

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

**A STUDY OF MARK 16:14-18: ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR MISSIONARY WORK
IN ASANTE AKIM CENTRAL DISTRICT OF GHANA BAPTIST CONVENTION**

BY

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**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the award of Master of Philosophy in Religious studies and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the university, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother Comfort Owusu of blessed memory also known as Maame Nyanta and to my lovely wife Mavis Osei Owusu (Mrs) and our children: Nana Aseda Osei Owusu, Shalom Osei Owusu, Adwoa Asempa Osei Owusu and Afia Nhyira Osei Owusu for their prayers and encouragement.

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Osei Owusus Benjamin (Rev.)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BC	Baptist Church
GC	Great Commission
GBC	Ghana Baptist Convention
LBC	Liberty Baptist Church
AABC’S	Asante Akim Baptist Churches
AACD	Asante Akim Central District
C’TTEE	Committee
AACZMCWC	Asante Akim Central Zonal Ministers and Church Workers Conference
AABMF	Asante Akim Baptist Ministers Fellowship
JHS 3	Junior High School 3

ABSTRACT

The exegesis of Mark 16:14-18 revealed that the main command is to “preach the Gospel” whilst “going” is a participle supporting the main command. Preaching the Gospel to all creatures encompasses evangelization and discipling the members converted which would result in both qualitative and quantitative growth. The study was conducted at the Asante Akim Central Baptist Churches (AACBC’S) through the administration of questionnaire, interviews and the report of Asante Akim Central Zonal Ministers and Church Workers Conference (AACZMCWC) held at Truth Baptist (Konongo-Odumasi. A number of relevant written materials such as biblical commentaries and handbooks were consulted. The research has revealed that the numerical growth of Baptist Churches in the district is not up to the projections that some ministers and church leaders have proposed for their various churches. The study recommends intensification of outreach programmes that would ensure qualitative and quantitative growth of all Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

One of the popular passages that renowned evangelical preachers have made reference to is Mark 16:14-16. The reference is done especially during Evangelism and Mission Conferences. Mark 16:14-18 and Matthew 28:18-20 are popularly referred to as the “Great Commission”. The text enjoins Christians to preach the Gospel and initiate members into the Christian Community. Ghana Baptist Convention Churches are distinctively known to treasure God’s word in all their endeavours. The word of God is the standard in everything they do. This thesis seeks to conduct an exegetical study of Mark 16:14-18 and its implications on Missionary Work of the Ghana Baptist Convention Churches in the Asante Akim Central District and come out with suggestions that would enhance their growth.

1.2 Background to the study

There are many reasons why the church should engage in world evangelism, but the paramount reason is the command of Christ. It is generally assumed that the Greek word “πορευθέντες” in Mark 16:15 is an imperative and constitutes the last command from Christ. The Greek word “πορευθέντες ” is not an imperative but it is an aorist participle and should be translated “having gone” or “as you are going”. This in no way diminishes the full force of the statement. Jesus knew that in the course of events or as a result of persecution they would soon find themselves scattered to all parts of the empire.¹ Jesus brought together His own mission from the Father with the mission that He sent the disciples.² The “πάντη τῇ κτίσει” in Mark 16:14-18 stresses the universality of their proclamation. A mission is not only work for God, but work with God. The work is to be

¹ Edmond Hiebert, *Mark A Portrait of the Servant*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1979), 45-46

² Roger Greenway, *Go and make Disciples*, (A challenging introduction to Christian Mission), (Michigan: Authentic Publishing Company, 2009), 23-25.

done in a way that resembles the sacrificial obedience of Jesus Christ.³ Those who believe are mandated to share it with those who do not believe.⁴

In 1849 the foreign mission board of the Southern Baptist Mission in United State of America sent Rev. Jefferson Bowen to start Baptist in Nigeria. He was converted in 1840 and appointed missionary by the Foreign Mission Board and he was sent to Africa the same year. The foreign Mission Board handed over the leadership of the Church to indigeneous Nigerians but played supervisory role and offered assistance to the Nigeria Baptist Conventon until 1961. In 1947, the Nigeria Baptist Convention sent request to Nigeria Baptist Mission to send missionaries to Ghana and they responded to the request by sending Rev J.A. Idowu and Rev. H.R. Littleton to Ghana in 1948. In 1952, Rev. Littleton established the first indigenous Baptist Church at Boamang in the Ashanti Region. In 1963 at the Nigeria Baptist Convention Annual Session, the Ghana Baptist Conference was granted independence and in January 1964, the name Baptist Conference was changed to Ghana Baptist Convention⁵.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Graham Scroggie in studying Acts 1:8 came out with four concepts of witnessing. He believes that the central theme of the Christian witness is Christ, the exclusive medium of the Christian witness is the church, the ultimate scope of the Christian witness is the world, and the unfailing secret of the Christian witness is the Holy Spirit.⁶

The mandate of preaching the gospel to all creatures took place after Christ had resurrected. Jesus now sent His disciples out to spread the gospel over all the world.⁷

³ Hiebert, *Mark a Portrait of the Servant*, 417-418.

⁴ *Life Application Study Bible* (New Living Translation second edition). (Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, 2000), 1609.

⁵ Kwadwo Amo, *Baptist History, Polity and Practice*.(Accra: AliveTrust publishers' 2001,) 32-34

⁶ Graham Scroggie, *the Gospel of Mark*, (Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 233.

⁷ New Bible Commentary (21st Century Edition).(Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 944.

Christians are sent by God to do those things that Jesus expressed in His own ministry. Jesus preached the Good News, healed sick, taught His followers and expressed compassion and forgiveness in practical terms. One major strand in the commission is preaching the gospel and persuading people to believe in faith.⁸

Asante Akim Central District has fifty three (53) towns and villages⁹ and out of the number Baptist Churches can be found in five (5) towns and villages: Konongo, Peterensa, Odumasi, Praaso and Konongo Lowcost. The researcher sought to find out why out of fifty three towns and villages in the district only five of them have Baptist Churches. The researcher would also find out if there have been attempts to establish satellite churches in some towns and villages in the district but failed.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions for the study are as follows:

- a. How did the Ghana Baptist Convention Churches get to the Asante Akim Central District?
- b. What measures have the Ghana Baptist Convention Churches put in place to enhance their growth based on Mark 16:14-18?
- c. What impacts are the Ghana Baptist Convention Churches making in Asante Akim Central District?
- d. What have been the challenges of the Ghana Baptist Churches in doing missions based on Mark 16:14-18 in Asante Akim Central District?

1.5 Methodology

The researcher adopted exegetical methodology in chapter two but employed qualitative and quantitative approaches in chapter four of the study. Chapter two is basically focused

⁸ R.Foli, *Church Growth in Ghana*, (Accra: Wesley Printing Press, 2001), 6-7.

⁹ Document from Statistical Division of Asante Akim Central District Assembly p1

on the exegetical work of the text while chapter four is based on data collection through interviews and analyzing questionnaire. Ten members from Asante Akim Baptist Churches made up of ordained Ministers, Deacons and Church Council Members were interviewed with the same interview guide. Questionnaire was administered to hundred and eighty other respondents such as full members of departmental executives, young adults, and some founding members of some of the Baptist Churches in the district. The Zonal Meeting of Asante Akim Baptist Churches for the year 2015 held at Truth Baptist Church were examined to gather relevant information on church growth in the district.

1.6 Scope of study

This study is confined within the disciplines of New Testament Studies and implication of missionary work of Ghana Baptist Convention Churches within Asante Akim Central District. The study is focused on Mark 16:14-18; and its implications for missionary work in Asante Akim Central District of Ghana Baptist Convention. The study also looks critically at the history and growth of Baptist Churches in the Asante Akim Central District and Ghana Baptist Convention in general.

1.7 Objective of the study

Objective was to make an exegetical examination of the text, Mark 16:14-18, and deduce its implications on missionary work of the Ghana Baptist Convention Churches in Asante Akim Central District. The researcher in pursuing this objective aimed at providing a thorough study of Mark 16:14-18. The researcher also carried out an exegetical study of the passage to illustrate the meaning of the command more clearly and also identified the relevance of the passage and also to ascertain the problem associated with the growth of its missionary activities within the district.

1.8 Significance of the study

This study would provide information that will aid the understanding of Mark 16:14-18, with its central message of missions. The study would offer a recommendation to the Ghana Baptist Convention Churches in Asante Akim Central District about the effective ways of organizing missions in order to attain the needed growth. The study would enhance our understanding of missions and its impacts on church growth. The study would also serve as a guide for future researchers on issues of church growth.

1.9 Limitations of the study

No good study could be conducted without going through many challenges and for that reason the researcher positioned himself well to work around the clock to make this study a successful one. This study is focused on Mark 16:14-18 and its implication on missionary work of Ghana Baptist Convention Churches in Asante Akim Central District. The following limitations were encountered:

Accessing vital information relating to the mission work in the district was difficult since keeping information in print in rural areas were not common. Tight schedules of some key members whom the researcher wanted to interview were not possible because the nature of their work did not permit them. Besides the above points raised, to travel from Konongo to some villages like Praaso, Peterensa, Domeabra, Odumasi to seek for some information that would aid the study was cumbersome and time consuming.

1.10 Literature Review

Scroggie argues that the Great Commission in Mark 16:14-18 is the Churches' marching orders. A Church which is not missionary is not Christian. Every Christian has the right to hear the Good News and everyone who has heard it is under an obligation to proclaim it.¹⁰

¹⁰ Scroggie, *The Gospel of Mark*, 283.

The researcher agrees with Scroggie that everyone who hears the good news is under obligation to proclaim to others. However, Scroggie fails to talk about the training they have to receive before they can share the gospel with other people. The researcher believes that converts can communicate meaningfully and effectively after they have gained the needed knowledge and skills. This study will also help the researcher to ascertain how Baptist Church leadership in Asante Akim Central District prepare their members to share the gospel to others who are not in the Christian faith.

According to Adeyemo the Great Commission is a command to go with the Good News to all creation.¹¹ He opines that the Commission was backed by authority and all Christians have a mandate of sharing it with the world. The author further stresses that to obey God's command to preach the gospel is the most exciting, most urgent and most necessary task in the world.¹² The researcher commends the author for his contribution that the Great Commission is a command and no other task comes with such authority but the author did not use the Greek text to establish his claim. The researcher will use the Greek text to establish if the Great Commission is a comm. and binding on all disciples of Christ or not.

Foli emphasizes that churches prefer to remain where they are than making an attempt to move forward.¹³ He further explains that since Church growth cannot occur instantly, but realize over a period of time, church leaders who are interested in seeing growth must be future oriented.¹⁴ For the author to say that churches prefer to remain where they are rather than growing and church leaders who are interested in seeing growth must be future oriented is not the true picture in most of the churches. The researcher disagrees with the author because his argument lacks any documental evidence. Besides, he generalizes his

¹¹ T. Adeyemo, *Africa Bible Commentary*, (Nairobi: Publishing by word Alive publishers Kenya, 2006), 1201-1202.

¹² T. Adeyemo, *Africa Bible Commentary*, 1201-1202.

¹³ Foli Richard, *Church Growth in Ghana* (Church growth series) (Accra: Wesley Printing Press, 2000), 12-14.

¹⁴ Foli Richard, *Church Growth in Ghana*, 14.

argument which indicates that all churches are declining which the researcher thinks is not the real situation on the ground. The author's assertion however, will help the researcher to find out from Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District if they are growing numerically or declining as claimed by the author.

Uzodinma identifies two interdependent action steps to do the Great Commission: "go", and "baptizing", He gives implications to the steps: "go" implies evangelism and missions; "baptizing" also implies churching converts. He believes that the process engages both the Christian leader and the believer, and the task includes commitment, obedience, discipline and perseverance. The author identifies the word preach in Greek as "κηρύξατε" which calls for the proclamation of the gospel. He states further that in proclaiming the gospel one has to disciple those who believe the message. He defines a disciple of Christ as a believer who has a steadfast disposition to acquire knowledge of Him and His teachings as well as His lifestyle and skills.¹⁵ The researcher commends the author for his significant contribution made that "go" implies evangelism and mission whereas "baptizing" implies growing convert but identifies his failure to employ the Greek to establish his position. In view of that, the researcher will do an exegetical study of the text to establish an imperative or command from the pericope.

Alan shares that the scope of Jesus' earthly ministry, and the teaching work of the disciples had been deliberately restricted to the "house of Israel" and preaching to the Gentiles was excluded (Matt 10:5-6). The earthly ministry of Christ was to the Jews first (Rom 15:8); the ministry of the risen Christ is to all without distinction.¹⁶ The researcher agrees with the author that Jesus' earthly ministry was restricted to the house of Israel but ministry of the risen Christ was to all without distinction. This means all people no matter their ethnicity, colour, and race have the right to hear the gospel and to make informed

¹⁵ Uzodinma Obed, *Transformational Discipleship and the 21st Century Church*, (Ibadan: Publishing by GIA Ventures, 2008), 44-45.

¹⁶ A.Cole, *An Introduction and Commentary of Mark Gospel* (New Testament Commentary) (Bedford Square: Tyndale press, 1989), 260.

decision about it. The author however, fails to employ the Greek text to substantiate his points. The researcher would make use of an exegetical methodology of the text under study to establish that fact or otherwise. The researcher will also find out from Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District if some communities and individuals have been ignored from hearing the gospel or the gospel is being preached to all men without any distinction.

Hendrikson notes that the Great Commission signifies what the Lord has ordered. He has promised to impart all the needed strength to all men who obey the command of preaching the gospel to all men. He identifies κηρύξατε (preach) as having an imperative force. He goes further to state that “preaching” focuses on winning the mind, the heart and the will for God and the truth learned must be put to practice, appropriated by the heart, mind and will. He states preaching and baptising go hand in hand. He notes that teaching should continue throughout the lives of those who believe and have been baptised.¹⁷ The author is commended for identifying “κηρύξατε” (preach) as the main verb and imperative of the Great Commission and that would help the course of this study. The researcher would resort to the Greek text to analyse the text syntactically to establish the imperative and participle from the text.

Brown analyzing Jesus’ mandate to the disciples stresses that to all creatures in Mark 16:15 is a universal call applies to all people including their cultures. The author further shares that when one believes the gospel everything about the person changes and this transformed person becomes the representative of Christ in that particular environment. The transformed believer has a mandate to share his/her Christian faith to other people in that community for them to be converted.¹⁸ The researcher agrees with the author that the gospel should not be limited to certain kinds of people no matter their social disposition in life. The problem is that the author fails to employ the Greek text to establish his claim.

¹⁷ William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary*, The Gospel of Mark,(London: Billing and Sons Ltd, 1976) , 199.

¹⁸ R.Brown (ed), *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, (London: publishing in Britain 2000), 476.

The researcher will find out from members of the Baptist Churches in the district some challenges they go through in sharing the gospel to people in their communities who are not Christians.

Malphurs sees the Great Commission as the mandate for the church and the imperative is to “preach”.¹⁹ He further identifies other portions of the Gospels that constitute the Great Commission. They include: Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 24:46-49, John 20:21 and Acts 1:8. He shares that evangelism and discipleship process are the two main dimensions of constituting new believers in Christ. He urges that Christian leaders should make time to nurture converts who come into the Christian faith. He blames Christian leaders for not having program to nurture converts and that constitute their difficulty of sharing their faith.²⁰ The researcher commends the author for his good work. He was emphatic that to preach the gospel is an imperative however; he fails to use the source language to establish his points. It is for this reason that the researcher would employ an exegetical methodology to identify the main command of Mark 16:14-18. The researcher will find out from leaders of the Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District measures they have put in place to disciple converts into maturity.

Akins suggests that Churches should have proper measures in place to evangelize the world. The purpose of doing an outreach program is to share the gospel and win others for Christ. He urges Christians not to force anyone to believe the gospel. The mandate for everyone who believes is to share the gospel but the conviction will come from the Lord.²¹ The author’s comments are commendable and will help the researcher to find out from the Baptist leadership in the district measures they have put in place to evangelize the district and some challenges confronting them in doing evangelism and mission work in the

¹⁹ A.Malphurs, *strategic Disciple Making, A Practical tool for Successful Ministry*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book, 2009), 14.

²⁰ Malphurs, *strategic Disciple Making, A Practical tool for Successful Ministry*, 15.

²¹ Wade Akins Thomas, *Pioneer Evangelism*, (Rio de Janeiro: Junta de Missoes Nacionais Press, 20000), 14-15

district. Recommendations will be made to the churches but that will be based on researcher's findings.

Autrey is of the view that from the pulpit to pew a church must work passionately to see people continually coming to Christ. Pastors, church officers and Sunday school teachers must have the desire to see people find Christ as Saviour. The work of evangelism is primarily the task of the church. Evangelism must always be vitally related to the church. He further states that evangelism is an imperative for the local church. The church which ceases to evangelize neglects one of its primary reasons for existing and begins the process of decline. He continues that the churches in the New Testament era were evangelistic. Evangelism is a mandate to the local church.²² The researcher commends the author for his good works on evangelism because evangelism serves as a wheel for the growth of the church. The researcher agrees that without evangelism there will be no growth in the church. The author states categorically that evangelism is an imperative for the local church and to cease to evangelize neglect one of the church primary reasons to exist and begin the process of decline. Though the author fails to state if the imperative applies to all churches at all times or not, the researcher will assess critically how Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District are committed to evangelizing the whole district for Christ and recommendations will be made but that will be based on the researcher's findings.

Ken says that the mandate for being witnesses for Christ is clear and unimpeachable. Jesus spoke of the value of the souls of men and the need to confront them with the gospel before His resurrection. Jesus also gave the evangelistic work order, not only to His disciples but to all believers. Ken further notes that Jesus' commission to His disciples is a straightforward statement describing the desire of Jesus for all Christians to evangelize the world. The imperative command is the word "proclaim". The going is implicit and

²² C.E.Audrey, *Basic Evangelism*, (Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), 50-53

understood as the normal action.²³ The author continues to share that the gospel must be proclaimed to the world with its natural hostility toward Christ, and its violence opposition toward righteousness, Christ sent His disciples.²⁴ The author's work on the text under study is commendable. He clearly states that the imperative is the word "proclaim" but fails to use the Greek to establish that claim. The researcher will also find out from Baptist Churches in the district how they proclaim the gospel to all manner of people without any discrimination and recommendation will be made based on the findings from the researcher.

Reisinger believes that the Great Commission has three distinct parts, make disciples, baptize them and teach them. It is not the Christian's prerogative to leave out any one of them. He continues that the first part of the commission is to go and make disciple that is seeking to bring men into a right relationship with God. He shares that a disciple is a learner of the teachings, a follower of the teacher and one who conforms to the teacher and the teachings. The second part of the goal is to baptize them. The author argues that the third part of the commission "teaching them...." is a long life ministry. That is seeking to bring them into a right relationship to the word of God.²⁵ The researcher agrees with the author and his points raised. This will help the researcher to find out if all the points raised by the author are applicable to the Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District.

