

THE IMPACT OF
CHARISMATIC
PROPHETISM

on the
YOUTH MINISTRY OF THE
METHODIST CHURCH GHANA:
AN ASSESSMENT

Michael Vincent Gyesi and Isaac Boaheng

The Impact of Charismatic Prophetism on the Youth Ministry of the Methodist Church Ghana: An Assessment

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to all the youth in the Christian Church. Rev. Michael Vincent Gyesi specially dedicates this book to Mr. Emmanuel Gyesi, his late father, who passed on shortly before the completion of the book. May his soul rest well. Rev. Dr. Isaac Boaheng dedicates it to his family and friends.



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We give all glory and thanks to God for His grace, strength, and guidance throughout the process of completing this work.

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Preface

Contemporary Christianity has seen the escalation of charismatic prophetism, especially in Ghana. This has influenced the emergence of many independent prophet-led churches, most of which are founded by young people from the historic mission churches or older Pentecostal churches who find the need for independence to operate fully their spiritual gifts, especially the prophetic gift, in their own ministries. Others either break away from their mother churches to join charismatic and prophetic churches or are constantly involved in the activities and services of prophetic churches while maintaining their membership in their mother churches. A positive correlation is realized between this and tertiary school-leaving by these young people. This book focuses on assessing the impact of charismatic prophetism on the youth ministry of the Methodist Church Ghana. It aims at tracing the basis of Christian prophetism from conceptual, traditional, biblical and theological points of view, identifying the major areas of influence of neo-Prophetic theology and practices on the youth, assessing the appreciation of the use of spiritual gifts and emerging approaches to youth ministry in the Methodist Church Ghana. Interviews, participant group observations and questionnaires administered to 321 young people reveal an undeniable influence of charismatic prophetism on the youth ministry of the Methodist Church Ghana. The factors of influence are mainly the theology and practices of charismatic prophetism, as the concept of salvation, enemy, prosperity, and the practice of anointing, healing and deliverance, and the extensive use of contemporary music and

media is replicated in youth service or sought for outside the church. The book recommends a proper management of youthful charisma and exuberance by ensuring monitored freedom of operation of spiritual gifts, creativity and dynamism in worship, increased time for prayer and expositional teaching of the word of God, use of contemporary music in church worship and involvement of the youth in church leadership.



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List of Abbreviations

AIC	African Initiated Churches
AAMUSTED	Akenten Appiah Minkah University of Skill Training and Entrepreneurial Development
AMB	Association of Methodist Brigades
ATNMTC	Atibie Nursing and Midwifery Training College
ATU	Accra Technical University
BCE	Berekum College of Education
BIMBICO	Bimbila College of Education
GHAMSU	Ghana Methodist Students' Union
MGF	Methodist Girls' Fellowship
MYF	Methodist Youth Fellowship
KATH	Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital
KICH	Kintampo College of Health
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
KOMENCO	Komenda College of Education
KTU	Koforidua Technical University
KSTU	Kumasi Technical University

OFCE	Offinso College of Education
RMU	Regional Maritime University
SPNMTC	St. Patrick Nursing and Midwifery Training College
STU	Sunyani Technical University
TTU	Takoradi Technical University
UCC	University of Cape Coast
UDS	University of Development Studies
UENR	University of Energy and Natural Resources
UEW	University of Education Winneba
UG	University of Ghana
UHAS	University of Health and Allied Sciences
UMAT	University of Mines and Technology
UPSA	University of Professional Studies Accra
WESCO	Wesley College of Education
YDM	Youth Development Ministry

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The youth ministry is one of the critical machineries on which every church thrives. The rise of Pentecostalism in Africa, and for that matter Ghana, has had impacts on Christian denominations and has even affected the usual church practices in the historic mission churches such as The Methodist Church Ghana, the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, the Anglican Church Dioceses in Ghana, and Evangelical Presbyterian Church, among others. The general success of Pentecostalism in Ghana, with its achievements as well as its excesses, has not been without the youth, who have been exuberant in the pursuit of charismatic dynamism and manifestation of supernatural power, and who have been a fertile ground for the flourishing of prophetism. This book, therefore, assesses the impact of Charismatic Prophetism, an aspect of Neo-Pentecostalism, on the youth ministries of the historic mission churches in Ghana, with the Methodist Church Ghana in focus.

