

# The Bible, Divination and the Twelve Apostles Church:

A Case Study of Jomoro and  
Ellembele Traditional Areas

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## **DEDICATION**

From Gyanvi-Blay to my beloved wife Mrs. Philomina Blay and my son Godspower Egya-Blay.

From Boaheng to all my students across the globe.

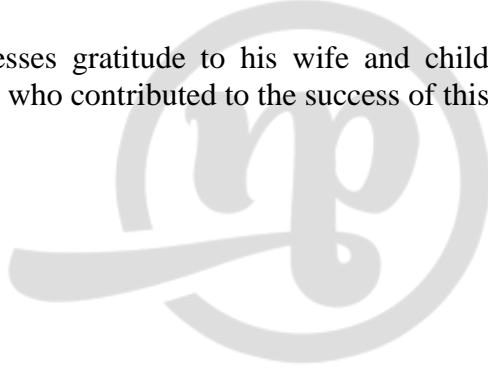


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We thank God for making this publication a reality.

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Boaheng expresses gratitude to his wife and children, parents and siblings and all who contributed to the success of this research.



## PREFACE

The encounter between Christianity and African traditional religion has long been characterized by tension, misunderstanding, and theological gaps. Early missionary efforts, shaped by colonial ideologies and Western cultural frameworks, often failed to engage meaningfully with African worldviews and spiritual needs. This disconnect left many African Christians in a state of religious and cultural dissonance, prompting the rise of independent prophetic movements that sought to contextualize the Christian faith within African realities.

This book explores one such movement—the Twelve Apostles Church of Ghana—tracing its roots to the prophetic ministry of William Wade Harris and focusing particularly on its development in the Nzema area. The study examines how indigenous beliefs and practices, especially divination, became integrated into the church’s theology and spirituality, even as these elements diverged from the missionary legacies that originally shaped African Christianity.

This book is structured into seven chapters, each addressing a key aspect of the study. Chapter One provides an introductory framework, outlining the background, research methodology, and overall organization of the work. Chapter Two explores the origins, doctrinal beliefs, and religious practices of the Twelve Apostles Church. Chapter Three examines the process of initiation and training into the priesthood within the church, shedding light on its unique spiritual formation. In Chapter Four, an exegetical analysis of 1 Samuel 9:1–10:26 is undertaken, alongside a comparative discussion of how this biblical passage is interpreted by both scholars and the Twelve Apostles Church. Chapter Five investigates the practice of divination as it exists within the church, while Chapter Six evaluates its perceived significance and practical implications for church members. The final chapter, Chapter Seven, offers a summary of the major findings, followed by general conclusions. With this overview in place, the book

now turns to the next chapter, which examines the historical emergence and growth of the Twelve Apostles Church.

By employing a qualitative case study approach, this research offers a detailed ethnographic and theological investigation into the practice of divination within the Twelve Apostles Church. Drawing insights from 1 Samuel 9–10:26 and from interviews with church prophets, prophetesses, devotees, and members, the study reflects on how African Independent Churches mediate spiritual experiences in ways that resonate with the socio-religious context of their communities.

This work contributes meaningfully to the growing body of literature on African Independent Churches (AICs), African Christian theology, and contextual biblical interpretation, particularly in relation to the Old Testament. It highlights how AICs such as the Twelve Apostles Church represent both a theological response and a socio-cultural reimagining of Christianity in Africa—one that seeks to reclaim spiritual agency, address existential concerns, and affirm African identity within the Christian faith. By examining the practice of divination in the light of 1 Samuel 9–10:26, the book not only engages in biblical exegesis from an African perspective but also raises critical questions about continuity and discontinuity between African traditional spiritual practices and Christian revelation. In doing so, it opens up fresh conversations on how African religious experiences can inform theological discourse, shape pastoral care, and revitalize Christian worship and community life in the African context. Ultimately, the study invites theologians, biblical scholars, church leaders, and lay readers alike to reflect on the potential of African Christianity to develop its own authentic voice—rooted in Scripture, sensitive to culture, and responsive to the spiritual needs of the people.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The lack of constructive dialogue between Christianity and African traditional cultures and religions has been acknowledged for some time. This theological gap has led many African Christians to struggle to reconcile their own worldview with the Christianity propagated by Western missionaries in Africa.<sup>1</sup> Ogbu U. Kalu observes that missionary strategies emerged amid the conflicting interests of colonial expansion, evangelical fervour, and responsibilities toward indigenous populations.<sup>2</sup> Accusations of missionary collaboration with colonial authorities should take into account their complex relationship, where they often clashed over cultural policies, educational programmes, and the moral tone of governance. It is worth noting the intriguing observation that colonialism inadvertently bolstered Islam more than numerous jihads could achieve.<sup>3</sup>

Kalu further notes that colonial Christianity presented a multifaceted texture, comprising four elements that presented challenges to indigenous peoples and elicited various responses.<sup>4</sup> Firstly, the missionary presence, observed in diverse settings like the mission hubs of southern and central Africa, the safeguarding of settler communities in eastern Africa, and the diminishing acknowledgement of the substantial role advocated for African agency by progressives like Henry Venn in West Africa. The second aspect was a cultural

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<sup>1</sup> Cephas Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism: A Study of the Development of Charismatic Renewal in the Mainline Churches in Ghana* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2002), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ogbu U. Kalu, "Ethiopianism in African Christianity", in Ogbu U. Kalu (ed.) *African Christianity: An Africa An African Story* pp. 258-277 (Pretoria, Department of Church History, University of Pretoria, 2005), 260.

<sup>3</sup> Kalu, "Ethiopianism in African Christianity", 260.

<sup>4</sup> Kalu, "Ethiopianism in African Christianity", 260-261.

policy that disregarded indigenous truths and perpetuated racism within missionary activities. Thirdly, the establishment of mission agencies neglected the potent resources of the Holy Spirit within the gospel, weakening the vitality of original evangelical spirituality and consolidating the monopoly over decision-making processes and faith practices. Fourthly, the translation of the Scriptures exposed the weaknesses of the missionary enterprise and produced unintended consequences. The cumulative impact of the first three elements burdened the African shoulders with the weight of humiliation<sup>5</sup> and disappointment.

Missionaries shared the prevailing enlightenment perspective of the era, which often depicted Africa negatively.<sup>6</sup> While they used education to cultivate an elite class capable of facilitating the spread of the gospel among their people, education also became a tool of competition and evangelization, resulting in limited diversity in curricula.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, education became a tool by which missionaries Europeanized their converts and segregated them from their community.<sup>8</sup> As time passed, most educated Africans did not want to associate themselves with uneducated ones. However, missionaries looked down upon educated “black Englishmen,” with some vehemently rejecting the notion of African potential advocated by Henry Venn.<sup>9</sup>

With their individualistic mindset, the missionaries adopted practices that contracted and weakened the African communal way of

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<sup>5</sup> Kalu, “Ethiopianism in African Christianity”, 261.

<sup>6</sup> For more on this see Isaac Boaheng “Early Christian Missions in West Africa: Implications for Rethinking the Great Commission”, in *Rethinking the Great Commission: Emerging African Perspectives* edited by Emmanuel Asante and DNA Kpobi (Accra: SonLife, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> Kalu, “Ethiopianism in African Christianity”, 261.

<sup>8</sup> Boaheng “Early Christian Missions in West Africa: Implications for Rethinking the Great Commission”, mmm.

<sup>9</sup> Kalu, “Ethiopianism in African Christianity”, 261.

life. Kalu cites an example of this controlling approach in the practices of the Africa Inland Mission among the Kikuyu from 1895 onward.<sup>10</sup> They exclusively recruited individuals who exhibited unwavering piety, personal conversion experiences, a fervent commitment to evangelism, and the ability to financially support themselves. Although this approach was not inherently bad, it ended up vilifying indigenous cultures and fostering the formation of closely bonded, insular communities of believers (*athomi*) who were completely detached from their families.<sup>11</sup> The Ghanaian example is the building of Salem (Christian communities) to accommodate converts so that they did not get polluted by the filthy environment in which they lived.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, the missionaries did not address the spiritual and health needs of their converts.<sup>13</sup> African Christians anticipated that their religious leaders would provide them with spiritual guidance (Akan: *akwankyerε*) akin to that provided by their counterparts in traditional African religion. Regrettably, the theological, pastoral, hermeneutical, and liturgical practices of the early missionaries disregarded the African worldview, resulting in minimal efforts to meet these requirements. Missionaries perceived illness solely through a natural lens, thus deeming the establishment of hospitals and the deployment of healthcare personnel and resources as adequate.<sup>14</sup> This is different from the African belief that some sicknesses have spiritual antecedents and can only be treated in the spiritual realm.

The above and similar other factors prompted Africans to seek

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<sup>10</sup> Kalu, “Ethiopianism in African Christianity”, 261.

<sup>11</sup> Kalu, “Ethiopianism in African Christianity”, 261.

<sup>12</sup> Boaheng “Early Christian Missions in West Africa.”

<sup>13</sup> Isaac Boaheng “The Doctrine of the Priesthood of all Believers and its Implications for ‘New Prophetic’ Churches in Africa”, *Kērussōmen: A Journal of Theology for the African Church* 7(2) (2021): 7-27, 9.

<sup>14</sup> Isaac Boaheng, “The Doctrine of the Priesthood of all Believers and its Implications for ‘New Prophetic’ Churches in Africa”, 9.

a Christianity tailored to their existential needs. With time the desire for a kind of Christianity that could deal adequately with the African culture and its world of spirits grew higher, leading to the emergence of African prophets like Prophet William Wade Harris (from Liberia), Sampson Oppong (from Ghana), Garrick Braide from Nigeria, Simon Kimbangu (from Congo) and many others across Africa between 1914 and 1921.<sup>15</sup> The impact of such African prophets was so great that it did not easily fade away even when they had left. In Ghana, the prophetic activities of three prophetic figures—specifically, Prophets William Wade Harris (known as the "Black Elijah" of West Africa), John Swatson, and Sampson Oppong—set the stage for the inception of African Independent Churches, especially those of pneumatological orientation, even though most of these prophets did not establish their own churches. The ministries of the above three prophets gave rise to spiritual churches (Akan: *Sunsum sore*) aimed at addressing spiritual needs and challenging Western dominance over the church's theology, worship style, governance, and culture.<sup>16</sup> These churches exhibited Pentecostal leanings, evident in their emphasis on spiritual experiences—such as spiritual healing, prophecy, visions and dreams, trances and exorcism—in both personal lives and church life. The use of such items as the rattles on the gourd and the gong-gong as musical instruments appealed to the African people and this is what really helped these breakaways and the initiation of these African-led movements.

One such African Independent Churches that emerged from the prophetic activities of earlier African prophets is the Twelve Apostles Church, which is the focus of this book. The Twelve Apostles Church

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<sup>15</sup> Kalu, *Africa Christianity: An Africa Story, Perspectives on Christianity Series*, 314.

<sup>16</sup> Isaac Boaheng, *A Contextual Theology of Atonement for the Akan Community of Ghana* (PhD Thesis: University fo the Free State, 2021), 214.

emerged as a result of Prophet William Wade Harris' missionary impact. It is believed to be one of the first of the African Independence Churches.<sup>17</sup> Prophet William Wade Harris worked with water, a cross, a book, and a calabash, which have been the precedence set for the converts who started the Twelve Apostles Church to follow.<sup>18</sup> The practice of divination, however, was not associated with the ministry of Prophet Harris. Yet, one of the key practices of the Twelve Apostles Church is divination. Given that the Bible condemns divination, one wonders how, when, and why the practice came into being in the Twelve Apostles Church.

To answer these and other related questions, the book used the Twelve Apostles Church in the Nzema area (Ellembele and Jomoro Traditional Areas) as a case study to find out not only the genesis of the practice in this church but also to examine the practice from the perspective of 1 Samuel 9-10:26. Thus the book is intended to examine some of the doctrines and practices of the Twelve Apostles Church. Apart from adding to the existing stock of knowledge on African Independent Churches in general, the book also contributes to Old Testament scholarship and African Christian theology in diverse ways.

### **Methodology for the book**

As noted earlier, the book was written to examine the practice of divination within the Twelve Apostles Church of Ghana using the Nzema area. An empirical research approach was used because we wanted to provide concrete evidence and reliable data on the subject matter. The case study provided us with an in-depth study of the practice of divination by the Twelve Apostles Church. The investigated population was the people of the Twelve Apostles Church in Nzema,

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<sup>17</sup> C.G. Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana* (London: : S.C.M Press, 1962), 9.

<sup>18</sup> P.S. Breidenbach, " 'Sunsum Edwuma', The Spiritual Work: Forms of Symbolic Communication in Ghanaian Healing Movement" (Northwestern University, 1962), 39,41.

Jomoro and Ellembele traditional areas in the Western Region of Ghana. The respondents were drawn from prophets, prophetesses, devotees, or members training in the priesthood, patients seeking treatment for various diseases, and regular members. This also included citizens and visitors who came to the “Garden” to seek help, those who have become regular members, and devotees in training. A sample size of 100 was drawn. This number was chosen for convenience in dividing participants into various categories within the target groups. These target groups, including prophets, prophetesses, devotees, and other members, were specifically chosen because they represent the individuals most frequently contacted within the Twelve Apostles Church community.

The study is qualitative and as such every information given by any member is vital. Given this, only a number in any group which may be sufficient to authenticate the information was selected. The purposive sampling technique was used to select certain prominent branches of the church, including those with notable histories such as the Garden<sup>19</sup> in Krisan. This decision was made due to the high foot traffic in these large churches, particularly in locations like the Garden, where numerous individuals, including patients, frequently visit. By focusing on these churches, a larger pool of potential interviewees could be accessed. Specifically, Gardens with significant historical backgrounds, such as Krisan, were intentionally chosen. The historical significance of Krisan, including its association with Grace Tane and Prophet Wade Harris, provided a rich backdrop for the study, supported by recorded accounts and oral tradition. Apart from Krisan, branches of the Church at Mbem, Allengenzule, Bonyere and Tikobo No. 2 were also visited because of their prominence in the operations of the Church.

In addition to purposive sampling, random sampling was used

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<sup>19</sup> The Garden refers to the home of the *Osofo* accommodating sick patients and also having the temple of the Church for services.

to choose additional Gardens for the study. Specifically, five prominent branches of the Twelve Apostles Church were selected, totalling five churches. Moreover, to ensure diversity, five other towns were randomly chosen, resulting in a total of ten towns included in the study. Within each selected town, a systematic approach was used to conduct the interviews. At each branch, one prophet, one prophetess, three devotees, four patients, and one other member were randomly interviewed. This sampling strategy was designed to ensure representation in various roles and perspectives within the Twelve Apostles Church community. Given the sensitive nature of spiritual topics, it was observed that many individuals were reluctant to participate in interviews. Hence, limiting the sample size to 100 individuals in a wide geographic area facilitated easier management and ensured that the targeted number and diversity of participants were met. The breakdown is as follows:

<b>Category</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>
Prophets	10
Prophetess	10
Devotees	30
Inmates/patients	40
Others	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Random sampling was also used to select other Gardens. These prominent churches are five in number. Apart from these five prominent branches of the Twelve Apostles Church, five other towns, making a total of ten towns were randomly selected. In every town selected, one prophet, one prophetess, three devotees, four patients and one other member totalling 100, were randomly interviewed. In dealing with spiritual things, not many people were willing to speak to

the researcher, so a small number like a hundred over a wide area was easy to deal with and also to meet the targeted number and people.

We obtained data from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was obtained from field work through participant observation and interviews. Specifically, we attended selected services of the Church on Fridays and Sundays to observe their activities and since the people were mostly non-literate, an interview guide was used to interview the people. Apart from the fact that the respondents are mostly non-literates, the use of the Nzema dialect (which is the native dialect of most of the interviewees) made us friendlier to the people and hence increased the level of confidence in us by the respondents.<sup>20</sup> Where possible, pictures were taken in the course of the study to support the evidence. Even though the main focus was the Nzema area, the authors also gathered data from YouTube videos on the activities of church practices from other parts of Ghana.

The secondary source was literature that others have produced on the subject of divination and the activities of the African Independent Churches. Qualitative analysis was employed in this research, as the primary focus of the book was on understanding the phenomenon of divination. Each piece of information collected on divination contributed valuable insights into various aspects of the phenomenon. Therefore, statistical tables were deemed unnecessary, since the objective was to explore the qualitative nuances and complexities of divination rather than to quantify numerical data.

### **Organization of the Book**

The book is divided into seven chapters. Chapter one is the introduction comprising the background, methodology and organization of the book. Chapter Two deals with the emergence,

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<sup>20</sup> One of the authors, Joseph Gyanvy Blay is an Nzema and conducted the interviews in the Nzema dialect.

practices and doctrines of the Twelve Apostles Church while Chapter Three focuses on enrolment into the priesthood of the Twelve Apostles Church. Chapter Four conducts an exegetical study of 1 Samuel 9:1-10:26 and examines the views of some biblical scholars and the Twelve Apostles Church on the text. Chapter Five deals with the concept of divination in the Twelve Apostles Church while Chapter Six focuses on the relevance of divination in the Twelve Apostles Church. In the last chapter, Chapter Seven, the book summarizes the key findings and draws conclusions. With the foregoing as the general introduction to the book, we now proceed to the next chapter where we focus on the emergence and development of the Twelve Apostles Church.



## CHAPTER TWO

### EMERGENCE, PRACTICES AND DOCTRINES OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES CHURCH

This chapter explores the unique practices, doctrinal tenets, and organizational structure that defined the Twelve Apostles Church. In so doing, the chapter sheds light on the enduring impact of this Church on the religious landscape of Ghana. In Chapter 1, we mentioned that the establishment of the Twelve Apostles Church resulted from the prophetic ministry of Prophet William Wade Harris. Therefore, it is important for us to begin this chapter with a brief account of the ministry of Prophet Wade Harris.

#### **The Ministry of Prophet William Wade Harris**

Africa experienced the emergence of a crop of evangelists with special charisma from 1910 onward.<sup>21</sup> These African prophets led mass movements toward Christianity without any intention of establishing churches of their own. They aimed rather at preaching and making converts join the existing churches. However, the activities of these prophets inevitably resulted in the emergence of charismatic personalities who established their own churches. In Ghana, Prophet William Wade Harris and Prophet Sampson Oppong stand tall in terms of the impact of prophetism on African Christianity. Our focus in this section is on the ministry of Prophet Wade Harris because of the connection his ministry has with the establishment of the Twelve Apostles Church.

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<sup>21</sup> Deji Ayegboyan and S. Ademola Ishola, *African Indigenous Churches: A Historical Perspective* (Lagos: Greater Heights Publications, 2013), 39.

### ***Early Life***

Prophet Wade Harris (the “Black Elijah” of West Africa) hailed from the Kru tribe of the Grebo people in Liberia, living from 1865 to 1929.<sup>22</sup> At the age of 12 years, Harris served as a ward to Rev. Jesse Lowrie of the Methodist Episcopal Mission.<sup>23</sup> He learnt his vernacular while living with the Reverend minister and became semi-literate in English. After the transfer of Rev. Lowrie to Cape Palmas, Harris pursued a career as a seaman and later became a teacher at an American Protestant Episcopal Mission school.<sup>24</sup> Due to his mission education, Harris was well-versed in Western customs and fluent in both English and Grebo. He held various roles, including teacher, lay Episcopalian preacher, boarding school director, and government interpreter. When tensions arose between the Grebo and the Liberian colonial government, he vocally opposed the authorities and was imprisoned for his involvement in anti-government demonstrations.<sup>25</sup> In 1909, he was incarcerated for treason due to his alleged involvement in a coup d'état attempt. Harris was subsequently jailed for more than a year.

