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Editorial Address: pentecostjournal@gmail.com

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CONTRIBUTORS

Most Rev. Dr. Robert K. Aboagye-Mensah is an ordained minister of The Methodist Church Ghana, and served as the Presiding Bishop from 2003-2009. He is currently the Director, Research and Publications at School of Theology, Mission and Leadership near Accra. He served as Dean of the Faculty of Theology and Mission, Pentecost University College. He was also the Executive Director of Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation, Kitwe, Zambia. In 1984 he obtained a Ph.D in Systematic Theology from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, UK.

Apostle Christian Tsekpoe is an ordained minister of The Church of Pentecost. He is a lecturer at Pentecost University College, School of Theology, Mission and Leadership Accra, Ghana. He is currently a PhD candidate at Oxford Centre for Mission Studies.

Apostle Vincent Anane Denteh is an ordained minister of The Church of Pentecost and the Area Head of the Sefwi Bekwai. He served as a Missionary of the Church of Pentecost in Ukraine and Madagascar. Vincent Denteh holds a Diploma in Freelance Journalism (Cleland Thom Journalism Training Services, Manchester, UK), Bachelor degree in Ministry and Christian Journalism (Freedom Bible College and Seminary, Arkansas, USA) and Bachelor of Theology Honours degree from South African Theological Seminary (SATS), Johannesburg, where he is currently offering a Master of Theology degree.

Apostle Dr. Alfred Koduah is an ordained minister of The Church of Pentecost. He studied at the Regents Theological College in Nantwich UK and was awarded a Master of Theology degree in Applied Theology by the University of Manchester, UK. He continued his theological education at the South African Theological Seminary, South Africa where he was awarded PhD in Theology. His interest is in the area of the development of theological models and strategies for communicating the gospel in contemporary society.

Rev. Dr. Nicholas Darko is an ordained minister of The Church of Pentecost. He has served as the Finance and Administrator Director at the Church of Pentecost Headquarters in Ghana since 2001. He is also the Resident Minister of D. K. Arnan Worship Centre. He is also an adjunct lecturer at the Pentecost University College. He holds a Ph.D. in Practical Theology from the South African Theological Seminary. Dr. Darko is a Chartered Certified Accountant, and a fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants in the United Kingdom (FCCA).

Rev. Fred Amoakohene Sarpong is an ordained minister of The Church of Pentecost. Currently, he is a lecturer and a coordinator for the School of Music at the School of Theology, Mission and Leadership, Pentecost University college. Prior to this, he worked as a Teaching Assistant in the Music Department of the University of Ghana. He is an active music professional trained by the University of Ghana. Fred has expertise in various music genres and takes particular interest in handling church music and setting up structures committed to the pursuance of good church music. His passion lies in sharing his knowledge on the subject with other people and institutions through seminars and paper presentations.

Professor Amos Yong, PhD, is Director, Center for Missiological Research, and Professor of Theology and Mission, School of Intercultural Studies, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, USA. Prior to this he was the Dean of Regent University School of Divinity, Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA.

Apostle Dr. Samuel Ofori is an ordained minister of The Church of Pentecost, and currently serves as the Resident Minister for New Mataheko Worship Centre, Kasoa. He lectures at the Pentecost Theological Seminary at Gomoa-Fetteh, near Accra, where he serves as the Director, Ministerial Formation and Training. He holds a Ph.D in Theology from the Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission and Culture, Akuapem-Akropong, Ghana. His research interest is in Christianity and African Culture.

**PENTECOSTALISM AND
MODELS OF MISSION**

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Theme for Next Issue:
**Pentecostalism and African
Traditional Religion**

EDITORIAL

Pentecostalism and Models of Mission

The theme of the third edition of the *Pentecost Journal of Theology and Mission* (PJTM) is “Pentecostalism and Models of Mission”.

Mission is God’s idea and the message of the whole Bible is about God’s mission to the nations. However, from biblical times to today, God engages human beings as His missional agents in fulfilling His purpose. Thus, the mission of God is intensely paradoxical, in that, on the one hand, God’s mission is initiated and directed by Him, and God’s mission is realized through the glorious work of God in Christ Jesus manifested through the power of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, God’s mission cannot be achieved without human beings’ participation in weakness as ‘jars of clay’. By referring to human beings as ‘jars of clay’ we mean missionaries, as co-workers of God, must daily acknowledge that they are weak, fragile and powerless in contrast to God’s glorious power that works through them. As Paul reminds us, we are jars of clay “to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us” (2 Corinthians 4:7).

It is tempting, especially when God is working powerfully in and through human beings, to arrogantly claim the victory for ourselves. This is one of the major challenges that confronts missionaries of all times. The apostle Paul, a missionary to the Gentiles, had to learn this lesson from the Lord, when the Lord told him, “My grace is sufficiently for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

As you read and study the six articles and the two book reviews, we want you to bear this paradox in mind so that we will be humbled by God’s grace as God uses us in His mission. The first three articles provide biblical and theological considerations for Pentecostal missions, and the last three deal with Pentecostal mission praxis. The journal ends with two book reviews.

The first article, “The Calling and Sending of Abraham as a missionary to the nations: A relevant missional model for Today” is written by Dr. Robert K. Aboagye-Mensah. His work is an exposition on the role of Abraham as God’s missionary to the nations, and how Abraham’s

missional model offers lessons that are relevant for missionaries of all ages irrespective of their particular or peculiar theological and denominational persuasions.

The second article, “A Theological Reflection on the Development of Mission Models in the Church of Pentecost and its implications for the Future of Pentecostal Mission in Ghana” by Christian Tsekpoe, presents a brief survey of how mission models have developed in the Church of Pentecost from the time of James McKeown to contemporary times. He uses the ‘Three-self Indigenous Principle’ as well as ‘Shreiter-Bevans’ taxonomy of local and contextual models to better understand the Church of Pentecost’s mission models. He concludes by pointing out the implications of these models for the future of the Church of Pentecost’s involvement in God’s mission in Ghana and elsewhere.

“Pentecostal Mission Praxis: A Review of core Pentecostal Doctrines that drive and shape Pentecostal Models of Mission” is the third article, by Dr. Vincent Anane Denteh. He examines the vast impact that Pentecostalism is currently having on world mission and the theological praxis that are propelling the massive growth. He concludes with vital recommendations for further discussion and re-evaluation of Pentecostal missional praxis in order that the rapid growth of the Pentecostal and charismatic churches may be sustained in the years to come.

The fourth article, “Declining Membership and Attendance in the Traditional Mainline Churches in the Western World: Lessons for Christianity in Ghana”, is written by Dr. Alfred Koduah. While Dr Koduah acknowledges the enormous contributions that the churches in the West had made towards the global expansion of Christianity he is concerned about the apparent decline in the mainline churches of the West. This concern leads him to conduct primary research to explore the factors that may be contributing to the decline in church membership and attendance. Specific factors for this decline emerge from Dr Koduah’s analysis and he concludes by drawing out some helpful lessons that will assist the Pentecostal churches to sustain their growth.

Dr. Nicholas Darko's article, "Pentecostalism and Africa-to-Africa Missions-Financing Praxis" briefly looks at the missions-financing praxis of four Pentecostal churches that are currently engaged in the emerging African-to-Africa missions. The churches are, The Church of Pentecost of Ghana, The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa, Light House Chapel International of Ghana, and The Redeemed Christian Church of God of Nigeria. Dr Darko draws attention to the need for professional, planned, financial programmes for God's mission in the world.

The sixth article by Fred Amoakohene Sarpong, "The Place of Music in Missions work in Ghana: with reference to The Church of Pentecost", gives a brief narrative of the role that music has played and continues to play in the churches in Ghana with particular reference to the Church of Pentecost. He examines four musical types in Ghanaian churches, namely, Contrafactum, Eclectic, Creative Essays of Afro-Identity and Spontaneous types. He concludes with a brief comment on the importance of the Psalms in church music.

We end with two book reviews. Professor Amos Yong, reviews *Pentecostalism in Africa: Presence and Impact of Pneumatic Christianity in Postcolonial Societies*, edited by Martin Lindhardt is the first review. The book is a collection of thirteen articles on various aspects of the pentecostal-charismatic movements on the African continent which are worthy of attention from scholars beyond Africa. Prof Yong writes;

"A central theme running throughout the book relates particularly to the political aspects of African pentecostal-charismatic movements, which reference to "postcolonial societies" in the book's subtitle foregrounds. In this vein, there are intriguing and substantive analyses of Pentecostalism as a "post-secular" phenomenon in the African space, of the movement's "spiritual warfare" approach to the political, and of pentecostal preachers as contemporary exemplifications of the traditional "big man rule" in African societies, among other treatments.

Professor Amos Yong, would like “Scholars of world Christianity in general and of Pentecostal-charismatic movements in particular in the South Asian and wider areas to be attentive to development in the African scene”.

The second book review is by Dr Samuel Ofori on Thomas C. Oden’s book, *How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind: Rediscovering the African Seedbed of Western Christianity*. After a thorough and exciting review, Dr. Ofori ends with this insightful comment: “The book also helps to deal with the erroneous impression that Christianity is a white man’s religion and thus foreign to Africa. A religion in which Africans have participated since the fourth and fifth centuries is as traditional to Africa as the other African traditional religions”.

The Editors are extremely grateful to our contributors for their articles and reviews making this third edition of PJTM a significant resource in the study of Pentecostalism and Models of Mission. We are pleased to announce the theme of “Pentecostalism and African Traditional Religion” for the next issue of PJTM.

Robert K. Aboagye-Mensah
Chief Editor

THE CALLING AND SENDING OF ABRAHAM AS A MISSIONARY TO THE NATIONS: A RELEVANT MISSIONAL MODEL FOR TODAY

Robert K. Aboagye-Mensah

Key Words: *Mission, spiritual disciplines, God's grace, Abraham, calling and sending, culture, faith, worship*

Introduction

This article is a reflection on God's calling and sending of Abraham as a missionary to the nations. It does so by trying to answer some basic questions - why was it necessary, who is Abraham, what was the core theology of his mission, and how did he respond to his God-given mission? At the end of each section we have drawn out some lessons that are relevant for our contemporary engagement in mission.

Why was the calling and sending of Abraham necessary? Redemption of humanity and creation

To appreciate the importance of our theme we must briefly narrate the past events that necessitated Abraham's calling and sending as a missionary; and that means giving a summary of Genesis 1 to 11:9.

In Genesis chapters one and two God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, crowned his work by creating human beings in his image (Genesis 1:26). God commanded that they were free, but the freedom had to be exercised accountably and responsibly (Genesis 2;15-17). Unfortunately, both human beings, male and female freely chose to act against God's will and purpose (Genesis 3:1-7). From then on the Bible presents us with two realities running side by side. On the one hand, human beings repeatedly rebelled against God , and consequence of such rebellion is summed up in these words,

Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. (Genesis 6:11-13)

On the other hand, we have God's prevenient grace acting alongside human sinfulness. God took the initiative to call Adam and Eve from their hiding place among the trees (Genesis 3:8-10). God graciously promised them that He will crush the head of the Serpent (Genesis 3:15). God kindly replaced the fig leaves that human beings had used as clothing with clothes made out of animal skins that would last longer (Genesis 3:21). And to ensure that Adam and Eve will not take the fruit from the tree that gives life, eat it, and live forever in sin and remain unredeemable, the Lord God sent them out of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:22-24).

To be sure, God punished humanity for being rebellious with the flood but after the flood human beings are again sent forth under God's blessing to multiply and fill the earth (Genesis 9:1). In Genesis 10 the descendants of Noah obey God's command to scatter or spread (see Genesis 9:1, 10:18, 32); but not long after this, human beings stopped spreading and instead settled. In a self-centered arrogance that sought to promote human supremacy over God, they decide to build a tower leading to heaven in order to make a name for themselves (Genesis 11:1-4). But God intervened and compulsorily scattered them by confusing "their language so they will not understand each other" (Genesis 11:9). Chris Wright has vividly and powerfully summed up the human conditions that called for God's redemptive intervention.

From Genesis 3-11 on one hand everything is tragically adrift from the original goodness of God's purpose. The earth lies under the sentence of God's curse because of human sin. Human beings are adding to their catalog of evil as the generations roll past - jealousy, anger, murder, vengeance, violence, corruption, drunkenness, sexual disorder, arrogance, etc.. Every inclination of human hearts is perpetually evil. Technology and culture are advancing, but the skill that can craft instruments for music and agriculture can also forge weapons of violent death. Nations experience the richness of their ethnic, linguistic and geographical diversity along with confusion, scattering, and strife.¹

To redeem humanity and the whole creation from the power of sin, death and Satan, (Genesis 3:15), God must start a new creation. In

other words, “in uttering this promise, God is already hinging at the coming of his new community and the deliverance of human beings and the world from the power of Satan”.² Now the main issue is, ‘who is going to be used by the triune God to fulfill His promise of redemption, humanity and the rest of creation? The calling and sending of Abraham as a missionary to the nations is God’s initial response to the human predicaments that will be fully realized in Christ Jesus. But who is Abraham, where did he originally come from, and what will be his role in fulfilling God’s mission for the nations?

Who was Abraham? - One of Terah’s Three Sons

Terah was the father of Abraham; he had three sons, Abraham, Nahor and Haran. They were all born in the city of Ur of the Chaldeans, (Iraq, NE of the Persian Gulf). Haran had a son, Lot and two daughters, Sarai and Milcah. Haran died in Ur while his father was still alive. “Of these, Nahor took Milcah as wife, and Abram took Sarai, because marriages between uncles and brothers’ daughters had not yet been forbidden by the law”.³

The people in the city of Ur worshipped many gods, including moon-god Sin. According to Augustine, an African theologian, the Chaldeans “were deeply immersed in unholy superstitions. It was only the family of Abraham that worshipped the true God”.⁴ Jerome also tells us that “the whole family of Terah was severely persecuted for their faith, and had to leave Ur on their way to Canaan”.⁵ Joshua alluded to this when he told the Israelites at Shechem that long ago their ancestors lived in Mesopotamia where they worshipped other gods. One of those ancestors was Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor. (Joshua 24:2).

Initially, Nahor did not accompany the family when they left Ur on their way to Canaan. Augustine suggests that when Terah and the family left Ur on their way to Canaan Nahor did not go with them because he “had lapsed from the piety of his father and brother, and adhered to the superstition of the Chaldeans”.⁶ Later when he repented and turned to the Lord he was persecuted as a suspected person, and he had to emigrate to Mesopotamia. Later when Abraham wanted a wife for his son Isaac he sent his servant to Mesopotamia, where Nahor and his wife Milcah had settled (Genesis 24:10).

There are two important lessons that may be deduced from what has been said about Terah and his household, when considering God's mission. First, God was actively present in Ur where superstition, idolatry and paganism existed. God was never absent from that city. God, graciously chose to make himself known to the household of Terah when they were still idol worshippers and "ungodly". We do not know the circumstances that brought them to faith in the true God. What is certain is that it was after they had believed that they were sent out. Thus, missionaries should always understand that they themselves or their ancestors were pagans before God made Himself known to them, and later called and sent them to other pagan nations. Again, missionaries must humbly acknowledge that they do not take God to the nations where they are sent. God has preceded them in the countries they are to serve.

A second lesson is that, persecution is an important means for the spread of the good news, as found in the family of Terah who migrated from Ur towards Canaan due to persecution. This is true in New Testament times as well. For example, the persecution of Stephen caused the disciples in Jerusalem to scatter, and in so doing, Philip for instance, took the good news to Samaria and beyond (Acts 8:1-5). In the early church this reality is summed up in the words of Tertullian, "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church"⁷, when he was demanding a legal toleration for Christians who were being persecuted within the Roman Empire.. The fact is persecution has precipitated the spread of the good news, and it started with the family of Abraham, the father of the nations.

What was the theological foundation of God's Mission to the nations? -The Grace of God

The biblical foundation of God's mission is His grace, expressed in mercy and compassion. This is profoundly true in the calling and sending of Abraham to the nations. As we have said earlier, in Babel human beings' determination to make a name for themselves by procuring their salvation failed with God's intervention (Genesis 11:1-8). In the case of Abraham, however, to ensure that the fulfillment of God's mission through Abraham is founded on God's grace, and not on any goodness of Abraham, God made the

promise to him when his wife was barren. Humanly speaking, it is impossible for the promise to be fulfilled in barrenness. In fact, Abraham himself at one point doubted whether this was actually going to happen when Sarah was barren. But God assured him that He will act through the barrenness and make the impossible possible. (Genesis 15:1-6; Romans 11:11-12).

Again, at Babel the people wanted to make “a name for themselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth” (Genesis 11:4). But in the case of Abraham it is God himself who graciously said to him, “I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing” (Genesis 12:2). Therefore, God’s mission that began with Abraham was founded on God’s grace alone. It did not depend on Abraham’s moral and material achievements, nor on his ethnicity and nationality. It was purely by God’s grace expressed in mercy and compassion that he was called to be God’s missionary to the world.

The fact that God’s mission is founded on God’s grace is extremely important for all generations. In the Old Testament the nation of Israel, that had their ancestral root in Abraham, had to be constantly reminded that God’s choice of them in reaching out to the nations was based on grace and not because they were any better than other nations. This is clearly stated in Deuteronomy chapter seven:

For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands. (Deuteronomy 7:6-9, emphasis mine)

Elsewhere, prophet Amos reminded the people of Israel that essentially, they were no better people than the other nations around

them, and that they had no advantage over them. “Are you Israelites not the same to me as the Cushites?” declares the LORD. “Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir?” (Amos 9:7). In the book of Jonah, the main missional lesson is that Jonah, as a representative of Israel, should know that God deals equally with all the nations including Israel on the basis of grace understood in terms of the mercy and compassion of God, and that God’s grace does not have any limited boundaries. Although Jonah clearly understood that God’s salvation is based on grace alone, he felt that it should be limited to Israel. This truth is clearly expressed in the complaint he made to God when the people of Nineveh heard his message, responded with fasting and repentance and turned to God and were forgiven. “I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.

Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.” (Jonah 4:3). Jonah certainly accepted God’s gracious acts in mercy and compassion towards Israel, but he did not want God to extend the same to other nations. What Jonah needed to know is that God’s grace, which is foundational to God’s mission to the world of the nations, is not limited to Israel.

Time and space will not permit us to show that the same truth is found in the New Testament. It will suffice to say that in the missional work of the Lord Jesus Christ he had compassion on people in the peripheries of Jewish society that the Pharisees had categorized as ‘sinners’ and ‘tax collectors’, unworthy of God’s grace. Jesus strongly rejected their position. He applied the same principle of grace to Gentiles, Samaritans, women, children, lepers, etc, who were outside the Jewish community. Because God’s mission to the nations is informed by God’s grace no one is exempted.⁸ Charles Wesley, an 18th century Oxford theologian and renowned music composer, has captured the limitlessness and the immensity of God’s grace in time, space and ethnicity, in these words:

Thy sovereign grace to all extends.
Immense and unconfined:
From age to age it never ends;
It reaches all mankind.⁹

In short, in the calling and sending of Abraham as a missionary to the nations, God was and is setting up His grace as a foundational model for God's mission in all generations, "There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:21-24).

However, we must also state categorically that the fact that grace is foundational to God's mission does not mean that human beings have nothing to do in the fulfillment of God's mission. To understand this point, let us listen attentively to what God said to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-4. It reads:

The LORD had said to Abram,
"Leave your country, your people and your father's household
and go to the land I will show you".
"I will make you into a great nation
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."
So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with
him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from
Haran. (Genesis 12:1-4, NIV)

It is important to note that in the above passage, God's speech falls into two halves. The first part is an imperative saying to Abram, "Get yourself up and go", and it is when Abram has done his part that the Lord will fulfill His part by making him into a great nation. The second part is where Abram is to be a blessing, and then the Lord will bless those who bless him. This is clear from the Mesoretic Text, where the verb 'blessing' is imperative, "And be a blessing", and not imperfect, "and you will be a blessing", as rendered in the NIV. In effect, what God is saying is that Abraham has a role to play in the fulfillment of God's purpose and intentions for him and all the nations. The first imperative is saying, he must get up and go, and then God will make him into a great nation. The second imperative

is saying when he becomes a blessing, then the Lord will bless those who bless him. So the two imperatives are conditional, for it is when man has done his part, and the Lord has done what He says He will do that the abundant blessing will be realized in Abraham and then extended to all the nations.

Thus, it is important that Abraham responded positively to God's imperatives: "So Abram left, as the LORD had told him." (Genesis 12:4). What we learn from Abraham is that the discipline of obedience is crucial in the fulfilment of God's mission. So, there are two important lessons to learn. First God's mission is founded on God's grace alone. Secondly, human beings have their part to play, namely they are expected to respond in obedience to God at all times and in all places.

How Did Abraham Respond to God's Mission? - Abraham Modeled A Seven-fold Spiritual Disciplines

We shall now turn to a seven-fold spiritual discipline that characterized Abraham's response to God's grace in the process of fulfilling God's mission to the nations, and their relevance for the church's engagement in God's mission today.

1. Growing Strong in Faith

The first spiritual discipline that Abraham followed is that he grew strong in his faith as he anticipated the fulfilment of God's missional promise. Even in the most challenging situations Abraham maintained his faith in God as Paul tells us in Romans 4: 18-21,

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead - since he was about a hundred years old - and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised".

Again in Hebrews, we are told that Abraham's obedience to God is an expression of his strong faith in God.

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God (Hebrews 11:8-10).

The great legacy that Abraham gives to all Christians, especially to all missionaries, is that they must have personal faith in the triune God before they go to the nations, for this is what Abraham did. Of course, having a personal faith in God did not make Abraham an extraordinary person. There were times that he lived with uncertainty and doubt regarding the fulfilment of the Promise (Genesis 15:1-5; see also Genesis 16:1-15). However, In the midst of doubts, he was convinced that God was faithful to his Promise and that he had to persevere in his faith. The challenging situations made him grow stronger in faith. He persevered to the end. In our commitment to Africa-to-Africa mission, or Africa-to-Europe/Asia missions we should grow in faith as we face challenging situations, for without faith we cannot please God.

2. Practicing Hospitality

Hospitality has a crucial place in realizing God's mission in the world. When Abraham was a missionary in Canaan, one day he saw three strangers standing nearby. "When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground" (Genesis 18:2). He invited them in, washed their feet and with the help of his wife Sarah and his servants they served the visitors with a delicious meal. Unknown to Abraham, he and his family were extending hospitality to the Lord himself, who had come to them as three strangers (Genesis 18:1-15). Commenting indirectly on Abraham's hospitality the book of Hebrews encourages Christians to practice hospitality as a missional virtue. "Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it" (Hebrews 13:1-2).

There are several examples in the Old Testament where people like Joseph, Moses and Solomon extended hospitality to strangers and were blessed by their acts of kindness (Genesis 43:15-34; Exodus 2:15-22; 1 Kings 4:22). In the New Testament our Lord Jesus himself showed hospitality when he lavishly fed over five thousand adults and children (Matthew 14:15-21; Mark 6:35-44; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:4-13). Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan is an excellent example of exercising hospitality towards a neighbor (Luke 10:30-37). Jesus continued to extend hospitality towards his disciples after his resurrection when he shared meals with them (John 21:4-13).

