

**CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

**CHALLENGES IN CHRISTIAN MISSION TO MUSLIMS: A CASE STUDY OF THE  
ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH, MOSHIE ZONGO, KUMASI**

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**DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY**

**MARCH, 2017**

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**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I, Iddrisu Tweneboah-Kodua do hereby declare that, this dissertation is the result of my own original research, except for some section for which citations have been duly acknowledged. To the best of my knowledge, no part of this dissertation has been presented to any university or any other institution for the award of any degree.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is first and foremost dedicated to God by whose direction, strength and inspiration I have been able to carry out this thesis project. I also dedicate this work to my beloved wife Susana and my children, Benedicta, Lois, Joel, Daniel and Gloria for their support and encouragement leading to the completion of this work.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

REV – Reverend

NIV – New International Version

MCSA – Muslim Converts Support Account

## **ABSTRACT**

This work, entitled challenges in Christian missions to Muslims: A case study of the Assembly of God church, Moshie Zongo, Kumasi, examines the establishment of the church in a Muslim dominated community and the problems encountered. The study was based on the assumption that Christian mission to Muslims has been perceived as difficult, dangerous and unprofitable by some Christians. Others also think that Christian missions to Muslims is biblical and conforms to the church's mandate for the Great Commission. Using the primary method of interviews, the researcher gathered information from key personalities in the study area. Again the researcher made use of personal involvement and experience. The study addressed the beginnings of the church as well as the challenges that cropped up. These challenges included socio-economic, infrastructural, spiritual and cultural factors which affected the church's growth. Despite the challenges, attempts were made by the church to carry out its missionary mandate. It can be concluded that if the Christian church can rise above fear, ignorance and prejudice, it can go far with its missionary agenda. The study recommends that first, conferences, seminars and workshops be organised for pastors, missionaries and other church leaders to sensitise them on Muslim evangelism. Again the teaching of Islam should be pursued in Christian theological institutions so as to equip the graduates from these institutions with the requisite knowledge about Islam and Christian missions to Muslims. Finally, a support scheme could be put in place to support Christian mission to Muslims in order to support converts who otherwise may be put out from their family homes because of their commitment to Christianity.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background

The Biblical record portrays Jesus' mission to the world as a demonstration of God's love for humanity which culminated in his death on the cross. But we are told that Jesus resurrected from the dead commissioned his disciples to proclaim the good news of salvation to all humanity. Grudem is of the view that as the church proclaims the good news of the kingdom, people will come into the church and begin to experience the blessings of God's rule in their lives.<sup>1</sup> This is a demonstration of God's concern for humanity which is linked to His ultimate purpose of reconciling all humanity to Himself.

Although the gospel writers in their view clearly considered Jesus' ministry in terms of the Jewish people, some of his activities and sayings included his openness toward the Samaritans and Gentiles. In as much as his ministry was directed primary to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 15:24), nevertheless, it can be understood that there were situations where by Jesus interacted with Gentiles. The mission of the church should be understood as one that encompasses everyone as specified in the great commission. Christian Missions thus involves the proclamation of the good news of salvation to all persons. It entails the message of the death of Jesus Christ for the sins of humanity that ensures salvation for all who believe. On the basis of this, the Great Commission which is Jesus' mandate to the disciples in particular and all Christian believers in general, was to be directed towards every person in every part of the earth. It is evident from the book of Acts that God carried out this task through the early church in

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<sup>1</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Nottingham: Inter Varsity Press, 1994), 864.

fulfilment of the prophetic tradition. Thus, the church's mission stands out as a partnership with God to bring about His ultimate intent for the world which he announced at the beginning through Abraham. Thus in stressing the Great Commission, Jesus Christ seemed emphasise the continuation of the ministry of preaching, winning souls and preserving them from generation to generation. Thus, the continuation of the Great Commission is dependent on the readiness of Christian to follow the path laid down by Jesus Christ. Samuel Faircloth sees the motive in the book of Acts as the expansion of the faith through missionary witness in the power of the Holy Spirit. He concludes that the will of the Holy Spirit is the continuous planting of new churches through out the world.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the proclamation of the gospel and the subsequent planting of churches is to be seen as a priority which must not be downplayed.

It must be noted that, since the times of the first century church, the proclamation of the Christian message has been varied out throughout the centuries. This has taken place in areas where "Christ has not been named", where churches have been planted. This is what missiologists refer to as frontier missions. We read in the book of Joshua how the Israelites were to cross the Jordan River into the Promise Land to establish a testimony of God among the people in the area. As we reach out to people in "unreached" areas we demonstrate a commitment to extending God's love to all people. It is in this light that Christian missions in Muslim areas is to be seen as frontier missions.

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<sup>2</sup> Samuel Faircloth, *Church Planting for Reproduction* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1991), 20.

Islam seems to be an emerging religious force in the African continent. Some African countries such as Senegal, Nigeria, Chad, Burkina Faso and other states have demonstrated a tremendous growth in the Islamic faith in terms of followers. Christian Evangelization in these countries seems very difficult and some Christian believers see these areas as no go areas for evangelistic activity for fear of persecution. In some cases there have been serious confrontations between Christian's evangelistic groups and some Muslims in the proclamation of the Christian message. This has made Christian mission to Muslims a seemingly endeavour. Thus, persecution, confrontations and physical attacks have characterized Christian evangelistic activities in Muslim territories.

On the contemporary scene, the activities of Muslims have come under serious scrutiny due to the upsurge of extremism and violence in many countries in their quest to propagate Islamic beliefs. On the International front, the activities of militant groups such as the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq as well as Al-Shabab in Somalia, Boko Haram in northern Nigeria, Movement for Unity and Justice in the Azawad (MUJAO) in northern Mali, Islamic State of Libya and the Alqaeda in the Islamic Magreb (A.I.M), operating in Algeria, seem to paint a negative image about Islam. This has "awaken" the Church to the need to study the religion of Islam and to come to terms with how to carry out missions among Muslims in Muslim territories. Thus, Christian missions in Muslim territories is to be considered as a challenge to the contemporary church.

In pursuance of the church's missionary mandate, the Assemblies of God, began its activities in Ghana in the northern part of the country, precisely at Yendi in 1937. From

there, it continued to spread to other parts of Ghana. Today the church can boast of many branches in both urban and rural communities. The church in its bid to expand and strengthen its gains, also established Bible training centres at Kumbungu in the Northern region, Bronkong in the Ashanti region and Saltpond in the Central region. These institutions have turned out many seasoned pastors, who have the strengthening of the faith of the members and equipping them for missions. In line with the overall missions policy of the church and its evangelistic mandate driven by an urban and a cross-cultural focus, the Assemblies of God established its presence at Moshie Zongo a predominantly Muslim community in the Kumasi Metropolis. The church seems to be making some gains in terms of growth, but is confronted with some challenges which need to be examined.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

It has been noted that the proclamation of the Christian message which culminates in the establishment of churches, falls in line with Jesus' mandate to the church. Proclaiming Christ in unknown territories is a demonstration of God's love and concern for all people everywhere. Many concerns seem to be raised in religious circles concerning Christian missions to Muslims. The question many people ask is whether it is possible to witness to Muslims. Whereas, some people see the endeavour as difficult and unprofitable, others think it is worth doing because it falls in line with Christ's mandate to the church. Those in the first category argue that Islamic communities are "no-go" areas and Muslims are intolerant and hostile to new ideas. Thus, any evangelistic or missionary activity among Muslims is considered to be dangerous or risky, and which should not be encouraged.

Nonetheless, those who support Christian missions to Muslims argue that, no matter the obvious challenges that may exist, Muslims are like any other people, and are to be reached with the Christian message if the right methods and strategies are employed. This situation poses an uncertainty regarding the church's involvement in evangelisation in Muslims territories. In the light of this, the study seeks to examine the evangelistic efforts of the Assembly of God Church at Moshie Zongo in Kumasi, and to ascertain the challenges that confront the church in its missionary or evangelistic agenda, in the advancement and sustainability of its presence in the area.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

This study sought to find answers to the following questions.

- What is the nature and scope of Christian missions from biblical perspective?
- How has the Assembly of God Church carried out its evangelistic work at Moshie Zongo?
- What challenges have confronted the church with regards to its Muslim evangelization activities?
- To what extent has the church made impact on the Moshie Zongo community?
- What measures could be adopted by the church to sustain its presence and ensure its growth in the area?

### **1.4 Aim and Objectives of the study**

The main aim of the study is to examine the challenges in Christian Mission in Muslim territories with particular reference to Moshie Zongo in Kumasi.



**Objectives:**

- To examine the meaning and scope of Christian missions from biblical perspective.
- To find out the strategies and methods that have been employed its evangelistic work at Moshie Zongo.
- To assess the impact that has been made by the church in its evangelistic work in the Moshie Zongo community.
- To examine the challenges that have confronted the church in its missionary work at Moshie Zongo.
- To suggest the possible ways by which the Church could sustain its presence in the Moshie Zongo community and ensure growth.

**1.5 Research Methodology**

The study is a qualitative one and adopts the phenomenological approach in investigating issues relating to views, experience, and perceptions. This study uses a historical method of enquiring into past events to come up with causes factors and reasons for the occurrence of the events or phenomenon under investigation.

**1.5.1 Methods of Data Collection**

The study employed two main sources in gathering data. First, the primary source involved the use of semi- structured questions for personal interviews with key personalities with relevant information such as Islamic clerics, Muslim chiefs, Pastors,

missionaries and other Christian workers. Also focus group discussions were conducted to determine the authenticity of the data so gathered.

The researcher coming from an Islamic background, had some relevant knowledge and experience about the Islamic religion which was relevant. Therefore, participant observation was employed in gathering relevant data for the study. Secondly, the secondary source involved the use of publications such as books, journals unpublished works, official church documents, Mosque documents, historical or archival materials, and newsletters.

### **1.5.2 Sampling Procedure / Techniques**

Respondents for the research were selected through a purposive sampling procedure based on an inclusion criteria made up of Islamic Clerics, Imams, Mallams, Muslim Chiefs, Pastors, and church leaders in the Moshie Zongo Community. Sixteen respondents were selected for the interviews using semi-structured interview questions or guide to ascertain perceptions, views and experiences within their defined groups

### **1.5.3 Data Analysis (Theological and Missiological)**

The analysis in this research was based on a theological and missiological approach. It sought to evaluate the data gathered from the fieldwork in order to draw implications of the issues raised for the church. This approach relied significantly on the quality or reliability and relevance of the information obtained regarding the subject being investigated rather than on the quantity of responses or numerical strength of the

respondents. Thus, the analysis were carried out from a theological perspective to determine the implications of the findings so far made and to arrive at an acceptable conclusion.

### **1.6 Scope and Focus of the Study**

The study did not seek to address every issue about Christianity and Islam. Neither was it directed towards Christian missions to Muslims generally. Rather it focused on the challenges involved in Christian missions at Moshie Zongo in Kumasi using the Assembly of God church as a case study. It was envisaged that Moshie Zongo which seems to be an Muslim dominated community, could provide sufficient data for any enquiry regarding Christian missions to Muslims. Thus, Moshie Zongo provides the context for Christian engagement with Muslims and which also can provide us with a clear picture of the issues being investigated.

### **1.7 Review of Related Literature**

In carrying out any research work, it is usually important to examine the views and ideas of scholars who have carried out similar studies. This is significant in order to provide focus and direction to the study on hand. The review of some scholarly works considered for this study is carried out under two main themes namely, Christianity and Islam as well as well as the Church and Missions.

### 1.7.1 Christianity and Islam

According to Irfan Omar, whether we like it or not, we live in a pluralistic world. Yet, we are not and cannot be an undifferentiated mass of humankind. In his view we are one humanity, but we are also different peoples, cultures, and religious communities.<sup>3</sup> This view by the author seems to suggest that both Christianity and Islam are different religions, comprising people of different cultural backgrounds. This can provide Christians with some knowledge of Islam which can help boost missions and cordiality of relationship. This is significant for the study which examines the challenges which confront Christian Missions to Muslims.

On his part, A. H. Mathias Zahniser maintains that in any dialogue between Muslims and Christians, the actual faith of the persons involved needs to be taken into consideration. Participants should be allowed to define the person's faith and getting to know the person is essential for effective communication.<sup>4</sup> This assertion presupposes that knowledge is key to effective communication of the Christian message. Any missionary endeavour that portrays any elements of prejudice is bound to fail in its objective and will thus be unsustainable.

Writing on *The church in the Shadow of World of Islam*, Sidney H. Griffith, maintains that when the Christians living in the territories that came under Islamic rule during the first century after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, eventually adopted the Arabic language, beginning for some of them as early as the second half of the eighth century,

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<sup>3</sup> Irfan A. Omar, *A Muslim view of Christianity: Essays on Dialogue* (Manyknoll: Orbis Books, 2007), 9.

<sup>4</sup> A. H. Matthias Zahniser, *The Mission and Death of Jesus in Islam and Christianity* (Manyknoll: Orbis Books, 2008), 12.

they opened a public channel of communication with the Muslims about religion and culture.<sup>5</sup> From the view of the author, language is very significant in communication between people of different faiths and this is true of Christians Missions to Muslims.

In his work *Sharing Your Faith with a Muslim*, Abdiyah Akbar Abdul-Hagg provides a framework for Christian engagement with Muslims. In his view Christology is the very essence of the Quran's teaching about Christianity. From certain passages in the Quran, it is easy to demonstrate the divine majesty of Jesus Christ as well as his unique life and miracles. Also, it can be shown from other passages that Jesus was like other prophets and apostles of God.<sup>6</sup> In this light, if Christians can reach out to Muslims more effectively, then it is imperative that they study the Quran and the entire Islamic religion to acquire more knowledge.

Phil Parshall's work, *Bridges to Islam: A Christian Perspective on Folk Islam*, demonstrates that bridges are a necessary part of life and serve as instruments of bringing together that which is separated. He maintains that bridges are also valuable in a religious sense and serve as connectors between Christianity and Islam which seem to be separated by antagonism, suspicion and hatred.<sup>7</sup> Thus, Christians Missions to Muslims must employ the necessary bridges in order to close the gap of prejudice and ignorance that seems to exist between Christianity and Islam.

