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THE HISTORY OF ASSEMBLIES OF GOD RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES IN GHANA FROM 1948 TO 2016, TRACING THEIR ORIGINS,
GROWTH AND INFLUENCE ON THE GHANAIAAN SOCIETY

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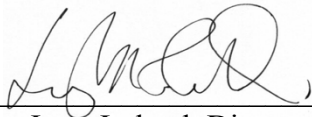
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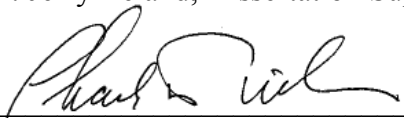
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ABSTRACT

The study explores the history of the AG relief and development services in Ghana under three thematic areas covering its origins, growth, and influence on Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016. The Assemblies of God Relief and Development services (AGREDS) was started by the early American AG missionaries to Ghana (then Gold Coast) in 1948. It was run as a compassion ministry to the poor and needy communities in which the church operated, in addition to preaching of the gospel. Confronted with the stark reality of human suffering from poverty, disease, and ignorance in various deprived communities, the early missionaries set up a relief and development wing of the church to respond to people's physical needs in a more tangible way reflecting the compassion of Christ. The missionaries started by establishing a health care center in Saboba in 1948 to care for the healthcare needs of people in towns and villages within the catchment area of the Saboba, Chiripone District of the Northern Region. Later in 1950, a second health facility was established in Nakpanduri in the Bumprugu District of the Northern Region. As the church expanded to other communities in Ghana, the relief and development services were also extended to assist more people.

In January 1991, the leadership of AG Ghana registered AGREDS as a non-profit para-church agency in Ghana to run the church's compassion ministry through social interventions in health services, education, and livelihood empowerment. AGREDS then operated under the missionary leadership from its inception in 1948 to 1992. During this period, the agency experienced modest growth in its operations through the establishment of two health facilities; educational support to schools; and emergency relief assistance to victims of bushfires, ethnic conflicts, and refugees from neighboring countries.

In 1992, the AG missionary team handed over AGREDS to indigenous Ghanaian leadership. From 1992 to 2016, AGREDS witnessed tremendous growth in its operations through various community interventions. These included growth in health services, educational support, community infrastructure program, livelihood empowerment for street girls, child sponsorship, an anti-child trafficking program, micro-credit for micro-enterprise development, response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and migration support. By December 2016, AGREDS' operations had spread to all the regions of Ghana, except the Ashanti Region. The study explores why, how, when, and through whom AGREDS expanded through the various interventions.

The study also examines the various influences of AGREDS on Ghanaian society from its inception in 1948 to 2016 through various stakeholder engagements and the various program interventions. The study brings to the fore the challenges AGREDS presents to the AG local and national church in Ghana and then offers useful recommendations for addressing these challenges. The study's recommendations include tapping local funding sources, accessibility to unrestricted funds, mainstreaming of relief and development services, contextualization, leadership succession planning, strategic planning, participation, and application of information communication technology for future growth.

Through both the qualitative and quantitative research methods, guided by two research questions, the study collected data from fifty-two respondents made up of various stakeholders of AGREDS. The analyzed data was applied to derive findings to resolve the research questions. This eventually led to the realization of the study purpose of exploring and documenting the history of AGREDS from 1948 to 2016, tracing its

origins, growth, and influence on Ghana society. This is a significant study on the history of AGREDS in Ghana, and arguably a useful contribution to the academy, particularly in terms of effective running of compassion ministry in Ghana, and in Africa as a whole.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the memory of my late wife, Mrs. Theresa Obeng-Amoako; my children, Emmanuel and Dorcas; my daughter-in-law, Joana; and my grandson, Ethan.

ABBREVIATIONS

AGREDS	Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services
AGG	Assemblies of God, Ghana
AG	Assemblies of God
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
CCG	Christian Council of Ghana
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ECD	Early Childhood Development
CIP	Community Infrastructure Program
UN	United Nations
ICCO	Inter Coordination for Cooperation Organization
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
PEN	Poverty Eradication Network
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
DFID	Department for International Development
SD	Standard Deviation

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Introduction

Over the years, various types of Christian relief and development projects such as the establishment of schools, hospitals, agriculture training centers, community water projects, and livelihood-empowerment ventures for the vulnerable in society have been undertaken by churches in various communities to help alleviate poverty. Indeed, humanitarian services have not only been utilized by the church to improve living conditions of people in Ghana, but have also helped in preparing the grounds for the spread of the gospel to many otherwise unreached areas.

Considerable amounts of time, effort, and financial resources from both indigenous and foreign donor partners are channeled each year into Christian relief and development projects in Ghana. Yet, in spite of the significant contributions of the church towards relief and development in Ghana, there is virtually no credible research work concerning the historical development of AGREDS.

Although a few individuals have written on relief and development services in Ghana, these writings have not provided a credible historical account of the Assemblies of God relief and development in Ghana. Its origins, growth, and influence on Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016 needs to be traced. There is thus a lacuna in terms of a documented historical account of AGREDS in Ghana. This knowledge vacuum hampers proper understanding of the historical evolution of Assemblies of God relief and

development in Ghana, and it also hampers a proper understanding of the relationship between relief and development in Ghana on one hand and its influence on Ghanaian society on the other hand.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study is to provide a credible historical account of the origin, growth, and influence of AGREDS on Ghanaian society. The study thus seeks to explore and document a detailed historical account of the Assemblies of God relief and development effort in Ghana from 1948 to 2016.

Significance of the Study

The study will offer a significant contribution to the academy by adding to the body of knowledge, impacting the Kingdom of God, and enriching the researcher's own ongoing ministry.

Contribution to the Academy

The study will be of immense benefit to the fields of humanitarian studies, missiology, and historiography, given the limited precedent literature on the research topic. The study will thus enhance proper understanding of the historical evolution of AGREDS, as well as the influence of AGREDS on Ghanaian society. Again, the study will serve as reference material for further studies on relief and development in Ghana. The origin and growth of the Assemblies of God relief and development and its influence on Ghanaian society will also serve as useful information to the academy.

Impact on the Kingdom of God

The findings of the study will benefit development practitioners as they seek to pursue their compassion ministries to fulfill the mission of God. This, therefore, will make such compassion ministries more purposeful, fulfilling, and God-honoring to both donors and beneficiaries.

Personal Impact

As a Bible college educator, and head of operations of the Assemblies of God, Ghana (AGG), the researcher will gain an enhanced understanding and appreciation of the evolution of Assemblies of God relief and development in Ghana from this study, as well as a better understanding of its influence on Ghanaian society. Ultimately, findings from the study will equip the researcher to better fulfill his calling as an effective liaison between the Executive Presbytery of the AGG and all agencies of the church, including the relief and development agency.

Statement of Problem

The problem to be explored is: What is the history of Assemblies of God relief and development in Ghana; its origins, growth, and influence on Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016?

Research Questions

RQ1: What constitutes a biblical and theological basis for AGREDS in Ghana?

RQ2: What characterized the origins, growth, and influence of AGREDS in Ghana from 1948 to 2016?

These questions will be elaborated on in chapter 4 on methodology.

Delimitations

The study is limited to the two specific areas indicated in the research questions. The biblical and theological basis of Christian relief and development discussion focuses on the definition of the *missio Dei* (mission of God) and what it entails, what Christian relief and development is, the biblical and theological basis of Christian relief and development, and historical perspectives on relief and development. The second section is limited to the origin, growth, and expansion of Assemblies of God relief and development in Ghana. This centers on the when, why, how, and growth of Assemblies of God relief and development in Ghana from 1948 to 2016. The third section explores the socio-economic and religious influences of AGREDS on Ghanaian society.

The study was limited both in terms of its scope and methods used. Eventually, the methodologies employed helped to generate the needed data for proper analysis and the writing of a credible history of AGREDS.

Definition of Terms

Assemblies of God (AG): This is a Pentecostal denomination established in the United States of America in 1914 as a product of the Azusa Street Revival. It is made up of congregations and ministers which are autonomous in operation but bound together by shared doctrines for the purpose of world evangelization. It is spread out to 212 countries worldwide.¹

¹Crosswalk.com Editorial Staff, *What Is the Assemblies of God? 10 Things You Should Know*. (Christianity.com, 2018), <https://www.christianity.com/church/denominations/what-is-the-assemblies-of-god-history-and-beliefs.html> (Accessed November 30, 2018).

Assemblies of God, Ghana (AGG): This is a Pentecostal denomination and a member of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship. It is autonomous, but cooperates with regional and continental AG bodies, such as the West Africa Assemblies of God Alliance (WAAGA), Africa Assemblies of God Alliance (AAGA), and the World Assemblies of God Fellowship (WAGF).²

Christian Social Action: This refers to the role of the church in society as implied from Scriptures.

Relief: Churches are involved in relief when they minister “to victims of natural or social disaster, seeking to provide immediate handouts of food, shelter, and other necessities so people survive.”³

Development: In development, the church “seeks to help individuals, families, and communities obtain appropriate tools, skills, and knowledge so they can care for themselves.”⁴ This may come through the provision of educational institutions, improved agricultural technology, reliable clinics, and loans given to small scale indigenous entrepreneurs. Relief is short-term in nature, but development is long-term. “Relief prevents starvation today; development brings self-sufficiency, at least in principle, in an ideal world.”⁵

²Frimpong-Manso, Paul, *General Superintendent’s Report to Executive Presbytery* (Akosombo, Ghana, May 2018).

³Ronald J. Sider, *Good News and Good Works: A Theology for the Whole Gospel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 138.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

Terminologies: The terms *relief and development, social action, social concern, community involvement, integral mission, humanitarian services, and integral mission*, are used to highlight different emphases throughout this study.

Assumptions

It was assumed that the offices of AGREDS in Ghana would give free access to relevant documentations regarding publications and reports. It was further assumed that the research instruments designed were understood by the pastors, church members, and other respondents, thereby facilitating effective data collection and analysis. Also, it is assumed that evidence gathered from various interviews and documents are valid, unless proved otherwise.

Finally, it is assumed that the agency, pastors, and national leaders provided accurate information and that no data pertinent to this study was withheld. Nevertheless, the research findings of the study were subjected to proper validation before conclusions were reached.

Issues Relating to Historiography

This study is historical in nature in the sense that the sources of data generated and analyzed are largely historical. Kay defines historiography as the way history is written, particularly with regard to the handling of the various sources consulted.⁶ The study will follow Kay's questionnaire guide for writing historiography. His steps are:

1. "What criteria is used for accepting or rejecting an evidence?"

⁶W. K. Kay, "Three Generations on: The Methodology of Pentecostal History," *EPTA Bulletin* XI (1+ 2) (January, 1992): 58, <http://collections.crest.ac.uk/280/1/fulltext.pdf> (accessed May 31, 2017).

2. How do historians avoid bias?
3. What or who determines the cause of historical events, natural, or divine?
4. How is the interaction between doctrine and experience in Pentecostal history explained?
5. How do we weigh the historian's judgment (or interpretation) against the reportage of participants in historical events?
6. And, how do certain events in history cause or influence subsequent events?"⁷

Kay's model recommends that the material selection and data gathering necessary to conduct the study should be well explained and justified. Also, evidence gathered should be classified into primary and secondary sources. Again, there is the need to avoid using generalizations and stay specific to the focus of the study.⁸ These variables were given due consideration in writing a credible history of AGREDS, tracing its origin, growth, and influence on Ghanaian society.

Summary

This chapter has provided the background to the dissertation. Beginning with a clear statement of the research problem, the purpose and significance of the study were discussed. This was followed by an outline of the research questions that guided the study to achieve its stated purpose. The chapter also provided the delimitations of the study, working definitions of key terms, assumptions with which the study was approached, as well as pertinent issues relating to historiography.

⁷Ibid., 58–70.

⁸Ibid.

Admittedly, the task of compiling an accurate history of AGREDS from 1948 to 2016 and tracing its origins, growth, and influence on Ghanaian society is not only challenging, but daunting. Nevertheless, the conviction is that the absence of a coherent written history of this vital missions model and its influence on Ghanaian society over the years is a huge disservice to research and missiology in Africa. It is, therefore, worth the painstaking sacrifice of time and other resources for accomplishing this challenging but exciting project.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter outlines the biblical-theological literature review of the dissertation. It explains how and why the biblical passages were chosen, and the logic of their connection to the research topic. It reviews what the traditional views of the church have been concerning the passages as compared to alternative contemporary views. It also indicates any presuppositions, and clarifies the methods used to ultimately decide on the meaning and application of the passages as they connect to the research topic. These are then followed by analytical discussions on biblical foundations for the compassion ministry, theological basis for social action through relief and development, and the biblical basis for AGG's engagement in relief and development. Finally, some reflections on the church and relief and development are provided.

The biblical interpretations in this chapter help to resolve research question 1 (RQ1), which follows: What constitutes a biblical and theological basis for relief and development services of the AGG? Specifically, it answers RQ1A which demands: What are the definitions of Christian relief and development? RQ1B asks: What should be the goal of Christian relief and development? In addition, RQ1C asks: What provides a biblical and theological foundation for AGREDS? RQ1D inquires: What are some historical perspectives on relief and development?

Biblical Interpretation

The biblical interpretation reviews begin with explanations for the choice of biblical passages, followed by presuppositions of the researcher, and methods of deciding the meaning and application of Bible passages selected.

Choice of Biblical Passages

Old and New Testament passages relating to the subject of relief and development have been explored and investigated in relation to how they provide the basis for Christian relief and development. Relevant theological works have also been examined to throw more light on the passages.

Sider defines social action as “that set of activities whose primary goal is improving the physical, socioeconomic, and political well-being of people through relief, development and structural change.”¹ In a review of Sider’s work, Maier observes that: “For Sider, the separation between social action and evangelism is not only unbiblical, but also ineffective. Evangelism without social action is empty and implausible; social action without evangelism is shallow because it does not cause true transformation.”²

Based on the understanding that the term *social action* or *social concern* as used by Sider is tantamount to the modern notion of relief and development, the above assertions by Sider provide foundational concepts for the church to embrace Christian social action.

Maier, however, observes that “although Sider’s suggested model might appear new to

¹Sider, 163.

²Rudolf Maier, “Review of *Good News and Good Works: A Theology for the Whole Gospel* by Ronald J. Sider.” *Seminary Studies* 39, Autumn 2001. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 2001), 346.
<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=2711&context=auss> (accessed November 2, 2018).

some, it is actually an old biblical model. The challenge is not so much for Christians to understand it as to practice it. A ‘right relationship with God, neighbor and earth’ is essential for the success of Sider’s model.”³

Presuppositions

It is presumed that the selected passages for this section of the study sufficiently delineate the biblical teaching on God’s concern for the disadvantaged in society. They also help to clarify the church’s responsibility to the poor and vulnerable, with particular reference to the AGG.

Methods for Deciding the Meaning and Application of Passages

The writers of the Scriptures wrote from their own personal, historical, and cultural contexts, using their own minds, talents, language, and style. However, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they wrote exactly what God wanted them to write. Another truth about the Scriptures is that every biblical passage should be interpreted according to its meaning as intended by the author and understood by his original audience.

Therefore, as part of the process of interpreting any biblical passage, the following four important questions were used to determine whether the passage is descriptive of a historical situation or normative for moral replication. First, do other direct teachings of the Bible condemn the action described in the passage? Second, does the action in the passage reflect a specific cultural practice limited to the original audience? Third, does the action described in the passage have the endorsement or

³Ibid.

confirmation of other Bible passages? And fourth, will the reader have the same result intended by the author if what the passage teaches is literally put into practice?⁴ These diagnostic questions helped greatly in deciding on the correct meaning and application of the passages.

This study examined the current literature and identified the key controversies and themes that shape a biblical approach to the church's compassionate engagement with the poor and needy. In interpreting the meaning of the chosen passages in their contemporary form and context, care was taken to ensure that they reflected the one meaning intended by the author and understood by his original audience.⁵ The text was thus examined in its original grammatical, literary, historical, and cultural context. This was useful in determining the singular, unambiguous meaning of the passage as intended by the author and understood by his original audience and, therefore, helped in making appropriate application to contemporary readers' current, historical, social-cultural, economic, and spiritual context.⁶ This therefore included "the legitimate, present-day implications of an author's meaning."⁷

In this regard, the researcher was alert to the influence of his own culture and worldview in order to avoid the tendency of filtering the meaning of the biblical text

⁴Emmanuel Amofo, "Group Discussion Notes on New Testament," (Lomé, Togo: Informally Published, 2016), 1.

⁵Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 37.

⁶Robert H. Stein, *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible: Playing by the Rules*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 19–20 http://assets.bakerpublishinggroup.com/processed/book-resources/files/Excerpt_9780801033735.pdf?1362517340 (accessed February 10, 2019).

⁷Ibid, 20.

through the lens of presuppositions and agenda. This required cautious interpretive reflection and a determined reliance on the Holy Spirit who, ultimately, is the original author of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20–21).

Biblical Foundations

The *Fall* and its impact on society, as well as biblical imperatives regarding compassion and the people of God, provide foundational understanding for the church's engagement in relief and development.

The Fall and Its Impact on Society

The Genesis narrative of the Bible traces the fall of humankind to sin. This alienation from God results in poverty, loss of identity, and marred human relationships which have their ripple effects on the economic, political, and religious systems of society. Myers argues that “the net result of the fall on the economic, political, and religious systems is that, they become the places where people learn to play god in the lives of the poor and the marginalized.”⁸ Through appropriate relief and development interventions, Christian social action seeks to address various forms of oppression and domination of the poor in society. Ultimately, that effort is intended to help in poverty alleviation and restored relationships between humans and God, as well as between the poor and the non-poor.

⁸Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 29.

The Poor in the Bible

The term ‘poor’ as used in the Bible connotes two different senses, namely material/economic sense, and spiritual sense. Generally, the poor in the Bible were either made up of the materially poor who could hardly raise enough support for their daily living (Lev. 23:22), or the spiritually poor who looked up to God for forgiveness of their sins or deliverance from trouble or danger (Ps. 34:6, Ps. 86:1; 109:22-25). Fee asserts that the spiritually poor comprises “sinners – those who recognize themselves as impoverished of spirit (Matt:5:3) and who stand helpless before God, in need of his mercy.”⁹ After carefully examining various passages in the Bible from the Old to the New Testaments relating to poverty, Ireland observes that “there are several terms used for poor/poverty, and the meaning can be either spiritual poverty or physical lack.”¹⁰ He also concludes that, “the poor in the OT and NT are both the economically poor, and also those who recognize their need of God and look to him for salvation.”¹¹ God’s concern for those who are poor among His people is seen in terms of defending the plight of the oppressed and disadvantaged in society such as orphans and widows (Deut. 10:18; Isaiah 1:17), the exploited (Prov. 22:22-23), and provision of material support for the physically poor (Ex. 23:11, Lev. 23:22).¹²

⁹Gordon D. Fee, *The Kingdom of God and the Church’s Global Mission*, In *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*, ed. Murray A. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991) 13.

¹⁰Ireland, *Evangelism and Social Concern*, 21.

¹¹Ibid., 24.

¹²See also Ezek 22:29; Amos 2:6-7, 4:1 and 8:4.

Writing on the topic, the poor in the New Testament, Neyrey explains that the Greek word for ‘poor’ “*ptochos* refers to a person reduced to begging, that is, someone who is destitute of all resources, especially farm and family. Thus the begging poor person is bereft of all social support as well as all means of support. One gives alms to a *ptochos*.”¹³ He further notes that when reading about the poor in the Bible, one must take into cognizance the cultural dynamics of the people of Israel. To Neyrey, the term “poor in the Bible was much more than an economic calculation, because the most valuable thing one possessed at that time was family, who alone provided food, clothing, shelter, loyalty and support. To lose family means immediate descent into the ranks of the begging poor.”¹⁴ Examples of the physically poor in the New Testament are recorded in passages such as Matt. 19:21, Luke 14:13 and Acts 9:36.¹⁵

Another class of the poor in the New Testament comprises the spiritually poor as found in the beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-4,6), and preaching of the good news to the poor in Luke 4:18 and Luke 7:22.

The Kingdom of God

For effective participation in the mission of God, it is critically important for believers to understand God’s mission within the context of the Kingdom of God. This is because it is out of the Kingdom of God that the mission of God emerges. The phrase

¹³Jerome H. Neyrey, Who is Poor in the New Testament?
<https://www3.nd.edu/~jnerey1/Attitudes.html> (accessed January 13, 2019).

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵See also Acts 10:4; 24:17, James 1:27 and the daily food distribution program to widows of the Early church in Acts 6:1-7.

“Kingdom of God” as used in the Bible generally refers to the reign of God over the entire creation. Writing on the Kingdom of God and the mission of God, Brown explains”

The concept of the Kingdom of God originates in the Old Testament. There one finds the Hebrew word *malkût* “Kingdom” with regard to God in two senses. One is sovereignty, and signifies his *cosmic* or *universal* reign. The second sense is the common one of a nation-state. When used in this sense... it signifies the redemptive Kingdom that God will establish on earth.”¹⁶

In another sense, the Kingdom of God is related to the time of God’s reign. In this sense, the reference means the reign of God in the life of God’s children throughout history up to the eschatological reign of Christ. Dempster describes this time as “the time of the reversal in the order of life which could only be started by supernatural intervention and with the time of God’s eschatological reign.”¹⁷

In this kingdom, God is the King who reigns over the entire created order, including Israel and the rest of the world (Exod. 15:18; Psalm 47:2; Matt. 6:9-10). Citizens of the kingdom are made up of believers from all cultures and ethnic groups of the world. Brown notes that, “this consists of everyone who is born again of God and belongs to the family and kingdom of God.”¹⁸ In analyzing what the Kingdom of God embodies, Brown notes that “the criterion for citizenship is faith in Christ as the eternal savior-king. The ‘kingdom law’ is to love one’s neighbor (James 2:8). Its ethos is ‘righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit’ (Rom. 14:17).”¹⁹ The citizens are thus

¹⁶Rick Brown, “The Kingdom of God and the Mission of God,” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology*, ed. Brad Gill, 28.1 Spring 2011.

¹⁷Murray Dempster A.H, “A Theology of the Kingdom: A Pentecostal Contribution,” *Mission as Transformation* (Oxford, U.K: Regnum Books International, 1999), 54.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Rick Brown, 8.

called to live by God's kingdom ethics, reflecting God's righteousness on earth. Fee points out that "they are to become like the Father and are expected to be his salt and light in the world by living out the life of the future—the kingdom of God itself—in the present age."²⁰ They are also entrusted with responsibility for the "the proclamation of the kingdom as good news to the poor. The proclamation of that good news, of course, is what the ongoing mission of the church is all about,"²¹ Dempster asserts. This responsibility of proclaiming the good news to the poor is to be carried out by all of God's children with urgency through the power of the King. Kirk questions: "If the kingdom is about the restoration of the fullness of life to a sick and fractured world, then many people, without knowing it, may be agents of the kingdom. However, without recognizing and submitting to the control of the King, they cannot be members of the kingdom."²² This therefore emphasizes the need for God's children to vigorously proclaim the message of the kingdom to all people in all cultures at all times.

The span of the kingdom of God is usually presented by scholars as covering three stages, namely, the past, present, and future. This is neatly summarized by Brown as follow:

God's mission to establish the kingdom is dynamic, and involves three principal stages: (1) Christ inaugurated the Kingdom on earth; (2) he reigns over it now in heaven, while through the Holy Spirit he extends it to disciples in every ethnic group; (3) he will establish it fully at the end of this age. Meanwhile the members on earth enjoy many of the blessings of the kingdom, and more when they go to

²⁰Gordon Fee, *The Kingdom of God and the Church's Global Mission*. In *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*, ed. Murray A. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991) 13.

²¹Ibid, 16.

²²J. A. Kirk, *What is Mission? Theological Explorations* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 35-36.

heaven, yet they look forward to its consummation in the age to come, after the resurrection and judgment.²³

It is in this vein that Fee concludes that, “for Jesus himself the kingdom of God was both ‘already’ and ‘not yet.’ It was both ‘now’ and ‘yet to come.’”²⁴ While believers enjoy the blessings of the kingdom in this present age, they eagerly look forward to the final consummation of the kingdom during the second coming of Christ the King.

Compassion and the People of God

In both the Old and New Testaments, God’s great desire is for his children to show deep concern and active compassion for the poor, the needy, and the disadvantaged in society. The inequalities, exploitations, poverty, and injustices in society that prevailed in the Bible days are also prevalent in Ghanaian society today. The meaning of each of the selected passages from the Bible is derived from the biblical context and then applied to the church in contemporary Ghana.

Genesis 3:1–19 traces the fall of humankind to sin. Commenting on the consequences of sin in this narrative, Roop observes that man’s disobedience had “immediate impact on life in the garden. The narrative does not picture a man and woman seized with shame and guilt. Instead, we read simply that they *saw* and *made*, *heard* and *hid*. The flow of the narrative leaves no doubt that these actions came as a consequence of the disobedience.”²⁵ He further argues that the narratives from the fall in Genesis 3 up to Genesis 11 “describe a world distorted and nearly destroyed by human disobedience: a

²³Rick Brown, 7.

²⁴Gordon Fee, 12.

²⁵Eugene F. Roop, “Genesis,” in *Believers Church Bible Commentary* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1987), S. 44, Libronix Digital Library Systems 3.0f. Copyright 2000-2007.

world filled with pain and suffering, with separation and misunderstanding, with domination and destruction.”²⁶ This alienation from God results in poverty, loss of identity, domination, and marred human relationships which have their ripple effects on the economic, political, and religious systems of society.

Based on Myers’ reflection on exploitation of the poor he argues, “When fallen human beings play god in the lives of others, the results are patterns of domination and oppression that mar the image and potential productivity of the poor, while alienating the non-poor from their true identity and vocation as well.”²⁷ Christian social action must, therefore, deal with tendencies by which people play god over others, confront systemic arrangements that demean the identity of the poor, aim at poverty alleviation, help restore human relationships, and above all, help people rediscover their true identities in God.

The Psalmist describes God as the Creator who actively feeds the hungry, defends the oppressed, sets prisoners free, provides healing for the sick, and protects the weak and disadvantaged in society (Psalm 146:6–9). In reference to God’s providential care for the people of Israel, Allen asserts that “Yahweh lives up to the highest ideals of kingship as the source of justice and vindication, giving food and freedom and the blessing of wholeness. The defenseless can find in Yahweh their royal champion.”²⁸ Commenting on verses 8 and 9 of Psalm 146, Radmacher, Allen, and House point out that “in these two verses there is a special focus on the gracious actions of God on behalf of the impaired,

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Myers, 29.

²⁸Leslie C. Allen, “Psalm 101-150 Revised,” in *Word Biblical Commentary*: (Dallas, TX: Word Incorporated, 2002), S. 378, Libronix Digital Library Systems 3.of. Copyright 2000-2007.

the helpless, the lonely, and the needy.”²⁹ In the same discourse, Walvoord and Zuck describe some of the ways in which God graciously meets the needs of the underprivileged: “He helps the oppressed...gives food to the hungry, releases prisoners...gives sight to...blind people, raises up the defeated, loves the righteous, protects the sojourner, and leads the orphan and widow to security.”³⁰ The church as God’s representative on earth is thus called upon to champion the above acts of compassion and kindness toward the poor and needy as a reflection of its identity with God’s nature.

Isaiah 58 illustrates that God’s people (Israelites) were required to be compassionate in all they did. God was displeased with them anytime their compassion fell below biblical standard, because that exemplified an ungodly disconnect between faith and practice. Walvoord observes that, in addition to Israel’s outwardly pious observance of the Law, “the Lord reminded the people that they should be just (Isa 58:6) and openhanded with those in need—the hungry (cf. v. 10), the poor...the naked (v. 7).”³¹ In Ghana and Africa as a whole, where poverty levels are very high, Christ-like sacrificial care in relief and development to assist the poor, prisoners, the sick, and needy would not only serve as tangible demonstration of God’s love towards humanity, but also help to draw people to Christ.

²⁹Earl D. Radmacher, Ronald Barclay Allen, and Wayne H. House, *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Publishers, 1999), S. Ps. 146:4-9, Libronix Digital Library Systems 3.of. Copyright 2000-2007.

³⁰John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), S. 1:896, Libronix Digital Library Systems 3.of. Copyright 2000-2007.

³¹Walvoord and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1113.

Jeremiah minces no words in stating that to know God is to seek justice for the poor (Jer. 22:13–17). Newman and Stine translate *the poor* in this context to include, among other conditions, the “needy and oppressed.”³² This, of course, does not exclude the financially deprived. They also observe that, “in the context, unrighteousness and injustice would seem to carry the same meaning.”³³ Expatiating on the above passage, Walvoord and Zuck observe that “Jehoiakim sought to build a palace for himself, and he did so at the expense of his subjects. They were forced to work for nothing as Jehoiakim lavished his money on panels of cedar wood.”³⁴ Jeremiah therefore points out that such acts of injustice and exploitation were ungodly, and therefore condemned by God.

Walvoord and Zuck draw a contrast between King Jehoiakim and his father Josiah and point out, “Josiah had done what was right and just and had defended the...poor and needy. These were actions God expected of the King. As God’s shepherd he was expected to nurture the flock, not decimate it. However, Jehoiakim inherited none of his father’s godly traits. He cared only for dishonest gain, bloodshed, oppression, and extortion.”³⁵ These ungodly traits were what Jeremiah condemned as uncharacteristic of people who knew God, and therefore what brought God’s judgement on Jehoiakim and Jerusalem. Martens argues that, “caring for the disadvantaged is what it means to *know*

³²Barclay Moon Newman and Philip C. Stine, *A Handbook on Jeremiah* (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 2003), 478.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Walvoord and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1156.

³⁵Ibid.

me (God).³⁶ This therefore emphasizes the need for God’s children to endeavor to translate their faith regarding biblical compassion to practice in order to please God.

Many New Testament passages show that Jesus and the early church demonstrated great compassion for the poor and marginalized both within and outside the church. Sider sums this up: “The biblical insistence on God’s concern for the poor is first of all a theological statement about the creator and sovereign of the universe. It is central to God’s character.”³⁷ God, by nature, expresses special concern for the poor, weak, and destitute, and, therefore, churches should share the same concern through appropriate relief and development interventions.

The early church practiced regular giving to meet the material needs of those in the fellowship who needed such support. These were the physically poor and disadvantaged among the saints. New Testament passages such as Rom. 12:13; 1 Cor. 16:1-4, 2 Cor. 8 and 9, and Gal. 6:10 are instructive regarding such practices of compassion in the New Testament church.

Apart from caring for the general needs of the saints, a specific class of vulnerability, namely widows, was identified for special care by the church. The early church had a program of relief to the poor and needy in the church which included daily food distribution to widows (Acts 6:1-6). Keener notes that “the Bible mandated caring for widows who had no other means of support, if they had no family nearby.”³⁸ Paul also instructed the church to provide regular support to older widows in the fellowship who

³⁶E. A. Martens, “Jeremiah,” in *Believers Bible Commentary* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1986), 147.

³⁷Sider, 140.

³⁸Keener, 334.

were really needy, but had no children or grandchildren to take care of them (1 Tim. 5:3-16). Where a widow's children or grandchildren were capable of taking up this responsibility of care, they were instructed to perform such duty as an act pleasing to God (v.4).

Another area of care for the needs of the disadvantaged within the body of believers practiced by the Early church was that of taking offerings to support disaster/famine victims. Such compassionate support was sent from Antioch and the churches of Macedonia to Jerusalem when the latter suffered severe famine (Acts 11:27:30; 1Cor. 16:1-4).

The apostle James states in his epistle the need for God's people to demonstrate love and compassion towards orphans and widows who suffer distress. He refers to such acts of compassion as a reflection of *religion that God our father accepts as pure and faultless* (James 1:27). Although this appears radical, it reveals the fact that God views the care for widows and orphans as critically important, and therefore he requires believers to demonstrate the same concern toward these disadvantaged individuals in society.

Exegesis of Luke 4:18-19

A New Testament text that requires much time to exegete in detail is Luke 4:18–19, popularly referred to as Jesus' kingdom manifesto. It is particularly important in view of the varying interpretations some scholars have given to link the passage to the compassion ministry in contemporary times. The goal here is to establish the original audience's understanding of the text as the author intended, as well as its applicability or

otherwise to contemporary compassion ministry of the church. A full exegesis of the passage is found in the paragraphs below and appendix G.

Authorship of Luke

The author of Luke is not expressly named in the gospel. Scholars such as Guthrie, Keener, and Manson are, however, convinced of ample evidence pointing the authorship to Luke. Guthrie for instance observes that “the gospel itself does not tell us anything specific about the identity of the author, but it does tell us about his methods.”³⁹ Manson asserts: “The tradition that the evangelist was Luke, a companion of Paul, mentioned in Colossians 4:14, Philemon 24, and 2 Timothy 4:11, goes back to the second century.”⁴⁰ Making an inference from the literary customs and style of writing, Guthrie makes the following deductions that point the authorship of the book to Luke: 1) The author alludes to the fact that he received information from eyewitnesses of the life of Jesus, hence implying he himself was not an eyewitness to the account. 2) The author’s narrative was based on earlier compilation by others which he found not comprehensive enough. 3) The author had personally conducted thorough investigation of the facts of the narratives to arrive at a more complete and orderly account.⁴¹ On his part, Keener points out that “early tradition, attested by second-century witnesses and the early title of the book favors Luke, travelling companion of Paul, as the author of Luke-Acts. Although

³⁹Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1990), 113.

⁴⁰William Manson, *The Gospel of Luke* (New York, NY: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1930), xxvii.

⁴¹Guthrie, 113.

the case for Luke's use of medical language has been exaggerated, the presence of educated language is consistent with the tradition of Lukan authorship."⁴²

Context of Text

The context within which a biblical passage is written is critically important to understanding the meaning of the passage as intended by its author and understood by its original audience. Fee therefore cautions that in interpreting the Bible, "always remember that your text is only one small part of a whole, and was never intended by the biblical author to be looked at or thought of independently from the rest of what he says."⁴³ The point is that, every word in the Bible exists in a sentence, every sentence fits into a passage, and every passage is crafted to fit into the central theme or message of the book to which it relates. This therefore implies that any attempt to interpret a biblical passage out of its context potentially leads to an interpretation unintended by the author, and hence likely to be at variance with what was understood by its original audience. It is from this perspective that Manus observes that "the delimitation of the Bible passage or text from its larger context makes it handy for exposition."⁴⁴

Socio-Economic and Political Setting of Israel

Jesus lived and carried out his earthly ministry in Israel within a socio-economic and political environment marked by oppression and exclusivity. Israel had a checkered

⁴²Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 176.

⁴³Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors* Rev. Ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 147-148.

⁴⁴Ukachukwu Chris Manus, *Intercultural Hermeneutics in Africa: Methods and Approaches* (Nairobi, Kenya: Action Publishers, 2003), 25.

history of falling into sin and exile due to rebellion against God's covenant.

Consequently, the nation fell into the hands of cruel foreign powers that dominated and oppressed it from time to time. Uwaegbute notes that "foreign powers like Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greeks, and Seleucids all ruled the Jews at different times of history. During the time of Jesus, the whole of Judea was colonized by the greatest of all empires that ever existed—Rome."⁴⁵ It was during such era that Jesus was born (Matt.2), grew up, and carried out his earthly ministry.

Uwaegbute further points out that "a large number of Jews were poor during this time. There was tyranny, injustice, overbearing and domineering leadership which characterized Roman imperialistic rule. This was an environment in which many Jews had much to be heartbroken about."⁴⁶ The socio-economic and political environment within which Israel lived during the earthly ministry of Christ could thus be described as oppressive and unfriendly to most Jews, particularly the poor and marginalized.

Date Gospel Was Written

There are differences in opinions among scholars as to the exact date the Gospel According to Luke was written. Dickson puts the date after AD 70 on the grounds that "Luke made extensive use of Mark's Gospel, and Mark's Gospel, which was the first of the New Testament Gospels to be written, probably took place around AD 70."⁴⁷

Keener's position on the date of writing of Luke is that although some scholars suggest a

⁴⁵Kingsley Ikechukwu Uwaegbute, "A Challenge of Jesus' Manifesto on Luke 4:16-21 to Nigerian Christians," in *International Journal of Theology & Reformed Tradition*, Vol. 5, 145.

⁴⁶Ibid, 147.

⁴⁷Kwesi A. Dickson, *The Gospel According to Luke* (Accra, Ghana: Asempa Pub., 1988), 17.

date before AD 64, and others put it after AD 70, none of these dates is conclusive with evidential substance. Nevertheless, a date after AD 70 appears more convincing, given the fact that Luke referred to Mark's work, which already existed.⁴⁸ This study agrees with both Dickson and Keener in dating Luke around the early 70s AD.

Recipient and Purpose of Luke

The author of Luke addresses the Gospel to a man he identifies as “most excellent Theophilus” (Luke 1:3). From the way the recipient of the book is addressed, Wiersbe concludes that “Theophilus (“Lover of God”), was probably a Roman official who had trusted Christ and now needed to be established in the faith.”⁴⁹ He also notes the possibility that Theophilus was someone who was seeking to know the truth of God's word, and so the book was intended to teach him the basics of the Christian faith.⁵⁰ The basis of his argument is that “the word translated *instructed* in Luke 1:4 gives us our English word *catechumen*, someone who is being taught the basics of Christianity.”⁵¹ Along this line, Keener observes that some of Luke's “audience is well-to-do and literarily sophisticated, and possibly desires confirmation in their faith or arguments they can use to defend it.”⁵²

⁴⁸Craig S. Keener, 314-315.

⁴⁹Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: The Complete New Testament in One Volume* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2007), 138.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Keener, 176.

The Gospel Account

The gospel account as recorded in Luke 3 and 4 indicates that after Jesus' baptism in the River Jordan where the Holy Spirit came upon him (Luke 3:21-22), he was led to the desert to be tempted by the devil (Luke 4:1-2). After this encounter, Jesus returned to Galilee, and the crowds followed him because news about his miracles and unique teaching with authority had spread throughout the entire region (Luke 4:14). Jesus then went to Nazareth where he grew up, and when it was Sabbath, he went to the synagogue for worship as usual. It was at this synagogue worship that upon invitation to read and teach the Scriptures, Jesus took the scroll and read from the prophet Isaiah, as later recorded in Luke 4:18-19.

Contrary to the assertion by some commentators that the text from Isaiah 61 was selected for Jesus to read, Uwaegbute argues that the Greek verb used rather supports the contrary. He points out that "*Heuren*, which is in the aorist passive (3rd person singular) is translated 'He found.' The verb *heuren* as used here therefore suggests that it was Jesus who chose the text of Isaiah 61:1-2 by himself when the *chazzan* (attendant) handed him the scroll concerning the prophecy of Isaiah."⁵³ He further asserts that the prevailing oppression and harsh living conditions of the Jews "may have influenced Jesus' choice of the text of Isaiah 61 as his manifesto which he read in Luke 4:16-21."⁵⁴ The position of this study is that although Jesus responded directly to many socio-economic and political ills during his earthly ministry, the subject of his manifesto on earth was divinely predetermined. The choice of Isaiah 61 to inaugurate his mission on earth was thus not an

⁵³Uwaegbute, 151.

⁵⁴Ibid, 147.

after-thought instigated by the happenings around him, but divinely inspired.

Furthermore, in his divinity, Jesus was aware and clear about his mission on earth, and hence it was not a coincidence at all that he read Isaiah 61. He did not need to be influenced by the pressures around him to determine his mission on earth.

Authorial Intent and Original Audience Understanding

The text from Isaiah 61:1-2 which Jesus quoted was understood by the Jews to be a messianic passage, outlining the things the Messiah would do when he came. Therefore, when Jesus attributed this scripture to himself by literally announcing that he was the promised Messiah who had come to begin his ministry, it must have caused a stir or shock to his listeners. According to Wiersbe, “the Jewish rabbis interpreted this passage to refer to the Messiah, and the people in the synagogue knew it. You can imagine how shocked they were when Jesus boldly said that it was written about him, and that he had come to usher in the acceptable year of the Lord.”⁵⁵

Even more disappointing to the audience was the fact that Jesus’ proclamation ended on the “acceptable year of the Lord,” and never added the “day of vengeance of our God” recorded in Isaiah 61:2, which indeed most Jews were eagerly expecting. Gooding thus observes that, “for many people, particularly those who believed in him, this was a shock and a disappointment, especially when they found out what it would mean.”⁵⁶ In other words, the Jews could not accept Jesus as the promised Messiah because they did not see him as someone who had come to deliver them from the

⁵⁵Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary*, 149.

⁵⁶David Gooding, *According to Luke: The Third Gospel’s Ordered Historical Narrative* (Coleraine, N. Ireland, Myrtlefield Trust, 1987), 83.

oppressive rule of the Roman government. Besides, they knew his parents, and how he grew up among them.

When Jesus spoke of the “acceptable year of the Lord” (KJV) or the “year of the Lord’s favor” (NIV) in Luke 4:19, he was linking it to the Jewish year of jubilee found in Leviticus 25, in which the poor and captives were set free on every fiftieth year. Therefore, Jesus announced himself as the promised Messiah who had come to deliver his people from sin, slavery, oppression, and physical hardships with the jubilee motif. Wiersbe contends, and this paper concurs, that: “Jesus applied all of this to His own ministry, not in a political or economic sense, but in a physical and spiritual sense. He had certainly brought good news of salvation to bankrupt sinners and healing to brokenhearted and rejected people. He had delivered many from blindness and from bondage to demons and disease. Indeed, it was a spiritual ‘Year of Jubilee’ for the nation of Israel.”⁵⁷

The other sections of the exegesis of Luke 4:18-19 are found in appendix G, where scholars such as Hopkins,⁵⁸ Uwaegbute,⁵⁹ and Koech,⁶⁰ arguing along the lines of liberation theology formulated by Gustavo Gutierrez,⁶¹ have tried to stretch the interpretation to include compassion to all the poor in society. Such interpretations are to be placed in their right perspectives, bearing in mind the authorial intent of Luke and the

⁵⁷Wiersbe, 149.

⁵⁸See Appendix G.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹James B. Nickoloff, *Gustavo Gutierrez: Essential Writings* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 1-2.

original audience's understanding of Luke 4:18-19. The church certainly has a mandate to demonstrate compassion to all the poor in society, but that should be based on other biblical passages that speak directly to helping all the poor in society. This paper maintains that the Lukan interpretation of Luke 4:18-19 and its linkage to Isaiah 61:1-2 was in reference to the spiritual salvation of Israel, and not in terms of political or economic freedom to all the poor in society.

Theological Basis for Social Action through Relief and Development

The theological basis for Christian social action finds its roots in the understanding that the triune God is relational, humankind exists as social beings, social action is an imperative of salvation, and man is responsible for stewardship under the creation mandate.

The Triune God Is a Relational God

Christian theology understands God as triune: one God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This, therefore, means that God is community in nature. Grenz asserts that "The one, true God is the social trinity. Furthermore, the divine reality is eternally relational even apart from the world, in that the Trinitarian persons comprise the one God. But not only is the immanent Trinity relational, the triune God enters into relationship with the world he creates."⁶² The creator God thus maintains an ongoing relationship of love with his creation. He, therefore, seeks to protect and defend this relationship whenever it is undermined in any way. God's plan is that the world would be

⁶²Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 78.

a community of love filled with caring relationships. He became flesh in order to restore fallen humanity to himself (John 1:14). This is what Christian social action seeks to achieve through relief and development.

Humankind Exist as Social Beings

The creation account of Genesis says, “So God created man in his own image...” (Gen. 1:27, NIV). The *social* Trinity God thus intends for people to maintain right relationships with him and in community with others, who are also God’s image bearers. This calls for Christlike humility, irrespective of one’s socio-economic standing. Capturing this idea, Hartin asserts that “throughout the biblical writings, humility is a fundamental virtue because it upholds and fosters the essential relationship that exists between the individual, the community, and God. Jesus’ central concern for his followers was that they respect the honor of God and others (Matt. 23:12; Luke 18:14).”⁶³ It is in this light that Jesus equates service to *the least of these brethren of mine* with service to God (Matt. 25:41–46). Love for God and one’s neighbor finds expression in the Great Commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 10:27). The more one loves God, the more one will delight in serving God and others. This makes it imperative for the AGG to embark on Christian social action through relief and development, in addition to preaching the gospel.

In Matthew 25:41-46, the *least of these brethren of mine* is interpreted as poor believers rather than the poor in general. Carson argues that “as people respond to his disciples or ‘brothers’ and align themselves with their distress and afflictions, they align

⁶³Patrick J. Hartin, “Humility,” In *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics*, ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2011), 390.

themselves with the Messiah who identifies himself with them.”⁶⁴ This paper agrees with the above interpretation, but submits that, although emphasis may be placed on those in the household of faith (Gal 6:10), believers should not limit love and concern to only the poor within the church, but to extend it to all poor and needy people as a reflection of God’s unconditional love for humanity (John 3:16). It is often through the love and concern for the poor that God’s love is demonstrated in practical and tangible ways.

Salvation and Christian Social Action

The doctrine of Salvation has both personal and social implications. Salvation from sin becomes more meaningful when it affects the individual’s community. Peskett and Ramachandra observe that “salvation embraces nothing less than a total renewal and reordering of the creation. It is not limited to the human creation.”⁶⁵ Salvation thus implies forgiveness and reconciliation, liberation from human suffering, and improvement of communities. The AGG should, therefore, be committed to addressing social injustices such as child slavery, discrimination against women, and cruel rites of widowhood that exist in some parts of Ghana. God’s desire is that the church will become “a light for the nations” (Is. 49:6 CSB). This, therefore, should translate into transformed lives in the community. Pesket and Ramachandra’s work explains the difference between relief and development and helps to clarify that the ultimate aim of relief and

⁶⁴D. A. Carson, *The Expositors Bible Commentary*, vol. 8: Matthew, Mark, Luke, ed. Frank E. Gabelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 522.

⁶⁵Howard Peskett and Vinoth Ramachandra, *The Message of Mission: The Glory of Christ in All Time and Space*, of *The Bible speaks Today: Bible Theme Series*, ed. Derek Tidball (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 25.

development is poverty alleviation, self-sufficiency, and general improvement in people's living conditions.

Divine Ownership and Stewardship of Creation

The account of Gen. 2:15 places a divine responsibility on man to preserve the earth and the environment in general. Pesket and Ramachandra contend that “developing the earth’s potential and conserving its fruitfulness are twin aspects of responsible planetary stewardship.”⁶⁶ As representative of God on earth, the church has a responsibility to champion ‘sustainable development’ which ensures that the planet is “not robbed of its life-giving and life-sustaining capacities.”⁶⁷ A case in point that calls for the church’s attention is the recent reported cases of illegal mining that resulted in the degradation of the environment and the pollution of bodies of water in many parts of Ghana. As stewards of God’s creation, the AGG should promote preservation of the earth and its environment. This could be achieved through regular teaching, advocacy, and other forms of Christian social action.

