore hole to the Amankom Assembly man and the Queen mother. According to Alex Obeng, the Assembly charges a small amount for a bucket of water to offset the electricity bills for the pumping of the water from underground. CeFORCE has counselors for health issues and those with health related issues are counseled appropriately by the health experts. This is not only to church members but also open to the community as well. CeFORCE medical team of Doctors and Nurses operates a First Aid service every Sundays and those who visit the facility are examined and treated freely. Others with complications are referred to OkomfoAnokye for treatment where most of the medical team practices their profession.

4.7 An Assessment of CeFORCE Contribution in Advocacy Programmes

Over the years, CeFORCE has organized many advocacy programmes to educate and inform many people on their health issues and their rights as citizens of Ghana.

Most of these programmes were held in secondary schools, colleges, polytechnics etc. Notably among them were health workshop on HIV/AIDS for Baptist pastors, seminar on HIV/AIDS behavioral change, health workshop on dressing and its health implications and a production of HIV/AIDS film-(heralds of HIV/AIDS) which was donated to Ghana Aids commission for campaign against infection and stigmatization.

Unfortunately, advocacy by CeFORCE has gone down drastically. Data from CeFORCE office shows that since 2006, CeFORCE has not carried out any advocacy programme until 2013 that one was held in collaboration with the whole church on the dreaded Ebola disease. Mr. Alex Obeng indicated that the situation has been so as a result of lack of popular request from the public and schools. In terms of failure of CeFORCE advocacy programmes, CeFORCE has over the years concentrated its

efforts mainly on HIV/AIDS prevention and stigmatization and have neglected other areas like drug abuse, child trafficking among others. However the center is ready to provide the needed information from its team of experts on any social issue upon request.

4.8 An Assessment of the Response of Beneficiaries

The research revealed that the beneficiaries at CeFORCE vocational centre's at Akwatialine and Asawasi were very grateful to the CeFORCE management for coming to their aid with the free apprenticeship programme in dress making and hair dressing. Some of them had their parents deceased and had to be accommodated and taken care of by CeFORCE. They indicated that CeFORCE gives them daily chop money for their up keep.

One beneficiary who benefited from CeFORCE free counseling programme donated an amount of GHC 10,000 to CeFORCE in recognition and appreciation of how his business which was at the verge of collapse had turned around because of the support he received from CeFORCE.

The research further revealed that two beneficiaries who received educational support from CeFORCE are currently medical doctors at OkomfoAnokye Hospital in Kumasi and are now in the CeFORCE medical team as volunteers providing medical support to the poor and the needy who access the CeFORCE free First Aid Services.

The Assembly Man at Amakom indicated that the mechanized bore hole provided by CeFORCE at Amakom in front of the Queen mother's palace has greatly improved the lives of the people of the community with free and clean drinking water.

4.9 The Challenges of CeFORCE in Helping the Poor

Concerning the challenges facing CeFORCE in helping the poor, Mr. Alex Obeng indicated four main areas. These are:

1. Lack of support from donor Agencies.
2. Lack of cooperation from beneficiaries to pay back soft loans
3. Failure of the Northern Immigrants Transit Programme
4. Lack of proper record keeping Culture

4.9.1 Lack of Support from Donor Agencies

Most Faith Based Organizations often receives support from donor partners especially from abroad. CeFORCE have not been an exception. According to Mr. Alex Obeng, since CeFORCE inception, it has received support from some donor agencies over the years. But the support begun going down until 2008, when the center received it last support from Master Seed, which is based in Canada. This he said have affected badly the programmes of the center. According to Mr. Alex Obeng it was out of such donations that the center was able to set up the revolving fund to support the poor in the community. The re-drawal of support from these agencies were as a result of the European economic crunch and lack of diligence on the part of some Ghanaian faith based organization who were receiving support from the same source. Since then CeFORCE has depended on internally generated funds from the main Church to fund all its projects. He said since the church has many departments to support, the funds received from the main church are often inadequate to support CeFORCE programmes for the year. As a result the center is not able to meet many of its obligations; a typical example was in 2015 when the center was not able to renew its working certificate with the Register General.