Indeed, Christians are expected to show hospitality towards one another, and Paul in his closing greetings to the church in Rome cited Gaius as one whose hospitality he and the whole church had enjoyed (Romans 16:23). We are not only expected to show hospitality towards all Christians, but we should do so within our nuclear and extended families, especially to widows and orphans (1 Timothy 5:1-8).

We must also know that demonstrating hospitality, especially to strangers is a way of showing our faithfulness to the triune God, and that such acts are usually accompanied by blessings from the Lord. Abraham and his wife, Sarah are good example of this, for the Lord blessed them when he said to them, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son" (Genesis 18:10). In the following year Sarah gave birth to Isaac. So Abraham teaches us that hospitality is an important missional responsibility even in our generation.

3. Being Disciplined in Prayer

We learn from Abraham that prayer is an essential discipline in our God-given missional responsibilities. The first example is where Abraham had to passionately intercede for Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:16-33). Abraham had such an intimate relationship with God that when God wanted to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah He shared what was on His heart with Abraham.

When the men got up to leave, they looked down towards Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. Then the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about

to do? Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him”. (Genesis 18:16-19)

Abraham responded to God by seriously interceding for Sodom and Gomorrah. Although God did not stop destroying Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham’s intercessory prayer had some positive results as indicted in Genesis 18:29, “So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived”. We learn from Abraham’s missional model that a missionary must be an intercessor for the nation’s he or she has been called to serve.

Another occasion that Abraham demonstrated the importance of intercessory prayer was when he had to find a wife for his son Isaac (Genesis 24:1-9, 40-41). In this moving story he asked his oldest servant to place his hand under his thigh and make a vow in the name of the Lord that he will not find a wife for Isaac from the Canaanites (Genesis 24:1-4). By this act, according to Augustine, Abraham was being “prophetic of the fact that the Lord God of heaven and the Lord of the earth would one day come in flesh fashioned from that thigh”¹⁰

Ancient Christian Commentary On Scripture, Old Testament II, Genesis 12-50, Edited by Mark Sheridan, General Editor, Thomas C. Oden, Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2002, cited in City of God, 16:33) p.122.

In this story, Abraham prayerfully charged his servant to find the right woman for Isaac. Abraham was convinced that marriage between people who do not share the same faith in Yahweh can jeopardize the fulfilment of the promise to him and for the nations. His servant shared his view and therefore prayed fervently and received immediate response to his request. When Rebekah appeared at the spring to collect water, she fulfilled all that Abraham’s servant had previously asked the Lord to do to enable him to know the right woman for Isaac (Genesis 24:5-61).

It was not only Abraham, and his servant who prayed for the right choice in marriage for Isaac. Isaac himself had gone to Beer Lahai Roi, to prayerfully meditate on the issue under discussion. This is a clear indication that Abraham had taught his household the importance of prayer in seeking God's will in mission. Interestingly, the wedding between Isaac and Rebekah took place in "the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death". (Genesis 24:62-67).

An important lesson is that prayer is an important ingredient in the fulfilment of God's mission. People engaged in God's mission should be intercessors for the nations. At the same time, they should train their family to be prayerful, particularly when it comes to marriage.

4. Acknowledging the Equality of all Persons

As we journey with Abraham in the process of fulfilling his God's mission among the nations, he offers us a remarkable missional model in his relationships. He knew how to relate respectfully with people of different ethnic groups. He had no quarrel with the Canaanites and the Perizzites when he lived amongst them. Abraham was able to have a peace treaty with Abimelech and Phicol the commander of Abimelech's forces when there was some misunderstanding among them regarding a well that Abraham had previously dug. The peace treaty was so successful that the place where the negotiation took place was called Beersheba, referring to the seven lambs with which Abraham sealed his covenant with Abimelech (Genesis 21:25-32).¹¹ Indeed, Abimelech and Phicol had great respect for Abraham and they openly testified that God was with Abraham in everything he did (Genesis 21:22). This acknowledgement powerfully demonstrates the positive impact that Abraham's witness had on the people among whom he lived.

Another situation that showed Abraham's ability to live amicably with people was how he related with the Hittites, particularly with Ephron after the death of his wife, Sarah. When Sarah died Abraham went to the Hittites and introduced himself as "an alien and a stranger among" them (Genesis 23:4). The Hittites in fact told him that because of the way he had respectfully and humbly lived among them they would give for free the land for the burial of Sarah.

They said to Abraham, “Sir, listen to us. You are a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our tombs. None of us will refuse you his tomb for burying your dead” (Genesis 23:5-6).

Indeed, Ephron the Hittite who owned the land that Abraham was negotiating for, said to him, “No my lord; listen to me, I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it. I give it to you in the presence of my people. Bury your dead.” (Genesis 23:11). Abraham refused to take the land for free. After lengthy negotiation, “the field and the cave in it were legally made over to Abraham by the Hittites as a burial site.” (Genesis 23:20). Abraham paid ‘four hundred shekels of silver, according to the weight current among the merchants’ (Genesis 23:16).

Abraham’s ability to live in peace with diverse ethnic groups clearly demonstrates he accepted all human beings as equal and treated them as such. Abraham understood that his missional calling and sending to the nations was based on God’s grace, and that all human beings are equal in the sight of God. Therefore, he had to live in peace with all groups of persons. The leaders of the nations among whom he lived and served also recognized him as a man who had the favor of God on him. His faith and character demonstrated the love of God in action. We must all follow Abraham’s exemplary missional model as we participate in God’s mission in the world of the nations.

5. Having Right Attitude Towards Wealth

One of the challenging things in mission is having the right attitudes towards material resources, and being able to manage them in ways that glorify the Lord. Abraham’s attitude towards money and other material possessions is another exemplary model for all people who have committed themselves to do mission in God’s way. There are three occasions that Abraham demonstrated right attitude towards possessing and managing wealth.

The first example is how Abraham managed the conflict that occurred between him and his nephew Lot. Abraham was a very rich man, with sheep, goats, and cattle, as well as silver and gold (Genesis 13:2). His nephew, Lot too was rich in sheep, goats, and cattle (Genesis 13:5). Because both of them had too many animals and there were not enough pasture land quarrels broke out between

the men who took care of their animals (Genesis 13:6-7). Abraham showed a real sense of maturity in resolving the deadly conflict. He drew Lot's attention to the fact that they should not allow their material possessions to destroy them. Then he politely reminded his nephew the importance of maintaining good human relationship within the family as a witness to outsiders. Next, although he was older than his nephew, and the one who had the Promise from God, he asked his nephew to make the first choice. "We are relatives, and your men and my men shouldn't be quarrelling. So let's separate. Choose any part of the land you want. You go one way, and I'll go the other." (Genesis 13:9). When Lot saw that the whole land in the Jordan Valley had plenty of water and rich pasture land he chose that place and moved there. Abraham was left with the land of Canaan, the Promised Land, and was richly blessed by the Lord for peacefully resolving the issue (Genesis 13:14-16).

The second incident occurred after Abraham had rescued Lot and his family after they had been captured in a battle (Genesis 14:1-16). After Abraham's victory over Chedorlaomer and the other allied kings, Melchizedek who was king of Salem and also a priest of the Most High God, brought bread and wine to Abraham and blessed him for the victory over his enemies. Abraham responded by giving Melchizedek a tenth of all the loot he had recovered from the defeated allied kings. By doing this Abraham rightly acknowledged that the victory came from the Lord, and that he was grateful to the Lord for the loot (Genesis 14:17-20). Indeed, according to Ambrose. "the fact that Abraham offered tithes to Melchizedek shows that he was humble even in victory."¹²

The third occasion followed immediately after Abraham had attributed the victory to the Lord. The king of Sodom came to Abraham and asked him to take all the loot, but give him back all his people. Abraham firmly rejected any thing that the king of Sodom wanted to give as a reward for the victory the Lord had given him. He wanted to avoid any situation that will make the king of Sodom take credit for the victory. "I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the thong of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, "I made Abram rich"" (Genesis 14:23). In effect, what Abraham is saying to the king of Sodom, according to Chrysostom

is, “I have on my side the supplier of countless goods; I enjoy much favor from on high. I have no need of wealth from you. I don’t want human resources. I am content with the regard God pays me. I know the generosity of his gifts toward me.”¹³ Ambrose’s remarks on this incident is also worth quoting. He writes,

“How remarkable it is, then, that Abraham did not wish to touch any of the spoil gained by his victory or to take even what was offered him? The fact is that to receive recompense diminishes the joy of a victory and blunts the gratuitous character of a favor.. The holy patriarch rightly refuses to appropriate any of the spoil, even if it was offered to him, lest the one who gave it say, “I have made him rich”¹⁴.

In short, Abraham is not against riches. He was very rich. He accepted that there is a place for material goods when we are engaged in God’s mission. The danger he wants us to avoid is when money and God are put on the same level and both are worshipped as if they are of the same value. Money is a servant and God is the Almighty Master who is over and above all material gains, and that we are accountable to God in how we manage material resources in God’s mission. One of the great challenges in the mission of God is how to acquire and manage material resources that come our way, and this is true today as it was in the time of Abraham.

6. Cross-Cultural Sensitivity

Cross-Cultural sensitivity is required of all missionaries, and Abraham is no exception. In fact, he was so sensitive regarding doing the right thing in a different culture, that he initially took controversial stance that God graciously vindicated him in the end. There are two similar incidences in his missionary career that have posed considerable challenges to biblical interpreters since the patristic period. The main issue concerns Abraham, on two occasions, asking Sarah to introduce herself as his sister, for fear that he might be killed if she is introduced as his wife. The first one happened when he and Sarah had to go to Egypt because there was severe famine where they lived. (Genesis 12:11-13). When they actually arrived in Egypt and Pharaoh’s officials saw that Sarah was a very beautiful woman they took her to the palace and treated Abraham well for her sake. But God intervened and

inflicted serious disease on Pharaoh and his household and Pharaoh had to politely and generously order Abraham and Sarah out of Egypt (Genesis 12:14-20).

The second occasion was when Abraham and Sarah stayed in Gerar, “and there Abraham said of his wife Sarah, “She is my sister.” Then Abimelech king of Gerar sent for Sarah and took her. But God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and said to him, “You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman.” (Genesis 20:2-3).

To understand and appreciate what is going on in these two incidences one will have to place the episodes in their cultural context in order to understand why Abraham had to take the stance he did. Didymus the Blind, an early African theologian, understood the cultural sensitivity of Abraham and therefore spoke positively of his decision. He writes,

Abraham made an intelligent compromise with the lustfulness of the Egyptians, being certain that God, who had made him leave his own country, would watch over his marriage. . In fact, marriage between brother and sister was practiced in Egypt and in his own country, as he said later, “She really is my sister”. It was therefore a clever strategy to suggest to Sarah to say only that at first. As the laws against adultery were probably respected among the Egyptians, Abraham thought in fact that they would kill him in order not to be considered as adulterers”.¹⁵

In a similar vein, Augustine, who understood the Egyptian culture also insists that Abraham did not lie when he refers to Sarah as his sister when the pressure of famine took them to Egypt.

There he called his wife his sister, and he told no lie. For she was this also, because she was near of blood; just as Lot, on account of the same nearness, being his brother’s son, is called his brother. Now he did not deny that she was his wife but held his peace about it, committing to God the defender of his wife’s chastity and providing as a man against human wiles. If he had not provided against the danger as much as he could, he would have been tempting God rather than trusting in him.¹⁶

Thus, Didymus the Blind and Augustine, interpreting the incident in its Egyptian cultural context see Abraham's position as an intelligent strategic compromise that later worked favorably for the Egyptians and Abraham.

For Chrysostom, the story of Abimelech was a great opportunity to highlight the importance of Abraham. The incident made Abraham very popular. He writes, "The fear of the people and the indignation of Abimelech provide an opportunity for emphasizing the importance of Abraham, who supposedly had been treated as of no account. The threats against Abimelech also serve to underline the importance of keeping God uppermost in mind and having regard for justice".¹⁷ The fact that in both cases God did not condemn Abraham's stance but defended him and openly blessed him means God accepted the position he took in the two culturally sensitive situations.

7. Being Constantly Attentive to Worship

The discipline of worship had an important place in Abraham's missional activities. This is expressed in many occasions in his missional journey by constantly and deliberately building altars and calling on the name of the LORD. The ultimate goal of God's mission is worship, and that was exactly what Abraham did. When in obedience to God he left Haran and he arrived at Schechem, the first thing he did was to "build an altar there to the LORD" (Genesis 12:7). Again, when later he pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east, "he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD" (Genesis 12:8).

When Abraham and his household returned from Egypt he went back to an area near Bethel where he had previously built an altar, and "there Abram called on the name of the LORD" (Genesis 13:3). After Lot had chosen the fertile land, and Abraham had settled for the land of Canaan, and the LORD had blessed him, he "went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the LORD" (Genesis 13:18). After Abraham had defeated Kedorlaomer and his allied kings in the battle, Melchizedek, king of Salem, the Priest of the Most High blessed Abraham. Abraham appropriately,

responded by giving a tenth of everything to Melchizedek as an act of worship for the victory God won for him (Genesis 14:20). Again, Abraham understood the sacrifice of his son Isaac as worship when he said to his servants on the third day in their journey, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. *We will worship and then we will come back to you.*” (Genesis 22:5, emphasis mine).

From what we have listed above we are right in agreeing with Chrysostom that Abraham “was constantly attentive to divine worship”,¹⁸ and so must we as we engage in God’s mission. The climax of God’s mission is the sincere act of worship of the Triune God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is what we find in Revelation where people from every nation, tribe, people and language stand before the throne of the Lamb and worship God unceasingly (Revelation 7:9-17). In sum, Abraham’s missional model of climaxing all occurrences in his life with worship is worth emulating, for that is the ultimate goal of the mission of God!

Conclusion

Abraham’s life and character reflected the grace of God that he himself had experienced in God. He was wise, brave, and skillful in diplomacy. Indeed, he offers our generation a relevant missional model founded on God’s grace that challenges us to develop spiritual disciplines that will enable us to fulfill God’s mission anytime and anyplace in the world.

Endnotes

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- ⁹ The Methodist Hymn-Book, numbered 77 verse 2 (England: The Methodist Publishing House, Copyright, December 1933).
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- ¹⁶ Ibid. p. 8.
- ¹⁷ Ibid. p. 86.
- ¹⁸ Ibid. p. 12.

A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF MISSION MODELS IN THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF PENTECOSTAL MISSION IN GHANA

Christian Tsekpoe

Key Words: *Pentecostal Mission, Three-Self Principle, Indigenous Mission Model, Contextual Mission Model.*

Introduction

The Church of Pentecost (CoP) has been identified as the fastest growing Christian denomination and the largest Protestant church in Ghana since 1989.¹ Even though the CoP is grouped among the Classical Pentecostal Churches in Ghana, together with the Assemblies of God (AG), Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) and the Apostolic Church (AC), some scholars tend to describe it as an indigenous Ghanaian Pentecostal church for various reasons.² For example, Asamoah-Gyadu indicates that - although it identifies with the classical Pentecostal tradition, the CoP has acquired a unique indigenous character, marking it out as different in outlook from, say, the Assemblies of God, whose American imprint after sixty years of existence in Ghana is still quite obvious.³

To some extent, some of the leaders of the CoP also seem to have similar view that the CoP is an indigenous Ghanaian church. Writing the introduction to the *'History of The Church of Pentecost Volume 1'*, Apostle D K Anan, the then chairman of the History Committee, points out that 'The Church of Pentecost, from its inception, has been an indigenous, a do-it-yourself Church.'⁴ This assumption agrees with the claims of Rev. James McKeown, the first superintendent and chairman of the CoP that he wanted to plant 'local species' in African soil, since he believed that a British oak is more likely to struggle in Ghana.

The relatively high growth experienced by the CoP is therefore attributed to the indigenous mission praxis of James McKeown, which have become implicit models of mission for the CoP. Consequently, any attempt made to change any of the existing practices of the church, by subsequent leadership, is usually met

with strong opposition from a cross section of church members, with McKeown's name as authority. Resistance to change is mostly assumed to originate from the older generation of church members who, in one way or the other, have experienced James McKeown's ministry with its character, which they believe, brought about the current numerical growth and success. They insist that the church should maintain its practices that has brought it this far. One retired Elder of the CoP told me in an interview that, 'you don't change a winning team.'⁵ What he meant was that, since the CoP is growing relatively well, as compared to other Christian denominations in Ghana, its current structures and practices, or mission model(s), should not be changed. As a result, such people have been nicknamed the 'McKeownites' by the younger generation of church members, meaning, 'the people of McKeown'.

Thus, two generations exist in the church. First is the older generation, who resist change and second is the younger generation whose cultural inclinations have been influenced by Western education, technology and other forces of globalization. Contrary to the views of the 'McKeownites', the younger generation of church members advocate for change in quite a number of practices in the church, challenging the relevance of some of the implicit mission models of the CoP. Consequently, some invisible tension exists between these two generations in the church.

The aim of this paper is to briefly survey how mission models have developed in the Church of Pentecost from the time of James McKeown to contemporary times. The paper evaluates how contextual the CoP's mission models have been through the generations, using the 'Three-self Indigenous Principle' as well as 'Shreiter-Bevans' taxonomy of local and contextual models. The paper concludes by pointing out the implications of these models for the future of the CoP and Pentecostal mission in Ghana.

The Use of Models in Mission

The term models has been widely used in different fields over the years.⁶ Scott Moreau indicates that the use of a model ranges from the physical to the metaphoric and to the theoretical.⁷ Barbour argues that a model 'provides a mental picture whose unity can be more

readily understood than that of a set of abstract equations.⁷⁸ In his classic work on Models of Contextual Theologies, Stephen Bevans describes a model as ‘a “case” that is useful in simplifying a complex reality, and although such simplification does not fully capture that reality, it does yield true knowledge of it.’⁷⁹ The term ‘mission model’ is therefore used in this paper to describe the use of relevant options available, in the form of mental images and symbols to simplify complex missiological practices in order to provide a practical guide by which mission is carried out in a particular historical, theological and social-cultural contexts.

The attempt to communicate the gospel in culturally meaningful ways and to relate with the communities in which the churches were being planted in has caused missionaries to use different mission models, either knowingly or unknowingly. Historically, missionaries have met cultural and theological challenges whenever people of different cultures responded to the gospel and came to faith. Such challenges thus did not start with the preaching of the Gospel in Africa. For example, Paul Hiebert argues that,

Missionaries face many dilemmas, none more difficult than those that deal with the relationship of the gospel to human cultures. Such questions are not new. In the book of Acts, serious questions arose when the Gentiles began to enter the church not by ones and twos but by the thousands. Did they have to become Jewish proselytes and adopt such Jewish practices as circumcision and such taboos as the proscription of pork? If not, which of the Old Testament teachings should the church follow, and which parts of Jewish culture could be discarded?

Different attempts have therefore been used to deal with such cultural and theological challenges in order to make the Gospel relevant and meaningful to people of different cultures. These attempts were also aimed at helping these new churches being planted to grow with indigenous character. The Apostle Paul in writing to the church in Corinth describes his personal struggles and attempts by pointing out that,

To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having

the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel that I may share in its blessings.¹⁰

The desire to 'save some' by all possible means, caused Paul the Apostle, to make himself all things to all people. This account can be seen as one of the New Testament models by which missionaries attempt to adapt to various cultures in order to identify with indigenous people among whom they serve. Even though, the term contextualization emerged within the theological scene in the 1970s, Paul's mission model as described above can be seen as a kind of contextual model. Of course, scholars agree that contextualization has been practiced by missionaries long before the emergence of the term.

Indigenous Mission Models

The introduction of the three-self indigenous principles, was seen as one of the early attempts in modern missions, to respond to difficulties missionaries encounter in communicating the gospel and sustaining their mission activities in foreign lands. Scholars such as Pierce Beaver, Robert Shenk Wilbert and Warren Newberry credited the origin of these three-self principles to two outstanding mission leaders: Rufus Anderson¹¹ and Henry Venn¹² and later on taken up by John Nevius,¹³ all within the nineteenth century.¹⁴ Anderson and Venn proposed that for a church to become indigenous, it should be self-supporting, self-propagating and self-governing. The 'three-self' principle as a model of mission, has since continued to be a subject of discussion by other missiologists such as Roland Allen, Alice Luce, Melvin Hodges, Paul Pomerville, and Paul Hiebert.¹⁵ The three-self principle as a mission model proposes that for a church to be indigenous, missionaries will have to gradually withdraw their involvement and support and encourage indigenous leaders to take over the work.

Pentecostals' Contribution to Indigenous Mission Models

Pentecostals' contribution to the discourse of indigenous principles could be credited to the Assemblies of God missiologist, Melvin Hodges, who wrote about the 'Indigenous Church' in 1953.¹⁶ Allan Anderson states that Hodges work might have been influenced by Roland Allen whose books on indigenous churches were circulating in Pentecostal circles as early as 1921. Books and articles written by Alice Luce (also based on Allen's teachings on indigenous church), might have framed Hodges missiology.¹⁷

Hodges advocates for a New Testament model of church that will be responsible and not depend on the mission agencies for growth and survival. By encouraging the missionaries and mission organisations to train local leaders and allow them to govern their own churches, teach them to propagate the gospel on their own and to support their own mission with local finance and local materials, Hodges brought about a radical shift in Pentecostal mission models of his time.

It is obvious that the three-self indigenous church principle as a model, does not address the issue of gospel and culture engagement. The focus of this model is on the sustainability of the churches the missionaries were planting. The proponents of this model, such as Hodges, probably assume that there is a normative model that has been established in the New Testament, which can be followed and implemented in every culture and in every generation. The weaknesses in the three-self principle might have led to the search for other ways of meeting the theological needs of local people, contributing to the emergence of the 'fourth-self' principle.

The Fourth-Self (Self theologizing)

In reaction to the weaknesses in the "three-self" principle, Hiebert proposed the "fourth-self" - "self-theologizing". The purpose of this, he suggests, is to address the question of whether the young churches have the right to read and interpret the Scriptures for themselves.¹⁸ The fourth-self principle deals with how the national church leaders would be allowed to develop theologies that they think are more relevant to their cultures. This also raises the question of the extent to which the missionary should give freedom to the national church leaders. Does the missionary need to supervise the theologizing

process or leave it? If he should leave it, what is the guarantee that it will not be syncretic? And if he should supervise or guide, would he not commit the same error of imposing his culture on the people? It is worth mentioning that the introduction of this “fourth-self” and the attempt by other scholars to add other “selves”, such as “self-missionizing” and “self-caring”, to the list, is a confirmation of the fact that the “three-self” principle as a mission model was not adequately meeting the local theological needs of the new Christian centres.¹⁹ As a result, some missiologists have questioned its effectiveness and considered it outmoded.²⁰ In spite of this, some churches, still promote its use, together with other contemporary local and contextual models.²¹

Local and Contextual Models of Mission

For a church to be contextually relevant, there is the need to explore how the mission theologies of the church incarnate into the local cultures and respond to the changing needs of the local people, including emerging generations. In contemporary times, contextual models seems to be preferred over indigenous models in describing the relationship between the Gospel and culture across generations. David Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen contend that contextualization -

Goes beyond the concept of indigenization which Henry Venn, Ruphus Anderson and other successors define in terms of an autonomous (self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating) Church. It also goes beyond the Roman Catholic notion of accommodation defined by Louis J. Luzbetak as “the respectful, prudent, scientifically and theologically sound adjustment of Church to native culture in attitude, outward behavior, and practical apostolic approach.”²²

Also, the Theological Educational Fund (TEF), led by Shoki Coe, who coined the word, contextualization, justifies the need for contextualization by attempting to differentiate between indigenization and contextualization. They insist that even though contextualization does not ignore the Gospel’s response to traditional cultures, it ‘takes into account the process of secularity, technology, and struggle for human justice, which characterize the historical

moments of nations in the third world.²³ This suggests that while paying attention to indigenous cultures, contextualization pays attention to the dynamics of culture at the same time.