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<sup>5</sup> Sydney H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam*, (Princeton University Press, 2008), 156.

<sup>6</sup> Abdiyah A. Abdul-Hagg, *Sharing Your Faith with a Muslim* (Minnesota: Bethway House Publisher, 1980), 22.

<sup>7</sup> Phil Parshall, *Bridges to Islam: A Christian Perspective on Folk Islam* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1983), 113.

Writing on *the African Christian and Islam*, John Azumah and Lamin Sanneh are of the view that Christianity and Islam have developed a deep connection with African values and practices, which have enabled them to establish an important and permanent place in society. Furthermore, Islam and Christianity have remained prominent on the continent, because the search for God has been reinforced as a perennial theme in the lives of African peoples.<sup>8</sup> The connection with the African heritage can provide the needed impetus for Christian missions to Muslims. Common grounds of dialogue can be found with reference to African cultural values and practices, which can make any relationship between people possible and diffuse any religious tension.

According to Richard Beaton, using metaphors about the Christian identity or mission is to a valuable means of communication. However, metaphors ought to cohere with the basic essence of historic Christianity. He continues that, the most dangerous is to read into the metaphor an idea that is foreign to the gospel. He concludes that the quest for coherence on the level of proclamation and praxis will safeguard the identity and mission of the church.<sup>9</sup> This presupposes that in the communication of the Christian message especially in Islamic contexts, care should be taken in the use of metaphors so as not to injure the sensitivities of the Muslim friends. This is very important for the success of frontier missions.

In his contribution to the discussion on relationship between Christianity and Islam, John Azumah observes that in places like Ghana, Muslims and Christians have often lived as

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<sup>8</sup> John Azumah & Lamin Sanneh, *The African Christian and Islam* (Cambria: Langham Partnership, 2013), 1.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Beaton "Metaphors and the Gospel," *Evangelical Mission Quarterly* 37, No. 1 (2001): 64.

close relations and neighbours, and have on the whole lived in peace at the grassroots level, exchanging gifts and visits on festive occasions. However, he reiterates that Christians need to think about the question of co-existence which is crucial to Christian theology and mission. For him, other faiths, especially Islam is no longer known to us merely as concepts and labels but have acquired the faces of real people whose presence affects many aspects of our Christian life.<sup>10</sup> This view makes it very imperative for any mission, especially in Islamic contexts, to take into consideration the methods and strategies to be employed.

### **1.7.2 The Church's Mandate**

In relation to the church's mandate, Letty Russel points out that God invites us to join in His mission and plan for the world, of restoring all men to their true humanity. As all members of Christ, they become partners in extending the invitation of Christ.<sup>11</sup> Thus, Christian missions should be considered as a partnership with God and Christ in restoring humanity to its original purpose, and this should not be compromised or underestimated, as we consider everybody everywhere.

On his part, Wayne Grudem maintains that as the church proclaims the good news of the kingdom, people will come into the church and begin to experience the blessings of God's rule in their lives.<sup>12</sup> Thus, it is the church's task to proclaim the good news of Christ which can result in the salvation of people. Missions involves the proclamation of the gospel and this is very significant for the church.

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<sup>10</sup> John Azumah, *My Neighbour's Faith: Islam Explained for Christians* (Nairobi: Hippo Books, 2008), 67.

<sup>11</sup> Letty Russell, *Christian Education in Mission* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983), 25.

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

Samuel Faircloth sees the motif in the book of Acts as the expansion of the faith through missionary witness in the power of the Holy Spirit. He concludes that the will of the Holy Spirit is therefore continuous planting of new churches throughout the world.<sup>13</sup> Christian missions involves the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ and this results in the planting of churches for them that believe the message. The expansion of the Christian faith hinges on Christian missions which is the mandate of the church.

Edmund Clowney is of the view that the Lord who calls the church to worship and to nurture also sends it through the centuries and across the continents to witness for Him.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the church exists not only for worship or have fellowship but also to witness to the saving power of Jesus Christ.

Van Gelder writes that the challenge before the church is to reclaim lost territory in the whole of creation for the glory and purposes of God. He contends that God is not finished with the world in the midst of its sin and brokenness, but wants to bring about reconciliation in all of life.<sup>15</sup> Christian missions is to be seen as a partnership with God in bringing about His divine purpose for humanity which must be taken seriously. Missions to Muslims falls in line with this divine purpose and is very significant for the study.

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<sup>13</sup> Samuel Faircloth, *Church Planting for Reproduction* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1991), 20.

<sup>14</sup> Edmund R.C. Clowney, *The Church* (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1995), 155.

<sup>15</sup> Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books 2000), 135.



According to Bruce Nicholls, the gospel was revealed by command of the eternal God for one specific purpose; to bring peoples of all nations to obey the faith.<sup>16</sup> Through the church's mission, God can make Himself known to peoples of all nations and cultures. Thus, missions is the mandate of the church and should be pursued with all diligence and sense of urgency.

Peter Wagner affirms the Power of God's Word to accomplish His purpose of salvation. For him, the message of the Bible is addressed to all mankind, God's revelation in Christ and Scripture is unchangeable. Through it the Holy Spirit still speaks today, illuminating the minds of God's people in every culture to perceive its truth freshly through their own eyes and thus discloses to the whole church the many-coloured wisdom of God.<sup>17</sup> As the church pursues its mission in the world through the proclamation of the Word of God, the hearts of people are opened up to God's purposes and wisdom.

On the part of David Bosch, mission describes the total task which God has set the church for the salvation of the world.<sup>18</sup> For Bosch, the salvation of the world is God's concern and He expects the church to share in this concern by communicating the gospel to people of all cultural backgrounds. Thus, the church's mission to Muslims which is the focus of this study is to be considered as an integral part of God's total agenda for humanity with reference to people everywhere.

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<sup>16</sup> Bruce J. Nicholls, *The Church: God's Agent for Change* (Cape Town: The Paternoster Press, 1986), 124.

<sup>17</sup> Peter Wagner, *Strategies for Church Growth: Tools for effective Mission and Evangelism* (London: The British Church Growth Association, 1987), 198.

<sup>18</sup>David Bosch, *Witness to the World* (London: Morgan & Stott, 1980), 17.

According to John Stott, the word mission concerns God's redeemed people and what He sends them into the world to do. He asserts that conversion must not take the convert out of the world but rather send him back into it, the same person in the world, and yet a new person with new convictions and new standards. Stott concludes that if Jesus' first command was "come," his second was "go" and that is, we are to go back into the world (out of which we came) as Christ's ambassadors.<sup>19</sup> Christian missions involves going to people everywhere with the Christian message with the aim of causing them to make a commitment to God. Thus, the study which examines the challenges in Christian mission to Muslims seems to fall in line with over all agenda of God.

Writing about the city as a place of mission, Craig W. Ellison is of the view that to be a missionary is to be sent by God with a specific purpose. Urban areas are greatly in need of evangelical Christians who are sent by God. The city is a place of mission of ministry with mission, creativity persistent, tolerance, acceptance of others, prayer and lay and ministerial involvement. It is a place needing the best in missions.<sup>20</sup>

Francis M. Dubose writes that, the challenge of the metropolis is not simply the challenge of an expanding geography. It is the challenge of an overtaxed psyche, with all the attitudinal problems that can arise as a by-product. This urban challenge is a world challenge, but it is especially acute in those parts of the world where urban life has brought its usual problems, but fear of its usual amenities. Keeping up with the

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<sup>19</sup> John Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (London: Falcon 1975), 19.

<sup>20</sup> Graig W. Ellison, *The Urban Mission*: (Washington D.C: University Press of America, 1974), 19 – 20.

metropolis will mean establishing lines of communication with the people.<sup>21</sup> From the views of the author it is significant to consider how to communicate with people, who are by nature made up of diverse views and opinions. Missions to people outside one's sphere needs to take into consideration the need to address people with reference to their context.

Christine A. Mallouh maintains that as we share our faith with others it is vitally important to understand that our religious traditions are not the gospel which is the message of hope in Jesus Christ, is to be made culturally relevant to people everywhere devoid of all forms of emblems.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the Christian message must be proclaimed in the context of the target audience. Missions to Muslims can only be possible if we consider the issue of worldview and the strategies involved.

In expatiating on how Christians can witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ as they live with neighbours of other faiths, Frank Adams suggests that Christians should witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ by proclamation the salvation of Jesus and being actively involved in the struggle for justice. Christians should also share with neighbours of other faith that in Jesus Christ the ultimate has become intimate with humanity, that nowhere else is the victory over suffering and death manifested so decisively as in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.<sup>23</sup> In our proclamation of the Christian message, it is important that we consider how to make the message relevant to the audience. It is to be

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<sup>21</sup> Francis M. Dubose, *How churches Grow in an Urban World* (Nashville Press, 1978), 28.

<sup>22</sup> Christine Malloube, *Waging Peace on Islam* (Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2000), 322.

<sup>23</sup> Frank Adam "Challenges Facing African Christianity in the Post Modern World", *Evangelical Review of Theology* (29, No. 4, (2005), 307.

carried out holistically with reference to identifying with the social conditions of people. This is very relevant as we consider the challenges in Christian missions to Muslims.

### **1.8 The Significance of the Study**

The Study which examines the challenges to Christian Missions to Muslims at Moshie Zongo in Kumasi is significant for the following reasons:

- It can help the Church to come to terms with the scope and extent of its missionary agenda, in terms of the fulfillment of the Great Commission.
- It would create the needed awareness among Christians of the need for missions to Muslims and to provide the requisite knowledge about the strategies to be employed in such an endeavour.
- Christian non-governmental organisations involved in urban or frontier missions may find this study relevant in determining which group or groups warrant their support.
- Christian theological institutions offering courses in comparative study of religion, missions and church planting can also find this study useful in the planning of their curriculum.

### **1.9 Organization of the Study**

The study is divided into five main chapters with some subdivisions where necessary. The introductory chapter focused on the background to the study, the statement of problem, research questions, the aim and objectives of the study, the research methodology, the scope and focus of the study, the review of related literature, the

significance of the study, organisation of the study as well as definition of relevant terms, and concepts.

Chapter two examines the background to the Moshie Zongo community and Christian missions. Issues discussed include the background to the Moshie Zongo community with reference to geographical location and economic profile of the community, the origins of people and their social structure and political organisation, as well as their religious life and thought. Also considered are a brief overview of Islam, beliefs and practices, the emergence and the impact of Islam in Moshie Zongo and some basic tenets of Christianity.

The third chapter focuses on the Assembly of God Church and Christian missions in the Moshie Zongo community. It considers issues such as the church and frontier mission, the advent of the Assemblies of God at Moshie Zongo, as well as the challenges in the evangelistic process. Chapter four considered a theological reflection on Christian missions in Islamic settings and some implications for the church in the contemporary times. The fifth chapter is a summary of the entire study, general conclusion and some recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **BACKGROUND TO THE MOSHIE ZONGO COMMUNITY AND CHRISTIAN MISSIONS**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The introductory chapter considered the general overview of the study. This chapter examines some background issues relating to the study. It considers the background of the Moshie Zongo community and Christian missions. Among the issues addressed are the origins of the community and its people, history of Islamic presence in Moshie Zongo, some aspects of the Islamic faith and some basic tenets of the Christian faith.

#### **2.2 BACKGROUND OF THE MOSHIE ZONGO COMMUNITY**

##### **2.2.1 Geographical Location**

Moshie Zongo is found within the Manhyia North district of the Kumasi Metropolis. It shares boundaries with Sepe-Buokrom to the east, Old Tafo to the northwest, and Yennyawoso to the south. According to the assembly member of the community, Abdul Razak, Moshie Zongo had an estimated population of about 1,800 people by the 1930s but this has risen to 45,000.<sup>24</sup> He gave this figure based on the 2012 general elections projections for the area.

##### **2.2.2 Economic profile**

There are few government institutions such as a local health centre and basic schools. There are also fuel service stations, a nursing training school, pharmacy shops, rural bank and hotels. The women are into petty trading such as food vending and consumables.

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with Honorable Abdul Razak, The Assembly Member of Moshie Zongo, 21<sup>st</sup> August, 2016.

The men are also drivers, butchers, farmers, security men, vulcanizers, artisans such as masons and carpenters. It is common to find the youth either playing football or gathering at vantage places discussing issues of mutual concern. As a result of the seeming high unemployment rate in the community, poverty levels among the people are also on the increase.

The poverty level of the people seems to be very high and as a result as many as four to ten people can be found residing in one room. A number of the people are involved in small scale businesses like traditional soap making, food joints, production of a local gin called pito and petty trading, sale of meat products, shoe making, dressmaking and hairdressing. Few are drivers, and quite a greater percentage of the people have no jobs. According to Alhaji Mahama Ali, a sub-chief of the Hausa people, the reason why a greater number of the people seem to be living in poverty is because of the fact that most of them have not received formal education.<sup>25</sup>

### **2.2.3 Origins of the People and Social Structure**

In an interview with Alhaji Amadu Jandar, in about the year 1926, a man named Haruna is believed to be the first person have to come to settle at the place now called Moshie Zongo. The place then was believed to be no less than a forest with houses less than ten. He lived there alone for a while and it is reported that people considered him as a lunatic because of his way of living. A number of concerned people launched complains to the then Chief of Tafo about the insanity of Haruna. The Chief, with his elders after

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<sup>25</sup> Interview with Alhaji Mahama Ali, Sub Chief of the Hausa Community, Moshie Zongo, 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2016.

monitoring him closely for some time, came to the realization that he was not a lunatic but rather a healthy and sound person who conducted himself normally. As a result of this, he was given the freedom to stay on the land which had been offered by the chief of Tafo.<sup>26</sup>

Haruna sent word to his kinsmen at home believed to be Bawku, and soon, some other people joined him to build the community. He was believed to originally come from the Upper Volta now called Burkina Faso. The people who came from that country are called the Mossi and hence the place became known as Moshie Zongo. This explains why the Mossi people group is the dominant tribe in the community. According to the, Alhaji Amadu, Jandar, no other tribe can claim to originate from Moshie Zongo the majority of the people are settlers from other parts of Ghana and other West African states.