Biblical Basis for Assemblies of God Relief and Development

This section identifies and describes relevant insights from selected sources that deal with the biblical basis for AGREDS. This includes *missio Dei* and relief and development, evangelism and social concern, the goal of relief and development, and divergent views on relief and development.

⁶⁶Ibid., 46.

⁶⁷Ibid.

Missio Dei and Relief and Development

John York argues that “God is indeed a God of mission, that the Scriptures give a diachronic unfolding of that mission, and that though the entire Bible is directly or indirectly a statement of God’s mission, the primary focus from Genesis to Revelation remains the proclamation of the gospel to all nations.”⁶⁸ This, therefore, implies that God’s plan of redemption through Christ is to be given to all people groups living on the earth diachronically. This mandate is what is referred to as the *missio Dei*. York explains that the *missio Dei* “refers to God’s plan to bless the nations through the gospel of Jesus Christ. In its ultimate fulfilment, this blessing would come through Jesus Christ, the offspring (Heb. *Zera* “seed”) promised first to Eve (Gen. 3:15), then to Abraham (Gen. 22:18), to Isaac (Gen. 26:4), and to Jacob (Gen. 28:14).”⁶⁹ York traces the *missio Dei* from Genesis to Revelation and then from the early church throughout the centuries in the light of the church’s mandate for mission and its demands throughout time. He argues convincingly that the *missio Dei* is the essential key for understanding the sequence and central message of the Scriptures.⁷⁰ A careful study of the entire life of Jesus while on earth, reveals that the fulfilment of the *missio Dei* depends on both the proclamation of God’s word, and good deeds through social concern in the form of relief and development.

⁶⁸John V. York, *Missions in the Age of the Spirit*, ed. Stanley M. Horton (Springfield, MO: Logion Press, 2011), 17.

⁶⁹Ibid, 20.

⁷⁰Ibid., 19–100.

Evangelism and Social Action through Relief and Development

Bosch defines the term evangelism as, “the core, heart, or center of mission; it consists in the proclamation of salvation in Christ to nonbelievers, in announcing forgiveness of sins, in calling people to repentance and faith in Christ, in inviting them to become living members of Christ's earthly community and to begin a life in the power of the Holy Spirit.”⁷¹

The phrase *social concern through relief and development* is not found in the Scriptures. However, its usage among Christians has been understood to mean the role of the church in society as implied from Scriptures. Ireland explains social concern as “those aspects of the Christian faith variously referred to as compassionate ministry, Christian ethics, and/or social justice.”⁷² Myers points out that Christian social concern through relief and development entails “seeking positive change in the whole of human life, materially, socially, and spiritually.”⁷³ Drawing extensively on the best biblical and scientific sources with regard to development, Myers clarifies the biblical teaching concerning the plight of the poor and underprivileged in society. He then challenges his readers to emulate the example of Christ by treating the poor with dignity and embracing them with appropriate interventions that address the needs of the poor. Myers’ work is a contribution to “how Christian mission can contribute to overcoming poverty and

⁷¹David J. Bosch, “Evangelism: Theological Currents and Cross-currents Today,” In *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, July 1987, <http://www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/1987-03/1987-03-098-bosch.pdf> (accessed February 12, 2019).

⁷²Jerry M. Ireland, *Evangelism and Social Concern in the Theology of Carl F. H. Henry* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015), 19.

⁷³Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 3.

dismantling systematic social evil.”⁷⁴ This blending of evangelism and social concern is popularly referred to as integral mission, or holistic mission. Contributing to this discussion, Chester cites from the *Micah Declaration* that states that: “In integral mission, our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ.”⁷⁵ This, therefore, means that, in integral mission, both the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel through relief and development are inextricably linked together.⁷⁶ Chester’s submission underscores the biblical basis for the church’s involvement in providing or assisting in the provision of some of the physical needs of the local communities through relief and development in addition to preaching the gospel.

Stott affirms the interrelationship between evangelism and social concern by pointing out that “evangelism and social concern have been intimately related to one another throughout the history of the church,”⁷⁷ and indeed the latter is vital for empowering the former. AGREDS projects in Ghana, such as the establishment of schools, hospitals, agricultural ventures, and community water schemes, have contributed

⁷⁴Ibid., 280.

⁷⁵Tim Chester, *Justice, Mercy and Humility: The Papers of the Micah Network International Consultation on Integral Mission and the Poor* (Carlisle: Peterborough Press, 2002), 3. See also Micah Network Declaration on Integral Mission, September 2001, https://www.micahnetwork.org/sites/default/files/doc/page/mn_integral_mission_declaration_en.pdf. (accessed February 15, 2019).

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷John R. Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today: New Perspectives on Social and Moral Dilemmas* (London, U.K.: Marshall Pickering, 1990), 3.

immensely to facilitating the spread of the Gospel and to the general improvement in people's living conditions.

Sider affirms the interrelationship between evangelism and social action, and asserts: "Virtually every major biblical teaching undergirds and demands social concern, and helps shape its character."⁷⁸ He contends that God, by nature, expresses special concern for the poor, weak, and destitute in society, and, therefore, churches should share the same concern. Describing God as one who defends the oppressed, feeds the hungry, sets prisoners free, heals the sick, and protects the vulnerable and marginalized in society, Sider argues that as God's agent of change in the world, the church is called upon to embrace social concern as a necessary process in fulfilling God's mission.⁷⁹ One way through which the church could embrace Christian social action is relief and development intervention.

In his review of Sider's writings, Rudolf Maier observes: "For Sider, the separation between social action and evangelism is not only unbiblical, but also ineffective. Evangelism without social action is empty and implausible; social action without evangelism is shallow because it does not cause true transformation."⁸⁰ Writing on evangelism and social responsibility, Padilla refers to a groundbreaking report of an ad hoc committee at Lausanne, endorsed by John Stott, which describes the gospel message as the "good news of liberation, of restoration, of wholeness, and of salvation that is

⁷⁸Sider, 139.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Maier, 346.

personal, social, global, and cosmic.”⁸¹ This significant attempt by evangelicals to embrace the need for evangelism and social concern to work together is noteworthy. Based on the above definition, Padilla observes that “social involvement had finally been granted full citizenship in evangelical missiology.”⁸² This study views AGG’s involvement in social concern through relief and development, as a necessary process in fulfilling God’s mission.

An important paper germane to this study is Murray W. Dempster’s groundbreaking work on the relationship between evangelism and social concern, published by Hendrickson.⁸³ In this work, Murray Dempster contends: “A *kerygmatic* ministry of evangelism, a *koinoniac* ministry of social witness, and a *diakonic* ministry of social service are all needed if the church’s global mission and ministry are to be carried out in the memory of Jesus of Nazareth, the One who was anointed by the Holy Spirit to inaugurate God’s reign of love, justice, and shalom.”⁸⁴ He thus strongly advocates that the church’s socio-humanitarian mandate must complement its evangelistic mandate.

⁸¹René C. Padilla, “Evangelism and Social Responsibility: From Wheaton ’66 to Wheaton ’83,” *Transformation* 2, no. 3 (1985): 29, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43052119> (accessed September 1, 2017).

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Murray W. Dempster, “Evangelism, Social Concern, and the Kingdom of God,” in *Called & Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*, ed. Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 22–39.

⁸⁴Ibid., 39.

Murray Dempster sees the church's *diakonic*⁸⁵ ministry as responding to its socio-humanitarian mandate "to foster a greater measure of justice for all people."⁸⁶ He argues insightfully that "by caring for the welfare of persons who need the basics of life, by redressing the unjust social conditions, by desacralizing political power..., by critiquing institutions that demean human dignity, and by establishing institutions of social transformation within the system, the church aims to be an agent manifesting God's eschatological intention to transform the world."⁸⁷ Emphasizing the church's capacity to carry out its socio-humanitarian mandate alongside its evangelistic mandate, Dempster points out that "the transforming power of God's reign that is personally experienced at conversion... is the same transforming power that can be manifested in the world through the church's moral deeds of caring for the welfare of the needy and the church's programs of social action aimed at changing the social system."⁸⁸

Dempster explains the literal meaning of *koinonia* (fellowship or ministry) in the Greek New Testament⁸⁹ and proposes that *koinoniac* ministry of the church accomplishes an important goal. That is, it portrays in the church the nature of God's kingdom lifestyle on earth "by sustaining each believer's loyalty to Jesus Christ and his kingdom mission

⁸⁵Matthew C. Harrison, Rev. Dr. President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod explains the term *diakonic* as "Love, care and concern for those in need" in *Theology for Mercy* (St. Louis: MO, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 2004) <https://www.google.com/search?rct=j&q=Theology%20for%20Mercy%20-%20Lutheran%20Church> (Accessed 29th November, 2018).

⁸⁶Murray W. Dempster., 38.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid., 27.

through the community's charismatic structure and Eucharistic celebration."⁹⁰ According to Dempster, by performing Christ-like good deeds to the world, "the church thinks strategically and acts concretely to perform kingdom-signifying deeds that will, in the long term, change the unjust living conditions of our human global village and will, in the interim, help the people who suffer from those injustices."⁹¹ The church's mandate in the world is thus to evangelize through Jesus' model of preaching the good news, as well as meeting physical needs of people.

Writing on mission, John Stott points out that Jesus commissioned his church to go and make disciples. This is evangelism (mission with words). Second, Jesus also commanded his disciples to demonstrate love to their neighbors. This is social concern (mission with works).⁹² He further declares that Christ's own ministry of service involved both and so must ours because, as he puts it, "our neighbor is neither a body-less soul that we should love only his soul, nor a soul-less body that we should care for its welfare alone, nor even a body-soul isolated from society."⁹³ He insists that Jesus "served in deed as well as in word, and it would be impossible in the ministry of Jesus to separate his works from his words. He fed the hungry mouths, and washed dirty feet, he healed the sick, comforted the sad, and even restored the dead to life."⁹⁴

⁹⁰Ibid., 31–32.

⁹¹Ibid., 32.

⁹²John R. Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 24–28.

⁹³Ibid., 29–30.

⁹⁴Ibid., 24.

John Stott contends that the most biblical form of social action is one that works in partnership with evangelism. He explains that, “as partners, the two belong to each other, and yet are independent of each other. Each stands on its own feet in its own right alongside the other. Neither is a means to the other, or even a manifestation of the other. For each is an end in itself.”⁹⁵ To sum it up, the social-concern mandate requires the church at all times to intentionally build into its structures pragmatic programs aimed at meeting the needs of the disadvantaged in society while at the same time evangelizing vigorously for the salvation of people. This dual mandate of the church must be carried out with similar zeal and passion demonstrated by Jesus during his earthly ministry.

The Goal of Christian Relief and Development

In the Old Testament, Christian relief and development aims at seeking the total wellbeing of people, devoid of all forms of oppression and human suffering. Jakonda argues that “Christianity is complete or holistic only when personal salvation displays itself in social services and when these social services stem from personal salvation.”⁹⁶ This portrays a beautiful picture of the interrelationship between evangelism and social concern.

The New Testament objective of social concern is the transformation of human society as God intended. This calls for a holistic view of life in one’s community in ways that are equitable, just, and peaceful. Myers emphasizes that “there can be no meaningful understanding of a person apart from his or her relationships-with God, self, community,

⁹⁵Ibid., 27.

⁹⁶S. Z. Jakonda, *Your Kingdom Come: A Book on Holistic Christian Development* (Jos, Nigeria: PURCORN, 2001), 2.

those he or she calls ‘other,’ and the environment.”⁹⁷ Ultimately, the various relief and development programs of the church should aim at reaching the above outcomes. This, therefore, calls for a theological shift to ensure that the church approaches ministry to the world holistically. Myers sums this up with the assertion that “any vision of a better human future that is Christian must include a vibrant, growing, living, Christian community that is eagerly and joyfully serving God and the community.”⁹⁸ This calls for a conscious effort on the part of the AGG to continually engage the community in the provision of essential amenities through relief and development.

Divergent Views on Social Action through Relief and Development

Two viewpoints have been expressed on the role of the church in society. One group emphasizes soul-winning aimed at salvation of people’s souls without due regard for their physical living conditions. This viewpoint emphasizes only the spiritual dimension of human life and neglects the physical dimension, including service to the community and the inhabitants therein. Padilla however argues that “today, most evangelicals would hardly fit the stereotype of a person who is solely committed to 'saving souls' and who closes his or her eyes to bodily needs. However, the problem comes when an attempt is made to define what importance such needs should have in relation to missionary priorities.”⁹⁹

⁹⁷Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 135.

⁹⁸Ibid., 115.

⁹⁹C. René Padilla, “Evangelism and Social Responsibility: From Wheaton '66 to Wheaton '83.” In *Transformation*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1985) Sage Publications Ltd, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43052119.pdf> (accessed 10th February, 2019).

Another group believes that life must be lived to its full while on earth. To them, heaven finds expression in the pursuit of good standard of living on earth, devoid of poverty and oppression. They argue that “heaven is here and now, and people make their own heaven.”¹⁰⁰ They emphasize vigorous economic and community transformation for better life on earth, while neglecting the biblical teaching on the spiritual dimension of human life such as personal relationship with Christ, salvation, and life after death. These divergent viewpoints create a seeming separation of the spiritual aspect of human life from the physical. This potentially hinders the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) and the Great Commandment (Luke 10:27) of the Lord Jesus Christ. To this end, Castro contends that, “in carrying out God's mission, we cannot opt permanently for one aspect of mission or another, be it liberation, development, humanization, or evangelization. These are all essential, integral parts of the mission entrusted to us and cannot be set against one another without becoming, simply, caricatures of what they really are.”¹⁰¹ The church should thus engage in both evangelism and social concern without neglecting any, in line with the pattern of Jesus’ earthly ministry (Matt. 9:35; Acts 10:38).

It seems apparent that human life comprises the body, soul, and spirit and that AGREDS thrives within human communities. Therefore, a theological shift is urgently needed to ensure that the church approaches ministry to the world holistically. This will

¹⁰⁰S. Z. Jakonda, *Your Kingdom Come: A Book on Holistic Christian Development* (Jos, Nigeria: PURCORN, 2001), 1.

¹⁰¹Emilio Castro, “Liberation, Development, and Evangelism: Must We Choose in Mission?” <http://www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/1978-03/1978-03-087-castro.pdf> (accessed February 10, 2019).

be achieved through both the proclamation of the Word and good deeds through relief and development.

Reflections: The Church and Relief and Development

Reflections on the church and relief and development cover the church's role as salt and light of society, the church as God's prophetic voice, Jesus' example on social action through relief and development, and the church viewed as a community within the larger community.

The Church as Salt and Light of Society

In Mathew 5:13–16, Jesus likens believers to salt and light of the world. Both salt and light are intended to influence and change their immediate environment. The church operates in communities that are distorted and darkened through corruption and other forms of sin. Such communities therefore need the preservation of 'salt' and illumination of 'light' that the church provides. The church, therefore, cannot detach itself from society, if it is to fulfill its divine mandate.

Carson argues that "if Jesus' disciples are to act as a preservative in the world by conforming to kingdom norms, if they are called to be a moral disinfectant in a world where moral standards are low, constantly changing, or non-existent... they can discharge this function only if they themselves retain their virtue."¹⁰² Thus, the church's mandate is not to withdraw from the sin-darkened world but to be actively involved in the

¹⁰²D.A. Carson, "The Church as Salt and Light of Society," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: With the New International Version of the Holy Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1984), 139.

transformation of society and constantly seeking to lead people to Christ through all legitimate means, including social intervention projects such as relief and development.

The Church as God's Prophetic Voice

The Old Testament prophets were actively involved in their communities and forthright in addressing ethical and moral issues of their time. Jeremiah, for instance, did not hesitate in pointing out injustice and oppression in Judah, even when it involved the king (Jeremiah 22:13-17). Similarly, Jesus condemned social injustice and oppression during his earthly ministry. Sider points out that Jesus “summoned the whole Jewish community to adopt his kingdom values on economics, marriage, women, leadership, enemies—in short, everything.”¹⁰³ Myers contends that “when the church is its best, it is a sign of the values of the kingdom and is contributing holistic disciples to the community for its wellbeing.”¹⁰⁴ The church's prophetic role includes spreading the gospel and serving the community by addressing social concerns and demonstrating God's kingdom ethics. The AGG can effectively achieve this mandate through appropriate advocacy interventions and proactive engagement with stakeholders concerning the application of biblical ethics in the various sectors of Ghana's development.

Jesus and Social Action through Relief and Development

The biblical narrative of incarnation provides a vivid picture of the relationship between the spiritual and physical dimensions of life (John 1:14) and offers a compelling

¹⁰³Sider, 153.

¹⁰⁴Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 127.

reason for the church's involvement in community development. Kirk observes that Jesus identified with the human community by living as a man, going through earthly experiences, and offering useful services to mankind. He identified with the poor, ate with them, touched them, healed them, forgave them, and proclaimed the gospel to them.¹⁰⁵ He also challenged evil in society and exposed it. Myers contends that "the incarnation smashes any argument that God is only concerned for the spiritual realm, and that the material is somehow evil or unworthy of the church's attention."¹⁰⁶ This assertion is reinforced by Jesus' earthly ministry pattern of preaching the gospel and doing good deeds (Acts 10:38), which largely provides the biblical and theological basis for AGREDS.

In their work, Buckley and Dobson contend that "Christ was a humanitarian"¹⁰⁷ and that no one ever "taught and lived more for the welfare of humanity"¹⁰⁸ than Jesus. They argue that because Jesus invested extensively in service to humanity during his life on earth, his followers are called upon to follow his example. However, such good works should ultimately feed into the big picture of the mission of God, namely the proclamation of the gospel leading to people's conversion.¹⁰⁹ The authors then moved beyond theory by interviewing fifteen evangelical leaders involved in humanitarian

¹⁰⁵J. Andrew Kirk, *What Is Mission?: Theological Explorations* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 44.

¹⁰⁶Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 46.

¹⁰⁷Christian Buckley and Ryan Dobson, *Humanitarian Jesus: Social Justice and the Cross* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2010), 222.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

ministry and documenting their perspectives on how to blend the practice of humanitarian ministry with proclamation of the gospel.¹¹⁰ The rich insights from Buckley and Dobson's work provides useful guidance to churches on how to combine preaching of the gospel with good deeds.

The Church as Community within a Larger Community

Members of the church are citizens within the larger community of God's creation. A community in this context refers to people who live together in a particular geographical area and who are bound together by common interests. An individual's common interests with the rest of society take the form of social amenities that all enjoy as citizens, such as good roads, schools, healthcare, and security. This places a responsibility on the AGG as a good corporate citizen to be involved in social action through relief and development.

A more compelling reason for this argument is the issue of sin and its consequential disruption of community that needs to be confronted. Sider throws more light on this and observes: "Made in the image of the triune God who is a community of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, persons are created so that only in community do we become what the creator intended."¹¹¹ This implies that humans become what they are meant to be only through the proper functioning of the structures of society. Boapeah contends: "The church's role in the community is to empower the people in the locality to equip themselves with the tools to tackle their own problems, expressed in their own

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Sider, 142.

way.”¹¹² According to him, this begins with “identifying the causes of bondage, poverty, and exploitation. We can then work with the people to empower them by removing these obstacles and creating a just society.”¹¹³

This is achievable through appropriate relief and development interventions. The role of the church in the community is not only to contribute materially to improve physical conditions of people, but also to influence the larger society with the kingdom ethics of Christ in all facets of community life. Figure 1 helps to illustrate this.

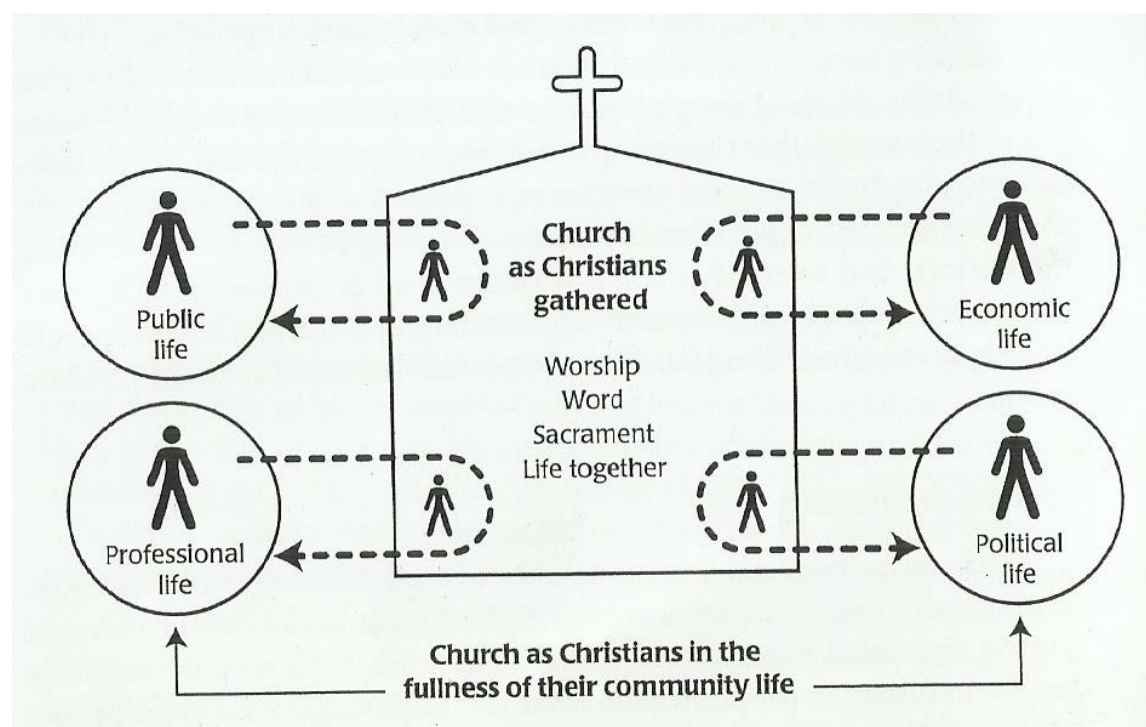


Figure 1. The church as community within community (from Myers).¹¹⁴

¹¹²Samuel N. Boapeah, *Christian Approach to Development: A Guide for Practical Christian Ministry in Development* (Accra, Ghana: Challenge Enterprises, 2005), 55.

¹¹³Ibid., 56.

¹¹⁴Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 133.

Development Sustained by Prayer

All forms of relief and development programs run by the AGG should be carried out in prayer if the church is to succeed. Prayer is an expression of dependence on God, as the church moves into the communities to demonstrate God's love to neighbors through social action. All efforts and resources put into this effort will amount to nothing if the church does not depend on God to bring about relief and development that conform to his will (Psalm 127:1). The dimension of prayer demonstrates total dependence on the creator and architect of society to bring about sustainable development through human efforts.

Summary

This chapter covered the biblical-theological review of the dissertation. It explained how and why the biblical passages were chosen and their appropriateness to the research topic. It reviewed what the traditional views of the church had been on the passages as compared to alternative contemporary views. It also discussed biblical compassion and the people of God, acknowledged presuppositions of the research, and explained how the meaning and application of the chosen passages were arrived at. The chapter also engaged the literature on biblical foundations for the compassion ministry, theological basis for Christian social action, biblical basis for AGG relief and development, and reflections on the church and relief and development.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL SCIENCE LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter examines the precedent social science literature relevant to an exploration of pertinent elements of the dissertation. The various facets of the literature review are organized to feed into the central theme of the history of AGREDS from 1948 to 2016 and its influence on Ghanaian society. They are representative of key works on Christian relief and development relevant to an exploration of the history of AGREDS. The chapter is organized along the following sub-divisions: (A) historical perspectives on development, (B) ways for implementing relief and development, (C) origin, growth, and influence of AGREDS in Ghana, and (D) what is still not known.

Historical Perspectives on Development

Over the years, development thinking has been shaped through contributions by development agencies, politicians, Christians, and non-Christians. Generally, development thinking has evolved from various perspectives including the following.

Development as Humanitarianism

Explaining development as humanitarianism, Craig N. Murphy states that development is “the complex of social practices designed to ameliorate the post-

Industrial Revolution problem of inequality across societies in a sustainable manner.”¹ Myers observes that “the world of humanitarian relief changed dramatically during the increase in civil conflict and people movements that took place during the 1990s.”² This benevolent approach to development prescribes humanitarianism as part of the solution to the problems of colonialism and imperialism.

Development as Transformation

In reviewing different perspectives on development, Myers cites Wayne Bragg’s argument from a seminal paper that “development that went beyond social welfare by including justice concerns”³ is the best view of Christian development. According to Bragg, such concerns include “life-sustenance, equity in the distribution of goods and opportunities, justice, dignity and self-worth, freedom from oppression, participation, reciprocity between the poor and non-poor, respect for best in local cultures, ecological soundness, hope, and spiritual transformation.”⁴ He further asserts: “No culture is pure and holy, but all have intrinsic value that can be redeemed and used for social transformation.”⁵ Implied in Bragg’s assertion is the fact that people in all cultures are

¹Craig N. Murphy, *The United Nations Development Programme: A Better Way?* (Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 29.

²Bryant L. Myers, “Humanitarian Response: Christians in Response to Uprooted People,” *Missiology: An International Review* XXXV, no. 2 (2007).

³W. G. Bragg, “Development as Transformation, in Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 2006), 95.

⁴Wayne G. Bragg, “Beyond Development to Transformation,” *International Review of Mission* 73, no. 290 (1984): 158–165, <https://www.neighborhoodtransformation.net/pdfs/Wayne%20Bragg%20%20Beyond%20Development%20to%20Transformation.pdf> (accessed June 7, 2018).

⁵Ibid., 163.

made in the image of God and, hence, have value and contributions to make to society. The recognition and inclusion of these concerns which were hitherto not part of the Evangelical agenda is, and has been, a useful addition to development thinking.

According to Myers, the limitations of Bragg's views are that they have a strong redistribution tone and also lack appreciation for the importance of wealth creation.⁶ This view seems to be valid. Also, Bragg did not factor into his theorizing "the contribution the poor make to their own poverty."⁷ These notwithstanding, Bragg's inclusion of freedom and participation of people of all cultures in development thinking provides useful insight for an exploration of the history of AGREDS.

Development as People-Centered

David Korten describes development as people-centered when "a high priority is placed on a process of democratization. The people are encouraged to mobilize and manage their own local resources with government in an enabling role."⁸ Under this model of development, the local people are assisted by their governments through the creation of an enabling environment that helps people to improve their standard of living as they deem fit in a legitimate and sustainable manner using local resources. The overriding emphasis of this approach to development is self-reliance. Pointing out the merits of people-centered development, David Korten asserts that it "generally results in

⁶Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 95.

⁷Ibid.

⁸David C. Korten, "Third Generation NGO Strategies: A Key to People-Centered Development," *World Development* Vol. 15. Supplement, (1987): 146, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.739.1444&rep=rep1&type=pdf> (accessed August 15, 2018).

more efficient and productive resource management, a reduction in dependence on external resources, increased equity, increased local initiatives and accountability, and a strengthening of economic discipline.”⁹ On the down side, he observes that “governments are often reluctant to provide the necessary leadership and lack a capacity to address many of the issues involved”¹⁰ in development. He therefore challenges non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to build their own capacities in providing the needed leadership¹¹ in this regard in order to ensure sustainability of development programs.

Myers sees Korten’s view of development as a process that thrives on the wheels of sustainability, justice, and inclusiveness with the goal of addressing poverty and social disintegration.¹² Viewing “development as a process, and not an end”¹³ in itself, is a very useful way of helping to transform the lives of the poor. This insight is very helpful in tracing the historical evolution of relief and development within the AGG.

Development as Access to Social Power

Based on his definition of the cause of poverty as limited access to social power, John Friedman asserts that development is “a process that seeks the empowerment of the households and their individual members through their involvement in socially and politically relevant actions.”¹⁴ Friedman thus advocates for self-reliance, local decision-

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 96.

¹³Ibid., 97.

¹⁴John Friedmann, *Empowerment: The Politics of Alternative Development* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992), 33.

making, participation, and empowerment through the household.¹⁵ He believes that the interplay of these variables should take place within the state, the economy, civil society, and the political arena.

Friedman's approach to development empowers people at the household level rather than the top echelon of society. He advocates for the "scaling up of macro development projects by linking community projects into networks, coalitions, federations, and confederations of popular organizations and non-governmental organizations."¹⁶ His view is very positive in the sense that he addresses the problem of overconcentration of power in the hands of a few people by placing the household's access to social power at the center of development. However, to the extent that Friedman's model of development does not directly address the spiritual dimension of human life, Myers finds Friedman's view inadequate. Myers contends, "Access to spiritual power is as important to the poor as social and political power, in fact, more so in many traditional rural communities."¹⁷ This insight is particularly helpful in tracing the origin, growth, and influence of AGREDS on Ghanaian society.

Development as Responsible Wellbeing

As the caption *responsible wellbeing* suggests, Robert Chambers, the proponent of this idea, shifts development thinking from programs to empowerment of the poor "to analyze and articulate their own needs, with the implications for policy and practice of

¹⁵Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 100–101.

¹⁶Friedmann, 33.

¹⁷Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 103.

putting first the priorities of the poor”¹⁸ at the center of the development agenda. In Myers’ assessment, “Chambers presents five words that he believes describe the current development consensus: wellbeing, livelihood, capability, equity, and sustainability.”¹⁹ He defines responsible wellbeing as encompassing all the things that are done to improve the quality of life of the weak and poor. This includes livelihood security and capabilities assessment. Again, Chambers calls on development stakeholders to challenge the status quo and go “beyond poverty to wellbeing, and beyond employment to sustainable livelihoods, to explore the new paradigm, to embrace the new professionalism, and to concern themselves with whose reality counts”²⁰ which he advocates in this case to be the reality of the poor, weak and vulnerable.²¹ He calls on stakeholders of social development “to question conventional concepts of development; to be challenged to change, personally, professionally and institutionally; and to change the paradigm of the development enterprise.”²² Explaining the need for sustainable wellbeing for the poor, Chambers argues that “the realities of the poor are local, diverse, often complex and dynamic, and poor people’s criteria differ from those assumed for them by professionals.”²³ Hence, he advocates that “the key is to enable them to express their

¹⁸Robert Chambers, “Poverty and Livelihoods: Whose Reality Counts?,” *Environment and Urbanization* 7, no. 1 (April 1995): 173, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/095624789500700106> (accessed August 10, 2018).

¹⁹Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 104.

²⁰Robert Chambers, 204.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid., 173.

reality, to put that reality first, and to make it count. To do that demands altruism, insight, vision, and guts.”²⁴

Myers points out that Chambers’ model of development is helpful in the sense that it stresses the importance of sustainability and transformational training.²⁵ He also advocates for a mechanism that holds “people in responsible positions of power accountable rather than blaming unjust behavior on abstractions and systems.”²⁶ The approach however does not address the challenge of spiritual misconceptions²⁷ which hamper development among the powerless in Africa, particularly in Ghana. Nevertheless, Chambers’ development model is a pro-poor philosophy which places the plight of the poor and vulnerable at the center of development. This contribution is useful in assessing the influence of AGREDS in the many poverty-endemic communities of Ghana.

Development as Addressing Powerlessness

Proponents of development that aims at addressing powerlessness of the poor attribute the cause of powerlessness to poverty. In this regard, Dickson observes that, “poverty is being understood increasingly as powerlessness.”²⁸ Writing on powerlessness of the poor, the World Bank Group argues that “poor people are disadvantaged by lack of

²⁴Ibid., 204.

²⁵Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 106.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸C. R. Dickson, Empowerment: A Theological Perspective.
https://www.google.com/search?q=Empowerment%3A+A+Theological+Perspective+-+C.+R.+Dickson&rlz=1C1GGRV_enGH751GH751&oq=Empowerment%3A+A+Theological+Perspective+-+C.+R.+Dickson&aqs=chrome..69i57j69i58.34561j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8 (accessed February 15, 2019).

information, education, skills, and confidence. Many factors contribute to limited personal capacity, including physical isolation, being cut off from the powerful and wealthy, lack of access to media, and limited schooling.”²⁹ The factors identified in the above submission are thus considered to be what largely account for powerlessness of the poor. In other words, the poor are powerless because socio-economic, political, and other systemic arrangements of society are kept in the hands of the powerful who often exercise control over the poor in all spheres of life. Dickson contends that, “there are real structural obstacles in the fabric of the society which contribute to the powerlessness of the powerless.”³⁰ As a biblical response to powerlessness therefore, Dickson proposes that, “the way for the poor to remove the control of others over them is to turn to the New Order and power available through participating in this New Order which is the Kingdom of God.”³¹ This paper submits that a more sustainable approach to addressing powerlessness of the poor is for both the poor as well as the powerful rich, to embrace the tenets of the Kingdom of God, leading to changed lives, and changed interpersonal relationships between humans, God, and the environment.

Along this line, Wallace cites Jayakumar’s address at Baylor University emphasizing that “the poor develop marred identities and scarred souls when they become defined by their poverty. Often, that results from powerful people who play God

²⁹World Bank Group, “Powerless, Trapped in a Many-Stranded Web,” 237.
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPOVERTY/Resources/335642-1124115102975/1555199-1124115201387/cry11.pdf> (accessed February 15, 2019).

³⁰C. R. Dickson, 251.

³¹Ibid, 254.

in the lives of the poor.”³² Jayakumar therefore contends that “the church has a life-giving message of truth for the poor that challenges lies about their self-identity and confronts the powerlessness that keeps them poor.”³³ Jayakumar’s development model encourages inclusiveness, mutual respect, and harmony among all people living as citizens of God’s creation in God’s kingdom.

Writing on disaster management, Kennek Nehrbass argues that “tribal peoples make sense of their world by formulating supernatural explanations for misfortunes that befall them. At times, their explanations are at odds with biblical theology.”³⁴ This therefore should be addressed through sound biblical teaching on such issues. It is in this regard that Myers sees Jayakumar’s approach as a helpful attempt “to fill in the spiritual blind spot in a broad and holistic way”³⁵ in development thinking. There is certainly the need to challenge both the poor and non-poor with a kingdom response to exploitation and oppressive tendencies that lead to powerlessness. This contribution is helpful in tracing the history of AGREDS, particularly in regard to how misconceptions and superstitious beliefs in rural settings of Ghana have often been handled.

³²Daniel Wallace, “Church Challenged to Proclaim the Worth of the Poor,” *Baptist Standard* (September 2013), <https://www.baptiststandard.com/news/texas/church-challenged-to-proclaim-the-worth-of-the-poor-in-god-s-eyes/> (accessed August 12, 2018).

³³Ibid.

³⁴Kenneth Nehrbass, “Dealing with Disaster: Critical Contextualization of Misfortune in an Animistic Setting,” *Missiology: An International Review* xxxix (2011).

³⁵Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 109.

Ways for Implementing Relief and Development

Historically, social action through relief and development has been implemented to address the plight of the underprivileged in society through interventions such as relief, social infrastructural development, structural change, advocacy, and empowerment.

Social Action through Relief

Sider asserts that churches are involved in relief when they minister “to victims of natural or social disaster, seeking to provide immediate handouts of food, shelter, and other necessities so people survive.”³⁶ In many flood-prone areas of Ghana, AGREDS has undertaken social action through free distribution of food and clothing to flood victims. AGREDS has also helped refugees and tribal war victims at very critical times. This study proposes that, periodically, these reliefs could be extended to prisons, orphanages, and clinics where people are identified to be living in distressed conditions. Such good deeds reflect what James calls: “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless” (James 1:27 NIV).

The HIV/AIDS and, of late, the frequent gas explosion disasters in Ghana are other challenges that call for Christian social action through relief. Over the years, AGREDS has demonstrated practical Christian love to victims of these diseases and disasters in the communities through free education, counseling, care, and support.³⁷ For instance, HIV/AIDS victims who cannot afford anti-retroviral drugs are assisted in procuring these vital drugs to help prolong their lives.³⁸ Besides that, the church could go

³⁶Sider, 138.

³⁷Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services, “Care and Support of People Living with HIV or AIDS,” in *AGREDS-Ghana: HIV/AIDS Programme* (Accra, Ghana: AGREDS, 2004), 38.

³⁸Ibid.

further by launching a campaign against stigmatization and promote awareness creation. Christian organizations can also promote methods of prevention of the disease that are consistent with biblical teaching.

Development of Social Infrastructure

In development, the church “seeks to help individuals, families and communities obtain appropriate tools, skills, and knowledge so they can care for themselves.”³⁹ This may come through the provision of educational institutions, improved agricultural technology, clinics and loans to small scale indigenous entrepreneurs. Relief is short-term in nature, but development is long-term. The goal in development is to help the underprivileged overcome poverty and become self-sufficient.

To address the problem of unemployment in Ghanaian communities, the AGREDS has set up educational institutions where youth acquire employable skills for the job market. Such schools are often located away from the premises of local AG churches to encourage non-Christian citizens to access the benefits of the programs. Through such development projects, lives of individuals are transformed from dependency to self-sufficiency.

Development for Structural Change

Sider notes that structural change takes place “at the macro level of law, politics, and economic life. Politics is one of the important ways to change the basic societal structures to create greater freedom, democracy, economic justice, and environmental

³⁹Sider, *Good News and Good Works*, 138.

sustainability.”⁴⁰ The AGG should educate their members, and Christians in general, not to reject politics on the grounds that it is secular, as generally perceived in Ghana. Rather, Christians should take advantage of political opportunities to cause structural change in the country. Specifically, Christians should feel free to stand in public elections in order to represent their constituencies in parliament to ensure good governance and enact good laws. The biblical admonition of Proverbs 29:2 as well as the godly rules of King David (1 Sam 13:14), King Asa (1 Kings 15:11-15), and Queen Esther all lend credence to this position.

Development through Advocacy

Advocacy, in the view of Tearfund, is “influencing the decisions, policies and practices of powerful decision-makers, to address underlying causes of poverty, bring justice, and support good development.”⁴¹ Other development-oriented organizations have defined advocacy in various ways. Oxfam GB sees advocacy as follows: “The promotion of a specific message and/or course of action in order to influence or contribute to the development and implementation of public policies which will alleviate the causes and consequences of poverty.”⁴² Action Aid explains: “The process of influencing key decision-makers and opinion-formers (individuals and organizations) for changes to policies and practices that will work in poor people’s favor.”⁴³ World Vision

⁴⁰Ibid., 139.

⁴¹Joanna Watson, “The What, Where, and Who of Advocacy,” in *Roots 1 and 2: Advocacy Toolkit-Laying the Foundations for Advocacy* (Teddington, UK: Tearfund, 2015), 4, <http://www.advokacija.lt/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/TearfundAdvocacytoolkit-1.pdf> (accessed 4/12/18).

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid.

International fills in a possible missing link by observing: “What the process involves is not defined, but it must include education of either the powerful or the powerless.”⁴⁴ The goal in all these, according to Tearfund, “is to bring good news to the poor, motivated by the compassion of Christ.”⁴⁵ At the heart of any advocacy intervention is promotion of the plight of the underprivileged in society.

While recognizing various advocacy interventions by the AG in certain local communities of Ghana in the past, an observation has been made that the relief and development agency of the church should extend its advocacy role to the national level in order to provide a voice for the voiceless so that they can cause positive change in their personal circumstances. Specifically, the church could lead a crusade against social injustices like cruel widowhood rites such as subjecting widows to brutalities to prove their innocence about their husband’s death, and child labor on farms in some ethnic communities of Ghana. It could also support advocacy on national platforms through print and electronic media.

Again, the church could use the liberalized media in Ghana to articulate the need to lessen the unfair treatment of females regarding access to education, decision-making, and the drudgery of domestic work. Different categories of people should be involved in this crusade at all levels ranging from public forums and press releases to radio and television programs. Building strong advocacy groups for women liberation at both local and national levels is necessary.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid.

Development through Empowerment

Boapeah explains empowerment as “enhancing the capacity of poor people by removing barriers that work against them, and building their assets to enable them to engage effectively in the process of development.”⁴⁶ He argues that “empowerment of people enables them to recognize their God-given dignity to make choices, to have a voice, and to become agents of change.”⁴⁷ Empowerment helps to break the dependency syndrome among the poor and enables them to become self-reliant.

Butrin, an AG missionary who has been in missions almost all her life, and has lived and worked among the African people, takes a closer look at the scriptural mandate for compassion and justice in missions. She advocates that the church’s response to humanitarian need should be well thought out and done with and by the affected people.⁴⁸ She then recommends “appropriate ways of responding that will be both effective and sustainable”⁴⁹ for selected projects. Her extensive travels to many countries, cultural observations, and firsthand practice in carrying out compassion ministries, makes her contribution very significant and relevant to this study.

As an integral part of the AGREDS agenda in Ghana, it is recommended that all projects run by the church should have built-in mechanisms to ensure that local communities are empowered to own their respective development projects. They should be equipped with new skills, increased access and control over resources. They should be

⁴⁶Samuel N. Boapeah, *Criteria for Evaluating Projects: MTh Handout* (Kumasi, Ghana: Spurgeone’s College Kumasi Campus, 2006), 4.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸JoAnn Butrin, *From the Roots Up: A Closer Look at Compassion and Justice in Missions* (Springfield, MO: Roots Up Publishers, 2010), 6.

⁴⁹Ibid., 16.

motivated to offer themselves to serve others, initiate action on their own, assume leadership, and bring improvement to their communities, thereby ensuring sustainable development. Regretfully, in Ghana, many community ventures such as schools, clinics, and portable water projects have collapsed soon after the benefactors had left the scene. Empowerment will prevent this apparent waste of valuable resources.

Origin, Growth, and Influence of AGREDS in Ghana

Frimpong-Manso provides a valuable comprehensive work on the origin, growth, and influence of the AGG. Documenting the first scholarly work on the history of the AGG, Frimpong-Manso traces its origin, growth, and development from its inception in 1931 up to 2014 through various leadership successions from missionaries to indigenous leadership.⁵⁰ According to Frimpong-Manso, the first AG missionaries who came to Ghana started with medical treatment of the sick among the indigenes of Yendi and its surrounding villages. They also built their own houses using local materials and labor, hence providing employment for the indigenes.⁵¹ Apart from that, the missionaries established schools and taught the local people how to read and write as well as helping them to learn various trades.

He argues that because the missionaries added relief and development services to the preaching of the gospel, the local people became more receptive to the gospel.⁵² Although this strategy of soul-winning is welcome to many, John Easter cautions against

⁵⁰Paul Frimpong-Manso, "The Origins, Growth, Development and Influence of Assemblies of God, Ghana" PhD thesis" (University of Wales, 2014).

⁵¹Ibid., 96.

⁵²Ibid.

raising people he describes as “rice Christians who converted solely for the benefits they received.”⁵³ Easter’s caution is particularly important in situations where such humanitarian services are given as manipulative handouts which often challenge human dignity and creates a dependency syndrome with misplaced donor trust.

Frimpong-Manso’s work serves as a record of the history, growth, and influence of the AGG. It, however, falls short of documenting the history of AGREDS or indicating their religious and socio-economic influences on Ghanaian society.

Writing a goodwill message for the seventy-fifth anniversary brochure of the AGG in 2006, Dontoh asserts that the church began in 1931 at Yendi in Northern Ghana through the selfless efforts of AG missionaries from America.⁵⁴ This assertion is confirmed by Rev. Lehmann, one of the foremost missionaries to the then Gold Coast, who arrived in the country in 1944, as he shared the story of the beginning days of the AGG in the fiftieth anniversary brochure of the church.⁵⁵

Dontoh points out that, right from the beginning, the goal of the missionaries was preaching the gospel message to win the indigenous people to Christ. However, they quickly realized that, “apart from preaching the gospel, they had to respond to the physical challenges of the people, such as poverty, diseases, and access to formal education. Hence, the missionaries organized classes for the natives in literacy, block-

⁵³John Easter, “The Indigenous Church: Advancing Our Missions Strategy for the Next 100 Years,” *Enrichment Journal*, no. 201404 (2014), http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/201404/201404_086_Indigenous_Church.cfm (accessed 7/11/17).

⁵⁴W.W. Dontoh, “A Word from the General Superintendent,” in *Assemblies of God, Ghana: 75th Anniversary Brochure* (Accra, Ghana: Innolink Limited, 2006), 6.

⁵⁵H.S. Lehmann, “The Ghana Story,” in *Assemblies of God, Ghana 1931-1981* (Accra, Ghana: AGLC Limited, 1981), 10.

making, window and door frames, and the fabrication of roof trusses.”⁵⁶ By this gesture, the missionaries demonstrated to the indigenes the love of Christ and God’s concern for the alleviation of poverty and human suffering.

According to Dontoh, this humanitarian component of the church planting strategy of the early missionaries, helped tremendously in improving the economic lives of the people.⁵⁷ The missionaries did not engage in relief and development as a one-off or ad hoc activity, but as a regular part of their missions’ strategy. Dontoh further notes that Rev. Lloyd Shirer, the American AG missionary who first came to Ghana, “served as community development officer in Tamale during the early days of the establishment of the church.”⁵⁸ Lehmann corroborates this information, and states the following in reference to missionaries Rev. and Mrs. McNutt: “Though the McNutts had gone out as builders, they saw the need for medical work as well as gospel work, so they travelled from one village to another dressing sores and preaching the gospel.”⁵⁹

In their compilation of the history of AGG clinics, Smith and Wichman note that the first AGG clinic was established in Saboba in 1948 followed by another clinic in Nakpanduri in 1951, and later by a third clinic (maternity home) in Walewale.⁶⁰ Although these writers did well in recording important historical highlights of the social

⁵⁶Dontoh, “A Word,” 8.

⁵⁷Dontoh, W. W., “This Is How Far We Have Come: The 75-Year History of Assemblies of God, Ghana,” in *Assemblies of God, Ghana: 75th Anniversary Brochure* (Accra, Ghana: Innolink Limited, 2006), 8.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Lehmann, 13.

⁶⁰Pauline Smith and Adeline Wichman, “History of Assemblies of God, Ghana, Clinics: 50th Anniversary” (Accra, Ghana: AGLC Limited, 1991), 1–3.

interventions of the AGG, they did not document a comprehensive history of AGREDS or its influence on Ghanaian society. This, therefore, is the lacuna to be addressed by this study.

What is Still Not Known

The literature reviewed so far has covered the concepts and perspectives on Christian relief and development, the biblical and theological basis for such efforts, and ways for implementing Christian social action through AGREDS. What was not sufficiently addressed by the body of literature is the history of AG relief and development in Ghana from 1948 to 2016. In other words, what characterized the origin, growth, and expansion of AGREDS? What socio-economic and religious influences have AGREDS had on Ghanaian society?