Charismatic Christianity is a strand of Pentecostalism or a form of pneumatic Christian denomination that has developed as a global movement with numerous local varieties and has been regarded as the fastest growing stream of Christianity in the world today. J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu argues that the contemporary or charismatic Pentecostal Churches have fast replaced the African Initiated Churches and are becoming the face of Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa in the 21st century.¹ Aside from being characterized

¹ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Taking Territories & Raising Champions: Contemporary Pentecostalism and the Changing Face of Christianity in Africa 1980-2010*,

by a world-dominating agenda for Christianity, they also have religious entrepreneurial ambitions, and they place a greater existential value on salvation in Christ in relation to business achievements, education, economy, and family life.²

In his book *Prophetism in Ghana*, C. G. Baeta alludes to Parinder's description of 'separatist churches' as "sects which have split away from, or sprung up in relative independence of, the older mission churches."³ He further establishes that because the leaders of such groups dislike their designation as 'separatist churches,' they prefer to be called 'spiritual churches,' which he rather qualifies as 'spiritist' than 'spiritual.' These are churches referred to as 'African Initiated Churches' (AICs) in which prophetism in Ghana began.

The significance of their being called *sunsum nsore* (spiritual churches) is their engagement in activities which, by their own claim, invoke the Holy Spirit of God or are to be interpreted as signs of his descent upon the worshippers.⁴ Among such activities are rhythmic swaying of the body, stamping to repetitious music (both vocal and instrumental, particularly percussion), hand-clapping, dancing, prophesying, speaking with tongues, poignant cries and prayers.

Classical Pentecostals have been typically characterized by their strong emphasis on prayer, spontaneous worship, holiness

Professorial Inaugural Lecture delivered at Trinity Theological Seminary: December 16, 2010. (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2010), 2-3.

² J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Development within the Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004), 1-2.

³ C. G. Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana* (Achimota: African Christian Press, 2004), 1.

⁴ Baeta, *Prophetism*, 1.

and discipline among members, aggressive approach towards evangelism, reverence and respect for the word of God, and reliance on the Holy Spirit.⁵ Asamoah-Gyadu posits that, “the basic justification for the existence of the Pentecostal movement therefore is that the historic mission churches, both Catholic and Protestant, with their otherwise very rich ecclesiastical, liturgical and theological traditions, have failed woefully to deliver the spiritual and charismatic experiences promised in the Bible and which so many seekers long for.”⁶ There is a high emergence and acceptance of contemporary charismatic songs as against the ancient hymns of the historic mission churches. As a result, the youth of the historic mission churches are unstable in their churches.

Charismatic prophetism is a genre of Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity which constitutes a new manifestation of prophetism in contemporary African and Ghanaian Christianity, grounding its beliefs and practices in an African worldview while exemplifying a high degree of hybridity in the practices of the older African Initiated Churches (AICs), Classical Pentecostal Churches and Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches.⁷ George Anderson Jr. asserts that one reason that accounts for the rapid growth of Charismatic Prophetism in Ghana today is that this type of Pentecostal Christianity is relevant to the

⁵ K.E.Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity* (Accra: SAPC, 2001), 10.

⁶ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Taking Territories & Raising Champions*, 27.

⁷ Cephas Narh Omenyo and Wonderful A. Arthur, “The Bible Says! Neo-Prophetic Hermeneutics in Africa,” *Studies in World Christianity* 19.1 (2013): 50-51.

