

PENTECOSTAL TRANSFORMATION IN AFRICA: THE RISE AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST

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Introduction

The emergence, growth and development of The Church of Pentecost (CoP), Ghana is a demonstration of a new era of African Christianity. The Church of Pentecost was listed as the largest Protestant Christian denomination in Ghana by the last empirical church survey of the Ghana Evangelism Committee. In 1937, James and Sophia McKeown were sent by the Apostolic church in the UK to the then Gold Coast (now Ghana) as missionaries. Working in partnership with the indigenous converts and personnel, McKeown worked tirelessly in Ghana to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the country through his emphases on the word of God, the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, and holy living. In 1953 McKeown was compelled to come out of the Apostolic Church of the UK and get along with the indigenous people under the name 'Ghana Apostolic Church' which was renamed 'The Church of Pentecost' in 1962.

The Church of Pentecost has become an indigenous church, with a good blend of Christianity and African cultural features. The Church of Pentecost has moved beyond the shores of Ghana to become a worldwide Christian denomination. At the end of 2015, the chairman of the Church of Pentecost reported having 18,915 churches across the globe, with an overall membership of more than two and a half million (2,612,618) and ninety branches in Africa, Europe, North and South America, Australia and Asia. In 2006 alone the Church of Pentecost made inroads into Ethiopia, Angola, Portugal, Las Palmas, El Salvador, Belize, Chad, Dominican Republic and Romania.¹ Yet, within the academic not much has been said about the growth and impact of the CoP on Christianity in Africa and the rest of the world.

Researchers who have touched on the Church of Pentecost and its mission activities include Robert Willie, Kinsley Larbi, Johnson Asamoah Gyadu,² Gerrie Ter Haar³ and Rijk Van Dijk.⁴ Both Larbi and Asamoah Gyadu present the collective historical, religious and theological orientation of Ghanaian indigenous Pentecostal movements. Asamoah-Gyadu cites the emergence of the CoP as one of the factors which led to the decline of the older African Initiated Churches suggesting that the CoP was a “more respectable option in indigenous Pentecostalism”.⁵ Thus it is important to study the factors which led to the growth and respectability of the CoP. In her research about the relationship between African-led churches in Europe and churches in the home countries of Africa, Ter Haar remarks that the CoP is one of the most successful of the African-led churches in Europe.

However, her main focus is on the True Teaching of Christ’s Temple Church, a “prophet-healer type church,” which emerged among the Ghanaian diasporic community in the Netherlands.⁶ Van Dijk writes about the role “Ghanaian Pentecostalism appears to play in the forming of their [Ghanaians’] identity as strangers in Dutch society”.⁷ He mentions the Church of Pentecost in the process. However, Van Dijk plays down the contributions being made by not only the Church of Pentecost but all Pentecostals and Charismatics, by hypothesizing “the prayer camps”⁸ as the “sending discourse”.⁹

There is no direct link (if even an indirect one) between the camps and the Church’s mission as Van Dijk suggested.¹⁰ Thus, beside the false impression, which Van Dijk gives his readers, there is no report about the development, growth and missionary activities of the Church of Pentecost. All the same, it is still important to bring into the awareness of the Christian world, the rise and development of the indigenous African Pentecostals and their enterprising missionary activities, such as those of the Church of Pentecost to the Christian world, and by so doing invite dialogue with them.

Consequently, this article is an attempt to bring out the rise and growth of the Church of Pentecost, and find out the missiological principles underlying the successful growth of the Church.

The article assumes that the Church of Pentecost lays much emphasis on the necessity for individual persons to experience the Spirit-baptism and that it is this experience (of Spirit-baptism) coupled with its advocacy of the importance of the African indigenous worship, which has caused growth in the Church of Pentecost in Ghana, across Africa and other parts of the world.

In addition to my own research this article draws from the work that has been done on the Church of Pentecost. Furthermore, being in Church leadership for over thirty years, I write as a participant observer. The paper adopts the abbreviation 'CoP' for the Church of Pentecost. The term 'African diaspora' is adopted to describe the scattering of African across the globe. Similarly the term 'Ghanaian diaspora' is adopted here to describe the global scattering of Ghanaians outside their own country, Ghana.

The Church of Pentecost: A continuation of Christianity in Ghana
Before the establishment of the Pentecostal churches in Ghana, the initial attempt to evangelize Ghana by the Roman Catholics Mission had been a failure. However, Christianity had firmly been established in the mid 1800s, through the enterprising missionary activities of the Basel Mission (1845), the Bremen Mission (1847), Wesleyan Methodist (1840) and the Catholic Mission (second attempt in 1880).¹¹ From 1922 onwards, some Ghanaians established their own independent churches for various reasons including a desire for freedom to worship in culturally relevant ways, religious changes, socio-economic and spiritual hunger (prophetism).¹² These are commonly referred to in Ghana as sunsum söre (Spiritual churches).¹³ These churches seem to thrive and promote the spread of the gospel effectively. The attraction of these churches is that they seek to provide the form of worship that satisfies the holistic needs of Ghanaians.¹⁴ Yet Asamoah Gyadu analyses that the absence of structures, failure to test revelation, lack of accountability and exploitation of people for personal gain negatively affected their popularity. The Church of Pentecost becomes prominent against this background.¹⁵

The Church of Pentecost traces its beginning to the activities of James and Sophia McKeown, both of Northern Ireland, who arrived in the then Gold Coast in 1937, on the ticket of the Apostolic Church of the UK. McKeown was invited by Peter Anim and his movement, the then Faith Tabernacle Church.