Summary

This chapter has outlined and discussed social science literature germane to the topic of the dissertation. It reviewed literature considered helpful for documenting the origin, growth, and influence of AGREDS in Ghana under the thematic areas of historical perspectives on development, ways for implementing relief and development, origin, growth, and influence of AGREDS in Ghana, and what is still not known from the available literature.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology used in carrying out the research project on the history of AGREDS from 1948 to 2016 tracing its origins, growth, and influence on Ghanaian society. The purpose and problem statements, the research questions, and the research site and setting are described briefly in succession. It should be pointed out that the *outsider* researcher approach was used throughout the project, paying particular attention to reflexivity during the data collection and analysis.¹ The qualitative method of research, largely used in this study is explained, and its choice is justified that it is appropriate for the study. However, where the quantitative method was found to be equally helpful, it was used to provide additional information for the study.

The sources from which data was collected for the study are indicated, and the sampling methods and the criterion for selection of study participants are described. This is followed by examinations of the research design and the selected data-collection instruments that were used to resolve the various research questions. Other aspects of the study include validation of data-collection instruments, interview data transcription,

¹Denise O’Leary, *Outsider Positioning in Action Research: Struggling with Being on the Outside Looking In*, 2016, http://arcolloquium.weebly.com/uploads/6/9/2/5/6925239/doleary_abstract.pdf (accessed October 28, 2016).

assurance of validity and reliability, access to participants, data analysis procedures, envisaged challenges, and ethical considerations of the study.

Research Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of the study is to explore the history of AGREDS from 1948 to 2016, tracing its origins, growth, and influence on Ghanaian society. To achieve this purpose, the study is guided by the following research questions.

1. What constitutes a biblical and theological basis for relief and development services of the AGG?

- A. What is the definition of Christian relief and development?
- B. What should be the goal of Christian relief and development?
- C. What provides a biblical and theological foundation for AGREDS?
- D. What are some historical perspectives on relief and development?

2. What characterized the origin, growth, and influence of AGREDS in Ghana from 1948 to 2016?

- A. When, why, and how was AGREDS established in Ghana?
- B. What characterized the growth of AGREDS from 1948 to 2016?
- C. What have been the socio-economic influences of AGREDS on Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016?
- D. What have been the cultural and religious influences of AGREDS on Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016?

The Study Site and Setting

The study site is Ghana, a country located on the west coast of Africa. It shares a border with Burkina Faso in the north, Cote D'Ivoire on the west, Togo on the east, and

the Gulf of Guinea in the south. The country has a total surface area of 238,533 sq. km,² with 10 administrative regions, 216 districts,³ and over 79 spoken languages.⁴ The official language of Ghana is English, and it is used mainly in schools and offices. The Ghana Statistical Services estimate the current population of Ghana as 27,043,093.⁵ The Christian population accounts for 71.2 percent of the population. Muslims make up 17.6 percent of the population while adherents to traditional religions make up 5.2 percent. The rest is made up of animists and others.⁶ The southern sector of the country is densely populated while the northern sector is sparsely occupied in terms of population.

Frimpong-Manso notes that the northern sector is generally a deprived area. There is an irregular rainfall pattern with virtually no irrigation system to harness water. Most of the people there are engaged in animal rearing for their sustenance. The economic hardships in the area often lead to hunger, disease, poverty, and illiteracy. The road network in the north is also very poor⁷ compared to those in the southern sector. It is, therefore, not surprising that most relief and development services in particular, and

²Central Intelligence Agency. "Ghana Geography 2016," in *World Fact Book 2016*, http://www.theodora.com/wfbcurrent/ghana/ghana_geography.html (accessed October 28, 2016).

³Ghana Government, *Ghana Districts: A Public-Private Partnership Programme between Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and Maks Publications & Media Services*. (Accra, Ghana: 2016), <http://www.ghanadistricts.gov.gh/news/?read=46228> (accessed October 28, 2016).

⁴Ghana Government, *Ghana Guide: Languages*, <https://www.justlanded.com/english/Ghana/Ghana-Guide/Language/Languages-in-Ghana> (accessed October 28, 2016).

⁵Ghana Statistical Services, "National Population Projection 2010–2014," http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/docfiles/2010phc/National%20Population%20Projection_2010%20to%202014.pdf (accessed October 28, 2016).

⁶CIA World Fact Book. "Ghana Religions," Index Mundi. <http://www.indexmundi.com/ghana/religions.html> (accessed October 28, 2016).

⁷Frimpong-Manso, "Origins," 99.

missions interventions in Ghana in general, are concentrated in the northern sector. According to Lehman, “about 60 out of the 76 missionary families who worked in Ghana were stationed in the north. Those who worked in the south were either working in the Bibles Colleges or at the printing press.”⁸ Perhaps the early missionaries adopted the strategy of concentrating more of their efforts in the most deprived areas in their pursuit of the *missio Dei* in Ghana.



Figure 2: Regional map of Ghana.⁹

⁸Lehmann, 13.

⁹Ghana Government, *Regional Map of Ghana*, 2016, www.mapsopensource.com (accessed September 11, 2016).

Data Gathering Methodology

The research methodologies used for gathering data on the history of AGREDS include a combination of questionnaires, interviews, and document reviews. The questionnaire method of investigation enabled the gathering of information through self-completed questionnaires delivered directly to respondents without the assistance of trained persons to help them answer the questions. This method was particularly useful in generating information from project managers and other officers who handle the day to day affairs of AGREDS. In most cases, such respondents were people who could read and write intelligent responses to the questionnaire.

The interview part was particularly helpful in generating information from beneficiaries of AGREDS who could not read and write but who could offer valuable responses due to their adequate knowledge of the local situation. This method of investigation enabled the researcher and respondents to engage in face to face questioning. The method is particularly useful in Ghana where many respondents are unable to read and write.

In addition to interviewing past and present employees of AGREDS, the researcher interviewed trustees, directors, and selected pastors and theologians in order to glean additional information on the history of AGREDS and its influence on Ghanaian society. This method was particularly helpful in generating information from practitioners and beneficiaries who had expert knowledge about the problem statement of this dissertation.¹⁰

¹⁰John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London, U.K.: SCM Press, 2006), 227.

The documents review method, on the other hand, enabled the researcher to generate further information from official reports and records kept at the offices of the relief and development agency. These were then analyzed to arrive at credible conclusions on the history of AGREDS from 1948 to 2016, identifying its influence on Ghanaian society.

The *Outsider* Researcher Strategy

In this study, the *outsider* researcher strategy was adopted. According to O’Leary, the *outsider* researcher strategy approaches a study “from the perspective of someone entering a setting to conduct research in a collaborative way with practitioners within the setting.”¹¹ The researcher of this study has no previous working experience in AGREDS, but he has observed the activities of the agency from afar as an outsider. AGREDS is registered as a separate legal entity from AGG, and hence its location and day to day operations are completely detached from the head office of AGG where the researcher works. The researcher thus has no previous knowledge about specific program interventions of AGREDS, where and how those interventions are implemented, as well as where and how funding for AGREDS projects is secured and accounted for.

An advantage in adopting an *outsider* researcher strategy is that it frees the researcher from possible biases that could ultimately compromise the credibility of the research outcome. This research strategy, therefore, helped to make the research more open-minded and objective throughout the endeavor. Highlighting the merits of adopting an *outsider* researcher strategy, O’Leary argues that outsiders generally view the potential

¹¹O’Leary, 1.

for success of each collaborative effort with greater objectivity since their views are often not biased by past failures, internal and inter-organizational politics, or other barriers that might generally be beyond the control of an insider.¹² In order to make the most of being an outsider, she suggests three key areas for action and reflection. These are comprised of developing a critical awareness of one's position within a group, critical reflection on power within and outside a group, and focusing on promoting positivity and developing trust in interactions with insiders.¹³ Therefore, it is critically important that the outsider values and solicits the contributions of all whose inputs matter in the study, recognizing personal limitations as an outsider.

Coghlan and Brannick argue that, whereas “insiders are already familiar with the common language within the organization, group, or area of practice including the ‘jargon’ and ‘window dressing,’ the outsider often has to struggle to make sense of the setting because of unfamiliarity.”¹⁴ Kanuha observes that being an insider researcher enhances the depth and breadth of understanding a population that may not be accessible to a non-native. However, questions also arise about objectivity, reflexivity (as defined in the following section), and authenticity of the research project being studied due to the familiarity of the insider researcher.¹⁵

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., 3.

¹⁴David Coghlan and Teresa Brannick, *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*, 3rd ed. (London: SAGE, 2009), 115.

¹⁵Kanuha V.K., “‘Being’ Native versus ‘Going Native’: Conducting Social Work Research as an Insider: Social Work,” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 45 no. 5 (2009): 57.

Contributing to the *insider/outsider* debate, Dwyer and Buckle posit that “the core ingredient is not insider or outsider status, but an ability to be open, authentic, honest, deeply interested in the experience of one’s research participants, and committed to accurately and adequately representing their experience.”¹⁶ A researcher should be mindful of all these key issue and (1) strive for positive, objective, and open engagement with all stakeholders; (2) value diverse opinions; (3) clarify conclusions; and (4) tactfully negotiate potential conflicts that arise in the course of a study. These four steps are essential in arriving at accurate and adequate conclusions.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity refers to the interplay or relationship between the researcher and the topic being studied. Denscombe argues that “inevitably, the sense we make of the social world, and the meaning we give to events and situations are shaped by our experience as social beings and the legacy of the values, norms, and concepts we have assimilated during our life time.”¹⁷ This therefore brings to question the researcher’s objectivity in the study of the social world.

Corroborating this argument, Corbin and Strauss contend that reflexivity is an “important consideration in qualitative research during data collection and analysis.”¹⁸ They argue that the researcher’s moods, feelings, and responses (like happiness, sadness,

¹⁶Sonya C. Dwyer and Jennifer L. Buckle, “The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider,” *Qualitative Research in International Journal of Qualitative Methods* (2009): 59, Edmonton, Canada: University of Alberta.

¹⁷Martyn Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide: For Small-Scale Social Research Projects*, 5th ed. (Maidenhead, U.K.: Open University Press, 2014), 325.

¹⁸Juliet M. Corbin and Anselm L. Strauss, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2008), 31.

anger, and reactions of approval or disapproval) are all emotions that can impact the research. This is because such emotions are conveyed to and received from participants who keep on making changes to their positions according to the flow of the interview or observation.¹⁹ A researcher should be mindful of the influence his moods, feelings, or emotions could have on participants, as well as the reciprocal influence his participants could have on him throughout the study. Thus, in order to promote integrity of the research findings, a researcher must carefully weigh personal opinions and perspectives and consistently endeavor to avoid allowing biases or personal influences to impact the data collection and analysis.

Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

The focus of this study is the history of AGREDS from 1948 to 2016 and its influence on Ghanaian society. A largely qualitative method was used for this exploratory study. Susan DeFranzo observes that “qualitative research is primarily exploratory research. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, insights, and motivations. Qualitative research is also used to uncover trends in thought and opinions, and dive deeper into the problem.”²⁰ The quantitative method was also utilized as an additional tool to capture the general feelings and opinions of respondents on the research topic. Using the research instrument of a questionnaire, data was collected and analyzed through descriptive statistics to arrive at what the data really revealed. Then, a semi-

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Susan DeFranzo, “What’s the Difference between Qualitative and Quantitative Research,” Snap Surveys, September 16, 2011, <http://www.snapsurveys.com/blog/what-is-the-difference-between-qualitative-research-and-quantitative-research/> (accessed 9/4/16).

structured interview guide was also used for collecting data for the qualitative research. These approaches enabled the research findings and conclusions to reflect, without bias, the perceptions of participants.

Denscombe notes that “qualitative research relies on transforming information from observations, reports, and recordings into data in the form of written words or visual images, not numbers.”²¹ Creswell pictures qualitative research as an intricate fabric made up of many different threads, colors, texture, and various blends of materials. Since this is not explained easily or simply, the common threads that often hold qualitative researchers together are general worldviews and perspectives.²² Such an approach places emphasis on conducting the research and striving to arrive at conclusions, mainly from the perspectives of research participants.

The choice of a largely qualitative method is appropriate for this study because it provides the leverage “to step beyond the known and enter into the world of participants, to see the world from their perspective, and in doing so, make discoveries that will contribute to the development of empirical knowledge.”²³ More specifically, the qualitative method afforded the research the flexibility to go beyond the known in order to dig out unknown ramifications of the thesis. In doing this, the study was guided by Corbin and Strauss’ proposals of curiosity, creativity, and willingness to trust the researcher’s instincts.²⁴

²¹Denscombe, 325.

²²John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2014), 35.

²³Corbin and Strauss, 16.

²⁴Ibid.

It is pertinent to point out that the various objections raised against qualitative research were acknowledged as the study was navigated. These include concerns that qualitative research results are unscientific, not objective but subjective, not replicable or generalizable due to context specificity, and cannot be trusted because of possible biases of the researcher.²⁵ Such threats to validity were minimized as much as possible.

Data Collection

Corbin and Strauss observe that in qualitative research the researcher has the advantage of collecting data from many alternative sources. “The researcher can use interviews, observations, videos, documents, drawings, diaries, memoirs, newspapers, biographies, and other sources.”²⁶ Primary data was collected from responses to questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, as well as from reports of AGREDS. The content of these primary source documents was then analyzed.

With regards to secondary data, information was collected from relevant books, journal articles and theses, and available reports on the history of AGREDS. Press releases and other publications were also accessed in the course of the study with the hope of picking up useful information on the origin, growth, and influence of AGREDS on Ghanaian society.

²⁵Steinar Kvale, “Ten Standard Objections to Qualitative Research Interviews.” *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 25, no. 2, (1994).

²⁶Corbin and Strauss, 27.

Participant Selection and Sampling Method

An important consideration in choosing participants and sample size for qualitative research is how representative or informative the sample is. According to Denscombe, “this means that the sample only needs to be sufficient in size to enable the researcher to feel that enough information has been collected.”²⁷ That would give greater credibility to inferences and interpretations placed on the research findings.

This study uses the sample mix of current and former employees of AGREDS, trustees, selected pastors, theologians, and beneficiaries of the services of AGREDS. In selecting respondents, the stratified sampling technique was employed where appropriate to minimize the development of one-sided or disproportionate samples. Black defines stratified random sampling as “random sample from identifiable groups (strata), subgroups, etc.”²⁸ Citing the main advantage of stratified sampling, Black observes that it “can ensure that specific groups are represented, even proportionally, in the sample(s) (e.g., by gender), by selecting individuals from strata list.”²⁹ The use of a stratified sampling technique thus ensured that relevant categories with regard to age, gender, location, and size of outfit were included in the sample. The study however took cognizance of Blacks’ concern that stratified random sampling approach is “more complex, requires greater effort than simple random; strata must be carefully defined.”³⁰

²⁷Denscombe, 41.

²⁸T. R. Black, *Doing Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences: An Integrated Approach to Research Design, Measurement, and Statistics* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc., 1999), 118.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

With the above in mind, as many respondents as possible were selected from relevant regions of Ghana. The aim was to go for saturation from each of the perspectives. The idea here is “to collect data until saturation occurs.”³¹ According to Janice Morse, “saturation is defined as ‘data adequacy’ and operationalized as collecting data until no new information is obtained.”³² She adds that, in qualitative research, “researchers cease data collection when they have enough data to build a comprehensive and convincing theory. That is, saturation occurs.”³³ It is at this stage that the researcher concludes that saturation has been achieved.

Corroborating this assertion, Greg Guest et al. contend that saturation occurs at “the point at which no new information or themes are observed in the data.”³⁴ They, however, quickly add that, “although the idea of saturation is helpful at the conceptual level, it provides little practical guidance for estimating sample sizes, prior to data collection, necessary for conducting quality research.”³⁵ Janice Morse takes this debate to another level and cautions that “failure to achieve saturation not only severely impedes the quality of the research, but it also means that the researcher’s task of theory

³¹Janice M. Morse, “The Significance of Saturation in Qualitative Health Research,” *Sage Publications, Inc.* Vol. 5, no. No. 2 (May 1995): 147, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/104973239500500201> (accessed May 28, 2018).

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid., 148.

³⁴Greg Guest, Arwen Bunce, and Laura Johnson. “How Many Interviews Are Enough? An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability,” *Sage Journals* 18, no. 159 (February 2006), <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1525822X05279903> (accessed May 23, 2017).

³⁵Ibid.

development is more frustrating and more difficult”³⁶ and could potentially lead to invalid results.

The above useful precautions were kept in mind, and the research was guided by the following benchmarks recommended by Janice Morse. First, “select a cohesive sample. The greater the cohesiveness of the sample, the faster saturation will be obtained but the less generalizability of the project.”³⁷ Second, “saturation will be achieved most quickly if theoretical sampling is used.”³⁸ Third, “sample all variations appearing within the data until each ‘negative case’ perspective is saturated.”³⁹ Fourth, “saturated data are rich, full, and complete. The resulting theory makes sense and does not have gaps.”⁴⁰ And fifth, “the more complete the saturation, the easier it is to develop a comprehensive theoretical model.”⁴¹

Furthermore, to ensure broader perspectives in the research findings, attention was given to gender parity in each of the above sample groupings. It was also ensured that respondents from different locations such as cities, towns, and villages were represented in the sample.

Then the researcher devised an appropriate coding system for the various respondents to facilitate easy identification in the analysis of the data collected.

³⁶Morse, 149.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

Denscombe refers to the process as *unitizing* the data, and he defines codes as “tags or labels that are attached to the ‘raw’ data. They can take the form of names, initials, or numbers; it does not matter as long as the code is succinct and is used systematically to link bits of the data to an idea that relates to the analysis.”⁴²

The researcher used the following alpha-numeric system of coding for respondents: 1 = pastor, 2 = employee of AGREDS, 3 = theologian, 4 = beneficiary of AGREDS, 5 = Bible school teacher, L = large city, S = small village, F = female, M = male, T = trustee, D = director, CG = Central Ghana, NG = Northern Ghana, SG = Southern Ghana, EG = Eastern Ghana, and WG = Western Ghana. Thus, a code in the data analysis such as F2SNG refers to a female employee who lives in a small village in Northern Ghana. The rationale for coding is to ensure anonymity of participants.

Research Design

The data collection and analysis procedure for this study was guided by the problem statement, and the two research questions indicated above. Both biblical-theological and social science literature reviews were used to provide answers to RQ1. In terms of the biblical-theological literature review, the researcher used hermeneutical and exegetical principles to examine the biblical writings on compassion and the mission of God. Social science literature and other scholarly articles were also examined from libraries and the Internet to help resolve RQ1.

Empirical field research was conducted to provide answers to RQ2. This involved the use of an interview questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

⁴²Denscombe, 284.

Data Collection Instruments

Based on the problem statement under investigation and the research questions indicated above, the following instruments were used for collecting data for the study.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to gather more insights on the origins, growth, and influence of AGREDS from 1948 to 2016. The first section of the interview questionnaire captured the background information on all the respondents such as name, profession, and current ministry role. The second section focused on the historical account, such as the origin and growth of AGREDS. Then, the third and final section investigated the socio-economic, religious, and other influences of AGREDS on Ghanaian society.

The use of a semi-structured interview guide afforded the interviewer the flexibility of framing questions in ways that were best understood by respondents and at the same time helpful in generating appropriate responses for the research. This, therefore, created a win-win endeavor for both parties. Where appropriate, related questions were asked as follow-up to previous questions to probe into pertinent issues that needed further clarity. Close attention was paid to people's opinions, ideas, beliefs, and perceptions during these interviews.

With the prior consent of interviewees, a tape recorder was used to record all the interviews. The tape recorder was used on trial basis to confirm the quality of recordings before actual usage for the interviews. Suitable offices with limited noise were then mutually selected for the interviews. To minimize inconveniences to respondents, their

own offices or places of work were chosen for the recordings. The information gathered by the use of this instrument helped to partly resolve RQ2.

Questionnaire

The researcher used a questionnaire to collect data on the feelings and perspectives of participants with regards to the problem statement under investigation. The answers received from the interviews served as a guide in developing the questionnaire. The interview questionnaire was made up of open-ended questions that gave respondents the opportunity to share their ideas and views on the history of AGREDS and its influence on Ghanaian society. Eventually, information gathered from the questionnaire helped to resolve RQ2.

Validation of Data-Collection Instruments

All the data-collection instruments were subjected to validation by a committee before they were used. The validation committee consisted of the supervisor of the researcher, the Dean of research, and an expert in social science who is a lecturer at the University of Ghana, Legon. The role of the validation committee was to ensure that the instruments were well crafted and that they helped to resolve the research questions. All the instruments were pretested to correct possible lapses before they were actually used.

Interview Data Transcription

After all the interviews were completed, the data was carefully transcribed verbatim. The reason for verbatim transcription, whereby mannerisms and gestures such as laughter, exclamations, and sadness, and so on that add to meaning are captured, is to ensure comprehensiveness of the data. The process also ensured that the data truly

reflected the perspectives of the respondents and that no important detail of the interview was left out. This procedure was applied to transcripts of all interviews.⁴³

Validity and Reliability

Elliston posits that “validity is the central issue of a research methodology. One must ask, does the study indeed address the issues it claims to address?”⁴⁴ Explaining the difference between validity and reliability, Elliston states that “validity refers to asking the right questions, securing the right information, and making the appropriate applications. Reliability, on the other hand, relates to consistency or the stability of the results.”⁴⁵ Explaining these further, Denscombe adds that “the idea of validity hinges around the extent to which research data and the methods for obtaining the data are deemed accurate, honest, and on target.”⁴⁶ In other words, the researcher needs to be satisfied that the data supports truth, reflects reality, and covers the crucial matters.

Thus, in order for stakeholders to feel confident that the research measurements and findings are trustworthy, consistent, accurate, and reliable, research biases and generalization of case specifics were minimized so as to ensure representativeness. Inadequate or wrong exegesis, leading to faulty hermeneutical analysis, interpretation, and application of selected biblical texts on the research topic, were all avoided. Other threats to validity and reliability were considered, such as poor selection of data-

⁴³The transcripts of all interviews are available, but not part of the present publication.

⁴⁴Edgar J. Elliston, *Introduction to Missiological Research Design* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2011), 56.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 55.

⁴⁶Denscombe, 328.

collection methods, quality of literature to be reviewed, and accessibility to the right participants and their willingness to honestly cooperate.

Objectivity in Historical Study

Bradley and Muller raise the question as to “whether it is possible for historians to attain any reasonable degree of detachment and objectivity in reconstructing the past.”⁴⁷ In answer to this question, Edward Carr states that “objectivity arises out of a willingness to let the materials of history speak in their own terms while the historian, at the same time, exercises a combination of critical judgment and careful self-restraint.”⁴⁸ Bradley and Muller add that objectivity “results from an honest and methodically lucid recognition of and use of the resident bias as a basis for approaching and analyzing the differences between one’s own situation, and the situation of a given document or concept.”⁴⁹ Because of these pertinent dynamics of objectivity, all historical materials were subjected to critical analysis and interpretation.

Contact with Participants

As a result of the challenges of an *outsider* researcher, the aid of organizational gatekeepers was solicited to secure access to participants from the various stakeholders. In this regard, key leaders of the AGG, AGREDS, and beneficiary communities were contacted first. The nature and objective of the study was then explained to them, and

⁴⁷James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller, *Church History: An Introduction to Research, Reference Works, and Methods* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 48.

⁴⁸Carr, Edward Hallett, “What Is History: The George Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures,” ed. R. W. Davies (Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge, 1961), 158–159.

⁴⁹Bradley and Muller, 49.

their help was solicited in identifying and enlisting other participants from among their various ranks, taking into consideration, age, gender, and location. This required a list of recommended potential participants and their contact details from the gatekeepers. The recommended potential participants were then contacted directly to seek their consent, followed by formal invitation letters and booking of interview appointments and schedules.

Analysis of Data

Denscombe defines analysis as “the separation of something into its component parts. To do this, of course, the researcher first needs to identify what those parts might be, and this links with a further meaning of analysis, which is to trace things back to their underlying sources.”⁵⁰ He further explains that, in analyzing data this way, “the researcher aims to expose some general principles that can be used to explain the nature of the thing being studied and can be applied elsewhere to other situations.”⁵¹ Thus, in the data analysis stage of this research, all the responses to the questionnaire and interview questions were read. Also, the tapes were listened to several times in order to determine themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data.

After that, the data was coded and organized into identifiable themes and sub-themes. The organized data was then interpreted and their meanings explained through appropriate forms such as descriptive analysis and statistics, figures, tables, and, in some cases, word-for-word quotations from participants.

⁵⁰Denscombe, 322.

⁵¹Ibid.

Challenges

Having to travel many miles to various parts of the country to interview and survey participants was a challenge. This involved substantial financial commitment, physical exhaustion, and the risks of travelling to distant locations through unfamiliar and sometimes dangerous roads. In order to collect the needed data, unfamiliar terrain was negotiated to reach participants, many of whom were previously unknown to the researcher. Further, several hours were spent each day to work through the study in order to meet established deadlines for submission of chapters. With this awareness, a carefully thought-out time table was developed for the entire study with timelines, deliverables, and accountability indices.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are critically important in all research studies. Elliston argues that ethical issues affect missiological research because “they reflect a researcher’s credibility and integrity, as well as the institutions and others associated with the research. They affect not only the subject of the research, but also the researchers who may come later to study the same subjects. They also influence the quality of the outcomes and affect both believers who will serve the *missio Dei* and people who are yet to believe.”⁵² He adds that ethical considerations are required at every stage of research projects, including the design and evaluation of precedent research, data collection and analysis, reporting of findings, conclusions and recommendations, as well as the ways

⁵²Elliston, 103.

that the research is published and used.⁵³ In this regard, all due ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the study.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in the research project was absolutely voluntary. All those who agreed to participate in the questionnaire or interviews did so on their own volition without any form of undue pressure. They were also assured of their right to decline to answer any question or even walk away from the study any time they wished to do so in the course of the study.

Informed Consent

Elliston recommends that research subjects should be provided with information about the procedures and any risks involved, and that they should give their consent before the research is initiated.⁵⁴ Therefore, participants were provided with full disclosure of the nature and objective of the study, and they were asked to sign specifically-designed informed-consent forms after they had understood the said purpose and were willing to participate in the study. Where written consent was not possible due to illiteracy or certain vulnerability on the part of prospective participants, the informed consent was presented orally on tape or by others lawfully authorized to act on behalf of such participants.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid., 104.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Confidentiality has to do with providing participants with the assurance that “their personal information would not be divulged to anyone outside of the study.”⁵⁵ To ensure adequate confidentiality, all items used for data collection from participants, such as tape recorders and notebooks, were stored in safe places under lock and key and not left accessible to people outside of the study.

Closely connected with confidentiality is the issue of anonymity for participants. The researcher endeavored to conceal the true identities of respondents and other participants of the study through the use of coded or fictitious names. This was particularly important where direct quotes or opinions of participants were cited in the study.

Summary

This chapter has provided the methodological approach for the study of the history of AGREDS, tracing its origins, growth, and influence on Ghanaian society. In order to place the study in the right context, pertinent features of the study site were discussed after comparing the study objective with the accompanying research questions. The researcher then indicated his status as an *outsider* researcher. The choice of both qualitative and quantitative methods for conducting the study were justified, and intentions to deal with the issues of reflexivity, data collection, participant selection, and access to participants were outlined.

The research design, data-collection instruments, transcription, and analysis of data were explained. Challenges with the study and how to deal with them were

⁵⁵Ibid.

anticipated. And finally, the ethical considerations necessary for conducting a reliable and credible research were discussed. The study was conducted in such a way as to arrive at research findings and conclusions that truly reflect the views, feelings, and perspectives of participants, devoid of biases and personal influences.

CHAPTER 5

DATA COLLECTION RESULTS: ORIGIN OF AGREDS

Introduction

This chapter examines the origin of AGREDS. It is the first of three chapters that examine the three main sections of the dissertation, namely, the origin, growth, and influence of AGREDS on Ghanaian society. The research findings on the origin, growth, and influence of AGREDS serve as the basis for determining the conclusions and recommendations of this study.

The chapter first provides data analysis and findings based on the questionnaire. Then it follows with a documented empirical account from fieldwork on the history of AGREDS from 1948 to 1992. It outlines the history of AGREDS under missionary leadership, program initiatives introduced during the missionary era, project funding, community involvement, and local/national church involvement with the agency. It explores why, how, and when AGREDS was established as an agency of the AGG and the contributions made by the early missionaries in its establishment.

Restatement of Research Questions

This chapter presents the findings and results of the investigations on the origin of AGREDS. The problem under investigation in this study is: What is the history of AGREDS and what characterized its origin, growth, and influence on Ghanaian society

from 1948 to 2016? To answer this question, two research questions were developed to guide the study. These are:

1. What constitutes a biblical and theological basis for relief and development services of the AGG?¹
2. What characterized the origin, growth, and influence of AGREDS from 1948 to 2016?²

Procedure for Data Gathering and Analysis

A mixed-methodology approach was chosen for data gathering and analysis to resolve the above research questions. This was comprised of quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The research instrument used in the quantitative approach was a self-administered questionnaire while a semi-structured interview guide was used for the qualitative research. In each case, a set of questions germane to the main research question above was developed and served to various stakeholders of AGREDS.³

Data-Collection Reports for RQ1

RQ1 states: What constitutes a biblical and theological basis for AGREDS? The researcher collected data from libraries, project documents, and the internet to help resolve this research question. Through hermeneutical principles, an exegesis of relevant Old and New Testament passages relating to the subject of relief and development were explored and investigated as to how they provide the basis for AGREDS.⁴ The social

¹See chapter 4, specifically the section concerning research purpose and research questions.

²Ibid.

³See appendix A and B for research instruments.

⁴See chapter 2, specifically the biblical-theological literature review concerning compassion and the people of God.

science literature review was also used to provide further answers to pertinent aspects of RQ1 such as the definitions of Christian relief and development, the goal of Christian relief and development, the biblical and theological foundation for AGREDS, and certain historical perspectives on relief and development.⁵

Reports for RQ1A

RQ1A states: What are the definitions of Christian relief and development? This research question was resolved through insights from the social science literature review and the semi-structured interviews. The social science literature review reveals that relief deals with the provision of immediate, short-term assistance to victims of disaster, usually in the form of food, shelter, and clothing.⁶ A respondent, coded as MDLSG, in response to the semi-structured interview defined relief as necessary when there has been an “extreme disruption of the functioning of a society that causes widespread, human, material, and environmental losses that exceed the capacity of the affected society or community to cope with, using their own resources.”⁷ These definitions helped to resolve RQ1A.

Reports for RQ1B

RQ1B asks: What should be the goal of Christian relief and development? The data revealed that the overriding goal of Christian relief and development is to seek the wellbeing of people by helping them to come out of all forms of injustice, oppression,

⁵See the biblical-theological literature review in chapter 2, and social-science literature review in chapter 3.

⁶See definition by Ronald J. Sider in chapter 1 in the section concerning definition of terms.

⁷See chapter 7 concerning influence through disaster relief.

and human suffering.⁸ This has to do with appropriate interventions to make life better for people as God intended.

Reports for RQ1C

RQ1C asks: What provides a biblical and theological foundation for AGREDS? This research question was resolved through both the biblical-theological literature review and the social science literature review. The data reveals that evangelism and social action through relief and development are linked together and, therefore, cannot be separated from each other.⁹ It was further revealed that the triune God is a relational God who has entrusted planetary stewardship to humankind and created humanity to exist as social beings with concern for the wellbeing of one another.¹⁰

Reports for RQ1D

RQ1D asks: What are some historical perspectives on relief and development? The social science literature review reveals that historically, various perspectives on development have conceptualized the outcome of development as a people-centered humanitarian effort that brings transformation, responsible wellbeing and access to social power for the powerless in society.¹¹

⁸See chapter 2, concerning the goal of Christian relief and development.

⁹See chapter 2, concerning the biblical basis for Assemblies of God relief and development.

¹⁰See chapter 2, concerning the biblical and theological basis for relief and development.

¹¹See chapter 3, concerning historical perspectives on development.

Data Collection Reports for RQ2

RQ2 asks: What characterized the origins, growth, and influence of AGREDS from 1948 to 2016? In resolving this research question, a questionnaire was designed and served to various stakeholders of AGREDS to get their views on the various aspects of the RQ, namely, the origin, growth, and influence of AGREDS¹² on Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016.¹³

Description of Participants

Themes and sub-themes have been developed out of the data collected from fifty-two semi-structured interviews and questionnaires administered to trustees of AGREDS, past and present employees, directors, pastors and theologians, and beneficiaries of AGREDS projects in various communities. The interviews, questionnaire, and subsequent data analysis were conducted in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the research methods discussed in chapter 4.

Analysis of Data

This section deals with an analysis of data collected from fifty-two responses to a questionnaire. The objectives of the dissertation steered the collection of data and subsequent data analysis. The analyzed responses represent the views of fifty-two respondents concerning the history of AGREDS from 1948 to 2016. All analyses were done with IBM SPSS version 21.

¹²See chapter 4 for Descombe's definition of analysis under the section regarding analysis of data.

¹³See chapter 4 concerning data-collection instruments.

This section analyzed the background information on the various respondents to the questionnaire, giving their status, gender, and education as summarized below:

Status of Respondents

All respondents disclosed their status in the church or relationship to AGREDS. The table below shows the distribution of the respondents' statuses. Out of the sample size of fifty-two respondents, eighteen (34.6 percent) of the respondents were employees of AGREDS, seventeen (32.7 percent) were beneficiaries of AGREDS, ten (19.2 percent) were church leaders, five (9.6 percent) were church trustees, and two (3.8 percent) were AGREDS directors.

Table 5.1. Status of respondents

	Number	Percent
Trustees	5	9.6
Employees	18	34.6
Directors	2	3.8
Church Leaders	10	19.2
Beneficiaries	17	32.7
Total	52	100.0

Source: Field work 2017/18

Gender of Respondents

The table below shows the representation of gender of individuals who took part in this study. Out of a sample size of fifty-two, there were thirty-four male respondents representing 65.4 percent and eighteen females representing 34.6 percent.

Table 5.2. Gender of Respondents

	Number	Percent
Male	34	65.4
Female	18	34.6
Total	52	100.0

Source: Field work 2017/18

Education of Respondents

As can be seen in table 5.3 below, the largest group of respondents, 23.1 percent (twelve), were high school graduates, followed by 21.2 percent (eleven) who hold master's degrees, 13.5 percent (seven) who hold diplomas, and 11.5 percent (six) who hold doctoral degrees.

Table 5.3. Education of Respondents

	Number	Percent
High school	12	23.1
Trade/technical/vocational training	5	9.6
No qualification	2	3.8
Diploma and associate degree	7	13.5
Bachelor's degree	5	9.6
Post graduate diploma or BA Honor's	1	1.9
Master's degree	11	21.2
Professional Degree	3	5.8
Doctoral Degree	6	11.5
Total	52	100.0

Source: Field work 2017/18

Study Objective

To achieve the objective of the study, respondents were asked a series of questions regarding the biblical basis for AGREDS, the interrelationship between AGREDS and the church's mission, and the contextual considerations relevant to relief and development interventions. Respondents were also asked to answer questions on the origin, growth, and influence of AGREDS on Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016.

Descriptive Statistics

Summaries of responses to questions 1–5¹⁴ by stakeholders of AGREDS¹⁵ are presented as descriptive statistics in table 5.4 on the next page.

¹⁴See appendix B for the questionnaire.

¹⁵See chapter 4 concerning sampling methods and participant selection.

Table 5.4. Response to questions 1–5

Item	Statement	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
1	The Assemblies of God relief and services have been an integral part of the church's mission agenda	4.3	4	5	0.9
2	There is a biblical basis for the Assemblies of God relief and development services	4.7	5	5	0.5
3	The ultimate goal of the relief and development programs run by the Assemblies of God, Ghana, should be to fulfill the mission of God.	4.6	5	5	0.6
4	Contextual considerations such as culture, religious inclination, and poverty, have often been relevant for effective implementation of Assemblies of God relief and development programs.	4.4	4	4	0.6
5	The origin, growth, and influence of the Assemblies of God relief and development services in Ghana have been characterized by community developments.	4.3	4	4	0.6

In interpreting the above table, a mean of 5.0 represents strongly agree, 4.0 represents agree, 3.0 represents neutral, 2.0 represents disagree, and 1.0 represents strongly disagree. The results from the table show that the mean scores for items 1, 2, and 3 are 4.3, 4.7, and 4.6 respectively and that items 4 and 5 have a mean of 4.4 and 4.3 respectively. The median and mode for items 2 and 3 is 5. Items 4 and 5 have a median and mode of 4 while item 1 has a median of 4 and a mode of 5. The *standard* deviation (SD) for items 1 and 2 are 0.9 and 0.5 respectively. Items 3, 4, and 5 have SD scores of 0.6 each. The highest recorded SD is 0.9 for item 1, and the lowest SD is 0.5 for item 2.¹⁶

¹⁶See appendix E for raw data statistics generated in August 2018.

Most respondents in items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 strongly agreed to the assertions made above.

Summaries of responses to questions 6–10 by stakeholders of AGREDS are indicated as descriptive statistics in table 5.5 below:

Table 5.5. Response to questions 6–10

Item	Statement	Mean	Median	Mode	standard deviation
6	The Christian witness of the Assemblies of God, Ghana, has been greatly enhanced through community-based social projects.	4.2	4	4	0.8
7	The Assemblies of God relief and development services have positively influenced the socio-economic conditions of beneficiary communities.	4.5	5	5	0.6
8	The Assemblies of God relief and development services have experienced significant growth in scope of operations from 1948 to 2016.	3.9	4	4	1.1
9	The Assemblies of God relief and development agency has remained focused on the mission of God over the years.	4.1	4	4	0.9
10	Leadership support of the Assemblies of God relief and development programs is an indication of leadership understanding and confidence in fulfilling the mission of God through relief and development	4.2	4	4	0.8

In interpreting the above table, a mean of 5.0 represents strongly agree, 4.0 represents agree, 3.0 represents neutral, 2.0 represents disagree, and 1.0 represents strongly disagree. The results from the table show that the mean scores for items 6 and 10 was 4.2. Items 7, 8, and 9 had a mean of 4.5, 3.9, and 4.1 respectively. The median and mode for items 6, 8, 9, and 10 was 4. Items 7, 8, and 9 had SDs of 0.6, 1.1, and 0.9 respectively. Item 9 had an SD of 0.9. Item 8 recorded the highest SD of 1.1, and item 7 recorded the lowest SD of 0.6¹⁷ Most of the respondents to items 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10

¹⁷Ibid.

strongly agreed with the assertions made in the items above.

Reports for RQ2A: Origin of AGREDS

RQ2A asks: When, why, and how was AGREDS established in Ghana? The goal in recording the origins of AGREDS was to find out what participants knew about why, when, how, and by whom AGREDS was established in Ghana. To resolve this research question, two leading questions were posed to participants. The first question asked: Could you please explain the origin and growth of AGREDS? The second question asked: Please provide me with any information you may have on the factors that led to the establishment of AGREDS.¹⁸

With the help of organizational *gatekeepers*¹⁹ (main contacts through whom other participants were contacted), appropriate stakeholders of AGREDS were identified, and interviews with each of them were conducted to solicit their views on the above research question. The research instrument used for these interviews was the semi-structured interview guide.²⁰ All the interviews were conducted at the offices of participants in order to minimize inconveniences to them.²¹ Each participant read the instructions regarding the interviews and signed the informed consent form to signify their understanding and agreement with the terms of their engagement before the interviews started.²² All the

¹⁸See appendix A for the semi-structured interview guide.

¹⁹ See chapter 4, concerning contact with participants.

²⁰ See appendix A.

²¹ See chapter 4 concerning semi-structured interviews.

²² See chapter 4 concerning voluntary participation and informed consent.

interviews were recorded on a tape recorder and carefully transcribed so that the end product truly represents the views of participants.²³

AGREDS under missionary leadership was then explored. This entailed the foundational work and subsequent contributions by certain missionaries to the origin of AGREDS. It also covers the reorganization and registration of AGREDS as an NGO, and its involvement in various relief interventions at conflict zones and refugee camps, all of which took place under the leadership of missionary John Thomas Goodwin.

AGREDS under Missionary Leadership

Analysis of responses to the questions on the origin of AGREDS reveals that some participants claimed they had been told by others that AGREDS was started by missionaries, but, beyond that, they could not tell specifically when, how, why, and through whom AGREDS was established. This underscores the urgent need for a scholarly empirical record of the history of AGREDS, not only as a contribution to the academy but also as a reference document to guide posterity.

Other respondents who had deeper knowledge about the origin of AGREDS were forthright in tracing the history from 1948 to 2016, including mentioning the names of some pioneer missionaries and the respective roles they played in establishing and nurturing AGREDS. The following quotes reflect the variety of opinions concerning the origin of AGREDS. A male pastor who is also both a trustee of AGREDS and a theologian lives in Northern Ghana and is represented by MT3NG. He had this to say about the origin of AGREDS:

²³ See chapter 4 concerning interview data transcription.

AGREDS started from 1948. During this time, there was an American missionary who came to Ghana to work, precisely in Saboba, the Kokomba land. He was Rev. McNutt. I have forgotten his first name, but I am saying this because his son taught me at WAAST. He came to work as a missionary there, and he discovered that the people were poor, sick, and some had open sores that they could not treat. So the man and his wife organized all those who had open sores, and then they will dress for them; and so that was how the clinic in Saboba started. From there, other missionaries helped the clinic to develop.²⁴

The above contribution shows that the missionaries were not only interested in the spiritual needs of the people, but also their physical needs. This is an holistic approach to ministry whereby proclamation of the Word is backed by demonstration of same.²⁵

M2LSG, a senior male employee of AGREDS, traced the origin of the organization to the early missionaries and provided compelling reasons why the missionaries started providing relief and development services in Ghana. He was meticulous in stating that: “The first missionaries came from Burkina Faso (Upper Volta) in 1931. In the process of evangelizing the community, they noticed that the people were so deprived and sick, and consequently, they had divided attention to listen to the gospel, so they started with the social ministry. They accordingly set up a clinic to administer to the sick alongside the preaching.”²⁶

Responding to the same questions on the origin of AGREDS, M35NG, another pastor from Northern Ghana who is a theologian and teaches at AG Theological Seminary, narrated:

Relief and development goes back to the first missionary who came to Ghana with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The late Rev. Lloyd Shirer and his wife, when

²⁴MT3NG, interview by author with AG trustee and theologian who lives in Northern Ghana, August 7, 2017.

²⁵See chapter 2 concerning divergent views on social action through relief and development.

²⁶M2LSG, interview with a male employee of AGREDS who lives in a large city in Southern Ghana, October 6, 2017.

they came in, relief and development though not formed, was an integral part of their mission. Listening to my father being the first generation of Assemblies of God members, he told me so many things about Rev. Lloyd Shirer. He came and the wife had to take care of the sick. Especially at the time they were here, dangerous wounds and open sores were on people. So they helped in dressing and bandaging the sores. This was how the work started.²⁷

Explaining further why AGREDS was started in Ghana in the late 1940's, M35NG stated that: "Snakes were biting and killing the people. No form of health administration was then available. So it was the colonial masters who even requested if the missionaries could help start a clinic to address the needs of the people; and then the church took it up. So they requested for missionaries who were nurses to come in and help."²⁸ The request was made by the early missionaries to the national AG church in the USA.

Another respondent, MD2SG, an employee of AGREDS who is based in Accra, reported that "the missionaries started a small clinic in Saboba in 1948. Then in 1950, the Napkanduri clinic was also started. In those years, they ran those two clinics with finances and main personnel from the United States, until somewhere in the mid 70s that some of the missionary nurses begun to train some Ghanaians to take over."²⁹ According to him, the missionaries finally handed over the two clinics to the national church in Ghana in 1972, but without appropriate transitional arrangements for sustainability. "The end result was that Saboba ultimately collapsed and closed down completely, even though they had trained a number of nurses. All these people who were trained had left and either joined the public service, or travelled outside Ghana for greener pastures,

²⁷M35NG, interview with a male theologian and AG Bible school teacher who lives in Northern Ghana, August 8, 2017.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹MD2SG, interview with a non-clergy executive director of AGREDS who lives in Southern Ghana (Accra), October 7, 2017.

causing the place to collapse.”³⁰ In the opinion of MD2SG, the clinic in Nakpanduri survived due to its collaboration with the Catholic Relief Services to administer a USAID food nutrition program to mothers and children in that area. The said collaboration was done through the AG Child Welfare Clinic at Nakpanduri, when the area was badly hit by bush fires.³¹

Information gathered from participants indicate that, when the last missionary nurse left Ghana around 1972, the two small clinics struggled along until the Saboba clinic eventually closed down. The closure of the clinic was partly because no sustainability plan had been put in place by the missionaries to hand over the clinics to either the national church or even to well-trained Ghanaians.³² MD2SG further disclosed that at that time, the AG mission always sent in missionaries from America, with support from the the Department of Foreign Missions. Hence, as soon as the missionaries departed, there were no funds to continue with the two clinics.³³ Therefore to address the vacuum created, the national church put together a committee made up of the then Northern Region superintendent and Rev. David Vespa and his wife to manage the clinics.³⁴

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

Another respondent, F4LSG, a female employee of AGREDS, who is also a beneficiary of an AGREDS project and lives in a large city in Southern Ghana, made this contribution:

My grandfather was one of the early converts so at least I was born into Assemblies of God, and I have gone through the history. I was told that Assemblies of God came to Ghana through Burkina Faso, and they went to Yendi. But they realized that it was not all about preaching. The people had a need, they realized that there was no hospital around, so they decided to do something to support or alleviate the health problems of the people. So they established a hospital in Saboba. Two years later, they established another hospital in Nyakpanduri, so it started from there.³⁵

This idea of blending the preaching of the gospel with social action through the provision of relief and development services is consistent with Myers' assertion that Christian social action entails "seeking positive change in the whole of human life, materially, socially, and spiritually."³⁶ It is, therefore, not surprising that the missionaries' approach to ministry was effective in impacting the lives of the people in project-beneficiary communities.

Another employee of AGREDS, F2LNG, in response to the question on the origin of AGREDS, said:

As best as I know, I think AGREDS started in the northern part of Ghana as a result of missionaries settling at certain parts of the Northern Region. In their mission to preach the Word of God to the people, they realized that they couldn't always look at their spiritual needs only, but also their health needs were equally important. They therefore established a clinic at the northern part of Ghana in 1948. From then, as the nation developed, they realized that it was not only health that needed consideration, but other projects that will really benefit the people, such as education, and the livelihood aspect of it.³⁷

³⁵F4LSG, interview with a female beneficiary of AGREDS who lives in a large city in Southern Ghana," August 9, 2017.

³⁶Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 3.

³⁷F2LNG, interview with a female employee who lives in a large city in Northern Ghana, August 9, 2017.