Ghanaian religious context.⁸ That is, it is able to provide the expected religious, psychological, emotional and social solutions to a majority of the Ghanaian populace that seek their attention. Moreover, the primary use of oral forms of communication in the local dialect (Twi) in Charismatic Prophetism is consistent with the Ghanaian populace and provides the youth with the opportunity to exercise their gifts and talents.⁹

According to Ogbu Kalu, the tendency to schism, internal competition, getting members from historic mission churches (of which many are youthful), and the benefits from population growth can be attributed to the reasons for the rapid growth and expansion of Charismatic Prophetism in African Christianity.¹⁰ This is not very different from Anderson's view that the Neo-Pentecostal churches consider themselves as adjunct to the efforts of the existing churches.¹¹ Their membership is largely drawn from already established churches, although a few of them may also be people who were a little above nominal Christians, or never really belonged to any church. Neo-Pentecostal churches or charismatic churches are "the 'revolt' churches that were started by young Christians who either felt discontent with their 'parent' churches

⁸ George Anderson Jr., "Ghana's Neo-Prophetic Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity: Future Prospects," *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies* 5.1 (2019): 16-25.

⁹ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "Hearing in Our Own Tongues the Wonderful Works of God: Pentecost, Ecumenism and Renewal in African Christianity," *Southern African Journal of Mission Studies* 35.3 (2007): 96-130.

¹⁰ Ogbu U. Kalu, *African Christianity: An African Story* (New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2007), 285-287.

¹¹ Anderson, "Ghana's Neo-Prophetic Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity," 21.

or believed they had received a ‘new revelation’ for the revitalization of the church.”¹²

Mark Yaconelli argues that the main challenges of sharing the Christian faith with young people are that youth workers do not know how to be with the youth, themselves and God,¹³ and further suggests that they need mentors who can relate well with them. A youth ministry, regardless of the context, requires the identification of the spiritual, personal and social needs of the youth in the target group, and intentionally programming the activities of these areas under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴ Notwithstanding, Neo-prophetic churches seem to have mastered the art of being with the youth and that has warranted their drift from the mainline churches thereof.

Why this book?

It has been observed that many of the youth from the historic mission churches have left their churches to join charismatic churches. This becomes rampant when they graduate from the tertiary institutions and join their mother churches at home. Some of them go to the extent of breaking away from their mother churches to establish their own ministries due to a prophetic gift they have, and also to seek a following. A typical example is the formation of “Christ Academy For All Nations (CAFAN),” a prophetic

¹² Joseph Quayesi-Amakye, *Prophetism in Ghana Today: A Study on Trends in Ghanaian Pentecostal Prophetism* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 12.

¹³ Mark Yaconelli, *Contemplative Youth Ministry: Practicing the Presence of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 18-20.

¹⁴ Fernando Arzola Jr., *Towards A Prophetic Youth Ministry: Theory and Praxis in Urban Context* (Inter Varsity Press: Illinois, 2008), 19-24.

ministry in Kumasi by a former GHAMSU KNUST Local Prayer Secretary and a Methodist. Another instance is the formation of "Christ Assembly Worldwide" in Accra by a former GHAMSU UG Local President.

In the tertiary institutions, they (the youth) seem to appreciate their campus youth ministries as more characteristic of charismatic movements than their mother churches. The researchers have observed that the few who stay in their mother churches after graduation adopt the Neo-Pentecostal or charismatic style of worship and force their way through, which sometimes faces opposition from the adult generation in the church.

There seems to be an overlap of different theologies and traditions in the historic mission churches due to the gradual adoption of a charismatic style of worship, which appears more appealing to the youth. The youth also seem to appreciate and enjoy the ministrations of the charismatic ministers than those of their own priests, as many of those ministrations are downloaded and often played on their mobile phones. This book intends to tackle the issue of the drifting of the youth to charismatic churches or the quest to establish their own prophetic churches, especially after their experience at the tertiary level of education and other related issues.

The outcomes of the study will be valuable to academia and people who aim at studying Charismatic Prophetism and contemporary youth ministry in Ghana. It will aid the historic mission churches in diversifying their youth ministries in order to curb the unending youth drift from their churches into the

charismatic churches. As well, the findings of the study will act as a guide for policy direction for the Youth Development Ministry of the Methodist Church Ghana in ensuring a continuity of youth worship in the church, even after tertiary education and also help the youth ministry remain relevant in contemporary times, both on campuses and in the church.