The word *Zongo* is from the Hausa language which means “a place which does not belong to any particular group of people or a no man’s land”. Apart from the Mossi, there are also the Sissala who come from Tumu in the Upper West Region, the Kussasi and the Frafra from the Upper East Region, and a few Ewe people are from the Volta Region as well as the Hausa who are said to have come from Nigeria to settle there. Also there are few Akan people who hail from various places like Brong Ahafo, Kwahu, Wassa, and Fanti. The natives of the area are from either Tafo or Anyaano (which is suburb of Moshie Zongo).

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<sup>26</sup> Interview with Alhaji Amadu Jandar, current Chief of Moshie Zongo, 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2016.



When the chief of Tafo was giving the land to Chief Haruna to stay on, one of the conditions was that he and his people must allow for churches to be planted in the area in the future. As a result, Moshie Zongo is the only Zongo in Kumasi where there are a lot of churches despite Muslim dominance. Moshie Zongo is a Muslim dominated area with a small percentage of the population being Christians. After it was agreed through deliberations between the Tafo Chief and his elders, it was agreed that churches could be established in the community. Since the beginning of the settlement, there has never been any tribal wars between the various tribes and within the community as a whole. This is to be believed to have come about as a result of the presence of Christians who they consider as their neighbours. The co-existence between the Christians and Muslims and also between the various people groups, has enhanced cordiality. This level of rapport has been sustained to the extent that they have managed to live at peace with one another at the ethnic and religious level for close to ninety years now. Both Christians and Muslims exchange presents such as food materials, clothes among many others during festive occasions. However, the conception of a church was highly opposed in the beginning and as a result churches only existed at the outskirts of the community. There are schools at Moshie Zongo which include Quranic, public and private basic schools.

Many houses do not have places of convenience, and sanitation and drainage is poor. Even though, there is a police post in the community, crime rate is still very high. The people of Moshie Zongo carry out marriage ceremonies as in many other communities. When a man is interested in a maiden, he is required to pay an official visit to the parents of the lady and make his intentions known to them. The dowry one pays for a particular

lady he wishes to marry is determined by the family of the bride to be. The bride worth to be paid could be in various forms such as cloth, wine or money. The various tribes in the community accept to marry among themselves, and hence there exist no ethnic limitations among the people.

Funerals are organized according to Islamic principles. Upon the demise of any member of a family, especially in the Muslim quarters, information is transmitted to all people in the community who gather to express their sympathy to the bereaved family and to assist in the burial arrangements. Funeral rites referred to as *adowa* are organized a week after the burial. Well wishers normally bring along food items and money to help the bereaved family to defray their funeral expenses. Therefore the people see themselves as belonging to one family who assist each other in times of need.<sup>27</sup>

#### **2.2.4 Political Organisation of the People**

The current Chief of Moshie Zongo is Naaba Alhaji Amadu Ibrahim Jandar who is of the Mossi tribe and is believed to originate from Burkina Faso. He is about 48 years of age and has been to Mecca the holy land of Muslims before. He has constructed a Mosque at his residence which is used by some Muslims of the community. In this Mosque about 30-40 people can come there every day to pray five times a day. He also gives alms to support the weak and the poor in the society. He has one wife with five children and has been a married man for twenty years. The wife, according to Naba Jandar, used to be a Christian in the Roman Catholic Church. Her name used to be Comfort Ofori but now she is called Obaidah which is an Islamic name. This has been considered as an achievement

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<sup>27</sup> Interview with Alhaji Amadu: Amadu Jandar. Chief of Moshie Zongo, 30<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

among Muslims in that they claim to have converted a Christian into the Islamic faith through marriage.<sup>28</sup>

Moshie Zongo is composed of about sixteen (16) ethnic groups each having its own headman. However, all these headmen constitute an advisory council for the community chief. The community chief mediates in all issues that are beyond the headmen and is also the link between the community and the *sharinky zongo* of Kumasi. He is not the custodian of the land but rather a steward who only takes care of it for the Old Tafo Chief and the Anyaano Chief.

### **2.2.5 Religious Life and Thought**

There are two major types of religion in the community. These are Islam and Christianity. Islam forms about 70% of the population with the remainder being Christians and traditionalists. The people have diverse views in terms of their beliefs. Since Moshie Zongo is an Islamic community, a larger part of the populace believes in the five pillars of Islam as an authentic means of salvation. They believe that there is only one God who is Allah that there is no other God apart from him. There are six central Mosques at Moshie Zongo, one of which is located at a place called First station.

In addition to this, there are several other smaller mosques and places of meetings in homes and other areas in the community which number about fifty-two. The Muslims meet five times in a day in the various Mosques for prayers. On Fridays however, they all congregate at the central Mosques which are able to contain them all (See Appendix II).

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<sup>28</sup> Interview with Abdul Karim Abubakar, Elder, Palace of the chief of Moshie Zongo, 30<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

If a Mosque is not able to contain at least fifty people, then it is considered as a place of meeting. At this place Friday prayers (Jumma) cannot take place. Each of the mosques has Imams (Prayer leader) from one to six who perform their duties in a system of rotation. The congregants give offerings, tithes on corn, maize, and other farm produce and these are used to take care of the Imams. Their duties include leading the people in prayer and teaching Islamic doctrines, officiate at weddings, naming of children, and the establishment of Islamic schools.<sup>29</sup>

The smaller part of the population being Christian also belong to different denominations which include the Roman Catholic, Assemblies of God, Church of Pentecost, Ghana Baptist Convention, Methodist Church, Ghana, the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, and the Seventh Day Adventists Church among others. There are other new churches which have emerged in the community and belong to the charismatic and neo-Pentecostal traditions. There is no recognized shrine in the community, however, it is believed that a certain woman, who was a traditional priest, used to operate by a small stream in the community, but today she is no more.<sup>30</sup> Both the Christians and Muslims in Moshie Zongo inter marry and the relationship between Muslims and Christians has been so cordial that there has never been any major interreligious conflict reported in the community.

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with Thomas Ahimah, Former Treasurer, Assembly of God Church Moshie Zongo, 16<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Hassan Yakubu Laah. Moshie Zongo Kumasi, 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2016.

## **2.3 History of Islamic Presence in Moshie Zongo**

### **2.3.1 History of Emergence**

In the year 1926, six people believed to be citizens of Burkina Faso left their homeland to come to Ghana in search of cola and also to look after some cocoa farms as labourers. They are believed to have spent a total of thirty days, thus one month, as they walked to Ghana with challenges of being beaten by the rains, snake attacks on the road, meeting elephants, crossing big rivers, walking through valleys, climbing hills as well as weariness resulting from hunger which affected them. They used to pray to Allah five times a day, and any time it was about to rain their prayer to Allah was that the Holy Quran would be protected from getting wet.<sup>31</sup>

Upon arrival they went to see the then Tafo chief to give them a place to settle. In the cause of their stay, five of them decided to go back to Burkina Faso because of economic hardship and language barrier. They left behind Nana Baba Bukari Tailor who came with his wives by name of Paga Atinpuga and Poriba Zinabu. According to Naba Baba Bukari who is hundred years old (See Appendix II), the two wives have produced ten children with thirty-four grand children who are all Muslims. He gained a lot of respect from the people he was staying with when they saw that he has been able to contain the economic hardship and has also learnt the Asante Twi language which had enabled him to communicate with the people around him with ease. He then sent messages to his friends and brothers back home that things were in good condition so a lot of them came to Ghana. Since he was a Muslims, he began practicing the religion on arrival in the

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<sup>31</sup> Interview with Alhaji Amadu Jandar, current Chief of Moshie Zongo, 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2016.

community and so all the brothers and friends around him also embraced Islam as their religion.

Those brothers, sisters and friends who came later from Burkina Faso also came to stay with Naba Tailor. He stated that some of them were not Muslims when they came from Burkina Faso but were converted to Islam through his good work of serving them which included, sharing of some food with them, preaching to them and also giving them some Islamic teachings. All the people around him became strong Muslims and began to spread the message of Islam as faithful disciples. This is how Islam came into the community of Moshie Zongo which has become the leading religion in the area. Nana Baba Bukari Tailor, has been able to make all his children and grand children about forty-four of them to embrace and accept Islam as their only and true religion.

He gave the reason that as early as childhood around three to four years, he made sure that his children were well taught the Islamic faith and practices. From the age of seven to ten years, he directed them to fast from 5am to 12 in the afternoon instead of 6pm as required by Islamic teachings and also made sure they went the Islamic school in the community to study how to read the Quran. These methods have made his children strong in the faith and he is pleased to have done a good job because in case he died today, his children are Muslims who know the way of Muhammad and will also pray for him to be accepted by Allah into heaven.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Interview with, Naba Baba Bukari Tailor, Elder and King Maker, 16<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

Hajjiah Marriamah Muhammad who is about ninety-seven years of age confirmed the above messages given by Baba Bukari Tailor. She added that all the old ladies in the community from the age of 35 to 85 are tasked to train the young ones to be strong in the Islamic faith. She claimed that Islam allows small children to be trained by men but when they grow it is proper and within Qu'ranic teachings that old ladies take up their training.<sup>33</sup> In the cause of training them to love, follow and spread Islam they also counsel them to stay away from pre-marital sex, to witness to their peers about Islam as the only religion to Allah, and also how to choose good partners. They are also taught to accept the fact that Islam allows husbands to marry more than four so they should avoid being jealous of one another. They are also taught to reject any man in marriage who is not ready to accept Islam and follow them to become a Muslim.

### **2.3.2 The Impact of Islamic Presence in the Moshie Zongo Community**

Since the first man to settle at the place was a Muslim, he was able to convert a lot of people into the Islamic faith. When Haruna came to settle at Moshie Zongo, the chief of Tafo gave him one condition that he and the other Muslims must not prevent other religious groups especially Christians from planting churches should they come around to do so. Since then, though some churches such as the Assembly of God, Ghana Baptist Convention and the Methodist Church Ghana have established their presence there, yet Islam has been the leading religion in the area. The reasons for this trend are that, the Christians who came there in the early years rejected the place with the reason that the place was a breeding ground for thieves and drug addicts. Secondly, the Muslims in the

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<sup>33</sup>Interview with Hajjiah Marriamah Muhammad, Leader of Women wing, Moshie Zongo, 16th September 2016.

community pay more attention to the propagation of their faith, as against their Christian counterparts. Thirdly, the issue of biological growth among Muslims which ensures that one gives birth to many children. For example the Hausa chief has five wives and seventeen children with forty-five grandchildren who are all Muslims. The fact that Muslims can marry many wives if they so wish and give birth to many children is a contributory factor for the increase in their population. Fourthly, they focus on marrying more Christian ladies and converting them into Islam which has been a strategy used by the Muslims and which has worked out for them. The fifth reason for the Muslim impact in Moshie Zongo is that they have established more Islamic schools which are training more people including women, men and children, with the aim of spreading the Islamic faith. According to Muhammad Ibrahim, the spokesperson of the chief of Moshie Zongo, apart from the above factors, Muslims in Moshie Zongo also embark on effective evangelism through dawn broadcasting. They also hold public lectures to explain to the people the tenets and basic beliefs of Islam.<sup>34</sup>

### **2.3.3 Some Islamic Sects in the Moshie Zongo Community**

Moshie Zongo has a large following of mainly Orthodox Muslims who are said to be of the Sunni stock. This is obvious for the fact that the first man to settle in the community was an orthodox Muslim. There are also adherents of the Tijaniyya. However it can be noted that there are no adherents of the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Movement in the community. The reason for this is that the differences in their teachings do not allow them to live together with members of the other sects. Whereas the orthodox Muslims

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<sup>34</sup>Interview with, Muhammad Ibrahim Fussani, linguist of the Chief of Moshie Zongo, Moshie Zongo, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2016.



believe that Jesus Christ did not die on the cross but it was Judas who replaced him on the cross, the Ahmadis teach otherwise that though Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross, he did not die on the cross. He fell into coma and when he was buried, he received some fresh air from the open and Luke, a friend of Jesus Christ, went to revive him. The Ahmadis also believe that after this event, he went to India to look for the “lost sheep”. He married there and gave birth to some children and died there after forty-five years.

This difference in teaching has created a big rift between the Ahmadis and the other Islamic groups to the extent that where orthodox Suuni Muslims are strong in their teaching and practices, the Ahmadis do not feel comfortable living there. Apart from the above they have something in common like the use of the Quran, Friday worship, giving Qu’ranic names to their children, and the acceptance of Muhammad as the messenger of Allah. Also the five pillars of Islam are practiced vigorously among all the Muslim sects who also believe in life after death.

## **2.4 History and Features of the Islamic religion**

### **2.4.1 Origins of Islam**

Islam is the name given to the religion founded by Muhammad in Arabia in the early seventh century. According to Patrick Sookhodeo, the word Islam is derived from the verb SLM, to resign, surrender, submit oneself, and Islam means but of submission and of resignation of oneself. One who professes Islam is a Muslim, one who has submitted. It is said by Muslims to be the religion of all the prophets from Adam to Muhammad.<sup>35</sup> As noted earlier, the founder of the religions is Muhammad, an Arabian trader from

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<sup>35</sup> Patrick Sookhodeo, *A Christian Pocket Guide to Islam* (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2002), 9.

Mecca who was born around 570AD and who died in 632 AD. Just as Christians measure their history from the birth of Christ, Muslims reckon theirs from the year Muhammad fled from Mecca to Medina to escape from opposition to his message. This flight referred to as *Hejira* is believed in Islamic tradition to mark the turning point of Muhammad's submission to God and his subsequent proclamation of a new revelation from God. Muslims believe in Muhammad as the last prophet. They also believe in the submission to the one and only one God, referred to as Allah.