From the above citations, it may be said that a number of respondents had a fairly good idea about the origin of AGREDS. Their ideas are consistent with contributions by authorities on the origin of AGREDS such as John Thomas Goodwin, a second-generation eye witness of the origin of AGREDS, whose father, Homer Thomas Goodwin, is credited with having recruited the first two nurses to start AGREDS in 1948.³⁸

On the other hand, many respondents, particularly project beneficiaries, had no idea when AGREDS was started. For instance, F4SSG, in response to a question on the origin of AGREDS stated, “Yes, I know they have been helping people, but I don’t know when they started.”³⁹ Another beneficiary, M4SNG, indicated, “It has to do with how Assemblies of God started as a church, that one I was not yet born, but I was born in the church. As I grew up, I saw a lot of things happening. When I was born, Assemblies of God was rendering relief services at just some few places, but now it has grown and spread to so many places and communities.”⁴⁰ Yet another beneficiary, F4LSG, simply responded, “It’s unfortunate I don’t know the history.”⁴¹

Further analysis of the responses from various stakeholders reveals that the older generation employees, directors, and trustees of AGREDS provided more details about

³⁸John Thomas Goodwin, interview with a second generation eye witness of the origin of AGREDS who grew up as a missionary kid in Ghana and later took over from his father as AGREDS executive director, March 1, 2018.

³⁹F4SSG, interview with a female beneficiary of AGREDS who lives in a small village in Southern Ghana, October 11, 2017.

⁴⁰M4SNG, interview with a male beneficiary who lives in a small village in Northern Ghana, August 8, 2017.

⁴¹F4LSG, interview with a female beneficiary who lives a large city in Southern Ghana, October 11, 2017.

the origin of AGREDS than the younger generation. For instance, MT1LSG, provided this assessment:

When the missionaries came in, they were not interested so much about doing social services. They were mostly in the north (Saboba and Nakpanduri areas) and realized there were child birth problems, people were being bitten by snakes and dying, so though it wasn't their intention, they had no option than to meet the needs of the people. The man who brought AOG to Ghana in 1931, Lloyd Shirer, it was said was so much involved in relief and development. All I will say is that, it was not something that was deliberate, but the needs and challenges of people at that time meant they should do these things.⁴²

In the view of this participant, relief and development were not in the original plan of the missionaries, but they emerged as an afterthought in quick response to human need on the mission field. Such a pragmatic approach to ministry is commendable and consistent with Jesus' pattern of ministry during his time on earth.⁴³

Another participant, M1LSG, who is an AG pastor and comes from Nakpanduri in Northern Ghana, provided this input:

The origin, I will say I was quite young at that time, but I saw missionaries in my hometown, Nakpanduri, who went round from house to house in the evenings trying to teach the women how to do needling and threading. They taught them how to prepare certain basic foods, how to mend their own clothes. They went from place to place on medical missions and set up a clinic. All that time I was not born, but when I was born in 1954, I saw these missionaries and there were times I even worked in the clinic with them. So I will say the relief services begun in the late 1940's and early 1950's.⁴⁴

The missionaries thus devoted much time for the people through going on medical missions, setting up clinics, and moving from house to house to enlighten and empower

⁴²MT1LSG, interview with a key trustee who has been an executive presbytery member for a long time," December 13, 2017.

⁴³See chapter 2 concerning Jesus and social action through relief and development.

⁴⁴M1LSG, interview with a male AG pastor who lives in a large city in Southern Ghana, September 5, 2017.

women with life-improvement skills in addition to preaching the gospel. This speaks volumes about the level of involvement of the missionaries in the daily lives of the people. They were clearly concerned about the total wellbeing of the people, and that is the goal of Christian social action.⁴⁵

A majority of project beneficiaries had either little or no idea at all about the origin of AGREDS in Ghana, although they readily shared their views on the current influence of AGREDS on their lives and communities. Their interest was more in sharing the benefits they had derived from AGREDS projects, and not in knowing when and how the agency was started. Another observation from the data analysis is that most respondents relied more on oral history handed down to them from family and friends than documented historical accounts on the origin of AGREDS. Comments beginning with words such as *they say, I heard, my father said, and I understand* run through the interview transcripts of participants such as F4SSG,⁴⁶ F2LNG,⁴⁷ and MILSG.⁴⁸

The caution about such sources of information is that the message tends to get distorted over time as it passes on from one person to the other. A greater danger is the likelihood of losing vital historical information after the death of the original carrier of unshared information. It is a popular saying in Ghana that, *the richest library in town is the cemetery*. This proverb highlights the huge volumes of unshared information permanently lost to society after the demise of certain knowledgeable people.

⁴⁵See chapter 2 concerning the goal of Christian social action.

⁴⁶F4SSG, interview with a female beneficiary of AGREDS who lives in a small village in Southern Ghana.

⁴⁷F2LNG, interview with a female employee who lives in a large city in Northern Ghana.

⁴⁸MILSG, "Interview with a Male AG Pastor, Who Lives in a Large City in Southern Ghana."

From analysis of the qualitative data gathered from various sources, respondents were clear that most of the early AG missionaries to Ghana saw the need to offer humanitarian services to the indigenous people alongside the preaching of the gospel. For instance, M2LSGa contributed:

To the best of my knowledge, the missionaries came in with the Word of God first. While doing the work of God, they realized that there were some physical needs that had to be met. So it came about that they needed to meet the poverty needs of the people while preaching. So they came in with the physical part, which is the community development, to be able to help improve upon the lives of the people, because they were illiterates who needed to be taught. There were also sick people who needed medication first, to be able to make an impact on them.⁴⁹

This respondent moved the discussion from the provision of relief services to community-development projects aimed at improving the lives of the indigenous people through education and other appropriate interventions.

Contributing to the investigation of the origin of AGREDS in Ghana, M2LNGa states: “I think around 1948, the Assemblies of God, Ghana, through the missionaries, had already started some of the social services, but they were more into health service, and child deliveries. Some communities in the North already had clinics operated by the missionaries. Some of the missionaries were nurses and they periodically visited some of these clinics.”⁵⁰ M4SNGa, who happened to be the chief of Nakpanduri where AGREDS operates a health center that was built and started in 1950, corroborated these assertions and reported that:

AGREDS started around 1948 or so, to the best of my knowledge. The missionaries were here from America, and they did a lot of good works to the people. I can even remember that it was because of the missionaries that some

⁴⁹M2LSGa, interview with a male employee of AGREDS who lives in a large city in Southern Ghana, October 6, 2017.

⁵⁰M2LNGa, interview with a male employee of AGREDS who lives in a large city in Northern Ghana, September 4, 2017.

obnoxious practices were stopped. Because when they came with the Word, first, people did not accept it, but as time went on, they received it well. So they started accepting the message, then they built churches with the people's support throughout the rural land, and they started with child welfare services, that is, growth and monitoring or enumeration of communicable diseases.⁵¹

The above response shows how AGREDS helped to reshape negative cultural practices and enhanced the Christian witness of the AGG in project-beneficiary communities.

M4SNGa further disclosed that he himself was born at the AG health center at Nakpanduri and later became an employee of the center when he was a young man before becoming the chief of the town.⁵² Treading the memory lane, he shared a story from his mother, who was still alive, that during the time he was to be born, pregnant women were prevented by their relatives from giving birth at the clinic purely on superstitious grounds. The indigenes believed that children born at the clinic were spiritually disadvantaged and denied protection by the gods. The reality, however, was that more children born at the AG health center were surviving, and many of those born outside the center were dying; the problem also included maternal deaths.⁵³ Probing further whether the reality on the ground helped to change, or at least shape, the stance of the people towards embracing the health facility established by the missionaries in the community, the participant responded in the affirmative, and he was full of praise for the contribution of AGREDS to the community.

Having established the fact that AGREDS was started by the early missionaries to Ghana and the fact that the missionaries considered relief and development as a vital

⁵¹M4SNGa, interview with a male beneficiary of AGREDS who lives in a small town in Northern Ghana, September 4, 2017.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

component of their missions' strategy, the roles played by certain missionaries in relation to the origin of AGREDS will now be discussed.

Foundational Work by Homer and Thelma Goodwin

Among those who played pivotal roles in making relief and development a vital component of the AGG mission's strategy are Homer Thomas Goodwin and his wife Thelma Tucker Goodwin, who arrived in Ghana (then Gold Coast) in February 1937 as AG missionaries.⁵⁴

Narrating the history of AGREDS, John Thomas Goodwin said that his father, Homer Thomas Goodwin, on one of his travels to Saboba from Bawku, this time in his Jeep and not on horseback for which he was noted, spotted a large building being constructed near the Saboba chief's compound. Upon enquiry, Homer Thomas Goodwin was told that a British officer had come and was building himself a bungalow.⁵⁵ Drawn by curiosity, Homer Goodwin got closer to greet the young British officer. According to John Goodwin, "The young officer received him and then told him that this was my father's last trip to Saboba. He (the British officer) had decided to keep the Kokomba people as an Anthropological exhibit, never to be exposed to any outside contact again. This greatly disturbed Homer T. Goodwin for some time, as he reflected on the fate of the Kokomba people month after month."⁵⁶

On one occasion, while Homer T. Goodwin was walking along the beach of Accra, he providentially met a British man who happened to be the private secretary to

⁵⁴Goodwin.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.

the governor of the Gold Coast colony. The private secretary later took Homer T. Goodwin to see the governor, who asked him several questions.⁵⁷ John Thomas Goodwin reported: “The end result was the offer of the bungalow the young officer had built in Saboba to the AG mission to establish a medical clinic there. The said officer was quickly recalled and work began to establish the first AG clinic in Ghana. My father recruited the first two nurses, Ozella Reid (Hagar) and Ruby Johnson, who arrived in 1948.”⁵⁸ This then traces the origin of AGREDS as an institution in 1948. At this stage, the major concentration of the missionaries regarding humanitarian services was the provision of free medical services to the people of Northern Ghana.

Contribution by Pauline Smith and Adeline Wichman

In their compilation, *The History of Assemblies of God Clinics: 50th Anniversary*, Pauline Smith and Adeline Wichman, write: “In late 1945, God’s opportunity came again. Florence Blossom returned to Yendi, followed shortly by Pauline Smith and Adeline Wichman in 1946. While waiting for the forth one to come from America to have both Yendi and Saboba filled, plans were continued to open the clinic to be used as a tool for the evangelism of the Kokomba people.”⁵⁹ Pauline Smith and Adeline Wichman in this compilation date the initial preparations for the opening of the Saboba clinic to a year or two before 1948.

Pauline and Adeline disclosed that, apart from Ruby Johnson and Ozella Reid who came as the first missionary nurses to Ghana, Florence Blossom, Pauline Smith, and

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Smith and Wichman, 1.

Adeline Wichman were also key missionaries who dedicated themselves to the work of the Saboba and Nakpanduri clinics. Later in 1951, Betty June Shackleton and Hilda Eichin arrived as missionary nurses to help with work at the Nakpanduri clinic.⁶⁰ Corroborating John Goodwin's assertion regarding the mission's collaboration with the colonial government to establish a clinic in Saboba, Pauline Smith and Adeline Wichman state: "The government was aware of the Assemblies of God's interest in entering Saboba, and asked if we could set up some sort of medical facilities to help the people as well."⁶¹ They also added that "the early days of ministry were filled with caring for the sick, delivering babies, and preaching in the surrounding villages."⁶² This further confirms the holistic mission strategy of the early missionaries.

Although the early missionaries did a great job of responding positively to the socio-economic needs of the people of Ghana through relief and development interventions alongside the preaching of the gospel, they had shortcomings which cannot be ignored. A participant, M35NG, argued that "the early missionaries failed to integrate the indigenous people into the mainstream of funding and managing the various community projects established by the missionaries. For instance, the national church was not involved in any fundraising to finance the projects."⁶³ He further stated that AGG local churches were not taught about the need to raise funds locally to sustain the relief

⁶⁰Ibid., 2.

⁶¹Ibid., 1.

⁶²Ibid., 3.

⁶³M35NG, interview with a male theologian and AG Bible school teacher, who lives in Northern Ghana, August 7, 2017.

and development projects. Not even the patients who visited the health centers were asked to make some token contributions towards their own medical care.⁶⁴

The projects were thus seen by both the national church leadership and church members as private ventures of the missionaries. There was hence no accountability to the national church leadership regarding funds raised by the missionaries for relief and development and how those funds were used. Although some local people were trained as nurses and paramedics, none were trained in healthcare administration nor were trained as to where and how to successfully access donor funding for projects.⁶⁵ It was, therefore, not surprising that these projects started to struggle for survival as soon as the missionaries left the scene. As indicated earlier, the Saboba clinic had to be closed down shortly after the missionaries left due to lack of funds and the technical knowhow necessary for managing and sustaining the projects.

According to MT3NG, it was much later when John Thomas Goodwin, a direct son of one of the pioneer AG missionaries to Ghana, came to work in Yendi and helped revive the Saboba and Nakpanduri clinics and started another one at Techimantia. He also organized the clinics into AG Health Services. MT3NG further disclosed that, after organizing the AG clinics, John Thomas Goodwin invited Rein Dekker, a Dutch missionary then in Ghana, to help start the development services wing that would run concurrently with that of the health services. Then, when the two missionaries, John

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

Thomas Goodwin and Rein Dekker, left Ghana, the mantle of AGREDS leadership fell on Joseph Kwame Wumbee, an indigenous Ghanaian who became executive director.⁶⁶

Arrival of John Thomas Goodwin

Joseph Kwame Wumbee disclosed in an interview that, in 1981, John Thomas Goodwin, a son of Rev. Homer Thomas Goodwin, arrived in Ghana as a missionary. His vision was to reignite the work of the two clinics started by his father. Probably with the benefit of hindsight, he decided to mentor an indigenous person who could continue with the vision for the clinics after he had left the scene.⁶⁷ He asserted, “That is how he succeeded in convincing me to resign from my government job to join him on staff way back in 1982.”⁶⁸ According to Joseph Wumbee, the first strategic decision taken by John T. Goodwin in consultation with the AGG General Council was “the creation of the AG Health Services in those years to run the two clinics at Saboba and Nakpanduri. He then integrated the AG Health Services with the government health system, then running in the country, instead of being a stand-alone entity as it used to be.”⁶⁹

Joseph Wumbee added that it was through this integration that AGREDS got to know of the Christian Health Association of Ghana and applied to become a member. “Then, based on AGREDS membership of this association, the government of Ghana took over payment of salaries of staff of the two AG clinics. This assistance from the government helped AGREDS to reopen the Saboba clinic in 1988 upon an invitation

⁶⁶MT3NG, “Interview with AG Trustee and Theologian, Who Lives in Northern Ghana.”

⁶⁷Joseph Kwame Wumbee, interview with the first indigenous executive director of AGREDS, March 19, 2018.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid.

from the Saboba Youth Association. That was how we began the process of consolidating the work of the clinics.”⁷⁰

According to Kwame Wumbee, AGREDS also took over the distressed government health center at Techimantia upon a plea from the people of the town, bringing the number of clinics under AG Health Services to three. But shortly after that, the people of Techimantia took back the clinic from AG Health Services.⁷¹ In a visibly sad mood, he confessed that “regretfully, we lost the clinic at Techimantia, because we were unable to meet the expectation of the people of Techimantia.”⁷² Further probing to find out why AG Health Services had lost the Techimantia clinic revealed that the people had expected the AG mission to set up a full-fledged hospital in the town to stand on its own instead of depending on the district hospital in a nearby town per the government policy.⁷³ Apparently, the said government directive was to prevent overconcentration of hospitals in one district. Hence, when the people discovered that AG Health Services was not willing to go against the government directive and set up a full-fledged hospital for them, they took back the clinic from the AG. It was later discovered by Kwame Wumbee that the Techimantia people had an erroneous impression that John Goodwin was a white medical doctor who was going to be stationed at the clinic to run it. Hence, when they later realized that he was a development worker instead, they became very disappointed.⁷⁴

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid.

The study observed that the approach adopted by AG Health Services in taking over the Techimantia clinic was flawed. There was very little community consultation between AG Health Services and the people of Techimantia. Management of AG Health Service went to Techimantia as *Father Christmas* to run a health facility for the people without really engaging the community well enough to know what their expectation was, relative to what the mission had to offer. There was thus no participation by the community people at the project-design and implementation stages.

Participation in development should be a voluntary process in which the people (project beneficiaries) are allowed to take part and have their contributions valued in the decisions and actions that will be affecting their lives. Developing this idea further, Boapeah points out that participation “involves beneficiaries making minimum resource commitment to the development process, in terms of labor, time, material and money, and decision making.”⁷⁵ This level of involvement of the local community is what Yamamori describes as “a necessary condition for breaking patterns of paternalism, which reinforce local passivity and dependency.”⁷⁶ To ensure project acceptance and sustainability, it is critically important that project beneficiaries are involved in the project conception, design, and implementation, up to project evaluation. Through participation, people learn new truths leading to a change in behavior, building of confidence, assumption of leadership, ownership of goals, and reception of the benefits of development.

⁷⁵Boapeah, *Christian Approach*, 64.

⁷⁶Yamamori, Tetsunao. *Serving with the Poor in Africa* (Monrovia: Liberia: MARC, 1998), 131.

AGREDS Registered as an NGO

Putting the origin of AGREDS into proper perspective, M2SNG reported that “sometime in 1985, the AG in Springfield, MO, USA, gave the AG Ghana an amount of \$8,000.00 to help manage bush fires destroying many farms in the Northern Region. The executive presbytery then broadened the mandate of AG Health Services to include emergency relief support and then handed over the relief program on bush fires to it.”⁷⁷ Later, AGREDS was registered as an NGO in January 1991 to serve as an umbrella organization with departments engaged in areas such as health services, education, agriculture, and social welfare. The executive presbytery at that time appointed John Thomas Goodwin as the executive director, Joseph Kwame Wumbee as the deputy executive director, and Rein Dekker as education director.⁷⁸

John Goodwin, in an interview, indicated that “during this time, AGREDS opened several schools in Northern Ghana. Along with the Northern District Council, we had taken over a number of schools in the Upper East, which ultimately became thirty-two schools all over Ghana. We also coordinated the relief efforts for Liberian and Togolese refugees in the late 1980s and 1990s.”⁷⁹ Further follow-up questions on funding for the educational projects revealed that most of the funding came from donor institutions in Holland through the instrumentality of Rein Dekker, who connected AGREDS to such donors.⁸⁰ It is surprising that the AG mission could not raise funds, either from the USA

⁷⁷M2SNGb, interview with a former male employee of AGREDS, who lives in a small village in Northern Ghana, September 4, 2017.

⁷⁸Wumbee, interview.

⁷⁹Goodwin.

⁸⁰Ibid.

or the national AGG church, to support such flagship projects, which really accounted for the rapid growth and popularity of AGREDS.

Relief Services at Refugee Camps

During the Liberian political crisis in 1989, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) brought many refugees from Liberia to Ghana. These refugees were camped at Budumburam in the Central Region. In this camp, the refugees were housed, fed, and even provided with basic clothing by the UNHCR and the Ghana government.⁸¹ Narrating how AGREDS got involved in assisting refugees, Joseph Kwame Wumbee stated that “when John Goodwin and I visited the refugee camp at Budumburam, we noticed that the refugees had to join long winding queues to receive daily food rations which lasted for hours, sometimes stretching into the night before all the people were served.”⁸² Moved with compassion for the plight of the refugees, especially children among them, AGREDS sought for and received funding from Africa Children, a Dutch donor organization, to provide a second kitchen at the camp specifically for feeding the children among the refugees.⁸³

Joseph Kwame Wumbee further disclosed that it was during this time that Rein Dekker helped AGREDS to apply to another NGO in Holland, called Dutch Inter-Church Aid, for further funding to assist the refugees. Thankfully, Dutch Inter-Church Aid gave US\$8,000 towards the intervention, and that is how AGREDS’ work on emergency relief

⁸¹Wumbee, interview.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

response was started and consolidated.⁸⁴ Later on, refugees, some of whom were believed to be of Ghanaian descent but had been away for decades and could not trace their roots, started arriving in droves and settled at Gomoah Nyanyano and Senya Breku in the Central Region. This group of people, according to Kwame Wumbee, were also refugees who needed some relief assistance.⁸⁵

AGREDS once again obtained some funding from Dutch Inter-Church Aid and another organization, Dorcas Aid, to assist these refugees in getting meaningful livelihood. About 6,500 refugees, including unaccompanied children, were assisted with food, clothing, medication, skills training, and formal education.⁸⁶ Some of the refugee children were supported by AGREDS as far as the university level of education under the Dorcas Aid sponsorship program, while UNHCR provided funding for the skills training component.⁸⁷ The rationale for the skills training was to help the refugees acquire some employable skills that would make them self-supporting in the long term.

Quite obviously impressed with the work of AGREDS at both the Budumburam and Senya Breku camps, the UNHCR approached AGREDS and asked if the latter could offer health services at the refugee camp at Budumburam.⁸⁸ AGREDS agreed and got funding from the UNHCR for this intervention. Part of these funds were used to set up a clinic at the refugee camp at Budumburam from 1994 to 2000.⁸⁹ Under this program,

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Goodwin.

⁸⁹Ibid.

children at the camp were provided with free medical treatment. The children, together with their parents, were also provided with education on personal hygiene, nutrition, healthy lifestyles, and how to avoid communicable diseases.⁹⁰ This era was arguably the beginning of AGREDS' popularity in the Christian social services intervention space in Ghana.

Relief Response to the Togolese Crisis

Touching on assistance to Togolese refugees in Ghana, Joseph Kwame Wumbee in an interview reported that “during the Togolese political crisis, a lot of Togolese ran into Ghana for refuge. The UNHCR in response, asked the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) to help with distribution of food supplies to the refugees. Subsequently, UNHCR invited AGREDS to join ADRA in the food distribution program in the Volta Region.”⁹¹ According to Joseph Wumbee, the strategy AGREDS adopted was to identify a local church in the affected community with a local pastor who would provide a place to store the food items for a few days. The selected pastors were made food monitors who made sure that the consignment of food received was equitably distributed and accounted for with reports.⁹² By and large, the role the AG pastors played as food monitors helped to enhance the goodwill of the church, which was leveraged subsequently to advance the Great Commission.

Later, AGREDS secured motorbikes from UNHCR for the food monitors, who happened to be all AG pastors. These pastors used the motorbikes for monitoring the

⁹⁰Wumbee, interview.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Ibid.

food distribution program as well as for their local church-planting work. This went on until 1997 when the Togo crisis was over, and the refugees returned to their country.⁹³ The arrangement was a win-win deal for both the food monitors and AGREDS as “many AG churches were reportedly opened in the Volta Region during the time of the UNHCR food distribution program. At the same time, there was effective monitoring and supervision of the program.”⁹⁴ While the Togolese refugee situation in the Volta Region was ongoing, a tribal conflict erupted in Northern Ghana in 1994.

Response to the Northern Region Conflict

In February 1994,⁹⁵ an ethnic conflict with unprecedented consequences suddenly erupted in Northern Ghana “involving the Kokombas on one hand and the Gonjas, Nanumba, and Dagombas on the other hand.”⁹⁶ This devastating conflict, which lingered on for over two years, left in its wake massive destruction of human life and property. It also attracted immediate sympathy from the donor community, philanthropists, the government, and development-oriented NGOs, including AGREDS which assisted with emergency relief.⁹⁷

An assessment report on the effects of the conflict by Francis Z.L. Bacho et al., indicates: “The conflict engulfed directly six administrative districts-Gushiegu/Karaga,

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Francis Z.L. Bacho, E.K. Musah, and Alima Mahama, *Report on the Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs of Victims in the Conflict Area of the Northern Ghana* (Tamale, Ghana: Inter-NGO Consortium, 1996), xi.

⁹⁶Ibid., 1.

⁹⁷MD2SG, interview with a non-clergy executive director of AGREDS who lives in Southern Ghana (Accra), March 19, 2018.

Yendi, Saboba/Chiriponi, East Gonja, Nanumba, and Zabzugu/Tatale-but had widespread effects on the country as a whole. It left over 200,000 displaced people involving more than 30,000 households, and a large number of villages/settlements burnt.”⁹⁸ This is shown in table 5.6 below.

Table 5.6. Rehabilitation needs: villages burnt by districts (November 1996)⁹⁹

Number	District	Number of Villages Destroyed
1	Gushiegu/Karaga	69
2	Yendi	235
3	Saboba/Chiriponi	3
4	Zabzugu/Tatale	28
5	East Gonja	47
6	Nanumba	60
Total		442

Judging from above, the magnitude of the devastating effects of the conflict was well beyond the capacity of any one organization to deal with. This was due to resource constraints, in spite of the desire of many agencies to implement some kind of intervention in the conflict area.¹⁰⁰ Besides that, Joseph Wumbee argued that it was risky

⁹⁸Bacho, Musah, and Mahama, 1.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Wumbee, interview.

for any one organization to attempt implementing an intervention in any part of the conflict zone, as the said organization could easily become a target of attack by opponents of beneficiary communities.¹⁰¹

Consequently, Inter-NGO Consortium was formed, including AGREDS, to help deal with the processes of assisting victims and also help in bringing lasting peace to the conflict area.¹⁰² He cited some of the agencies involved in the consortium as: ADRA, Christian Council of Ghana, Catholic Relief Services of Ghana, AGREDS, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, and World Vision International.¹⁰³ To be able to roll out a comprehensive strategy for addressing the challenges on hand, Inter-NGO Consortium undertook a needs assessment and came out with key findings. “The assessment results showed that:

1. There was large-scale destruction of settlements.
2. Social facilities were also destroyed, resulting in widespread shortage of social services.
3. Agriculture, which is a mainstay of the people was also disrupted, resulting in severe food shortages.
4. There were also large numbers of vulnerable groups such as widows, children, the disabled, and victims who escaped into the urban centers with no source of livelihood.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Bacho, Musah, and Mahama, 1.

5. There was still a widespread sense of insecurity, with limited free mixing and social interaction. Peace and reconciliation was seen as an immediate felt need which needed to be addressed.”¹⁰⁴

According to the report, the response adopted by Inter-NGO Consortium was to roll out a strategy to address the immediate needs of vulnerable groups in the conflict area including income-generating activities for women, revamping the agricultural sector, developing social facilities and services, and negotiating peace among the warring factions.¹⁰⁵ Joseph Wumbee reported that “at a meeting of donor agencies and NGOs, the director of the Dutch Inter-Church Aid (funding agency of the food distribution program in the conflict zone), declared that his agency was not going to be interested in the deal unless AGREDS was going to be responsible for the food distribution. This was against the backdrop of AGREDS’ previous sterling performance in handling such programs for the Dutch Inter-Church Aid.”¹⁰⁶ This caused the popularity and reputation of AGREDS to soar in Ghana among the donor community. AGREDS was thus made responsible for food distribution to victims in all the six districts of the Northern Region engulfed in the conflict. Joseph Wumbee added that this responsibility was once again discharged to the admiration of the donor agency.¹⁰⁷

As a fallout from the devastating conflict, a number of schools in the conflict zone were either burnt or severely vandalized¹⁰⁸ (see table 5.7, page 130). Physical

¹⁰⁴Ibid., xi.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 1.

¹⁰⁶Wumbee, interview.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Bacho, Musah, and Mahama, 26.

infrastructure such as school buildings, teaching supplies, and learning materials were destroyed. Additionally, Francis Z.L. Bacho et al. report that, psychologically, “children in mixed communities found it difficult to share the same facilities with children they regarded as their enemies. Teachers who belonged to enemy ethnic groups were suspected.”¹⁰⁹ In most African cultures, particularly Ghana, cultural divisions and the sense of belonging are very strongly embedded in every aspect of the people’s social life. The conflict situation was, therefore, a very dicey one that needed to be approached with great care and God’s guidance.

David Augsburger points out that “traditional cultures see conflict as a communal concern; the group has ownership of the conflict and context.”¹¹⁰ It is thus important to consider the effect of conflicts on other relationships within the group as well as the reputation of the group as a whole. Articulating this view, Dulabaum contends: “Mediators do not import a global ‘conflict recipe’ but integrate rules, social rituals, and requirements into a dynamic process of working through conflict. This model emphasizes the culture-specific nature of an individual’s area of authority and the knowledge of all participants.”¹¹¹ AGREDS was thus sensitive to the cultural ramifications of the conflict at each step of its intervention.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰David, W. Augsburger, *Conflict Mediation Across Cultures: Pathways and Patterns* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 8.

¹¹¹Nina L. Dulabaum, *Meditation: Das ABC*, 3rd ed. (Weinheim, Germany: Beltz Verlag, 2001), 98.

Table 5.7. Inter-NGO Consortium: destroyed schools by districts (November 1996)¹¹²

NO	DISTRICT	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS DESTROYED
1	Saboba/Cheriponi	3
2	Yendi	60
3	Gusheigu/Karaga	7
4	Nanumba	68
5	Zabzugu/Tatale	15
6	East Gonja	2

In response to the plight of victims in the conflict area, AGREDS demonstrated Christ-like compassion, by rehabilitating “a total of 6 schools in the conflict zone. Two of such schools were Gbungbaliga and Kpachiyili in the Yendi District, which were supported with funds from the Royal Netherlands Embassy.”¹¹³ The importance of this intervention is consistent with God’s nature as a relational God who demonstrates concern for the wellbeing of the human community. He seeks to protect and defend this relationship whenever it is undermined by destruction or any form of dislocation. AGREDS’ philosophy of relief and development is that of fostering a community of love and developing caring relationships among all ethnic groups in Ghana.

The Executive Director of AGREDS disclosed that, during the time AGREDS was handling food distribution in the Northern conflict zone, it was concurrently involved

¹¹²Bacho, Musah, and Mahama, 25.

¹¹³Ibid., 27.

in executing the food distribution program of Dutch Inter-Church Aid in the Volta Region. Hence, in recognition of the efficiency and commitment of AGREDS to the project, Dutch Inter-Church Aid at one point asked whether AGREDS was interested in assisting with peace negotiation in the conflict zone.¹¹⁴ AGREDS took advantage of this challenging opportunity as a way of expanding its frontiers in the compassion ministry in Ghana.

Peace Negotiation in the Northern Conflict Zone

Kwame Wumbee stated that AGREDS was initially jittery in its response to the invitation by Dutch Inter-Church Aid to assist with peace negotiation in Northern Ghana, given the fact that it had no previous experience or technical capacity to handle peace negotiation in a conflict situation.¹¹⁵ He however added that AGREDS was grateful when Dutch Inter-Church Aid provided funds for the peace negotiation and invited Nairobi Peace Initiative which had the technical competence for peace negotiation to lead the process. Indirectly, Nairobi Peace Initiative helped to build the capacity of AGREDS in peace negotiation efforts.¹¹⁶ The role of Inter-NGO Consortium of which AGREDS was a key member was to compliment the efforts of the government of Ghana in bringing lasting peace to the conflict zone.

Members of Inter-NGO Consortium, mandated to handle the emergency situation were made up of the ADRA, UNICEF, AGREDS, Save the Children, Christian Council of Ghana, World Vision International, Catholic Relief Services, National Catholic

¹¹⁴Wumbee, interview.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

Secretariat, and others.¹¹⁷ To avoid possible reprisal attacks from perceived ethnic enemy camps, Joseph Wumbee explained that “the NGOs were to handle the emergency situation in the conflict zone together as a body, and not as any individual NGO.”¹¹⁸

Sharing his views on AGREDS’ involvement in the peace negotiation process, M2LSG disclosed that “the first time the warring factions came together in one room for peace negotiation was when AGREDS and the other NGOs invited them. Before then, the government’s peace negotiation team was meeting the different tribes at different times and places, simply because the rival tribes will not meet together around one table.”¹¹⁹ He asserted that, while the ethnic factions suspected the government of complicity, they saw the NGOs as neutral and more trustworthy.¹²⁰ This helped Inter-NGO Consortium to leverage the advantage it had to facilitate the peace process.

Bacho, Musah, and Mahama report that, through workshops and various peace awareness strategies designed and successfully executed, the conflict was abated, and peace eventually returned to the conflict zone.¹²¹ This was sealed by the signing of specific peace agreements by the warring factions. According to Bacho, Musah and Mahama,

“the following agreements were signed on 30th March, 1996, dubbed the Kumasi accord on Peace and Reconciliation: (a) Agreements between the Dagombas, Kokombas, and Bassares, (b) Agreements between the Kokombas and Nanumbas, (c) Agreements between the Gonjas and Nohumorus, (d) Agreements between the

¹¹⁷Bacho, Musah, and Mahama, 15–23.

¹¹⁸Wumbee, interview.

¹¹⁹M2LSG, interview with a male employee of AGREDS, who lives in a large city in Southern Ghana.

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Bacho, Musah, and Mahama, 33.

Bassares and Gonjas, (e) Agreements between the Nawuris and Gonjas, (f) Agreements on Regional Association.”¹²²

The executive director of AGREDS in an interview disclosed that after the peace negotiation program was over some of the people in the communities who knew AGREDS as an agency of the AG, requested if the AG could open churches in their areas. His response was: “I contacted the AG Home Missions Director, who coordinated the planting of churches in the conflict zone with £10,000.00 support from Tear Fund, UK. This amount was used to purchase sixty motorbikes for pastors and Bible school students to use for church planting in those communities.”¹²³ These emergency response interventions helped the rapid growth and popularity of AGREDS, particularly in beneficiary communities.

Meanwhile, Joseph Wumbee reported that “by late 1992, John T. Goodwin had to go back to the USA due to ill-health of his elder daughter. This led to my appointment as acting executive director of AGREDS in 1993. Then, from August 1994 to July 1995, Rein Dekker acted as executive director when I was away in Holland for a master’s program. Finally, I was confirmed as Executive Director in February 1996.”¹²⁴ This marked the beginning of AGREDS under indigenous leadership.

Summary

This chapter examined the origin of the AGREDS, starting from the days of the early American missionaries in 1948 to the time the last of those missionaries finally left Ghana in 1992. The chapter began with an analysis of the data collected, representing the

¹²²Ibid., 33–34.

¹²³Wumbee, interview.

¹²⁴Ibid.

views of fifty-two respondents to the questionnaire. Then, the history of AGREDS under missionary leadership was outlined, covering the foundational work done by certain key missionaries credited with the introduction and implementation of AGREDS.

Finally, the chapter identified and described the various relief and development interventions introduced by the missionary leadership. These included relief intervention at refugee camps, relief response to the Togolese crisis, and emergency response to the Northern Ghana ethnic conflicts culminating in peace negotiations that brought the conflicts to an end and the eventual signing of various peace accords. The next chapter will explore the growth of AGREDS under indigenous Ghanaian leadership.

CHAPTER 6

DATA COLLECTION RESULTS: GROWTH OF AGREDS

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the origin of AGREDS from 1948 when the early American missionaries introduced relief and development interventions in Ghana alongside the preaching of the gospel up to 1992 when the last missionary left Ghana. This chapter provides a detailed documented account from fieldwork of the history of AGREDS from 1992 to 2016. Topics outlined here include the history of AGREDS under indigenous Ghanaian leadership, program initiatives introduced during the period, project funding, community involvement, and local and national AG church involvement in the projects of AGREDS. It explores why, how, and when the operations of AGREDS expanded in scope through the introduction of various program interventions and then explains the respective roles played by the indigenous leadership, donor partners, and the General Council of the AGG from 1992 up to the end of 2016.

Restatement of Research Questions

The question under investigation in this study is: What is the history of AGREDS including its origins, growth, and influence on Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016. To answer this question, the following two research questions were used:

1. What constitutes a biblical and theological basis for the relief and development services of the AGG?¹
2. What characterized the origin, growth, and influence of AGREDS from 1948 to 2016?²

This segment of the investigation presents the findings and results on the growth of AGREDS over the period of the study.

Description of Demographics

Through the assistance of gatekeepers,³ the research gained access to fifty-two participants who responded to both the questionnaire⁴ and semi-structured interviews.⁵ These were made up of thirty-four males and eighteen females⁶ representing various stakeholders of AGREDS such as trustees, employees, directors, church leaders, and project beneficiaries.⁷ The objectives of the study were explained to all participants who understood and willingly agreed to take part in the study by signing the Informed Consent Form.⁸

¹See chapter 4 concerning the research purpose and research questions.

²Ibid.

³See appendix D.

⁴See appendix B.

⁵See appendix A.

⁶See table 5.2 in chapter 5 in the section concerning gender of respondents.

⁷See table 5.1 in chapter 5 in the section concerning the status of respondents.

⁸See chapter 4 concerning voluntary participation and informed consent.

Description of Participants

Participants in both the quantitative and qualitative research were all stakeholders of AGREDS consisting of five trustees who also double as executive presbytery members of AGG, eighteen past and present employees of AGREDS, two directors, ten church leaders (pastors and Bible school teachers), and seventeen project beneficiaries.⁹ Out of these, twelve were high school graduates, eleven had master's degrees, seven had diplomas, and six had doctoral degrees. Apart from two participants who had no form of educational qualification, the rest had some appreciable educational background.¹⁰

Analysis of Data

Through the research instruments of a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide, questions were carefully crafted to resolve the above two research inquiries. In each case, participants were asked to respond to a set of sub-questions germane to the main research questions above.

Data Collection Reports for RQ1

RQ1 asks: What constitutes a biblical and theological basis for relief and development services of the AGG? The biblical-theological literature review,¹¹ as well as the social science literature review¹² resolved various aspects of RQ1.

⁹See table 5.1 in chapter 5 in the section concerning the status of respondents.

¹⁰See table 5.3 in chapter 5 in the section concerning education of respondents.

¹¹See chapter 2 concerning compassion and the people of God.

¹²See chapter 2 concerning the theological basis for social action through relief and development and chapter 3 concerning ways for implementing relief and development services.

Reports for RQ1A

RQ1A asks: What are the definitions of Christian relief and development? This research question was resolved by providing a section on definition of terms.¹³ Relief seeks to provide short-term and immediate assistance to victims of crisis situations such as disasters. Development, on the other hand, seeks to empower individuals, families, and communities with appropriate skills, knowledge, and infrastructure so they can take care of themselves in the long term.¹⁴

Reports for RQ1B

RQ1B states: What should be the goal of Christian relief and development? This research question was resolved through the social science literature review.¹⁵ Both the Old and New Testament Scriptures reveal the goal of Christian relief and development as seeking the total wellbeing of people through appropriate interventions that reduce or eliminate human suffering and oppression in all forms.¹⁶ The study reveals that AGREDS has achieved this goal through interventions such as the Community Development Capacity Initiative, Street Girls Project (Lifeline), Anti-Child Trafficking Program, Early Childhood Development Program, Micro-Enterprise Development, and Community Infrastructure Development.¹⁷

¹³See chapter 1 for definition of terms.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵See chapter 2 concerning the goal of Christian relief and development.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷See below in chapter 6 concerning the growth of AGREDS.

Reports for RQ1C

RQ1C asks: What provides a biblical and theological foundation for AGREDS?

This research question was resolved through the biblical-theological literature review and the social science literature review¹⁸ as discussed under the same research question in chapter 5. Through various relief and development interventions cited below in this chapter, AGREDS provides practical demonstration of the gospel while the church does the preaching aspect.¹⁹

Reports for RQ 1D

RQ1D asks: What are some historical perspectives on relief and development?

This research question was resolved through the social science literature review.²⁰

Historical perspectives on development discussed in the social science literature review include development as a responsible, people-centered humanitarian effort that brings transformation and access to social power for the powerless in society.²¹ The various development projects of AGREDS, discussed below in this chapter,²² speak to the above historical perspectives.

¹⁸See chapter 2 concerning compassion and the people of God, and also concerning biblical and theological basis for social action through relief and development.

¹⁹See chapter 2 concerning evangelism and social action through relief and development.

²⁰See chapter 3 concerning historical perspectives on development.

²¹Ibid.

²²See chapter 6 concerning the growth of AGREDS.

Data Collection Reports for RQ2: Growth of AGREDS

RQ2 asks: What characterized the origins, growth, and influence of AGREDS from 1948 to 2016? This research question was resolved through the research instruments of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews²³ as well as project document reviews. The growth of AGREDS from its inception to date has been characterized by development projects such as: Community Development Capacity Initiative, Street Girls Project, Anti-Child Trafficking Program, Micro-Enterprise Development, and Community Infrastructure Program. The rest include expansion of Health services, Response to HIV/AIDS, and Migration Support Response.²⁴

Reports for RQ2A

RQ2A asks: When, why, and how was AGREDS established in Ghana? This research question was resolved through the research instruments of a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews as detailed in chapter 5 in the discussion of the origins of AGREDS. This section discusses the why, when, and how AGREDS was established in Ghana.²⁵

Reports for RQ2B

RQ2B asks: What characterized the growth of AG relief and development in Ghana from 1948 to 2016? To resolve this research question, participants were asked to explain the origin and growth of AGREDS.²⁶ Data gathered from interviewees in

²³See appendix A and B.

²⁴See the discussion of these interventions below in this chapter.

²⁵See chapter 5 concerning the origin of AGREDS.

²⁶See appendix A.

response to RQ2B indicate that, from its inception as a registered NGO to date, AGREDS has experienced tremendous growth in all spheres of operations.²⁷ Responses from various participants pointed to growth, not just in Northern Ghana, but also to other parts of the country. For instance, M2LSG stated:

Yes, I think that the scope has really grown. Around 1948 to 1950, there was just a clinic in one home. Now, as we speak, we are talking about hospitals, health centers where surgical operations can be done, and all those things; and a lot of people like our services. AGREDS as we are today, we are almost in about six regions. We just started our presence in the Eastern Region, Suhum, to be specific, so indeed we have grown. But whether we could have grown much bigger, I will say, yes.²⁸

This contribution gives a hint that there is room for improvement in AGREDS' operations. Pressed further to explain why AGREDS could have grown much bigger than it is today, M2LSG answered that, "over the years, the church's involvement, by way of owning the activities of AGREDS, has not been the best until recent times."²⁹ M15WG, an old AG minister who also thinks AGREDS could have grown much larger and faster, stressed this same point:

Yes, I will say I have seen some growth, but as compared to the number of years it has existed, I don't think it has grown to the level that it should be. Basically, their activities are only seen mainly in the North, and what I have also observed is that, as an entity, local churches are not so much affiliated to their activities, such that local churches give inputs into their operations, and so it looks like, yes, the program is running, but the local or individual churches are not so much involved.

²⁷See chapter 5 concerning the period of time from the registration of AGREDS as an NGO up to the peace negotiation in the Northern conflict zone. See also chapter 6 concerning the growth and expansion of AGREDS.

²⁸M2LSG, interview with a male employee of AGREDS, who lives in a large city in Southern Ghana, October 6, 2017.

²⁹Ibid.

I believe that some pastors are not so much aware of their operations. This means either lack of information or lack of interest.³⁰

These sentiments emphasize the need for integration of relief and development service into the mainstream of the church's mandate at both the local and national levels.

Another characteristic response from M2LCG to the question on the growth of AGREDS over the years follows: "Yes, tremendously! Because if you look at something that started with regards to just health, today we have development and relief, education, skills training, child sponsorship, and all, and with this, we can conclude that it has grown."³¹ Similarly, F2LNG, an old female employee of AGREDS who happens to be a project manager, stated:

Yes, definitely. At first, it was just two clinics, but we now have hospitals in addition. One is now a district hospital. So, judging from that, it has been a lot of work. The one in Nakpanduri has also seen physical expansion, and a number of things are still ongoing there. Apart from the two, the agency has also started other projects, including Lifeline, which has operated since 1998 and has trained roughly 1,300 or more kids. In the eastern corridor, we also have the child sponsorship program which is ongoing. Also over the years, we have assisted HIV/AIDS victims and children in the Upper West Region.³²

The above response reveals that AGREDS operations had not only been concentrated in the Northern Region of Ghana, but also in other regions such as Upper West, Eastern, and Greater Accra. The growth of AGREDS was given more impetus through the appointment of the first indigenous executive director.

³⁰M15WG, interview with a male pastor who teaches in the Bible college and lives in Western Ghana, December 4, 2017.

³¹M2LCG, interview with a male employee of AGREDS who lives in a large city in central Ghana, October 8, 2017.

³²F2LNG, interview with a female employee who lives in a large city in Northern Ghana," October 5, 2017.

Appointment of First Indigenous Executive Director of AGREDS

The appointment of Joseph Kwame Wumbee, the first indigenous executive director of AGREDS, was confirmed on February 9, 1996 with a letter signed by the general secretary of the AGG and with copies sent to the AGG executive presbytery chairman and AGREDS board members.³³ Among other things, the letter captured the responsibilities and expectations of the AGREDS executive director by the AGG executive presbytery. The mandates follow:

1. Direct the general administration of AGREDS in accordance with its constitution and policies.
2. Direct the recruitment, advancement, discipline, and termination of all employees of AGREDS under the provisions of the constitution and in accordance with the appropriate conditions of service.
3. Make conditions of service reports to the board chairman of AGREDS to be presented to the executive presbytery.
4. Make annual audited financial reports and annual budget recommendations to the board of directors.
5. Make an annual report of the progress and status of AGREDS to the board of directors.
6. Initiate and direct an ongoing and in-service training program of continuing education for the AGREDS staff.
7. Develop and maintain up-to-date job descriptions for all staff.

³³Assemblies of God Ghana, "Confirmation of Appointment of Joseph Kwame Wumbee, Executive Director of AGREDS" (Document presented as the AGG confirmation of the AGREDS executive director, Accra Ghana, February 1996).

8. Oversee the external contacts of AGREDS with various agencies, both inside and outside Ghana, in order to solicit and maintain funding for AGREDS.
9. Consult closely with the chairman of the executive presbytery when Ghanaian and expatriate personnel are being recruited for positions within AGREDS.³⁴

Some of the implications deduced from the above job description of the AGREDS executive director are that AGREDS is expected to operate in a structure as a para-church organization guided by a constitution. Also the day-to-day running of AGREDS is to be the responsibility of the executive director and the management team, while the executive presbytery of AGG is to concentrate on their constitutional mandate of “exercising general oversight responsibility over the church, in line with Article 11, subsection 2(b) of the Constitution and By-Laws of the church.”³⁵ Also, the executive director of AGREDS was made accountable to the executive presbytery of the AGG for submitting periodic reports to the Executive Presbytery through the board chairman, as well as maintaining close consultation with the chairman of the executive presbytery regarding recruitments to fill positions within AGREDS. This was a complete departure from the relationship of AGREDS to the national church hierarchy during the missionary leadership era. Hence, it represented the dawn of a new era for AGREDS under indigenous leadership.

To ensure sustainability in running the operations of AGREDS, the executive director was tasked to build the capacities of AGREDS staff through continuous training

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Assemblies of God Ghana, *Constitution and Bylaws: Assemblies of God, Ghana* (Accra, Ghana: AGLC Limited, 2013), 27.

programs and also to maintain contacts with donor agencies and explore possible avenues for raising funding for AGREDS through local and foreign sources. The challenge with this approach to funding AGREDS was that, over time, about 95 percent of funding for AGREDS projects was coming from foreign donor partners who were not necessarily under or affiliated with the AG in any way.³⁶ Consequently, AGREDS inadvertently became more and more accountable to its foreign donor partners than the national church.

