

ABSTRACT

RELEVANT METHODS AND STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL CHURCH PLANTING IN HYDERABAD, INDIA

by

Patrick Dommati

Hyderabad is one of the most popular metropolitan cities of India and has rich diversity. It is a home to numerous Christian organizations and churches; however, the Christian populace is very low and does not match the potential it has. Not much research has been done on urban mission and church planting in the context of this city. This research investigates and addresses this issue.

This research studies different church planting methodologies that are being implemented in this city to identify and propose the most appropriate ones to augment healthy Christian growth in the city. In this research the major focus is on the Book of Acts, reflecting mainly on passages which highlight urban missions. Targeting the cities which were hotspots for trade and commerce, religious plurality, and politics was a successful strategy of Paul during his missionary journeys. The literature review highlights viewpoints of renowned scholars and thinkers who have contributed in the field of urban missions. Twenty-five church planters from Hyderabad were selected to share their expertise and were willing to contribute their empirical knowledge towards this research. Data was collected through questionnaires (soft copies and hard copies) and interviews and later analyzed by editing, coding, and classification.

Effective strategies for successful church planting in Hyderabad were suggested by this research. Implementing these strategies can enhance better church growth through

church planting in the city. This study suggests that there is scope to further investigate the limitations of empowering women for urban missions in the twenty-first century and the prevalence of persecution and intolerance towards the gospel in this city.

Seven major findings have been deduced from this research. They include: focusing on household evangelism, emphasizing prayer, demonstrating Christ's love in action, motivating and equipping church members to participate in church planting, focusing on discipleship and spiritual growth, equipping lay leadership, and highlighting the importance of personal evangelism. When proper emphasis is laid on implementing these strategies, one can attain a greater success in planting churches in Hyderabad.

**RELEVANT METHODS AND STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL CHURCH
PLANTING IN HYDERABAD, INDIA**

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by

Patrick Dommati

May 2021

© 2021

Patrick Dommati

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	x
CHAPTER 1 NATURE OF THE PROJECT	1
Overview of the Chapter	1
Personal Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Purpose of the Project	4
Research Questions	4
Research Question #1	4
Research Question #2	4
Research Question #3	4
Rationale for the Project	4
Definition of Key Terms	8
Delimitations	9
Review of Relevant Literature	10
Research Methodology	13
Type of Research	15
Participants	15
Instrumentation	17
Data Collection	18

Data Analysis	19
Generalizability	20
Project Overview	20
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT	22
Overview of the Chapter	22
Biblical Foundations	23
Biblical Foundation from the Old Testament	23
Biblical Foundation from the New Testament.....	30
Biblical Foundation for Urban Mission: Book of Acts.....	54
Urban Setting of the New Testament World.....	67
Theological Foundations.....	75
Church Planting Strategies Applied in the Book of Acts	75
Public Preaching of the Gospel in the Book of Acts.	76
Demonstration of Signs and Wonders	79
Exorcism	80
Household Evangelism	82
Focusing on Receptive Groups	83
Sharing the Love of God in Deed	85
Personal Evangelism.....	86
Teamwork	87
House Churches	89
Developing Lay Leadership.....	91
Focus on Ministering to Women and Equipping Them.....	93

Hindrances and Obstacles to Evangelistic Work	94
Role of the Holy Spirit	96
Case Study - Urban Church Planting: A Strategy Based of Paul's Work at Ephesus	99
Research Design Literature	101
Summary of Literature	102
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT	104
Overview of the Chapter	104
Nature and Purpose of the Project	105
Research Questions	106
Research Question #1	106
Research Question #2	106
Research Question #3	107
Ministry Context	107
Participants	112
Criteria for Selection	112
Description of Participants.....	113
Ethical Considerations	114
Instrumentation	115
Expert Review.....	118
Reliability and Validity of Project Design	119
Data Collection	120
Data Analysis	124

CHAPTER 4 EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT	130
Overview of the Chapter	130
Participants	131
Research Question #1: Description of Evidence	137
Research Question #2: Description of Evidence	142
Research Question #3: Description of Evidence	149
Summary of Major Findings	158
CHAPTER 5 LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT	160
Overview of the Chapter	160
Major Findings.....	161
First Finding: Focusing on Household Evangelism	161
Second Finding: Emphasizing Prayer	164
Third Finding: Demonstrating Christ’s Love in Action.....	169
Fourth Finding: Motivating and Equipping Church Members to Participate in Church Planting.....	174
Fifth Finding: Focusing on Discipleship and Spiritual Growth	178
Sixth Finding: Equipping Lay Leadership	183
Seventh Finding: Highlighting the Importance of Personal Evangelism..	189
Ministry Implications of the Findings.....	193
Limitations of the Study.....	198
Unexpected Observations	199
Recommendations.....	201
Postscript	202

APPENDIXES

A. Invitation to Participate in the Research	205
B. Questionnaire	206
C. Consent Form for Participating in Questionnaire (Hard Copy)	212
D. Consent Form for Participating in Online Questionnaire.....	213
E. Consent Form for Participating in the Interview	214
F. Confidentiality Agreement from the Translator	215
G. Confidentiality Agreement from the Data Analyst	216
H. Telugu Translation: Invitation to Participate in the Research.....	217
I. Telugu Translation: Questionnaire	219
J. Telugu Translation: Consent Form for Participating in the Questionnaire	226
K. Telugu Translation: Consent Form for Participating in the Interview	228
WORKS CITED	230

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Gender Ratio of the Participants.....	132
Table 2. Age of the Participants.....	133
Table 3. Participants Experience in Church Planting Ministry.....	134
Table 4. Number of Churches Planted by the Participant.....	134
Table 5. Most Recent Church Plant of the Participants	135
Table 6. Different Groups Found in the Churches of the Participants.....	136
Table 7. Percentage of Locals and Immigrants in the Church Congregation	136
Table 8. Literacy Percentage in the Churches	137
Table 9. Strategies Being Employed.....	141
Table 10. Research Question 1 – Graphical Representation of the Above Table	142
Table 11. Challenges Encountered (External Challenges)	145
Table 12. Research Question 2 – Graphical Representation of the Above Table	146
Table 13. Challenges Encountered (Internal Challenges).....	148
Table 14. Research Question 2 – Graphical Representation of the Above Table	149
Table 15. Participants' Responses to Church Planting Strategies from the Book of Acts	150
Table 16. Graphical Representation of the Above Table.....	150
Table 17. Essential Components of a Model Successful Church Plant	157
Table 18. Graphical Representation of the Above Table	158

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1. Acts 1:8.....	44
Figure 2. Golconda Fort.....	111
Figure 3. Charminar	111

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, all glory and honor to God almighty who in His abundant grace has enabled me to successfully complete my studies at this prestigious seminary. The list of people who have been a constant support in this endeavor of mine is very long. I would like to acknowledge them for their immense contribution.

To Bishop Joab Lohara and Mr. David Goodnight for recommending me to Asbury Theological Seminary (ATS).

To the Beeson International Program for granting me scholarship to further my education in this esteemed institution.

To my coach, Dr. Bryan Collier, for his wise counsel, guidance, and constant motivation. To Dr. Milton Lowe, my academic advisor, for his invaluable suggestions that helped me fine-tune my research. To Dr. Ellen Marmon and Dr. Verna Lowe for their instructions on dissertation writing. To Dr. Winfield Bevins for all his encouragement, classroom teachings, and academic assistance. To the DMin team, Mrs. Lacey Craig, Mrs. Ashley Watson, Mrs. Elizabeth Clevenger, and others at ATS for their continuous support during my studies. To the IRB team for their guidance in doing human subject research.

To all twenty-five participants who willingly contributed towards my research amidst the pandemic situation of COVID-19. To SAIACS library staff team, Mr. Yesan Mr. Prasad and the late Ms. Anitha for helping me gain access to endless sources of knowledge.

To Dr. Lars Dunberg for his experiential insights and to the editorial team at ATS. To Dr. A. Samarpatha, Mr. Pandugu Nagaraj, and Mr. Vijay for their technical assistance.

To my church, Gospel Trumpets Bible Fellowship, for their consistent prayers.

To my senior pastor, Rev. Dr. G. S. Vijay Bhushanam, for his inspiration, urging me to not give up on my vision.

To my prayer team, the late Mr. Athota Prasad Rao, Mrs. Athota Victoria, Mrs. Florence Prakash, Mr. Chukka Praveen, Mr. Chukka Mahipal, and Mr. Korani Ashish, for uplifting me in their prayers.

To Clearbranch Church and Table Church for their moral support.

To my prayer partner Rev. Vaughn Stafford and his wife, Cindy, who were an infinite source of strength, uplifting me in their prayers everyday.

To my classmate and dear friend Rev. John Ryberg for being my pillar of support all through my studies at ATS.

To my cohort of 2017 and legacy group members, Rev. Theo Burakeye, Rev. CJ Tillinghast, and Rev. Jeffrey Allen Horsman for their constant encouragement.

To my friends, Mr. Rick Davis, Mr. Brandon Miller, Rev. William Chaney, Mrs. Mary Crowson, Mr. Samir Mukha, and Rev. Lalith Kumar Naik, for helping me and cheering me on to finish my journey.

To my parents Mr. Dommati Luke David and Mrs. Kruthagnatha David, parents-in-law Rev. Dr. Vijay Bhushanam and Mrs. Esther Mary Vijay, and my sisters (Mrs. Beulah and Mrs. Spandana) and their families for believing in me and my passion. A very special thanks to my little sister, Ms. Maranatha for being an endless source of support.

To my darling daughter Darynn Abigail for all the sacrifices you have made so that papa would complete his studies.



**I WANT TO DEDICATE THIS DISSERTATION TO MY BELOVED WIFE,
RUTH, WHO WAS THE WIND BENEATH MY WINGS. I AM THANKFUL TO
JESUS FOR ALL THE WONDERFUL YEARS WE HAVE SHARED
TOGETHER.**

CHAPTER 1

NATURE OF THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

Chapter one presents an overview of the project, “Relevant Methods and Strategies For Successful Church Planting in Hyderabad, India.” The chapter includes a personal introduction which presents the significance of the project and then describes the problem. It also states the purpose of the project and the key research questions that the project aims to answer. This chapter also describes the rationale behind the project, gives a brief description on some of the key terms that are used in the paper, and sets up proper boundaries to the area of research. Other topics in this chapter include the research methodology that will be used in the project, a description about the participants, the instruments that were used for data collection, and steps employed for data analysis. All these topics will be further elaborated in the chapters that follow.

Personal Introduction

Ever since I was a young boy, I developed a heart for Christian missions in India. Growing up in a home for Christian missionary children, I heard stories and testimonies from different mission fields of the country. I would get excited about how God was working in my nation and was very enthusiastic about it. However, as I advanced in age and knowledge, I was constantly hit by the reality that there is still a vast majority of the population that needs to know the Lord Jesus Christ. This created a further burden in me.

On one occasion, when I heard the statistics of the Christian population in India, I was deeply moved in the Spirit that we were a small minority in this vast nation. That

was the time when I felt a strong sense of God's call in my life, and I dedicated myself to His ministry.

I studied in two seminaries in India (South India Biblical Seminary and South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies) that had an emphasis on Christian missions. In 2006, after my seminary studies I joined as an associate pastor at *Gospel Trumpets Bible Fellowship Church*, Hyderabad, which also has a similar emphasis on missions and church planting.

Staying and ministering in Hyderabad provided me with some firsthand exposure to the on-the-ground realities of Christian work. From my association and interactions with different pastors and church leaders I have realized that there is vast scope for church growth through church planting in Hyderabad. This has caused me to take up research which aims to study the church planting methods that are being employed in the city of Hyderabad and determine effective methods for planting healthy churches there.

Statement of the Problem

India is the second-largest populated country of the world, and it has a rich Christian history. Niell, speaking of the geography of the nation, stated that it "covers an area of more than one and half million square miles" (Niell 11). According to tradition, the gospel reached this vast nation, with its complex and varied civilization, in the first century AD through the ministry of Jesus' own disciple, apostle Thomas (Neill 16). Since then, there has been an inflow of Christian faith through various individuals and groups. Especially during the modern era (from AD 1500 to around AD 1800, most often 1815), there has been a great inpouring of both Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries into the country from a variety of global mission organizations. Today, India

has a wide group of churches including Eastern Syrian churches, Mar Thoma Syrian Church, the Church of South India (CSI), Evangelical Church of India (ECI), St. Thomas Evangelical Church of India, the Church of North India (CNI), the Presbyterian Church of India, Pentecostal Church, Apostolics, Baptists, Lutherans, Mennonites, Methodists, Traditional Anglicans, and other evangelical groups. Churches run thousands of educational institutions and hospitals which have contributed significantly to the development of the nation (*Christianity in India*). In spite of this wide range of churches, mission organizations, and their contributions to various aspects of the society, India still has a very low Christian population. According to the 2011 census, India has 2.3% Christians (*Religion in India*), which includes both Roman Catholics and Protestants. It is said that the city of Hyderabad also has a similar ratio of Christians, around 2.5 to 2.75% (*Demographics of Hyderabad; Hyderabad Population*). This figure is very disheartening.

Hyderabad is more likely than many other locations in the country to have a greater Christian population. Some of the advantages it holds are the variety of churches (some of them include the Church of South India, Baptists, Methodists, Mennonites, and Pentecostals), Christian organizations, and mission organizations in the city. It also has large crusades every year, where Christian evangelists from all over the world come to share the Gospel. Despite all these advantages, it is haunting to see a very low ratio of Christians in the city. This is a concern that needs serious attention. It is imperative to do research on the church planting methodologies that are being employed in Hyderabad and derive effective principles that can be adapted for healthy church planting and growth.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this research was to investigate the church planting methods that are being implemented in Hyderabad by interviewing pastors, then identify, design, and propose methodologies or principles that can be applied in Hyderabad for more effective church growth through church planting.

Research Questions

Research Question #1

What methods and strategies are being employed by successful church plants in Hyderabad?

Research Question #2

What challenges are encountered by successful church plants in Hyderabad?

Research Question #3

What are the essential components of a model successful church plant in Hyderabad?

The information collected from responses to research questions 1 and 2 and a focus on the book of Acts will suggest an appropriate model for church planting in Hyderabad.

Rationale for the Project

A Brief Overview of the Birth and Early Traces of Christianity in India

Arthur Jeyakumar, speaking of the Christian faith in India stated, “Christianity in India is as old as Christianity itself (Jeyakumar 1). According to Firth, the Syrian church in India holds on to a tradition that Thomas, the disciple of Jesus, landed in Cranganore (Kodangaluru), north of Cochin, around AD 52. It is said that he preached to the Jewish

settlers and their neighbors and was successful in winning them. He also traveled to many places in the southern coastal part of India and founded churches. Finally, in Mylapore, now part of the city of Chennai, the Brahmins raised a riot against Thomas, and he was speared to death around AD 72 (Firth 3-4).

Frykenberg is probably right in stating that though the Gospel reached India in the first century AD, there were periods of dormancy for the church (Frykenberg 116). The churches were confined to their territories without spreading out much or showing evidence of growth through church planting.

Jeyakumar is of the opinion that there was a close relationship between the mission work in India and Colonialism during the period of the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Danish, and the British. He points out that Portugal and Spain, both being Roman Catholic countries, had the blessings of the Pope, who asked them to send missionaries, support them, and establish churches. This came to be known as “Padroado” or “Patronato,” meaning Patronage. The rulers of Portugal and Spain did missions work as they colonized different territories of India. (Jeyakumar 13-14).

Some of the ways the Portuguese tried to engage in missionizing their territories during the 1500's follow. 1) They encouraged their men both from the merchants and the military to marry Indian women. This was to build a group within the local community who would be faithful to Portugal. 2) They offered jobs only to Christians. 3) Public offices could be held by Christians alone. These privileges lured people to the Christian faith, but it should not be ignored that Christian missionaries were also involved in direct evangelism, spreading the Gospel to people in their territories (Jeyakumar 15). It is said that between 1535 and 1537, the whole of the Paravas community (in south India),

numbering around twenty thousand, were baptized by the Portuguese priests (Jeyakumar 15).

Background of the City of Hyderabad

“The city of Hyderabad is a center for Islamic culture, and it still has the remains of Moghul splendors. It was founded probably between 1589 to 1591 by Mohammed Quli Qutub Shah (AD 1580 to 1612)” (Sathiaraj 88). Hyderabad was formerly known as Bhagyanagar, named after the wife of Qutub Shah (Sathiaraj 88).

Demography of Hyderabad

Hyderabad is the capital city of Telangana state of India. It occupies an area of approximately 625 square kilometers (241 square miles). The city is built along the banks of the River Musi (*Geography of Hyderabad*). The estimated population of Hyderabad is around ten million people (one Crore) (*Hyderabad Population 2020*). It is one of the fastest developing cities in India. It has grown to become a software industry hub with 997 registered software firms, and it is growing at a fast pace (Sathiaraj 88). This city has people from a wide variety of linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. Linguistic groups include Telugu, Urdu, Hindi, Oriya, Malayalam, Punjabi, Gujarathi, and Kannada, and the ethnic groups include Marwadis, Lambadas, Sindhis, and Baniyas (Sathiaraj 87).

Earliest Traces of Christian Missions in Hyderabad

After Queen Victoria took charge of India, Sir Arthur Cotton, a government engineer, paved the way for Christian mission to Hyderabad in 1862. Rev. Ebenezer Jenkins had a similar burden for the state of Hyderabad. C. W. Posnett of Medak was instrumental in opening schools in this area. In 1878, missionaries Henry Little and William Burgess came to Secunderabad. The first Methodist Telugu service was held in

Ramkote in December 1879, and in 1880 the Wesleyan Mission building was erected here (Sathiaraj 88).

Advantages the Christian Population Holds in Hyderabad

Today, Hyderabad has the head offices and branches of a majority of Christian organizations and churches; some of them include the Church of South India, Baptist Church, Methodist Church, Lutheran Church, Assemblies of God Church, Mennonites, Marthoma Syrian Church, Ravi Zacharias International Ministries, Youth With A Mission, Haggai Institute, Operation Mobilization, and Seva Bharath (Sathiaraj 88). It also has a number of Bible Colleges and Seminaries. Some of the major ones include Andhra Christian Theological College, Bharath Bible College, and Mennonite Bible College (Sathiaraj 202).

Given the rich background of Christianity in India and the advantages this faith holds, especially in Hyderabad, it is natural to expect it to grow much larger than it is now. This research and study will contribute to understanding the church planting approaches that are being employed in Hyderabad and will help in recommending relevant and effective missional methods to plant healthy churches in the city.

This research will also contribute to a larger audience at least in two areas. It will provide a model to guide research scholars in the future on how such research studies can be undertaken, and, as this research aims to explore effective church planting methods, these principles have universal implications and church planters can contextualize and apply them to similar contexts.

Definition of Key Terms

Missional: The word “missional” in this research refers to Christ’s calling to the church to share the Gospel to the lost world. The early church found in the book of Acts was a missionary church. It is seen as fulfilling the sovereign plan and will of God using different methods (Barnabas 1). In this research “missional” refers to a similar usage and also to missiological principles for spreading the Gospel and making disciples of Jesus.

Hyderabad: Hyderabad is the capital city of the Telangana state in India. This city forms the context of this research project. It should not be mistaken with the Hyderabad state that existed during the Moghal Empire (around AD 1700-1875) (*Hyderabad*). Hyderabad and Secunderabad form twin cities which are very closely knitted together. Therefore, whenever there is a reference to Hyderabad, one should consider the geographic area that includes both places.

Healthy Church: The words *healthy church or churches* appear several times in the research paper. People have defined *healthy church or churches* in different ways. When this research mentions *healthy church*, it refers to some of the characteristics presented by Rick Warren and Christian Schwartz. These churches focus both on the quality and quantity. Some of the key elements of these churches include the following. They possess genuine relationship with God, use their gifts and talents both inside and outside the church to glorify God, disintegrate themselves into small groups to discuss and apply God's word in their daily life, are involved in spirit-filled worship, rely on God for His continuous empowerment (Acts 1:8), have warm fellowship among believers (Acts 2:42-44), exercise the power of prayer (Acts 4:31), are generous in helping others

(Acts 4:32-37), and most importantly mobilize every member of the church to be a witness in the world outside (evangelize) (Acts 8) (Warren).

Missions and Church Planting: The words *missions* and *church planting* are important terms that are widely used in this paper. These two words are very closely knitted in the Bible, especially in the New Testament. *Missions* can be stated as the work of evangelism through various methods, resulting in winning people for God and planting new churches. Further, the offshoot of a church is itself involved in missions. This almost creates a circular pattern. The end result of both of these is to build the kingdom of God. Therefore, the terminologies *missions* and *church planting* are used interchangeably in this research.

Church Growth: The word church growth is a relative term and can mean several things. However, in this research, the description of growing church is taken from the model of the early church as found in the book of Acts. “They were serving one another and reaching out to those who needed to know the Lord” (*What Does The Bible Say About Church Growth?*). The result of such commitment was the Lord adding to their number daily those who were being saved. In light of above statements, *Church Growth* in this paper refers to qualitative internal spiritual growth and more importantly reflects quantitative growth through evangelism and church planting.

Delimitations

This topic is vast, and so setting boundaries right at the beginning will help the research be more focused. The field research is limited to twenty-five pastors from the city of Hyderabad. A good number of the primary participants are from Rajendranagar

Mandal (constituency) of Hyderabad as there are many church plants that have occurred in this area during the past two to three decades.

The study is also limited to selective passages from the book of Acts which are missional in nature rather than focusing on the Bible as a whole. Further, some passages will draw more attention than others because of their vitality and relevance to the research.

Review of Relevant Literature

On December 18, 1955, Dr Rajendra Prasad, the President of India, speaking on the occasion of St Thomas Day celebration, made the following observation in his speech at Delhi: “Remember, St Thomas came to India when many of the countries of Europe had not yet become Christian, and so those Indians who trace their Christianity to him have a longer history and a higher ancestry than that of Christians of many of the European countries. And it is really a matter of pride to us that it so happened” (Mundadan 9). Many Indian church history scholars share this strong view that Christianity reached India in the first century.

This research draws its material from a wide variety of literature. There is material from the Indian Church history section, which highlights the rich heritage of Christian history, especially in the Telugu speaking region. Other literature in this research is material related to urban missions, as Hyderabad is considered a megacity in India.

A major portion of Chapter Two deals with the biblical foundation and scholarly views on *missions* and *church planting*, especially from the Book of Acts. George is right in pointing out that the best source material to study the development of Christianity in

the early period is the Book of Acts (George A *Study of the Urban Church Growth in the Book of Acts* 31). Filson expresses a similar view when he states, “For the study of the rise and early development of the Christian church no writing is more important than the book of Acts” (Filson 9). He further goes on to quote Burton Scott Easton that Acts is “the most popular historical work the world has ever seen” (Filson 9). Though this statement might seem a little too broad, it does make an important point that it is imperative to look to the book of Acts for the birth and growth of the early church.

Some of the topics that are highlighted in the literature review are given below.

Role of the Holy Spirit: One cannot miss the work of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, in the life of the church. Tennent rightly points out that “the Holy Spirit is not merely an impersonal force or a *donum superadditum* (i.e., a spiritual addition). Rather, the Holy Spirit is the authoritative, empowering presence of the living God” (Tennent 411). The book of Acts presents various roles of the Holy Spirit. First, the Holy Spirit empowers the church for global mission (Act 1:5 and 8) (Tennent 412). Haya-Prats, commenting on the work of the Holy Spirit, expresses a similar view when he states that the author of Acts presents “in a global manner, the entire activity of the apostles as a testimony under the impulse of the Holy Spirit” (Haya-Prats 97). Second, the Holy Spirit is the teacher of the church. He conveys and communicates to the church the will of God, thereby bringing the church under the authority of God (Tennent 412-413). Third, the Holy Spirit demonstrated Himself through the powerful manifestation of signs and wonders. Luke records that “everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles” (2:43). This manifestation of signs and

wonders was not just limited to the apostles but is seen in the ministry of others such as Stephen (6:8) and Philip (8:6,13) (Tennent 412).

Evangelism and Social Action: Tennent, in his book, “Invitation to World Missions,” brings about the issue of “Evangelism and Social Action.” He rightly points out that in the early church, though the proclamation of good news mainly highlighted the death and resurrection of Jesus and thereby called people to repentance and reconciliation with God, one cannot miss the *social action*. According to him, “The phrase *social action* refers to the church’s cultural mandate to express God’s love practically through tangible acts of compassion and justice for the poor, the homeless, the sick, and the disenfranchised. The resulting ‘social action/social justice paradigm’ is a powerful testimony of God’s love and compassion for the whole person” (Tennent 389). This is an area that is addressed in the research.

Paul’s Mission Strategy: A significant amount of data focuses on “Paul’s mission strategy,” or “Pauline” methods in missions, as he is one of the apostles who is highlighted by Luke, the author of Acts, who presents his missionary journeys to various parts of the Roman Empire (Robert 12). Paul was not an ordinary person; he was a zealous Pharisee, a law-abiding and duly circumcised member of the tribe of Benjamin, and a Greek –speaking Roman citizen who persecuted the church. After his encounter, this same Paul went on to stand in the Synagogues and boldly proclaim Jesus as the fulfilment of the Jewish Scriptures (Robert 12). His missiological methods made significant contributions to the spread of the Gospel in the early church.

House Church Strategy: During Jesus’ time and then during the expansion of the church in the Book of Acts, the house became a center for spreading the Gospel,

discipling, meeting for worship, and encouraging each other. In fact, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost happened in a house setting. Acts 2:1-2 states, “Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting” (Choudhrie 12-13). In the Book of Acts the first worship service, communion, and preaching to the gentile family (Cornelius) all happened in a house (Choudhrie 14). Green, commenting on it, states that the house is the central pivot of Christian advancement (Green *Acts for Today* 96).

Other important subjects that will occupy space in the literature review include the substance or content of disciples preaching (Green *Acts for Today* 69-90; Allen 53f), team work (Green *Acts for Today* 104-106; Eims 173-184), personal evangelism, developing lay leadership, and hindrances to evangelistic work.

Research Methodology

Primary Source: The primary source for this research are contributions from 25 pastors, which include both men and women. Their feedback has contributed towards understanding the on-the-ground reality about their particular church’s role in missions and church planting. Data was collected from them using interviews and questionnaires. This is further discussed and elaborated on in Chapters 3 and 4.

Secondary Source: The secondary sources for this research includes books, theses/dissertations, and articles from journals. Data has also been collected from reliable internet resources and texts from the Bible. The literature review is given in Chapter 2, but implications drawn from it are found in other chapters as well.

Qualitative Analysis: Most scholars agree that there are three kinds of research method, “qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods” (Creswell *Research Design*,

Second Edition 3). “*Quantitative* research is based on quantity or amount” (Kothari 3). Here the focus or outlook is in terms of quantity. On the other hand, the focus of *qualitative* research is on the “phenomenon involving quality. Its aim is to get to the meaning, feeling and describe the situation” (Goundar). Sensing, commenting on qualitative research, states that this type of research is rooted “in the social world of experiences and seeks to make sense of lived experiences” (Sensing 57). He further quotes Denzin and Lincoln, according to whom, “Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them” (Sensing 57). Creswell also expresses a similar thought when he states that in this approach, “the researcher collects open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing theme from the data” (Creswell *Research Design, Second Edition* 18).

Having looked at some of the aspects of qualitative research, it seems appropriate to undertake this methodology for this thesis. It is best suited for deriving the right answers for the research questions. Suitable instruments will be used to collect the data from the field, and the data will be analyzed using proper techniques. These aspects are further elaborated in Chapter 3.

Sampling: Sampling is a key aspect in doing such research. According to Stangor, “Sampling refers to the selection of people to participate in a research project, usually with a goal of being able to use these people to make inferences about a larger group of individuals” (Stangor100). Sensing, commenting on *sampling*, states “*purposive samples* select people who have awareness of the situation and meet the criteria and attributes that

are essential to your research. They are more common in qualitative research and will be more useful for D.Min projects” (Sensing 83). Considering the importance of sampling for this research, it has focused on 25 people who contributed to the project, and conclusions are based on their input.

The qualitative method has been used to gather the desired data for this research. During this process, the data has been gathered through questionnaires and interviews, which also includes life stories and participant observations. The descriptions and the conclusions are based on the participants’ response to the questions posed to them, along with the researcher’s personal observations and verifications (Solomon 21-22).

Type of Research

All the research works done at the DMin level fall into one of four different research types: descriptive Research, pre-intervention Research, intervention, or post-intervention (DMin Class notes). This research falls into the category of pre-intervention research which means that it describes the issue of church planting in Hyderabad and identifies the problem and the reasons contributing to it. Further, based on the study of church planting methods described in the book of Acts and the inputs gathered from the primary participants, it proposes steps that can contribute to accelerate church planting in the city of Hyderabad (DMin class notes).

Participants

Selection of the right participants to provide appropriate and adequate data is crucial when undertaking this research. Solomon refers to Spradley who is right in pointing out key qualifications that an informant should possess. Some of them include enculturation, current involvement, adequate time, and analytical skills (Solomon 24).

Taking into consideration these criteria, data was gathered from selected pastors in Hyderabad. They include pastors from Rajendranagar Mandal (constituency) and from other parts of the city. The research focused on 25 respondents to keep the study more precise and achievable. They have been selected with attention paid to their knowledge and experience in this area. Without showing any discrimination, men and women were identified who could contribute to this research from their personal and ministerial experiences. The number of female respondents is less as there are very few of them holding pastoral office in Hyderabad. Most of the participants could communicate in English; however, Telugu (the vernacular language) was also used as some of them were more comfortable expressing themselves in that local language.

Advantages in Using Participants from Rajendranagar Mandal: The city of Hyderabad has been stretching its horizons rapidly due to the inflow of people into it. One of the areas that has shown fast development in the recent years is Rajendranagar Mandal. The establishment of an international airport very close to this area has added to this growth. Once considered to be on the outskirts of the city, it now has government offices, huge shopping malls, residential societies, good educational institutions including three universities (agriculture, horticulture, and veterinary), and restaurants. This growth has also led to the emergence of new churches in the last few decades. These include both mainline, denominational, and independent churches. In this context, having a significant number of respondents from this specific area seemed helpful; however, this does not undermine the role of participants from other parts of the city for this research.

Instrumentation

The two major instruments that were employed for data collection in this research were questionnaires and interviews. Both these instruments have proven to be effective for this type of research. According to Sensing, they employ “the same basic techniques for asking a question” (Sensing 86). He further states that asking the right questions requires a skilled mind and hard work (Sensing 86). This might involve a continuous process of reworking the questions several times before actually putting forth the accurate ones. In simple terms, asking the right questions provides the right answers for the research. While formulating the questions, the researcher was guided by his coach, and he also took input from research scholars like Dr. Milton Lowe, who have expertise on such research procedures. These questions had to be modified and refined several times to achieve the desired goals.

Questionnaires have been prepared in three different formats: hard copies, soft copies for email, and Google forms. The respondents were given the liberty to choose from any of them. They all contained the same set of questions.

Some of the respondents opted for a verbal communication, and therefore interviews were conducted with them using questions from the questionnaires. These interviews were recorded for more transparency in the research. Most of the participants in these interviews spoke in the Telugu language, which is the local, vernacular language spoken in Hyderabad. These interviews were either done through physical meetings, telephonic conversations, or through FaceTime conversations. These tools of instrumentation are further explained in Chapter 3.

Data Collection

Data collection is key to any empirical field research. Doing data collection using the appropriate techniques will yield the best results. It helps in bringing out the actual on-the-ground reality of the situation and sets the stage to provide the needed solutions to the issue. Sensing rightly points out, “tools to collect data from the setting are chosen based on the particular demands of your project” (Sensing 71). As mentioned above, two tools were employed for data collection: questionnaires and one-on-one interviews. To make the project more manageable, the study was limited to inputs gathered from 25 pastors from Hyderabad.

All the questionnaires were given in advance, and the participants were allowed to work on them for a minimum of ten days. Though the completion of the questionnaire does not take much time, the hope was that they would not rush but rather thoughtfully answer each question. The questionnaires also collected demographic details such as the name and location of their church and total number of church members.

The questions asked both in the questionnaire and in the interviews resonate with each other, and they are in alignment with the research questions and the purpose statement. Close-ended questions were employed, and participants could answer by choosing from one of the options given. There were also open-ended questions, which could be descriptively answered from their personal experiences. As suggested by Sensing, the things that went well and the obstacles faced during data collection are briefly highlighted (Sensing 71).

Data Analysis

As much as data collection is important, so is data analysis, which often acts as a translator or exegete. Without proper analysis the right conclusions will not be found. Sensing, quoted from Swinton and Mowat, who rightly stated, “Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the complicated mass of qualitative data that the researcher generates during the research process” (Sensing 194). This is a real challenge now as the raw data must be placed “into logical, meaningful categories, to examine data in a holistic fashion, and to find a way to communicate the interpretation to others” (Sensing 194).

Some of the steps that have been employed in data analysis are given below.

Editing: This is the first thing to be considered when the raw data is available from each of the participant. During this process, the data is examined to see if the respondents have answered the questions appropriately. Any material that is recorded in a language other than English is translated and written in the proper format. If there are gaps or answers that are vague, the respondents are contacted for further insights into them (Kothari 122-123).

Coding: According to Sensing, coding is the process of making the raw data more accessible for interpretation. It takes into consideration several aspects such as assigning meaning to descriptions, quotes, and texts. (Sensing 202-203). Repeated words, phrases, concerns, topics, and expressions are grouped together into meaningful categories which are modified as and when required during different stages of the analysis (Sensing 196, 203).

Classification: Kothari, commenting on classification, states that this is “the process of arranging the data in groups or classes on the basis of common characteristics” (Kothari 123). Arranging the raw data into different themes, categories, and patterns helps in understanding and analyzing the available material better (Sensing 198). Homogenous content is found in the data and put under one category for further study. At the same time there is also a focus on heterogeneous content, where there are clear and distinct differences in the collected data (Sensing 197-198). All these aspects of data analysis are further expanded in Chapter 3.

Generalizability

This project is significant as it identifies effective methods of church planting that are being employed by churches in Hyderabad and also draws out missional implications from the book of Acts which can be easily contextualized for any population, demography, or geographical location, especially in urban contexts.

Project Overview

This project attempts to study the on-the-ground reality of church growth through church planting in Hyderabad and then draw out proper implications from the book of Acts for this context. Employing the proposed suggestions that are drawn from the research can be helpful for significant church growth.

Chapter One presents an overview of the whole project. It gives a personal introduction explaining the significance of the project and states the problem that needs to be addressed, the main purpose of the project, and the research questions that were employed to draw out conclusions. It also defines some key terms that appear in the research and the boundaries set for the project. There is a description provided of relevant

literature, the research methodology, the participants who contributed to the project, the instruments that were used for data collection, and how the data was analyzed. All this sets up the stage for the following chapters where each of these topics are further expanded.

Chapter Two presents the biblical foundation for missions and church planting. A survey is done through different passages from the Bible which relate to the research topic, however a major part of this section deals with selective passages from the books of Acts. Further it presents the urban context of the Greco-Roman world and then a thematic approach is taken to discover different church planting methodologies that were employed by the apostles, especially highlighting Paul's strategy in church planting.

Chapter Three expands the research methodology that is employed for this project. It describes the ministry context (*Hyderabad*) of the project by providing insights into the historical background, geography, population, culture, and religious practices. This chapter also elaborates on the participants and how they have been selected. Further, it describes the instruments that have been employed for data collection and the process involved in it. The last section deals with the different procedures undertaken for data analysis. This sets the stage for the remaining chapters.

Chapter Four presents a detailed account of the data collection. It describes the findings discovered from the inputs of the participants, compares them with the church planting strategies from the book of Acts, and then draws out implications for the churches in Hyderabad.

The final chapter, Chapter Five, provides recommendations from the research and concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

The Bible has several texts on missions and church planting. Missions are the heart of God (John 3:16), and this subject is among the core teachings of his Word, the Bible. This chapter is divided into three major sections, and each discusses various aspects pertaining to this theme.

The first part of this chapter focuses on the biblical basis for missions and church planting. This section provides an overview of the Bible on the topic through selective scripture passages from different parts of the Bible. Doing an elaborate study on all the scriptures cannot be justified in research such as this and does not fit the main agenda of this paper. Therefore, a greater space is allotted to the book of Acts, highlighting the birth and expansion of the church, especially from an urban church plant perspective as this falls in line with this research.

The words *mission/missions* and *church planting* are very closely knitted and are used interchangeably throughout this paper. In the New Testament, especially in the book of Acts, the end product of mission is church planting, and the offshoot of church is mission. They are two sides of the same coin, building the kingdom of God.

The second section begins by focusing on the urban context of the New Testament world, highlighting some key features observed there. This approach helps to better understand the strategies for urban mission/church planting as described in the book of Acts. In this segment, the aim is to focus on the different church planting

principles that were applied by the disciples, especially Paul's, as he plays a vital role in the urban church plant.

The third section deals with the opinions of different scholars on subjects from the Book of Acts and urban church planting. The focus is on scholarly views and how they perceive different topics concerning the subject.

Biblical Foundations

Valerian Fernandez points out that right from the inception the church has been missionary in her nature and continues through history. He makes an interesting observation when he states that this seems to be a shift from her parental religion Judaism (Fernandez). Though there is some truth in this statement, one should note that from the beginning God intended His people to be a blessing to the nations. This is very clearly pointed out in the election and call of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3). In fact, "The Bible is the record of a mission: the divine mission of saving the human race carried out by the Triune God and his commissioned people" (*The Basis of Missions in the Old Testament*). The following section surveys different passages of the Bible to highlight the missiological aspect that is vivid throughout its pages.

Biblical Foundation from the Old Testament

There are several references in the Old Testament pointing to its missiological outlook. George W. Peters, in his article, *Missions in Biblical Perspective*, states, "of all needs in missions, there is no need more pressing than to rediscover and hold to a truly biblical perspective in missions" (Peters 10). According to him, soon after the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, God announced the coming of a Savior (Genesis 3:15), which he calls protoevangelism. (Peters 11). In fact, major themes of the

Pentateuch including the flood and Noahic covenant, the call of Abraham and covenant, the call of Moses, the exodus of Israel from Egypt, the Sinaiic covenant, and the law are not just the history of Israel but point to a theocentric God involved in history for the redemption of humanity. (Peters 11). In other words, mission is nothing but the mission of God, *Missio Die*, manifesting from His own nature. (Peters 9).

Genesis: The Call of Abraham

Jeremy Bouma quotes Tremper Longman III according to whom, “the book of Genesis lays the foundation for all of the history of redemption... This story of God’s work of redemption continues throughout the rest of the Old Testament.” (Bouma). Jiri Moskala expresses a similar view in his article, *The Mission of God's People in the Old Testament*. Commenting on the call of Abraham in Genesis 12, he states, “The universality of the mission was explicitly mentioned for the first time in regard to Abraham.” (Moskala). Dennis Olson views “the call of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-4) as ‘one of the most dramatic transitions in the entire story of the Old Testament’” (Olson *Commentary on Genesis 12:1-4a*). In the chapters up to this event, humanity had drifted away from their commitment to God and fellowship with Him. The fall of Adam and Eve, the story of Cain and Abel, the flood, and the efforts to build the Tower of Babel to reach the heavens clearly portray the wickedness of human heart. Now in Genesis 12, God is about to provide a solution through Abraham and reconcile humanity to Himself (Bouma). Olson rightly points out that this selection of Abraham does not imply the rejection of other people but rather God's strategy to redeem all humanity through him. In fact, Abraham and Sarah were chosen for a long-term project where they would become a special vehicle to affirm “God's continuing commitment to humans and the world” (Olson

Commentary on Genesis 12:1-4a). Christopher J. H. Wright also expresses a similar view when he writes that the election of Abraham and Israel, was to fulfill "God's 'missionary' purpose of ultimate blessing to all nations. Israel's election was not for the rejection of the nations, but for the sake of their salvation" (Wright 707).

It is very clearly pointed out that God's call for Abraham was not limited to experiencing personal blessings but to be a blessing to others. This is mentioned twice, "you will be a blessing" (verse 2) and "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (verse 3). Moskala rightly points out that God stresses this aspect of Abraham being a blessing to all nations at least three times (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18) (Moskala). Matthew Henry, along with many other Old Testament commentators, agrees that this promise points to Jesus, the coming Messiah (Henry *Commentary on Genesis 12*). He would come from Abraham's lineage not just for the Jewish nation but for all the families of the earth (*Genesis Chapter 12*). There can be no doubt that "Jesus Christ is the great blessing of the world, the greatest that ever the world was blessed with" (Henry *Commentary on Genesis 12*). Having said this, one cannot overlook Abraham's way of life which shone bright in a world filled with idolatry and darkness. One of the most common practices of Abraham during his travel to many places was to build altars and call on the name of the Lord (Gen 12:7-8; 13:4 and 18; 22:9-13). By doing this, he was being a witness to everyone around him and presented the uniqueness of his God (Moskala).

Moskala rightly points out, "Abraham's universal mission was repeated to Isaac (*New International Version*, 'And through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed,' Gen 26:4), and reaffirmed to Jacob (Gen 28:13-15; 35:11-12; 46:3) and Moses

(Exod 3:6–8; 6:2–8)” (Moskala). In all this, God ultimately planned to bless the whole of humanity (Wright 707).

Teachings in Other Books of the Old Testament

The people of Israel had the responsibility to continue the universal mission. God demonstrated his power in Egypt through the ten plagues, and crossing over the Red Sea was a remarkable event in the history of Israel. These events not only proved that the gods of Egypt were no match to Him (Exod. 12:12) but were also aimed at the Egyptians so they would know that the God of Israel was the true God (Exod. 7:5 and 17; 8:22; 14:4 and 18) (Moskala). Leviticus 19:9-37 presents God's instructions to the Israelites about interpersonal relationships. In verses 33-34, He states that foreigners should not be mistreated, rather they should be shown love (v. 34 - Love them as yourself). This vividly points out that the Israelites were called to be different in their approach to people outside, and, in doing so, they were reflecting God's love for them. This again presents God's heart for all people (*2. Conduct of Interpersonal Relationships Through Love and Respect*).

All through the history of Israel, God constantly demonstrated His power, revealing Himself to the nations around Israel. (Moskala). This is clear through the events that are presented in the Book of Joshua. Right at the beginning is the testimony of Rahab where she clearly spells out, "the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below" (Joshua 2:11).

In Isaiah 42:6, God shares His purpose for Israel when He says “I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a *light for the gentiles.*” God’s purpose was

to bless all nations through Israel. (Olson *What in the World Is God Doing?* 17).

However, there is less in the Bible about Israel grasping this mission of God and leading others to Him.

Book of Jonah

George Robinson, commenting on the book of Jonah, states, "One of the premiere missionary texts within the OT is the story of Jonah" (Robinson). Kang Soon Lee makes a similar comment in his article, *Mission in the Book of Jonah*, when he calls Jonah both "as a prophet and missionary." According to him, a missionary is one who is chosen, called, and sent by God to carry out His specific mission, and all these are present in Jonah (Jonah 1:1-2) (Lee). Jonah was sent as a cross-cultural missionary to preach to the people of Nineveh. He was very reluctant to show his obedience to God and hoped that God would destroy the city of Nineveh, but one will note tremendous results as the whole city fasted and repented, turning to God (Robinson).

Scholars vary in their opinions about the book of Jonah, and there are two truths that stand out. First, this story very clearly reveals the attitude of the Israelites towards outsiders (in this case, Ninevites, who were a threat to Israelites). Jonah ran away not because he thought the Ninevites would reject his message but because he was afraid that they might accept it, and God would relent from punishing this wretched people (Stetzer *Jonah and the Mission of God: A Closer Look*). In fact, the Bible says that "Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry" (Jonah 4:1), and he even prayed that he would die (Jonah 4:3).

Second, this book reveals God's great mercy to all people who truly repent. This is vivid in Jonah 4:10-11, but the Lord said, "You have been concerned about this plant,

though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?”

Universal Claim of God from Isaiah 45

Isaiah 45 is one of the most significant chapters of the Bible, describing the universal claim of God (*The Basis of Missions in the Old Testament*). In seven verses (Isaiah 45: 5-6, 14, 18, 21-22) Yahweh claims Himself to be the only God, who has all power, and that He alone would be exalted (Isaiah 45, *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*).

In Isaiah 45:18, God declares Himself as the creator of the heavens and the earth: "he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it" (*The Basis of Missions in the Old Testament*). According to the *Benson Commentary*, this idea of God presents the vanity of idols and that He alone is the true God. He is not only the creator but continues to sustain the world by His great power to manifest His goodness to all humanity (Isaiah 45:18, *Benson Commentary*). According to *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, this verse (v.18) is aimed to draw all people to put their unwavering confidence in the true God (Isaiah 45:18, *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*). Further, this God is not just the creator of the heavens and earth but of all humanity (v.12 – “It is I who made the earth and *created mankind on it*”), therefore, by virtue of this all humanity belongs to Him (*The Basis of Missions in the Old Testament*).