McKeown and Anim parted company in 1939 due to some theological differences. McKeown continued to work as a missionary of the UK Apostolic Church till 1953 when church practices and constitution caused his dismissal from the UK Apostolic Church. McKeown was invited to lead the indigenous group, dubbed the Gold Coast Apostolic Church. In 1957 when Ghana attained independence, the name was changed to the Ghana Apostolic Church. The two apostolic churches were operating in Ghana: The Apostolic Church, Ghana (the original one from the UK) and the Ghana Apostolic Church. In 1962 the President of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, intervened in a legal battle between the churches, when he ordered the Ghana Apostolic Church (McKeown's group) to change its name. It was then that the name 'The Church of Pentecost' was adopted. Therefore, the origin of the Church of Pentecost can be placed at the events of 1953, when James McKeown was dismissed from the Apostolic Church of the UK.¹⁶ In 1971 the Church of Pentecost affiliated with Elim Pentecostal Churches of UK; it is a mutual accord that still continues.

The Assemblies of God which started operations in the country in 1931 and the three churches which had come in contact with McKeown, the Christ Apostolic Church, the Apostolic Church of Ghana, (affiliated to the UK Apostolic Church) and the Church of Pentecost, remained the main Pentecostal churches until the 1970. Others such as the Reformed Apostolic Church, Foursquare Gospel Church and Open Bible Church joined the race after this period.

The Apostolic Church background and the role of Pastor James Mckeown

The Apostolic Church that sent McKeown to Ghana had its birth in the Welsh revival. It was a church that displayed all the spectrum of classical Pentecostalism. Swiss theologian and expert on Pentecostalism Walter Hollenweger, describes the Apostolic Church as a church that "gives greater play to the gifts of the Spirit".¹⁷ In the Church, men are called through prophecy to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Others were called to the offices of elders and deacons. Women are called as deaconesses. Women are not ordained into the full time pastoral ministry. Consequently, the Apostolic Church developed a ministry organised as a strict hierarchical structure.¹⁸

Also, a rigorous ethical stance was upheld with the prohibition of things such as drinking alcohol and smoking. Members who were found of making a practice of going to questionable places or falling to open sin were to be disciplined.¹⁹

Against this backdrop, the CoP owed much to the Apostolic Church. While such practices could have been hindrances to the pioneering missionary; they were not. Right from the beginning, McKeown wanted the Church to be indigenous with Ghanaian culture, ministry and finance. He realized that "it would be difficult to grow an 'English oak' in Ghana. A local 'species,' at home in its culture, should grow, reproduce and spread: a church with foreign roots was more likely to struggle".²⁰ His concern was to sow what he called the "local species" to produce an indigenous church.

To achieve this goal of indigenization, McKeown's philosophy was "just to evangelize"²¹ and make the people know God. McKeown said, "once we have a strong Church of people who really know Jesus and the Holy Spirit, then everything else will follow".²² The implication of this was that he was not going to provide social services. The people who knew God were going to provide finance, build schools, hospitals and serve their nation in diverse ways. On the face value, this was quite strange. A church is supposed not only to serve the spiritual needs of people, but also material.

Nevertheless, the philosophy behind McKeown's policy was that he could not offer the people what he did not have. He would give them what he had. Once he got the right people, they would serve their own people with other needs. History was to judge him.

Consequently, McKeown's ministry had an impact on Ghanaian society; he won many converts. Among his early converts who became prominent were Pastors J. A. C. Anaman, Joseph Egyir Paintsil and Mrs. Christiana Obo. Their 'contextualized messages' caused people to pray for the Spirit baptism, most importantly, as a protection against witchcraft, and give power to witness and confront evil powers.²³ McKeown was quick to recognize and acknowledge the involvement of Ghanaians in his work. He often said, 'I never founded anything. I never opened a single assembly [church].'²⁴ In his view the Ghanaian did the work.

McKeown's major contributions to the growth and development of the CoP were his ability in providing self-less leadership; maintaining personal integrity and putting the Bible into practice. Again, he stressed the fact that the Church must be self-reliance in finance, governing and the propagation of the gospel. These principle were similar to the "Indigenous Policy" (self-supporting, self-propagation and self-government), as first set forth by Rufus Anderson²⁵ and Henry Venn,²⁶ and later developed and re-defined by others including Roland Allen and Melvin Hodges.²⁷ Whether McKeown was aware of this policy is not clear. Some Pentecostal scholars, including Hollenweger and Spittler, point out that Pentecostals have been influenced by Allen's *Missionary Methods*.²⁸ McGee, for instance, has shown that Allen's books were already circulating in Pentecostal circles as early as 1921.²⁹ Leonard thinks that McKeown was not aware of the policy.³⁰ However, McKeown's stress on self-supporting and liability districts might imply that he had read about them somewhere else. Undoubtedly, for McKeown, like many Pentecostals,³¹ he was implementing "New Testament methods" through the "leading of the Holy Spirit".³²

For Larbi, "These principles helped to place the organisation on a sound footing morally, financially, and in terms of its strong and uncompromising evangelistic drive. These principles have since defined the ethos of the Church. McKeown played the role of a facilitator par excellence".³³ Allan Anderson is right in his assessment, "To all intents and purposes this was an autochthonous Ghanaian church".³⁴

In the late 1950s, McKeown would spend increasing time in Britain, spending only half year in Ghana. Thus in 1982, when he retired, and handed over Chairmanship to Ghanaian, Apostle Fred Stephen Safo (1982-87), he felt that the Church could run smoothly without him. The transition was very smooth. There have been two other African leaders after Safo; Prophet M. K Yeboah (1988-1998) and Apostle M. K. Ntummy (1998-2008) with Opoku Onyinah elected in 2008; each followed smoothly without a conflict. The CoP is indeed an example of an African Pentecostal church with respect; an African Church that is self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating, and self-theologising.