Robert Schreiter's *Constructing Local Theologies*, and Stephen Bevan's *Models of Contextual Theology* are two major contributions on models of theology, valuable for missionaries. Schreiter, for example, proposes the use of translation, adaptation and contextual approaches as classifying principles for his work. To Schreiter, 'these approaches advocate not only a relation between a cultural context and theology, but also something about the relation between theology and the community in which it takes place.'²⁴

He explains that these three approaches could be understood as models for engaging local theology.²⁵ His work can be seen to concentrate more on the shift in perspective from Western or traditional theology to local theologies emerging at that particular place and time. Even though Schreiter clearly acknowledges the dynamics of culture, his work does not seem to have adequately responded to the challenges of changing cultures in the development of local theologies. There is no local theology that can remain relevant to a particular local community. Even authentic local theologies are provisional. A theological model that worked for a particular community at a particular time may not be relevant for the same community over a period of time, since new generations emerge within each community with their peculiar cultural and social proclivities. New generations will always raise new questions that will always demand new missiological and theological answers.

Building upon Schreiter's work, Bevans proposed *Models of Contextual Theology*. He suggested a way to think more clearly about the encounter between the gospel message and culture, and about honouring tradition and responding to social change at the same time. He identified six models to which mission can be intentionally pursued. These are: Translation Model, Anthropological Model, Praxis Model, Synthetic Model, Transcendental Model and Countercultural Model. The use of examples and practical missiological practices and events makes it easy to understand how each of the models Bevans brings on board operates. His models

can be used as a guide for both researchers and missionaries who are interested in gospel and culture encounter. To be able to identify which models the CoP's mission approximates to and how these models developed within the various generations, there is the need to carry some analysis of the CoP's mission praxis in line with some existing models.

ANALYSIS OF CHURCH OF PENTECOST'S MISSION MODELS

The Church of Pentecost's Evangelistic Mission Models

Daniel Walker's PhD research identifies five evangelistic mission models of the CoP. These include Local Mission Model, Regional Mission Model, Migration Mission Model, Reverse Mission Model and Reflex Mission Model.²⁶ Walker's work presents a very comprehensive mission history of the CoP, by examining the church's mission work from a historic perspective. By employing economic market principles such as competition, monopoly, oligopoly, and comparative advantage, Walker concludes his work by developing an economic mission model for the CoP, which he argues, 'can be used to measure the other models in the church.'²⁷ These mission models, however, do not show how the CoP interacts with the various cultures within which the church operates. Walker's concentration was on the spread of the mission of the CoP from one geographical location to the other and so was not focused on the theologies that developed within the various local, regional and international contexts.

The Church of Pentecost and the Three-Self Indigenous Principle

Before Walker's work, Opoku Onyinah, in a paper presented at James McKeown's Memorial lectures,²⁸ postulates that McKeown's mission practices in the CoP, were rooted within the indigenous church policy of self-supporting, self-propagating and self-governing. He connects this with McKeown's claim of planting local species in African soil, which is interpreted to mean that the Church he planted, is an indigenous Ghanaian church.²⁹ McKeown, like other missionaries of his time, had to struggle with the cultural

challenges in Ghana in an attempt to make the message of the Gospel meaningful to the people to whom he ministered. I have argued elsewhere that, for various reasons, the CoP has been self-supporting and self-propagating, but cannot be said to be self-governing until McKeown retired in 1982, if the three-self indigenous principle is to be understood from its original meaning.³⁰

It is important to note however that by attempting to use the three-self principles the CoP's mission work was helped in various ways. First, by aligning with the three-self principle in Ghana at a time when Africans were engrossed in nationalistic feelings of self-expression and independence, CoP was made attractive to Ghanaians and this contributed to the numerical growth of the church. Second, the self-propagation principle also aided the rapid numerical growth of the church since every member of the CoP sees evangelism and soul winning as a personal responsibility. Third, the self-supporting principle has provided a strong financial foundation for the CoP, which has been maintained with little modifications up until today.

As stated earlier, it is apparent that the three-self church principle, does not address how the gospel responds to the various cultures of indigenous people. A church could be fully 'three-self' but may still be using Western models if local leaders have been trained in Western theologies. In Ghana for example, this can be explained from the fact that the firing of Ephraim Amu from the Presbyterian Church for putting on traditional Ghanaian cloth to preach at church and for teaching local Ghanaian drumming in the Presbyterian Training College was not carried out by Western Missionaries, but the Ghanaian Presbyterian indigenous leaders, who have been trained by the missionaries in Western theologies.³¹ Similar incidents took place in other parts of Africa. Writing about this situation in Nigeria, Bolaji Idowu alleged that the Nigerian converts themselves who have wholehearted accepted the European way of life as the accepted Christian life style, will go any length to fight anyone who attempts to suggest that the Nigerian culture has some good elements and must be used to worship God. He therefore pointed out that 'the main obstacle in the way of an indigenous Church in Nigeria is, by some irony, ultimately Nigerians themselves.'³²

Within the CoP, McKeown left Ghana 36 years ago but CoP still maintains some appreciable parallels in structure, ministry and outlook with the Apostolic Church, UK. The tenets of the church for example, which is the basic doctrine of the CoP, is deeply rooted in the 1937 UK Apostolic Church tenets.³³ CoP pastors still use suit and clerical collar as the official attire for the clergy. Other practices such as non-ordination of women into the clergy, suspension of members who fall into 'open sin' and even the most contested women's head covering and gender segregation at church, were all inherited from the UK Apostolic Church.³⁴ The argument therefore remains that being self-supporting, self-propagating and self-governing alone does not make a church indigenous. Until indigenous people are able to raise questions about how the gospel speaks into their own culture and answer these questions without necessarily depending on Western theologies, the church cannot be said to be indigenous.

The Church of Pentecost and Contextual Models

On another note, a closer observation of CoP's mission suggests a combination of other mission models in line with Schreiter-Bevans' taxonomy of contextual models of theology. For example, it is evident that the McKeown-led CoP allowed the Ghanaians to use their local languages, songs, drumming and dancing as well as the use of Akan traditional appellation to pray. This suggests that the church's mission approximates to what Bevans calls the Adaptation Model. This model tries to seek a fundamental encounter between Christianity and indigenous culture. McKeown's mission in the CoP shows that he strived to use the primal³⁵ resources of the Ghanaian people to achieve his aim, accusing other missionaries for westernizing their churches in Ghana.³⁶ Scholars identify that primal resources are very valuable materials for Christian usage. We see especially in Africa that the names used for God in the Christian Bible were mostly derived from the primal religions. Songs, proverbs, poetry, riddles, stories, myths, and idioms are important primal materials that have made African Christianity fresh and original. Kabiro wa Gatimu states:

Gikuyu Christians use their primal resources not for academic reasons, but because the Bible is their guide to sound living . The use

of primal resources has indeed helped Gikuyu Christians to attest to the sacred character of primal religion and world-view and to reclaim a relevant spirituality, which is vital in biblical hermeneutics.³⁷

For example, apart from allowing the Ghanaians to use their local drums and dances to praise the Lord during worship, McKeown is also reported to have allowed Afua Kuma³⁸ to use primal religious praise in poetic forms to praise the Lord Jesus Christ. Kwame Bediako indicates that, “what is so striking about Madam Afua Kuma’s prayers and praises is how intensely they reflect a well-known and important feature of African primal religion.”³⁹ For the Ghanaian within the context of Afua Kuma, these prayers and praises relate to their worldview and reveal who Jesus is just as the Psalms will reveal God to the first Century Palestinian.

Again, as was common with Pentecostal mission of the time, the CoP’s mission model tended to lean towards a countercultural model. This is because even though he seems to have taken Ghanaian culture serious, it can also be recognized that as typical of this model, McKeown was sometimes suspicious of the local cultures and as a result, his measure of what is acceptable in the CoP, was based on his understanding of the Scriptures. It is reported that before he allows such cultural practice as agbadza (an indigenous Ewe dance), Awensem (an indigenous Akan poetry), or women swirling their cloths on the floor during times of praises in church, McKeown will first request for the meaning of such practice to make sure that it was not against the word of God.⁴⁰ This means that it was McKeown, and not the indigenous leaders, who sometimes determined what an acceptable practice in the church was.

Also, although McKeown allowed all the numerous tribes in Ghana to use their vernacular languages, it is not clear why he stayed in Ghana for 45 years without speaking any of the Ghanaian languages. It is also not too clear how McKeown responded to the numerous customs and festivals celebrated by the various tribes in Ghana. As at now, members of the CoP would not be willing to get close to Ghanaian traditional festivals such as Homowo, Aboakyire, Hogbetsotso, Ngmayem/ Dipo, Asafotu-Fiam, Adae/Akwesidae, and Odwira within their local communities. Until recently, CoP

members and ministers will not be comfortable with chieftaincy issues since they are considered to be pagan or idol worship. This is also not peculiar with the CoP, but a common characteristic of Ghanaian Pentecostal mission. A situation Birgit Meyer describes as ‘a complete break with the past.’⁴¹

The Church of Pentecost’s Contextual Mission to the Next Generation

Within contemporary time, the leadership of the CoP realised that the mission of the church was not adequately meeting the needs of certain groups of people within the Ghanaian society. This led to the formation of English Assemblies within the church. For example, in 1992 three meetings were held by the leadership of the English Assemblies in Accra, led by the then International Missions Director of the church, in the person of Apostle Opoku Onyinah.

The purpose of these meetings was to find out what the church could do to meet the changing needs of faith seekers within the Ghanaian community as well as members of the CoP whose socio-cultural and spiritual needs were no longer being met in the existing mission models of the CoP. In an address he delivered at the second meeting of the English Assembly leaders, Apostle Opoku Onyinah pointed out to his audience that there seems to be what he termed ‘generations in a generation’ within the society. He identified these generations as: first, the Elderly; second, the Semi-literate and Middle class; and third, the New generation. He argued that

The first two groups, I suppose, are being catered for in the Church of Pentecost. They feel quite at home with our programmes, our mode of worship and our media of communication, even though there may still be room for improvement. The third group, however, do not appear to find their place in our traditional way of worship, let alone the media of communication. They enjoy Teaching and Worship, and seem to thrive on mixing the Ghanaian culture with the Western system. The dynamics of civilisation and the increased interaction of the peoples of the world through education, travel and commerce have all combined to making culture a transferable commodity. Therefore, this new generation being a product of today’s

civilization, do not always ‘conform’ to known and traditional ways of doing things. Whether they are right or wrong is not the issue at stake here. To us, what is expected of us is to reach them in their own world with the same, old, unchanging Word of God, which is still the power of God unto salvation.⁴²

The outcome of these meetings is the formation of Pentecost International Worship Centres (PIWCs), as a ministry within the CoP. This ministry seems to have a different approach to worship, liturgy and medium of communication. Until 2010 when a communique, issued by the College of apostles, prophets and evangelists of the CoP, brought about a lot of changes in the practices of the traditional CoP, it was only in the PIWCs, where men and women could sit together, or dance together. Also, it was only in the PIWCs where women could go to church without head covering as against the strict head covering practice of the traditional CoP.

The PIWC model is also quite approximate to what Bevans calls Synthetic model. This is because, the PIWCs try to use the systems of contemporary cultures and contextualize their mission to meet deep seated needs of the society in which the church undertakes its mission. Both Vision 2013 and Vision 2018 indicates that The rationale behind the establishment of the Pentecost International Worship Centres (PIWCs) was to provide a well organised, cross-cultural church, primarily for people of non-Ghanaian cultural background (expatriates), who want a place to worship God. Furthermore, our Ghanaian brothers and sisters who prefer to worship in the English language or in a multi-cultural environment (for whatever reasons) were considered in the PIWC formation concept.⁴³

Even though the PIWCs have been well established and growing very fast, indicating an appreciable level of success as a mission model within the CoP, there is still some amount of misunderstanding and apprehension among some of the older generation of church members, who think that time tested principles of the founding fathers of the CoP has been compromised in the PIWCs. Some are of the view that the PIWCs are not as spiritual as the traditional congregations because, some of the young women in the PIWCs go to church in trousers whilst leaving their hair uncovered. As a

minister of the CoP, I have recognised that in spite of all the attempts made by leadership to educate church members on these issues, some members in the local congregations remain suspicious and worried about the innovations within the PIWCs.

Again, even though the opposition against the 2010 communiqu,, which allows women to attend any CoP services, without covering their head, seems to have died down publicly, it is obvious that some members in the local congregations still have issues and given any opportunity, will show their displeasure. This state of affairs indicates the urgent need for an incarnational mission model, not only for the CoP, but also for Pentecostal mission in Ghana. A model that has the capacity of meeting deep rooted cultural needs of various Ghanaian communities and at the same time responding to the dynamics of cultural change without much conflict.

The Need for an Incarnational Model for Pentecostal Mission in Ghana

I contend that there is the need for an incarnational model for the CoP in particular and Ghanaian Pentecostal mission in general. This I argue will help sustain Pentecostal mission in the country because this model sees mission as God speaking from a particular culture to people in ways that they can understand and respond to. This model is developed from the doctrine of God in Christ as presented in John 12:24. The missionary's work represents 'the grain of wheat', which must fall into the culture (soil) and 'die' for a true local theology to develop from the grassroots. The incarnational model can therefore be seen as a cultural model. The use of terms such as acculturation and transculturation to describe this model have been seen as inadequate because, like the translation model, it presents one culture as a strong culture which tends to assimilate a weaker one.⁴⁴

Ben Knighton therefore uses the word enculturation to describe the incarnational model. He argues that "'Christian enculturation' can be intelligible to others besides interested Christians."⁴⁵ Again, in his work on 'Christian Enculturation in the Two-Thirds World' Knighton argues that Christian Enculturation is presented as a missiological model which can enhance the confidence of new

churches to work out their own salvation. It is not only individuals that are enculturated into society, but also religious traditions⁷⁴⁶. Enculturation can be seen not only as a common process, but also a life-long one since individuals are not the only innovations in culture; societies enculturate as well. By this model, important changes in structures and practices within the church's mission should be nurtured in the power of the Holy Spirit to incarnate from the grassroots of the church, instead of leadership proposing a radical change and communicating to the members. This may help the majority of church members to be part of the transformational processes taking place within the church, making it much more easy for understanding and implementation.

This incarnational model, in my view, can be achieved through the deliberate building of a two-fold relationship. First is a strong relationship with grassroot members of the church. There is the need for Pentecostal mission in Ghana to take seriously the divergent needs of the various cultures and various generations within the church. Grassroot congregants will need to be engaged in conversations that can unwrap their deep-seated needs and how such needs can be authentically pursued within Ghanaian Pentecostal mission. Second is a strong relationship with the Holy Spirit, which has always been the emphasis of Pentecostal mission. Ghanaian Pentecostals should therefore continue to demonstrate that only the Spirit of God is able to hold together all the complexities of mission, by attending to historical and theological convolutions and at the same time responding to socio-cultural dynamics. This calls for a responsible walk with the Holy Spirit since He is able to make "the way of the Lord" possible by raising up the valleys and making low the mountains so that "all peoples" will see the glory of the Lord. (Isaiah 40:3-5).

Conclusion

It has been seen that the Rev. James McKeown's emphasis on the three-self principles of church planting made the CoP attractive to Ghanaians and helped the church to grow numerically and firmly. Secondly, the contextual models of mission practiced in the CoP have been timely and capable of helping the church to sustain its numeric growth, vitality and spirituality. The success of each mission model can be attributed to the strong reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit for mission in each generation. The implementation of these models has however been mainly from the leadership level without the full involvement of grassroots members of the church. In some cases, implementing these models created misunderstanding and chaos. Examples include of the PIWC's synthetic model of mission and the 2010 communiqu,. This means that even though the CoP has been able to respond effectively to the needs of the various generations with its mission models, these have not been clearly understood by some of the church members, thus creating conflicts in its implementation.

As a result, I propose the need for the CoP to develop and implement a mission model that have the ability to incarnate from the various prevailing cultures; dealing with deep seated spiritual, socio-cultural, political and economic needs of the various communities and at the same time responding to the dynamics of cultural change brought about as a result of the effects of globalization on the Ghanaian communities, without creating much conflicts. Since the CoP is recognized as the largest Pentecostal church in Ghana, a successful development and implementation of this model could represent one of her significant gifts to Ghanaian Pentecostal mission and for the matter, the global church.

Endnotes

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- ² See Kingsley Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Edies of Ghanaian Christianity* (Accra: Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, 2001), 203; Kwabena K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill 2005), 23; Christine Leonard, *A Giant in Ghana: 3000 churches in 50 years, The Story of James McKeown and the Church of Pentecost* (Chichester: New Wine Ministries, 1989), 74.
- ³ Asamoah-Gyadu 2005, 23.
- ⁴ Daniel K. Anan, in *The History of The Church of Pentecost*, Volume 1 (Accra: Pentecost Press, 2005), xii
- ⁵ Personal Interview with Elder Dampson on 11/04/2015.
- ⁶ See Steven Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002); Ian Barbour, *Myths, Models and Paradigms: A Comparative Study in Science and Religion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); Scott Moreau, *Contextualization in World Missions: Mapping and Assessing Evangelical Models* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2012).
- ⁷ Moreau, *Contextualization in World Missions*, 31.
- ⁸ Barbour, *Myths, Models and Paradigms*, 35.
- ⁹ Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 31.
- ¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 9:20-23 (NIV).
- ¹¹ Rufus Anderson (1796-1880) worked as the senior secretary to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). Even though he wanted to work at the mission field, he did not get the opportunity but worked at the Headquarters of the Missions Board at Boston. See Beaver “The Legacy of Rufus Anderson” (1979), p. 94-97.

- ¹² Henry Venn (1796-1873) worked as secretary to the Church Mission Society (CMS), in United Kingdom around the same time when Rufus was secretary to the ABCFM in US. See Shenk, R. Wilbert, "Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn: A Special Relationship?" *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 5:4, 1981, p. 168.
- ¹³ John L. Nevius (1829-1893) was an American missionary to China. He received his education at Princeton Seminary and was sent to China in 1854 under the Presbyterian Mission Board.
- ¹⁴ See Pierce R. Beaver "The Legacy of Rufus Anderson" *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 3:3, (1979), 94-97; Wilbert R. Shenk "Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn: A Special Relationship?" *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 5:4, (1981), 168-172; Warren B. Newberry, "Contextualizing Indigenous Church Principles: An African Model" *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* (2005), 8/1, 95-115; also see See Knight William M. A, *Memoir of the Rev. Henry Venn: The Missionary Secretariat of Henry Venn, B.D., Prebendary of St. Paul's and Honorary Secretary of the Church Missionary Society* with an Introductory Biographical chapter and Notice of West African commerce by His Sons; The Rev. John Venn, M. A. Senior Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge and The Rev. Henry Venn, M. A. Rector of Clare Portion, Tiverton (London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1880); Nevius, L. John *Methods of Mission* (New York: Foreign Mission Library, 1895).
- ¹⁵ Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co 1962); Alice Luce, 'Paul's Missionary Methods' *The Pentecostal Evangel* (1921); Melvin Hodges, *The Indigenous Church* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1953); Paul Pomerville *The Third Force in Mission Peabody* (MA: Hendrickson, 1985); and Paul Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Company, 1985).
- ¹⁶ Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 12.
- ¹⁷ Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 209.

- ¹⁸ Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights*, 196.
- ¹⁹ See Newberry, “Contextualizing Indigenous Church Principles”, 95-115.
- ²⁰ See Reese “The Surprising Relevance of the Three-Self Formular”, 25-27.
- ²¹ See Jesse N. K. Mugambi, “The Three-Self Principle in Christian Missionary Expansion: A Theological Reflection” in *Lesmore Gibson Ezekiel and Jooseop Keum From Achimota to Arusha: An Ecumenical Journey of Mission in Africa Conference Edition* (Nairobi: WCC & Acton Publishers, 2018), 61-68. Also, in a paper presented at the Mission Leaders Forum of the world Assemblies of God (AoG) Fellowship congress, Delonn Rance admonished AoG missionaries to practice the missiology of the indigenous church since it has been the standard for the church almost from the beginning. The CoP is also one of the churches that encourages the use of the three-self principle model.
- ²² David J. Hesselgrave & Edward Rommen, *Contextualization: Meanings, methods, and models* (William Carey Library, 2000).
- ²³ Hesselgrave & Rommen, *Contextualization*.
- ²⁴ Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985), 6.
- ²⁵ Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 6.
- ²⁶ For details of these models, see Walker, Daniel “The Pentecost Fire is Burning: Models of Mission Activities in the Church of Pentecost”, Unpublished PhD Thesis submitted to University of Birmingham, 2010.
- ²⁷ Walker “The Pentecost Fire is Burning”, 229.
- ²⁸ Onyinah Opoku (ed), *James McKeown Memorial Lectures: 50 years of The Church of Pentecost*, 2004.
- ²⁹ Onyinah, *James McKeown Memorial Lectures*, 71.
- ³⁰ See Christian Tsekpoe, “Mission Praxis of Revd James McKeown in Ghana’s Church of Pentecost”. A Paper Presented at Pentecost Theological Seminary on February 2, 2017.

- ³¹ Opoku Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana 34th edn* (Dorchester: Deo Publishing 2012), 107.
- ³² Bolaji Idowu, *Towards An Indigenous Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 5-6.
- ³³ Constitution of the Apostolic Church in the British Isles, 1937; CoP, Constitution 2008; Samson A. Fatokun, "A Pentecost from Wales to the Uttermost Parts of the World: The Apostolic Church's Global Mission, 1916 to Date" *Swedish Missiological Themes* 96/4, 405.
- ³⁴ A video documentary of the UK Apostolic Church reveals that at its early stages, women go to church, covering their head. Also, narrating his experience of Holy Spirit Baptism in the UK Apostolic Church, Rev. Garfield Spurdle, wrote as far back as February 15, 1926 that 'I was sitting in the week night meeting at Trealaw assembly on the front row on the *male side* when the Holy Spirit began to move' (emphasis mine). The statement 'male side' indicates that gender segregation in sitting arrangement was practiced in the UK Apostolic Church before McKeown came to Ghana (then Gold Coast). See, Official Centenary DVD of The Apostolic Church, 2016. Also see The Magazine of Overseas Action: Centenary Celebration Edition of the Apostolic Church, 2016, 28.
- ³⁵ The term primal is used here, not in the derogatory sense but in the sense of 'basic' or 'fundamental' to describe the pre-Christian culture of Africa. Even though primal may not be an ideal term, it is less objectionable among Ghanaians and more universal in usage than other terms known.
- ³⁶ Leonard, *A Giant in Ghana*, 69; Onyinah, *McKeown Memorial Lectures*, 71.
- ³⁷ Kabiro Gatumu, "Using Primal Resources to Appropriately the Bible: A paradigm Shift for Biblical Hermeneutics" *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (June, 2009), 16.
- ³⁸ Christina Afua Gyan was an illiterate Ghanaian Christian woman, commonly referred to as Afua Kuma, a native of the forest town of Obo-Kwahu on the Kwahu mountain ridge in the Eastern

Region of Ghana and a member of the Church of Pentecost. She was a peasant farmer and also practiced as a traditional midwife. Even though her prayers and praises of Jesus are, in her mother-tongue (the Akan language), they have been translated into English by Fr. Jon Kirby, to give the reader a good indication of their depth of Christian experience conveyed in the thought-forms and categories of the Akan world view in her rural setting.