The above scenario partly explains why participants such as MT3NG stressed the view that AGREDS was operationally detached from most AG local churches.³⁷ Participants M2LNG³⁸ and MT1LWG³⁹ also expressed the same viewpoint in their responses. MT1LWG,⁴⁰ for instance, cited instances where AGREDS was running projects in certain communities, and yet the AG local churches in those communities knew nothing about the projects. It is submitted that this phenomenon could be reversed when the General Council of the AGG takes over ownership of the funding of AGREDS through periodic direct financial contributions in significant amounts or indirectly facilitating local and foreign fund raising for AGREDS projects.

³⁶Wumbee, interview.

³⁷MT3NG, interview with AG trustee and theologian who lives in Northern Ghana, August 7, 2017.

³⁸M2LNG, interview with a male employee who lives in a large city in Northern Ghana, August 9, 2017.

³⁹MT1LWG, interview with a key leader of AG Ghana who is a trustee and lives in Western Ghana, October 7, 2017.

⁴⁰Ibid.

Growth and Expansion of AGREDS

Over the years, the focus of AGREDS has included, but not been limited to, health services, education, relief and rehabilitation (refugee support programs), community development (construction of schools and clinics in deprived communities), poverty reduction programs, child trafficking initiatives, peace building efforts, conflict resolution, HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support, and child/family sponsorship support. The operations of AGREDS are driven by its corporate mission, namely: “To work with communities in partnership with other like-minded agencies in the love of God to find sustainable solutions to hunger, poverty, illiteracy, exploitation.”⁴¹ Its vision declares: “To have in Ghana communities where people manage their own affairs as good stewards of God’s creation.”⁴²

The growth in the scope of AGREDS operations as reported by participants has been achieved as a result of many carefully selected and packaged relief and development projects that were successfully executed across Ghana. Specifically, these include community development capacity initiative, lifeline project for street girls, anti-child trafficking program, and early child development program. Others are micro-credit for micro enterprise development, community infrastructure program, expansion of health services, response to HIV/AIDS victims, and migration support response.

⁴¹Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services, *EC-UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative: The Buduburam Community Development Initiative in Collaboration with Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services Brochure* (Accra, Ghana: AGLC Limited, 1991), 5.

⁴²Ibid.

Growth through Community Development Capacity Initiative

The AGREDS executive director in an interview reported that the Buduburam Community Development Capacity Initiative project, was implemented by AGREDS in 2002 with funding from the European Commission-United Nations Joint Migration & Development Initiative.⁴³ After peace was finally returned to Liberia, the UNHCR embarked on voluntary repatriation of the refugees either to their country of origin or to any other possible destination of their choice. Those who opted for local integration into Ghanaian society were taken through a local integration program aimed at equipping the refugees with sustainable employable skills in order to benefit both the refugees and the host community.⁴⁴ It was within this context that AGREDS, in partnership with UNHCR, UNDP (United Nations Development Program) and the government of Ghana, implemented this project for Liberian and other refugees.

Information gathered from a working document on the program indicates that the Capacity Development Initiative project based at Buduburam in the Central Region was “host to over 14,000 Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees since 1990, following the civil war which erupted in Liberia in 1989 and Sierra Leone in 1991.”⁴⁵ The main thrust of the project was to equip the refugees and Ghanaians living in and around the Buduburam catchment areas of Gomoa East District with “with sustainable employable skills through training in the fields of information communication technology (ICT), masonry, carpentry, electrical engineering, and draughtsmanship.”⁴⁶

⁴³Wumbee, interview.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵AGREDS, *EC-UN*, 2.

⁴⁶Ibid.

To ensure sustainability of the program, the project had a component designed to build the technical and managerial capacity of community-based organizations for ongoing delivery of quality training in employable skills. The target of the project was the equipping of four hundred young refugees with employable skills and the provision of improved technical and managerial capacity of ten community-based organizations.⁴⁷ Information gathered through the semi-structured interviews confirm that these targets were achieved, and even exceeded, by the end of the project-implementation period.⁴⁸

Growth through the Street Girls Project (Lifeline)

The Street Girls Project, codenamed Lifeline, was conceptualized by AGREDS as a lifeline response to the problem of homeless girls who lived on the streets of Accra under dehumanizing conditions. According to Joseph Kwame Wumbee, executive director of AGREDS:

The goal of the project was to provide a safe place for the street girls to sleep at night and also to equip them with employable skills in order to keep them away from the streets and the dangers associated with that. During the first year of project implementation, it was located in a rented building at Mamobi, a suburb of Accra, with a sponsorship package of \$20,000 annually for three years from a Holland-based NGO known as Children at Risk.⁴⁹

An evaluation done by AGREDS after one year of Lifeline implementation revealed that the project was a failure due to poor patronage by the affected street girls. Explaining the failure, Joseph Wumbee alluded to the fact that there was no proper consultation between AGREDS and the street girls during the planning and implementation stages of the

⁴⁷Ibid., 3.

⁴⁸M2LSG, interview with a male employee of AGREDS, who lives in a large city in Southern Ghana.

⁴⁹Wumbee, interview.

project.⁵⁰ The girls used to sleep at Agblobleshie located on the Western corridor of Accra while the Lifeline rented building was located at Mamobi on the Eastern corridor. The daily routine of commuting from Agbobloshie to the Lifeline accommodation posed a huge challenge to the girls who could not afford the transport charges involved, although they were grateful for the safe accommodation provided by AGREDS.⁵¹ This explains why the girls did not patronize the facility provided by AGREDS.

Thankfully, under the leadership of Joseph Wumbee, AGREDS secured funding of an amount of \$900,000 from a Holland-based donor, Van Herk, in 1999 to purchase an old furniture company property situated on 1.2 acres at the center of Agblobloshie, near where the street girls were located.⁵² According to Wumbee, this facility was converted into a center for the Lifeline with enough rooms for dormitories, workshops, a kitchen, and so on. Therefore, the problem of distance to the girls was solved.

Narrating the plight of the young street girls, F2LSG, project manager of Lifeline, shared this with great emotions:

Agbobloshie, where the Lifeline center is located, happens to be the center of activity for these young girls who have migrated from different parts of the country to look for greener pastures. This has become necessary for most of the girls due to economic hardships in their villages, irresponsible parenting, or loss of biological parents; and some also run away from maltreatments at home, forced early marriage; and others, due to peer pressure to pursue better lives in the city.⁵³

Interactions with the project manager revealed that most of these girls become disappointed when they discover the reality of non-existing jobs in Accra. They end up

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹F2LSG, interview with a female project manager of AGREDS Lifeline, October 5, 2017.

⁵²Wumbee, interview.

⁵³F2LSG, interview with a female project manager of AGREDS Lifeline, October 5, 2017.

living on the streets and in the slum areas of the Agbogbloshie market. They occupy any available places where they can find empty wooden structures, abandoned buildings or kiosks, canopies in front of stores, or lorry parks where they can sleep at the end of a hard day's work.⁵⁴ According to F2LSG, this predisposes many of them to become victims of sexual exploitation, leading to increasing numbers of babies on the streets without fathers. Others, in desperation for survival, become involved in stealing, drug abuse, and other social vices detrimental to their own health and natural development.⁵⁵ Sadly, many of them are oblivious of the dire consequences of these negative behavior patterns.

In “a baseline survey conducted by AGREDS in August 1999 on the living conditions of street children and their numbers on the streets of Accra, the number stood at approximately 25,000.”⁵⁶ What is more worrying about this statistics is that it involves the youth, and hence, the future leaders of Ghana. To reverse the trend, F2LSG pointed out that “the goal of the AGREDS Lifeline project is to educate the young girls on the streets of Accra through counselling on the need to be off the streets, and learn a trade, in order to be able to lead more dignified lives with their families.”⁵⁷ Corroborating this assertion, M2LSG shared that the project provides the young girls with employable skills, education opportunities, healthcare, guidance, and counselling. At the same time, it reduces the influx of potential street girls through networking with AG partner NGOs and

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services, *Street Children Component of Community-Based Poverty Reduction Project: Lifeline Street Children Project, 18th Month Report* (Accra, Ghana: AGLC Limited, 2004), 3.

⁵⁷F2LSG, interview with a female project manager of AGREDS Lifeline, October 5, 2017.

other development-oriented agencies in the district.⁵⁸ By and large, this intervention helps in the country's fight against poverty among the marginalized in society.

The 2002 annual report of AGREDS captures the three main courses taught at the Lifeline center as comprising “dressmaking, hairdressing, and batik tie and dye. Besides these, traditional catering, soap, pomade, and powder making, are taught as supplementary courses.”⁵⁹ The project is residential, and it aims at taking at least 100 girls off the streets annually and equipping them with employable skills.⁶⁰ The Lifeline eighteenth month report of 2004 expanded the scope of activities undertaken at Lifeline to include guidance and counselling and skills training with courses on dressmaking, hairdressing, batik tie-dyeing, business management, functional literacy, health, and moral education.⁶¹ The report indicates that during the Guidance and Counselling sessions, the issues covered include: “Proper Communication, Attitudinal Change, Goal-Setting, Peer pressure, and Womanhood. These sessions “took the form of open forums, group discussions, and one-on-one interactions.”⁶² The one-on-one counselling sessions should be particularly helpful for girls with special needs, as that could help them to open up on issues considered peculiar and personal to them.

⁵⁸M2LSGb, interview with a male employee of AGREDS, who lives in a large city in Southern Ghana, October 6, 2017.

⁵⁹Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services, “AGREDS: Annual Report 2002” (Accra, Ghana: AGREDS, 2002), 17.

⁶⁰Wumbee, interview.

⁶¹AGREDS, *Street Children*, 4–7.

⁶²*Ibid.*

The dressmaking and hairdressing classes cover “theory and practical lessons, including introduction to tools and equipment, measurements, cutting, materials, creams, and practical skills for hairdressing and dressmaking. On batik tie-dye, the girls are taught the names of tools and chemicals, and how to do tying, stitching, and dyeing of materials, color blending, motif and engraving.”⁶³ The business management classes cover topics on “how to set up and manage one’s own business, basic bookkeeping, separation of business from the owner, marketing techniques, and customer service.”⁶⁴ These are all intended to help the girls become well versed in managing their own small businesses.

The report further states that girls of school-going age who are identified as school dropouts but who are able to study are sponsored under AGREDS scholarship to enable them to go back to school to complete their formal education.⁶⁵ The goal behind the back- to-school program is to provide the girls with “the opportunity to continue their education to enable them to become more useful citizens to the society.”⁶⁶ Interaction with the Lifeline project manager revealed that a couple of such girls have been able to further their education up to the university level and other tertiary levels under scholarships facilitated by AGREDS.⁶⁷

⁶³Ibid., 6.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵AGREDS, “Report 2002,” 17.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷F2LSG, interview with a female project manager of AGREDS Lifeline, October 5, 2017.

Project documents reviewed indicate: “Health education forms an integral part of the course since the girls had very little knowledge of hygienic conditions, sexually transmitted diseases, i.e., HIV /AIDS, and the effects of drug abuse.”⁶⁸ The climax of the Lifeline project is the process of reintegration of the girls back into their communities of origin after their training. Every effort is made by Lifeline project officers to reunite the girls with their parents or guardians at their hometowns through sensitization, education, counselling, and various support systems.⁶⁹ The goal here is to facilitate mutual acceptance between the girls and their parents or guardians.

According to F2LSG, “the process of reintegration involves a series of meetings with the parents, community leaders, and tribal representatives together with the girls themselves. All girls reintegrated are properly counselled and given some working capital in the form of equipment and inputs to help them start their own small businesses in their hometowns.”⁷⁰ Further information gathered from the project manager indicates that the girls are never abandoned by AGREDS after reintegration. Lifeline project officers keep following-up on them to see how they are faring in their new trades and often offer helpful guidance and counseling to keep them on track.⁷¹ This demonstrates a genuine commitment by AGREDS to ensure that the girls succeed in their chosen careers.

⁶⁸AGREDS, *Street Children*, 7.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰F2LSG, interview with a female project manager of AGREDS Lifeline, October 5, 2017.

⁷¹Ibid.

Project Funding

Joseph Kwame Wumbee reported that, like other projects, Lifeline could not have been successful without the Christ-like generosity of various donors; and he catalogued them as follows:

1. Dr. Van Herk (Dutch Philanthropist) donated \$900,000 USD to acquire the Lifeline property at Agbobloshie.
2. Kerk in Actie (Churches in Action) has been providing the project with an amount of 63,000 euros annually since 1998.
3. In 2007, Robertson Foundation (an American Foundation) expressed interest in the Lifeline Project, and supported AGREDS with a grant of \$1,000,000 USD over a five- year period. The grant was broken down into five installments of \$200,000 USD yearly. This helped to greatly deepen the processes of the project, especially the reintegration component.
4. Africa's Children donated about \$10,000 USD to \$12,000 USD yearly to Lifeline.
5. Personal donations from Rev. Dr. Harry Insaidoo and the Tema Community 4 AG came in once in a while.
6. The Central Region women's ministry made a lot of donations to the project.
7. The General Council of the AGG assists.
8. UNICEF⁷² also helps.

The respective contributions to the project by various donor partners are represented on the graph below.

⁷²Wumbee, interview, March 6, 2018.

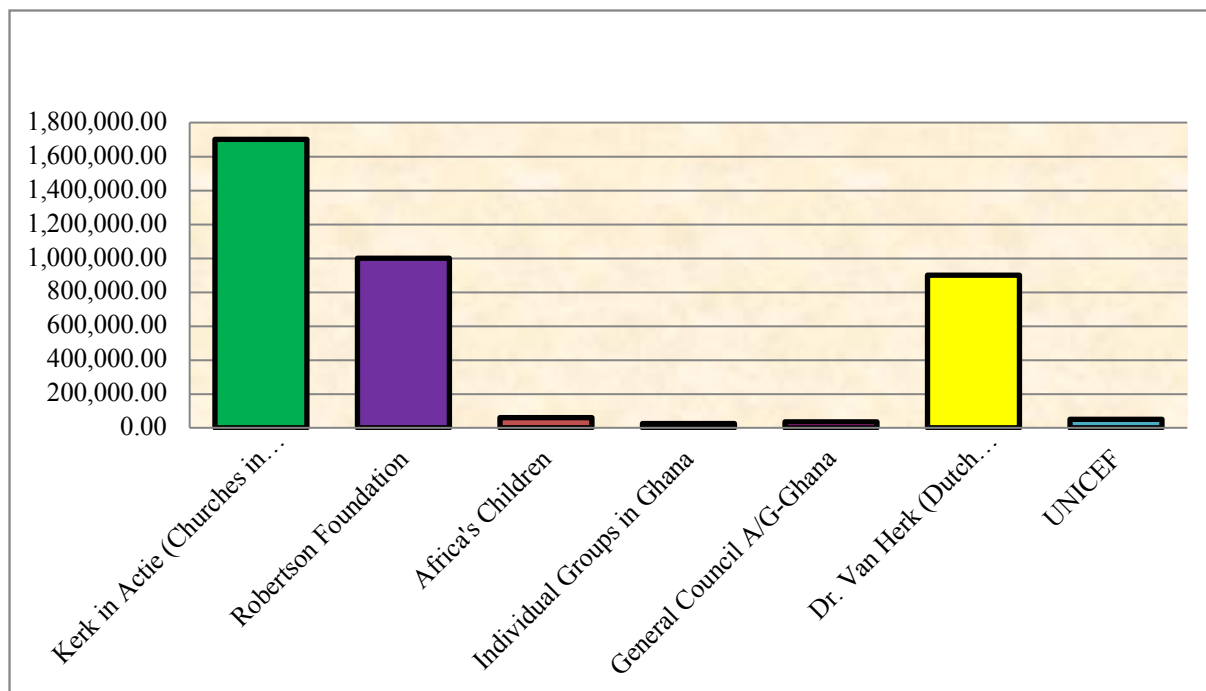


Figure 3. Cumulative donor contributions to Lifeline in USD (1998-2016).

Growth through Anti-Child-Trafficking Program (Lifeline)

Under the Anti-Child Trafficking program, AGREDS works with key stakeholders to rescue girls who are identified as victims of child marriage, child trafficking, and child exploitation.⁷³ Project documents indicate that, after successfully rescuing such girls, they are taken through screening and eventually given appropriate training to enable them acquire employable skills that empower them to improve their human security and dignity. The implementation strategy of this program covers four thematic areas: rescuing, rehabilitation, reintegration, and early childhood development (ECD).⁷⁴ In view of the legal implications of human trafficking in Ghana, an AGREDS

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Wumbee, Joseph, Kwame, *Administrative Report to the Board of Directors 2014* (Accra, Ghana: AGREDS, 2014), 13.

program officer reported that AGREDS works in close collaboration with the Anti-Human-Trafficking Unit of the Ghana Police Service and the Enslavement Prevention Alliance-West Africa.⁷⁵ The program implementation goes through the following phases.

Community Outreach

Program officers of AGREDS first identify and visit what they term *flash points* (receiving and distribution areas) for human trafficking in Accra.⁷⁶ They then “sensitize and interact with various stakeholders to help identify girls who fall within the program’s target group in their localities. During interaction, emphasis is placed on girls who find themselves in exploitative labor in all forms and are willing to be moved into a residential facility to learn a skill to enhance their livelihood.”⁷⁷ In Ghana, locations such as slum areas of Accra, various lorry and train stations, and markets are places typically noted as flash points for human-trafficking activities.

Screening and Health Care

The girls who meet the program’s protocols are rescued and are then taken through screening. Those who are unable to meet the program’s protocols are then referred to partner organizations for support.⁷⁸ As a priority to the program, “all beneficiaries (trainees and ECD pupils) undergo medical screening by health

⁷⁵M2LSG, interview with a male employee of AGREDS, who lives in a large city in Southern Ghana, October 6, 2017.

⁷⁶Joseph Kwame Wumbee, *Administrative Report to the Board of Directors 2014* (Accra, Ghana: AGREDS, 2014), 14.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Wumbee, interview.

professionals; critical cases are immediately referred to the nearest health facility, and all beneficiaries are registered under the National Health Insurance Scheme.”⁷⁹ AGREDS does this to determine the health status of each beneficiary and also to ensure that they are properly protected from all health risk factors. Also at this stage, the intentions of the project to send trainees back to their communities after their training is made known to all beneficiaries. Hence, during this stage, all relevant information about the parents/guardians of the girls and their home towns are collected and documented for further follow-up. Subsequently, their parents are contacted and notified about the status of their children.⁸⁰ Once screening is completed, the girls are taken through skills training of their choice.

Skills Training

Skills training is a major component of AGREDS Lifeline program. The choice of each skill training is guided by the presence of innate talents and the respective interests of the girls. Depending on the availability of funds, skills training usually centers around “catering, dressmaking, and beauty care. Batik tie and dye serves as a supplementary skill for all the trainees. Functional literacy and entrepreneurial training are incorporated in the mainstream program. This is to help trainees have basic knowledge in identifying products, reading of instructions, accounts, and record keeping, among others.”⁸¹ After the program, a graduation ceremony is held at which the trainees are presented with certificates of participation. According to F2LSG, for many of the girls, this is usually the

⁷⁹Wumbee, *Report to the Board of Directors 2014*, 15.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid.

only certificate and training in literacy they may have received all their lives.⁸² After graduation from the skills training, steps are taken by AGREDS to reintegrate the girls into their communities of origin or any other community they choose.

Reintegration

The process of reintegration is divided into three steps: pre-reintegration, reintegration, and post-reintegration.⁸³ The pre-reintegration phase takes place while the trainees are undergoing skills training. It essentially involves “conducting social investigations on the backgrounds of trainees, including economic surveys on their families and communities at large. Field officers also use the opportunity to mediate on behalf of trainees who had strained relationship with their families, as a way of preparing the grounds for their smooth reunion/reintegration”⁸⁴ after their skills training. Apart from that, Wumbee added that field officers take advantage to educate the community members on the dangers of migration, waywardness, etc.⁸⁵ This phase is helpful in addressing negative peer pressure among victims of child trafficking and their perpetrators.

The reintegration itself takes place after the girls have finished their skills training. The process involves a series of stakeholder consultations, meetings, and forums aimed at reuniting the girls with their families.⁸⁶ F2LSG reported that, “at such meetings,

⁸²F2LSG, interview with a female project manager of AGREDS Lifeline.

⁸³Wumbee, *Report to the Board of Directors 2014*, 15.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Wumbee, interview.

⁸⁶F2LSG, interview with a female project manager of AGREDS Lifeline, October 5, 2017.

aggrieved parents/guardians, and girls who happen to be victims of abuse, are counselled to forgive and patch up any strained relationships they have with each another. AGREDS provides all girls who are reintegrated to their communities with start-up capital kits made up of equipment, tools, and materials.”⁸⁷ Also, public forums involving tribal and community leaders, and the youth, are held to sensitize them on the dangers of improper migration, child exploitation, and so on.

Finally, the post-reintegration stage involves periodic visitation by Lifeline project officers to the homes and work places of beneficiaries, now on their own, to assess the progress of their work. At such visits, the project officers offer some advice and technical assistance to the girls if necessary.⁸⁸

Growth through Early Childhood Development Program (Lifeline)

Another Lifeline program contributing to the growth of AGREDS over the years is an Early Childhood Development (ECD) program, designed for children aged one to five. Two of such programs are run in Nanumba and Yendi in the Northern Region, and one in the South, specifically at Agblobloshie, in Accra.⁸⁹ According to F2LSG, “the goal of the intervention is to help vulnerable children in slum areas to benefit from formal and informal education necessary for proper child development, and to prepare them to become responsible citizens in future.”⁹⁰ At the same time, the program seeks to educate mothers on proper caregiving, nutrition, and child-protection rights.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid.

Each center of the ECD program has a number of trained caregivers, a congenial teaching and learning environment, and a number of sponsored children with donor funding through AGREDS. Narrating the story on how funds are generated to support the program, M2LSG said, “While a chunk of the support comes from donor funding, each parent is expected to contribute a token amount regularly towards their child’s upkeep at the center. The sponsorship package for ECD covers teaching and learning materials for the children, feeding, healthcare, and child growth monitoring.”⁹¹ The curriculum at the child-development center covers “language development, motor skills, and indoor and outdoor activities. The mothers on the other hand, are given free education on healthcare and child welfare through sensitization workshops on topics like breast feeding, child nutrition, use of treated mosquito nets, immunization, family planning, and disease prevention.”⁹² These help parents in giving better care to their children.

Growth through Micro-Credit for Micro-Enterprise Development

Another livelihood empowerment program run by AGREDS is the Micro-credit for Micro-Enterprise Development. This intervention, which has been running “mainly in the Northern Ghana since 2005, is designed to facilitate access to micro-credit for thousands of men and women from program communities, and the setting up of cooperatives for bee keepers, and shea butter processors.”⁹³ With a seed capital from AGREDS, additional funds are generated from credit union groups formed by community

⁹¹M2LSG, interview with a male employee of AGREDS, who lives in a large city in Southern Ghana, October 5, 2017.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Wumbee, *Report to the Board of Directors 2014*, 18.

members. Out of the total funds available, loans are then disbursed to micro-enterprise development clients, after they are taken through training on loan management.⁹⁴ The loan management training assists beneficiaries in the prudent use of the funds received, thereby avoiding default in loan repayment.

The clients of micro-enterprise development, who are mostly into “petty trading, shea butter processing, and groundnut oil extraction, also receive training on topics, such as loans policy, and savings mobilization, value addition on shea butter processing, record keeping, and minutes writing.”⁹⁵ Project documents reveal that, “since its establishment in 2005, the scheme has supported about 162 groups (3,816 individuals) in all kinds of vulnerability within the Tamale metropolis.”⁹⁶ The scheme is particularly helpful in rural communities where no banking institutions exist. Although the scheme is helpful to the poor rural citizens, it must be noted that the major setback to micro-credit for micro-enterprise development is the challenge of poor loans recovery. This is what AGREDS will have to watch closely and guard against.

Growth through Community Infrastructure Program (CIP)

A major challenge facing most developing countries such as Ghana is the provision of adequate infrastructure across the country. The situation is worse in the rural communities as most of the infrastructure provided by government is concentrated in the urban centers to the neglect of the rural communities. Besides, the few infrastructure

⁹⁴M2LSG, interview with a male employee of AGREDS who lives in a large city in Southern Ghana.

⁹⁵Wumbee, *Report to the Board of Directors 2014*, 18.

⁹⁶Ibid.

projects provided are left to deteriorate over time due to poverty and a culture of poor maintenance among the people.

According to the World Bank collection of development indicators, people living in rural communities in Ghana in 2016 were reported to be 45.32 percent of the population.⁹⁷ Most of these people unfortunately live “below the poverty line of \$1.25 earnings a day per United Nations (UN) Millennium Indicators statistics.”⁹⁸ AGREDS’ CIP, in collaboration with donor partners, has over the years responded in significant ways to addressing the huge infrastructural gap in selected communities of Ghana, particularly where education and health service infrastructure are notably low.

An AGREDS 2006 CIP report states: “The program is designed to help contribute to the improvement and/or acceleration of community development. Generally, it includes the provision of school blocks, community clinics, housing for teachers, nurses and doctors, skills training workshops, etc.”⁹⁹ Putting the project in perspective, the 2006 CIP report highlights that “AGREDS CIP in collaboration with World Servants Europe, sought to exhibit the love and compassion our Lord Jesus had for people He came into contact with, during His ministry on earth.”¹⁰⁰ According to the executive director, this

⁹⁷The World Bank, "Rural Population (% of Total Population) in Ghana, 2016," <https://www.google.com/search?rct=j&q=The%20World%20Bank.%20%E2%80%9CRural%20Population%20%28%25%20of%20Total%20Population%29%20in%20Ghana%2C%202016.%E2%80%9D>. (accessed April 8, 2018).

⁹⁸United Nations, "UN Poverty Line: Millennium Indicators," 2016, <https://www.google.com/search?rct=j&q=United%20Nations.%20%E2%80%9CUN%20Poverty%20Line%3A%20Millennium%20Indicators.%E2%80%9D%202016> (accessed April 7, 2018).

⁹⁹Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services, *Community Infrastructure Program, 2006 Report* (Accra, Ghana: AGLC Limited, 2006), 5.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

endeavor has been successful over the years through the collaborative efforts of AGREDS with donor partners, particularly World Servants Europe, to work with the various beneficiary communities.¹⁰¹ The AGREDS CIP report indicates that “every year, World Servants Europe recruits volunteers from Europe, made up of construction workers and artisans, and sends them to AGREDS in Ghana to help with community-based infrastructure projects. Beneficiary communities on their part, donate land and communal labor for the project”¹⁰² while AGREDS handles coordination, logistics, and supervision of the projects.¹⁰³ The table below shows communities and organizations that benefited from AGREDS’ CIP in 2006 alone. Further details on the list of CIP beneficiary organizations will be provided in the next chapter.

¹⁰¹Wumbee, interview.

¹⁰²AGREDS, *Community Infrastructure*, 5.

¹⁰³Wumbee, interview.

Table 6.1. CIP beneficiary communities and organizations in 2006

Project Code	Beneficiary Community/ Institution	Type of Project	Region / District
GH 106	Kabreya Community	Multi-Purpose Learning Resource Center	Northern Region (Nanumba South District)
AG 306	Saboba Medical Center	Nurses' Quarters	Northern Region (Saboba Chiriponi District)
GH 406	Lifeline Street Project	1. School Block for Early Child Development 2. Modern Kitchen	Greater Accra Region
GH 206	Wiamoase Salvation Army Clinic	Administrative Block	Ashanti Region

Source: AGREDS Community Infrastructure (CIP) Report, 2006¹⁰⁴

Growth through Expansion of Health Services

The delivery of health services is one major thematic area of AGREDS' operations. The agency operates two health facilities that provide preventive, promotional, and curative health services to the general public. The two health facilities are Saboba Medical Center and Nakpanduri Health Center, both established by the early AG missionaries in 1948 and 1950 respectively.¹⁰⁵ Joseph Kwame Wumbee observed

¹⁰⁴AGREDS, *Community Infrastructure*, 6.

¹⁰⁵Wumbee, interview.

that, over the years, the Saboba Medical Center “has grown from what was considered initially as a small clinic to become a district medical center in the Saboba District of the Northern Region of Ghana.”¹⁰⁶ Similarly, the Nakpanduri Health Center has seen considerable expansion since its establishment. The objective of these two health facilities, serving “an estimated population of 90,000 and 30,000 respectively,”¹⁰⁷ is the continuous delivery of good quality basic health services. This effort constitutes part of the church’s contribution to national health outcomes.

A visit to the Nakpanduri Health Center during data collection was helpful in observing the significant expansion at this facility although, judging from its long years of existence, the facility could have expanded more than it is now. M4SNG, who is the chief (traditional ruler) of Nakpanduri, argued that the health center is not fulfilling its potential and had this to say: “One thing that saddens me is that, since 1948 up to date, this clinic has been there, others came and have become full-fledged hospitals, but we are still a clinic. They built structures for hospitals but since then, those structures are still there and they have not completed them, but if they go ahead and complete them and bring in medical staff, it will help us better.”¹⁰⁸ It is obvious that the major challenge facing the two health facilities is poor funding, particularly by the AG national church.

Documents reveal that, as part of their mandate, the two health facilities undertake daily health education at the outpatient departments before consultation starts. The reason

¹⁰⁶Joseph Kwame Wumbee, *AGREDS Report Submitted to the Executive Presbytery of the Assemblies of God, Ghana 2014* (Accra, Ghana: AGREDS, 2014), 5.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸M4SNG, interview with a male beneficiary who lives in a small village in Northern Ghana, August 8, 2017.

for such education is to equip the people to be able to prevent or manage some of the cases at home, before reporting them to the clinics if necessary.¹⁰⁹ The clinics also reach out regularly to communities within their catchment areas to provide education on immunization to children against childhood killer diseases such as polio, diphtheria pertussis, tetanus, hepatitis B, homophiles influenza, and yellow fever.¹¹⁰ All these are done in addition to the treatment of several medical cases reported at the two AG health facilities on a daily basis. The table below indicates some statistics on activities at the two health facilities.

Table 6.2. Health service delivery to beneficiary communities (2013)¹¹¹

Activity	Saboba Medical Centre	Nakpanduri Health Centre	Total
OPD	31,812	20,280	52,092
Delivery	867	290	1,157
Surgery	632	0	632
Immunization(Children)	4,081	6,997	11,078
Total	37,392	20,570	64,959

Further information gathered from project reports during interviews shows that the two health facilities operate twenty-four-hour services for patients to ensure that

¹⁰⁹Joseph Kwame Wumbee, *Administrative Report to the Board of Directors 2013* (Accra, Ghana: AGREDS, 2013), 9.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Wumbee, *Executive Presbytery 2014*, 4.

healthcare is accessible to clients all day round. To achieve this objective, staff of the clinics are put on eight hourly duty rosters in succession within the twenty-four hours of each day.¹¹² The executive director of AGREDS, however, pointed out that “the Saboba Medical Center lacks the staff necessary to run full shifts 24 hours a day in such areas as the laboratory, pharmacy, theatre, and maternity. We do have an efficient call service that provides the essential back-up personnel for all emergencies, and generally, they can assess and prepare a patient for emergency operation within thirty minutes or less, even at night.”¹¹³ The table below shows some important statistics on the AG hospital in Saboba over the last three years of this study.

¹¹²Felix Sackey Nana, *Board Report to the Executive Presbytery of AG Ghana for 2016* (Accra, Ghana: AGG, March 2017), 5.

¹¹³Wumbee, *Report to the Board of Directors 2013*, 4.

Table 6.3. Health service statistics from the AG hospital in Saboba (2014-2016)¹¹⁴

NO	INDICATORS	2014	2015	2016
1	OPD Attendance	28,831	27,458	25,007
2	Admissions	6,863	6,263	5,494
3	Discharges	5,961	6,055	5,304
4	Deaths	85	58	77
5	Deliveries	569	624	712
6	Lab Investigations	27,809	23,184	24,777
7	Surgeries	528	645	667
8	Transfusions	1,671	1,093	1,120
9	Malaria Cases Treated	3,346	5,045	908
10	Malaria Deaths	39	22	14
11	Referrals In	231	118	110
12	Referrals Out	130	129	86

In explaining some of the statistics in the above table, the board chairman's report attributes the decrease in the hospital's out-patient department's attendance to competition from a new clinic in Saboba opened by the District Assembly of the area,

¹¹⁴Sackey, 6.

lack of medicines in the AG hospital, and low client satisfaction.¹¹⁵ Interestingly, a similar decline in hospital attendance in 2002 was rather accredited to the effort of village health workers and traditional birth attendants on disease prevention.¹¹⁶ Of particular importance is the significant decreases in malaria deaths at the Saboba hospital over the three years in succession. The Ghana News Agency cites malaria as the “top killer disease in the country, killing an average of five people every minute.”¹¹⁷ The sharp decreases in malaria deaths thanks to the AG hospital in Saboba thus brings a sigh of relief to both the people of the area, the government, and all well-meaning Ghanaians.

In spite of the successes of the Saboba and Nakpanduri health facilities, one cannot ignore the challenges they often face in their operations. These include the “frequent breakdown of aging project motorbikes and vehicles with no funds for their replacements, bad roads especially during rainy seasons, and inadequate numbers of doctors, nurses, and administrative staff.”¹¹⁸ Other challenges are undue delays in reimbursement by the National Health Insurance Scheme to the hospital and clinic for the cost of services rendered to patients, frequent incidence of conflicts in the catchment areas, competition from new health facilities, and the inadequate supply of utilities such as potable water and electricity.¹¹⁹ It seems that adequate funding, particularly from the

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶AGREDS, Annual Report 2002, 5.

¹¹⁷Ghana News Agency, "Malaria Is Leading Killer Disease," Ghana Web, September 5, 2006, <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/health/Malaria-is-leading-killer-disease-Official-110060> (accessed April 10, 2018).

¹¹⁸Wumbee, *report to Executive Presbytery 2014*, 6.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

national AGG to keep the projects of AGREDS running on a sustainable basis, is what, by and large, will define the future influence of AGREDS in Ghana. A case in point is the huge financial investment needed by the church to implement its response towards the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Ghana.

Growth through Response to HIV/AIDS

Global statistics on HIV/AIDS reports that “HIV continues to be a major global public health issue. In 2016, an estimated 36.7 million people were living with HIV (including 1.8 million children)—with a global HIV prevalence of 0.8% among adults. Around 30% of these same people do not know that they have the virus.”¹²⁰ It further reports that cumulatively, “since the start of the epidemic, an estimated 78 million people have become infected with HIV and 35 million people have died of AIDS-related illnesses. In 2016, 1 million people died of AIDS-related illnesses.”¹²¹ To date, millions of children are estimated to be orphaned by the global pandemic.

The figures are staggering, and the situation is not different in Ghana. Official statistics on Ghana indicate that, “as of 2014, an estimated 150,000 people were infected with the virus, and the HIV prevalence rate was at 1.37%.”¹²² It is in view of these heart-breaking realities of the pandemic that AGREDS was moved with the compassion of Christ to offer a Christian response to victims and the general public through proper

¹²⁰UNAIDS, "Global HIV and AIDS Statistics," Avert, 2016, <https://www.avert.org/global-hiv-and-aids-statistics> (accessed April 10, 2018).

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²UNAIDS, "HIV/AIDS in Ghana," 2014, <https://www.google.com/search?rct=j&q=%E2%80%99CHIV/AIDS%20in%20Ghana.%E2%80%9D%202014> (accessed April 10, 2018).

education, care, and counselling. AGREDS' involvement with HIV/AIDS education, care, and support dates back to the late 1990's.¹²³ This compassionate response was born out of AGREDS' conviction that HIV/AIDS is

a threat to family and spiritual wellbeing, as young men and women infected often suffer spiritual anguish, social isolation, and family disintegration, as the families are also 'co-infected.' It is a threat to the community, regional, and national security, as the most productive and vibrant citizens are most affected. It retards a country's collective effort at growth, development, and particularly poverty reduction—poverty makes one more vulnerable to HIV, as well as making others to spend their savings/earnings in search of a cure etc.¹²⁴

In addition to the above, AGREDS subscribes to the view that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is “a threat to human dignity as the infected, particularly heads of households, lose their ability to provide, their social standing, suffer the indignities of a debilitating illness, and in some cases, are shunned.”¹²⁵ They are also discriminated against by others, including close relations and associates.

In the fight against this dreaded disease and its untold effects on society, there is the urgent need to identify and build the capacities of strategic institutions such as churches, other religious bodies, traditional society groups, corporate entities, and various civil society groups to enable them to help fight the pandemic from all angles. The response of the church towards the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Ghana is particularly crucial. This is because churches are “well placed to help challenge stigma because they reach out to a substantial number of people. They have the principles of compassion, leadership, and moral responsibility urgently required to manage the challenges of HIV/AIDS which

¹²³Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services, *Report on Anti-Stigma Workshops for Student Pastors of Assemblies of God Bible Colleges* (Accra, Ghana: AGLC Limited, 2007), 5.

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵Ibid.

has a profound impact on the churches' spiritual, social, and human responsibility."¹²⁶ In an emphatic response to answering the question on the need for religious leaders' involvement in fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic, a global religious body on the pandemic in Africa had this to say:

The churches have strengths, they have credibility, and they are grounded in communities. This offers them the opportunity to make a real difference in combating HIV/AIDS. To respond to this challenge, the churches must be transformed in the face of the HIV/AIDS crisis, in order that they may become a force for transformation—bringing healing, hope, and accompaniment to all affected by HIV/AIDS.¹²⁷

Writing on the strategy used by AGREDS to address the pandemic, the AGREDS-Ghana HIV/AIDS program manual states: “AGREDS-Ghana addresses the AIDS pandemic in Ghana with programs that aim at preventing the spread of the virus, care for those infected and affected, reducing the stigma of those living with HIV and AIDS, and building the capacity of the church for a sustainable and effective response.”¹²⁸ Over the years, therefore, AGREDS' HIV/AIDS program has focused on

networking with other organizations, building the capacity of churches for effective response to the pandemic, integrating care and support into church programs, mainstreaming HIV/AIDS prevention care and support into a house-to-house visitation, facilitating the formation of people living with HIV/AIDS support groups, and supporting them with income generation activities, and advocacy for an enabling environment for effective prevention, care, and support.¹²⁹

¹²⁶Ibid., 6.

¹²⁷Berkly Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs. “Plan of Action: The Ecumenical Response to HIV/AIDS in Africa.” Paper presented at the Global Consultation on the Ecumenical Response to the Challenge of HIV/AIDS in Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, November 25–28, 2001.

¹²⁸AGREDS, *Anti-Stigma*, 8.

¹²⁹Ibid., 12–13.

AGREDS has, thus, demonstrated practical Christian love and compassion towards HIV/AIDS victims over the years in various communities of Ghana, particularly where the prevalence rates are reportedly high. Project documents indicate that, with support from donor partners, AGREDS had made substantial investments in the fight against the pandemic in such interventions as free education, care and counseling, capacity building, awareness creation, advocacy, and campaigns against stigmatization.¹³⁰

On funding the HIV/AIDS program, Joseph Kwame Wumbee, executive director of AGREDS, reported that funds were received from three donor partners, namely, Africa's Children, Inter Coordination for Cooperation Organization (ICCO), and the Ghana Aids Commission.¹³¹ According to him, AGREDS received an initial \$10,000 from Africa's Children for sensitization in the AG Bible colleges. Subsequently, the ICCO provided approximately \$300,000¹³² which further helped to expand AGREDS' role in fighting the disease through education, capacity building, and sensitization across the country. Out of the funds from ICCO and the Ghana AIDS Commission, AGREDS was able to undertake more sensitization and training of pastors and selected church leaders within the AG across the country. Specifically, the executive director reported that

500 Pastors of the AG Ghana were trained on HIV/AIDS. This was done through anti-stigma workshops for student pastors of AG Bible colleges in Kumbugu, Kumasi, and Saltpond. In addition, selected leaders of the youth, women's ministry, and men's ministry were trained in all the regions, after which regional response teams were set up in each region of Ghana to handle on-going responses to the pandemic. Furthermore, 3 Pastors were sponsored by AGREDS on a study

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Wumbee, interview.

¹³²Ibid.

tour to Uganda to study how the church in that country was responding to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.¹³³

The move to learn from the rich experience of Uganda, an African country with an enviable record of bringing the HIV/AIDS pandemic under appreciable control, is commendable in the sense that AGREDS sought for best practice in managing the pandemic instead of reinventing the wheel. AGREDS started the HIV/AIDS response intervention in 1998, and the program ran for sixteen years up to 2014. The impact of this intervention on Ghanaian society will be explored in the next chapter of this study.

Growth through Migration Support Response

Another notable intervention that has contributed in shaping the growth of AGREDS is its program of assistance to needy migrants repatriated from other countries to Ghana. In partnership with the Dutch Council for Refugees, AGREDS has “worked in the area of migration for many years with rich experience in migration issues offering support to Ghanaians returning from Europe as well as regional victims of human trafficking.”¹³⁴

Under this agreement, AGREDS offers the following support to returnees: “Reception at the airport in special cases, acquaintance meeting (first meeting), review of client reintegration plan, assisting to explore and utilize available social networks, temporary housing upon arrival, and individual guidance.”¹³⁵ Other forms of assistance include “support with establishing a small-scale business or of finding a job, support with

¹³³Ibid.

¹³⁴AG Care Ghana and Dutch Council for Refugees, “Partnership Agreement Document between AG Care Ghana and The Dutch Council for Refugees” (Accra, Ghana: AGREDS, 2013), 1.

¹³⁵Ibid.

finding a suitable educational track or (vocational) training, referral to health care institutions, and support in finding the right kind of contacts; mediation in restoring contact with family members, administrative support, and provision of information about the country.”¹³⁶

Under this partnership agreement, the Dutch Council for Refugees provides a “grant of 1,800 euros per adult, and 2,800 euros per child”¹³⁷ to cover expenses on reintegration of a migrant such as education, health care, housing, or employment. AGREDS also uses its network contacts to offer additional support where necessary. The table below shows statistics on returned migrants from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands who were reintegrated into Ghanaian society by AGREDS in 2013 with support from Refugee Action in the UK and Maatwerk bij Terugkeer in the Netherlands.

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷Ibid.

Table 6.4. Return and reintegrated migrants in 2013¹³⁸

Region	Number		Totals
	UK	Netherlands	
Accra	35	10	45
Ashanti	11	4	15
Western	1	1	2
Brong Ahafo	10	4	14
Central	2	1	3
Eastern	1	3	4
Volta	1	3	4
Total	61	26	87

Profile of AGREDS by End of December 2016

AGREDS is a Christian non-profit organization that exists as an agency of the AGG, responsible for coordinating the relief and development programs of the church within the Republic of Ghana. Through this agency, the AGG reaches out to various communities and individuals to demonstrate “the truth of the biblical teaching on showing compassion to the hurting in the community, promoting social justice, stewardship of resources, and contribution to national development.”¹³⁹

¹³⁸Wumbee, *Report to Executive Presbytery 2014*, 9.

¹³⁹Joseph Kwame Wumbee, *AGREDS Report Submitted to the Executive Presbytery of the Assemblies of God, Ghana, 2017* (Accra, Ghana: AGREDS, March 2017), 3.

Mandate

AGREDS, “derives its mandate from the General Council of the AGG, inspired by the Word of God, and supported by legal registration as a non-governmental organization. It is duly recognized by the Social Welfare Department of Ghana, and it works in collaboration with other development partners within and outside Ghana.”¹⁴⁰ As an agency, AGREDS is responsible for spearheading and implementing all the major humanitarian programs and projects of AGG across the country.

Vision and Mission

The vision of AGREDS is to create “transformed communities, and its mission is to work with partners in the love of God to eliminate poverty.”¹⁴¹ By this, AGREDS seeks to support vulnerable groups and deprived communities of Ghana to help them become transformed by reducing poverty, exploitation, and overdependence so that they can attain self-reliance and socio-economic wellbeing so that the liberties and dignity of all persons are upheld.¹⁴² Everything AGREDS does on a daily basis revolves around the above vision and mission.

Core Values

The operations of AGREDS are guided by the core values of “mutual respect and fairness, accountability and transparency, full participation, innovativeness, long-term commitment, partnership and alliance, and diversity.”¹⁴³ These are further explained as

¹⁴⁰Ibid.

¹⁴¹Wumbee, Joseph, Kwame, *Executive Presbytery*, 2014, 3.

¹⁴²Ibid.

¹⁴³Wumbee, *Executive Presbytery 2017*, 4.

“mutual respect and fairness to people-devoid of all forms of discrimination; accountability and transparency in handling and reporting all organizational matters; full participation of all stakeholders in designing, implementing, and evaluating projects; and creativity in devising solutions that contribute to AGREDS vision and mission.”¹⁴⁴ Other core values are “long-term commitment to sustainable transformational development of communities, and working in partnership and in alliance with those that share a common vision and values in ways that are mutually respectful and responsible.”¹⁴⁵ These core values define AGREDS and the nature of its program activities.

Establishment

Although relief and development services carried out by the AGG dates back to the days of the early missionaries around 1948, AGREDS was registered as a faith-based NGO in Ghana on January 24, 1991¹⁴⁶ with the mandate of carrying out the relief and development services of AGG.

Governance and Administration

AGREDS is governed by an eleven-member board of trustees made up of seven men and four women of varied backgrounds in development, administration, accountancy, gender issues, clergy, and international relations.¹⁴⁷ At the management level, AGREDS has a “five-member team made up of the executive director,

¹⁴⁴Ibid.

¹⁴⁵Ibid.

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

¹⁴⁷MD2SG, interview with a non-clergy executive director of AGREDS who lives in Southern Ghana (Accra), March 19, 2018.

administrative manager, accounts officer, and two program managers who are stationed in each of the two field offices of Tamale and Saboba. Major decisions are taken at the head office in Accra, but day-to-day operational decisions are taken on the field by project officers.¹⁴⁸ This, therefore, makes room for quicker decisions at the grassroots by project officers.

Staffing

From a level of 2 nurses in 1948 to approximately 70 members of staff at the time the last missionary left Ghana in 1992, AGREDS had grown to a total staff strength of 267 for all its programs and projects nationwide by December 31, 2016.¹⁴⁹ This is shown in table 12 below:

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

¹⁴⁹Wumbee, interview.