Spread of The Church of Pentecost to the world

The beginning of the spread of CoP to other West African countries was not an organized one. As CoP members migrated along West Africa, they shared their faith with others and, before long, small groups of new converts were formed. These migrants sent information home about the existence of new churches, which they had established. Being influenced by the fear of the imminent return of Christ, the leadership of the CoP is always challenged with the urgency in evangelization. Therefore, pastors are always sent as 'missionaries'³⁵ to foreign land without formal training. In a way the establishment of the branches of the church outside Ghana shows the effectiveness of oral culture. Hollenweger observes that "all the elements of oral theology function as a logic system for passing on theological and social value information in oral society".³⁶

Thus, although the CoP has not yet intellectually systematized its faith and practices in theological categories, these are echoed in its normal church activities such as worship-songs and preaching, conventions and movement meetings, and the members carry these along orally. In a similar way, when the Ghanaian immigrants went to the West, they began to worship and contribute to the growth of Western churches. Yet they could not find their identity. Gerloff, writing about the African-Americans rightly says that "the religion of the slaves [Africans] and the religion of the slave master [Whites] were never identical, even when both referred to the same Bible".³⁷ Thus in the attempt to find their identity, members of the CoP among the immigrants were able to establish churches in their places of abode. At the end of 1999, the Church had not only got branches in all the West African countries but also in East, Central, South and North Africa.³⁸ Churches have also been established in many countries in the other continents, including Israel, Holland, Belgium, U.S.A., Canada, Norway, France, Germany, India, Italy, Switzerland, Korea, Lebanon, Brazil, and Japan. The State of Church address by the Church in 2016 indicates 4,561 churches and a total membership of 431,855 in the Mission fields. 377 new churches were opened and 38,470 converts were baptized in 2015 alone.³⁹

Establishment of the International Missions Office

In order to co-ordinate the activities of the branches overseas the CoP established a department called the “International Missions Office,” during the chairmanship of Prophet Yeboah. This department is under the International Missions Director, who is directly accountable to the Chairman of the Church, on the same level as the Church’s General Secretary. Reporting directly to the Chairman of the Church gives the International Mission Director free access to administer the Missions office without any bureaucratic hindrances and indicates how important missions is to the CoP. Part of his function is to advise missionaries and where appropriate work with them to organise crusades, rallies and conventions for the effective evangelism of the nations.⁴⁰

Characteristics of the CoP

1. Government

The church has a centralised structure that is similar to the Apostolic Church in UK.⁴¹ At the top comes the General Council which consists of all confirmed ministers of the Church, Area Executive Committee members, Chairmen of Boards and Committees and Movements Directors. Following the General Council is the nine men Executive Council that sees to the administration of the Church. The areas (and nations) presbyteries, chaired by the apostles and prophets, come after the Executive council followed by district presbyteries, headed by pastors. Last on the administrative structure of the Church are the local presbyteries, headed by presiding elders. The structure may have its weaknesses, but as a whole, it seems to fit in with the Ghanaian culture, especially that of the Akan with its various military organs.⁴² Thus it makes the members feel secure in its formality, accountability and disciplinary measures.

2. Worship

Worship in the Church is similar to other classical Pentecostals,⁴³ with some cultural diversity such as the giving of testimonies, praises, special times of prayer called worship and preaching.⁴⁴ There is the opportunity to express oneself before God in diverse ways—prayer, dancing and testimonies. During one such meeting Afua Kumah, the mother-in-law of apostle A. T. Nartey, claiming to move by the Spirit,

came forward and applied the appellations to the chief to the praise of God. Often she was called during conventions to praise the Lord this way. Later her words were put into writing.⁴⁵ The name of Afua Kumah, the product of the CoP, has become a classical example of local theologizing within African Theology.⁴⁶

Eventually the CoP developed a form of worship, especially its songs that have had an impact on Ghanaian society.⁴⁷ Often as preaching and prayer go on a member would receive through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit a song that would be sung spontaneously, without having to write it. Professor Larbi observes that the CoP "has bequeathed to Ghanaian Christianity more locally brewed Christian songs than any other Church in the country".⁴⁸ It can be said that the CoP's form of worship has become paradigmatic to Ghanaian Pentecostal churches. Even the other churches, both Protestants and Catholics, adopt Pentecostal type of worship, singing and clapping, after they had gone through their formal liturgy. Beside the fact that many Ghanaians will confirm this, most of the leaders of the Charismatic churches were either members of or affiliated with the CoP. These includes Duncan Williams (leader of Action faith), Eric Kwapong (formerly, one of the key leaders of Otabil's International Central Church), Agyin Asare (Perez Chapel) and Addae Mensah (Gospel Light International Church.)

Preaching is the climax of Sunday worship. Usually passages or texts are read from the Bible and contextualized to suit their audience.⁴⁹ Ter Haar sees the place accorded to the Bible and preaching by the diasporic community, as "a significant point of distinction between African and Western Christianity in general, ⁵⁰an indication that the needs of the diasporic community could not be met by the Western churches.

The giving of testimony is very prominent in worship. Through insights from these testimonies, the leaders become aware of the basic needs of the individual members, including health, lack of accommodation and unemployment. While, at the end of such sessions, prayers are said for such people, others are also counseled. Thus, through worship in the indigenous way, the needs of the members may be met by the Church. Bible study meetings are held once during the weekdays.