Notwithstanding the challenges from the donor agencies, from the 2015 report, the center was able to help in providing one hundred and thirty (130) people with employable skill. Out of this number, thirty (30) people were helped financially to acquire equipments to start their own businesses. During the year, the center gave financial assistance to ninety six other people to start up their own business and also to acquire accommodation. All these were funded by the church's internally generated funds.

4.9.2 Lack of Cooperation from Beneficiaries to Pay Back Soft Loans

CeFORCE in the early days of its operation set up a revolving fund to support the needy in both the church and the community. Out of this fund, soft loans were given to people who have benefited from CeFORCE skill training programmes to start up their businesses. Beneficiaries of the soft loan are supposed to pay back the loan within an agreed period without any interest. Unfortunately beneficiaries who have used the facility to set up their own businesses were unwilling to pay back the interest free loan in order to keep the fund revolving for others in need to access.

Most of the beneficiaries who were church members were with the notion that the fund is church money and it belongs to all of them and didn't see the need to pay back. Mr. Alex Obeng indicated that as the center exerted pressure in the collection of the loan, most of the people reacted back in non attendance to regular church services and church programmes indicating that they are being harassed by the center officers. The Board of Directors and the Church Council later decided that the center should no more go after the loan and write off them as bad debt. This affected the sustainability of the CeFORCE revolving fund.

4.9.3 An Assessment of Lack of Proper Record Keeping Culture

CeFORCE have done a lot of work since its inception as a Faith Based Organization in supporting to alleviate the economic hardship of the poor. But unfortunately, the researcher could not lay hands on most of the data, and records of individual beneficiaries and contributions to the centre. The centre manager explained this lack of records as a result of relocation from one office to the other. The researcher has to rely mostly on the interviews conducted and the few collections of data to carry out the research work. The researcher realized that most of CeFORCE works were not electronically documented for easy access.

4.9.4 An Assessment of Failure of the Northern Immigrants Transit Programme

The Northern Immigrant Transit programme was a programme of CeFORCE aimed at helping and reducing streetism in the Kumasi metropolis. The main targets were the street girls popularly called “kayaye” in the local parlance.

According to Mr. Obeng, the programme was started with five girls from Northern Ghana who have come down to Kumasi to ply the “kayaye” trade. They were redrawn from the street, accommodated and put into CeFORCE vocational training centers for skill acquisition training of their own choice. The center took care of their feeding, clothing and pocket money during their period of training. At the end of their training, they were provided with equipments to start up their own businesses.

The center further gave them money and resettled them back to the north to ply their trade. Mr. Obeng lamented that six months later, most of the first batch of girls trained came back to Kumasi for stay. When they were questioned, they said income levels of their village folks were too low to patronize their wares and that they will make good

money in Kumasi and hence their decision to returned back to the city to ply their trade. This resulted in the center cancelling out the Northern Immigrant Transit programme as it defeated the purpose for which it was set up.

4.9.5 An Assessment of the Corporation between BREDA and CeFORCE

In chapter 3, the researcher gave much insight to the activities of the Baptist Relief and Development Agency (BREDA) of the Ghana Baptist Convention. Most of the activities of the agency are based in the three Northern Regions and some part of the Volta Region. Little can be said about BREDA's presence in the middle belt of Ghana. The concentration of BREDA's activities in the north is out of the belief that it is the most deprived part of Ghana with less opportunities and income levels.

It is clear that most of the poverty alleviation programmes in the middle sector are carried out by individual churches and popularly by CeFORCE of Grace Baptist Church. My interview with Mr. Alex Obeng revealed that BREDA and CeFORCE are separate entities under the Ghana Baptist Convention. CeFORCE is only recognized in Grace Baptist and not by the Ghana Baptist Convention. As a result both bodies operate separately and do not collaborate in any way to reduce the effect of poverty in the community they operate in. The researcher realized that Ghana Baptist Convention churches; including Grace Baptist Church contributes funds every month/year towards BREDA's operation. BREDA in addition enjoys a lot of support from donor agencies and from American Baptist churches International and many individual Baptist churches in USA, the Danish Mission Council Development Department etc. All this funds are directly used only in the project areas of BREDA. But for CeFORCE activities in the middle zone, the Ghana Baptist Convention would

have been considered unresponsive to poverty alleviation in the middle zone of Ghana and the poor in the middle zone of Ghana would have been left out from receiving support from Ghana Baptist Convention.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In the *Contemporary Christian*, John Stott cites the 6th paragraph of the Lausanne Covenant: “evangelism and the social responsibility are connected vessels, one depended on the other. Stott insists that social activity and evangelism are partners, partners so related as husband and wife are. The biblical example of the Seven called to a social ministry, while the Twelve remained faithful to their pastoral duties; seem to be an appropriate illustration (The Book of Acts, chapter 6).⁵¹