Methodological Approach Used in the Book

The study adopted a descriptive survey method to collect and analyze data for the study. Descriptive survey research is the collection of data with the aim of accurately and systematically describing a given population, a current situation, or a phenomenon. It is appropriate for this study because, unlike experimental research, it uses a variety of methods to investigate one or more variables without manipulating them, but only describing and measuring aspects of them as they naturally occur. As well, its appropriateness is justified by the aim of this book to identify characteristics, frequencies and trends towards assessing of the impact of charismatic prophetism on the Methodist youth ministry. In this design, randomization is employed so as to make inferences about the population characteristics from the observation of samples at a limited error margin. The methodology is further discussed later in the book.

Ethical considerations

Prior to participation, all respondents provided informed consent and were assured that the information they shared would remain confidential and be used solely for research purposes. The study

strictly adhered to ethical principles, including voluntary participation, privacy, and respect for all participants throughout the research process.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools were employed exclusively to support the writing process, such as refining language, checking grammar, and organizing ideas. Specifically, ChatGPT (OpenAI) was used for this purpose. The authors assume full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the final work.

Organization of the book

This research is organized into seven chapters. Chapter One provides the general introduction to the study. It discusses the research background, the rationale for the study, the methodological approach employed, and the overall organization of the study. Chapter Two reviews relevant literature on Charismatic Pentecostalism and related scholarly works. It examines previous studies and identifies gaps that justify the present research. Chapter Three explores prophetism within the biblical context. The chapter discusses prophetism in the Old Testament, the Ancient Near East, Israel, the New Testament, the Intertestamental Period, the Gospels, and the Early Church. It also examines the theological purpose of prophecy.

Chapter Four examines prophetism in the context of Ghanaian churches. It discusses prophetism in African Traditional Religion from a Ghanaian perspective, the planting and development of Christianity in Ghana, and the emergence of prophetism within African Independent Churches (AICs). Chapter Five analyzes the dominant areas of influence of neo-prophetic

theology and practice. Particular attention is given to concepts such as salvation, enemies, spiritual guidance (akwankyere), healing and deliverance, anointing, prosperity, music, symbolism and ritualism, media engagement, and youth involvement. Chapter Six presents the research methodology, data analysis, and discussion of findings. It outlines the data collection procedures, sampling techniques, research instruments, and methods used in the study. The chapter further analyzes respondents' views and discusses the influence of charismatic prophetism on Methodist youth, especially regarding spiritual gifts, campus ministry experiences, church participation, and attraction to prophetic ministries. Chapter Seven concludes the study by summarizing the major findings, offering recommendations, and presenting final reflections on the implications of the study for the church and future research.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL, CONCEPTUAL AND SCHOLARLY FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

Over the years, the subject of the impact of charismatic prophetism on historic mission churches has garnered significant attention, with a number of scholars and researchers exploring its complexities. This chapter reviews previous scholarship and seeks to synthesize existing knowledge on the subject, identify gaps, and provide a foundation for further investigation.

Charismatic Pentecostalism

Pentecostal identity is revivalist, emphasizing charisma, conversion, and sanctification, Donald Dayton argued. It has a strong Christology because it is an experience of a new relationship with Christ as saviour, healer, sanctifier (who baptizes with the Holy Spirit), and the sustainer of the hope of glory.¹⁵ Pentecostalism, as a movement of the Holy Spirit, is that which emphasizes the experience of the Spirit as normative to life, liturgy and worship, commenced in Ghana at the beginning of the twentieth century with the introduction of charismatic renewal into church life.¹⁶ Since then, the impact of Pentecostalism has been evident in

¹⁵ Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, (Michigan: Baker Academic, 1987), 47.

¹⁶ Sylvia Owusu-Ansah, "Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches in Ghana," in *Christianity in Ghana: A Postcolonial History Vol. 1*, ed. J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (Legon-Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2018), 168-183.