“All night” prayer meeting is one of the features of the CoP.⁵¹ Ojo rightly observes about African Christians in general that, “[they believed that] the more they pray, the greater the power of God works through them to defeat the powers of darkness”⁵² and overcome social problems.

A number of interpretations from different perspectives have been offered to explain Pentecostal type of worship. For scholars such as Hollenweger and Ter Haar, they are psychological and therapeutic functions of relief.⁵³ Of course, this has its place in Pentecostal corporate worship. However, it must be pointed out that not all who attend Pentecostal meetings need such therapeutic relief; for some are really settled down in life, they may have other purposes such as “building [themselves] up in [their] most holy faith” (Jude 22).

Others have attempted to provide a sociological explanation for Pentecostal worship. For Gifford, “most young people have no money to go to night clubs, discos or concerts for their entertainment. The churches provide a new forum for a parallel music scene...”⁵⁴ But Gifford’s “ridicule” is misconstrued, since such young people who join the churches, later testify of the power of God that has delivered them from worldly acts such as discos and clubs.⁵⁵ Thus it is the consideration of those acts as worldliness that puts the young people off from going to these social activities, rather than socio-economic circumstances as Gifford puts it.⁵⁶

Assessing the activities of the Africans in the diaspora, Van Dijk argues, “the global ‘strength’ of Pentecostalism is put centre stage; it is to this strength that a person can gain access through involvement in the leaders’ immediate social environment in diaspora”.⁵⁷ Although Van Dijk does not spelt out what he means by “the global ‘strength’ of Pentecostalism,” he appears to be speaking about Pentecostal type of worship in general, which, for him, is geared toward the provision of social help for those in the diaspora.⁵⁸ However, although social services may give some reasonable explanations for the Pentecostal type of worship, it cannot be the focus of Pentecostal worship, since, for example, with regards to the Ghanaian diasporic communities, there are some clubs which render social activities for them,⁵⁹ but some Pentecostals would not attend.

Cox sounds convincing as he demonstrates in his book, *Fire from Heaven*, that Pentecostalism is the recovery of "primal spirituality".⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the difficulty that some Pentecostals may have with this viewpoint is that, for them, worship is always geared towards spirituality, which has its source in divine revelation.⁶¹ Thus most Pentecostals will embrace Land's explanation for the Pentecostal-type of worship, "the singing, preaching, testifying...prayer meeting, [speaking in tongues]...all the elements of corporate worship prepared people for...a life of missionary witness".⁶² From this perspective, Pentecostals see worship as enriching their spiritual lives in order for them to be able to face practical life situations with fortitude and hope, besides carrying on with their Pentecostal life of witness with zeal.

3. Emphasis on the Holy Spirit and its implications for missions

The strength of the CoP growth and mission may be attributed to the emphasis it places on the work of the Holy Spirit. Leonard reports of a conversation that went on between McKeown and another missionary, I have only three messages 'One: Jesus Christ and him crucified. Two: the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Three: the power of God to change lives and bring holiness in the Church'.⁶³ The Holy Spirit is thought of as the One who guides the Church. It is the Spirit who enables them to effectively perform the tasks assigned to each believer in Christian ministry. Performance of task is urgent, since it is believed that the second coming of Christ is imminent. The Holy Spirit gives supernatural ability to Christians to witness including power to preach, power to cast out evil spirits, power to heal the sick and protection from evil forces. It is believed that once people experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit as initially evidenced by speaking in tongues, they are expected to witness Christ to others. Thus people baptized in the Holy Spirit are missionaries wherever they are. Everybody gets involved in evangelism.

Here, it is clear that power goes beyond what Eastwood attempts to identify as the priesthood of all believers.⁶⁴ Power is associated with what Stronstad explains as the prophethood of all believers,⁶⁵ where all could become powerful and confront witchcraft and fetishism in their evangelistic activities. This sort of "prophethood" of all believers appeals to the peasants and the downtrodden who constitute a majority

of the population in society. They help to propagate the gospel. The rapid growth of the CoP is an evidence of this.

The CoP does not stand alone here. Clearly the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the motivating factor behind all Pentecostal mission activities. This is clearly reflected in the writings of Pentecostal scholars, such as Spittler, Menzies and McClung. Spittler, the North American Pentecostal theologian writes, "Pentecostal success in mission can be laid to their drive for personal religious experience ...the experiential particularism involved in every Pentecostal baptism in the Holy Spirit".⁶⁶ However, sociologist Paul Gifford adduces the reason for the growth of the CoP to a "lack of any education requirements, which enables anyone wanting to begin a church to do so on behalf of CoP".⁶⁷ Gifford's argument is weak, because if such a requirement were to be the main factor of the growth of a church, then many churches would have grown. Similarly Pomerville, the Pentecostal missiologist, observes that church growth specialists assign many causes, including the mobilization of the laity, praying for the sick and aggressive evangelism, to Pentecostal church growth and missions. Nevertheless, Pomerville suggests that "the Pentecostal experience of individual believers has always been and still is the primary cause of growth of Pentecostal churches".⁶⁸

By stressing the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the CoP emphasizes the coming of the Spirit on a person's life as an experience which brings the ability to perform signs and wonders in Jesus' name to authenticate the gospel message. Against this background, there are campaigns, rallies, and crusades geared at winning new converts for Christ. Other evangelistic activities, especially among the diasporic communities include in-door crusades, personal evangelism and door to door visitations with the view to minister to the non-Christians.⁶⁹ It has been a regular feature within the Church's fellowship meetings for people to hear reports of signs and wonders wrought in the power of the Holy Spirit, including cripples walking, blind seeing and demons being cast out during their evangelistic activities. Ter Haar observes that they "detect the hand of God" in their daily affairs.⁷⁰ For Land, Pentecostalism is the "unseen recovery of the universal call to witness in the power

and demonstration of the Spirit in order to carry out the universal mission of the church...".⁷¹ Thus the emphasis on signs and wonders by the Church, which is also part of the Pentecostal evangelistic strategy throughout the world, has contributed to the growth of the Church both in Ghana and beyond.