Many expect that the church should do more in its involvement in social work and poverty alleviation. It is the desire of the poor to see Christians or Faith Based Organizations come to them not only with the Gospel but also with Aids and programmes that would result in social and economic empowerment of their lives. The church’s involvement in addressing social injustice and poverty related issues through its various structures and programmes is welcoming news in finding solutions to poverty alleviation in many communities in which it operates. This chapter which concludes the research would bring out the findings from the research and highlight on CeFORCE achievement and contributions to poverty alleviation over the years. Recommendations will be given on how CeFORCE can be better empowered to respond to the concerns of the poor and achieve its desired goal in poverty alleviation.

⁵¹John Stott, *the Contemporary Christian, An Urgent Plea for Double Listening* (Leicester: IVP 1992), 340.

5.2 Summary of Issues Emerging from the Research

5.1.1 Achievement in Education

Education is fundamental to poverty alleviation. Education enables one to acquire knowledge and skills which addresses some of the causes of poverty and unemployment. Grace Baptist Church through CeFORCE has established the Grace Preparatory and junior high school which caters for many pupils in the community. A scholarship scheme has also been established to take care of brilliant but needy students from basic level to the tertiary level in the country. The facility has helped the poor in the community and the church to access free education but at a cost to the Church. It is worth noting that CeFORCE through its educational support has produced five Lawyers and another five Medical doctors. All these efforts of CeFORCE have one way or the other addressed one effect of poverty which is the inability of the poor to fund their wards education.

5.1.2 Vocational Skills Acquisition

CeFORCE vocational centers at Asawasi and Akwatialine are turning out many people with technical and vocational skills to meet their manpower and development needs in order to be gainfully employed or start their own businesses.

Data from CeFORCE office indicates that from 2005 to 2015, a total of fourteen thousand six hundred and forty two (14642) people received direct training from the centre. It also came out through the research that CeFORCE direct training programmes were free and some beneficiaries were given equipments and financial support to start their own businesses after the training.

This effort of CeFORCE has gone a long way to address the effect on poor people who cannot afford formal education for their wards. Again school drop outs have equally benefited from the free vocational and technical training programme leading to an improvement in their socio- economic lives.

5.1.3 Health Care Delivery

Health is a state of complete harmony of the body, mind and spirit. Without good health one would not be sound in his body, mind and spirit to do anything meaningful. Ill health is therefore an enemy to any meaningful development.

Many people are unable to afford quality health care as a result of poverty. CeFORCE medical team of Doctors and Nurses operates a First Aid service every Sundays and those who visit the facility are examined and treated free of charge. In some cases the church supports some needy people to pay for the cost of their medical care. Data was not readily available from the CeFORCE office to support this aspect of the research. CeFORCE assistance to the poor to receive good health care goes a long way to alleviate the effect of poverty in the community.

5.2.4 Financial Support to the Poor

It came out during the research that CeFORCE over the years has giving financial assistance to one thousand seven hundred and twenty (1720) people to start their own businesses. The financial assistance is normally given to two different groups of people; People with technical or vocational skills who desire to start their own business and CeFORCE direct trained beneficiaries. CeFORCE facilitates the

acquisition of interest free soft loans from the Church's Credit Union for its beneficiaries.

Data from CeFORCE indicates that from 2005 to 2015, eight hundred and eighty one (881) individual's received soft loans from the Credit Union. Again within the same period, eight hundred and thirty nine (839) individuals received financial assistance from CeFORCE. CeFORCE financial assistance has helped to reduce the effect of poverty to its beneficiaries.