### ***His Call***

During his imprisonment, he experienced a vision of the angel Gabriel, which convinced him that he was God's final prophet, entrusted with the divine task of spreading Christianity to those who had not yet embraced it.<sup>26</sup> The angel used the following words to commission Harris: “Harris, you are not in prison, God is coming to anoint you;

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<sup>22</sup> Elizabeth Isichei, ‘A Soul of Fire’, in *Christian History*, vol. 22, no. 3 (August 2003), 22-25; Ayegboyin and Ishola, *African Indegenous Churches*, 40.

<sup>23</sup> Ayegboyin and Ishola, *African Indegenous Churches*, 40.

<sup>24</sup> Isichei, *A Soul of Fire*, 22; Ayegboyin and Ishola, *African Indegenous Churches*, 40.

<sup>25</sup> Ayegboyin and Ishola, *African Indegenous Churches*, 40.

<sup>26</sup> Emmanuel K. Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity* (Accra: Blessed Publication, 2001), 58.

you will be a prophet...you are like Daniel.”<sup>27</sup> Simultaneously, as he received the angel's commission, he experienced the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him. This manifestation of the Spirit's presence was marked by a profound sound like a jet of water, signifying a powerful spiritual presence.<sup>28</sup> Harris recounted that this extraordinary experience occurred three times, each instance deepening his conviction of being chosen as a prophet of God. He particularly identified with the role of a watchman, drawing parallels to the biblical figure described in Ezekiel 33, who was tasked with warning the people of impending danger and guiding them toward spiritual enlightenment and salvation. As soon as he was released from prison, he set out to fulfil his call as a soul winner.

### ***His Missionary Endeavors***

Following his release from prison in 1913, Harris embarked on a mission to bring Christianity to non-converted Africans, particularly his fellow Grebo people.<sup>29</sup> Harris identified himself as an Old Testament prophet akin to Elijah and a New Testament preacher like John the Baptist. In line with this, he went about preaching repentance fervently. Harris wore white robes and carried a cross. He carried a Bible and a bowl for baptism. He exhibited an unwavering and resolute stance against tribal deities. However, Harris embraced indigenous worship practices, coupled with a fervent evangelistic zeal and a remarkable display of the power of the Holy Spirit. This was evident in his preaching, healing, and deliverance ministries. His approach to ministry attracted numerous converts, even among traditional priests. Notably, Prophetess Grace Tani and Prophet John Nackabah, both former traditional priests, underwent conversion through Harris's teachings. The legacy of his ministry extended beyond individual conversions, as it laid the foundation for the establishment of several

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<sup>27</sup> Ayegboyin and Ishola, *African Indegenous Churches*, 41.

<sup>28</sup> Ayegboyin and Ishola, *African Indegenous Churches*, 41.

<sup>29</sup> Allen, *Harris, William Wade*.

African Independent Churches and marked a significant transformation in the religious landscape influenced by Harris and others. Baeta believes that the Twelve Apostles Church constitutes “a continuing result of a visit paid to the Apollonia and Axim districts of the then Gold Coast by the well-known Grebo Prophet William Wade Harris ....”<sup>30</sup>

In approximately 1913, he embarked on a journey from the Ivory Coast to the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) to conduct a revival focused on repentance, prophecy, and healing. Upon his return from the Gold Coast, he faced arrest in Kraffy, Ivory Coast, in 1914, amidst heightened insecurity during wartime.<sup>31</sup> Historical accounts suggest that he protested against shipmasters who insisted on employing African labourers to unload goods on Sundays.<sup>32</sup> This practice is reflective of prevalent racial abuses and white supremacy during that era. In a defiant act, he purportedly splashed holy water on the ship, causing it to catch fire and subsequently attracting the ire of colonial authorities. Consequently, he was subjected to physical abuse and deported to Liberia in 1915, where he continued his ministry under house arrest until his passing around 1929.<sup>33</sup> It is widely believed that Harris died in impoverished circumstances, in stark contrast to contemporary African charismatic leaders who have amassed significant wealth.

### ***Impact of his Ministry***

John Swatson and Helen Valentine believed to have assisted Harris, continued his ministry following his house arrest.<sup>34</sup> Contrary to

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<sup>30</sup> Christian G. Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana* (Achimota: Ghana Christian Press, 1996), 8.

<sup>31</sup> Isichei, *A Soul of Fire*, 22.

<sup>32</sup> Isichei, *A Soul of Fire*, 22.

<sup>33</sup> Allen, *Harris, William Wade*.

<sup>34</sup> Allen, *Harris, William Wade*.

establishing churches himself, Harris directed his converts to existing Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches, which became the primary beneficiaries of his work. In communities without established churches, Harrist Churches emerged, with Harris appointing twelve apostles to lead each community.<sup>35</sup> Some of Harris's followers, who initially aligned with Protestant missionaries, grew discontented as the missionaries challenged fundamental social institutions like polygamy and undermined the authority of Harris's disciples. In 1928 a delegation from Ivory Coast reported the grievances they harboured against the missionaries to Harris.<sup>36</sup> In response, a delegation from the Ivory Coast, led by John Ahui, approached Harris with grievances against the missionaries. Upon their return, they presented a "last will and testament" from Harris endorsing their desire for independent worship.<sup>37</sup> This led to the establishment of the Harrist Church of the Ivory Coast, while the Church of the Twelve Apostles emerged on the Gold Coast. Harrist Churches flourished.

Many prophets emerged from within the Harrist tradition and evangelical movement that later spread to places where Harris never went. Even to date, they that claim Harris endorsed their actions and practices, they have developed their own unique forms through the "minor prophets" who followed Harris.<sup>38</sup> Harris's message did not deviate so much from that of the missionaries with regards to the gospel, yet his approach differed and "represented a new and populist level of African Christian initiative, and Africanised Christianity disconnected from missionary control."<sup>39</sup> and "an authentic Christian

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<sup>35</sup> Isichei, *A Soul of Fire*, 24.

<sup>36</sup> Allen, *Harris, William Wade*.

<sup>37</sup> Allen, *Harris, William Wade*.

<sup>38</sup> Ogbu Uke Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 38.

<sup>39</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 38.

universality, yet one in which diversity and Africanity in particular was to be honoured.’’<sup>40</sup> A gospel message well presented in the African context as against the Western worldview on spiritism.<sup>41</sup>

Despite the backing of the colonial government, Western missionaries experienced a lack of success in their endeavours, whereas Harris's revival movement proved remarkably effective. His indigenous African churches, galvanized by his teachings, stood united against the oppressive policies and racial injustices of the French colonial regime. Following the First World War, colonial authorities, including the French, became apprehensive of potential uprisings within Christianity. Across many West African nations, there was a notable receptiveness to conversion, coinciding with the challenges posed by colonial economic policies. The prophetic revival spearheaded by Harris played a pivotal role in addressing these issues, contributing significantly to the fight against white supremacy and the quest for liberation from Western cultural domination. Through the Africanization of Christianity, Harris made substantial strides in advancing the cause of freedom and independence from colonial rule.

In aligning with Harris's mission to evangelize Africa through its own people, Ethiopians like Casely Hayford emphasized the imperative for Africans to evangelize their own continent and Africanize Christianity. They stressed the importance of contextualization in gospel dissemination to ensure its meaningful reception within local contexts, advocating for preaching that resonated with African settings to foster understanding. They argued this approach could be best achieved by Africans who were attuned to the cultural nuances of their people, unlike Europeans who often failed

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<sup>40</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 38.

<sup>41</sup> Peter White, Decolonising Western missionaries mission theology and practice in Ghanaian church history: A Pentecostal approach, in *In die Skriflig*, vol. 51, no. 1 (June 2017) 1-7:5.

to comprehend and appreciate African culture. Despite Western missionaries' condemnation of practices like polygamous marriage, Harris, like many Ethiopians, endorsed such customs, reflecting a divergence from Western norms. However, Harris acknowledged and embraced certain aspects of Western influence, particularly in education and hygiene, acknowledging the significant contributions of Western missionaries to education in Africa. This stands in contrast to the pervasive Eurocentrism that often denigrated African culture as pagan and primitive, illustrating the asymmetrical dynamics of cultural exchange between Africans and Westerners.

Harris's evangelical mission was not necessarily to establish a church but to preach the gospel that would save the people of Africa through prophetic words, healing, and miracles.<sup>42</sup> With the use of local songs, traditional drums, expressive African dance and his response to the problems and existential issues that were confronting the indigenous people,<sup>43</sup> he deployed new missiological strategies that strengthened the pace of evangelism and appealed to the people.<sup>44</sup> About 180 of his songs have been translated by Garrick Braide into his native Kalabari language.<sup>45</sup> One of the common songs sung by his followers at the beginning of their outreach programmes simply declared that “Jesus has come, and Satan has vanished”.<sup>46</sup> As they sang this song and repeated it many times happily amidst drumming and dancing, the evangelists would pour holy water on shrines that would burst into flames to exhibit the power of God over their own traditional gods.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Allen, *Harris, William Wade*.

<sup>43</sup> Emmanuel Agbonkhanmeghe Orobator, *Theology Brewed in an African Pot* (New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 5.

<sup>44</sup> Jacob K. Olupona, *African Religions: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 32.

<sup>45</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*: 36.

<sup>46</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*: 34.

<sup>47</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, *African charismatics* 41.

The practical and experiential nature of Harris's ministry, characterized by signs and wonders, appealed to Africans who sought tangible manifestations of spiritual truth. Unlike the liturgical and regimented style of worship introduced by European missionaries, Harris's Christianity reflected the exuberance and expressive nature of African spirituality, aligning more closely with their cultural sensibilities. Although some African prophets, influenced by Western education, rejected traditional symbols and beliefs, Harris emphasized healing and deliverance without condemning African traditions. This approach resonated deeply with Africans, providing relief from sickness and liberation from spiritual oppression, thereby fostering belief in the power of their God. Despite the importation of spiritism from African Traditional Religion into Christianity, Harris and other African prophets offered a distinct African interpretation of Christianity, diverging from European missionary perspectives and methodologies.

His evangelical efforts extended to the Ivory Coast, where his message found fertile ground due to disillusionment with traditional spiritual beliefs. Harris's distinctive attire and symbolic items, including a Bible, cross, walking stick, gourd rattle, and baptismal bowl, contributed to his success in spreading Christianity. Despite encountering resistance and persecution, particularly from colonial authorities, he continued his ministry, even journeying to the Gold Coast (modern-day Ghana) for revival campaigns centred on repentance, prophecy, and healing.

### **A Brief History of the Twelve Apostles Church**

Harris used certain items like water to baptize people, a cross, a calabash to fetch water for baptism, and a Bible for preaching. He made a tremendous impact on the lives of people in Nzemaland. His coming to Half Assini and its environs brought about a change in the

area. Menstruating women who were previously segregated and quarantined in special huts began to sleep at home with their families. Bereaved spouses no longer stayed on the beach for eight days and many children were enrolled in schools.<sup>48</sup>

His preaching had such an impact on people's lives that he had many converts, including Grace Tane and John Nackabah. In the ministry of Harris, he did not condemn polygamy but was seen with two women. This made the missionary churches reject some of his converts which included Tane and Nackabah. When they could no longer stay with the Methodist Church the two people joined to form their healing church which had many doctrines and practices which were absent in Harris's ministry which they called the Twelve Apostles Church. This chapter deals with a brief history of the Twelve Apostles Church, its characteristics, doctrines and liturgy.

The impact of Harris brought a great spiritual awakening in the Nzema area. Harris urged the people to throw away their charms and seek an all-powerful God. This change in behaviour is termed by Gray as "a theocratic organization of cosmos."<sup>49</sup> These charms and idols were thrown away and temples were built with bamboo eagerly waiting for preachers and teachers.<sup>50</sup> His instruction to his converts was to wait for white men to arrive and then attend any of the missionary churches at the time (Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches).<sup>51</sup> In view of this instruction, many converts were won for the Roman Catholic and the Methodist Churches found in the area. The Methodists and the Catholics were not the only people on the scene,

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<sup>48</sup> Haliburton, *A Study of An African Prophet and His Mass Movement in the Ivory Coast and the Gold Coast (1913-1915)*, 75.

<sup>49</sup> R. Gray, *Black Christians and the White Missionaries* (London: Yale University Press, 1990), 111.

<sup>50</sup> Debrunner, *A History of Christianity in Ghana*, 269-277.

<sup>51</sup> Breidenbach, " 'Sunsum Edwuma', The Spiritual Work: Forms of Symbolic Communication in Ghanaian Healing Movement," 44.

the Seventh-Day Adventists also tried to make use of the movement by starting work at Asanta.<sup>52</sup>

The Twelve Apostles Church is said to be the first African Independent Church (AIC) formed in Ghana and the name was derived from the practice through which Harris appointed “Twelve Apostles” or leaders in the village to look after the needs of the “flock.”<sup>53</sup> Some of the converts of Harris discovered that the Old Testament and New Testament narratives give prominence to healing which was of immense relevance to the Africans. Because of all the above-mentioned factors, these converts decided to form their church which would focus on healing which had been overlooked by the missionaries in their kerygma (preaching) and so formed the Twelve Apostles Church.<sup>54</sup> The Twelve Apostles Church was founded by Nackabah, a former traditional priest from Essuawua near Enchi, and Tane, a traditional priestess specifically responsible for treating pregnant women in Krisan near Eikwe, who were both converted and baptized into Christianity by Harris.<sup>55</sup> Grace Tane abandoned the work or ministry entrusted to her by Harris after he left due to the tension created when she wanted to go with the prophet. Tane then took to selling palm wine for her livelihood. After doing this for some time she fell mysteriously ill. Tane was then taken to Nackabah who healed her and told her that the sickness was the result of her abandoning the work of God entrusted to her. This convinced Tane to team up with Nackabah to work in the ministry left to them until the death of Nackabah in 1947.

There may be some remote and immediate causes that may have contributed to or led to the formation of an independent faith-

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<sup>52</sup> Debrunner, *A History of Christianity in Ghana*, 272.

<sup>53</sup> Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana*, 9.

<sup>54</sup> Gray, *Black Christians and the White Missionaries*, 102.

<sup>55</sup> Breidenbach, “‘Sunsum Edwuma’, The Spiritual Work: Forms of Symbolic Communication in Ghanaian Healing Movement,” 47.

healing church like the Twelve Apostles Church. During the time of the ministry of Harris, there was a social disorientation against him and other African prophets who emerged at the time. Colonial suppression or the standard of “orthodox” theology was used in the foreign missionary enterprise to the detriment of the proliferation of the African missionary movements.<sup>56</sup>

Tane and Nackabah embarked on the healing ministry entrusted to them in the manner of Prophet Harris. Initially, they heeded the instruction of the prophet which allowed the converts to attend the missionary churches and so most of the followers of Grace Tane and John Nackabah had to travel far distances to find missionary churches to attend.<sup>57</sup> They did this for some time but later felt that they could no longer bear the cost involved in travelling to church.

Some of the immediate causes that account for the formation of the Twelve Apostles Church include the following: firstly, the followers of Tane and Nackabah attended the missionary churches for some time, but the mission-trained catechists started being sceptical about their conversion and started asking them questions about their faith in God. The missionary churches did not even accept people who had been baptized by Nackabah.<sup>58</sup>

Secondly, Tane remarked that “when the Methodist or Roman Catholic Church sees that you are possessed by a spirit, they do not like it”, signifying that those churches did not want to deal with anyone or anything pertaining to spiritual things.<sup>59</sup> In this case, even when one

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<sup>56</sup> Breidenbach, “‘Sunsum Edwuma’, The Spiritual Work: Forms of Symbolic Communication in Ghanaian Healing Movement,” 5.

<sup>57</sup> Breidenbach, “‘Sunsum Edwuma’, The Spiritual Work: Forms of Symbolic Communication in Ghanaian Healing Movement,” 50.

<sup>58</sup> Breidenbach, “‘Sunsum Edwuma’, The Spiritual Work: Forms of Symbolic Communication in Ghanaian Healing Movement,” 50.

<sup>59</sup> Breidenbach, “‘Sunsum Edwuma’, The Spiritual Work: Forms of Symbolic Communication in Ghanaian Healing Movement,” 60.

was harassed by evil spirits, one could not get a solution and so many people looked for places where they could get a sense of security against witchcraft and other evil spirits.<sup>60</sup>

Thirdly, another follower of Tane also explained why Nackabah and his followers had to form their own church. He said “Why the Nackabah people separated themselves from the Roman’s (author’s error) Church came because of the calabash. They went to the Romans, but the Romans said that they played the calabash, and if this is so they said they did not want them to come. That is why they also went and formed their own Church.”<sup>61</sup>

Concerning the use of the calabash or rattle instruments to be used during worship by the people of Nackabah, Rev. J. Mckeown was sent by the Apostolic Church to inspect their work at Kadjabir to approve it for financial support. When Rev. Mckeown saw them using the rattles, he asked them to put them away and replace them with tambourines. Since the people believed that the rattles or the calabash had the power to drive away evil spirits, they were not prepared to exchange them with tambourines which were regarded as noise-making toys. They initially pleaded with Reverend Mckeown to allow them to use the rattles, but since that plea was not heeded, the followers of Tane and Nackabah decided to go their separate ways.<sup>62</sup> Tane and Nackabah having realized that the missionary churches did not want them, but had a ministry to accomplish all the same, teamed up to form the Twelve Apostles Church.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Breidenbach, “‘Sunsum Edwuma’, The Spiritual Work: Forms of Symbolic Communication in Ghanaian Healing Movement,” 60.

<sup>61</sup> Breidenbach, “‘Sunsum Edwuma’, The Spiritual Work: Forms of Symbolic Communication in Ghanaian Healing Movement,” 60.

<sup>62</sup> Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana*, 16.

<sup>63</sup> Breidenbach, “‘Sunsum Edwuma’, The Spiritual Work: Forms of Symbolic Communication in Ghanaian Healing Movement,” 16.

## **Characteristics of the Twelve Apostles Church**

The Twelve Apostles Church is an example of the African Independent Churches (AIC) and as such it possesses some general characteristics of the AIC in terms of its doctrines or theology and practices some of which are discussed below.

### **Pneumatological Emphasis**

This is the emphasis laid on the work of the Holy Spirit. As an AIC, the Church views its emergence as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit. It is one of the churches credited with rediscovering the role of the Holy Spirit and making the role of the Spirit the main focus and preoccupation of faith and practice. The Twelve Apostles Church therefore believes in the gifts of the Spirit that manifest in diverse ways including healing, speaking in tongues, prophesying, and so on which form the basis of their faith and practice.<sup>64</sup>

### **The Spiritual Call of a Prophet**

The calling of a prophet in the Twelve Apostles Church is characterized by compelling visions, repeated dreams and sometimes illness that finally led to the total surrender of the prophet to the call of Christ.<sup>65</sup> The story of Tane stands as a prominent testament to this divine calling.<sup>66</sup> Tane, like many others, found herself ensnared in the intricate web of doubt and hesitation, wavering between earthly concerns and the celestial beckoning of her calling. However, the relentless pursuit of her divine mandate did not relent.

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<sup>64</sup> Mwaura, "The New Religious Movement: A Challenge to Doing Theology in Africa," 7.

<sup>65</sup> Mwaura, "The New Religious Movement: A Challenge to Doing Theology in Africa," 7.