Christian worship as well as across the previously existing mainline churches.

Alfred Koduah observes that early classical Pentecostals in Ghana permitted the various ethnic groups in Ghana to use their own traditional drums and dance in their Christian worship of the Lord. As a result, the indigenous people became attracted to the simpler and livelier form of worship introduced by the classical Pentecostals, and thus moved from the mainline churches to join the Pentecostals.¹⁷

According to Asamoah-Gyadu, the Pentecostal movements leading the current renewal of Christianity in African countries like Ghana are autonomous, independent of both the established historic mission churches and the older classical Pentecostal churches like the Assemblies of God. He posits that Ghanaian Pentecostalism in its various streams has adapted the global Pentecostal culture to suit the needs of the local context in ways that have changed the nature and direction of Christian mission.¹⁸

As advanced by Ogbu Kalu, Pentecostalism is labelled by Paul Gifford as a “paradigm shift” amid the new development in African Christianity.¹⁹ He observes that despite the fact that the mainline churches remain significant in Ghana, nevertheless, they have, in numerous ways, been eclipsed by something quite new,

¹⁷ Alfred Koduah, “Classical Pentecostalism in Ghana,” in *Christianity in Ghana: A Postcolonial History Vol. 1*, ed. J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (Legon-Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2018), 136-165.

¹⁸ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “Pentecostalism in Africa and the Changing Face of Christian Mission: Pentecostal/Charismatic Renewal Movements in Ghana,” *Brill: Mission Studies* 19.2 (2002):14-39.

¹⁹ Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 6.

the charismatic movement, in two decades (1979-2000). Most Christians in Ghana are not unaware of the shift. Almost every Christian and some non-Christians in Ghana are aware of charismatic prayer centres, their all-night services, their crusades, conventions and Bible schools, their new buildings, their car bumper stickers and banners, and particularly the posters that everywhere advertise an enormous range of forthcoming activities. Their media efforts and their religious superstars cannot be underestimated.

Ogbu Kalu argues that “holiness, healing and premillennial eschatology are woven into a theology that profiles the mainline churches as benchwarmers who have lost the power of the gospel that was very real in the early Jesus movement.”²⁰ The traditional themes of healing, deliverance, prosperity and empowerment associated with the global Pentecostal movement have been synthesized with traditional worldviews, thus, giving Pentecostal Christianity an added relevance in the African context. This has yielded massive responses in African Christianity.

Sylvia Owusu-Ansah notes that the rise of spiritual churches and the emergence of charismatic movements have caused some kind of awakening within the ranks of the historic mission denominations, as evidenced by the sudden formation of charismatic renewal movements like the Methodist Prayer and Renewal Programme and Bible Study and Prayer Group of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana.²¹ These programmes were initiated to stop the haemorrhage in which members drifted from the

²⁰ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 7.

²¹ Owusu-Ansah, “Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches in Ghana,” 168-183.

historic mission denominations into the charismatic movements. Regardless, the formation of these renewal groups couldn't stop the haemorrhage of drift of members, even though it has reduced it. Among the activities of these renewal groups were Bible study, prayer, healing and deliverance sessions and evangelistic outreach programmes.

Asamoah-Gyadu again mentions some characteristics of charismatic movements and suggests their impact on the youth. In his own words, a general characteristic of charismatic churches is "mostly urban-centred mega-size congregations that appeal to an upwardly mobile youth; and linked to this, fashion-conscious and relaxed dress codes for members; worship styles that are exuberant, affective, emotionally-laden, expressive and dynamic."²²

Owusu-Ansah observes that when young people started migrating from the historic mission churches into new charismatic churches and fellowships from the early 1980s, they mostly gave three reasons for their move. Some of these are; that there was good teaching (rather than preaching) of Scripture as the authoritative Word of God; that the worship was enjoyable and could be felt, which is mostly used as a critique to the liturgically ordered and ceremonial nature of worship in the historic mission churches; and that the power of the Holy Spirit was affirmed in the charismatic churches, as young people for whom infant baptism and confirmation had lost their religious meaning and yearned for