Roland shares that the commission in Mark 16:15 is one dominant and controlling imperative, while the verb form is participle. The Greek word "πορεύεσθαι" translated "go" is a participle and could be translated "going" or "as you go". Likewise, the word translated "baptizing" is participle. While this participle is immensely important, the imperative "preach" is of superlative importance. He emphasises that lack of compassion for souls is the greatest tragedy of Christians and of churches throughout the world. He further notes that the master used every method of evangelism that all men might be saved.

²³ Stephens Ken, *Discipleship Evangelism*, (Phoenix: Publishing by Good Life Productions, 1978), 14

²⁴ Stephens, *Discipleship Evangelism*, 18.

²⁵ Ernest C. Reisinger, *Today's Evangelism*, (Phillipsburg: Craig Press, 1992), 7-8

He preached with power, and He taught God's truth to all who would learn of Him. He rebuked hypocrisy, He wept over the sin-burdened, He exhorted the unrepentant, and He patiently called the wavering. The author was of the view that the early disciples took the Great Commission seriously when Jesus told them to make disciple of all nations. Their passion for souls was kept aflame by constant spiritual fellowship with Christ and also by continued efforts to win others. They acted under the authoritative command of Christ the Lord.²⁶ The researcher commends the author for using the Greek “πορευθέντες” (Poreuthéntes) to establish as a participle and κηρύξατε (keerúxate) as imperative. The researcher would carry out an exegesis of Mark 16:14-18 in order to reveal why κηρύξατε is the main command in the pericope. The researcher would also conduct a study in Asante Akim Central Baptist Churches to establish whether the author's assertion that churches have no compassion for the lost souls is true or not and make recommendation that will be based on the findings.

Wimber stresses that Christians can fulfil the commission with the love of God. He further notes that before Jesus commissioned them to go, He resourced them with the power required to do it. He opines that every Christian has been called to the harvest field. Though there is always a need for more workers, there has never been a time in this century when so many workers and programme have been tilling the fields. He further stresses that when proper measures are not put in place, fulfilling the mandate will be impossible.²⁷ The researcher agrees with the author that Jesus resourced the disciples with the power they required. Christian leaders should resource or equip their members before they send them to preach the gospel. The researcher would like to find out from the leadership of Asante Akim Central Baptist Churches measures they have put in place to equip their members in reaching out the district for Christ. Recommendation will be made based on the findings of the researcher.

²⁶ Roland Q. Leavell, *Evangelism Christ's Imperative Commission*, (New Orleans: Broadman Press Nashville, Tennessee, 1971), 3-6

²⁷ John Wimber, *Power Evangelism*, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1986), 35-37

Fraser notes that evangelization is an indispensable and central component of the mission of the church. He continues that the Greek word *euangelion* meaning “good news” stresses a message to be communicated. *Euangelion* is derived from the Greek word *angelos* which means angel or messenger of God. The message of the events and meaning that surround Jesus Christ is to be shared with all people. Fraser further notes that if no one is sent to them, there is no opportunity to hear. The author further stresses that the message must be clear and attractive and those who share it must prepare adequately. The message must be comprehensible within the audience’s own pattern of meaning.²⁸ The researcher commends Fraser for his immense contribution made and his vivid explanation of the idea of evangelizing non-Christians with the message of Christ, however, he fails to identify the Greek word to determine why preaching the gospel is the imperative in the Great Commission. In view of that the researcher will do an exegesis of the text under study to establish why “preaching” is the imperative but not “go”.

Chafer says that those who are already in the Christian faith must be ready to respond to God’s calling of reaching the world with the gospel. He further shares that after preaching the gospel to them, there should be a follow-up to make sure that they are well nurtured and integrated into the various departments in the church.²⁹ The author fails to identify the Greek words which support his assertion. The researcher would identify the Greek words relevant to the text and then analyse them syntactically to reveal κηρύξατε (*keerúxate*) as the imperative whilst πορευθέντες (*poreuthéntes*) as participle. The researcher will find out from Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District their preparedness of sharing the gospel with others in their various communities.

Norman shares that the leadership of the church is the main agent of making sure the commission has been fulfilled. Leaders are called to minister to both the spiritual and social needs of the world. He further notes that the gospel has to be used to meet the need

²⁸ Dayton Fraser, *Planning Strategies for World Evangelization*, (Michigan: Publishing by Wm.B. Eerdmans and Co, 1980,) 46-47

²⁹ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *True Evangelism*, (Edinburgh: Publishing by Zondervan Publishing House, 1989), 6.

of all people. He shares that one cannot meet the spiritual needs of people effectively if what they share have no bearing on their social needs. Evangelism therefore cannot be separated from social action and social justice. He emphasizes that the gospel has to be used to meet the needs of the people in society especially the poor and the oppressed.³⁰ The researcher agrees with the author that Christian leaders have to be responsible by using the Gospel to meet the spiritual and social need of the people. The idea of social need has become priority in most of the churches. Churches are undertaking social intervention programs in the area of education, employment, infrastructure and a lot. Churches are providing clothing, food and shelter to people who lack such basic needs in life. The researcher will use this study to find out what social intervention programs Baptist Churches in the district are doing to help their communities and make recommendations based on the findings.

William believes that the focus of the church has been shifted from her mandate of reaching the world with the gospel to something else. He shares that the Church lacks even a sense of reaching the world and how to make steady progress on the problem confronting the church.³¹ The researcher disagrees with the author's assertion that churches lack a sense of doing evangelism and missions". The author's conclusion looks as if churches do not know what they are doing in the area of evangelism and mission which to the researcher is unfair conclusion. His views will not be considered in this study because he fails to substantiate his points raised.

Burnett notes that the mission of Israel was basically one in which people would be drawn to the nation, for this reason Jesus was to give His disciples a new commission to go out into the whole world. The Great Commission is not just a single statement found in Mark 16:15 and Matthew 28:19, but consists of five statements found in the first five books of the New Testament and each statement adds elements to the total Commission. The first

³⁰ Norman Thomas, *Readings in World Mission*, (London: Orbis Publishing House, 1995), 148-149

³¹ William J. Abraham, *the Logic of Evangelism*, (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1989), 1.

event occurred after the resurrected Christ appears and speaks to the disciples. It is at this time that He gives them the commission. Burnett continues to share that the second event occurs after the incident on the Emmaus road when Jesus suddenly appeared to the disciples (Lk 24:36-48). Mark 16:14-18 provides the third statement of the Commission. The imperative in this commission is to preach the gospel to all manner of people. One additional factor in Mark's Commission is the emphasis on believers being given the power to perform miracles. The fourth event occurred in Mark 28:18-20, and the last event occurred in Acts 1:6-8. The universal scope of the missionary task is to the end of the world.³² The author further shares that sharing the gospel can take place at any time but whatever form it takes, making known the message of the gospel must be central. The author argues that many evangelicals see evangelism and social action as equal activities so distinction has to be made between the two which most often confuse people.³³ The researcher commends the author for his significant contribution made and the researcher would use the study to find out what social intervention programmes Baptist leaders in the district adopt in the course of sharing the word of God in various communities.

Coleman notes that it takes regenerated Christians to proclaim the gospel effectively and make positive impact on their communities. He further stresses that Jesus' calling of the disciples was not based on their social status but their willingness to leave every thing behind and follow Him. They had no academic degrees in the arts and philosophies of their day and their formal education likely consisted only of the Synagogue school. Most of them were raised in the poor section of the country around Galilee. None of them occupied prominent places in the Synagogue, nor did any of them belong to the Levitical Priesthood. They were impulsive, temperamental, easily offended and had all the prejudices of their environment. These men selected by the Lord to be His assistants represented an average cross section of the society in their day. Not the kind of group one would expect to win the

³² David Burnett, *God's Mission: Healing the Nations*, (Bromley: Publishing by Send the Light Publishers, 1986), 142-143.

³³ David Burnett, *God's Mission: Healing the Nations*, 143.

world for Christ but when Jesus called them He nurtured them before He sent them out to preach the gospel.³⁴ The researcher commends Coleman for his good work done but his assertion that most of the Christ disciples were ordinary men in their societies was not well explained. The researcher agrees with the author that as converts are being sent out to proclaim the good news they should not look down on themselves because of their social status nor should they look down on those they would proclaim the gospel to. The researcher argues that the gospel must be preached to all men being rich or poor, healthy or sick, educated or illiterate, young or aged. The researcher will use the study to ascertain or not if Asante Akim Baptist Churches discriminate in sharing the gospel or they proclaim their faith to all manner of people in their various communities. The mode of selecting members to form church leadership will be observed critically so that recommendation will be made that will help the growth of Baptist churches in the district.

Hesselgrave shares that the essence and method of mission are often lost and that make leadership not even think about missions at all.³⁵ The author further states that the one who speaks on the mountain is the risen Christ to whom all authority (*exousia*) has been given. The Holy Spirit will provide the power or might (*dunamis*) to fulfil the command (Acts 1:7-8). The commission is clearly related to Christ's authority by the word. Two meanings are possible: (1) all authority is behind the command; (2) all authority belongs to Christ so those commanded to go, can do so in that assurance.³⁶ He notes that the word which translated "go" is participle in the original and not an imperative. It should be probably translated "going" or "as you go." But that should not be allowed to blunt the force of the word. He further notes that baptizing is a participle which derives imperatival force from the main verb. The most complete and oft-quoted statement of the Great Commission are found in Matthew 28 and Mark 16, however, the parallel passages should not be

³⁴ Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, (New York: Publishing by Fleming H. Revell Company, 1984) 21-23

³⁵ Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally*, (Michigan: Publishing by Bakers Book House; Grand Rapids 1982) 22.

³⁶ Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally*, (A Guide for Home and Foreign Missions) 23.

overlooked since they serve to underscore its central motifs. A comparison of these varied statements of the Great Commission clearly shows that they are neither redundant nor contradictory but they are complementary.³⁷ The researcher agrees with Hesselgrave that the command in Mark 16:14-18 is to preach the gospel and that would assist the course of the work.

Kennedy shares that the gospel must be proclaimed without any compromise. But people must be respected and communicated to in a way that enables them to intelligently accept or reject the gospel. The author further stresses that Christian leaders must endeavour to come out with programme which will motivate, recruit and train men, women and young people to do the job of evangelism and then keep them doing it. Christian leaders must integrate evangelism and mission programme in the church activities.³⁸ The researcher agrees with the author that the gospel must be proclaimed without any compromise and people are not being forced to accept the gospel or reject it. He fails to use Greek text to substantiate his claim. In view of that the researcher will conduct an exegetical study of the text under study to establish the author's claim or disprove it. His assertion will enable the researcher to know from the Greek text the imperative and participles. The researcher will find out from the Baptist Churches in the district how they empower their members to do mission and recommendations will be made based on the findings.

Hamilton opines that reading Jesus' final words as found in Mark 16:14-18 and Matthew 28:18-20 reveal the mystery of God's unconditional love for individuals and nations. He sees the heart of the Great Commission as preaching to all nations, whilst "going", "baptizing" and "teaching" are participles.³⁹ The researcher agrees with Hamilton that Jesus reveals God's unconditional love for individuals and nations on the Great

³⁷ Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally*, 24-25.

³⁸ James Kennedy, Archie B. Parrish and Vic Jackson, *Evangelism Explosion*, (London: Publishing by Ark Litho Ltd, 1988), 1-2.

³⁹ D.J.Hamilton, (ed) *The New Testament Basis for the Discipling of Nation*, (Seattle: YWAM Publishing, 2008), 74-75.

Commission and assess how this love has influenced Asante Akim Baptist Churches to proclaim the gospel to communities that have not experienced this special love of God.

Johnson and Stevens define church growth as the balanced increase in quantity, quality, and organizational complexity of a local church. They emphasize that if the three components do not take place in a balanced way, a church will not maintain its good health.⁴⁰ If for instance, church growth occurs only as numerical increase, at the expense of quality and organizational development. However, if qualitative development excludes quantitative growth, the product is again an unhealthy and the result is an ingrown, introspective attitude that not only fails to attract new people, but also repels those who remain. Likewise, if organizational and structural development is neglected while the church focuses on quality and quantity, growth will be limited. New people attracted to the church will not be effectively absorbed into the fellowship because of the lack of leadership development and programme to meet their needs. On the other hand, if organization is emphasized without careful attention to quality and quantity, the church will be indistinguishable from the average social club. The church may function well, but it will lack drawing power and spiritual energy.⁴¹ The researcher agrees with the authors that church growth must be balanced in the areas of quality, quantity and organizational complexity of the local church. The authors' idea of balance growth in local churches will help this study. The researcher will do an assessment of all Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District to see if their growth is based on the three points raised by the authors' and recommendation will be made to them in order to enable them to grow in all the areas in the ministry.

Wagner indicates that church growth means all that is involved in bringing men and women who do not have a personal relationship to Jesus Christ as Lord. According to Wagner, the overall purpose of God for the unsaved people in the world is basic to New

⁴⁰ R.Johnson and W. Stevens, *Dynamics of Church Growth*, (Michigan: Publishing by Baker House Company, 1984), 10-11

⁴¹ R.Johnson and W. Stevens, *Dynamics of Church Growth*, 11.

Testament Christianity and also to church growth. The provision God has made for bringing lost people to Himself is the gospel. This is the good news that Jesus commanded to be preached to every creature in Mark 16:15. The author further notes that the difference between those who are not in the Christian faith and those who are saved are their response to the gospel. Thus, it is crucial that all those who are not in the faith must hear the gospel and hear it in such a way that they will repent of their sins and place their trust and commitment in Christ as their Lord.⁴² The author's comments are recommendable and the researcher would find out if is applicable in Asante Akim Central District.

Berkley sees church growth as all that is involved in bringing men and women who do not have a personal relationship to Jesus Christ into fellowship with Him and into responsible church membership. He further notes that church growth must based on a pragmatic analysis of existing churches, and it emphasizes numerical growth as an indication of church health. He also stresses that to evangelize is to spread the Good News that Jesus Christ died for and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures. But evangelism itself is proclamation: telling about the historical, biblical Christ as the Saviour with a view to persuading people to come to Him personally and so be reconciled to God. The Great Commission also requires that Christians teach people to be Christian in lifestyle, to disciple them so that they begin observing daily all that Christ has commanded.⁴³ The researcher agrees with the author that church growth involves bringing men and women who do not have personal relationship with Christ. This will enable the researcher to find out from the Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District what they are doing to bring those who are not yet Christians for them also to have personal relationship with Christ.

Dickson shares that all the synoptic gospels mention the commission of Jesus to the disciples to take the good news to the world (Matt 28:19-20, Mk 16:15, Lk 24:46-47, Jn

⁴² Peter Wagner, *Your Church can grow*, (California: Publishing by G/L Pulications Glendale, 1971), 36-37.

⁴³ James D. Berkley, *Leadership Handbook of Outreach and Care*, (Michigan: Baker Books, 1994), 3-4.

20:21-23). The author emphasizes that Jesus knew that the disciples now had the good news of His resurrection, and they would definately go. He did not need to command them to go. The command is in “preaching the good news”. In their going into all the world they must preach the gospel to every creature.⁴⁴

Winston stresses that understanding the central truth of Christ’s commission is to discipling all the people groups of the world. This is the imperative in the Great Commission whereas the other verbs in the commission are participles. The concept of people groups as separate ethno linguistic and cultural entities is prominent in church growth thought.⁴⁵

Greenway indicates that Christians need to share with one another what the Bible teaches and what they have learned by experiencing about the important subject of missions.⁴⁶ According to him, mission will continue until people of all nations, races, tribes and languages accept the gospel.⁴⁷ Greenway is commended and his work would be of much help for this research. However, he fails to deal with what constitute the command based on the text. The researcher would make use of an exegetical methodology to identify the main command of Mark 16:14-18.

Foli emphasizes that the goal of mission is to have a truly indigenous congregation in every community of every culture. When that occurs, Christians may be sure that the gospel has been preached to every creature. He further stresses that internal growth is the essential quality that a church must have if it is to grow in any other way. Where a church is growing internally, the presence of God’s Spirit is evident to those who are not members.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Dickson Roger, *Dickson Teacher’s Bible with Commentary and Encyclopedic Study Guide*, (Kansas: Africa International Missons Publishers 2011), 1143

⁴⁵ Winston Crawley, *Global Mission, (A story to tell)*, (Nashville: Broadman press, 1985), 270.

⁴⁶ Greenway, *Go and make Disciples*, 12-13.

⁴⁷ Greenway, *Go and make Disciples*, 12-13.

⁴⁸ R.Foli, *Church Growth in Ghana* (Church growth series) (Accra: Wesley Printing Press Ghana 200), 12-14

Miles notes that evangelism is three dimensional. It is being, doing, and telling the gospel. The being corresponds to what the Bible calls *koinonia*, the doing to the biblical *diakonia*, and the *telling* to the biblical *kerygma*. Evangelism is being the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and the aroma of Christ. There is the being dimension where evangelism is fishing for persons, bearing fruit that abides forever, and engaging in the ministry of reconciliation. There is the dimension of doing where evangelism is the proclamation of the gospel, bearing witness to Jesus Christ, and advertising the wonderful deeds of Christ. Making disciples is a task which always includes those three aspects of life, love, and lips. Evangelism with integrity will attempt to achieve a wholesome balance among being, doing, and telling. If any dimension is totally missing for long in any evangelistic method, a state of asymmetry and disproportion will occur.⁴⁹ The researcher commends the author for the contribution made that evangelism is three dimensional and all the three dimensions have to be met in order to avoid the church finding herself in the state of asymmetry and disproportion. The researcher however, will assess Baptist Churches in the District to ascertain if all the three dimensions of evangelism are operational in local Churches in the district.

McGavran argues that real mission must seek to create not churches but outposts of the kingdom of God in all its perfect purity, love, and power most vigorously reject the misconception that evangelization is the planting of churches or even the extension of the church. McGavran dismisses church planting as the aim of mission, despite the fact that it was what the apostle Paul devoted himself to and what the founders of modern missions proclaimed. He notes that there should be a drawn programme to nurture those who have believed.⁵⁰ The researcher commends the author for his in-depth knowledge in church growth and his takes that there should be a drawn programme to nurture those who have believed. This will assist the researcher to find out from the leadership of Asante Akim

⁴⁹ Delos Miles, *Introduction to Evangelism*, (Michigan: Publishing by Broadman Press, 1973), 49.

⁵⁰ D.A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 357

Baptist Churches the drawn programmes they have put in place to nurture those who have come into the Christian faith and base on it to make recommendation.

Logan argues that to preach to the spiritual needs of man's heart without addressing his physical needs as well is to become the hypocrite who turns away his needy neighbour with friendly words: "go in peace, and be filled".⁵¹ The researcher disagrees with the author because the text is not about providing material need but to preach the gospel to all creatures. The researcher will find out from the leadership of Asante Akim Baptist Churches if there are measures put in place to meet the material needs of the people they preach the gospel to them.