<sup>66</sup> Breidenbach, "'Sunsum Edwuma', The Spiritual Work: Forms of Symbolic Communication in Ghanaian Healing Movement," 50.

## **Church as a Community**

The Twelve Apostles Church and all AICs have the concept of the church as an assembly of believers just as in the early church. The church as a physical structure is alien to the Twelve Apostles Church and so can worship freely at any place such as homes, or open-air places. There is *Koinonia* or fellowship expressed in terms of sharing, among members of the same faith, personal properties and concerns regardless of social status. The homes of the leaders are “havens of belonging” where they are open to those in need.<sup>67</sup>

## **Flexible Liturgy**

The liturgy of the Twelve Apostles Church is characterized by spontaneity. There is great participation from all the worshipers and a lot of flexibility. There is much room created in their liturgy for the outworking of the Holy Spirit.

## **Prominent Role of Women**

There is a large proportion of women, who take part in the religious and social life of this Church. In this Church, women have been founders of branch churches, and principal leaders and often wield immense power. This Church confers status and prominence on women and often builds some of them into formidable prophetesses.<sup>68</sup> The characteristics mentioned above are generally identified with all or most of the AICs. The Twelve Apostles Church is also noted for the use of certain sacred items like water, rattles on the gourd as an instrument, Moses’ staff (this will be explained later in the book), and incense and so on in the course of their practices. These practices were obtained from direct observations by the researchers at various “Gardens” of the Church in the Jomoro and Ellembele Traditional

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<sup>67</sup> Mwaura, “ The New Religious Movement: A Challenge to Doing Theology in Africa ,” 10.

<sup>68</sup> Mwaura, “ The New Religious Movement: A Challenge to Doing Theology in Africa ,” 12.

Areas.

### **The Use of Water for Healing**

The emphasis of the Church on healing has been the very reason for its existence. Even though healing is a general concern for humanity, this Church has given it great prominence. These prophet-healers wield great insight and act as intermediaries between God and humankind. They are counsellors, psychotherapists, exorcists, ritualists and priests. Prayer is central to healing, but in the course of ministering healing to patients, water is used as a medium for healing which is done in the name of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. Water is believed by the Twelve Apostles Church to have a medicinal property and the ability to cure diseases. Water is the most important thing used in healing or curing the patients that come to the “Garden”. It is used in bathing, cleansing, or purifying them. It is also fetched in a basin for every patient to carry and is prayed over while the rest of the congregation sings and plays the gong-gong. After some time, the evil spirit that is believed to be responsible for the sickness of the patient begins to manifest itself in the basin of water by shaking uncontrollably on the head of the patient.

When the prophet or prophetess or *Ɔsɔfo* (the term *Ɔsɔfo* is the Akan name for prophet and prophetess or priest and priestess and the plural is *Asɔfo*). When Prophetess Christba prays over water for someone to drink, she claims it provides healing; this is concise and maintains clarity while preserving the intended meaning.<sup>69</sup> Water is also used in preparing herbal medicine or concoctions that some patients will drink. A herbal concoction is made and poured into the nostrils of dying patients to resuscitate them while some herbs are also given to mental patients to heal them.

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<sup>69</sup> Personal communication, March 13, 2009.

From Breidenbach's (1973) research, the members of the Twelve Apostles Church believe that water has a divine origin which means that it comes from God and contains a life-giving force capable of providing or maintaining purity in an individual. It is also said that as a woman gives birth to a child, so is it that a god gives birth to water. This means that water is a very important so that when it is used to either bath the patient or drink, it purifies him or her and restores his or her health.<sup>70</sup>

### **The Use of Rattles on the Gourd as a Musical Instrument**

It is the main musical instrument used by the Twelve Apostles Church. This was the instrument that Harris was using when he was preaching the gospel. It was an African musical instrument that he discovered. The congregation of the Twelve Apostles Church shakes it when singing. This is done very passionately and energetically since it is believed to invoke good spirits, thereby causing evil spirits dwelling in people to manifest themselves for the evil spirits to be exorcised. The music produces ecstasy which leads to spirit possession that enables the *Ɔsɔfo* to prophesy. Given this, the music features prominently during the healing and exorcism service, which usually take place during Friday worship.

### **The Use of “Moses Staff”**

It is designed in the form of a cross that rests on a two-meter-long stick. The *Asɔfo* use Moses' staff because Moses used a staff to perform miracles such as Moses pointing the staff to the Red Sea for it to divide in Exodus 14:6. Harris used to hold it when preaching. This is believed to be a symbol of authority of the *Ɔsɔfo*. This is comparable to the use of the staff by the linguist who is the official spokesperson of the chief

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<sup>70</sup> Breidenbach, “‘Sunsum Edwuma’, The Spiritual Work: Forms of Symbolic Communication in Ghanaian Healing Movement,” 229.

or the king among the traditional Akans. This means that as an *Ɔsɔfo* holds the staff, he or she acts as an official spokesperson of God and serves as his or her symbol of authority.<sup>71</sup> It is stretched on the patients while praying for them in the healing or curing process. During exorcism or to expel evil spirits, this is either stretched on the patient or used to touch the forehead of the patient. When the trainees or devotees are working for the *Ɔsɔfo*, they use it as an authority given by the *Ɔsɔfo* to discharge that duty.

### **The Use of Water Cisterns**

These are wells of water located usually at the centre of the compound of the “Garden” beside the big cross in the “Garden”. A short wall is usually built around them. These cisterns of water are referred to by the people of the Twelve Apostles Church as “David” and “holy spirit”. The “David” and the “holy spirit” can be fetched for patients to be sent home for protection, driving away evil spirits from their rooms, preventing or casting out witches and wizards, healing diseases and many other purposes. They are mostly covered with a white cloth. When a mad person is brought into the “Garden” some of either “the david” or “holy spirit” can be used in washing the face of patients to enable him or her to regain his or her sanity. Though the water from the “David” is called holy water according to Isaiah 12:3 and Ezekiel 36:25, the name “David” comes from the fact that David took smooth stones from the brook (1Sam 17:40) and if one of such stones could kill Goliath then water from the brook is believed to be powerful in healing and capable of doing many things. People with problems in life come to bow before them to pray for direction. Some of them make pledges so that when answers are received, they come to redeem their pledges. These are shown on plate 8 and the “David” and the holy

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<sup>71</sup> Breidenbach, “‘Sunsum Edwuma’, The Spiritual Work: Forms of Symbolic Communication in Ghanaian Healing Movement,” 273.

Spirit are labelled D and B respectively.



*Figure 1:* A picture showing the temple and some sacred items in Galilee Garden in Bonyere.

A= the cross. B = the ‘Holy Spirit’. C= the Galilee Temple. D=‘David’. E= a dwarf wall around the cross indicating a restricted area

### **The Use of the Lightning Stone**

According to *Ɔsɔfo* Christba (personal communication March 13, 2009), a prophetess of Galilee Garden in Bonyere, lightning struck her compound or “Garden” five years after she was ordained as a *Ɔsɔfo* in 1965. This does not happen to every *Ɔsɔfo* but a few privileged ones. *Ɔsɔfo* Christba was one of the blessed ones to have had this experience in her ministry. When the lightning struck the compound of *Ɔsɔfo*

Christba, it landed on the compound in the form of a sharpened stone with sparks of fire from the sky and whichever part of the compound it struck or landed, a lamb was burnt as a sacrifice. The ashes of the burnt offering are also used for healing or curing sick people especially mad people, that are brought into the “Garden”. The stone is full of calcium. Pieces of it can be ground, dissolved in rainwater and put in the nose of a dying patient to sneeze to resuscitate him or her to regain consciousness.

### **The Use of Red Thread**

Red and white strips of clothes are made into threads and tied around the waist, the legs, the hands, the wrists and even made into a necklace for patients. The thread is mostly put in some amount of “David” and some amount of “Florida water” added and the *Osfo* prays over it. It is believed to be able to expel evil spirits from a patient. It can detect and arrest witches and wizards. It is used for protection against any evil spirit.<sup>72</sup>

### **The Use of Incense**

This is a slender aromatic stick like the thickness of a broomstick and about a hundred centimetres long. Different kinds of them are used. Most of them are manufactured in India. For example, some of them are known as “9 9”, “Mummy Water”, “Seven Seas”, “Black Beauty”, “Desire”, “Srisalbaba” and so on. The type to be used is determined by the Holy Spirit on all occasions. It is used during worship on Sunday and morning devotions. It is believed to drive away all evil spirits and bring down angels.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Ergoteh Nda, personal communication, March 13, 2009.

<sup>73</sup> Bonyah Avoh, personal communication, March 13, 2009.

## **The Use of Candles**

There are different colours of the candle that are used. Some of them are white, red, yellow, and black. The most commonly used one is the white and in some cases the red type. Apart from the white type, if there is any other that needs to be used, it is determined by the *Osfo* depending on the occasion. It is used for worship or devotional purpose in the temple and it signifies the light of God driving away every darkness in people's lives. It symbolizes purity and drives away evil spirits that may interrupt services. Its use is motivated by the Old Testament practice of the Israelites. In Exodus 25:31-40 God commanded the Israelites to make a lampstand so that candles could be fixed on them.<sup>74</sup>

## **The Use of the Cross**

In the compound of most of the "Gardens" of the Twelve Apostles Church there is a big wooden cross. This is erected almost in the middle of the compound beside the "David" with a wall around it. It is a symbol of Christ crucified. It is erected in the compound since in Numbers 21:4-9 God asked Moses to erect a bronze snake so that if anyone who was bitten by a snake looked, the person would be healed. In this case, the cross is also erected on the compound so that anyone who gets into trouble or is afflicted with any disease (bitten by the snake of affliction) kneels down to look at it and gets healed. People come to kneel down in front of it to pray. The patients are prayed for while kneeling before the cross. They show their humility before Christ, showing their regret for any sin committed by bowing down before it and rubbing their mouths at the base of the cross. This is a kind of penance done by members for the sins committed. The prayers made there are believed to be effective and capable of healing the

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<sup>74</sup> James Blay, personal communication, March 13, 2009.

sick.<sup>75</sup>

This is illustrated by plate 8 and it is labeled A on page 141.



*Figure 2:* A picture showing the temple and some sacred items in Galilee Garden in Bonyere.

A= the cross. B = the ‘Holy Spirit’. C= the Galilee Temple. D=‘David’. E= a dwarf wall around the cross indicating a restricted area

### **The Use of White Cloth**

It is used mostly on Sundays to cover the table in the temple and also to cover “the David”. This is a symbol of purity and reverence for God. During prayers and devotional periods, it symbolizes the sanctity that attracts angels into the assembly.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>75</sup> James Blay, personal communication, March 13, 2009.

<sup>76</sup> Ergoteh Awoyeh, personal communication, March 13, 2009.

### **The Use of the Red Cloth**

This is used on Fridays, and it is hung on the cross to signify the death of Jesus Christ. Due to this, members of the Church wear red garments to conform to that occasion. It is some of this red cloth that is used for the red thread.

### **The Use of the Rattle on the Gourd**

This is motivated by the fact that in Exodus 15:20 after the Egyptians drowned in the Red Sea Miriam the prophetess went out with the women with ‘timbrel’ in her hands playing and dancing. In this case, the word *Mfuaba* in the Fante Bible which is the Fante word for timbrel in that scripture is interpreted by the Twelve Apostles Church as the calabash or rattles on the gourd which is used by the Twelve Apostles Church.<sup>77</sup>



*Figure 3: A picture showing some sacred items. A = rattles on the gourd*

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<sup>77</sup> James Blay, personal communication March 13, 2009.

*as a musical instrument. B=sheep skin on which the prophetess kneels  
for prayers*

### **The Liturgy of the Twelve Apostles Church**

The order of service of the Twelve Apostles Church was obtained from both a participant observation by the researcher and from interactions with members of the Church after their services. The Twelve Apostles Church meets on Fridays and Sundays for their main services. In addition to that, morning devotions are held on most days of the week, except for Saturdays, from 5:30 am to about 6:00 am. Morning devotions start with an opening prayer, followed by the Lord's Prayer and then someone raises an *abibindwom* which is the "African lyrics". In some cases, several congregational prayers are made where certain topics are given by the *Ɔsɔfo* for everyone in the congregation to pray over. Most of these topics concentrate more on praying for the sick and for people with other problems. In other cases, each member prays one after the other and this prayer is interrupted with the Lord's Prayer after the fourth person has prayed. After these prayers, everyone gives a scripture quotation and after each quotation, the leader says "May the Lord bless that for us forever" while the congregation responds "Amen". Somebody then gives a word of exhortation and after that, the *Ɔsɔfo* says the benediction. The *Ɔsɔfo* will also sprinkle some of the water from the "David" on the members, bringing the devotion to an end.

Most Friday worship services are conducted between the hours of 12:00 noon and about 4:00 pm. It is mostly devoted to healing and the services are conducted in two sessions. The first session is normally held in their temple and then immediately followed by the second session, which is held on the compound purposely devoted to healing and deliverance. During the first session, an opening prayer is said by one of the devotees who enters the temple while the rest of the

members play the rattles on the gourd and the gong-gong. In front of the congregation, there is a table with red cloth on it, with a candle and incense lit, a white stool, a pillow beside and a sheep skin in front of the table.<sup>78</sup> Any member who enters the temple must kneel down with his or her head on the ground to say a word of prayer before joining the rest of the congregation to sing. While members enter the temple one by one to pray and join the rest of the congregation for the worship, the *Ɔsɔfo* kneels down before the cross at the compound praying for the healing of the sick for some time. When he or she finishes praying, he or she enters the temple and prays for the congregation. The *Ɔsɔfo* also prays over the water mixed with perfume and “Florida water” and then sprinkles it over the members to bless them. Before concluding the first session and initiating the second session, the *Ɔsɔfo* finds out from the members if anyone had visions and dreams the previous night. When dreams are shared by those members, the *Ɔsɔfo* would pray over them. It is believed that angels would be revealing some directions to people’s deliverances through dreams so that they will guide the *Ɔsɔfo* and the devotees during the healing session.

During the second session of the service, the patients were partially undressed. In other words, men wear only shorts while women have a piece of cloth up to the chest. They all line up on the compound carrying small basins of water. The devotees or trainees stand one after the other before the “David” praying with the staff and a rosary. After that, each devotee prays for a patient and in the course of the prayer dips his or her hand in the water carried by the patient and afterwards uses it in bathing the patient. The *Ɔsɔfo* does the same and prays finally for them. All these are done amidst music throughout the session. When the spirit responsible for any sickness manifests itself in shaking the water, the *Ɔsɔfo* comes and stands before the cross to divine. This

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<sup>78</sup> Shown in plate 7 in front of Prophetess Christba in Galilee Garden, Bonyere at page 140.

is done through the use of the holy cup raised to the sky and looking up into the sky while praying. It is believed that during the divination, every secret is revealed for the people to know what to do to set the patient free. The patients are then thoroughly bathed with soap and water from the “David”, “Florida water” and perfume.

When all these activities are completed for the patients, all the *Asɔfo* together with their members move around the “David” and the cross while singing and dancing. This movement is referred to by the people as the journey round the cross and “the David”. After this journey, they all say the Lord’s Prayer and the *Ɔsɔfo* gives the benediction.

On Sundays at 9.00 am, the first bell will go to remind the people of the morning service and then at 9.30 am, the second bell goes for the commencement of the service. The service starts with one of the devotees saying the opening prayer after which they sing some hymns. They use the Methodist hymnal in Fante. The first reading will be taken, followed by an “*abibindwom*” interlude. The second and third readings will be taken with either a hymnal interlude or “*abibindwom*”. The choir sings a song or two before the preacher comes to give the message.

The Methodist Liturgy is used for their Sunday service and there is a local preacher trained with the local preachers’ manual of the Methodist Church to do this on Sundays. This is believed to be due to the fact that the founders came from the Methodist Church thus some of the items or activities on the liturgy of the Twelve Apostles Church were taken from the Methodist Church. The preaching is mostly interspersed with *abibindwom* until the end of the service after which the offertory is received followed by the announcement and then closed with a prayer.

## The Doctrines of the Twelve Apostles Church

Most of the beliefs and doctrines of the Twelve Apostles Church may be based on the Old Testament practices, and some of them are going to be discussed here with the texts or passages quoted from the Revised Standard Version. Most of the details of the doctrines were given by James Blay of Prophet Mieza Bonya's Garden, Mbem.<sup>79</sup> Most of the songs they sing portray their doctrines or what they believe in, and this confirms their belief in the Lordship of Jesus Christ and his crucifixion. The type of songs also proves their belief in the virgin birth of Christ. They also believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit especially the gifts of tongues and the interpretation of tongues as it was demonstrated on the Pentecost day.



*Figure 4: A picture showing the temple and some sacred items in Galilee Garden in Bonyere. A= the cross. B = the 'Holy Spirit'. C= the Galilee Temple. D='David'. E= a dwarf wall around the cross indicating a restricted area.*

<sup>79</sup> James Blay, personal communication, March 13, 2009.

They believe and pray in the name of Jesus Christ and also believe in the power of prayer and fasting. During the period of fasting and prayer, they go to pray at a quiet place, more especially praying at midnight at the cemetery just as some people also go to pray at the mountain sites. They explain that the cemetery is always quiet and that is why it is conducive to prayers.<sup>80</sup>

Their practice of divination is based on the Old Testament practice where people went to prophets or seers to seek the counsel of God or inquire about the mind of God concerning the future. 1 Samuel 9:6 says "...but he said to him, 'Behold, there is a man of God in this city, and he is a man that is held in honour; all that he says comes true. Let us go there; perhaps he can tell us about the journey on which we have set out.'" These people went to see Samuel about King Saul's father's donkeys that were lost (James Blay, personal communication March 13, 2009).

Most prophets used some sacred items in the Old Testament days for divination. For example, the *urim* and *thummim*. Given this, the Twelve Apostles Church believes in the use of a sacred item to divine or inquire of the Lord. Unlike the Old Testament prophets' use of *urim* and *thummim*, the Church uses a cup referred to as the holy cup for divination. The use of this cup is supported by Psalm 116:13 which says, "I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord".

Based on Genesis 44:4,5, which has been quoted earlier on, the people believe that divination is biblical and so the holy cup is also ordained by God to be used.<sup>81</sup>

They worship on Fridays and Sundays because Jesus Christ was crucified on Friday and resurrected on Sunday. On Fridays, they wear red attire signifying the day of the crucifixion of Christ. Mark

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<sup>80</sup> James Blay, personal communication March 13, 2009.

<sup>81</sup> James Blay, personal communication March 13, 2009.

15:20 says "...and when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, and put his own clothes on him..." This tells that the people covered the nakedness of Jesus with purple clothes and that is what members of the Twelve Apostles wear to share in his suffering. Isaiah 63: 1 also says "Who is this that comes from Edom, in crimsoned garment from Bozrah, he that is glorious in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength". This also tells us that the red attire worn on Fridays also signifies victory. On Sundays, they wear white to show the resurrection day of Jesus.<sup>82</sup>

The concept of healing with water, according to the doctrines of the Twelve Apostles Church, is motivated by John 9:6,7 which says, "As he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man's eyes with the clay, saying to him 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.'" and in the story of the healing of Naaman in II Kings 5, he was asked to go and wash in River Jordan for his healing. This shows that when a prophet blesses water for a patient, it can solve so many problems for the patient.<sup>83</sup>

The "David" is a well that contains water that is used for healing purposes. In John 5 there was the Bethesda pool where angels came to stir, for sick persons to get healed. Hence, they believe in the ministration of angels to the sick people and they believe that at night angels come to stir that well and when anyone uses it in any way, he or she gets solutions to his or her problems. Though the water is called holy water according to Isaiah 12:3 and Ezekiel 36:25, the name "David" comes from the fact that David took smooth stones from the brook (1Sam 17:40) and if one of such stones could kill Goliath then water from the brook is believed to be powerful to heal, capable of doing many things. The name "David" is also from the fact that it is

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<sup>82</sup> James Blay, personal communication March 13, 2009.