5.2.5 Challenges Faced in Supporting the Poor

The major challenge identified during the research was lack of donor support for CeFORCE programmes. This has put a lot of demand on the Church as it is the sole funder of all CeFORCE activities. Most of the initial support CeFORCE received from foreign donors has seized.

Again it came out that, as a result of the over stretched demand on CeFORCE, its laudable vision to build CeFORCE village which will be a hub for all its vocational /technical training activities have been put on hold.

Lastly, most of the documentation of CeFORCE activities over the years was not readily available. Most of the electronic documentation was lost as no back up was kept over the years.

5.3 Conclusion

The effect of poverty in our communities is so alarming, leading to unemployment, illiteracy, poor sanitation, poor drinking water, inadequate medical care, diseases, poor nutrition, lack of housing and stress etc. Many people with these problems are not

far fetch, as they can be found in our churches and the community. The church must therefore be seen as a people of God who do not only seek the spiritual wellbeing of its members and the community at large but one that also seek the socio-economic and political well-being of the people. This is what the researcher sought to find out about churches response to poverty alleviation, examining CeFORCE contribution as a study

The research revealed that CeFORCE is doing well in contributing its quota towards poverty alleviation. Most of its programmes are geared towards addressing both the effects of poverty and its alleviation. The researcher had made certain recommendations that could further ensure the improvement of CeFORCE support towards poverty alleviation in the community.

The researcher wishes to conclude by stating that the response of CeFORCE of Grace Baptist Church towards poverty alleviation has improved the lives of the poor and vulnerable in the community through its economic empowerment programmes.

5.4 Recommendations

The research has revealed that Grace Baptist Church Centre for Community Empowerment (CeFORCE) has contributed like other faith based organization in addressing issues of poverty in the community. CeFORCE has achieved most of the aims for which they are established. CeFORCE however needs to managed and supported effectively to ensure its sustainability and continuous support to alleviate poverty in the church and the community. I am therefore making the following recommendations that will help to effectively maintain the growth and sustainability of CeFORCE of Grace Baptist Church, Amakom.

1. Although CeFORCE has done so well in supporting the poor through the sponsorship of Grace Baptist Church, it could do better if it can receive donor support to fund its many programmes and project as the benefits will be enormous towards alleviating poverty.
2. CeFORCE must strive to establish collaboration with BREDA through the Ghana Baptist Convention. As BREDA enjoys more donor support from abroad than locally, CeFORCE collaboration with BREDA may facilitate donor support to fund many of its projects.
3. CeFORCE must seek to be recognized under the Ghana Baptist Conversion as a branch of BREDA working in the middle zone to support the poor and help alleviate poverty in the society. This would lead to receiving support not only from Ghana Baptist Conversion but also from individual Baptist churches in the middle zone.
4. CeFORCE should use its advocacy programmes to advocate strongly against parental neglect which is one of the primary curse of illiteracy and unemployment leading to increase poverty in the community. CeFORCE should educate people on government interventions to alleviate poverty and speak against government policies that are against the poor.
5. CeFORCE should not abandon completely the Northern Immigrant Transit Programme which is towards taken the 'kayaye' girls from the streets and putting them into CeFORCE vocational training centers for skill acquisition. Even if they refuse to go back to the Northern region after the training, the main aim of getting them from the streets would have been achieved.

6. I recommend strongly the establishment of the CeFORCE village which is supposed to be a campus that would accommodate and train all CeFORCE beneficiaries in vocational / technical skill acquisition.
7. I recommend the acquisition of proper modern office equipment for the CeFORCE office to aid in proper records keeping and storage of information on its programmes and beneficiaries.
8. CeFORCE should create a separate fund for its beneficiaries – those sponsored in formal education and vocational / technical training and any other beneficiary to voluntarily contribute to in support of other poor people in the community to be economically empowered.

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PERSONALITIES INTERVIEWED

Rev. Robert Asante, Snr. Pastor, Grace Baptist Church, 2nd August, 2016.

Mr. Alex Obeng, CeFORCE Director, 15th September, 2016.

Mrs. Mpersu, Gita Fabric, 15th January, 2017.

Madam AmaKonadu, Volunteer, 3rd, October, 2016.