Miles shares four major types of church growth; these are internal, expansion, extension, and bridging. Internal growth is a growth in grace. Expansion growth is the growth of a congregation through evangelism with emphasis on conversion growth. Extension growth is a growth through planting daughter churches in the same homogeneous group and geographical area. Bridging growth is establishing churches across cultural and geographical barriers. He continues that another way to conceive these four types is to think of bridging growth as foreign missions, extension growth as home, state, and local missions, expansion growth as the growth of one local church, and internal growth as the growth of the individual Christian and development of the local congregation.⁵² The researcher commends the author for the good work done by elaborating more on church growth. The researcher will critically assess Baptist Churches in the district to ascertain if various growths propounded by the author are applicable or not and make recommendations.

Powell opines that the measure of a church is in the fulfilling of its mission. A church must not forget what its priorities are. He further argues that the church is the ultimate institution

⁵¹ Robert E. Logan, *Beyond Church Growth (Action Plans for Developing a Dynamic Church)* (New York: Publishing by the Fleming H. Revell Company, 1984), 94.

⁵² Delos Miles, *Church Growth (A Mighty River)*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1973), 52-53

God has chosen to reach and disciple the world. It is the existing institution which seeks to address the needs of the people. He continues that until the leadership of the church knows what to do; they cannot properly measure the success or failure, the greatness or smallness of the church. It is, therefore, tragic when a church turns inward and thinks only of itself; when consciously or unconsciously it ceases to care about the growth and reach out to its community. He concludes that for a church to remain vital and dynamic it must look beyond and reach out to the lost. To remain vibrant and alive, the church must retain its sense of mission.⁵³ The researcher agrees with the author that mission must be her priority. The leadership of the church must clearly state their mission statement to serve as a guide. The researcher also shares with the author that the church must look beyond and reach out to non-Christians. The researcher will find it out from the Baptist Churches in Asante Akim District if they have clearly stated their mission statement that guides them in reaching out to other communities.

1.11 Organization of the study

This study has been divided into five chapters, chapter one deals with the introduction of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, methodology, relevance of the study, organization of the study, limitation of the study and literature review. Chapter two is an exegetical study of Mark 16:14-18, it discusses issues that emanate from the exegesis of the pericope. Chapter three examines the situational profile of Asante Akim Central District, brief history of Ghana Baptist Convention, the history of the Baptist Church in the Asante Akim Central District and some activities and growth of the Baptist Churches in the district. Chapter four focuses on data presentation, findings and its implications while chapter five focuses on the summary of findings, issues emerging out of the study, recommendations and conclusions.

⁵³ Paul W. Powell, *Shepherding the Sheep in Smaller Churches*, (Michigan: Annuity Board Publishers, 1995), 11-12

1.12 Conclusion

Scholars have made their different views about Jesus' Commission to the eleven disciples known. Some of them like Malphrus used the Greek text to establish their claims that the command in the commission in Mark 16:14-18 is "preaching the gospel". While others share the same opinion that the imperative in the commission is to preach the gospel but failed to use the source text to establish their claims. There are few who failed to make any comments as to whether preaching the gospel is a command and binding on contemporary Christianity or not. It is for this reason the researcher employ an exegetical methodology in chapter two of this study and analyse the text under study to establish the main command and its implications in Asante Akim Central Baptist Churches.

CHAPTER TWO

Exegesis of Mark 16:14-18

2.1 Introduction

In chapter one, the general introduction was discussed: the background to the study, statement of problem, research questions, objective of the study, scope of the study, methodology, significance of the study, literature review and organization of the research. This chapter focuses on the exegetical analysis of Mark 16:14-18,

2.2 Background to the gospel of Mark

The traditional author of the second gospel is first introduced in Acts as "John whose surname was Mark" (Acts 12:12). Since the two names are alternatives, there is some inaccuracy in calling him "John Mark", because the New Testament never used the combination. John was a common Hebrew name, while Mark or Marcus, was Latin. The use of such a Latin or Greek second name was quite common among Greek speaking Jews.⁵⁴ In attempting to fix the date of this Gospel the critics range from A.D. 44 to A.D. 75. Recent criticism is decidedly in favour of a date prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. It seems certain, therefore, that this Gospel was written between A.D. 40 and A.D.56, and the evidence as a whole points to A.D. 50 as the most probable date. If this be so, then Mark is the earliest of the New Testament Writings, with the possible exception of James.⁵⁵ The author wrote for Greek-speaking readers, for this is the language of the original text. More specifically, the first readers appear to have been unfamiliar with the Semitic languages of Palestine (Aramaic and Hebrew), because the writer pauses to interpret phrases in these languages when he employs them (5:41; 7:11, 34; 10:46; 15:22, 34). Further, the writer explains Jewish customs and religious groups to his readers, indicating that they were not residents of Palestine and were probably not Jews (7:3-4;

⁵⁴ Hiebert, *Mark A Portrait of the Servant*, 12.

⁵⁵ Scroggie, *The Gospel of Mark*, 6.

12:18; 14: 12).⁵⁶ Craig also shares that Mark's audience probably lived outside Palestine and most of them were non-Jewish; Rome is the most likely of these proposals favored by some early Christian tradition, though it is not certain. According to Carson, Mark writes to Gentiles seems clear from his translation of Aramaic expressions, his explanation of Jewish customs such as the washing of hands before eating (7:3-4).⁵⁷ The book of Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels. The gospel traditions were circulated orally under the supervision of eyewitnesses and as they began to die, it became important to record the gospel traditions in writing.⁵⁸ Both the writings of the early church fathers and from internal evidence prove that this gospel was written shortly after the death of Peter which occurred in 64 AD under the persecution of the Roman Caesar Nero.⁵⁹ The gospel of Mark goes straight to the point, discussing Jesus' identity, the role of suffering, and the necessity of faith. Mark was a disciple of Peter; therefore, Peter's perspective appears repeatedly in this gospel. Mark paints a picture of Jesus as a servant leader. He clearly and concisely portrays Christ as a compassionate model to follow. His fast-paced narrative describes the suffering servant, who engaged in consistent ministry to others through healing, teaching, feeding, encouraging, and restoring the broken. It makes sense that Mark might maintain such focus, since he needed such encouragement himself. He travelled with Paul and Barnabas across Asia Minor on their first missionary journey, but sometime during their ministry, Mark grew frightened and left the team. Mark sees Jesus as the ultimate leader. Mark's picture, however, portrays Him not so much as the Messiah but as the model for all people. Jesus gave Himself to others. He spent time meeting their physical needs (3:1-11); He spent time with His twelve disciples (3:13, 14); He empowered the twelve for ministry (3:14-19); and He spent time teaching the people (3:23-29). More than anything, Mark teaches us that the master considers relationships to

⁵⁶ Hutardo, *New International Biblical Commentary*, 10.

⁵⁷ Keener, *Bible Background Commentary*, 134.

⁵⁸ J. Vines, *Exploring the Gospels of Mark*, (New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers Publishers, 1990), 308

⁵⁹ *New Living Translation Study Bible*, (Illinois: Tyndale Publishers House, 200), 1642.

be paramount.⁶⁰ The content of the book along with extra biblical sources, indicate that Mark's Gospel was written for the benefit of those who lived outside the area in which Jesus had His ministry. The Lord's actions, rather than his words, are given the most attention, particularly miracle He performed which demonstrated His divinity. The narrative moves swiftly from one stirring scenes of Jesus' ministry to another without interruption.⁶¹

2.3 Delimitation of the text of Mark 16:14-18

Mark 16:14-18 forms part of the longer ending. The Longer Ending starts from verse 9-20. Mark 16:14-18 could stand on its own as a pericope because in the immediate five preceding verses, 9-13, Jesus had appeared to Mary Magdalene and the two disciples whose names were not mentioned. In the text under study, Jesus specifically addressed the twelve disciples and rebuked them of their unbelief and hardness of heart. Such instances did not happen to Mary Magdalene or the two disciples in the preceding verses so there is an indication that the audience in verse 14 were different from the previous ones.

The use of adverb ὕστερον meaning 'later or afterward' in verse 14 clearly indicates a change of time and place. However, in verse 9 there was specific time Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene, that is, early on the first day of the week but in verse 14 there was no specific time Jesus appeared to the eleven. The use of the adverb 'ὕστερον' indicates different time with different audience from the preceding events.

In the text under study, no specific mention is made of the place where the incident took place, however in the subsequent text a specific place, οὐρανὸν (heaven), is mentioned. After the Lord had talked to them He was taken to heaven.

The theme also changes from Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene and the two disciples to the great commission. From verse 9-13 attention was centered on Jesus' appearance to

⁶⁰ J.C.Maxwell, *The Maxwell Leadership Bible*, 1224-1225

⁶¹ Graham Scroggie, *the Gospel of Mark*, 133

Mary Magdalene and the two disciples. The subsequent verses, from 14-18, also have different theme that of the Great Commission. From verse 14-18, we find Jesus commissioning the disciples to go into the world and preach the gospel to all creation. The fivefold signs that will accompany those who will believe the gospel include: casting out demons, speaking in new tongues, handling snakes with safety, drinking anything poison without danger and healing the sick by placing on of hands.

2.4 Greek Text of Mark 16:14-18

¹⁴ Ὑστερον [δε] ἀνακειμένοις αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἑνδεκα ἐφανερώθη καὶ ὠνείδισεν τὴν ἀπιστίαν αὐτῶν καὶ σκληροκαρδίαν ὅτι τοῖς θεασαμένοις αὐτὸν ἐγгерμένος οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν.

¹⁵ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· πορευθέντες εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἅπαντα κηρύξατε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει.

¹⁶ ὁ πιστεύσας καὶ βαπτισθεὶς σωθήσεται, ὁ δὲ ἀπιστήσας κατακριθήσεται.

¹⁷ σημεῖα δὲ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ταῦτα παρακολουθήσει· ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου δαιμόνια ἐκβαλοῦσιν, γλώσσαις λαλήσουσιν καινὰς,

¹⁸ [καὶ ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν] ὅφεις ἄροῦσιν καὶ θανάσιμόν τι πίωσιν οὐ μὴ αὐτοὺς βλάβῃ,

ἐπὶ ἄρρῶστους χεῖρας ἐπιθήσουσιν καὶ καλῶς ἔξουσιν.⁶²

2.5 Transliteration of the Greek Text of Mark 16:14-18

¹⁴ Hústeron [dé] anakeiménois autoís toís héndeka efaneroóthee kaí ooneídisen teén apistían

autoón kaí skleerokardían hótí toís theasaménois autón egerménon ouk epísteusan

⁶² Nestle-Alan *Greek-English New Testament*. (Stuttgart:Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1981), 87

¹⁵ Καί εἶπεν αυτοῖς Πoreuthéntes eis tón kósmon hápanta keerúxate tó euangélion pásee teé ktísei

¹⁶ Ho pisteúsas kaí baptistheís soothéēsetai ho dé apisteésas katakritheēsetai

¹⁷ Seemeía dé toís pisteúsasin taúta parakoloutheēsei. En toó onómatí mou daimónia ekbalóusin Gloóssais laleésousin kainaís

¹⁸ Καί en taís chersín ófeis aroúsin Kán thanásimón ti píoosin ou-meé autoús blápsee epí arroóstous cheíras epitheésousin kaí kaloós héxousin.⁶³

2.6 Translation of Greek to English and its transliteration

Verse 14

Υστερον	δε	ἀνακειμένοις	αὐτοῖς	τοῖς	ἐνδεκα	ἐφανερώθη	ὠνείδισεν
Afterward		as reclining at table	they	unto the	eleven	he appeared	upbraided
Hústeron	dé	anakeiménois	autoís	toís	héndeka	efaneroóthee	ooneídisen

τὴν	ἀπιστίαν	αὐτῶν	καὶ	σκληροκαρδίαν	ὅτι	τοῖς	θεασαμένοις	αὐτὸν
with	unbelief	their	and	hardness of heart	because	them	which had seen	Him
teen	apistían	autoón	kaí	skleerokardían	hóti	toís	theasaménois	autón

ἐγγεγερμένον	οὐκ	ἐπίστευσαν.
after he was risen	not	they believeth
egeegerménon	ouk	epísteusan.

Verse 15

Καὶ	εἶπεν	αὐτοῖς·	πορευθέντες	εἰς	τὸν	κόσμον	ἅπαντα	κηρύξατε	τὸ
And	he said	unto them.	Go ye	into	the	world	all	preach	the
Καί	εἶπεν	autoís.	Poreuthéntes	eis	tón	kósmon	hápanta	keerúxate	tó

⁶³ Interlinear Greek Bible, 865

εὐαγγέλιον πᾶση τῇ κτίσει.
 gospel to every creature
 euangélion pásee teé ktísei.

Verse 16

Ὁ πιστεύσας καὶ βαπτισθεὶς σωθήσεται, ὁ δὲ ἀπιστήσας
 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he but that believeth not
 Ho pisteúsas kaí baptistheís sootheésetai ho dé apisteésas

κατακριθήσεται.
 shall be damned
 katakritheésetai.

Verse 17

σημεῖα δὲ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ταῦτα παρακολουθήσει· Ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι μου
 signs and them that believeth these shall follow in name my
 Seemeía de toís pisteúsasin taúta parakoloutheései. En toó onómatí mou

δαίμόνια ἐκβαλοῦσιν, γλώσσαις λαλήσουσιν καινὰς,
 devil shall cast out tongue they shall speak with new
 daimónia ekbalóusin gloóssais laleésousin kainaís

Verse 18

Καὶ ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν ὄφεις ἄρουσιν καὶ θανάσιμόν τι πίωσιν
 And hands serpent they shall take up and if deadly thing any they
 drink
 Kai en tais chersín ófeis arousing kán thanásimón ti píoosin

Οὐ μὴ αὐτοὺς βλάβῃ, ἐπὶ ἁρρώστους χεῖρας ἐπιθήσουσιν καὶ
 not them it shall hurt on the sick they shall lay and
 ou autoús blápsee epí arroóstous cheíras epitheésousin kai

καλῶς ἔξουσιν.
 they shall recover
 kaloós héxousin.

2.7 Rough translation of Mark 16:14-18

Verse 14

Afterward as reclining at table, they unto the eleven He appeared and upbraided them with unbelief and hardness of heart because them which had seen him after he was risen not they believeth

Verse 15

And He said unto them, Go ye into the world, all and preach the gospel to every creature

Verse 16

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he but that believeth not shall be damned.

Verse 17

Signs and them that believeth; these shall follow in name my devil shall they cast out tongues; they shall speak with new

Verse 18

Hands serpent, they shall take up and if deadly thing, any they drink not them; it shall hurt on the sick, they shall lay and they shall recover

2.8 Smooth Translation of Mark 16:14-18

Verse 14

Afterward as they were reclining at table, He appeared unto the eleven and upbraided them with unbelief and hardness of heart because they did not believe them which had seen Him after He was risen

Verse 15

“He said to them as you are going into the world, preach the Gospel to all creatures”. Or
“having gone into the world, preach the Gospel to all creatures”.

Verse 16

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned

Verse 17

These signs shall follow them that believeth, in my name they shall cast out devil and they
shall speak with new tongues

Verse 18

They shall take up serpent with their hands, they shall drink deadly thing and it shall not
hurt them, they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover

2.9 Structure of Mark 16:14-18

Vv14a-----Jesus’ appearance to the eleven

Vv14b-----The rebuke of the eleven by Jesus

Vv15-----The commission of the eleven by Jesus

Vv16-----The fate of the believer

Vv17-18-----Signs associated with the believer

2.9.1 Jesus’ appearance to the eleven Apostles (Mark 16:14a)

“Υστερον [δε] ἀνακειμένοις αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἑνδεκα ἐφανερώθη

Afterward as they were reclining at table, He appeared unto the eleven

The term ἑνδεκά ‘eleven’ is used in a collective sense to designate the apostolic company irrespective of the exact number.⁶⁴ There is no indication of place or time; all that is available is ‘later or afterward’. When Jesus suddenly appeared to His disciples in their Jerusalem gathering place, they thought that they saw a spirit, and even a little later they still ‘disbelieved for joy’.⁶⁵ Three times Jesus appeared to His disciples. He first appeared to Mary Magdalene (16:9), then to two of them (16:12), and finally to the eleven (16:14). The remaining disciples were persistent in their unbelief. The only thing that renewed their faith was the appearance of their resurrected Lord.⁶⁶ Unbelief and hardness of heart had long been the besetting sins and nowhere was this more apparent than in this reluctance to believe in the resurrection. The adverb “Afterward” in verse 14 is an indefinite designation of time, simply denoting a time subsequent to the appearances just mentioned.⁶⁷ He upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart. The strong Greek verb ὤνειδισεν meaning upbraided, reproached or censured is not used elsewhere of Jesus in the resurrection accounts. They were guilty of hardness of heart, obstinacy and stubbornness, refusing to bow in faith to receive the testimony of eyewitnesses.⁶⁸ This appearance to the eleven followed immediately upon the report of the Emmaus travellers (Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-25). Luke and John do not create the impression that Jesus scolded them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, but he recognized how hard it was for them to believe, and he sought to remove their difficulty by proof of His resurrection.⁶⁹ The appearance to the eleven on the evening following the resurrection is given in both Gospels of Luke and John but differs from that of Mark in the matter of Jesus’ reproach of

⁶⁴ D.Stibbs, *The New Bible Commentary*, (Michigan: WM.B.Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1958),839.

⁶⁵ W.Hendriksen, *Gospel of Mark*, 689

⁶⁶ J.Vines, *Exploring the Gospels of Mark*, 308-309.

⁶⁷ R.A.Cole, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (An Introduction and Commentary), (Michigan: Wm.B.Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 260.

⁶⁸ Hiebert, *Mark A Portrait of the Servant*, 417

⁶⁹ C.F. Pfeiffer and E.F.Harrison, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press 1980), 1025.

their unbelief of the stories of His resurrection.⁷⁰ He appeared to them Himself, when they were all together, as they reclined at the table, which gave Him an opportunity to eat and drink with them.⁷¹ In this third and final appearance, Jesus comes into the room where the eleven remaining disciples are reclining at dinner, still refusing to believe the reports of those who had seen Jesus alive⁷².

2.9.2 The rebuke of the eleven by Jesus (Mark 16:14b)

καὶ ὠνείδισεν τὴν ἀπιστίαν αὐτῶν καὶ σκληροκαρδίαν ὅτι τοῖς θεασαμένοις αὐτὸν ἐγγεγερμένον οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν.

and upbraided them with unbelief and hardness of heart because they did not believe them which had seen Him after He was risen

Jesus rebuked the eleven apostles for not believing the report of those who first saw Jesus after the resurrection. The apostles were evidently still suffering from despondency as a result of the death of the one they thought would be the Messiah of Israel. Their discouragement would not allow them to believe again after such great disappointment. Therefore, they were still in a state of shocked at the time the women reported the resurrection.⁷³

The Lord upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart because they had not accepted the testimony of the women and of Cleophas and his companion who only confirmed what Jesus Himself had told them would take place.⁷⁴ By hearing about Jesus' resurrection before seeing Him, they learned what it was like to believe the testimony of eyewitness. This would be necessary for all those to whom they would preach in their

⁷⁰ E.P.Gould, *The International Critical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark*, (New York: Morrison and Gibb Publishers 1983), 307.