<sup>83</sup> James Blay, personal communication March 13, 2009.

associated with David’s power as a warrior and it is believed that the water is capable of defeating any enemy that will come into contact with it.<sup>84</sup>



*Figure 5: A picture showing the temple and some sacred items in Galilee Garden in Bonyere. A= the cross. B = the ‘Holy Spirit’. C= the Galilee Temple. D= ‘David’. E= a dwarf wall around the cross indicating a restricted area*

The *Asɔfo* use of “Moses’ staff” is from the fact that Moses used a staff to perform miracles even like the division of the Red Sea in Exodus 14:6. Elisha sent Gehazi, his servant, with his staff in II Kings 4:29 to put it on the face of the dying son of the Shunamite woman. In Mark 6:8 Jesus charged his disciples to “Take nothing for their journey except a staff.”<sup>85</sup>

<sup>84</sup> David Arthur, personal communication March 13, 2009.

<sup>85</sup> James Blay, personal communication March 13, 2009.



*Figure 6: A picture depicting the use of the tasbih (prayer beads) for prayer and divination*

Big crosses are erected in the “Gardens” of the Twelve Apostles Church premises to signify Christ. I Cor. 1:18 says “for the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God”. Therefore, according to the belief of the Twelve Apostles Church, the cross is there as the power of God to save people in the “Garden”. It is erected in the compound because in Numbers 21:4-9 God asked Moses to erect a bronze snake so that if anyone who was bitten by a snake looked, he or she would be healed. In the case of this Church, the cross is also erected on the compound so if anyone who is bitten by the snake of affliction kneels to look at it he or she would get healed. In the story of Jacob in Genesis 28:10-22 he had a dream of angels ascending and descending a ladder, when he was running away from his father’s house, he anointed the stone and said “Surely the Lord is in this place.” Thus, when Tane had the power to heal and helped people, she erected a cross as a symbol showing that

the place was the house of God where people could come for solution to their problems.<sup>86</sup> A typical Garden of the Twelve Apostles Church showing the cross is found on page 57 (Fig. 7).

In Mark 5:1-13, Jesus met the man possessed with the legion of evil spirits. The evil spirits saw him and asked not to be sent out into the empty area but to enter the pigs and Jesus agreed to do that. In this scenario, from the Twelve Apostles Church's perspective, it seems there was a negotiation and a compromise between Jesus and the spirits. During exorcism or deliverance sessions of the Twelve Apostles Church, the *Dsofo* negotiates with the spirit before anything is done to set the patient free and what to offer. The Church believes that sacrifices of different kinds can be made to set the patient free. The Church holds that when those sacrifices are offered or the demands of the spirit oppressing the victim or the patient are met, the spirit will leave the host. The Church uses the understanding above to explain why sometimes sacrifices are offered on behalf of some patients to other gods or spirits or items are collected to appease or pacify them. These gods may be responsible for the patients' plight due to certain offences the patients might have committed against them. From James Blay's account, the animal to be used is determined by those gods or the spirits offended by the patients.<sup>87</sup>

According to the teaching of the Twelve Apostles Church, the life of an animal like a sheep or a goat can be substituted for that of a dying patient to save his or her life.<sup>88</sup> This is motivated by a story in Gen 22 where God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac and later God had to provide a ram. In this story, it is believed God substituted Isaac's life with a ram, hence, if someone is dying, a ram or a goat can be used as a substitute for his or her life.

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<sup>86</sup> James Blay, personal communication March 13, 2009.

<sup>87</sup> James Blay, personal communication March 13, 2009.

<sup>88</sup> Personal communication with Nda, and Elizabeth Abizi, March 13, 2009.

During such a ritual, articles like a bottle of wine, a packet of candles and incense, are collected together with a sheep. The candles, according to the Church, are used to drive away the darkness surrounding the patient, the incense is used to attract the presence of angels to minister to the patient and the aroma of the wine also seeks to attract the angels who are to minister to the patients. The *Dsfo* will wash the live sheep symbolizing purification and pray over all the articles to consecrate the sheep. He or she holds the sheep and takes it around the patient three times after which the patient carries the sheep on his or her neck. The sheep is then brought slowly down from the neck of the patient. This is to identify the sacrificial animal or sheep with the one offering the sacrifice. This ritual will be repeated for seven days and every time it is completed the sheep will be tied in a rope. This is because the number seven is believed to be complete and as such the ritual must be complete to get the desired results. When it is completed on the seventh day the sheep will be released. According to Prophet Nda (personal communication March 13, 2009), this ritual was performed for his mother, and immediately when the sheep was released the sheep just entered her room and died. According to the narration, the life of the sheep was substituted for that of the mother to save her life.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ENROLMENT INTO THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES CHURCH

According to the members of the Twelve Apostles Church, a devotee is someone who has accepted the challenge to go for training from an *Ɔsɔfo*. Such a devotee or person goes to stay with the *Ɔsɔfo* for an “on the job” apprenticeship training for a period which will be determined by the *Ɔsɔfo*. When the training is completed, an ordination or graduation ceremony will be organized where such a person is officially and publicly inducted into the office of a prophet or prophetess.

#### **The Initiation**

In the Twelve Apostles Church, it is not everyone who attends the Church that is referred to as a devotee but only those believed to be chosen by the spirit of God. Those who are chosen by the spirit are initiated to be recognized as devotees or trainees. The person can be a male or female. When one is chosen, one experiences some form of sickness becomes restless, and experiences sleepless nights and sometimes nightmares that make one shout in the night. Some of the experiences of some of the *Asɔfo* have it that the one “called”, sometimes experiences shaking all over the body and even speaks strange languages. Some of these “called” members who were engaged in trade had their commercial activities collapsed through losses or had the goods getting burnt. If one refuses to heed this call, strange sicknesses may befall such a person. If some of these signs are experienced and the individual goes to see any *Ɔsɔfo* of the Twelve Apostles Church, such a person would be told that he or she has been chosen by the spirit to be trained. The head of every branch of the

church in the “Garden” is the *Ɔsɔfo*, assisted by the devotees followed by the regular members and then the patients who visit the “Gardens” for their problems to be solved. It is some of these visitors who become members. All these signs can be likened to what Geoffrey Parrinder said about someone who is called to be a diviner “a man may suffer from fits or sickness, and deduce from this that a spirit is seeking to speak through him.”<sup>89</sup> Prophetess Sarah Ackah also explained that when such a person decides to stay with the *Ɔsɔfo* to be trained, that affliction leaves the person.<sup>90</sup> When such a person is completely healed, his or her calling is confirmed through divination by the cup and then his or her initiation follows.

During the initiation, the devotee will be prayed for by a group of *Asɔfo* forming a priesthood board, and then cleansed or bathed with water containing “Florida water”. This is done on a Friday. The devotee will be clothed with a red garment and a member of the priesthood board will take the holy cup containing water, raise it up and look up into the sky to divine to know whether the devotee is called to be initiated and other issues concerning the devotee.<sup>91</sup>

The devotee will also be given the holy cup to discern whether he or she has been chosen to be trained in the priesthood. If God has accepted him or her, it will be shown when the new devotee raises the cup into the sky, and a power or a force holds the cup in the air and then the cup is weighed down. This divination is repeated three times. When this proves to be successful, the priesthood board sprinkles powder on the devotee, signifying that the devotee has successfully been accepted to go through the priesthood initiation process. Here, one of the priests collects the cup from the devotee and places it under

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<sup>89</sup> Geoffrey E. Parrinder, *Religion in Africa* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), 103.

<sup>90</sup> Personal communication, March 21, 2009.

<sup>91</sup> Manza Eyeduah, personal communication March 10, 2009.

the cross. From then on, the actual training of the devotee begins.<sup>92</sup>

Some devotees are called into the priesthood in their own rights and so they bear their own names after training while others are chosen to succeed their parents or a closed relative who was an *Ɔsɔfo*. The newly ordained *Ɔsɔfo* who succeeds a deceased *Ɔsɔfo* is named after the predecessor.<sup>93</sup> That is, if the predecessor is the first, then the successor becomes the second. That is why the head prophet of the Twelve Apostles Church is John Nackabah IV who succeeded his uncle who was John Nackabah III. In this case, a female devotee can succeed a male prophet and vice versa. This might be made known during the divination process. This name is used during the training and is made known to the public during the ordination. The choice of a successor is done by the spirit and does not lie in the powers of the Church. Before a member is initiated into the priesthood, the chosen person has to provide some articles like a packet of white candles, a packet of incense, a bottle of perfume of any kind, Florida water, a tin of powder, three -yard piece of any kind of cloth, three-yard piece of red cloth, a bottle of mild alcoholic drink (Aperitif) and some amount of money that will be determined by the *Ɔsɔfo*.<sup>94</sup>

## Training

Manza Eyeduah Krisan intimated that the training sessions are informal apprenticeship type where the initiated devotee learns on the job.<sup>95</sup> Most of these *Asɔfo* do not have a formal education and so cannot even read the Bible. This makes the training of a devotee more informal. In this case, the devotee stays with the trainer as an assistant and is in close association with the trainer. The role of a devotee while

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<sup>92</sup> Manza Eyeduah, personal communication March 10, 2009.

<sup>93</sup> John Nackabah IV, personal communication, March 24, 2009.

<sup>94</sup> Manza Eyeduah, personal communication, March 10, 2009.

<sup>95</sup> Manza Eyeduah, Krisan, (personal communication, March 10, 2009)

under training is to join or help in organizing morning devotions, pray for the sick patients on admission in the “Garden” and also to lead in the singing. Kangakyi of Tikobo no 2 also added that every devotee is also supposed to fast for a particular patient when that patient’s condition is critical and desperate until there is total healing.<sup>96</sup> The devotee bathes the patients on Fridays during healing services. Such spiritual baths in the “Garden” do not only take place on Fridays but as many times as the spirit will direct the devotees. At some points, the devotee will be required to bath the patient at midnight since it is believed that angels visit the “Garden” to minister to the sick, and as such the *Ɖɔɔfo* would like the devotees to take advantage of their presence. In this case, as devotees administer the spiritual bath to patients, the angels would also be ministering healing to the patients. If the *Ɖɔɔfo* is to go for any herbal medicine he or she goes with all the trainees or the devotees for them to learn so that they can go for those herbs when the need arises.

In some cases when there is the need for the *Ɖɔɔfo* to offer sacrifices on behalf of any patient, to any spirit that has been offended, it is the duty of the devotee to organize the sacrificial items prescribed by the spirit, that will be brought by the patient’s relatives, examine the quality and the quantity of them, make them ready to go with the *Ɖɔɔfo* and relatives to the spot where the ritual will be performed. The devotees are always seen working with the *Ɖɔɔfo* (the head) of the “Garden” and even handle cases under the supervision of the *Ɖɔɔfo*.<sup>97</sup>

*Ɖɔɔfo* Christba of Galilee Garden, Bonyere (personal communication, March 13, 2009) commented that when she was under training, she was the one who was supposed to resuscitate any patient who was brought unconscious and also to divine to know whether the patient would survive or not. If it was known that the patient would not

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<sup>96</sup>Kangakyi, Personal communication, March 14, 2009.

<sup>97</sup> Saviour Ngoah, personal communication, March 25, 2009.

survive, he or she was sent away. In this case, the devotees may be playing the role of dealing with all the preparatory stages of the patients' cases for the *Ɔsɔfo* to handle.

*Ɔsɔfo* Christba also commented that the prophetesses of the Twelve Apostles Church have been acting as Traditional Birth Attendants who take care of pregnant women to deliver their babies.<sup>98</sup> When the women are brought to the “Garden” they are given herbal medicines to drink and to have an enema to keep the foetus and the expectant mother healthy until delivery. During training, the devotee is to accompany the *Ɔsɔfo* to pick those herbs and to take pregnant women through spiritual baths that will protect the pregnant women from all attacks and ensure safe delivery. The prophetess' work as Traditional Birth Attendants can also be traced to Grace Tane who was taking care of pregnant women, mentioned earlier in this book. She handed down the tradition for women devotees to be trained to be qualified Traditional Birth Attendants by the time they graduate.<sup>99</sup>

### **Graduation or Ordination Ceremony**

For any of the devotees to be outdoored or ordained into the priesthood vocation, it has to be determined by an angel or the spirit revealing it to the *Ɔsɔfo* and oil is poured on the head of that particular person or devotee. When this is revealed to *Ɔsɔfo*, the trainer, it is then communicated to the priesthood board which will be called to decide on when to commission or induct the devotee into the priesthood or to the office of a prophet or prophetess so that the devotee gets prepared for that occasion. According to the decision of the priesthood board, several devotees can also be brought together for a mass ordination. One of the authors had the opportunity of witnessing one such mass ordination service on the 15th of March 2009 at Anwea near Nkroful

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<sup>98</sup> Personal communication, March 13, 2009.

<sup>99</sup> Christba, personal communication, March 13, 2009.

in the Ellembele District where the Head Prophet John Nackabah IV inducted them into office.

Graduation or ordination is a time when any of the devotees passing out of training is specially commissioned or inducted into priesthood either to continue the work of a deceased *Ɔsɔfo* or set up another station of the Twelve Apostles Church. During this time, an elaborate ceremony in the form of a coronation will be conducted for the devotee. When the vision for ordination is seen by the trainer, the time for the ceremony will be fixed starting on Thursday evening through to Sunday. The devotee to be ordained provides a tin of powder which will be poured on the devotee after he or she has successfully been ordained and the success is celebrated with other members of the Church; a bottle of perfume, which will be used to administer a spiritual bath for the devotee graduand; red and white clothes which will be worn by the newly ordained *Ɔsɔfo* on Friday and Sunday services respectively after the ordination; goats or a cow or sheep, a bag of rice, and ingredients like pepper, onions, garden eggs, tomatoes and so on which will be used to prepare meals for members and the public to enjoy themselves after the ceremony.<sup>100</sup>

The devotee will be hidden or quarantined in a room for seven days, fasting and praying together with the *Ɔsɔfo*, the trainer and other devotees who are yet to complete their training. The ceremony starts on a Thursday evening with a prayer session and this is repeated on Friday morning. On Friday, before the ordination on Sunday, the graduand will be given the holy cup to divine to confirm or otherwise his or her successful training.<sup>101</sup>

During this time of divination for confirmation, the devotee to be ordained raises the cup into the sky, and a power or a force holds the cup in the air and then the cup is weighed down. All members of

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<sup>100</sup> Elizabeth Abizi, personal communication, March 14, 2009.

<sup>101</sup> Elizabeth Abizi, personal communication, March 14, 2009.

the clergy will be present to observe this. This is done three times, and when the graduand is successful, any *Ɔsɔfo* will be appointed to prophesy over the graduand. In the evening, the priesthood board tests the graduating devotee on some scripture verses, the history of the Church, the mission of Prophet William Wade Harris and issues concerning the Church after which the graduand will also be tested in songs in Arabic, Kru, and *Abibidwom* (traditional songs). When he or she passes the test, prayers continue the next day.<sup>102</sup>

The graduation or ordination ceremony usually takes place on Sundays. The ordination ceremony is conducted following the Fante Methodist Liturgy for the outdooing of the local preachers.

The members of the Twelve Apostles Church that gather start by reciting the Lord's Prayer, followed by a confession of sins and after which songs from the Methodist hymnal are sung. This is then followed by the Bible readings in Fante and then in Nzema if the occasion is being done in the Nzema area, with the Methodist hymns, especially the Christian *Asoɛ Ndwom* (CAN which is the Fante Methodist hymns) interludes. Before the sermon is preached the graduand is given a spiritual bath with water containing Florida water, dressed in a white robe and veiled in his or her hiding place before he or she is brought out and given a seat in front of the preacher. It is believed that the essence of the ordination is to empower the graduand and also to officially declare him/her an accredited or licensed *Ɔsɔfo*. The preacher in his sermon encourages the graduand to put his or her trust in God and be committed to prayer since it is through prayer that issues are revealed. After the sermon, an appeal for funds is organized to support the ministry of the graduand which will be followed by the actual induction ceremony.

During the induction, the head prophet, an officiating minister,

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<sup>102</sup> Sarah Ackah, personal communication, March 21, 2009.

uses the Fante version of the Methodist liturgy. The portion of the Fante Methodist liturgy used in this ceremony reads:

*Otumfo Nyankopɔn a akoma nyina bue ma Wo, ahwehwedze nyina inyim, na esumadze biara nnhunta Wo; fa wo Sunsum Krɔnkrɔn hye hen mu tsew hen akoma mu adwen ho, ma yendɔ wo pirim, na yenhuhor wo dzin krɔnkrɔn no de mbre ɔse; wɔ hen Ewuradze Jesus Christ ntsi. Amen.*

Below is the English version:

Almighty God before whom all hearts are opened to, beyond all searching and all hidden things are exposed, let your Holy Spirit enter into us and cleanse our hearts and minds. Let us be able to love you at once and exalt your holy name the way we should in the name of Jesus Christ Amen.

The officiating minister leads the graduand to recite the Lord's Prayer in Fante as follows:

*Hen Egya a ewɔ sor, wo dzin ho ntsew, w 'ahendzi mbra wɔnye wo pe wɔ asaase, de mbre wɔye no wɔ sor. ma hen daa daa edziban nde. Na fa hen mfom kye hen, De mbre yedze kye hɔn a wɔfom hen. Na mma nngya hen nnkɔ ngyegyey mu; Na yi hen fi mbusu mu; Na ɔwo na ahendzi, nye tum, nye enyimnyam ye Wodze daa. Amen.*

Below is the English version:

Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever Amen.

After the above prayer, the minister declares the purpose of the gathering which is to publicly recognize and commission anyone who has accepted the call of God upon his or her life to proclaim the gospel according to the beliefs of the Church and call the people to witness that:

*Yeedzi ehyia wɔ Nyame enyim de yeregye enuanom nye nkyerebaa yi wɔ bagua mu ato Asekafo fekuw yi mu. Yegye dzi de Nyankopɔn na ɔafreɛn mu na wɔagye hen ato mu de mbre Asɔr Twelve Apostles Church nyee tse. Yesere de Nyankopɔn mma hɔn dɔ nye tum ama wɔabɔ ne nsempa no dawur na wɔafre dodow ma wɔaba nnuho no dawur mu dze aahye n'aser no ma ama n'enyimnyam na ne dzin krɔnkrɔn.*

The English version reads thus:

We have gathered here before God to witness the public recognition of these brethren as part of the association of preachers. We believe that it is God who has called them and has accepted them according to the tradition of the Twelve Apostles Church. We pray that God will grant them love and power to proclaim the gospel to call people to repentance in order to fulfill the mandate of church growth to the glory of his holy name.