Mr. Dickson Quarm, Beneficiary, 3rd October, 2016.

Madam MaryAnsah, Beneficiary, 3rd October, 2016.

Madam Yaa Manu, Beneficiary, 3rd October, 2016.

Mr. KwakuDomfeh, Beneficiary, 20th October, 2016.

Mr. Emmanuel Debrah, Beneficiary, 20th October, 2016.

Mrs. Victoria Degraft-Adjei, Counsellor, 5th October, 2016.

Mr. Samuel Manu, Volunteer, 5th October, 2016.

Mrs. AnsahAsare, Volunteer, 5th October, 2016.

SuleyKarim, Beneficiary, 10th January, 2017.

Madam Gloria Konadu, Beneficiary, 10th January, 2017.

Mr. Emmanuel Kumah, Church Member, 23rd January, 2017

Mr. Sampson Adjei, Volunteer, 23rd January, 2017.

Mrs. Twumasi, Counsellor, 23rd January, 2017.

Mr. Kenneth Acheampong, Church Member, 10th January, 2017.

Madam Dora Boateng, Beneficiary, 10th January, 2017.

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APPENDIX I

Questionnaire for Grace Baptist Centre for Empowerment (CeFORCE), Staff

Introduction

Dear respondent,

You have been selected randomly to provide some information about the contribution of Grace Baptist Church Centre for Community Empowerment (CeFORCE) in poverty alleviation through its community empowerment programmes.

It will be highly appreciated if you could share with us your experience on the subject by answering the following questions freely and honestly. The information is important for the candidate pursuing MA in Christian Ministry at the Christian Service University College. It will also be useful to Grace Baptist Church CeFORCE in carrying out its activities in the future.

You are assured that your response will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Identification

Questionnaire Number.....

Date of interview (Day/Month/ Year)

Name of community.....

A. Background Information of Respondents

Instruction to the interviewer: Circle the appropriate number or slot in the appropriate questions or phrases.

A1. Sex of the respondent 1. Female [] 2. Male []

A2. Age of the respondent 1. 20-29 2. 30-39 3. 40-49 4. 50-59

A3. Marital status of the respondent: 1. Single [] 2. Married [] 3. Divorced []
4. Widow / Widower [] 5. Co-habitation []

- A4. Education level: 1. No formal education [] 2. Primary school education []
 3. Secondary school education [] 4. Tertiary school education []

A5. Religious affiliation.....

A6. Denomination.....

B. Objective one

Grace Baptist church Centre for Community Empowerment (CeFORCE) is a project of GRAFI that offers counseling, direction and support to people in the community for meeting their economic and socio-political needs.

B1. Are you a Project Assistant or staff of CeFORCE of Grace Baptist Church?
 1. Yes [] 2. No []

B2. If `` Yes'' how long and in what capacity have you worked with CeFORCE

B3. What are the main objectives of CeFORCE?

1.....

2.....

B4. Are you aware of any past poverty alleviation project of CeFORCE?

1. Yes [] 2. No []

B5. If “Yes” mention them according to their order of importance

1.

2.

3.

B5. How many people benefited directly from it? Mention them according to the order in B5.

1.

2.

3.....

B6. Are you aware of any ongoing poverty alleviation project of CeFORCE?

1. Yes [] 2. No []

B7. If ``Yes`` mention them according to their order importance

1.
2.
3.....

B7. How is CeFORCE of Grace Baptist Church funded in carrying out its mandate?
Please mention according to the order of importance.

- 1.....
2
3.....

B8. Is CeFORCE adequately funded to carry out effectively its poverty alleviation projects?

1. Yes [] 2. No[]

B9 If ``No`` mention some of the challenges CeFORCE face in it desire to help the poor in and outside the church?

1.
2.
3.

B10. Do you think the church through CeFORCE can do more to help the poor?

1. Yes [] 2. No []

If ``Yes`` suggest some of the ways you think CeFORCE can do more to help the poor

- 1.....
2.....
3.....

B11. What is the working relationship between CeFORCE and BREDA?

-
.....