⁷¹ M. Henry, *Commentary on the whole Bible*, (Massachutt: Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody 1992), 1818

⁷² David L. McKenna, *The Communicator's Commentary*, (Texas: Publishing by Word Books Publishers, 1973), 327

⁷³ Dickson Roger, *Dickson Teacher's Bible with Commentary and Encyclopedic Study Guide*, (Kansas: Africa International Missions Publishers 2011), 1180.

⁷⁴ H.R.Ironside, *Expository Notes on the Gospel of Mark*, (New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers Publishers 1982), 248

coming missionary outreach.⁷⁵ Though they had not till now seen him themselves, they are justly blamed because they believe not the one who seen Him after He was risen.⁷⁶ The unbelief is not something that is merely intellectual as unbelievers and others often believe. When Jesus appeared and upbraided the disciples, it was not merely their disbelief that he scored but also their “hardness of heart” or rather “heart stiffness” that refuses to bend and yield to the proper evidence, refuses to believe in spite of such evidence. The root of all unbelief lies in this heart of stiffness. Whereas they should believe they refuse to believe; what they ought not to trust they persist in trusting. The guilt is expressed in Greek word “ὠνεΐδισεν” meaning upbraided; this word shows with severity Jesus treated the unbelieving disciples.⁷⁷ After rebuking them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, Jesus goes directly to the purpose of His appearance. He gives the Great Commission for world evangelization along with the promise of salvation to those who believe and with the power to do miracles.⁷⁸

2.9.3 The commission of the eleven by Jesus (Mark 16:15)

καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· πορευθέντες εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἅπαντα κηρύξατε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον

πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει.

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creatures.

The commission is a command to go with the good news to all the world and to all creation.⁷⁹ Here He set forth His programme of world evangelization in no uncertain terms. They are to carry the good news of an accomplished redemption, not only to Israel to whom the message of the kingdom had been largely confined during the Lord's earthly

⁷⁵ Bible Knowledge Commentary, 763.

⁷⁶ R.A. Cole, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 259.

⁷⁷ R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel*, (Minneapolis: Publishing by Augsburg Publishing House, 1964), 762.

⁷⁸ David L. McKenna, *The Communicator's Commentary*, 327

⁷⁹ R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel*, 763.

ministry but into the world.⁸⁰ Jesus now makes it clear to the disciples that the gospel is for all the world, not just for the Jews (John 10:16). They must go to every village, town and city of the world (Mt 28:19, 20). No community must be left untouched by the proclamation of the gospel. They were mandated to preach the gospel to all creatures which designates what is to be done, what to preach, and to whom the preaching must go.⁸¹ Jesus broke down the assignment into reasonable segments because one cannot go everywhere and preach the gospel to every creature.⁸² The good news is central to the Great Commission, as it was central to Jesus' mission on earth. They are to take the good news to all nations or all creation. The emphasis of all means that "all creation" implies that there can be no exception.⁸³ The commission gives more emphatic expression to the universal destination of the gospel.⁸⁴ They had been sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and were forbidden to go into the way of the Gentiles, or into any city of the Samaritans; but now their mission is enlarged and they are authorized to go into all the world, into all parts of the world, the habitable world, and to preach the gospel of Christ to every creature, to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews; to every part of the world, much less to every creature in it, but they and the other disciples.⁸⁵ In this commission, Jesus backed it up with the miraculous credentials that only He could give. The message is the Gospel, the Good News of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. The message is to share Christ to the whole world.⁸⁶

2.9.4 The fate of the believer (Mark 16:16)

ὁ πιστεύσας καὶ βαπτισθεὶς σωθήσεται, ὁ δὲ ἀπιστήσας κατακριθήσεται.

He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believe not shall be damned

⁸⁰ H.R. Ironside, *Expository Notes on the Gospel of Mark*), 248-249.

⁸¹ Roger, *Dickson Teacher's Bible with Commentary and Encyclopedic Study Guide*, 1180.

⁸² J.Vines, *Exploring the Gospels of Mark*, 310.

⁸³ T.Adeyemo, *Africa Bible Commentary*, p.1227

⁸⁴ A.B.Bruce, *The expositors Greek Testament*, (Michigan: Eerdmans printing company, Grand Rapids 1980), 456.

⁸⁵ M.Henry, *Commentary on the whole Bible*, 1818

⁸⁶ *The Bible Exposition Commentary of the New Testament*, 254.

The main thought in verse 16 is not baptism because Jesus was not teaching that one has to be baptized to be saved. The crucial word which is believed because baptism does not confer salvation rather confirms it. According to the author, baptism is an outward act that demonstrates an inward experience.⁸⁷ The one who credits this gospel as a revelation from God; and is baptized obliging him/herself to walk according to its precepts, shall be saved from sin and brought to eternal glory. But he that believes not shall be damned because the person rejects the only provision that could be effectual to his salvation.⁸⁸ It is noteworthy that no mention of baptism is made rather it is unbelief which leads to condemnation not absence of any ritual observance.⁸⁹ Those who received the message in faith were to witness to it by declaring themselves openly as His disciples. There was no saving virtue in the ordinance itself, but it was an expression of subjection to Christ. Those who refused to believe would be judged.⁹⁰ He that believed and is baptized shall be passing from the duty to preach to the result of that preaching, the singular number which points to the individual response to the gospel.⁹¹ The aorist participle point to actions viewed as past in relation to the time of the verb “shall be saved” that is, from his sins, as the result of faith and confession. There will be others who after having heard the message will respond in disbelief, deliberately refuse to receive it. Such unbelief carries penalty, “shall be condemned”.⁹² That one who does not believe the gospel will be damned by God. The basis for condemnation is unbelief, not lack of any spiritual observance. He continues that he who credits the gospel as a revelation from God and baptize obliging himself to walk according to its precepts, and he shall be redeemed.⁹³ He who believes the message of the gospel enters into an obligation to proclaim to others.⁹⁴ If they believe not or receive not the gospel, they cannot expect any other way of salvation but must inevitably perish; but

⁸⁷ Vines, *Exploring the Gospels of Mark*, 310.

⁸⁸ D.R.W.Wood, *New Bible Dictionary*, (InterVarsity Press, 1996), 14

⁸⁹ D.R.W.Wood, *New Bible Dictionary*, 15.

⁹⁰ Ironside, *Expository Notes on the Gospel of Mark*, 249.

⁹¹ Ironside, *Expository Notes on the Gospel of Mark*, 250.

⁹² Hiebert, *Mark, A Portrait of the Servant*, 418.

⁹³ Vines, *Exploring the Gospels of Mark*, 325.

⁹⁴ The Critical Bible Commentary, 573.

they that believe the gospel and give up themselves and the flesh and be devoted to Christ shall be saved from the guilt and power of sin.⁹⁵ He that comes to disbelief at the very moment shall have the verdict of condemnation pronounced upon him by Christ. This involves the fact that the person hears the gospel preached, for only then can he respond it with disbelief. He who believes receives salvation, forgiveness and eternal life but those who refuse to believe shall be judged.⁹⁶ The preaching of the gospel is significant and those who listen will either be saved or condemned. The only people who will not be condemned are the people who believe the message preached.⁹⁷ The unbelief of the disciples is truly amazing, no wonder the Lord ‘upbraided them’ but did not abandon them. These ordinary and faithless men are given a supreme opportunity; they are made the custodians of the gospel, and given the world for a sphere.⁹⁸

2.9.5 Signs associated with the believer (Mark 16:17-18)

σημεῖα δὲ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ταῦτα παρακολουθήσει· ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου δαιμόνια ἐκβαλοῦσιν,

γλώσσαις λαλήσουσιν καιναῖς,

,[καὶ ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν] ὄφεις ἄροῦσιν καὶ θανάσιμόν τι πίωσιν οὐ μὴ αὐτοὺς βλάβῃ, ἐπὶ ἁρρώστους χεῖρας ἐπιθήσουσιν καὶ καλῶς ἔξουσιν.

These signs shall follow them that believe, in my name they shall cast out devil and they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpent with their hands, they shall drink deadly thing and it shall not hurt them, they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.

⁹⁵ Matthew Henry's *Bible Commentary*, 945.

⁹⁶ Lenski, *The Interpretation of Mark's Gospel*, 765.

⁹⁷ Manford George Gutzke, *Plain Talk on Mark's Gospel*, (Michigan: Publishing by Zondervan House, 1975), 189.

⁹⁸ Graham Scroggie *on Mark and Matthew*, (Pennsylvania: Publishing by ARK Publishers, 1981), 131.

The signs would authenticate or confirm their message.⁹⁹ These signs shall follow or accompany them that believe.¹⁰⁰ These gifts were part of the credentials of the apostles as the authoritative agents of God in founding the church.¹⁰¹ These signs were what Paul calls "the signs of an apostle" (2 Cor 12: 12). These miraculous powers were given to the authoritative messengers in order to accredit them as Christ's representatives (Acts 4:30-33; 5: 12). But they were not displayed by any who did not believe but to those who became witnesses publicly such gifts were granted.¹⁰² These signs are promised to accompany "them that believe," those who as a definite act of faith embraced the gospel. It points to faith as the initial and fundamental feature of the Christian life. The promise is not limited to the preachers, but includes their converts. These signs were the authenticating credentials of the apostolic message, exhibiting the presence of the living Christ working with and through His messengers.¹⁰³ The miraculous signs would be for the confirmation of the message and messengers.¹⁰⁴ To take up serpents in their hands is the evidence of them to live under the power and protection of God, and that all nature is subject to Him. This was literally fulfilled in the case of Paul in Acts 28:5.¹⁰⁵ Gospel uses the ethical term for them which is far higher than 'wonders' or 'power works'. These signs were the credentials for the apostles and their gospel message, seals that proved their message genuine.¹⁰⁶ The signs promised are characteristic of our Lord's activity; the speaking with tongues is new and belongs to the apostolic period; and the taking up of serpents and drinking poisons with impunity is absolutely foreign to Lord's principle.¹⁰⁷ The good news must be proclaimed with the authority of Jesus Christ.

⁹⁹ Vines, *Exploring the Gospels of Mark*, 311.

¹⁰⁰ Adam Clarke's Commentary, 850.

¹⁰¹ Hendriksen, *Gospel of Mark*, 690.

¹⁰² Ironside, *Expositor Notes on the Gospel of Mark*, 249.

¹⁰³ Hiebert, *Mark, A Portrait of the Servant*, 416.

¹⁰⁴ Roger, *Dickson Teacher's Bible with Commentary and Encyclopedic Study Guide*, 1180.

¹⁰⁵ A. Clarke's Commentary, 432.

¹⁰⁶ R.C.H Lenski, *Interpretation of St. Mark Gospel*, (Ohio: the Wartburg Press, 1968) 675.

¹⁰⁷ E.P. Gould, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*, 307.

The accompanying signs that God may choose to give are not the focus.¹⁰⁸ Signs are supernatural events confirming the divine origin of the apostolic message. The signs authenticated the faith the early believers proclaimed, not the personal faith that anyone of them exercised. In fulfilling their commission in Mark 16:15, believers would be given the ability to do miraculous things in Jesus' name.¹⁰⁹ The signs mentioned in verse 18, had been witnessed during the earliest beginning of the church. God gave the gift of speaking in tongues to meet a very urgent need. Within days the multitudes attending the Feast of Pentecost were to return to distant home. Paul did shake off a deadly serpent (Acts 28:3-6), and the tradition speaks of certain Christians who escaped death by poisoning because God protected them from the attacks of enemies. These signs were to be evidence of God's protective power, and not to be exhibitions of self-confidence. The signs were necessary for the establishment of the church; they attracted and indisputably served their purpose.¹¹⁰ The promise of charismatic gifts held out to those who believe indicates clearly enough that the narrator belonged to the community which held that speaking in tongues, exorcism, and healing were not confined to the church, but were the ongoing marks of authentic Christian faith.¹¹¹ So much dispute centers on this montage of the spiritual signs of casting out demons, speaking in tongues, handling snakes and healing the sick but none of them should be made a cardinal doctrine that diverts Christians from the central Truth of the Great Commission.¹¹² These signs will follow them that believe and will occur after people believe. The preaching of the gospel is by the authority of God, and if it is done as God wants it done there will be signs following.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ Adeyemo, *Africa Bible Commentary*, 1228

¹⁰⁹ *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 543

¹¹⁰ Ivor Powell, *Mark's Superb Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Publishing by Kregel Publications, 1985), 425.

¹¹¹ Anderson Hugh, *The Gospel of Mark*, (London: Publishing by Butler and Tanner Ltd, 1980), 360.

¹¹² David McKenna, *The Communicator's Commentary*, 327.

¹¹³ Manford, *Plain Talk on Mark's Gospel*, 189.

2.10 Exegetical Analysis of Mark 16:14-18

Verse 14

“Ὑστερον [δὲ] ἀνακειμένοις αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἑνδεκά ἐφανερώθη

Afterward He appeared to the eleven as they were reclining at the table.

“Ὑστερον (Afterward) is adverb from ὑστερος qualifying the meaning of the verb ἐφανερώθη (manifest). The use of Ὑστερον in verse 14 indicates that Jesus had finished some event before He manifested Himself to the eleven. “Afterward” is an indefinite designation of time, simply denoting a time subsequent to other appearances recorded in Luke 24:36-43 and John 20:19-29.¹¹⁴ In Greek adverbs modify verbs mainly by either limiting its action or state with respect to time (now, then) or place (here, there) or qualifying the verb’s action or state with respect to manner (quickly, gently) or degree (first, more). Ὑστερος occurs 12 times in the New Testament but appears 7 times in Matthew alone. [δὲ] is adversative particle and never stands in the first position in the sentence. [δὲ] is being served as a connecting particle that reconciles the previous event to what is currently happening that indicates transition ‘now’ ‘then’ or ‘afterward’. The particle [δὲ] is the fourth most frequent word in New Testament. [δὲ] also signifies the resumption or continuation of the main idea.¹¹⁵

αὐτοῖς serves as personal pronoun dative masculine from αὐτος (he) and functions as subject of the verb ἐφανερώθη (appeared or manifested). In Greek the subject of most verbs can relate whether an action, a state, active, middle or passive. Since Greek verbs are inflected (their form changes) for person and number they frequently don’t need to have an expressed subject, especially if the subject should be a pronoun like ‘he’ or ‘you’. The dative is used to indicate a relationship between the action of

¹¹⁴ Hiebert, *Mark A portrait of the Servant*, 417

¹¹⁵ J.M. Gibson, *The Expositor’s Bible: the gospel of Mark*, (London: A.C. Armstrong and Son, 1903), 450

the subject through the verb and the substantive.¹¹⁶

In the above Greek sentence ἑνδεκα (eleven) serves as an adjective modifies the pronoun αὐτοῖς. ἑνδεκα also serves as direct object to αὐτοῖς while Ἀνακειμένοις serves as indirect object of the verb ἐφανερώθη. Ἀνακειμένοις in the above Greek sentence serves as verb participle present middle dative masculine plural from ἀνακειμαι meaning to recline at table. The present nature of the verb indicates that the action is supposed to continue. At the table was the exact place Jesus manifested Himself to the eleven.¹¹⁷

In the above Greek sentence αὐτῶν is a personal pronoun genitive masculine plural from αὐτός it serves as the subject of the verb ὠνείδισεν (upbraided). The main verb in the sentence ὠνείδισεν gives much emphases on the subject αὐτῶν. ὠνείδισεν is aorist active and 3rd person singular from ὠνείδιζω.

Ἀπιστίαν (unbelief) is a noun accusative feminine singular from ἀπιστία. Ἀπιστίαν serves as the direct object of the verb ὠνείδισεν. The meaning of the negative words ἀπιστεω is largely dependent upon that of the positive words πιστις and πιστευω. Since there is no Hebrew equivalent to the positive form, only Greek texts from the sphere of Judaism are available as a basis for comparison. Unbelief, ἀπιστία, denotes in the technical sense rejection or non acceptance of the message. ἀπιστία in Mark 16:14 is an inability or unwillingness to believe in the face of the improbability of the report but at the same time it carries a negative valuation because of its equation with σκληροκαρδίαν. ὅτι (because) is a conjunction explaining why the eleven were being upbraided or reproached.¹¹⁸

θεασαμένοις (which had seen) is a verb participle aorist middle dative masculine plural from θεάομαι. In the sentence the verb θεασαμένοις asserts what the subject αὐτῶν is

¹¹⁶ J.D.Kwamena Ekem and Seth Kissi, *Essentials of Biblical Greek Morphology (with an Introductory Syntax)*. (Accra: SonLife Press, 2010), 24.

¹¹⁷ Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, (Michigan: Publishing by Eerdmans Printing Company, 1987), 468.

¹¹⁸ Gould, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*, 307.

doing. The defective verb appears in the New Testament only in the pluperfect. θεάομαι in the New Testament always signifies the act of seeing with the eyes, as with the other verbs of seeing. The Greek verb θεάομαι is derived from θεα (view, appearance) and indicates its particular connotation. The verb θεάομαι appears 22 times in the New Testament.¹¹⁹

Verse 15

καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· πορευθέντες εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἅπαντα κηρύξατε τὸ
εὐαγγέλιον

πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει.

He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creatures.

The Greek phrase καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς begins with a conjunction coordinating καὶ. εἶπεν serves as a verbal complement to complete the action of the preceding verb πορευθέντες. αὐτοῖς is a personal pronoun dative masculine plural and indirect object of the verb εἶπεν. αὐτοῖς serving as masculine plural indicating that Jesus was not addressing an individual but a group of people.¹²⁰

The use of the Greek phrase πορευθέντες εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἅπαντα translate as (go into all the world). This verse has a verbal participle πορευθέντες “go” preposition accusative εἰς “into” definite article τὸν “the”, adjective accusative ἅπαντα “all” and noun accusative masculine singular κόσμον “world” from κόσμος.

πορευθέντες has been rendered by some English Bible Versions such as the King James Version and Revised Standard Version as “go” and preach the gospel to all creatures. This translation seems to portray πορευθέντες as imperative but it is not, because the word πορευθέντες is a participle. Morphologically πορευθέντες is an verb aorist passive nominative masculine plural participle deponent verb from πορευομαι. The inflected verb as found in the text could be translated as “having gone”, but since it is a passive deponent

¹¹⁹ Kittel, *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*, 752.

¹²⁰ Kittel, *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*, 521

verb and deponent verbs are active in meaning, Πορευομαι expresses normal movement. It means “go away”. The verb linked with αὐτοῖς serves as a pronoun and subject of the verb.¹²¹

Εἰς is a preposition that precedes the noun κόσμον. The preposition is placed before the noun κόσμον to indicate the relationship to either the verb πορευθέντες or the noun κόσμον. Κόσμον is a noun accusative masculine singular from κόσμος meaning “world” or “universe”. κόσμον therefore modifies the verb πορευθέντες. The Greek concept of κόσμος was meditated to early Christianity by Hellenistic Judaism especially in the late and original Greek writings. Κόσμος is the totality of everything created by God thus including all that is created and transitory. Κόσμος has the special message of world as the dwelling place of God and as the totality of humanity or of human relationships.¹²²

The Greek sentence κηρύξατε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει translates as “preach the gospel to all creatures”. Κηρύξατε (to preach or proclaim) is an imperative aorist active 2nd person plural from κηρύσσω. In Greek, the imperative verb expresses command; this expresses the urgency of how the good news has to be proclaimed to all creatures. Κηρύξατε which is an imperative gives much emphasis on the preceeding noun εὐαγγέλιον which has to be proclaimed to all creatures. The formation of the early Christian language of proclamation occurred in connection with these related terms, but added new content to them. κηρύξ stands in Greek as the origin of the linguistic development of the word group and it came to fill with conceptual significance only at the late period of early Christianity. In the Markan ending κηρύσσω is used to describe the proclamation as a worldwide mission within the horizon of the creation.¹²³

¹²¹ Kittel, *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*, 774.