Yahweh is also the God of history and the future. (*The Basis of Missions in the Old Testament*). Isaiah 45:11 says, “This is what the Lord says Concerning things to

come.” God alone can guide and give information about future events, and people should enquire of Him (Isaiah 45:18, *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*). After the demonstration of Yahweh's deity there is the proclamation of salvation to all humanity (Isaiah 45:22–25). Verse 22 says “Turn to me and be saved, *all you ends of the earth*” (Isaiah 45:22, *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*). “This verse contains truth enough, if properly understood and applied, to save the world; and on the ground of this, all people, of all ages, nations, climes, ranks, and character, might come and obtain eternal salvation” (Isaiah 45:22, *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*). Further, verse 23 clearly points out that all humanity will worship Him (v.23 - “Before me *every knee* will bow”).

All the verses mentioned in Isaiah Chapter 45 signify the universal nature of the God of the Bible. All people are expected to turn their eyes and hearts to Him, expecting salvation from Him alone (Isaiah 45:22, *Matthew Poole's Commentary*).

Concluding Remarks on Biblical Foundations for Missions from the Old Testament

Kang Soon Lee points out that the model of the centrifugal mission of God is vivid in different parts of the Old Testament. He, like many other missiologists, comments that God's salvation story was not just limited to the nation of Israel but extended to all nations. He puts forth verses such as Isaiah 49:6b, “I will also make you a light for the gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth,” and 60:1, “Arise, shine, for your light has come” (Lee). Moskala states that though the scope of mission was universal, it was gradually disclosed to His people in history. God expected His people to carry the message of hope and salvation to others around them (Isa 66:19; Ps. 67:2; 96:3), but they failed to catch this vision for various reasons (Moskala). One

reason for this attitude, mentioned in the article, *The Basis of Missions in the Old Testament*, is that from the time of Moses, the people of Israel constantly encountered desperate situations where they had to stand their faith in a religiously pluralistic world. In other words, their struggle was to restrain themselves from the influences of a heathen and corrupt world around them (*The Basis of Missions in the Old Testament*).

Throughout the Old Testament, Israel, instead of being a missionary nation, constantly failed in her commitment to God and followed the ways of the pagan nations. In this context, one of the repeated messages of the Old Testament prophets was “repent and return to God” (2 Chronicles 24:19; Isaiah 53:6; 55:7; Jeremiah 35:15; Joel 2:12-13; Hosea 14). However, one should not overlook the presence of people who were attracted to the God of Israel. Some of the examples include people like Rahab, Ruth, and Naaman. They put their faith in the God of Israel. This clearly indicates the missionary nature of the Old Testament, though such cases are scarce. (Bosch 175-176).

Biblical Foundations from the New Testament

The Gospels

If the question, what is the biblical basis for Christian missions and church planting, is posed to Christians, most believers would probably end up with the Great Commission mentioned in Matthew 28:19-20 or passages like Matthew 24:14, Mark 16:15, John 3:16, and Acts 1:8 (Culbertson). These biblical passages from the New Testament are very relevant to the topic; however, there are several other passages that shed light on the same subject. The following paragraphs will chronologically list different passages related to Christian missions and church planting and briefly describe them.

Matthew

Matthew 24:14 – “And this gospel of the kingdom *will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations*, and then the end will come.” According to Meyer's NT Commentary, ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμῆνῃ (in the whole world) should not be taken as a reference to the Roman Empire but in general to all the inhabitants of the world, which was the messianic mission (*Matthew 24:14, Meyer's NT Commentary*). Further, the mention of “*a testimony to all nations*,” once again implicitly sanctions the preaching of the gospel to all gentiles, a work which was later taken up more deliberately by Apostle Paul and others in the book of Acts (*Matthew 24:14, Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers; Matthew 24:14, Benson Commentary*). Though there is not information about the labor of most of the apostles, some conclusions can be drawn from the writings of Paul. In Romans 10:18 he states, “their voice has gone out *into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world*.” Paul testifies about it again in Col. 1:6 and 23, (v. 6 - “the gospel is bearing fruit and growing *throughout the whole world*”; v. 23 - “This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to *every creature under heaven*”). In fact, he himself carried the Gospel to “Arabia Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Illyricum, Rome, Spain (see Romans 15:19, 24, 28; Galatians 1:17; Philippians 1:13, etc.)” (*Matthew 24:14, Pulpit Commentary*).

Matthew 25:31- 32 - “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 *All the nations will be gathered before him*.” According to *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, the parables in Matthew Chapter 25 appear to be in sequel with the discourse in chapter 24 and form a conclusion to it. Further this particular passage (v. 31 and 32) is connected with the final advent of

Jesus (Matthew 25, *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*). In other words, it refers to the Lord's judgment, a grand closing scene from the eschatological predictions (Matthew 25:31, *Meyer's NT Commentary*). There is a difference of opinion among scholars about who “*all the nations*” refers to. Some view it as referring to the heathen nations of the world (Matthew 25, *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*), while others refer to it as “the whole race of men, who, dead and living, small and great, Jew and gentile, shall stand before God to be judged according to their works (Revelation 20:11-13)” (Matthew 25:31, *Pulpit Commentary*).

Matthew 28:18-20 - Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore *go and make disciples of all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” These verses are commonly known as part of “the great commission” of the Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples. Now that the disciples were trained by their Master, it was their turn *to go and make disciples of all nations*. These words “all nations” are the same as in Matthew 25:32 (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη - all the nations), and the phrase was commonly used by the Jews to refer to the gentile nations outside themselves (Matthew 28:19, *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*). This commission by the Lord Jesus Christ acted as the foundation of their authority to go out to the gentile world. Jesus broke down the long-lasting walls of the Jews, when He commanded His disciples to bring people of all nations to the saving knowledge of Himself (Matthew 28:19, *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*). *Baptism* and *teaching* are presented as two main branches in this process (Matthew 28:19, *Benson Commentary*).

However, there is a stress laid on teaching, which acts as one of the key elements for full discipleship (Matthew 28:19, *Pulpit Commentary*; Matthew 28:19, *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*). In other words, "The sum of the apostleship is the proclaiming of the doctrine received from Christ throughout all the world, and the ministering of the sacraments: the efficacy of which things depends not on the ministers but on the Lord" (Matthew 28:19, *Geneva Study Bible*).

The word *Church* is not explicitly present in this passage; however, Rene Frey rightly points out "the only way to accomplish the Great Commission, which includes disciple-making, training and baptism, is through the establishment of local churches. Likewise, the only way to carry out the discipline Christ ordained in Matthew 18:15-20 is to have and to plant local bodies" (Frey).

Mark

According to Fernandez, the Gospels portray Jesus as an itinerant missionary traveling from one place to another. He draws out an important observation from Mark Chapter 1. In Mk. 1:35, Jesus moves out to a solitary place very early in the morning to pray. In the following verses (v. 36-37), when the disciples found Him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" (NIV). Fernandez rightly points out that the reference to "everyone" could be to people in the town who were sick or to those who heard about Jesus healing many on the previous evening and want to see Him perform more miracles (cf. Mk. 1:32-34). Instead of going back to the same town, Capernaum (v. 21), where He was popular, Jesus said, "Let us go somewhere else - to the nearby villages - *so I can preach there also. That is why I have come*" (Mk. 1:38 - NIV). According to Fernandez, "This statement of Jesus, right at the beginning of his public ministry, underlines his

‘missionary intent’" (Fernandez). Jesus is setting the stage for a larger scope of evangelism. His design to propagate the gospel to all places is vividly presented, and He sets a model for His disciples to follow later (Mark 1, *Benson Commentary*).

Mark 13:10 - And the gospel must first be preached to *all nations*. This verse is in the context of Jesus teaching His disciples about enduring hardship. Right after the ascension of Jesus, starting from the day of Pentecost, many people turned to God and the plantation of churches in different parts of the Roman Empire, including Jerusalem, Iconium in Lycaonia, Galatia, throughout Asia Minor, Greece, Crete, and Italy. The Gospel reached many distant places although there is not a full record of it. A good example is the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch through the work of Phillip. This Ethiopian official was baptized and must have taken this newly found faith in Jesus to his family and other friends in Ethiopia. A majority of the churches planted in the places mentioned above and in other parts of the Roman world were done within thirty years of Jesus' death (Mark 13:10, *Benson Commentary*), before the destruction of Jerusalem (Mark 13:10, *Pulpit Commentary*).

Mark 16:15 - He said to them, "Go into all the world and *preach the gospel to all creation*." These words of the Lord Jesus once again portray the universal nature of the Gospel. Having received instructions and training from the master, the disciples were now to go into the world. This verse puts forth three truths about Jesus Christ and the gospel: His adequacy (all sufficient Savior for all), His divine mercy for all, and the adaptive nature of the Gospel (absorbed into various civilizations all through the history). *Go and preach* is what Jesus commands His disciples. It implies both evangelizing and discipling of all nations, bringing all people to Jesus and building them up in Him (Mark

16:15, *MacLaren's Expositions*). *Barnes' Notes on the Bible* divides the verse into three parts: preach, referring to proclamation or making known; the gospel, the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus, and to every creature, a message not limited to any particular group but for all. The offer of salvation is for all human beings (Mark 16:15, *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*).

Luke

Luke 2:9-10 - The proclamation of the birth of Jesus was first given to a group of lowly shepherds who were keeping watch over their flock in the wilderness. The angel of the Lord said to them, "I bring you good news that will cause great joy *for all the people*." According to Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, *For all people* — first refers to the people of Israel and thereafter open to the whole world (Luke 2:10, *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*). This very well fits in the agenda of God as presented in John 3:16 (God so loved the *world*).

Luke 15:1-32 - The Parable of the Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, and Lost Son are among the familiar parables of Jesus. These parables were told in a context when tax collectors and sinners were gathering around Jesus to hear from Him, but the Pharisees and the teachers of the law viewed it with an indignant spirit saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." For the "scribes, who were the interpreters of the law, and the Pharisees, who were the rigid observers of their decrees and interpretations" this was unacceptable. For them, people such as tax collectors and sinners did not deserve the mercy of God and were considered an excommunicated group (Luke 15, *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*). However, Jesus saw them differently. For Him, they looked like a group that was *lost*, and He explains His reason for loving and receiving

such sinful people (Luke 15:1, *Pulpit Commentary*). All these parables point to His mission of *seeking the lost*.

Furthermore, in the parable of the lost sheep the shepherd finds the sheep and then carries it back home. This action demonstrates that the mission of evangelism is accomplished when the repentant new believers are integrated into lively communities that are the church (Frey).

Luke 19:1-10 – Luke chapter 19 presents an incident from the city of Jericho. There is a short man named Zacchaeus who was a chief collector and a wealthy man. He desired to see Jesus and therefore climbed a sycamore-fig tree. When Jesus reached the spot, He called Zacchaeus by his name and went to his house as a guest. This action of Jesus was not well received by the people around and they muttered, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." In this context Jesus makes an important statement reaffirming His mission in this world. In verse 10, He said, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." "He came into this lost world to seek and to save it. His design was to save, when there was no salvation in any other. He seeks those that sought him not, and asked not for him" (Luke 19:10, *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*). Jesus speaks the same words in Matthew 18:11 as well. Paul also mentions this aspect in 1 Timothy 1:15 when he writes, "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*" (Luke 19:10, *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*).

Luke Chapter 24 – This chapter presents the post resurrection narratives of Jesus. After appearing to Cleopas and another disciple on the road to Emmaus, Jesus now reveals Himself to all His disciples. He opens their minds so that they can understand His death and His resurrection from the scriptures (v. 45f). In this context, Jesus once again

declares His universal plan of salvation. In verse 47, He says, “repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name *to all nations*, beginning at Jerusalem.” According to the *Pulpit Commentary*, "This is more definitely expressed in Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15, where the universality of His message, here summarized, is found in the form of a definite command" (Luke 24:47, *Pulpit Commentary*). This preaching of the Gospel will commence from *Jerusalem* under the leadership of his disciples. Luke expands on this process in Acts 1:8, and it becomes a reality on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 (Luke 24:47, *Pulpit Commentary*; Luke 24:47, *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*). Paul uses a similar pattern in his evangelistic approach. In Acts 13:46 he preached the gospel *first* to the Jews and when they rejected it, he and Barnabas turned to the gentiles. (Luke 24:47, *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*)

John

John 3:16: This verse is probably the key passage of John’s Gospel. It presents the heart of God. Missions as presented in this verse flow out of His love for the perishing world. Here there is a reference to the divine love, *Agape*, in which He did not spare His only begotten son but gave Him as a ransom for the lost humanity.

Commenting on John 3:16, Peters states,

This verse is foundational to the New Testament and forms the missionary foundation, content, and intent of the purpose, plan, and program of God.... It is not only the heart of the gospel and a summary of the all-determining act of God in history, but it also presents the dynamic, dimension, purpose, and demands of evangelical missions. (Peters 10)

Though God has paved the way for eternal life through His son, Jesus, it is realized only when a person believes and accepts it. The following verse also stress the same aspects, “God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him” (John 3:17).

John Chapter 4: John gives an elaborated description of Jesus’ interaction with a woman at the Samaritan town called Sychar. Considering the cultural norms of the time, this is a very unusual encounter for various reasons. Jews usually avoided this road, even though it was the shortest route between Jerusalem and Galilee. This was primarily because Jews looked down upon the Samaritans due to the mixed group that emerged in this area from intermarriage. It was also very unusual of a rabbi to speak to a woman in a public place (John 4:27). It is said that a rabbi would not do that even with his own wife. Accepting a drink from a Samaritan was unthinkable for Jews, and they had differences even in the area of religious practices. Although Samaritans worshipped the same God as the Jews, they had their own temple on Mount Gerazim. In simple terms, "Jews have no dealings with Samaritans" (*John 4 – A Samaritan Woman and A Nobleman Meet Jesus*).

Adding to all these differences is the moral nature of the woman. She had five husbands, and now the one she was living with was not her husband. In spite of all these barriers, Jesus opts to reveal Himself to her as the Messiah (v. 26). The response of the woman is noteworthy. She leaves her jar of water for which she had come to the well (v. 28), runs to the people of her town, whom she had previously avoided (she came alone to the well v. 6-7), and testifies to them about Jesus (v. 29). The result of this encounter is amazing: many Samaritans from the town believed in Jesus (v. 39). There are at least two major lessons from this passage. Jesus expanded the borders for evangelism. The

disciples saw how their master was reaching to people outside their own ethnicity, something that they were expected to do later. Another interesting point to note in this passage is found when comparing verse 8 and 31-34. The disciples went into the town (v. 8) to bring some food for Jesus; however, Jesus does not eat it (v. 31-32). He further states, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of" (v. 32). "Here Christ sets forth before the disciples, 'the lofty aim at conformity to the divine will and fulfilment of the divine work as being the meat of the soul'" (John 4, *MacLaren's Expositions*). Surprisingly, the sinful woman who encountered Jesus at the well turns into an evangelist, bringing the whole town to Jesus and thus fulfilling his desire.

John 17:18 - "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world."

This verse is part of what is known as Jesus' high priestly prayer for His disciples. This verse clearly highlights the mission of the church in this world. As God sent His only son, Jesus Christ sends people, His church, into the world. This is the mandate of Christ (Sproul). In other words, now the disciples are to replicate the Master and effectively carry out His mission in this world (*John 17:18, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*).

John 12:32 — "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, *will draw all people to myself.*" In John Chapter 12, Jesus was anointed by Mary at Bethany (Jn. 12:1-11) after which He rode on a donkey into Jerusalem as people sang, "Hosanna" to His name (v. 12-19). This scene was followed by Jesus' prediction of His death (v. 20-36) to the disciples. In this context, Jesus speaks of being *lifted up from the earth* and also *drawing all people to Himself* (v. 32). The first part of the verse (*lifted up from the earth*) is a primary reference to the cross (death) but it also includes an allusion to His resurrection

and ascension (John 12:32, *Vincent's Word Studies*). Followed by this is a declaration of His rule over the world (*will draw all people to myself*). The Greeks who are now drawn to Jesus in verses 20 and 21 “are the first-fruits of the harvest of which the whole world is the field, and of which the last day is to be the great ingathering” (John 12:32, *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*). This mission of drawing people to Jesus will be carried out by His disciples later.

John 20:21 — Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! *As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.*” This verse is part of Jesus’ post-resurrection appearance to His disciples. He declares *peace* to His disciples who were gripped in fear (v.19) and then pronounces the reason for choosing them, *I am sending you* into the world. Damian Emetuche, in his article, *Church Planting: Biblical, Theological and Missiological Considerations* states:

The sending of the disciples by Jesus corresponds to the sending of Jesus by the Father: this entails that they should know Jesus as intimately as Jesus knows the Father (Jn 15:15; 17:7, 8, 25), be utterly dependent upon Jesus in the same way as the Son is dependent upon the Father (Jn 4:13-14; 15:7-8, 16), bring glory to Jesus and do his will as Jesus did the will of the Father (Jn 4:3, 5:30, 38), be obedient to Jesus and keep his word (Jn 14:21, 23-24; 15:14, 20; 17:6), make Jesus known and testify of him as Jesus made known the Father and bore witness of him (Jn 12:44, 45; 13:20). (Emetuche)

This verse is a replicate of what was earlier uttered by Jesus (high priestly prayer) in John 17:18: As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. Jesus reminds His disciples to get involved in a mediatorial work just like Himself:

He is the great Apostle (Hebrews 3:1); they are ambassadors for Christ, to whom He commits the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18). He stands in the same relation to the Father as that in which they stand to Him. He declares to them, and they in his name are to declare to the world, the fulness of the Father's love, and the peace between man and God, witnessed to in his life and death. He and they stand also in the same relation to the world. (John 20:21, *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*)

John 21:4-14 — This passage records the final miracle of Jesus before His ascension. Simon Peter and a few other disciples had gone to catch fish in the sea of Tiberias. It is interesting to note that during the first encounter of Jesus with Simon Peter and Andrew, He said to them "Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people" (Matthew 4:18 and 19), but here they are back pursuing their old profession. Though the disciples toiled the whole night they caught nothing. Jesus visits them in their time of disappointment and asks them to throw their net on the right side of the boat. This led to a miraculous catch of 153 large fish (v. 11). Scholars have varied in their interpretation of this section. One of the commentaries states that this multitude of large fish probably represents the great success that these disciples would gain when they start obeying Jesus. Also, the fact that Simon Peter had to *drag the net ashore*, and *the net did not break*, could symbolically signify the difficulty with which these disciples would have to work to retain the new believers and protect them from slipping back into the world (John 21:11, *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*). Though it is hard to validate the accuracy of such an interpretation, it does make some sense in the light of the great success that these disciples achieved in the book of Acts. The church is called to

cast out its nets in obedience to the master and work hard to retain the new believers in faith.

Book of Acts

Acts is the second book of Luke in which he attempts to provide a historical account of the impact of the gospel, presenting “the continuing work of Christ through the Holy Spirit” (*The Book of Acts: Major Themes of Acts*). Frey rightly points out that the book of Acts presents a primordial pattern for church planting and multiplication which can be used as model today (Frey).

The inauguration of the church happened on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, and Peter preached a powerful lengthy sermon. On that single day around three thousand were added to the believers. Further Acts 2:47 states that God added to their number daily. This began the early church; however, it is not until Acts 8:1 when this group of believers in Jerusalem are addressed as *church* (Frey). The following paragraphs discuss *Church Planting* from selective passages of the book of Acts; however more space will be given to the subject with *Church Planting Methodologies from the Book of Acts*.

Acts 1:8 – This verse is considered to be the key verse of the book. It lays the scope of missions for the disciples, starting from Jerusalem, moving to Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. Jesus promises the power and presence of the Holy Spirit as they move forward in this mission (Parker). The word *Power* in this context refers to several aspects: to preach the gospel with authority, to endure hardships and trials without giving up hope, and to take up dangerous journeys for the sake of the gospel (Acts 1:8,

Barnes' Notes on the Bible). Further the very reason these disciples were chosen and trained was to be His *witness* (you shall be my witnesses – 1:8).

They had seen his manner of life, his miracles, his meekness, his sufferings; they had listened to his instructions, and had conversed and eaten with him as a friend; they had seen him after he was risen, and were about to see him ascend to heaven; and they were thus qualified to bear witness to these things in all parts of the earth. (Acts 1:8, *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*)

The disciples are called to be witnesses in Jerusalem (their city – Acts 2), Judea (their region), and Samaria (their neighboring region) and to the ends of the earth. The events in the book of Acts seem to be hanging on this verse (*Romans 15:22-24 Transitions In Our Lives*). In fact, the book can be divided based on it: Jerusalem – Acts 1-7; Judaea – 9:32, 12:19; Samaria – 8, and the rest of the book presents how the gospel spread to different parts of the then known world, including Rome (Acts 1:8, *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*; Acts 1:8, *Expositor's Greek Testament*; *Romans 15:22-24 Transitions In Our Lives*). Wagner, commenting on this verse, states, “The missiological task was clear, and it was magnificently implemented in the book of Acts” (*Wagner Spreading the Fire* 25). Though Paul and his companions pioneered this mission of God into the world, finally reaching Rome, the center of the imperial power (Acts 28), this is not the end of the story, the church still has the responsibility to reach out to different parts of the world to accomplish the vision of God (Acts 1:8 - "being witnesses") (*Romans 15:22-24 Transitions in our lives*). In other words, what is proclaimed in Acts 1:8 needs to continue till the Lord's coming. Figure 1 envisions how the church today should move forward to accomplish the mission of God.

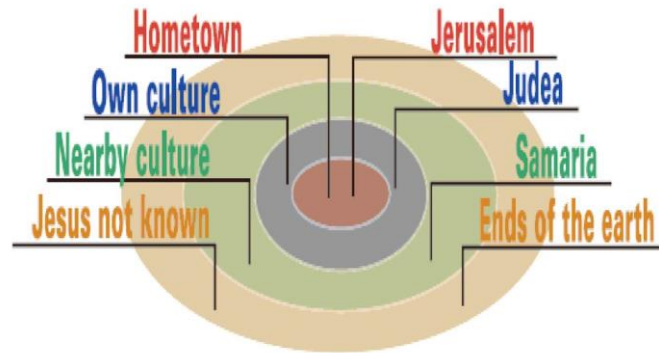


Figure 1: Acts 1:8 - (Taken from *Romans 15:22-24 Transitions in our Lives*)

Acts Chapter 2: Acts 2: 1-41 describes the fulfilment of what Jesus promised (Holy Spirit) in Acts 1:8 and the beginning of what He expected from His disciples (be witnesses). On the day of Pentecost, when the disciples (probably all 120 people mentioned in Acts 1:15) (Acts 2, *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*) were together in one place, they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues (vs.1-4). This drew all the God-fearing Jews, who had come to celebrate the Pentecost festival in Jerusalem from every nation under the heaven to the place where the disciples were. To their surprise and amazement, they could hear the disciples speak in their languages. Some people made fun of it, saying that they were drunk with wine (vs.5-13). In this context, Peter stood up and addressed the crowd. According to Longenecker, Peter probably delivered this sermon in “the outer court of the temple” (Gaebelein et al. 274). He presented to them God’s plan of salvation from the Old Testament (Joel and David) and the testimony about Jesus Christ. “When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’” Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (vs. 37-38). On that single day, around three thousand people accepted this message and were baptized. People who accepted Jesus from the different

regions mentioned in Acts 2:8-11 would have carried this message of salvation to their respective places and probably prepared the ground for the future ministry of the disciples in those regions (*Acts 2, Barnes' Notes on the Bible*). With this begins the fulfilment of the mission of God in the book of Acts.

Acts Chapters 3 to 7: These chapters revolve around the events that occur in the city of Jerusalem. Some of the highlights include the healing of the crippled man at the temple gate and Peter's witness at the place called Solomon's Colonnade (chapter 3); Peter and John's trial before the Sanhedrin, their release and believers sharing their possessions with those in need (chapter 4); punishment on Ananias and Sapphira for lying against the Holy Spirit, miraculous signs by the apostles, and the persecution of apostles by religious leaders (chapter 5); the issue regarding the distribution of food to the widows, the election of seven spirit-filled believers to attend to this problem, and Stephen's trial before the Sanhedrin (chapter 6), and Stephen's fearless testimony before the Sanhedrin and his martyrdom (chapter 7). A few major features of these chapters follow. New believers devote themselves to the apostles teaching, to fellowship, to breaking of bread, to prayer and to share things in common (2:42-46 – these principles apply to the other following chapters as well; 4:24; 4:32-37); 2). Disciples and other believers boldly shared their faith in the midst of rising opposition and persecution (Acts 4:3, 21; 5:40; 7:57-60); 3). God daily added more people to the group of believers in Jerusalem (Acts 2:47; 5:14).

Acts Chapter 8: Until this chapter persecution was confined to apostles and individuals; however, now for the first time, the church in Jerusalem as a whole faced severe persecution (8:1) resulting in the believers being scattered. However, one will

notice that this situation did not suppress the spread of the gospel but rather led to a new explosion in evangelism. The scattered believers preached the word wherever they went (8:4). Many in Samaria accepted the word of God (8:14) and the gospel reached further even to places like Ethiopia, through the Ethiopian Eunuch (8:26-40).

Acts Chapter 9: It is probably right to state that this chapter records one of the most spectacular events of the book of Acts. God encounters Saul, a persecutor of the church, and then reveals His plan for Saul's life, "This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel" (9:15 – NIV). This is the emergence of the greatest Church planter recorded in the New Testament. The church in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace, and it continued to grow in numbers (9:31).

Acts Chapters 10 to 12: These chapter present a record of the ministry of Apostle Peter. Chapter 10 enters a new phase in the expansion of the church (*Acts 10, Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*). In Acts 10:34-35, Peter makes a noteworthy statement when he says, "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation." Cornelius, a gentile centurion from Caesarea, his family, relatives, and close friends accepted Jesus Christ, were filled with the Holy Spirit, and baptized (10:24, 44-48).

In chapter 11:1-18, Peter explains his actions to the church in Jerusalem, and those who heard him, praised God without any further objections. This same pattern of gentiles accepting the gospel and becoming believers is further witnessed in Antioch (11:19-30). Finally, Chapter 12 presents the schemes of King Herod to put the Apostle Peter to death, but God turned things around, providing a miraculous escape for him

(12:1-19). In the midst of all this, “the word of God continued to increase and spread” (12:24 – NIV).

Acts Chapter 13 and 14 – Paul’s First Missionary Journey: This begins the new phase in church planting activity as presented in the Book of Acts. “When the church was worshipping and fasting in Antioch, the Holy Spirit marked Paul and Barnabas for a unique missionary journey” (*The Missionary Journeys of Paul*). After they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on Paul and Barnabas and sent them off. Both of them traveled to Cyprus, Salamis and preached the word there in the Jewish synagogues (13:4-5). John Mark joined as a helper to them. Then they moved to Paphos where the proconsul, Sergius Paulus believed in the teachings about the Lord (13:6-12). From Paphos, they sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John Mark left them (13:13). From Perga they moved to Pisidian Antioch, where Paul preached at the Synagogue for two consecutive Sabbaths (13:14-44). However, there was growing opposition from the Jews (13:45), and therefore Paul and Barnabas turned to the gentiles who gladly accepted the message (13:46-48). Later the Jews persecuted and expelled them from the region (13:49-50).

Chapter 14 records Paul and Barnabas’ ministry in Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. At Iconium, they preached both to the Jews and gentiles, and many believed (14:1). When some Jews and gentiles tried to persecute them, they escaped to Lystra (14:2-6). At Lystra the healing of a lame man led to a huge commotion. People shouted that gods had come down in human, and they offered sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas (14:11 and 18). Later, some Jews stoned Paul and Barnabas and dragged them out of the city thinking that they were dead (14:19). Then they preached in Derbe (14:21). On their way back to

Antioch, Paul and Barnabas strengthened the disciples and appointed elders at the newly formed churches at Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch (14:21-23).

Acts 15:36-18:22 – Paul’s Second Missionary Journey: After the first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch for a long time during which there arose a doctrinal issue because of the teachings (the issue of circumcision for gentile believers) of a few people from Judea (Acts 14:28-15:1). Paul, Barnabas, and a few other believers were sent to Jerusalem to discuss this matter with the apostles and the elders there. Acts 15:4-35 describes what is known as *the Jerusalem council* and the letter sent from the apostles about their decision on this matter to the church in Antioch.

In Acts 15:36-41, Paul and Barnabas decide to take up their second missionary journey to strengthen the believers from their first visit. However, there was a sharp disagreement between them regarding John Mark, who had earlier left them in Pamphylia. This led both Paul and Barnabas to part in their journeys. Barnabas and Mark sailed to Cyprus while Paul and Silas traveled through Syria and Cilicia strengthening the churches (Acts 15:39-41).

Paul and Silas went to Derbe and then Lystra where Timothy joined them (16:1-3). They traveled from town to town delivering the decision of the apostles and elders from Jerusalem (Jerusalem Council – Acts 15) and strengthening the churches (16:4-5). They traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia and then passed by Mysia to Troas where Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia begging them, “come over to Macedonia and help us.” Paul and his team immediately responded to this vision and moved to Macedonia (Acts 16:6-10).

Their next major stop was Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of the Macedonia District (16:12). Here Lydia (a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira – 16:14) and the members of her household were baptized (16:15). Later Paul and Silas were put into prison due to the uproar in the city against them. This happened because Paul had rebuked a slave girl who was possessed with an evil spirit and was being exploited by her owners to predict the future and gain them money. When the owners realized that the spirit left her and that she could fetch them no money, they instigated a mob against Paul and Silas and brought them before the magistrates. That night there was a violent earthquake, and the prison doors flew open. The jailer assumed that the prisoners had escaped and drew his sword to kill himself, but Paul intervened. This paved the way for Paul and Silas to share the gospel with him and his family who believed and were baptized at that very hour of the night (16:16-34). Later, after being released from jail, Paul and Silas encouraged the believers at Lydia's home and then moved to Thessalonica (16:40-17:1).

At Thessalonica, for three Sabbaths, Paul visited the local synagogue and reasoned with the Jews that Jesus was the expected *Messiah*. Some Jews, a large number of God-fearing Greeks, and prominent women accepted the message, but there were other Jews who stirred up a mob against Paul and Silas wanting to harm them. However, they could not find them and that night the brothers sent Paul and Silas safely to Berea (17:1-10).

At Berea, Paul and Silas once again preached in the Jewish synagogue. Here too, many Jews, prominent Greek women, and many Greek men believed in the word (17:10-12). The Jewish opposition from Thessalonica went to Berea to agitate the crowds.

However, the brothers rescued Paul and escorted him to Athens, while Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea (17:13-15).

At Athens, Paul was greatly distressed to see the city full of idols. He reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and God-fearing Greeks and also in the marketplace with others. He was later brought to a meeting of the Areopagus. This place is called "the hill of Mars, dedicated to Mars, the heathen god of war, the place where the Athenians held their supreme court of judicature" (Acts 17:19, *Benson Commentary*). It was on a hilltop in the middle of the city, and the supreme judges of Athens assembled here (Acts 17:19, *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*). Here Paul delivered an extraordinary message, starting with his observation about the inscription written on an altar, *TO AN UNKNOWN GOD* (17:22-31). A few men believed in Paul's message, among them were Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others (17:34).

From Athens, Paul traveled to Corinth where God strengthened him in a vision, and he stayed there for a year and a half teaching the word (18: 9-11). Here, he met a Jewish couple named Aquila and Priscilla who had come from Italy. Paul stayed with them as they too were tentmakers like him, and they worked together (18:2-3). Silas and Timothy also joined Paul at Corinth. Initially, every Sabbath Paul reasoned with Jews and Greeks in the synagogue, however when they opposed, he moved out and went to the gentiles (18:4-6). Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord and were baptized and many other Corinthians also believed and were baptized (18:8).

From Corinth, Paul sailed to Ephesus along with Priscilla and Aquila, whom he left there. He visited the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews but declined to stay long. He promised to return to Ephesus if it was God's will (18:21). He moved from Ephesus to Caesarea where he greeted the church (Jerusalem) and then traveled to Antioch (18:22).

Acts 18:23-21:14 – Paul's Third Missionary Journey: After spending some time in Antioch, Paul once again started his journey traveling throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the believers (18:23). Acts Chapter 19 speaks of Paul's ministry in Ephesus. For three months, he entered the synagogue and spoke boldly about the kingdom of God but when they did not believe and publicly maligned the Way, Paul moved to the lecture hall of Tyrannus and had his discussions there for two years. Many Jews and Greeks from the province of Asia heard the word (19:8-10). The Lord did extraordinary miracles through Paul in this region. During this time, a silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, instigated other craftsmen by saying that they might not only lose their income but that their goddess and her temple would be discredited because of Paul's work. There was a huge commotion in the city (19:23-41).

In Acts 20, after the uproar ended, Paul set out for Macedonia, encouraging many people on his way till he reached Greece where he stayed for three months (20:1-3). Then he traveled to Troas where a young man named Eutychus fell from the third story and died. Paul raised him from the dead, and people were greatly comforted (20:6-12). From Troas Paul and his companions moved to Miletus where he called for the elders from Ephesus. He gave them a farewell speech, telling them that he might not see their face again. This grieved the whole group (20:13-38).

From Miletus, Paul and his companions started their journey towards Jerusalem. On the way, they stopped at Tyre for seven days. Through the Spirit, the disciples urged Paul not to travel to Jerusalem, but he did not listen to them (21:3-4). From Tyre, they landed at Ptolemais where they greeted the brothers and stayed with them for one day (21:7). Then they arrived at Caesarea where a prophet named Agabus prophesied that Paul would be bound in Jerusalem and handed over to the gentiles. On hearing this, many pleaded with Paul not to travel to Jerusalem but could not convince him (21:8-14).

Acts 21:17-28:30 – Paul's Arrest and Deportation from Jerusalem to Rome: After arriving at Jerusalem, Paul and his companions reported all that God had done among the gentiles through his ministry to James and the elders (21:17-19). The brothers in Jerusalem sensed a danger for Paul because of his teaching on his missionary journeys. According to them, some Jews spread a rumor that Paul taught against the Law of Moses, especially on issues regarding circumcision of Jews. Paul was asked to take some men for purification so that this misconception about him would be removed (21:21-24). However, when Paul tried doing so, some Jews from the province of Asia stirred a crowd and seized him. They made allegations against Paul that he had defiled the temple by getting some Greeks into it. People dragged him out of the temple and tried to kill him, but a Roman commander and his soldiers intervened and arrested Paul. However, Paul wanted to speak to the crowd and was permitted to do it (21:27-40). Paul spoke to the crowd in Aramaic, presenting before them his zeal for God, the way he persecuted believers, his conversion experience, and call to serve the gentiles (22:1-21). The crowd once again raised their voices and shouted. To this the commander ordered that he be taken to the barracks and flogged. Then Paul revealed his identity as a Roman citizen by

birth. This alarmed the commander and those who questioned Paul withdrew themselves (22:22-29).

The next day Paul was brought before the chief priests and the Sanhedrin where he was questioned. Paul realized that some of them were Sadducees and that he was being tried because he was a Pharisee and believed in the resurrection (Sadducees did not believe the resurrection). This led to a violent dispute between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and Paul was immediately moved by the troops into the barracks (23:1-10). The following day more than forty Jewish men made a solemn oath to kill Paul. When this news reached the commander, he moved Paul safely to Caesarea with a letter to governor Felix. Here Paul was kept under guard in Herod's palace (23:12-35). Chapter 24 deals with the charges brought against Paul by the Jewish religious leadership and Paul's own defense before the governor Felix (24:1-21). Paul was kept under guard granting him certain freedoms (24:22). After two years governor Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus (24:27). In chapter 25, when governor Festus tries to show Jews favor by trying to push Paul to appear before him in Jerusalem, Paul makes an appeal to be tried before Caesar to which Festus agrees (25:1-11). After this, Festus presents Paul before King Agrippa, Bernice as well as other high-ranking officers and leading men of the city (25:23-27). Paul then delivers a lengthy defense, consisting of his personal testimony and his faith in Jesus (Acts 26). Though Agrippa did not find Paul guilty of any serious offence, because he had appealed to Caesar, it was decided to send Paul to Italy (26:32). Chapters 27 and 28, describe Paul's journey to Rome along with other prisoners. On their way, they encountered a violent storm and are shipwrecked, but they safely reached an island named Malta (Chapter 27). Here God used Paul to heal many sick people (28:8-9).

Finally, Paul reached Rome, and for two years Paul stayed in a rented house and preached the Kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ (28:30-31).

Having surveyed different passages both from the Old and the New Testaments, it can be concluded that the

Bible has one unified message from Genesis to Revelation; that those of us who are blessed with the knowledge of the love of God and the salvation that the death and resurrection of Christ gave us should spread that blessing to all peoples of the earth. To do anything different is to disobey the direct commands of God himself. Many are called to go, and many are called to send and support those who go through prayer and finances, but there is no one exempt from involvement in this command to make disciples of all nations. (*The Biblical Basis of Missions/God's Heart for the Nations*)

Biblical Foundation for Urban Mission: Book of Acts

Hastey is of the opinion that cities had a prominent place in God's dealing with people both in the Old and the New Testament. According to him the churches in the New Testament were mainly spread out in the cities of that time, and "they were the centers of proclamation, witnessing, church planting, and missionary activities" (Hastey 147). He further points out that Apostle Paul began his ministry in the context of city and from his three missionary journeys one can conclude that his entire focus was on urban mission (Hastey 148). He used cities as a base from which he could reach out to the world with the Gospel of Jesus.

Keller also seems to express a similar view in his book, *Center Church*, when he states,

Paul and other Christian missionaries went to great cities because when Christianity was planted there, it spread regionally (cities were the centers of transportation routes); it also spread globally (cities were multiethnic, international centers, and converts took the gospel back to their homeland); and finally it more readily affected the culture. (Keller 154)

Hastey quotes Francis M. DuBose, who states that the ministry of Jesus also focused on cities. DuBose tries to substantiate his view by stating that “Jesus was born in the city of Bethlehem, grew up in the city of Nazareth, died and was resurrected in the city of Jerusalem” (Hastey 148). Though it is hard to prove this opinion (Bethlehem and Nazareth being described as cities), it is clear that Jesus did focus on urban mission. In Matthew 9:35-36 the author clearly points that Jesus ministered both in the villages and the cities (Hastey 147).

Up to this point this work has discussed the spread of the gospel and the expansion of church in a chronological pattern from the book of Acts. Now in the following paragraphs, it will review some passages where urban ministry is clearly evident in the Bible.

Christian Witness in Jerusalem

Commenting on *A Biblical Basis for Urban Ministry*, Howard L. Olver points out that the early church seems to have had a greater emphasis on urban mission. According to him, the very words of Jesus in Acts 1:8 begin with being witnesses in the city, Jerusalem; however, it moves beyond it. (Olver). He goes on to point out that after persecution in Acts 8, the early church scattered to various places and in most cases this movement is traced by the cities belonging to the Roman Empire (Olver).

Jerusalem was one of the most impressive cities of New Testament times. It belonged to the province of Judea, which was under the Roman Empire. Mark A. Chancey quotes Pliny the Elder (23-79 C.E.) who described it as "the most famous city in the East, not just in Judea" (Chancey). One of the most important sites in Jerusalem was the temple. Jeffers quotes Josephus (Jewish War 1.422-25) according to whom, King Herod the Great of Judea was responsible for a great deal of construction in Palestine. In fact, he rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem (John 2:20 – it took 46 years to build), which had some Greek flavor to it (Jewish War 5.184-227) (Jeffers 52). Chancey agrees with Jeffers on this point (Chancey)

This city had two hills. The one on the eastern side had the temple on it, and there was another hill on the western side. It was distinct from other cities of the Roman empire as it did not have statues of emperors and other deities, and there were no temples to other gods either (Chancey). However, this city was the religious capital of Jews living all over the world (Hastey 147).

The birth of the Christian church began in the city of Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost when Peter preached his sermon, and three thousand were added to their number (Acts 2:1-41). This was just the beginning of a tremendous movement in the city which later spread to various other urban areas and provinces in the Roman world. Some of the highlights of the expansion of the church in Jerusalem involved believers committing themselves to apostles teaching, to fellowship, to breaking of bread, and to prayer – 2:42-47; some great miracles (healing of a crippled man – 3:1-10, healing of the sick and deliverance from evil spirits – 5:12-16) and punishment upon Ananias and Sapphira – 5:1-11; persecution of apostles and the church – 4:1-22, 5:17-41, 6:8-15, 7:54-

8:3; believers sharing their possessions – 4:32-37, and two powerful sermons (Peter – 2:14-41; Stephen – 7:1-53).

Based on these points, it can be concluded that the church in Jerusalem grew as a result of various factors such as bold and public preaching of the gospel amidst persecution, power evangelism, fellowship, and caring for the needs of fellow believers.

Christian Witness in Samaria

Samaria was a wealthy capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel. According to 1 Kings 16:24, King Omri of Israel “bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver and built a city on the hill, calling it Samaria, after Shemer, the name of the former owner of the hill” (NIV). He further made it his political capital. It is interesting to note that "both the capital city and the region over which it ruled bore the name Samaria" (Tappy).

In Acts 8:1, when the church at Jerusalem was persecuted, believers scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Philip is seen as proclaiming Christ in the city of Samaria (8:5). He performed many miracles signs, healing the sick and delivering those possessed by the evil spirits. This amazed many people, and they paid close attention to his message. It is said that the whole city was filled with great joy (8:6-8).

In Samaria, there lived a man named Simon who practiced sorcery and amazed many people by his magic. However, when Philip preached the good news of the Kingdom of God many believed and were baptized. One among them was Simon. He followed Philip everywhere as he was astonished by the miracles that Philip was performing (8:9-13).

When apostles in Jerusalem came to know that Samaria had accepted the gospel, they sent Peter and John. On their arrival, they discovered that the new believers did not receive the Holy Spirit, and they laid their hands on them. When Simon saw that the Spirit was given by the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered money to receive this power. Peter rebuked him for this act, but Simon pleaded the apostles to pray for him so that nothing would happen (8:14-25).

The ministry in the city of Samaria mainly involved power encounters, healing, and preaching of the Word with many people coming to put their faith in Jesus.

Christian Witness in Damascus

According to Craig Keener, Damascus was around 135 miles north of Jerusalem with a very large Jewish population (Keener 346). This was one of the oldest cities situated on the trade route between Egypt and the nations of Mesopotamia. Damascus constantly came under the rule of different nations: Egyptians (13 to 14th centuries BCE), Arameans (around 1200 BCE), and Israel (788-748 BCE). Further in 734 BCE, it was virtually destroyed by the Assyrians; however, the city regained its fortunes by 539 BCE in the Persian time. During the time of the Greeks, Alexander the Great appointed a governor to oversee the activities in the city, which had openly embraced Hellenism. This city was under the Roman rule from 65 BCE (Chaignot).

Acts Chapter 9 recounts Saul's conversion experience on the road to Damascus. The passage reveals the existence of Jewish synagogues in the city (9:2) and also of Christian believers. Paul, after his conversion, stayed with the disciples in Damascus and boldly preached about Jesus in the synagogues (9:19-22). The Jews conspired to kill Paul,

but his followers came to his rescue and lowered him down in a basket from an opening in the wall (9:23-25).

The existence of a Christian population in Damascus probably points to the fact that after the persecution in Jerusalem some of the disciples scattered to this city and witnessed to others in this place (8:4). The Christian population grew as a result of believers being witnesses, and later Paul joined them in this endeavor.

Christian Witness in Lydda (9:32-35)

Lydda was another ancient city, around eighteen kilometers South-East of Joppa. This city is known as Lod in the Old Testament (1 Chronicles 8:12; Ezra 2:33; Nehemiah 7:37; 11:35). During the Hellenistic period it was one of the capitals of the eleven districts of Judea. In the later part of the first Century AD, it had a strong Christian community (Derrenbacker and Wyrick 832).

Peter travelled to Lydda where Christian saints were already present. He healed a paralytic man, Aeneas, who was bedridden for eight years. All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw this miracle and turned to the Lord (9:32-35). Here too God's mighty hand is shown in healing the sick, which brought many to the saving fold of Jesus.

Christian Witness in Joppa (9:36-43)

Joppa was an ancient seaport on the Mediterranean Sea with a natural harbor (Holum *Joppa* 732). It was around 50 kilometers away from Jerusalem. David used this port to get the Lebanon cedars from Hiram for the temple, which Solomon built later (2 Chron. 2:15-16). Jonah sailed for Tarshish from Joppa (Jon. 1:3) (Wiseman 605).

In Acts 9:36-42, Peter raised Tabitha, a disciple of Jesus, from the dead. The news about this miracle spread all over Joppa, and many people believed in Jesus (9:42). Peter

stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon (9:43). Once again, this passage reveals that many came to trust Jesus because of a miraculous sign that was performed in their city.