Table 6.5. AGREDS staff as of December 31, 2016¹⁵⁰

Program / Institution	Regular Staff	Contract /Casual Staff	Total
Saboba	98	68	166
Nakpanduri	37	10	47
Lifeline	3	20	23
NCDP	6	5	11
YACDP	3	3	6
NFO – Tamale	2	6	8
Accra Office	6	-	6
Total	155	112	267

Program Interventions

From one thematic area of health, explored during the time of the early missionaries, AGREDS now operates in three thematic areas of health, education, and livelihood empowerment.¹⁵¹ Under health, AGREDS operates two medical facilities made up of one district hospital and one health center in Saboba and Nakpanduri respectively, both in the Northern Region of Ghana. Under education, AGREDS assists twenty-nine basic schools with total population of 8,538 pupils in seven districts within three regions.¹⁵² AGREDS Livelihood Empowerment covers poverty reduction programs

¹⁵⁰Wumbee, *Executive Presbytery 2017*, 4.

¹⁵¹Wumbee, *Executive Presbytery 2014*, 5.

¹⁵²Wumbee, *Executive Presbytery 2017*, 10.

that cover such areas as vocational and skills training, micro-enterprise development, relief and rehabilitation (particularly for refugees), conflict prevention and resolution, anti-child trafficking, and child sponsorship programs. These are depicted in figure 4.

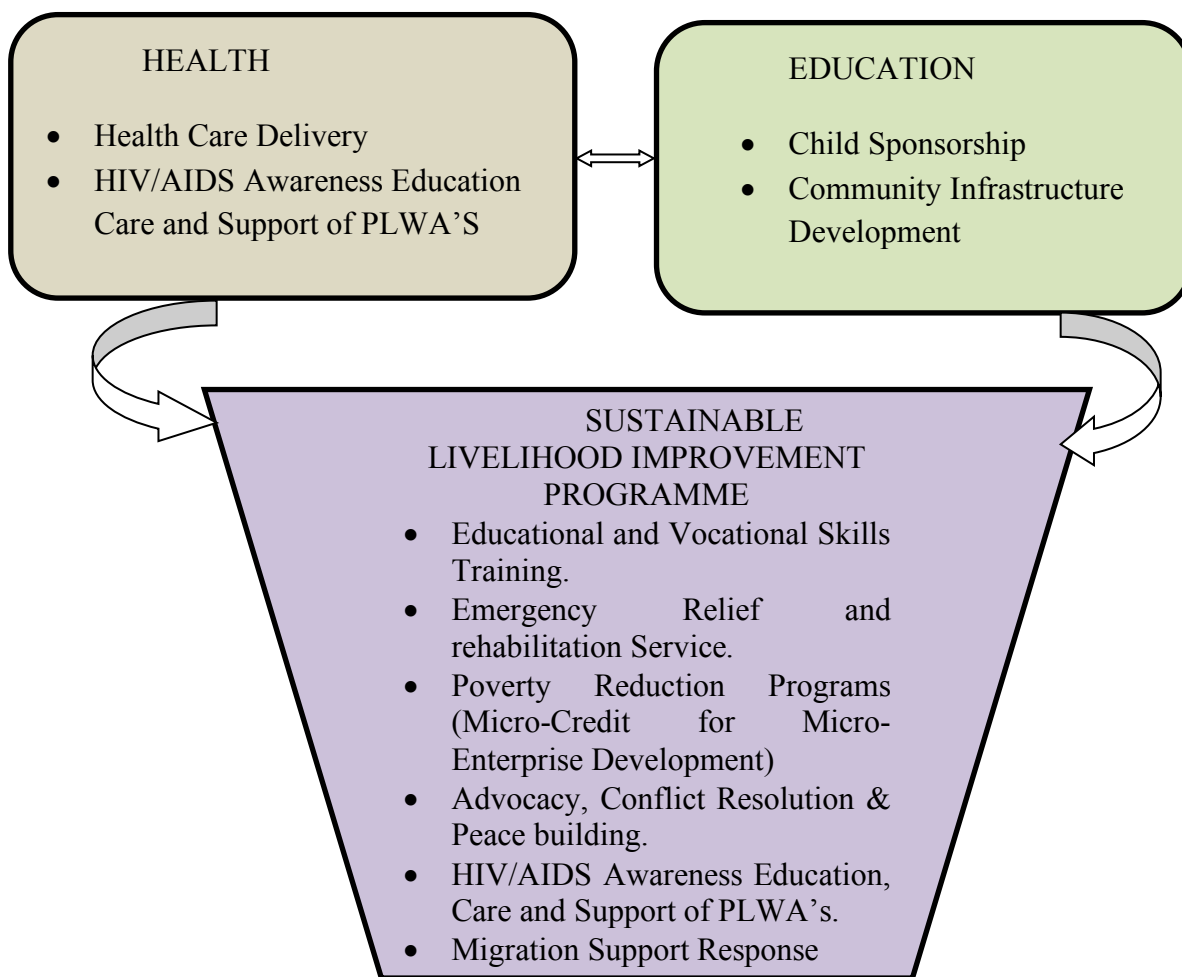


Figure 4. AGREDS thematic programs.¹⁵³

¹⁵³Wumbee, *Executive Presidency*, 2014, 5.

Partners/Project Funding

Over the years, the work of AGREDS has been sustained by donor partners from Holland, USA, and Ghana. Some of these donors are Kerk in Actie (Churches in Action), Children at Risk, Robertson Foundation, Africa’s Children, Dutch Philanthropists, UNICEF, and UNHCR. Others include the government of Ghana, Ghana Aids Commission, General Council of AGG, and individuals and groups in Ghana.¹⁵⁴

Geographical Coverage

During the time of the missionaries, AGREDS’ operations were concentrated in only one region, the Northern Region, as well as the brief take-over of the Techimantia Health Centre in the Brong Ahafo Region.¹⁵⁵ This is understandable, given the fact that “the Northern Region makes up the largest number of poor people of any of Ghana’s ten regions (1.3 million).”¹⁵⁶ As of the end of December 2016, the programs and projects of AGREDS had spread across nine out of the ten regions of Ghana. These comprise the regions of Brong Ahafo, Central, Greater Accra, Western, Eastern, Northern, Upper East, Upper West, and Volta.¹⁵⁷ Although AGREDS had not executed any project directly in the Ashanti Region, it had indirectly trained some people from the said region either in its Lifeline project at Agblobloshie, Accra, or through its migration program. Besides that,

¹⁵⁴M2LNG, interview with a male employee who lives in a large city in Northern Ghana.

¹⁵⁵Wumbee, interview.

¹⁵⁶Edgar Cooke, Sarah Hague, and Andy McKay, *The Ghana Poverty and Inequality Report 2016, Using the 6th Ghana Living Standards Survey*, Unicef, 2016, [https://www.unicef.org/ghana/Ghana_Poverty_and_Inequality_Analysis_FINAL_Match_2016\(1\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/ghana/Ghana_Poverty_and_Inequality_Analysis_FINAL_Match_2016(1).pdf) (accessed April 16, 2018).

¹⁵⁷M2LNG, interview with a male employee who lives in a large city in Northern Ghana.

the Ashanti Region is generally considered to be more endowed with economic resources than all the other regions. Hence, the incidence of poverty and vulnerability are much less in that region relative to the other regions.

Reports for RQ2C

RQ2C asks: What have been the socio-economic influences of AGREDS on Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016? This research question was resolved through data collected from the research instruments of a questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide.¹⁵⁸ The findings and results for this research are outlined in chapter 7 of this study.

Reports for RQ2D

RQ2D asks: What have been the cultural and religious influences of AGREDS on Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016? This research question was resolved through data collected from the questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide.¹⁵⁹ The findings and results for this research question are discussed in chapter 7 of this study.

Summary

From a single activity of engagement in health care at its inception in 1948, AGREDS has experienced significant growth in the scope of its operations to a wide range of relief and development services over the years. These have covered projects and program interventions in all the three thematic areas of its operations: health, education, and livelihood empowerment.

¹⁵⁸See appendix A and B.

¹⁵⁹See appendix A and B.

In spite of the many challenges it faces, AGREDS has successfully executed landmark projects, including massive infrastructure development in education and health in many deprived communities. It has provided vital health services in rural communities and provided livelihood empowerment through advocacy for street girls, refugees, migrants, victims of human trafficking, and child abuse. Having explored the various facets of the growth and expansion of AGREDS since its inception to its expanded profile as at the end of December 2016, the influence of AGREDS on Ghanaian society will now be examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

DATA COLLECTION RESULTS: INFLUENCE OF AGREDS

Introduction

This chapter explores the influence of AGREDS on Ghanaian society from its inception in 1948 to the end of 2016. It outlines the nature and types of influences AGREDS has made on Ghanaian society through its various program interventions.

Restatement of Research Questions

The question under investigation in this study is: What is the history of AGREDS, including its origins, growth, and influence on Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016. To answer this question, the following two research questions were used:

1. What constitutes a biblical and theological basis for relief and development services of the AGG?¹
2. What characterized the origin, growth, and influence of AGREDS in Ghana from 1948 to 2016?²

This segment of the investigation presents the findings and results on the influence of AGREDS over the period of the study.

¹See chapter 4 concerning the research purpose and research questions.

²Ibid.

Description of the Demographics

Fifty-two participants were contacted who willingly agreed to respond to both the questionnaire³ and semi-structured interviews.⁴ These were made up of thirty-four males and eighteen females⁵ who are stakeholders of AGREDS. Further demographics were discussed more fully in the previous chapter.⁶

Description of Participants

Participants in the study were made up of fifty-two respondents to the questionnaire⁷ and semi-structured interviews.⁸ These were AGREDS' trustees, employees, directors, pastors, Bible school teachers, and project beneficiaries. Further information about the participants were described more fully in the previous chapter.⁹

Analysis of Data

A questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide were used to gather data for resolving the above two research questions. For each research question, participants were asked appropriate leading questions¹⁰ that helped to generate data.

³See appendix B.

⁴See appendix A.

⁵See table 5.2 in chapter 5 in the section concerning the gender of respondents.

⁶See chapter 6 for a description of demographics.

⁷See appendix B.

⁸See appendix A.

⁹See chapter 6 for a description of participants.

¹⁰See appendix A and B.

Data Collection Reports for RQ1

RQ1 asks: What constitutes a biblical and theological basis for the relief and development services of the AGG? This research question was resolved through the biblical-theological literature review and the social science literature review.¹¹

Reports for RQ1A

RQ1A asks: What are the definitions of Christian relief and development? This research question was resolved with definitions of terms related to relief and development from the social science literature review.¹² By offering various short-term relief¹³ and long-term development¹⁴ assistance to project beneficiaries, AGREDS has demonstrated what the definitions entail. The definition of Christian relief and development was fully discussed in the previous chapter.¹⁵

Reports for RQ1B

RQ1B asks: What should be the goal of Christian relief and development? This research question was resolved with the social science literature review as discussed in detail in the previous chapter.¹⁶ Data collected from fieldwork reveals that AGREDS contributes significantly to the goal of reducing poverty, injustice, and oppression of

¹¹See chapter 2 concerning compassion and the people of God, and also biblical and theological basis for the Assemblies of God relief and development.

¹²See chapter 1 for a definition of terms.

¹³These are discussed below in this chapter under socio-economic influences.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵See chapter 6 for reports for RQ1A.

¹⁶See chapter 6 for reports for RQ1B.

people¹⁷ through the various socio-economic influences discussed below in this chapter. For instance, AGREDS' response to the HIV/AIDS menace goes a long way to improve the wellbeing of victims and their families, as well as their communities.¹⁸

Reports for RQ1C

RQ1C asks: What provides a biblical and theological foundation for AGREDS? This research question was resolved with the biblical-theological literature review,¹⁹ and has been discussed in detail in the previous chapter.²⁰

Reports for RQ1D

RQ1D asks: What are some historical perspectives on relief and development? This research question was resolved through the social science literature review.²¹ The data collected from fieldwork revealed that AGREDS' socio-economic, religious, and cultural influences, discussed below in this chapter, largely reflect the historical perspectives of humanitarianism, transformation, people-centeredness, access to social power, responsible wellbeing, and addressing powerlessness.²²

¹⁷See chapter 2 concerning the goal of Christian relief and development.

¹⁸See chapter 6 concerning growth through a response to HIV/AIDS.

¹⁹See chapter 2 concerning the biblical basis for Assemblies of God relief and development.

²⁰See chapter 6, concerning RQ1C for a further discussion on this research question.

²¹See chapter 3, concerning historical perspectives on development.

²²Ibid.

Data Collection Reports for Research Question 2

RQ2 asks: What characterized the origins, growth, and influence of AGREDS in Ghana from 1948 to 2016? This research question was resolved through the data collected from the semi-structured interviews²³ and project document reviews. The analysis helped in organizing the data into the categories of origins, growth, and influence of AGREDS.

Reports for RQ2A

RQ2A asks: When, why, and how was AGREDS established in Ghana? This research question was resolved through project document reviews and data collected from the semi-structured interviews. This has been discussed fully in chapter 5.²⁴

Reports for RQ2B

RQ2B asks: What characterized the growth of AGREDS from 1948 to 2016? This research question was resolved through project document reviews and data collected from the semi-structured interviews. The various interventions that characterized the growth of AGREDS have been fully discussed in chapter 6.²⁵

Reports for RQ2C: Socio-Economic Influences of AGREDS

RQ2C asks: What have been the socio-economic influence of AGREDS on Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016? In resolving this research question, participants were asked the following question: In your opinion, what socio-economic influences has

²³See appendix A.

²⁴See chapter 5 concerning the origin of AGREDS and AGREDS under missionary leadership.

²⁵See chapter 6 concerning the growth of AGREDS.

AGREDS made on beneficiary communities since its inception? They were asked to provide as many examples as possible.²⁶ This leading question helped to generate relevant data from the interviewees. Project document reviews on various areas of AGREDS' influence on the Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016 were also reviewed. William Dontoh, general superintendent of AGG from 2002 to 2009²⁷ asserted that the humanitarian aspect of the missionaries' ministry strategy contributed greatly in providing better economic lives for the people.²⁸ Information from fieldwork reveals that the socio-economic influences of AGREDS on Ghanaian society have resulted from AGREDS' involvement over the years in disaster relief, conflict resolution, education, livelihood empowerment, advocacy, and health services.

Criteria for Determining Influence

Conceptually, the term *influence* in this study refers to the observed effects that an AGREDS' intervention has had on beneficiaries or the communities in which they live. It points to the extent to which the right things have been done and to the significance of the intervention, relative to biblical teaching on compassion. It also relates to the nature and extent of the benefits derived by beneficiaries, whether directly or remotely, and whether favorable or unfavorable. Major emphasis, however, is made on positive influences of the interventions on the beneficiaries or communities involved. Some key influences of AGREDS on Ghanaian society in these regards will now be explored.

²⁶See appendix A for the semi-structured interview guide.

²⁷Frimpong-Manso, "Origins," 119.

²⁸See chapter 3, concerning the origin, growth, and influence of AGREDS in Ghana.

AGREDS' Influence through Disaster Relief

The data reveals that AGREDS' influence on Ghanaian society through disaster relief, from its inception to date, has taken the form of relief assistance to conflict victims, refugees, and victims of bush fires and floods.

Disaster Relief to Victims of Ethnic Conflict

As cited earlier in chapter 5 of this study, during the ethnic conflict that erupted in Northern Ghana between the Kokombas and other tribes, such as the Gonjas, Dagombas, and Nanumbas, AGREDS moved in quickly with relief items to support over 200,000 displaced people, and over 30,000 households.²⁹ Working in collaboration with the government of Ghana and Inter-NGO Consortium, many items were distributed to internally displaced people in the centers set up in each district capital. These included “pots, pans, buckets, plastic plates, and tents. Other relief items included used clothing, grinding mills to some communities, and food items, including Weanimix for malnourished children. Cement, door frames, rafters, thatch, and corrugated iron roofing sheets were also provided to support at least five communities in each district”³⁰ of the conflict zone. These were basically short-term assistance to stabilize the lives of the affected people in the conflict zone.

It is significant to point out that “AGREDS donated 10 million cedis from its emergency relief fund to the consortium as part of its contribution towards the purchase of food items and other supplies to the internally displaced persons.”³¹ The quantum of

²⁹Bacho, Musah, and Mahama, 1.

³⁰Ibid., 1, 6.

³¹Joseph Kwame Wumbee, *Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services (AGREDS): Annual Report 2002* (Accra, Ghana: AGREDS, 2002), 13.

this contribution in those days demonstrates AGREDS' deep commitment to alleviating the suffering of the disadvantaged in society.

AGREDS was also involved in offering relief assistance to victims in the conflict that broke out in 2002 between the Kokombas and Nawuris in the Kitare B-Zongo of the Nkwanta District of the Volta Region.³² Narrating the contribution AGREDS made to support victims in this conflict, the AGREDS 2002 annual report states: "A quantity of canned beans worth about three million cedis was also donated through Northern Region Youth Development Association towards the upkeep of internally displaced people in this conflict."³³ The report added that "the outbreak of full-scale civil conflict which began as a mutiny in neighboring Ivory Coast on September 19, 2002 also preoccupied the coordinating activities of AGREDS through the Inter-NGO Consortium in its response preparedness in the event of an escalation of the conflict resulting in a mass exodus of refugees into Ghana."³⁴ This indicates that AGREDS' approach towards emergency relief assistance was not only reactive, but also pro-active.

In his response to a follow-up question on the difference between relief and development, a director of AGREDS, MDLSG, explained:

Relief is a response to an emergency, and or a sudden crisis situation, or event that requires an immediate action. Relief can also come from a disaster. We define disaster as an extreme disruption of the functioning of a society that causes widespread, human, material, and environmental losses that exceed the capacity of the affected society or community to cope with, using their own resources. So after looking at emergency and disaster which forms the foundation of relief,

³²Ibid.

³³AGREDS, *Annual Report 2002*, 13.

³⁴Ibid.

relief then is a response to the humanitarian needs of a population that has suffered either a man-made or natural disaster.³⁵

This participant's understanding of relief is consistent with Sider's assertion cited earlier in chapter 4 of this study that churches are involved in relief when they minister "to victims of natural or social disaster, seeking to provide immediate handouts of food, shelter, and other necessities so people survive."³⁶ This is exactly what AGREDS did in reaching out to victims of the Northern Ghana conflict disaster. Devastated and traumatized people in the conflict zone who had suddenly become displaced by the conflict, could therefore breathe a sigh of great relief as they received the various items from AGREDS to stabilize their lives and provide for survival.

Assessing the impact of relief assistance to conflict victims in Africa, David Smock observes that, while relief and development assistance to conflict victims in Africa by NGOs is highly commendable, the gesture has been criticized on the grounds that it sometimes leads to fanning the conflict rather than helping to bring peace.³⁷ Unpacking this observation in more specific terms, Smock argues that when humanitarian assistance for the civilian population gets into the hands of war combatants, the said assistance could be kept away from the civilians. Even where such assistance reaches the ordinary citizens, the rebel authorities indirectly benefit by using their own resources to fuel the war. Sometimes also, the assistance from foreign NGOs may inadvertently come

³⁵MD2SG, interview with a non-clergy executive director of AGREDS who lives in Southern Ghana (Accra), October 7, 2017.

³⁶Sider, 138.

³⁷David R. Smock, *Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict in Africa* (United States Institute of Peace, 1996), v, <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/pwks6.pdf> (accessed April 4, 2018).

with negative connotations on ethical grounds.³⁸ Situations of relief assistance with negative ethical connotations usually happen when relief assistance is provided with strings attached, such as the requirement that culturally undesirable conditions be met by beneficiary communities before their eligibility to benefit from the relief assistance.

Disaster Relief to Victims of Bush Fires

Apart from providing relief to victims of tribal conflicts in Ghana, William W. Dontoh, the general superintendent of AGG from 2002 to 2010, acknowledges the role of AGREDS in providing relief assistance to victims of bush fires in Ghana, and states: “During the early 1980’s when Ghana experienced devastating bush fires that swept through the country, particularly the Northern and Brong Ahafo Regions, the church responded swiftly with emergency relief provisions for the victims through AGREDS.”³⁹ This took the form of food supplies and other relief items for the affected communities.

Francis Bacho et al describe the agricultural sector of Northern Ghana as “the life wire of the people.”⁴⁰ This is because the main occupation of most people who live in Northern Ghana is agriculture. The effects of the food relief items provided by AGREDS to cushion the conflict victims and their families from starvation can therefore not be quantified. This is particularly so for the targeted vulnerable groups such as children, widows, disabled, aged, and pregnant and lactating mothers among the population.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Dontoh, 11.

⁴⁰Bacho, Musah, and Mahama, 37.

Disaster Relief to Flood and Drought Victims

Another aspect of AGREDS' influence on Ghanaian society is in relation to relief assistance to flood victims in Accra in 2001. William Dontoh reports that during this critical time, "AGREDS collaborated with other members of the Inter-NGO Consortium on relief and rehabilitation to provide relief items to over 5,000 victims of the worst flood disaster ever, that hit Accra in 2001."⁴¹ The relief items were in the form of blankets, clothing, food, and cash.

Again, during a period of severe drought in Northern Ghana, AGREDS was available to offer relief assistance to people through the Nakpanduri Health Centre. M4SNG reported: "The clinic was also some time ago carrying out relief services. In fact, there came a time when there was real famine around here. So during the 70's, we had milk, beans, sorghum and many other food items to distribute to children who were brought here for weighing at the health center."⁴² The number of children who survived the hunger and drought because of AGREDS' food intervention and who are now playing responsible roles in the church and society at large is impossible to know.

AGREDS' assistance to refugees and victims of tribal conflicts, bush fires, and natural disasters such as floods have contributed immensely not only to stabilizing lives and bringing hope to the numerous victims involved, but also to achieving national and global outcomes such as the fight against poverty and hunger under the auspices of the "millennium development goal 1"⁴³ of the United Nations. Again, by reaching out to

⁴¹Dontoh, 11.

⁴²M4SNG, interview with a male beneficiary who lives in a small village in Northern Ghana," August 8, 2017.

⁴³MDG Monitor, "Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger" (United Nations, 2016), <http://www.mdgmonitor.org/mdg-1-eradicate-poverty-hunger/> (accessed April 5, 2018).

refugees at various camps in various regions of Ghana to offer relief assistance to refugees from other countries such as Liberia, Togo, Ivory Coast, and Sierra Leone, AGREDS' compassionate gesture went a long way to boost the image of Ghana within the international community, as well as serving as a sterling example of good neighborliness between Ghana and her neighboring countries.

AGREDS Influence through Conflict Resolution

The presence and work of AGREDS has contributed directly or indirectly to bringing peace and reconciliation to many ethnic communities of Northern Ghana, which hitherto were at loggerheads with each other. Among such communities are the following.

Conflict Between Kokombas and Gonja's/Nanumbas/Dagombas

As stated earlier in chapter 5 of this study, AGREDS' direct involvement in conflict resolution took place in 1994 during the ethnic conflict that broke out in the Northern part of Ghana involving the Kokombas on one hand and the Gonjas, Nanumba, and Dagombas on the other hand.⁴⁴ With the assistance of Dutch Inter-Church Aid, AGREDS worked with Inter-NGO Consortium to bring about lasting peace to the conflict zone after two years of mass destruction of life and property.⁴⁵ This was achieved through peace talks, workshops, and other mediation efforts.

Quite refreshing in this discourse is M2LSG's revelation that, for the first time, ethnic rivals who hitherto would not sit together in one room or around one table could

⁴⁴Bacho, Musah, and Mahama, 1.

⁴⁵MD2SG, interview with a non-clergy executive director of AGREDS who lives in Southern Ghana (Accra), March 19, 2018.

now do so because of the trust and integrity they found in the intervention by AGREDS through Inter-NGO Consortium.⁴⁶ This means that, after the signing of the Kumasi Peace and Reconciliation Accord by the warring factions, ethnic groups from both factions could now work together in an atmosphere of tolerance, trust, and respect for one another to build a prosperous community for their common good.

The biblical mandate of the church is to “seek the peace and prosperity of the city” (Jer. 29:7 NIV). This required the people of Israel, then in exile, to work for the peace of Babylon. Later, they were also asked to “pray for the peace of Jerusalem” (Psalm 122:6 NIV). It is submitted that one positive way of seeking the peace of the city is through genuine mediation for conflict resolution such as AGREDS’ example in facilitating peace and reconciliation between warring factions in Northern Ghana. This is what Tim Chester refers to as a “demonstration of the gospel”⁴⁷ and lately corroborated by InterVarsity Students Association in its publication, “Proclaiming and Demonstrating the Gospel.”⁴⁸ It is only within a peaceful and prosperous environment that ministry to the community can be freely carried out. Peace and reconciliation between warring factions is achievable only through a Christ-centered mediation process like what AGREDS adopted.

⁴⁶M2LSG, interview with a male employee of AGREDS who lives in a large city in Southern Ghana., October 6, 2017.

⁴⁷Chester, Tim, *Justice, Mercy and Humility: Integral Mission and the Poor*, 3.

⁴⁸InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, “Proclaiming and Demonstrating the Gospel,” in *Large Group Meeting Handbook* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018), <https://intervarsity.org/handbooks/chapter-leader/proclaimingthegospel> (accessed April 20, 2018).

Conflict between the Bimobas of Nakpanduri and Kokombas

The Bimobas of Nakpanduri and the Kokombas have in the past been engaged in fierce ethnic conflicts leading to loss of human lives and properties, including the burning of houses, farm lands, and cattle. However, with the physical presence and good works of AGREDS in Nakpanduri, M4SNG, a key leader of the town, reported in an interview that “the presence of AGREDS in Nakpanduri has helped solve the problem against the Kokombas. The Assemblies of God pastor and the elders of the church played a significant role. They were always praying for us; they were always visiting the people and always sending peace messages to the people. They have significantly helped to end the fighting leading to the peace we are now enjoying. So the Assemblies of God church has assisted this place so much.”⁴⁹ Still citing a more recent case of conflict in his area that the AG is helping to resolve, M4SNG stated:

I remember a current situation of fighting between some two small communities, where Assemblies of God Church is in the forefront mobilizing support from the women who are gathering used clothing, salt, and food to send to that community, and to go and preach peace to them. Sometimes, they even organize a peace retreat in town where they have invited women from so many villages around Nakpanduri, plus women from those war-torn communities, and they talk peace to them. So you see, Assemblies of God is bringing in a lot by way of peace.⁵⁰

The above contribution reveals the community’s appreciation of AGG’s role in promoting peace and wellbeing of people in the area. Another mediation effort undertaken by AGREDS to bring about reconciliation and peace in Ghana is related to the Yendi and Bimbila conflict.

⁴⁹M4SNG, interview with a male beneficiary who lives in a small village in Northern Ghana, August 8, 2017.

⁵⁰Ibid.

Conflict Between Yendi and Bimbila

Narrating the role AGREDS played in this conflict, M2LNG, an employee of AGREDS, contributed:

We realized that, it was difficult for the two ethnic groups to come together, so we carried out peace-building interventions in those areas, and then we were also able to mobilize and bring them together, and they currently live and work together as one people. One thing I noticed has also changed especially in these areas, is tolerance. They now accommodate each other, irrespective of one's religion, whether one is a traditionalist, Christian, or Muslim. They are able to work together because of the interventions we do, and the kind of education we give to those communities.⁵¹

It is particularly intriguing to note that with the mediation role of AGREDS in the conflict area, children in mixed communities, who hitherto found it difficult to share the same facilities with children from perceived enemy camps, could now tolerate one another and relate freely in peace. The suspicion of teachers belonging to perceived *enemy ethnic groups* was also abated.⁵² With lasting peace prevailing in these two communities, the people are now free to carry out their daily economic activities to improve their lives and contribute to national development. The church also had the liberty to carry out the mandate of missions in those communities without any fear of danger. Seeking peace with God and others in the community eventually leads to “changed people and changed relationships that are just and peaceful.”⁵³ This is the ultimate goal of Christian relief and development,⁵⁴ and that involves addressing social conditions that undermine people's peace and wellbeing such as ethnic conflicts.

⁵¹M2LNG, interview with a male employee who lives in a large city in Northern Ghana.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 135.

⁵⁴See chapter 3, concerning the goal of Christian relief and development.

AGREDS Influence through Education

Education has been described as the bedrock to the development of any nation. A project document indicates that, under the thematic program of education, AGREDS has demonstrated commitment to offering assistance to several communities in Ghana through community infrastructure development and child sponsorship in basic schools.⁵⁵

Community Infrastructure Development

AGREDS' influence on Ghanaian society through education dates back to 1992 when it constructed its first school block at Logshegu in the Northern Region of Ghana.⁵⁶ Since then, AGREDS has consistently contributed towards improvement in basic education in under-privileged communities with the aim of “increasing access to quality education, school management, community participation and ownership of education, partnership for education, lobbying, and advocacy.”⁵⁷ Project documents indicate that from 1992 to 2016 AGREDS has executed seventy-five infrastructural projects, forty-nine educational structures and twenty-six health facilities. The educational infrastructure includes classroom blocks, teachers' houses, skills training facilities, toilets, etc. in eight regions of Ghana. The net effect of these interventions from 1992 to date translates into increased school enrollment⁵⁸ and a better environment for teaching and learning in the

⁵⁵AGREDS, *Infrastructure Development*, 1.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Emmanuel Baba Mahama, *Board Report to the Executive Presbytery of AG Ghana for 2015* (Accra, Ghana: AGG, June 2016), 9.

⁵⁸AGREDS, *Infrastructure Development*, 1–2.

various beneficiary communities. In the long run, this has contributed in solving some of the educational needs of vulnerable children in the catchment areas.

Child Sponsorship Program

Under the AGREDS child sponsorship program, several thousands of children, who otherwise would have been school dropouts and become social miscreants, have benefited from a basic education sponsorship and are now contributing to national development. A project report on child sponsorship at the AGREDS head office indicates that a child who was nearly a school dropout was given access to secondary education and supported through the college of education level to eventually become a qualified trained teacher in the Northern Region of Ghana. This student gave this testimony: “AGREDS has been very helpful to me. I had difficulty in accessing education. My parents could not finance my education due to financial challenges. Now I am a qualified trained teacher.”⁵⁹ Clearly, the multiple benefits that society will derive from this teacher in terms of training younger generations cannot be quantified.

In response to a question on whether AGREDS has had any socio-economic influences on beneficiary communities, MT3NG, a long-standing executive presbytery member of AGG said: “Yes, many places where they have worked, they have left indelible marks on the people’s social lives. In some places, they have built schools, and people are benefitting from the school. And you see, when you go with education, you leave an indelible mark on the people’s socio-economic lives.”⁶⁰ Education helps people

⁵⁹M4SNGb, documented testimony of beneficiary of AGREDS child sponsorship program 2016, October 11, 2016.

⁶⁰MT3NG, interview with AG trustee and theologian who lives in Northern Ghana, August 7, 2017.

to acquire employable skills, earn a decent living, and also contribute their quota to national development.

Along this line, concerning AGREDS' socio-economic influences in Ghana, M2LNG remarked:

For the Yendi area, when the government educational reform started, and kindergarten was expected to be part of the basic educational structure, there were no infrastructure to cater for children at the kindergarten level. But AGREDS has been able to provide educational infrastructure to cater for children at that level. This has helped to increase access to education. We have also been able to provide them with teaching and learning materials. There were even some places that lacked teachers, and we have supported the teachers there to undergo professional training, and are now teaching in the schools.⁶¹

The above response reveals that AGREDS' influence on Ghanaian society through education has been quite comprehensive, covering the provision of infrastructure, logistics, and teachers' capacity building.

Still on the same question, the general superintendent of AGG could not hide his joy by mentioning certain key leaders of Ghana who were beneficiaries of AGREDS projects and are now in very influential positions of society, playing responsible roles in building both the church and the nation. According to him,

John S. Nabila, now a university professor, and chairman of the National House of Chiefs, attended AG school at Wulugu. Rev. David Nabedmado, now the senior pastor of Tema Community 4 AG church, has done a lot of missions and brought a lot of influence. He was born at the Saboba clinic, but his mother died during childbirth. Around that time, their culture perceived it as a misfortune for a child whose mother died during childbirth, and so the family didn't know what to do with the baby. So the missionaries took him and brought him up, until his uncle came in to help, and now, he is one of our strong AG ministers.⁶²

⁶¹M2LNG, interview with a male employee who lives in a large city in Northern Ghana, August 9, 2017.

⁶²Frimpong-Manso, Paul, interview with the general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, Ghana, December 13, 2017.

AGREDS' contribution to raising people such as those cited above who are now in key positions of society is quite remarkable. The influence of such individuals on the political and socio-economic development of the country cannot be measured.

Further information gathered from M2LNG on AGREDS' influence on Ghanaian society through education revealed that, apart from assistance for child sponsorship and educational infrastructure, AGREDS also offers support to improve knowledge and skills of teachers in project-beneficiary communities.⁶³ This takes the form of sponsoring the training of teachers in modern teaching methodology.

Apart from that, AGREDS supports education in beneficiary communities with "assorted core subject textbooks, distributed free of charge to pupils. The goal here is to improve pupil/textbooks ratio in those schools. Additionally, AGREDS offers training to parent-teacher associations and school management committees on issues of advocacy and lobbying to enable them to engage local government officials more effectively,"⁶⁴ so as to benefit from amenities they rightfully deserve.

The above interventions of AGREDS, aimed at influencing Ghanaian society through education, gives practical meaning to a Christian approach to development. As cited earlier in the literature review, "Myers clarifies the biblical teaching on concern for the plight of the poor and under-privileged in society, and challenges his readers to emulate the example of Christ by treating the poor with dignity, and embracing them

⁶³M2LNG, interview with a male employee who lives in a large city in Northern Ghana.

⁶⁴Felix, 9.

with appropriate interventions that address the needs of the poor.”⁶⁵ AGREDS is thus fulfilling its biblical mandate as a Christian development organization.

A concern expressed by some participants, however, is that the humanitarian work of AGREDS is concentrated mainly in Northern Ghana. Participants who expressed this concern include MT3NG,⁶⁶ M2LNG,⁶⁷ and MT1LWG.⁶⁸ Although this is understandable because of the relatively high poverty level in Northern Ghana, there is the need for AGREDS to spread its activities to many other parts of the country to assist pockets of vulnerable people in slums and deprived areas to overcome poverty. This will require more donor funding, and that is where AGG is called upon to mobilize resources internally through its structures to assist AGREDS.

AGREDS Influence through Livelihood Empowerment

AGREDS’ influence through livelihood empowerment has been identified as benefits from programs such as the Lifeline livelihood empowerment projects, micro-credit schemes, and the Sustainable Livelihood Improvement Program (SLIP). These interventions and the extent to which they have influenced Ghanaian society will be analyzed.

⁶⁵Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 3. See chapter 3 concerning evangelism and social action through relief and development.

⁶⁶MT3NG, interview with AG trustee and theologian who lives in Northern Ghana.

⁶⁷M2LNG, interview with a male employee who lives in a large city in Northern Ghana.

⁶⁸MT1LWG, interview with a key leader of AG Ghana who is a trustee and lives in Western Ghana.

Empowerment through Skills Training

Under the Sustainable Livelihood Improvement Program (SLIP), AGREDS seeks “to equip vulnerable young girls with employable skills that will impact their human security, development, and dignity. This includes tailor-made skills training, business and entrepreneurial skills training, provision of small business start-up kits to trainees, and guidance and counseling for young girls rescued from worst forms of child labor.”⁶⁹

Under the street girls component, hundreds of street girls have been taken off the streets of Accra and “provided with food, shelter, clothing, moral education, guidance and counselling, protection, and health education. They have also been equipped with employable skills through skills training, and engaged in collaboration with parents, community leaders, District Assemblies, and other NGOs for a smooth reintegration of trainees in their communities of origin.”⁷⁰ To ensure that beneficiaries sustain the benefits of the training, AGREDS provides them with start-up kits in the form of equipment and materials. Also, the school dropouts among them, who are capable of continuing their education, are sent back to school under AGREDS’ sponsorship.⁷¹ This therefore makes the AGREDS Lifeline program an all-inclusive intervention for beneficiary communities.

These interventions have helped immensely in empowering and shaping the future of beneficiaries and enabled them to live decent lives off the streets, thereby becoming more useful citizens to the society. Also, the executive director’s report to the board on 2016 activities of AGREDS indicates that the “incidence of child marriage, and girls’

⁶⁹Felix, 2.

⁷⁰Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services, *AGREDS-Lifeline Annual Report 2005* (Accra, Ghana: AGREDS, 2005), 9.

⁷¹Ibid.

engagement in exploitative labor has been reduced, and exchanged with skills-based gainful employment as the basis for sustainable human security. The girls' basic human security has improved as they are properly clothed, and accommodated at the Lifeline centre, and equipped with employable skills.⁷² The following life-transforming stories of project beneficiaries provide further evidence of AGREDS' socio-economic influences on Ghanaian society.

According to the AGREDS 2015 Lifeline annual report, F4SSG, a beneficiary of AGREDS skills training, "was rescued from a stone quarry in 2010 and given a skills training in catering. She started baking at home after graduation, and also taught her mother how to bake. Her mother stopped working at the stone quarry, which was very detrimental to her health, and went fully into baking. F4SSG then secured a well-paid job and got married to her sweetheart in December 2015."⁷³ Another remarkable story in a publication confirming the socio-economic influence of AGREDS on Ghanaian society is that of F4SCG:

F4SCG, was rescued in 2013 from the streets of Accra, after one year of street life. She was brought into the Lifeline shelter where she learned catering. Upon completion, she was reunited with her family at Bronyibima in the Central Region. She started baking cookies and hawking with her products. A year later, she enrolled in a six-month floral and cake decoration school to sharpen her skills, and become more marketable, since there was no such service in her immediate community. She graduated in December and started taking orders for weddings and festive occasions.⁷⁴

⁷²Wumbee, *Executive Presbytery 2017*, 12.

⁷³AGREDS, *Lifeline Annual Report 2015*, 17.

⁷⁴Ibid.

Changing peoples' lives through equipping them with livelihood empowerment skills, leads to job creation, reduction of unemployment in the country, and improved human dignity. This revealed a clear case of AGREDS' socio-economic influence on Ghanaian society.

According to F2LSG, a Lifeline project manager at Agblobloshie in Accra, "most of the girls trained at the centre experience appreciable positive attitudinal change before graduation. AGREDS believes that if you change the way a person thinks, you have changed that person's life."⁷⁵ By extension, that person becomes more useful to her family and society at large. This understanding was vividly confirmed and articulated by F4LSGa, a rescued street girl now equipped and empowered with Lifeline skills training. In response to a question on what socio-economic influences AGREDS had made on beneficiary communities, she noted:

Okay, supposing I didn't come here, I don't know what would have happened to me at home. I might have fallen into a guy's trap because my mother doesn't have money to support me, so I have to find ways to help her. So who knows, I would have indulged myself in something that wouldn't bring any benefit, but more troubles for my mum instead, like getting pregnant. But when you come to the center here, the instructors take their time to talk to us and teach us. We don't just come here and learn a skill, they educate us on a lot of things.⁷⁶

The above remarks reflect to a large extent how the lives of project beneficiaries have been turned around for the better and by extension have helped to fulfill the goal of Christian relief and development.⁷⁷

⁷⁵F2LSG, interview with a female project manager of AGREDS Lifeline, October 5, 2017.

⁷⁶F4LSGa, interview with a female beneficiary of AGREDS Lifeline at Agblobloshie, August 9, 2017.

⁷⁷See chapter 2 concerning the goal of Christian relief and development.

Empowerment through Micro-Enterprise Development

Another socio-economic influence of AGREDS has come through micro-credit schemes implemented in many deprived communities. The scheme involves the formation of village savings and loans (VSL) associations that mobilize regular savings from members and lends to members in their times of need.⁷⁸ The scheme is particularly helpful in communities where there are no formal banks for people to access credit.

The 2013 administrative report from the executive director to the AGREDS board states that “during monitoring interactions with beneficiaries, some indicated that they had used the credit to improve not only their businesses, but also their household food security. Some women used savings from the scheme to pay for their children’s school fees and provide food for their households, while others were able to renew their national health insurance and that of their wards independently from their spouses.”⁷⁹

Yet another component of AGREDS micro-enterprise development that assists vulnerable people in society is what is called SLIP. By this program, AGREDS “rolls out tailor-made interventions to improve livelihoods. Women and young girls who constitute the most marginalized and vulnerable people in society benefit most from SLIP. Participants are either taken through skills training, or provided loans under the micro-credit scheme to advance their economic activities.”⁸⁰ In this way the intervention has helped many people to acquire skills that generate income for them and their families to live meaningful lives in society. M2LNG, a project manager for the micro-enterprise

⁷⁸Wumbee, *Report to the Board of Directors 2013*, 20.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Wumbee, *Executive Presbytery 2014*, 7.

development of AGREDS in Northern Ghana, stated the following as an example of AGREDS' socio-economic influences in Ghana:

We have provided micro-enterprise development support especially for women, so they can have access to capital to invest in activities, and this has increased income levels of various households. Currently, what we are doing is that, for purpose of sustainability, we have been able to mobilize some groups, we have the youth aspect where we mobilize the youth and give them training and loans so they will be able to engage in gainful business activities to make a living. We assist especially the women to be able to support and complement what their husbands are doing on the farms.⁸¹

Throwing more light on the above contribution of AGREDS to society, the participant added that, because of the effects of climate change, farming activities in Northern Ghana had not been very reliable and lucrative. Hence, the intervention had been very helpful in supplementing the incomes of parents in the communities and enabled them to take better care of the needs of their children, such as health, education, clothing, and other necessities of life.⁸²

Another participant, MT1LNG, who has been a trustee of AGREDS and an executive presbytery member of AGG for a long time, contributed: "There are many people who got soft loans through AGREDS and engaged in income-generating activities, and it has helped them to educate their children. I know people who are PhD holders, who were supported by AGREDS when they were orphans. Their school fees were being paid for. Today, they are in universities; some are lecturers and others PhD holders and key leaders. So actually, AGREDS has done so well."⁸³

⁸¹M2LNG, interview with a male employee who lives in a large city in Northern Ghana, August 9, 2017.

⁸²M2LNG, interview with a male employee who lives in a large city in Northern Ghana.

⁸³MT1LNG, interview with an AGREDS trustee who has been an executive presbytery member of AG Ghana for a long time, August 9, 2017.

Another socio-economic influence story of AGREDS relates to the VSL scheme. F4SNG, a mother of three from a village in the Northern Region of Ghana and a beneficiary of AGREDS' VSL who grew her working capital from GH¢500 to GH¢2,000, was happy to report: "Now I can help meet the basic needs of my family; my petty trading business is doing very well because my working capital is increasing, and patronage of goods is very good. I can also supplement my husband's income to support our children in school"⁸⁴ The above project influence stories sum up the whole essence of empowerment as explained by Boapeah and cited earlier in chapter 3 of this study as "enhancing the capacity of poor people by removing barriers that work against them and building their assets to enable them to engage effectively in the process of development."⁸⁵ Boapeah contends that poor people are enabled "to recognize their God-given dignity to make choices, to have a voice, and to become agents of change"⁸⁶ in their communities through the process of empowerment.

The benefits of the various socio-economic influences of AGREDS on Ghanaian society, catalogued above, translate into job creation and employment opportunities for the unemployed in society. Beneficiaries equipped with employable skills are then able to employ themselves and others in society, pay income taxes to the government, and take better care of themselves and their families. This is consistent with Sider's understanding of development, cited earlier in chapter 3 of this study, that Christian development "seeks to help individuals, families, and communities, obtain appropriate tools, skills, and

⁸⁴F4SNG, interview with a VSL beneficiary in Northern Ghana, August 8, 2017.

⁸⁵Boapeah, *Christian Approach*, 4.

⁸⁶Ibid.

knowledge so they can care for themselves.”⁸⁷ Besides that, these beneficiaries, particularly the younger ones, are empowered to become useful citizens of society and saved from negative socio-economic tendencies such as peer pressure, drug abuse, prostitution, stealing, and other such vices. In the final analysis, the true beneficiaries of the interventions are the communities to which they belong.

Apart from that, AGREDS as an organization continues to create employment for hundreds of people every year. As of December 2016, people employed by AGREDS in its various projects nationwide totaled 267 (see table 6.5). Thus, in terms of job creation, AGREDS has not only run programs that reduce unemployment in Ghana but also assisted these 267 workers to feed their families and care for their dependents within the extended family system of Ghanaian society.

AGREDS Influence through Health Services

AGREDS’ influences through health assistance has taken the form of clinical health services and advocacy for HIV/AIDS victims. These are analyzed below.

Clinical Health Services

AGREDS has two health facilities, namely, Assemblies of God Hospital, Saboba, and Assemblies of God Health Center, Nakpanduri. Both facilities are located in the Northern Region of Ghana, and they provide both preventive and curative health care services to mostly rural and deprived communities.⁸⁸ Over the years, these two institutions have worked to improve access to quality health care and to increase local

⁸⁷Sider, 138.

⁸⁸Felix, 5.

community involvement in healthy life choices while holding the government accountable and assisting it to deliver quality health care to the people.

The Saboba facility is now upgraded to a district hospital for the Saboba Chereponi District, and it serves “44 satellite centers, comprising 107 communities in its catchment area, with 210 village health workers, and 110 trained traditional birth attendants.”⁸⁹ Apart from that, it serves as “the referral hospital for all curative health care for the four adjoining health centers (Sambuli, Wapuli, Chereponi, and Wenchiki); as well as from other neighboring districts, and cases from the nearby Republic of Togo.”⁹⁰ This therefore indicates the influence of AGREDS as well as the number of people who benefit from its services.

The Nakpanduri Health Centre on the other hand, “provides health services for about 69 communities in its catchment area, as well as other communities from the Upper East Region. Apart from treating patients who come to the health centre, the facility also reaches out to 22 outreach stations.”⁹¹ The influence of these two health facilities on the wellbeing of people in the catchment areas, and Ghana as a whole, is enormous. The project communities involved have thus benefited from good quality and affordable health care, bringing down diseases in the areas and leading to healthier, more productive citizens.

⁸⁹Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services, *Saboba Community Health PHC Annual Report 2002* (Accra, Ghana: AGREDS, 2002), 1.

⁹⁰AGREDS, *Annual Report 2002*, 5.

⁹¹Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services, *Nakpanduri Health Centre Report for January to June 2004*. (Accra, Ghana: AGREDS, 2004), 1.

A project document reports that: “All the people in the beneficiary communities, especially women, said they had benefitted tremendously from the work of these facilities. Health care provision has been brought to their door step. Many of the diseases like the six childhood killer diseases, and malaria, no longer assume epidemic proportions. The health workers also give education through health talks.”⁹² The project report concludes that the facilities have impacted positively the health of community members in the following ways: “There is a significant reduction in the outbreak of preventable diseases, and child mortality, due to high immunization coverages. The training of 210 village health workers and 110 traditional birth attendants has also contributed to the achievements above.”⁹³

A key community leader at Nakpanduri, who happens to be a former AGREDS’ employee at the Nakpanduri Health Centre and now enskinned as the chief of the town, contributed an interesting response when asked how long he had been associated with AGREDS. He said: “Well, I have been involved since I was born. It will interest you to know that I was born in 1952 in this same facility. I was born in Assemblies of God Clinic, that was how we used to call it in 1952 by the early missionaries who were here. I went to school in town, I came and even served in that facility as the nurse in charge. So that facility to me personally has done tremendously well, and has helped a lot.”⁹⁴ This comment is quite useful in assessing the influence of AGREDS on Ghanaian society,

⁹²AGREDS, *Saboba*, 1.