After announcing the purpose of the gathering and openly declaring the Church's acceptance of the graduand, the officiating minister welcomes him or her into the ministry of proclaiming the word of God and on behalf of the Church and declares that this ministry is what Jesus has left the Church to fulfil. This is also taken from the Fante liturgy as follows:

*Enuanom nye nkyere baa adɔfo pa, yenam hen Ewuradze Jesus Christ ne dzin mu ma hom akwaaba wɔ ha nde da yi. Wɔakaa hom edwuma a hen Ewuradze dze ahyen 'Asɔr, nye kwan kor a asɔ n'enyi de ɔnam do*

*bɔ ne nsempa dawur nye mbrɛ n'ahenman bɛyɛ aba.*

The English version says:

Beloved brethren, we welcome you this day in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. You have been reminded of the work that the Lord commanded the church and the way the gospel of the coming of the kingdom could be preached.

The minister after this, administers the oath and, in the oath, the minister asks the graduand whether he or she promises to be a true disciple as below:

*Ana egye Jesus Christ to mu de w' Agyenkwa nye w' Ewuradze; na isua deebeyɛ osuanyi nokwafo ama n'Asɔr Krɔnkrɔn no?*

The English version is:

Do you accept Jesus Christ as your saviour and do you promise that you will be a true disciple of his holy Church?

Then the graduand responds *musua dem* meaning “I promise”. The minister also asks in Fante whether the graduand promises to proclaim the gospel to his or her hearers and he or she promises so as below:

*Ana ewɔ awerehyɛmu de Sumsum Krɔnkrɔn na otu wo da ara ampa de ebɔ nokwar a wɔada no edzi wɔ kyerɛw krɔnkrɔn no mu de cyɛ Nyame n'asɛm no dawur, na eda Nkwagye enyimnyam Asempa a ɔnam hen Ewuradze Jesus Christ do no edzi ma hen a wobetse nyina?*

Below is the English version:

Do you believe that it is the Holy Spirit who has chosen you to proclaim the truth revealed in the Bible as God's word and as such promise to proclaim the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ to all those who will listen?

He or she responds, *Musua dem* meaning “I promise”. The minister again asks whether the graduand promises to be faithful in conducting church services, the reading of the word and every teaching that will help the growth of the Church and the graduand responds by saying, “I promise”,

*Ana ebɔ anohoba de ebeye kua wɔ asɔrye mu nye Kyerew Krɔnkron ne kenkan mu na esuadze biara a ɔboa wɔ dem nyimdzee yi mu?*

*Mobɔ anohoba dem.*

Below is the English version:

Do you promise that you will keep on praying and reading the Bible and to help improve on the knowledge of God in the Church?

And the graduand responds, “I promise”. The minister again asks whether the graduand will do his or her best to do the work according to the teachings of the Church and to work hard to better the condition of the Church and the graduand responds, “I promise”

*Ana ebɔ anohoba de ibedzi dem dwuma yi de mbre ɔnye Twelve Apostles Church Asɔr nkyerɛkyere na mbra saa, na aabɔ mbɔdzen biara a ibotum etu ne yieyempon?*

*Mobɔ anohoba dem.*

Below is the English version:

Do you promise to do this work diligently according to the teaching and the tenets of the Twelve Apostles Church and to promote the growth of the Church?

The minister now declares on behalf of the Church as having heard and being witnesses to the oath sworn, the graduand has been gladly accepted into the association of priesthood that proclaims the gospel

and so declares that “may the blessing of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit come upon the graduand always as he or she joins the association”.

*Yeenya atse hom dase pa yi, yenam hen Ewuradze Jesus Christ nye n'Asɔr do dze enyigye gye hom to asenkafo kuw yi mu. Otumfo Nyankopɔn egya, ɔba, nye Sumsum Krɔnkrɔn nhyira no mbra hom do daa wɔ hom nye hen fekubɔ wɔ nsempa no mu.*

Below is the English version:

We have all heard of the oath that has been sworn. We gladly accept you or recognize you as preachers in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Church. May the Almighty God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit bless you every day in our association of preachers of the gospel

After taking the oath, the minister shakes hands with the graduand to welcome him or her into the priesthood by reading the following from the Fante liturgy.

*Yedze fekubɔ nsa nyimfa kyia hom de ɔye akɔaba asenkyeredze a asɔr dze ma, na yegye hom gyinabew de hom yeasenkafo wɔ mu no to mu.*

The English version has it as follows:

We gladly greet you with the right hand of fellowship as a sign to welcome you on behalf of the Church and we recognize your position as preachers.

The veil is then removed and the minister anoints the graduand on behalf of the Church. The officiating minister presents certain items such as a Bible, a cup referred to as the holy cup, Moses' staff and the rattles on the gourd to the graduand. These items are significant in the sense that the Bible is to remind the graduand to be diligent in

proclaiming the gospel of Jesus, the holy cup, a symbol of power and the license to inquire of the Lord through divination, a Moses' staff as a symbol of authority and power to destroy the works of the devil and the rattles on the gourd also as a reminder to one's commitment to the Twelve Apostles Church. The significance of these items is derived from the declaration read to the graduand from the liturgy given below.

*Afei gye Bible krɔnkrɔn yi wɔ hɛn nsamu; na nyia ɔdze asem yi mae no mma wo adom, nyansa nye tum na fa bɔ nokwar no dawur de mbre Jesus mu nokwar no tse.*

Below is the English version:

Now receive this Holy Bible from us and may the one who gave you this word grant you grace, wisdom and power to proclaim the gospel according to the truth from Jesus.

Having made this declaration, the minister prays for him or her from the liturgy given below:

*Otumfo nye bekyebo Nyankopɔn, Wo nkotoo na ewɔ tum a edze akyɛdze nye adom a nyimpa nam do hyɛ wo pɛ ma, ma wo nkowaa yi gyedzi, ahotsew, ntseasee na ɔdɔ; na siesie hɔn ma som a ɔyɛ mfaso. Yesere wo, fa wo nhyira tsew hɔn sunsum akyɛdze na bra afɔrbɔ ho wɔ mber a ɔyɛ nwinwin yi mu. Yebisa yi wɔ Wo ba hɛn Ewuradze Jesus Christ Ne Dzin mu. Amen.*

*Nyankopɔn, nyansa nye tum nsunyiwa, fa adwen botooyɛ na koryɛ koma dom w 'asomafɔ yi, de w 'asem no nsuae mu woɛnya wo Sunsum Krɔnkrɔn ne kan no na Jaagye hɔn akɔ nokwar nyina mu. Dom hɛn yi osian wo ba hɛn Agyenkwa Jesus Christ ntsi. Amen.*

*Nyankopon, ɔwo a ɔnam wo Sunsum Krɔnkrɔn do daa ewɔ nkorɔfo a*

*woehyia mu wɔ Jesus Christ dzin mu no finimfin, ma wo nkowaa yi awerehyemu de enye hɔn wɔ hɔ, ama w'asem eekenyan ndzebɔnyefo, aakyekye awerehofo were, dze fahodzi aabre ndɔmmumfo, na eenyin agyedzifo wɔ Wo gyedzi Krɔnkrɔn soronko no mu ama wɔdze aahye wo dzin enyimyam. Amen.*

*Otumfo Nyankopon, yesere wo ma w 'asɔr aabɔ w 'asem dawur wɔ ano ana ekyirkyir, ekodu wiadze mfendzanan. ma w 'ahoɔdzen, nyansa, mbɔdzenbɔ nye ɔɔɔ-sunsum mbre wo nsempa ho asenkafo nyina do; ama w 'ahenman no aaba na honam nyina eehu Nyame no nkwaye no. Iyi na yesere wɔ wo ba Jesus Christ dzin mu, ɔ no a oyi wiadze bɔn kɔ. Amen.*

Below is the translated version in English language:

Almighty God, you are the only one with the power to grant gifts and the grace that anybody can use to fulfil your will. Give these servants of yours faith, righteousness, understanding and love and prepare them for a profitable service. We pray that you bless and cleanse their spiritual gifts for this life of sacrifice in this time when the weather is cold. We ask this in the name of your son, our Lord Jesus Christ Amen.

God, the bearer of wisdom and power, grant your Church, the heart of quietness and love to these missionaries of yours. Through the declaration of your word, receive an illumination from the Holy Spirit into all truth. Grant us the grace in the name of your son, our saviour Jesus Christ Amen.

God, it is through your Holy Spirit before the people gathered in the name of Jesus Christ should grant your servants the hope that you are with them, so that your word will revive sinners, comfort those who are mourning, to set the captives free and to strengthen the faith of believers in the extraordinary holy faith to glorify your most holy name Amen.

Almighty God, we pray for your Church to be able to proclaim

your word far and near up to the ends of the world. Uplift your strength, wisdom, ability and the spirit of love in your people to proclaim the gospel so that your kingdom will come and all people will see the salvation of God. This is what we ask in the name of your son Jesus Christ, who takes away the sin of the world. Amen.

After induction, the newly ordained *ጋጋፍ* and the congregation go on a town procession amidst drumming and dancing while some of the women are left behind to cook. When they return from the procession, they come to enjoy the meals prepared.

After the induction ceremony, the graduate continues to stay in the “Garden” to work with his or her trainer for some time while looking for a site to build his or her own “Garden”. When the graduand finds a site, the priesthood board goes to inspect the place, prays over it, and sprinkles some amount of the holy water or “David” at the site for the graduand to move in.<sup>103</sup>

After working in the new “Garden” for some time, a date is set by the priesthood board to erect the cross in the new “Garden”. Before the date is set the new *ጋጋፍ* will have to build an area earmarked for the cross in the “Garden”. The cross is placed in the centre of either two concentric circles or squares with the cistern of water or “the David” beside the first outer square or circle. This is because it is believed that the cross signifies the presence of the Lord, so the area around it is considered holy and must be declared a restricted area. It is also built to conform to the pattern of the Old Testament temple where the cross is located at the holy of holies.<sup>104</sup> This is shown in plate 8 with the dwarf.

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<sup>103</sup> Isaac Yankey, personal communication, March 14, 2009.

<sup>104</sup> David Arthur, personal communication, April 10, 2009.



*Figure 7: A picture showing the temple and some sacred items in Galilee Garden in Bonyere.*

A= the cross. B = the 'Holy Spirit'. C= the Galilee Temple. D='David'. E= a dwarf wall around the cross indicating a restricted area

When the Board is satisfied with the construction, a date is fixed for the cross to be erected. The cross is erected at midnight because it is believed that when God instructed Moses to erect the bronze snake in Numbers 21 it was done at night. Thanksgiving sacrifices in the form of goat or sheep, rice and other food items for the celebration is provided by the newly ordained *Osɔfo* in the new "Garden" when the day breaks. From then on, the graduate is accepted wholly into the priesthood board and the new "Garden" becomes a permanent Twelve Apostles Church station where people can attend services and also come for consultation.



*Figure 8: A picture showing the Head Prophet Inducting new Asofo. A is Head Prophet administering the oath of induction and B shows new Asofo being anointed after induction.*

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has revealed that the process of enrolment into the priesthood of the Twelve Apostles Church is a spiritually driven and culturally distinctive journey that integrates divine calling, apprenticeship-style training, and ritualized initiation. The pathway begins with a perceived divine selection, often marked by physical, emotional, or circumstantial experiences interpreted as signs of a spiritual call. This call is then affirmed through divination, followed by an initiation rite that symbolically and ritually inducts the devotee into training. The training itself is immersive and highly practical,

emphasizing close mentorship under an *Osifo*, participation in healing and ritual activities, and, for women, skills such as serving as Traditional Birth Attendants. The process culminates in an ordination or graduation ceremony, sanctioned by spiritual confirmation, where the devotee is officially recognized as a prophet or prophetess. Through this system, the Twelve Apostles Church sustains its prophetic leadership, preserves its spiritual traditions, and ensures the transmission of its sacred practices from one generation to the next.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE PASSAGE 1 SAMUEL 9: 1—10:26

The previous chapter provided a detailed exploration of how individuals are enrolled into the priesthood within the Twelve Apostles Church, examining the criteria, processes, and spiritual significance attached to this rite of passage. Building on that foundation, the present chapter shifts focus to a biblical and theological analysis of 1 Samuel 9:1–10:26. It delves into the narrative of Saul’s divine selection and anointing as the first king of Israel, offering an exegetical interpretation of the text. The chapter also considers how this passage is interpreted within the context of the Twelve Apostles Church.

#### **Historical Account of the Passage**

Kish had lost his she-asses and to find, if possible, the straying animals, Saul, the only son of Kish was sent in the company with a servant to search for them. Saul, which means “the asked for” was not only described as “choice and goodly” in his entire race, but also apparently handsome and taller than anybody in the land.

From his home at Gibeah, Saul and his servant passed in a north-western direction over a spur of Mount Ephraim and they turned their search eastwards to the land of Shalishah.<sup>105</sup> Having traversed another district in the land of Benjamin, they found themselves in the district of Zuph, where Samuel’s home was in Ramah. For three days, the two continued to search, when it occurred to Saul that their long absence might cause his father more anxiety than the straying of the she-asses. Before returning home, Saul’s servant suggested that since

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<sup>105</sup> A. Edersheim, *Bible History: Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Edman’s Publishing Company, 1972), 38.

they were just in view of the city where “the seer” lived, they might first consult him as to the “the way” they “should go” in order to find the she-asses.<sup>106</sup>

Having determined that the seer was not only in the city, but that the people had had “a sacrifice” on the high place outside where Samuel had built an altar, they were in hope of finding him there. When they had just entered the city itself and were “in the gate” or wide place inside the city entrance, they met Samuel where the elders used to sit and popular assemblies gathered. They met Samuel coming from an opposite direction on his way to the “Bamah” or sacrificial “height”. To Saul’s enquiry about the “seer’s house”, Samuel replied by making himself known.<sup>107</sup> At the time that Saul and his servant were looking for Samuel, he was also expecting them since the Lord had revealed to Samuel the previous night that they would come. Samuel had prepared for his arrival by ordering the choicest piece of sacrificial meal to be set aside for his guest. As soon as Samuel saw Saul at the gate, his voice indicated that this was the future leader of God’s people.<sup>108</sup>

Samuel invited Saul first to the feast and then to his house. Having been invited to his house by Samuel, he promised Saul that he would tell him all that was in his heart. Saul was undoubtedly aware that Israel had demanded and was about to receive from Samuel a king but had no idea that he was going to be chosen since he came from the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest tribe.<sup>109</sup>

Apparently the “seer” made no answer to what Saul had said but at the sacrificial feast Samuel pursued the same course towards his guest. After the feast, Saul followed his host to his house and was sent to the flat roof for a personal conversation with him. Samuel conversed

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<sup>106</sup> Edersheim, *Bible History: Old Testament*, 38.

<sup>107</sup> Edersheim, *Bible History: Old Testament*, 39.

<sup>108</sup> Edersheim, *Bible History: Old Testament*, 39.

<sup>109</sup> Edersheim, *Bible History: Old Testament*, 40.

with Saul throughout the night, and when Samuel was about to leave his guests to go, he sent the servant away from the roof top and decided to deliver the message of God to Saul. He took a vial of oil and anointed Saul. This placed Saul's institution of royalty on the same footing as that of the sanctuary and the priesthood (Ex. 30:23, Lev. 8:10), as appointed and consecrated by God and for God and intended to be the medium for receiving and transmitting blessings to his people.<sup>110</sup>

After Samuel had anointed Saul, he gave Saul a kiss, which was a token of homage together with a message: "Is it not that Jehovah hath anointed thee to be prince over his inheritance" was pronounced, to appoint Saul as the first king of Israel.<sup>111</sup>

### **Interpretation of 1 Samuel 9:1-10:27**

#### **Interpretation by Selected Scholars**

Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin. This tribe had been reduced to a very small number by the fatal war with Gibeah and there was the need to provide wives for 600 men who were considered to be poor due to their diminished number. Even though the tribe of Benjamin is the smallest and also the most financially poorest, it was high in dignity before the sight of Yahweh.<sup>112</sup> Saul was the son of Kish, who was the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Apiah. The genealogy speaks of some measure of respectability. Kish, the father of Saul is described as *gibbor hayil* which means either he belonged to a warrior elite or probably a man of wealth.<sup>113</sup> Kyle McCarter also says that *gibbor hayil* often has military connotations (Joshua 1:4; 8:3; 10:7) and also describes a social standing with high economic power. Since *hayil*

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<sup>110</sup> Edersheim, *Bible History: Old Testament*, 41,42.

<sup>111</sup> Edersheim, *Bible History: Old Testament*, 42.

<sup>112</sup> M. Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (United States of America: Hendrikson Publishers, 2006), 397.

<sup>113</sup> R.P. Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel: Commentary* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1986),112.

means wealth as well as physical strength, it became applicable to any high-ranking citizen or powerful man.<sup>114</sup>

Saul's father might be a wealthy military general who had a lot of possessions including asses where some of them were missing and had to send Saul and his servant to go and look for them. It is stated by Stoebe in R.W. Klein's research that the asses were the riding animals of nobility and so their loss would mean both poverty and inability to fulfil leadership roles. Since Kish himself might be a military general, he had to take the responsibility of sending people to go and look for them.<sup>115</sup> This is seen of the text in 1 Sam 9:5, 6 as follows:

When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who is with him, 'come, let us go back, lest my father cease to care about the asses and become anxious about us'. But he said to him, 'Behold, there is a man of God in this city and he is a man that is held in honour; all that he says comes true. Let us go there; perhaps he can tell us about the journey on which we have set out.'

According to Hertzberg (1976), Saul advised that they go back home, but it was upon the advice of the servant when they got to the land of Zuph, that they went to the famous man of God living in the neighbourhood who, as the servant is aware, knows everything.<sup>116</sup> A man of God refers to a priest or a prophet who has the Spirit of God as his possession and also has in himself something of the divine nature so that he or she can become a medium of divine communication.<sup>117</sup>

A man of God is a person who is known to possess divine

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<sup>114</sup> P.K.,McCarter Jr. *1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1980), 173.

<sup>115</sup> R.W. Klein, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Samuel 10* (Texas: Wordbooks Publisher, 1983), 86.

<sup>116</sup> H.W. Hertzberg, *1 & 2 Samuel: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976),81.

<sup>117</sup> J. Lindblom, *Prophecy Ancient in Israel*. (London: Oxford Basil Blackwell, 1973), 60,61.

powers that enable him or her to heal the sick, raise the dead, perform miracles and also has the ability to know unseen things which may be past, present, or future.<sup>118</sup> It is that ability that made Samuel a man sought after by many people. It was due to Samuel's fame that made the servant to suggest to Saul that they could consult concerning the lost asses. Samuel was recommended to Saul since whatever he said came through. This is the Deuteronomistic criterion of a true prophet found in Deut 18:22.<sup>119</sup>

In 1 Sam 9:7, Saul asked the servant, "... if we go, what can we bring the man"? In the text, Saul was concerned about his ability to provide a local dignitary with an appropriate token of greetings (*tesura*) before requesting assistance.<sup>120</sup> The term for the gift used here, *tesura*, occurs only here in 1 Sam 9:1-10:26 in biblical Hebrew. This represents a gift of greetings. This can be compared to the Akkadian *tamartu*, a gift of greetings that fundamentally refers to an occasion of "seeing one another", which, in other words, may be a gift given upon seeing someone especially a king, and hence a tribute.<sup>121</sup> Robert P. Gordon believes that it was customary to take a present when one went to seek the help of a seer (1 Kings 14:3, 2 Kings 5:5, 15, 8:8).<sup>122</sup> The gift, *tesura*, may be derived from the verb meaning "to see", and is therefore, precisely defined as an "interview fee."<sup>123</sup>

From *Peake's Commentary*, the word "seer" is mentioned in 1 Sam 9:9 for the first time and has attracted much discussion. There are two words used here, seer, (*ro'eh*) and prophet (*nabi*). Seer and prophet are virtually identified generally as the same but differ in the

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<sup>118</sup> McCarter Jr. *1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary*, 176.