The emphasis placed on the need for each person to receive the Holy Spirit also results in spontaneous liturgy, void of rigid order. This is mainly oral and narrative with emphasis on a direct experience of God through the indwelling Holy Spirit. Accordingly, through the baptism in the Holy Spirit, everyone is involved in worship and knows how to conduct a service. The result of this is indigenous assimilation. It was this sort of indigenous assimilation, exhibiting itself in the lives of the CoP members in diaspora, which resulted in the establishment of the branches of the CoP overseas.

Pentecostal emphasis on the Holy Spirit-baptism especially regarding glossolalia has not gone unchallenged.⁷² McGee sums up critical remarks against speaking in tongues; "critics branded glossolalia as nonsense".⁷³ Nonetheless, the Charismatic renewal in Africa and world-wide is a confirmation of the impact that the Pentecostal stress on the Holy Spirit has had on Christianity. Undoubtedly the Pentecostal experience and success have forced the larger church across the world to reassess the work of the Holy Spirit in its activities. Thus it is an undisputed fact that Pentecostalism has contributed positively to African and world Christianity.

4. Finance

On finance, it is the policy of the CoP not to ask for any outside support. The main sources of supports are tithes and offerings contributed by the members. The CoP believes that God will meet the Church's financial needs in season and out of season. This biblical based belief has been reechoed to the Church in various General Council meetings through prophetic messages. The resultant effect is that the CoP accepts that if it does not borrow or seek financial aids, loans or grants from anywhere, God will be its eternal riches and treasury to sustain the Church in all its needs. From this view point, the Church uses whatever local resources are available for its projects. Church members have been supporting projects such

as Church building, putting up of schools, putting up of clinics and buying of vehicles. For example, in 2004, an individual member of the Church, Elder Kwasi Oppong, put up a church building which amounted to \$ 150, 000 for his local church. In 2006, an elder of the Church also purchased two cars for the use of two pastors in his vicinity. In 2014, five individuals and their families put up five church buildings for different local congregations, at various places. Five other individuals also purchased vehicles for the use of their pastors.⁷⁴

By insisting on being self-supporting, the CoP has stood on its feet right from its beginning to date.

5. Social services

The CoP set up a department in 1982 called Pentecost Social Services, during the chairmanship of Apostle Safo. Its vision is to serve the spiritual and physical needs of people through an wholistic approach to development on a sustainable basis. In his State-of-the Church Address Chairman, Apostle Dr Ntumy reports that the Church owns and operates one hundred and thirteen Primary, Junior/Senior Secondary and Vocational/Technical Schools in Ghana. In 2003, through the leadership of Chairman Ntumy, a university college was established which does not only offer Theological programmes, but also Business Administration and Information Technology. The CoP in Ghana contributes to the Health Sector by owning and running six clinics and one fully-fledged hospital in Ghana. The CoP continues to donate generously towards institutions such as Heart Foundations, Children's Homes, Leprosarium and Veterans Associations.

In 2006, through the CoP's GENDER outfit, it contributed to poverty alleviation by training and resourcing sixty orphans and young widows and an additional two hundred and fifty-seven in employable skills in the Upper Region of Ghana.

At the international level, the CoP responds to the social needs of people. Both Van Dijk and Ter Haar rightly observe that members automatically become part of "a supportive socio-religious network," which helps them to define their roles in their various respective societies.⁷⁵ The meeting places become places of providing information on some issues such as jobs and accommodation. Professionals among members, including council workers, educationists, teachers

and solicitors, become consultants in their areas of specialism and render services to their clients on a voluntary basis. For example, those without resident permits are advised to apply for some or go home rather than to live in a country without legal documents.⁷⁶ Thus here the CoP provides conditions for migrants of insecure states, often with no jobs, no houses, no money and no legal documents to find their right places in society.

The concern for the general welfare of the members is also apparent in the social services department of the CoP providing support, for example at marriages and funerals. Those whose spouses are not with them are counseled, either to go for them or go and settle down home.⁷⁷ For those who want to get married, the CoP helps them through its international network.

In line with the Ghanaian cultures, the CoP officers in Ghana as well as those abroad make investigations about the prospective spouse. The purpose is to find out that their potential affine is not a noted criminal, not given to quarrelling, and is hard working with good morals. After both parties are satisfied they communicate to each other, and then those at home eventually help to perform the respective customary rites. Thus here the CoP takes over the role of the traditional abusua (family). By these services the CoP creates conditions which help the immigrants to get well established in their family lives, and by so doing help to arrest unforeseeable problems of divorce and its repercussions. With regard to funerals, donations are collected for people who are bereaved. Thus here the church helps to alleviate the possibility of incurring debt, pressure, and "guilt and shame" from its members.⁷⁸

The CoP's emphasis of the concept of holiness,⁷⁹ which may be considered by some as fundamentalism,⁸⁰ helps to protect vulnerable immigrants from falling victim to social problems. Members are reminded that committed Christians do not smoke, drink, abuse drugs or visit the disco.⁸¹ Instead their bodies should be given to the Holy Spirit as the Temple of God. Accordingly, the CoP prevents its members from falling victim to crimes, such as drug abuse, drug trafficking, excessive use of alcohol and other petty crimes which are common among immigrant communities in the West and elsewhere.