- ³⁹ Kwame Bediako, *Jesus in Africa: The Christian Gospel in African History and Experience* (Akropon-Akuapem: Regnum Africa, 2004), 9.
- ⁴⁰ Onyinah, *McKeown Memorial Lectures*, 74.
- ⁴¹ Birgit Meyer, “Make a Complete Break with the Past Memory and Post-Colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourse”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 28, No 3 (August, 1998), 316-49.
- ⁴² Address by the International Missions Director, Rev. Opoku Onyinah, at a meeting with the presbyters of the English language assemblies of the Church of Pentecost, Greater Accra region ‘A’ held at the A. T. T. C., Kokomlemle, on July 22, 1992.
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- ⁴⁵ Benjamin P. Knighton, “Christian Enculturation in Karamoja, Uganda”, Unpublished PhD Thesis Submitted to the University of Durham, 1990, 53.
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PENTECOSTAL MISSION PRAXIS. A REVIEW OF CORE PENTECOSTAL DOCTRINES THAT DRIVE AND SHAPE PENTECOSTAL MODELS OF MISSION

Vincent Anane Denteh

Key Words: *Pentecostalism, missional praxis, the Holy Spirit, glossolalia, factors of rapid growth, recommendations and re-evaluation of Pentecostal mission praxis.*

Introduction

The impact of Pentecostalism on world mission cannot be underestimated in contemporary mission work and missional praxis. This article seeks to look into the mission praxis of Pentecostalism, its rapid growth and core doctrines that undergird Pentecostal models of mission. The paper highlights the factors that have made the Pentecostal movement a force to be reckoned with in contemporary missional praxis. It concludes with vital recommendations for further discussion or re-evaluation. The intention is to make Pentecostal missional praxis relevant in this century and beyond.

An Overview of Pentecostalism

Unlike the main-line churches that have been in the forefront of mission work for centuries, Pentecostals have made an impact in world mission more recently, since the twentieth century. For example, classical Pentecostal churches like the Assemblies of God and the Apostolic Faith Mission have just attained one hundred years of ministry, and have a positive and far-reaching impact on world mission. According to Moreau and others, the quest for a supernatural phenomenon that would enable the church to expedite its mandate for mission became very earnest in the nineteenth century among “radical evangelicals” (2004:147) and that later became the key issue that Pentecostalism sought to respond to. Many scholars have tried to define Pentecostalism, but I think Professor Kwabena Asamoah-Gyedu’s definition will aid our understanding in this section. According to Asamoah-Gyedu, Pentecostalism is a:

stream of Christianity that emphasizes personal salvation in Christ as a transformative experience wrought by the Holy Spirit; and in which such pneumatic phenomena as “speaking in tongues”, prophecies, visions, healing, miracles, and signs and wonders in general, are sought, accepted, valued, and consciously encouraged among members as evidence of the active presence of God’s Spirit (Gyimah 2013:x).

This definition gives us a vivid picture of Pentecostalism yet scholars debate the origin and nature of the Pentecostal movement. For example, Donald Dayton is of the view that Pentecostalism can be traced to “Wesleyanism and American revival movements in the nineteenth century” while Alister McGrath argues that there is no vast difference between Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism, except for the emphasis of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit Baptism by Pentecostals (Kim 2006:5). Along the same line of argument, Cecil M. Robeck Jr. defines Pentecostalism “as a revivalist movement of denominations, independent congregations, and Para-church organisations borne out of the Wesleyan-Holiness movement at the beginning of the 20th Century” (Gyimah 2013:12).

In Gyimah’s view, Robeck admits to the fact that the ministry of Charles Fox Parham and the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles in the early part of the twentieth-century made Pentecostalism a global phenomenon. The Pew Center Forum, based in Washington DC, USA, (2011) also states that the Pentecostal movement can be traced to the nineteenth century Holiness Movement, whose members were very passionate for personal piety. Notwithstanding these viewpoints, the Pew Center Forum agrees with several scholars that Pentecostalism began with the Azusa Street Revival.

As global missionary activities of the main-line churches seem to be declining, the influence of the Pentecostal movement has reinvigorated world evangelisation and that gives impetus to the expansion of Christianity in this century. According to the Pew Research Centre, (2011:13), the estimated Christian population in the global south stood at 1.3 billion Christians, representing sixty-one per cent of the entire world’s Christian population. Many scholars admit that the growth of Pentecostal mission in barely one hundred

years as at the end of the twentieth-century has contributed to this development. The Pew Research Centre states that there “are about 279 million Pentecostal Christians and 305 million charismatic Christians worldwide,” and that most are found in the global south. Anderson’s (2003:1) perspective supports this claim:

The ‘southward swing of the Christian center of gravity’ is possibly more evident in Pentecostalism than in other forms of Christianity. Most of the dramatic church growth in the twentieth-century has taken place in Pentecostal and independent Pentecostal-like churches.

K.,rkk.,inen (2000:33) writes that the Pentecostal mission has grown from “zero to 400 missions” within a period of ninety years and that “is unprecedented in the whole of church history.” McGee also made this frank admission when he wrote that Pentecostal missionaries have done a great work to change the entire landscape of Christian activities in the twentieth-century (Moreau 2000:739).

Pentecostal Doctrines that Shape Pentecostal Models of Mission

The impact of Pentecostalism on world mission is undisputed. This section seeks to examine some of the undergirding doctrines which may have shaped Pentecostal mission practice. Nine aspects of Pentecostal doctrines and praxes will be reviewed and the way that each has shaped mission activity will be explored. It ought to be noted that these core Pentecostal doctrines discussed in this section are not treated as doctrine models of Christian mission, but rather they exemplify ways that Pentecostal mission models have been shaped.

Pneumatocentric Mission

We shall first consider an astute observation that Allan Anderson has made, in which he states that Pentecostal missionaries depend on the Holy Spirit for their calling into the mission work. According to Anderson, Pentecostal missionaries believe that their call to mission is totally dependent on the leading of the Holy Spirit rather than on the “formal structures” that exist in formal Christian denominations. Often they are called to serve in the mission field “through some spiritual revelation like a prophecy, a dream or a vision, and even through an audible voice perceived to be that of God” (2003:2).

As a Pentecostal myself and a missionary, I believe strongly that Anderson's assertion is peculiar to the missiological worldview of Pentecostals, including my own position. Throughout all my missionary career in both Ukraine and Madagascar as well as short mission trips to various countries, I was highly convinced that it is a call from the Lord and therefore subjected myself fully to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Anderson (2003:2) calls this model of mission "pneumatocentric mission" and that understanding inspires Pentecostal missionaries to offer themselves to the mission work without laying a premium on material resources. They do not wait to be fully resourced financially and logistically before embarking on mission. Neither do they spend long periods in seminaries for training before moving into the mission field.

For Pentecostals, God's call upon their lives for the work of mission is sufficient to make them succeed. Most often, they are not adequately prepared in terms of human resource, personnel development, financial resources, logistics, and building infrastructure, as compared to their Roman Catholic and Protestant counterparts. It is implicit in McGee's statement that even some of them travelled without salaries and adequate knowledge of cross-cultural communication of the gospel (Moreau 2000:738).

For example, until 1972, The Church of Pentecost in Ghana, did not have an organised theological institution after the closure of a Bible School (1953 - 1957) started by missionaries of the Latter Rain movement (from North America). The school was re-introduced in 1972 by David Mills and closed down again in 1975. It was re-opened in 1981 (Onyinah 2002:176), but in all these years, The Church of Pentecost was involved in mission work. This example is similar to many of the early Pentecostal missionary activities, where they did not focus much on establishing theological institutions to train their ministers or missionaries before sending them to the field.

Notwithstanding these limitations, their dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit in mission in terms of speaking in tongues, signs and wonders, personal sacrifices for God's kingdom and vigorous evangelistic activities have been factors that have contributed greatly to the success of their missionary activities across the world.

Their way of worship, is usually similar to indigenous worship; their emphasis on indigenous songs and dancing during worship; offerings; and fervent prayer activities have changed the entire landscape of Christian ministry as well as mission work today. During his missionary activities in Ghana, Rev. James McKeown's (an Irish missionary and the founder of The Church of Pentecost in Ghana) missiological perspective can give us a deeper insight into this discussion. McKeown testified that his message in Ghana, as a missionary, centred on three important factors: "Jesus Christ and Him crucified"; "the Baptism of the Holy Spirit"; and "the power of God to change lives and bring about holiness in the Church" (The Church of Pentecost 2005:54).

Anderson (2003:1, 2) puts it well when he states that right from the inception of the missionary activities of the Pentecostal movement, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit has been the priority and that is one of the factors that has contributed to the success of their mission. Citing Hollenweger (1972:298), Walker (2010:89) premises his assertion on a Pentecostal belief that Spirit baptism arms a person with "power for missionary service" and that belief has been existing even among the Holiness movement (a precursor of the Pentecostal movement) way back in 1870 as taught by Asa Mahan.

Pfister (2000:6) appears to add currency to this discussion. He intimates that "Talking about Pentecostal mission is talking about a missionary enterprise that works." He observes that for someone to qualify for full-time ministry in a Pentecostal church, the person's aptitude in evangelism and church planting would have to be examined. Pentecostals and Charismatics believe that the presence of the Holy Spirit in a person should be able to drive him into evangelism leading to planting of churches and discipling the converts for Christ. Roswell Flower affirms this fact: "When the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts, the missionary spirit comes in with it; they are inseparable. . Carrying the gospel to hungry souls in this and other lands is but a natural result" (Anderson 2003:3).

For Pentecostals and Charismatics, the necessity of the Holy Spirit baptism is indispensable from their mission work (Lk. 24:49; Ac. 1:8, cf. Matt. 3:11; Mk. 1:18; 1 Jn. 1:33) as they believe that Jesus Himself

is the baptiser with the Holy Spirit (Grant, McClung, Jr in Woodberry, Engen, and Elliston 1997:58). By virtue of their understanding of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the work of mission and ministry in general, Pentecostal and Charismatic missionaries seek to use any person who is faithful to the gospel and is readily committed to the cause of the advancement of God's kingdom for mission activity rather than spending long years in training people at theological seminaries. This strategy has resulted in raising a lot of indigenous leaders for God's kingdom. Pentecostal missionaries believe that even if indigenous leaders have little training, the Holy Spirit will continue to equip them into full maturity. Their emphasis is for the people to remain faithful and dedicated to the Holy Spirit.

Following the biblical precedent of how Jesus and the early apostles ministered in signs and wonders, Pentecostal and Charismatic missionaries seek to confront the power of darkness in their propagation of the gospel (Eph. 6:10-12). They minister in the light of Jesus' statement that signs shall follow those who believe the gospel (Mk. 16:17, 18). In most cases, they conduct deliverance and healing prayer meetings under the power of the Holy Spirit and the people themselves see what the Lord can do in their lives. This phenomenon has not only helped in the rapid spread of the gospel, but had also reinvigorated the missional practices of the early apostles where signs and wonders characterised their ministry (Ac. 3:6-11; 5:22; 19:11).

The impact of this kind of ministry is that indigenous communities with superstitious beliefs come to the realisation that the power of the gospel is superior to their traditional beliefs and thus the gospel is the only way for their deliverance and salvation. Others, too, desire for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on them so that they can confront demonic activities themselves. As this practice has helped the work, Pentecostal missionaries have continued to focus on biblical passages highlighting speaking in tongues (1 Cor. 13; 14:2), miracles (Mk. 16:20; Jn. 2:11; 4:48; Ac. 4:10; 19:11), gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:7-11), and preaching about the imminent parousia (1 Thess. 4:17; Phil. 4:5; 1 Cor. 7:29).

The Impact of Parousia

Parousia is a Greek word for “appearance” and it is used to denote the Second Coming (appearance) of Jesus Christ. Pentecostal and Charismatic ministers preach the gospel as if Christ were coming on the very hour that the message is being delivered; and this understanding deepens the faith of people and their dependence on God as they seek to be sanctified. Many of their converts often live with high expectation of the second coming of Christ. This mindset increases their commitment level as they are prepared to sacrifice their worldly possessions to the building of God’s kingdom. For example, in my Church, even before announcements are made, we often hear the announcer saying, “If Christ tarries, we shall do this and that in the coming week or month.” According to the Church’s historical records, we inherited that saying from the first European missionary who founded the Church (Onyinah in James McKeown Memorial Lectures, 2004:79). The imminence of the second coming of Christ and the belief in life after death, with the belief that sinners will not inherit God’s kingdom, are central to Pentecostal theology.

As a result, the development of the Church in terms of building infrastructure and logistics does not necessarily depend on sponsorship or donations from abroad. The indigenous believers, living by this notion of the imminent parousia and a future reward from Christ, have always been prepared to sacrifice their material resources to purchase land, musical instruments, and build their own church buildings. The impact of imminent parousia among Pentecostals affects all dimensions of Pentecostal mission as it is often considered as the motivation behind missionary activities among Pentecostals. It is one of the paramount doctrines from which Pentecostalism dwells.

Furthermore, Russell Spittler (1988), a renowned North American Pentecostal theologian, has mentioned five characteristics that are peculiar to the Pentecostal movement. They are personal experience with God, oral expression or testimony, spontaneous expression of faith, the quest for otherworldliness, and the authority of the Bible. Although some of these things mentioned by Spittler have been highlighted already in our discussion, the way he articulates his points is equally crucial for our discussion at this stage.

A Personal Experience with God

The practice of having a personal experience of one's encounter with God is a backbone in Pentecostal missiology. Spittler (1988:412, 413) states that Pentecostals put a premium on their personal experience of their encounter with God. They believe that the piety of the believer must be characterised by a passionate and personal encounter with the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ during worship and in everyday Christian living. In other words, the piety of the Christian must be experiential and affective and not just mental assent or an intellectual state of mind.

With this understanding, Spittler observes that at times Pentecostal worshippers shed tears, speak in tongues, and express themselves with physical gestures during worship. They like expressing their experience with God in terms of prophetic utterances and songs, healings, and the demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit in every facet of their worship. This "model" of personal experience with God is carried into their evangelistic activities where they minister the gospel with vigor and with passion. As they go to the mission field, they believe that no strategy on the field must supersede the inner testimony that they have about the Holy Spirit and His readiness to impact the lives of those who believe the gospel. For Pentecostals, their major strategy is based on the testimonium, where the believer demonstrates "the inner witness of the Spirit in the form of a positive but yet pragmatic concept, thinking it through, implementing it, and evaluating it in the light of experience and results" (Pfister 2000:7).

Oral Expression or Testimony

Spittler (1988:412.) also refers to Pentecostals' stress on the oral expression (testimony) of their encounter with God. Time is usually allotted during fellowship meetings for believers to share testimonies of their experience with God. Worshippers have the liberty to express themselves through songs, testimonies, poetry or reading of Scripture, both individually and collectively. As they pray aggressively during their gatherings as well as their individual devotional lives, individuals experience spectacular events from God which in turn gives them a cause to testify to God.

The missional implication for the testimony model is that they serve as evangelistic tools in the mission field where those who listen to such testimonies turn to Christ in view of having the same encounter with God. Prayer and vigorous evangelistic activities as an expression of one's faith are done on a congregational basis where everyone can develop his gift without restriction. This practice has contributed to the growth of Pentecostalism in the communities that are open and communal rather than in those that are individualistic.

Spontaneous Expression of Faith

Emphasis on spontaneous worship is peculiar to Pentecostal missional praxes. Their experience with God sometimes takes a spontaneous dimension and breaks the order of formalities and traditions pertaining to worship (Spittler 1988:413, 414) as the case may be with the main-line churches. Pentecostals do not limit themselves to formalities and customs relating to occasions. According to Spittler, Pentecostal worship is characterised by spontaneous actions. In most cases, their actions come from the perspective of the following scriptures:

“But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you will abide in Him” (1 Jn. 2:27, NKJV).

“If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged” (1 Cor. 14:30, 31, ESV).

Allan Tippett agrees with Roland Allen that when the Holy Spirit indwells a person, He transforms the person's life and gives him the ability to witness in the context of what Roland Allen called “spontaneous expansion” (Gallagher 2014:4). Anyone familiar with Pentecostal and Charismatic churches will attest to the claims of Spittler in terms of the spontaneous expression of one's faith in Pentecostal worship. It is true to say that Pentecostals tend to depend predominantly on the Holy Spirit for direction in all their activities. In some Pentecostal worship, it is common to see that someone may interrupt the preacher with a song that he feels has been dropped into his heart by the Holy Spirit to complement the message preached.

As they believe in the spontaneous acts of the Holy Spirit, there is no special time allocated for speaking in tongues, prophecy, sacrifice, praying, singing and dancing, or kneeling down to express their experience of their encounter with the Holy Spirit. Even if that time does exist, the congregants are aware that they are not strictly limited to the liturgy of the church at any given moment. For them, the will of the Holy Spirit and the direction that He may want the service to go in a particular circumstance supersedes the status quo making every person at a particular church service to be ready for any direction to which the Holy Spirit may lead the church.

Spittler has noted that Pentecostal worship is practiced in the context of the biblical statement that, “The wind blows wherever it pleases.. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit” (Jn. 3:8). As a result, anyone sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit must prepare to offer Him a place during every Pentecostal activity. While the Western type of Christian worship is characterised by formalities and liturgies, traditional worship of people in the global south appears to differ. Thus, it can be inferred that this model of spontaneous worship resonates very well with most societies in the two-third world and that might inform the reason for spontaneous growth of Pentecostalism in those parts of the world.

The Quest for Otherworldliness

Some highlights have been thrown on this point when we discussed reliance on the imminence Parousia in Pentecostal mission. However, Spittler’s (1988:416, 417) fourth point is what he calls otherworldliness (heaven) and that tends to centre on eternity, particularly heaven as an eternal abode for the righteous. Pentecostal Christians think about eternity in the context of the following passages:

“we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:18, NKJV).

“For the form of this world is passing away” (1 Cor. 7:31, NKJV).

“Therefore, if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God” (Col. 3:2, NASB).

Indeed, dreaming about heaven and the need for preparation for eternity in heaven is central to the faith of Pentecostals. Most of their messages highlight the reality of heaven and hell where they strongly agree with Scripture that the righteous in Christ will go to heaven (Matt. 25:46; 2 Pet. 3:13) while the wicked or the ungodly will suffer in hell (Ps. 9:17; Matt. 13:49, 50; 25:41-46).

The propagation of this message by Pentecostals on the mission field may impact people to such an extent that they turn their lives to Christ everywhere that Pentecostals operate. They expose all the implications about eternity as espoused in Scripture to their members and the world and that makes people understand that they are in transit in this world and the best way to live in eternal comfort in heaven is to repent of their sins, denounce ungodliness, accept Christ as their Lord and personal Saviour, and live by the precepts of Scripture. With this model as a major praxis in Pentecostal mission, their mission fronts tend to expand rapidly as many people repent of their sins and accept Jesus Christ as their Lord personal Saviour to avoid eternal damnation in hell.

The Authority of the Bible

Spittler's (1988:418, 419) final point is very important and obvious in Pentecostal missiology. Emphasis on biblical authority is crucial for Pentecostals and it has always been a major doctrine in their discourses and worship. They have absolute respect for the Word of God as they ensure that it is declared authoritatively for every person to submit to it. Spittler states that, of all the four characteristics of Pentecostals that have been mentioned, the emphasis on biblical authority supersedes them all. According to him, Pentecostals commit themselves to the "supreme and the final authority of the Bible" as they ensure that every statement made is backed by Scripture and must be followed to the letter.

Reliance on the authority of Scripture deeply influences all aspects of Pentecostal missiology and practice because for Pentecostals, the Bible is the final authority in every approach, praxis, and strategy of the church. It is against this backdrop that the biblical themes about the Holy Spirit and His activities, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and eternity in Scripture are projected as their key models in their missiology and missional practices.

Other factors such as their “approach towards aggressive evangelism” and “emphasis on holiness and discipline” (Koduah in James McKeown Memorial Lectures, 2004:127) as well as fervent prayers form part of the practices of Pentecostalism. These factors also pose a challenge to Pentecostal missionary activities in this century where the post-modern worldview of subjectivity is rife in the world.

The Ecclesiological Perspective of Pentecostal Mission

Furthermore, Pfister (2000) has observed that one of the heartbeats of Pentecostal mission is the exclusive attention given to the building of local congregations. My own experience within, The Church of Pentecost concurs with Pfister and also explains further that equipping and nurturing the local congregations to be self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governance is a vital element in Pentecostal mission. The local congregations serve as the bases for theological education, missionary training, mission promotion activities, and the place of raising financial resources and logistics for the advancement of God’s kingdom.

Since many Pentecostal churches do not receive external assistance for their missionary activities, they tend to empower the local congregation in terms of their theological understanding of the mission mandate given to the church by God, the role of individual Christians in fulfilling that mandate, and the general responsibility of the larger church to redeem the creation of God from perishing. These are some of the cardinal principles of Pentecostal ecclesiology making local congregations very effective and passionate about mission work. For example, members of the local congregations of my Church (The Church of Pentecost) are so passionate about mission work that their willingness to contribute towards the expansion of mission is always very high. They give cheerfully towards mission as the Bible admonishes Christians in 2 Corinthians 9:6-7.

Emphasis on Spiritual Warfare

Coming from the background of Western philosophy with its Enlightenment ideologies, most of the early Western missionaries in Africa and Asia rejected the reality of indigenous supernatural worldviews. According to Professor Kingsley Larbi, their argument

was that the belief in witchcraft and supernatural powers was just “psychological delusion” (James McKeown Memorial Lectures, 2004:138). In contrast, Pentecostal missionaries saw the need to confront those powers with the power of the Holy Spirit. Larbi posits that Pentecostal missionaries recognised the existence of evil forces as they tended to “place Jesus at the centre of the cosmic warfare as the supreme and conquering Saviour whose power surpasses all” (p. 138). This means that while the missionaries of the main-line churches did not really grasp the deeper spiritual thirst of the indigenous people, the Pentecostal missionaries understood that reality. Referring to a testimony by Peter Anim, who left the Presbyterian Church to form a movement (the Faith Tabernacle Church) that later led to the formation of the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), Larbi writes:

I was faced with the necessity of contending for a deeper faith and greater spiritual power than what my primary religious experience was able to afford, and I began to seek with such trepidation to know more about the Holy Ghost (James McKeown Memorial Lectures, 2004:139).