<sup>119</sup> Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel: Commentary*, 113.

<sup>120</sup> McCarter Jr. *1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary*, 176.

<sup>121</sup> McCarter Jr. *1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary*, 176.

<sup>122</sup> Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel: Commentary*, 113.

<sup>123</sup> Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel: Commentary*, 113.

way they function. The use of the word “seer” is outdated in favour of the word “prophet”. Though here, they are used as synonyms, the words suggest different characteristics. *Ro'eh* refers to the visionary element in the prophetic phenomenon whereas *nabi*, from the root word which means “to utter”, seems to refer to the prophetic utterance of God’s word.<sup>124</sup>

It can be deduced that the culture of consulting men of God or prophets concerning unknown issues existed among the people of Israel. Although it has been stated by H.H. Rowley (as cited by Freeman) that “it is ... quite impossible to treat Hebrew prophecy as an isolated phenomenon.<sup>125</sup> Even though it is believed to have grown out of a background of Ancient Near Eastern prophecy”, it has its uniqueness.<sup>126</sup> The divine origin of the prophetic institution is set forth in Deuteronomy 18:9-22 by Moses himself who never came into contact with the religious institution of Canaan, declared in this passage that there was to be an institution of prophets raised up who would declare the messages of God and whose office would one day culminate in one great prophet like unto himself (Moses). From Moses’ time, the voice of prophecy was rarely heard. The prophetic movement did not really become an organized institution until the time of Samuel when the prophetic movement in the Old Testament was organized into schools of prophets.<sup>127</sup>

According to Harry Mowvley, three views of the origins of the Israelite prophecy have emerged. First, Von Rad suggests (as cited by Mowvley) that in the light of evidence put forward, Israel first came

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<sup>124</sup> L.H. Brockington, *1 & 2 Samuel: Peakes Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Matthew Black (Hong Kong: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1977), 322.

<sup>125</sup> H.E. Freeman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), 18-28.

<sup>126</sup> Freeman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets*, 18-28.

<sup>127</sup> Freeman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets*, 18-28.

into contact with prophecy among Canaanite people after the settlement on Canaanite soil and took it over from them, adapting it in the process to her own conception of God.<sup>128</sup>

Second, Eichrodt argues (as cited by Mowvley) that the prophecy was not borrowed from anyone but originated naturally in Israel as it had been done among other people.<sup>129</sup> It is often associated with abnormal behaviour due to possession by God in which a man ceases temporarily to be himself and becomes ecstatic. Such a state was the outcome of the “sacred dance”. Dancing as a form of religious expression is found in many cultures and the music and rhythmic movements send the participants into this ecstatic state. Furthermore, the fact that the earlier Israelite prophets wore camel hair clothes and ate the fare of the desert seems to suggest that they were strongly opposed to the Canaanite way of life. If this is so, they were unlikely to borrow anything from it. Thus, it arose spontaneously among Israelite tribes. The third view is a kind of compromise. Lindblom agrees that prophecy arose in Israel spontaneously, just as it did in many cultures where ecstatic behaviour followed from a close relationship between certain individuals and their god. He points out that such a phenomenon as ecstasy can hardly be borrowed since it is a real experience and not just an imitation of someone else’s behaviour. But the forms in which these possessed people expressed themselves as they conveyed their messages from God, and the terms which were applied to them by others were quite probably derived from the Canaanites among whom they settled (pp.9-10).<sup>130</sup> The second and the third views by Eichrodt and Lindblom respectively tend to agree with the uniqueness of the Israelite prophecy expressed by Freedman.

During the period of Samuel, consulting men of God for God’s

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<sup>128</sup> H. Mowvley, *Guide to Old Testament Prophecy* (London: Cox & Wyman Ltd., 1979),12.

<sup>129</sup> Mowvley, *Guide to Old Testament Prophecy*,12.

<sup>130</sup> Mowvley, *Guide to Old Testament Prophecy*,9-10.

assistance in matters of secrecy in life had become a normal tradition of the people. This was to inquire the mind of God concerning a secret in life. It was as a result of the duty of inquiry that made Samuel so famous that Saul's servant suggested to Saul that they should consult. Furthermore, the gift given to Samuel by Saul seems to suggest that it was an accepted custom to give offerings to the seers for their services.<sup>131</sup> The fact that during the time of Deborah when she functioned as a judge in Israel she used to sit under a palm tree and people came to her for judgment suggests something of the function of the seer.<sup>132</sup>

According to Hobart E. Freeman, the difference between the two terms lies in the fact that *nabi* stresses the objective or active work of the messenger of the Lord in speaking forth God's word, the seer, *ro'eh* on the other hand emphasizes the mode of receiving divine revelation by "seeing".<sup>133</sup> In other words, the term prophet emphasized the prophetic utterances, the term seer indicated his method of receiving the divine communication.<sup>134</sup>

The passage, 1 Sam 9:11-14 says, "... make haste: he has come just now from the city because the people have a sacrifice today on the high place." In the time of Samuel, was the high place, *bama* which was a local shrine centred on an artificial mound or a platform in an open space outside the city.<sup>135</sup> It was an area where various forms of worship took place.<sup>136</sup> From the passage, the people of Israel came to sacrifice to the Lord and also ate the sacrificial meal. The use of the high place later came under heavy condemnation since the worst aspect

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<sup>131</sup> Freeman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets*, 31.

<sup>132</sup> Mowvley, *Guide to Old Testament Prophecy*, 12.

<sup>133</sup> Freeman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets*.

<sup>134</sup> Freeman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets*, 18-28.

<sup>135</sup> Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel: Commentary*, 114.

<sup>136</sup> McCarter Jr. P.K., *1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary*, 175.

of the “pagan” or non-Israelite ritual was assimilated into its use.<sup>137</sup> By no means an exclusive Israelite institution, it nevertheless played a major part in the religion of Israel throughout its history, and even long after the completion of Solomon’s temple. Because of the tendency of the religion of the high place to assimilate some worst aspects of “pagan ritual” came under heavy fire from the prophets of the classical period (Ho 10:8, Am 7:9) and is repeatedly denounced in the books of kings.<sup>138</sup>

From what has been said so far, it can be deduced that the people of Israel had the custom of consulting Samuel, the man of God, to inquire of the Lord and as such instituted a high place as a local shrine where the people made sacrifices to God. Quite apart from that, Samuel could also inquire of the Lord on behalf of the people; and intercede for the people who will be bringing their problems for directions and solutions even before they come to Samuel.

It can also be deduced that, in addition to the fact that Samuel made sacrifices on behalf of the nation to Yahweh and individuals also made sacrifices there at the high place, Samuel could have also had his personal devotion and meditation there and received revelations of people’s cases and their solution even well ahead of time before they come. With this in mind, one can argue that it was during Samuel’s personal devotion to the high place that he received the revelation in 1 Sam 9:15 that Saul was going to come to him and consequently had all the information that must be given to Saul even before he came the following day.

In 1 Sam 9:22-27, Samuel, having the foreknowledge of who Saul was going to be, gave him a special treat and also hosted him and his servant on the rooftop until dawn. When they woke up, they went to a street outskirts of the city before sending the servant away from

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<sup>137</sup> Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel: Commentary*, 114.

<sup>138</sup> Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel: Commentary*, 114.

them so that Samuel could make known to Saul the word of God.

1 Sam 10:1 “Then Samuel then took a vial of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him and said ‘Has not the lord anointed you to be prince over people of Israel’”. This passage according to McCarter, Jr. indicates that anointment refers to rubbing or smearing with a sweet-smelling substance.<sup>139</sup> The practice involved a symbolic transfer of sanctity from the deity to an object or person and this was essentially a sacramental act.<sup>140</sup> Saul was anointed to be a prince. The Hebrew word here is *nagid*, which means “one who is raised up”, ‘elevated’, ‘made known’ or ‘singled out’. In this case, it is attributed to a king before he begins to reign. Therefore, the term regularly refers to the king's designate or a crown prince.<sup>141</sup>

One of the signs that was fulfilled was the meeting of the two men near Rachel’s tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah in 10:2 who would tell Saul about the place where the asses can be found and the state of mind of the people in the house. Zelzah is mentioned only here and is sometimes thought to conceal an occurrence of the verb *salah*, translated as “come mightily upon”. This name was probably coined after a memorable occasion of spirit possession there.<sup>142</sup>

In 1 Sam 10:5, another sign that was to be fulfilled was the meeting of the band of prophets with a harp, tambourine and all kinds of instruments which might be played to induce ecstasy through which they could prophesy. In Israelite prophecy, ecstasy was produced by the power of Yahweh. Wherever ecstasy is developed as the culmination of religious experience external methods are deliberately used to invoke and intensify ecstasy. The most frequently used external

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<sup>139</sup> McCarter Jr, *1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary*.

<sup>140</sup> McCarter Jr, *1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary*.

<sup>141</sup> McCarter Jr. P.K., *1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary*, 179.

<sup>142</sup> Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel: Commentary*, 117.

method is music. The prophets in Gibeah whom Saul met after being anointed by Samuel came from a high place with music of diverse instruments already in a state of ecstasy.<sup>143</sup>

From the above facts, it can be conveniently said that some kind of divinatory practices through a medium or a man of God such as Samuel in progress and that was complemented by the use of divinatory instruments by authorized or accredited men of God. These practices were normal and accepted by the people of Israel. Divinatory practices, through which the unknown and hidden issues became unveiled continued to exist to the extent that a place like Zelzah, in the territory of Benjamin, could derive its name. In this case, people might have either consulted Samuel or gone to Zelzah which was close to Ramah to inquire of the Lord concerning their problems.

Another sign to be fulfilled in Saul's life was the meeting of a band or school of prophets at Gibeath-elohim where the people would play music to induce spirit possession that would enable Saul to prophesy together with the students of the school of prophets and be "turned to another man". All these signs mentioned above were fulfilled and in 1 Sam 10:12 someone who saw Saul prophesying said "Is Saul also among the prophets"? This became a proverb. From Lindblom, the proverbial expression, "Is Saul also among the prophets" (1 Sam 10:11) implies that the behaviour like that of the prophets was beneath a man of a good family like Saul.<sup>144</sup> The question posed by one of those who witnessed Saul's behaviour amid the raving prophets (and who is their father?) suggests that the prophets were despised as of lowly and obscure origin, but in times of crisis, people consulted these men of God.<sup>145</sup>

In every age, the faculties of receiving revelations and uttering

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<sup>143</sup> Lindblom, *Prophecy Ancient in Israel*, 79.

<sup>144</sup> Lindblom, *Prophecy Ancient in Israel*, 79.

<sup>145</sup> Lindblom, *Prophecy Ancient in Israel*, 74.

true oracles have been one of the most conspicuous elements in the endowment of men and women of prophetic inclinations. It was because they possessed this faculty that the prophets of Israel came to be respected (even though they were initially despised) and became sought after by their contemporaries.<sup>146</sup> These men and women possessed the gift of divination to a particular degree to be able to tell what was happening in distant places. Israelite tradition knows also of divination which was not opposed to the religion of Yahweh. Joseph practiced cup divination (Gen. 45) which is the one mainly practiced by the Twelve Apostles Church. At a time, the Philistines came up against Israel to fight them (Israelites) and King David inquired of the Lord through the tree oracle (2 Sam 5). Such instances prove that certain forms of divination were occasionally compatible with Yahweh's religion.<sup>147</sup>

According to R.B.Y. Scott, the Hebrew word for "priest" *kohen* has as its counterpart in Arabic which means "diviner". The priest is the "holy man" like the prophet or seer. In Judges 18:1-6 the migrating Danites consult a local priest, precisely as Saul and his servant go to Samuel the seer to ask their way, in 9:8-10. The answer to a question put to the priest was obtained by the use of an ephod which appears to have been a sacred vestment with a pouch, from which the sacred lots called *urim* and *thummim* were cast.<sup>148</sup> Lindblom also says that divination by means of *urim* and *thummim* was the affair of priests proper.<sup>149</sup>

From the above, it can be deduced that various divinatory processes such as the use of dreams, trance, second sight, the use of instruments such as the cup and the *urim* and *thummim* were all

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<sup>146</sup> Lindblom, *Prophecy Ancient in Israel*, 71.

<sup>147</sup> Lindblom, *Prophecy Ancient in Israel*, 88.

<sup>148</sup> R.B.Y. Scott, *The Revelation of the Prophets*. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1971), 42.

<sup>149</sup> Lindblom, *Prophecy Ancient in Israel*, 88.

practised by the people of Israel and so revealing secrets through prophetic utterance, dreams and vision can also be permitted in this era and that is exactly what most prophets in the Charismatic Churches in general and the Twelve Apostles Church, in particular, are practising

From the passage 1 Samuel 10:17-27, it is stated as follows, “Now Samuel called the people together to the Lord at Mizpah and he said to the people of Israel, thus says the lord... therefore present yourselves before the lord by your tribes and by thousands...the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lots.”

Up to this point, Saul’s appointment has been kept secret in response to the earlier demand of the tribal elders (8:4-22). Samuel convenes a public assembly at which Saul can be presented as God’s choice. Since the people are eager and anxious to have a king, a mere appointment by Samuel may not be accepted by the people and hence the process of election by lot which is also a divinatory process is used.<sup>150</sup>

It is possible to discern the Lord’s will to fall in with the wishes of the people. This is done through a sacred lot. In this case, there is the process of elimination from a larger entity to a smaller entity, and finally, the individual man. This led to the discovery of Saul.<sup>151</sup> Even though Samuel knew whom God had chosen, he wanted to involve the people in choosing by the use of the lot. Samuel knew that there were people who would not agree to the choice since they had already rejected the sons that were appointed and so Samuel had to allow everybody the chance to go through the selection process so that the one chosen can be acceptable to all.<sup>152</sup> The casting of lots, in this case, seems to bear numerical connotation and so uses more probability

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<sup>150</sup> Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel: Commentary*, 119.

<sup>151</sup> Hertzberg, *1 & 2 Samuel: A Commentary*, 88.

<sup>152</sup> Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, 400.

where every clan is presented and given equal chances to be chosen. When the lot fell on Saul, he had then disappeared and so Samuel had to inquire of the Lord once again this time by the use of *urim and thummim*.<sup>153</sup>

From the story in the passage, some divinatory practices like night vision or dreams, casting of lot upon the people by presenting them in tribes and families to choose Saul, the use of the *urim and thummim* to know where Saul was hiding and inducing spirit possession or ecstasy through music to be able to speak the mind of God were all sanctioned by Samuel. From these instances, it can be said that both intuitive or mediated divination and instrumental divination (Klaus Koch's classification of divination) were practised.

Other divinatory practices that have been used by people of God discussed earlier in other references of the Bible are the use of the divinatory cup by Joseph, and the use of the tree oracle by David. All these practices either done or supported by renowned men of God were not condemned in the various texts and so they become good examples for any individual man of God or groups of men of God to minister in any of such particular ways according to the choice of the spirit in a man of God.

According to Cephass Omenyo and Abamfo Atiemo, prophets in the Charismatic Churches are regarded as people "who see".<sup>154</sup> These people can see into the future and also into the spiritual dimensions of people's problems and provide solutions to them. These prophets can interpret dreams and also receive revelations through dreams as has been the case in Samuel's ministry in the passage under

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<sup>153</sup> D. F. Payne, *New Bible Commentary*, ed. D. Guthrie and J. A. Motyer, 3rd ed. (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1989), 292.

<sup>154</sup> Cephass N Omenyo and Abamfo O Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space: The Case of Neo-Propheticism in Ghana," *The Ghana Bulletin of Theology* 1, no. 1 (2006): 55–68.

discussion.<sup>155</sup>

Receiving gifts and sacrifices from the people who come to inquire of the Lord is a practice that this passage sanctions and the tradition of consulting men of God in times of crises is also sanctioned by God in the history of the people of Israel, and hence, these traditions can also be inherited by both the Twelve Apostle's Church and the Charismatic Churches.

### **Interpretation by the Twelve Apostles Church**

According to the interpretation of the passage by the Twelve Apostles Church, the story depicts that the tradition of consulting men of God was a normal practice at the time. It was a known practice at that time that people were going to Samuel for consultation, and hence, the servant had the idea of going to consult Samuel concerning an issue that was a mystery for the prophet to unravel.<sup>156</sup> According to James Blay, Mbem, the Twelve Apostles Church believes that in the story of Samuel, he had a foreknowledge through a night vision, that Saul and the servant would be coming to him the next day before it happened.<sup>157</sup> In like manner, some of the prophets of the Twelve Apostles Church sometimes would be able to foresee some of the cases, their root causes and the remedies to those problems even before those with the cases visit the prophet the following day.

In the case of Saul and the servant going with gifts to see Samuel, it is interpreted by the people of the Twelve Apostles Church that the *Asɔfo* are solely engaged in the work of God without any salary and so the people who come for consultation see it as a duty to go to the *Asɔfo* with gifts from their hearts. Others who consult the *Asɔfo*

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<sup>155</sup> Omenyo and Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space: The Case of Neo-Prophetism in Ghana," 66.

<sup>156</sup> Isaac Yankey, personal communication, March 14, 2009.

<sup>157</sup> Personal communication, March 13, 2009.

make pledges and redeem them later when they have found solutions and no specific fees are charged for consulting men or women of God or *Asɔfo*.<sup>158</sup>

In the account of the passage, Saul and his servant were looking for the asses that were lost and so in the Twelve Apostles Church, Prophet Isaac Yankey of Anibre (a town in the Evalue-Gwira District in the Western Region of Ghana) explained that people who get infected with various diseases and those with various problems have their health and peace lost.<sup>159</sup> In other words, diseases and problems, according to the Twelve Apostles Church, affect people's health and peace and so such people who have their health and peace lost or misplaced, according to Prophet Isaac Yankey, "come to us so that we can find it for them". When such people go to the *Ɔsɔfo*, the *Ɔsɔfo* deals with the problem with the help of prayers and divination by using of the holy cup, and through that, he or she is able to find a solution for the patient. These *Asɔfo* of the Twelve Apostles Church, are considered as seers as in the case of Samuel, from the Twelve Apostles Church's perspective, and so people who lose their health and inheritances come to look for such seers for consultation as it is in the case of Saul and the servant.

From Prophet David Arthur (personal communication, April 10, 2009), some of the divinatory practices the people of the Twelve Apostles Church engage in are prayers, dreams and visions, divination by the use of the holy cup, placing the Bible on the head of the patient, the use of the beads (*Tasbih*) and carrying of water in a basin by the patient. All these practices are believed to align with the divinatory practice sanctioned in the passage and also in other references considered by scholars earlier on. James Blay of Mbem (personal communication, March 13, 2009) points out that the Twelve Apostles

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<sup>158</sup> John Nackabah IV, personal communication, March 24, 2009.

<sup>159</sup> Personal communication, March 14, 2009.

Church believes that their main instrument used for divination is prayers and through prayers, cases are revealed in the form of dreams and visions. If prayer for the patient fails to bring revelations, the use of the cup becomes another instrument of divination and that is motivated by Joseph's story of using the cup in Gen 45 as stated earlier on.