According to Esposto under the leadership of Muhammad, Islamic religions and the activities of the Muslim community produced a new empire and a rich civilization which came to dominate much of Europe, the Middle East Asia and Africa. According to Esposto, because Islam developed in central Arabia its religious and social milieu provide the context for understanding Muhammad's reformist message and mission. The Arabs placed great emphasis on tribal ties, group loyalty or solidarity as the source of power for a clan or tribe. Tribal affiliation and law were the basis not only for identity but also for protection. The threat of family or group vendetta, the law of retaliation was of vital importance in a society lacking central political authority or law.<sup>36</sup>

The religion of pre-Islamic Arabia reflected its tribal nature and social structure. Gods and goddesses served as protectors of individual tribes and their spirits were associated with sacred objects, trees, stones, springs and wells. Mecca possessed a central Shrine of the gods, the Kaba, a-cube shaped building that housed the 360 tribal patron deities. Allah, the supreme high God, was considered as the creator and sustainer of life. Against

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<sup>36</sup> John Esposto, *Islam: The Straight Path* (Oxford: OUP, 1994), 6.

this background, it is worthy to note that pre-Islamic Arabia provided the context that shaped the Islamic religions. The development of Islam throughout the decades continue to reflect the Islamic faith. Islam developed as a reformation of the religious landscape of Arabia. The message of Islam, that is the belief in one and only one God came as a response to the polytheistic background of the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>37</sup>

#### **2.4.2 The Sources of Authority in Islam**

Each religious tradition has its own authentic sources of authority, which are referred to for authentication of its religious beliefs, practices and traditions. Like Christianity, Islam has its own sources of authority which are both oral and written. What are these sources of authority in Islam? In the view of Sanwer it is needless to say that some of these sources are common to all sects of Islam and some vary from sect to sect. The one which is common to the entire religion of course is the Holy Quran which is believed to be the most authentic source for all adherents of Islam. There is no sect which can ignore, let alone, reject the Qur'an as the source of authority. Muslims believe the identical book is in Heaven and Allah sent the angel Gabriel to Muhammad to reveal to him his "Word". Muslims thus, regard the Quran as the word or speech of God. The Quran is divided into 114 chapters or *Surahs*. The *Surahs* are revelations given to Muhammad during his twenty three years of "Prophethood" from 610 AD to 632 AD.<sup>38</sup>

Another source of authority is the *Haddith* meaning "Tradition". After the death of Muhammad, his followers did a collection of his sayings and actions in books to guide and direct their religious beliefs and practices. These are believed to give additional

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<sup>37</sup> John Esposto, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 6.

<sup>38</sup> Ghulan Sarwar, *Islam: Beliefs and Teachings* (London: Muslim Educational Trust, 1984), 1.

meaning to the *Surahs* and help interpret them. The most respected *Haddiths* are that of Bukari. Muslims do not feel the *Haddith* is the "Word of God". They compare the *Haddiths* to the Gospels, which reports what Jesus said. Islam believes the Quran is the authentic Word of God sent from Heaven through the angel Gabriel. Thus, there is no doubt that all true Muslims are united by their submission to the authority of their sacred Book, the Quran. They also believe that the Quran came to them in the Arabic language, and is thus the sacred language of Islam and requires no translation.<sup>39</sup>

#### **2.4.3. The Articles of faith in Islam**

This section deals with the basic beliefs or articles of faith in Islam. Muslims believe strongly in God or Allah. They believe in the one, unique and incomparable God. The first duty of a Muslim is to declare his faith in Allah by the words, 'there is no God but Allah' (*La ilahailallah, Muhammad rasul la*) and 'Muhammad' is Allah's messenger'. This expression of *tawhid* that is 'there is no God but Allah - is known as the primary creed (*Kalima*) of Islam. *Tawhid* implies that God is: One in his essence; he is not composed of parts, One in his attributes; not having a multiplicity of powers or wills and One in his works and no other being besides God has any influence on God at all.<sup>40</sup> In line with this article, Muslims believes that God is not a Trinity as held by Christians. God has said in the Quran:

"Indeed, they disbelieve who say, "God is the third of three (in a trinity)," when there is no god but one God". If they desist not from what they say, truly, a painful punishment will befall the disbelievers among them. Would they not rather repent to God and ask His forgiveness? For God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. The Messiah (Jesus), son of Mary, was no more than a messenger ... (Quran, 5:73-75)".

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<sup>39</sup> Andrew Ripping, *Muslims: Religious Beliefs and Practices* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 41.

<sup>40</sup> Ripping, *Muslims Religious Beliefs and Practices*, 1993, 41.

By this Muslims reject entirely the divinity of Jesus and see the relationship between Jesus and God as that of son and father in human terms.

Again, every Muslim believes in the divinely inspired books which God has sent down from time to time through various peoples, through his apostles or prophets. According to Horton the number of books sent down is believed to be 104. Of these, only five are named in the Qur'an. They are: The scrolls of Abraham (now lost). The *Tawrat* (the Torah) given to the prophet Musa (Moses), the *Zabur* (the Psalms) given to the Prophet Dawud (David), the *Injil* (the Gospel) given to the prophet Isa (Jesus) and the Qur'an revealed to the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>41</sup> Muslims believe in the existence of angels (*malaika*) and that they are honoured creatures. Among the angels is Gabriel, who brought down the Quran to Prophet Muhammad. Against this background, they also believe that there are Spirits (*jinni*) who influence the daily life of mankind, either for good or for evil.<sup>42</sup>

Muslims also believe in the prophets and messengers of God, starting with Adam, including Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Jesus (peace be upon them). But God's final message to man, a reconfirmation of the eternal message, was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Their belief is that Muhammad is the last prophet sent by God, as God has said: **“Muhammad is not the father of anyone of your men, but he is the Messenger of God and the last of the prophets ...” (Quran, 33:40).**

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<sup>41</sup> D. Horton, *The Portable Seminary* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2006), 430.

<sup>42</sup> William M. Miller, *A Christian's Response to Islam* (Wheaton, ILL: Tyndale House Publishers INC, 1980), 43 – 44.

Muslims believe in the Day of Judgment, (the Day of Resurrection) when all people will be resurrected for God's judgment according to their beliefs and deeds. They believe that each person has two angels who serve as recorders. One records good deeds whilst the other the bad deeds. These deeds will be weighed on the judgement day and the heavy one will determine where you will spend eternity, heaven for good deeds and hell for bad ones.<sup>43</sup>

Finally, Muslims also believe in *Al-Qadar*, which is Divine Predestination. But this belief in divine predestination does not mean that human beings do not have freewill. Rather, Muslims believe that God has given human beings freewill, and that they can choose right or wrong and that they are responsible for their choices and actions. It is this which in Muslim belief makes man liable for judgement in the last day. Hence man is without excuse when he comes to the judgement of God.

#### **2.4.4 Religious Life (Practical Duties) of Muslims**

In Islam the believer's relationship with Allah is demonstrated by his faithful practice of the religious rites. However, according to Hassan the five compulsory daily payers (*salati*) are considered the most fundamental of these obligations. The first duty of a Muslim is to declare his faith that 'there is no God (or deity) but Allah' and 'Muhammad is Allah's messenger (apostle)'. To say this declaration in Arabic in front of a judge, or two witnesses, and to believe it, are all that are required of a person to become a member of the community of believers (*ummah*)<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> William M. Miller, *A Christian's Response to Islam*, 43 – 44.

<sup>44</sup> S.A. Hassan-Ali, *Islam: An Introduction* (New Delhi: Universal Peace Foundation, 2006), 17.

Before any prayers, ritual washing is performed by washing in a prescribed way. The name for this is *wudu*. Muslims always pray facing the direction of Mecca. This direction is the *qiblah*. The five prescribed prayers consist of a set cycle of words and ritual gestures (*bowing/ raka 'hs*). At the early stages Muhammad and his followers performed only two prayers, the morning prayer before sunrise and the evening prayer after sunset. According to Ghullan Sarwar, it is believed by Muslims that their prayers are witnessed by the angels at anytime day or night. Besides these they use to spend a great part of the night in prayer. After the famous night journey of Muhammad, the five daily prayers were prescribed (Sura 17:80).<sup>45</sup>

Additional *raka'hs* are recommended according to the *sunnah* (sayings and deeds of Muhammad). These are called *sunnah* prayers. Sarwar continues that the words which accompany the gestures must be learnt by heart and uttered in the Arabic tongue, regardless of the language of the person praying. *Salat* is seen as a collective and social act. The common use of Arabic by all worshippers emphasizes the universality of Islam. This sense of solidarity is also reinforced by the knowledge that Muslims everywhere, each day, are repeating the same words and gestures, while facing the city of Mecca, the birthplace of the prophet and the scene of his first revelations and of his triumph over the Meccans.<sup>46</sup>

Muslims may pray in Mosques at other times, but Muslim men are expected to attend the Mosque on Friday afternoons to pray and to hear a sermon. At the main festivals, the

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<sup>45</sup> Sarwar, *Islam: Beliefs and Teachings*, 1.

<sup>46</sup> Sarwar, *Islam: Beliefs and Teachings*, 1.

large Mosques are filled with hundreds of Muslims. This too helps to give a sense of unity in worship and of brotherhood. According to Islamic tradition the noon prayer on Fridays was specified as a special congregational prayer in the main Mosque following a scriptural injunction (Sura62:9). Personal prayers (*du'a*), whether praise, thanksgiving or supplication, may be added afterwards. These may be uttered in one's own language, but it is considered better to memorize some in Arabic.

Now we come to the fifth and last of the pillars of Islam. Muslims believe that the first Al- *Ka'ba* was built by Adam. This stone building was damaged and rebuilt many times throughout history. The *Ka'ba* was a centre for worship among the Arabs before the time of Muhammad. Inside the building is a big room. This room is now empty. In pre-Islamic times the room was full of statues of idols. When Muhammad and his followers entered Mecca in 630 AD, the pinnacle of Islam's triumph, they destroyed the idols. Muslims all over the world now pray in the direction of this building. 'The Black Stone' is a meteorite stone located in the north-eastern corner of the Ka'ba. It is believed to have been white at the time of Adam, but man's iniquities are supposed to have given it its present colour.<sup>47</sup>

The final pillar is the *hajj*, which is a pilgrimage to the Holy City of Mecca. A man who has performed the *hajj* may dye his beard yellow or orange and may wear a small white skull cap. These marks then become a visible sign of his spirituality. In many areas this gives him higher status. He is known as *al-hajji*. The traditions of Muhammad say that every step taken by the pilgrim in the direction of the Ka'ba blots out a sin and the person

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<sup>47</sup> David Waines, *An Introduction to Islam* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 95.



who dies on his pilgrimage is enrolled among the martyrs. According to Islamic tradition, *Jihad* does not belong to the five practical pillars of Islam, but is repeatedly emphasized in the Qur'an and the Traditions. The word has been interpreted and understood in various ways since the time of Muhammad. It is an Arabic word which means 'to struggle to the utmost of one's capacity. It has varying interpretations: A 'holy war' in defence of Islam; raiding and conquest during the early spread of Islam; a modern call to propagate Islam; and personal self-discipline.

## **2.5 The Basic Tenets of Christianity**

The tenets of Christianity are the very heart of the faith. There are several beliefs which make Christianity very unique to other faiths. Christians believe in monotheism, that is, the oneness of God. This is based on the Biblical mandate:

“You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing loving kindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments” (Exodus 20:3-6, NIV).

It is significant to note that God visits iniquity on the descendants of those who do not follow the true and living God. Thus Christianity denies the worship of other gods apart from God, the creator.

Christians also believe in the Deity of Christ that is Jesus as God manifested in the flesh (John 8:58 with Exodus 3:14). According to Geisler Christ as the eternal Son of God is clear from both the Old and New Testaments. Jesus said that if you do not believe “that I am, you will die in your sins. In Greek “I am” is ‘*ego eimi*,’ which means ‘I am.’ These

are the same words used in John 8:58, where Jesus says “before Abraham was, I am”. By this Jesus was claiming the divine title by quoting Exodus 3:14. Christians are of the belief that, Salvation is by grace. That is, it is not purchased with money or earned through works. It is freely offered by God through faith. “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” (Eph. 2:8-9, NIV).

God in His sovereignty has put in place a mechanism to bring man to Himself. No man can please God by his own works. God’s standard is that anyone who believes in the Lord Jesus may be saved. We are told in Gal. 5:4: “You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.” This verse and its context plainly teach that if you believe that you are saved by faith and works, then you are not saved at all. This seems to be a common error among other religious groups. Because they believe in a false Messiah, they tend to possess a false doctrine of salvation.

Christians further believe in the resurrection of Christ. In line with this Geisler asserts that, “the crowing miracle of Jesus’ life was his resurrection, predicted in the Old Testament and reaffirmed in the New Testament.” According to the Apostle Paul, “**If** Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith, “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.” (1Cor. 15:14, 17l NIV). Paul seems to suggest that the basis of the faith of Christians is the resurrection of Jesus. It is the resurrection of Jesus which gives the Christian an assurance of salvation and a future hope. This also is the basis of their confidence in God. To deny the physical

resurrection is to deny that Jesus' work was not a satisfactory offering to God the Father. It would also mean that Jesus was corrupt and needed to stay in the grave. But, he did not stay in the grave because his sacrifice was perfect and acceptable to God. It accomplished the purpose of God, that is, the reconciliation between God and man.

Furthermore, Christians also believe that the Gospel is the power of God, which leads to salvation. Therefore Paul warns that,

“But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: if anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!”  
(Gal.1:8-9,NIV)

The Apostle Paul puts much emphasis on the gospel which is able to bring humankind into a saving knowledge of God. Christians believe that. This gospel is about Jesus Christ whose death and resurrection has bridged the gap between God and man. It has set aside every enmity between God and man. Christians also believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, that is, God existing in three persons, as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This seems to be implied in Matt. 28:19, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy **Spirit**,”. This scripture and others such as Matthew 3:16-17; 1Cor. 12:4-6; 2Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6) go to support the biblical position on the Trinity. The doctrine is not represented by a single verse per se though it is hinted at. Rather, it is arrived at by systematically looking at the totality of scripture. It is, nevertheless, the proper representation of scriptural revelation concerning the nature of God. Therefore the church, for that matter all Christians firmly hold on to this doctrine and they believe that it is that which makes their Christian faith to stand on “solid ground”.