⁹³Ibid., 2.

⁹⁴M4SNG, interview with a male beneficiary who lives in a small village in Northern Ghana, August 8, 2017.

particularly coming from one who is a beneficiary and former employee of AGREDS and the traditional ruler of Nakpanduri.

The sixty-seven-year-old chief of Nakpanduri is very convinced that the positive influence of the AGREDS health centre is what has resulted in the speedy expansion of Nakpanduri township. This is what he said in appreciation for AGREDS influence: “If not because of Assemblies of God relief and development clinic, the town would not have grown like this. So many people came here to seek help from the medical assistants at the clinic, and so the town started expanding. Very few children were dying, and so the town was growing as a result of this clinic.”⁹⁵ He was however quick to add his regret that the facility appeared to have been neglected by the church in terms of infrastructure development and had not been upgraded to a district hospital. He, therefore, made a passionate appeal to AG leadership for a facelift to the facility.

Advocacy for HIV/AIDS Victims

The HIV/AIDS pandemic, first reported in Ghana in 1986, has been a matter of great concern not only to the government of Ghana, but also to civil society groups, the international community, and the church.⁹⁶ Regrettably, the church in Ghana was initially quite apathetic towards victims of the disease because of initial perceptions of immorality associated with its causes. However, in the heat of widespread infections with high prevalence rates in some regions, AGG, through AGREDS, demonstrated remarkable concern for the plight of victims by designing and implementing a comprehensive

⁹⁵F4SNG, interview with a VSL beneficiary in Northern Ghana, August 8, 2017.

⁹⁶AGREDS, *Annual Report 2002*, 8.

advocacy intervention program, that brought relief and hope to many victims across the country.⁹⁷ The 2002 annual AGREDS report projected that, judging from the rate of the epidemic, “the human and socio-economic toll will remain massive for many years unless exceptionally effective prevention, treatment, care, and support programs were put in place.”⁹⁸ The report further states: “The peak ages of infection were 25–29 years for females, and 30–34 for males. With a national prevalence rate of 6.3%, it was estimated that about 500,000 Ghanaians could be living with HIV.”⁹⁹ These were the prevailing conditions in Ghana at the time AGREDS launched its HIV/AIDS advocacy intervention.

Writing an overview of a manual on anti-stigma workshops for student pastors of AG Bible colleges, Alexis Danikuu, program manager of the intervention, enumerates the following as the focus of the AGREDS HIV/AIDS advocacy intervention: “Networking with other organizations in partnership, capacity building of churches for an effective response, integrating care and support into AG church programs, and mainstreaming HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and support into a house-to-house visitation.”¹⁰⁰ Other areas of concentration of the AGREDS intervention are “facilitating the formulation of support groups for people living with HIV/AIDS and supporting them with income-generating activities and then advocacy for an enabling environment for effective prevention, care and support.”¹⁰¹ Danikuu argues that the church should show concern for victims of HIV/AIDS,

⁹⁷Ibid., 7.

⁹⁸Ibid., 8.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Alexis Danikuu, *AGREDS Report on Anti-Stigma Workshops for Student Pastors of AG Bible Colleges* (Accra, Ghana: AGLC, 2006), 12–13.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 13.

because “the church has a voice in the people and government if they speak and preach. It has sustainability and contribution which can be replicated in the regional and district levels.”¹⁰²

A more compelling reason for the church’s active involvement in the fight against the pandemic in Ghana is the biblical mandate of compassion for the hurting in society. A healthy population that is free from devastating diseases such as HIV/AIDS is a sure safeguard for higher productivity and national development.

In terms of influence that the AGREDS HIV/AIDS advocacy intervention has made on Ghanaian society, Danikuu asserts that “the project has created the much needed awareness within the Assemblies of God, and has led to the passing of a resolution by the church to make HIV/AIDS central in all its developmental programs.”¹⁰³ He further states: During the period of the intervention, a total of 420 pastors from various parts of the country, including regional superintendents, principals of Bible schools, and departmental directors benefited from sensitization and training workshops and, therefore, they could provide accurate and balanced information on the disease to their congregations.¹⁰⁴ The report on anti-stigma workshops for student pastors at AG Bible colleges also indicates that a strong partnership was established with victims of the disease, and appropriate support was offered to enhance their lives beyond the positive diagnosis.¹⁰⁵ Such vital assistance to victims of HIV/AIDS goes a long way to reduce stigmatization, as well as helping victims to live more productive lives.

¹⁰²Danikuu, Alexis, *AGREDS Report on National Training of Trainers Workshop in Information, Education, and Communication/Behavioral Change* (Accra, Ghana: AGREDS, 2004), 6.

¹⁰³Danikuu, *Anti-Stigma Workshops*, 13.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*

Again, by sponsoring members of regional response teams for a study tour of Uganda to study the church's response to the pandemic in Uganda, the capacities of the people sponsored were built to ensure sustainability of the intervention in Ghana. This was coupled with the fact that doctors, nurses, and volunteers were trained locally through the AGREDS intervention on infection control and psychological support services.¹⁰⁶ The awareness-creation component has a huge potential of equipping church members to discuss more freely issues about sexuality and the disease and ultimately lead to reduction in stigmatization, fear, and prejudice. In spite of financial constraints, AGREDS put hundreds of orphans on a support system to enable them to continue with their education. Apart from sponsoring various workshops for HIV/AIDS victims, AGREDS donated an amount of ₵9,000,000 to support victims of the disease in income generating activities¹⁰⁷ geared towards positive living.

AGREDS' influence on Ghanaian society through advocacy for HIV/AIDS victims was also recognized through the "development, acquisition, and distribution of 'Christian-oriented' information, education, and communication materials. Five different 'Christian-oriented' materials in the form of stickers were developed around the thematic areas of prevention, stigma, discrimination, care, and support."¹⁰⁸ These important materials were widely distributed throughout the country, and the AGREDS training manual on HIV/AIDS information and counselling received wide patronage from stakeholders¹⁰⁹ including "the

¹⁰⁶Wumbee, interview.

¹⁰⁷AGREDS, *Annual Report 2002*, 11.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 9–10.

¹⁰⁹Wumbee, interview.

Ghana AIDS Commission, NGOs, and community-based organizations.”¹¹⁰ This, therefore, facilitated positive networking and combined advocacy with like-minded institutions to derive optimum impact of the intervention across the country.

Reports for RQ2D: Cultural and Religious Influence

RQ2D asks: What have been the cultural and religious influences of AGREDS on Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016? This research question was resolved through a review of social science literature and participants’ responses to the semi-structured interviews. Participants were specifically asked: In what ways have the AG relief and development efforts in Ghana influenced the culture and religion in Ghana from its inception to date? They were also asked to provide examples.¹¹¹

AGREDS Cultural and Religious Influences

The preamble to the cultural policy of Ghana states: “Ghana has over 50 ethnic groups whose common values and institutions represent our collective national heritage. Each of these ethnic groups brought together by accident of history, has unique cultural features and traditions that give identity, self-respect and pride to the people.”¹¹² The Ghana cultural policy document further states: “Since independence, the emerging civil society of Ghana has recognized the need to promote unity within this cultural diversity, and Ghana has since enjoyed relative unity, stability, and peace.”¹¹³

¹¹⁰AGREDS, *Annual Report 2002*, 10.

¹¹¹See appendix A for the semi-structured interview.

¹¹²National Commission on Culture, *The Cultural Policy of Ghana* (Accra, Ghana: Republic of Ghana, 2004), 7, <http://www.ghanaiandiaspora.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/CULTURAL.-POLICY-FINAL.pdf> (accessed April 10, 2018).

¹¹³Ibid.

Religion is so pervasive in Ghana that it is almost woven into the culture of the people. Writing on religious beliefs in Ghana, John Misachi points out: “Religion influences almost everything in the daily lives of the Ghanaian from family life, economic activities, education, to any facet of life.”¹¹⁴ It is within this religious and cultural context that AGREDS seeks to influence Ghanaian society by promoting unity and mutual respect among the diverse religious and cultural groupings in the country. Frimpong-Manso contends that the people in the project-beneficiary communities became more receptive to the gospel when the missionaries added relief and development to the preaching of the gospel.¹¹⁵ AGREDS’ influence on culture and religion in Ghana covers such areas as religious tolerance, the reshaping of negative cultural practices through education and advocacy, Bible translation, and the planting of churches in AGREDS beneficiary communities.

Reshaping Negative Cultural Practices

On the cultural front, participants generally reported that AGREDS had done tremendously well in shaping the culture of the people in the catchment areas of their projects. For instance, M2LNG, a project manager of AGREDS, in response to whether contextual considerations such as culture, religious inclination, poverty and so on, have been relevant for effective implementation of AGREDS’ development programs, stated:

AGREDS has helped to change the behavior of the people on certain negative cultural practices. For example, in the Nanumba area where we have the Kokomba ethnic groups, when a child is born, according to customs or traditions in some areas, if the child happens to be a girl, the first man within or outside the family to see the baby becomes the husband of the child. For that matter, while

¹¹⁴John Misachi, *Religious Beliefs in Ghana*, April 25, 2017, <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/religious-beliefs-in-ghana.html> (accessed April 10, 2018).

¹¹⁵See chapter 3, concerning the origin, growth, and influence of AGREDS in Ghana.

the child is growing up, the parents prepare the child to marry this particular man, regardless of the man's age. Even when the child is in school, the parents of that child will forcefully remove her from school and give her out for marriage.¹¹⁶

For reasons such as above, AGREDS has introduced program interventions specially designed to educate parents on the rights of children as enshrined in the Constitution of Ghana.¹¹⁷ In other words, AGREDS has been involved in advocacy on behalf of innocent children who fall victim to such negative cultural practices in Ghana. M2LNG further reported: "There are other cases, such as teenage pregnancies. When things of this nature happen, because the elders do not want embarrassment in the family, the tribal heads sometimes try to manage things at home in the traditional way, but that often results in other serious consequences affecting the education of the girl child."¹¹⁸ Therefore, through advocacy and proper education, AGREDS has been able to reshape cultural practices inimical to the interest of the girl child and other such vulnerable groups in society.

AGREDS Influence on Religion

On the religious front, respondents were in agreement that the influence of AGREDS has been overwhelming, particularly in project-beneficiary communities. In this regard, MT1LWG, a key leader in the top hierarchy of AGG, touched on promoting religious tolerance, and reported:

Religious-wise, AGREDS has not been partial, they cut across almost every religion with the ultimate aim of presenting Christ through the good works they offer to various communities. When they dig boreholes, establish schools, etc., they don't exclude those who are not Christians, they even allow the Muslims to

¹¹⁶M2LNG, interview with a male employee who lives in a large city in Northern Ghana.

¹¹⁷M2LNGa, interview with a male employee of AGREDS who lives in a large city in Northern Ghana.

¹¹⁸M2LNG, interview with a male employee who lives in a large city in Northern Ghana, August 9, 2017.

attend their schools and so on. So I think by this attempt, the impact that AGREDS has made on culture and religion has been great. And sometimes doing things of this nature, the people tend to ask about which group of people the agency represents, and that becomes a platform to present the gospel to them. So it has helped in a way.¹¹⁹

The understanding of the above response is that, through the compassionate provision of community development projects such as schools and boreholes, AGREDS has helped to enhance the Christian testimony of AGG, particularly in project beneficiary-communities. This also furthers the promotion of religious tolerance in Ghana, as well as complimenting the efforts of the church in the propagation of the gospel of Christ.

Corroborating the above assertion, MTLSG, another key leader in the top hierarchy of AGG contributed:

AG even brought translation of the Scripture in Dagbani, and we were the first people to reduce the Dagomba language into writing in Ghana, so all these things will positively affect the people. Also, AG came into the northern region when most of the people were either Muslims, or non-Christians, and we have been able to live together without tension or fighting because we have never discriminated in providing services to Muslims or non-AG members. We have taken care of all these people holistically, and this has brought unity.¹²⁰

As confirmation of AGREDS' policy of religious tolerance, during data collection at the health center at Nakpanduri, it was discovered with surprise that a male employee who was a participant of this study is a known Muslim but relates freely with all others without any discrimination.

M4SNG, on his part shared his views on the religious influence of AGREDS on the Nakpanduri township.

¹¹⁹MT1LWG, interview with a key leader of AG Ghana who is a trustee and lives in Western Ghana.

¹²⁰MTLSG, interview with a key trustee of AGREDS who has been an executive presbytery member for a long time and lives in a large city in Southern Ghana, October 7, 2017.

Now you can find that all the families in Nakpanduri are Christians. Even though we have pockets of traditional believers, majority of them are Christians. There is even a saying here that if you are not a Christian, and you die in Nakpanduri, your death will be nothing. But if you are a Christian, Christians will come from all manner of places to your funeral and bid you good bye. So you see, Christianity has actually impacted the people.¹²¹

The above contribution from M4SNG on the Christian population of Nakpanduri is indicative of the level of influence AGREDS had made on the religious lives of the people, given the assertion that the majority of the citizens are now Christians.

Joseph Kwame Wumbee, executive director of AGREDS, in his response to the question on AGREDS' influence on religion, stated: "In the Lifeline project, I can say close to probably 50 or 60 percent come from Muslim background, but they are given the gospel every morning. We have morning devotion every day. They have to go to church and so forth. So tell me, how else could we have reached them? Some churches have also been started in some communities because of what they have seen us do."¹²² M4SNGa, a seventy-four-year-old native of Nakpanduri, and a former employee of AGREDS confirmed this claim.¹²³ Similarly, Pauline Smith and Adeline Wichman confirm the above claim in *History of Assemblies of God Clinics*.¹²⁴

The religious influence of AGREDS on Ghanaian society also comes from the clinics it has established. Putting together the *History of Assemblies of God Clinics: 50th*

¹²¹M4SNG, interview with a male beneficiary who lives in a small village in Northern Ghana, August 8, 2017.

¹²²Wumbee, interview.

¹²³M4SNGa, interview with a male beneficiary of AGREDS who lives in a small town in Northern Ghana.

¹²⁴Smith and Wichman, 3.

Anniversary, Smith and Wichman, who were among the early American AG missionaries to Ghana, state:

Both clinics are blessed by helpers who were, and are, fully dedicated to the task of reaching the lost for the Lord Jesus Christ, by daily gospel services, and reaching out into the areas. The clinics operate with local programs and have child-welfare clinics which reach many, many villages. Out of this service, souls have been added to the church. Many dedicated workers have worked to establish this ‘ministry of helps’ that has been a blessing to the saved and unsaved, to the old and young, to the establishment of a thriving church of believers, approved of God.¹²⁵

The establishment of thriving churches in project-beneficiary communities as an offshoot of AGREDS’ social interventions serves as ample testimony of AGREDS’ religious influence on such communities.

The blending of social concern and evangelism through the operations of AGREDS is supported by John Stott’s assertion that “evangelism and social concern have been intimately related to one another throughout the history of the church.”¹²⁶ It is through the influence of social action that many people often appreciate the sincerity and genuineness of the gospel. It is to this end that Tim Chester contends that “our social involvement has evangelistic consequences, as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ.”¹²⁷ The caveat, however, is that from the design to the implementation of any social-action program in a community, project implementers should ensure that the intervention is not presented as a bait to woo beneficiaries to Christianity. Throughout the history of the church, conversions to Christianity that are based on baits do not turn up to

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Stott, *Decisive Issues*, 2.

¹²⁷Chester, Tim, *Justice, Mercy and Humility: Integral Mission and the Poor*, 3.

be genuine and sustainable. Interactions with M2LNG, an AGREDS project manager, reveal that project workers are very careful in ensuring that the programs they implement do not have any semblance of baiting beneficiaries.¹²⁸

Summary

This chapter has examined the influence of AGREDS on Ghanaian society. It began with a conceptual framework on what the influences entail. Then, it continued with a description of AGREDS' influence through disaster relief responses to conflicts, bush fires, and drought. This was followed by a discussion of AGREDS' influences on Ghanaian society through mediation in various ethnic conflicts, assessment of religious and cultural influences, and intervention of AGREDS' educational programs. The chapter also discussed the socio-economic influences of AGREDS on Ghanaian society, covering various livelihood empowerment projects, and micro-enterprise development. Finally, the influences of AGREDS through health service delivery and advocacy were identified and documented.

¹²⁸M2LNG, interview with a male employee who lives in a large city in Northern Ghana.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the various influences of AGREDS on Ghanaian society were examined in detail. This chapter summarizes the key findings and conclusions from the study, highlighting the challenges AGREDS presents for local churches and the national AG church in Ghana as a whole. It also offers recommendations for the future of AGREDS, pointing out some of the things AGREDS could do differently to ensure greater effectiveness and projects sustainability.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study are expected to outline the history of AGREDS, tracing its origins, growth, and influence on Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016. The findings from the data in relation to RQ1 and RQ2 are summarized.

Findings for RQ1

RQ1 asks: What constitutes a biblical and theological basis for the relief and development services of AGG? The exegesis of selected Old and New Testament passages in the biblical-theological literature review helped to resolve this research question.¹ In the Old Testament, God's concern for the poor and marginalized in society

¹See chapter 2 concerning compassion and the people of God.

is emphasized by the Psalms and Jeremiah which describe God as one who defends the oppressed, feeds the hungry, heals the sick, protects the weak and vulnerable, and seeks justice for the poor.² Similarly, exegesis of New Testament passages such as Mark 10:21, and Luke 4:18–19 helped to emphasize God’s concern for the plight of the poor and weak in society.³ Meeting the needs of the poor through Christian relief and development is thus consistent with biblical patterns both in the Old Testament and in Jesus’ ministry pattern in the New Testament.⁴

The biblical-theological literature review also provides useful insights from relevant sources that deal with the biblical and theological basis for the AGREDS.⁵ Specifically, the literature shows that evangelism and social action through relief and development are inseparably linked together.⁶ The goal of Christian relief and development is seeking the total wellbeing of all people by working against poverty, oppression, injustice, and human suffering.⁷ The biblical-theological literature further shows that the triune God is a relational God. Humankind exists as social beings and has responsibility for the stewardship of creation.⁸ Again, the biblical basis for the relief and development services of AGG is rooted in the biblical teaching that the church exists as

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵See chapter 2 concerning the biblical and theological basis for AGREDS.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid. See also the section concerning the goal of Christian relief and development.

⁸Ibid. See also the section concerning the theological basis for social action through relief and development.

the salt and light of society (Matt 5:13–16) and God’s prophetic voice (Jer. 22:13–17) to the community.⁹

Findings for RQ2

RQ2 states: What characterized the origins, growth, and influence of AGREDS in Ghana from 1948 to 2016? The origin, growth, and influence of AGREDS have been characterized by community developments. This assertion was indicated by most respondents to both the questionnaire¹⁰ and the semi-structured interviews.¹¹ Like the proverbial mustard seed (Matt. 13:31–32), AGREDS had a humble beginning in the late 1940’s with individual missionaries who, out of Christian compassion, responded to poverty and human suffering by dressing open wounds and offering other forms of health care to needy communities of Northern Ghana.¹² Over the years, the agency has gone through various transitions of growth in different shapes and forms and maintained the momentum of growth to a staff strength of 267 as of December 2016.¹³ It offers relief and development services ranging from disaster relief,¹⁴ conflict mediation,¹⁵ health care,¹⁶

⁹Ibid. See also the section containing reflections on the church and relief and development.

¹⁰See the frequency tables in appendix F.

¹¹See chapter 5 concerning the history of AGREDS under missionary leadership and chapter 6 for the growth of AGREDS and chapter 7 for the influence of AGREDS.

¹²See chapter 5 concerning AGREDS under missionary leadership.

¹³See chapter 6 for a profile of AGREDS at the end of December 2016.

¹⁴See chapter 5 concerning relief services at refugee camps.

¹⁵See chapter 5 concerning AGREDS’ response to conflict in Northern Ghana.

¹⁶See chapter 6 concerning the expansion of health services.

educational support,¹⁷ and livelihood empowerment to the less-privileged in society.¹⁸ Through the AGREDS' thematic areas of education, health care, and livelihood empowerment,¹⁹ many have been rescued. Street girls have been empowered through skills training and given hope in life.²⁰ Children from poor families have received education through child sponsorship and educational infrastructure development.²¹ The sick have received life-saving health care.²² And, thousands of people trapped in conflict zones have benefited from Christ-centered mediation and relief assistance.²³ Numerous socio-economic benefits have been provided to Ghanaian society at large.

Conclusions

The origin, growth, and influence of AGREDS on Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016 is characterized as follows.

Origin of AGREDS

The origin of AGREDS is traced to the foundational work of relief and development done by American missionaries to Ghana from the early 1930's up to the late 1940's.²⁴ During this period, AGREDS was not functioning as an agency on its own

¹⁷See chapter 6 concerning growth through early childhood development program and growth through the community infrastructure program.

¹⁸See chapter 6 concerning growth through the Lifeline project targeting street girls.

¹⁹See chapter 6 concerning program interventions.

²⁰See chapter 7 concerning socio-economic influences.

²¹See chapter 7 concerning influence through education.

²²See chapter 7 concerning influence through health services.

²³See chapter 7 concerning influence through conflict resolution.

²⁴See chapter 3 concerning the origin, growth, and influence of AGREDS in Ghana.

but as an initiative of individual missionaries who, in addition to preaching the gospel, rendered humanitarian services to identified communities in response to prevailing poverty and human suffering.²⁵ This practice of combining the preaching of the gospel with the provision of relief and development services was given greater impetus by missionaries Homer Thomas Goodwin and his wife Thelma Tucker Goodwin. They demonstrated this by recruiting the first two missionary nurses, namely Ruby Johnson and Ozella Reid, to start the first AG clinic in Saboba in the Northern Region in 1948.²⁶ According to missionaries Pauline Smith and Adeline Wichman, the clinic was to be used as a tool for evangelization of the Kokomba people.²⁷ Later in 1950, the second AG clinic was started at Nakpanduri, and more missionary nurses arrived from the USA to assist.²⁸ Then in 1981, John Thomas Goodwin, a direct son of Homer Thomas Goodwin, arrived in Ghana as a Missionary to reorganize the work of the two clinics started by his father many years earlier.²⁹ John Thomas Goodwin recruited and mentored Joseph Kwame Wumbee, an indigene of Ghana who could continue with the vision of the clinics after John Goodwin had left the scene.³⁰ This was a smart move by John Goodwin to ensure project sustainability. In January 1991, the executive presbytery of AGG registered AGREDS as an NGO with the departments for health services, education, agriculture,

²⁵Ibid. See also chapter 5 concerning AGREDS under missionary leadership.

²⁶See chapter 5 concerning the foundational work by Homer and Thelma Goodwin.

²⁷See chapter 5 concerning the contribution made by Pauline Smith and Adeline Wichman.

²⁸Ibid. See also the section on AGREDS under missionary leadership.

²⁹See chapter 5 concerning the arrival of John Thomas Goodwin.

³⁰Ibid.

and social welfare.³¹ From that time up to March 1996, AGREDS broadened its operations to cover relief services at the refugee camp in Buduburam for Liberian refugees, the refugee camps in the Volta Region for Togolese refugees, and peace negotiations in the Northern Ghana conflict zone.³²

Growth of AGREDS

The growth of AGREDS from 1948 to 2016 has been quite steady and remarkable. Data from fieldwork and project documents reveal that, from an initial clinic in Saboba in 1948,³³ AGREDS added a second clinic at Nakpanduri in 1950.³⁴ Then, from that time up to December 2016, AGREDS has expanded the scope of its operations to cover diverse projects and program interventions in three thematic areas of health, education, and livelihood empowerment.³⁵ Specifically, the growth and expansion of AGREDS over the years has covered interventions such as the provision of community infrastructure,³⁶ expansion of health services to rural communities,³⁷ micro-enterprise development,³⁸ and various livelihood empowerment projects for street girls,³⁹ refugees,

³¹See chapter 5 concerning AGREDS' registration as an NGO.

³²See chapter 5 concerning relief services at refugee camps, the relief response to the Togolese crisis, and the peace negotiation in the conflict zone in Northern Ghana.

³³See chapter 5 concerning the foundational work by Homer and Thelma Goodwin.

³⁴Ibid. See also the section on AGREDS under missionary leadership.

³⁵See chapter 6 concerning program interventions.

³⁶See chapter 6 concerning growth through Community Infrastructure Program (CIP).

³⁷See chapter 6 concerning the expansion of health services.

³⁸See chapter 6 concerning growth through micro-credit for micro-enterprise development.

³⁹See chapter 6 concerning growth through the Lifeline project for street girls.

displaced migrants,⁴⁰ and victims of child abuse and trafficking.⁴¹ In terms of staffing, the data reveals that, from a staff strength of two nurses in 1948, AGREDS staff strength had grown to 267 by the end of December 2016.⁴² It is, therefore, abundantly clear that AGREDS has experienced tremendous growth in the scope of its operations from its inception in 1948 up to the end of December 2016.

Influence of AGREDS

The influences of AGREDS on Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016 has been varied and equally remarkable. These have taken the form of disaster relief to victims of ethnic conflicts involving over 200,000 displaced people in over 30,000 communities. Victims of bush fires, flood, and drought have also been helped.⁴³ Another area of AGREDS influence on Ghanaian society has been through conflict-resolution interventions in ethnic conflict between the Kokombas and the Gonjas/Nanumbas/Dagombas in 1994, conflict between the Bimobas of Nakpanduri and the Kokombas in 1995, and the conflict between Yendi and Bimbila in 1995.⁴⁴ These interventions helped to bring the conflicts to an end, leading to the signing of various peace accords in March 1996.⁴⁵ This is consistent with the scriptural admonishing in Psalm 122:6 that requires believers to work for or “pray for the peace of Jerusalem.”

⁴⁰See chapter 6 concerning growth through migration support.

⁴¹See chapter 6 concerning growth through the anti-child trafficking program of Lifeline.

⁴²See chapter 6 for a profile of AGREDS at the end of December 2016.

⁴³See chapter 7 on AGREDS’ influence through disaster relief.

⁴⁴See chapter 7 section on AGREDS’ influence through conflict resolution.

⁴⁵See chapter 5 concerning peace negotiation in the conflict zone in Northern Ghana.

Other commendable influences of AGREDS on Ghanaian society have taken the form of reshaping negative cultural practices and enhancing the Christian witness of AGG in project-beneficiary communities⁴⁶ through child sponsorship and educational infrastructure development.⁴⁷ Other activities include livelihood empowerment through skills training, micro-enterprise development,⁴⁸ clinical health services to rural communities, and advocacy for HIV/AIDS victims.⁴⁹ The Ghanaian society, particularly beneficiary communities of AGREDS projects, has been better off through the above interventions that have led to conflict resolutions, the reshaping of negative cultural practices, access to education, positive socio-economic influences, advocacy, better health care, and the enhancement of the Christian witness of AGG.

Implications of Study

The implications of this study concern the future of AGREDS and involve the local church and the leadership of AGG. They include financial support for programs and projects, project sustainability, cultural alignment, mainstreaming of relief and developments services, communication, participation, and leadership succession.

Financial Support for AGREDS Programs and Projects

Information gathered from respondents (such as MT3NG and MT1LWG) and from the executive director's reports to the AGREDS board points to the fact that there is

⁴⁶See chapter 7 concerning the religious and cultural influences of AGREDS.

⁴⁷See chapter 7 concerning influence through education.

⁴⁸See chapter 7 concerning socio-economic influences.

⁴⁹See chapter 7 concerning influence through health services.

a huge deficit between the funds AGREDS requires for its yearly activities and what it is able to generate from the donor community.⁵⁰ This view was shared by MT1LWG.⁵¹ Year after year, the executive director's report to the board keep highlighting that one of the challenges AGREDS faces is inadequate funds for Lifeline, education, and health projects. This therefore makes it difficult for AGREDS to scale-up those programs.⁵² He also cites "inadequate funding to support both recurrent and capital expenditure; and that funding for the organization to cover operational costs continues to be a major headache with its implications on staff retention."⁵³ Consequently, the executive director indicated that, AGREDS was unable to hire and retain an adequate number and mix of skilled staff, provide adequate logistics for its programs, or replace aging project vehicles⁵⁴ to cut down on high maintenance cost.

Lekorwe argues that "lack of well trained and experienced human resources limits the extent to which local NGOs are able to manage their daily affairs and their capacity to effectively plan, appraise, implement, and monitor their projects and programs."⁵⁵ Further information provided by the executive director is depicted in figure 3 of chapter 6 and confirms that AGREDS obtained funding for its projects and programs mostly from external donor partners. As high as over 90 percent of funding for all AGREDS projects

⁵⁰MT3NG, interview with AG trustee and theologian who lives in Northern Ghana.

⁵¹MT1LWG, interview with a key leader of AG Ghana who is a trustee and lives in Western Ghana.

⁵²Wumbee, *Executive Presbytery 2017*, 11.

⁵³Wumbee, *Executive Presbytery 2014*, 9.

⁵⁴Wumbee, interview.

⁵⁵M. Lekorwe, "Managing Non-Governmental Organizations in Botswana," *The Innovation Journal* 12, no. 3 (2007): 12.

come from foreign donor partners, and only less than 10 percent is obtained from local sources such as the government of Ghana, AGG, and individuals.⁵⁶ The situation was worse during the era of AGREDS under missionary leadership, but it has persisted to the present time with little improvement as of December 2016.

The danger the above situation poses is that it tends to keep AGREDS vulnerable to its foreign donor partners. Along this line, Prince Gyamfi contends that “reliance on external funding leads to external partner organizations controlling the agenda of the local NGO, and that, these controls in many instances run counter to the objectives of local NGOs.”⁵⁷ Worse still, Gyamfi argues that funds received from foreign donor partners are restricted funds in the sense that they are for specific purposes that the local NGO is obliged to implement. He points out that “local NGOs cannot choose and change projects that they want to run. They can also not use such funds to cover core cost and recruit competent staff for project implementation.”⁵⁸ In that regard, they are unable to realize their goals. Gyamfi therefore advocates that local NGOs like AGREDS should begin to think beyond just the conventional foreign funding sources and become more creative in generating other funds locally for their operations in order to ensure sustainability and effectiveness in their work.⁵⁹ This will give AGREDS a free hand to run its own local programs without the pressure to follow foreign donor prescriptions.

⁵⁶Wumbee, interview.

⁵⁷Prince Gyamfi, “Financing Local Non-Governmental Organizations in Ghana: Issues and Challenges” (Master’s thesis, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, 2010), 69.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

Project Sustainability

Project sustainability is another huge challenge AGREDS faces. Boapeah points out that project sustainability “is possible through continual education, training, equipping, and entrusting work to people.”⁶⁰ There is thus the need for continuing empowerment of AGREDS staff through reliable systems of health delivery, education, and skills training. Projects should be entrusted to local people to continue after the benefactor has left the scene. Joseph Wumbee points out that, many of AGREDS projects and programs currently find it difficult to deliver sustainable results to their communities because the major donors have withdrawn their support. This resulted in the collapse of the health facility in Saboba and the near closure of the health center in Nakpanduri as soon as the early missionaries left the scene.⁶¹

Even now, information gathered from project workers and beneficiary communities speaks volumes about lack of sustainability of some key projects of AGREDS. For instance, F2LNGc, a top employee of the Saboba district hospital made this chilling remark about the current state of the Saboba hospital: “Frankly, sir, our hospital is struggling for its very life. National Health Insurance scheme is not paying. Our local NHIS office has remained unfavorable in its treatment towards us. Our local politicians are actively lobbying for a government hospital in Saboba because the AG Ghana Church has not continued to help build up our facility.”⁶² He also added: “Our hospital buildings are not in good shape and some of them were not well designed in the

⁶⁰Boapeah, *Christian Approach*, 67.

⁶¹Wumbee, interview.

⁶²F2LNGa, interview with a female employee of AGREDS who lives in a large town in Northern Region, August 9, 2017.

first place. We lack x-ray facilities. Our facility lacks fences or walls, leaving animals and motorists opportunity to roam freely. Even local AG members highly criticize us in town and are ashamed.”⁶³ A visit to the Saboba clinic on October 7, 2017 and a response from M4SNG⁶⁴ confirm the above assertions.

Besides the above concerns, no concrete program could be found regarding the training and entrusting of the projects to beneficiary communities. In the area of strategic alliances, partnerships, and collaboration with existing trade associations and other NGOs, AGREDS is doing quite well, but there is still room for improvement in this regard. Generally, AGREDS projects such as child sponsorships, Lifeline, and health facilities are not sustainable as currently operated. Serious efforts are, therefore, required on the part of AGREDS’ leadership and the executive presbytery of AGG to ensure project sustainability.

Cultural Alignment

Yet another implication for AGREDS is the issue of ensuring cultural sensitivity of the projects it runs so that they are in line with the cultural dynamics of beneficiary communities. A case in point is the child sponsorship project under the AGREDS educational program. Although the said program should be applauded as beneficial to sponsored children, it may be criticized on grounds of insensitivity to the culture of African families. Like other Western donor-funded projects, the child sponsorship program comes with prescriptions from Western donor partners that promote individualism and hence runs counter to the African communal culture. In this regard,

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴M4SNG, interview with a male beneficiary who lives in a small village in Northern Ghana.

Needle argues that selecting individuals and giving them sponsorship amounts to discrimination against those left out.⁶⁵ The program, therefore, is tagged with the stigma of being selective and divisive, particularly as Needle observes that, in some instances, “brothers, sisters, or other families become jealous. And parents can feel humiliated because outsiders are providing things they cannot—or frustrated that only one of their children receives help.”⁶⁶

Contributing to this debate, Bornstein contends that “as much as child sponsorship links people across nations in transnational relationships of a global ‘Christian family,’ it divides people locally and has immense potential to inspire jealousy.”⁶⁷ Ireland echoes the above sentiments, by stating that “these programs damage the relationships between children and their biological parents in exchange for a less concrete, less tangible, and less relatable relationship with an anonymous donor.”⁶⁸ The challenge, however, is that no amount of donor funding or even locally-generated funds could be enough to support all children in a community. Hence, some form of selectivity appears a reasonable way out. A compromise option perhaps could be to use the funds to invest in infrastructure for the benefit of all the children instead of supporting only a few children through the sponsorship program.

⁶⁵Jim Needle, “Simply ... Why You Should Not Sponsor a Child,” *New Internationalist*, 194 (1989): 1, <https://newint.org/features/1989/04/05/simply> (accessed May 24, 2018).

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Erica Bornstein, “Child Sponsorship, Evangelism, and Belonging in the Work of World Vision Zimbabwe,” *American Ethnologist* 28, no. 3 (2001), <https://www.issuelab.org/resources/19652/19652.pdf> (accessed May 24, 2018).

⁶⁸Jerry M. Ireland, “From ‘Ubuntu’ to Koinōnia: The Spirit-Formed Community and Indigenous African Compassion,” Informally published journal article (2018): 5.

Another criticism often leveled against child sponsorship is that it has the tendency of creating a dependency syndrome on the sponsored child. Needle points out that “the sponsored child is constantly reminded that they are the ‘poor relation.’ They must always be prepared to show gratitude to the ‘rich cousins’ on whose charity they depend.”⁶⁹ This is not only unfortunate but dangerous to the psyche of sponsored children, particularly in the formative years of their lives.

Others have also criticized child sponsorship programs on grounds of racism. Arguing along this line, Needle asserts that “child sponsorship advertisements distort our image of the Third World, and perpetuate many negative stereotypes. Children are depicted in deprivation and degradation as passive victims whose parents are unable to cope.”⁷⁰

Many have therefore wondered why in spite of the above criticisms of the child sponsorship program, NGOs from developing countries still go in for this kind of assistance? Kiros Hiruy and Robyn Eversole have argued that the NGOs ignore African cultural concerns and still go in for the program for fear of not getting the funding at all.⁷¹

Jerry Ireland again points out what is even more disappointing, that “faith-based organizations often fall victim to the same hindrances as their NGO counterparts, and they do so to the extent that they allow donors to determine their priorities as this often

⁶⁹Needle, 2.

⁷⁰Ibid., 6.

⁷¹Kiros Hiruy and Robyn Eversole, “Ngos and African Grassroots Community Organizations in Australia,” *Third Sector Review* 21, no. 1 (June 2015), <https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=343391157733099;res=IELHSS> (accessed May 25, 2018).

compromises faith commitments.”⁷² The question would be whether all of AGREDS’ Western donor-funded projects could pass the test of immunity from donor prescriptions that compromise both the African communal culture and faith commitments.

Relegation of Relief and Developments Services

With the establishment of AGREDS, the AG national church in Ghana appears to have virtually handed over all its relief and development services to this agency, and in that sense relegated these services to the background, both at the executive presbytery and local church levels. A key executive presbytery member of AGG observed that neither the local AG churches nor the executive presbytery approach relief and development services as mainstream activities of the church. Hence, these vital ministries draw leadership attention only as an afterthought and during emergency situations.⁷³ While commending some AG local churches in Ghana for establishing basic schools within their premises, this researcher wondered whether these schools were set up as income-generating ventures or as development projects in the spirit of ministry to the poor as implied from the Scriptures. It is high time that the church began to think about mainstreaming relief and development services, particularly, at the local church level.

Communication

The study also reveals that there is lack of proper communication on AGREDS’ projects and programs between project officers of AGREDS and the AG local church leadership within beneficiary communities. MT3NG intimated that, quite often,

⁷²Ireland, “From ‘Ubuntu,’” 5.

⁷³MT1LWG, interview with a key leader of AG Ghana who is a trustee and lives in Western Ghana.

AGREDS projects were being executed in communities within his region without the knowledge of the local church leadership let alone their collaboration.⁷⁴ Although half-yearly reports are submitted to the executive presbytery, the AGREDS outfit runs as a stand-alone entity without the benefits of interconnectivity and synergistic collaboration with the local churches.

It is submitted that the Great Commission will be better served through closer collaboration between AGREDS and AGG local churches in the design, planning, and execution of community projects. Such strategic collaboration through proper communication will result in the provision of a holistic ministry to the communities by which the church could minister to both the spiritual and physical dimensions of people's lives. At the same time, it will lead to church growth in project-beneficiary communities as AGREDS and the local churches leverage the services of each other to expand their operations.

Effective Organizational Structure

Yet another implication from the study is that the entire operations of AGREDS lacks effective organizational structure to drive its mission and vision. Employees, such as M2LSG, alluded to the lack of a clearly defined organization structure for AGREDS.⁷⁵ The assertion was corroborated by F2LNGa.⁷⁶ In the view of Molomo and Somolekae, “the key weakness of NGOs in Africa is the inappropriate organizational structures which

⁷⁴MT3NG, interview with AG trustee and theologian who lives in Northern Ghana.

⁷⁵M2LSG, interview with a male employee of AGREDS who lives in a large city in Southern Ghana.

⁷⁶F2LNGa, interview with a female employee of AGREDS who lives in a large town in the Northern Region.

impact the manner in which NGOs carry out their core business.”⁷⁷ Along the same lines, Lotsmart asserts that the “majority of local NGOs lack such structures and operating mechanism. This makes it difficult for any local NGO to systematically generate funds locally.”⁷⁸

Lwesya defines organizational structure as “the forming architecture... through which an organization fulfills its mission and achieves its visions. These include the philosophies and beliefs that necessitate the creation of an organization, the values that drive and policies that operate it, and maps of people relationships.”⁷⁹ This definition captures the sense that an effective organizational chart should have built-in alignments to corporate mission and vision. AGREDS thus needs a clearly defined organizational structure (with all critical positions filled) that defines authority and accountability levels of the board, management, and staff, as well as their interrelationships and how all their roles feed into the realization of AGREDS’ mission and vision.

Leadership Succession

Leadership succession in AGREDS is another important area of concern revealed by the study. Interaction with the executive director brought to the fore the lack of AGREDS staff with adequate leadership and managerial skills. This situation is attributable largely to the organization’s inability to attract and retain high-caliber staff

⁷⁷M. Molomo and G. Somolekae, “Making a Difference: NGOs, Good Governance, and Service Delivery,” in *Public Administration and Policy in Botswana* (Kenwyn, Cape Town: Juta & Co Ltd., 1999), 29.

⁷⁸N. Lotsmart, *The Challenges of Non-Governmental Organization in Anglophone Cameroon* (Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers, 2007), 41.

⁷⁹Enson Mbilikile Lwesya, *Organizational Leadership: Theory and Dynamics: Doctoral Study Guide LDR 9103*, 4th ed. (Lome, Togo: Pan Africa Theological Seminary, 2015), 33.

for effective project implementation.⁸⁰ M2LSGc, a project supervisor, disclosed in an interview that many skilled and competent staff of AGREDS often end up being poached by other organizations due to poor remuneration by AGREDS.⁸¹ It was further gathered from interactions with the executive director that although certain officials of AGREDS were almost due for retirement there were no competent successors to whom the baton of leadership should be passed on. A situation such as this is likely to cause stagnation of the organization with serious implications for its future fortunes. There is thus the need for a credible succession plan to be put in place for AGREDS.

The above will require a comprehensive staff-development program that is intentionally designed by the board of AGREDS to upgrade leadership competencies of staff. This will help create a pool of competent staff prepared for leadership succession at all levels of the organization. Lwesya maintains that “effective organizations use core competencies to both apply them to existing opportunities, create new business prospects, and thereby leveraging everything towards a firm’s competitive advantage.”⁸² AGREDS needs constant upgrading of staff competencies in order to attract a good number and mix of critical staff whose competencies qualify them for leadership succession.

Recommendations

The recommendations presented below are informed by findings from data analysis, as well as other useful information gleaned through interactions with various

⁸⁰Wumbee, interview.

⁸¹M2LSGc, interview with a male employee who lives in a large city in Northern Ghana, August 8, 2017.

⁸²Lwesya, 37.

stakeholders, reviews of documents, and observations. The goal in presenting these recommendations is to provoke further discussions by stakeholders of AGREDS, particularly its leadership, and the executive presbytery of AGG to take appropriate measures to address existing lapses in order to help AGREDS operate more effectively towards the realization of its mission and vision. The recommendations are geared largely towards addressing the challenges outlined above.

Funding for AGREDS Operations and Projects

To address the perennial shortfalls in funds mobilization to finance AGREDS' operations and interventions it is recommended that AGREDS looks beyond its conventional sources of funding and diversify its funding base. Diversification, according to Gyamfi, “means securing funds from as wide a base as possible—the local business community, national and local government, and the general public—and not just from external, institutional donors such as foreign NGOs like USAID or DFID.”⁸³ He proposes that local NGOs could broaden their funding base through “fundraising activities directed at the general public and also tap local corporate donors for monetary and in-kind support.”⁸⁴ Citing experiences from other countries, Gyamfi observes that “whilst in Philippines and Central America an increasing number of NGOs are tapping corporate bodies and local philanthropists as a resource for their activities, local NGOs in Ghana are not utilizing these huge potentials.”⁸⁵ Andreja contributes to this debate and states that, “Financial resources can be raised from local citizens, businesses, local authorities,

⁸³Gyamfi, 71.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Ibid., 70.

or others in a variety of forms and through many means, including: donations of cash, grants from local authorities or other community organizations, user fees for participation in various activities, membership dues paid by members, fundraising events, sponsorship of NGOs and/or their activities by local businesses.”⁸⁶

AGG has a huge potential of allied corporate entities, astute business people, industrialists, and philanthropists, who are members of its local churches. These groups of people are likely to identify with AGREDS mission and vision if properly packaged and presented to them. Some of these philanthropists and corporate entities are on record as regularly donating huge sums of their income each year to support orphanages, church buildings, and government hospitals. Leveraging this untapped potential local funding source will help propel the speedy growth of AGREDS and increase its impact on Ghanaian society.

Accessibility to Unrestricted Funds

One sure way of ensuring project sustainability for AGREDS is to access reasonable amounts of what Gyamfi terms as unrestricted funds. According to him, “funds that are received from donors for a specific purpose are known as restricted funds. Local NGOs are legally obliged to use them for the reason for which the donor gave them. In contrast, unrestricted funds can be used for anything at all that helps the local NGOs to achieve their mission.”⁸⁷ He, therefore, emphasizes that “the more unrestricted

⁸⁶Andreja, Tonc. *How to Mobilize Local Resources: A Guide for Non-Governmental Organizations and Citizens Initiatives* ed. Jennifer Stuart (Zagreb: Croatia, Academy for Educational Development, 2004), 6
https://udruge.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/UserFiles/200410_local_resources_ENG.pdf.

⁸⁷Gyamfi, 71.

funds local NGOs have, the more freedom of action they have. Local NGOs can choose and change the projects that they want to run, and they can cover costs that donors are reluctant to fund, like overheads cost and staff salaries.”⁸⁸ A chunk of unrestricted funds could be channeled to AGREDS annually through the structures of AGG. This could take the form of levies, or a certain percentage of tithes and offerings earmarked annually by the national church for the compassion ministry of AGREDS. The legal registration of AGREDS as a non-profit NGO could also be varied to enable the agency to engage in certain income-generating activities such as consultancies to support its operations.

Volunteer Services

In a study conducted by Poverty Eradication Network of Kenya (PEN Kenya) on the challenges and opportunities facing NGOs in Kenya, the network provides some useful recommendations for cutting down on the cost of NGO operations. Among other things, the network observes that there is a “huge supply of idealistic, young, energetic, and well-educated graduates who are unemployed or underemployed. Many of them are searching for opportunities to serve their country and get work experience. There are also many older experienced professionals willing to give their time to NGOs.”⁸⁹ The situation in Ghana is not different. The issue of unemployed university graduates has for some time now been a major challenge facing successive governments of Ghana to the extent that the teaming unemployed graduates have now come together to form an

⁸⁸Ibid., 71–72.

⁸⁹PEN Kenya, “Summary of Challenges and Opportunities Facing NGOs and the NGO Sector” (Nairobi, Kenya: PEN Kenya, 2001), 5, <http://www.penkenya.org/UserSiteFiles/public/challenges%20and%20opportunities%20facing%20NGOS.pdf> (accessed April 28, 2018).

association named Unemployed Graduates Association. AGREDS therefore could take advantage of the situation to attract some of these unemployed graduates to offer voluntary services for certain community interventions at minimal allowances. At the same time such graduates could benefit from enhancing their résumés with working experience from AGREDS.

The study further observes: “Finally, there are opportunities to appoint international volunteers to fill vacancies that would otherwise require unavailable funds to fill. Student-exchange programmes also offer NGOs low-cost human resources that can support research, documentation, and staff capacity building initiatives.”⁹⁰ In the past, AGREDS has utilized the services of international volunteers such as those from World Servants Europe to execute some of its infrastructural projects.⁹¹ This is something AGREDS could explore further to augment other efforts at cutting down the cost of funding its projects.