The missionaries provide counseling for members especially in areas of marital problems, employment, need for legal papers, finance and dreams believed to have been influenced by demons. That some of these are successful is indicated in the ways and manners which many people seek the attention of pastors.⁸²

6. Training

Until 1971 there was no formal training for any of the Church's officers. Retreats for teaching and prayer are held from time to time by a pastor for his district officers and for ministers (including other officers) within an area by the area head. It was Pastor David Mills, an Elim missionary, who adjoined to the CoP,⁸³ who re-introduced Bible School to the CoP in 1972. Bible School had been introduced to the CoP in 1953 when the Later Rain visited Ghana in 1953, but it was abandoned in 1957.⁸⁴ Pastor's Mills College also had to be closed down in 1975 and re-opened in 1981.⁸⁵ It is clear from the closing down of the schools that, in time past, the CoP shared with other Pentecostals, as Hollenweger points out, that "modern academic theology is a tragedy, whose fruit is empty churches".⁸⁶ As with other Pentecostals, the situation has changed. Currently the CoP has established a University College which has three Faculties: Theology and Missions; Business Administration and Information Technology. The infrastructure of the Pentecost University College was provided by the CoP, without resort to any foreign support. Full-time ministers spend at least one academic year training at the University. Some continue to a degree level. While some ministers continue to study to masters and doctoral levels, others have already obtained these degrees.

Conclusion

The emergence, development and growth of the CoP can be placed within the broader context of the 20th century Pentecostal renewal. The CoP's practices and principles have been based mainly upon those set up by James McKeown, the founder. McKeown's principles were similar to the 'Indigenous Policy' as first set out by Anderson and Venn, but like many Pentecostals, McKeown thought he was building an indigenous church with the New Testament methods. His fundamental principle of helping the native know God, and then trust

God to provide the rest has yielded results. The Church of Pentecost has progressively developed to become an example of an African indigenous Pentecostal church. Its form of Pentecostal worship has had impact on the modes of worship in other churches in Ghana. That this was untenable was revealed in the fact that Ghanaians in diaspora had to import from Ghana the sort of Christianity, African Pentecostalism, that was meaningful to them in the land of their 'strangerhood,' albeit Christianity had come to them from the West.

The CoP's emphasis on the baptism in the Holy Spirit as a mean of evangelism, protection and of power against evil forces has contributed to the growth. In such ministry, power is not vested into one person, but to all believers.

The shift of the CoP from McKeown's philosophy of "just to evangelize," which appeared to take care of only the 'spiritual' aspect of people, to the inclusion of social services which attempt to provide for the holistic needs of humanity has also helped to enhance the growth.⁸⁷ The diasporic churches, for example, respond to the social needs of the people and create conditions that prevent their members from falling victim to crime. As far as the members of the diasporic churches are concerned, the ministry the CoP is offering is theologically sound, intellectually stimulating, spiritually encouraging and emotionally satisfying. In both practical and psychological terms, the overseas churches help to create the necessary conditions for their members to acquire a sustainable position in Western society, supporting their attempts to integrate or participate successfully in the social mainstream and also satisfying their spiritual appetite. This has been what the power of Pentecost has done in the soil of Africa.

Notes

- 1 Opoku Onyinah, "The State of the Church Address" in *The Church of Pentecost: 42th General Council Meetings*, Accra: Pentecost Press Ltd, 2016), 10-15; M. K. Ntumy, "The State of—the-Church Address" in *The Church of Pentecost: 11th Extraordinary Council Meetings*, Accra: Pentecost Press Ltd, 2007), 15-35.
- 2 The three main works on the Church of Pentecost are Robert W. Wyllie, "Pioneers of Ghanaian Pentecostalism: Peter Anim and James McKeown," *Journal of Religion in Africa* VI, no. 2 (1974): 109-22; E. Kingsley Larbi, *Pentecostalism. The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, Accra: CPCS, 2001); Christine Leonard, *A Giant in Ghana: 3000 Churches in 50 Years-The Story of James McKeown and the Church of Pentecost* (Chichester: New Wine Press, 1989). Though Leonard's work was not presented in an academic style, it is a very good piece of work on the Church.
- 3 Gerrie Ter Haar, "Strangers in the Promised Land: African Christians in Europe," *Exchange* 24, no. 1 (1995): 1-33; Gerrie Ter Haar, *Halfway to Paradise: African Christians in Europe* (Cardiff: Cardiff Academic Press, 1998).
- 4 Rijk A. van Dijk, "From Camp to Encompassment: Discourses of Transsubjectivity in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 26, no. 4 (1992), 1-25.
- 5 J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Development within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 89.
- 6 Haar, *Halfway to Paradise*, 174.
- 7 Dijk, "From Camp to Encompassment," 135.
- 8 A prayer camp is a place where people go and pray. Some people may reside there for sometime, until their needs are met or otherwise.
- 9 Dijk, "From Camp to Encompassment," 135, 143.
- 10 Van Dijk bibliography shows that he had enough material to have helped him bring the facts to surface. One is inclined to think that he used his authorial skill to conjuncture such a hypothesis, highlighting "ritualistic religiosity," to arrest his Western audience's attention.