Another significant pillar of the Christian faith is the Bible. It is the sacred scriptures of Christianity and constitutes the final authority in all matters of faith. All the beliefs and practices of the Christian church are defined by the Bible. In line with this, Kwame Bediako has observed that the centrality of Scripture means more than the importance of texts of the Bible, and more than the importance of certain verses and chapters that one may quote as proof text to support a particular position, one holds because of denominational or traditional background. In his view the centrality of scripture is “more fundamental and its significance much larger.<sup>48</sup> Scripture is more comprehensive...than just the sum of passages of scripture. Scripture provides the ultimate interpretation of who we are, not just as human beings created by God, but as human beings in our specific cultural identities”. Thus, “the notion and concept of scripture are intrinsic to our religious apprehensions and the religious grasp of our faith. Scripture therefore, is the authoritative, normative deposit given to us of the divine-human encounter, that lies at the heart of our path”. The Christian faith, therefore, is the fruit, the result and the manifestation of God’s dealings with humanity. Scripture is the proof of that engagement. It becomes the authoritative “road map” for our religious itinerary and the effective compass for our journey of faith as the people of God.<sup>49</sup>

## **2.6 Conclusion**

The chapter addressed the background to the Moshie Zongo Community and Christian Mission. It considered issues such as the background of Moshie with reference to its

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<sup>48</sup> Kwame Bediako, “Scripture as the Hermeneutic of culture and Tradition,” *Journal of African Christian Thought*. (4, No. (2001), 2.

<sup>49</sup> Bediako, “Scripture as the Hermeneutic of culture and Tradition,” *Journal of African Christian Thought*, 2.

history of origins, the people, their social structure, politics, and religious life and thought. Also addressed are the history of Islamic presence in Moshie Zongo aspects of the Islamic religion and some tenets of the Christian faith.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH AND ITS MISSION IN MOSHIE ZONGO**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The discussion in the previous chapter covered the background of the Moshie Zongo Community and Christian Missions. It considered issues such as the background of Moshie Zongo, History of Islamic Presence in Moshie Zongo, some aspects of the Islamic faith, and some basic tenets of Christianity. This chapter examines the Assembly of God Church and Missions in Moshie Zongo. Among the issues addressed are church and frontier missions, the emergence of the Assembly of God church at Moshie Zongo, the as well as the challenges in the evangelistic process in Moshie Zongo.

#### **3.2 The Church and Frontier Missions**

The major priority and purpose of the Christian church is to glorify God. This is done, among other things, by worship (Ps. 29:2), by producing the fruit of the Spirit (Phil. 1:11), by holiness. (1 Cor. 6:19 – 20) by obedience to God's will (Jn. 14:15) and by witness to Christ's redemptive and sovereign power. (Phil. 2:11). The church today is to bear the responsibility of pursuing the mission of reconciling lost humanity to God in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:20). This involves making the Christian message known in such a way that people will hear and understand it.

The Great Commission in Mathew 28:19, mandates the church (Christian believers) to make of all nations, disciples of Christ. People of all backgrounds are to hear the good news of salvation brought about as a result of the death of Christ. Peter Wagner has noted that in its efforts to be faithful to the kingdom, the church must preach the gospel. We as Christians we are told to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). Again the gospel of the kingdom must be

preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, (Matt. 24:14).<sup>50</sup> Roy Pointer has also observed that “the most compelling reason for the priority of evangelism is the plight of man. The scriptures reveal man as alienated from God and subject to His judgement. Man is lost and needs to be saved”.<sup>51</sup>

The church in mission stands in line with what God has been doing in history, and is still doing today: Just as Israel was chosen to carry out God’s mission in its time, God has called the church today, to be a vehicle through which His purposes will be accomplished in history. Thus the church’s mission involves declaring God’s purpose to establish its kingdom, and which is carried out by a people who makes the kingdom a reality in the world. God’s purpose for the world thus involves His loving concern for humanity, the salvation of all people everywhere, and the reconciliation of all things. (Eph. 1:10, Col.1:20, 23)

Muslims fall in the category of those who do not have personal relationship with God through Christ. The church’s mission therefore includes the evangelisation of Muslims and this is considered as frontier missions. Thus, we owe it as a duty to establish a testimony of Christ among all people groups including those of the Islamic faith. In doing so, the church stands out as a partner with God in the pursuit of His purposes in the world. God desires that all people everywhere come to know Him through Jesus Christ in the context of the church.

In the book of Joshua, the children of Israel were told that their major priority in entering the land of Canaan after crossing the Jordan river, was to establish a testimony of Yahweh among the natives. The Israelites possessed the knowledge of the one and only true God, and were thus, to make Him known to the inhabitants of Canaan who were very much into idolatry. Against this

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<sup>50</sup> Peter Wagner, *Church Growth and the Whole Gospel: A Biblical Mandate* (New York: Harper & Row Publisher INC, 1981), 10 – 11.

<sup>51</sup> Roy Pointer, *How do Churches Grow?* (London: British Church Growth Association, 1984), 25.

background, Samuel Faircloth observes that the motif in the book of Acts is the expansion of the faith through Missionary witness in the power of the Holy Spirit. He concludes that “the will of the Holy Spirit is the continuous planting of new churches throughout the world”. As the church proclaims the gospel, people will come into the church and begin to experience the rule of God in their lives.<sup>52</sup> Christian Missions is to be seen as a partnership with God in bringing about His divine purpose for humanity which is the reconciliation of all people everywhere to Himself.

In this same sense, David Bosch sees missions as the total task which God has set the church for the salvation of the world. He sees the salvation of the world as God’s concern, which He expects the church to share, by proclaiming the gospel to all people everywhere.<sup>53</sup> The church thus, exists in the world, as God’s agent of change with the mandate to enforce His divine purposes for all of humanity. Christian missions is thus to be considered as a partnership with God and Christ in restoring humanity to its original purpose. Mission constitutes the church’s divine mandate towards the whole world which must not be downplayed or compromised.

### **3.3 The Advent of the Assemblies of God at Moshie Zongo**

In examining the presence of the Assemblies of God in the Moshie Zongo community, it is relevant to consider the history and founding of the church in order to ascertain how far it has come in terms of its mission.

#### **3.3.1 History and Origins of the Church**

Following the findings of the Ghana Evangelism Committee report regarding the “unfinished task” published in 1990 and made available to all churches, the Ashanti

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<sup>52</sup> Samuel FairCloth, *Church Planting For Reproduction* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1991), 20.

<sup>53</sup> David Bosch, *Witness To The World* (London: Morgan & Stott, 1980), 17.



Regional Council of the Assemblies of God, decided to launch out to unreached communities and people under a strategic plan of missions. Under this missionary programme, plans and modalities were put in place for local churches to reach out to communities where their presence were not manifested. In fulfillment of this master plan of mission, Moshie Zongo was targeted as the first location. The first issue they considered was to find a minister of the gospel who had a Muslim background to pioneer the mission project at Moshie Zongo since the area was perceived to be Muslim dominated. In their search for that person, the regional executives settled on one Rev. Iddrisu Tweneboa –Kodua (who happens to be the researcher of this study project), who willingly accepted to spearhead the mission among the people of Moshie Zongo. Work thus commenced in 1993.<sup>54</sup>

Rev. Iddrisu and his wife Susana were by then residing at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology campus. When given the mandate to lead the mission at Moshie Zongo, he moved there joyfully and with a ready heart to work among his own “brothers and sisters” who were of the Islamic faith. It took two months to carry out a survey and feasibility studies in the area. This involved ascertaining the kind of people with whom he was going to work, their history, the category and number of people in the community, the educational status of the people and above all to find a place to be used for worship. As at that time all the schools there were owned by Muslims, who mainly used them for the teaching of the Arabic language and thus would

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<sup>54</sup>Interview with, Malik Muhammad Associate Pastor Assembly of God Church, Moshie Zongo, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

not permit any church to worship in their schools. This made it very difficult to obtain a place of meeting and this delayed the commencement of the church.

After the feasibility study, Rev. Iddrisu was able to find an uncompleted building belonging to one Madam Yaa Yesu who resided at the nearby suburb of Dicheonso.<sup>55</sup> She graciously gave the place out for the commencement of the church with the only advice that she did not want to hear of any disturbances between them and the Muslims in the community. She also cautioned that peace was to be ensured as they carried out the proclamation of the Christian message in the community. Madam Yaa Yesu also donated some wooden benches to be used for worship services.

### **3.3.2 The Nature and Methods of Church Planting**

The evangelization process at Moshie Zongo began with street meetings which involved personal one-to-one witnessing. With much diligence and perseverance on the part of Rev. Iddrisu some converts numbering about five (5) were won. These initial converts became the founding members and leaders of the church. They included Musah Muhammad, Mariama Serwaa, Kwaku Ali, and others who together with Rev. Iddrisu and his wife Susana constituted the church in its early days. The pastor served as the Sunday school teacher as well as usher. The Pastor's wife Susana also served as the women organizer, young ladies leader and worship leader as well. Musah Muhammad became the men's ministry leader, while Kwaku Ali served as the financial and property manager.

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<sup>55</sup>Interview with, Kwaku Ali. Deacon in the Church, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

Apart from the pastor and his wife all these other people were residing in the community at the time the church began and were therefore in charge of the church services especially in the evenings when the pastor was not available. This was so because the pastor (Rev. Iddrisu) was by then staying at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, and was also a Bible school student and could therefore not attend the church services in the evenings. Even though this affected the growth of the church in the initial stages, with good and more prudent measures put in place, the church began to experience a steady growth with more people joining the fellowship of the church.<sup>56</sup>

The strategies employed in the church planting process helped to sustain the gains made from the beginning. Apart from going to the local people and sharing the Christian message with them on one-to-one basis, Rev. Iddrisu later trained the initial converts to do likewise with love and patience. They were instructed to be gender sensitive by allowing the men to speak with men and the women with their women counterparts and the young ladies. They were not to speak with more than two people at a time for the reason that one of them could go home and report negatively about the other in case he or she accepted the Christian message.

As time went on, the church grew steadily in numbers, and the church's leadership introduced some more equally effective means of winning more converts. This strategy was a satellite one involving household evangelism whereby church members were directed to meet people in their homes, study the Bible and pray with them. In the course

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<sup>56</sup> Interview with Joseph Ahima, Former Treasurer, Moshie Zongo, 16<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

of time they were to direct those who showed enough commitment to the message to join the main church services.

Rev. Iddrisu later moved his family into the Moshie Zongo community to stay in a two-bed room house which was secured with the assistance of the Living Waters Assembly of God Church at Bomso Kumasi, then pastored by Rev. Charles David Vespa, a former missionary from the United States of America, who paid for all the accommodation expenses.<sup>57</sup>

Another strategy that was used in the evangelisation process was the breakfast meeting programme. This was initiated by the church in collaboration with the Full Gospel Business Men Fellowship International, International (a para-church group of Christian professionals). As part of this programme, the church organised people from all places to come to the church premises where a “brother” would share his testimony concerning his encounter with the Christian faith. Breakfast was served to the participants and after which an altar call was made for those who wanted to commit their lives to Jesus Christ as their personal saviour to come out and do so openly. In collaboration with the Full Gospel Business Men Fellowship International, some Muslims converts were led through intensive discipleship course for spiritual nourishing and upbringing. Also because the pastor was from a Muslim background, it enabled him to establish good relationship with the converts which resulted in their spiritual growth.

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<sup>57</sup>Interview with Marriamah Serwa, Former Women’s Ministry Leader, 12<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

In the course of time, other Assemblies of God churches sent their Muslim converts to the Moshie Zongo Church for spiritual nurture since they considered the pastor (Rev. Iddrisu) to be in a better position to help Muslim converts to grow in the Christian faith.<sup>58</sup> One of such churches was the Living Waters Assembly of God Church.

These churches were not just sending their Muslim converts to the Moshie Zongo Church but some of them also supported with material things. For instance some bought clothing for the converts, others provided accommodation, and others also opened their business places for the Muslim converts to get jobs. One convert by name Mamunatu had the opportunity to attend school to pursue formal education with the Living Waters Chapel paying her school fees from the basic to the second cycle through to the tertiary level. This support enabled her to graduate from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology as an accountant. When others saw that Muslim converts were being assisted by the church, they also responded willingly to the Christian message and joined the church.<sup>59</sup>

The church also arranged with medical personnel from the KATH to conduct medical screening and also treat the people in the community of various diseases free of charge. The people including children and the elderly were treated of malaria, heart diseases, stomach as well as eye problems. The church members also donated used shoes and clothing to support the weak and needy people in the community. Periodic clean up

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<sup>58</sup>Interview with David c Vespa, Former pastor and missionary, Living Waters Chapel Bomso Kumasi, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Joseph Ahimah, former Treasurer, Moshie Zongo, 16<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

exercises were also embarked upon in the community with the sweeping of the streets, distilling of drains and burning of refuse at various locations.

In the course of time when the church began to gain sound footing in the community, it opened a bank account called “Muslims Converts Support Accounts” (MCSA). Monies were raised from donations made by loved ones in the church and others from the Calvary Temple Assembly of God Church at Bantama, Atwima Farms and some other individual Christians. Again at one board meeting of the church, it was decided that a percentage of the church’s total monthly income be sent to the MCSA for the purpose of meeting the physical needs of converts from Muslim homes who may be ostracized from their families because of their conversion to the Christian faith.

Another program which contributed significantly to the steady growth of the church was the “Bible and the Qur’an” class which was held once every week.<sup>60</sup> This programme was designed to allow the Bible “to speak with the Qur’an” with the aim of strengthening the faith of the members who had come from Islam. These converts were taught to love the reading of the Bible and to appreciate where they had come to. As a result some of the converts came to acknowledge the importance of Bible reading and thus accepted the Bible as the inspired word of God. During these classes the converts were given the opportunity to ask questions on issues they did not understand, which they hitherto did not get the opportunity to ask when they were in Islam. This enabled them to grow faster in their new found faith.