Christian Witness in Caesarea

Caesarea was one of the prominent ports on the Mediterranean Sea. It was built by Herod the Great between 22 and 10 or 9 BCE and was named after Emperor Caesar Augustus (Holum *Caesarea* 206). It had a mixed population of both Jews and gentiles, and they were often in conflict with each other. Caesarea was the headquarters of the Roman governors of Judea. They had their residence there (23:23-24), and it “held a regular Roman garrison of a cavalry unit and five infantry cohorts” (Keener 349).

The book of Acts refers to this city on a number of occasions (Acts 9:30; 10:1-48; 18:22; 21:8; 23:33-27:1). One of the most significant events recorded from this place is the conversion of Cornelius (Roman Centurion), his family, relatives, and friends (10:24 and 44). Later Paul is seen as sailing from Caesarea on his missionary journey and landing at this port before going to Jerusalem (18:22).

Holum, commenting on the conversion of Cornelius, states, “Around this man and his household apparently formed the earliest gentile Christian community anywhere” (Holum *Caesarea* 207). This incident is a good example of household evangelism, and it probably led to the beginning of a house church in Caesarea.

Christian Witness in Antioch of Syria

John McRay, commenting on Antioch of Syria, states that it was, “the largest and the most important of 16 cities in the ancient world that were named after the Syrian emperor Antiochus” (McRay *Antioch* 67). According to Jeffers, it was “the center of

political, military and commercial communication between Rome and Persian frontier and between Palestine and Asia Minor” (Jeffers 70). He further states that it was one of the three or four most significant cities of the Roman Empire with a very large Jewish population (Jeffers 70). It expanded bit by bit and therefore did not reflect proper planning like most of the other Roman cities (Jeffers 51).

One noteworthy fact about the establishment of the church in Antioch is that it was probably the result of the ministry of church laity. The gospel was not just preached to the Jews but to gentiles as well (11:19-20). Paul started as an apprentice and a fellow worker of Barnabas at Antioch (11:22-27). This church had some outstanding characteristics. When prophet Agabus predicted a famine in entire Roman world, the church at Antioch immediately provided help for the believers living in Judea (11:27-30). As a church, they set apart Barnabas and Paul for foreign missions (13:1-3). When there arose a controversy between the Jews and gentiles over the issue of circumcision, the church at Antioch sent Paul, Barnabas, and a few believers to the apostles and the leaders in Jerusalem to enquire of them. This issue was elaborately discussed at the Jerusalem council in Acts Chapter 15, and their decision was passed on to different churches.

Christian Witness in Salamis and Paphos of Cyprus

Salamis was known to be the chief city of Cyprus. It had a port and a population of “more than hundred thousand residents” (Keener 358). There were probably several synagogues in the city where Paul and Barnabas proclaimed the word.

Paphos was the provincial capital of Cyprus, and it had good trade ties with Judea (Keener 358). Here the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, wanted to hear the word and therefore sent for Barnabas and Paul. However, a sorcerer named Elymas tried to oppose them.

Paul rebuked the evil spirit and declared that he would be blind and immediately he lost sight. This led the proconsul to put his trust in their teachings (13:6-12). That power encounter led to the establishment of the church in this city.

Christian Witness in Pisidian Antioch

Pisidian Antioch was in the southern part of Galatia and during Paul's time it was a very significant city. It was a military base and administration center for the southern province of Galatia with connecting roads to other Roman colonies. Emperor worship was widely practiced in this city (McRay *Antioch* 67). Paul spoke in the synagogue here proclaiming forgiveness of sins and justification through Jesus (13:38-39). Many Jews and God-fearers accepted the message and believed in Him (13:43 and 48). Though there was an opposition to it (13:45 and 50), the word of the Lord spread through the whole region (13:49). One important principle for church planting that can be picked up from the ministry of Paul and Barnabas here is the focus on *receptive groups* (13:48).

Christian Witness in Iconium

Keener calls Iconium "a wealthy and prosperous town" though it was much smaller than other cities of the Roman Empire (Keener 361). Geographically, this city was "on a high plateau in south central Asia Minor" connecting several major trade routes (Hartog *Iconium* 624-625). Paul and Barnabas spoke in the synagogue here, and a great number of Jews and gentiles believed (14:1). They even performed many signs and wonders (14:3), but when there arose opposition they moved to others cities (14:4-6).

Christian Witness in Lystra

Lystra was around twenty to twenty-five miles from Iconium. It was a Roman colony with thousands of Romans settled here, especially the army veterans (Keener 362;

Hartog *Lystra* 834). At Lystra, Paul healed a man, lame from birth. This led to an unusual response from the crowd who claimed Barnabas to be Zeus and Paul, Hermes. They even offered sacrifices to them and would not listen to Paul and Barnabas. Later, Paul was stoned and dragged outside the city (14:8-20). Paul visited this city again on his second missionary journey where Timothy joined him (16:1-5).

Christian Witness in Philippi

Philippi was named after Philip II of Macedonia (Spencer 1048). This city had been a Roman colony since 42 BC. It was one of the four districts of Macedonia with great wealth and honor (Keener 369). Luke calls it the leading city of Macedonia (16:12). At Philippi, Lydia and the members of her household accepted Paul's message and were baptized (16:14-15). Later, when Paul and Silas were put in prison after the earthquake experience, the jailer and his family accepted Jesus and were baptized (16:25-34). In both these cases, the whole household accepted Jesus.

Christian Witness in Thessalonica

According to Keener, Thessalonica was an important city, having the largest port of Macedonia. It had the residence of the provincial governor. During Paul's time the estimated population of the city was around two hundred thousand people. Unlike many other cities that Paul visited, this place was not given the status of a Roman colony and therefore enjoyed greater freedom in terms of administration (Keener 374). As usual, Paul visited the synagogue and shared the gospel on three Sabbath days, reasoning with them from the scriptures and explaining that Jesus had to suffer and rise from the dead (17:2-3). As a result of this, some Jews, a large number of God-fearing Greeks, and prominent women believed in Jesus (17:4). It is probably appropriate to state that Paul

and Silas focused on receptive people and gained success in their mission at Thessalonica (George *A Study of the Urban Church Growth in the Book of Acts* 38).

Christian Witness in Berea

Berea was roughly fifty miles southwest of Thessalonica. It was probably “the second most important city in the province of Macedonia as well as the center of the imperial cult” (Keener 375). It had a good number of Jewish people who, according to Luke, were of a more noble character than those living in Thessalonica (17:11). Once again, Paul and Silas are seen as ministering in the context of the Jewish synagogue. Many Jews, a number of prominent Greek women, and many Greek men believed in the Lord (17:12).

Christian Witness in Athens

Nash calls Athens, “the most famous of all Greek cities, named for the Greek goddess of wisdom, Athena” (Nash 126). Nash and Keener and many other scholars agree that Athens was a philosophical center (Nash 126; Keener 375); however, this city exercised its influence even in the area of art and politics (Nash 126). It had some majestic temples (for example Athena’s temple, which was visible from a great distance), shrines, and statues of gods and goddesses. Keener, commenting on this city, states, “Athens was unrivaled for its exquisite architecture and statues” (Keener 375).

At Athens, Paul is seen as ministering both in the synagogue and in the marketplace (17:17). He encountered the Epicureans and the Stoic philosophers here (17:18). One of the most famous speeches of Paul is recorded here in which he applauds the Athenians for their religious belief and introduces Jesus as their “unknown god” (17:22-23). This is probably one of the best examples of contextualizing the gospel.

Many believed in the message, including Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, and a woman named Damaris (17:34).

Christian Witness in Corinth

Corinth was originally a Greek city which was completely destroyed by the Romans in 146 BC. However, the Romans rebuilt it in 44 BC, making it the capital of the province of Achaia. (Maxwell WOMEN IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD).

According to Gerd Theissen, during the New Testament times this city was a comparatively new one (less than a century old). It consisted of Roman citizens, some Greek slaves, and the Jews (Theissen 99-100). It was “one of the commercial centers of the empire” (Keller *What Is God's Global Urban Mission?*).

At Corinth Paul is seen as ministering to the Jews in the synagogue, but when there arose an opposition, he moved out to preach to the gentiles (18:4-6). Paul stayed here with Aquila and Priscilla for a year and half teaching the word of God (18:2-3 and 11). Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord and many other Corinthians also believed and were baptized (18:8). At Corinth there is a model of house church pattern (18:17) and family discipling (Aquila and Priscilla).

Christian Witness in Ephesus

According to Maxwell, "Ephesus was the de facto Roman capital of the Roman province of Asia" (Maxwell WOMEN IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD). It was founded by Androclus, king of Athens around 900 BCE. During Roman rule, it is said that this city was very populated, and it had the official residence of the governor of the province of Asia. It was known for its worship of Artemis, a goddess of hunting and fertility (Aune “Ephesus” 413-414). Ephesus was “perhaps the Roman world’s religious

center as the hub of many pagan cults and particularly of the imperial cult, with three temples for emperor worship” (Keller *What Is God's Global Urban Mission?*). Aune, in his article on *Ephesus*, refers to Josephus, according to whom “there was a large Jewish community in Ephesus by the mid-3rd Century BCE” (Aune “Ephesus” 415).

Paul began his ministry in Ephesus by teaching twelve disciples about the Holy Spirit and baptizing them (19:1-7). He boldly preached in the synagogue for three months and later had discussions in the lecture hall of Tyrannus for two years (19:8-10). Luke mentions that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord and that God worked great miracles there (19:10-12). After the riots in Ephesus, Paul moved out of this city (19:23-20:1). According to the testimony of Demetrius, a silversmith, Paul converted a large number of people in Ephesus and the whole province of Asia (19:26). After Paul’s ministry, the church in Ephesus grew under the lay ministry. At Miletus, Paul is seen as encouraging and admonishing the elders of the Ephesian church (20:17-36).

Christian Witness in Rome

Rome was the capital city of the Roman Empire, situated on the Tiber River (Aune “Rome” 1138). It was the “power capital, the military and political center” of the Roman world (Keller *What Is God's Global Urban Mission?*). According to Keener, it had a large Jewish community, numbering around forty to fifty thousand people, most of whom lived across the Tiber River. They spoke the Greek language and met in synagogues for their religious practices (Keener 416). Paul was brought to Rome as a prisoner, but he was allowed to live by himself in a rented house with a soldier to guard him (28:16, 30). Like any other place, Paul once again ministered to the Jews (28:17-28),

and some of them were convinced (28:24). Luke closes his writing by pointing out that Paul boldly preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ to all who visited him (28:30-31).

It is very clear from the study of various passages in the Book of Acts that most of the church planting ministry recorded in this book centered on the urban context. Peter, Paul, and other leaders seem to have had a special focus on reaching out within cities with the gospel of Jesus. Having approached this study of the Book of Acts in a chronological way, mapping the different cities in which the churches have been established, the strategies that were applied in urban church planting will now be investigated..

Urban Setting of the New Testament World

A majority of New Testament scholars agree that Christianity was born in the "Greco-Roman World." The term "Greco -Roman World," is usually used by scholars to refer to the land around the Mediterranean sea, addressing a period of 600 years between the time of Alexander the Great (roughly 300 BC) and Emperor Constantine (around AD 300) (Lizorkin-Eyzenberg). Although this time period belonged to the Roman Empire, Greek culture, also known as *Hellenism*, continued its prominence blending with Roman culture, especially in the Mediterranean world (Maxwell WOMEN IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD). Tidball, commenting on the environment of the Roman world in the first century AD, also expresses a similar view when he states that although the empire of Alexander the Great had disintegrated by this time, it had left its lasting impressions on the language and customs of the people. Rome continued to preserve much of this Hellenistic (Greek) culture; however, they made huge leaps in the area of construction.

They built new roads and buildings focusing on trade and commerce. They allowed their provinces to maintain their independence and promoted a city-state structure (Tidball 66-67). Jeffers also makes a similar observation about the Greco-Roman world when he points out that the societies of this period were organized around their cities. They were centers of culture and business (Jeffers 48). They provided a major stimulus for agricultural products, manufactured goods, and luxury items (*Demography of the Roman Empire*). Meeks adds to this, stating that cities of the Mediterranean world played a key role in political and social changes for around six and half centuries from the time of Alexander to Constantine (Meeks *The First Urban Christians* 11). Other scholars such as Stambaugh, Balch, and Roetzel who have researched topics related to the New Testament also have a similar view that cities played a prominent role in the first century AD during the time of the apostles. It is vital to study the context of urban world from this era to have a better understanding of the circumstance in which the church was born and grew.

City In Palestine

Jeffers, commenting on City (*Polis*) in Palestine, states that it was bigger than a village, and it had a “form of self-rule and buildings dedicated to the public life” (Jeffers 66). He refers to Josephus who clarifies the confusion about some places that are referred to as both villages and cities by different authors (example: Matthew and Luke refer to Capernaum, Gadara and Bethsaida as “cities” (in Galilee) – Mt. 8:34; 9:1; 11:20-23; Lk. 4:31; 9:10; however, Mark uses a general term “villages” when referring to the place in Galilee – Mk. 1:38-39). According to Josephus, Galilee had many cities, and there were some villages that had a population of around fifteen thousand inhabitants, which made

them large enough to be called cities, and therefore they were referred to as cities by some and villages by others. (Jeffers 66-67).

Most cities in Palestine had some kind of drainage system for rainwater and sewage. A few wealthy houses had bathrooms with plumbing. Houses were mostly built wall-to-wall with some open courtyards. Floors were usually made up of beaten clay and basalt blocks; however, the wealthy homes had floors of plaster and stone (Jeffers 68-69).

Physical Setting of the Cities in the Roman Empire

Jeffers observes that cities and larger towns of the Roman Empire were built “on highways, at river crossings and at natural harbors” (Jeffers 51). A majority of the cities that were established by the Romans began as colonies for the settlement of the citizens or veterans of the legions; however, they grew “to become important commercial and cultural centers, transportation hubs and capitals of global empires” (*List of Cities Founded by the Romans*). Some of the notable aspects of most cities were the high walls that surrounded them, city gates, watch towers, aqueducts that brought water into the city, and religious shrines (Jeffers 51). Jeffers further points out that the Greek or Roman cities were very different than the Ancient Near Eastern cities. According to him, the Greek and Roman cities were much more planned with wider roads within the city walls. However, most of the streets were filled with dirt, and that was the reason people were expected to wash their feet after returning from outside (Luke 7:38-46; Jn. 12:3; 13:5-15) (Jeffers 51).

Houses in the City: Most houses in the city were single-story private homes and were usually lined up in the street. The walls were plain and often covered with some sort of plaster. Houses usually had a courtyard. However, in populous cities, there were multi-

story buildings. An example of this is found in Acts 20:9, where a young boy fell out of the window of a third-story building at Troas (Jeffer 54).

Jeffer also points out that some rich people in the cities had large and lavishly decorated houses. Some of the features in such homes were large rooms, wall painting, mosaic tile flooring, and sometimes a fountain in the courtyard. Here are few examples of large houses from the New Testament: Acts 12 – a group of believers gathered together to pray for Peter, who was imprisoned; Philemon 22 – Philemon’s house at Colossae where Christians and other guests could gather, and Romans 16:23 – the house of Gaius at Corinth, which could hold “the whole assembly” (Jeffer, p. 54).

Religious Setting in the Roman Empire

According to Craig L Blomberg, Christianity was born in a context where religion pervaded almost every aspect of life (Blomberg). Tidball expresses a similar view when he points out that Christianity entered at a time when the Roman Empire was already crowded with several religions (Tidball 70). Many other scholars hold this opinion. There are three major aspects in this area: emperor worship, Roman gods and goddesses, and philosophies.

Emperor Worship: According to Alden A. Mosshammer, Roman emperors were assigned semi-divine status and were given special honor (Mosshammer 1135). However, Tidball writes that during the first century there was a growing worship of the emperor. Some emperors did not enforce it, but it was widely accepted by most of them. Worshipping the emperor was considered a way of expressing one’s political submission to him (Tidball 70). Blomberg also expresses a similar view when he states that most of

the people only gave lip service to emperor worship, and it was more an act of patriotism (Blomberg).

To summarize, though Roman emperors were considered to have some divine nature, they were actually worshipped to show submission to them. Apart from the worship of emperors, most people had their local deities, mystery religions, and different philosophies.

Roman Gods and Goddesses: Maxwell, commenting on Greco-Roman religions, states that although Jupiter, Juno, Athena, and others were among the among the major traditional gods and goddesses of the time, in most cases worship of these gods was over and limited to some rituals and annual festivals (Maxwell WOMEN IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD). Blomberg makes an important observation about the religious context of the Greco-Roman World. According to him, during the first century there was a rise in new cults. As people were uprooted from their native places and resettled, they came across new worldviews and ideologies. All this led to the development of more pluralistic religions. (Blomberg). According to Jeffers, shrines and temples stood all around the Greek cities. Moreover, the town halls had places of honor for statues of gods, heroes, and statesmen. The Roman cities were similar and usually contained a temple to Jupiter. There were other temples scattered around the city streets (Jeffers 52). This pluralistic setting gave an initial advantage to Christianity when it entered the gentile religious environment. At the beginning, Christianity was considered as a sect of Judaism (Tidball 71). Meeks also agrees when he states that Christianity appeared to many as being a sect within the Jewish community (Meeks *The Moral World* 110). However, when the distinction between Christianity and Judaism became more clear, Christianity

became more vulnerable (Tidball 71). Blomberg expresses a similar view when he states that people were often intolerant to religions like Christianity that were exclusive.

(Blomberg)

Roman Philosophies and Mystery Religions: According to Maxwell, though there were many religions in the Greco-Roman world, for the most part worship was cold and impersonal. They were primarily about occasionally celebrating some rites and some annual festivals. This led many to seek religious satisfaction in what is known as mystery religions, which were considered to be more dynamic and personal (Maxwell WOMEN IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD). There is much less known about this form of religion, which was gaining popularity at the beginning of the Christian era. This is mainly because the followers of it vowed keep secrecy and strictly maintained it (Chapter 1: The World of the New Testament). Maxwell also points out that people sought satisfaction in philosophies of various forms such as “astrology, magic, and numerous superstitions” (Maxwell WOMEN IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD).

Usage of the Greek Language in the Greco-Roman World

One of the most important things about any culture is its language. This is the medium through which all aspects of a culture are understood, learned, and promoted. Alexander the Great promoted the use of a common language (koine or common Greek) in the Mediterranean world, making it the lingua franca of his time. This lasted for a long time, even after the time of Jesus Christ. In fact, the whole of New Testament, except small portions, was written in the koine Greek. It is also said that the language used for the spread of the Gospel was mainly Greek as most people understood it. Interestingly, even Paul's letter to the Romans was written in Greek though Latin was the official

language of Rome (Chapter 1: The World of the New Testament). This clearly communicates how the Greek language permeated all of society. Having said this, such widespread usage of the Greek language was an added advantage to the early church, making it more convenient for foreign missions.

Urban Finances in the Greco-Roman World

One of the common aspects in the Greco-Roman world is the establishment of cities all over their provinces. Such establishments and the maintenance of them needed a large amount of finances. Jeffers, commenting on this aspect, makes some important observations. According to him, real estate was among the main sources of income for the cities. The city land was rented out to farmers for cultivation, who had to pay for the use of it. Cities would also rent out stalls in marketplaces and other buildings to merchants. Taxes was another main source of income. Cities set up toll booths and custom duties to generate revenues. However, these sources of income were often not sufficient; therefore, members of the upper classes were expected to make special contributions. People usually made voluntary contributions to gain honor and standing in the society. In most cases, these benefactors received proclamations of gratitude; statues were built in their honor, and they were given seats of honor in theatres and enjoyed other privileges. In some cases the emperors, senators, and other government heads funded building projects, festivals, or public games in the cities (Jeffers 62-63). All these sources contributed to the income of the Greco-Roman urban world.

Education in the Greco-Roman Culture of the New Testament

According to Jeffers, education was an important aspect “to all the urban social classes in the New Testament era. Formal education was an essential part of life in the

upper classes, at least for males” (Jeffers 253). However, the lower classes, especially in cities, preferred a less formal education. It is said that both Jews and Christians with their written scriptures probably placed greater emphasis on education than others from the lower classes (Jeffers 253). Jeffers, commenting on Jewish education, states that in most cases the earliest Jewish instruction took place in the context of homes, and knowledge was mainly imparted through instruction and an observation methodology. He refers to Jewish author Philo who suggests that educating children was the duty of the father (Jeffers 253). Some of the teachings included the trade of the father, moral instructions, discipline, and philosophy. However, the most important teachings provided to the children in the Jewish families from an early age were instructions about God and the law (Jeffers 253).

Transportation in the Greco-Roman World of the New Testament

One of the contributions of the Roman Empire was in the area of construction. They not only constructed huge buildings and stadiums but also wide roads for transportation, business, and travel of their military (Chapter 1: The World of the New Testament). In his article on Roman Roads, Cartwright states,

Roman engineers were audacious in their plans to join one point to another in as straight a line as possible whatever the difficulties in geography and the costs in manpower. Consequently, roads used bridges, tunnels, viaducts, and many other architectural and engineering tricks to create a series of breathtaking but highly practical monuments which spread from Portugal to Constantinople. The network of public Roman roads covered over 120,000 km, and it greatly assisted the free movement of armies, people, and goods across the empire. (Cartwright)

Evan Andrews also makes a similar observation in an article where he presents eight points to describe the significance of Roman Roads. According to him, Roman roads were: 1) Key to their military strength; 2) Exceptionally efficient; 3) Well engineered; 4) Easy to navigate; 5) The location of roadside inns and state-run hotels for travelers; 6) Well guarded and patrolled by imperial army troops; 7) A help to the emperors to map their growing empire, and 8) Built to last (Andrews). Transportation was not just limited to roadways; they also developed sea routes to connect different cities in the empire. The sea routes covered the Mediterranean and Black Seas and numerous other routes (Trueman). It is said that travel between all the parts of the empire was possible, making it much easier for those in their administration (Chapter 1: The World of the New Testament). This was a huge advantage to Christian missions. People like Peter, Phillip, Paul, Barnabas, Timothy, and Luke who took part in foreign missions could travel with ease, proclaiming the Gospel to the neighboring cities and also in distant places.

Theological Foundations

Church Planting Strategies Applied in the Book of Acts

Wagner in his book, *Spreading the Fire*, states, “communicating the gospel to the lost is the major theme” of the book of Acts and it is “designed to inform us how it happened in the past and... how it should happen today.” (Wagner *Spreading the Fire* 17). From the earlier study of the book of Acts, it is evident that there is no one specific strategy for church planting; rather Paul, Peter, and other Christian leaders employed different methods at different places and with different groups to proclaim their faith and draw people to Jesus. Ronaldo Lidório in his article, *The Method of Paul for Church*

Planting quotes Michael Green who "argues that the evangelizing strategies in the first century were clear, simple, compelling and community based. That is, they were not too complex to be reproduced by only a limited group of people, or were obscure, impeding of being understood by the people, or even elitist because they could be carried out by every believer in his or her neighborhood." (Lidório). These words of Green adds impetus to this study on church planting from the book of Acts. The following paragraphs discuss the strategies of evangelizing and church planting that are evident in the book, highlighting some of the dominant ones.

Public Preaching of the Gospel in the Book of Acts

One of the prominent things in the book of Acts is the wide variety of sermons that were delivered to both Jewish and gentile audiences. Some of the important ones include Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-40), Stephen's defense before his persecutors, and Paul's message at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:16-41) (Green *Acts of the Apostles* 10). He points out that there is a clear pattern in the speeches that are delivered in Acts. They include an appeal to listen, a Christocentric message supported by scriptural evidences, and a call to repentance or forgiveness of sins (Green *Acts of the Apostles* 11). Green observes that though there is a homogeneity in the messages, there is also a wide variety in the way they were presented (Green *Evangelism in the Early Church* 115). Greenway, Keller, and many other scholars also take a similar stand (Greenway *Apostles to the City* 73-74; Keller 112-113).

Preaching Synagogues

Green rightly points out, "the synagogue provided the seedbed for evangelism among the Jews. Wherever there were Jews, there were synagogues, and all loyal

Israelites were expected to attend weekly; furthermore, they attracted a number of ‘godfearers’ among thoughtful gentiles. Here was a ready-made congregation for Christian missionaries to address” (Green *Evangelism in the Early Church* 194).

According to him, the common message in synagogue preaching was threefold: 1)

Listeners were called to pay attention to the history of God’s people till the coming of Messiah; 2) Speakers presented the good news about Jesus Christ by describing how messianic prophecies have been fulfilled in Him; 3) They finished with the audience being called to repentance by stressing that the forgiveness of sins was found in Jesus alone and in Him there was freedom (Green *Evangelism in the Early Church* 195).

Greenway refers to Paul’s message in the synagogue at Antioch (13:16-41) and makes a similar observation. According to him, “Paul anchored his message in the Old Testament scriptures. He began by tracing God’s gracious dealings with Israel, leading up to the greatest gift of all, Jesus the savior (v. 23)” (Greenway *Apostles to the City* 73). This pattern of preaching is evident throughout Paul’s missionary endeavor. To an audience that were familiar with the Old Testament scriptures, he usually began with it and quickly turned their attention to the good news about Christ (Greenway *Apostles to the City* 73).

Preaching to an Audience outside the Jewish Community

Paul uses different approaches in his style of preaching to different audiences.

When speaking to a Jewish audiences or those who possessed knowledge of the Old Testament, he quoted scriptures, especially Old Testament prophecies. However, in his approach to gentiles, “he argues from general revelation and the greatness of creation” (Keller 113). Greenway also expresses a similar view when he picks up Paul’s speech in the city of Athens, where his audience lacked the knowledge of the Old Testament. He

rightly points out that Paul “began on the common ground of creation and the ‘seed of religion’ that all men possess” (Greenway *Apostles to the City* 73). Paul presents who God is, how He wants to relate to mankind, what He wants them to do, and a call to respond to this message (Greenway *Apostles to the City* 73). He very vividly states that apart from the message of the cross there is no reconciliation with God and hope for humanity (Greenway *Apostles to the City* 74).

In conclusion, it can be said that Paul adapted his message well to make it more authentic for all varieties of people from different backgrounds. Keller elaborates on this by highlighting some of the groups which Paul addressed: 1) Acts 13:13-43 – In Antioch to Bible believers – “Jews, Gentile proselytes and ‘God-fearers’ (Gentiles who believed the Bible and met in synagogues but who had not been circumcised)” (Keller 112); 2) Acts 14:6-16 – In Lystra to “a crowd of peasant polytheists” who were uneducated people; 3) Acts 17:16-34 – In Athens to “sophisticated pagans” who were holding to philosophical views; 4) Acts 20:16-38 – In Miletus, farewell message to “Christian elders”; Acts 21:27 -22:22 – In Jerusalem to “a hostile Jewish mob”; Acts 24-26 – In Caesarea to “Felix, Festus and Herod Agrippa – governing elites” with culturally mixed backgrounds and knowledge. Paul’s approach in his presentation of the gospel greatly depended on the culture of his audience (Keller 112). However, the crux of the message that he consistently preached to the urban audience of the time remained the same: “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, he was buried and rose again the third day, according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3-4) (Greenway *Apostles to the City* 74).

Demonstration of Signs and Wonders

The book of Acts is loaded with instances where God shows Himself through signs and wonders, which remarkably impacted the spread of the gospel. Wagner emphatically presents this aspect of ministry when he states, “Christianity swept through the Roman Empire because people could see with their own eyes that Jesus did miracles greater than any gods they had known of” (Wagner *The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit* 80). The first instance of this manifestation is found on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the believers in Acts 2:1-12. People were amazed and perplexed when they heard the disciples proclaim the wonders of God in their own language (12:8-12). After listening to Peter’s sermon, on that single day three thousand people accepted the message and were baptized. This is the beginning of what is later found in the book of Acts and all through the history of the church. Acts 2:43 and 5:12 say that the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. In Acts 3:1-10, Peter and John heal a crippled man at the temple gate, which opened doors for Peter to share the gospel to the Jews in the place called Solomon’s Colonnade (3:11).

In Samaria, people paid close attention to Philip’s message when they saw the miraculous signs he performed (8:6). Many of them believed and were baptized (8:12). Commenting on it, Babu Immanuel rightly points out, “Philip’s Samaritan mission is full of signs and wonders” (Immanuel 87). In the following chapter, Peter healed Aeneas, a paralytic man who was bedridden for eight years. This resulted in many turning to the Lord in Lydda and Sharon (9:32-35). At Joppa, Peter raised Tabitha from the dead (9:36-41). This again became known all over the area and many people believed in the Lord (9:42).

In Acts 14:3, Paul and Barnabas shared the gospel boldly at Iconium, and God confirmed their message by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders. Later in the same chapter, a crippled man in Lystra is healed by them (14:8-10), which provided an opportunity to preach the gospel (14:15-17). In Ephesus as well God did extraordinary miracles through Paul (19:11-12). Simpson, commenting on the divine healings that took place in Ephesus, states

In the case of Paul at Ephesus there had been special claims made for heathen magic, especially the mystic inscriptions upon the image of Diana which were supposed to possess a healing charm. Therefore, God met this situation on its own ground, even as Moses met the magicians of Egypt in order to show the genuine and the false. (Simpson 74)

Simpson rightly points out that all the miracles in the book of Acts were aimed at two things: either they called attention to the truth of the gospel, or it was used as a seal for the gospel that was already preached (Simpson 74).

Based on all these observations it can be concluded that God used signs and miracles at several junctures in the book of Acts for the expansion of His church in various places.

Exorcism

Exorcism and power encounters are another major way that God demonstrated His power through His disciples in the book of Acts. According to Yeboah, exorcism is an attempt to “cast out evil spirits” (Yeboah 444). In the ancient Near East, “an exorcist usually called on the power of a stronger, and usually good spirit, to subdue or cast out a less powerful, and usually a malevolent spirit” (Yeboah 444). According to Wagner in

some cases these evil spirits were confined to a particular jurisdiction, and they can be termed as *territorial spirits* (Wagner *Confronting the Power* 171).

The book of Acts records several instances where God used His disciples to deliver people bound by the evil spirit. In Acts 5:16, the crowds from the neighboring towns of Jerusalem brought to the disciples those who were sick and *tormented by the evil spirits*, and all of them were healed. Acts 8 records Philip doing miraculous signs in Samaria, and evil spirits leaving many with shrieks (8:7). This led to a great joy in the city (8:8). According to Wagner, at this point the reference to *joy* could possibly be about seeing their loved ones healed; however, as they followed him in amazement, Philip preached the gospel and many believed and were baptized (8:11-12) (Wagner *Spreading the Fire* 213). Even Simon, a man who practiced sorcery believed and was baptized (8:9-10, 12).

At Philippi, Paul confronts a soothsaying slave-girl and delivers her from the evil spirit. Klauck calls this incident, “an exorcism cast in a remarkable form” (Klauck 65). Luke narrates that the slave-girl followed Paul and the team for many days shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.” (16:17-18). Many scholars have always wondered why Paul delayed in delivering her. Klauck makes an important observation which could be true considering the events that followed. According to him, Paul foresaw the negative consequences that would arise after her deliverance, hindering the proclamation of the gospel further in that city (16:19-40) (Klauck 69).

At Ephesus, God once again uses Paul to demonstrate his extraordinary power. Even the handkerchiefs and aprons that touched Paul were used to heal the sick and

deliver people from evil spirits (19:11-12). The seven sons Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, also attempted to drive out the evil spirits using the name of Jesus as a formula. On one occasion a man with the evil spirit answered to them, “Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?” Saying this, he jumped on them and beat them badly (19:15-16). This became known to the Jews and the Greeks in Ephesus, and they held the name of the Lord Jesus in high honor. Further many confessed their evil deeds, and people practicing sorcery burnt their scrolls publicly. In all this, the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power (19:18-20).

Wagner rightly points out “that the power of God to heal the sick, cast out demons, and perform miracles is not given as an end in itself. God’s power should be seen as a means to an end. The end is that God is glorified through reconciling people to himself” (Wagner *The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit* 87). From this study of various passages on exorcism it can be concluded that the deliverance of people from the bondage of evils spirits has always led to a wider proclamation of the gospel.

Household Evangelism

The book of Acts presents household evangelism as a strategy for missions and church planting. According to Hedlund, evangelizing households was a favored technique implemented on various occasions (Hedlund *God and Nations* 245). In the first century Greco-Roman world, the family was a closely-knit unit, and the apostles used this to their advantage when sharing the gospel. Often the focus was not just on winning an individual but on bringing the whole family to God (George *A Study of the Urban Church Growth in the Book of Acts* 53).

In Acts Chapter 10, Peter ministers at the house of Cornelius, a Roman centurion in Caesarea. Cornelius invited his relatives and close friends on this occasion, and the whole group accepted Jesus and were baptized. A similar thing is witnessed in Philippi, where Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth, responded to Paul's message. Both she and the members of her household were baptized (16:14-15). Further, the jailer of the prison and his household believed in Jesus and were baptized (16:31-33). In Acts Chapter 18, a similar event happens at Corinth, where Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord and were baptized (18:8).

In all these cases, decision makers in the house were people who exercised some kind of influence or authority. This could be true even about Lydia as she seemed to be a wealthy woman, running her own business. From the above examples, it is evident that household evangelism was used as an effective tool for missions and church planting.

Focusing on Receptive Groups

Though the aspect of focusing on receptive groups might not seem very vivid in the book of Acts, there are glimpses of it, and it is appropriate to briefly discuss this approach.

Acts Chapter 10 presents God encountering Peter in a vision and commanding him to eat unclean animals which were inappropriate for a Jew. As Peter pondered it, he was approached by the three men who were sent by Cornelius, a gentile Roman centurion. The Spirit of God prompts Peter to visit the house of Cornelius. On approaching his house, Peter finds a group of people that were gathered there to listen to the word. The Lord mightily moved among them, and the whole group believed in the

message and were baptized. This is a good example of focusing on receptive groups, whose hearts are prepared by God to receive his message.

One of the most vivid patterns in Paul's ministry in every city is his engagement at the local synagogue first. He would start by sharing the gospel to the Jews, gentile proselytes, and god-fearers who gathered on the Sabbath. When rejected he would then turn to other platforms to share the gospel (McRay *Paul His Life and Teaching* 372-373). Studying this pattern, one might think, "why did Paul use this approach?" There could be two reasons for it. First, McRay points out that Paul himself spelled out the reason for such a pattern on two occasions. In Romans 1:16, Paul states that he is not ashamed of the Gospel which brings salvation to everyone who believes, *first for the Jews, then for the gentiles*. He vocalized this belief at the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch when the Jews abusively spoke against him. He said, "since you rejected it (gospel)..., we now turn to the Gentiles" (McRay *Paul His Life and Teaching* 372-373). The second reason is an assumption based on the Jewish origin of Christian faith. The Jews anticipated the coming of the messiah, and it is possible that they were aware of the prophecies from Hebrew Scriptures. Based on this assumption, it is probable that Paul first approached them expecting them to be more receptive to the gospel because they possessed a prior knowledge of the coming messiah.

Acts Chapter 16, presents another instance of God's specific direction. The Holy Spirit kept Paul and his companions from preaching the word in the province of Asia and then directed Paul in a vision to travel towards Macedonia. Paul immediately turned towards this region (16:10), convinced that God wanted them to preach the gospel there.

He travels through various cities of Macedonia seeing great success in the ministry with many people turning to Jesus (16:15, 33, 40; 17:4,12 etc.)

In the cases mentioned above it is clear that God directed His people to specific groups whose hearts were already prepared to receive the gospel. By turning to such receptive groups, the disciples witnessed a great harvest of souls.

Sharing the Love of God in Deed

Among the many activities of the new believers mentioned in Acts 2:42-47, Luke makes a passing comment about them sharing their material possessions. They even sold their belongings to help those in need (2:44-45). Larkin, commenting on it, states that the believers created a common fund for the poor which was continually supplied by the rich in the congregation (Larkin 83). This presents the transformed nature of the people who accepted Jesus. According to Wagner, this is a kingdom principle taught by Jesus (Matt.22:39), and it was now gaining a practical demonstration among believers (Wagner *Spreading the Fire* 142).

This aspect of sharing is further elaborated in Acts 4:32-37, where believers are presented as one in heart and mind. From time to time, people sold their properties and put the proceeds at the apostles' feet, which were then distributed to those in need (4:34-35). Wagner calls it an unselfish love for each other. (Wagner *Spreading the Fire* 142). In this context, Luke introduces Barnabas, a Levite from Cyprus, as a model to everyone. He sold his field and put the money at the apostles' feet. Commenting of Barnabas, Larkin states, "For Luke he embodies the full integrated life of external witness and care for the church's internal needs" (Larkin 84).

Further, the church at Jerusalem also cared for the needs of widows by providing them food (6:1-6). This group included both the Grecian and the Jewish widows. Though there was an initial issue of some widows being neglected, Olver states that the apostles showed great concern over this matter by immediately appointing seven people of good standing to deal with this injustice against the Grecian Jews (Olver). This shows the openness of the early church in embracing people in need from all backgrounds. A similar aspect of helping fellow believers is found during the time of famine in Judea. The disciples at Antioch responded by raising funds and sending them to the elders in Judea to help the church (11:27-30).

This caring fellowship strengthened the spirit of unity among believers and presented a practical demonstration of Christ's love to everyone around them. It seemed that everyone would want to join a caring group like this. While the apostles continued the mission of sharing the gospel with greater power (4:33), the early church, through its demonstration of love and care, was probably posing itself to be an attraction to many outside.

Personal Evangelism

Even though the book of Acts is loaded with several examples of public proclamation of the gospel this does not undermine the presence and effectiveness of personal evangelism. One of the best examples is that of Philip in Acts 8:26-40. He was set apart by the believers and apostles to serve at the table (6:5), but after the persecution in Jerusalem he is seen executing amazing evangelistic skills in spreading the gospel to the Samaritans. Later, when God reveals that he must go to the south on the road that goes from Jerusalem to Gaza, Philip leaves behind his successful mission and

immediately obeys. Green commenting on this passage writes, “I’m struck by the importance which God clearly assigns to personal evangelism if he calls one of his prime evangelists out of the extremely fruitful work in which he was engaged, and into a desert to meet just one man in a chariot” (*Green Acts for Today* 108). Philip’s obedience not only brought the Ethiopian official to God but also opened doors for the gospel to reach his nation, Ethiopia. Acts 16:25-33 records another example in the conversion of the jailer and his family. Though this incident might seem to fit household evangelism, it is probably right to mention that it first started with personal evangelism in the jail. This is very clearly highlighted in verses 29-30. After the earthquake incident, “The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’” From this question we can assume that the jailer was aware of the message of the gospel. Now the message of Paul and Silas was straight, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved...” The question asked by the jailer was at a personal level, and the reply to it was also given at the individual level at first. However, it moved beyond that and brought the whole family to the fold of God.

It can be concluded that personal evangelism is an effective tool in church planting that should not be overlooked. Even Jesus undertook personal conversations (example – Samaritan woman) as a means to reveal Himself, and this strategy was executed later even in the Book of Acts.

Teamwork

Teamwork is a principle that is very evident in the Book of Acts. In chapter 3, Peter and John go as team to the temple and are involved in the healing of a crippled

man. Acts 5:12 speaks of the apostles performing many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. They stayed together as a team during these events. This aspect becomes more vivid during the ministry of Paul. He and Barnabas were set apart by the church, and they traveled together on their first missionary journey (13:2-3). Paul and Barnabas were said to be “united in heart, vision and purpose” (Eims 173). On their return back to Antioch, they reported to the church all that God had done through them (14:26f). Green makes an important observation when he states, “mission is a partnership between those who stay, pray and give and those who go” (Green *Acts for Today* 105). In other words, teamwork is not just between the group members that work together but also includes those supporting it in various ways. This presents mutual accountability.

Later, Paul had Timothy, Titus, Luke, Aquila, Priscilla and others who accompanied him. The number in these teams varied. At times there were just two people, sometimes a small band and occasionally a larger group (Eims 173). Green, commenting on this subject, rightly states that the model of one-man minister is not an effective pattern, and it could lead to “loneliness, frustration, authoritarianism and burn-out. God believes in teams, Jesus chose, and left behind, a team” (Green *Acts for Today* 105)

In Philippians 4:3, Paul uses the idea of being yoked together to refer to his fellow workers who stood by him for the cause of the gospel. One of the basic principles in teamwork is being united in hearts and deeds to accomplish a common goal. Eims lists five elements that are essential in teamwork and are worth noting: “1) An accepted leader; 2) A Common objective; 3) Basic agreement on activities; 4) A strong, God-given

love and loyalty among team members; A certain division of labor within the team” (Eims 174).

House Churches

It is obvious in the book of Acts that the early church was born and primarily spread in the context of the house. Payne in his writing on *Missional House churches* gives a series of examples to validate this point. In Acts 1:12-14, after the ascension of Jesus, believers met together in an upper room. In Acts 2:2, on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon the believers, they had gathered in a house. In Acts 2:46, the believers continued to meet in houses. The house was a common meeting point for the believers (Payne 1-2). Meeks also expresses a similar opinion when pointing out that the early Christians in the first few chapters of Acts, centered “many of their activities in the Temple.” However, they soon moved to private homes (Acts 2:46; 12:12) (Meeks *The Moral World* 110). Greenway is also of a similar opinion. In his comments on *the establishment of churches*, he mentions that Paul’s urban strategy of ministry was not just to bring people to the saving knowledge of Christ, but he formed the believers into Christian communities, organizing them into churches, and, in most cases, these gatherings were in the context of a house (Greenway *Apostles to the City* 83).

According to Meeks, this practice of meeting in houses is even more vivid among the diaspora Christians (Meeks *The Moral World* 110). Both Meeks and Payne list several places where the church meets in houses (Meeks *The Moral World* 110-111; Payne 2). In Thessalonica a mob was led to Jason’s house to arrest Paul and Silas (Acts 17:5). In Acts 12:12, when Peter was arrested, the believers gathered for prayer in Mary’s house. Greenway points to Acts 20:20, where Paul said to the Ephesian elders that he

taught them both “publicly and from house to house.” According to him, this “was probably referring to his visits not simply to individual families but to the homes where groups of believers gathered regularly for worship and instruction” (Greenway *Apostles to the City* 83). Later in Paul’s letters he is greeting the churches that met in different houses (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15). Banks, commenting on 1 Cor. 16:19 where Paul mentions about the greetings sent from Aquila, and Priscilla and the church that meets at their house, states that this is the first time the expression *house church* is used in Paul’s writing. The mention of *oikos*, house, in this context refers to the church gathering that was meeting in the house of Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus (Banks 37-38). In Colossians 4:15, he greets Nympha, and the church that met her house. He greets the church that meets in Philemon’s house (Philemon 1). In Romans 16:3-5, he greets the church that met at Priscilla and Aquila’s home. There are several examples in the New Testament which very clearly highlight the significance of houses as meeting point for believers (Payne 2). Meeks, commenting on *house churches*, writes that the church or *ekklesia* in each city consisted of small cell meetings, and Christians found new converts, sympathizers at such gatherings. However, these people could have gathered together for worship and instruction at larger and more spacious houses (Meeks *The Moral World* 110). He further states that though these gatherings, “with its regular meetings, its strong sense of identity,” looked slightly similar to other associations of that time, they showed significant differences. The early Christians were taught to practice equality by accepting each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, and they also set up high ethical standards, which was very unlike other associations (Meeks *The Moral World* 113-114).

Meeks saw *house churches* as having a lot of advantages in the early church age. According to him, they offered more privacy and security for Christians to conduct their worship and practice religious rituals. He also goes on to state that the householder in some cases became the patron of the group, offering not only a place but some financial support and protection. A good example of this is presented in the incident at Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9) where Jason is seen as posting bond (verse 9) to assure the good behavior of his guests (Paul and Silas) (Meeks *The Moral World* 111).

Payne is right in stating that the tradition of house churches continued even after Emperor Constantine made Christianity an official religion in AD 313. Even after two thousand years, churches still continue to meet in houses (Payne 2).

Developing Lay Leadership

The idea of developing lay leadership is another vital aspect that is found in the Book of Acts. This pattern strengthened the brand-new local churches, and, as a result, they grew rapidly. Green makes an important observation to substantiate this opinion. According to him, Paul and his team not only preached the Gospel in various places but later returned to the new believers to strengthen them and develop leadership among them (15:36) (Green *Acts for Today* 105). Eims also expresses a similar view (Eims 179). Paul and Barnabas returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch (14:21). At Lystra Paul was stoned and dragged outside the city, and the Jewish opposition left him, thinking he was dead (14:19). In verse 19 the Jews from Antioch and Iconium led this mob. It is not clear why Paul and Barnabas wanted to return to such hostile places. The answer lies in verse 22 as they were willing to risk their lives once again so that the disciples could be strengthened and encouraged (Eims 179). Commenting on this, Eims further states that

Paul and Barnabas understood people as the key to reach the world, therefore they believed people “must be helped, strengthened, encouraged, taught, and trained.” (Eims 180).