¹²² Exegetical dictionary of the New Testament, 876

¹²³ Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Mark*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books House, 1973), 874.

εὐαγγέλιον is a noun accusative neuter singular meaning good news. The accusative neuter focuses the verbal action of κηρύξατε thereby limiting the action to or by the accusative substantive. εὐαγγέλιον therefore serves as the direct object to the verb κηρύξατε. The New Testament proclamation of the εὐαγγέλιον can take both Old Testament-Jewish and Hellenistic-Greek tradition.¹²⁴ The primary dependence of the noun on Greek Hellenistic tradition is evident. The close connection between εὐαγγέλιον and the person of Christ indicates also for Mark that the term is derived from the Christological tradition of the Hellenistic world. Jesus' proclamation of the Gospel is not only the fulfilment of the time, but the future reign of God as announced. πάση (every) is adjective dative singular modifying the noun κτίσει.¹²⁵

Verse 16

ὁ πιστεύσας καὶ βαπτισθεὶς σωθήσεται, ὁ δὲ ἀπιστήσας κατακριθήσεται.

He that believe and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believe not shall be damned

The sentence ὁ πιστεύσας καὶ βαπτισθεὶς σωθήσεται begins with the definite article (ὁ) which serves as nominative masculine singular and subject to the verb πιστεύσας. The definite article serves as demonstrative pronoun (he) and indicates a change in subject sometime with suggestion of contrast. Definite article is sometimes omitted in translation in some expressions when it is used between a demonstrative adjective and a noun. In this regard ὁ becomes the subject of the verb πιστεύσας. πιστεύσας (believe) is a verb participle aorist active nominative masculine singular from πιστεύω.

κατακριθήσεται (to condemn) is a verb indicative future passive 3rd person singular from κατακρινω. The verb κατακρινω appears in the LXX only 4 or 5 times representing

¹²⁴ Vine expository dictionary of the New Testament, 895

¹²⁵ Kittel, *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*, 534

Hebrew meaning *gazar* only in (Septuaginta Est 2:1)¹²⁶. Mark uses the verb in judicial sense in his two related and obviously redactional occurrences (10:33, 14:64) for the condemnation. Mark affirms that Jesus' condemnation was legal and this cannot be attributed to his tradition. 1 Corinthians 11:32 distinguishes between the simple verb as educative refining judgment and the compound verb which is used for the total condemnation to which all of Adamic humanity is subjected.¹²⁷

Σωθήσεται (to save) is a verb indicative future passive 3rd person singular from σωζω. The mood being passive indicates that Jesus was the one on whom the action was directed. The verb indicative asserts what the subject *ὁ* is either in action or state of being. The future passive and 3rd person singular makes σωζω future responses of God's salvation.¹²⁸ Σωζω occurs 106 times in the New Testament and is distributed fairly in the various writings. In the New Testament the initiator of saving and helping action is often God, usually mentioned only indirectly through the divine passive. It is Paul's use of σωζω that the verb refers either to present missionary efforts by the apostle or other Christians or to God's future decision.¹²⁹

Verse 17

σημεῖα δὲ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ταῦτα παρακολουθήσει· ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου δαιμόνια ἐκβαλοῦσιν, γλώσσαις λαλήσουσιν καινὰς,

These signs shall follow them that believe, in my name they shall cast out devil and they shall speak with new tongues

Σημεῖα (a sign) is a noun nominative neuter plural from σημεῖον. σημεῖα serves as subject to the verb πιστεύουσιν. The narrator uses σημεῖ which is far higher than “wonders” or “power work.” These signs were the credentials for the apostles and their gospel

¹²⁶ R.T.France, *The Gospel of Mark* (A Commentary on the Greek Text) (Michigan:William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1990), 97.

¹²⁷ Kittel, *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*, 531.

¹²⁸ R.C.H Lenski, *The Interpretation of St.Mark's Gospel* (Ohio: The Wartburg Press Columbus 1956), 766.

¹²⁹ *Vine expository dictionary of the New Testament*, 897.

message.¹³⁰ The noun σημεῖον occurs 77 times in the New Testament especially in historical writings. Jesus' followers witnessed various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:22). Speaking in tongue is a 'sign' for unbelievers. The Egyptian plagues are signs pointing to God, and before the Jewish war prophets appeared promising "signs" of freedom with the intention of proving that God was with them. For Paul a σημεῖον can be external sign.¹³¹

ἐκβαλοῦσιν (to cast out) is a verb indicative future active 3rd person plural from ἐκβαλλω. Ἐκβαλλω is a compound of βαλλω and appears 81 times in the New Testament. Cast out suggests the meaning of ἐκβαλλω in the most comprehensive sense.¹³² In Greek generally, ἐκβαλλω has many shades of meaning in New Testament. The subject is always a person or a group of persons and it has also a weaker meaning of "send away". A person or group of persons is more frequently the object of ἐκβαλλω in New Testament. In the majority of cases it denotes a more or less forcible casting out.¹³³

Καιναῖς (new) is an adjective dative feminine plural from Καινος. The adjective modifies the meaning of the noun γλώσσαις (tongue). Καιναῖς also serves as the indirect object of the verb λαλήσουσιν (to speak). The adjective Καινος appears 38 times in the New Testament. The compound form of the word does not, as a rule, have the theological profile of the adjective or of the noun.¹³⁴

Δαιμόνια (a demon) is a noun accusative neuter plural from δαιμόνιον. In the above Greek sentence δαιμόνια is serving as the direct object of the verb ἐκβαλοῦσιν. The ability to cast out demons is not limited to individual people but to all those who believe the gospel. In New Testament διαμονιον occurs a total of 63 times in the gospels. In Matthew 8:31 διαμων stands in place of διαμονιον which is a neuter form of the adjective διαμονιος used

¹³⁰ Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel*, 768.

¹³¹ Vine Expository Dictionary of New Testament word, 907.

¹³² Albert Bengel, *New Testament Word Studies*, (Michigan: Kregel Publications Grand Rapids 1971), 373.

¹³³ Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 876.

¹³⁴ Bible exposition commentary of the New Testament, 365

as the subject. Israel originally attributed good and evil to Yahweh and saw in God power to do harm messengers of both chastisement and temptation (Septuaginta 1 Samuel 16:14-23). Angels appear as helpful powers while demons are diabolical and destroyers. Demons injure and destroy, they are described as “unclean spirits”. The great majority of New Testament occurrences of διαμονιον are in the reports of Jesus’ miraculous healings in the synoptic gospels.¹³⁵

ὀνόματι (name) is a noun dative neuter singular from ὄνομα. ὀνόματι in the context modifies the verb παρακολουθήσει meaning to accompany or investigate. New Testament usage of ὄνομα only partially corresponds to general Greek usage. Preposition constructions with ὄνομα are from the most non-Greek and should be considered direct or indirect Semitism. Applying to Jesus ὄνομα constructions that were applied to God in the Old Testament belongs to the style of other New Testament as well.¹³⁶ ὄνομα occurs 230 times in New Testament and is especially frequent in the synoptic gospels and Paul’s writings.¹³⁷

Verse 18

18. Ὅφεις ἀροῦσιν καὶ θανάσιμόν τι πίωσιν οὐ μὴ αὐτοὺς βλάβῃ, ἐπὶ ἀρρώστους χεῖρας ἐπιθήσουσιν καὶ καλῶς ἔξουσιν.

They shall take up serpent with their hands, they shall drink deadly thing and it shall not hurt them, they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.

The Greek sentence Ὅφεις ἀροῦσιν καὶ θανάσιμόν τι πίωσιν οὐ μὴ αὐτοὺς βλάβῃ meaning they will pick up snakes with their hands begins with Ὅφεις (snake) which serves as accusative masculine plural and indirect object of the verb ἀροῦσιν. There are 14

¹³⁵ Kittel, Theological dictionary of the New Testament, 786.

¹³⁶ Bible exposition commentary on New Testament, 986.

¹³⁷ Exegetical dictionary of the New Testament, 321.

occurrences of ὄφεις in the New Testament and 5 of them are in the book of Revelation. The New Testament does not attribute any special value to snake, as was the case in addition to negative evaluation in antiquities. Snake is regarded without symbolic significance as a dangerous animal that man does not give to his son (Matt 7:10).¹³⁸

Ἀροῦσιν (to take up) on the other hand is a verb indicative active 3rd person plural from αἶρω. The verb asserts what the subject αὐτοὺς is doing, that is, they will lay their hand on sick people. Αἶρω can stand unemphasized in relation to another verb to designate an object which a person takes up as he or she commences some other action. The act of taking can receive more emphasis when it speaks of taking along a thing. The meaning to take up occurs in the sense of a change of location. Αἶρω can also indicate removal or to take up in the sense of destruction.¹³⁹ Ἀροῦσιν is preceded by θανάσιμόν which serves as adjective accusative neuter singular meaning deadly. Τί on the other hand functions as a pronoun and indefinite accusative neuter singular from τίς.

πίωσιν (to drink) is a verb subjunctive aorist and 3rd person plural from πινω. πινω in the context mean that all those who believe the gospel and drink deadly poison will not be hurt. The verb πινω occurs 37 times in the New Testament. The New Testament warns against a life focused primarily on earthly enjoyment, eating and drinking (Matt 6:25-32), and also not necessary to worry about food, clothing, eating and drinking. The expression “eating and drinking” is frequently used as an expression for table fellowship.¹⁴⁰

ἐπιθήσουσιν (to lay upon) is a verb indicative aorist and 3rd person plural from ἐπιτιθημι. The verb ἐπιθήσουσιν in the sentence throws more light on what the subject αὐτοὺς is doing. There are 39 occurrences of ἐπιτιθημι in the New Testament, predominantly in the

¹³⁸ Kittel, *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*, 752.

¹³⁹ The Wheeler's Greek syntax notes, 243

¹⁴⁰ Exegetical dictionary of the New Testament, 431.

synoptic gospels. In most occurrences, the verb has the literal meaning usually in fixed phrase like ἐπιτιθημι τας χειρας with the dative, accusative or ἐπι.¹⁴¹

ἔξουσιν (to have or hold) is a verb indicative future active 3rd person plural from εχω. The verb has a great breath of meaning: have, keep, possess, acquire, take possession. Εχω is used more than 700 times in the New Testament especially in the synoptic gospels. The word designates any form of combining two entities, including those of a personal, material and metaphorical kind.¹⁴² The relationship expressed in the Greek verb is rendered in Hebrew in other ways. The consequences are that the LXX renders more than 50 different expressions with εχω. New Testament usage agrees with the range of meanings found in classical and Hellenistic Greek. The subject of εχω in the New Testament can be Christ or other supra-earthly beings like angels and demons. Normally Christ and the transcendent powers appear as object of εχω.¹⁴³

Καλῶς (well) is an adverb and appears 37 times in the New Testament and the most frequent usage is in Mark gospel. Καλως most often designates the suitability or appropriateness of an action or a state of affairs. It also denotes correctness, behave rightly or appropriately. Corresponding to the wider basic meaning of καλως “morally good, noble and it can also express a moral value judgment.”¹⁴⁴

2.11 Mark 16:14-18 in the context of the Theology of Mark’s Gospel

2.11.1 The Person of Christ:

Mark's major theological emphasis is the identity of Jesus of Nazareth. For Mark, Jesus is above all “the Messiah” the Son of God. In Mark’s Gospel, all of these titles, as well as his actions point to his identity as the Christ (or Messiah), the Son of God.¹⁴⁵ His identity as “the Son of God” was affirmed by God at His baptism (1:11) and by demons at the start of

¹⁴¹ Exegetical dictionary of the New Testament, 864.

¹⁴² The biblical illustrator of the New Testament, 865.

¹⁴³ Vine Expository Dictionary of New Testament word, 896.

¹⁴⁴ Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark’s Gospel*, 763.

¹⁴⁵ New Living Translation Study Bible, 1644-1645.

His ministry (1:24). Later the disciples recognized Jesus as the Messiah (8:29). Then, at Jesus' transfiguration, God affirmed the disciples' confession (9:7), as Jesus approached His death, He affirmed His unique identity as God's Son, both through His teaching (12:6,13:32) and at His trial (14:61-62). The climactic confession of Jesus identity as God's Son took place at the crucifixion where a Roman centurion was the first human in Mark's Gospel to recognize that Jesus is truly the Son of God (15:39). Jesus' identity as the Son of God is evidenced by His exorcisms and God's recognition but His sacrificial death and the way He dies provide the supreme evidence that He is the Son of God.¹⁴⁶ The text under study identifies Jesus as a true Messiah when He said to the disciples "in my name you will cast out demons, speak in new tongues, take up serpents, if you drink anything deadly it will by no means hurt you".

2.11.2 The kingdom of God:

Mark emphasizes the kingdom as future and indeed imminent, and as the community in which God's will is done. Jesus announces that the kingdom is at hand; in the latter he declares that some of His hearers will live to see it come. In the parables of the sower, the seed is growing secretly and the mustard seed, the kingdom is present in the situation in which Jesus finds Himself. From the sayings in Mark there is an impression that he thinks of the kingdom as a community shortly to be established by God. The saying about receiving the kingdom as a little child suggests the idea of a divine gift which a man can receive here and now, entering into the kingdom can have either a present or a future meaning. On the whole we must say that Mark's view of the kingdom is eschatological, and that he does not record, and perhaps has not assimilated, the more distinctive elements in the teaching of Jesus¹⁴⁷. There is no sign in Markan teaching of the conception of the kingdom as an earthly or political institution. The arrival of God's kingdom is central to Jesus' message. People need to repent and believe the gospel because the kingdom of God

¹⁴⁶ New Living Translation Study Bible, 1655

¹⁴⁷ Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark (The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, and Indexes)*, (Michigan: Bakers Book House, Grand Rapids 1966), 114-115.

is here with us.¹⁴⁸

Verse 15 of the text under study urges the disciples to preach the gospel to all creatures. One has to receive the divine gift and become part and parcel of God's kingdom. He who believes and is baptized gains access into God's kingdom; however those who do not believe will be condemned.

2.11.3 Discipleship:

Mark's Gospel is not the story of Jesus alone, but of Jesus and his disciples. If Mark's main theological emphasis is on Christology, a vital subplot is the analysis of what it means to follow Jesus. This theme is explored through a portrayal of Jesus' first disciples in their privilege and in their failure, in their experience of being with Jesus, and especially in the teaching he gave them.¹⁴⁹ Mark's account tells us that Jesus' disciples found this a hard lesson to learn and their whole understanding of Jesus' mission was at best superficial, if not dangerously misleading. There is a recurrent emphasis on their failure to understand (6:52; 7: 18; 8:21; 9:10).¹⁵⁰ In his disciples as well as in the wider community, Jesus has to overturn a deep-seated natural reluctance to see his mission from the divine perspective. Discipleship therefore must necessarily be an uncomfortable process of reorientation and of abandonment of the self-centered values of human society in favour of the divine economy.¹⁵¹ The text under study demonstrates that Jesus appeared to the disciples and rebuked them for not believing those who had seen Him after He had risen. After rebuking them He also sent them to go and preach the gospel to all creatures. Preaching the gospel therefore become mandatory to all those who believe the good news of salvation.

¹⁴⁸ George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans publishing Company 1981), 233.

¹⁴⁹ Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 231

¹⁵⁰ Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 113

¹⁵¹ Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 233-234

2.11.4 Christology

The character of Mark's Christology can be seen best from his use of the names and titles of Jesus. The Son of God is the title with which Mark introduces Jesus as Messiah in 1: 1, and it is generally agreed that this title is at the heart of his Christological message.¹⁵² It recurs at the key points in the Gospel: God declares Jesus to be His beloved Son at his baptism (1: 11); the demons recognize Jesus as such in his ministry of exorcism (3:11; 5:7); the baptismal pronouncement is repeated in 9:7, significantly immediately after Peter's confession of Jesus as Messiah. The Markan son of God is a divine Being who appears in the human form that He is deeply moved in the presence of human suffering.¹⁵³ Mark presents Jesus as the Son of God and as Son of Man. The man destined to die, the beloved Son destined to save and be raised from the grave.¹⁵⁴ "Son of Man" was the narrations used it for him. One reason Jesus preferred this name was because it was not an inflammatory title such as "Christ" or "Messiah". Sometimes Jesus used "Son of Man" to describe Himself as a suffering redeemer and as representative of human. Jesus did not use "Son of Man" to distinguish His humanity from His divinity.¹⁵⁵ Mark's royal titles such as Christ or Son of God or King are not misinterpreted to suggest that Jesus was some sort of political figure and aspirant.. What unites these allusions is the royal or kingly character and power of the one spoken about. "Son of Man" is the most frequently used title, and the roles assigned to the Son of Man in Mark's gospel are in fact royal roles.¹⁵⁶ Mark's Gospel presents Jesus as the Son of God who acts with all the authority of God himself (2: 1-12) and whose glory is once revealed in visible form and yet he appears in humility, weakness, and suffering.¹⁵⁷ He was and knew himself to be the Messiah, but his mission was to suffer and be rejected by his own people, not to rule in earthly triumph. He was the son of God, but he shared fully in human emotion and stress (3:5; 6:5-6; 8: 12).

¹⁵² Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 230

¹⁵³ Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 120-124

¹⁵⁴ Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 230

¹⁵⁵ New Living Translation Study Bible, 1593

¹⁵⁶ Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark (A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary)* (Michigan: Publishing by William B.Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 49.

¹⁵⁷ Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 230.

2.12 The analysis of the synoptic parallels of Mark 16:14-18

2.12.1 Jesus' appearance to the eleven disciples

Only Mark and Matthew use the Greek word ἑνδεκα (eleven) to specify the number of disciples that Jesus appeared to. Luke uses 'they' and Greek αὐτούς but John was silent about the number of disciples that Jesus appeared to.¹⁵⁸ Mark stresses that Jesus appeared to the disciples when they recline at the table with the Greek word ἀνακειμένοις which is a verb participle present middle dative masculine plural. Matthew emphasizes that Jesus appeared to them on Galilee Mountain (Γαλιλαίαν εἰς τὸ ὄρος) but was silent about the particular location that Jesus made his appearance to the disciples. John too was silent about the specific place; however, he was emphatic about the time 'evening' with the Greek equivalent ἀψίας which is a noun genitive accusative singular. To Mark Jesus upbraided all the disciples for their unbelief and hardness of heart because they failed to believe the report of those who had told them that Jesus had risen. Matthew on the other hand stated categorically that a section of them doubted. The Greek phrase ("δέ ἐδιστασθάν") is a verb indicative aorist active plural and 3rd person plural. This clearly indicates that not all disciples doubted; however Matthew failed to specify those who believed and those who doubted.¹⁵⁹

According to Luke the disciples were startled and frightened when Jesus stood among them because they supposed they had seen a spirit. The Greek word πνεύμα is a noun accusative neuter singular meaning 'spirit'. Jesus then asked them why they doubted. John was silent about anything pertaining to the doubt of the disciples; all that he emphasizes was that they shut themselves up because of the fear of the Jews.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Graham Scroggie, *A Guide to the Gospels*, (Michigan: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1962), 180-181.