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<sup>60</sup>Interview with Isaac Kofi Dwomoh, Livingstone Chapel Pastor, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

Many Muslims ladies in the community occasionally came to the church premises with their marital and other problems. These women were given the opportunity to study in a free environment where the men and women sat together. As more non-Christians attended this special Bible study class an awareness was created in their minds concerning commitment to Jesus Christ as saviour. Through this programme many of the converts began to experience spiritual growth and began to share their faith in the community among their brothers and sisters. The church members were also tolerant with children who came around the church premises as a matter of curiosity. These were invited and taught Bible lessons which resulted in some of them joining the church. As they grew in their relationship with the church it also attracted their parents to visit the church, which also led some to join the church's fellowship in the long run.<sup>61</sup>

Other strategies used in the evangelistic process included street evangelism with the sharing of gospel tracts with people on the street and in homes as well. With much diligence, the church members carried out this activity regularly and with joy and patience. Many people bore witness to the transformation that had taken place in the lives of the church members and thus attested to the genuineness of the message which they proclaimed. This resulted in many people joining the church. Also there were intensive prayer sessions which caused much growth in the church in the beginning. From Monday to Friday, early in the morning from 5am to 7am, prayer codenamed "morning glory" went on in the church premises. At this prayer meeting, the leaders and other members met to pray for the church and other people especially Muslims in the

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<sup>61</sup>Interview with Thomas Ahimah, Former Treasurer Assembly of God Church, Moshie Zongo, 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2016.

community. Every Friday morning was also dedicated to special prayers for Muslims in the community as well as those in the global world. This programme was adopted by some other churches which began to pray for the conversion and the preservation of Muslims converts in their churches. The name given to this special prayer session was *Jummah Prayer* which simply means Friday prayers. Some Bible school students also used to attend this prayer meeting after which they went into the community to proclaim the Christian message from house to house. During other times, some of the church members also went to the Mid-Ghana Bible College at Bronkong and together with the students, prayed for the growth of the church at Moshie Zongo as well as for the conversion of Muslims in the other places in the world.

As prayer was intensified in the church and in the community, some of the people claimed to have seen Jesus Christ in their dreams and as a result came for more insight and counseling and which gave them the opportunity to convert to the Christian faith. Through the prayer sessions many miracles were witnessed by the people and this inspired them to grow in their faith. It is reported that some members of the church and other non-members who used to patronised the prayer meetings experienced physical healings, flourishing of their business ventures as well as marriage couples who were childless also receiving the blessing of having children. Some of the children that were born were even named after the pastor whom they considered as the means of their blessing from God. Prayer also brought about unity and understanding in the members which inspired them to share their faith openly in the community. Thus they saw themselves as belonging to one family which is the church.



### **3.3.3 Further Growth in the church**

Apart from the initial strategies which brought about the establishment of the church at Moshie Zongo, there are other factors which promoted growth in the church and sustained the gains that were made from the beginning. In addition to the regular spiritual formation activities, the church members took upon themselves to visit the relatives of members occasionally and also in their times of bereavement. They sympathized with those victims and also gave them donations to help defray the costs of the funerals. Again, during marriage and child naming ceremonies involving relatives of members, the church encouraged its members to attend such ceremonies. This brought about cordial relationship between the church and the community and also paved the way for more non-members to join the church's fellowship.

During Muslim festivals of *Eid-ul-fitr* and *Eid-ul-addah*, Muslims in the community presented some food and meat to the Christians and this also helped to promote peaceful coexistence between the Christians and the Muslims in the community. The church also undertook outreach activities outside the community. The first community that was reached was Adwuman in the Kwabre East district where a church was planted. A parcel of land was acquired for the church to construct a chapel. A pastor was also sent there to help in the spiritual growth of the members. Another church was planted at Biemso No. 2 in the Ahafo Ano South district where four plots of land were acquired for chapel construction. The Moshie Zongo church funded the acquisition of the plots through its ministry partners from the church and other sister churches.

The leadership of the church began to attract more Muslims brothers and sisters to themselves through good personal relationship. They paid regular visits to Muslim homes, participated in football matches and as well joint communal activities in the community. At certain times, disputes among Muslim brothers were settled with the assistance of the church leaders. The impact of the church in the community became very visible to every one culminating in further growth in the church. Rev. Iddrisu pastored the church from 1993 to 2006 after which he was transferred to go to the United States of America as a missionary. The Ashanti Regional Council of the Assemblies of God, immediately brought in a new pastor in the person of Rev. Kwame Opoku Ware to take care of the congregation. He has been in charge of the church since 2006 until now as the resident pastor.

### **3.3.4 People of the Book Centre Assembly of God Church Today**

Rev. Iddrisu Tweneboa Kodua pastored the church at Moshie Zongo from 1993 to 2006 after which he was posted to the United States of America as a home missionary. Rev. Kwame Opoku Ware was posted to Moshie Zongo to take charge of the church. At the time he took over the church, the membership stood at three hundred (300) with thirty (30) men, seventy (70) women, one hundred and twenty (120) youth and eighty (80) children.<sup>62</sup>

The membership of the church now stands at two hundred active members who are regular in their church attendance and faithful in the payment of their tithes and other obligations. The reasons for the drop in the membership was due to challenges that

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<sup>62</sup> Interview with Michael Osei, former Church Deacon, Moshie Zongo 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2016.  
Interview with Joseph Amankwah, Sunday School Superintendent Moshie Zongo 8/8/16

cropped up later in the church after the departure of Rev. Iddrisu which included the inability of the new pastor to appeal to the indigeous people because of language barrier and the fact that he did not have a Muslim background.<sup>63</sup> The current number of deacons is five, and include Moses Adusei, Michael Okyere, Daniel Nabila, Dennis Otuo Acheampong and Samuel Frimpong Morrison. The Women Ministry department has Adaba Kate as president assisted by Mary Agyapong and Hagar Boateng. The Sunday school department has Moses Adusei, Michael Okyere and Angela Agyemang as leaders. The children's department is headed by Frederick Manu, Esther Osei Frimpong, Esther Adusei, Mary Akurugu, Vida Yin, Cynthia Agbango and Portia Abgango.<sup>64</sup> The church is multiethnic in membership and is composed of people from diverse cultural backgrounds with a greater number coming from the northern parts of Ghana and few others from Southern Ghana.

### **3.4 Challenges in the Church's evangelistic process**

Even though the Assembly of God church at Moshie Zongo, also referred to as the People of the Book Centre, has consolidated its presence in the community, that has not being without some challenges. Since its establishment in the community, the church has encountered several challenges resulting from socio economic, infrastructural, cultural, spiritual, and leadership factors.

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<sup>63</sup> Interview with Joseph Ahima, former Treasurer, Assembly of God Church, Moshie Zongo, 16<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Michael, former Deacon, Assembly of God Church, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

### **3.4.1 Socio-economic Challenges**

Perhaps the major challenge which confronted the church in its early beginnings, and even today, had to do with finance. The economic background of most of the members seemed was not sound enough and this did not put them in a good position to pay their tithes faithfully and regularly. As a result the church did not get enough funds to support its activities in the initial stages. One key issue had to do with the care and support of converts from Islamic background. Islam seems to be in opposition to Christianity and hence any Muslim who purports to “cross-over” or “convert” to Christianity is met with serious challenge. In some cases such converts are even banished from their homes and ostracized from their family roots. In such situations, it becomes imperative that the church takes up the care and support of such victims. This calls for funds to meet huge budgets that may have to go into such areas as accommodation, feeding, clothing, education, employment skills training and many others.

Another issue worth nothing is that many non-Muslim “converts” were also calling in for assistance from the church. They argued that every convert no matter his or her background needed to be assisted and not just Muslim converts alone.<sup>65</sup> This had some negative impact on the financial performance of the church. As some church members were unable to pay their tithe, and others bringing in small amounts, the church could not get enough funds to support its activities, as noted earlier. Initially, anyone who came to the church and claimed to have converted from Islam was considered to be a true convert, but with time, some were found out not to be genuine converts but only came to the church for material reasons. Some of these were even found out to be drug and alcohol

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<sup>65</sup>Interview with, Joseph Ahima, Former Church Treasurer Moshie Zongo, 16<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

addicts and robbers, while others were found to be making immoral approaches towards the young ladies in the church. Consequently converts were closely monitored to ascertain the genuineness of their commitment before any assistance could be given to them.

### **3.4.2 Infrastructural challenges**

Another internal problem had to do with the place of meeting. The daughter of the owner of the building which was used as chapel in the early days of the church came from the United States of America and purposed to complete the building for her mother before going back to her base. The church was therefore forced to leave the premises without any preparation for an alternative place.<sup>66</sup> The leadership of the church approached the Executive Council of the Assemblies of God in the Ashanti Region and yet no positive response was received. A plot of land was allocated to the church by the chief of Tafo and yet the church could not afford to pay for it. In 1994 the church borrowed from a bank, an amount of five hundred Ghana cedis (500.00) for a plot of land for the construction of a new chapel. No sooner had the plot of land been bought than help came from some American missionaries to ensure the construction of the chapel. But the project has since not been completed. (See Appendix II) Worse still the church faced the challenge of flooding any time it rained as the land on which the chapel was constructed is in a flood prone area. It took the church to spend large sums of money to erect pillars and construct embankments to check the flood water from causing damage to the chapel building.

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<sup>66</sup>Interview with Isaac Opoku, Former Deacon and Treasurer, 16<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

### **3.4.3 Persecution by Muslims**

The church had to brace itself against spiritual challenges. Occasional physical abuse on the part of the Muslim leaders on the pastor of the church and fear of the members was too much to contain. When these Muslim leaders got to know that the pastor was a former Muslim, they decided to attack him because they considered him to be a threat to their faith and as someone who would reveal the secrets in their religion. Also, they colluded with the landlord of the pastor, who was a Muslim to eject him from his house and be sent to another place. This brought some form of hardship to the church which was not financially strong at that time to hire a residential accommodation for the pastor. The pastor and the family had to move from one place to the other and this affected the church in its early days since he was not able to attend to the members efficiently. It took the intervention of the Living Waters Chapel which donated some amount of money to the church to rent an apartment for the pastor.<sup>67</sup> Again, as more threats were coming on the church, it created fear in the members.

Persecution was so great towards the pastor and the church with regards to the winning of converts in the community. The Pastor was warned many times by Muslim parents not to speak to their children and loved ones concerning the Christian faith. He was arrested many times and sent to the police station with the charge that he was insulting Muhammad and discrediting the Islamic religion. However this was found to be untrue and was only a ploy to put fear in him so as to stop him from preaching in the community.

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<sup>67</sup>Interview with DaCosta Dankwah, Deacon 7<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

There was a Muslim brother in the community whose wife was a member of the church. He organized some of the youth in the community to cause confusion with the reason that the wife gave offering to the church. One night after an altar call, following an outdoor evangelistic meeting, some of these youth came to the grounds intentionally to ask questions concerning the blood of Jesus Christ and salvation.<sup>68</sup> When the preacher (who is also the researcher of this study project) tried to explain to them from the Bible, they became angry and collected the Bible and threw it away while some of them threatened to beat him up. Others also threw stones at the crowd at the meeting. However calm was restored when the evangelism team went to speak with the youth to exercise restraint and allow peace to prevail. The fear, intimidation, and threats of death on the Christians became a set back to the church's evangelistic activities, despite the gains that were made in terms of growth.

#### **3.4.4 Cultural challenges**

It has been noted that a majority of the church's membership seem to come from Islamic background. Also the church is made up of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, mostly from the northern parts of Ghana. Very often it became very difficult to communicate the Christian message through preaching and Bible studies within the church context, because of language problems. In the multicultural context of Moshie Zongo, language becomes a critical issue as each ethnic group seems to cherish its mother tongue. Even when the Asante Twi is used in church worship service, there may be some people who may not be able to comprehend the teaching of the Bible. This eventually affected their spiritual formation. This is the dilemma of the current pastor

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<sup>68</sup> Interview with Abu Alhassan Yusif, Head of evangelism team, 21<sup>st</sup> August 2016.

who is an Akan and also lacks an Islamic background. Due to language barrier, it is often difficult for the pastor to build personal relationship with the Muslim chiefs, imams and other local leaders in the community. This challenge has affected the church after the departure of Rev. Iddrisu.

Again prejudice on the part of the Christians, fear of converts being banished from family roots and threats of divorce of married women are some cultural challenges that confront the church. For instance, Zenabu Mamuna is reported to have been divorced by her husband Seidu Haruna following her conversion to the Christian faith. Also Abass Alhassan chased his wife Mamunatu Muhammad to the church premises for patronizing a Christian programme. This eventually led to her divorce.<sup>69</sup>

### **3.5 Conclusion**

The discussion in this chapter centered on the Assembly of God Church and missions in Moshie Zongo. It addressed issues such as the church and frontier missions, the advent of the Assembly of God church in the Moshie Zongo community, as well as the challenges in the evangelistic process at Moshie Zongo.

In a predominantly Muslim community of Moshie Zongo, the Assembly of God emerged and established its presence. It was discovered that the church's presence in the community has been greatly affected by many challenges. These challenges have been identified as infrastructural, spiritual, socio-economic, cultural among others. Despite the challenges the Assembly of God continue to sustain its presence in the community.

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<sup>69</sup> Interview with Kwaku Ali, Deacon Assembly of God Church, Moshie Zongo, 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2016.



**CHAPTER FOUR**

**EMERGING THEOLOGICAL AND MISSIOLOGICAL ISSUES IN THE**

**CHRISTIAN – MUSLIM ENCOUNTER**

**4.1 Introduction**

The discussions in the previous chapter concerned on the Assembly of God church and missions at Moshie Zongo. Among the issues considered are the church and frontier missions, the advent of the Assembly of God church at Moshie Zongo, as well as the challenges in the evangelistic process. This chapter considers the interpretation and analysis of data from a theological perspective. It considered issues such as religious pluralism and the church and the quest for knowledge, understanding and cooperation, holistic ministry and church growth as well as mission and cultural issues.