*Figure 9: A picture showing a devotee praying for God's help concerning patients that have come to the Garden with various sicknesses enters the water, a strong force pushes the cup of water down. When that force is felt by the *Ɖsɔfo*, he or she looks into the cup. The revelation resulting from divination by the holy cup comes in different forms. For instance, some of the *Asɔfo* say when they feel the weight in the cup, they look into the cup and receive the revelation in the form of visions accompanied by hearing voices from the cup.*

## Conclusion

The narrative of 1 Samuel 9:1–10:26 reveals a profound interplay between divine providence and human agency in the selection of Israel's first king. From the seemingly ordinary errand of searching for lost donkeys to the prophetic encounter with Samuel, the text underscores that God's purposes often unfold through everyday events. The genealogy and social standing of Saul, coupled with the symbolic acts of the feast, private conversation, anointing, and kiss, emphasize that kingship in Israel was both a divine appointment and a sacred trust. The scholarly interpretations highlight the importance of the servant's role, the cultural significance of gifts, and the prophetic authority of Samuel, reinforcing the theological truth that leadership in God's people is not merely a matter of human ambition but of divine calling and confirmation. For the Twelve Apostles Church, this passage resonates deeply with its understanding of spiritual office as a divine vocation affirmed through prophetic insight and ritual consecration. Just as Saul's anointing placed him in a role designed to mediate God's blessings to his people, so the church views its priests and prophets as God's chosen vessels, set apart through discernment, preparation, and the empowerment of the Spirit. Thus, the story of Saul's calling serves as both a biblical foundation and an enduring model for understanding divine selection, prophetic guidance, and the sacred responsibilities of spiritual leadership.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE CONCEPT OF DIVINATION IN THE TWELVE APOSTLES CHURCH

“Call to me and I will answer you and will tell you great and hidden things which you have not known” (Jeremiah 33:3). This is one of the motivational messages to newly ordained *Asɔfo*. This is to tell them that when they call on the Lord in prayer, he will reveal to them secrets and the future to them.

In the Twelve Apostles Church, it is believed that the basic or fundamental component of divination is prayer through which the secrets and unknown issues of life are revealed. Whatever processes the *Asɔfo* undergo are done prayerfully to seek God’s help. When God answers their prayer, he reveals the source of any problem that people will bring before them and prescriptions to solve the problems. This chapter deals with the concept of divination in the Twelve Apostles Church.

#### **Definition**

*The New Bible Dictionary* defines divination as the attempt to discern an event distant in time or space that consequently cannot be perceived by normal means.<sup>160</sup> Awuah-Nyamekye also defines divination as a human attempt to know the will of the divine.<sup>161</sup>

This includes every initiative from humans to know the unknown. Some of the initiatives to know the unknown can be demonstrated in some divinatory practices by the people of the Berekum traditional area that have been mentioned as follows: water and mirror gazing, carrying of the corpse, examining animal entrails,

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<sup>160</sup> Mashall et al., *New Bible Dictionary*, 279.

<sup>161</sup> Awuah-Nyamekye, “Divination: Its Nature and Meaning in Berekum Traditional Area,” 77.

throwing a dice, prayer, dreams, meditation, getting possessed, divining by the use of stick and pot, by a horn, sand and a pestle and so on. Different forms of trial by ordeal are also mentioned which include walking on broken glasses barefooted, drinking boiling oil, or ritually prepared concoction. The Twelve Apostles Church in the Jomoro and Ellembele Traditional areas' concept of divination is not fundamentally different from the two definitions cited above.

“*Abisadeε*“, as it is called by the Nzema’s in general and the Twelve Apostles Church in the Jomoro and Ellembele Traditional areas in particular, is believed to be practised by the Old Testament prophets to reveal the past, present and future. Divination, from the Twelve Apostles Church’s perspective, therefore, is to unfold or unveil the truth from a controversy and also to know or find out what is to come with the help of the spirit of God. Divination is also believed to help to unravel the root of any mysterious misfortunes in one’s life. According to the Prophet John Nackabah IV, the administrative head of the Twelve Apostles Church, divination is a way or process through which God reveals the sources of afflictions through prayers to save the lives of people.<sup>162</sup>

Furthermore, the Twelve Apostles Church believes that it is a way of communicating with God for him to reveal the root cause of every problem and prescribe a solution to it. From what has been said so far, divination can be defined, from the Twelve Apostles Church’s perspective as a means through which one communicates with God in times of trouble for God to answer by revealing the source and then giving direction for solution.<sup>163</sup>

### **Types of Divination**

Divination as a means of finding the root causes of afflictions in

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<sup>162</sup> Personal communication, March 24, 2009.

<sup>163</sup> William Wade Harris VI, personal communication, March 10, 2009.

people's lives and the remedies for them is of many kinds in the Twelve Apostles Church. Some of them include the following: through prayers, through the use of the holy cup, through the patients carrying the basin of water, through the use of the *tasbih* or beads and also by putting the Bible on the patient's head.

### **Divination through prayers**

Most *Asɔfo* of the Twelve Apostles Church that were interviewed indicated prayer as the main means of divination in their Church. It is believed that through fervent prayers for the patient coupled with the patient's faith in God, the patient's problem can be diagnosed and what is to be done to resolve the situation (prescription). In view of this, the *Ɔsɔfo* and the devotees fast and pray for the patients to have their problems solved.

During such prayers for the sick, every root cause and the direction for remedy are revealed through dreams, visions, hearing of voices, and also receiving premonitions. In such a situation, the details of the cause of the affliction and its solution are revealed. If the affliction is as a result of a curse from any sin committed by the patient, the revelation will include a means of making amends which may include pacifying or appeasing any spirit or the ghost of a deceased that has been offended through certain sacrifices. These sacrifices are made as a compromise to bring deliverance to the patient just as the African traditionalists do.

In the course of making amends, the one wronged or aggrieved by the patient would have to be contacted for him or her to accept an apology so that whatever curse that the offended might have pronounced will be revoked. If the aggrieved is dead, the spirit would reveal exactly the location of his or her burial place so that the *Ɔsɔfo* and his team will go to the graveside at midnight to ask for forgiveness from the deceased who has been aggrieved. The figure or plate on the

next page shows a devotee praying under the cross.

### **Divination by the use of the holy cup**

According to the information gathered from some of the *Asofo*, it is only during desperate situations that divination by the use of the holy cup is used. In such situations when a patient is brought to the “Garden” unconscious, some amount of the holy water or “David” mixed with Florida water is put in the nose of the patient to resuscitate him or her before divination by the cup is done to determine whether the patient will recover in the “Garden” and also to know what to do to cure that patient.



*Figure 10: Picture showing various stages of divination by the holy cup. A is Prophetess Martha Muah of Effasu fetching water for divination. In B, the Prophetess is praying over the cup containing holy water. In C, she is raising the cup to the sky. D shows the Prophetess experiencing a down push as the spirit enters the cup.*

When the *Ɔsɔfo* is divining by the use of the cup, he or she first says the Lord's Prayer, and asks for forgiveness of sin for both the patient and the diviner himself or herself.



*Figure 11: A picture showing a devotee praying for God's help concerning patients that have come to the Garden with various sicknesses enters the water, a strong force pushes the cup of water down. When that force is felt by the *Ɔsɔfo*, he or she looks into the cup. The revelation resulting from divination by the holy cup comes in different forms. For instance, some of the *Asɔfo* say when they feel the weight in the cup, they look into the cup and receive the revelation in the form of visions accompanied by hearing voices from the cup.*

Others say that they do not see anything but could actually hear someone talking to them and telling them what happened and the kind of questions to ask the patient to elicit more information from the

patient. From another group of *Asɔfo*, when the cup is raised and is weighed down, the spirit actually enters the *Ɔsɔfo* and begins to talk through the *Ɔsɔfo* to the hearing of the patient and anybody around to reveal the cause of the problem and to prescribe a solution to the problem. This type of divination has been illustrated in Plate 3 on the next page.

### **Divination by carrying a basin of water**

According to the researchers' observations, during the healing and deliverance services on Fridays, the patients are partially undressed and made to carry basins of water containing some amount of the holy water or "David". The *Ɔsɔfo* and the devotees pray for the patients one by one amidst drumming, singing and dancing. The singing and dancing of the members of the Church is so passionate that induces the spirit to enter the basin of water. This then forces the evil spirit tormenting the patient to reveal the root cause of the problem and its remedy to the hearing of all the members there.



*Figure 12: Illustrates divination by carrying basins of water during the 2009 Easter convention at Tikobo No.1 on 10th April 2009. Some of the prophetesses seen in Plate 4 are praying for the patients and some of the prophetesses are also eliciting more information from the patients whose evil spirits tormenting them are manifesting.*

### **Divination by the use of the *Tasbih* or the beads**

The word *Tasbih* is from the Persian language Farsi which means to praise God or to pray to God and so it is consulted for divine guidance.<sup>164</sup> This is the same reason why the *tasbih* has been accepted by the Twelve Apostles Church as an instrument of prayer and is also used for divination. The *tasbih* or beads is a form of a rosary, with a deep brown colour noted to be usually used by Muslims. It was observed during Friday's healing and deliverance session where a devotee, Alhaji Kaku, formerly a Muslim who got converted and had been called to train into priesthood but decided to maintain his Muslim name, was seen praying with it beside the cross. From his experience, he counts beads with his fingers while praying beside the cross. During the time of such prayers, he could receive some revelation concerning some of the cases that have been brought into the “Garden”.

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<sup>164</sup> Retrieved from [www.everything2.com](http://www.everything2.com), January 16,2009.



*Figure 13: A picture depicting the use of the tasbeih (prayer beads) for prayer and divination*

### **Divination by the use of the Holy Bible**

Prophetess Martha Muah of Effasu explained that the Bible is believed to be a powerful weapon that evil spirits are afraid of and so it can also be used in exorcism or casting out demons.<sup>165</sup> This agrees with Philomena Mwaura's findings that say that "the African Indigenous Churches (AIC) consider the Bible to be imbued with power and the book and its words have magical properties."<sup>166</sup> Mwaura termed the above belief as "hermeneutics of mystification."<sup>167</sup>

In view of the above belief of the Twelve Apostles Church, the Bible is used here for both exorcism and divination. Prophet Isaac

<sup>165</sup> Personal communication, April 10, 2009.

<sup>166</sup> Mwaura, "The New Religious Movement: A Challenge to Doing Theology in Africa," 16.

<sup>167</sup> Mwaura, "The New Religious Movement: A Challenge to Doing Theology in Africa," 16.

Yankey added that a Bible verse that talks about healing is read to the patient and then the Bible is placed on the head of the patient.<sup>168</sup> Immediately the Bible is placed on the head of the patient, and the evil spirit tormenting the patient feels tormented and begins to manifest itself by shaking the patient violently. The evil spirit is now forced to talk to the patient to reveal the root cause of the problem.

As this is going on, the *Asɔfo* or any of the devotees will be trying to elicit more information from the spirit that is manifesting itself in the patient through questions. This will help reveal everything about the affliction of the patient. In this way, whatever solution the spirit prescribes is followed carefully for the patient's problem to be addressed. Plate 6 on page 65 illustrates divination by the use of the Bible. Prophetess Esther Quayson of Eikwe has placed the Bible on a patient's head and the spirit tormenting the patient speaking through her and the prophetess is eliciting for more information.

### Articles for divination

Those who consult with *Asɔfo* bring gifts of their own free will. These gifts are either brought with them when they come to consult them or they make pledges and then redeem them later.

As it has been pointed out earlier, the *Asɔfo* of the Twelve Apostles Church do not charge a fee or collect any article from a patient who comes to them to inquire of the lord through divination, it is only when the root cause of the affliction is revealed and there is the need for any sacrifice that the articles are collected from the patient. At times, some of the articles resulting from divination may include sheep, cattle, goats, packets of candles, bottles of alcoholic drinks like the 'Aperatif for sacrifices to be performed at a particular spot to appease the spirit(s) tormenting the patient(s).

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<sup>168</sup> Personal communication, March 14, 2009.

## The Meaning of Divination in the Twelve Apostle Church

The Nzema word for Divination is *Ebizale* which literally means the art of asking or making an inquiry. It connotes the idea of going to an *Ɔsofo* who is believed to have the ability to reveal hidden things or reveal the will of the divine. People may go to the *Asɔfo* to know the whereabouts of a missing article and also to know who is responsible for a person's misfortune and to be able to avert it.<sup>169</sup> The tradition of going to consult traditional priests or priestesses for any problem to be solved was normal among the Nzemas even before the Church came into existence.



*Figure 14: A picture showing Prophetess Esther Quayson of Eikwe putting the Bible on a patient's head and interacting with the spirit.*

The Nzemas in general believe that life is full of uncertainties, and even where some limited form of predictions or prophecies can be made about the human condition, the influence of evil forces seems to counteract or fight against such prophecies. This makes life very

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<sup>169</sup> Awuah-Nyamekye, "Divination: Its Nature and Meaning in Berekum Traditional Area," 87.

difficult for people. In an attempt to unravel the root of these evil forces, the people consult the *Asɔfo* who use divination to do so. It is believed that when the mystery surrounding the uncertainties is revealed, the appropriate means to deal with them could also be found. Awuah-Nyamekye has made a similar observation about the people of Berekum in the Brong-Ahafo of Ghana.<sup>170</sup>

The Twelve Apostles Church, from investigations, believes that God is distant apart from man and so to get to God, one needs to achieve that through intermediaries.<sup>171</sup> This is in line with Breidenbach's research which says that "Nyame (God) himself, who is the all-powerful is there but he has attendants..."<sup>172</sup> From the full statement made in that text, God sees everything that is happening and through angels, reveals everything to these intermediaries. These intermediaries are the *Asɔfo* who are able to bring solutions to the people's problems through God's power.<sup>173</sup> This was the same condition prevailing in Samuel's time where Samuel acted as an intermediary for the people of Israel and also found among the traditional Nzemas. The *Asɔfo* in the "Garden" is regarded by the people in the community and the patients as people 'who see' and since they can see into the future their ministries are well patronized.

The ability of the *Asɔfo* 'to see' is mainly received through the dreams and visions they have been having and their ability to interpret them. That ability is also received through their intuition, premonitions and various types of divination like the use of the Bible, carrying basins of water, the use of the cup and so on discussed earlier. The art of divining by raising the cup of water to the sky is called by the people

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<sup>170</sup> Awuah-Nyamekye, "Divination: Its Nature and Meaning in Berekum Traditional Area," 89.

<sup>171</sup> David Arthur, personal communication, April 10, 2009.

<sup>172</sup> Breidenbach, "'Sunsum Edwuma', The Spiritual Work: Forms of Symbolic Communication in Ghanaian Healing Movement," 189.

<sup>173</sup> Breidenbach, "'Sunsum Edwuma', The Spiritual Work: Forms of Symbolic Communication in Ghanaian Healing Movement," 189,190.

of the Twelve Apostles Church in Nzema *Ayile ezole* which means collecting medicine from the sky. This is because when the water is raised to the sky it becomes *ayile* (medicine). This medicine (*ayile*) is capable of performing wonders.

They can also see and foretell future events during spirit possession. Spirit possession is mostly invoked through the music that is played. According to Jean Buxton's research on religion and healing in Mandarin, spirit possession is how a source of healing power can flow through the possessed vehicle to members and in this case, the *Ɔsɔfo* is the vehicle.<sup>174</sup> From the researchers' observation during Friday healing services, the people play the rattles on the gourd together with the gong-gong while singing and dancing. This is done passionately for some time and the spirit comes upon the *Ɔsɔfo* and some of the devotees and they begin to shake violently. During this time the *Ɔsɔfo* could receive visions, hear the angels talking to him or her, and also speak to the people through the *Ɔsɔfo* either in the local language or in other tongues which will be interpreted.

James Blay, a member of Prophet Miezah's Bonya's Garden, Mbem, and Pastor Saviour Ngoah, Ainyinasi remarked that people consider the use of items or articles for prayers, healing and services (symbolic in nature ) by the Twelve Apostles Church as African traditional practices.<sup>175</sup> Even though some people try to see the African tradition as evil due to its symbolic nature, it is also in line with Old Testament practices, one of which is divination which is the subject under discussion. It can be seen from this research that the Twelve Apostles Church's use of sacred items or articles can be attributed to the authority of the Old Testament having examples of the use of sacred items like candles, incense, the *urim* and *thummim* and so on,

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<sup>174</sup> J. Buxton, *Religion and Healing in Mandarin* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 42.

<sup>175</sup> James Blay, personal communication, March 13, 2009; Saviour Ngoah, personal communication, March 25, 2009.

in the temple. This observation can be further explained by Dickson's research, mentioned earlier on, on African Religion which outlines the similarity of the Hebrew culture to that of Africa. Given this, it would not be surprising for the Twelve Apostle Church to identify with some of the symbolic rituals in the Old Testament which look like that of the African traditional practice.

Divination is still relevant to the modern Christian even though it is being condemned. It is still in operation since prophets of Charismatic Ministries reveal past secrets and predict the future through dreams and visions. This observation agrees with an example in Awuah-Nyamekye's research which reveals that some pastors divine by using the Bible and key.<sup>176</sup> They also bless water for people and use olive oil or 'anointing oil' in healing as the Twelve Apostles Church uses the 'Florida water'.<sup>177</sup>

The Twelve Apostles Church's use of the passage 1 Samuel 9:1-10:26 as a basis for practising divination may be justifiable. However, the question that remains unresolved is whether they really use the Holy Spirit or not. Whether the Twelve Apostles Church is using the spirit of God or not can only be told by the help of discernment of spirits through the Holy Spirit. From the researchers' experience as a Pastor in the Charismatic Ministry, discernment can be received through visions, intuition and hearing from the spirit of God and so on. This means that there is no empirical method that can be used to ascertain anything of the spirit as mentioned above.

The Twelve Apostles Church, an African Independent Church (AIC), therefore, has been noted to practice divination, and it is out of the AIC that the Charismatic Ministries emerged hence referred to as

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<sup>176</sup> Awuah-Nyamekye, "Divination: Its Nature and Meaning in Berekum Traditional Area," 124

<sup>177</sup> Omenyo and Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space: The Case of Neo-Prophetism in Ghana," 66.

the Neo-Pentecostal Churches. Because of this, it has been observed to have influenced the Charismatic Churches. This could be in line with Deji Ayegboyin's assertion that "the soil more often than not influences the growth of plants", meaning that the Twelve Apostles Church being the soil has influenced the plants which are the Charismatic Ministries.<sup>178</sup>

The difference between the divination of the Twelve Apostles Church and that of the Charismatic Ministry is that the former uses both instruments like the cup, and the Bible in divination and also through visions, dreams and intuition while the latter mostly uses dreams and vision alone. This agrees with Koch's classification of divination as instrumental divination and mediated divination mentioned earlier in this book.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, divination deals with finding the root causes of afflictions in people's lives and the remedies for them. This is done through prayers, the use of the holy cup, the carrying of basins of water, the use of the *tasbih*, and the use of the Bible. The *Osfo* consulted does not charge any fee but only receives gifts from patients. Divination is the art of inquiring and when the mysteries are revealed the appropriate means to deal with them could be found.

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<sup>178</sup> Deji Ayegboyin, "Dressed in Borrowed Robes: The Experience of the New Pentecostal Movement in Nigeria," in *Ghana Bulletin of Theology*, ed. C. Omenyo and A. Atiemo, 1st ed., vol. 1, 2006, 38.

## CHAPTER SIX

### DIVINATION AND ITS RELEVANCE IN THE TWELVE APOSTLES CHURCH

Divination from the perspective of the members Twelve Apostles Church as stated in the previous chapter is a means of communicating to God and as he answers, reveals secrets and provides solutions. The types of divination practised by the Church are to help unravel the root cause of problems and offer solutions to them. Divination therefore has been very relevant to the people of the Twelve Apostles Church as a whole and the Nzema society in particular.