²² Asamoah-Gyadu, *Taking Territories & Raising Champions*, 13.

something experiential found it in the charismatic emphasis of the power and experience of the Holy Spirit.²³

Aryeh mentions that the ministry of charismatic prophetism is attentive to attracting Christians who want to be healed, travel, marry, or expect some business breakthrough, which indirectly benefits the prophet through the collection of consultation fees.²⁴ Most of the ministers of these Neo-Prophetic churches in Ghana are currently youthful persons, who, after being convinced of their call into ministry by virtue of the manifestation of some charisma, break away from their mother churches to form their own ministries due to what they refer to as “unpleasant conditions for their ministry”, as mentioned by Aboagye Aryeh. They seek to freely minister in their own desired ways, which may not be allowed in the mission churches. This fuels their breakaway. “It is obvious that charismatically gifted persons find it difficult to submit to others.”²⁵ Many a time, they “seize a branch” or break away with some members of the mother church who later become founding members of the new church or who simply follow them because of their charisma.²⁶

The attention on Pentecostalism or charismatic movements, Asamoah-Gyadu asserts, must not be misinterpreted to mean the cessation of the historic mission churches to be of relevance since they have survived for almost two centuries and

²³ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Taking Territories & Raising Champions*, 11-12.

²⁴ Daniel Nii Aboagye Aryeh, “Mission Financing: The Case of Contemporary Prophetic Ministry in Ghana” *Pentecostalism, Charismatism and Neo-Prophetic Movements Journal* 1.4 (2020): 67-78.

²⁵ Aboagye Aryeh, “Mission Financing,” 72.

²⁶ Aboagye Aryeh, “Mission Financing,” 72.

significantly contributed to the socio-religious history of Ghana.²⁷ However, he adds that in the reshaping of Christianity through the Pentecostal movement, we find God doing something new, and that the mode of mediation of 'the holy' by the renewal movements is relevant to the needs of the people, as proved by their attraction for people in older Christian traditions.²⁸ "The popularity of Pentecostal movements in Ghana is largely a response to the marginal role that Christian traditions give the Holy Spirit in their mission and theology."²⁹

Conclusion

Apparently, a comparative analysis of the dialogue among the above scholarly materials reveals that the impact of Charismatic Prophetism cannot be underestimated. A considerable body of literature covers charismatic Christianity and its effect on the mainline churches. However, the numerous literatures on the impact of charismatic Christianity have broad scopes and do not mostly single out the youth, who are a vibrant tool of the charismatic movement. It is on this premise that this research work was conducted with emphasis on Charismatic Prophetism and the youth.

²⁷ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 34-35.

²⁸ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 35.

²⁹ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 35.

CHAPTER THREE

PROPHETISM IN BIBLICAL CONTEXT

Introduction

Prophets played a significant role in the social, religious and political life of biblical Israel. Prophets also functioned in the early Christian Church. This makes prophetism widely known throughout the Old and New Testaments. Adherents to prophetism have mostly relied on the biblical accounts of prophetism as grounds for validating their practices. This chapter aims to delve into how prophetism features in the Bible.

Neo-Prophetism/ Charismatic Prophetism

“Prophetism is a religious phenomenon that involves an individual being supernaturally endowed with extra-sensory capabilities that enable him/her to perform supernatural functions. It involves the supernatural ability to gain spiritual insight into spiritual matters and the use of knowledge thus gained in the realm of humans.”³⁰

Neo-prophetism is another type of Pentecostal Christianity that has grown in Ghana since the 1990s as a movement with Pentecostal ethos, style and emphases but yet different from the mainstream Pentecostal traditions.³¹ These are newly emergent

³⁰ Joseph Quayesi-Amakye, *Prophetism in Ghana Today: A Study on Trends in Ghanaian Pentecostal Prophetism* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 12.