According to Larbi, this “internal discontent” and thirst for the power of the Holy Spirit caused a major exodus of believers from the main-line churches to the newly established Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. This reason was one of the major factors that contributed to the phenomenal growth of the Pentecostal and the Charismatic movements and the trend continues since people still have spiritual needs to be met.

There is one final point to be made in this section. It is no exaggeration to say that most of the missionary activities undertaken by Pentecostal churches were financed from the resources of indigenous Christians. For example, The Church of Pentecost, which began in Ghana less than a century ago by an Irish missionary, is currently involved in mission work in many countries across every continent in the world, but all their missionary activities are sponsored through the sacrifices of the indigenous Christians. The Church, which is described by Professor Kingsley Larbi (a renowned Pentecostal theologian in Ghana) as “the largest Protestant Church in Ghana” (James McKeown Memorial Lectures, 2004:106) has also been involved in very successful missionary activities. The Church in Ghana has been able

to buy places of worship in Europe, Latin America, Asia and other parts of Africa. This attests to the fact that the impact of the gospel, as propagated by Pentecostal missionaries, on the lives of the indigenous Christian communities is enormous.

It is also worth noting that Pentecostalism, with its steady development, also has some unique approaches that have influenced main-line churches. Anderson's (2010:2) statement captures it well:

Pentecostal churches show a wide variety of forms, from back-room churches with a dozen members directed by one pastor, to mega-churches with millions of members, run as a religious enterprise by CEO-style leaders. This organizational diversity is part of Pentecostals' capacity to adapt to local demands. It also reflects their able use of market strategies and entrepreneurial tools.

A reflection on Professor Larbi's statement will suffice in helping us to understand why Anderson claims that Pentecostalism has greatly influenced the landscape of Christianity:

Major contributions of the Pentecostal movement to Christianity in Africa include liturgical renewal, financial stewardship, and revival of evangelistic fervor.

The evangelical Pentecostals and their forerunners, the Spiritual Churches, are the pacesetters in indigenising Christianity on the continent. Their emergence has sent a clear message that Christianity should not be 'wrapped in foreign clothing,' and that it should be rooted in Christ but related to the culture of the people (James McKeown Memorial Lectures, 2004:141).

In line with this argument, Anderson (2010:3) admits that Pentecostalism has influenced the main-line churches, causing various kinds of reforms such as the establishment of the Charismatic renewal movements that are in the Protestant churches and which were then followed by the Catholic Church. For example, their use of the mass media in sharing the gospel has become a general phenomenon among many main-line churches today.

The Pew Research Center also attests to this claim when it writes that the beliefs and practices of Pentecostals are changing the way

many Brazilian Catholics practice their faith today (2011:45). This phenomenon was identified in the 2006 Pew Forum survey where the research revealed that over half of Brazilian Catholics identify themselves with the Charismatic movement, and participate in practices such as divine healing, and speaking in tongues. These are indications that the missional approach of Pentecostals and even their theological perspective, to say the least, can be a great force to reckon with in this century. However, Pentecostal and Charismatic movements still have much to do in the face of the challenges of the twenty-first century because not all their approaches are applicable in this and ensuing generations.

Pentecostal Mission in the Twenty-First Century

Despite the achievements of Pentecostals and Charismatics in the previous century and the beginning of this century, some issues still have to be addressed: How can they sustain their achievements in mission in this century and beyond, if Christ tarries? What will be the general outlook and the growth of their mission work in the years ahead? What are some of the challenges that are already confronting them today which need to be dealt with in order to sustain their growth in the years ahead? The answers to these questions are vital for the sustenance and expansion of Pentecostal mission in this century. In the light of this, some scholars, including Kärkkäinen, (2000), are calling for Pentecostals and Charismatics to evaluate their missiological approaches.

First, Kärkkäinen (2000:34) warns against glorifying themselves in the light of their huge achievements within a short period. The temptation of being complacent leading to the attitude of triumphalism may be high and that can affect their churches. This caveat is necessary because Pentecostals can draw some lessons from the rise and subsequent apparent decline of the main-line churches in some areas of the world. Citing Russell Spittler, Grant McClung Jr. warns against what he calls the “twin perils of triumphalism and elitism” within the Pentecostal and Charismatic circles (Woodberry, Engen, and Elliston 1997:63). One of the major causes of these perils that McClung Jr. talks about may be growing numbers of people within Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. As their numbers continue

to rise, the tendency of being complacent with their growth may be high and that can be very dangerous for the subsequent development of Christian mission.

Another area that Pentecostals ought to consider is to seek ecumenical relationship with the main-line churches because of its importance in global mission. Considering the fact that the main-line churches have been in Christian mission for many centuries before the inception of Pentecostal mission, there is much that the latter can learn from the former for mission and ministry work in general. The twenty-first century Pentecostal mission should not ignore the biblical emphasis on seeing the church as the body of Christ and the significance of uniting to advance the kingdom of God. At times, the solutions to the challenges confronting Christian mission in this century may need an ecumenical approach, particularly where Pentecostals and the main-line churches can meet to learn relevant missional praxes from one another and develop a missiological approach for the way forward.

Second, the world is at a stage of change. From the socio-political systems to religion, everything is vulnerable to the test of time. The socio-political and religious environments in the twentieth-century have shifted greatly and the trend continues. Legal systems, worldviews, and political systems keep on changing and become more complex. Missional practices and mission scenes keep changing and becoming extremely complex. There is no sign to assure the church that these trends will one day reverse or normalise. K.,rkk.,inen (2000:34) has made an astute observation about this development. I think his assertion should be a wake-up call to Pentecostals and Charismatics: “The contexts where Pentecostal mission work started in the first decades of this century have been - and are being - replaced by new complex circumstances.”

While there are opportunities in some of these changes, Pentecostals ought to admit that there are equally obvious threats to their way of mission. When one carefully examines the characteristics of Pentecostal worship and their approach towards evangelism, one would realise that there will be challenges in this century, the prospects notwithstanding. For example, their way of worship (mostly with excessive noise making) may require regulation in some areas of the world in contemporary times.

There must also be a relevant missiological framework to guide the administration of some of the factors that contributed to their aforementioned growth. The crux of the matter is that Pentecostal mission praxis and its doctrines should be fashioned in such a way that they can be missiological viable in twenty-first century mission work.

The issue of doing mission work without adequate preparation in terms of human and financial resources comes to the fore here. If this worked well in the twentieth-century, can it be a viable approach in this century? Today's Pentecostal mission has to answer this question, if it desires to make another landmark in mission in this century. As people become more materialistic and entrenched in post-modern ideologies, even sacrifices towards the advancement of God's kingdom tend to become a challenge.

This calls for the re-evaluation of our application of God's Word to the situation of other people, method of offerings, and the way we handle revelations in the church; all of these are to be theologically examined in the light of the dynamics of society. While we admit that with God all things are possible, it is prudent to seek the wisdom of God to deal with the dynamics of society in which we minister.

A lack of passion for mission is already telling on the activities of some of the main-line churches currently. Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, with their great achievements, ought to maintain their passion for mission. As Paul told Timothy "to fan into flame the gift of God" which was in him (2 Tim. 1:6, NIV), so also we can say Pentecostals and Charismatics to fan into flame their passion for mission that has given them a wide swath of territories within a period of one hundred years.

Conclusion

It has been realised from this presentation that Pentecostalism is a force to reckon with in contemporary mission work. The core doctrines and practices of Pentecostalism has shaped Pentecostal mission in ways that have been relevant and contextualised addressing the social and spiritual needs of humanity. The overview of Pentecostalism and its mission praxis discussed in this article present Pentecostal missiology as the basis for filling in some important gaps that had been existing in Christian mission since the early days of modern mission.

Over the years, contextualizing worship in the mission field by the main-line mission churches had been a challenge. Another gap left in Christian mission that was not also thoroughly considered was the emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit in a real sense in the mission field.

However, from a Pentecostal perspective their models of mission are shaped by Pentecostal doctrine and it has been identified that Pentecostal ecclesiology is originally focused on propagating the gospel to win souls for Christ. The local congregation is vital for the equipping of the body of Christ and act as the principal “evangelist” not only towards the propagation of the gospel, but also a mission-training centre from where people could be equipped for missionary work. This model of Pentecostal missiology has been one of the reasons for the significant impact they are able to make on the mission field.

Another core doctrine in Pentecostalism that has been discussed in this presentation is their emphasis on spiritual warfare. With this understanding cutting across Pentecostal missiology, all of human needs, whether infirmities, sickness, and economic setbacks, are confronted as part of the church’s spiritual exercise. We have noticed that with this notion in mind, Pentecostals spend much time praying, seeking for divine power, and reading Scripture to gain insight and also use it as a weapon during spiritual warfare.

In all these understandings and expressions of Christian faith Pentecostal mission as been able to emerge as a significant player in modern mission.

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DECLINING MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE IN THE TRADITIONAL MAINLINE CHURCHES IN THE WESTERN WORLD: LESSONS FOR CHRISTIANITY IN GHANA

Alfred Koduah

Key Words: *Traditional mainline churches in the West, church membership decline, Christianity in Ghana*

Introduction

By all standards, people in the western world, especially Europeans, have proved themselves as a very religious people. Having broken away from their various primal religions to embrace Christianity many centuries ago, Europe has served as the centre of gravity of Christianity for over 1,000 years.

America has become what it is today because of the influx of Christians from Europe who moved there in the early 1600s in search of a place to enjoy religious freedom. Since then, churches in the West have been experiencing growing membership and attendance. They have been at the forefront in sending missionaries to other parts of the world. Through their numerous books and other literature, they have helped to shape Christian theology and practice. Similarly, through their numerous Bible Schools and seminaries, ministers of the gospel have been trained. They have also sent out billions of dollars to support Christian activities globally. Actually, without the significant roles played by Europeans and Americans, Christianity would not have been that successful. However, over the last decades, the situation appears to be changing as Europe and North America seem to be losing their Christian heritage. Church membership and attendance appear to be declining.

Arising out of this genuine concern, the leadership of The Church of Pentecost in Ghana mandated me to undertake research trips to Holland, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, and the UK in July 2017 and the US in September 2017 to examine whether or not the perceived decline of membership and attendance in the traditional mainline churches in the West was real, and if so, identify the contributory factors. This was done with the view of drawing practical lessons for Christianity in Ghana.

Having reviewed relevant literature, interviewed 59 key church leaders from traditional mainline Evangelical, Catholic, Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches, administered and analysed 164 questionnaires, this essay presents the findings and recommendations of the research.

Decline in Church Membership and Attendance in the West

Many years ago, it was considered sinful for westerners to absent themselves from church services. However, in Europe today, only two to four percent of the people attend church service regularly. The average age of church attendees in the UK is 51. It is 57 in the United Methodist Church in the US and about 56 in Holland. It is estimated that 60,000 members of the Protestant Church in Holland leave the church annually and that if the trend continues, that denomination will cease to exist by 2050.

Whereas some 930,000 Muslims attend mosques every week in the UK, the Anglican Church in that country records a total of 916,000 attendance on a weekly basis. In 2014, the Anglican Church in the UK baptised 130,000 persons, which was 12 percent lower than the 2004 figures. In 2015, it recorded 124,000 baptisms, but buried 149,000 members. Today, only 1.4 percent of the population of England attends Anglican services on Sundays. Officially, the church admits: “Over recent decades, attendance at Church of England church services has gradually fallen. These trends continued in 2015. Most key measures of attendance have fallen by between 10 percent and 15 percent over the past 10 years.” This decline is happening against the backdrop of the fact that the Anglican Church educates over one million children in their schools. This suggests that the Church schools are not impacting students with the Christian faith.

The editorial director of the Catholic Herald, Damian Thompson, asserts that because some 1.7 million people left the Anglican Church between 2012 and 2014, it is projected that Christianity in Britain will come to an end by 2067 and Anglicanism in the UK is likely to disappear by 2033 if the trend continues. After 400 years of existence, the British Mennonites closed down in March 2016.

Historically, the membership of the Methodist Church in Great Britain grew from 58,000 in 1790 to 302,000 in 1830 and reached a peak at 841,000 in 1910. By the end of 2014, it had 202,000 members in 4,650 congregations. It is now trying to merge with the Anglican Church after splitting for more than 200 years.

After 500 years of the Protestant Reformation, which started in Germany, 52 percent of the population of that country now say they do not believe in God. Whereas less than 10 percent of the population in France and Sweden attend church regularly, and only three percent of the Danish population, and 30 percent of Italian population go to church on a weekly basis. Church attendance in Ireland fell from 90 percent in 1990 to 60 percent in 2009. Only 100,000 representing two percent of the Norwegian population attend church on Sundays, making that country record the lowest church attendance in Europe. However, the Catholic Church in Norway is doing well numerically because of migrants from the Catholic-dominated Eastern European countries to that country.

Generally, church membership in Switzerland has fallen from 95 percent in 1980 to about 68 percent in 2015. In Belgium, church attendance is so low that in order to attract people to church, one local priest in the village of Brielen usually turns the church into a beer bar after Sunday service.

With about 23 percent of Catholics in the US regularly attending mass, the director of Into Thy Word Ministries, Richard J. Krejcir, points out that church membership in the US dropped by 10 percent in the 1980s and dropped again by 12 percent in the 1990s. Between 1990 and 2000, combined Protestant denominations in the US lost some five million members. He notes that whereas over 4,000 churches close down annually in the US, only about 1,000 new ones are started. By his calculation, therefore, 38,000 new churches will have to be started annually in the US in order to catch up. Similarly, whereas in 1900 there was a ratio of 27 churches per 10,000 people in the US, by 2000, there were only 11 churches per 10,000.

Thus, church attendance and membership in the West have fallen drastically. This has led some to form “Done with church”, “Dones”, and “Believing without belonging” movements. There is even the

“Done with church, but not with God” movement, whose adherents are referred to as the “De-churched”. They contend that although they are fed up with traditional church services, they can still worship God privately and love people as the Bible teaches. They believe that because Paul taught that if you are hungry, eat at home (1 Cor. 11:34), they want to “eat at home” because the church is failing to feed them properly. They also think that because Jesus has taught that “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (Jn. 13:35), they can qualify as true disciples of God if they worship the Lord privately from wherever they are and still demonstrate Christian love to others.

Declining church membership and attendance has resulted in pastors quitting the ministry in their numbers, seminaries closing down, Christian bookshops no longer economically viable, and church buildings being abandoned, sold out, demolished or modified for secular usage.

Pastors Quitting the Ministry and Seminaries Closing Down

With dwindling church membership and attendance, some pastors in the West are quitting the ministry. According to Pastor John Waller of the Elim Pentecostal Churches, UK, about 50 percent of pastors drop out within five years of ordination. In the US, between 1,500 and 1,700 pastors leave the ministry every month. Even though pastors in Europe are not quitting the ministry at the same rate as those in the US because of the state-church system, the European churches are facing an aging priesthood. For example, the average age of Catholic priests in Ireland is 63. Generally, the Catholic Church is facing priest shortage.

Also, many seminaries in the West are closing down as many westerners do not want to spend time, energy and money to train as theologians or pastors when they are not likely to find churches to minister in. Today, it is mainly Asians, Latinos and Africans who patronise seminaries because their churches are still vibrant and are ready to engage them upon graduation.

Abandonment, Sale, Demolition, and Modification of Church Buildings for Secular Usage

Whenever church buildings in the West become too expensive to maintain, church membership and attendance dwindle drastically, or a church is unable to support a priest, the church buildings are usually abandoned, sold out, demolished, or modified for secular usage.

A senior writer at BreakPoint, Shane Morris, notes that within 10 years some 515 Catholic churches have been closed down in Germany. In the projection of the German writer, Matthias Schulz, 15,000 out of about 45,000 church buildings in Germany will no longer be needed in the nearest future. Whereas over 10,000 churches have been closed down in the UK since 1960 including 8,000 Methodist and 1,700 Anglican churches, there are some 2,000 mosques or Muslim prayer halls in that country. This is against the backdrop that although the first mosque in Britain was opened in the 19th century, by 1961, there were only seven mosques in that country.

A senior fellow for Transatlantic Relations, Soeren Kern, notes that whereas the Catholic Church has constructed only 20 new church buildings in France in ten years, and has closed down more than 60 churches, about 150 new mosques are currently being constructed in that country, which hosts the largest Muslim community in Europe. Actually, it has been projected that in future, Islam will become the dominant religion in Europe.

The Italian journalist, Giulio Meotti, estimates that every 75 seconds, a German leaves the church, and that between 1990 and 2010, some 340 church buildings belonging to the Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD), the largest federation of Protestant churches in Germany were closed down and 46 others demolished. Also, in Holland, two church buildings are closed down every week.

It is heart-rending that church buildings are being converted into mosques, restaurants, beer bars and other non-Christian uses. When one buyer converted a church building into a music club, he used the pulpit as the DJ stand. In Boostedt in Northern Germany, one undertaker now uses a former church building to display his coffins.

Another one in the North German town of Milow now houses an ATM. According to the Ghanaian-born Pentecostal Pastor B. O. K. Anaba, parts of the buildings of the Dutch Reformed Church, Amsterdam, and Pinster Gemeente in Den Haag, which have been sold out have been modified for use as brothels.

Whenever it becomes necessary to sell or demolish church buildings, the process of announcing its closure to the remaining church members, the actual vacation of the building, and the demolition exercise have always been very painful and sometimes traumatic experience. When church buildings are demolished, the religious objects are collected as artefacts and sold in countries such as Indonesia, Congo, Philippines, and Ukraine. Meotti notes that Holland has become the world's most important exporter of religious objects signifying that secularism has now become a business.

From 1970 to 2008, about 205 Catholic Church buildings have been demolished in Holland and 148 others converted for other non-Christian uses. One respondent (who wants to remain anonymous) states that within 10 years, the Catholic Diocese of Chicago has sold 150 church buildings because of dwindling attendance. He adds that if President Trump's proposal to construct a wall between Mexico and the US materialised, the US Catholic Church was going to suffer because its main source of getting members now have been the migrants from South America.

These notwithstanding, Professor John Samuel Mbiti and my respondents from the Evangelical Church in Rheinland, Düsseldorf, Germany emphatically argue that they did not think the traditional mainline churches in the West are declining because for them, church growth should not be measured by membership and attendance alone, but its contribution to society.

Factors Contributing to the Decline in Membership and Attendance of Traditional Mainline Churches in the West

The state of the traditional mainline churches in the West is complex and dynamic, but taken as a whole, there is a quantifiable decline in membership and attendance. Analysis of data collected from 59 interviewees and 164 questionnaires in July and September 2017 identified several contributory factors.

Externally, the various philosophies from the period of the Enlightenment through to the postmodern era, which culminated in the Cultural Revolution in the West are responsible for the decline in membership and attendance of the traditional mainline churches. The permissive nature of those philosophies, coupled with the sexual revolution, homosexual debate, state-church system, secularism, improved educational standards, economic prosperity, greater access to information technology, over-work, effects of the two world wars, and demographical changes have led to moral relativism, political correctness and privatised spirituality. These have had negative impact on Christianity.

Internally, factors contributing to the decline include uncaring and unfriendly services, traditionalism, formalism, preaching of watered-down sermons, scandals involving priests, inadequate evangelistic, discipleship and missionary activities, promotion of liberal theology, perception of the ministry as a job rather than calling, failure of parents and the church to transmit the Christian faith to emerging generations, failed leadership, inadequate integration of migrants, superficial worship, and the one hour-long church services.

Although the scope of this essay will not allow for elaborate discussion of these factors, the subsequent charts will throw some light on them.

Presenting the Data Collected

Table 1 shows the responses to the question, “Do you think the traditional mainline churches in the West are declining?” 80% of respondents said “yes”.

Response to question: “Do you think the traditional mainline churches in the West are declining?”	Frequency (n = 164)	Percentage (%)
Yes	132	80
No	24	15
No Idea	8	5
Total	164	100

Table 1: Decline in mainline traditional churches in the West

Respondents were asked to identify signs that the traditional mainline churches in the West are declining. 49 percent of respondents identified dwindling membership while 24 percent perceive the unwillingness of young people to go to church as a concerning sign of decline. See Figure 1 below.

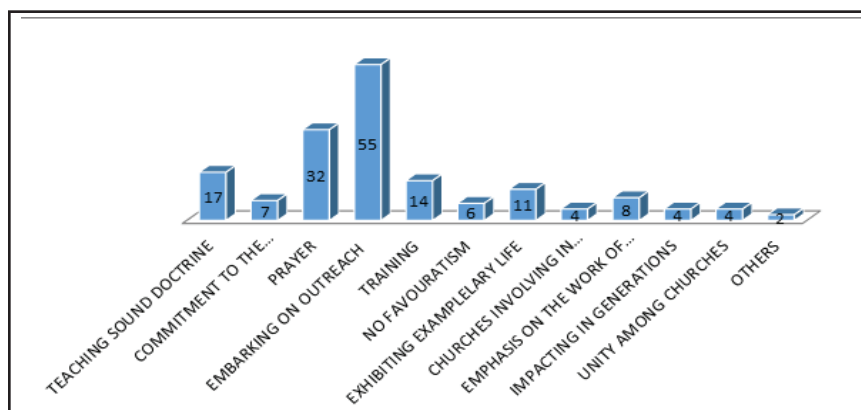


Figure 1: Signs of the Declining State of the Traditional Mainline Churches in the West

Respondents were asked to identify the factors contributing to the decline and their responses are shown in Figure 2 below. 30 percent of respondents attribute the decline to lack of effective leadership, and 17 percent think it is because of inadequate evangelism, 14 percent believe it is because of lack of commitment.

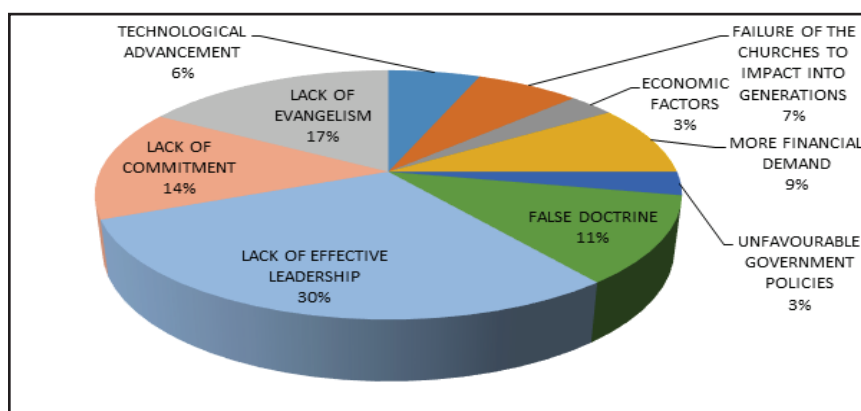


Figure 2: Reasons for the decline in membership and attendance in the traditional mainline churches in the West

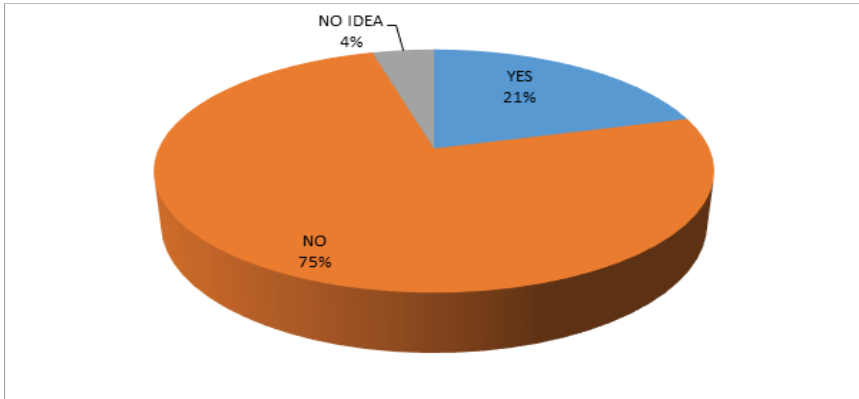


Figure 3: Are Young Westerners Regularly Attending Church Services?