Thank you for participating in this study

APPENDIX II

Questionnaire for Grace Baptist Centre for Empowerment (CeFORCE), Beneficiary

Introduction

Dear respondent,

You have been selected randomly to provide some information about the contribution of Grace Baptist Church Centre for Community Empowerment (CeFORCE) in poverty alleviation through its community empowerment programmes.

It will be highly appreciated if you could share with us your experience on the subject by answering the following questions freely and honestly. The information is important for the candidate pursuing MA in Christian Ministry at the Christian Service University College. It will also be useful to Grace Baptist Church CeFORCE in assessing its impact in the community and drive its future activities.

You are assured that your response will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Identification

Questionnaire Number.....

Date of interview (Day/Month/ Year)

Name of community.....

A. Background Information of Respondents

Instruction to the interviewer: Circle the appropriate number or slot in the appropriate questions or phrases.

A1. Sex of the respondent 1. Female [] 2. Male []

A2. Age of the respondent 1. 20-29 [] 2. 30-39 [] 3. 40-49 [] 4. 50-59 []

A3. Marital status of the respondent: 1. Single [] 2. Married [] 3. Divorced []
4. Widow / Widower [] 5. Co-habitation []

A4. Education level: 1. No formal education [] 2. Primary school education []

3. Secondary school education [] 4. Tertiary school education []

A5. Religious affiliation.....

A6. Denomination.....

B. Objective one

Grace Baptist church Centre for Community Empowerment (CeFORCE) is a project of GRAFI that offers counseling, direction and support to people in the community for meeting their economic and socio-political needs.

B1. Are you aware of Grace Baptist Centre for Community Empowerment (CeFORCE)? 1. Yes [] 2. No []

B2. If “Yes” mention how you heard about it

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

B3. Are you aware of any poverty alleviation project of CeFORCE?

- 2. Yes [] 2 No []

B4. If “Yes” mention them according to their order of importance

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

C. Objective two

CeFORCE project/ programme beneficiary

C1. Have you in any way benefitted from CeFORCE activities / programmes?

- 1. Yes [] 2. No []

C2.if “Yes” mention what form of support you received from CeFORCE

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

C3. Mention how the support transformed or improved your life

- 1.
.....
.....

C4. Were the support / benefit from CeFORCE at a fee or free?

- 1. Yes [] 2. No []

C5. If “Yes”, mention what the fee was meant for.

1.

C6. Were support and programmes discriminative to other denomination or unbelievers?

1. Yes [] 2. No []

C7. IF “Yes” mention the form / type of discrimination

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

C8. Were you satisfied with CeFORCE support / programme you benefitted from.

1. Yes [] 2. No []

C9. Were there any follow up by CeFORCE on your progress after you were supported?

1. Yes[] 2. No []

C10. Briefly mention in your view what should be done to improve CeFORCE of Grace Baptist.

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

Thank you for participating in this study

APPENDIX III

CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT (CeFORCE)

ACTIVITIES FROM 1997 - 2015

YEAR	ACTIVITIES	REMARKS
1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Daily career guidance and counseling ➤ Snail and mushroom farming workshop ➤ Batik textile training and workshop ➤ Symposium on democratic rule and individual rights 	
1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Daily career guidance and counseling ➤ Career fair on education and vocation ➤ Seminar on entrepreneurial skills ➤ Public symposium (the elected representative & accountability) ➤ Batik textile training and workshop 	
1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Daily career guidance and counseling ➤ Career fair for students – education and vocation ➤ Batik textile training and workshop ➤ Health workshop on HIV/AIDS ➤ Public symposium (ensuring the entrenchment of domestic culture in the next millennium in Ghana) 	
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Daily career guidance and counseling ➤ Seminar on empowerment and transformation ➤ Batik textile training and workshop ➤ Health workshop HIV/AIDS 	
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Daily career guidance and counseling ➤ Career guidance seminar for students ➤ Batik textile and soap making training 	
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Daily career guidance and counseling ➤ Soap and pastries making ➤ Seminar on entrepreneurial skills for SME's' 	
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Daily career guidance and counseling ➤ Food preservation ➤ Health workshop on HIV/AIDS for Baptist Pastors 	
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Daily career guidance and counseling ➤ Seminar on HIV/AIDS (Behavioral change) ➤ Seminar on efficient management of SME's – the heart of wealth creation ➤ Production of HIV/AIDS film (heralds of HIV/AIDS – Donated to Ghana AIDS Commission for campaign against the infection and stigmatization. 	<p>Good Average Great attendance all time recommended</p>
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Daily career guidance and counseling ➤ Seminar on wealth creation i.e.: preparing, building and sustaining your business ➤ Seminar on road safety for the drivers in the 	<p>Very well Great attendance excellent</p>