Except in Corinth (18:11) and Ephesus (20:31), Paul did not stay long in any of his mission fields. Green rightly points out that Paul made short visits to many places such as Paphos, Perga, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. According to him, this “shows up an important principle of trusting the initiative of the new Christians. Trust them into leadership” (Green *Acts for Today* 106). McRay, commenting on *lay leadership*, also expresses a similar opinion. According to him, Paul’s appointment of leaders in the new congregations was “consistently employed in his missionary work.” (McRay *Paul: His Life and Teachings* 373).

At Corinth, Paul stayed with Aquila and Priscilla for eighteen months. During this time, Paul would have trained them. This is later reflected in their ministry when Paul left them at Ephesus. Commenting on them, Simpson states, “Aquila and Priscilla could not be apostles, but they were indeed living ‘epistles, known and read of all men’” (Simpson 72). They took note of Apollos, who spoke with great fervor about Jesus, and equipped him further by straightening his doctrinal position (Greenway *Apostles to the City* 89). This made a remarkable impact on him, making him a spearhead with the Jews by proving from the scripture that Jesus was the Lord (18:24-28). This training of Apollos happened under Aquila and Priscilla who were also lay leaders.

Further, in Acts 20:17f, Paul meets the elders from the church at Ephesus and gives them instructions to keep watch over themselves and the flock. This is another

example of Paul equipping the local leadership which had a lasting impression on the churches.

Focus on Ministering to Women and Equipping Them

The nature and role of women in the first century New Testament world was very different from what is witnessed in the present day. Commenting on the status of women in the Greco-Roman world, Maxwell writes that there can be no dispute that it was a male-dominated society. He further adds, “All the Emperors were men; so also, so far as we know, were the senators, the proconsuls, the praetors, and every other ordinary officer of state. If any of them were women, they were so exceptional as not to alter the overwhelming male dominance” (Maxwell WOMEN IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD). Jeffers also expresses a similar opinion when he states that in most cases women were confined to fulfill specific roles such as child bearing and child rearing. They were considered inferior to men, even in the area of intellectual ability (Jeffers 249). However, both Jeffers and Maxwell agree that there were some upper-class women and a few others who raised above this model by gaining wealth, position of influence, and power (Jeffers 250; Maxwell WOMEN IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD).

In his comments on *Women in the Christian Congregation*, Jeffers rightly points out that there were a good number of women among Jesus’ followers and some of them did hold social status and financial independence, even contributing to His ministry expenses (Lk. 8:1-3). They played vital roles in the life and ministry of Jesus right from the beginning when Mary (mother of Jesus) was chosen and commended by God (Lk. 1: 28-38). Jesus taught women without any discrimination (Jeffers 251) (Jn. 4: 10-26; 11:20-27), healed them (Mt. 8:14-15, Mk. 1:30-31, Lk. 4:38-39), answered their requests,

commended them (Mk 5:25-34, Mk. 12:41-44, Lk. 21:1-4), and used them as examples in His parables (Mt. 25:1-13, Lk. 15:8-10, Lk. 18:1-8). Even at the resurrection, women were chosen to be the first group to witness it and later proclaim this good news to the apostles (Mt. 28:8-10) (*Jesus' Interactions with Women*). All these instances vividly present the fact that Jesus viewed women with dignity, unlike the cultural worldview of His time.

The Book of Acts continues the same pattern of presenting women. They are seen joining in prayer and fellowship with other disciples from the first chapter (Acts 1:14) (Jeffers 251). According to Jeffers, they were part of the Pentecost experience where the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-11, 17-18), and they were often among the first ones to receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 5:14; 12:12; 16:14-15; 17:4,34) (Jeffers 252). They are also presented as people with the gift of prophecy. In Acts 21:8-9, Paul is at Philip's house, whose four unmarried daughters prophesied (Banks 123). They also served in leadership positions in many Pauline congregations. Some of them include: "Lydia (Acts 16:14, 40), Priscilla (Acts 18:2-3; Rom 16:3-4; 1 Cor. 16:19), Phoebe (Rom 16:1-2), the mother of Rufus (Rom 16:13) and Chloe (1 Cor 1:11)" (Jeffers 252). Meeks also expresses a similar view when he writes, they played "a very large part in the mission and patronage and leadership of the Pauline groups" (Meeks *The Moral World* 111). He gives the example of Junia in Rome who played a very prominent role in the church (Rom. 16:7) (Meeks *The Moral World* 111).

Hindrances/Obstacles to Evangelistic Work

The first century Christians were enthusiastic about sharing their new-found faith, but this was not without obstacles. Some of them faced extremely difficult circumstances.

Green states that Christians were “opposed as anti-social, atheistic and depraved” (Green *Evangelism in the Early Church* 29). He also states that Christians were offensive to both Jews and gentiles for their doctrines and their behavior (Green *Evangelism in the Early Church* 29).

Threat from the Jewish Group

Though Christianity was born in the matrix of Judaism, it was not an easy task to win Jews to Christianity. Green puts forth several reasons for this: 1) The early Christians were a small minority of nobodies; 2) A majority of them lacked formal rabbinic training to counter the existing theology, belief, and practices of the people, and 3) They were up against properly qualified Jewish religious leadership who were considered as possessing an oral tradition that reached back to the time of Moses (Green *Evangelism in the Early Church* 30). In spite of all these inadequacies, these ignorant, unlearned laymen started attracting a sizeable amount of followers, and they fervently accused the Jewish leadership for the unlawful murder of Jesus, the messiah. This stirred up a lot of fear among the Jewish leadership who wanted to nip off Christianity (Green *Evangelism in the Early Church* 30).

The Greco-Roman Threat

Green, speaking about the Greco-Roman threat, states that Romans considered their gods to be the ones who gave them victories, protected them, and provided for them. However, they showed tolerance and respect to the gods of the nations they subdued. (Green *Evangelism in the Early Church* 35). There arose a conflict of worldviews because, just like the Jews, Christians held to a monotheistic view of God which seemed very narrow-minded to the Romans. Initially, Christianity was thought to be part of the

Jewish religion, but as it spread to different regions and as constant opposition rose from Jews, it was taken to be a cult that could disturb the peace of the society, and this led to wider attacks on Christians. In AD 64, during Nero's reign, Christians were cruelly tortured and murdered. However, all this could not stop the spread of the new-found faith (*Green Evangelism in the Early Church* 34-37).

Role of the Holy Spirit

Coggins points out that the Holy Spirit God works through a wide variety of factors and is a vital dynamic of church growth (Coggins 41). However, Chandran is probably right in stating that even though the power and work of the Holy Spirit is acknowledged His role has been badly neglected (Chandran 170). Taylor expresses a similar opinion, stating that “the chief actor in the historic mission of the Christian church is the Holy Spirit. He is the director of the whole enterprise.... This fact so patent to Christians in the first century is largely forgotten in our own. So we have lost our nerve and our sense of direction” (Taylor 3).

Empowering to be a Witness

The author of Acts suggests from the beginning that the work of witnessing is entirely dependent on the Holy Spirit (Hedlund *The Mission of the Church in the World* 191). One of the most common verses about the work of the Holy Spirit in empowering believers to be witnesses is Acts 1:8 – “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you shall be my witnesses.” Jesus told the disciples to wait until they were empowered to do His work, and they were obedient to it, making no attempt to carry out the great commission until the day of Pentecost. Boer points out, “the Great Commission derives its meaning and power wholly and exclusively from the Pentecost

event” (Boer 47). Murray, commenting on it, states, “the very spirit of God’s own Son, as he had lived and loved, had obeyed and died,” had “to become their personal life” (Murray 149). This begins to unfold with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in Acts Chapter 2. Commenting on this experience, Coleman states, “Jesus as an external Presence now reigned as Sovereign in their hearts. The gospel became life and power within them” (Coleman *The Great Commission Lifestyle* 89). These timid disciples, now turned into bold witnesses, communicated in foreign languages. Peter narrates the story of Jesus beginning from the Old Testament, and finally a great multitude of people turn to God with repentance. This is nothing but the accomplishment of the Holy Spirit through His obedient disciples (Terry 77)

Hedlund refers to an important observation made by Dupont; on the day of Pentecost “the church was born universal” (Hedlund *The Mission of the Church in the World* 195). The apostles, filled by the Holy Spirit, spoke in languages of the different people who had gathered there. Though Luke does not present an exhaustive list of the people present on the day of Pentecost, he does state in Acts 2:5 that the crowd present in Jerusalem on that day, “represented every nation under the sun.” Since then one of the central tasks of the church has been to fulfill the Great Commission under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Hedlund refers to Allens’ work, which puts forth different references from the Acts of Apostles, pointing out the work of the Holy Spirit in the progression of the missionary work:

There is the proclamation by Peter (Acts 4:4), Stephen (7:5), and Philip (8:26, 40); the conversion and mission of Saul (9:15-20); the effect of persecution and its cessation on the progress of the gospel (9:310); the preparation of Peter by the

Spirit for the interview with Cornelius (Acts 10); Barnabas's ministry at Antioch (11:24); the sending of Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey (13:2, 4); and the Holy Spirit's guidance at Jerusalem (Acts 15:28), Macedonia (Acts 16:16, and finally Rome (28:25ff.), justifying the mission to the gentiles.

(Hedlund *The Mission of the Church in the World* 195-196)

The book of Acts presents a record of the missionary work and the expansion of the church under the supervision of the Holy Spirit. Boer, commenting on the work of the Holy Spirit, states, "He launches the witness at Pentecost and guides it at every turn until the grand climax is reached in Paul's arrival in Rome" (Boer 109). He rightly points out that the work of apostles in missions was not theirs fully but the work of the Holy Spirit in them (Boer 109). Similarly, Marshall states, "the Spirit is regarded as witnessing along with human actors (Acts 5:32)" (Marshall 67).

Convincing the Heart

Greenway rightly points out that the special work of the Holy Spirit is to bear witness about Christ. His mission is not to speak of Himself or testify about Himself but to reveal Jesus. He plays a prominent role in applying the word of the gospel and bringing people to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Though the believer's witness is important it is only the Holy Spirit God who can carry the word to the soul and the heart (Greenway *Missions Now: This Generation* 30-31). In Evangelism the Holy Spirit God plays a dual role; on one side He empowers the believers to witness, and on the other side He convinces the unbeliever so that the Word bears fruit in them.

In conclusion it can be said that the role of the Holy Spirit God is multi-faceted. He empowers the church to evangelize the world. He validates the ministry of the church

through signs and wonders. He provides direction to His people and leads them into godly living. He strengthens the believers in the midst of opposition and persecution (*The Book of Acts: Major Themes of Acts*).

Case Study - Urban Church Planting: A Strategy Based on Paul's Work at Ephesus

The Book of Acts widely records how churches were planted in various urban contexts. The following paragraphs study Paul's approach to the establishment of the Ephesian Church as a model for an urban church plant. This is mainly derived from Greeway's book, *Apostles to the City* (Greenway *Apostles to the City* 87-95).

Making the Right Contacts: In Acts 18:18-21, Paul is seen as visiting Ephesus along with Priscilla and Aquila. Though this was a very brief visit, he promised them that he would return back (v. 21). The first thing to be noted on this short visit is Paul making his initial contacts with the Jews in the synagogue (v. 19). This aspect is part of Paul's regular strategy in all the cities that he visited where there existed Jews and synagogues. He would always begin with his people and in the context of a meeting in the local synagogue try to plant the seed of the gospel in their hearts (Greenway *Apostles to the City* 87).

Disciple Preparing Disciples: The second part of Paul's strategy here involves leaving Priscilla and Aquila at Ephesus (v. 19). This seems to be a very intentional move by Paul. He had stayed with this family at Corinth for at least a year and half (18:3, 11), rooting them in their faith and equipping them for ministry. In Acts 18:24-26, a Jew named Apollos arrived at Ephesus. Luke narrates that he was a learned man, an eloquent speaker, bold and possessed with a thorough knowledge of the scripture (18:24-26, 28). However, Apollos was limited in the doctrinal understanding of the new-found faith that

he was proclaiming. In this context, Priscilla and Aquila (probably lay leaders), opened their home and equipped him more adequately in the way of the Lord. The result of this investment is seen in the following verse (v. 28) where Apollos is vigorously arguing with the Jews at Achaia and proving from the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

Greenway, commenting on the work of Apollos, states that he was *an evangelist*, who had the ability “to explain the gospel in clear and effective ways to the unsaved people.” He further states, “At Ephesus, Apollos was an important link between Paul’s initial contact and his deeper and prolonged ministry later on” (Greenway *Apostles to the City* 89).

Partnership Ministry: The third strategy of Paul is found in Acts Chapter 19, where he is seen as traveling back to Ephesus. This was a shared ministry with Timothy, his assistant (Greenway *Apostles to the City* 89). Paul stayed at Ephesus for two years and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. During this period, “all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord” (19:10). God performed great miracles through Paul which “added tremendous impetus to the spread of the gospel” (Greenway *Apostles to the City* 90). However, Paul’s stay at Ephesus was cut short due to the sudden riots against him, and Timothy was placed at Ephesus to carry on what Paul had begun (1 Tim. 1:3). By then Paul had also trained local leaders, who were appointed as overseers and shepherds of the church (20:28).

Periodic Follow-Ups: The fourth aspect of Paul’s strategy for urban church planting is *periodic follow-up visits* (Greenway *Apostles to the City* 93). His intentions for *follow-up visits* are very clearly mentioned in Acts 15:36 where it says, “Sometime later Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us go back and *visit the believers in all the towns where we*

preached the word of the Lord and *see how they are doing.*” He returned back to some of those places and encouraged the new believers. Apart from that “he also sent his assistants, men like Timothy, Titus, and Tychicus (1 Tim. 1:3; Titus 1:5; and Eph. 6:21, 22), to convey messages, correct false teachings, organize churches, and pastor believers” (Greenway *Apostles to the City* 93)

Practical Instructions Imparted Through his Letter: Greenway calls Paul’s letter to the Ephesian church as “*an extension course* in doctrine, ethics, and practical Christian piety” (Greenway *Apostles to the City* 95). This was probably a letter to be circulated among all the churches in the region to help the believers grow in faith and maturity (Greenway *Apostles to the City* 95).

From this case study, it is clear that church planting is not just about preaching the gospel nor is it solely about the efforts of one person. There are various other aspects that need to be taken into account. All the above-mentioned points are vital in urban church planting; however, they are not the only ones to be considered. One should depend on the guidance of the Holy Spirit to adopt the right principles and also learn from other people who have either worked or are working in similar contexts.

Research Design Literature

Creswell rightly points out that the literature review plays a vital role in any research, accomplishing several purposes. One among them is, “it shares with the reader the results of other studies that are closely related to the study being reported” (Creswell *Research Design, Fourth Edition*). This research falls into qualitative research design, which more often tries to answer questions like *why* and *how* regarding the research issue. In this chapter an attempt has been made to probe into different aspects relating to

missions and church planting, looking at questions like: What do different scriptures (Old and New Testament) say about missions and church planting?; How did church planting take place in the Book of Acts (chronologically)?; What did the urban world of the New Testament look like (characteristics)? What were the different church planting methods employed in the Book of Acts, especially by Paul?

A qualitative researcher is primarily concerned about what Lincoln and Guba call “the human as instrument” approach, where the major focus is on “understanding human beings’ richly textured experiences and reflections about those experiences” (Jackson). In this context, the different scholarly views that have been discussed in Chapter Two and the conclusions drawn from them act as guides for the following chapter, specifically in preparing appropriate questions for the field research.

Summary of Literature

In conclusion it can be stated that the Bible has an ample number of references pointing to the mission of God in this lost world. God’s longing for the salvation of humanity is presented right in Genesis 3:15, where He promises the messiah who would crush the head of the enemy, Satan. The very election of Abraham in Genesis 12 was to make him a blessing to the nations. Further God expected the people of Israel to be a light to the nations and carry the message of hope and salvation to others around them, but they failed to catch this vision. However, God continued to act throughout history, and this hope of salvation was finally realized in His son Jesus Christ.

In all the four Gospels, Jesus is presented as one who pointed people to the kingdom of God. His parables and other teaching repeatedly sounded this message. He

constantly invested in the lives of disciples, teaching and equipping them for a bigger task that is later revealed in the book of Acts.

The Book of Acts records the birth of the Church in a Greco-Roman world. That context contributed to the rapid spread of the gospel, particularly the usage of a common international language (Greek), the existence of good roads and sea transportation, and Roman peace and tranquility.

For the most part, early church plants seem to have happened in an urban context. Some of the forerunners for urban mission were Peter, Philip, and, more importantly, Paul and his companions. They can be described as itinerant missionaries who constantly moved from one city to another preaching the gospel. They applied different church plant strategies that proved to be successful. Some of the most prominent strategies included: 1) public preaching of the gospel; 2) demonstration of signs and wonders; 3) exorcism; 4) household evangelism; 5) focusing on receptive groups; 6) sharing the love of God in deed; 7) personal evangelism; 8) teamwork; 9) establishing house churches; 10) developing lay leadership, and 11) a focus on ministering to women and equipping them.

As Jeff K. Walters points out, there is rapid global urbanization today (Walters). This calls the attention of the church to focus on urban mission like never before. In this context, it is appropriate to search for successful church plant approaches. One can take into consideration lessons from some of the proven strategies that were applied in the book of Acts and adapt the best ones to suit individual settings. The church has a great responsibility to reach out to the lost with the gospel and to do anything different is to disobey the direct commands of God.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

Chinelo Igwenagu, in his article, *Fundamentals of Research Methodology and Data Collection* states that *research methodology* “is a set of systematic technique used in research. This is simply a guide to research and how it is conducted” (Igwenagu). Similarly, Sam Goundar states that “research methodology is a systematic way to solve a problem. It is a science of studying how research is to be carried out. Essentially, *the procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena are called research methodology*” (Goundar). According to Kothari, “*Research methodology* is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically” (Kothari 8). Sensing, in his comment on *methodology*, also seems to express a similar opinion. According to him, it “is the overarching paradigm the research utilizes to study a particular problem” (Sensing 26). He further expands on this by presenting a series of questions, including: “How will the stated problem be solved or better understood? How are you going to study the problem?” (Sensing 26). To sum up, *research methodology* is a scientific approach to deal with the research problem and derive appropriate solutions to it. In this process several suitable research techniques and methods are applied.

This chapter is crucial as it provides a work plan for the project. It offers a clear map of how the research is being carried out. Developing a proper research methodology acts as a guide for the researchers. It prevents them from any deviations and constantly puts them on the right track to achieve the purpose of the research (Goundar).

The following pages of this chapter provide an overview of different aspects of research methodology that are employed for this project. First, the nature and purpose of the project are presented, and the ministry context is described. Following this is a description on the primary participants selected to contribute to the research, measures taken to select them, and precautions for maintaining their confidentiality. Next are the instruments employed for data collection, their significance, and procedures followed in this research. The expert review also shaped the research process, and measures were taken for the reliability and validity of the project design. The chapter ends with a description of the process of data collection and data analysis.

Nature and Purpose of the Project

Hyderabad is one of the fastest growing metropolitan cities in India with advances in the areas of infrastructure, commerce, and industry that provide job opportunities to millions of people. The city has also been a prime place for establishing many Christian organizations and churches. It has more likely than many other cities to have a greater Christian population, but the ratio of Christians still remains very low (below 3%) (*Hyderabad Population 2020*). In light of this, research was done to investigate church planting methods that are being employed in the city. The main agenda of the research is to investigate the popular methods of church planting that are being employed in Hyderabad by taking into consideration the views of pastors and church planters and proposing effective methodologies for greater church growth through church planting. This research has studied the church planting strategies that were employed in the Book of Acts and have used those principles to guide this investigation. Proper scientific

research methods and appropriate instruments have been considered to achieve the main purpose of the research.

The purpose of this research was to investigate the church planting methods that are being implemented in Hyderabad by interviewing pastors, then to identify, design, and propose methodologies and principles that can be applied in Hyderabad for more effective church growth through church planting.

Research Questions

In the light of the research problem and the purpose of the research, three research questions have been proposed. The aim of these research questions is to draw out conclusive implications for the main purpose of the research. Two different instruments (questionnaires and interviews) were used to collect data from twenty-five pastors in Hyderabad. The following paragraphs briefly describe the research questions, mention the instruments used, and point out the questions from the questionnaire that are primarily aimed at each of the research questions.

Research Question #1 - What methods and strategies are being employed by successful church plants in Hyderabad?

The first research question aims to discover different strategies that are being employed by churches in Hyderabad. All of the twenty-five participants were asked to contribute their views on it. Question number ten and eleven in the questionnaire are aimed at drawing out information on this particular subject. The same questions were also repeated in the verbal interviews.

Research Question # 2 - What challenges are encountered by successful church plants in Hyderabad?

This research question is aimed at discovering the challenges faced for planting churches in Hyderabad. Once again, questionnaires and interviews were the two instruments employed for gaining information from the participants. Questions number ten and twelve in the questionnaire were aimed at drawing information on this subject.

Research Question # 3 - What are the essential components of a model successful church plant in Hyderabad?

The third research question is aimed at discovering some key characteristics of successful church plants in Hyderabad. Questions number fourteen to seventeen in the questionnaire point to this aspect. The same questions are used in the interview as well.

Question number thirteen in the questionnaire has strategies for church planting that are derived from the study of Book of Acts. The participants are required to select the most appropriate ones to suit their context and rate them in order of importance. The information collected from responses to the research questions and the strategies for church planting from the Book of Acts will be used to determine an appropriate model for effective church planting in Hyderabad.

Ministry Context

The ministry context of this research paper is the city of Hyderabad in the state of Telangana, India. It is also popularly known as the "City of Pearls" and the "City of Nizams" (*Culture of Hyderabad - The City of Nizams!*). The following paragraphs briefly review different dynamics of Hyderabad to provide a better grasp of the research context.

Brief Historical Background of Hyderabad: This city has a vibrant historical legacy. It is said to have originated during the Qutub Shahi dynasty under king Mohammed Quli Qutub Shah (AD 1580-1612). He was a Muslim ruler of the kingdom of Golconda

(Vepachedu). There is a difference of opinion on the exact date of its formation however; some scholars date it back to AD 1589, and some others to AD 1591 (Vepachedu). It was then called Bhagyanagar (*Industrial Profile: Hyderabad District*). After the Qutub Shahi dynasty, this region was conquered by the Mughal Empire and finally it fell into the hands of the Asaf Jahi dynasty (1724), also known as the Nizams (*Culture of Hyderabad - The City of Nizams!; Hyderabad*). The present city of Hyderabad came into existence in August 1978 (*Industrial Profile: Hyderabad District*).

Geography of Hyderabad: Hyderabad is the capital city of Telangana state and is located in its central part. It lies on the banks of the Musi River in the Deccan Plateau. It is located at 17.366° N latitude and 78.476° E longitude. The city is approximately 536 meters above the sea level. The estimated area of the city is around 625 square kilometers (241 square miles); however, it is expanding at a fast pace (*Geography of Hyderabad*).

The Contemporary City: Hyderabad is among the fastest growing cities of India in terms of infrastructure, population, commerce, and industries. It is a hub for the information technology (IT) sector, having international centers. Apart from this, Hyderabad is also flourishing in the industrial sector with major manufacturing companies in pharmaceuticals, textiles, and cigarettes. It has well-developed intercity transportation provided by the public and private sectors consisting of public buses, metro rail service, local trains, and private taxis (*Hyderabad, India*).

Sridhar quotes from the “Telangana Socio-Economic Outlook 2018” report released by the government, according to which Hyderabad tops in literacy rate in the state with 83.2% (Sridhar). Wikipedia also presents a similar literacy rate. According to it, the literacy rate in Hyderabad is 82.96% (males 85.96% and females 79.79%) (*Demographics of*

Hyderabad). However, most of the daily wage laborers who are migrating into Hyderabad from the neighboring districts of Telangana state and from other parts of India are either illiterates or have minimal education. If their literacy rate is taken into account, the literacy rate in Hyderabad might be lower than the statistics above.

Hyderabad is also known for its educational opportunities. Literature and fine arts flourished greatly under the patronage of the Nizams (*Culture of Hyderabad - The City of Nizams!*). Osmania University, established by the Nizams in 1918, is one of the top universities of India. There are several other universities, including the University of Hyderabad, Agricultural University, Urdu University, and University of Law, and many other research and training institutes which offer a wide range of courses (*Hyderabad, India*).

Population and Culture: Hyderabad is the sixth-highest populated city in India (*Culture of Hyderabad - The City of Nizams!*). According to *World Population Review*, the estimated population of Hyderabad in 2020 is around ten million people (one crore) (*Hyderabad Population 2020*). The city of Hyderabad represents a cosmopolitan culture which is a home to people from various parts of the nation who have been residing here for decades (*Telangana Today*). The city provides a perfect blend of North and South India (*Culture of Hyderabad - The City of Nizams!*). The culture of Hyderabad is very distinct from other parts of state. The strong Islamic influences inherited from the Nizam's era is still very vivid. This can be seen in architecture, food, lifestyle, and language (*Culture of Hyderabad - The City of Nizams!*).

There are an estimated 1,476 slums in Hyderabad with a population of approximately 1.7 million. Nearly one-quarter of these residents are immigrants from

rural parts of India due to urbanization. Most of them have relocated to the city in search of jobs, and they mainly depend on the public services from the government (*Hyderabad Population 2020*).

Religious Practices and Festivals: "Hinduism is the most common religion practiced in the city (55.5%), followed by Muslims (41%), Christians (2.5%), Jains (0.5%), Sikhs (0.3%), Buddhists (0.02%) and other religions" (*Hyderabad Population 2020*). Though Telugu is the vernacular language of the state, Hyderabad is multi-lingual with Urdu, Hindi and English being prominent among them (*Hyderabad Population 2020*).

The multi-cultural character of the city is seen in the celebration of different festivals in the city. Major festivals include Hindu festivals like Sankranti (festival of kites), Dusshera, Diwali (festival of lights), and Ganesh Mahotsvam, Muslim festivals like Ramadan and Bakr Eid, and Christian festivals like Easter and Christmas. The Hindu festivals of Bonallu and Bathukamma are given regional importance. Festivals of all religions are celebrated with extravagance (*Culture of Hyderabad - The City of Nizams!*).

Clothing Style: The traditional dressing style of women in general is saree or salwar kameez. They adorn themselves with gold, jewelry, and pearls. With the impact of westernization the younger generation is now looking for a more comfortable approach, opting for dresses and jeans. Men are usually in shirt and pants, but people wear the traditional kurta pyjama and sherwani as well, especially during festivals and special occasions (*Culture of Hyderabad - The City of Nizams!*).

The Uniqueness of Hyderabad: Hyderabad is referred to as "the city of Pearls" or "Pearl City" because it is considered a global center for trading natural pearls, diamonds, and emeralds (Bhose).

People of the city are generally known for their hospitality. Known as the land of Biryani, Hyderabad is famous for its *Dum ka Biryani* which is a rice dish with slow cooked meat and spices. Hyderabad is also known for a unique flavor of tea called the Irani Chai (Bhose). The major food items consumed here are rice (a staple food), wheat, lentils, vegetables, chicken, red meat, fish and eggs.

"Hyderabad has a rich tradition of literature and fine arts, with many museums, art galleries and exhibitions dedicated to the display of Hyderabadi heritage" (*Culture of Hyderabad - The City of Nizams!*). Some of the major tourist attractions in the city are Charminar, Golconda Fort, Qutubshahi tombs, Mecca Masjid, Birla Temple, Falaknuma Palace, Chowmohalla Palace, Salarjung Museum, Ramoji Film City, and Necklace road. The city has an International Airport connecting people to various parts of the world.



Figure 2: Golconda Fort



Figure 3: Charminar

Pictures of Golconda Fort and Charminar adapted from *Culture of Hyderabad - The City of Nizams!*

Participants

Criteria for Selection

Selection of the right participants was imperative for drawing more accurate conclusions in this research. Much thought was given to this, and a criteria for selecting people for this research was developed before starting. Some of the criteria included: 1) They should have planted one or more churches in Hyderabad. 2) They should be able to communicate either in English or Telugu. This criterion was essential as the majority of churches in Hyderabad are for Telugu-speaking congregations with Telugu-speaking pastors. It would be easier for the researcher to communicate in a language that both the researcher and the respondent understand so that researcher does not make incorrect assumptions of what is being shared. 3) They should be educated enough to read and write in one of these two languages. Though literacy need not be an important issue in church planting, most of the urban population today is educated, and when attempting to draw out principles for church plant among these communities, this criterion is mandatory. 4) Though there is no gender discrimination when approaching this research, Hyderabad, like most Indian cities, is a patriarchal society, and this is reflected even in the church, with a majority of pastors being male. Therefore, a majority of the participants for this research are male. 5) Finally, participants should be of sane mind and be able to articulate their thoughts clearly.

Having mentioned these criteria, it needs to be noted that there are hundreds of pastors in the city of Hyderabad who would likely fulfill the objectives. However, since this research confined data collection to 25 people, participants were selected who were known either directly or indirectly as people with theoretical and practical knowledge on

this subject, were available, and consented to participate. The process of selection is further described in detail in the next section.

Description of Participants

For research like this, it is of utmost importance that right people are selected to draw out non-biased conclusions. Therefore, participants were chosen from a variety of individuals who have expressed their consent to participate in this research by contributing their knowledge. They are from different age groups, denominations, gender, and backgrounds; however, there are three factors worth mentioning about them: 1) All of them work or have worked in the city of Hyderabad; 2) All of them have made a significant contribution towards church planting ministry, and 3) Some of the participants who have contributed to this research are from in and around the Rajendranagar constituency (area) as mentioned and discussed in Chapter One.

Sensing rightly points out that it is vital to describe the participants, mentioning, who they are, why they have been chosen, and how many (Sensing 63). The following paragraphs present a brief description of the participants. In any research it is vital that proper boundaries are created right at the beginning to have more precise results; therefore, the number of participants was limited to twenty-five people. Though there is nothing unique about this number, it will keep the research more tangible.

A few of the participants are young (25-35 years) church planters who are enthusiastic to serve God. Having their views incorporated will resonate with the current trends. Their churches are usually made up of a small group of believers who meet for worship and fellowship at homes (house churches).

The next group of participants are from mainline churches. The term *mainline churches* refers to organized or structured churches belonging to a network of established churches. These participants have vast experience in church planting and pastoral ministry; therefore, considering the inputs from their rich expertise is vital for this research.

The final group of participants are senior church planters with an experience of twenty years or more in church planting ministry. Having seen the ups and down in their ministry, the knowledge from their experiences will greatly benefit the approach in this research.

There is also one woman minister included. Her inputs provide a different approach towards this research. Women ministers in Hyderabad are few in number and often overlooked because of their gender; however, their views cannot be neglected to have a complete perspective into planting churches in an urban context like Hyderabad.

Ethical Considerations

A consent form was signed by each of the participants who had agreed to contribute to this research. This consent form clearly spelled out that there was no compulsion on them to participate and that the confidentiality about their personal details would be upheld with utmost care. Further if at any moment, the participant wanted to withdraw from the survey due to personal reasons or to withhold answers to a part of the survey, they could do so.

All the soft copies of the raw data, including audio recordings, are saved on a personal laptop and hard disk. This data was highly secured as both laptop, hard disk, and the folders containing the raw data were accessible by different passwords. The hard copies were kept secure in a locked cabinet in the researcher's personal office. The same guidelines

were followed by the translator and data analyst who signed confidentiality agreements to keep the data completely secure. After the completion of their tasks, they securely returned all the documents by email and in pen drives with the files password protected. They also deleted the soft copies from their computers and destroyed hard copies by burning them. Once the research is completed and approved by the coach and academic office, all the soft copies and emails containing any information provided by the participants will be completely deleted, and the hard copies destroyed by fire.

Instrumentation

There are various instruments used for data collection; however, questionnaires and interviews are among the most popular and widely used ones for research such as this. These approaches in data collection have proved to be effective for gathering correct information and facts that are more reliable. The following paragraphs discuss some of the characteristics of these instruments, the advantages of using them, and how they have been employed during this research.

Questionnaire: Questionnaires are a popular tool employed for collecting data and information; however, proper care should be taken to draft the right questions that align with the purpose of the research. This instrument is defined by Goode and Hatt as “a device for securing answers to questions by using a form which respondent fills” (Raju 10.2). Bogardus provides a more elaborate definition. According to him, “a questionnaire is a list of questions sent to a number of persons for them to answer. It secures standardized results that can be tabulated and treated statistically” (Raju 10.2).

There are several advantages of using a questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. Some of them include: 1) They are cost effective. The only money spent on

this is the printing and postage charges (if sent by post); 2) This instrument is very appropriate even when the respondents are scattered over a larger area and are not easily accessible; 3) The respondents have adequate time to thoughtfully respond to each question; 4) The most important aspect is probably the validity of this instrument. In this case respondents work more independently, and the researcher cannot influence their answers either through words or thoughts. Respondents have the liberty to express their views without any external influence, especially from the researcher (Raju 10.7; Kothari 100-101). Considering these advantages, this instrument has been employed for data collection.

This research used a structured questionnaire. The words *structured questionnaire* refers to one that includes “definite, concrete, and preordained questions” (Raju 10.4) that have been developed in advance, taking into consideration the research questions posed in Chapter One. The nature of these questions fall under the *mixed questionnaire* format. This means there are questions that are *open form*, where the participants have the liberty to use their language to express their opinions and viewpoints, and there are also *closed form* questions, where they are expected to answer one of the options already defined in the questionnaire. This method has been employed as it fits well with the nature of the research.

The questions in the questionnaire have been framed and reframed based on the research questions and the inputs of the dissertation coach, Dr. Bryan Collier, and Dr. Milton Lowe. They aim to fulfill the objectives of the research.

The questionnaire is divided into two major parts. The first part has basic information of the participant and their church details, providing background information

of the respondent; the second part of the questionnaire aims to achieve the objective of this research. Both these details are vital in analyzing the data provided by the participants. These questionnaires were prepared in three different modes: a printed, hard copy, an emailed soft copy, and a Google form (a web-based form, where the respondents can fill in their answers in a link provided to them). Participants were given the liberty to choose the most convenient mode among them.

Interviews: Scheduled interviews are another instrument that has been employed for this research. Raju quotes Goode and Hatt, according to whom, "Schedule is the name usually applied to a set of questions which are asked and filled in by the investigator in a face to face situation with another person" (Raju 11.2). Here, once again the same set of questions from the questionnaire were used. Interviews proved to be very effective for participants who were less educated or more comfortable expressing themselves verbally. Moreover, they provided the interviewer an opportunity to probe deeper into the questions by encouraging the respondent.

Using interviews as an instrument also has a lot of advantages. Some of them include: 1) More data and greater depth can be obtained through this instrument; 2) It has a higher percentage of response, and it is very unlikely that any question is left out by the respondent; 3) The questions can be simplified and restructured during the process of the interview to yield an appropriate answer, and 4) There is scope for collecting more supplementary information about the respondent's personal details and context that can sometimes be of greater value during interpretation. (Raju 11.12; Kothari 98-99).

Considering these advantages, this instrument was also employed for data collection.

The questions were verbally presented to the participants, and their answers were recorded and filled into a written format. This is done with a face-to-face approach or a telephonic conversation.

Expert Review

The questions for the questionnaire and the interviews have been discussed extensively with the dissertation coach, Dr. Bryan Collier. During this process, gaps were identified that needed to be addressed. Some questions had to be deleted as they did not fulfill the purpose of the research and a few others were added. The coach suggested that these questions should be further discussed with another expert on the subject. Therefore Dr. Milton Lowe, who is an academic with vast experience in this field, was chosen for the task. He had a thorough critical evaluation of the questionnaire and made some suggestions which have been incorporated. He suggested an appropriate scaling system to rate certain aspects in the questionnaire. Some questions have been worded differently to make them more meaningful and draw accurate answers. Instead of limiting the respondent to a definite number of ways in which they could answer some of the questions in the questionnaire, it was rightly suggested in the expert review that the numbers be deleted, allowing the respondents to express their views without any limitations. On a particular question on the Book of Acts it was suggested that the strategies of church planting be listed, and the respondents guided rather than keeping it as an open question for the respondent to suggest strategies. This was a deep insight as it could have led to a variety of proposed strategies by the participants which would have made the data analysis complex. Overall, the expert reviews were very successful in

helping formulate the right kind of questions to attain the desired answers for this research.

Reliability and Validity of Project Design

Raju rightly points out that reliability, validity, and generalization are marks of a good research design (Raju 5.5), and proper care has been taken to achieve this goal in this project. The first step taken in this process was to formulate the right research questions for the project. Considering the importance of it, much thought and caution was taken during this process. These questions were further discussed with experts on the subject, who helped in refining them.

Second, employing the right tools and applying them correctly is vital for acquiring proper results in any research. Two instruments (questionnaires and interviews) have been selected for the primary data collection. *Primary data* refers to the first-hand information collected directly from the respondents. This is more original in character and comes from the theoretical and experiential knowledge of the participants (Kothari 95). The questions for questionnaires and interviews have been structured based on the research questions from Chapter One and from the findings of the study of the Book of Acts in Chapter Two. They prompt the respondents to provide appropriate answers that align with the research.

Both these instruments (questionnaires and interviews) are proven methodologies that have been employed by other researchers who have dealt with similar subjects of research. Further, as suggested by Sensing in his book, *Qualitative Research*, prior to implementing the instruments, they have been discussed with experts who have

experience with using the right tools on the subject, especially the coach, Dr. Brian Collier, and Dr. Milton Lowe. Such an approach makes the research design more reliable.

Finally, proper criteria were developed and employed to select the right participants who could contribute to this project. All the participants are from the city of Hyderabad, and they have experience on the subject matter.

In conclusion, it can be stated that appropriate research questions have been designed to achieve the purpose of the project; proper instruments were employed to collect the data, and the right participants were selected to contribute their views. All these steps make the research more reliable and validate the approach.

Data Collection

As previously mentioned, the topic for this research is “Relevant Methods and Strategies for Successful Church Planting in Hyderabad, India.” The main purpose of this research, as presented in the second part of the title, is to identify and determine effective principles or strategies for planting healthy churches in the city of Hyderabad. The whole research is aimed at that, and therefore appropriate research questions were developed, and proper instruments were selected right at the beginning to achieve this goal. This process was established based on the reading of different papers written on similar subjects and taking into consideration the views of experts on such research (especially the coach, Dr. Bryan Collier, and Dr. Milton Lowe).

A research such as this can be a vast, strenuous, and intangible project if proper boundaries are not set up in pursuing it. This research was limited in a number of ways. The project was confined to the city of Hyderabad. A major part of the biblical and theological foundations in Chapter Two focused on relevant selective passages from the

Book of Acts, and the primary respondents were limited to twenty-five pastors from the city. This approach made the project more focused and concrete and thus more likely to achieve the purpose of the research.

This research falls is pre-intervention as it deals with the issue of church planting in Hyderabad. An attempt has been made to study different church planting strategies that were applied in the book of Acts and to gather inputs from selected pastors from Hyderabad on this subject to draw out proper implications for planting more churches in this context. As pre-intervention research it describes the issue and identifies significant steps that need to be taken to deal with it (MTP – Chapter 3 – PowerPoint- Module 3, Class Notes).

Further, this is a *qualitative research* where things have been studied in the natural setting of the context of Hyderabad. It is primarily an *exploratory research* project (MTP – Chapter 3 – PowerPoint- Module 3, Class Notes). The core aim was to interpret the findings and draw out conclusions from them (Sensing 57).

Selection of the Participants: Twenty-five participants were carefully selected for this task. The following steps were considered in identifying and recruiting the participants. *Step 1:* Hyderabad has different pastors' fellowships, where pastors from the city come together every month for a time of prayer, spiritual enrichment, and fellowship. An attendance book and an address database of the pastors is maintained by these fellowship groups, and the researcher accessed them. From the list of pastors, the researcher selected fifty people and sent an invitation letter to them to participate in the research. Some of these pastors are known to the researcher personally while others were selected on the recommendation of the leaders of these fellowships. *Step 2:* From the fifty

participants that were invited, there were some who did not respond, and there were a few others who expressed unwillingness to participate in the research due to various constraints. *Step 3:* From the group that responded positively, the researcher selected twenty-five participants who have experience in church planting ministry in the city of Hyderabad. The participants were recruited only after signing the consent form.

Instruments: The instruments employed to derive appropriate answers to the research questions were *questionnaires* and *interviews*.

Questionnaires: Questionnaires were prepared, keeping in mind the research questions that were put forth in chapter one (Kothari 102). The first part of the questionnaire had a set of questions that were aimed at collecting details about the participants and demographic information about their churches. The second set of questions were intended to derive the views of the participants on issues regarding their experiences in church planting. These are mostly reflections from their experiences on the subject. Most of them are open-ended questions so as to have a better understanding of the participants' perspectives. The last section has a question prepared from the study of Book of Acts in Chapter Two. It lists different strategies of church planting that were applied in the Book of Acts, and the participants were required to pick the best ones to fit their context. Overall the questions gathered demographic details, views from participants' experience on the subject, and their reflections from the strategies employed in the Book of Acts.

Questionnaires were developed in three formats (hard copies to be hand-written, soft copies to be emailed, and a Google form), and participants chose from one of them to provide their feedback. The respondents were expected to read the questions, understand

them, and write their answers in the space provided (Kothari 100). Though the filling out of this questionnaire was estimated to take approximately 30-45 minutes, they were given ten days to thoughtfully consider their views. All the questionnaires returned were properly filed, and the data was systematically compartmentalized for the analysis.

Interviews: The second instrument used for this research was *interviews*. An applied set of questions from the questionnaire were verbally asked of the participants who opted for interviews (Raju 11.2). Questions were shared with them in advance so that they could thoughtfully prepare their answers rather than sharing a brief spontaneous answer. Such an approach was very helpful. The interviews were mainly done through physical meetings and by telephone. They were conducted based on the availability of the participants, and an appointment was made with them. These interviews were done in Telugu, which is the vernacular language of the participants. During the interview, sometimes questions had to be rephrased and repeated again to give more clarity and acquire the appropriate answer (Raju 11). Some of the meetings were rescheduled due to the unavailability of the participants. One conscious attempt that was made during the interview was to restate the question and their answer to help the participants fully grasp what they had shared. This pattern sometimes helped them to add few more thoughts to their answers. They were also given a week's time to think about any further additions they wanted to contribute. Being flexible in the approach provided the participants with opportunities to present their views more openly. The responses of the participants were written down in pencil during the interview though they were also recorded for credibility. The recordings were very helpful when typing the answers as the researcher could cross-check, which further prevented him from making assumptions based on

memory. One participant used both methods, the questionnaire and the interview. Though he initially opted for the questionnaire and did write some of the answers, he later wanted to expand his thoughts through an interview.

A majority of the participants answered all the questions. The data collected from all these aspects contributed in performing a better analysis. The more information gathered on the subject, the better it helps in analyzing the data.

Data Analysis

Having collected the data, the task at hand was to analyze it using the appropriate tools. Commenting on *Documentary Analysis*, Sensing states that at this point all the documents containing field notes, answers to the questionnaires, and data collected from the interviews need “to be unpacked and analyzed” (Sensing 196). However, proper care needs to be applied in this process. It is suggested that the data be read several times thoroughly before organizing (Sensing 196). Lakshmi pathi Raju also expresses a similar opinion in his textbook on “Social Work Research.” He states that one needs to remember that the facts collected from the participants could sometimes be complex ideas with many problems, and therefore a thorough knowledge of the data is required for proper analysis (Raju 14.2).

Kothari rightly points out that this “analysis of data requires a number of closely related operations such as establishment of categories, the application of these categories to raw data through coding, tabulation and then drawing statistical inferences. The unwieldy data should necessarily be condensed into a few manageable groups and tables for further analysis” (Kothari 18). In other words, the raw data needs to be classified into “purposeful and usable categories” (Kothari 18). A similar view is expressed by Sensing

as well (Sensing 197). Raju also holds a similar opinion when he states, “analysis of data means studying the tabulated material in order to determine inherent facts or meanings. It involves breaking down the existing complex factors into simpler parts and putting the parts together in new arrangements for purposes of interpretation” (Raju 14.2). All three authors, Sensing, Kothari, and Raju, seem to be in agreement that the raw data needs to be carefully classified into meaningful and simple categories which will yield answers to the research questions. (Kothari 18; Sensing 196-198; Raju 14.2).

Raju states that the analyzed data should be reproducible, amenable for qualitative treatment, lead to a systematic theory, and significant for broader generalizations (Raju 14.2). These aspects have been carefully deliberated during the process of analysis.

Editing: The first thing that was considered in the process of analysis was *editing* the available raw data. This was an important aspect and intentionally considered before laying hands on analysis. In editing, the data was examined to see if it was accurate, consistent with other facts described by the respondents, properly entered, complete, and well arranged. This included translating and rewriting some of the responses. Most of the editing from the interviews were either done on the same day or by the next day (Kothari 122-123). This practice was useful as it helped the researcher work with small chunks of information that were freshly collected from the respondents, and any gaps or issues that were unclear were immediately clarified with the respondents.