- ¹¹ Hans W. Debrunner, *A History of Christianity in Ghana* (Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1967), 7-100; Peter Bernard Clarke, *West Africa and Christianity: A Study of Religious Development from the 15th to 20th Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1986), 7-26, 41-62.
- ¹² Kofi Asare Opoku, "A Brief History of Independent Church Movement in Ghana Since 1862," in *The Rise of Independent Churches in Ghana*, ed. Asempa (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1990), 12-26; Kwesi A. Dickson, "The Methodist Society: A Sect," *Ghana Bulletin of Theology* 2, no. 6 (1964), 1-7.
- ¹³ Elsewhere there are called, Ethiopian and Zionist churches; Separatist churches, *Aladura churches*, African Initiated Churches, African Initiatives in Christianity, African Indigenous Churches, African Instituted churches, African Independent churches. See Bengt G. M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, 1948, Second (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 53-55. John S. Pobee and Gabriel Ositelu 11, *African Initiatives in Christianity: The Growth, Gifts and Diversities of Indigenous African Churches* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1998), 4; Allan Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost: The Spirituality and Experience of Pentecostal and Zionist / Apostolic Churches in South Africa* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2000).
- ¹⁴ For works on these churches, see Christian Goncalves Kwami Baëta, *Prophetism in Ghana: A Study of 'Spiritual Churches'* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1962); Robert W. Wyllie, *Spiritism in Ghana: A Study of New Religious Movements* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1980); David M. Beckmann, *Eden Revival: Spiritual Churches in Ghana* (London: Concordia Publishing House, 1975).
- ¹⁵ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatic*, 89.
- ¹⁶ For further discussion of this, see Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 210-242.
- ¹⁷ Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1972), 192.
- ¹⁸ Leonard, *A Giant in Ghana*, 138.
- ¹⁹ The Apostolic Church, *The Apostolic Church: Its Principles and Practices* (Bradford: Apostolic Publications, 1937), 35-44, 245-49;

- Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 191,290-293; Leonard, *A Giant in Ghana*, 138.
- ²⁰ Leonard, *A Giant in Ghana*, 69.
- ²¹ Cf. Debrunner, *Christianity in Ghana*, 325.
- ²² Leonard, *A Giant in Ghana*, 76.
- ²³ In fact the Church puts so much emphasis on the baptism of the Holy Spirit as evidence in speaking in tongues that even, at present, those who are not baptised in the Spirit are not allowed to hold any ministerial office.
- ²⁴ Leonard, *A Giant in Ghana*, 9, 116.
- ²⁵ Rufus Anderson, *Foreign Missions: Their Relations and Claims*, Third Edition (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, 1874), 48, 60-61,109-113.
- ²⁶ Wilbert R. Shenk, *Henry Venn-Missionary Statesman* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1983), Beaver in his foreword to this book rightly says that "the two men [Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson] are independently the authors of the "Three-Self Formula". See page xii. See also the following pages for the development of the formula, 25-41,109.
- ²⁷ Roland Allen, *Missionary Method: St Paul or Ours? 1912*, American edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962).
- ²⁸ Hollenweger, Pentecostalism, 298 R. S. Spittler, "Implicit Values in Pentecostal Missions," in *Missiology: An International Review* xvi. 4 (October 1988), 416.
- ²⁹ McGee, "Pentecostals and Their Various Strategies for Global Mission," 212.
- ³⁰ Leonard, *A Giant in Ghana*, 170-71.
- ³¹ Melvin L. Hodges, *The Indigenous Church* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1953), 10, 133.
- ³² McKeown, Interview by Christie Norman.
- ³³ E. Kingsley Larbi, "Sustaining the Growth", in James McKeown Memorial Lectures: 50 Years of the Church of Pentecost, Opoku Onyinah, ed. (Accra: The Church of Pentecost, 2004), 143.

- ³⁴ Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 117.
- ³⁵ CoP refers to all its pastors who minister overseas as 'missionaries.' In a way, those in African counties are really doing missions work, since most of the members of the churches are indigenes. So far as CoP work in the West is concerned, it is within the Ghanaian community. However, to go with CoP 'language' the term 'missionary' is used to described all pastors of the Church who go from either Ghana or else to minister in a country that is not their own.
- ³⁶ Walter J. Hollenweger, "After Twenty Years Research on Pentecostalism," *Inter Notional Review of Mission* LXXV, no. 297 (1985): 10-11; see also Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997), 293; Spittler, "Implicit Values", 413-14.
- ³⁷ Roswith I. H. Gerloff, "The Holy Spirit and the African Diaspora: Spiritual, Cultural and Social Roots of Black Pentecostal Churches," *EPTA Bulletin* xiv (1995): 91.
- ³⁸ These include Botswana, Zambia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Mozambique, Lesotho and Malawi.
- ³⁹ The Church of Pentecost, *International Missions Report for the Year 2063*, Accra (April 2007).
- ⁴⁰ The Church of Pentecost, *Final Reviewed Constitution*, 20.
- ⁴¹ The Apostolic Church, *The Apostolic Church*, 22-44;cf. The Church of Pentecost, *Final Review Constitution*, 1-27.
- ⁴² For reading on Akan military organs, see Robert Sutherland Rattray, *Ashanti Law and Constitution* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1929), 120-26; Kofi Abrefa Busia, *The Position of the Chief in Modern Asante* (London: Oxford university Press, 1951), 1-22; G. K. Nukunya, *Tradition and Change in Ghana* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1992), 67-74.
- ⁴³ Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 130, 149.
- ⁴⁴ For example, in preaching someone moved by the Spirit may cut across and sing.