	metropolis on knowing your rights as a driver on the road	
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Daily career guidance and counseling ➤ Seminar on career guidance for the youth and students in the metropolis ➤ Training workshop for the disables in the metropolis ➤ Radio school of business ➤ Health seminar on dressing and its implications 	<p>Good Great work</p> <p>Recommended Recommended Recommended</p>
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Daily career guidance and counseling ➤ Seminar on career guidance for the youth and students in the Baptist churches in the metropolis ➤ Marriage seminar for pastors, deacons, church leaders and marriage counselors ➤ CeFORCE 10th anniversary celebration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career fair and exhibition of CeFORCE trainees products • Symposium • Drama • Testimonies 	<p>Very well Well attendance</p> <p>Very encouraging</p> <p>Well organized and patronized</p>
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ daily career guidance and counseling ➤ career guidance seminar for the students and artisans in the metropolis ➤ psychosocial counseling seminar for pastors church leaders, community leaders, civil society organizations, assembly members, teachers etc. 	<p>Great very well</p> <p>very impressive and well attendance</p>
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ daily career guidance and counseling ➤ seminar on doing business without an office for young graduates ➤ radio school of business ➤ seminar on avenue for tapping financial resources 	<p>Very encouraging Very well</p> <p>excellent Impressive</p>
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ daily career guidance and counseling ➤ career guidance seminar for students and artisans ➤ individual career planning and development 	<p>Average Very impressive Great attendance</p>
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Daily career guidance and counseling ➤ Beat and hat making training ➤ Finding a stop gap job while waiting for your professional job 	<p>Very well Great Successful</p>
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Daily career guidance and counseling ➤ Factors that ensures setting up a successful business enterprise ➤ Public symposium (the elected representative & accountability) 	<p>Not encouraging Very successful Could not come not on due to financial constraint</p>

2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Daily career guidance and counseling ➤ How to establish your own business without an office. ➤ Beats and hat making ➤ Mushroom and glasscutter training 	<p>Not encouraging Very well excellent Impressive</p>
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ daily career guidance and counseling ➤ career guidance seminar for the students and artisans in the metropolis ➤ psychosocial counseling seminar for pastors church leaders, community leaders, civil society organizations, assembly members, teachers etc. 	<p>Very encouraging Very well excellent Impressive</p>
2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Daily career guidance and counseling ➤ Beat and hat making training ➤ Finding a stop gap job whiles waiting for your professional job ➤ Soap making ➤ How to establish your own business without an office ➤ Mushroom and glasscutter training. 	<p>Very well Well attendance Very encouraging Well organized and patronage</p>

APPENDIX IV

RECORDS OF BENEFICIARIES OF CEFORCE FROM 1997 -2015

YEAR	No. of People Reached	No. of People That Received Direct Training	No. of People Granted Soft Loan	No. of People Counselling	No. of People Received Financial Assistance
1997	400	100	-	293	7
1998	300	60	-	235	5
1999	502	40	20	437	5
2000	600	50	30	510	10
2001	700	38	-	662	-
2002	900	55	30	803	12
2003	850	100	30	705	15
2004	1,200	280	45	855	20
2005	1174	1000	-	128	46
2006	3750	2704	-	987	59
2007	4116	2775	105	1107	129
2008	2351	1322	95	831	103
2009	2450	1576	250	476	148
2010	2094	1522	200	300	72
2011	1959	1438	-	500	21
2012	1500	906	-	519	75
2013	720	434	-	249	37
2014	814	473	95	193	53
2015	949	512	136	205	96
TOTAL	27,329	15,385	805	9,597	913

APPEDIX V

January 6, 2016

THE DIRECTOR

CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

P.O.BOX 4087

KUMASI

OVERVIEW OF CeFORCE ACTIVITIES IN THE YEAR 2015

INTRODUCTION

The total number of people that came to the centre in the year for assistance and counseling were over 949. The breakdown of their ages ranges between 15 and 70 years, and the categories of problems that they brought were mainly educational, career aspirations, social issues, legal matters, medical, economics and most chiefly financial.