Coding: The second aspect that was considered for analysis was *coding*. Sensing gives elaborate notes on how coding needs to be taken up during analysis (Sensing 202-206). According to him, “Coding (sometimes called ‘indexing,’ ‘tagging,’ or ‘labeling’) is a way to get a handle on the raw data so that it is more accessible for interpretation.

Coding assigns units of meaning to descriptions, quotes, texts, etc.” (Sensing 202-203). Kothari, commenting on coding, states that it “refers to the process of assigning numerals or other symbols to answers so that responses can be put into limited number of categories or classes” (Kothari 123). Both Sensing and Kothari agree that during the compartmentalization of the data one should remember that it facilitates addressing the research problem and the purpose of the project (Sensing 203; Kothari 123).

Coding is used in order to reduce the raw data into small meaningful categories. The main themes that emerged from similar words or phrases were grouped together under categories. As suggested by Sensing, these categories have been modified on several occasions during the process of analysis (Sensing 203). Just like editing, this process of coding was immediately taken up after receiving the responses from participants. Appropriate codes were given on the margins of each document, and the codes were recorded in an index for cross-referencing the details.

This process of coding followed the guidelines of Tesch. These have been highlighted by Sensing (Sensing 204-205). 1) The transcripts have been carefully read to get an overall idea of the views presented by the participants, and the main points have been highlighted. 2) Each document was dealt with separately to try to understand the underlying meaning of it, and some striking thoughts from it were written on the margins. 3) After reading and re-reading the data provided by the participants, similar topics were identified and clustered together. These topics have then been arranged under different columns with some of them being considered major topics and others as unique topics or sub-topics. 4) This list of topics has been abbreviated as codes, and these codes were written next to the appropriate segments on each document. 5) These topics were then

elaborated, giving a brief description on each of them, and inter-related topics have been grouped into smaller categories. 6) A final decision was made to abbreviate each category and provide them with proper codes. 7) All the material was divided among the categories, placing the data into its appropriate groups for the preliminary analysis. 8) During the process some existing data had to be re-coded. Finally, graphs, charts, and tables were employed to report the data in a more meaningful way.

During the process of analysis, the demographic details of the participants and their churches were initially summarized. This gave a clarity to the context of the participants and helped in understanding certain points mentioned by them in their feedback.

Classification: Classification is the process of arranging raw data with common characteristics into smaller and meaningful groups (Kothari 123-124). Classification can be done based in two different areas, *homogenous data* and *heterogeneous data*. These are briefly described below.

Homogenous Data: Different categories were developed based on the research questions as they pointed to the main purpose of the research. Sensing suggests that *homogenous* data should be grouped together in one category (Sensing 115). Following this pattern, certain repeated words, phrases, and gestures were identified to identify homogenous data (Sensing 196). Further, the homogenous data presented by the participants through the questionnaires and interviews was arranged into one category and then rated. In this process, statistical bar graphs were used to describe them. The points on which participants most agreed upon are considered more accurate and effective.

Heterogeneous Data: Similarly, *heterogeneous* data was put into a separate category, and, as mentioned by Sensing, these divergent themes have been openly described (Sensing 198). Casual assumptions were avoided on the variations (Sensing 198), and the researcher further tried to probe into this matter by asking, “What could be the probable reason for the variations in their answers?” (Sensing 196). Heterogeneous data seemed as important as the homogenous data, providing an understanding that there are differences within the same city context from one area to the other. This is an important insight to be remembered in the research.

The raw data provided by the participants was analyzed through this process of editing, coding, and classification. This process of analysis helped in breaking large amount of information into simple and meaningful chunks which could then be interpreted to draw out more accurate conclusions.

Conclusion: This chapter has provided insights on how the research project was carried out. It offered information on some very vital aspects of the different procedures employed during this research. First, the nature and purpose of the project were described. The next section described the context of the ministry by highlighting the historical background of Hyderabad, its geography, the contemporary situation in the city, its population, culture, religious practices, festivals, dressing style of the people, and some unique facts about the city.

The section on participants described the process of gathering twenty-five participants to contribute their views for this research. The criteria for selection of the participants was clearly defined, and a brief description of them was provided. The participants were required to sign a consent form, which shows their voluntary

participation in the research. Further, utmost care was taken to maintain the confidentiality of the participants and their personal details.

Questionnaires and interviews were the two instruments selected for data collection. The characteristics and advantages of these instruments have been discussed, and the process of using them in this research has been presented. Further, the section on expert review highlighted the feedback provided by the experts that helped in formulating the right questions in developing this research.

On the whole, proper steps were taken to formulate research questions and employ the right tools to acquire the appropriate results, and utmost thought was given to select the participants. All these steps made the research more reliable and validated the approach.

The final section dealt with data analysis, which plays a vital role in any research. It describes three major patterns that have been employed for this purpose. They are editing, coding, and classification of the material into smaller and more meaningful patterns. Having described the research methodology for this project, the stage is now set for Chapters Four and Five.

CHAPTER 4

EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

Chapter Four plays a vital role in the research as it explores the feedback provided by the participants. This chapter is divided into four parts. In the first part, there are brief details of the participants and the demographic information of their churches. This data helps to understand both the participant and the context of their ministry. The second part of the chapter deals with the inputs given by the participants to questions 10 and 11 in the questionnaire that are built around the first research question: What methods and strategies are being employed by successful church plants in Hyderabad? In the third section, the focus is on answers, partly from question 10 and 12 in the questionnaire, related to the second research question: What challenges are encountered by successful church plants in Hyderabad? The fourth section has inputs from questions 14 to 17 in the questionnaire which highlight the third research question: What are the essential components of a model successful church plant in Hyderabad? Finally, the chapter ends with a brief list of the major findings from responses provided by the participants, and this set the stage for Chapter Five. Though all the views of participants were retained, a few answers were irrelevant to the questions posed and therefore not included. Before delving into the different opinions shared by the participants, it is appropriate to restate the *statement of problem* and the *statement of purpose* for this research, which will help in understanding the different points that are being put forth in this chapter.

Statement of Problem: As mentioned in Chapter One, according to various scholars, Christianity reached India right in the first century through Jesus' disciple,

Thomas. However, statistics presents that Christians are still a small minority (less than 3%) in the nation. This statistic is not much different in Hyderabad which has more advantages than many other locations in the country to have a greater Christian population. Some of the advantages it holds are the wide variety of churches, Christian organizations, and mission organizations. It also has a track record of having huge crusades every year, where Christian evangelists from all over the world come to share the Gospel. Despite these advantages, there is a very low percentage of Christians in the city. This is a concern that needs serious attention. Considering this situation, it is imperative to do research on the church planting methodologies that are being employed there and derive effective principles that can be adapted for healthy church planting and growth.

Statement of Purpose: The purpose of this research was to investigate the church planting methods that are being implemented in Hyderabad by interviewing pastors and then identify, design, and propose methodologies and principles that can be applied in Hyderabad for more effective church growth through church planting.

Participants

Twenty-five participants were selected for this project, and each of them was assigned a code number from CP01 to CP25 (CP refers to Church Planter). All the participants have experience in church planting and work in different parts of Hyderabad. They are both male and female though there was only one female participant as the majority of church planters in Hyderabad are male. The age group of the participants and their experiences into church-planting ministry vary. Most of the participants planted more than one church. Their churches consist of men, women, youth, and children and in

most cases have both local and immigrant groups in their congregations. Though most of the congregation members in these churches are literate, the literacy percentages vary. These details about the participants added variety to the research, providing different perspectives. The paragraph below highlights the participants more closely to provide a better understanding about them and the context of their ministry.

Gender Ratio of the Participants: It is probably right to state that India is predominantly a patriarchal society. This is reflected even in Christian missions and church planting. Two female pastors, who have experience into church planting in Hyderabad, were invited to participate in this research; however, only one of them expressed her consent, and therefore there was one female church planter and twenty-four male church planters as participants in this research. Table 1 illustrates this.

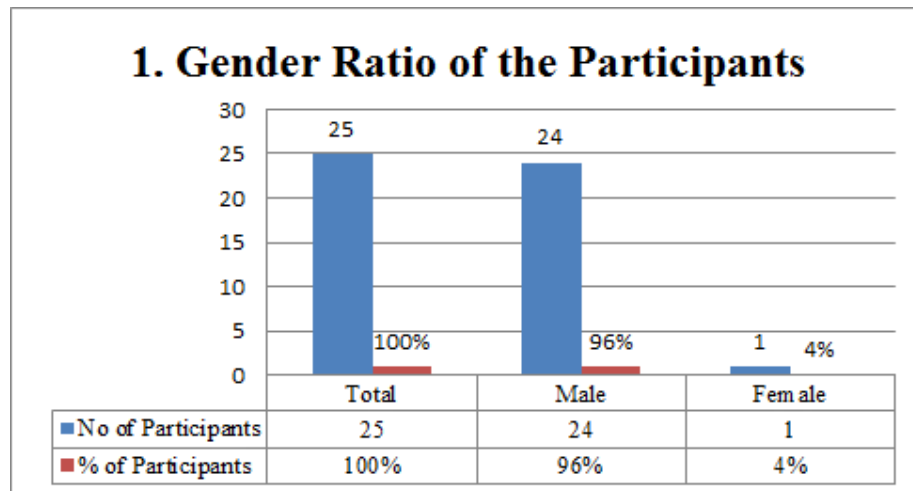


Table 1. Gender Ratio of the Participants

Age of the Participants: Most church planters in the city of Hyderabad are above the age of twenty-five years. This could be because of the theological education (seminary studies) system in India, where students graduate in their early twenties and then usually work under a senior pastor to gain ministerial experience. Therefore, the

participants chosen were above the age of twenty-five and were categorized into five age groups (25-35 years; 36-45 years; 46-55 years; 56-65 years; and 66 years and above).

Church planters who expressed their consent to participate were invited to be part of this research without bias as to their age.

Out of the twenty-five participants, two came from the age group of 25-35 years (8%), eight from 36-45 years (32%), eight from 46-55 years (32%), four from 56-65 years (16%), and three from 66 years or above (12%). Table 2 gives a better picture of the ages of the twenty-five participants:

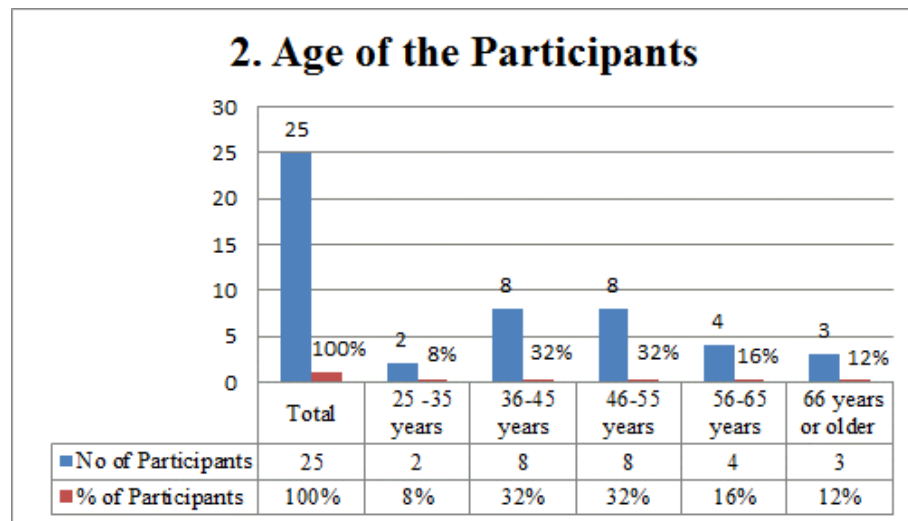


Table 2: Age of the Participants

Participant’s Experience in Church Planting Ministry: Participants vary in their amount of experience church planting. The experience range of one year to more than thirty years was categorized into five groups (1 to 5 years; 6 to 10 years; 11 to 15 years; 16 to 20 years; 21 to 30 years, and more than 30 years) for the participants to choose from. Three participants have an experience of 1 to 5 years; two participants have 6 to 10 years; five participants have 11 to 15 years; four participants have 16 to 20 years; eight participants have 21 to 30 years, and three participants have more than 30 years of

experience. There are some very new church planters as well as others with vast experience in church planting. This broad variety helps validate the research.

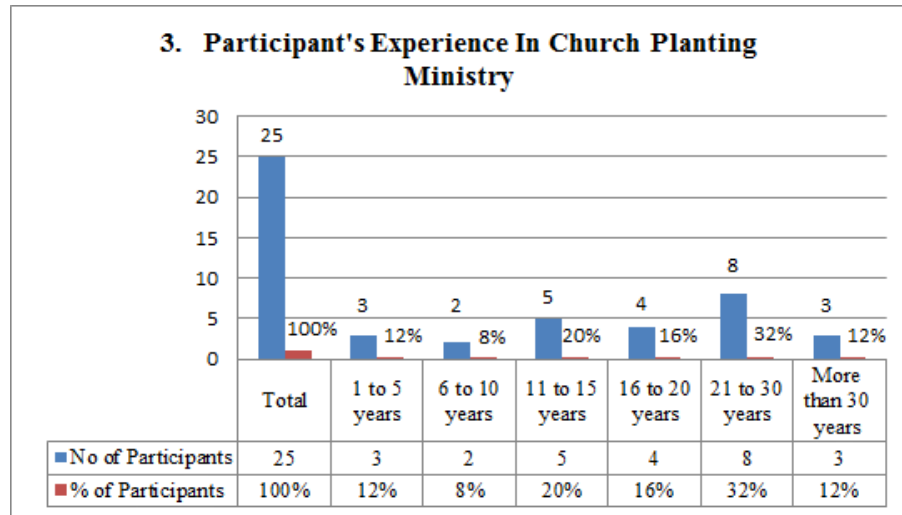


Table 3: Participants Experience in Church Planting Ministry

The experience of the participants is also reflected in the number of churches each person planted. Among the twenty-five participants, five have planted one church; five have planted two churches; four have planted three churches; three have planted four churches, and eight people have planted more than four churches. The data shows that 80% of the participants have planted more than one church. Table 4 illustrates this.

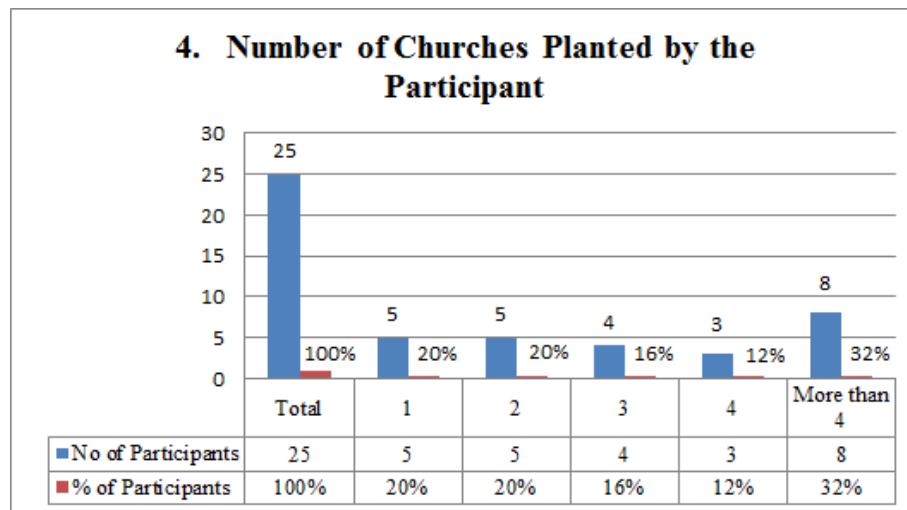


Table 4: Number of Churches Planted by the Participant

Description of the Most Recent Church Plant of the Participants: Data was also collected about the most recent church plant of the participants. Five of them have planted their churches in the last 1 to 5 years; five between 6 to 10 years; four between 11 to 15 years; three between 16 to 20 years, and eight people between 21 to 30 years.

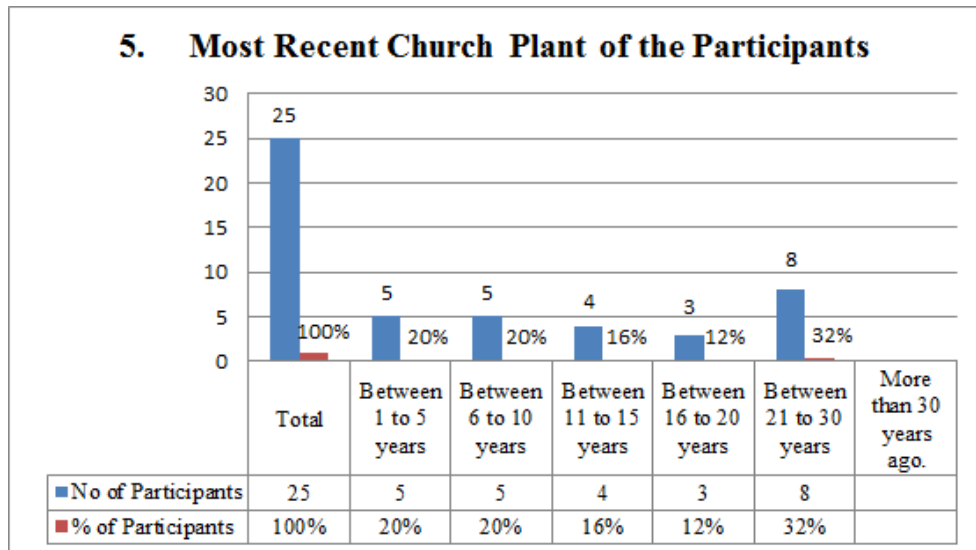


Table 5: Most Recent Church Plant of the Participants

The church congregations of the participants constitute men, women, youth (16-20 years), and children (4-15 years). Three participants (12%) shared that men constitute majority in their church; seventeen participants (68%) stated women; three participants stated youth (12%), and two participants (8%) have both men and women as the highest group. From the feedback it was clear that women are the largest group in a majority of the churches.

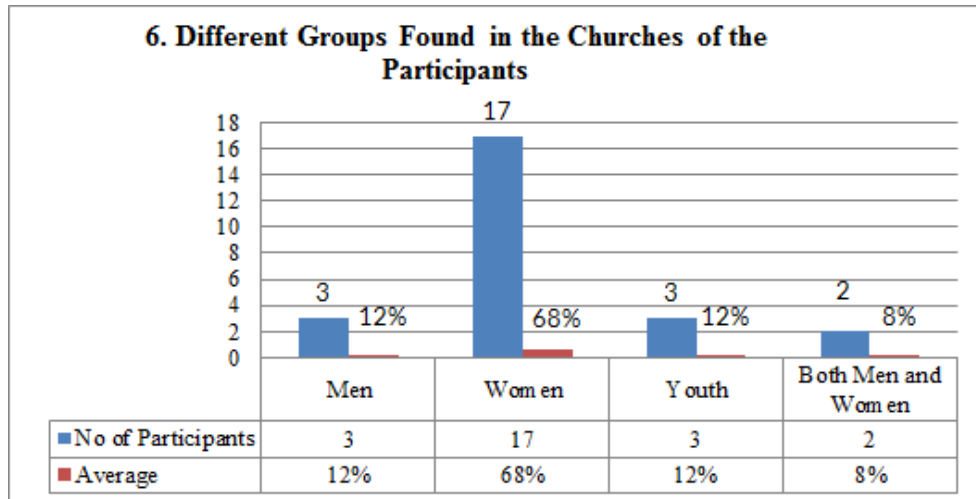


Table 6: Different Groups Found in the Churches of the Participants

Sixty-four percent of people belonging to the churches of the participants are local residents of Hyderabad, while thirty-six percent are, immigrants who have travelled to the city either for jobs or for education.

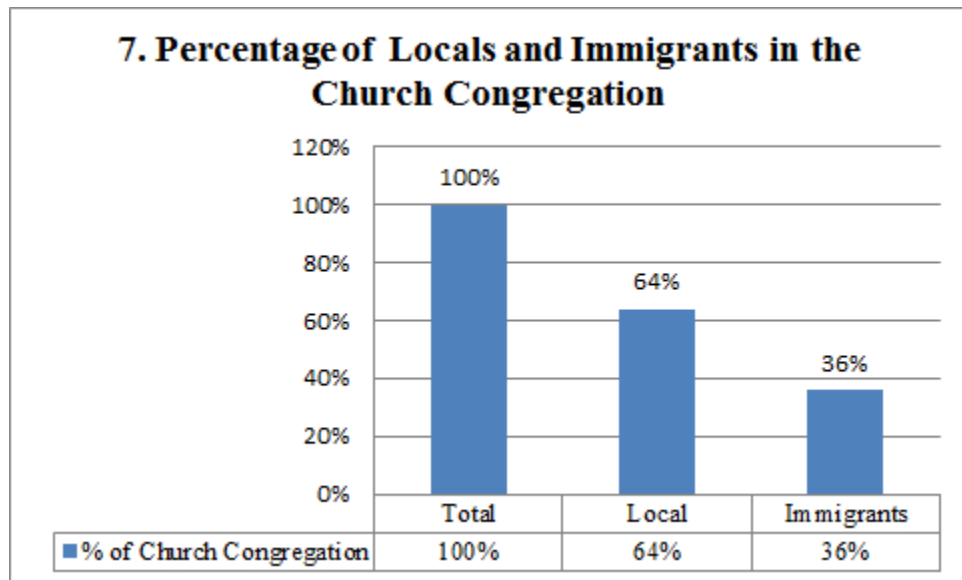


Table 7: Percentage of Locals and Immigrants in the Church Congregation

It was also observed that sixty-nine percent of people belonging to these congregations are literate (meaning that they can read and write). This is lower than the

literacy percentage in Hyderabad, and the probable reason is the high percent (36%) of immigrants who to the most part are illiterate groups that moved from rural areas of the state to the city.

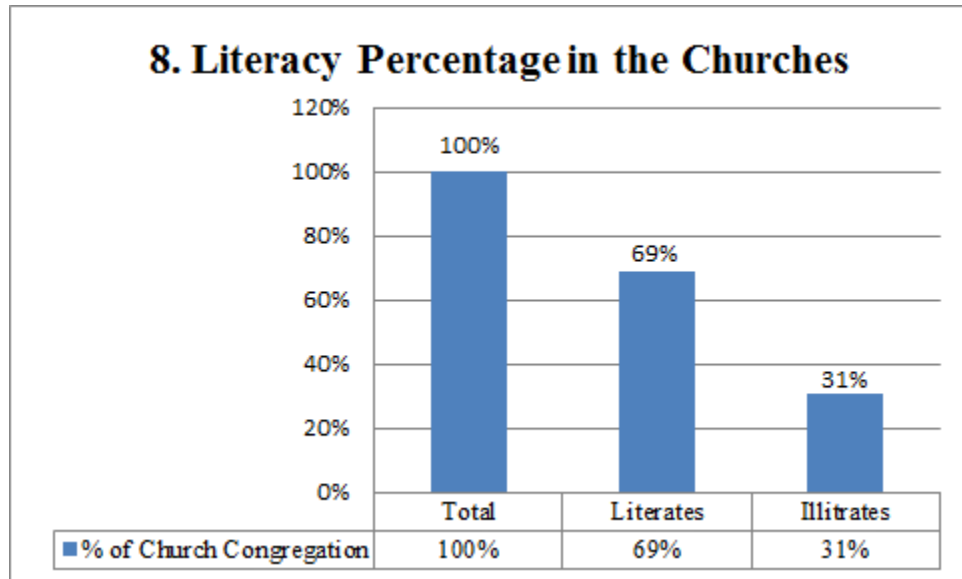


Table 8: Literacy Percentage in the Churches

All this data about the participants and the demographic context of their ministry, sets the stage for what follows, and it helps in understanding the inputs better.

Research Question #1: Description of Evidence

What methods and strategies are being employed by successful church plants in Hyderabad?

An extensive collection of data was gathered from the participants on their approach to church planting in the city of Hyderabad. This data was derived from the answers given by the participants to the 10th and 11th questions from the questionnaire. The vast information gathered from the given data has been narrowed down to the following key strategies without missing the essence from their inputs. The prominent strategies employed by the participants include: 1) an emphasis on prayer; 2) discipleship; 3)

evangelism through outreach; 4) personal evangelism; 5) motivating and equipping church members to participate in church planting; 6) social welfare activities; 7) a focus on specific target groups; 8) cottage prayers, cell groups meetings, and house churches; 9) relational evangelism, and 10) healing and deliverance. The following paragraphs describe each of these in vivid detail

1) *An Emphasis on Prayer*: Prayer is mentioned as a key component in the process of planting churches by many of the participants (CP01, CP02, CP07, CP08, CP09, CP13, CP14, CP15, CP16, CP18, CP21, and CP23). Some of the most prominent patterns of prayer mentioned by them are prayer walk (CP08), chain prayers for a specific target group (CP14), and fasting prayers (CP15, CP18).

2) *Discipleship*: Discipleship is another important ingredient for planting churches mentioned by several of the participants (CP01, CP02, CP04, CP07, CP09, CP11, CP13, CP14, CP15, CP18, CP20 and CP21). Giving priority to God's word (CP21), conducting regular Bible classes and studies (CP18, CP20, and CP21), discipleship training programs to equip believers to reach out to others (CP14 and CP21), and focusing on developing leaders and training church planters (CP09 and CP14) are some of the points highlighted by the participants.

3) *Evangelism through Outreach*: This is a large category which includes conventional strategies of church planting mentioned by the participants. Some of the most prominent ones include tract distribution, street preaching, public crusade and Gospel meetings, door-to-door evangelism, and the use of social media and digital platforms (CP01, CP02, CP05, CP06, CP08, CP11, CP12, CP13, CP15, CP17, CP18, CP19, CP20, CP21 and CP22). Among the above points, CP12 and CP15 state that they

engaged in tract distribution by involving the church members to be a part and work together as team.

4) *Personal Evangelism:* Personal evangelism is deemed an effective approach to church planting in Hyderabad. CP01, CP02, CP10, CP15, CP18, CP19 and CP23 are of the view that by sharing their personal testimonies they encourage people from other faiths to accept Jesus Christ. Furthermore, CP23 states that these new believers become witnesses, attracting many others to Christ.

5) *Motivating and Equipping Church Members to Participate in Church Planting:* CP15 is of the view that creating a vision among church members for planting churches is vital and that their participation extends to finances as well. CP20 also expresses that the church was a supportive team with a unified focus. CP16 highlighted the importance of the role of church elders who assisted him immensely. CP01, CP03, CP06, CP07, CP08, CP09, CP10, CP11, CP 13, CP15, CP16, CP17, CP18, CP20, CP21, CP22, CP24 and CP25 are of the same opinion that the active participation of church members in giving their time, treasure, and talent would help to build the church. CP11 makes an important observation that when the church members reach out to influential leaders of the society, this will have greater impact on the community.

6) *Social Welfare Activities:* CP13, CP14, CP17, CP20, CP21, CP23 and CP24 speak about their involvement in social welfare activities as a means to share the love of Christ in action. CP20 points out that social services like family counselling and other charitable activities builds a familiarity with the people. CP21 is of the view that one can build good relationships with the community through care acts and care events like providing free tuition, medical care, and food supplies. CP23 is of the strong belief that

things like adult literacy classes, free evening schools, and medical camps opened doors for them to share the Gospel.

7) *A Focus on Specific Target Groups*: Some of the target groups mentioned are, children (CP10, CP12 and CP18), youth (CP10, CP15, CP16 and CP18), and women (CP16, CP18 and CP24). According to CP12, children's ministry includes reaching them through music, songs, stories, and puppet shows, and while doing this many of the parents were also reached. CP18 also focuses on children's ministry through Vacation Bible School. CP15 focuses on the youth and encourages them to be a witness for Jesus by sharing their personal experience about God. CP18 also speaks about conducting youth retreats to attract the young generation. CP10 says that by reaching out to the children and youth of the community, they were able to preach the Gospel to their parents. CP16, CP18, and CP24 believe that strengthening the women in the church is essential.

8) *Cottage Prayers, Cell Groups Meetings, and House Churches*: CP12 planted 14 churches in the urban slum areas; all of which are house churches. CP08 mentions that people from other faiths had easy access to their cottage prayer meetings. CP11 says that by conducting small prayer meeting in houses, people in that vicinity came to know about the gospel of Jesus, which was an effective method to plant a church in that locality. CP16 and CP18 also are of the view that cottage prayer meetings are helpful in the process of planting a church and strengthening believers.

9) *Relational Evangelism*: Relational evangelism involves personal interactions with people. CP01, CP02, CP09, CP13, CP15, CP18, CP20, CP23 and CP25 are of the mind that vibrant fellowship and unity among fellow believers is necessary to strengthen

each other in faith. CP06, CP11, CP19 and CP22 speak about the importance of visiting houses and sharing the gospel. CP18 makes the observation that visiting the sick and praying for them encourages the family

10) *Healing and Deliverance*: CP19 has a personal healing experience in his family and shares his testimony to people as he preaches the Gospel. He states that many were healed through their prayers, and this resulted in people embracing the Christian faith. CP23 is also of the same view. CP01 states that he too encountered people in sickness, in bondage, and in poverty who experienced deliverance when they prayed. Further, these people stood as living testimonies in their community thereby bringing new people to Christ. CP16 speaks of special prayers for the deliverance of the sick and those in bondages in the community.

Tables 9 and 10 provide an overview of these findings.

Strategies Being Employed	No of Participants	Average
Emphasis on Prayer	12	48%
Discipleship	12	48%
Evangelism through Outreach	15	60%
Personal Evangelism	7	28%
Motivating and Equipping Church Members to Participate in Church Planting	18	72%
Social Welfare Activities	7	28%
Focus on Specific Target Groups	6	24%
Cottage Prayers, Cell Groups Meetings and House Churches	5	20%
Relational Evangelism	13	52%
Healing and Deliverance	4	16%

Table 9: Strategies Being Employed

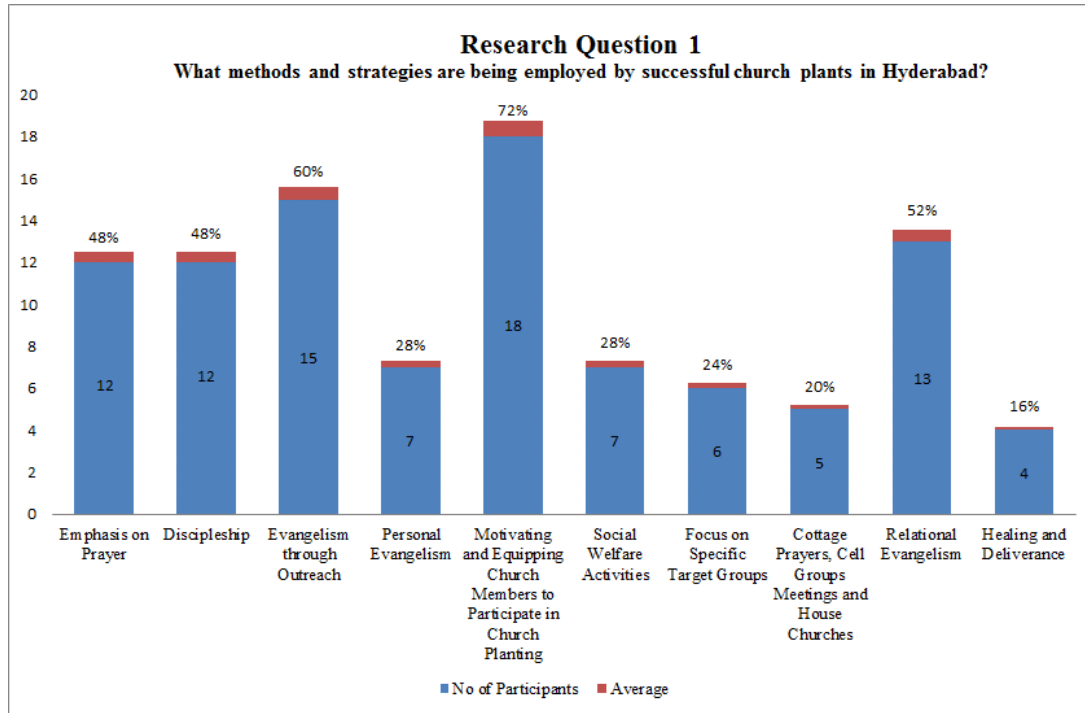


Table 10: Research Question 1 – Graphical Representation of the Above Table (see Table 9)

Research Question #2: Description of Evidence

What challenges are encountered by successful church plants in Hyderabad?

After analyzing the content provided by the participants, following are the major challenges that act as a hindrance to successfully plant churches in the city of Hyderabad. There are twelve points that highlight the practical problems faced by the participants, which include both external and internal challenges. The content in these points are derived from the inputs provided in Question 12 and also contain a few reflections from Question 10 in the questionnaire.

I. External Challenges

1) *Persecution*: CP01, CP07, CP12, CP14, CP16, CP18, CP19, CP20, and CP21 are the participants who experienced physical attacks on themselves, their families, and their church. Their stories are filled with horrifying experiences some of which are shared in detail. CP20 recalls an incident where he and his team were ambushed by 250 to 300 locals while preaching the Gospel in the streets. They were cut off from their community for seven years, with no one talking to them or even selling them groceries. CP18 tells of a time when black magic was performed against his family. Some even threatened to kill them. CP16 also faced a similar life-threatening situation. CP21 describes in vivid detail a time when he was cruelly beaten up by a group of 40 young people for almost an hour, which left him battered and bruised on the streets. CP14 recollects an episode where both the pastor and his wife were physically assaulted by religious extremists. CP12 encountered several occasions where he was manhandled and beaten up. These religious fanatics set Christian literature and gospel tracts on fire. They even vandalized the church property, breaking the doors and stealing electronic equipment from the church. CP01 and CP07 also recall similar incidents where they faced constant threats of violence by hooligans and disruption of the worship service.

2) *Religious Opposition*: It appear that more than 80% of the participants (CP01, CP02, CP03, CP05, CP07, CP08, CP09, CP11, CP12, CP13, CP14, CP15, CP16, CP17, CP18, CP19, CP20, CP21, CP22, CP23 and CP25) have encountered some kind of opposition from religious fanatics. Hyderabad is a comparatively safe place for Christians as suggested by CP01; however, opposition by religious extremists is rampant in the city. The staunch religious ideals of other faiths rooted in the community often pose a threat to

church planters (CP11, CP12 and CP17). In the residential areas, Christian worship centers faced opposition from the immediate neighborhood and were not allowed to conduct religious meetings (CP09, CP11 and CP25). There is a growing antagonism towards the gospel by religious fanatics, who at times have even hindered the believers from coming to the church (CP19). They keep track of the church activities (CP07) to create a sense of intimidation among the local believers.

3) *Spreading False Rumors and Tainting the Name of Christ and Christianity:*

CP11, CP13, CP18, and CP23 expressed this challenge. As others defamed the character and spread rumors among the believers and nonbelievers, CP11 states that it has been a challenge to plant the church in that locality. CP23 says that the seekers of Christ were disappointed and misled when some people discouraged them saying that this newfound God would do no good for them. CP13 faces another challenge where people opposed the believers saying that Christians are on the business of conversion. In the case of CP18, people who opposed him spread rumors stating that he is a non-local and would cheat the people by taking their money.

4) *Social Discrimination:* In this section, there are two social evils that are highlighted, the caste system and gender discrimination, both of which pose a challenge in church planting. According to CP08 and CP23, Christianity is looked down on as a lower caste group, misleading many seekers of the faith. CP12 also mentions this particular evil. CP19 is of the view that new believers find it difficult to embrace their identity in Christ and forego their privileges provided by the government, especially the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. CP16 shared her personal testimony as a woman

in the ministry. Being a woman and a widow was her biggest challenge as people did not accept her as a leader. She was insulted on many occasions.

5) *Political Factors*: Participants mentioned that they faced opposition from the local leaders (CP21) and that no support from the local leaders was extended when approached for building a church in the community (CP16). CP22 foresees a greater threat once the anti-conversion bill is passed by the government. According to CP20, the new converts are being counseled and threatened by the leaders that they would lose government privileges if they continue to go to church.

6) *Community Based Challenges for Planting Churches*: Two community-based challenges that are identified by the participants are illiteracy (CP13 and CP21) and addictions (CP11). CP13 states that since most of his audience were illiterates preaching the gospel in a way they could understand is quite a challenge. CP11 expressed that the men in the community he works with have a habit of consuming alcohol and were addicted to drugs.

Tables 11 and 12 provide an overview of these findings.

External Challenges Encountered	No of Participants	Average
Persecution	9	36%
Religious Opposition	21	84%
Spreading False Rumors and Tainting the Name of Christ and Christianity	4	16%
Social Discrimination	5	20%
Political Factors	4	16%
Community Based Challenges for Planting Churches	3	12%

Table 11: Challenges Encountered (External Challenges)

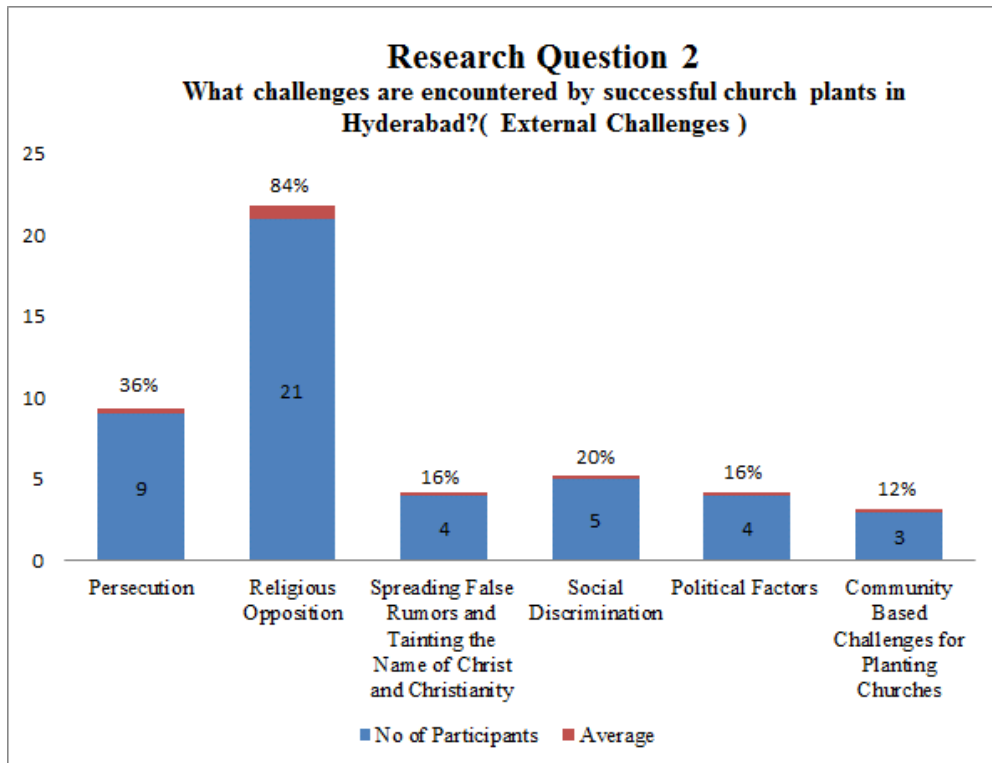


Table 12: Research Question 2 – Graphical Representation of the Above Table (see Table 11)

II. Internal Challenges

1) *Lack of Proper Vision for Church Planting*: CP06, CP08 and CP10 express the following concerns. According to CP06, the churches of today have become more institutionalized and less kingdom-of-God concerned, and there is more worldliness creeping into the churches. On a personal level, he admits that there has been a lack of initiative on his part. CP08 also admits that he has focused on other areas of ministry. CP10 observes that the church believers have become traditional rather than mission oriented. Furthermore, church is not as active as it should be in today's society.

2) *Lack of Spiritual Nourishment*: CP02, CP03, CP04, CP06, CP07, CP08, CP10, CP11, CP19, CP20, and CP24 articulate the following challenges that have crept into the churches today: the materialism of people in general, the busy lifestyle of people, a lack

of discipleship and fellowship, an indifference towards spiritual matters, a mediocre way of Christian living, a disinterest in learning the Word and meditating on it, a lack of prayerfulness, believers leading a compromised life, a lack of Bible-based doctrines in the church, and a declination of spiritual growth among believers. CP07, CP08 and CP20 point out that many, after receiving healing, material benefit, or some other form of service, show little interest in spiritual matters. CP19 observes that many new believers do not profess and embrace Jesus openly before their relatives and community; moreover, the influences of non-Christian acquaintances gradually leads them astray.

3) *Disunity Among Churches and Believers*: CP08, CP15 and CP19 shared that a lack of harmony is prevalent among the churches and the believers. Divisions in the church caused by members aspiring for leadership brings about discord in the congregation (CP15 and CP19). CP15 identifies this as one of the many satanic works that the church experiences today.

4) *Poor Testimony of Christians and Christian Leaders*: CP08 and CP23 state that some believers do not hold a good testimony in the community which is a drawback when they approach people with the gospel. CP03, CP10, and CP20 observe the widespread existence of counterfeits and false doctrines in the Christian community. CP10 mentions that the propagation of false doctrines and prosperity gospel preachers on television have made it difficult when people are approached with the gospel. CP20 identifies that many pastors promote the prosperity gospel rather than equipping the believers in the word of God.

5) *Lack of Financial Independence*: CP17, CP19, CP21 and CP24 express that financial constraints have greatly impacted their ministry. CP17 was unable to acquire

training in a Bible Seminary due to lack of finances. CP19 states that he ministers for a local church while earning his livelihood in other ways due to financial problems. CP21 pastors a church which is located in a slum, and though he saw the needs of the local people, it was very hard for him to cater to them as he himself was financially unstable. Due to financial limitations, CP17 and CP24 run house churches. They state that some feel hesitant and inconvenienced to attend church in a house.

6) *Immigrants*: CP19 claims that most of the believers in his church are immigrants, and they move away. Only two to three percent stay for a long time.

Tables 13 and 14 give a better picture of these findings.

Internal Challenges Encountered	No of Participants	Average
Lack of Proper Vision for Church Planting	3	12%
Lack of Spiritual Nourishment	11	44%
Disunity Among Churches and Believers	3	12%
Poor Testimony of Christians and Christian Leaders	5	20%
Lack of Financial Independence	4	16%
Immigrants	1	4%

Table 13: Challenges Encountered (Internal Challenges)

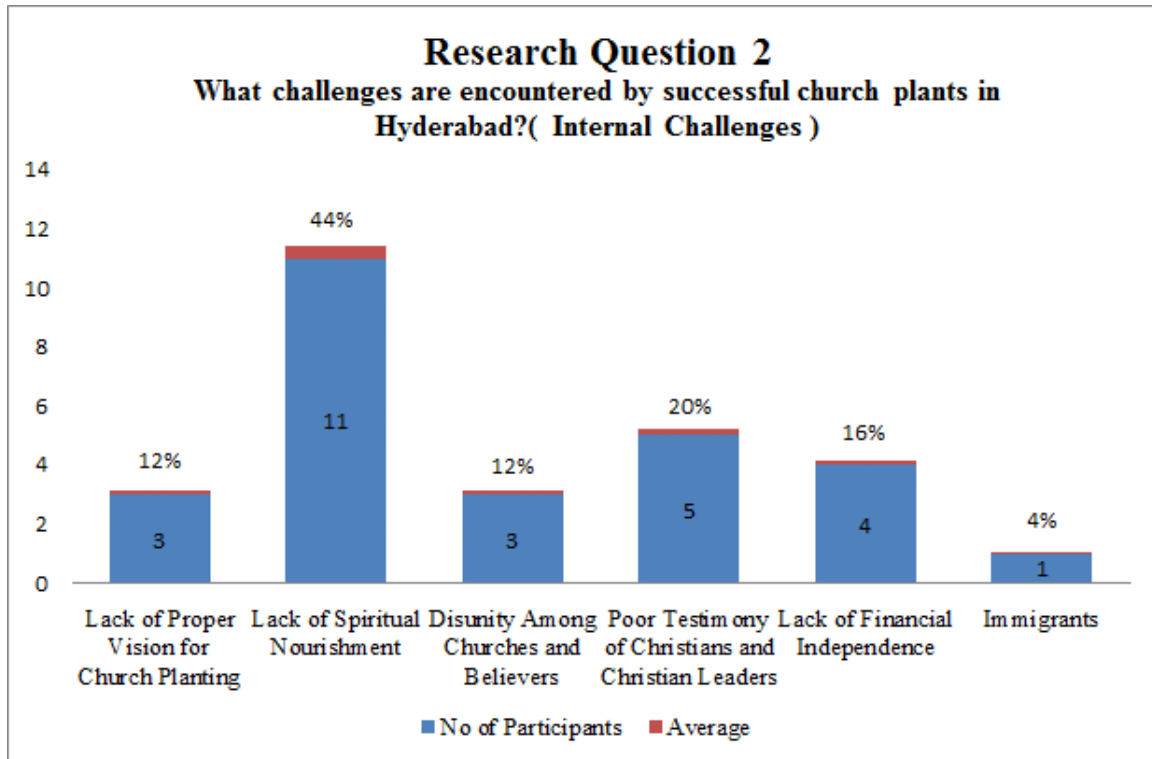


Table 14: Research Question 2 – Graphical Representation of the Above Table (see Table 13)

Research Question #3: Description of Evidence

What are the essential components of a model successful church plant in Hyderabad?