¹⁵⁹ Robert H. Stein, *The New American Commentary*, Tennessee: Publishing by Broadman Press, 1992), 617.

¹⁶⁰ Stein, *The New American Commentary*, 617.

2.12.2 Jesus commission to the eleven disciples

To Mark, Jesus urged the disciples to go to all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Matthew emphasis was to make disciples of all nations. Mark's emphasis was to preach the Gospel (κηρύξατε τό εὐαγγελίου). κηρύξατε is a imperative aorist active verb and 2nd person plural meaning it was a command to them to preach the gospel.¹⁶¹ Εὐαγγελίου on the other hand is accusative singular noun meaning gospel or good news. While Mark command was to preach the good news, Matthew concerned was to 'go make disciples of all nations. The Greek sentences put it this way πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. Here, πορευθέντες serves as a verb participle aorist nominative masculine plural meaning go but go is not an imperative or command rather a participle. Μαθητεύσατε is a verb imperative aorist active and 2nd person plural meaning "to make a disciple". This means that making the disciples is a command to Jesus' disciples. ἔθνη is a noun accusative neuter plural meaning 'a nation'. The Lukan account does not have direct bearing of Jesus' commission. In this sense Luke was silent about Jesus' commission to the disciples. John however did not specify the particular destination the disciples should send the gospel to. John did not use Mark's all creation nor Matthew's all nations.¹⁶² All that John said was he greets them by saying peace be with you, as the Father has sent Me I also send you. Mark stressed that “he who believes the Good News and is baptized will be saved” Matthew also emphasizes that after making disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Lukan account was silent about the baptism while Johannie account too was silent about the baptism but they were asked to forgive them of their sins.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ R.T.France, *The Gospel of Mark (Commentary on the Greek Text)*, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 208

¹⁶² Stein, *The New American Commentary*, 619.

¹⁶³ Ironside, *Expository Notes on the Gospel of Mark*, 251

2.16 Conclusion

Preaching the gospel is seen as the main command given by Jesus. The command is a process and not a one step action, rather several activities are involved. Among them are to evangelize and win more converts for Christ, disciple them through baptizing and teaching as well as sending them to bear fruits by way of winning others for Christ. The exegesis of Mark 16:14-18 has shown clearly that the main command is to preach the gospel. These words; “going” and “baptizing” are participles which imply on-going activity. These participles explain how the command is to be carried out. The next chapter will deal with the profile of Asante Akim Central District, history of Ghana Baptist Convention, history of the Baptist in Asante Akim Central District and some activities that sustain their growth.

CHAPTER THREE

BAPTIST PRESENCE IN ASANTE AKIM CENTRAL DISTRICT

3.1 Introduction

In previous chapter we discussed the background to the gospel of Mark, delimitation of the text of Mark 16:14-18, Greek text of Mark 16:14-18, transliteration of Greek text of Mark 16:14-18, translation of Mark 16:14-18, structure of Mark 16:14-18, exegetical analysis of Mark 16:14-18, theology of Mark 16:14-18, the Parallel analysis of Mark 16:14-18, authorship of Mark's gospel, date and place written the gospel of Mark and the audience or recipient of Mark's gospel were also discussed.

This chapter will concentrate on situational profile of Asante Akim Central District, History of Ghana Baptist Convention, History of Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District, Some activities that have sustained the growth of Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District and some early missionary fields of Ghana Baptist Convention.

3.2 Situational Profile of Asante Akim Central Municipal Assembly

The Asante Akim Central Municipal Assembly is one of the 30 districts in the Ashante Region. The district was created by Legislative Instrument (L.I) 2056 and it has Konongo Odumasi as its twin Capital Town. It was carved out of the then Asante Akim District Council in 1988 and was elevated to Municipal status by L.I 1907 in November 2007. Until July 2012, it used to be Asante Akim North Municipal Assembly but with the carving out of the Asante Akim North District, the Municipal Assembly was renamed Asante Akim Central. The Asante Akim Central Municipal Assembly is located in the eastern part of the Ashanti Region. It shares boundaries with Asante Akim North District at the North, Ejisu-Juaben and Sekyere East at the West, Asante Akim South at the East and South. The land size of the Municipality is 400 square kilometres (km²) forming 1.6 % of the total land area of Ashanti region. The municipality is located within latitude 6 °30' north, 7 °30' North,

0°15' west and 0°20' west. Konongo Odumasi is the Municipal Capital and it is about 48km from Kumasi the Regional Capital. Other bigger settlements in the municipality include: Dwease, Praso, Petreansa, Nyaboo, Kyekyebiase, and Obenimase.¹⁶⁴

Studies show that there are 16,919 dwelling units in the Municipality. This number constitutes less than half percent (0.3%) of the national total (5,467,054) and less than two percent (1.5%) of the regional total (1,126,205). More than half (59.6%) of dwelling units in the Municipality are compound houses. Separate houses constitute the next highest (25.8 %) percentage of occupied dwelling units. With the remaining occupied dwelling units, it is only Flat/Apartment (6.2%) that has more than five percent. In male headed households, 57.4 percent dwell in compound houses. For this same type of dwelling unit, the proportion is 62.9 percent for female headed households. Separate housing units are the next dominant occupied dwelling unit for households headed by males and females with the proportions of 27.5 percent and 23.2 percent respectively. With urban-rural localities, the trend is not different; the majority of occupied dwelling units in both localities are compound houses. In urban localities, 65.1 percent of all dwelling units are compound houses and the proportion in rural localities is 46.8%.¹⁶⁵

The population of the Municipality, according to the 2010 population and Housing Census is 71,508. This comprises of 33,942 males (47.5%) and 37,566 (52.5%) females with the sex ratio of 90.4. This means that, there are about 90 males to every 100 females in the municipality.¹⁶⁶ The population is predominantly urban as most of the people in the Municipality are in urban localities. The urban population is 48,511 which represents 67.8 percent of the population with the remaining 32.2 percent (22,997) found in the rural areas. The 2010 census put the population of the municipality at 71,508. This was projected to 73,438 and 75,421 in 2011 and 2012 respectively. The 2010 population and housing census reveals that the labour force in the municipality (the economic active group i.e. 15 – 64) is

¹⁶⁴ Document from statistical division of Asante Akim Central Municipal Assembly pp2-9

¹⁶⁵ Document from statistical division of Asante Akim Central Municipal Assembly pp.8-10

¹⁶⁶ Document from statistical division of Asante Akim Central Municipal Assembly pp.11

39,765 representing 49.1% of the total population. This situation means that, there is existing labour force to support business interventions. According to the 2010 population and housing census, the Asante Akim central municipality has 5% of its active labour force unemployed, less than the national figure of 3.8%. However, majority of those employed are within the informal private sector (54.2%), consisting of traders, artisans, casual workers among others. This statistics indicated poses a serious threat to revenue mobilisation in the municipality since, those in the informal sector are not documented and as such, very difficult to track and retrieve revenue from them.¹⁶⁷

The district enclave serves as the bread basket for the neighbouring districts and production of staple foods has seen a progressive increase in output. For instance, output for maize production has increased from 11,331m/t in 2010 to 13,476 in 2012. In partnership with some private enterprise, rice production has increased from 1,257 to 15,324.4m/t in 2012. The increase in production can be attributed to new farming technologies introduced such as root and tuber project and new plantain suckers/multiplication. The decreasing statistics for 2013 is as a result of the carving out of the Asante Akim North from the municipality.¹⁶⁸ Christianity, Islamic and traditional religion are the main dominance in the district with Christianity being the dominance among the three in the district. The meeting places of these religions can be used as a tool to sensitise the residents on their roles and responsibilities in promoting development in the municipality.¹⁶⁹

The institutional and administrative arrangements of the Asante Akim Central Municipal Assembly is organised in accordance with the Local Government System Act, 1993 (ACT 462). The Municipal Assembly is the political administrative authority with the mission “to ensure improvement on the quality of honesty, transparency and accountability”. The Assembly is made up of thirty-six (36) Assembly Members of whom twenty-five (25) or two-thirds are elected by universal adult suffrage and eleven (11) are government appointees

¹⁶⁷ Document from statistical division of Asante Akim Central Municipal Assembly pp.12-13

¹⁶⁸ Document from statistical division of Asante Akim Central Municipal Assembly pp2-10

¹⁶⁹ Document from statistical division of Asante Akim Central Municipal Assembly p.11

with the Member of Parliament and the Municipal Chief Executive as Ex-officio members. The Municipal Assembly is presided over by the Presiding Member elected from among their rank.¹⁷⁰

Education in the municipality is handled by the Municipal Directorate of Education whose responsibility is the administration, monitoring and supervision of teaching and learning in the municipality. The municipality currently has both Basic and secondary level Schools. The municipality has been subdivided into Four (4) Circuits for the purpose of effective administration and supervision. The enrolment has assumed an increasing trend over a period of 2009/2012 for all the levels of education in the district. The increase in enrolment at the Primary level can be partly attributed to social intervention programmes like the School Feeding Programme. Continuous educational campaign by the Municipal Assembly and other stakeholders are the main causes of the increment in enrolment in all the levels.¹⁷¹

The municipal health directorate exist to ensure prevention of diseases and avoidable deaths being kept at the barest minimum and the people have access to quality driven, results oriented, close to client and affordable health service by a well-motivated workforce. The municipality has only one public hospital located at Konongo. This facility serves residents within the district and beyond. There are also two privately-owned hospitals in Konongo to assist in providing health care services. The municipality also has two health centres in Dwease and Praaso, to attend to minor cases and illness. Services provided at such facilities include, out-patient, ante-natal, in-patient and dispensary. Furthermore, there is an established community health planning services (CHPS) compound located at Obenimase for residents. Malaria continues to be one of the challenges confronting the people in the district. The municipality, as a pilot municipal in the GAIT's Malaria Control Programme has trained eighty-seven (87) Advocates to embark on educational programmes aimed at educating the community members about the cause, mode of transmission, prevention and

¹⁷⁰ Document from statistical division of Asante Akim Central Municipal Assembly pp12-13

¹⁷¹ Document from statistical division of Asante Akim Central Municipal Assembly pp14-15

control of malaria. Currently, the advocates have trained about five thousand people. The municipality still battles with high maternal mortality cases, though government has implemented several programmes to address the issue.¹⁷²

3.3 History of Ghana Baptist Convention

The root of the Ghana Baptist Convention can be traced back from the neighbouring country of Nigeria. The convention's early beginning was associated with the Nigeria Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention of United State of America. Nigerian Baptist brethren came to Ghana to trade in the early parts of 1900s. These Yoruba Baptist traders later grouped themselves to form Baptist Churches in the country.¹⁷³ In 1947, the Yoruba Baptist Association which was formed in 1935 made an appeal to both Nigeria Baptist Convention and Nigeria Baptist Mission. The Mission is made up of only Southern Baptist Convention Missionaries working in Nigeria to send some missionaries to start Baptist Churches among the Ghanaians because the Yoruba Baptist Churches were failing to attract Ghanaians into their fold since Yoruba language was used in all worship services.¹⁷⁴ The Nigeria Baptist Mission in response to the request made by the Yoruba Baptist Association sent Rev. and Mrs. H.R. Littleton to Ghana in 1948 to start Baptist Churches among the indigenous people. Their effort resulted in the establishment of the first indigenous Baptist Church in 1952 at Boamang in the Ashanti Region. Earlier in 1947, the Yoruba Baptist Association was renamed Gold Coast Baptist Conference to enable the emerging Ghanaian Baptist Churches to be part of the Conference. In 1957 when Ghana gained her independence from Britain, the Conference was renamed Ghana Baptist Conference. All this time the Conference was under the Nigeria Baptist Convention. In

¹⁷² Document from statistical division of Asante Akim Central Municipal Assembly pp16

¹⁷³ Boadi, *Brief History of Ghana Baptist Convention*, (Accra: Olive Publishing House, 2000), 13

¹⁷⁴ Amo, *Baptist History, Polity and Practices*, 15

1963, the Nigeria Baptist Convention granted the Ghana Baptist Conference independence. The Conference was renamed Ghana Baptist Convention in January 1964.¹⁷⁵

3.4 History of Baptist in Asante Akim Central District

Nigerians were the first people to have started Baptist Church in Asante Akim Central District with Konongo as district capital around 1960.¹⁷⁶ The Church was attended by only Nigerians and Yoruba language was dominant. When the aliens Compliance Order was passed in 1969 almost all the Nigerians left but few who remained because they had working permit started reorganizing the church. Some indigenous Ghanaians joined the church and took over the leadership from the few Yorubas and renamed it New Life Baptist Church.¹⁷⁷ The church was organized in March 1978 by a student pastor E.S Dwete and the church population was not more than ten during Sunday's divine service. He did his best by laying a solid foundation for the church but left in 1983 to continue his theological education in Kumasi. Rev. Kanton succeeded E.S.Dwete but after serving the church for some time he had to leave because of economic challenges that confronted the church. Brother Seth Ayarkwa took the mantle of leadership of the church from 1984-1986 as a care taker when he completed then University of Science and Technology (UST). After serving the church for some time he left to overseas and brother Kofi Osei Wusu succeeded him and served as Chairman of the deacons from 1986-1990. It was during the leadership of Brother Kofi Osei Owusu that Rev.George Amoako Prempeh services were secured to pastor the church and he changed the name of the church from New Life Baptist to Liberty Baptist Church. Liberty Baptist Church through the evangelism and mission program has been able to establish satellite churches within the district. The satellite churches include: Temple of Praise Baptist Church-Konongo Lowcost, Holy Spirit Baptist Church-Paterensa, New Life

¹⁷⁵ Boadi, *Brief history of Ghana Baptist Convention*, 14

¹⁷⁶ Osei Assibey John, (A founding member of Liberty Baptist Church), Interview by Osei Owusu Benjamin at his residence in Konongo on 14th March 2016.

¹⁷⁷ J.O.Adjani, (Nigerian and founding member of Liberty Baptist Church), interview by Osei Owusu Benjamin at his residence on 12th March 2016.

Baptist-Praaso, Heaven Gate Baptist Church-Domeabra, Kingdom Baptist Church-Kurofa, and Truth Baptist Church-Konongo- Odumasi.

In 1985, brother Adom Baafi a native of Konongo Odumasi completed Ghana Baptist Theological Seminary at Abuakwa, suburb of Kumasi. He worshiped with Liberty Baptist Church Konongo but after some time he expressed the desire to start a daughter church in his hometown. The leadership of Liberty Baptist Church embraced his idea and collaborated with him through the evangelism and missions committee and opened a branch in Odumasi under his leadership. The church has been in existence since then and in terms of growth is second to Liberty Baptist Church in Asante Akim Central District.¹⁷⁸

Holy Spirit Baptist Church was established by the youth wing of Liberty Baptist Church Konongo. In 1994, under the leadership of Rev. George Amoako Prempeh the youth ministry celebrated their week long programme for the year. Their focus was to intensify evangelism work in Peterensa; they won more souls especially the youth for Christ. After the programme they secured a classroom block and started Baptist Church. Rev. Amoako played a supervisory role for some time and sent one of the youth leaders as a care taker of the church. Brother Samuel Ampofo has been able to sustain and grow the church up to date and he has become full time minister of the gospel. Currently, the population of the church ranges from 45-60 though they made projection of (80) eighty members in 2015 but they could not meet it because of some challenges they go through as the result of doing evangelism and mission.¹⁷⁹

In the year 1999, J.K.Manu completed Baptist Theological Seminary and decided to start Baptist Church in his hometown Praaso. Currently, the population of the church ranges from 40-60 though they made a projection of (70) seventy in 2015 but they were not able to achieve their target because most of church members especially the youth migrated to the

¹⁷⁸ Mrs Beatrice Adom Baafi (Deaconess of Truth Baptist Church Odumasi), interview by Osei Owusu Benjamin at her residence on 24th April 2016.

¹⁷⁹ Rev.Samuel Ampofo (head pastor of Holy Spirit Baptist Church Peterensa), interview by Osei Owusu Benjamin in his office on 12th March 2016

cities to seek for greener pastures. New Life Baptist church has been recommended by Ghana Baptist Convention in 2014 annual session report as one of her rural Baptist Churches doing well.¹⁸⁰

3.5 Some Activities that has sustained Baptist Growth in the District

In order to enhance the needed growth in the district, Baptist churches undertake various spiritual and secular activities during the course of the year. During the Easter Conventions all Baptist Churches within the district camp in a particular place for some days most often from Wednesday to Sunday. The location of the convention is based on two main factors, either to revive the existing church or to plant new church in a particular community. The focus of the convention most often is based on evangelism and missions. During the course of the convention members were sent out to preach Christ as part of fulfilling the Great Commission. Converts who accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour are given to the local Baptist Church to nurture them to maturity. On Saturday's the organizers of the programme organize fun fair games and extend an invitation to the youth of the community where the program is held. The idea is to foster good relationship with the community.¹⁸¹

Another activity that has sustained the growth of the Baptist Church in the district is quarterly watch night service organized for all the churches in the district. The year is divided into four quarters with three months in each quarter. In each quarter one of the churches hosts watch night service and all the churches come together and wait upon the Lord and also to foster the existing relationship among member churches. Baptist members get opportunity to pray and study the word of God together. They also get opportunity to know members from different churches and through that some have become good friends.

¹⁸⁰ Munites recording book of 46th annual session of Ghana Baptist Convention held at Ejura in the Ashanti Region

¹⁸¹ Felix Kwabena Asante (senior deacon of Liberty Baptist Church Konongo and secretary to Asante Akim Baptist Ministers Fellowship), interview by Osei Owusu Benjamin at his residence on 16th April 2016.

Currently, Liberty Baptist Church has introduced a new programme “family system” to grow and maintain their members. With the family system membership of the church is broken into smaller units with a shepherd and his or her assistant. The idea is that the shepherd and his assistance ought to visit each member at least twice a week and also to give them phone calls on every church program. They have also been instructed to make sure that each member is given a role to play within the family in order to keep them active all the time. They have also been urged to make sure that each family member shares the word of God to at least one person a day and to win one soul for the Lord for the month. This activity introduced by the leadership of the church has brought tremendous transformation in the church. In less than three months, membership has increased on Sunday services. More members attend evening services and various departmental groups like Women Missionary Union (WMU), Men’s Ministry, Youth Ministry and Young Ladies Ministry.