³¹ Cephas N. Omenyo and Abamfo O. Atiemo, “Claiming Religious Space: The Case of Neo-prophetism in Ghana,” *The Ghana Bulletin of Theology* 1.1 (2006): 55-68.

prophet-led churches that have sprouted and operate within the sphere of Ghana's charismatic movement from the early 1990s.³² Charismatic prophetism can be seen as a revamp of the operation of the older African Initiated Churches (AICs), though in a more elitist and selective manner; that is, they replicate some traits and characteristics of the older AICs. As advanced by Asamoah-Gyadu, although the *Sunsum nsore* (AICs) may be declining quantitatively, their qualitative impact on Ghanaian Christianity continues through an enduring religious and theological heritage.³³

As a result of the link he establishes between prophetic practices in the indigenous religion and current renewal movements, Omenyo defines prophetism as the practice of using divination to find one's destiny and the root of ill occurrences so that one may cope with them or prevent them from recurring in the future.³⁴ Thus, in Neo-Prophetic Churches, there is a 'prophet' who is deemed to be an intermediary between the spiritual world and the human congregation he oversees. In this sense, the prophet stands in the stead of God and declares God's seasonal word and cautions, which may be beyond the access of the congregation, to them.

Quayesi-Amakye describes a Pentecostal prophet as a Christian enabled by the Holy Spirit to acquire insight into spiritual

³² Joseph Quayesi-Amakye, "Prophetism in Ghana's New Prophetic Churches," *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 35.2 (2015): 162.

³³ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 36.

³⁴ Cephas Omenyo, "Man of God Prophecy unto Me: The Prophetic Phenomenon in African Christianity," *Studies in World Christianity* 17.1 (2011): 30-49.

mysteries such that he/she is supernaturally equipped to communicate the mind, will intentions of God as well as forewarn and offer guidance or directions to individuals or the church.³⁵ This is in tune with the significant issue Gifford raises in his 'Ghana's New Christianity' concerning the centrality of the person of the prophet in the activities of prophetic ministries in Ghana, which he identifies as vertical rather than horizontal relationships in such religious communities.³⁶

In view of Neo-prophetism in Ghana, the Christian faith has been placed within the setting of the African culture by virtue of the attempted influence Neo-prophetism has exerted on the worldview of indigenous people by integrating parts of the Gospel.³⁷ Sanneh affirms this view with his assertion on prophetism among the AICs:

A process of internal change was thus initiated in which African Christians sought a distinctive way of life through mediation of the spirit, a process that enhanced the importance of traditional religions for the deepening of Christian spirituality... Biblical material was submitted to the regenerative capacity of

³⁵ Quayesi-Amakye, *Prophetism*, 13.

³⁶ Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 2004), 60.

³⁷ Victor Washington, "An Analysis of the Practice of *Akwankyerε* in Neo-Prophetic Churches in Ghana," *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* 3.12 (2022): 548.

African perception, and the result would be Africa's unique contribution to the story of Christianity.³⁸

In the thought of Aryeh, "The reception of an oracular message from a deity to its subjects is a hallmark of the potency of the deity and its intermediaries." There is therefore a good patronage of the services of religious intermediaries who often diagnose and prescribe solutions, and also, predict future events through spiritual means in many African societies,³⁹ which has been the case for charismatic prophetism in Ghana.

Prophetism in the Old Testament

Prophecy is regarded in the Bible as a word that is inspired by God and spoken through a called vessel known as the prophet. Biblically, such a prophetic word can be both foretelling – the act of predicting the future or some course of events that will transpire in the future, and forthtelling – which involves proclaiming a message to the receiver's present situation.⁴⁰ Characteristically, Old Testament prophecy was mostly forthtelling, even though the prophets also spoke about their present occurrences.

Boaheng asserts that the prophetic ministry in ancient Israel did not receive prominence until the ministry of Samuel on

³⁸ Lamin Sanneh, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 180.

³⁹ Daniel Nii Aboagye Aryeh, "General Introduction" to *Biblical, Traditional and Theological Framework for Understanding Christian Prophetism in Ghana Today* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2018), xv.