After examining the inputs provided by the church planters, the following key points were deduced as the essential components of a model successful church plant in Hyderabad. These points are acquired from the answers to the 14th – 17th questions in the questionnaire. Feedback for question 16 from the questionnaire is presented first in Tables 15 and 16, and thereafter responses from questions 14 to 17 are summarized under major headings.

Responses to Question 16 in the questionnaire:

Church Planting Strategies from the Book of Acts	No of Participants Opted for Strategy	Average
1. Public Preaching of the Gospel	9	36%
2. Demonstration of Signs and Wonders (Example: Healing Ministry)	7	28%
3. Exorcism (Demonstrating God's Power over the Powers of the Devil)	6	24%
4. Household Evangelism (Example: Cornelius)	19	76%
5. Focusing on Receptive Groups	5	20%
6. Sharing the Love of God in Deed (Caring for the Poor - Acts 2:45)	17	68%
7. Personal Evangelism (Example: Phillip and the Ethiopian Eunuch)	16	64%
8. Teamwork	9	36%
9. House Churches	11	44%
10. Equipping Lay Leadership (Example - Stephen and Phillip)	17	68%
11. Focusing on Ministering to Women and Equipping them	9	36%

Table 15: Participants’ Responses to Church Planting Strategies from the Book of Acts

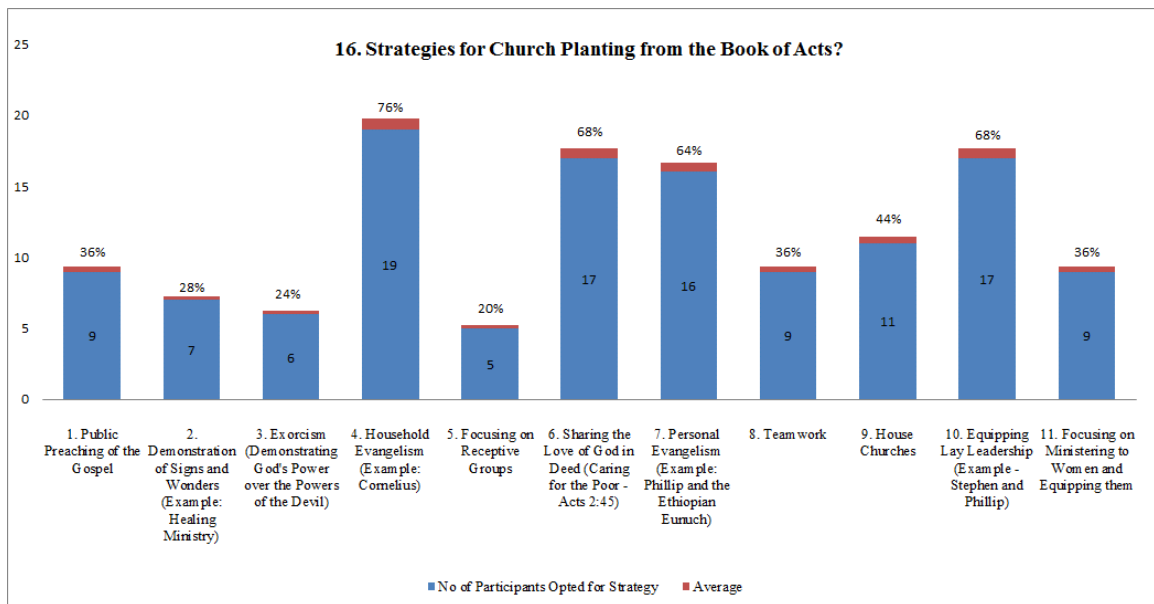


Table 16: Graphical Representation of the Above Table (see Table 15)

Following are the major points derived from questions 14 to 17:

1) *Emphasis on Prayer*: Out of the 25 participants, 18 of them (CP01, CP02, CP03, CP06, CP07, CP08, CP10, CP11, CP12, CP14, CP15, CP17, CP19, CP21, CP22, CP23, CP24 and CP25) stressed the importance of prayer as one of the main ingredients for a successful church plant in Hyderabad. Different aspects of prayer have been mentioned. Some of them include giving priority to prayer life (CP02, CP03, CP07, CP08, CP12, CP15, CP17, CP19, CP21, CP22, CP23, CP24, and CP25), interceding for others (CP01, CP03, CP08, CP19, and CP21), fasting prayers (CP11, CP14, CP17 and CP25), prayer cell in homes (CP03, CP19, CP10), prayer walks (CP21 and CP22), corporate prayer (CP06 and CP11), and chain prayers (CP14).

2) *Visionary Leadership*: Nine participants (CP01, CP04, CP08, CP15, CP17, CP18, CP19, CP21 and CP24) expressed their views on this subject. Some of the points mentioned by them follow. Pastors should have a clear vision for church planting (CP08, CP17, CP18, CP21 and CP24) and serve with integrity (CP18). This vision for winning souls should be imparted to the church members so that together they can strive for the expansion of God's Kingdom (CP01, CP04, CP15 and CP21). CP19 states that one should possess vision and zeal like Paul and be willing to bear everything for the ministry.

3) *Discipleship*: Seventeen participants (CP02, CP04, CP07, CP08, CP10, CP11, CP12, CP13, CP15, CP17, CP18, CP19, CP20, CP21, CP22, CP23 and CP24) speak about different vital aspects of discipleship. Key points highlighted by the participants are emphasizing Bible studies and equipping believers with Bible knowledge, building strong

and faithful followers by equipping the church believers to actively participate in missions, focusing on worship, discipling new converts, and edifying the believers by training them in the Word. CP12 points out the importance of personal mentoring and coaching as part of discipleship training. CP11 says this kind of gatherings for Bible study and discipleship meetings may help to bring about a revival in the church. CP18 strongly believes a model successful church should be like the Berean church from the book of Acts, which examined the scriptures to see if what was being taught to them was according to the Word of God. Furthermore, CP20 is of the view that the churches of today must be equipped in the Word of God to challenge the false Gospel.

4) *Motivating the Church to be Involved in Church Planting*: Fifteen participants (CP04, CP06, CP10, CP12, CP13, CP14, CP15, CP17, CP18, CP19, CP20, CP21, CP22, CP23 and CP24) believe in equipping the church as a whole to contribute towards the expansion of the Kingdom of God. CP12 and CP13 are of the view that equipping believers with skills of evangelism is a key to multiply. CP19 also speaks about creating a vision in the church and encouraging the believers to share the Gospel. CP21 suggests raising missionaries from the church for outreach. CP15 talks about motivating the church members to work as a team for church growth. CP21 points out that understanding the spiritual giftedness of the members in church is vital. Furthermore, CP15 says that the church should identify, equip, and use individuals like Timothy and Lydia. CP20 also expresses a similar view when he mentions identifying and sending people for mission journeys like Aquila and Priscilla who as a family equipped a fellow believer Apollos. CP06, CP14, CP15, CP21, and CP24 believe in developing a sense of

teamwork and delegating responsibilities in the church. CP04 further states that the family as a whole holds a crucial role in building the church ministry.

5) *Equipping Lay Leadership*: Seventeen participants (CP02, CP03, CP04, CP05, CP06, CP07, CP08, CP09, CP10, CP12, CP13, CP19, CP20, CP21, CP23, CP24 and CP25) have given importance to equipping lay leaders. CP05, CP12, CP13 and CP24 are of the same mindset that the church should focus on preparing future leaders (lay leaders and second line leaders) who are rooted in the Scriptures to carry on God's work in establishing His church. CP03 goes a little further by adding to the above statement that those who are called to ministry should have proper training.

6) *Demonstrating Christ's Love in Action*: Eighteen participants (CP01, CP02, CP05, CP06, CP07, CP09, CP11, CP12, CP13, CP16, CP17, CP18, CP19, CP20, CP21, CP22, CP23 and CP24) believe in sharing the love of God in deed. Some of their views follow. CP01, CP06 and CP09 are of the opinion that the church needs to be a caring community, with a compassionate heart towards people of all backgrounds, showing unbiased love and respect. People of every faith should feel welcomed in the church. CP13, CP16 and CP23 encourage the believers to understand the problems of people and demonstrate Christ's love to them. CP21 talks of care acts and care events. A similar view is also expressed by CP09 and CP24, which is to cater to the needy by helping them and offering personal counselling, conducting medical camps, visiting the sick, etc. On the whole, the church should have a holistic approach towards the people in community (CP12).

7) *Significance of the Holy Spirit in Missions*: The following paragraph conveys the views of nine participants (CP05, CP07, CP08, CP12, CP15, CP18, CP20, CP22 and

CP25). CP18 elaborately narrates the role of Holy Spirit in missions. According to him, one needs to have the special anointing of the Holy Spirit to experience the power of God in the ministry. Further, CP12 states that the church is built by the power of the Holy Spirit God. The Holy Spirit God is seen as providing guidance (CP07, CP15 and CP25), special gifts (CP25), and boldness (CP20). CP05, CP08 and CP22 speak of ministering with supernatural powers, such as healing ministry and performing signs and wonders which play an important role in establishing churches.

8) *Focus Specific Target Groups*: CP10, CP11 and CP15 describe the importance of ministry to children, youth, and women. CP10 views children and youth ministry as an opportunity to reach out to many others, leading to planting more churches. CP11 and CP15 speak of involving women in prayers (CP15) and having fellowship gatherings for them which will create an opening for women of other faiths to come and know about Jesus.

9) *Significance of Leading an Exemplary Life*: CP16, CP18, CP19, CP20 and CP23 place stress on believers and Christian ministers living a life of good repute in the society. CP18 states that the pastors should have a clear vision and serve with integrity. CP20 states that the Christian leaders should strive to replicate God in their daily deeds and maintain a good reputation. He also speaks of the sacrificial act of Barnabas towards the ministry. CP16 states that the ministers should glorify God through their lifestyle. CP19 states that having a good testimony is of utmost importance. CP23 sums up Christian living by saying that, in order to disciple people, first believers should live like the disciples of Jesus and demonstrate Him through their lives.

10) *Household Evangelism:* In question 16 of the questionnaire, nineteen participants (CP01, CP03, CP05, CP06, CP08, CP09, CP10, CP11, CP12, CP13, CP15, CP16, CP17, CP18, CP19, CP20, CP21, CP22 and CP23) have opted for household evangelism as one of the major strategies from the Book of Acts to successfully plant a church. CP08, speaking of household evangelism (Cornelius pattern), makes a noteworthy comment. He suggests making a list of FRANS (F-friends, R-relatives, A-associates, N-neighbors, S-strangers). In this process, he suggest making a list of FRANS, praying for them, and looking for opportunities to share the Gospel.

11) *Personal Evangelism:* Sixteen participants (CP01, CP02, CP04, CP08, CP09, CP10, CP11, CP12, CP13, CP18, CP19, CP20, CP21, CP22, CP23, and CP24) are of the opinion that personal evangelism is an effective method to share the gospel to reach out to the unreached. To equip the believers with skills of personal evangelism and emphasize the necessity of establishing personal testimony is highlighted by CP12.

12) *Other Approaches to Evangelism:* Sixteen participants (CP01, CP02, CP03, CP06, CP07, CP08, CP09, CP10, CP11, CP12, CP13, CP15, CP19, CP23, CP24, and CP25) share about evangelism, using different patterns. Some of them include reaching out to immediate neighbors (CP03, CP09, CP15 and CP19), reaching people through literature (tracts) (CP02), gospel meetings (CP02, CP11 and CP15), door-to-door evangelism (CP15), friendship evangelism (CP08, CP12, CP19, CP23 and CP25), engaging in dialogue with people of other faiths (CP06 and CP10), encouraging believers from other faiths to share their faith with people of their faith (CP19), and encouraging believers to share the gospel (CP07 and CP13). CP23 states that preaching the Gospel

should not be limited to verbal communication but should be demonstrated through actions as well.

13) *House Churches*: Eleven participants (CP03, CP06, CP08, CP10, CP11, CP12, CP14, CP15, CP16, CP20 and CP25) express that one of the best strategies for church planting is conducting house churches. Further, CP03 states that such patterns should be replicated in new places. CP12 suggests selecting open homes where there is least resistance.

14) *Other Relevant Strategies*: Twelve participants (CP03, CP05, CP06, CP08, CP09, CP10, CP14, CP15, CP19, CP21, CP23 and CP25) speak about using other relevant approaches and strategies in reaching out to people. CP05, CP06 and CP09 speak of understanding the mindset of the people and being culturally sensitive in approaches. CP05 and CP21 further states that selecting the right area with easy access to transportation facilities is vital. CP19 and CP23 speak about the importance of contextualizing the message. CP15 states that one should not retaliate if faced with opposition, but rather move on to another place. CP25 shares about the importance of identifying unchurched areas and focusing on them, first by prayer, prayer walks, and building friendship.

15) *Build Relationships*: Thirteen participants (CP01, CP02, CP07, CP11, CP12, CP14, CP15, CP16, CP17, CP18, CP23, CP24 and CP25) speak about the importance of building and maintaining strong relationships, within the church and outside. CP02, CP07, CP12, CP17, CP23 and CP24 emphasize the significance of regular fellowship in the church. CP23 further states that this is one of the key elements mentioned in Acts 2:42. CP01 points out that when a bond is created between the pastor and the church

members, they can unitedly fulfill their God-given vision. CP11, CP14, CP15 and CP18 stress the need for unity among pastors, churches, and believers. In addition, CP16 speaks about supporting the small churches and pastors financially.

16) *Cell and Cottage Group Meetings*: Five participants (CP02, CP10, CP11, CP15, and CP17) speak about the importance of small group ministry. CP02 and CP10 speak about prayer cells in a house. CP11, CP15 and CP17 state that the cottage prayer meetings provide an opportunity to share the gospel, which is effective in planting churches.

Tables 17 and 18 give a better picture of these findings.

Essential Components	No of Participants	Average
Emphasis on Prayer	18	72%
Visionary Leadership	9	36%
Discipleship	17	68%
Motivating the Church to involve in Church Planting	15	60%
Equipping Lay Leadership	17	68%
Demonstrating Christ's Love in Action	18	72%
Significance of the Holy Spirit in Missions	9	36%
Focus Specific Target Groups	3	12%
Significance of Leading an Exemplary Life	5	20%
Household Evangelism	19	76%
Personal Evangelism	16	64%
Other Approaches to Evangelism	16	64%
House Churches	11	44%
Other Relevant Strategies	12	48%
Build Relationships	13	52%
Cell and Cottage Group meetings	5	20%

Table 17: Essential Components of a Model Successful Church Plant

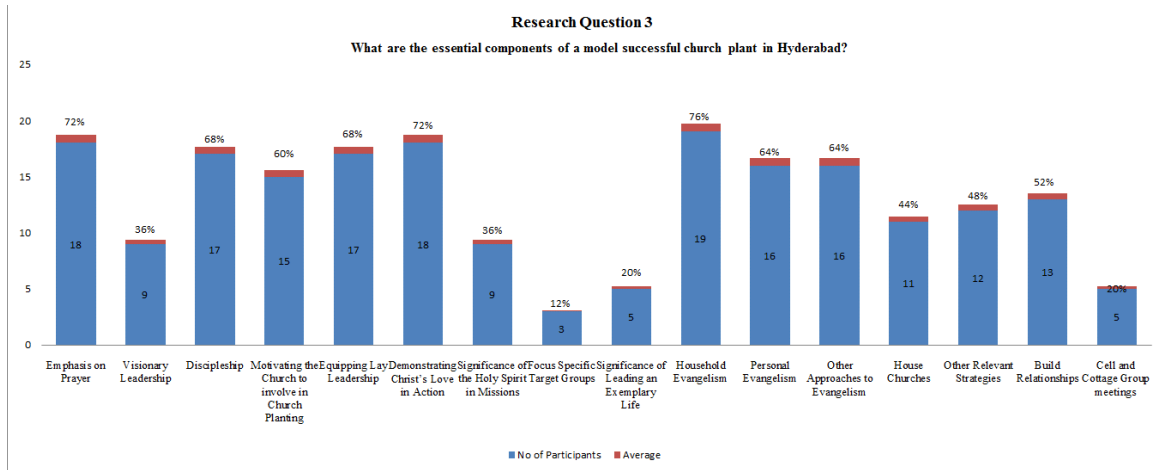


Table 18: Graphical Representation of the Above Table (see Table 17)

Summary of Major Findings

Chapter Four is built upon the data provided by twenty-five participants in response to the questions from the questionnaire. It contained four major sections. The first part dealt with particulars about the participants and the demographic information about their churches. Part two built upon research question two which deals with data about the methods and strategies that are being employed by successful church plants in Hyderabad. Three major strategies that are suggested by the participants are motivating and equipping church members to participate in church planting; evangelism through outreach, and relational evangelism. Part three covered research question two, dealing with the challenges encountered by successful church plants in Hyderabad. The major challenges identified are religious opposition, persecution, and a lack of spiritual nourishment in the churches. Part four focused on research question three which presents the essential components of a model successful church plant in Hyderabad. Out of the many points mentioned by participants, the key components suggested by the participants are household evangelism, an emphasis on prayer, demonstrating Christ’s love in action, discipleship, and equipping lay leadership. The next chapter will focus on the major

findings discovered from participants. Listed here are the major findings from Chapter Four:

1. Focusing on household evangelism (76% participants)
2. Emphasizing prayer (72% participants)
3. Demonstrating Christ's love in action (72% participants)
4. Motivating and equipping church members to participate in church planting (72% participants)
5. Focusing on discipleship and spiritual growth (68% participants)
6. Equipping lay leadership (68% participants)
7. Highlighting the importance of personal evangelism (64%)

Some of these findings may include overlapping of information. They will be discussed more in chapter five.

CHAPTER 5

LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

This research has been initiated to discover why the Christian population is not flourishing in the city of Hyderabad in spite of the abundant resources and advantages available to her. As stated earlier, the purpose of this research is to investigate the church planting methods that are practiced in the city of Hyderabad and to identify, design, and propose effective methodologies for planting churches in Hyderabad. In this process, Chapter Five describes in detail the major findings which were concluded in Chapter Four. These findings include 1. Focusing on household evangelism (76% participants); 2. Emphasizing prayer (72% participants); 3. Demonstrating Christ's love in action (72% participants); 4. Motivating and equipping church members to participate in church planting (72% participants); 5. Focusing on discipleship and spiritual growth (68% participants); 6. Equipping lay leadership (68% participants); 7. Highlighting the importance of personal evangelism (64%). The above mentioned are carefully examined through the three lenses: personal observation, the literature review and the biblical/theological framework.

The ministry implications of the findings and the limitations of this study are also addressed. Furthermore, the unexpected finding in the course of this research are highlighted and reviewed. Any recommendations, such as changes for future areas of research in church planting, are suggested. Finally the summary of this research journey and the researcher's personal reflections are presented.

Major Findings

First Finding: Focusing on Household Evangelism

Personal Observation: Being in the pastoral ministry since 2006, this researcher has observed that the method employed by Cornelius in the Book of Acts is as effective in today's age as it was during the early church period. Many churches in Hyderabad conduct cottage prayer meetings, cell group meetings, etc. as part of their regularly weekly programs. Usually in such meetings, the host family extends an invitation to their immediate neighborhood, family, and friends. Such a pattern is also observed while celebrating occasions such as birthdays or anniversaries. The researcher has been a part of such gatherings where there were opportunities to openly share the gospel to people, irrespective of their religious and social backgrounds.

Nineteen (76%) out of the twenty-five church planters who participated in the survey agree that the churches in Hyderabad should *focus on household evangelism* as an effective strategy for church planting in this city. One of the participants shared about encouraging believers to reach out to friends, relatives, associates, neighbors, and strangers (FRANS). According to him, one should start praying for them and then look for opportunities to share the Gospel. Another participant also shared a similar opinion when he stated that new believers, especially from other faiths, should be encouraged to share their testimony to people of their faith.

Biblical: In the Gospels, there are occasions where Jesus is seen as ministering in homes. In Mark 1:29-34, Jesus is at the home of Simon and Andrew. On hearing this, the

whole town gathered at their door where Jesus healed many and drove out demons (vv. 33-34). Mark 2:1-2 also narrates a similar incident where Jesus enters a home in Capernaum. When the people heard that Jesus was present there, they gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, and He preached the word to them.

Luke 5:27-32 includes the call of Levi (Matthew), the tax collector who held a great banquet for Jesus at his house. A large crowd of tax collectors and others were present. In this gathering, Jesus reveals His mission when He states, “I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance” (Lk. 5:32).

The Book of Acts also narrates such patterns of *household evangelism*. One of the most fitting examples of this approach is found in Acts Chapter 10. Cornelius, a gentile centurion, was expecting Peter to visit his home and had invited *his relatives and close friends* (v. 24). Peter, on arriving, witnessed a large gathering of gentiles at Cornelius’ house. At the end of the chapter there is a spectacular incident where the Holy Spirit was poured out on the whole assembly, and they were later baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (vv. 44-48).

Acts Chapter 16 has two other illustrations of *household evangelism*. In verses 14-15 Lydia of Thyatira opens her heart to listen to the Gospel shared by Paul after which *she and her household* were baptized. Furthermore, verses 25-34 speaks of the Philippian jailer who took Paul and Silas into his home and at the same hour of the night *he and all his family* accepted Jesus and were baptized (v. 33).

Other examples of household groups found in scriptures include Jason’s home in Thessalonica (Acts 17:5), Titius Justus’s home in Corinth (Acts 18:7), Philip’s home in Caesarea (Acts 21:8), and Stephanas’s home in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:16; 16:15). All

of these narratives impart a beautiful insight as to how Jesus and the apostles used homes as a strategic place to preach the word and serve the household members and others who were welcomed into their house.

Literature Review: The scholarly review on church planting also express the importance of household evangelism. Hedlund in his book, *God and Nations*, highlights that household evangelism was a favored technique implemented on various occasions (Hedlund *God and Nations* 245). He quotes Boer and Judge Avers both of whom share a similar view. According to Boer, “the church was not built up of so many individual Christians but of basic social units... families” (Hedlund *God and Nations* 245). Judge Avers comments on family group conversion. He sees this as “a familiar New Testament pattern with important theological ramifications” (Hedlund *God and Nations* 245). George also emphasizes that the early church focused on not just the individual but on evangelizing the whole family (George *A Study of the Urban Church Growth in the Book of Acts* 53).

A model example for household evangelism found in the Book of Acts is Cornelius. Mathew in his book, *Becoming a Missional Family*, dedicates an entire chapter presenting Cornelius’s family as a model missional family. He says of Cornelius that, “as a God fearer, his influence on his own family, relatives, colleagues, and friends truly makes his home the model home for every family” (Mathew 194). He further goes on to mention that the faith of Cornelius was far beyond an individual experience. His entire household was influenced by it. “Household” here refers not just to his immediate family but also to “servants, slaves, freedmen, laborers, and sometimes even business associates and tenants” (Mathew 195).

Ponraj, from his study of *People Movements in India*, makes an important observation that they were greatly impacted by families who moved as a group to embrace Christian faith (Ponraj 93). He goes on to state that group decisions as families should be encouraged, including events like baptisms (Ponraj 98).

Keller quotes Green on household evangelism. He states:

A person's strongest relationships were within the household – with blood relatives, servants, clients, and friends – so when a person became a Christian, it was in the household that he or she would get the most hearing. If the head of the household (Greek, *oikos*) became a believer the entire home became a ministry center in which the gospel was taught to all the household's members and neighbors. (Keller 278)

Considering the views put forth by the above scholars it can be concluded that the pattern of household evangelism is very effective in the Indian context where the families are closely knitted. Church planters should not only focus on winning individuals for Christ but should also look out for opportunities to influence their families through them.

Second Finding: Emphasizing Prayer

Personal Observation: Over the years, the researcher has observed prayer to be a fundamental aspect of many church programs. Most of the churches in Hyderabad conduct prayers (fasting prayer, all night prayers, special prayer services, chain prayers etc.) as part of their weekly and monthly schedules. *Prayer* was found to be one of the secret ingredients to successful church planting in this study. Seventy-two percent of the church planters (18 participants) testified on giving priority to prayers to intercede for winning souls and expanding the kingdom of God. Prayer and fasting are effective

weapons in combating spiritual warfare as told by a participant (CP25). Such an approach is quintessential both on the part of the church planter and the church as a whole.

Biblical: The Bible mentions several illustrations which focuses on *prayer*. Jesus begins His earthly ministry in seclusion and fasting (Matt 4:1-11). In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus taught His disciples to pray for the Kingdom (Matt. 6:10 – "your kingdom come"). Luke presents how Jesus sets an example to follow in the way prayer always take precedence over His life. Luke 5:15-16 reads, "Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. 16 But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." Even when His popularity kept spreading among the people, Jesus did not miss out on His personal fellowship and prayer time with His Father. In fact, Jesus drew strength for His mission from this solitary time. In Luke Chapter 10, Jesus appoints 72 disciples and sends them to different towns. In this context, He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. *Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field*" (Lk 10:2). This clearly presents the importance of prayer towards missions. In John Chapter 17, Jesus intercedes for His disciples and all the believers. He pleads the Father for divine protection over the disciples (Jn. 17:11 – "protect them by the power of your name") and for unity among the believers so that the world may know Jesus, the son of God (Jn. 17:20-23).

The Book of Acts also has several references indicating the importance of prayer. Acts 1:14 reads, "They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers." This clearly presents the context in which the early church was born. At such a time as this when the believers were praying,

God poured out His spirit on them making this event the epicenter of global missional work, the ripple effect of which is felt even in this time and age.

One of the pillars of the early church as presented in Acts 2:42 is *prayer*. After mentioning these aspects, Luke writes "And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). Acts 4:24-30 speaks of the power of prayer. The believers prayed very specifically for Peter and John that they would speak with great boldness. Acts 6:3-4 includes the response of the apostles to a crisis. They said, "brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention *to prayer* and the ministry of the word." This clearly shows that the apostles were committed to what Jesus had taught them through His life, *prayer, and the ministry of the word*. In Acts 13:3, the church at Antioch *fasted and prayed* before sending out Paul and Barnabas on their mission trip.

The church today draws its power for missions and church planting through prayer. It should be an intentional and consistent practice to pray for the laborers in the mission field to reap great harvest for the master.

Literature Review: Several scholars agree that prayer is the core ingredient of church planting. Wesley Duewel, head of OMS International, beautifully narrates the importance of prayer in missions. He says, "We can reach our world, if we will. The greatest lack today is not people or funds. The greatest need is prayer" (Duewel 7). Greenway quotes Murray on prayer as follows: "When prayer for the power of God to do the work of God becomes a petition of every Christian, all the problems in mission will be solved" (Greenway *Go and Make Disciples* 95). Bounds also describes prayer as the

primary catalyst for missions. He states, “the mightiest successes that come to God's cause are created and carried on by prayer in God's power” (Bounds 12). David A Slagle in his research on *The Prayer Driven Church* also expresses a similar view on the significance of prayer as a discipline to be followed in church planting. According to him, “Church Planting is difficult work. In light of the magnitude and difficulty of the task, church planters may be tempted to rely upon the wisdom of the world to meet the challenge.... Apart from prayer, church planting and all forms of mission become the mere activity of human hands” (Slagle 39). Vishal Mangalwadi in his article on *William Carey* quotes William Carey, the father of modern missions, who also emphasized the importance of prayer in missions. According to him, “one of the first, and most important of those duties which are incumbent upon us, is fervent and united prayer” (Mangalwadi 21).

The significance of prayer is presented in the life of Jesus Himself. Bill Gaultiere, commenting on this, makes an important observation when he states:

Continually, Jesus withdrew from people, daily life activities, and the demands of his ministry to be alone with the Father and pray. Jesus’ solitude and silence is a major theme in the Gospels. His ongoing, intimate relationship with his Abba was the source of his compassion, wisdom, and power that we see on every page of the Gospels. ... It’s how He began his ministry. It’s how He made important decisions. It’s how He dealt with troubling emotions like grief. It’s how He dealt with the constant demands of his ministry and cared for his soul. It’s how He taught his disciples. It’s how He prepared for important ministry events. It’s how He prepared for his death on the cross. (Gaultiere)

One can recall the birth of the early church which happened in the context of a prayer meeting. Carol Moerman states, "The early church was born in a prayer meeting. One hundred and twenty of the disciples waited ten days in the Upper Room, 'all joined together constantly in prayer' (Acts 1:14) in anticipation of the promised Holy Spirit, who would anoint and empower them, resulting in thousands of converts, and unnumbered house churches being established" (Moerman). Ed Stetzer, commenting on this passage (Acts 1:12-14), states that "the church was born in prayer" (Stetzer 50). Slagle also affirms a similar thought when he says, "the priority of prayer at the birth of the church is undeniable. The results are equally unquestionable" (Slagle 35). Prayer is seen as an indispensable means in every page of the history of the early church recorded in the Book of Acts. Bounds, commenting on the gentile missional movement, states that it all started with prayer on the rooftop where Peter had a divine vision (Bounds 371). This led to Peter's visit to the house of Cornelius which result in the salvation of his family, friends, and others who had gathered in the house. P. C. Mathew also alludes to a similar thought in his book *Becoming a Missional Family* when he states, "the early church was a praying church.... prayer is the key to attract people." (Matthew *Becoming a Missional Family* 158).

It can be concluded that prayer is an integral part of church planting which must not be ignored. In the words of Henri Nouwen on prayer, "If we don't have a hidden life with God, our public life for God cannot bear fruit" (Nouwen). This thought sums up the significance of prayer which is woven into the fabric of church planting.

Third Finding: Demonstrating Christ's Love in Action

Personal Observation: Christian missionaries who came to India in the 17th century propagated Christianity alongside fighting social evils of that time. Some of their major contributions were in the education and the health sectors, primarily focused on the welfare of women and children. This pattern was very effective. However, most of the churches in the 21st century seem to be concentrating exclusively on pulpitry and church-oriented programs. Eighteen participants suggested that the churches should take on a more holistic approach in their ministry. CP12 specifies that in the course of church planting, one needs to address physical, intellectual, educational, emotional, and spiritual needs of the individuals and families. CP21 testifies from his experience that providing free tuition and giving basic education made the community receptive to him. CP24 also suggests that social upliftment programs, counselling, and providing health care would be effective while approaching the communities with the gospel. The views mentioned by the participants appear to be apt in the context of the urban ministry in the city of Hyderabad where many are in need of love and affection. From the researcher's first-hand experience in the ministry, he came across several people in every walk of life who were in need of help, assistance, and counselling and had the opportunity to serve among the widows, lepers, aged, and orphans. Most of the time all they needed was a little attention and a little love. These acts of compassion make the person receptive to hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which in its entirety is fabricated in love as demonstrated by Jesus who is the epitome of love.

Biblical: The Bible has a considerable amount of teaching about sharing God's love in deed. Some of the references include: Deut. 15:11; Pro. 19:17; 21:13; Mat. 5:16;

25:34-46; Lk. 3:11; 10: 25-37; Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37; Heb. 13:16; Rom. 12:13; Gal. 6:9-10; Phil. 2:4; Jam. 1:27; 2:14-17, and 1 Jn 3:17-18.

In Deut. 15:11, God commands His people to be helpful to the poor and the needy. Pro. 19:17, speaks of being kind to the poor. One of the reasons for the fall of Israel as indicated by some prophets (Amos 2:6-7; Micah 6:7-8) was because they neglected and oppressed the poor.

In Mat. 5:16, Jesus speaks of doing good deeds that will bring glory to the Father. A classic example on Jesus' exhortation to care for the poor is found in Matthew 25: 31-46. On one side, He commends those who cared for the poor, the sick, the needy, strangers, and those who are in the prison, and on the other side, He banishes the ones who neglected them. Jesus states, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Mt. 25:40). A practical demonstration of such deeds can be seen throughout Jesus' ministry to the sick and the vulnerable sections of the society.

Jesus, in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37), emphasizes the message of compassion even to a stranger. When speaking of compassion, one cannot miss out on the miracle of five loaves and two fish (Mark 6:30-44) where Jesus fed 5000 hungry men and many more who came to hear His words. He felt deep concern for them (Mark 6:34). In John 8:3-11, Jesus is seen as defending the woman caught in adultery while everyone was eager to stone her to death. If there was any man in the crowd fitting to punish her it was Jesus Himself, but He chose to show kindness.

The early church in the Book of Acts put into practice these teachings of the Lord Jesus. In Acts 2:45, the believers sold property and possessions to give to anyone who

had need. A similar act of generosity is again witnessed in Acts 4:32-37 where the believers claimed none of their possessions as their own but shared everything they had. Of the many who sold their possessions, Barnabas is a fine example who disposed of a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet to be used for the ministry. In Acts Chapter 6, the church cares for the widows. Though there arose an initial disturbance that some were being neglected, this matter was taken care of.

Literature Review: P. C. Mathew in his book *Becoming a Missional Family*, rightly states, "Jesus' compassion and His love for the rejected and the downtrodden is a powerful way to bring His kingdom. Though we speak the truth of the Gospel, people need to see the power of the Gospel by genuine love and concern" (Mathew *Becoming a Missional Family* 117). Time and again Jesus demonstrated this action through His life and teaching. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31), Jesus makes a striking contrast of rich and poor. According to Herzog, "the rich man belongs to the urban elite, the class that controls wealth, power, and privilege" (Herzog 117). On the contrary Lazarus is, "a destitute beggar clothed with ulcerated sores" (Herzog 118). Hugh Martin, commenting on this parable, states that poverty and misery is typified through Lazarus while the rich man portrays an affluent lifestyle (Martin 182). However, Jesus presents a great reversal in the afterlife. Benjamin Keach points out that Jesus in this parable is not condemning the rich man for his wealth and splendor but rather for his insensitiveness to the poor man at his gate (Keach 377). Wenham also alludes to a similar thought when he states that this parable presents a warning "about the dangers of neglecting the poor" (Wenham 150). Jesus very clearly illustrates that people are to care for the socially disadvantaged and vulnerable.

Wagner, in his book *Spreading the Fire*, states that the kingdom principles taught by Jesus was being demonstrated by the believers of the early Church (Wagner *Spreading the Fire* 142). Larkin also sees this aspect being reflected in the early church when the believers created a common fund to help the impoverished brethren in the church (Acts 2:42-47) (Larkin 83). Trites, commenting on caring acts of the early church, states that they were voluntary and spontaneous. These deeds and generosity attracted many from the pagan world of that time (Trites 52-52).

Such selfless acts of service have been practiced and been passed through generations throughout the church history by different groups and individuals. Moon and Long, in their book *Entrepreneurial Church Planting*, narrate the 18th century Moravian church who modeled the pattern of the early church in lending support to the locals, both financially and spiritually (Moon and Long 106). Further, they quote from the *Works of Rev. John Wesley, Volume 10*, where “Wesley emphasized proper stewardship of money as a means to care for the poor and the marginalized. He exhorted the early Methodists ‘to gain all one can, save all one can and yet give all one can’ in order to glorify God through sharing of goods” (Moon and Long 107). Michael W. Goheen, also speaks of a holistic approach (witness in life, word, and deed) in mission. (Goheen 227-263). He quotes David Bosch, from *In Word and Deed: Evangelism and Social Social Responsibility*, where he states that evangelism and social action are not “separate components or part of mission, but dimensions of the one, indivisible mission of the Church” (Goheen 237). Trites also expresses a similar opinion when he states that “evangelism and social action were not divorced from each other” (Trites 52).

In the Indian context, there are several instances where the love of God was practically demonstrated which had influenced their lives. Mathew, commenting on the autobiography of M. K. Gandhi, *My Experiment with Truth* states that, “one cannot discard the inspiration of Jesus in Gandhi’s life to incarnate and identify with the poorest of the poor in India” (Mathew *Becoming a Missional Family* 107). Though Gandhi did not accept Christianity, he drew great inspiration from the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7). Gandhi's ideology of *Ahimsa* (non violence) and *Satyagraha* (holding onto truth) are an offshoot of the teachings of Jesus. In other words, it can be said that Gandhi absorbed the teachings of Jesus “into his life and thought” (Subrahmanyam). Binu John in his book, *A Study on Christian Contribution to the Nation Building*, makes a striking observation that “the sacrificial effort of Christians in many areas has helped to lay a foundation for India’s new life” (John *A Study on Christian Contribution* 6). One such great personality who worked hard for the cause of women was Ida Scudder, a missionary to South India in 1900. During that time, the traditional and orthodox families in India did not allow their women to appear in public. They would rather prefer their women die of disease than appear before male doctors for examinations and treatment. Scudder was deeply troubled at the plight of Indian women. This led her to pursue medicine, and she later founded the Christian Medical College at Vellore where she not only treated women but also trained them as doctors and nurses. (John 17-18). Another woman who is known for her selfless service in India is Mother Theresa. Mathew, commenting on her life, states, “the impact of Mother Teresa has been so vibrant and powerful Her willingness to empty herself and serve others came from deep love and devotion she had for her master”

(Mathew *Becoming a Missional Family* 116-117). The work of such missionaries in Indian church history brought about a radical transformation in the lives of many.

Fourth Finding: Motivating and Equipping Church Members to Participate in Church Planting

Personal Observation: During the research, 15 of the 25 participants (72%) pointed out that the participation of the believers towards church planting is indispensable. CP12 and CP13 rightly point out that equipping the believers with skills of evangelism is a key to multiply. CP15 and CP21 are of the similar view that one should identify, equip, and use individuals with their spiritual gifts and talents. However, the role of the church is not only to equip believers to share the gospel in their immediate neighborhood but also to raise committed people for missionary work in distant places. This is pointed out by both CP20 and CP21. As a pastor, this researcher strongly agrees with the thought that believers should be motivated, equipped, and involved in missions to see greater results. Such a pattern is evident in the early church. Moreover, to reach out to the vast populace of India, there need to be a greater number of believers who are committed to share the Gospel. Many churches have confined the participation of their members to programs within the church rather than mission-oriented activities like outreach ministry. Involvement of every member of the church towards missions might seem a mammoth task, but it is exactly what God intends for the church to be.

Biblical: It would be wrong to assume that church planting is the sole responsibility of a Church planter or pastor. The scriptures show a pattern of leadership where the leader is supported, advised, and constantly uplifted in his ministry. A fine example of such is seen in the life of Moses. Exodus Chapter 17 recounts the tale where

Aaron and Hur supported Moses during the battle against the Amalakites by holding his arms when he grew weary. In the chapter following Moses heeds the advice of his father-in-law (Exodus 18:17-23). Here, Jethro advises Moses to delegate his responsibilities to capable, God fearing, and trustworthy men who can assist him. The Church as a whole should play her God-given role in the ministry.

The Book of Acts has several instances where the believers of the early church donned multiple roles in the ministry. Some are seen as praying earnestly for those working in the mission fields. Some sacrificially contributed towards the ministry. Some extended hospitality and welcomed the apostles into their homes which were used as a base for evangelism. Some took up the responsibility of preaching the gospel, and a few travelled along with the apostles, assisting them in planting Churches. Some of the scriptural references that support the above statements follow.

i. Prayer: One of the fundamental pillars of the early Church is prayer to which the believers were faithful to (Acts 2:42). In Acts 4:29, the church prayed that God's servants would preach the word with great boldness and in the following verse they pray for healings and miracles to be performed in the name of Jesus. The power of church prayer is evident in Acts Chapter 12 where the believers gathered together in the house of Mary, the mother of John, also called Mark, and prayed for Peter's release from the prison.

ii. Sacrificial Contribution: Acts 2:45 and 4:32-37 highlight the sacrificial giving of the believers. A similar act of giving is found in Acts 11:27-30, where a prophet named Agabus who, through the Spirit, predicted of a severe famine in the Roman Empire. On hearing this, "the disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for

the brothers and sisters living in Judea” (Acts 11:29). In addition, Paul also mentions sacrificial giving in his second letter to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 8:1-3), appreciating the Macedonian Churches who, amidst trials, gave beyond their ability.

iii. Hospitality: Paul established the ministry at Corinth during his stay at the home of Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18). Further this couple opened the home for Apollos (Acts 18:24-26) as well. Lydia is another example of extending hospitality in God’s service (Act 16:15).

iv. Preaching the Gospel: After the outbreak of the great persecution, Acts 8: 4 recounts that the believers who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Further, in Acts 16: 1-5 Timothy, a believer in Lystra, is chosen to accompany Paul on his second missionary journey. Paul, in 1 Timothy 1:2, addresses Timothy as his true son in faith. This implies that Paul mentored this young believer and used him alongside in the ministry.

Church planting is more effective when believers are equipped and encouraged to participate in the missions. The church as the body of Christ should be united and boost each other building itself up in love as each part does its work (Eph 4:16).

Literature Review: Slagle in his research quotes Wayne Cordeiro who states, “You were not designed to do church alone. You are not a one man band. No one is” (Slagle 24). This is a very true considering the way Jesus Himself involved the disciples, and this pattern is very vivid in the Book of Acts, where the church as a whole was involved in preaching the Gospel and planting new churches.

Stetzer quotes Amberson who says that the New Testament churches “are the direct and inevitable consequences of believer’s involvement in witnessing and

proclamation” (Stetzer 37). Trites and Towns also speak of the early church believers who spread the gospel and planted churches during persecution. According to Trites, “ordinary men and women planted churches in special places as Damascus, Phoenicia, Cyprus, Antioch and Rome (9:10; 11:19; 28:13-14)... After great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem, ‘those who had been scattered went about preaching the word’ (8:4). The early Christians had a compulsive desire to be a witness to Christ” (Trites 49). Towns states that as believers scattered due to persecution the seed of the Gospel was planted in different parts of the nation and beyond (Towns *The Great Commission and Church Planting* 146). Derek Prince in his book, *Life-Changing Spiritual Power*, reflecting on, Jesus’ words from Acts 1:8, “you will be my witnesses” states that “his basic strategy for reaching it was for all God’s people to become witnesses, witnessing to and winning others. Those, in turn, were to witness and win until, like the expanding ripples from stones cast into a pond, they reached the uttermost part of the earth” (Prince 252). He goes on to say that when thousands and thousands of early church believers from different backgrounds applied this strategy of witnessing, the pagan Roman Empire was utterly shaken (Prince 252).

Payne is of the view that in the early church one can observe that there was clear evidence of high-level participation from the members of the congregation (Payne 40). Both Hughes and Arn speak of the participation of believers in the churches today. Hughes puts forth the discipline of participation in the church as using one’s “time, talents, expertise, and creativity” for the glory of God. (Hughes 176). Arn also expresses a similar view when he states, “every believer has a part in Christ’s ministry” (Arn “Lay Ministry” 107). Coleman further stresses this view when he states, “evangelism is an

unceasing responsibility and privilege” of every believer (Coleman *The Reach of Evangelism* 175)

Keller, speaking on the sending nature of God, states that “the biblical God by nature is a sending God, a missionary God. The Father sends the Son; the Son sends the Spirit and His disciples into the world. Therefore the whole church is in mission; every Christian is in mission.... A missional church, then, is the one that trains and encourages its people to be in missions as individuals and as a body” (Keller 259). The sending principle (John 20:21 – “I am sending you....”) is emphasized by Stetzer as a personal message that is to be applied by every believer in the church (Stetzer 38). According to him this is a healthy trend (Stetzer 17). In the light of these views it can be concluded that the church needs to reflect the sending aspect of God by motivating, equipping, and sending its members into the world to be His witnesses.

Fifth Finding: Focusing on Discipleship and Spiritual Growth

Personal Observation: Many churches conduct discipleship programs like Bible studies, cottage meetings, and women and youth Bible studies which focus on systematic teaching of the scriptures to their members. Annual retreats and revival meetings are also conducted to strengthen and rekindle their faith.

Seventeen participants emphasized equipping the believers with Bible knowledge and discipling the church which will further the vision of church planting. Some of the views put forth by these participants are recorded as follows. CP11 says that discipling acts as a catalyst to bring about a great revival in the church. CP20 remarked that equipping the church in the Word of God will help to identify and counter the false teachings. A similar viewpoint is shared by CP18 who challenges the churches to

replicate the Berean church who received the message with great eagerness and examined the scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true (Acts 17: 11).

The researcher's pastoral experience makes it clear that one cannot ignore discipleship. It strengthens the church in every aspect. However, the process of discipling is very challenging. It is a time-consuming and strenuous task but is worth the efforts. The ultimate goal of every disciple is to make disciples of Jesus.

Biblical: Discipling is a pattern that Jesus personally endorsed during His earthly ministry, and faithful followers of Christ should imitate the same. Jesus chose the twelve, nurtured them by imparting the kingdom values, and commissioned them to go into all the world and make disciples (Matt. 28:19-20). In doing this the disciples would be fulfilling the promise made to Abram, "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Gen. 12:3). Such a pattern of discipling is also mirrored in the Book of Acts.