Another activity that has enhanced the growth of Baptist in Asante Akim Central District is a radio programme organized by Liberty Baptist Church. The impact of this program is not only on the host church but also on all Baptist Churches in the district. The program is organized in such a way that all Baptist ministers within the district take part. Various Baptist ministers in the district call to testify how the radio program is yielding positive fruits in their churches because in every week new people worship with them because of the program.

3.6 Conclusion

Asante Akim Central District covers 1,160 sq km with estimated population of 169,976 in 2010 (projection from 2000 population census). There are 16,919 dwelling units in the Municipality. This number constitutes less than half percent (0.3%) of the national total (5,467,054) and less than two percent (1.5%) of the regional total (1,126,205). Ghana Baptist Convention was traced back from neighbouring country of Nigeria in early part of

1900s. Though Baptist came into Asante Akim District in the late 60s but was well established under the leadership of Rev. George Amoako Prempeh. Various activities are undertaken to sustain the growth of the Baptist Churches in the district by the various Baptist Churches in the district. Currently, all Baptist Churches in the district are undertaking projects that are economically viable.

The next chapter will concentrate on interviews, data interpretation, analysis and discussion of the questionnaires filled by the respondents.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA INTERPRETATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we discussed the situational profile of Asante Akim Central District, the history of Ghana Baptist Convention, the history of Baptist in Asante Akim Central District, some activities that sustain growth in Asante Akim Baptist Churches and some early Baptist mission fields in Ghana.

This chapter examines the results of the questionnaire administered, and interviews conducted and their consequent implications in order to analyze the concept of evangelism and mission work of Ghana Baptist Convention. Respondents view on various questions posed to them would serve as appropriate basis for drawing solid conclusion.

4.2 The Coming of Baptist Church in Asante Akim Central District

There are three sources as to how the Baptist Church in Asante Akim Central survived after the Nigerians left. In an interview with Olawani Adjani who is a Nigerian and founding member of Liberty Baptist Church in his residence, he said that when his brethren who had no residence permit left, there were few of them who stayed because they had residence permit. He further

stressed that others too had married Ghanaians so they were meeting for worship but it was not effective as it used to be. To him the purpose of their meeting was to protect their facilities because the chief of Konongo was taking back their lands acquired legitimately and Zongo community was also occupying their buildings.¹⁸²

Another source also said that the Baptist Church was sustained in Asante Akim Central through an effort of J.A.Boadi. This was disclosed in an interview with Alexander Kofi

¹⁸² Olawani Adjani (founding member of Liberty Baptist Church), interview by Osei Owusu Benjamin in his residence on 12th March 2016

Kumordji who happened to be one of those who championed the course of Baptist in the district. He emphasized that when the Nigerians left, the Baptist Church in Konongo collapsed and there was no church called Baptist in the 1970's. He stressed further that it was during that period that J.A.Boadi who happened to be the first Ghanaian Baptist minister¹⁸³ came to Konongo with some friends to assess the facilities left behind by the Nigerians. It was during this time that he started Baptist Church in Konongo and named it New Life Baptist Church. The researcher visited J.A.Boadi who is now old but active at his residence in Abuakwa a suburb of Kumasi for him to confirm or deny the claim. He emphatically said that when he came to Konongo in 1970, there was no Baptist Church so he organized some friends, all deceased, to Konongo and embarked on evangelism and missions and all those who gave their lives to Christ were baptized and accepted as members and they started using the auditorium left by the Nigerians. He further revealed that the land where the Konongo Muslims have built their central mosque was a property of Nigerian Baptist community but he alone was not able to retrieve it.¹⁸⁴

According to the final source the Baptist Church started in Asante Akim Central by some students who came from University of Science and Technology (UST). In an interview with Kofi Osei Owusu who happened to be one of the students, he stressed that because Konongo was his hometown and he being an executive member of Christians on Campus Fellowship he used his position to convince his colleagues to extend their holiday evangelism trip to Konongo. He further said that when they came to Konongo, there was no Baptist Church but there was Baptist Church building occupied by Konongo Urban Council Middle School as their Home Science Centre. According to him they started using the facility as their meeting place and the converts who gave their lives to Christ were committed into the care of elders they appointed, however, they visited the church on every Sunday.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Boadi, *A brief history of Ghana Baptist Convention*, 23

¹⁸⁴ Rev.Dr.J.A.Boadi, (first Ghanaian Baptist Minister to be ordained), interview by Osei Owusu Benjamin in his residence at Abuakwa a suburb of Kumasi on 17th April 2016

¹⁸⁵ Kofi Osei Owusu, (Chairman of Deacons, Liberty Baptist Church-Konongo), interview by Osei Owusu Benjamin at his residence on 17th February 2016

4.3 Impact of Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District

The researcher visited each Baptist Church in the district to find out some impacts that they have made toward the development of their locality. Michael Boateng who is a senior deacon at Liberty Baptist Church admitted that the church has not done much like the Catholic, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches which own secondary schools and credit unions in the district; however the Baptist Church has contributed her quota to the development of the society. He pointed out that the Baptist Church has been able to establish a private school from crèche up to JHS “Three”. The school has a population of two hundred and thirty learners with eighteen teaching staff and three non teaching staff. The school is serving as a source of employment to the youth in the community. The church has employed three permanent workers who are serving as administrative secretary and evangelism directors. Another area in which the church is doing well is the radio programme they do every Saturday morning from 5.00 am-5.30 am. Many people within the district have expressed interest in Liberty Hour and contribute meaningfully during the phone-in-segment.¹⁸⁶

In an interview with J.K. Manu about the impact of his church on Praaso community, he argued that his church has not done much because of rural-urban migration. He disclosed that the migration has affected the growth of his church because the youth move to cities for greener pasture after school and as the result leaving the church for aged. He further commented that his Men’s Fellowship members started cocoa seedling project last year 2015 and sold the seedlings to the farmers at a moderate price and it has helped some of his members to earn a living. They have started another cocoa nursery project for 2016 farming season and they are certain to earn good income than the previous season.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ Michael Kwame Boateng, (Deacon of Liberty Baptist Church-Konongo), interview by Osei Owusu Benjamin at his residence on 13th February 2016.

¹⁸⁷ Rev.J.K.Manu, (Head pastor of New Life Baptist Church), interview by Osei Owusu Benjamin at his church premises on 19th February 2016

Deacon Isaac Kudjo when interviewed about the impact Truth Baptist Church has made in Odumasi Community, commented that the absence of substantive minister has affected the church very much. The church has been there for the past ten years without a minister and each member of the current leadership has his/her own work so they do not have much time to concentrate on the activities of the church. He further said what the church can boast of is that the church identified eight members who were committed but needy so after the end of the year 2015 harvest the leadership gave each person an amount of eight hundred Ghana cedis (GH800) to start business. He was happy that six out of the eight are doing well in business and their commitment to the church activities have improved. He was of the view that indirectly the church has been able to create jobs for some members who form part of the society.¹⁸⁸

Rev. Samuel Ampofo of Holy Spirit Baptist Church admitted that his church has not been able to do much because of some internal crisis that the church was going through. He hinted that the leadership has planned to start a crèche as early as possible. Currently, Rev. Ampofo serves as chaplain in some selected basic schools in Paterensa community and his vision is to impact biblical doctrine into the up and coming ones.¹⁸⁹

4.4 Challenges of doing missions in Asante Akim Central District

J.K.Manu when asked challenges they encounter in doing evangelism and missions in the district, he stressed that the major challenge has to deal with the inability of smaller churches to employ the services of substantive ministers. Because there is no central funds for Baptist ministers and the local church has to employ the services of their own minister and foot all the cost involved, the smaller churches who are not financially independent can not afford to employ the services of a minister and the minister who accept the challenge to pastor rural churches do not stay long because of financial constraints. He was of the view

¹⁸⁸ Isaac Kudjo, (Chairman of Deacons Truth Baptist Church Konongo-Odumasi), interview by Osei Owusu Benjamin in his office on 23rd February 2016.

¹⁸⁹ Rev.Samuel Ampofo,(head pastor of Holy Spirit Baptist Church Peterensa), interview by Osei Owusu Benjamin in his office on 23rd February 2016.

that in the future when a central fund is created to cater for ministers, Baptist churches will be well established in the rural areas.¹⁹⁰

Samuel Ampofo also said that the division of the district into South West and South East Association is also another constraint in doing missions in the district. He noted that it has become difficult for a church in the South East to do missions in the South West and vice versa because each Association is independent. He suggested that in the future Asante Akim Central Baptist Churches must form their own association so that the whole district will be open up for missions.¹⁹¹

Deacon Francis Aboagye of Temple of Praise Baptist church emphasized some challenges that his church was encountering in doing missions in the district. He lamented that his church is not doing well in missions because they lacked human resources to reach out to people. He further stressed that personally he has approached some churches in the South East Association to offer them some assistance to enable them reach out and win souls for the Lord but all of them have turned blind eye on them. He blamed some ministers of being selfish and only care for their churches but do not care about other churches. He stated that for the Baptist Church to be visible like other churches, leadership in both associations has to sit up and strategize how they could reach out into areas the Baptist Church as not reached yet. He concluded that motivating lay workers to accept the challenge to take care of rural churches should also be a prime concern for all and ministers must stop focusing on their own local churches.

4.5 Distribution of questionnaire, data interpretation and analysis

Questionnaire was administered to one hundred and eighty (180) members of the Baptist Churches under Ghana Baptist Convention in Asante Akim Central District having

¹⁹⁰ Rev.J.K.Manu, (head pastor of New Life Baptist Church-Praaso), interview by Osei Owusu Benjamin at his church premises on 16th April 2016.

¹⁹¹ Rev.Samuel Ampofo, (Head pastor of Holy Spirit Baptist Church-Peterensa), interview by Osei Owusu Benjamin in his office on 12th April 2016.

Konongo as their district capital. Out of this number one hundred and fifty one (151) representing eighty four percent (84%) were received and twenty nine of the respondents representing sixteen percent (16%) failed to submit their questionnaire without any tangible reason.

On 9th January 2016, a zonal meeting for all local Baptist Church leaders within the district was held at Truth Baptist Church Konongo-Odumasi, to review the activities of 2015 and set agenda for 2016. The participants were from all the local Baptist Churches within the District. The researcher took advantage and administered the first set questionnaire to forty six participants representing twenty six percent to leaders present.

With the rest of the targeted population comprising one hundred and thirty four (134) people remaining, the researcher visited Baptist churches one after the other and distributed the questionnaire to members who were interested to fill them. Seventy people representing fifty two percent (52%) received the questionnaire at the Liberty Baptist Church Konongo. This number excluded leaders who attended the zonal meeting at Truth Baptist on 9th January 2016.

Out of seventy members who filled the forms at Liberty Baptist Church-Konongo, sixty (60) of them submitted theirs and ten of them failed to submit as promised; thirty members of Truth Baptist Church were given the forms but twenty two of them submitted theirs and eight of them failed to honour their promise. Twenty members from the Holy Spirit Baptist Church were given the questionnaire but fourteen of them representing ten (10%) submitted theirs and six of the respondents failed to do so. The zonal meeting consisted of all Baptist Church leaders which include all ministers, deacons and deaconesses, church council members and lay workers. The researcher took his time to visit one Baptist church after the other and distribute the remaining questionnaire to them. Seventy questionnaire (70) representing fifty two percent (52%) were distributed to members of Liberty Baptist Church having a total population of two hundred and sixty (260) members. Thirty (30) questionnaire

representing twenty two percent (22%) was given to Truth Baptist Church which has eighty to hundred memberships. Twenty people representing fifteen percent (15%) were given at Holy Spirit Baptist Church Paterensa which has about fifty (50) members. The remaining questionnaire was given to New Life Baptist Church Praaso which has about thirty (30) church members. The distributions of the questionnaire were based on individual ability to read and understand the questions posed on the forms.

From the total number of people who responded to the questionnaire from all the Baptist Churches within the district, ninety-seven (97) representing sixty-four percent (64%) were males and fifty-four (54) representing thirty six percent (36%) of the respondents were female. In addition, one hundred and four (102) respondents which constitute sixty-four percent (64%) have been in the church for ten (10) years or more. This clearly indicates that most of the respondents have been in the church for ten years or more. This clearly indicates that most of the respondents have been in the church for long time to be able to give credible information on the churches activities.

4.6.1 The Command to Proclaim the Gospel

The participle in the pericope is “going” which explains the imperative “proclaim”. On the question; is the proclamation of the gospel a command or optional to all believers? One hundred and twenty four (124) out of the one-hundred and fifty one (151) respondents representing eighty-two percent (82%) identified that proclaiming the Gospel is a command to all Christians because unless Christians proclaim the gospel those who are yet to believe cannot respond to this divine calling. Eighteen (18) respondents representing twelve percent (12%) also stressed that proclaiming the gospel is optional and it has been reserved for only ministers of the gospel. The remaining nine (9) respondents representing six percent (6%) emphasized that they had no idea about the question posed by the researcher.

There is a clear indication that the idea of “proclaiming the gospel” is not alien to the Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District since most of the respondents were able to identify proclamation of the gospel as a command as found in Mark 16:14-18. Although not all respondents identified the proclamation of the gospel as a command for all believers, proclamation of the gospel was identified as one of the issues that emerged out of the exegesis in chapter two of the study.

4.6.2 Response of Asante Akim Baptist Churches to the Great Commission

When the question, “what does the Great Commission mean to you” was posed, the response was as follows:

Ninety-six (96) of the respondents which represent sixty-four percent (64%) stressed that the Great Commission is all about reaching the world with the gospel. Thirty (30) of the respondents representing (20%) also were of the view that the Great Commission is all about visiting church members and having fellowship with them while twenty-five (25) respondents representing sixteen percent (16%) also emphasized that they had no idea about the question posed to them.

Out of one hundred and fifty one (151) respondents only forty-eight (48) representing thirty-two percent (32%) responded to the question about activities their local Baptist Churches undertake in fulfilling the Great Commission. This means one hundred and three (103) of the respondents representing sixty-eight percent (68%) did not answer that question. Only ten (10) of the respondents stated that evangelism is the main activity their local churches undertake in fulfilling the Great Commission. The remaining thirty-eight wrote different programs such as music festival, prayer conference, playing football matches with other churches, organizing watch night services.

When the question was asked, how often does your local Baptist Church organize outreach program? forty-three (43) of the respondents representing twenty-eight percent (28%)

emphasized that their local Baptist Church organize outreach programme once a year while the remaining one hundred and eight (108) representing seventy-two (72%) percent also argued that their local Baptist Churches do not organize crusade at all throughout the year.

In an attempt to answer the question, how many satellite churches do you have? only sixty-eight of the respondents (68) representing forty-five (45%) percent stressed that their local Baptist Churches have satellite churches. All the sixty-eight respondents (68) were from Liberty Baptist Church-Konongo. This means that the remaining Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District which include: Truth Baptist Church Konongo-Odumasi, Holy Spirit Baptist Church Peterensa, New Life Baptist Church, Praaso and Temple of Praise Baptist Church Konongo-Lowcost, do not have any satellite church. The sad thing is that none of the above churches is less than fifteen years since its establishment.

When asked if their local ministers emphasize the need to preach the Gospel to the unbelieving world, one hundred and forty five (145) of the respondents representing ninety-six percent (96%) admitted that their ministers always use the pulpit to stress the need to preach the gospel to the unbelieving world while six (6) respondents representing four percent (4%) emphasized that they do not think their ministers use the pulpit to stress the need to reach the unbelieving world with the gospel.

4.6.3 Challenges Baptist Churches encountered in doing evangelism and missions in AACD

On the question of some challenges that local Baptist Churches encounter in doing evangelism, out of one hundred and fifty one (151) respondents who submitted their forms, sixty-five (65) of them representing forty three percent (43%) believed that their major challenge in doing missions is the migration of the youth to cities to do further studies and also to seek for jobs to better their lives. Forty-six (46) of the respondents representing thirty percent (30%) were also of the view that their main challenge in doing missions is the

Ghana Baptist Convention division of the district into two; Kumasi South West and Kumasi South East. This division has created a situation whereby those in South West may have no influence on South East even if the church there is a daughter church. This policy has discouraged some churches from evangelizing certain areas in the districts where they think do not form part of their Association. The effect of this policy is evident because some churches have abandoned their daughter churches which they were supporting to grow. Forty (40) respondents representing twenty six percent (26%) also emphasized that their main challenge to do mission in their local Baptist Church is lack of motivation. In a one on one encounter with some respondents, it came to light that ministers should use their pulpit to sensitize members to see the need to do missions and also some financial motivation has to be provided to urge members to do more than what they are doing.

4.6.4 Evangelism Committee in various Baptist Churches in the District

On the question of whether local Baptist churches have evangelism and mission committees or not, sixty-seven (67) of the respondents representing forty-four percent (44%) stated emphatically that their local Baptist Church do not have evangelism and mission committee that facilitate the course of evangelism and missions in their churches. In analyzing the questionnaire the researcher realized that most of the respondents who said that their local churches do not have such committees were from Holy Spirit Baptist Church-Peterensa, New Life Baptist Church and Temple of Praise Baptist Church-Konongo. Seventy-one (71) of the respondents representing forty-seven percent (47%) also emphasized that their local churches have evangelism and mission committees that steer the affairs of evangelism and missions in their churches. It was revealed to the researcher that most of the respondents who emphatically stated that their local churches have such committees were from Liberty Baptist Church-Konongo and Truth Baptist Church Konongo-Odumasi. Only thirteen (13) respondents representing nine percent (9%) stressed that they had no idea as to whether their local Baptist Church has a committee responsible for evangelism and missions. A study of

the respondents who said they have no idea as to whether or not their local churches have evangelism and mission committee revealed that out of thirteen respondents to that question, six (6) of them were from Liberty Baptist Church, three (3) of them were from Truth Baptist Church, two (2) of them were from Holy Spirit Baptist Church, one (1) was from Temple of Praise Baptist and another one (1) was from New Life Baptist Church.

4.6.5 The mode of membership in Baptist Churches

Basically there are three main ways one can become a member of a Baptist Church under Ghana Baptist Convention. (a) The person must be a believer, that is, one who has repented of his/her sins and accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. (b) The person must be baptized by immersion. (c) The person must be voted upon and accepted by the church members.¹⁹²

1. By baptism the new convert who has not been baptized by immersion or who was baptized in his/her infancy without knowing the Lord Jesus Christ but has now been born again is baptized by immersion in the local Baptist Church where he/she is seeking membership. After the baptism, the church members at either an emergency or regular business meeting must vote on the person and accept him/her into membership.
2. By transfer of membership per a letter from the former church, the local Baptist where the person is seeking membership has to gather the necessary information for instance when the person became a member of the church or when he/she was baptized in the church, the Minister who baptized him/her etc from the person and then write to the person's former church for a letter of transfer. Upon receiving the letter of transfer from the person's former church, and the letter stating that the person is in good standing and has been recommended by his/her former church for

¹⁹² K.Amo, *Baptist History, Polity and practice*, 59

acceptance into the local Baptist Church, the person formally is voted upon and accepted into membership by the local Baptist Church.¹⁹³

3. The last sub mode for one to become a member of Baptist church is by statement. In the absence of 1 and 2 above, a person can apply for church membership by statement. His/her application letter should clearly state that he/she is a born again person and baptized by immersion and where possible he/she should attach a photocopy of his/her baptismal certificate. Thorough investigation should be conducted by the receiving Church on the candidate before voting to accept him/her into membership¹⁹⁴.