Figure 3 above summarises the responses to the question “Are young Westerners regularly attending Church services? A worrying 75 percent of young westerners do not regularly attend church services, which suggests the future of the church in the West is depressing. The survey also explored the factors that may be keeping young people from attending church. Figure 4 below summarises the range of responses.

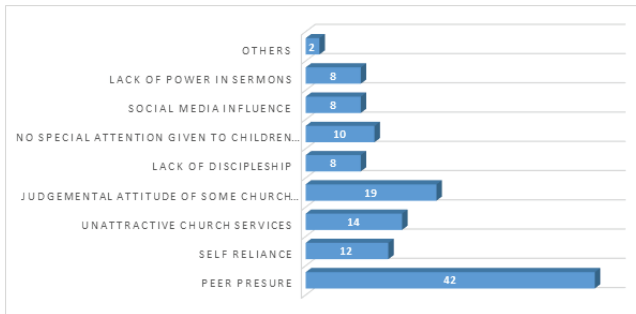


Figure 4: Factors Keeping Young Westerners from Attending Church Services

The fact that 42 respondents (of 164) representing 34 percent perceive peer pressure as the key factor keeping young westerners from attending church services suggests that the church should address the issue of peer-pressure and adopt a relationship-based mode of evangelism and discipleship.

Addressing the question of attracting youth to church - figure 5 below - 53 percent of respondents think that music and instrumentation could

attract young westerners to church and churches need to improve upon their music ministries by singing hermeneutically-balanced, gospel-inspiring and soul-searching songs. More than one quarter of respondents suggested that parents should continue to encourage their children to go to church.

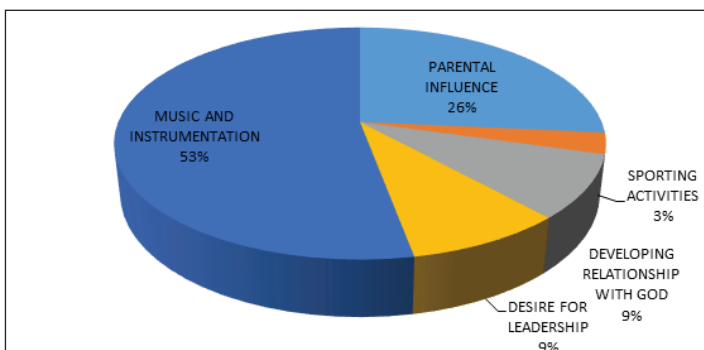


Figure 5: Factors that could Attract Young Westerners to Church

Exploring impact of technology on faith revealed a number of responses. As depicted in Figure 6 below, 35 percent of respondents believe that technology has helped improve educational standards yet 19 percent perceive it as spreading negative information and 18 percent think its use on the social media appears destructive. 21 percent consider it as making people have less time for God. 21 percent consider it as making people have less time for God. Christians must take advantage of technology by making available more online Bible-based materials and other technologically-driven Christian resources.

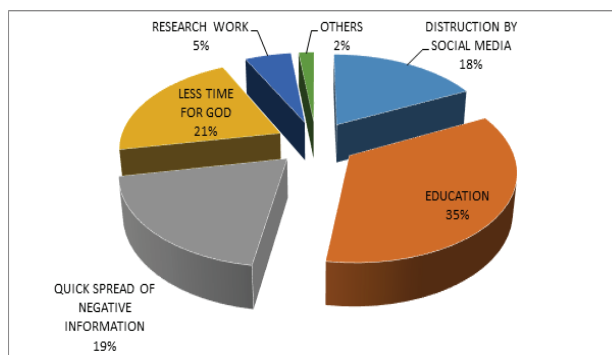


Figure 6: Impact of Technology on the Decline of Traditional Mainline Churches in the West

Declining Membership and Attendance in the Traditional Mainline Churches

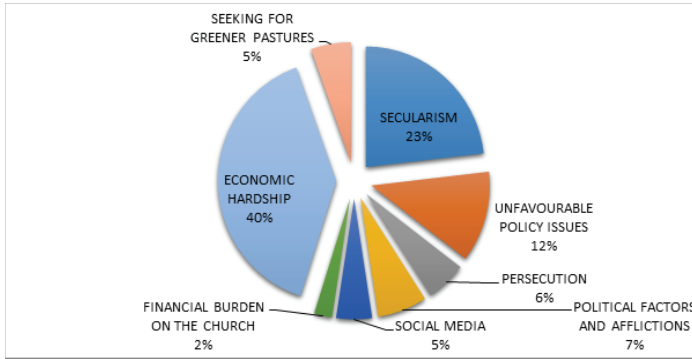


Figure 7: Impact of Socio-Economic and Political changes in the Decline of Traditional Mainline Churches in the West

Considering the impact of socio-economic and political changes in the decline of traditional mainline churches in the West, secularism, unfavourable policies, persecution, seeking greener pastures, political factions and affiliations, social media, financial burden, and economic hardship were identified. Of these, 40 percent of respondents noted economic hardship as the most important factor followed by secularism.

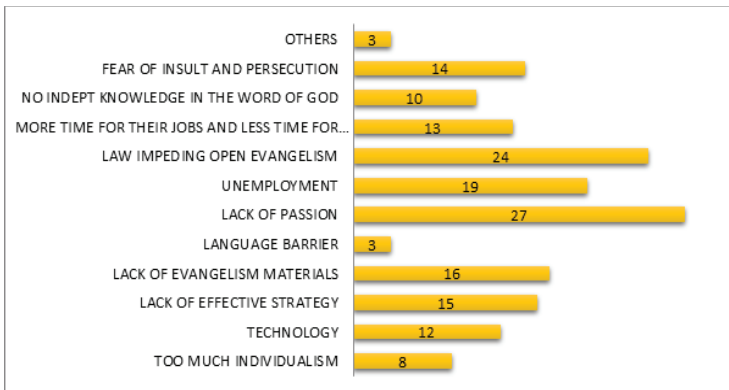


Figure 8: Why Traditional Mainline Churches in the West No Longer Evangelise Aggressively

Figure 8 shows that lack of passion and laws prohibiting open evangelism are the two most important reasons why traditional mainline churches in the West are no longer evangelising aggressively. The implication is that once Christians revive their concern and passion for lost souls, they can also revive their evangelistic zeal. They can also boldly apply for permission from law-enforcement agencies to proclaim openly the gospel.

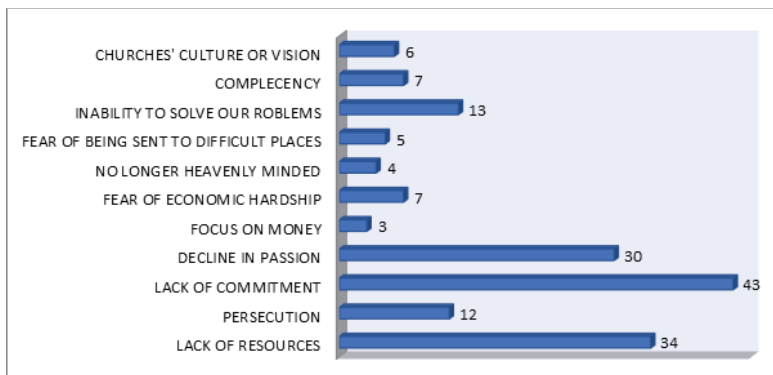


Figure 9: Why Traditional Mainline Churches in the West are No Longer Aggressively Involved in Foreign Missionary Activities

From Figure 9, lack of commitment and resources, together with decline in passion are the three main perceptions of why traditional mainline churches in the West are no longer aggressively involved in foreign missionary work.

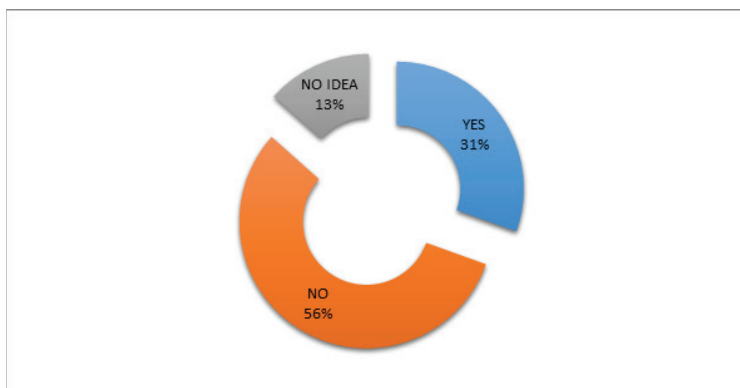


Figure 10: Do Westerners See the Need for God in their Lives?

Figure 10 (above) shows that 31 percent of respondents think that some westerners still see the need for God in their lives, but 56 percent do not think that they need God in any way. This poses a challenge to gospel communicators because it is very difficult to share the gospel with anyone who does not even see the need for God in their lives. In such a situation of indifference, Christians will have to pray for gifts of healing and miracles to convince people about Christ Jesus.

Declining Membership and Attendance in the Traditional Mainline Churches

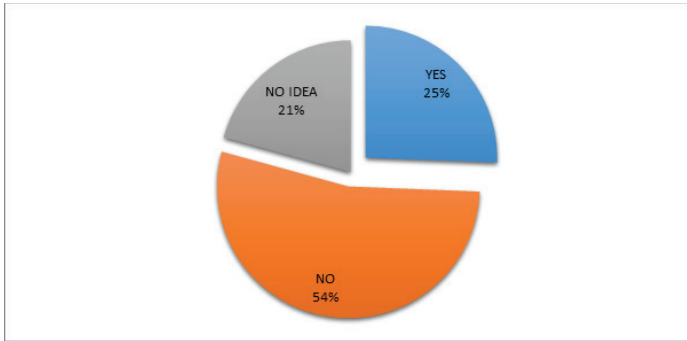


Figure 11: Do Westerners See the Relevance of the Bible in their Daily Lives?

From Figure 11 (above) 54 percent of respondents do not think that westerners see the Bible as relevant to their lives, but 25 percent think otherwise. Again, this situation poses a challenge for gospel communicators because if people do not believe in the Bible, it is difficult to convince them of the Christian faith. In that case, along with the gifts of healing and miracles Christians will also need to develop relationship-based evangelistic methods to demonstrate the power and love of God to them.

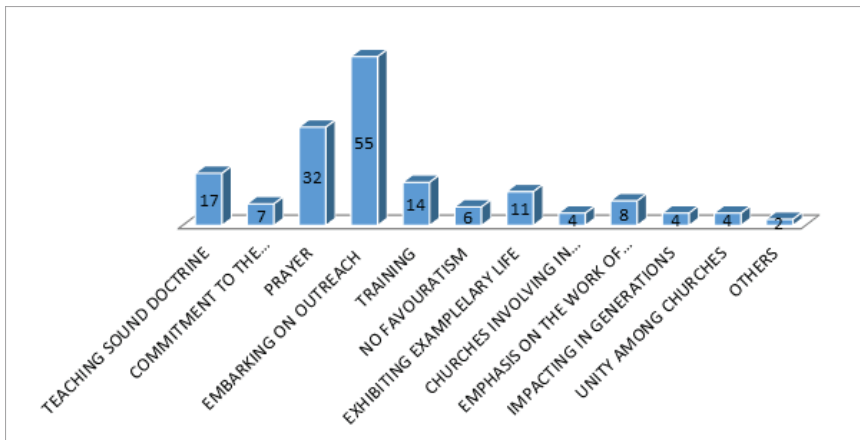


Figure 12: What should be Done to Revive the Traditional Mainline Churches in the West?

As a means of reviving the traditional mainline churches in the West, Figure 12 (above) shows that embarking on gospel outreaches, prayer, and the teaching of sound doctrines are to be given topmost consideration.

The Pentecostals, Charismatics, and Migrant Churches: A Ray of Hope for Traditional Mainline Churches in the West

Whereas traditional mainline churches in the West are declining in membership and attendance, the Pentecostals, Charismatics, and migrant churches are growing. Fuller Theological Seminary Professor, Cecil Mel Robeck, observes that between 1972 and 2012 in the US, whereas the Baptists, Lutherans, Presbyterians and the other traditional churches were declining, the three largest Pentecostal churches in the US saw significant growth – the Church of God grew by 1,274 percent, Assemblies of God grew by 184 percent and the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, grew by 394 percent.

Actually, the five largest churches in the US are Pentecostal or Charismatic in ministry. They are Pastor Joel Osteen's 25,000-member strong Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas, Pastor Creflo Dollar's 23,000-member strong World Changers Church International in College Park, Georgia, the 20,000-member strong Saddleback Community Church, Lake Forest, California, led by Pastor Rick Warren, the 18,000-member strong Potters House Church in Dallas, led by Bishop T. D. Jakes, and Bishop Ed Young's 18,000-member strong Fellowship Church in Grapevine, Texas.

Similarly, the single largest Christian congregation in Europe is the Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations Church in Kiev, Ukraine, founded by the Nigerian-born, Pastor Sunday Adelaja. Another migrant church from Nigeria, the Redeemed Christian Church of God, has over 80,000 members in various local congregations in the UK. The multi-national Kingsway International Christian Centre in London, founded by the Nigerian-born, Matthew Ashimolowo, now records up to 12,000 attendance on Sundays. Thus, the Pentecostal, Charismatic and migrant churches have provided a model for how churches can grow exponentially in a permissive postmodern environment.

Factors contributing to the growth of the Pentecostal, Charismatic and migrant churches in the West include reliance on the Holy Spirit, belief in the supernatural causality of events, emphasis on the primacy of the Bible, consistent personal and corporate prayer life, spontaneous worship, aggressive evangelism, strong fellowship, and cultural bonding.

Even though most respondents, including Professors Amos Young and Ryan Bolger of Fuller Theological Seminary, believe that God will never leave Himself without a witness (Acts 14:17), the traditional mainline churches in the West will have to learn from the Pentecostals, Charismatics and the migrant churches.

Lessons for Christianity in Ghana

From the foregoing, it is necessary for Christianity in Ghana to take several lessons so that the same negative fate that has befallen the traditional mainline churches in the West does not befall it. While being optimistic about the future, the reality is that if the traditional mainline churches in the West, which has been in existence for many centuries is now experiencing such a massive decline, then Christianity in Ghana, which has been in existence for a relatively shorter period is vulnerable. Similarly, if previously Christian-dominated lands such as Turkey and North Africa have been overtaken by Islam, then Christianity in Ghana should not take lightly the phenomenon of declining traditional mainline churches in the West.

As noted by the former Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church, Ghana, Robert Aboagye- Mensah, the contemporary church and theological seminaries must join the early African theologians to reaffirm the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible.

Christianity in Ghana should realise that the various socio-economic, technological, political and religious changes that have taken place in the country over the last few decades have literally reduced church services to mainly Sunday mornings. Accordingly, it should not be too difficult to predict that another set of major socio-economic shifts can easily put the church under serious threat especially as the major permissive anti-Christian western philosophies such as postmodernity, secular humanism and New Age Movement are now having a profound negative impact on the church in Ghana.

The Christian ecumenical bodies in Ghana and the government should establish self-regulatory commissions to manage religious affairs, strange teachings and practices, ministerial charlatans, religious extremism and manipulations that are taking place in the country in the name of “deliverance”. Care must be taken that the people do

not lose confidence in Christianity. Already, it appears the numerous ministerial scandals and superficial lifestyles of some Christians in Ghana have sown some seeds of mistrust among the citizenry, which can ultimately lead them to lose confidence in Christianity. This must be avoided at all costs.

Churches in Ghana should understand that young people in the contemporary era are desperately in need of intimate and caring communities that would provide them with emotional healing and direction in life. Accordingly, the children and youth ministries will have to be upgraded to enable them to adequately address the needs of the young people. As today's youth are the leaders of tomorrow, the church must satisfactorily address the needs of its young people. Winning and training them will not only guarantee mature church membership in future, but also reduce the level of crime and juvenile delinquency that bedevils Ghanaian society today.

Additionally, since young people today are expecting excellence in all activities, including that of the church, every effort must be made to ensure that the children and youth services are excellently run with trained full-time pastors appointed for them. Separate halls should also be constructed exclusively for them so that their services can be run simultaneously with the adult services. They should, however, be joined to the adult services so that they are not completely cut off from the mainstream church. After they have had their special service for some time, they must join the main service to "catch the spirit" of the church, and observe how the church services are conducted in their particular denominations.

Christian parents in Ghana will have to be encouraged to worship together with their children in line with Scripture (Deut. 6:6-9; 31:12-13; Josh. 8:35; 2 Chr. 20:13; 31:16-18; Ezra 10:1; Joel 2:15-16; Acts 21:5). They can also take lessons from the Muslims who have been able to indoctrinate their children in the Islamic faith mainly through worshipping together with them right from their infancy. The Deputy General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Professor Ioan Sauca, asserts that the Romanian Orthodox Churches are not declining as the other traditional mainline denominations in the West partly because the children worship with their parents in the same service as

they are fully considered as part of the church and, therefore, partake in its sacraments and liturgy.

While church leaders must be educated to appreciate the importance of the children and youth ministries, youth centres must also be constructed for them. Their programs must be regularly reviewed to reflect the contemporary situation.

Christianity in Ghana must also undertake the following activities:

- Continue steadfastly in prayer and fasting for sustained growth.
- Ensure that everyone who joins the church is taught to understand their salvation, and the need to live according to biblical standards.
- Continuously rely on the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- Continuously teach the word of God without compromise. Adopt a back-to-the-Bible approach in all activities.
- Continue to preach the exclusive message that Jesus is the only way to salvation.
- Ensure that Christianity does not become mere routine liturgical rituals people go through on Sundays, but a real demonstration of Christ-likeness.
- Ensure that church members consistently observe their daily “quiet time” through prayer, Bible study and meditation.
- Avoid anything that will make people lose confidence in the church.
- Avoid leadership struggles, divisions, materialism, and all forms of moral and ecclesiastical corruption.
- Ensure that church services are inspirational, power-packed, and Spirit-controlled, with the preaching of Bible-based sermons.
- Ensure that the praise and worship ministries are strengthened through the use of hermeneutically-balanced and Spirit-inspired songs with the properly arranged musical accompaniment.
- Embark upon aggressive relationship-based evangelistic and discipleship programs.
- Understand the changing socio-economic-political and spiritual environment in which the church is ministering in order to

effectively communicate the unchanging gospel in the fast-changing world.

- Avoid being bogged down by tradition and formalism.
- Strengthen the bond of fellowship by demonstrating genuine Christian love to both rich and poor in the church.
- Appoint only spirit-filled leaders of character and integrity.
- Use the Bible to respond to emerging political, legal, social, moral and bioethical issues.
- Identify, encourage and even sponsor mature Christians to enter politics with a specific agenda to help consolidate good governance, and also influence decision-making that will promote Christian values and aspirations.
- Form Christian morality advocacy groups to collaborate with the government and other legislative bodies to enact laws that will protect and promote Christian standards of morality.

Lessons for Ghanaian Churches in the West

With tightened immigration laws in the West, it has become difficult for many Ghanaians to migrate to the West. The implication is that the first generation members of the Ghanaian migrant churches in the West will soon retire, return to Ghana or even be called to glory. This means that the leadership of those migrant churches should prepare the next generation to take over, otherwise they can also suffer decline. In that case, they will not be able to service the mortgages on the few church buildings they have acquired. That will force them to sell their properties as the traditional mainline churches are currently doing. Accordingly, they may have to undertake the following activities:

Make the churches more youth-friendly

Call spirit-filled leaders of character and integrity into the full-time ministry. Such pastors should be able to communicate effectively in the national languages of the respective countries.

Reduce the running of financially-induced programs and the taking of multiple offerings by exploring the possibility of administering the church solely on tithes and a few absolutely-necessary offerings.

Establish multi-cultural congregations to run alongside the Ghanaian-speaking congregations with the view of winning indigenous nationals for Christ.

Conclusion

This essay has examined the phenomenon of declining church membership and attendance in the traditional mainline churches in the West with the view of drawing practical lessons for Christianity in Ghana. It has been seen that the traditional mainline churches in the West have actually declined as church membership and attendance have dwindled drastically with some pastors leaving the ministry, seminaries and Christian bookshops being closed down, and church buildings being abandoned, sold out, demolished or modified for secular usage.

Even though several factors have been identified as contributing to the decline, the essay has demonstrated that the Pentecostal, Charismatic and migrant churches in the West are still growing. This implies that if the traditional mainline churches in the West would inject Pentecostal ethos into their services by giving the Holy Spirit His rightful place, return to the primacy of Scripture, and get spirit-filled leaders of character and integrity, they are likely to be revived.

While being optimistic that the Lord will always honour His word and will not leave Himself without a witness in any generation (Acts 14:17), Christianity in Ghana should learn lessons from the traditional mainline churches in the West so that the same fate does not befall it. It must check the strange teachings and practices being promoted by some pastors and prophets, coupled with the various ecclesiastical scandals in Ghana. In addition to adopting a back-to-the-Bible approach in their activities, churches in Ghana must engage in morally-appropriate and Christ-honouring activities, promote aggressive relationship-based evangelism and discipleship programs, become more youth-friendly, continue to give the Holy Spirit His rightful place and appropriately use the Bible to respond to emerging socio-economic, political and religious issues without compromising its core Christian values.

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PENTECOSTALISM AND AFRICA-TO-AFRICA MISSIONS-FINANCING PRAXIS

Nicholas Darko

Key words: *Missions-financing; Africa-to-Africa mission; Pentecostalism.*

Introduction

This article briefly introduces the missions-financing praxis of four Pentecostal churches that are prominent in the emerging African-to-Africa missions, and how this could form a basis for missional practice. The four major churches are, The Church of Pentecost of Ghana, The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa, Light House Chapel International of Ghana, and The Redeemed Christian Church of God of Nigeria. Before we examine the missions-financing of these missional Pentecostal churches, it will be helpful to explain some of the terms that are used in this article, namely, Mission, Missions and Africa-to-Africa missions.

Mission, Missions and Mission-financing

The emerging trend of Africa-to-Africa missions by Pentecostals¹ has recently been defined as ‘missions activity originating from one African country to another African country.’² The impact of African missional activity targeted at Africa, has resulted in a phenomenal growth in membership of Pentecostals. This vitality has raised an important issue of missions-financing. The current missions-financing that most Pentecostals are practicing is based on a legacy inherited from the Azusa street glossolalic experience in the early 20th century, that depends more on the Holy Spirit’s direction, than having a well-crafted missiological financing approach.