**4.2. Religious Pluralism and the quest for understanding and cooperation**

Ghana, as a country has witnessed religious pluralism over the years at all levels. Many religious groups or faiths have had their presence manifested in almost every corner of the country. One positive thing is that, except on few occasions, we seem not to have witnessed inter-religious conflicts. There have been few incidents reported concerning violent attacks on religious leaders during faith activities. For instance Abu Alhassan Yusif, head of the Evangelistic team of the Assembly of God Church at Moshie Zongo reported that there were attacks on the team during an outdoor evangelistic meeting. This involved physical attacks and intimidation and threats of death.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Interview with Abu Alhassan Yusif, head of the Evangelistic Team, Assembly of God Church, Moshie Zongo, 21<sup>st</sup> August 2016.

It is significant to note that, religious pluralism is a critical issue that needs to be handled properly. It has been observed that most of the in human acts perpetuated by humans beings throughout history, directly or indirectly have something to do with religion. As one theologian writing on religion and violence observes:

Many of the violent conflicts in the world today involve religious animosities. Indeed, the history of the encounters among the world's religious is filled with distrust and hatred, violence and vengeance. The deepest tragedy of the history religious is that the very movements that should bring human beings closer to each other and to their ultimate source and goal have time again become forces of division. In one conflict after another around the world, religious convictions and interpretations of revelation have been used and abused as justifications for violence<sup>71</sup>.

It can be deduced form the assertions of Lefebure that religious conflicts that sometimes crop up between Muslims and Christians tend to have their roots in the collective historical experience of the people as well as their socio-political and religious challenges. Some would argue, however, that ignorance accounts for much of the fear, suspicion, and hatred that lead to violence and open conflicts between people of different religions. It is significant to note that on the both of the Christian and Muslim sides in Ghana and Africa as a whole, there is a lot of ignorance, prejudice and stereotyping. The question is, how do we bring about peace and cooperation among Christian and Muslim communities?

In the words of Mother Theresa, cited by Lefebure 'peace is not something you wish for, it's something you make, something you do, something you have something you give

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<sup>71</sup> Leo D. Lefebure, *Revelations, the Religious and Violence* (New York: Orbis Book, 2000), 78.

away'.<sup>72</sup> Also talking about religion and peace, the prominent Swiss theologian Hans Kung made the following solemn observation:

No would peace without peace among religions; no peace among religions without dialogue between the religions; and no dialogue between the religions without accurate knowledge of one another.<sup>73</sup>

There is therefore an urgent need for accurate knowledge of the teaching and beliefs of religions other than our own. Of course there are problems within all faith communities. But that is not the point. The point is that believers should be prepared to confront and deal with issues honestly in a mature and level-headed manner.

In my view, Christians should concern themselves with matters in Islam that directly relate to them. In other words, Islam has a lot to say to and about Christians and Christianity in its scripture, traditions and theology, and Christians need to know these things. As one leading Muslim scholar put it:

Islam's attitude to Christianity is as old as Islam itself, since Islam partly took shape by adopting certain important ideas from Judaism and Christianity and criticizing others. Indeed, Islam's self-definition is partly the result of its attitude to these two and their communities.<sup>74</sup>

In other words, right from the beginning, Islam has always defined itself in contradistinction to the other religions, especially Judaism and Christianity.

On the Christian side, it is significant to note that knowledge of other faith, especially Islam, is very crucial for missions, and evangelism, as well as for co-existence and

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<sup>72</sup> Leo D. Lefebure, *Revelations, the Religious and Violence* (New York: Orbis Book, 2000), 78

<sup>73</sup> Hans Kung, "Christianity and World religions: Dialogue with Islam". *Towards a Universal Theology of Religion*. (MaryKnoll: Orbis Books, 1987), 194.

<sup>74</sup> Fazlur Rahman. *Major Themes of the Quran* (Mineapolis: Bibliotheca Isamica, 1980) 162.

cooperation. Knowledge is a key factor for attitudinal change. Many Christians seem to have little knowledge about Islam and this is not good enough. For the Christian faith to triumph and be sustained in any community or locality it is crucial that, churches play a key role in instilling the knowledge of other faiths, especially Islam, in their members, in order to dispel prejudice and hatred.

This view about the significance of knowledge as a basis of dialogue is affirmed by Zahniser who says that in any dialogue between Muslims and Christians, the actual faith of the persons involved needs to be taken into consideration and that getting to know the person is essential for effective communication.<sup>75</sup> This presupposes that in a pluralistic environment, Christians should strive to gain the relevant knowledge about Islam. No longer should Muslims be viewed with hatred, and as people that we can impose our ideas on. Dialogue in communication is a crucial factor for peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic environment. It is only when the relevant knowledge about each other's faith is unavailable that, it breeds animosity and prejudice. Today, many Christians see mission to Muslims as risky and a waste of resources for the reason that, Muslims are violent and uncooperative. Fear, ignorance and prejudice are factors which can derail the church's evangelistic efforts.

The significance of religious knowledge for theology has been defended by Azumah. In his view,

The current trend in theological seminaries is to focus on our Judaeo – Christian heritage. No one disputes that the Jewish history and religious traditions contained

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<sup>75</sup> A.H. Matthias Zahuiser, *The Mission and Death of Jesus in Islam and Christianity*. (Mary Knoll: Orbis Books, 2008), 12.

in the Old Testament are crucial for Christian self understanding. Much attention is also paid to African Traditional Religion (ATR), which is also important for African Christians, self understanding. But despite its growing presence in Africa, Islam is almost always ignored.<sup>76</sup>

It is important to note that, giving its far reaching implications for Christian mission and church development, it is imperative that churches consider it as a matter of priority to promote the teaching and understanding of Islam. The survival or sustainability of the church in a pluralistic environment, especially Muslim dominated areas, will largely depend on knowledge of the “neighbours” faith. Islam is a missionary religion, and the only religion that poses a serious missionary challenge to Christianity. Muslims consider areas not covered by Islam as their unfinished agenda. Therefore it is their unwavering ambition and mandate to bring all territories under Islam. This is what makes a pluralistic environment a challenging one.

#### **4.3 Holistic ministry and church growth**

In an attempt to establishing and strengthen the church in a pluralistic environment, a lot of factors would have to be considered. It has been established that, for the church to grow in such an environment, it has to have the knowledge of how to cooperate with all the other faiths. The church’s ministry involves its relationship with God, and with the outside world. As the church moves towards the world in terms of missions and evangelism, it has the tendency of winning more people. Such converts after hearing the Christian message proclaimed to them often declare their commitment and acceptance.

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<sup>76</sup>John Azumah, *My Neighbour’s Faith: Islam Explained for Christians* (Nairobi, Kenya: Hippo Books, 2008), 13.

However, it has been found out that the church would have to go the extra mile in discipling new believers well for spiritual growth.

Joseph Ahima reported that the Assembly of God church at Moshie Zongo adopted the social intervention approach as part of its evangelic process. Converts from Muslim backgrounds were catered for by the church in terms of accommodation food, clothing and jobs even though funds were limited.<sup>77</sup> This approach confirms Wagner's position that churches involved in social ministries, and specialize in social service delivery tend to attract more new members.<sup>78</sup> It can be deduced from Wagner's assertion that churches should be concerned about the physical and social needs of their members in order to sustain their membership.

It is clear from the example of the Assembly of God church at Moshie Zongo that as they attended to new converts in their physical and social challenges, some of them began to commit themselves to the church's fellowship. Holistic ministry in terms of social service delivery can be an important tool for the church's expansion. On the other hand, it can also bring about confusion, as the church would not be in the position to meet all the needs of the members. Also, it may be difficult to identify the genuineness of the intentions of new members joining the church. In the view of Grudem, new members come into the church and begin to experience the blessings of God's rule in their lives.<sup>79</sup>

This position presupposes that the proclamation of the Christian message will have to be

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<sup>77</sup> Interview with Joseph Ahima, Former Treasurer, Assembly of God Church, Moshie Zongo, 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2016.

<sup>78</sup> Peter Wagner, *Church Growth and the Whole Gospel* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1981), 37.

<sup>79</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Nottingham: Inter Varsity Press, 1994), 864.

in the church. The message will have to be relevant in responding to the felt needs of the people. Any message that fails to address the needs of people in their context may not be accepted by the people. It is this light that, social service delivery has been identified by many scholars as very vital to the church's growth and expansion.

It can be learnt from the example of the early church that social service played a major role in the expansion of the first century church. It is important to note that there are some people who may consider the church as their family. This is so in the context of the Assembly of God church at Moshie Zongo where converts from Muslim backgrounds were ostracized from their families, and had to be taken up by the church. The church acts as an agent of restoring hope to people and charting the course of a brighter future for new believers. Thus, the church's social service delivery is supported by the scriptures as very integral in the church's developmental process. Even though, there have been arguments concerning the sustainability of social services in the church context, the fact still remains that, the church should be guided by scripture in its movement towards the world in mission and evangelism.

#### **4.4 Mission and Cultural Issues**

It has been argued in some scholarly circle that missionary or evangelistic targeting is discriminatory and constitutes a deviation from the Church's missionary mandate. Whereas some will argue that all people everywhere are to be reached with the Christian message, there are some who will also argue that the success of mission largely depends on the strategy to reach one group of people at a time. Despite this continuous debate,

the challenge of frontier mission remains a task for the church. Establishing a testimony of God among a particular group of people is an important aspect of the church's missionary mandate.

The Assembly of God church had to adopt this strategy of targeting in terms of its missionary agenda at Moshie Zongo. The community is a Muslim dominated one, but the church needed to establish a testimony of God there. Kwaku Ali reports that, the church had to use several strategies in its missionary efforts at Moshie Zongo. The key strategy was to find a minister of Islamic background to lead the mission and which worked out positively for the church.<sup>80</sup> This agrees with Craig Ellison's view that to be a missionary is to be sent by God with a specific purpose.<sup>81</sup> Ellison's view implies that God sends His servants out with a specific purpose to accomplish a specific task. Thus, the mission of the Assembly of God at Moshie falls in line with God's agenda. The church's missions to Muslims stands out in the divine will of God who desires that people of all cultures are reconciled to Him. God also desires that all people who come to Him in the context of the church are discipled. Spiritual formation of believers is an integral part of the church's missionary agenda. We are told in Matt. 28:19 – 20, to make disciples of all nations, and among other things teach them to observe the principles of the Christian faith.

It needs to be noted that as people come to God through Christ, their growth in the Christian faith would largely depend on how they are nurtured. In this light, strategies

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<sup>80</sup> Interview with Kwaku Ali, Deacon Assembly of God Church, Moshie Zongo, 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2016.

<sup>81</sup> Craig W. Ellison, *The Urban Mission* (Washington D.C: University Press of America, 1974), 19 – 20.



would have to be put in place to achieve such purpose. Critical to this task is the role of leadership. New believers need to be directed by a guide. In this case the pastor becomes the guide for Christian believers to grow in their faith. The example of the Assembly of God at Moshie Zongo in finding a pastor of Islamic background played, out as a good strategy that was adopted. It is crucial that churches adopt the strategy of using indigenous leadership for their missionary activities. People are able to identify with people they can relate with in terms of culture, including language and lifestyle.

According to the apostle Paul, he became everything to all people (1 Cor. 9:19 - 20). This means that he learnt to identify with the Greeks because he had a Greek background. God used Paul to accomplish greater works which culminated in the establishment of churches in the Graeco-Roman world of the first century. In the same sense, the apostle Peter could speak and record about three thousand people of Jewish descent committing themselves to the Christian faith largely because of missionary strategy. Peter's message to the Jews following the events of the Day of Pentecost, were targeted towards the Jews whom he addressed as fellow Jews. By appealing to the commanding heights of the Jews such as their history including their ancestry (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) the prophets, and the law, Peter was successful in getting them to understand his message. (Acts 2:14 – 38). Peter's work among the Jews led to the establishment of the first church in the first century.

It is significant to understand God's purposes which are spelt out in His specific agenda for all humanity. The book of Acts shows the significance of missionary strategy which

played out in the ministries of Peter and Paul. Thus, the use of evangelistic strategy may not be out of place, but stands out in accordance with the biblical tradition. It therefore stands to reason that the church can grow in the contemporary world if the right strategies are put in place in accordance with the scriptures. Churches that stand out to grow seems to be the ones who are strategic in their outlook and specific in the approaches towards accomplishing the divine mandate. It is important that, as a church, we come to the realization that we cannot do everything at a particular given time. Rather, with the direction of God through the scriptures, we are able to do that which is within our power.

Adopting missionary strategy for missions in pluralistic environments, and multicultural settings, is very crucial. It is a fact that cultural issues will continue to challenge the church in this century, but will determine the success or otherwise, of our missionary endeavours.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

The chapter entailed an interpretation and discussion based on the findings of the study. The issues discussed here include religious pluralism and the quest for knowledge understanding and cooperation, holistic ministry and church growth, missions and cultural issues. From the discussions, it can be deduced that religious pluralism cannot be eradicated from any given area. Rather efforts should be made to foster co-existence between Christian and Muslims. Christians missions and evangelism should be devoid of enmity to the extent that all polemics are taken out of every communication.

Christian missions should include social action. This has been found out to be a good strategy not only of reaching out to new converts but also sustaining them in the Christian faith. The church should therefore recognize its social responsibility as part of its mandate of reaching out to the world including Islamic communities. Again, since Christian mission involves cultural issues, the issue of language should be critically taken into consideration. People often identify with preachers coming from their background or can speak their language. Thus, language is critical for theological engagement in missions.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Summary**

When the Assembly of God Church entered the Moshie Zongo Community, it was found out that the community had a Muslim dominance in terms of population. From the beginning, it was not going to be easy as far as Missions is concerned. However, the missions programme commenced with well thought out strategies, but not without encountering some challenges. These challenges had far reaching implications for the church which found itself in a religious environment that appeared hostile.