The early church devoted themselves to the teachings of the apostles (Acts. 2:42) which is one of the key requisites of discipleship. In Chapter 8 of Acts, Philip encounters the Ethiopian eunuch who was reading the prophetic passage from Isaiah but could not understand it. Then Philip from the very scriptures shares of the good news of Christ (V. 35). An immediate response is seen in the following verses where the Ethiopian eunuch accepts this message and is baptized. The above narration is very much in line with what Jesus commanded His disciples (Mt 28:19-20) and what the early church believed in.

In Acts 11: 22-26, Barnabas, who was sent to Antioch by the church in Jerusalem, strengthened the believers to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts (V. 23). Further, he, along with Saul (Paul), taught the scriptures to a great number of people making them disciples for Christ. The term Christians was coined referring to these disciples at

Antioch. Acts 18 unfolds a beautiful sequence wherein Paul discipled Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth who later discipled Apollos in Ephesus. Furthermore, Apollos after being equipped vigorously refuted the Jews and boldly shared the gospel to them.

This pattern of making disciples is seen throughout Paul's missionary journeys and is highlighted in his letters as well. In Colossians 1:28, Paul writes, "He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ." He makes a similar point in 1 Thes.2:11-12, when he states "for you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God." Even amidst his own discomfort, Paul continued to personally invest in discipling the people around him. This is reflected in the letter to Philemon where he urges Philemon to take back Onesimus (a runaway slave) whom he discipled while in the prison.

Paul's heart for the believers to grow in faith is reflected in 1 Corinthians 3. He points out that he fed the believers with milk and that they were still not ready for solid food. A similar thought is expressed in Heb. 5:2, where the author states "though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!"

Apart from the above-mentioned scripture passages, there are several references where Paul is seen as either warning the believers against false teachings and teachers or admonishing them for accepting such wrong teachings. In Gal. 1:6-9, Paul urges the Galatian believers to stay away from people who were throwing them into confusion and perverting the gospel of Christ. A similar view is expressed again in Galatians 5:7-12 where, Paul cautions the believers:

To watch out for false teachers in order not to fall into their trap. He presents six characteristics of the Judaizers that are general enough to fit all other teachers of ungodliness, ancient or modern. False Teachers: 1) Hinder the Truth (Galatians 5:7), 2) Are Not of God (Galatians 5:8) 3) They Contaminate the Church: (Galatians 5:9), 4) They Will Be Judged: (Galatians 5:10), 5) They Persecute True Teachers: (Galatians 5:11), 6) They Should Be Cut Off: (Galatians 5:12).
(Galatians 5:7-12. The Character of False Teachers).

In 1 Timothy, Paul urges Timothy to warn the church about false teachers and false teachings (1 Tim. 1:3; 4:1-3; 6:3-5) (*17. Identifying False Teachers*). From the above passages it is very evident that the early church followed in the footsteps of Jesus by consciously focusing on discipling. This is a pattern that every church planter must put into their ministry.

Literature Review: The approach of a church planter towards missions does not stop with evangelism. The focus is then shifted to nurturing the new believers in the Word of God. Craig Ott and Gene Wilson in their book, *Global Church Planting* state that “mass approaches to evangelism will always need to be complimented with personal follow-up and discipleship.... Ultimately there is no substitute for personalized teaching and spiritual nurture” (Ott and Wilson 217). Robert E Coleman, in his article, *The Reach of Evangelism*, share a similar thought when he states, “Evangelism and discipleship complement each other. Neither can be healthy without the other” (Coleman *The Reach of Evangelism* 176). Kent R. Hunter also expresses a similar view on discipleship stating that making disciples is one of the central themes of church growth. The evangelistic strategy is not just a mere preaching of the Gospel but goes further in cultivating the

seeds that were sown. He further states that discipleship is a “lifelong life-style” of following Jesus along with learning, growing, and fellowship with the believers (Hunter, *The Quality Side of Church Growth*, 119-120). Stetzer also describes discipleship as an “ongoing process” which begins with the salvation event but goes beyond it (Stetzer 40)

S. D. Ponraj in his book on *Strategies for Church Planting Movement* devotes a chapter on discussing *Church Planting Movements in Cities*, where he speaks about the importance of *discipleship*. According to him church planters should be good disciple-makers who will train them to make new disciples (Ponraj 165). This is seen in the earthly ministry of Jesus. Ben Cooper, commenting on Matthew 28:19, states that Jesus is now sending out His disciples to do something that He Himself had been doing, making disciples (4:19, 21; 9:9). "Jesus is incorporating them into the task – and what Jesus has done in a geographic region..., his followers are now to do globally" (Cooper 235). Trites also expresses a similar view from his study of the early church leaders. According to him “the apostles persisted in teaching and preaching with enthusiasm and faithfulness” (Acts 5:42). Therefore, it can be said that one of the characteristics that a church planter should have is to intentionally and constantly work for the edification and spiritual growth of the new believers. Ponraj also stresses that one cannot be called a disciple if they do not make one more disciple for the Lord Jesus Christ (Ponraj 165). This clearly portrays the significance of disciple-making. He is right when he states that the churches would become stagnant “if the disciples are dormant, passive, and expect to be ministered to rather than going out to bring people to Christ” (Ponraj 165). In other words, it can be said that discipleship should always result in making new disciples. It is a cyclical process.

Trites highlights the spiritual growth of the early church as “not simply quantitative; it was also qualitative.” He paints a beautiful picture of the inner life of the church (Acts 2:42-47) as bold, generous, and faithful. The apostles and the leaders of the early church focused primarily on teaching, which not only strengthened the new converts but also prepared them to endure tribulations. He goes on to say “teaching with a view to discipleship became an essential feature of the church’s ministry” (Trites 47-48). Keller, adding to this, states that developing discipleship helps in answering hostile questions raised by the neighbors (Keller 253). Stetzer stresses that discipleship is the responsibility the church undertakes to “win people for Christ and grow these new converts in the faith” (Stetzer 40). He describes a model from Paul and Barnabas’ pattern in planting churches. According to him, they performed three essential ministries which included strengthening the disciples, encouraging them to remain true to their faith, and establishing leadership in the newfound congregations (Stetzer 55).

In conclusion, it can be said that discipleship is an aspect that was emphasized in the early church and needs to be a focus in the life of the church in every age. It is an ongoing process which helps in the spiritual maturity of believers and equips them to discern false teachings and stand firm in faith during adverse situations, especially persecution.

Sixth Finding: Equipping Lay Leadership

Personal Observation: In his book, *Developing the Leader Within You*, John C. Maxwell defines leadership as *influence* (Maxwell *Developing the Leader Within You* 1). Oswald Sanders also expresses a similar view when he states, “Leadership is influence, the ability of one person to influence others to follow his or her lead” (Sanders 27). This

is very true; however, it has been observed that in many cases *leadership* in the church is viewed very narrowly, referring to an office or duty. Further, it has been observed that churches have a tendency to depend on leadership from outside the local church and overlook developing local lay leadership. Such an approach can be disastrous for the growth of the church and her future endeavors.

Churches do have lay leaders, but it is probably right to state that their ministry unto the church has not attained its maximum potential and is often not recognized. Some of the reasons may include ignorance on part of the church or pastor who is focused on church-oriented activities, confining lay leaders to a particular office or task, lack of enthusiasm on the part of the lay leaders, lack of proper training, illiteracy, or limitations in resources.

Seventeen of the twenty-five participants mentioned the importance of preparing second line leaders who are rooted in the scriptures. Developing such a group in every church can accelerate church planting in a city like Hyderabad. CP12 is probably right in his statement that preparing second line leaders to carry on God's work in establishing His church is one of the key strategies for church planting from the Book of Acts.

According to CP03, one of the essential components of a model successful church plant in Hyderabad is training faithful young men in the ministry.

Biblical: The Bible record tales of Joshua who, under the leadership of Moses, served the God of Israel and His people. This is a perfect example of the need for developing a second line leader to carry out God's plan towards His people. Eric Geiger, commenting on this aspect, states, "As you read through the Scripture, you see Moses pouring into Joshua. Moses brought Joshua up the mountain to receive the Ten

Commandments from God (Ex. 24:13). Joshua observed Moses' righteous indignation when Moses smashed the two tablets (Ex. 32:17-19), and Joshua was witness to the Holy Communion Moses shared with the Lord as he guarded the tent of meeting (Ex. 33:11)" (Geiger).

Phil Johnson in his article on *A Biblical Model of Lay Ministry* states that though Nehemiah is often recognized as a model for spiritual leadership, "he is primarily a model for lay leadership." He further points out that the lessons from his life are "applicable to laymen as they are to pastors and teachers in the church" (Johnson).

There is a beautiful pattern of leadership in the life and ministry of Jesus. His choosing of disciples who were a group of unschooled, ordinary men (Acts 4:13) and investing in them the kingdom principles is a perfect model of developing future leaders to carry out His mission. Jesus taught them both directly and indirectly through parables, miracles, and real-life situations. These lessons were advocated by the disciples during their ministry. The Book of Acts exhibits several passages on lay leadership.

Acts 6 presents a crisis, where some of the believers felt neglected with the assistance provided to them. When this was brought to their notice, the disciples (believers) then chose seven men who were spiritually wise to assist the apostles in this matter. They are good examples of lay leadership. Among them Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit (6:5), stands out. He not only provided support to the apostles in the church but also performed miracles and spoke with wisdom spreading the gospel (vv. 8-10). In the following chapter, Stephen is seen boldly defending the gospel of Christ, even as the council members refused to listen to him; after which they stoned him to death. He is the first martyr recorded in the Book of Acts.

One of Paul's strategy on mission journeys was that he not only preached the gospel but also appointed leaders among the various churches he established. McRay, in his book, *Paul: His Life and Teachings*, states that Paul consistently appointed leaders throughout his missionary journey (McRay *Paul: His Life and Teachings* 373). This can be seen in Acts 14:23 where Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in each church and with prayer and fasting committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. During Paul's third missionary journey, he calls the leaders of the church of Ephesus to Miletus. He encourages them to stand firm in their faith, cautions them of false teachers, and reminds them of his instructions during his ministry among them (Acts 20: 13-32).

Luke, the physician, is another example of a lay minister. Though he is mentioned only three times (Col 4:14; 2 Tim 4:11; Phil 1:2) in the Bible, his contribution is immense. He authored two books in the New Testament, one of which narrates the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and the other presents the birth and expansion of the early church (Gospel of Luke; Book of Acts). He is a travel companion of Paul in some of his mission trips, and Paul identifies him as a fellow worker and a dear friend.

Paul, in several of his epistles, speaks of equipping the lay leaders who can be of assistance to the church. In 2 Tim 2:2 Paul encourages young Timothy saying, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses *entrust to reliable people* who will also be qualified to teach others." Paul makes a similar comment in Titus 1:5 where he states, "The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and *appoint elders* in every town, as I directed you."

In the closing remarks presented in Romans 16, Paul mentions the names of people who worked very hard for the Lord and assisted him in ministering the word.

Some of them extended hospitality, while some accompanied him in his mission trips, and others risked their lives and were jailed alongside Paul.

All the above-mentioned scriptural passages and examples vividly narrate the Bible's focus on developing lay leaders and second line leaders.

Literature Review: Developing lay leadership is a vital aspect that needs to be considered by every church planter. According to Payne, church leadership includes more than just pastors, elders, and deacons (Payne 87). Stetzer makes a striking remark in his book, *Planting Missional Churches* where he states that “lay people can plant churches” (Stetzer 78). He draws the conclusion of the above statement from a couple that is frequently mentioned in the New Testament, Aquila and Priscilla. According to him, they were lay people who probably began the church in Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:19). They are also mentioned in Rome and Corinth (Acts 18:2-3, 19 and 26). These lay leaders had a heart for church planting and assisted Paul (Stetzer 77). Trites expands on this thought when he mentions several lay people from the Book of Acts who shared in the task of evangelism alongside the apostles. Some of them include Stephen, Philip, Apollos, Aquila, and Priscilla (Trites 49). Keller seems to be in agreement with the above views when he states that the churches must focus on equipping lay people for “evangelistic witness” (Keller 259). He also points out, “as lay ministry grows in a congregation, so, too will the amount of evangelism” (Keller 280). Terry, Smith, and Anderson in their book, *Missiology* hold to a similar view that “lay people spread the Gospel for the most part” (Terry et al. 171). They quote Green, who states that it is easy for a lay person to share the gospel informally in their day-to-day activities with every person they come across. From all the above-mentioned observations, it can be concluded that lay leaders have the

ability to contribute towards missions and church planting, and therefore the church should not undermine their potential.

Further, Stetzer highlights some virtues of Paul that the modern-day church planter should imitate. According to him, Paul was a “team player.” He worked with others to plant churches (Acts 15:40; 16:6; 20:4). He constantly empowered others, and this is vivid in the way he entrusted responsibilities to young Christians (Acts 16:1-3) (Stetzer 46). Ponraj insinuates a similar thought when he speaks of “team approach to evangelism.” He quotes Bruce Nicholls according to whom, “God’s gift to his church is team ministries within the body of Christ” (Ponraj 132-133).

Ponraj presents a biblical basis for training lay leaders which is “to train reproducing leaders” (Ponraj 181). He draws his insights from 2 Timothy 2:2, where Paul instructs young Timothy (“the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others”) “to train men who will in turn train others.... In the church planting context such reproducing leaders must be trained so that the process of leadership training and church planting will continue simultaneously” (Ponraj 181-182).

From this study on developing lay leadership, it is evident that lay leadership impacts the missions on a much larger scale. Taking into consideration the biblical pattern where Jesus trained His disciples and they in turn trained the first Christians and so on, it is imperative that church planters invest in believers who can train and develop others for the expansion of God’s kingdom.

Seventh Finding: Highlighting the Importance of Personal Evangelism

Personal Observation: Personal evangelism can be described as a process of sharing the gospel at an individual level and bringing them to Christ. It is an effective method of reaching out to people and is universally applicable. While it is a responsibility of every believer to be a witness for Jesus Christ, many do not consider it their personal obligation. Churches of this age seem to overlook this significant approach towards church planting and fail to encourage believers and provide proper guidance for its fruition.

As a pastor, this researcher has personally witnessed the method of effective personal evangelism in his church. One of the church programs was aimed at conducting weekly Bible studies on a university campus. At first exposure was limited to a few Christian students who participated in the Sunday worship service. Gradually, these believers invited their friends to church retreat programs. Over time, they began to show interest in Bible studies and were receptive to the gospel. This was made possible because of the personal witness and invitation extended by the Christian friends. This is a perfect example of personal evangelism.

Sixteen of the twenty-five participants are of the mindset that planting new churches often starts with the seed that is sharing the gospel with a person. This may include friends, relatives, neighbors, colleagues, and even strangers. This pattern of evangelism is advocated by Jesus and is mimicked by the early church.

Biblical: There are several scriptural passages in the Bible which support the theme of *personal evangelism* in the Bible. In John 1:40-42, the very first thing that “Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, ‘We have found the Messiah’

(that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.” A similar pattern is observed in the following verses (v. 45-49) where Philip finds Nathaniel and tells him about Jesus of Nazareth. He extends an invitation in verse 46, saying, “come and see.” After meeting Jesus, Nathaniel declares Jesus as “the son of God and the king of Israel” (v. 49). Both the above examples are examples of personal evangelism, where one person is seen as introducing the other to Jesus.

There is a perfect example of personal evangelism in the case where Jesus confronts a Samaritan woman at the well. John narrates this episode in chapter four of his gospel where he meticulously describes the scene. Breaking all social and religious norms, Jesus approaches this woman and manifests Himself as The Messiah. The pattern in which Jesus reveals Himself presents guidelines as to how one should apply the same principles while practicing personal evangelism. Many missiologists consider this a key passage to draw valuable insights that can be applied comprehensively.

In Acts 8: 26-38, the angel of the Lord led Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch in a desert. The Ethiopian leader was found reading a passage from the book of Isaiah. He invited Philip to explain the scriptures of Isaiah, for he could not grasp its meaning. Philip began with that very passage of the scripture and told him the good news about Jesus (v. 35) to which the eunuch responded and was baptized immediately. This is similar to the verses from Romans 10:13-15 where Paul states, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent?” Just as Philip was prompted by the Spirit to take up the task of

personal evangelism, so also, every believer in the Church should engage in personal evangelism, which is a powerful and practical tool that can be applied in the churches. It is as effective today as it was in the early church two millennia ago.

Literature Review: Timothy K. Beouger, in his article on *Personal Evangelism* begins by narrating a story. He shares a conversation between two soldiers in a war zone. One of them exclaimed, "We are surrounded by enemy!" to which the other replies, "That's great! Let's not let any of them get away!" This scenario is apt to describe the situations of a believer, who is surrounded by unbelievers, caught in the deception of Satan. In such context, "how can we seek to not let any of them get away?" (Beouger). It is the duty of every believer to reach out to individuals with the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. According to Mike Mazzalongo, "Everyone who has received the gift of salvation should have a desire to share that gift with others. We have received something precious because of the kindness and generosity of others. We ought to be ready to pass it on to others who have not yet heard or received the good news" (Mazzalongo).

Ponraj cites Patrick O'Connor who states, "the gospel normally flows readily along the same route as does gossip, from friend to friend and from relative to relative" (Ponraj 173). Trites points out that the geographical expansion of the early church was made possible by spreading the gospel "not only from one individual to another, but also from place to place" (Trites 46). It was due to the efforts put forth by committed followers of Christ who shared with friends and strangers likewise. Andy Sochor, writing on personal evangelism, states that Philip's invitation to Nathaniel can also be viewed as a pattern for personal evangelism. According to him, after Jesus called Philip to follow Him (Jn. 1:43), he found Nathaniel and extended a personal invitation to come and see

Jesus. Later, this encounter with Jesus led Nathaniel to put his faith in Jesus (Jn. 1:49) (Sochor). Green in his book, *Acts for Today*, makes a phenomenal observation where he points out that the incident of Philip leaving behind his successful mission in Samaria and being led to the desert to meet one man clearly demonstrates the importance God gives to personal evangelism (Green *Acts for Today* 108).

Keller makes a claim from biblical and historical references that “simple friendship was one of the main carriers of the gospel. Biblical illustration of it is taken from John chapter 1, where Philip introduces Jesus to Nathaniel, his friend” (Keller 278-279). He further quotes Green who lists out the historical references for friendship evangelism: “Pantaenus led Clement of Alexandria to Christ, Justin led Tatian, and Octavius led Minucius Felix to Christ” (Keller 279). Hughes, commenting on John 1:41, states that Andrew was an ordinary man, who after his encounter with Jesus was eager to find his brother, Simon and tell him. “He was so drawn to Christ, He was sure that if others could just once be exposed to Jesus, it would be enough” (Hughes 205). He further makes a very important observation that the new believers who know Christ, like Andrew, are excited to share Jesus to the people around them even if they do not possess all the answers (Hughes 206).

In the early church evangelism was simple. It involved preaching or simply sharing of the gospel. However, in this modern age with technological advances there are several types of evangelism. Elmer E. Towns explains the different approaches to personal evangelism. They include four steps to salvation, also known as the “Roman Road of Salvation;” “The Four Spiritual Laws” developed by Campus Crusade International, and “Evangelism Explosion,” developed by James Kennedy. These

techniques of personal evangelism are taught and used by many churches and Bible seminaries (Towns *Evangelism: The Why and How* 47-48). Ponraj presents different evangelistic tools that can be applied for personal evangelism in an urban context. They include, “Bridge illustration, Four Spiritual Laws, and Step Up To Life. Sharing movies like the Jesus Film with colleagues and friends is another way of introducing a person to the Lord Jesus Christ” (Ponraj 171).

One of the challenges in personal evangelism as addressed by Ott and Wilson is “the number of one’s personal contacts is simply too few and none of them are ready or yet willing to hear the gospel” (Ott and Wilson 216). Though this is true to some extent, it is to be kept in mind that every soul is precious in God’s sight and as a follower of Christ, one’s duty is to share the gospel whether the other person is receptive to it or not.

Jesus Christ died to save the world (Jn.3:16), and salvation is made available for each and every person. “God uses people to reach people” (Hunter, *The Quality Side of Church Growth*, 120). Every believer has to work for the expansion of the kingdom of God. As Ponraj points out “The scope for evangelism is unlimited especially in a city where huge mass dwells” (Ponraj 170). In the context of the metropolitan city of Hyderabad with a population of ten million the opportunities to plant churches are vast.

Ministry Implications of the Findings

The principles mentioned in the above section are both biblical and practical, accrued from the church planters in the city of Hyderabad. By applying the aforementioned strategies one can expect a great impact on missions in this city.

Household evangelism is given prime importance in church planting. A distinctive characteristic of a typical Indian (Hyderabadi) family is that they are closely knit. This

can be witnessed during festivals and when celebrating special occasions where invitations are extended not only to relatives but also to their immediate neighborhood and colleagues. This can also be seen at cottage meetings which are part of the church programs. Mostly at these gatherings people bond over singing, music, personal interactions, and food. Sharing the gospel at meetings such as this is an effective medium to reach out to many. This same principle can be applied to reach out to the families and friends of people who accepted Jesus from other faiths where the new believers may intentionally host a prayer meeting to introduce Jesus to them.

Prayer is one of the core values of a Christian walk of life. Almost every church in Hyderabad conducts prayer services as part of the church programs. These prayers mainly focus on interceding for the needs of the church and its members. But in the light of this research, prayer has been identified by many participants as playing a vital role in church planting. Such an important aspect should be channeled in the proper manner. When the whole church is of a unified mind and prays for the perishing souls, there can be a great revival in missions. The researcher witnessed the following story in his women's fellowship. The Pastor Amma (Pastor's wife) introduced 'praying for the nations' in their weekly gatherings. Such a pattern inspired the whole church to pray earnestly for her immediate neighborhood, city, and state. This burdened the hearts of many who involved themselves not just to pray but also to participate and financially support the mission work.

Demonstrating love in action is a vital aspect of Jesus' ministry that cannot be neglected. Jesus is a model for compassion and kindness. This is reflected throughout His life. Preaching the word and demonstrating love in action to the people in need are two

sides of the same coin in Jesus' pattern of ministry. This approach is effective for planting new churches. Looking at the city of Hyderabad, "As per the Census of India estimates, the urban poverty in Hyderabad is measured at 23% of total population. This level is comparatively high as against Delhi (8%), Kolkata (6%) and Chennai (20%) but slightly better than that of Mumbai (27%)" (*Poverty Reduction at City level: Strategy Development for Hyderabad*). Some of the major drawbacks due to rapid urbanization in the city of Hyderabad are the high cost of living, unemployment, and emergence of more slums. According to an article published in the Deccan Chronicle, a popular English newspaper, there are 775 notified urban slums in Hyderabad (*Hyderabad has second largest poor populace in India*). Reaching to people in need when poverty is on the rise will open new avenues. When there exists a growing animosity towards the gospel, sharing the love of God through care acts and events makes it more likely to be accepted. The effective methods to present Christ's love in action to a community starts off with primarily identifying the needs of that particular community, which may vary from place to place. Some of them may include social work, such as conducting free medical camps, providing free medicine, and creating awareness in the community, free education and literacy programs, and nutritious meals for malnourished children and families.

Implementing this approach has created a foothold in the communities.

Motivating and equipping church members is essential in realizing the vision for church planting. As mentioned earlier, Hyderabad is the fourth most populated city in India. As per the census of 2011, Hyderabad (urban/metropolitan) has a population of 7.67 million (*Hyderabad (Greater Hyderabad) City Population 2011 – 2021*). According to the recent UN World Population Prospects in 2021, it is estimated that Hyderabad has

a population of more than 10 million people (*Hyderabad Population*), of which the Christian population is less than 3% (*Hyderabad (Greater Hyderabad) City Population 2011 – 2021*). Usually only a select few in the church actively participate in missions, but if and when each member in the church is encouraged to play their part to evangelize, there will be a multiplication of believers. For these things to happen the pastors, church planters, and Christian leaders should focus on equipping the church. A few of the different ways to accomplish this task are by preaching sermons that center on missions, conducting seminars and workshops, providing exposure by taking them on mission trips, and involving them by using their talents in the ministry. Such an approach will not only result in uplifting the morale of the believers in the church but also will lead to successful growth of the church.

Discipleship: The ministry of Jesus started with choosing the disciples and the final instructions given before His ascension also focused on making disciples (The Great Commission). This manifests the importance of discipling. The concept of disciple is not a novelty in the Indian context. The parampara of guru – shishya (tradition of the disciple learning at the teachers' feet) existed since ancient India where the disciple idolizes the teacher and follows in his footsteps. The teacher then demands gurudakshina (an offering) for imparting his wisdom. In the Christian context, Jesus, the greatest Guru (teacher), not only imparted wisdom to his disciples but also served them and even offered Himself as a sacrifice on the cross. All that he expects from his disciples is that they follow in his footsteps. The church is not only called to share the gospel but also to make disciples. Therefore, discipling should be given priority in the churches. This is an arduous task which demands the commitment of the pastor and every member of the

church. The process of discipling begins with providing spiritual nourishment to the believers by teaching the Word of God. One of the major challenges in the churches today is misleading the believers by the widespread propagation of prosperity gospel. The churches of today should mirror the pattern of the early church which was deeply rooted in the scriptures and the apostles' teaching. "One size fits all" is a misguided notion in discipling the church. The church should focus on a more diversified approach, adapting to the needs of different target groups which include children, youth, women, men, and senior citizens.

Lay Leadership: Leadership is not just a position as many consider it to be but rather a place of influence where one can impact the lives of those around. Most of the churches in Hyderabad have leaders, but sadly it is observed that they confine their roles to the physical needs of the church such as managing church events, overseeing the church programs, conducting committee meetings, and discussing finances, church construction work, and repairs. While these need to be addressed, lay leadership in the church has a much bigger role to perform for the expansion of the Kingdom of God. This vision should be imparted to the leaders of the church. Some of the many ways to achieve it include creating a burden in their hearts towards winning souls, equipping them in the scriptures and providing opportunities for them to teach at church gatherings, investing in them personally and preparing them for bigger challenges, and conducting leadership training programs and workshops.

Personal Evangelism: This is one method which is effective in its approach when applied by any person. It is a universal method which has been used by many all through the ages. Hyderabad is a crowded city with a large population where people are

surrounded by neighbors, family, and friends. The opportunity for doing personal evangelism is relatively high. This is where the church plays a vital role. Church should motivate and provide proper guidance and resources to the believers to share the gospel. One of the best ways is to teach them to share their testimonies of salvation and the goodness of God in their lives. This is more effective when new believers in the church from other faiths share about Jesus with their family and friends. It is easier for them to relate to their contacts in helping them to understand the gospel. A more subtle way of reaching out to people amidst growing animosity towards Christianity is by applying personal friendship evangelism. Personal evangelism need not be limited to verbal communication of the gospel but also include resources such as Christian tracts and literature. This provides an opportunity to start a conversation even with a stranger. All of the above methods are biblically rooted and practically effective; however, people should be motivated and equipped to get involved. The church must also prepare as any approach is not without difficulties and will not bear fruit instantly. Therefore, one should not lose heart but consistently persist to work for the expansion of God's kingdom in sharing whatever ways possible. Doing so will create a greater result.

Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to the city of Hyderabad, and the inputs for this research are taken from twenty-five participants who are church planters residing in this city. One of the areas that could have been improved was participation of a couple more women church planters. Three women church planters were approached of which one was unavailable, and the other was hesitant to participate. A certain number of participants who gave consent to participate could not stick to the schedule for various

reasons mainly due to curfews imposed by Covid-19. They did not furnish their feedbacks on time, which was an arduous task. Analyzing the data put forth by the participants has been challenging as few of them had given incomplete data and had to be contacted again for clarifications.

At the start of the research, it was felt that including the viewpoints of Christian leaders and other pastors apart from church planters would help in obtaining different perspectives to the study of a successful model of a church plant in Hyderabad. However, upon the suggestions of the dissertation coach, the study remained limited as expanding it would have been more exhaustive and deviated the focus from church planting.

Unexpected Observations

Unexpected Observation 1: Persecution - During the research, it was bewildering to discover that 84% of the participants had encountered opposition and persecution from religious fanatics. Prior to this research, persecution was believed to be more rampant in a rural setting than compared to an urban setting. Hyderabad felt like a much safer place with its diverse culture and cosmopolitan way of life and seems relatively tolerant towards religious practices.

This research showed that persecution comes in different forms. Some of them as mentioned by the participants are as follows: burning of Christian literature and gospel tracts, vandalizing of the church property, stealing equipment from the church, being isolated and banned from society, practicing witchcraft against the pastors' family, threats of violence by rowdies, disruption of worship service, mob attacks, intimidating believers, manhandling and physical assault. One incident that stood out is of a participant who was beaten and tortured by a mob. He was left bloodied on the streets

with no one coming forward to help him. This clearly reveals that persecution is becoming widespread and growing intense.

Persecution is not an alien concept to a Christian. God's children have always faced persecution since time immemorial. The church, right from her inception, endured opposition and persecution; however, this did not hinder her growth. Apostles, Christian leaders, and believers continued to stand firm in their faith and boldly testify the gospel. At times, they probably changed the way they presented it, but the zeal for the Lord and His mission is strongly evident in the Book of Acts, which largely constitutes this research. Furthermore, it is encouraging to note that amidst such perilous times, the church flourished and continued to spread. This should foster a spirit of resilience in the hearts of every believer and create a passion for church planting. The churches of this age should strive to imitate the model of the early church.

Unexpected Observation 2: Women in Ministry – After scouring the vast city of Hyderabad, only a few women church planters were identified, whereas the majority of the congregation in most churches in Hyderabad are women. Nineteen of the twenty-five participants mentioned that they have women as the largest group in their church. Though their contribution to the church is significant, the women are not given the due recognition and support. The lone woman contributor to this study mentioned that she faced gender discrimination both by the society and fellow workers, which was a big drawback in her ministry. Though gender inequality is a thing of the past, Indian society is still bound by the patriarchal system.

Recommendations

The gospel in its essence is immutable. Nevertheless, the way it is presented and communicated to people takes different forms at different places and is to be conformed to the indigenous patterns of the receptors. The famous phrase, “The water of life in an Indian cup,” by the Indian Christian thinker of the 19th century, Sadhu Sundar Singh, states that there exists no defined framework for theological philosophies in India which has yet to produce a “constructive, consistent, coherent and relevant” systematic theology (Selvanayagam). This same thought can be applied not only for producing a theology but also when considering the methodologies to present the gospel. At the final leg of this research, these final conclusions and recommendations, if adopted, will result in successful church planting in the city of Hyderabad.

Recommendation 1: An association of regional church planters and pastors should be formed in different parts of the city to discuss the challenges they encounter and propose possible solutions and implement them. This platform can also be used to boost the morale of the fellow church planters to move ahead with greater enthusiasm.

Recommendation 2: The conventional and traditional strategies of church planting like street preaching, gospel crusades, and the like which were successfully employed in the past, might not be relevant in today’s scenario in the city of Hyderabad due to the rising hostility towards Christianity. Therefore, one should embrace contemporary approach for church planting. Personal evangelism, household evangelism, and reaching out to people through care acts and events should be the focus.

Recommendation 3: Empowering women in ministry and assigning them leadership roles in the church should be encouraged.

Recommendation 4: There are not many studies or research done in the field of indigenous mission work. It is imperative that emphasis is given towards this research and the findings published so that other church planters can benefit.

This research work focused on *effective church planting methodologies* for the city of Hyderabad. The principles suggested in this research can be modified and contextualized to be put into practice by church planters working in Hyderabad and other urban settings in India. The contents of this research can be used as a teaching material to be taught in Bible seminaries and also given to church planters who are venturing into planting churches in an urban context. The outline, content, and bibliography from this study can be used as a guide for others researchers who are working on similar research projects.

Postscript

The journey began long before I enrolled in the Asbury Theological Seminary for my DMin program. I went to a mission school run by the Free Methodist Churches in Yavatmal, Maharashtra, India. It was a residential school for missionary children where I heard of several stories from the mission fields. As a child, I witnessed persecution of Christians and church planters from the religious extremists on our campus. All these experiences planted a seed in my heart for missions as a young man. When God called me for the ministry, I knew without a doubt that one day I would be a church planter.

This has been a very insightful journey. Reading a vast number of books and other materials for this research have imparted knowledge and understanding. Classroom teachings and discussions, interactions with my fellow classmates, and the legacy group have fashioned my thought processes. At times when I felt lost under a vast load of

information, professional guidance from my coach, Dr. Bryan, and academic advisor, Dr. Milton, have been indispensable. All the above have enhanced my research.

During my research, I encountered many challenges – finding resources related to church planting in Hyderabad was hard. I could not find literature that specifically dealt with my study. I could not physically access libraries to further my research due to the lockdown posed by the pandemic. Meeting the participants to collect feedback was also difficult.

The data collected from the 25 participants from their firsthand exposure in church planting have taught me crucial lessons as how to practically apply them in church planting. Interaction with the above said participants have forged an irrevocable bond.

Throughout my journey I was open-minded and receptive to the varied opinions shared by varied participants. This led to my discovery of the practical strategies employed in the mission fields. The importance of household evangelism in planting churches has been enunciated by a majority of the participants. This amazed me as I was of the mind that many would opt for leadership. Another discovery which left me speechless was the growing intensity of persecution in an urban setting where there is believed to be tolerance for every religion. It was an eye opener, which clearly indicates that the doors for future missions and church planting in Hyderabad could slowly close, and therefore, like Jesus said in John 9:4 “As long as it is day, we must do the works of Him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.”

APPENDIXES

A – Invitation to Participate in the Research

B – Questionnaire

C – Consent Form for Participating in Questionnaire (Hard Copy)

D – Consent Form for Participating in Online Questionnaire

E – Consent Form for Participating in the Interview

F – Confidentiality Agreement from the Translator

G – Confidentiality Agreement from the Data Analyst

H – Telugu Translation: Invitation to Participate in the Research

I – Telugu Translation: Questionnaire

J – Telugu Translation: Consent Form for Participating in the Questionnaire

K – Telugu Translation: Consent Form for Participating in the Interview

APPENDIX A

Invitation to Participate in the Research

Subject: Request your participation in my research for D. Min program.

Dear brother or sister,

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let me briefly introduce myself to you. I am Pastor Patrick Dommati from Gospel Trumpets Bible Fellowship Churches, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad. Since 2006, I have been serving the Lord in this area.

I am presently pursuing Doctor of Ministry from Asbury Theological Seminary, USA. As part of the course requirement, I am working on my dissertation with the topic, *Survey of the Missional Methods Modelled for Church Planting in the City of Hyderabad in Order to Determine Effective Methods for Planting Healthy Churches in the Region*. This project requires field research and considering your experience in this area I have selected you to contribute your valuable feedback and suggestions. I am employing two tools (questionnaire and interview) for participants to partake in it and you can choose from either of them. Further, questionnaire is available in three formats: hard copy, soft copy (for email) and Google form. You can opt whichever format is more feasible for you. It should probably take around 30 to 45 minutes to complete it. I assure you that your demographic information and answers will be kept anonymous and completely confidential. This is a voluntary commitment and at any point if you choose to withdraw, I will adhere to your decision.

I hope you will consider this request, as your inputs will contribute to determining effective church planting methods in the city of Hyderabad. If you require any further information, I will be happy to provide it. You can mail me your consent on patrick.dommati@asburyseminary.edu or intimate me over phone (9441474949). Please do mention the tool (questionnaire or interview) that you wish to take up so that I can send you the appropriate information about it.

Looking forward to your participation. I sincerely appreciate your time and pray that God will bless you, your family and ministry.

Regards

Patrick Dommati

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

1. Name:
2. Name of the Church:
3. Area:
4. Phone Number:
5. Email ID:
6. Gender: (Tick the correct option)
 - Male
 - Female
7. Age: (Tick the correct option)
 - 25 -35 years
 - 36-45 years
 - 46-55 years
 - 56-65 years
 - 66 years or older
8. How long have you been in church planting ministry? (Tick the correct option)
 - 1 to 5 years
 - 6 to 10 years
 - 11 to 15 years
 - 16 to 20 years
 - 21 to 30 years
 - More than 30 years
9. How many churches have you planted? (Tick the correct option)
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - More than 4

10. When did you start your most recent church plant? (Tick the correct option)

- Between 1 to 5 years
- Between 6 to 10 years
- Between 11 to 15 years
- Between 16 to 20 years
- Between 21 to 30 years
- More than 30 years ago.

11 Who are the major groups that constitute your church congregation? (Tick the correct option)

- Men Youth (16 to 20 years)
- Women Children (4 to 15 years)
- All of the above

What is their Percentage (%)

- 11 a. Men: _____ %
- 11 b. Women: _____ %
- 11 c. Youth (16 to 20 years): _____ %
- 11 d. Children (4 to 15 years): _____ %

12. Who are the different groups of people in your church? (Tick the correct option)

- Local Immigrants Both groups

What is their Percentage?

- 12 a. Local: _____ %
- 12 b. Immigrants: _____ %
- 12 c. Any other specific group: _____ (Name) _____ %

13. What percentage of your church group is literate?

Literate: _____ %

14. How do you rate your church plant in the last five years? (Tick the appropriate box)

1. Poor 2. Fair 3. Good 4. Very Good

15. What factors do you think have led to the above mentioned scores?

16. What methods or strategies have you applied? Examples: Door to door evangelism; street preaching; tract distribution; equipping church members to reach out to others etc.

17. What challenges did you encounter in your church plant ministry and from your experience, what challenges do you foresee for the future church plant ministry in the city of Hyderabad?

APPENDIX C

Consent Form for Participating in Questionnaire (Hard Copy)

Doctoral Research Project

I am thankful to you for accepting my invitation to participate in this research. Your views will contribute towards developing effective church planting methods for the city of Hyderabad.

Please allot 30 to 45 minutes of your valuable time to complete this questionnaire. If you need any clarification regarding this document or the questionnaire, please reach out to me on patrick.dommati@asburyseminary.edu or contact me over phone (9441474949). Kindly fill in all your answers and return back the questionnaire in a week's time.

Once again, thank you for accepting to be part of this research.

Patrick Dommati

Consent and Confidentiality Statement

This research is being conducted by Patrick Dommati, Doctoral Student at Asbury Theological Seminary. By signing this form, I affirm and consent to voluntarily participate in this research. It has been clearly intimated to me that there is little or no risk to me. I have also been informed that all my responses would be kept completely confidential. Further, in case of any uncomfortable question, I can withhold my answer, discontinue the survey and that my responses will not be included in the research project. I am also aware that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any given moment. Further, if there is anything that makes me uncomfortable during this study, I can contact Dr. Bryan Collier, from Church Planting Cohort of D. Min program by email (bryan.collier@asburyseminary.edu).

- I CONSENT to participate in this research
- I DO NOT CONSENT to participate in this research

Name:

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX D

Consent Form for Participating in Online Questionnaire

(Soft Copy or Google Form)

Doctoral Research Project

I am thankful to you for accepting my invitation to participate in this research. Your views will contribute towards developing effective church planting methods for the city of Hyderabad.

Please allot 30 to 45 minutes of your valuable time to complete this questionnaire. If you incur any difficulty in opening the file (soft copy of the questionnaire) or any technical issue to access the link (URL to Google form), you can reach me on patrick.dommati@asburyseminary.edu or contact me over phone (9441474949).

Once again, thank you for accepting to be part of this research.

Patrick Dommati

Consent and Confidentiality Statement

This research is being conducted by Patrick Dommati, Doctoral Student at Asbury Theological Seminary. By clicking/ticking on “I CONSENT,” I affirm and consent to voluntarily participate in this research. It has been clearly intimated to me that there is little or no risk to me. I have also been informed that all my responses would be kept completely confidential. Further, in case of any uncomfortable question, I can withhold my answer, discontinue the survey and that my responses will not be included in the research project. I am also aware that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any given moment. Further, if there is anything that makes me uncomfortable during this study, I can contact Dr. Bryan Collier, from Church Planting Cohort of D. Min program by email (bryan.collier@asburyseminary.edu).

- I CONSENT to participate in this research
- I DO NOT CONSENT to participate in this research

Name:

Date:

APPENDIX E

Consent Form for Participating in the Interview

Dear (Name),

Thank you very much for your willingness to participate in this interview. Your honest and valuable insights are not only helpful for my doctoral study research but will contribute towards developing an effective church planting methodology for the city of Hyderabad.

I would like to schedule an appointment to arrange for this interview sometime during the next week. Please let me know your convenient time and I will make it a priority to be available. In case, you are busy next week, we can set it up in the following week. As part of this research procedure, I request you to complete “Consent and Confidentiality Statement” and return it to me and also share your preferred date and time for the interview. I will confirm our appointment either by calling you on phone or by sending you a mail. If you need any clarification or have any questions, please do mail me (patrick.dommati@asburyseminary.edu) or call me on 9441474949.

Once again, thank you for accepting to be part of this research.
Patrick Dommati

Consent and Confidentiality Statement

I, _____ (name), give my consent to be interviewed by Patrick Dommati, as part of his research project for the Doctor of Ministry program, Asbury Theological Seminary. I consent to be interviewed either in person or through face-time or telephonic conversation. I grant him the permission to record (audio or video) the interview. It has been clearly intimated to me that there is little or no risk to me. I have also been informed that all my responses would be kept completely confidential. Further, in case of any uncomfortable question, I can withhold my answer, discontinue the survey and that my responses will not be included in the research project. I am also aware that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any given moment. Further, if there is anything that makes me uncomfortable during this study, I can contact Dr. Bryan Collier, from Church Planting Cohort of D. Min program by email (bryan.collier@asburyseminary.edu).

Name:

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX F

Confidentiality Agreement from the Translator

I, Dr. G S Vijay Bhushanam, will be assisting the researcher, Patrick Dommati in translation work.

I agree to abide by the following guidelines regarding confidentiality:

1. Hold in strictest confidence the identification of all individuals that may be revealed during the course of performing research tasks throughout the research process and after its completion.
2. Keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than the Researcher
3. Keep all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) secure while it is in my possession (e.g., using a password-protected computer).
4. Return all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) to the Researcher when I have completed the research tasks.
5. After consulting with the Researcher, erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the Researcher (e.g., information stored on computer hard drive) upon completion of the research tasks.

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX G

Confidentiality Agreement from the Data Analyst

I, Dr. Samarpitha Athota, will be assisting the researcher, Patrick Dommati in Data Analysis

I agree to abide by the following guidelines regarding confidentiality:

1. Hold in strictest confidence the identification of all individuals that may be revealed during the course of performing research tasks throughout the research process and after its completion.
2. Keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than the Researcher.
3. Keep all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) secure while it is in my possession (e.g., using a password-protected computer).
4. Return all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) to the Researcher when I have completed the research tasks.
5. After consulting with the Researcher, erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the Researcher (e.g., information stored on computer hard drive) upon completion of the research tasks.

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX H

Telugu Translation: Invitation to Participate in the Research

పరిశోధన ప్రక్రియలో పాలు పొందడానికి ఆహ్వానము

అంశము: డా. మిస్ పరిశోధనలో పాలు పొందడానికి నా వినతి:-

ప్రియా సోదరి / సోదరుడ,

ప్రభువును రక్షకుడైన యేసు క్రీస్తు నామమున మికు శుభములు, నన్ను గురించి సంక్షిప్తంగా పరిచయం చేసుకుంటాను.

రాజేంద్రనగర్, హైదరాబాద్ లోని గోస్పెల్ ట్రంపెట్ట్ బైబిల్ ఫెలోషిప్ చర్చి (GTBFC) అను సంఘానికి, నేను కాపరిగా వున్నాను. ఈ ప్రాంతంలో 2006 సం. నుండి పరిచర్యలో కొనసాగుతున్నాను.

ప్రస్తుతం అమెరికాలోని ఆస్పెరి వేదాంత కళాశాలలో పరిచర్య శాఖలో (Doctor of Ministry) డాక్టరేట్ పట్టాని కొనసాగిస్తున్నాను. హైదరాబాద్ శివారులలో ఈ పరిశోధనలో భాగంగా సంఘాల స్థాపన ప్రక్రియలో సమర్థవంతమైన, ఆరోగ్యకరమైన పద్ధతులను పర్యవేక్షణ చెయ్యాలి. ఈ ప్రాజెక్టులో క్షేత్ర పరిశోధన ఎంతైనా అవసరం. ఈ ప్రక్రియలో మి అనుభవాలను ఎంచి సలహాలను, అభిప్రాయాలను సేకరించగలనన్న విశ్వాసంతో మిమల్ని ఎంపిక చేసాను. ఈ పరిశోధనలో పాల్గొనేవారికి రెండు పద్ధతులను (ప్రశ్నపత్రం లేదా ఇంటర్వ్యూ) ద్వారా ఏర్పాటు చేసాను, వాటిలో ఏదైనా ఎంపిక చేసుకోవచ్చు.