Contextualization

Contextualization of projects is key to ensuring cultural alignment of AGREDS projects and programs in beneficiary communities. Contextual development takes place when the church ministers to a community around the needs of the community’s people, affirming their dignity and building trust. Yamamori describes this as “the dynamic process whereby the constant message of the gospel interacts with specific human situations.”⁹² It is recommended as a policy that AGREDS stays away from all projects

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹AGREDS, *Community Infrastructure*, 5.

⁹²Yamamori, 204.

that offend the cultural sensitivities of beneficiary communities. Possibly, such programs could be more appropriately repackaged. Contextualization requires that AGREDS considers cultural issues seriously and packages its program interventions in a manner that communicates meaningfully and respectfully with the local culture.

On the other hand, AGREDS should scale up its advocacy role concerning negative socio-cultural practices in Ghanaian society, particularly those that are against children and other vulnerable groups. Writing on the challenges and prospects of NGO support for children in Ghana, Sabaa notes, “NGOs are challenged by entrenched socio-cultural practices and beliefs nationwide that tend to defy the laws of the land with much impunity.”⁹³ Some of these negative practices are child labor and cruel widowhood rites in certain parts of Ghanaian society.

Mainstreaming of Relief and Development Services

Mainstreaming an activity means to bring that activity to the fore and make it a normal practice. The compassion ministry is a very important activity through which the church demonstrates the love of God to humanity as it pursues the task of making disciples of all nations. The practice by which both the AG national church in Ghana and its local churches fail to recognize relief and development services as an integral part of the church’s mission agenda needs to be re-examined. Mainstreaming relief and development services of AGG will ensure that the church’s missions drive is not skewed so heavily towards the spiritual dimension of winning souls that physical needs are ignored. This was not how Jesus approached ministry to humanity during his earthly

⁹³Susan Sabaa, "NGO Support for Children in Ghana: Challenges and Prospects," 2010, 4, <https://www.cepa.org.gh/researchpapers/NGO71.pdf> (accessed April 27, 2018).

ministry. Jesus's model of ministry was holistic in that he ministered to both the spiritual and physical dimensions of people's lives. He provided food for the hungry, healing for the sick, and defense for the poor. He challenged injustice in society in addition to preaching the gospel.

Although the establishment of AGREDS has helped to institutionalize the compassion ministry within AGG, this vital ministry should not be relegated to the background by the local churches. On the contrary, local churches should consider relief and development services as an integral part of their missions' agenda, with an annual budget provision. AGREDS then should be charged with the responsibility of playing a supervisory role and undertaking capacity building in the local churches to ensure that the compassion ministry is carried out effectively in all regions across the country.

Meanwhile, where AGREDS has to implement any intervention in a community, the agency should involve the local AG churches throughout the different stages of the project from beginning up to completion and evaluation of those interventions. By so doing, the problem of the communication gap between AGREDS and the local churches would be addressed. Also, the local churches could easily leverage the good deeds of AGREDS to increase their membership and grow more churches in project beneficiary communities.

It is further recommended that the compassion ministry should be taught as a course in the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary to deepen the knowledge of ministers on relief and development services during their training in the seminary. Pastors should also teach on the compassion ministry to their congregations and encourage their members to contribute generously to that ministry. Furthermore, the writers of the

church's Sunday school lessons should develop relevant lessons on mainstreaming compassion ministry, and that should be taught in all AG local churches nationwide.

Leadership Succession Strategy

Leadership succession is a process, not an event. Successful organizations intentionally plan for, and systematically develop potential leaders to take up the baton of leadership as and when the need arises. This could take the form of formal training and on-the-job training through mentoring. John Maxwell contends that “the growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership. The process is designed to build into potential leaders, to bring out their best qualities, to develop their character, and to help them discover and reach their potential.”⁹⁴ Kouzes and Posner corroborate this assertion and maintain that great leaders “help others learn new skills, develop existing talents, and provide the institutional supports required for ongoing growth and change.”⁹⁵ Along the same line, John Stott asserts that the main goal of Christian leadership is to help people become all that they can become under God.⁹⁶ It is recommended that the above submissions should form the basis of the leadership development philosophy of AGREDS.

In order to ensure an effective leadership succession, AGREDS leadership should intentionally look for potential leaders within its staff and systematically build their capacities to enable them to take up the mantle of leadership at the appropriate time when

⁹⁴John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You* (Port Harcourt, Nigeria: Spiritual Life Outreach, 1995), 113.

⁹⁵James Kouzes and Barry Posner, *The Leadership Challenge: How to Make Extraordinary Things Happen in Organizations*, 5th ed. (San Francisco, CA: The Leadership Challenge, 2012), 243.

⁹⁶Stott, *Decisive Issues*, 367.

vacancies are created. In this regard, the leadership of AGREDS at any given time, should look out for employees with integrity, influence, respect, and passion for compassion ministry and develop them into a pool of competent leaders who could be promoted to feed into the organization's leadership succession plan. This should go with reasonable remuneration packages and other forms of motivation to prevent the danger of losing such staff to other organizations with more attractive offers.

AGREDS could also develop its leadership through systematic and intentional mentoring. According to Clinton, mentoring is "the process where a person with a serving, giving, encouraging attitude, the mentor, sees leadership potential in a still-to-be developed person, the protégé, and is able to promote or otherwise significantly influence the protégé along in the realization of potential."⁹⁷ A good example of mentoring is what took place between Barnabas, Paul, and John Mark in Acts 11 where Barnabas was the mentor, and Paul and John Mark were mentees. Usually, the influence and guidance mentors provide are long-term in nature leading to a life-changing experience and lifetime empowerment.

Kotter sees empowerment as an essential component of the role of leadership. In his view, leadership involves "the development of vision and strategies; the alignment of relevant people behind these strategies; and the empowerment of individuals (groups and societies) to make the vision happen, despite obstacles."⁹⁸ The dimension of

⁹⁷R.J. Clinton, *The Making of a Leader* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1993), 130.

⁹⁸J.P. Kotter, "What Leaders Really Do," *Harvard Business Review* Harvard Business School Publishing, OnPoint 2000.

empowerment is critically important in developing potential leaders of AGREDS for leadership succession.

Additionally, AGREDS could develop potential leaders through effective delegation. In delegation, subordinates are periodically assigned certain leadership responsibilities, granted commensurate authority to go with the responsibility, and made accountable for results. Through effective delegation, subordinates are able to gain varied experiences over time that “keeps them growing, stretching, and learning. The broader people’s base of experience, the better they will be at handling new challenges, solving problems, and overcoming difficult situations.”⁹⁹ The opportunity for subordinates to assume leadership roles is motivational in itself, and it also ensures their systematic development for leadership succession. Nevertheless, Bossidy and Charan provide a caveat that the only job “no leader should delegate is, having the right people in the right place.”¹⁰⁰ Apart from that, leaders are encouraged to delegate other aspects of their responsibilities to subordinates from time to time with the goal of developing the latter for leadership succession.

Participation

The challenge of sustainability of AGREDS’ projects can be largely resolved through participation. As cited earlier in this study, participation in development refers to a voluntary process by which people are allowed to take part in decisions and actions affecting their lives and have their contributions valued.¹⁰¹ Through participation, people

⁹⁹Ibid., 122.

¹⁰⁰Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan, *Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done* (New York, NY: Crown Business, 2002), 109.

¹⁰¹Boapeah, *Christian Approach*, 63.

learn new truths leading to confidence building, leadership, and ownership of goals and benefits of development. The PEN Kenya insists that “communities have assets, wisdom, labor, time, and skills to be applied to their own development programs. Communities are now willing to work for their own development.”¹⁰² PEN Kenya thus urges NGOs to “invest in community institution building, train local people; enable them to plan, implement, and evaluate their own development programs, and to access available local resources. Innovative local solutions to local problems always attract support.”¹⁰³

Another way of ensuring local participation in AGREDS projects is encouraging beneficiary communities to make some contribution towards their community projects. In the days of the early missionaries, the health facilities established in Saboba and Nakpanduri were ran as charities,¹⁰⁴ and so the local people were not encouraged to make any contribution towards the services they received. This, therefore, created a continuous dependency syndrome for the local people which became very difficult to correct when the missionaries left. This led to the closure of the Saboba clinic for some time.

It is recommended that AGREDS should involve the local people in sustaining the various interventions, through their regular contributions in cash or kind, no matter how small. The beneficiary communities should also be involved in the different stages of their projects and be encouraged to own such projects. Additionally, their capacities should be built particularly as to how and where to raise funds and mobilize other resources to implement their own development programs. Finally, AGREDS leadership

¹⁰²PEN Kenya, 5.

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Goodwin, interview.

should aim at setting up time-tested systems in its operations and allow the systems to run with or without anyone. Sustainable institutions need strong systems, not supermen.

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is crucial in corporate governance. Gartenstein notes that “it provides a sense of direction and outlines measurable goals. It is useful for guiding day-to-day decisions and also for evaluating progress and changing approaches when moving forward.”¹⁰⁵ A study conducted by PEN Kenya on the challenges and opportunities of NGOs in Kenya, cited earlier in this paper, finds that “few NGOs have strategic plans which would enable them to have ownership over their mission, values, and activities. This leaves them vulnerable to the whims of donors and makes it difficult to measure their impact over time.”¹⁰⁶ The absence of a carefully-thought-out strategic plan has thus robbed AGREDS of the immense benefits that strategic planning provides.

In order to derive optimum benefits from the tool of strategic planning, Gartenstein advises that an organization “should give careful thought to the strategic objectives it outlines, and then back up these goals with realistic, thoroughly researched, quantifiable benchmarks for evaluating results.”¹⁰⁷ He further asserts that “strategic planning can be an especially valuable process when it includes employees in all

¹⁰⁵Devra Gartenstein, "Why Is Strategic Planning Important to an Organization?" AZCentral, 2018, <https://yourbusiness.azcentral.com/strategic-planning-important-organization-4103.html> (accessed May 10, 2018).

¹⁰⁶PEN Kenya, 1.

¹⁰⁷Gartenstein.

departments, and at all levels of responsibility, thinking about how their activities and responsibilities fit into the larger picture, and about their potential contributions.”¹⁰⁸

Over the years, AGREDS has operated without a credible strategic plan that values input from all stakeholders and is owned by all who matter in carrying out its mission and vision. However, the study gathered that AGREDS has now developed a five-year strategic plan to be launched soon by its board.¹⁰⁹ It is hoped that this new paradigm will help AGREDS to stay more focused on driving its operations towards the realization of its mission and vision. A credible strategic plan helps to define and clarify corporate mission, set realistic goals, and evaluate actual performance against best practice benchmarks.

Information Technology

It goes without saying, that the world is now a global village, driven by information technology. Digital infrastructure such as the internet, e-mail systems, and websites are powerful drivers for successful organizations in today’s world. Although AGREDS currently has good e-mail and internet systems, at least at its Accra head office, it could not boast of a robust and interactive website to market itself to stakeholders and the rest of the world. Through a functional website, AGREDS can establish helpful networks and share the benefits and impact of its thematic areas of operation with the whole world to accelerate its growth and influence on Ghanaian society.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Wumbee.

Recommendations for Additional Research

The focus of this study was to explore the history of AGREDS from 1948 to 2016, tracing its origins, growth, and influence on Ghanaian society. This therefore means that certain aspects of relief and development not directly aligned to the focus of the study were ignored. To fill in the missing link, the following are recommended for additional research on relief and development services in Ghana.

AGG Compassion Ministry and Missio Dei

An area that showed up from the study for additional research is an investigation of the role AGG compassion ministry plays in fulfilling the mission of God, otherwise known as *missio Dei*. John York defines *missio Dei* as "...the proclamation of the gospel to all nations."¹¹⁰ This is God's plan of redemption of mankind, and it involves sharing the gospel message with all ethnic groups on earth until Christ returns. A question that arises out of this imperative is, how effectively could the sharing of the gospel with all people groups have been done by AGG? Although the study revealed the need for both proclamation and demonstration of the gospel through good deeds (compassion), it did not find out the role the AGG compassion ministry had played in fulfilling the *missio Dei*. An additional study is recommended for investigating stakeholder perspectives on the role AGG compassion ministry has played over the years in fulfilling the *missio Dei* in Ghana.

¹¹⁰John York, 17.

Influence of Other NGOs on Ghanaian Society

Another area highly recommended for future research is the influence of other NGOs on Ghanaian society. The study concentrated on the origin, growth, and influence of AGREDS on Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016. AGREDS is a Christian non-profit NGO, and so the findings recorded may not reflect that of the entire NGO sector in Ghana due to the differences in the way the various NGOs operate. Apart from that, the study focus of the influence of AGREDS on Ghanaian society also exposes its limitation in terms of geographical spread and context specific application of findings and conclusions. An additional research involving the influence of other NGOs on Ghanaian society is needed to determine if the same findings and conclusions would be arrived at.

Compassion Ministry Education and Training at AGTS

Yet another area arising out of the study for future research is education and training on compassion ministry. The study revealed that the curricula used by the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (AGTS) for training pastors over the years do not include any course on compassion ministry. This therefore has created a knowledge gap among AGG ministers and by extension its members regarding the compassion ministry mandate. An additional research focusing on an investigation of stakeholder perspectives on whether an appropriate compassion ministry education and training at AGTS over the years could have yielded different findings and conclusions regarding the growth and influence of AGREDS on the Ghanaian society.

Summary

This chapter has examined the challenges and implications that the study presents for AGREDS, the leadership of AGG, and its local churches. These topics include

funding, project sustainability, cultural alignment, communication, leadership succession, organizational structure, and mainstreaming of the compassion ministry by the local and national AG church. Although AGREDS has performed credibly well in providing critical community interventions in the thematic areas of health, education, and livelihood empowerment, its efforts are being hampered by the above challenges.

To overcome the challenges, the chapter put forth eight recommendations. These included tapping the huge potential of local funding sources, accessibility to unrestricted funds, use of volunteer services, contextualization, mainstreaming relief and development services by both the national and local AG churches, leadership succession strategies, participation, information technology, and strategic planning. Finally, the chapter proposed recommendations for further research. It is hoped that the recommendations suggested in this paper will help in addressing the challenges AGREDS faces in order to achieve its core mandate of poverty alleviation through sustainable compassion ministry in Ghana.

Conclusion

This study has helped to answer the question: What is the history of Assemblies of God relief and development in Ghana; its origins, growth, and influence on Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016? Specifically, it has helped to document the history of AGREDS from its inception in 1948 to 2016. Through a largely qualitative research, the study discovered and documented among other things, the origin of AGREDS in Ghana. It provided credible answers to the questions of when, how, by whom, and why AGREDS was established in Ghana. The study also found out the various transitions of growth of AGREDS from its inception up to 2016. This included the various

interventions introduced at various times to address poverty and other forms of human suffering, as well as the respective roles played by the American missionaries and the indigenous Ghanaian leadership in the growth process.

The study further explored and recorded the influences of AGREDS on Ghanaian society over the years. These were discussed under socio-economic, cultural and religious influences, highlighting the scope of such influences on less-privileged communities in different geographical areas of Ghana. The study helped to find out the challenges AGREDS faces, and then, provided some useful recommendations for addressing those challenges.

Navigating through the above processes has helped to achieve the study purpose. That is, exploring and documenting a credible historical account of the origin, growth and influence of AGREDS on Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016. This is a significant contribution to the academy, particularly in the fields of humanitarian studies, missiology, and historiography. Development practitioners of the compassion ministry, particularly in Ghana and Africa, will also appreciate the findings of this study as helpful and handy, as they seek to fulfill God's mission in more effective and sustainable ways.

APPENDIX A

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

A History of Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services in Ghana:**1948-2016****Introduction:**

My name is Abraham Obeng-Amoako, Head of Operations of the Assemblies of God, Ghana. I am currently a student of the Pan Africa Theological Seminary in Lomé, Togo. As part of the requirements for the award of a PhD degree in Theology, I am expected to undertake this academic research work involving interviews of stakeholders of the Assemblies of God relief and development Agency. The topic of my dissertation is: A history of the Assemblies of God relief and development services in Ghana, tracing their origins, growth, and influence on the Ghanaian society from 1948 to 2016. The Executive Director of the Assemblies of God relief and development services in Ghana, Mr. Joseph Kwame Wumbee, has approved this topic, and granted written permission to the researcher per attached letter, to conduct interviews with stakeholders.

Your participation poses no risks to you, and you have the right to decline to answer any question I ask you, or walk away any time during the interview, if you so wish. I seek your kind permission to record this interview on tape, transcribe, and analyze the data, as part of the dissertation.

I wish to assure you that all information provided by you in this interview will be treated as confidential, and kept anonymous. By answering the interview questions below, you are indicating that you understand the statements above and consent to

participate in this study. I deeply appreciate your time and willingness to make an input to this project.

Background Information of Respondent

1. What is your full name?
2. Could you please tell me your profession and current ministry role?

Mission and Development

3. What is your understanding of the church's mission on earth?
4. What is your general understanding of relief and development services?
5. What is the biblical basis for engagement in relief and development services?
6. In your opinion, is there any difference between relief and development services?

Please explain.

Assemblies of God Relief and Development in Ghana

7. How long have you been involved in, or associated with the Assemblies of God relief and development ministry in Ghana?
8. What do you think is the relationship between the Assemblies of God relief and development services in Ghana, and the church's mission?
9. What is your opinion on making relief and development services an integral part of the church's mission agenda?
10. Could you please explain the origin and growth of the Assemblies of God relief and development agency in Ghana?
11. Please provide me with any information you may have on the factors that led to the establishment of the Assemblies of God Relief and Development services.

12. To what extent have contextual considerations such as culture, religious inclination, poverty etc, been relevant for effective implementation of the Assemblies of God relief and development programs in Ghana? Please explain and provide examples.
13. In your estimation, has the relief and development services run by the Assemblies of God, Ghana, helped to fulfill the mission of God in Ghana? Explain and provide specific examples.
14. In your opinion, what socio-economic influences have the Assemblies of God relief and development services made on beneficiary communities since its inception? Please provide as many examples as you can.
15. In what ways have the Assemblies of God relief and development in Ghana influenced particularly culture and religion in Ghana, from its inception to date? Provide examples.
16. What do you think have been the strengths and weaknesses of the Assemblies of God relief and development services in Ghana, with particular reference to its health care, education, and livelihood empowerment programs?
17. Historically what enabling factors both internal and external have enhanced the delivery of services of the agency? Please provide examples.
18. Historically what obstacles if any have affected the implementation of services for example:
 - Structure of the agency
 - Implementation strategies
 - Human and material Resources
 - Exogenous factors

19. What additional information or recommendation on relief and development would you like to provide to enhance this project?

20. What is the highest educational level you have achieved?

Conclusion:

Thank you very much Sir/Madam, I really appreciate your perspectives and insights on the issues discussed in this interview. God richly bless you.

.....
Name of Interviewee

.....
Signature of Interviewee

.....
Signature of Researcher

.....
Date

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE

**A History of Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services in Ghana:
1948-2016**

This is a study soliciting your opinion on various issues relating to the history of the Assemblies of God relief and development services in Ghana from 1948 to 2016. The answers you provide shall be kept confidential, and will be used solely for the purposes defined by this project. Thank you.

Statement of Informed Consent

You are being asked to participate as a volunteer in a research study conducted by Rev. Abraham Obeng-Amoako, a doctoral student at Pan-Africa Theological Seminary (PATHS), Lomé, Togo. This study is designed to gather information about the history of the Assemblies of God relief and development services in Ghana from 1948 to 2016. The research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Jerry Ireland, Dr. Bill Kirsch, and Dr. Chuck Wilson.

You will be one of several stakeholders of the Assemblies of God relief and development services, made up of employees, trustees, directors, church leaders, beneficiaries etc., participating in this study by completing this questionnaire.

1. Your participation in this project is voluntary; you will not be paid for your participation. You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or harm of any type. If you decline to participate in or choose to not complete the questionnaire, the researcher will not inform anyone of your decision, and no foreseeable negative consequences will result.
2. Completing the questionnaire will require approximately 20 minutes. There are no known risks associated with completing the questionnaire. If, however, you feel uncomfortable in any way during this process, you may decline to answer any question, or not complete the questionnaire.
3. The researcher will not identify you by name in any report using information obtained from your questionnaire; your confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of data generated by this questionnaire will protect the anonymity of all individuals.
4. This research effort and this questionnaire have been reviewed and approved by the Dissertation Proposal Review Board, which functions as the Institutional Review Board for ethical research at PATHS. For research-related problems or questions regarding ethical research practices, please contact: Dr. Chuck Wilson at: cwilson@sagu.edu or Dr. Marvin Gilbert at: marvin.gilbert@agmd.org

For further information, including a copy of the results of this study, please contact:

Abraham Obeng-Amoako at: obengamoako@agghana.org or P.O. Box AN 7644, Accra, Ghana

NOTE: By completing and submitting this questionnaire, you are indicating that you understand the statements above, and consent to participate in this study. **Do not put your name on the questionnaire;** your signature acknowledging that you understand the information presented above is not required.

What is your primary ministry position?...
 (tick only one of the choices at right)

- Trustee
- Employee
- Director
- Church Leader
- Beneficiary
- Other: _____

What is your gender? Male Female

What is your highest educational qualification-accomplishment? (tick one of the choices at right)

- High school graduation (with a school-leaving certificate; e.g., “WASSCE”; “O”-level exams)

- Trade/technical/vocational training
- Some academic credit (no qualification)
- Diploma or associate’s degree
- Bachelor’s degree
- Postgraduate diploma or BA Honours
- Master’s degree
- Professional degree
- Doctorate degree

Instructions: Please carefully read each of the following statements and respond by ticking the response box that best reflects your opinion. Please be completely open and honest in your responses. Take as long as you need, but do not linger over any statement.

.....

1. The Assemblies of God relief and development services have been an integral part of the church's mission agenda.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain or Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. There is a biblical basis for the Assemblies of God relief and development services.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain or Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. The ultimate goal of the relief and development programs run by the Assemblies of God, Ghana, should be to fulfill the mission of God.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain or Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Contextual considerations such as culture, religious inclination, and poverty, have often been relevant for effective implementation of Assemblies of God relief and development programs.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain or Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. The origin, growth, and influence of the Assemblies of God relief and development services in Ghana have been characterized by community developments.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain or Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. The Christian witness of the Assemblies of God, Ghana, has been greatly enhanced through community-based social projects.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain or Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

7. The Assemblies of God relief and development services have positively influenced the socio-economic conditions of beneficiary communities.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain or Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. The Assemblies of God relief and development services have experienced significant growth in scope of operations from 1948 to 2016.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain or Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. The Assemblies of God relief and development agency has remained focused on the mission of God over the years.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain or Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. Leadership support of the Assemblies of God relief and development programs is an indication of leadership understanding and confidence in fulfilling the mission of God through relief and development.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain or Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX C

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION

In accordance with the academic policy of PAtHs, all research instruments I will use to conduct this study will be developed and validated before they are used. The instruments include, a semi-structured interview guide, and a questionnaire guide, etc.

The following five steps will be followed for validation of the research instruments:

1. Review of all instruments developed in the methodology.
2. Review of all research instruments by student's supervisor.
3. Review of all research instruments by second reader of the dissertation.
4. Contextual-Cultural review by an expert recruited by student.
5. Pilot testing of the research instruments with volunteers who will check appropriateness of wording, clarity, etc.

APPENDIX D
GATEKEEPERS INTERVIEW LETTER
REV. ABRAHAM OBENG-AMOAKO
P. O. Box AN 7644, Accra

January 20, 2017

The Executive Director

Assemblies of God Relief & Development (AG Care, Ghana)

P. O. Box C482

Accra

Dear Sir,

ACADEMIC INTERVIEWS OF STAKEHOLDERS OF AG CARE, GHANA

I refer to my earlier discussions with you on the above subject, and write to request for your kind permission to undertake academic interviews of various stakeholders of the AG Care, Ghana. I am currently a PhD student of the Pan Africa Theological Seminary in Lome, Togo. As part of the requirements for the award of a PhD degree in Theology, I am expected to undertake an academic research work involving interviews of selected stakeholders of the AG Care, Ghana. This comprises the trustees, directors, employees, and beneficiaries of the services of AG Care, Ghana, in various parts of the country.

The interviews will be recorded on tape, transcribed, and analyzed as part of my dissertation. All interviewees have the right to decline to answer any question I ask them,

or walk away any time during the interview, if they so wish. I wish to assure you that all information provided by you, your staff, directors, or any other person in these interviews, will be treated as confidential, and kept anonymous.

I deeply appreciate your time and cooperation in granting these interviews, and respectfully ask for your written consent.

Yours Faithfully,

Rev. Abraham Obeng-Amoako

APPENDIX E
RAW DATA STATISTICS

	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10
N Valid	52.0	52.0	52.0	52.0	52.0	52.0	52.0	52.0	52.0	52.0
Missing	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mean	4.3	4.7	4.6	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.5	3.9	4.1	4.2
Median	4.0	5.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Mode	5.0	5.0	5.0	4 ^a	4.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Standard. Deviation	0.9	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.6	1.1	0.9	0.8

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

APPENDIX F

FREQUENCY TABLES AND CHARTS

B1

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
Disagree	3	5.8	5.8	7.7
Uncertain or Neutral	1	1.9	1.9	9.6
Agree	22	42.3	42.3	51.9
Strongly Agree	25	48.1	48.1	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

A question was asked on whether the Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services in Ghana have been an integral part of the church's mission agenda, majority of the respondents agreed with the assertion, with 25 (48.1) strongly agreeing, and 22 (42.3) agreeing, while four respondents did not agree that the Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services have been an integral part of the church's mission agenda. One respondent was uncertain.

B2

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	18	34.6	34.6	34.6
Strongly Agree	34	65.4	65.4	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Respondents were further asked if there is a biblical basis for the Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services. Majority of the respondents 34 (65.4 percent) strongly agreed that there is a biblical basis for the AG Ghana relief and development

services, and 18 (34.6 percent) also agreed. This means that, generally, all respondents answered in the affirmative, as shown in the table B2 above.

B3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
	Agree	16	30.8	30.8	32.7
	Strongly Agree	35	67.3	67.3	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Also, respondents were quizzed on whether the ultimate goal of the relief and development programs run by the Assemblies of God, Ghana, should be to fulfill the mission of God. Thirty-five respondents representing 67.3 percent strongly agreed with the assertion, and sixteen (30.8 percent) respondents agreed that the ultimate goal of the relief and development programs run by the AGG should be to fulfil the mission of God. One respondent disagreed. These are displayed in table B3 above.

B4

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
	Uncertain or Neutral	1	1.9	1.9	3.8
	Agree	25	48.1	48.1	51.9
	Strongly Agree	25	48.1	48.1	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Respondents were further asked, if contextual considerations such as culture, religious inclination, and poverty, have often been relevant for effective implementation of Assemblies of God relief and development programs. To this question, twenty-five

(48.1 percent) respondents strongly agreed, twenty-five (48.1 percent) agreed, one respondent was uncertain, and one respondent did not agree with the assertion that contextual considerations such as culture, religious inclination, and poverty have often been relevant for effective implementation of AG relief and development programs.

B5

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Uncertain or Neutral	3	5.8	5.8	5.8
	Agree	29	55.8	55.8	61.5
	Strongly Agree	20	38.5	38.5	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Another question posed to respondents was, whether the origin, growth, and influence of the Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services in Ghana have been characterized by community developments. A majority of respondents, numbering twenty-nine (55.8 percent), agreed with the assertion. Twenty (38.5 percent) respondents strongly agreed while three respondents were uncertain.

B6

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
	Disagree	1	1.9	1.9	3.8
	Uncertain or Neutral	4	7.7	7.7	11.5
	Agree	28	53.8	53.8	65.4
	Strongly Agree	18	34.6	34.6	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Additionally, respondents were asked if the Christian witness of the Assemblies of God, Ghana, has been greatly enhanced through community-based social projects. Twenty-eight (53.8 percent) respondents agreed, eighteen (34.6 percent) respondents

strongly agreed, one (1.9 percent) respondent disagreed, one (1.9 percent) strongly disagreed, and four (7.7 percent) were uncertain that the Christian witness of the AGG has been greatly enhanced through community-based social projects. The above distribution is displayed in table B6 above.

B7

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Uncertain or Neutral	3	5.8	5.8	5.8
Agree	21	40.4	40.4	46.2
Strongly Agree	28	53.8	53.8	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

On whether the relief and development services run by the AGG have positively influenced the socio-economic conditions of beneficiary communities, twenty-eight (53.8 percent) respondents strongly agreed, twenty-one (40.4 percent) agreed to the claim, and three (5.8 percent) were uncertain that AGREDS had positively influenced the socio-economic conditions of beneficiary communities. These are displayed in table B7 above.

B8

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	10	19.2	19.2	19.2
Uncertain or Neutral	2	3.8	3.8	23.1
Agree	23	44.2	44.2	67.3
Strongly Agree	17	32.7	32.7	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

In addition, respondents were asked if AGREDS had experienced significant growth in scope of its operations from 1948 to 2016. Twenty-three respondents agreed, and seventeen respondents strongly agreed. Ten respondents disagreed with the assertion

that the relief and development services of the AGG had experienced significant growth in the scope of its operations. Two respondents were uncertain about the claim.

B9

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	4	7.7	7.7	7.7
Uncertain or Neutral	7	13.5	13.5	21.2
Agree	23	44.2	44.2	65.4
Strongly Agree	18	34.6	34.6	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

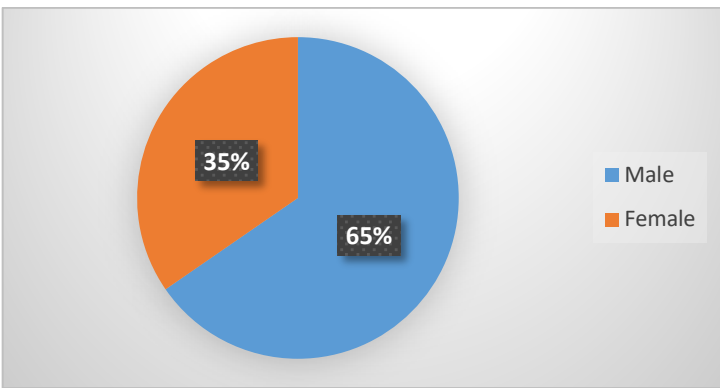
Furthermore, respondents were asked if the relief and development agency of the AGG has remained focused on the mission of God over the years. Twenty-three (44.2 percent) of the fifty-two respondents agreed, and eighteen (34.6 percent) strongly agreed. Four (7.7 percent) of the respondents disagreed that the relief and development agency has remained focused on the mission of God over the years. Seven (13.5 percent) were neutral,. These are displayed above.

B10

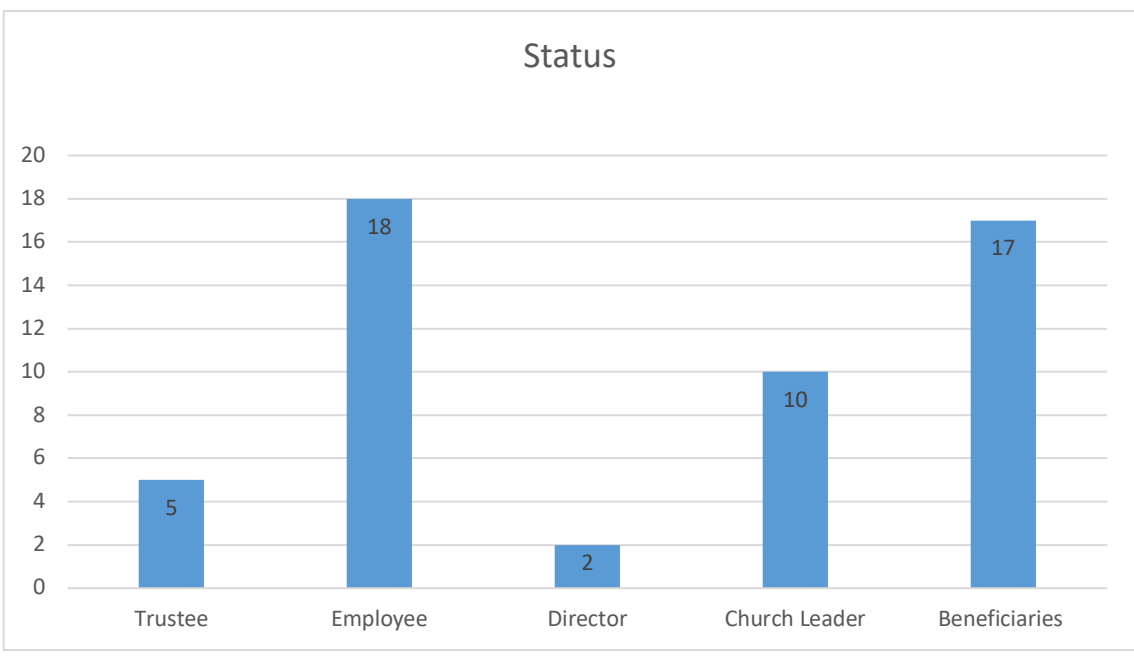
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	2	3.8	3.8	3.8
Uncertain or Neutral	6	11.5	11.5	15.4
Agree	24	46.2	46.2	61.5
Strongly Agree	20	38.5	38.5	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Respondents were finally asked if leadership support of the Assemblies of God relief and development programs is an indication of leadership understanding and

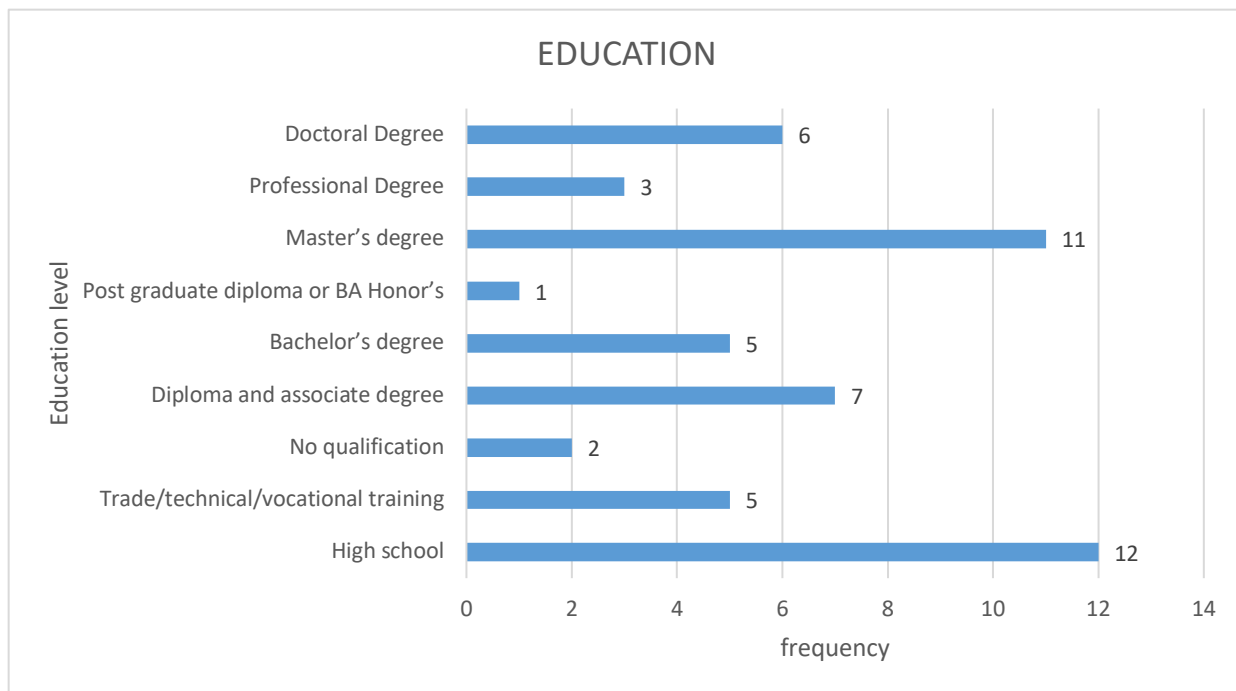
confidence in fulfilling the mission of God through relief and development. To this question, twenty-four (46.2 percent) agreed the assertion made, twenty (38.5 percent) strongly agreed, six were neutral, and two (3.8 percent) disagreed.



Gender of respondents.



Status of respondents.



Education of Respondents.

APPENDIX G

LUKE 4:18-19

From the above text, three observations are made:

1. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jesus to anoint and empower him before he started his earthly ministry. Explaining the rationale for this, Stronstad observes that “Jesus is not only anointed by the Spirit, but He is also Spirit-led, Spirit-filled, and Spirit-empowered. In addition, Luke intends the Spirit’s anointing, leading, and empowering of Jesus to be programmatic for His entire ministry.”¹ This underscores the need for the Spirit’s anointing on Christ’s followers, for effective ministry on earth.
2. The anointing of the Spirit on Jesus was for service to the needy, and not for personal gratification. In support of this idea, Koech notes that “Jesus in his public ministry is the bearer of the spirit, not for his own sake but for the sake of the people who are in need, those needing liberation; the sick, the poor and oppressed.”²
3. The anointing of the Spirit on Jesus was meant to bring relief to the poor, oppressed, and marginalized in society. Koech points out that, “issues faced by the nations now include spiritual, psychological, social, political and physical oppression. The power of the Holy Spirit to liberate is therefore crucial.”³

¹Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1984), 45.

²Joseph Koech, “The Spirit Motif in Luke 4:14-30; Acts 1:8 and the Church Today,” in *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 27.2, 2008, 160.

³*Ibid.*, 156.

The various aspects of the passage will now be analyzed and placed in their proper perspectives:

Anointing of the Holy Spirit

In Luke 4:18, Jesus grounds his manifesto on the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Individuals in the Old Testament were anointed with oil to usher them into office or for special services. According to Koech, “anointing in Scripture means to authorize or set apart a person for a particular work or service. Priests, Kings, and Prophets were anointed. Oil was poured on the head of the person being anointed (Ex. 29:7).”⁴ The anointing of Jesus was however not done through the pouring of oil, but through the power of the Holy Spirit that came upon him. In the same way, followers of Christ can receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit for service in the Lord’s vineyard. Jesus identifies the following as the reasons for his anointing:

To Preach the Gospel to the Poor

This means to proclaim or herald the message of salvation or deliverance for God’s people. Uwaegbute explains that “the verb used here is *euaggelizathai*. This is the present middle form of the Greek verb *euaggelizo* which means preach or proclaim the good news.”⁵ In answering the question as to who the poor in this text refers to, Green observes that “numerous attempts have been made to find here a referent to the ‘spiritually poor’ or, more recently, reflecting the concerns of a material-oriented interpretative method, to the economically poor. Both of these definitions of the ‘poor’

⁴Ibid, 162.

⁵Kingsley Ikechukwu Uwaegbute, 151.

are inadequately grounded in ancient Mediterranean culture and the social world of Luke-Acts.”⁶ He contends that although the economically poor are not excluded from the definition, in the Mediterranean culture, the ‘poor’ in Luke’s wider definition includes all the excluded and disadvantaged in society principally on account of what he terms “diminished status honor.”⁷ The preaching of good news to the poor is thus a message of inclusion and not that of exclusion of the disadvantaged as practiced by the Jews during Jesus’ earthly ministry.

While Fitzmyer observes that “to the poor, Isaiah was announcing the Consolation of Zion to various groups in the postexilic community,”⁸ Hopkins goes to the other extreme and contends that “no amount of spiritualizing of this passage can remove the divine emphasis on those in poverty and oppression.”⁹ Along this line, Austin explains in his Greek definition of salvation (*soteria*), by stating that: “Salvation is a broader term in Greek than we often think of in English. Other concepts that are inherent in *soteria* include restoration to a state of safety, soundness, health and wellbeing as well as preservation from danger of destruction.”¹⁰ Apart from offering spiritual salvation to men, which Luke 4:18 emphasizes, Jesus in his earthly ministry, provided healing to the sick, fed the hungry, and defended the oppressed in society. This paper’s position is that

⁶Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 210-211.

⁷Ibid, 211.

⁸J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 28 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 532–533.

⁹Dwight N. Hopkins, *Black Theology of Liberation* (MaryKnoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 26.

¹⁰Precept Austin, “Salvation-Soteria: A Greek Word Study,” https://www.preceptaustin.org/salvation-soteria_greek_word_study (accessed February 6, 2019).

the announcement of good news to the poor in Luke 4:18 was not in reference to economic poverty, but more in reference to the spiritual poverty of Israel.¹¹

To Heal the Brokenhearted

Apart from preaching the gospel to the poor, Jesus also promises in Luke 4:18 to heal the brokenhearted. In the view of Uwaegbute, this cannot be spiritualized in the sense that the brutal, and oppressive rule of the then Roman government had caused much pain and heartbreaking conditions for the Jews whom Jesus addressed.¹² It is possible that the Jews suffered different kinds of heartbreaking injustices from the imperialist rule of the Roman government. Jesus' message was therefore meant to be a promise of joy and comfort to the brokenhearted. This paper maintains that the brokenhearted were not necessarily victims of political brutalities, but those whose hearts were broken because of sin and the onslaught of Satan.

To Proclaim Liberty to the Captives

Another reason for Jesus' anointing was to proclaim liberty to the captives. In explaining the captives Jesus was referring to, Gooding argues that, "obviously he was not talking of literal captives of war. In the metaphorical sense...there are plenty of examples in the Gospel, of Christ giving freedom to people who were captives of guilt (see 7:41-50), to the crushing and bruising power of Satan (see 8:26-39), to the love of money (eg. 19:1-10), and so forth."¹³ He concludes therefore that this is the context in

¹¹See section on authorial intent and original audience understanding.

¹²Kingsley Ikechukwu Uwaegbute, 152.

¹³David Gooding, *According to Luke: The Third Gospel's Ordered Historical Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 82.

which Jesus referred to captives, and promised them liberty. Green concurs with this interpretation.¹⁴ Uwaegbute on his part points out that the proclamation of liberty to the captives had both literal and spiritual implications, and that the understanding of Jesus' audience was more towards the release of Jewish prisoners. "This is because the Roman world of Jesus' time had already taken a lot of Jews prisoners. A lot of Jews equally had lost their inheritance, lands and property to the Roman imperialistic rule. And worse still, the whole of Jewish nation was a Roman captive."¹⁵ This paper sides with the position of proclaiming liberty to spiritual captives¹⁶ as explained above by Gooding. This however does not mean that the church should be unconcerned about the plight of physical prisoners. As much as it is able, the church through its compassionate mandate implied from other scriptures (Jam. 1:27, Acts 10:38), should assist such disadvantaged people in society through advocacy and other forms of relief and development interventions.

Recovery of Sight to the Blind

The recovery of sight to the blind is another dimension of Jesus' manifesto of Luke 4:18-19. Gooding asserts that "this obviously included the offer of literal sight to the physically blind, since various cases of healing of blind people are recorded in the Gospel (see 7:21; 18:35- 43)."¹⁷ He quickly however adds that the text also implies the opening of the spiritual eyes of people to enable them turn from darkness to light, citing

¹⁴Joel G. Green, 211 – 212.

¹⁵Kingsley Ikechukwu Uwaegbute, 152.

¹⁶See section on authorial intent.

¹⁷David Gooding, 82.

Acts 26:18.¹⁸ Along this line, Russell argues that “Jesus used his divine nature to cure people while simultaneously teaching the gospel. Should we not also seek to impact people holistically?”¹⁹ This paper considers the interpretation of recovery of sight to the blind in reference to the opening of people’s spiritual eyes to enable them turn from darkness to God’s light as more consistent with Lukan authorial intent.

To Set at Liberty those who are Oppressed

Yet another promise in the Jesus Manifesto of Luke 4:18-19 is “to set at Liberty those who are oppressed.” The issue of physical oppression of the Jews was a daily reality during the Roman imperialist rule in the days of Jesus’ earthly ministry. The Jews therefore understood this text in reference to their deliverance from Roman rule by the promised Messiah. Hopkins observes that: “Biblical stories provide examples of God siding with oppressed people. At the foundation of the Hebrew scriptures is a continuous story about how Yahweh heard, saw, and delivered oppressed Hebrew slaves from bondage to liberation (Exod. 3:6-11).”²⁰ Expatriating on the spiritual-physical implications of the text, Hopkins argues that “the biblical emancipation was not only freeing the invisible spirits of the slaves, but also the freeing of real workers who were real slaves to the ruling class, whose purpose was the accumulation of profit based on forced and unjust labor of working, oppressed humanity.”²¹ Uwaegbute agrees with the above assertion, but

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Mark Russell, “Christian Mission Today: Are we on a Slippery Slope? Christian Mission Is Holistic,” in *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 25:2 Summer 2008, 25.

²⁰Dwight N. Hopkins, 23-24.

²¹Ibid, 24.

adds that “aside Roman oppressive rule, other forms of oppression existed during Jesus’ time. Top among these was oppression by the devil in forms of sicknesses, diseases, demonic attacks, and lunacy.”²² All of these needed to be overcome through the liberty Jesus provided to the oppressed.

To Proclaim the Acceptable Year of the Lord

The final promise Jesus announced in his manifesto before returning the scroll to the attendant was “to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” Keener points out that “Isaiah in this passage (61:1-2; cf. 58:6) seems to describe Israel’s future in terms of the year of jubilee, or a year of release, from Leviticus 25 (cf. esp. Lev. 25:10).”²³ Some scholars suggest that either the Jews had just celebrated the jubilee or that it was anticipated, and therefore had not yet been celebrated.²⁴ Arguing from the position that the year of jubilee had not yet been observed in Israel, Uwaegbute explains that Jesus wanted his audience to know that, “while the Jubilee year had never been observed in Israelite history, his ministry will practically demonstrate what the Jubilee year was meant to entail. His ministry was to provide both material and spiritual needs of man. That was to be accompanied by forgiveness of sin and eternal life.”²⁵ Along this line, Wiersbe notes that during this special year, “slaves were set free and returned to their families, property that was sold reverted to the original owners, and all debts were

²²Kingsley Ikechukwu Uwaegbute, 153.

²³Craig S. Keener, 190.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Kingsley Ikechukwu Uwaegbute, 154.

cancelled. The land lay fallow as man and beast rested and rejoiced in the Lord.”²⁶ As stated earlier, Wiersbe argues, and this paper concurs that “Jesus applied all of this to His own ministry, not in a political or economic sense, but in a physical and spiritual sense.”²⁷ Fitzmyer points out that, “the Isaian description of a period of favor and deliverance for Zion is now used to proclaim the period of Jesus and the new mode of salvation that is to come in him.”²⁸ The above views of Wiersbe and Fitzmyer echo the authorial intent of Luke regarding proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord.

²⁶Warren W. Wiersbe, 149.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Fitzmyer, 532-533.

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