The challenge confronting Pentecostals is whether this is the only means of financing God’s mission. To be sure, the church cannot overlook the importance of money and the role financial management plays in missions. Therefore, some major Pentecostal churches in Africa are increasingly becoming aware of the need to deliberately

engage in the practice of raising and allocating financial and other resources to propagate the gospel in other cultures³. Amidst this concerns, Dr C. Bate has raised a critical issue in missions-financing: ‘Despite the importance of money and missions, not much has been studied in the theology literature, and this appears ‘academic neglect.’⁴ The implications of Bate’s critical inquiry could be that Pentecostals have not developed the theoretical and theological underpinnings of missions-financing, and neither have they improved their missions-financing praxis over the years.

The late prominent South African missiologist, David Bosch saw mission as God’s self-revelation, that is, God is the One who loves the world and sent his only Son Jesus Christ to rescue the world. The nature and activity of God, embraces both the church and the world, and the church is privileged to participate in this mission. Bosch further distinguishes mission (singular) from missions (plural), by indicating that missions represents the missionary venture of the Church.⁵ This position of Bosch could be related to the emerging Africa-to-Africa missions trend. As Bosch has clearly stated, the theology of the mission of God is about God’s self-revelation in Christ Jesus that expresses God’s love for the world. However, missions, meaning how each church defines and carries out its response to the mission of God, (that is, missions praxis) will differ from church to church. In effect, each church or denomination must determine what constitutes its own particular missions, and the financial implications. The Africa-to-Africa missions could change for the worse if its financial praxis is not properly defined and managed.

Africa-to-Africa missions

This question regarding missions-financing is unavoidable when we consider Africans sending missionaries within the continent. This issue of missions-financing appears not to have been discussed much in the theology literature of Africa-missions. However, the issue is gaining momentum, with the spread of Pentecostalism in Africa, as a sub-set of the South-to-South missions initiative. The challenge that the Pentecostal churches have to face is how they are going to sustain the Africa-to-Africa or South-to-South missions. Professor David Killingray of University of London’s concern regarding the

need for research in the area of missions-financing in Africa is in the right direction when he examines the way the Western missionary movement used to support missions in Africa. He writes,

The Western missionary movement was sustained by home offices that consistently sought to promote and direct the cause of overseas mission. In sharp contrast, many (perhaps most?) mission agencies in modern Africa lack firm and well-directed administrative infrastructural support. I am not sure if much research has been done in this area of vital support services for missionaries in the field. Are missionaries paid regularly, is there pension provision, care for personal and family health needs, and schooling for children.⁶

Professor Killingray's concern appears to synchronise theologically with that of Bate, pointing out the importance of research on missions-financing in the emerging trend of Africa-to-Africa missions.⁷ Dr Dela Quampah, a Ghanaian missionary of the Church of Pentecost serving in the Republic of South Africa has recently expressed similar concern when writing on the topic: *The changing face of missions: Pentecostal perspective from South Africa*.⁸

Pentecostalism and its vitality has gained major attention among theological and other related scholars, such as Allan Anderson, Opoku Onyinah, G. B. McGee, Mathews Ojo, and J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu⁹

The focus of most of these Pentecostal scholars has been on the spiritual practices of Pentecostals that distinguish them from other denominations, such as, among others, prophecies, healing, speaking in tongues and testimonies confirming the power of God. They do so because these manifestations in worship are what attract the vulnerable communities in Africa. Financial challenges of some African communities may draw them to these Pentecostal manifestations.

Certainly, we do not deny the importance of these spiritual manifestations in the missions of Pentecostal churches. But funding cannot be over emphasized in the need for proper and adequate research regarding the emerging trend of Africa-to-Africa missions. It is for this reason that we have chosen to examine the missions-financing of selected Pentecostal-charismatic churches that are engaged in the Africa-to-Africa missions.

Cases of Current Practice of Missions-Financing

African Pentecostals in their urgency to evangelise the rest of Africa followed the practices of the early Pentecostal missionaries that did not pay much attention to the actual amount of money needed for missions. They trusted God to provide their needs whilst in the mission fields. Even in modern times, some African Independent Churches (AICs) hold this view and practise it. For example, Dr T. A. Oduro, one of the leaders of AICs in West Africa is emphatic that when it comes to determining the financial strength in missions, the church does not need to rely on programmed missions-financing activities, such as designated funding, missions weeks and mission boards.¹⁰ This is a clear indication of how some African churches have carried the early Pentecostal missions-financing practices into the 21st Century. However, most of the Classical Pentecostals have overcome this conservative posture, and seem to be keeping pace with the need to organise finances for missions, according to contemporary economic and theological understandings in Africa.

The Church of Pentecost in Ghana

The Church of Pentecost (COP) in Ghana, one of the Pentecostal missional churches involved in the Africa-to-Africa missions has designated financing for its missions' enterprise. This is done by raising money periodically and prudently allocating it among the mission nations in Africa. They send missionaries to the mission nations and pay their expenses. They also provide infrastructure at strategic points. Financing of operational cost, including salaries of indigenous pastors are paid from the local resources of the mission nations. There have also been supporting social services, and this is done through training and financially empowering missionaries in the African nations. The Church of Pentecost strongly believes that their model of self-financing must be monitored to ensure judicious use of money in the mission nations. However, lack of personnel in some African countries makes effective implementation of these financial structures challenging.¹¹¹¹ The Church of Pentecost. Missions Handbook. Accra: The Church of Pentecost, 2008.

The Apostolic Faith Mission in South Africa

The Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) in South Africa, one of the foremost initiators of Pentecostalism in southern Africa, has been in operation almost immediately after the Azusa street experience in 1908. They therefore carried the immediate effect of the glossolalic experience to Africa, and waded through, up to the present day. However, in recent years, there has been some transformation in their earlier concentration on spiritual issues at the expense of the physical and social needs of the people.

Victor Molobi illustrates the transformation that has occurred within the Pentecostal churches in terms of funding their missions in South Africa, by citing, as an example, the work of The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa. He points out that recently AFM has created various empowering ventures in response to the needs not only of its members, but also people in the communities they operate¹² For instance, in the township of Tashwane, the AFM has established a mission-financing department that raises money to meet the needs of their members and also that of the community. The department has the responsibility not only to raise the money but to ensure that the funds raised are well managed. The AFM has also done pioneering work in the Indian Ocean in financing missions. Even in theological training, the AFM seeks financial viability. ¹³ AFM is aware that poverty continues to have a toll on the communities, and that as Pentecostals, they have the responsibility to work with other agents in addressing both the spiritual and material needs of the people. These initiatives show differences between the early Pentecostals' approach to missions-financing, as against the present.

Light House Chapel International in Ghana

The Light House Chapel International, which is actively engaged in Africa-to-Africa missions has introduced a method of financing their missionaries sent to African countries. The ministers they send out are professionals who use their professions to engage in missions in Africa, without taking salaries from the church. They depend upon the salaries of the institutions that have employed them.

They seem to be getting on well. However, missions expenses go beyond salaries of missionaries, so the church looks for other means to raise money to pay for other expenses. Dr. Peter White and Dr. Benjamin Acheampong, see finances as one major challenge in advancing the gospel, and they think it must be planned and managed well.¹⁴

The Redeemed Christian Church of God in Nigeria

The Redeemed Christian Church of God has been able to organise enough monies to build structures for worship, wherever they operate in Africa. The church has an organised administration, and has a department for Africa missions. This department caters for the needs of Africa missions. It teaches its members to raise money, and one of the criteria for assessing ministers is their ability to teach people to understand giving. Its African missions has witnessed the building of chapels in the city centres of the African nations. It has brought its missions management to contemporary levels that brings in money for the mission work.¹⁵

In Nigeria, similar to the missions work of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, some non-denominational Christian organisations raise money for missions as well. These Christian organisations, by implication, show some kind of readiness to provide financing model to match the emerging Africa-to-Africa missions. These groups include Gospel Bankers and Mission Supporters.¹⁶ These organisations working with and within the church are giving meaning to mission-financing in contemporary times.

Reflection on Current Missions-Financing

It could be observed from the cases discussed above that Pentecostals have come from the initial position of not giving enough priority to how to raise and manage money in missions to a more conscious approach towards missions-financing. Over the years, they are finding the missions-financing rhythm, as they encounter the reality of challenging economies in Africa.

As mentioned above, structures have been put in place to raise money for the Africa-to-Africa missions. The Church of Pentecost for example has a designated mission directorate, managing a designated missions fund.

They have built financial structures to ensure equity in the allocation of the finances. The Redeemed Christian Church of God has a similar arrangement, but they have gone a step further to dedicate a separate department at its headquarters for Africa missions. This encourages paying attention to Africa in missions, with its peculiar challenges, when it comes to money and missions. Building infrastructure appears to be a major objective of these Pentecostals, especially the neo-Pentecostal churches. The Light House Chapel International's tent-making ministry is another creative initiative for financing missions.

In most of the Pentecostal missions, the finances are geared towards maintaining the missionaries on the ground. In some mission areas, where monies raised are not enough to finance projects which could have direct social impact on the indigenous people, the African headquarters of these churches solicit for funds from Africans in the diaspora to support the Africa-to-Africa missions.

The total financial investment of these Pentecostals, when put together could amount to huge flow of finance for the Africa-to-Africa missions. However, there are no available statistics on this matter, and it is hoped that this issue will be properly addressed in the near future.

Economic context

Missions-financing, like any other human activity must take varying economic contexts into consideration. It is possible for funding to be allocated without considering the economic environment in which the mission is taking place. For example, Sierra Leone and Nigeria are both African nations, but their economic environments are different. This fact must be seriously considered when allocating funds for missions. Unfortunately, this is where earlier Pentecostals failed in their missions-financing planning. This weakness could sneak into current missions-financing praxis and create difficulties for missionaries, who may find it difficult to officially report the reality on the ground to their sending nations. D. R. Dunaetz hints that missionaries normally leave out some of the situations which will not appear 'good' when reporting to their home countries.¹⁷ The objective of this article is to help unearth such issues in missions-financing and find solutions for them.

Paternalistic missions-financing

Missions-financing leading to paternalism was a problem, and still remains a problem in the West-to-Africa missions. It has been observed that the Pentecostals' Africa-to-Africa missions-financing also appears to have some paternalistic tendencies unintentionally in the African mission nations. The receiving mission nations are uncritically ready to follow every instruction from their new African missionaries, once they could get some monies from these African missionaries. James Harries' concern about this missions-financing approach is that it leads to dependency, which makes the culture of the mission nations dependent on the culture of the sending nations.¹⁸ In so doing the Africa-to-Africa missions trend is mimicking the very paternalistic tendencies operated by the West-to-Africa missions-financing that is considered unacceptable by African Pentecostals. Harries believes that God's mission must bring transformation that ensures equality, mutual respect and dignity through the Africa-to-Africa missions.

Giftings Missions-Financing Model

It is important for Africa-to-Africa missions to look for an African specific, self-financing, mission model. It would mean considering the giftings of the various groups of people in the church and how these can be employed in specific missions. This is because financing is not limited to money. Every other resource such as talents and giftings that could support missions must be used. All church members must be encouraged to give voluntarily when it comes to raising resources for missions. This approach could bring about a new understanding of self-supporting for missions. The founder of the Church of Pentecost in Ghana, McKeown, portrays a situation that confirms his own brand of self-financing for missions. In his own words:

You will know that over the years you have built churches, storms have come and you have lost them, it has been a great storm and you have wept as you saw your labour wrecked, now the storm is over, what are you going to do about it? Are you going to follow the example of the little birds, with love in your heart, a song on your lips you set rebuilding, and repair the rages of the storm? As I write this letter I have a minister at my right hand, he promises 200 cedis.

Then I looked up saw a servant girl in the room, I called her and read this letter, she responded at once and said, “I will give 5 cedis.” What, you are a servant, I would have thought if you could give 1 cedi that would have been great; “I will give 5 cedis”, she said. Then I spoke to a boy in the Church Office, he said, “I will give 10 cedis.” What if all the Church responded like that? ¹⁹

The emerging trend of Africa-to-Africa missions financing could consider this simple, but effective way to get almost everyone in the church to promote self-financing. This partly explains why the Church of Pentecost has been one of the leading self-financing Pentecostal churches, and has launched into African missions in a big way. This approach by McKeown places him in the centre of the debate that asks: Was McKeown aware of the self-financing model propagated by Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson in the 19th century or not? Professor Opoku Onyinah maintains that McKeown’s tenacity to understanding and applying the biblical truths produced in McKeown his own brand of self-financing.²⁰ This could be an example for Pentecostals in missions in Africa to consider in the 21st century.

Biblical Models for Missions-Financing

The urgency of Pentecostals’ engagement in missions should lead them to discover what the Bible says about financing God’s mission. Unfortunately, there are some Pentecostals who do not consider that missions-financing is a scriptural term, notwithstanding the numerous biblical references that direct how God’s work must be financed. In Dr M. E. Stevens’ in-depth research on the Temples, Tithes and Taxes, he has argued that the Old Testament was not limited to worship alone, but the worship in the temple was facilitated by financing of activities to sustain the worship.²¹ This makes financing an indispensable activity in God’s mission where the main objective of missions is people responding to God’s love and worshipping him accordingly. What then are the implications of biblical truths in the Old and New Testaments for missions-financing?

In Deuteronomy chapter 14:28-29, part of God’s intention for the tithes was for it to be used according to his instructions. He specifically directed what was to be given to the less-privileged, such as the widows, foreigners, and orphans. God intended all the people to

live in a just and equal community. It was in the light of this that God directed the third year tithes to be given to the less-privileged community among the Jews. When it comes to tithes brought to the Jerusalem Temple, another direction towards fairness is seen by appointing faithful men to administer the tithes (Nehemiah 13:10-13). Indeed, to ensure fairness in the distribution of the tithes, God was also interested in the structures that were set up to manage the funds.

The New Testament also continues in considering the needy and building structures for managing monies that were meant for propagating the gospel. In Luke 8:1-3 the financing of Jesus' ministry included some women who followed Jesus in his travels. The focus of Jesus' financing, apparently included taking care of the needy (John 13: 26, 29; Mark 14:4-6; Matthew 17:24-27). In Luke 9:12 Jesus' direction to the disciples: 'You give them something to eat' (Luke 9:13) could mean they were expected to provide for the needs of the people as an obligation. Again, we see structures set up in the Acts to financially care for the needy and to aid the spread of the gospel in the early church (Acts 6:1-7).

The Apostle Paul's appeal to the Corinthians, and the case study he presented on the Macedonian churches, adds to how missions-financing should be handled (2 Corinthians 8:1-22). The appeal was Christological, and not without spiritual substance. The agape love of God seen in the death of Jesus Christ was the basis of inspiration and motivation. His emphasis was the grace God gave the Macedonian churches, and how they utilised this grace for the furtherance of the gospel. Embodied in the appeal was the careful structure the Apostle Paul put forward to ensure credibility and accountability (2 Corinthians 8:18-21).

The Holy Spirit played a role in guiding the financing of the early church when they met together in fellowship as believers sold their property and laid the money at the feet of the apostles. The Philippian Christians also gave out of their own volition, apparently also propelled by the Holy Spirit working in them (Acts 2:42-47; Philippians 4:10-20). They also supported the missionary trips of the apostle Paul willingly.

This brief biblical survey, brings out pertinent issues that have implications for missions-financing. First, both Old and New

Testaments give prominence to the needy in doing God's mission. This is not limited to financing the communications of the gospel alone, but it goes towards the care of the needy people both inside and outside the church. The implication for financing missions is that every missions-financing programme should include social action in a very comprehensive manner. This could make the gospel more potent and effective. However, the needy people themselves were not excepted from contributing towards achieving God's mission as the Macedonian Christians out of their hardships gave beyond their means (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).

Second, there should be adequate structures to finance the mission projects. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament acknowledge the need for structures. These structures could help monitor the finances in an equitable manner, to diffuse possible challenges arising from financing. Effective structures encourage sustainable missions financing.

Third, like any other function of the church, the Holy Spirit should be allowed to work among the people when it comes to missions-financing. This could involve teaching the biblical truth on giving, since proper understanding of the Word of God could facilitate giving.

Fourth, best practice should be applied in the context of raising or allocating finances for missions. For example, the circumstances in Acts chapter 6:1-7 called for the church which was growing to pray and adopt a strategy of appointing capable people to care for the finances, and other social needs of the church.

Conclusion

By reviewing the missions-financing models of some Pentecostal-charismatic churches this study has opened up a rather important subject in the Pentecostal discourse on missions-financing, which some considered not so relevant for the African church in mission. It has brought into focus the need for building structures for mission-financing that will ensure proper accounting for finances and other resources in the Africa-to-Africa missions. The study also has encouraged dependence on the Holy Spirit in working out structures for missions-financing. Finally, it is hoped that this article will provoke individual Pentecostal missional churches to engage in research in their missions-financing praxis.

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THE PLACE OF MUSIC IN MISSIONS WORK IN GHANA: WITH REFERENCE TO THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST

Fred Amoakohene Sarpong

Key Words: *Models of musical types, Indigeneity, Missions, Hymns, Contrafactum, Eclectic, Creative Essays, Spontaneous Type, Psalms.*

Introduction

This article gives a brief narrative of the role that music has played and continues to play in the churches in Ghana with particular reference to the Church of Pentecost. It begins by acknowledging that the COP as an indigenous Ghanaian church sees music as an integral part of its missions in Ghana and beyond. It then examines the musical tradition of the churches in Ghana, and examines four models of musical types in Ghanaian churches, namely, Contrafactum, Eclectic, Creative Essays of Afro-Identity and Spontaneous types. The rest of the paper focuses on the Spontaneous Type of music as the Church of Pentecost's preference in worship and in its missional activities. It concludes with a brief comment on the importance of the Psalms in church music.

The Church of Pentecost (COP), an indigenized Ghanaian Church

Music, flowing from the mind and the heart of the African, has played and continues to play an important role in the worship and missions of the churches in Ghana. This is particularly the case when one considers the vast contribution that music has made towards the rapid growth of the Church Of Pentecost, a church that prides itself of its indigenous Ghanaian identity. According to Kingsley Larbi in the 'Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity' though the COP owes its origins to the missionary activities of James McKeown, from its inception deliberate attempt was made to plant the church firmly into the Ghanaian soil, without losing its rooting in Christ and the Bible. This is recognisable in its ethos, beliefs, and worship¹. Indeed, the first Ghanaian Chairman of the COP, Apostle F.S. Safo did not lose sight of the independence and indigeneity of the COP when he stated that,

The Church of Pentecost (until 1962, the Ghana Apostolic Church), is an indigenous Church. Since 1953, and with the break of the Bradford connection, The Church of Pentecost has governed her own affairs without any interference from any outside authority. The leadership of the church being Irish (up to 1982) and the fact that occasionally missionaries from the UK worked with us does not negate the assertion that The Church of Pentecost has always managed her own affairs from within Ghana. Perhaps we achieved this feat because we have always relied on internal resources to keep the church going.²

One of the internal resources that keep the Church Of Pentecost going as an indigenous church is its music, although surprisingly little has been written about the church's music and how it aids the spread of its doctrines. Throughout my readings on Pentecostalism and missions and the indigenization of the gospel in Ghana I found that the early writers on the history and growth of the COP did not say much about the place of music, drumming and dance and the impact they have had on the indigenisation of Pentecostal movement and the gospel in Ghana. To some extent this omission in the history of the COP is rather unfortunate for, to borrow the words of John S. Mbiti, "the African, is incurably musical,"³ and therefore, the role of music in the missions of the church in Ghana should not be ignored.

In Ghana, music cannot be separated from drumming and dancing. The three are intimately woven together. Ghanaians do not have a specific designation for the word "music". In Ghana 'music' is more than songs. It is the shadow of who we are. The words that probably come together to give us an idea of what constitutes music are: 'Ndwom' (Song), 'Ayan' (Drumming), and 'Agoro' (playing). Therefore, it is insightful that our foreign missionaries, especially James McKeown used music, that is, songs, drumming and dance as one of the models for their "indoctrination plan". In so doing they were unconsciously connecting us to one of our best ways of expressions. Eventually, as Annan K. Newlove puts it, "we snatched it, remoulded it, and replaced it where it belonged within our own frame of reality!"⁴

Musical Traditions of the Church in Ghana

Undoubtedly, church music in Ghana began with the coming of European missionaries, but there is much evidence to show that before the advent of European missionaries, the African life and culture was deeply-rooted in music. African music was and is rich, very much meaningful to its makers, and complex in its orientation.⁵ Ghana has been blessed with composers, writers and singers of church music who have made invaluable contributions in the promulgation of Christianity, the sensitization of faith, and the spiritual mobilization of indigenous believers to lift their voices in worship to proclaim their faith and to glorify their Maker.

The effort to indigenize Christian worship in Ghana was largely initiated by indigenous musicians. They helped the community to use music as a medium of reflecting on their Christian faith in the context of the local culture, so that the community will be able to readily internalize the message of the gospel in music and give external expression of it in their daily missional relationships. For instance, in the late 1920's Dr Ephraim Amu, a famous Ghanaian musicologist, sought to find ways to give the strict Euro-Christian Order of Service indigenous, cultural and contextual expression. The objective was to enable Christianity which was perceived by some people as a "foreign religion" to find general acceptability among the indigenous people of Ghana.⁶

Thus, the indigenous Ghanaian experience of Christian worship is one that is accentuated by some unique traditional musical elements that is still part of modern-day worship in churches in Ghana. In recognition of the indispensable role of music to the spread and growth of Christianity and missions work in Ghana, some churches, particularly the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, provided music education in schools and in specialized programmes. This gave participants the opportunity to learn music formats, within which art music could find its level in church worship.

Characteristically, Ghanaian Christians love to sing, drum and dance. Music has become the life blood of the Christian denominations in the country. However, knowing that our country is a musical one or that our people love to sing is not enough. If we are to become conscious

of what we do and also reflect on ways by which to improve upon what we do, we need to ask questions like: ‘Why has our worship become so infused with music, drumming and dancing? What do we gain from such practices? and, Where are we heading to with our music? and How can we make the best out of music in our worship and missional work?’ These questions are indeed relevant, but answering them is beyond the remit of this paper. Such an assignment belongs to the future, although in this paper attempts to indirectly respond to some of these questions.

Ghanaian church music began with the hymns, spirituals and anthems that were introduced by missionaries during the formative period of the missionary enterprise. The type of European church music that the missionaries brought to Ghana was derivatives of the Western musical tradition that was very prominent at least in the European church culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This European church music displayed elements of music with a deep and fine sense of melody and harmony with a union between harmonic function and counterpoint. This philosophy of composition manifested itself in the hymns, anthems and other types of music that were found in the song books, introduced in Ghana.

Of all the musical types that European missionaries introduced into the Ghanaian churches, perhaps the one that has had much influence on Ghanaian Christianity, particularly in worship is the “hymn”. To the missionaries, the introduction of hymn singing was simply a way of “rising to meet a challenge”. In particular;

1. It was difficult for the early missionaries to learn new music so foreign to their own. African polyrhythms were complex and also African tonal languages varied from region to region.
2. Missionaries, like all people, loved their own music. They found it expressed a “reverent” form of worship; a reverence they could not find in African sounds.