ప్రశ్నల సమాచారం మూడు రూపానిరూపణలు అందుబాటులో వుంచాను (hard copy) ప్రింటు చేసిన కాపీ (soft copy) ఇమెల్ ద్వారా సేకరించేది (Google form) గూగుల్ ఫారం క్రమములో మీకు అనుకూలమైనదేదైనా ఎంపిక చేయవచ్చు. దీనిని పూర్తి చేయడానికి 30 లేదా 45 నిముషాలు పట్టొచ్చు. మీరు అందించే జనాభా పరమైన వివరాలను పూర్తి రహస్యంగా, బాధ్యతగా, అనామధేయంగా వుంచగలనని హామి ఇస్తున్నాను. ఈ నిర్ణయం కేవలం స్వచ్ఛందంగా మాత్రమే గనుక మిరెప్పుడు విరమించుకోవాలన్న మీ తీర్మానానికి కట్టుబడి వుంటాను.

హైదరాబాద్ పరిసరాలలో సమర్థవంతమైన సంఘ స్థాపన (church planting) పద్ధతులకు మీరిచ్చే సలహాలు బాహుగా సహకరిస్తాయి అని నా నమ్మకము. ఇంకా ఏదైనా వివరాలు కావాలన్న అందిచగలను. మీ సమ్మతిని నా phone 9441474949 లేదా నా email - patrick.dommati@asburyseminary.edu ద్వారా తెలుపగలరు. దయచేసి రెండు పద్ధతులలో (ప్రశ్నపత్రం లేదా ఇంటర్వ్యూ) దీనిని ఎంపిక చేస్తారో తెలుపగలరు. దానిని బట్టి ప్రక్రియకు

సంబందించిన వివరాలు పంపించే ఏర్పాటును చేయగలను. ఈ పరిశోధన ప్రక్రియలో మీ వంతు, సహకారాన్ని ఆశిస్తూ మీ సమయాన్ని వెచ్చిస్తునందుకు అభినందిస్తూ దేవుడు మిమ్మును, మీ కుటుంబాన్ని, మీ పరిచర్యను దీవించాలని ప్రార్థన.

గౌరవప్రదంగా

Patrick Dommati

APPENDIX I

Telugu Translation: Questionnaire

ప్రశ్న పత్రం

1. పేరు :
2. సంఘము పేరు :
3. ప్రాంతము:
4. ఫోన్ నెంబర్ :
5. ఇమెయిల్ ఐడి :
6. లింగము : (సరియన సమాధానం టిక్ చేయండి)
 - పురుష
 - స్త్రీ
7. వయస్సు : (సరియన సమాధానం టిక్ చేయండి)
 - 25 నుండి 35సం.
 - 36 - 45 సం.
 - 46 - 55 సం.
 - 56 - 65 సం.
 - 66 సం. లేదా ఎక్కువ
8. ఎంతకాలము నుండి సంఘ స్థాపన పరిచర్యలో (Church planting ministry) వున్నారు?
(సరియన సమాధానం టిక్ చేయండి)
 - 1 నుండి 5 సం. లు
 - 6 నుండి 10 సం. లు
 - 11 నుండి 15 సం. లు
 - 16 నుండి 20 సం. లు
 - 21 నుండి 30 సం. లు
 - 30 సం. లు కంటే ఎక్కువ

9. మీరు ఎన్ని సంఘాలను స్థాపించారు? (సరియైన సమాధానం టీక్ చేయండి)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 4 కంటే ఎక్కువ

10. చిట్ట చివరి సంఘమును ఎప్పుడు స్థాపించారు? (సరియైన సమాధానం టీక్ చేయండి)

- 1 నుండి 5 సం. లు
- 6 నుండి 10 సం. లు
- 11 నుండి 15 సం. లు
- 16 నుండి 20 సం. లు
- 21 నుండి 30 సం. లు
- 30 సం. కంటే ఎక్కువ

11. మి సంఘములో ఎలాంటి ప్రజల సమూహములు ఇమిడి వున్నాయి? (సరియైన సమాధానం టీక్ చేయండి)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> పురుషులు | <input type="checkbox"/> యవ్వనులు(16 నుండి 20 సం. లు) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> స్త్రీలు | <input type="checkbox"/> పిల్లలు (4 నుండి 15 సం. లు) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> వైవి అన్ని | |

ఎంత శాతము?

11.(a) పురుషులు _____ %

11.(b) స్త్రీలు _____ %

11.(c) యవ్వనులు (16 నుండి 20 సం. లు) _____ %

11.(d) పిల్లలు (4 నుండి 15 సం. లు) _____ %

12. ఏ భిన్నమైన ప్రజల సమూహము మి సంఘములో వుంటారు?

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> స్థానికులు | <input type="checkbox"/> వలసదారులు | <input type="checkbox"/> రెండు సమూహాలు |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|

ఎంత శాతము?

12. (a) స్థానికులు _____ %

12. (b) వలసదారులు _____ %

12. (c) ఇంకా ఏదైనా ప్రత్యేకించబడిన సమూహము _____ (పేరు) _____ %

13. మీ సంఘములో అక్షరాస్యత శాతం ఎంత?

చదువుకున్నవారు _____ %

14. ఐదు సం||లలో మీ సంఘస్థాపన గురించి ఏ కొలమానమిస్తారు? (సరియైన గళ్ళ

(BOX)ను టీక్ చేయండి)

1. బలహీనమైనది

2. పర్వాలేదు

3. బాగుంది

4. చాలా బాగుంది

15. పై పేరుకొన్న కొలమానాన్ని ఏ కారణాంకాని (Factors) బట్టి చేసారు?

16. ఏ పద్ధతి లేదా వ్యూహము అనువర్తించారు? (ఉదా: ఇంటింట సువార్త; వీధి సువార్త;

కరపత్రములు పంచటం; ఇతరులను సంధించడానికి సంఘ సభ్యులులను సిద్ధపర్చడం?)

- బహిరంగ సువార్త ప్రకటన సభలు
- సూచకక్రియలు - అద్భుత నిర్దర్శన (ఉదా: స్వస్థత)
- దయ్యములను వెళ్లగొట్టే పరిచర్య (దయ్యలా శక్తిపై దైవ శక్తిని నిరూపించడం)
- గృహ కూడికల సువార్త (ఉదా: కొర్నేలి)
- ప్రతిస్పందన చేసే వారిపై కేంద్రీకరణము
- క్రీస్తు ప్రేమను కార్య రూపంలో ప్రదర్శించడం (బీదలను కనికరించడం అపోస్త 2 :45)
- వ్యక్తిగత సువార్త (ఉదా: ఫిలిప్పు మరియు ఐతియోపియా నపు:సకుడు)
- సామూహిక పరిచర్య (టీం వర్క్)
- ఇంటిలో సంఘాలు
- “లే” (Clergy కాని)నాయకులను సిద్ధపరుచుట (ఉదా : సైఫేను - ఫిలిప్పు)
- స్త్రీల మధ్య పరిచర్యపై కేంద్రీకరణము, వారిని సిద్ధము చేయడం

22. మీరేదైనా వ్యూహము అపోస్తలకార్యముల గ్రంథములో గలవని మీరు అనుకొనిన వాటిని వివరించండి

తేది:

APPENDIX J

Telugu Translation: Consent Form for Participating in the Questionnaire

ప్రశ్నావళి లో పాల్గొనడానికి సమ్మతి పత్రము

డాక్టరేట్ పరిశోధనలో ప్రణాళిక

పరిశోధన ప్రక్రియలో పాల్గొనటానికి నా ఆహ్వానానికి మి సమ్మతిని బట్టి మీకు ధన్యవాదాలు. హైదరాబాద్ పట్టణములో సార్థకమైన సమర్థవంతమైన సంఘస్థాపన పద్ధతులను అభివృద్ధి చేయడానికి మీ విచారణ ఏంతో తోడ్పడుతుంది.

దయచేసి ఈ ప్రశ్నావల్లిని పూర్తి చేయడానికి మీ విలువైన సమయంలో 30 నుండి 45 నిమిషాలు ఇవ్వగలరు. ఈ ధ్రువపత్రములోని ఏవైన అంశాలను నివృత్తి చేయాలనుకుంటే email: patrick.dommati@asburyseminary.edu లేదా ఫోన్ (94414 74949) ద్వారా నన్ను సంప్రదించగలరు, వివరణలు తెలుపగలరు. దయచేసి ప్రశ్నావళిలోని ప్రశ్నలన్నింటిని పూర్తిచేసి ఒక వారంలోగా పంపగలరు.

ఈ పరిశోధన ప్రక్రియలో మీరు పాల్గొనటానికి ఇచ్చిన సమ్మతినిబట్టి మరోసారి ధన్యవాదాలు.

Patrick Dommati

సమ్మతి మరియు గోప్యత సంబంధిత వివరాలు

ఆస్పిరి వేదాంత కళాశాలలో డాక్టరేట్ అభ్యర్థన చేయునట్టి పాత్రీక్ దోమట్టి (Patrick Dommati) గారిచే ఈ పరిశోధన జరుపబడుచున్నది. ఈ పత్రము సంతకము చేయడం ద్వారా నా సమ్మతిని స్వచ్ఛంగా తెలియ జేయుచున్నాను. దీనిలో లేషమంతైన - ఏమాత్రమైన అభద్రత ప్రమాదముండదని స్పష్టంగా నాకు తెలుపబడింది. అంతే కాకుండా నా స్పందనను పూర్తి భద్రతతో, గోప్యతతో వుంచగలరని వివరించబడింది, తెలుపబడింది మరియు అభయం ఇవ్వబడింది. ఆపై ఏవైనా ఇబ్బందికరమైన ప్రశ్నలు వస్తే నేను నా ఉత్తరువులను ఆపివేస్తాను, సర్వేక్షణ (Survey)ను విరమించుకుంటాను మరియు నా స్పందనలు పరిశోధన ప్రాజెక్టులో చేర్చకూడదు. ఈ పరిశోధన అధ్యాయన నుండి నేను ఎప్పుడైనా విరమించగలనన్న హక్కు కూడా వుందిని తెలియపర్చబడింది. ఈ ప్రక్రియలో ఎలాంటి ఇబ్బంది ఎదురైనా, నేరుగా Dr. Bryan Collier, చర్చి ప్లాంటింగ్ కోహోర్ట్ D. Min ప్రోగ్రామ్, గారికి ఇమెల్ ద్వారా)bryan.collier@asburyseminary.edu) సంప్రదించగలను.

- ఈ పరిశోధనలో పాల్గొనటానికి నా సమ్మతి
- ఈ పరిశోధనలో పాల్గొనటానికి నా ఆసమ్మతి

పేరు

సంతకము

తేది

APPENDIX K

Telugu Translation: Consent Form for Participating in the Interview

ఇంటర్వ్యూలో పాల్గొనడానికి సమ్మతి పత్రము

ప్రియమైన

ఇంటర్వ్యూలో పాల్గొనడానికి మీ సమ్మతిని (అంగీకారాన్ని) బట్టి వందనాలు.

నిజాయితీతో మిరిచేసే సలహాలు కేవలం నా డాక్టరేట్ పరిశోధనలో మాత్రమే కాక హైదరాబాద్ పరిసరాల్లో సమర్థవంతమైన (చర్చిస్టాంటింగ్) సంఘ స్థాపన అభివృద్ధికి ఈ పద్ధతులు బలముగా తోడ్పడగలవు.

వచ్చే వారం ఏడో ఒక సమయము మితో ఇంటర్వ్యూ కొరకు కార్యక్రమ నిర్వహణ (Schedule) ఏర్పాటు చేస్తున్నాను. దయచేసి మీ అనుకూల సమయాన్ని తెలిపితే దాని ప్రాధాన్యంగా యెంచుతాను. మీకు వచ్చే వారం మీరు పనిలో ఉన్న (Busy), ఆ మీది వారంలో దానిని ఏర్పాటు చేయగలను.

ఈ పరిశోధనలో భాగంగా దయచేసి మీ సంపూర్ణ సమ్మతిని, గోప్యతకు సంబంధించిన పత్రాలను పూర్తి చేసి నాకు పంపగలరు, ఇంటర్వ్యూ కొరకు మీ లభ్యత వివరాలు, తేదీ, సమయం కూడా పంచుకోగలరు.

మన నియామక సమయాన్ని మీకు ఫోన్ ద్వారా కాని, ఇమెయిల్ ద్వారా కాని తెలుపగలను. ఇంకా ఏవైనా అవసరమైన వివరణలు, ప్రశ్నలు నాకు ఫోన్ (94414 74949) ద్వారా లేదా ఇమెయిల్ (patrick.dommati@asburyseminary.edu) ద్వారా పంపండి.

ఈ పరిశోధన ప్రక్రియలో మీరు పాల్గొనటానికి ఇచ్చిన సమ్మతినిబట్టి మరోసారి ధన్యవాదాలు.

Patrick Dommati

సమ్మతి మరియు గోప్యత సంబంధిత వివరాలు

నేను _____, Patrick Dommati గారికి ఆస్పెరి వేదాంత కళాశాలలో డాక్టర్ అప్ మినిస్ట్రీ సంబంధిత పరిశోధనలో బాగంగా ఇంటర్వ్యూ ఇవ్వడానికి నా సమ్మతిని తెలుపుతున్నాను. ఈ ఇంటర్వ్యూ ప్రత్యేకంగా లేదా పరోక్షంగా (ఫోన్ సంభాషణ ద్వారా) ఇవ్వడానికి సమ్మతిస్తున్నాను. మా సంభాషణను record (మాటలు /చిత్ర రూపంలో) చేయడానికి అనుమతిస్తున్నాను. దీనిలో కొద్దిపాటైనా లేదా ఏమాత్రము నాకు

ప్రమాదము లేదని స్పష్టంగా తెలుపబడింది. అంతే కాకుండా నా స్పందనను పూర్తిగా భద్రతతో, గోప్యతతో వుంచగలరని అభయం ఇవ్వబడింది. ఏవైనా ఇబ్బందికరమైన ప్రశ్నలు వస్తే నేను విరమించుకొంటాను. ఈ పరిశోధన నుండి నేను ఎప్పుడైనా విరమించగలనన్న హక్కు కూడా తెలియబడింది. ఈ ప్రక్రియలో ఎలాంటి ఇబ్బంది ఎదురైనా, నేరుగా Dr. Bryan Collier చర్చి ప్లాంటింగ్ కోహోర్ట్ D. Min ఫ్రోగ్రామ్, గారికి ఇమెల్ ద్వారా)bryan.collier@asburyseminary.edu(సంప్రదించగలను.

పేరు

సంతకము

తేది

WORKS CITED

- Allen, Roland. *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours, A Study of the Church in the Four Provinces*. USA: ReadaClassic, 2010. Print
- Andrews, Evan. "8 Ways Roads Helped Rome Rule the Ancient World." *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 10 Apr. 2014, www.history.com/news/8-ways-roads-helped-rome-rule-the-ancient-world. Accessed 2 Dec. 2018.
- Arn, W Charles. "Lay Ministry: A Closer Look." *Church Growth: State of the Art*, by C. Peter Wagner et al., Tyndale House Publishers, 1989, pp. 105–112.
- Aune, David E. "Ephesus." *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, by David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers and Astrid B. Beck eds. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 413-415.
- Aune, David E. "Rome." *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, by David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers and Astrid B. Beck eds. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 1138-1142.
- Banks, Robert. *Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in their Historical Setting*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1982. Print
- Barnabas, C. *History of Mission World*. Tirchy: IIICS Study Book Series, 2003. Print
- "Barnes' Notes on the Bible." *Bible Commentaries*, biblehub.com/commentaries/. Accessed 18 Sep. 2018.
- "Benson Commentary." *Bible Commentaries*, biblehub.com/commentaries/. Accessed 23 Oct. 2018.

Beougher, Timothy K. "10 Ways to Foster Personal Evangelism in the Local Church."

Southern Equip, 6 Apr. 2018, equip.sbts.edu/publications/magazine/magazine-issue/spring-2018-vol-86-no-1/10-ways-foster-personal-evangelism-local-church/. Accessed 9 Jan. 2021.

Bhose, Sahana. *Unique Facts about Hyderabad You Can't Afford to Miss*. yatrablog.com.

Accessed 13 Aug. 2020.

Blomberg, Craig L. *The Religious Background of the New Testament*.

www2.bhpublishinggroup.com/readthebible/downloads/cdrom/Week_06/NT_Religion.pdf. Accessed 25 Jan. 2020.

Boer, Harry. R. *Pentecost and Missions*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans,

1964. Print.

Bosch, David J. "Reflection on Biblical Models of Mission." *Toward the 21st Century in*

Christian Mission, by James M. Phillips and Robert T. Coote eds., Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1993, pp. 175–192.

Bouma, Jeremy. "What Does Genesis 12:1–3 Mean, Why Does It Matter?" *Zondervan*

Academic, 16 May 2016, zondervanacademic.com/blog/what-does-genesis-12-mean. Accessed 25 Jan. 2019.

Bound, E. M. *E. M. Bounds on Prayer*. New Kingsington, PA: Whitaker House, 1997.

"Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges." *Bible Commentaries*,

biblehub.com/commentaries/. Accessed 2 Feb. 2020.

Cartwright, Mark. "Roman Roads." *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, 17 Sept. 2014,

www.ancient.eu/article/758/roman-roads/. Accessed 24 Oct. 2019.

- Chaignot, Mary Jane. "The Ancient City of Damascus." *BibleWise*,
www.biblewise.com/bible_study/characters/ancient-damascus.php. Accessed 2
 Feb. 2020.
- Chancey, Mark A. "Jerusalem in the New Testament Period." *Jerusalem in the New
 Testament Period*, [www.bibleodyssey.org/en/places/related-articles/jerusalem-in-
 the-new-testament-period](http://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/places/related-articles/jerusalem-in-the-new-testament-period). Accessed 25 Jan. 2020.
- Chandran, J. R. *The Church in Mission*. Madras: The Christian Literature Society, 1991.
 Print
- "Chapter 1: The World of the New Testament." *Augsburgfortress*,
ms.augsburgfortress.org/downloads/0800697707Chapter1.pdf?redirected=true.
 Accessed 1 Feb. 2020.
- Choudhrie, Victor ed. *The House Church: The New Testament Model for Multiplying
 Congregations*. Betul: N.P., 2005. Print
- "Christianity in India." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation,
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_India. Accessed 23 Aug. 2017.
- Coggins, Wade T. *So That's What Missions is All About*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1976.
 Print
- Coleman, Robert E. *The Great Commission Lifestyle: Conforming Your Life to Kingdom
 Priorities*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992. Print
- Coleman, Robert E. "The Reach of Evangelism." *Global Passion: Marking George
 Verwer's Contribution to World Missions*, by David Greenlee et al.,
 Secunderabad: OM Books, 2004, pp. 171–179.
- Cooper, Ben. *Incorporated Servanthood*. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013.

- Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Second Edition. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003.
- Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Fourth Edition. 2014, Dr BR Ambedkar College, www.drbrambedkarcollege.ac.in/sites/default/files/Research-Design_Qualitative-Quantitative-and-Mixed-Methods-Approaches. Accessed 17 Nov 2019.
- Culbertson, Howard. "Lecture 1: Biblical Foundations -- Why World Missions?" *World Evangelization: Lecture on Biblical Foundations for World Missions*, home.snu.edu/~hculbert/bible.htm. Accessed 17 Jan. 2020.
- "Culture of Hyderabad - The City of Nizams!," Holidify, www.holidify.com/pages/culture-of-hyderabad-330.html. Accessed 4 Aug. 2020.
- "Demographics of Hyderabad." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Hyderabad. Accessed 6 Aug. 2020.
- "Demography of the Roman Empire." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demography_of_the_Roman_Empire#Urbanization. Accessed 15 Oct. 2019.
- Derrenbacker, Robert A and Stephen Von Wyrick. "Lydda." *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, by David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers and Astrid B. Beck eds. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 832.
- Duewel, Wesley. *7 Quotes on Prayer in Missions*. send.org/Blog/prayer-in-missions. Accessed 12 Feb. 2021.

Eims, Leroy. *Disciples in Action: A Study of the Apostles Ministry from Acts*. Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1981. Print.

“Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers.” *Bible Commentaries*, biblehub.com/commentaries/. Accessed 19 Sep. 2019.

Emetuche, Damian. *Church Planting: Biblical, Theological, and Missiological Considerations*. Day Center for Church Planting, Jan. 2012, www.daycenteronline.com/Files/PDF/CHURCH%20PLANTING_BIBLICAL_THEOLOGICAL_%20AND.pdf. Accessed 17 Nov. 2019.

“Expositor's Greek Testament.” *Bible Commentaries*, biblehub.com/commentaries/. Accessed 3 Jul. 2020.

Fernandez, Valerian. “(PDF) Biblical Foundations for Mission.” *ResearchGate*, Pontificia Universidade Catolica Do Parana - PUCPR, 18 Dec. 2018, www.researchgate.net/publication/329766515_Biblical_foundations_for_mission. Accessed 19 Jan. 2020.

Filson, Floyd V. *Three Crucial Decades: Studies in the Book of Acts*. Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1963. Print

Firth, C. B. *An Introduction to Indian Church History*. Delhi: ISPCK, 2005. Print

Frey, Rene. *Christianity.ca - The Biblical Basis for Church Planting*, 2009, www.christianity.ca/page.aspx?pid=13864. Accessed 5 Jun. 2020.

Frykenberg, Robert Eric. *Christianity in India: From Beginnings to the Present*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. Print

Gaebelein, Frank E., et al. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: John - Acts: with the New International Version: John and Acts*. vol 9. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981. Print

“Galatians 5:7–12. The Character of False Teachers.” *SAFE HAVEN COMMUNITY CHURCH*, www.safehavenworship.com/galatians-57ndash12-the-character-of-false-teachers.html. Accessed 12 Feb. 2021.

Gaultiere, Bill. “Jesus' Solitude and Silence.” *Soul Shepherding*, 4 Aug. 2020, www.soulshepherding.org/jesus-solitude-and-silence/. Accessed 3 Feb. 2021.

Geiger, Eric. “Lessons from Moses Equipping Joshua by Eric Geiger.” *CLA*, 23 Oct. 2020, christianleadershipalliance.org/blog/2015/08/10/moses-equipping-joshua-eric-geiger/#/program/e0610f3c5a66d2aceff81924beeccd70. Accessed 27 Jan. 2021.

“Genesis Chapter 12.” *Enduring Word*, 13 June 2018, enduringword.com/bible-commentary/genesis-12/. Accessed 23 Sep. 2019.

“Geneva Study Bible.” *Bible Commentaries*, biblehub.com/commentaries/. Accessed 18 Jun. 2020.

“Geography of Hyderabad.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_Hyderabad. Accessed 1 Oct. 2017.

George, K. M. *Christianity in India Through the Centuries*. Hyderabad: Authentic Books, 2007. Print

George P.V., Jaison. “A Study of the Urban Church Growth in the Book of Acts with Special Reference to the Pentecostal Churches in Calicut City.” *Bangalore, South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies*, 2007.

Goheen, Michael W. *Introducing Christian Mission Today: Scripture, History and Issues.*

Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2014. PDF

Goundar, Sam. "(PDF) Chapter 3 - Research Methodology and Research Method."

ResearchGate, Unknown, 9 Mar. 2012,

[www.researchgate.net/publication/333015026_Chapter_3_-](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/333015026_Chapter_3_-_Research_Methodology_and_Research_Method)

[Research_Methodology_and_Research_Method](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/333015026_Chapter_3_-_Research_Methodology_and_Research_Method). 2012. Accessed 3 Aug. 2020.

Green, J.B. "Acts of the Apostles." *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its*

Development, by Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids eds. Downers Grove,

Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1997. pp. 7-24.

Green, Michael. *Acts for Today: First Century Christianity for Twentieth Century*

Christians. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1993. Print

Green, Michael. *Evangelism in the Early Church*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans,

1987. Print.

Greenway, Roger S. *Apostles to the City: Biblical Strategies for Urban Missions*. Grand

Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1983. Print

Greenway, Roger S. et al. *Missions Now: This Generation*. Grand Rapids, Michigan:

Baker Book House, 1990. Print

Greenway, Roger S. *Go and Make Disciples!*. Secunderabad: OM Books, 1999. Print

Hartog, Paul Anthony. "Iconium." *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, by David Noel

Freedman, Allen C. Myers and Astrid B. Beck eds. Grand Rapids, Michigan:

Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 624-625.

- Hartog, Paul Anthony. "Lystra." *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, by David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers and Astrid B. Beck eds. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 834.
- Hastey, Ervin E. "Reaching the Cities First: A Biblical Model of World Evangelization." *An Urban World*, by Larry L. Rose and C. Kirk Hadaway eds. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1984.
- Haya-Prats, Gonzalo. *Empowered Believers: The Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts*. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2011. Print
- Hedlund, Roger E. *God and Nations: A Biblical Theology of Mission in the Asian Context*. Delhi: ISPCK, 2002.
- Hedlund, Roger E. *The Mission of the Church in the World: A Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1991. Print
- Henry, Matthew. "Commentary on Genesis 12 by Matthew Henry." *Blue Letter Bible*, www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Gen/Gen_012.cfm. Accessed 3 Jul. 2020.
- Herzog II, William R. *Parables of Subversive Speech: Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994.
- Holum, Kenneth G. "Caesarea." *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, by David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers and Astrid B. Beck eds. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 206-207.
- Holum, Kenneth G. "Joppa." *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, by David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers and Astrid B. Beck eds. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 732.

Hughes, R. Kent. *Disciplines of a Godly Man*. Secunderabad: OM-Authentic Media, 2001. Print

Hunter, Kent R. "The Quality Side of Church Growth," in *Church Growth: State of the Art*, by C. Peter Wagner, Win Arn, and Elmer Towns eds. Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1986, pp. 119-125.

"Hyderabad." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyderabad. Accessed 29 Oct. 2017.

"Hyderabad (Greater Hyderabad) City Population 2011 - 2021." *Hyderabad (Greater Hyderabad) City Population Census 2011-2021 | Andhra Pradesh*, www.census2011.co.in/census/city/392-hyderabad.html. Accessed 20 Jan. 2021.

"Hyderabad Has Second Largest Poor Populace in India." *Deccan Chronicle*, 13 July 2017. Accessed 7 Aug. 2020.

"Hyderabad, India." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/place/Hyderabad-India/The-contemporary-city.

"Hyderabad Population 2020." worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/hyderabad-population. Accessed 13 Nov. 2020.

"Hyderabad Population." www.populationu.com/cities/hyderabad-population. Accessed 23 Jan. 2021.

Igwenagu, Chinelo. *Fundamentals of Research Methodology and Data Collection*, ResearchGate, Apr. 2016, www.researchgate.net/publication/303381524_Fundamentals_of_research_methodology_and_data_collection. Accessed 14 Aug. 2020.

Immanuel, Babu. *Repent and Turn to God: Recounting Acts*. Perth: HIM International Ministries, 2004. Print

“Industrial Profile: Hyderabad District.” *Industries, Telangana Government, India*, www.industries.telangana.gov.in/Library/District/hyderabad.pdf. Accessed 10 Aug. 2020.

Jackson, Ronald, et al. “(PDF) What Is Qualitative Research?” *ResearchGate*, Oct. 2007, www.researchgate.net/publication/233325570_What_Is_Qualitative_Research#:~:text=It%20encompasses%20all%20forms%20of,human%20action%20by%20describing%20the. Accessed 23 Mar. 2020.

“Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary.” *Bible Commentaries*, biblehub.com/commentaries/. Accessed 14 Nov. 2019.

Jeffers, James S. *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1999.

“Jesus’ Interactions with Women.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus%27_interactions_with_women. Accessed 2 Feb. 2020.

Jeyakumar, D. Arthur. *History of Christianity in India: Selected Themes*. Delhi: ISPCK, 2002. Print

John, Binu. *A Study on Christian Contribution to the Nation Building*. Delhi: ISPCK, 2001.

Johnson, Phil. “A Biblical Model of Lay Ministry.” *Grace to You*, 18 Aug. 2016, www.gty.org/library/Articles/A101/A-Biblical-Model-of-Lay-Ministry. Accessed 14 Feb. 2021.

- “John 4 – A Samaritan Woman and A Nobleman Meet Jesus.” *Enduring Word*, 13 Feb. 2019, enduringword.com/bible-commentary/john-4/. Accessed 26 Jul. 2019.
- Keach, Benjamin, *Exposition of the Parables*. Series Two, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1991.
- Keener, Craig S. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. 2nd Edition, Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2014. Print
- Keller, Timothy. *Center Church*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2012. Print
- Keller, Tim. “What Is God's Global Urban Mission?” Lausanne Movement, 22 Mar. 2018, www.lausanne.org/content/what-is-gods-global-urban-mission. Accessed 10 Dec. 2019.
- Klauck, Hans-Josef, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003. Print
- Kothari, C. R. *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. Second Revised Edition. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers. 2004.
[https://www.cusb.ac.in/images/cusb-files/2020/el/cbs/MCCOM2003C04%20\(Business%20Research%20Methods\)Research_Methodology_C_R_Kothari.pdf](https://www.cusb.ac.in/images/cusb-files/2020/el/cbs/MCCOM2003C04%20(Business%20Research%20Methods)Research_Methodology_C_R_Kothari.pdf). Accessed 21 Jul. 2020.
- Larkin Jr., William J. *Acts: The IVP New Testament Commentary Series*. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 1995.
- Lee, Kang Soon. *Mission in the Book of Jonah*. 14 April 2011, <https://pctscwm.tistory.com/24>. Accessed 7 Jan. 2018.

Lidório, Ronaldo. *The Method of Paul for Church Planting*.

https://churchplanting.com.br/v2/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=36:the-method-of-paul-for-church-planting&catid=1:church-planting&Itemid=5. Accessed 13 May 2018.

“List of Cities Founded by the Romans.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation,

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_cities_founded_by_the_Romans. Accessed 18 Feb. 2018.

Lizorkin-Eyzenberg, Eli. “The New Testament: The Greco-Roman Context (Bart D.

Ehrman, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill).” *Biblical Hebrew and Holy Land Studies Blog - IIBS.com*, Israel Institute of Biblical Studies, 22 Feb. 2013, blog.israelbiblicalstudies.com/jewish-studies/the-new-testament-the-greco-roman-context-bart-d-ehrman-university-of-north-carolina-at-chapel-hill/. Accessed 12 Jan. 2018.

“MacLaren's Expositions.” *Bible Commentaries*,

biblehub.com/commentaries/. Accessed 17 Mar. 2018.

Mangalwadi, Vishal. “Carey, William: A Model for Mission as Transformation.”

Transformation: A Unifying Vision of Church's Mission, Luis K Bush ed. Hyderabad: Transform World India, 2006. pp. 19-31.

Marshall, I.H. *The Acts of Apostles*. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992. Print

Martin, Hugh. *The Parables of the Gospels*. London: SCM Press, 1962.

“Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary.” *Bible Commentaries*,

biblehub.com/commentaries/. Accessed 6 May 2018.

Matthew, P. C. *Becoming a Missional Family*. Bengaluru: Urban India Ministries, 2014.

Print

“Matthew Poole's Commentary.” *Bible Commentaries*,

biblehub.com/commentaries/. Accessed 6 May 2018.

Maxwell, C. Mervyn. *WOMEN IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD - Adventist Archives*.

Adventist Archives, Feb. 1988, www.adventistarchives.org/women-in-the-greco-roman-world.pdf. Accessed 15 Jan. 2020.

Maxwell, John C. *Developing the Leader Within You*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1993.

Mazzalongo, Mike. “Jesus' Method of Personal Evangelism.” *BibleTalk.tv*, 1 Jan. 1970,

bibletalk.tv/jesus-method-of-personal-evangelism. Accessed 27 Feb. 2021.

McRay, John. “Antioch.” *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, by David Noel

Freedman, Allen C. Myers and Astrid B. Beck eds. Grand Rapids, Michigan:

Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 67-68.

McRay, John. *Paul: His Life and Teaching*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic,

2003. Print

Meeks, Wayne A. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*.

London: Yale University Press, 1983.

Meeks, Wayne A. *The Moral World of the First Christians*. London: SPCK, 1987.

“Meyer's NT Commentary.” *Bible Commentaries*,

biblehub.com/commentaries/. Accessed 20 May 2018

Moerman, Carol. *Chapter Twelve: Prayer and Church Planting Movements*.

Murraymoerman, www.murraymoerman.com/3downloads/donton/don/12-prayer%20and%20Church%20Planting%20Movements.pdf. Accessed 16 Feb. 2021.

Moon, W. Jay and Fredrick J. Long. *Entrepreneurial Church Planting: Engaging Business & Mission for Marketplace Transformation*. Wilmore: GlossaHouse, 2018. Print

Moskala, Jiri. "The Mission of God's People in the Old Testament." *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, JATS*, Vol 19, January 2008, digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1144&context=jats. Accessed 4 May 2018.

Mosshammer, Alden A. "Roman Religion." *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, by David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers and Astrid B. Beck eds. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 1134-1135.

MTP – Chapter 3 – PowerPoint- Module 3, Class Notes.

Mundadan, A. Mathias, *History of Christianity in India: From the Beginning up to the Middle of the Sixteenth Century, Volume I*. Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1984. Print

Murray, Andrew. *The Spirit of Christ*. London: Nesbet and Co., 1880. Print

Nash, Scott. "Athens." *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, by David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers and Astrid B. Beck eds. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 126-127.

- Niell, Stephen. *The Story of the Christian Church in India and Pakistan*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1970. Print
- Nouwen, Henri. "18 Amazing Henri Nouwen Quotes on Prayer." *Prayer Coach*, 8 June 2018, prayer-coach.com/prayer-quote-henri-nouwen/. Accessed 16 Jan. 2021.
- Olson, C. Gordon. *What in the World Is God Doing?: The Essentials of Global Missions*. Cedar Knolls: Global Gospel, 1989.
- Olson, Dennis. "Commentary on Genesis 12:1-4a." *Working Preacher from Luther Seminary*, 20 Mar. 2011, www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/second-sunday-in-lent/commentary-on-genesis-121-4a. Accessed 13 Jan. 2018.
- Olver, Howard L. *A Biblical Basis for Urban Ministry - City Vision*. Aug. 1977, www.cityvision.edu/courses/coursefiles/301/Olver.PDF. Accessed 17 Dec. 2018.
- Ott, Craig and Gene Wilson. *Global Church Planting*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011. Print
- Parker, Nathaniel B. *Acts 1:8 Global Outreach Plan*. 22 Apr. 2016, https://www.academia.edu/25535517/Acts_1_8_Global_Outreach_Plan. Accessed 18 Jul. 2018.
- Payne, J. D. *Missional House Churches*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007.
- "Persecution." *What Does the Bible Say About Persecution?*, www.openbible.info/topics/persecution. Accessed 28 Jan. 2021.
- Peters, George W. "Missions in Biblical Perspective," *Vital Missions Issues: Examining Challenges and Changes in World Evangelism*. by Roy B. Zuck ed., Secunderabad: OM Books, 1998, pp. 9-20.

Ponraj, S. D. *Strategies for Church Planting Movement: Biblical and Cultural Principles for Starting and Sustaining a Movement of Churches*. Chennai: Mission Educational Books, 2011.

“Poverty Reduction at City Level: Strategy Development for Hyderabad.” *Urban Poverty Reduction Strategy for Hyderabad*, Centre for Good Governance, cgg.gov.in/core/uploads//2017/07/UPRS-for-Hyderabad.pdf. Accessed 16 Feb. 2021.

Prince, Derek. *Life-Changing Spiritual Power*. Christchurch: Derek Prince Ministries – Asia/Pacific, 2010. Print

“Pulpit Commentary.” *Bible Commentaries*, biblehub.com/commentaries/. Accessed 13 Feb. 2018.

Raju, M. Lakshmipathi. *Social Work Research: M. A. Social Work: 1st Year, Paper – V*. Guntur: Don Bosco Technical School Press, 2018. Print

“Religion in India.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_India. Accessed 23 Oct. 2017.

Robert, Dana L. *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion*. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. Print

Robinson, George. “Biblical Foundations for Short-Term Missions.” *View of BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR SHORT-TERM MISSIONS*, Global Missiology, Oct. 2010, ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/article/view/381/988. Accessed 16

Jun. 2018.

Romans 15:22-24 Transitions in Our Lives. Girton Baptist Church,

www.girtonbaptistchurch.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/062-Romans-15v22-24.pdf. Accessed 18 Apr. 2018.

Sanders, Oswald. *Spiritual Leadership*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1994. Print

Sathiaraj, Daniel. ed. *Transforming the Indian Cities: Profiles of Selected 100 Cities*.

Hyderabad: India Missions Association, 2004. Print

Selvanayagam, Israel. "Waters of Life and Indian Cups: Protestant Attempts at

Theologizing in India." *Christian Theology in Asia*, Cambridge University Press,

June 2012, [www.cambridge.org/core/books/christian-theology-in-asia/waters-of-](http://www.cambridge.org/core/books/christian-theology-in-asia/waters-of-life-and-indian-cups-protestant-attempts-at-theologizing-in-india/DD50AA89826DFED465E8BFF90845A336)

life-and-indian-cups-protestant-attempts-at-theologizing-in-

india/DD50AA89826DFED465E8BFF90845A336. Accessed 3 Feb. 2021.

Sensing, Tim. *Qualitative Research: A multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of*

Ministry Theses. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011. Print

"17. Identifying False Teachers (1 Timothy 6:3-5)." *17. Identifying False Teachers (1*

Timothy 6:3-5) | Bible.org, [bible.org/seriespage/17-identifying-false-teachers-1-](http://bible.org/seriespage/17-identifying-false-teachers-1-timothy-63-5)

[timothy-63-5](http://bible.org/seriespage/17-identifying-false-teachers-1-timothy-63-5). Accessed 7 Feb. 2021.

Simpson, A. B. *The Spirit-filled Church in Action*, vol. XVI, Christ in the Bible Series.

Harrisburg: Christian Publications, 1975. Print

Slagle, David A. *Abstract - The Prayer-Driven Church Plant*. Asbury Theological

Seminary, 1 Mar. 2006,

[place.asburyseminary.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1273&context=ecom-](http://place.asburyseminary.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1273&context=ecommonsatsdissertations)

[monsatsdissertations](http://place.asburyseminary.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1273&context=ecommonsatsdissertations). Accessed 27 Jan. 2021.

- Sochor, Andy. "Personal Evangelism." *Plain Bible Teaching*, 29 July 2017, plainbibleteaching.com/2006/05/01/personal-evangelism/. Accessed 4 Feb. 2021.
- Solomon, Etala David. *Change and Continuity: Influences on Self-identity of Christian Dalits of Madiri Puram Village in South India*. Delhi: ISPCK, 2012. Print
- Spencer, Richard A. "Philippi." *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, by David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers and Astrid B. Beck eds. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 1048-1049.
- Sproul, R.C. "The Biblical Basis for Missions." *Ligonier Ministries*, 31 Aug. 2015, www.ligonier.org/blog/biblical-basis-missions/. Accessed 14 Mar. 2018.
- Sridhar, G Naga. "26 Districts in Telangana Have below-Average Literacy Rates." @*Businessline*, The Hindu BusinessLine, 15 Mar. 2018, www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/26-districts-in-telangana-have-below-average-literacy-rates/article23264121.ece. Accessed 4 Aug. 2020.
- Stangor, Charles. *Research Methods for the Behavioral Sciences*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980. Print
- Stetzer, Ed. "Jonah and the Mission of God: A Closer Look." *The Exchange | A Blog by Ed Stetzer*, 27 June 2012, www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2012/june/jonah-and-mission-of-god-closer-look.html. Accessed 2 Mar. 2018.
- Stetzer, Ed. *Planting Missional Churches*. Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Academic, 2003. Print

Subrahmanyam, P.T. "Mahatma Gandhi and the Sermon on the Mount." *Mahatma*

Gandhi and the Sermon on the Mount | Articles On and By Gandhi,

www.mkgandhi.org/articles/mahatma-gandhi-and-sermon-on-the-mount.html.

Accessed 16 Jan. 2021.

Tappy, Ron E. Samaria, www.bibleodyssey.org/en/places/main-articles/samaria.

Accessed 14 Jul. 2019.

Taylor, J.V. *The Go-Between God – Holy Spirit and the Christian Mission*. London:

S.C.M. Press. 1972. Print

Telangana Today, "Hyderabad Ideal Cosmopolitan City, Says KT Rama Rao."

Telangana Today- Latest Telangana News Headlines, Hyderabad News, 13 Jan.

2020, telanganatoday.com/hyderabad-ideal-cosmopolitan-city-says-kt-rama-rao.

Accessed 15 Aug. 2020.

Tennent, Timothy C. *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the*

Twenty-First Century. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2010. Print

Terry, John Mark, Ebbie Smith and Justice Anderson eds. *Missiology: An Introduction to*

the Foundations, History, and strategies of World Missions. Nashville: Broadman

& Holman (B & H) Publishers, 1998.

"The Basis of Missions in the Old Testament." *URBANA STUDENT MISSIONS*

CONFERENCE, urbana.org/transcript/basis-missions-old-testament. Accessed 27

Mar. 2018.

“The Biblical Basis of Missions / God's Heart for the Nations - Global.” *Global Frontier Missions: Christian Missions, Training, and Discipleship*, Grant,

globalfrontiermissions.org/gfm-101-missions-course/biblical-basis-of-missions/.

Accessed 27 Aug. 2018.

The Book of Acts: Major Themes of Acts.

<http://btsfreeccm.org/local/lmp/lessons.php?lesson=ACT3text>. Accessed 20 Jul. 2020.

Theissen, Gerd. *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*. ed. and trans. John H. Schutz, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982.

“The Missionary Journeys of Paul: Jesus Film Project.” *The Missionary Journeys of Paul / Jesus Film Project*, 25 Feb. 2019, www.jesusfilm.org/blog-and-stories/missionary-journeys-paul.html. Accessed 24 Oct. 2019.

Tidball, Derek. *The Social Context of the New Testament*. Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997. Print

Towns, Elmer L. “Evangelism: The Why and How,” *Church Growth: State of the Art*, by C. Peter Wagner, Win Arn, and Elmer Towns eds.. Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1986, pp. 43-55.

Towns, Elmer L. “The Great Commission and Church Planting,” *Church Growth: State of the Art*, by C. Peter Wagner, Win Arn, and Elmer Towns eds.. Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1986, pp. 143-149.

Trites, Allison A. “Church Growth in the Book of Acts,” *Vital New Testament Issues*, Roy B. Zuck ed. Grand Rapids: Kregel Resources, 1996, pp. 44-54.

Trueman, C N. "Ancient Rome and Trade - Why It Was so Important." *History Learning Site*, 16 Mar. 2015, [www.historylearningsite.co.uk/ancient-rome-and-trade](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/ancient-rome/ancient-rome-and-trade). Accessed 3 Sep. 2019.

2. *Conduct of Interpersonal Relationships Through Love and Respect (19:9-37) – Asbury Bible Commentary - Bible Gateway*, www.biblegateway.com/resources/asbury-bible-commentary/2-conduct-of-interpersonal-relationships-through-love-and-respect-19-9-37. Accessed 22 Feb. 2018.

Vepachedu, Sreenivasarao. *The Cultural Fate of Hyderabad State*. ResearchGate, Dec. 2002, www.researchgate.net/publication/282367268_The_Cultural_Fate_of_Hyderabad_State. Accessed 11 Aug. 2020.

"Vincent's Word Studies." *Bible Commentaries*, biblehub.com/commentaries/. Accessed 14 Mar. 2018.

Wagner, Peter C. *Confronting the Powers: How the New Testament Church Experienced the Power of Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare*. California: Regal Books, 1996. Print

Wagner, C. Peter. *Spreading the Fire: A New Look at Acts – God's Training Manual for Every Christian*. The Acts of the Holy Spirit Series, Book 1. Secunderabad: Ben Publishing, 1999. Print

Wagner, C. Peter. *The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit. Encountering the Power of Signs and Wonders*. Michigan: Servant Publications. 1988. Print

- Walters, Jeff K. "Looking To A City: Current Themes In Urban Missions ." Sbsts-Wordpress, 2015, sbts-wordpress-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/equip/uploads/2015/10/Pages-from-SBJT-V15-N2_Walters.pdf. Accessed 27 Jul. 2020.
- Warren, Rick. "Rick Warren Shares 8 Characteristics of a Healthy Church." The Vision Room, 29 May 2015, www.visionroom.com/rick-warren-shares-8-characteristics-healthy-church/. Accessed 14 Nov. 2017.
- "What Does The Bible Say About Church Growth?" *Got Questions*, www.gotquestions.org/church-growth.html. Accessed 30 Oct. 2017.
- Wenham, David. *The Parables of Jesus*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1989.
- Wiseman, D. J. "Joppa." *New Bible Dictionary*. Third Edition, by David J. Atkinson and David H. Field eds. Secunderabad: OM Books, 2000, p. 605.
- Wright, Christopher J. H. *Old Testament Theology of Mission*. In *Evangelical Dictionary of World Mission*, edited by A. Scott Moreau. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000, pp. 706-709.
- Yeboah, Charles. "Exorcism." *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, by David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers and Astrid B. Beck eds. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 444.