Aside the daily guidance and counseling, the Centre was able to undertake three major activities as; How to establish your own business without an office, Beats and hat making, Soap and pomade making, Mushroom and grasscutter training.

The Centre was also able to assist some clients with financial assistance and equipments to enable them have a better living.

KEY ACTIVITIES:

1. GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

Majority of our clients were taken through some counseling process and were guided to come out with some solutions to their problems.

a. EDUCATIONAL:

They were the people who came to the Centre for various counseling and advices on their future career most especially on the choices of programmes to do in their various institutions and how to go about it.

b. SOCIAL AND LEGAL:

The cases received were mainly marital, neglect of children, inheritance, tenancy agreements, juvenile waywardness and attempted rape. Most of the cases were referred to FIDA, DOVVSU, Social welfare and some legal experts for directions.

c. MEDICAL:

All the medical problems were referred to some medical experts who voluntarily help them free of charge most especially the GRACE BAPTIST MEDICAL TEAM members.

d. ECONOMIC:

The Centre was able to help in providing over 130 people with employable skills. Out of that over 30 people were help acquire equipment in addition for their jobs training.

e. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

The Centre was able to assist over 96 people financially to start up their own business and acquiring accommodation

f. INVITATIONS:

The Centre received from some youth associations, organized trade unions and some churches in the Kumasi metropolis to give a talk on various topics that matter most on them during the year 2015.

Most of the groups were given talk on CHOOSING THE RIGHT CAREER, EFFECTIVE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT, TIME MANAGEMENT, IMPORTANCE OF SAVINGS etc.

g. FOLLOW UP:

The Centre officer visited some of the beneficiaries of the Centre; most especially those who had receive direct assistance from the Centre and helped them in their managerial aspects especially on bookkeeping.

h. VISITATIONS:

The Centre officer also met with some of the fellowships and zones to brief them the works of CeFORCE and also assisted those lacking the knowledge in managing their businesses and their social life styles. The Centre also coordinated in getting some resource persons for the auxiliary groups in the church on various programmes.

I. INFORMATION SEARCH:

The Centre officer visited many institutions in search of information on current affairs especially on social matters like labour laws and the issues from DOVVSU, FIDA, NCCE, CHRAJ, GHS, GES GPS, GIS etc.

j. CHALLENGES:

The major challenges being face by the Centre are:

1. Lack of funds
2. Church members not patronizing the activities of the Centre
3. Most of the church members visit the Centre only with intention of getting financial assistance

Due to some circumstances beyond the control of the Centre Officer, management meeting was not as regular as was supposed to be

4. The Centre was not able to renew its certificates of operations due to the non-availability of funds in the year 2014

j. RECOMMENDATION

1. I would like to recommend that the CeFORCE budget be included in the main church budget instead of E.M.B budget which is a subsidiary or a department of the church.

2. Since the Certificate of the GRAFI cover many departments under the umbrella of the church, I suggest that, the departments which earn income are make to bear the cost of renewing all the GRAFI certificate especially those with REGISTRAR GENERAL DEPARTMENT, SOCIAL WELFARE DEPATMENT and COALATION OF NGO's

3. I would also be grateful if the file Cabinets, desk and the notice boards could be change for the office to look modern

1. APPRECIATION:

I wish to commend the Directors and management members especially Rev. Dr. KojoOsei-Wusuh, Rev. Robert K. Asante, Mrs. ZipporahAppiah-Kubi for availing themselves to the Centre officer whenever they are called upon not forgetting other pastors, deacons and the entire staff of Grace Baptist Church who helped in various ways especially on counseling and administrative works, I am very grateful.

It is my wish that the recommendations made are given the needed attention.

Thank you.

Alex Obeng

(Centre Officer)

Cc: GRAFI BOARD

CeFORCE MANAGEMENT

FILE