#### **The Relevance to Religious Life**

According to Prophet Isaac Yankey, the ability to know and to unravel any secret behind any ailment comes from God, so there a great demand placed on every *Ɔsɔfo* to be committed to more prayers in order to be able to deal with the problems that the patients bring.<sup>179</sup> People come to the *Asɔfo* of the Twelve Apostles Church desperately in search of what Asamoah-Gyadu has termed as practical salvation and as they come they must find a solution to their problems.<sup>180</sup>

From Prophet David Arthur of Bonyere Junction's, experience in ministry, divination increases the faith of the *Ɔsɔfo*. Right from the training period of the *Ɔsɔfo* till he or she graduates the *Ɔsɔfo* witnesses a lot of healing of serious diseases in the "Garden."<sup>181</sup> These past experiences continue to stir up the faith of the *Ɔsɔfo* to the extent that by the time he or she starts his or her ministry, his or her faith in the healing power of God has grown. The only thing left for the *Ɔsɔfo* to

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<sup>179</sup> Personal communication, March 14, 2009.

<sup>180</sup> J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics. Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 19.

<sup>181</sup> Personal communication, April 10, 2009.

do is divine to know whether it is the will of God for the patient to be healed or not.

It is believed that every power to heal diseases and to be able to solve problems brought about by the patients is from God and as such places a demand on the *Ɔsɔfo* to stay closer to God in prayer, and in obedience to the word of God. This closeness to God increases the *Ɔsɔfo*'s ability to heal and solve problems.

The *Asɔfo* have also realized that any time the spirit has led them in finding solutions, there has been success and so they are always anxious to seek the leading of the spirit. In this case, he or she becomes more and more aware of how weak humankind can be without the help of God. This attitude brings the *Ɔsɔfo* closer to God every day. In view of the above, the *Ɔsɔfo* becomes conscious of avoiding sin and tries to keep him or herself pure so that he or she can attract the presence of the spirit any time he or she prays. This has helped to produce more Christian piety in the *Asɔfo* of the Twelve Apostles Church. With this awareness, the *Asɔfo* ask for forgiveness for themselves and also for the patients before they hold the cup.<sup>182</sup>

### **The Relevance of Divination to the Socio-Moral Life of Members of the Twelve Apostles Church**

It has been observed over the years in the “Garden” of the Twelve Apostles Church that many of the patients who are brought there have been suffering from various diseases discovered to be curses placed on them.<sup>183</sup> On this issue, Prophetess Christba explained that some of the causes of these curses may come from patients stealing, cheat on someone, have illicit affairs with someone’s wife or husband, or any kind of wrongdoing.<sup>184</sup> Due to the gravity of such diseases brought to

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<sup>182</sup> Esther Quayson, personal communication, April 10, 2009.

<sup>183</sup> Christba, personal communication, March 13, 2009.

<sup>184</sup> Personal communication, March 13, 2009.

the “Garden”, it has helped to instil some kind of fear which deters many members of the Twelve Apostles Church from doing those things that will bring the curses.

When one becomes a diviner, one receives the ability to see beyond the ordinary and this ability raises one to an honourable status in society. Whenever an *Ɔsɔfo* receives honour in society, he or she becomes careful of the kind of life he or she leads. He or she is supposed to lead a life worthy of emulation in society.

Members of the Twelve Apostles Church believe that angels visit the “Garden” in the night to minister healing to the sick patients and one of the prerequisites of attracting them is to observe constant good sanitation in the “Garden”. Due to this belief, it has been their tradition that the members and the inmates of the “Garden” keep the “Garden” tidy. For instance, they sweep the “Garden” twice a day. This practice in the “Garden” has become part and parcel of their ethos and has been extended to their homes which goes to improve the sanitation condition in their homes.

From the researchers’ observation during the period of 1980-1990 in the Nzema area, there were very few hospitals and health posts and the roads in the area were also very bad and almost inaccessible and as such making it difficult and expensive for vehicles to get to the few health centres. In those days, health insurance had not been implemented and some of the women could not bear the cost of the medical bills and were forced to stay at home to deliver their babies. During those periods, most of these women who delivered at home without any assistance developed many complications. This made some of the prophetesses act as Traditional Birth Attendants to help pregnant women deliver their babies. Their role as birth attendants made delivery of babies convenient and less expensive and also the prophetesses who assisted the women in labour readily availed themselves even at odd times when they were called upon.

Until very recently, women played a passive and supportive role in mission churches. However, through divination, where the spirit sometimes decides to choose a woman instead of a man, the status of women both in the Church and the society has been raised. In this Church, women are allowed to exercise authority or given a place in leadership roles in the Church.

### **Relevance of Divination to their Economic Life**

*Asɔfo* of the Twelve Apostles Church believe that Jesus healed people freely without charging and so, no *Ɔsɔfo* is supposed to charge anything for healing. In other words, Jesus gave the gift of healing freely and so the *Asɔfo* must also do the same. Because of this, people who consult any *Ɔsɔfo* consider it a duty from their hearts to either bring along gifts whenever they consult them or make pledges and redeem them after they receive solutions to their problems.<sup>185</sup> James Blay, a member of Prophet Bonya’s branch of the Church in Mbem “Garden”, testified about someone who built the shed in the “Garden” to show appreciation for his child who was cured of a terrible disease.<sup>186</sup> Prophet James Akesse of Tikobo no.1 also testified to a similar fact that he was able to put up his building to the lental level through several donations from the people who sought his help.<sup>187</sup>

The Twelve Apostles Church is not paying any *Ɔsɔfo* so when one is enrolled in priesthood, one is allowed to stay and establish his or her ministry at a place chosen by the newly ordained *Ɔsɔfo* where he or she can engage in various businesses to support the ministry. In view of this, some of the *Asɔfo* who are engaging in farming are mostly helped by the devotees and members of the Church. This provides the *Asɔfo* with free labour that enhances their economic activities.

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<sup>185</sup> Sarah Ackah, personal communication, March 24, 2009.

<sup>186</sup> Personal communication, March 13, 2009.

<sup>187</sup> Personal communication, March 13, 2009.

It is also believed that as the *Asɔfo* are devoted to the ministry, they receive the blessing of God upon themselves and their children. According to *Ɔsɔfo* Christba, whatever business she has been doing including that of her children has been prosperous.<sup>188</sup> Such prosperity has been seen in her textile business that of the daughter and the transport business of the husband.

### **Impact of Divination on Church Growth**

The work of healing and deliverance through divination brings many people to the Church. When people come to receive their healing, they tell others what God has done for them so that those people who will hear the testimonies can come to witness that in the Church. Some of the people who come to the “Garden” to receive the healing become members hence increasing the numerical strength of the Church. As the years go by, more people are being trained in the priesthood. As more people are becoming *Asɔfo*, they go out to establish their “Gardens” which become branches of the Church thereby expanding the Church.

Due to the growth in the number of people in the church, several projects have been introduced. For instance, in Essiama, the Church has started a preparatory school which is at the nursery level. Most of these school children are made up of children of members of the Church. This will in the future raise the educational level of members and those members will be capable of teaching members the doctrine of the Church. This is a long-term church growth strategy, not only in a numerical sense, but also in a spiritual sense.

In spite of the relevance of divination as discussed, there are certain perceptions from a lot of quarters that make the mere mention of the word divination offensive in the ears of people. The concept of

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<sup>188</sup> Personal communication, March 13, 2009.

divination also has a certain negative impact on society that makes this unacceptable. Some of these are discussed below.

Firstly, since the Twelve Apostles Church is the first African Indigenous Church (AIC) in Ghana, those early missionaries created the impression in people that consulting *Asɔfo* is a “fetish” practice and so going to them became ungodly. This impression has been so strong that whenever one mentions the word divination, what comes to mind is a practice meant for magicians, traditional priests and oracles of family gods and evil spirits. This attitude comes from the negative perception of the African Tradition Religion by the foreign missionaries and their churches.

Secondly, when the truth about someone behind a patient’s predicament is revealed in divination those that have been offended in the process become angry and react violently towards the offender. Some offended people go to the extent of threatening the lives of offenders. This has led to litigations, antagonism, and conflicts in families and so many people frown on the tradition of consulting the *Asɔfo* of the Twelve Apostles Church.

Thirdly, many *Asɔfo* do not have any formal education and so cannot even read the Bible. Since they cannot read, they do not understand or cannot explain the very things they do, let alone support their practice with scriptures. This allowed other people who do not even know what is being done in the “Garden” to subject their practice to misinterpretations. Now that some of them have already entered the universities and attending Bible training school established in Kormantse by the Twelve Apostles Church, it is hoped that they will be able to correct some erroneous impressions that have already been made about the Church.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, divination plays a central and multifaceted role in the life of the Twelve Apostles Church. It serves not only as a spiritual means of discerning God's will and diagnosing the root causes of personal and communal challenges, but also shapes the religious, social, moral, and economic life of its members. Through divination, the *Asɔfo* draw closer to God, foster Christian piety, and deepen their dependence on divine guidance. Morally, it promotes accountability and deters wrongdoing, while socially, it elevates the role of both male and female leaders, encouraging hygienic practices and nurturing community welfare. Economically, although healing is rendered freely, divination indirectly fosters generosity and financial support for the *Asɔfo*, enabling them to pursue self-sustaining ventures. Moreover, the healing and testimonies resulting from divination attract new members and drive the Church's growth both numerically and spiritually. Despite the significant contributions of divination, negative perceptions persist—some rooted in colonial missionary biases and others due to family conflicts or the limited formal education of some *Asɔfo*. Nonetheless, with growing educational opportunities within the Church, especially through Bible training institutions, these misconceptions are gradually being addressed.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

#### **Summary and Conclusion**

The main task of this book was to evaluate the use of the Bible by the Twelve Apostles Church of Ghana as a basis for divination using Jomoro and Ellemble Traditional areas as a case study. In the course of this investigation, the practices and doctrines of the Church were examined. Quite apart from these, the biblical interpretation of the passage mentioned above was analyzed. In addition to these, the concept of divination and its relevance to the Twelve Apostles Church and the entire modern Christian were also examined. From the book, the following conclusions and recommendations are made.

The first wave of Pentecostal Christianity began in Africa as a result of the rise of African prophets. Some of those prophets were William Wade Harris and John Swatson. Some of these prophets did not establish churches but due to the impact of their ministries, their converts formed churches that were believed to have continued the ministry of these prophets. The Twelve Apostles Church of Ghana was founded by John Nackabah and Grace Tane, who came from an African traditional religious background but were converted by Prophet William Wade Harris to Christianity.

They first began their ministry with the power of the Holy Spirit as the prophet handed to them, winning more souls for the Methodist Church. Later the Church was reluctant to accept John Nackabah and Grace Tane and their followers, and so they had to come out of the Methodist Church to form their church called the Twelve Apostles Church.

The Church fashioned its ministry according to the practices of Prophet William Wade Harris like wearing white gown, and the use of certain sacred items mentioned below but the practice of divination did

not originate from the Prophet.

The study revealed that the Twelve Apostles Church uses certain items like rattles on the gourd as an African musical instrument, water for healing and cleansing, the Moses' staff, candles, red and white threads, incense, white and red clothes, gong-gong, erect crosses on the compound of their "Gardens" and so on.

This book revealed that the rattles on the gourd and the gong-gong are played for people to sing and dance. The songs passionately sung by the people produce ecstasy which induces spirit possession through which prophetic revelations are made.

It was also found that they preach from the Methodist local preachers' manual and use the liturgy during Sunday services, since the founders were Methodists and were used to them. They believe in the birth and also the death of Jesus Christ which is portrayed by the cross erected on the compound as a symbol of power in his death. They also believe that the Holy Spirit is their source of power for ministry. They believe in the ministry of angels to the sick so there is a cistern of water called "David" on the compound which angels come to stir at night which becomes efficacious in curing diseases and all evil spirits.

From the study, it came to light that the Twelve Apostles Church believes in the concept of divination which is mainly motivated by the story of the loss of Saul's father's asses in 1 Samuel 9:1-10:26 and supported by the story of Joseph's cup in Genesis 45:4, 5, and many other scriptures some of which have been mentioned in the discussion above. The Church defines divination as the means of communication with God for him to reveal the root cause of every problem and prescribe a solution to it. With this understanding, prayer was found to be the main type of divination in the Church.

Concerning the interpretation of the passage 1 Samuel 9:1-10:26, the Twelve Apostles Church believes that Samuel had the foreknowledge of the mission of Saul and his servant in a night vision

before they came to him and hence most of the *Asɔfo* are receiving foreknowledge of some cases before those cases get to them. It was also observed that the *Asɔfo* do not charge any fee for their services but the patients owe it as their duty to bring gifts along with them during consultation or make pledges which are redeemed later on.

According to the study, the *Asɔfo* are considered seers by the people and so all those afflicted by diseases are considered to have their health and peace lost. Given this, the people come to the “seers” to search for them. For this reason, it is justifiable for people to visit the *Asɔfo* and hence also right for people to visit the prophets of the Charismatic Ministries in times of crisis.

The study further revealed that the *Ɔsɔfo* acts as a diviner who inquires from the Lord for the patient to reveal the root cause of problems and to prescribe solutions. This agrees with the biblical scholars’ position that the Hebrew word *kohen*, is a priest and has a counterpart in Arabic which also means a diviner. This means that the priest or priestess or prophet or prophetess who is the *Ɔsɔfo* in both the Twelve Apostles Church and the Pastor or Prophet in the Charismatic Ministries must divinely inquire of the Lord about a patient’s case.

According to some interpretations of the passage by biblical scholars, consultation with men of God and sending gifts to them was a normal practice at the time of Samuel. It was also viewed as a token of greetings and respect for the man of God.

Evaluating the passage, 1 Samuel 9:1-10:26, an example from the Bible, three different instances of divination by Samuel can be observed. Firstly, Samuel received the message about Saul and the servant in a dream the previous night to tell Saul the mind of God. Secondly, the king of Israel was chosen by casting of lots which fell on Saul and thirdly when Saul hid himself, Samuel inquired of the Lord to locate him by using *urim* and *thummim*. From these instances, it can be said that both intuitive or mediated divination and instrumental

divination are practised here.

It was also observed from the analysis that the Twelve Apostles Church practice divination through dreams and visions, declaring messages through a medium which are all intuitive types of divination and then the use of the holy cup, *tasbih*, patients carrying the Bible and carrying basins of water which are instrumental divination. These practices are in line with the three instances of divination revealed in the passage, therefore, justifying.

The fact that the practices of the Twelve Apostles Church are found in the African Traditional Religion does not necessarily make the members less Christian. From the research, it was revealed that the Hebrew or Jewish culture has a lot of similarities with the African culture, so the Twelve Apostles Church has identified with the Old Testament tradition and has built a theology from that. Jesus Christ is not only for the Western missionaries but also for the African culture and as such his message must be presented in an African worldview. This is the path the Twelve Apostles Church has taken and must be well appreciated.

From the above, the question that should be answered is whether it was right for the missionaries whose point of view emphasized logical reasoning and disregarding anything supernatural to have given judgments on issues that are only discerned by the help of the spirit of God. This is a question that needs further investigation.

From the discussions so far, it can be said that divination is relevant both to the Twelve Apostles Church and to all modern Christians. The relevance of divination to the religious life is that divination increases faith, prayer life and consciousness of sin and the leading of the spirit.

Its relevance to socio-moral life is such that there is fear of being cursed as a result of any wrongdoing. This fear helps reform society. Many of the prophetesses act as Traditional Birth Attendants

helping in the delivery of children, especially at places where there are no hospitals and clinics.

The relevance of divination to the church is seen in the growth of the Twelve Apostles Church in the sense that many people who receive solutions to their problems from the *Asɔfo* join the Church and hence increasing the membership of the Church.

Divination is still relevant to the modern Christian even though it is being condemned. It is still in operation since prophets of the Charismatic Ministries reveal the past secrets and predict the future through dreams and visions. A lot of people both Christians and non-Christians go to these prophets for consultation and some eventually become their members. This is also increasing church growth in Charismatic Ministries.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the book, the following recommendations are made. Firstly, it was observed during the study that the main setback of the Church is the low level of education of most of the *Asɔfo*. Since the majority of them do not have formal education, they cannot teach their members and devotees the word and be able to explain the practices, supporting them with biblical passages. In view of this, people outside the Twelve Apostles Church say all kinds of negative things about the Church. To reverse this trend, it is recommended that intensive in-service training on the word in local languages must be organized from time to time for the *Asɔfo* who are already in the ministry and for those who are in training. This could be done for a period of time before being ordained. This will enable them to teach the word of God and also explain the Church's doctrine to its members and those who come to seek help from them.

Secondly, the way to achieve the above aim is that the members who have formal education should be encouraged to become *Asɔfo* and

may even enrol in recognized seminaries and Bible Schools so that after their training, they will have the capacity to teach the word in the “Gardens” and to explain their doctrine to the general public.

Thirdly, the researchers' observation is that many people do not know much about the doctrines of the Church and hence the misconception about the Church. So it is recommended that the doctrines or the teachings of the Church especially the basis for its practice of divination be explained to the general public through the media (radio, television, and so on) or outreach programmes or crusades for the general public to know what they believe in. The above has the potential to address some of the misconceptions about the Church particularly the practice of divination.

Fourthly, to avoid the patients becoming angry and violent towards those the *Asɔfo* reveal to be responsible for the patient's plight, the *Asɔfo* should try and conceal such information and only focus on the solutions for peace and harmony to prevail in the families of patients.

Fifthly, since the missionaries treated the African prophets poorly and allowed their converts to form a church that is currently being looked down upon by society, it is recommended that there are a lot of such people who are in desperate need of sound teachings hence those who are believed be knowledgeable in the Christian teachings and practices must do well to go and look for them to help them and not to reject or despise them.

Sixthly, from the research, those who consider themselves good Christians must not only sit and criticize or pass negative comments about those who are believed to have wrong teachings or are weak. What good Christians can do is to make the effort to go to the weak people to find any opportunity to help them correct some erroneous teachings?

**Looking ahead: Improving Christian ministry and theology**

Finally, we conclude by suggesting how AICs may improve their ministry and theology. This can be achieved first by aligning more closely with traditional Christian orthodoxy, particularly through deeper engagement with biblical exegesis and historical Christian doctrines. Many AICs emphasize local traditions and experiential spirituality, but ensuring that their theological foundations are rooted in core biblical teachings will help guard against syncretism and doctrinal drift. In this sense, collaboration with established theological institutions and the broader Christian community can also foster a more robust orthodoxy and thus help AICs maintain their unique identity while remaining faithful to scriptural truths.

In addition to theological refinement, AICs can enhance their ministry by adopting stronger ecclesiastical structures and governance models in line with historical Christian practices. Many AICs operate with charismatic leadership, which can sometimes lead to instability or unchecked authority. If they implement accountability mechanisms and adhere to the collective wisdom of the global church, AICs can cultivate healthier leadership dynamics that promote church unity and long-term sustainability.

Moreover, a focus on sacramental theology, pastoral care, and discipleship will ensure that their ministries nurture spiritual growth and maturity within their congregations. In this way, AICs can enrich their contributions to Christianity while remaining anchored in the orthodox Christian faith and practice.

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## APPENDIX 1 PICTURES OF SOME SACRED ITEMS



Plate 7.



Plate 8. A pictures showing the temple and some sacred items in Galilee Garden in Bonyere. A = the cross. B = the 'Holy Spirit'. C= the Galilee Temple. D= 'David'. E= a dwarf wall around the cross indicating a restricted area.

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