#### **5.1.2 Summary of findings**

The study set out to examine the challenges of Christian missions to Muslims in the case of the Assembly of God church at Moshie Zongo came up with the following findings. First, like in all missionary endeavours, the church was confronted with the issue of financial report. With the church members not having food, financial base, it became very difficult for the church to raise the needed funds to support its activities. Funds were required not only to finance the church's activities, but also to support converts from Islamic backgrounds who had been banished from their family roots for their conversion to the Christian faith. This issue of finance has been a major problem for the church, and till date the chapel building has not been completed since its commencement in 2003.

Secondly, it came to light that, the church had to grapple with persecution by Muslim. Because Muslims see Christians as religious competitors rather than friends, they oppose every activity geared towards winning their members. It has been reported that any Muslim who purports to “convert” to the Christian faith is faced with *fatwa* which is an curse pronounced on Muslims who betray their Islamic faith by crossing to another faith. Again, when it was discovered that the first pastor was from Islamic background, it made the situation worse. At certain times it was reported that he was physically attacked during evangelistic programmes, while stones were thrown at the crowd that gathered to hear the Christian message.

Thirdly, it was discovered that cultural issues was a major challenge in the missionary activities of the church. A church made up of people from diverse cultural backgrounds posed a major problem for the leaders with respect to language problems. This became an issue when a new pastor was brought into the church in 2006 with the departure of Rev. Iddrisu. This new pastor was of the Akan ethnic group and could not therefore relate well with the people in the community. This caused the membership of the church to drop sharply. Also some of the church members viewed the Muslims with prejudiced mindset. For them, it was safe to mind one’s own business. On the other hand people wishing to respond to the Christian message, especially married women feared being divorced by their Muslim husbands, while others feared being rejected by their families.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The study set out to address the challenges in Christian missions to Muslims with particular reference to the Assembly of God church at Moshie Zongo. The church was established within a Muslim dominated community and it was clear that its missionary programme was going to face challenges. In a religious pluralistic society such as Moshie Zongo, it is clear that any evangelistic or missionary programme will have to scale over cultural and spiritual hurdles if it was to succeed. Many Christians seem to shy away from carrying out mission in such societies, especially in areas of Muslim dominance. Fear of attacks, ignorance and prejudice are some of the hindrances to effective Christian missions in Muslim areas.

Also, due to theological differences, any missionary or evangelistic activity in Muslim areas would face resistance and this seems to cripple all missionary work in such areas. Again, since Islam and Christianity appear to be parallel religious entities, converts from Islamic background coming into Christianity would definitely face rejection from their family roots and this calls for measures to support and settle such victims. Against this background, it can be noted that mission to Muslims require financial resources to meet any eventualities. This seem to put off many churches from missions to Muslim areas who see such ventures as waste of resources, time and energies. The view of such churches, missions to Muslims is risky and should not be pursued. However, of the light measures are put in place, mission to Muslims can be possible and successful.

At this juncture it can be concluded that, challenges in missions to Muslims are real and inevitable, but the church would have to carry its missionary mandate by rising above any fear, prejudice and ignorance. By seeking to know more about the Islamic faith, relevant strategies can be employed to further all missionary activities in areas which are considered Muslim dominated.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

In the light of the findings so far made in this study, the following recommendations are being put forward:

##### **5.4.1 Conferences, Seminars and Workshops**

In order on frontier missions, it is recommended that periodic conferences, seminars and workshops on Islam be organized at all levels for pastors, missionaries, and other church workers, to enable them to come to terms with the theology of the Islamic faith. This can put them in a better position to develop their members with respect to missions across cultures and other faiths.

##### **5.4.2 Teaching of Islam in Christian Theological Institutions**

As a move to improving Christian missionary activities in Muslim areas, it is recommended that Islam should be made part of the curriculum of Christian theological institutions and seminaries. Institutions that run courses in missions should consider adding frontier missions and comparative study of religion to help their products to be

abreast with current trends in missions and Islam in order to affect their ministries for good.

#### **5.4.3 Missionary support**

It have been found out that converts from Islamic background would have to be supported and settled, when they join the church's fellowship. This calls for money, and at this juncture, it is recommended that missionary organisations which support missions, should reconsider areas of their support to include cross – cultural missions and particularly missions to Muslims. Churches and groups in these areas may warrant the needed support to help them to be efficient in their missionary works.

#### **5.4.4 Reducing Religious Conflicts**

In order to reduce conflicts resulting from violent attacks on especially Christians, it is recommended that regular or periodic meetings be organized by the leadership of Christians and Muslims in communities where they have their presence. Such meetings will help put in place conflict resolution mechanisms to forestall any cases of conflict that might crop up. Again, it is recommended polemics in communication be reduced at all levels so as to bring about peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims. Finally in order to reduce inter-religious conflict is also recommended that sanctions be applied on people who fuel on necessary tensions such as insults and abuses. Such sanctions can help bring people to book and help them change their attitude for the better.



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## **PERSONALITIES INTERVIEWED**

Abdul Karim Abubakar, Elder, Palace of the chief of Moshie Zongo.

Abu Alhassan Yusif, head of the Evangelistic Team, Assembly of God Church, Moshie Zongo.

Abu Alhassan Yusif. Head of evangelism team.

Alhaji Amadu: Jandar, Chief of Moshie Zongo.

Alhaji Mahama Ali, Sub Chief of the Hausa Community, Moshie Zongo.

DaCosta Dankwah, Deacon, Moshie Zongo.

David c Vespa, Former pastor and missionary, Living Waters Chapel.

Hajjiah Marriamah Muhammad, (Mangajia) Leader of Women wing, Moshie Zongo.

Hassan Yakubu Laah, Moshie Zongo Kumasi.

Honorable Abdul Razak, The Assembly Member of Moshie Zongo.

Isaac Kofi Dwomoh, Livingstone Chapel Pastor.

Isaac Opoku. Former Deacon, Moshie Zongo.

Joseph Ahima, former Treasurer, Assembly of God Church, Moshie Zongo.

Joseph Amankwah, Sunday School Superintendent Moshie Zongo.

Kwaku Ali, Deacon Assembly of God Church, Moshie Zongo.

Marriamah Serwa, Former Women's Ministry Leader.

Michael Osei, former Church Deacon, Moshie Zongo.

Muhammad Ibrahim Fussani, linguist of the Chief of Moshie Zongo, Moshie Zongo

Malik Muhammad, Associate Pastor, Assembly of God Church, Moshie Zongo

Naba Baba Bukari Tailor, Elder and King Maker.

Rev. Opoku Ware, Current pastor Assembly of God. Moshie Zongo

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE (QUESTIONS)**

- (1) What is the nature of the Moshie Zongo community?
- (2) How has missions been carried out in Moshie Zongo?
- (3) What methods have been employed in the church's missionary process?
- (4) How successful or effective has been these methods?
- (5) What challenges were faced by the church in its missionary bid, and to win more converts?
- (6) How has these challenges been handled by the church?
- (7) What is the current state of the church today?
- (8) What measures can be adopted to help sustain the church and ensure its growth in the community?

## APPENDIX II

### RELEVANT PICTURES



**Researcher with founding leaders of the Assembly of God Church Moshie Zongo**



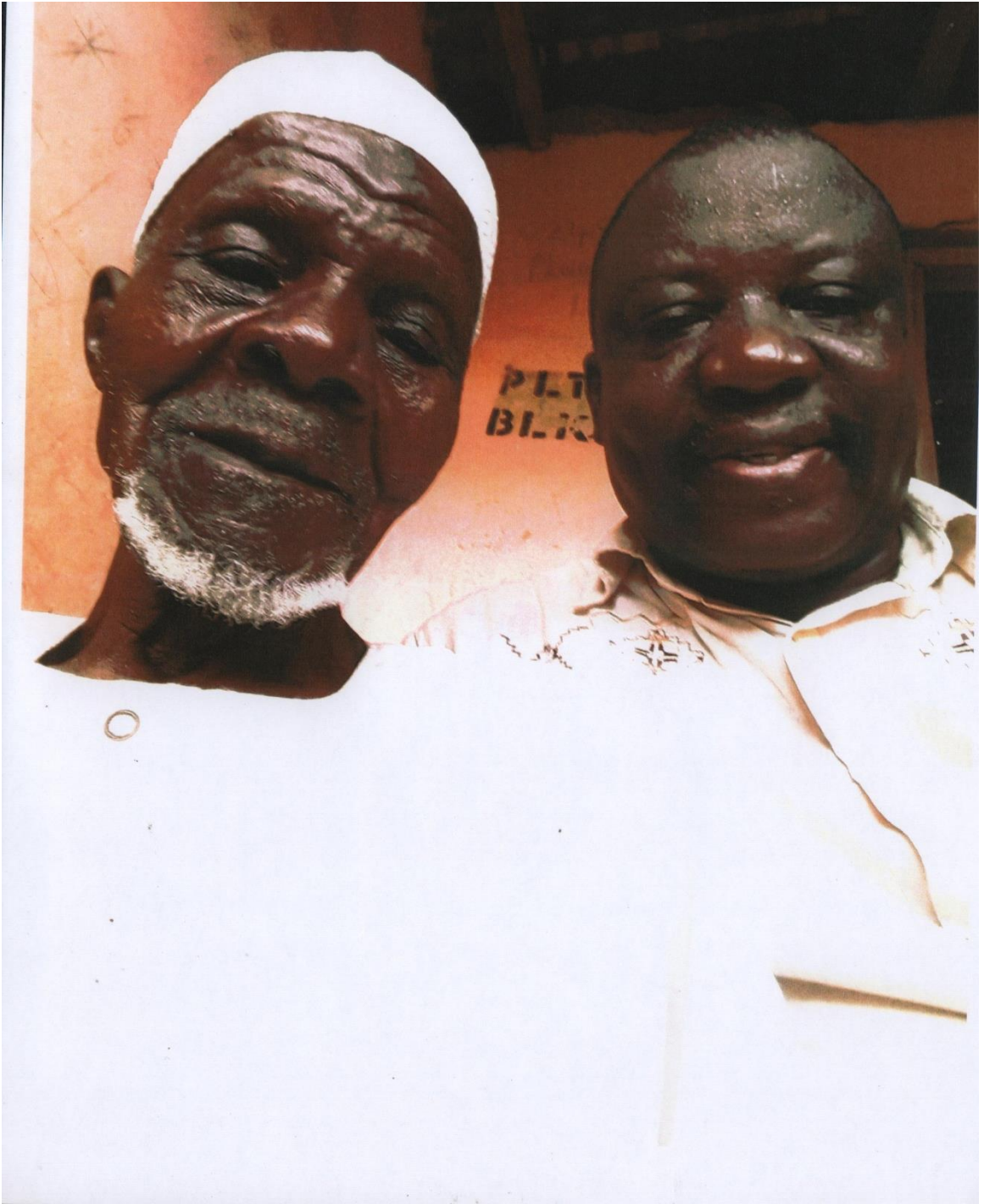
**Researcher with some Muslim Youth at Moshie Zongo.**



**The central Mosque at Moshie Zongo.**

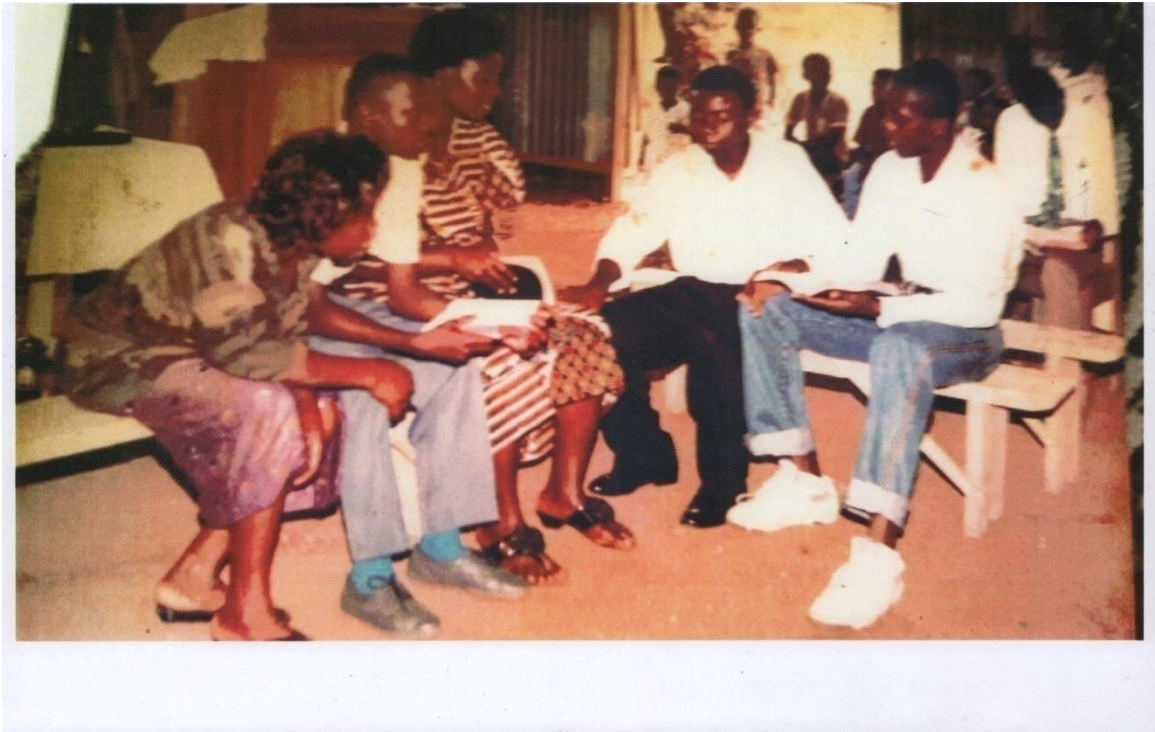


**The Chapel building of the Assembly of God Church at Moshie Zongo**



**Researcher with Naba Bukari Tailor, Founder of the Moshie Zongo Community.**





**The five founding members of the Assembly of God Church at Moshie Zongo.**