Out of the one hundred and fifty one respondents who submitted the questionnaire, one hundred and thirty eight (138) representing ninety one percent (91%) stated that they were accepted into their local Baptist Churches through Baptism by immersion. When quizzed why most of them were accepted through Baptism by immersion, the researcher realized that they were not taught other modes of becoming a member. When the researcher questioned one minister why all your members attained membership status only through Baptism by immersion he answered that he was not all that familiar with others, that was why he insisted on Baptist by immersion. Only thirteen (13) respondents representing nine percent (9%) emphasized that they were accepted as members in their local Baptist Churches through transfer from the other churches. During the analysis of the questionnaires it was observed that all those who acquired their membership status through transfer were workers who had migrated from one geographical area to another or government workers who have been transferred into Asante Akim District. Out of thirteen (13) respondents who acquired their membership through transfer, nine of them were from Liberty Baptist Church Konongo, three (3) of them were from Truth Baptist Church Konongo-Odumasi and one of

¹⁹³ .Amo, *Baptist History, Polity and practice* p 60

¹⁹⁴ Amo, *Baptist History, Polity and practice* p 61

them was from Temple of Praise Baptist Konongo. None of the respondents got their membership by statement.

4.6.6 The impact of Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District

On the issue of how their local Baptist Churches have made an impact in the district, out of the one hundred and fifty one (151) respondents who submitted their forms, ninety three (93) of them representing sixty two percent (62%) stated emphatically that their local Baptist Church have not made any significant impact in their local community. Observing it critically, the researcher realized that apart from Liberty Baptist Church where most of the respondents emphasized that their local church has made some significant impact, the rest of the respondents who were from other Baptist Churches categorically stressed that their local Baptist Churches have made little or no impact at all. Fifty one (51) of the respondents representing thirty four percent (34%) were emphatic that their local Baptist Churches have made significant impact in their local community. It was only seven (7) respondents representing five percent (5%) who were of the view that their local Churches have made no impact at all. In doing a further study to ascertain some specific impact that some Baptist Churches have made within the district, the researcher observed that Liberty Baptist Church have started a private school from crèche to Junior High School Three (JH3) charging moderate school fees. When the director of education of Liberty Baptist Preparatory Mr. George Gyanfi was interrogated on 31st January 2016 after church service, he emphatically said that the purpose of their school is not for profit; rather, it is the church's contribution to assist the development of the Konongo community. Another area that the church is making an impact is the radio programme they do every Saturday morning from 5am-5:30am. Many people within the district have expressed interest in Liberty hour and contribute meaningfully during the phone in calls. Another area that the church is doing so well is the youth annual donation to Konongo Odumasi Government Hospital and Asante Akim

Central Baptist Churches Women Missionary Union (WMU) annual donation to orphans and aged within the district that has attracted a lot of people into the Baptist churches.

4.7 Discussion

The words of Jesus as found in Mark 16:14-18 and its parallel (Matthew 28:18-20) and the command found in the text κηρύξατε (*keruzate*) translated as “preach”. κηρύξατε is an imperative verb. It is also aorist active in the 2nd person plural. It therefore, means “to proclaim, preach or announce”. The imperative makes it clear that this is a command for all Christians to preach the gospel. κηρύξατε is to preach the gospel as a herald before or ahead of time.¹⁹⁵ The use of the aorist tense, implying proclamation of the gospel for an appointed time rather than indefinitely, to preach is also a peremptory command and asserting a binding duty. It is also ordained for “all creation” and is of universal import.¹⁹⁶ The word πορευθέντες (*poreuthentes*) “going” is a verbal participle and indicates how to carry out the command of preaching.

The main command requires the disciples to recruit followers from “all creation”. Preaching the gospel to all creation is a process which includes evangelism, training and motivating persons to multiply themselves. Foli identifies the principles of making disciples as preaching, recruiting, consolidating, teaching, training and sending and multiplying. For him recruiting is making converts through the preaching of the Good News, in other words ‘evangelism begins the process of preaching the gospel’¹⁹⁷. Malphurs agrees with Foli and expresses the view that the command of Jesus found in Mark 16:14-18 has both evangelism and edification components. He further stresses that one has to preach the gospel to win a non disciple to Christ and at that point the person becomes a disciple. The new disciple needs to grow or mature hence the edification component.¹⁹⁸ The people of God that

¹⁹⁵ S.Zodhiates, *Hebrew-Greek key study Bible*, 1641.

¹⁹⁶ J.R.Edwards, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary (PNTC) (The gospel according to Mark*, (Michigan: William B.Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 507

¹⁹⁷ R.Foli, *Discipleship for Growth*, (Accra: Trust Publishers 1995), 56

¹⁹⁸ Malphurs, *Strategic Discipleship Making: A practical tool for successful ministry*, 18-19

constitute the church, they need continuous preaching and teaching so as to know and obey all that Jesus has commanded. Preaching is embedded in discipleship hence Jesus requires loyalty from the disciples to witness. In that mission, the disciples are required to heal the sick, clean the lepers and raise the dead.¹⁹⁹

4.8 Conclusion

The chapter reveals that out of one hundred and eighty (180) members of the Baptist Churches in the district to whom questionnaire were given, one hundred and fifty one (151) representing eighty four percent (84%) were received and twenty nine of the respondents representing sixteen percent (16%) failed to submit their forms. One hundred and twenty four (124) out of the one-hundred and fifty one (151) respondents identified that proclaiming the Gospel is a command to all Christians. On the impact of Baptist Churches in the district, ninety three (93) of the respondents representing sixty two percent (62%) stated emphatically that their local Baptist Church have not made any significant impact in their local community. However, Fifty one (51) of the respondents representing thirty four percent (34%) were emphatic that their local Baptist Churches have made significant impact in their local community and most of these respondents were from Liberty Baptist Church.

The next chapter focuses on the summary of the findings, issues emerging out of the study and recommendation.

¹⁹⁹ Edwards, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary (PNTC)*, .527.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, ISSUES EMERGING OUT OF THE STUDY

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the result of questionnaire administered, interviews conducted and their consequent implications were analyzed. This chapter presents summary of this research, issues emerging out of the study, recommendations and conclusions.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The research sought to find out how Mark 16:14-18 is operational in Asante Akim Baptist churches in Ghana. It uncovered that Nigerians were the first people to have started the Baptist work in the district. It was also established that the Baptist Church came into the district as the result of three main sources. One source claimed that Nigerians who had working permit remained when the Aliens Compliance Order act was passed in 1969. They started Baptist work in the district; though their meetings were not effective, their purpose for meeting was to protect the facilities left by their brethren. Another source also shares that the Baptist church was sustained in the district through an effort of J.A. Boadi who happened to be the first Ghanaian Baptist minister. The last source also stressed that the Baptist church came to the district through Students on Holiday Program (SHOP) from University of Science and Technology (UST). They were of the view that Brother Kofi Osei Owusu who happened to be an executive member used his influence to convince his colleagues to extend their holiday programme to Konongo, his hometown. They admitted that when they arrived in Konongo there was an abandoned Baptist Church building and students of Konongo Urban Council Middle School were using that facility as home science centre but there was no church activity taking place. They organized outreach programme

and they started a Baptist church with those who were converted through the outreach programme.

The study also found out that some of the measures that Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District are undertaking to enhance their growth. Such measures include Annual Easter Convention Programme with the aim of either reviving the existing but not active churches or to plant new Baptist Churches in particular communities. Introduction of “family system” is a new programme that has been introduced by Liberty Baptist Church to maintain and grow their members. With this new programme, membership is broken into smaller units with a shepherd and assistant to disciple them into maturity. They have a responsibility of visiting their members on regular basis and encouraging them to involve themselves in all church activities.

Quarterly watch night services are also designed by Asante Akim Central Baptist Ministers Fellowship to ignite members for prayers. The programme is designed in such a way that all member churches get the opportunity to host the programme at least once a year. The programme revives the host church and also brings brotherliness among all the Baptist family in the district.

The last but not the least measure to enhance the growth of Baptist Churches in the district is the joint radio programme by all Baptist churches in the district. The programme offers the ministers opportunity to share the love of Christ to the people in the district. The radio programme is gradually bringing Baptist Churches into the limelight in the district.

The study also examined the impact of Baptist Churches in the district to ascertain whether the members are growing qualitatively and quantitatively. It was discovered that some of the Baptist Churches in the district have been able to grow qualitatively and quantitatively in their communities. Liberty Baptist church has established a private school, from crèche to

JH3 with a school population of two hundred and thirty and also employed twenty one teaching and non teaching staff. The study also found out that New Life Baptist Church Men's Ministry cocoa seedling project has raised the standard of living of some church members because it has served as source of employment to some church members. Financial assistance to some members in Truth Baptist Church in Konongo-Odumasi has boosted their businesses and their commitment level to church activities.

It was discovered that the major challenges confronting Baptist Churches in the district have to do with the inability of smaller churches to employ the services of substantive ministers. It has been observed that most of the Baptist Churches in the rural areas do not have ministers because of the Baptist policy of local churches engaging their own ministers and taking care of them. The policy has deprived most rural churches from having their own ministers and some members were of the view that unless the policy is amended and centralized the Baptist churches will continue to suffer.

The study also established that the division of the district into South West and South East Association has been a constraint for the growth of the Baptist Churches in the district. With this division it has become virtually impossible for churches in South East to do missions in South West.

The study also disclosed that the unwillingness attitude of leaders in bigger churches to help smaller churches grow is another constraint to the growth of Baptist Churches in the district. Some members advised leadership of bigger churches to eschew the attitude of "each one for himself syndrome" and focus on how they can help smaller churches to grow.

In an attempt to find out from the Baptist members of Asante Akim Central District their understanding about proclaiming the gospel, one hundred and twenty four (124) of the respondents representing eighty-two percent (82%) identified proclamation of the Gospel as

a command to all Christians and not an option. It was further discovered that ninety-six (96) of the respondents representing sixty-four percent (64%) stressed that the Great Commission as found in Mark 16:14-18 is all about reaching the world with the Gospel. There is a clear indication that the meaning of the Great Commission is known by the members of Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District since most of the respondents were able to state that proclamation of the Gospel is a command for all Christians as stated in Mark 16:14-18 and the Great Commission is about reaching the world with the Gospel.

It was further noted that Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District respond to the Great Commission through house- to- house witnessing, open air outreach, church planting as well as continuous teaching in the Sunday schools. When new converts are made, they are oblige to join the Sunday school system to be discipled into maturity process as the Great Commission urges continuous teaching of all that Jesus has commanded. The study has observed with great concern that the Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District have gone through a lot of challenges in terms of growth, however, Mark 16:14-18 is operational in almost all the Baptist churches in the district.

5.3 An issue emerging out of the study

The rendering of the Greek word πορευθέντες (*poreuthentes*) by some Bible translators make it as if the word is an imperative. Rather the word πορευθέντες is a participle. It is a verbal participle, aorist passive deponent plural. The inflected verb as found in the text could be translated as “having gone”, since the verb is a passive deponent, and deponent verbs are always active in meaning and are translated with “-ing” verb in passive voice. Since the word is a deponent it could be translated as “going” not “go” as found in most of the Bible Translations. This translation challenge offered by some bible translators has changed the meaning of verse 15 entirely. The pericope should therefore be translated as

the following:

“As you are going into the world, preach the Gospel to all creatures”. Or “having gone into the world, preach the Gospel to all creatures”.

5.4 Recommendations

From the discussion above the researcher recommends the following:

- a. Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District should intensify outreach programs such as open air preaching and house to house witnessing. They should also introduce house fellowship in rural churches to disciple their members into maturity. This will impact positively on the numerical growth of their members.
- b. Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District should have proper documentation of activities and events that take place in the church. The researcher discovered that no single Baptist Church in Asante Akim Central District was able to provide a document that contains vital information of the church. Baptist Churches should employ the services of an administrative secretary with at least senior secondary school holder who will record and keep such important documents. The researcher discovered to his disappointment to see a church in the 21st Century without any proper documentation.
- c. Asante Akim Central Baptist Minister Fellowship should find a strategy to resource financially rural ministers who are willing to stay and grow Baptist churches there. They can introduce fund raising programmes during their quarter watch night services or urge local churches to raise funds on monthly basis to support such course.

- d. Local Baptist Churches in the district should be proactive in creating jobs or developing the skills of their members to enable them to be more independent and competitive on the economic market. The result will be to minimize rural-urban drift which pose a major challenge to some Baptist Church members in the district.
- e. Ghana Baptist Convention which is the mother of all Baptist Churches in Ghana should have measures in place to grow the Baptist Churches especially those in rural areas. The researcher noted with keen interest that Baptist Churches are more attractive in the cities and towns but are hardly seen in rural areas. The reason being that most members in the cities and towns are economically sound and are capable of meeting the needs of their local ministers whereas those in rural areas are not. Most ministers prefer to pastor in cities and towns to rural areas. It is for this reason that the Ghana Baptist Convention which do not transfer its ministers nor give financial assistance to them should come out with programme that will motivate some ministers who are willing to go to the rural areas to grow Baptist Church there.
- f. Local Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District should endeavor to help their ministers further their education. The researcher discovered that out of five ordained ministers in the district only one has a degree in theology. Two of them hold certificate in theology which is minimum in terms of qualification in the Ghana Baptist Convention and other two hold Denominational Track in Ministry (DTM) certificate which is not recognized by Ghana Baptist Convention any more.

Denominational Track in Ministry programme was designed for members who had no qualification to enter into ministry but had the calling to lead the church. The programme lasted for few years but was cancelled by the Ghana Baptist Convention. This clearly indicates that some of the ministers in the district lack some skills that will help them to nurture the churches.

5.5 Conclusion

Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District anticipated a high growth rate in membership. It has been observed that the numerical growth is low on the churches' own projection. The perceived low attendance at Sunday divine services and other weekly activities have been a headache to the ministers and the leadership in general.

The study has clearly indicated that the Ghana Baptist Church leaders in the district are doing so well to grow churches and also plant new ones in communities where there is no Baptist Church. It was revealed that ministers are putting measures in place despite numerous challenges confronting evangelism and mission work in the district to make Baptist Churches more visible in the district. There is no doubt that when smaller churches get the needed help from Ghana Baptist Convention, Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District will grow like other orthodox churches. Those who are not closer to the Baptist Churches may not see what the churches are doing to grow their membership.

During the course of the study it was observed that each Baptist Church in the district is doing well to fulfil the Great Commission mandate though there was no line of distinction as to who qualify to share the Gospel and who deserves to hear it. There is no doubt that Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District lack logistics and motivation to do major evangelism and mission work; however, in the absence of those facilities they are still doing their best to fulfil the Great Commission mandate.

The exegesis of Mark 16:14-18 has shown clearly that the main command in the text is not πορευθέντες (*poreuthentes*) "go" rather, it is κηρύξατε (*keruzate*) which is imperative meaning "preach". Preaching the gospel is seen as the main command given by Jesus according to the text. The study elicited from members views on the Great Commission found in Mark 16:14-18; and the views of the respondents have been presented. The researcher has also

attempted to make a summary of some relevant findings and recommendations. Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District have to intensify their outreach programme to improve upon the low growth rate of membership. The fact that the growth rate is low does not mean they are not missionary focused. The text is therefore, applicable to all Baptist Churches in Asante Akim Central District.

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APPENDIX 1

Interview Questions

1. Name:
2. Sex: (a) male (b) female
3. Name of your church
4. What position do you hold in the church?
(a) Minister (b) Deacon (c) Council member (d) member
5. Age (a) 18-35 (b) 36-50 (c) 60 and above
6. How long have been a church member
(a) Less than one year (b) 2-5 years (c) 10 years and above
7. How do you see the statement “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature in Mark 16:15? (A) Command (b) Optional (c) No idea
8. Do you see your local church as mission focus?
(a) Yes (b) No (c) I can’t tell
9. What does the Great Commission mean to you?
(a) Visiting church members (b) Reaching the world with the Gospel (c) No Idea
10. What are some activities your local Baptist Church undertake in fulfilling the Great Commission mandate in Mark 16:14-18
.....
11. How often does your local Baptist Church organize outreach program
(a) Once a Month (b) Once a year (c) Not at all
12. How many satellite churches do your local Baptist Church has established?
(a) One (b) Two or more (c) None
13. Does your local Baptist Church has established evangelism committee?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) No Idea

14. Which of the following is a challenge to your local church in doing evangelism?

(a) Migration of the youth to the cities and towns (b) Division of the district into different Associations (c) Insufficient logistics and motivation

15. Do new members visit your church from time to time?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) No Idea

16. How does one become a church member in your local Baptist church?

(a) Baptism by immersion (b) By transfer (c) By statement

17. Do you personally involve yourself in evangelism and missions work in your local

church? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Not at all

18. Does your local minister often make emphasis on the need to preach the Gospel to the unbelieving world? (a) Yes (b) No (c) I can't remember

19. What impact has your local Baptist Church made in your community?

20. Do your local Baptist Church members willingly give money to support evangelism and mission work? (a) Yes (b) No (c) I can't tell

APPENDIX 2

Preamble

Letter of Introduction

I am Osei Owusu Benjamin (Rev) a resident minister of Liberty Baptist Church (Konongo) and the final year student of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology department of Religious Studies. I would like to conduct a research on a topic “A study of Mark 16:14-18; its implications for Missionary Work in Asante Akim Central District of Ghana Baptist Convention”. I will need assistance from all Baptist Church ministers, church leaders and church members in the district. Every piece of information that you may give to support this study will be treated with confidentiality. The final work of this study will be given to your local church to aid you in the area of evangelism and mission in the district, hoping that my request will meet your kindest and earliest consideration.

Yours faithfully,

()

Osei Owusu Benjamin

Appendex 3

Interviewee	Position/Address	Date Interviewed
1. Osei Assibey John	founding member of LBC	14 th March 2016
2. J.O.Adjani	Founding member of LBC	12 th March 2016
3. Beatrice Adom Baafi	Deaconess Truth Baptist	21 st April 2016
4. Samuel Ampofo	Head Pastor Holy Spirit Baptist	12 th March 2016
5. Felix K.Asante	Secretary of AABMF	16 th April 2016
6. Kofi Osei Wusu	Head of Deacons (LBC)	17 th February 2016
7. Michael K.Boateng	Associate Pastor (LBC)	13 th February 2016
8. J.K.Manu	Head Pastor (New Life Baptist)	19 th February 2016
9. Gyamfi George	Head of education (LBC)	14 th April 2016
10. Isaac Kudjo	Head of Deacons (Truth Baptist)	23 rd February 2016
11. J.A.Boadi	First Ghanaian Ordained Baptist Minister	17 th April 2016

Administrative map of the Asante Akim Central Municipal Assembly