- ⁴⁵ See Afua Kumah, *Jesus of the Deep Forest*, trans. J. Kirby (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1981).
- ⁴⁶ Cf. Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Ghana: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Edinburgh: Orbis Book, 1995), 59-60.
- ⁴⁷ Cf. Leonard, *A Giant in Ghana*, 68; Larbi, "The Development of Ghanaian Pentecostalism," 153; Rosalind I. J. Hackett, "Charismatic/Pentecostal Appropriation of Media Technologies in Nigeria and Ghana," *Journal of Religion in Africa* XXVII, no. 3 (1998): 270.
- ⁴⁸ Larbi, "Sustaining the Growth," 143.
- ⁴⁹ Cf. with Anderson's observation about the hermeneutical principles of the Pentecostals in South Africa. Allan Anderson, "The Hermeneutical Processes of Pentecostal-Type African Initiated Churches in South Africa," *Missionalia* 24, no. 2 (1996): 174.
- ⁵⁰ Haar, *Halfway to Paradise*, 48.
- ⁵¹ Praying through out the whole night.
- ⁵² Ojo, "Charismatic Missionary Enterprises," 557.
- ⁵³ Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 457; Ter Haar, "Strangers in the Promised Land," 457.
- ⁵⁴ Gifford, *African Christianity*, 90.
- ⁵⁵ Cf. Emmanuel Owusu Bediako, Personal Communication (Washington, December 12, 1998).
- ⁵⁶ Although Gifford was speaking about the neo-Pentecostals in Ghana, the fundamental principle is the same. For example, some Ghanaian Pentecostal in the diaspora do not go to discos and concerts because they see these activities as worldly.
- ⁵⁷ Dijk, "From Camp to Encompassment," 148.
- ⁵⁸ Dijk, "From Camp to Encompassment," 148-149.
- ⁵⁹ See Peil, *Ghanaians Abroad*, 363-364
- ⁶⁰ Cox, *Fire Heaven*, 81, 83, 228.
- ⁶¹ Cf. Steven Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 20, 23.

- 62 Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, 75.
- 63 Leonard, *A Giant in Ghana*, 85
- 64 Cyril Eastwood, *The Priesthood of All Believers: An Examination of the Doctrine from the Reformation to the Present Day* (London: The Epworth Press, 1960), 238-39.
- 65 Roger Stronstad, *The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 114-15.
- 66 Spittler, "Implicit Values", 413.
- 67 Gifford, *African Christianity*, 76.
- 68 P. A. Pomerville, *Introduction to Missions: An Independent-Study Textbook*, (Irving: ICI University Press, 1987), 96, 100.
- 69 Bediako, Personal Communication.
- 70 Ter Haar, *Halfway*, 45.
- 71 Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 96.
- 72 For example, see J. P. Kildahl, *The Psychology of Speaking in Tongues*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 38-39, 54-55; M. J. Cartledge, "Interpreting Charismatic Experience: Hypnosis, Altered States of Consciousness and the Holy Spirit?" in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 13 (1998), 120; Cf. S. L. Davies, *Jesus the Healer: Possession, Trance the Origin of Christianity*, (London: SCM, 1995), 187. Davies work constitutes an attempt to contribute to the quest for the historical Jesus, reinterpreting the gospel accounts of healings and exorcisms in the light of modern psychology and anthropology. But he develops a chapter claiming that Paul delivered his messages orally in order to effect the induction of spirit-possession in susceptible listeners (Ibid., 189).
- 73 G. B. McGee, "Pentecostal Missiology: Moving Beyond Triumphalism to face the Issues," *PNEUMA* 16.2 (Fall 1994), 279.
- 74 Opoku Onyinah, "The State of the Church Address" in *The Church of Pentecost: 42th General Council Meetings*, Accra: Pentecost Press Ltd, 2015, 10-14.
- 75 Dijk, "From Camp to Encompassment," 139; Ter Haar, "Strangers in the Promised Land," 17.

- ⁷⁶ Bediako Kwame, Personal Communication; Emmanuel Koney, "Personal Communication", (Brussels, January 2, 1999).
- ⁷⁷ The condition, which brought such immigrants, did not permit them to bring their dependants. Most marriages have broken down because of the long separations of spouses in search of greener pastures. Koney, Personal Communication; George Arthur, Oslo, Personal Communication, February 2000; Rattray, *Religion and Art*, 79-90; Nukunya, *Tradition and Change*, 39.
- ⁷⁸ For Ghanaians, funerals are very important. Bishop Sarpong, the Ghanaian Catholic anthropologist, writes, "one of the signs of a successful life and a good death is the way a deceased person's funeral is celebrated". Sarpong, *Ghana in Retrospect*, 26. Although the Church discourages expensive funerals, immigrants may fly home for the funerals of their parents, uncles, nephews or siblings and thus incur debt. Those who fail to go usually send money for this purpose. Whether a bereaved person is able to attend a funeral at home or not, the Church allows another funeral to be celebrated abroad. Donations are made to the individuals concerned towards their funeral expenses.
- ⁷⁹ Ter Haar, "*Strangers in the Promised Land*," 225.
- ⁸⁰ Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 50-52.
- ⁸¹ Bediako, Personal Communication; Owusu-Afriyie, Personal Communication, (London, June 10, 1998).
- ⁸² Bediako, Personal Communication.
- ⁸³ See section 4.6 below.
- ⁸⁴ James McKeown, "World Mission Training Centre, December, 1, 1954; James McKeown, Circular Letter", November, 29, 1957.
- ⁸⁵ The Church of Pentecost, Winneba, General Council Minutes, March, 12-18, 1975.
- ⁸⁶ Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 194.
- ⁸⁷ Presently it is the Church's policy that at least one social service should be done in any country it functions, until the indigenous people are grown to put up more for their community. The Church of Pentecost International Mission, *Missions Hand Book* (Accra: The Church of Pentecost, 1994), 8.