Although initially hymn singing posed some challenges for the African churches, they managed to master it and, in some cases, adapted it to their own cultural situations. Today in addition to hymn singing the churches have ingeniously come out with different models of musical types in worship.

Models of Musical Types in Ghanaian Churches

Basically, there are four models of traditional Ghanaian church musical types. These four musical types have served as the basis for creativity; and continue to give us representatives that keep each type alive in every generation. The four basic types are Contrafactum, Eclectic, Creative Essays of Afro-Identity and Spontaneous Music.

Contrafactum

By Contrafactum we mean in vocal music the substitution of one text for another without substantial change to the music. In Ghana there are known and unknown composers who either took existing tunes of hymns or songs and provided text for them; or the other way around, of composing tunes for existing texts. In some cases, some of the composers under this category composed both text and music, but within fixed parameters of a foreign musical type such as “the hymn.” Exponents of the contrafactum type include:

1. Rev. Gaddiel Robert Acquah (“Amensuon Twereampon,” “Wonfa Ndaase”) of the Methodist Church Ghana
2. Rev. J. Allotey- Pappoe, (“onso Nyame ye”, “Abodze Nyinaa”) of the Methodist Church Ghana
3. Apostle Prof. Opoku Onyina of the Church of Pentecost (see for instance the 2017, 2018 CoP. theme songs),

Eclectic Type

The second musical type is the Eclectic Type. It is comparatively a much newer trend and type of Ghanaian church music which seeks to satisfy a “seeker-friendly” worship style by putting together various cultural aesthetics to create a desired music or sound. They may use all foreign instruments and may even appeal to modern American music, such as jazz and gospel, insofar as the results satisfy aesthetic needs. Such groups include: Voices of Pentecost, Joyful Way Incorporated, Soul Winners, Koda, Joe Mettle etc. This type is normally referred to as Christian Contemporary Music.

Creative Essays of Afro-Identity Type

The Creative Essays of Afro-Identity is a musical type from African Christian composers who deliberately create songs that have unique African cultural identity. In their compositions they ensure the accuracy of language, prosody, rhythms, tones, cultural relevance and meaning that are appropriate for Christian worship. Even when they composed for foreign instruments, they make sure that those foreign instruments speak the language of the Ghanaian (or African.)

The Spontaneous Ghanaian Christian Music

As its name suggest the Spontaneous musical type is music that is created as a result of a spontaneous response to an event. It is in contrast to pure art music which is the result of a well-thought-out programme of assembling ideas and elements into the creative process of a single musical work. In Ghana, spontaneous music is exemplified through such traditional church musical genres such as: Ebibindwom, Asafo, Samanmo, etc. Composers who represent this musical type in our generation include, Eunice Addison (of blessed memory), Eunice Johnson, P.B. Appiadu, Opoku Onyina, Emmanuel Kwasi Mireku, Cindy Thompson and others. Most of their songs are in free-style and it is useful during “personal and corporate prayers, worship, and other Christian events”. Flow is incomparable with any known church musical type except Ebibindwom. The free-style and superfluous repetitiveness is only traceable to the spontaneous song type of music.⁷ Examples of such songs may include: Sunsum Kronkron bra (Holy Spirit come), Ode ne nsa teaa no aka me (He has touched me with His finger) by Opoku Onyina, Awurade kasa (God! Speak) by Cindy Thompson to name but a few.

However, it is important to mention that some of the spontaneous songs do not come from accredited musicians. There are some Christians, who may receive healing or other forms of miracles during worship and spontaneously express their appreciation to the Lord in new songs. These spontaneous songs, flowing out of personal testimonies, are usually considered the heart’s language, and they use traditional forms of expressions, usually accompanied by drumming and dancing in response to God’s miraculous saving acts. These songs then begin to spread from church to church by musical “pollinators”

using mainly oral means. These pollinators are usually “church musicians” valued for their abilities to memorize many songs and lead congregations through exciting worship experiences. Christian “spontaneous” or “heart music” are to be found in many Ghanaian communities, including The Church of Pentecost.

The Church of Pentecost and the Spontaneous Music

In the Church Of Pentecost the spontaneous music type is now called ‘Prophetic or Spiritual Songs’. These songs are mostly received during effective prayer and various worship sessions. Usually, as stated above, these songs are not already composed or created. In the COP, it is believed that the recipients of such songs must have received it from the Spirit of God. Some of these songs are received through prophecy, others are received during sermon delivery, others also are received as and when a spectacular event occurs. The spontaneous music type has played a major role in making The Church of Pentecost an indigenous church and also the leading Pentecostal church in Ghana. This type of music, spontaneous as it may be, appears natural to the ordinary Ghanaian and they are therefore easy to sing. The songs are tonal in nature, mostly in pentatonic scale, call and response, repetition of words, improvisation, short melodies and often times with predictive endings which makes the learning of such songs very easy and comfortable. Such songs, because they are easy to learn, travel far within the country. They are mostly sung in the Akan language, “Twi” in various forms.

There are many people in the Church of Pentecost who prefer spontaneous types of songs to songs or hymns already composed in English, and would like to sing them in their mother tongue. For instance, the Akan ethnic group, who speak the Twi language, would like to sing their songs in that language, that is, they want their songs or hymns ‘Akanly’ rendered. I believe this is partly because COP had its origin from the Akan communities before it later got established in other parts of the country.

To sum up, in Ghana one of the keen ways to identify a Church of Pentecost branch is by its music, particularly, the spontaneous songs that are usually considered prophetic or Holy Spirit inspired. A biblical text that informs this belief comes from apostle Peter, “For prophecy

never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21).

Indigeneity of Music in The Church of Pentecost

Let me briefly draw out a few points that are considered relevant by the Church of Pentecost in its indigenization of music in worship. Firstly, as stated above, for the COP the European hymns would have to be indigenised for them to be accepted as songs for Ghanaian Christian liturgy. So most of the hymns that the missionaries brought had to be translated into Ghanaian languages because people want to understand the meaning of the hymns, and how they can appropriately apply them to their context in their daily living.

Secondly, short melodies are an indigenous means of remembering important issues or events in Ghana. So, the COP uses short melodies in music for easy transmission of the gospel message to the people. These short melodies, which are spontaneously received by some members of the Church are believed to contain messages of God’s redemptive plan for all levels of people in society, namely - the great, small, rich or poor, literates and illiterates and the like.

Thirdly, since traditionally in Ghana music is used as ‘a storage facility’, the COP also considers music a means to safeguard the doctrines and practices of the church. In other words, to indigenize the gospel message, the songs, hymns and other spiritual songs must capture the core theological and doctrinal beliefs of the Church.

Fourthly, the indigenized ‘free style’ of the songs sung makes the COP attractive to the majority of people in Ghana. One such popular songs is evangelical in nature, asking people to turn to Christ because He receives all kinds of people, without any form of discrimination, - the poor, the sick, the lonely, the powerful, the rich, etc.

Bra! Bra! Bra! Na obegye wo
Bra! Bra! Bra! Na obegye wo
Ogye ahiafo, ogye ayarefo, ogye asikafo, etc.
Yesu de, onsa mu

The song literally means in English,
Come! Come! Come! For He will receive you
Come! Come! Come! For He will receive you
He receives the poor, He receives the sick, the rich, etc.
As for Jesus, He does not segregate (or discriminate).

The Church of Pentecost and the Psalms

It is appropriate to conclude this discussion by briefly stating the relevance of the Psalms and other biblical texts in the Church Of Pentecost's worship. The COP shares the view that the Psalms served as the Hymn Book of the Temple in Jerusalem. It believes that every day had its own psalms as the people met to worship in the Temple. As we read and meditate on the psalms, we are enjoined to 'sing to the Lord a new song'. In Psalm 33 we are to 'sing joyfully to the LORD, and to praise the LORD with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre'. We are to sing to him 'a new song;' 'play skillfully', and 'shout for joy' (Psalm 33:1-3). Again, in Psalm 150, we are exhorted to use all types of musical instruments available to praise the Lord. That means, since musical instruments are vast and sound different, making music to the Lord cannot be the same for all groups of people. Every group or nation is at liberty to use the musical instruments and traditions available to them to praise the Lord.

In Ghana the Church of Pentecost has taken this line in its worship. In playing its active missional role of making disciples of all nations, it is important also for the COP to accept the fact that indigenization of music applies to all groups of people everywhere. Therefore, the church should not expect people in other nations to sing the same songs and use the same musical instruments as we do in Ghana. One of our missionary approaches is to respect the musical traditions of every nation and the various cultural settings in which they worship the triune God⁸

Again, the Church of Pentecost believes that we have something to learn from the apostles when it comes to the use of music in worship, for they continued the practice of using music as a vehicle of worship. In Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19, Paul exhorts the church to 'teach, admonish one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace, pouring our hearts to the Lord'.⁹

The early fathers of the Church of Pentecost also made use of music in all their services. The Holy Spirit baptismal services, the anointing, healing miracle services, rallies and conventions were characterized by the Spirit filled spontaneous music. They found that it had power because it had direct appeal to the hearts and minds of the people.

The early missionaries of The Church of Pentecost engaged in church planting without forgetting the use of music, and this practice is still being followed. Up till today the COP does not only train people in the art of teaching and preaching, but also in the use of music in its missions. Men and women such as Eunice Addison, Eunice Johnson, P.B. Appiadu, Opoku Onyina, Mireku and a host of others have served their generation and they have kept the high standards of musicality. It is not surprising that in the establishment of the Church of Pentecost's 'Pentecost Theological Seminary' a music department has been set up as an integral part of its missional activities, because the COP puts a high premium on church music in order to affect our generation and the next.

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**PENTECOSTALISM IN AFRICA:
PRESENCE AND IMPACT OF PNEUMATIC
CHRISTIANITY IN POST-COLONIAL SOCIETIES,
EDITED BY MARTIN LINDHARDT**

Global Pentecostal & Charismatic Studies 15. Leiden and Boston: Brill,
2015. x + 387 pp. \$84.00, paper. ISBN 9789004281868.

*Reviewed by Amos Yong, PhD, Director, Center for Missiological Research,
and Professor of Theology and Mission, School of Intercultural Studies,
Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, USA.*

The editors of Brill's Global Pentecostal & Charismatic Studies series surely have been aggressively recruiting especially regionally oriented books focused on the movement around the majority world where, as many scholars have observed, pentecostal-charismatic Christianity has been not only exploding but is arguably at the vanguard of the shift of world Christianity's center of gravity to the southern hemisphere. This is thus the third book – following *Pentecostal Power: Expressions, Impact, and Faith of Latin American Pentecostalism* (edited by Calvin Smith) and *European Pentecostalism* (edited by William Kay and Anne Dyer), both published in 2011 – of regional analyses, but it differs from the other two in being primarily, although not exclusively, a volume of articles by scholars of the movement in the African context, in contrast to material produced by Pentecostal or charismatic scholars more prominent in the earlier works. Editor Martin Lindhardt brings to his task not only his expertise on African and transnational Pentecostalism that is informed by research on Latin America (see his earlier monograph, *Power in Powerlessness: A Study of Pentecostal Life Worlds in Urban Chile*, Brill, 2012), but also his network of relationships as a professional anthropologist (see also a previously edited Lindhardt project, *Practicing the Faith: The Ritual Life of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians*, Berghahn, 2011).

What emerges is a collection of thirteen essays on various facets of the movement focused on distinctive themes and contexts. The latter include case studies of the movement in the Congo, Tanzania, South Africa, Nigeria, and Zambia (the latter two featured as comparative assessments in one chapter), while the former include foci on gender, the public dimensions of pentecostal-charismatic

Christianity, development and related issues, and popular culture, among other discussions. A central theme running throughout the book relates particularly to the political aspects of African pentecostal-charismatic movements, which reference to “postcolonial societies” in the book’s subtitle foregrounds. In this vein, there are intriguing and substantive analyses of Pentecostalism as a “post-secular” phenomenon in the African space, of the movement’s “spiritual warfare” approach to the political, and of pentecostal preachers as contemporary exemplifications of the traditional “big man rule” in African societies, among other treatments. The level of writing is generally high throughout, framed not only by Lindhardt’s extended introductory chapter (over fifty pages) but also by an invaluable historical overview from Allan Anderson, arguably the present doyen of global pentecostal-charismatic studies who began his scholarly work on African Pentecostalism.

Scholars of world Christianity in general and of pentecostal-charismatic movements in particular in the South Asian and wider areas will want to be attentive to developments in the African scene. Although some might urge that there has been a gradual, albeit no less distinctive, “Christianization” and even “pentecostalization” or “charismatization” across the African context, and in that case what is happening on the African ground differs considerably from the Asian landmass where there is sporadic, at best, pentecostal-charismatic and Christian growth amidst religiously diverse and also pluralistic backdrops, nevertheless the contrasts should not be overemphasized so that the continuities are overlooked. In mainland China, for instance, the demographic trajectories indicate that a massive pentecostal-charismatic expansion is well underway, and in that case, observing the impact of developments in specifically the sub-Saharan area (all of the essays in this volume pertain to that part of the continent) can be informative for researchers hoping to anticipate future scholarly trends, as well as for missiologists attempting to chart opportunities and challenges for the Christian church and its mission going forward. In that regard, readers of Dharma Deepika ought to consult this book for many reasons, not least for the implications of how pentecostal-charismatic forms of Christianity might unfold across the public domain of Asian nations and contexts in the next generation.

**THOMAS C. ODEN, HOW AFRICA SHAPED THE
CHRISTIAN MIND: REDISCOVERING THE AFRICAN
SEEDBED OF WESTERN CHRISTIANITY**

(Illinois: IVP Books, 2007), 204pp, ISBN 978-0-8308-3705-2.

Reviewed by Samuel Ofori

(Pentecost Theological Seminary, Gomoa-Fetteh, Ghana).

Thomas C. Oden's *How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind: Rediscovering the African Seedbed of Western Christianity* brings to light early African Christianity, an aspect of World Christianity which has largely been ignored or neglected. Christianity has been wrongly perceived in Africa as a Western religion, an importation of the colonialists. This perception is, in part, because the fact that Africa made substantial contributions to Christianity and even aided its spread and development in Europe has not been highlighted in the history of Christian expansion. In his book, therefore, Oden develops the theses that Africa played a decisive role in the formation of Christian culture. He postulates that decisive intellectual achievements of Christianity were 'explored and understood first in Africa' (p. 9) before their exportation to Europe and even after a millennium before getting to North America.

The book is organized into two parts. Part One examines the ways in which Africa served as the seedbed of Western Christianity. This he calls 'A forgotten story', that the African imagination, the African mind, 'ideas and literary products produced specifically on the continent of Africa during the first millennium of the Common Era' (p. 10) shaped classic Christian minds. Sadly, Africa's Christian heritage has remained unnoticed. That Africa is not a late player in the Christian story is vividly exposed in this part of the book. Early forms of Christianity flourished in Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and further south. Moreover, pivotal scenes of salvation history recorded in the Bible took place in Africa including the story of Moses and the exodus, Mary, Joseph and Jesus and the flight to Egypt. In the first Christian century references to Apollos of Alexandria, the Libyans at Pentecost, Simon of Cyrene and the Ethiopian Eunuch are all examples of Africa's early role in the Christian story.

The role of the city of Alexandria in Egypt, and the lands of the Nile and the Madjerda Valleys as the seedbed of early Christian thought is also emphasised. Christian ideas and practices travelled north to Europe from these lands, ideas developed by African writers such as Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius, Optatus and Augustine – Africa’s public voice within early Christianity. The see of Alexandria, referring to the Eastern churches of the continent, and the see of Carthage, referring to the Western churches, the two African regions of ancient Christianity are symbolically represented among the patriarchates by the earlier Marcan apostolate. Alexandria at its zenith was larger and of far more importance in the world of ideas, literature and learning. These ideas flowed from Africa to Europe, and shaped the Christian mind.

Oden then states this African seedbed hypothesis in a measured way and begins to sort out the facts that support it. He presents seven (7) ways in which Africa shaped the Christian mind, bringing out what Africa gave to Christianity, especially its intellectual formation. This section of the book is the most revealing and insightful, and calls for further research and investigation for authentication to put Africa at her rightful place in Christian history. Oden presents his seven (7) ways in easy-to-follow bullet form which enables the reader to follow his line of thought and enhances comprehension. He sets out his objectives as showing,

- How the birth of the European university was anticipated within African Christianity.
- How Christian historical and spiritual exegesis of Scripture first matured in Africa.
- How African thinkers shaped the very core of the most basic early Christian dogma.
- How early ecumenical decisions followed African conciliar pattern.
- How Africa shaped Western forms of spiritual formation through monastic discipline.
- How Neoplatonic philosophy of late antiquity moved from Africa to Europe. (pp. 42-43).

- His elucidation of these objectives brings clarity into the seedbed hypotheses. The Western idea of a university was born in the crucible of Africa. The unrivalled library of Alexandria was the model for university libraries all over Europe. The community that surrounded the Alexandrian library formed the embryo of the Western idea of university.

Oden shows convincingly that exegesis of Scripture first matured in Africa. Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa, who were influential in defining early Christian thinking on God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit for Orthodox Christianity in the 4th Century CE were all decisively shaped by extensive exegesis of Scripture from Africa developed by African exegetes like Origen, Didymus the Blind, Tyconius and Augustine of Hippo. The early Greek Bible (the Septuagint) and the old Latin Bible versions were products of Africa. Many leading themes of the widely read homilies of John Christostom and Theodorat of Cyrrhus and Ambrose followed Origen, Didymus and Cyril of Alexandria in specific detail. African exegetes also powerfully affected the dogmatic formulations of the orthodoxy of the East and the West. Moreover, textual interpretations that were hammered out in the Maghreb and the Nile valley influenced definitions of Christology and the trinity defined by Africans including Tertullian, Cyprian, Athanasius, Augustine and Cyril. They formed Christian dogma before they became ecumenically received worldwide.

The major battles with heresy were fought out in Africa before they were received ecumenically, including Gnosticism, Arianism, Montanism, Marcionism and Manichaeism. All these heresies were thoroughly argued as problems of biblical interpretation in Africa before clear definitions were reached in the Rhone and Rhine and Orontes valleys of Europe. Athanasius, for instance, defended classical Christianity against Arian readings of the Gospel. The Nicene formula was so keenly refined by Athanasius that it found its way into the centre of ecumenical orthodoxy.

The early African councils provided a practical model for ecumenical debate and resolution. The conciliar movement though began in Jerusalem (45CE) as reported by Luke in Acts Chapter 15, but it took on formal characteristics in African debates in Carthage, Alexandria,

Hippo and Milevis that would gradually come to define the methods for achieving ecumenical consensus elsewhere. Major decisions were made by ecumenical conciliar process in North Africa under the leadership of Cyprian and the bishops of Numidia, Byzacena, Carthage and Mauretania. These councils were utilized in Africa before proceeding to the first ecumenical council at Nicaea. The most influential ecumenical debates first occurred largely in the great African cities of Carthage, Hippo, Milevis and Alexandria where issues of Arianism, Sabellianism, Gnosticism and Pelagianism were debated and largely decided before elsewhere. Among conflicts that were first settled in African synods before Nicaea were issues on penitence, diocesan boundaries, episcopal authority and ordination, as well as, issues on the person of Christ and trine teachings where the main African voices included Sabellius, Tertullian, Arius, Athanasius, Origen, Demetrius of Alexandria, Cyprian of Carthage, Optatus of Milevis and Augustine of Hippo.

The African desert gave birth to worldwide monasticism which shaped Western forms of spiritual formation. The African monastic fruits began by Anthony, Pachomius and Augustine came to flower in Italy and France and all the way from Ireland and Northumberland to Dalmatia. The matrix in which monasticism was spawned was the Egyptian desert and thereafter Numidia, Libya and Byzacena.

The earliest advocates of Neoplatonism emerged in Africa. Some African born philosophers like Marius Victorinus and Christian teachers like Clement of Alexandria were among the earliest to set forth circumspect connections and distinctions between logos philosophy and the Christian teaching on God. Rhetorical and dialectical skills were also honed in Africa for Europe's use as advanced dialectical study of rhetoric migrated from Madaurus, Sicca and Carthage to Europe. African rhetors moved from African locations to Europe, introducing many rich subtleties of African communication talents, literary passion and dialectical skills.

Unfortunately, European historicism failed to analyse adequately the close engagement of early African Christian teaching with indigenous African cultures (Berber, Pharaonic, Coptic, Nilotic) which constituted the main testing ground for early Christian dialectical models of the relation of Christianity and culture.

This has resulted from a modern European prejudice, which assumes that everything of intellectual importance that happened near the Mediterranean is really at heart European, and not of African origin, and ‘Alexandria gets its unjustified reputation as being simply a non-African extension of European intellect.’ (p. 58) Oden, however, is quick to assert that none of the hypothesis has been fully argued and that all await full investigation by ‘a generation of balanced scholarship, but the direction of the argument is clear.’ (p. 59)

In Part 2 of his book, Oden challenges modern African Christians to recover their classical African past. The opportune moment for such initiative is now, because of three major conditions. First, the rapid numerical expansion of Christianity in Africa. Second, a new hunger for intellectual depth. Third, the perceived might of the Muslim world, coupled with the exhaustion of modern Western intellectual alternatives. This is a short-term opportunity because the conditions of history could change, if it is not seized. It is now possible for those stories to be told, and the texts and ideas to be restudied after centuries of neglect.

The future for Africa is bright, if young Africans will live within the earliest African traditions of scriptural wisdom for a long period of time. For Africans to entrust their children to Christianity, they must have confidence that it is truly African, and not fundamentally alien to the African spirit. If young Africans today live within the earliest African traditions of scriptural wisdom, God will give them the grace to once again grasp the divine purpose in African history, just as Africans dwelled in it and passed it along to Europe and the world.

In living the divine purpose, modern African Christianity has a lot to learn from the ancient patristic and evangelical African ancestors. To live within the earliest traditions of scriptural wisdom, they need to learn from ‘the very best early African Christian teachers: Athanasius and Augustine.’ (p. 107) In their efforts to foster ecumenism and in the struggle with potential divisions, they have the benefit of learning about conflict resolution from their ancient African mentors and listening to the uniting ‘voices of classical consensual African Christianity.’ (p. 108).

Oden concludes the book with an Appendix which brings out his purpose for the book, which was to:

Set forth the basic vision for a renewed initiative in the theological and historical reassessment of early African Christianity. I have done this in response to a request by the Early African Christianity Project that might draw the project towards a consensus on this vision. (p. 143)

Oden has to a very large extent achieved the goal he set himself in the book to show Africa's role in the formation of Christian culture in the early centuries of Christianity. He brings out ideas and an African Christian heritage that has sadly been ignored and this makes an original work and a fresh approach to Christian history in general. However, many of the issues which he raises, require further research and investigation to prove their authenticity and genuineness.

The centre of gravity of Christianity is now in the Southern continents, especially Africa, and this has brought in its wake the concomitant reverse mission from Africa to the Western world. This book and research into Africa's earlier contribution to Christianity should help build the confidence of African Christians as they engage in mission to the West, and the lessons from early African Christianity are invaluable. The book also helps to deal with the erroneous impression that Christianity is a white man's religion and thus foreign to Africa. A religion in which Africans have participated since the fourth and fifth centuries is as traditional to Africa as the other African traditional religions.