⁴⁰ Isaac Boaheng, "Contemporary Prophetism in Ghana in the light of Old Testament Precedents," *Journal of Contemporary Ministry* 5 (2021): 33.

the premises of factors such as the rising threats to the worship of Yahweh and the need for advocates to speak for the voiceless in the society.⁴¹ For him, God raised such prophets to check Israeli kings from straying from the line of the Ancient Near East kingship practices, where the kings lead the people astray, and also to enforce the prevalence of justice and righteousness. Old Testament prophets were appointed for their specific tasks.

Prophetism in the Ancient Near East

In the ancient Near East, prophetic activity was associated with practices of divination and the interpretation of omens by professional cultic officials and priests. To the Mesopotamian religion, gods represented the forces of nature and therefore were both powerful and capricious. As such, the determination of the future through the reading of various omens became very critical. Before a temple or a public building was constructed, a diplomatic marriage arranged, or an army went to war, the omens were to be consulted first.⁴² “The task of the diviner is to determine the will of a god or gods through various ritualized actions such as the examination of sheep entrails, consultation with the dead (1 Sam. 28:8), or the study of astrological configurations.”⁴³

An example of the Mesopotamian kings’ use of divination is found in Ezekiel 21:21, where King Nebuchadnezzar used three

⁴¹ Boaheng, “Contemporary Prophetism in Ghana,” 34.

⁴² Victor H. Matthews, *The Hebrew Prophets and their Social World: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2012), 17.

⁴³ Matthews, *The Hebrew Prophets*, 17.

different methods: shaking a group of arrows and choosing one, consulting the teraphim or divine images that he had brought with the army, and examining a sheep liver. Nonetheless, due to the association of such practices with false religions and false gods, they were forbidden by Israelite law (Deut. 18:10-13). Prophets like Isaiah (8:19-22), Jeremiah (27:9-10), and Malachi (3:5) condemned these practices and called the practitioners as deceivers and liars.

Prophetism in Israel

Biblical teaching reveals that a prophet is a speaker for or of God. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew words *nabhi* (speaker) and *ro'eh* (seer) are used to refer to a prophet. Per this, the utterances of the prophet, who is a speaker of/for God and a seer, are not from his own imagination or spirit but from a higher source. The prophet sees things beyond the domain of human sight and hears things which human ears do not ordinarily receive (1 Sam. 9:9; Jer. 32:16; Ezek. 13:2). In these passages, a sharp distinction is drawn between people who claim to be prophets but only speak out of their own hearts and minds and those who declare the word which the Lord has spoken to them.

Two important titles used to designate a prophet are 'his (God's) servant' and 'man of God.' 'His servant' was used to depict the prophet as a humble subject whose aim was to accomplish the tasks assigned by his master (1 Kgs. 14:18; 2 Kgs. 9:7; 17:13, 23), while 'man of God' was a title of honour used to refer to the prophet who especially had a close relationship with God and

exercised a particularly strong prophetic gift (1 Chrn. 23:14; 2 Chrn. 30:16; Ezra 3:2).

The Israelites who received and delivered the prophetic word of God functioned in various social contexts. Some were priests as well as prophets; others appeared before the royal court and advised the king, but didn't have any responsibility in the temple. Some seemingly behaved like madmen without self-control, while others wrote structured literary pieces. Matthews asserts that "some prophets are identified as ecstatic (having lost conscious control of their bodies or speech) while others present their messages in less spectacular or manic ways."⁴⁴ The prophetic messages of the prophets even varied greatly. Some argued on the basis of covenant and law, while others spoke in languages closer to wisdom and literature. Heschel's assertion is profound: "The prophet is not only a prophet. He is also a poet, preacher, patriot, statesman, social critic, and moralist."⁴⁵ The variety of their prophetic roles within Israel's culture, therefore, complicates attempts to specifically categorize them.

Aryeh subscribes to Aune's classification of Old Testament prophets into four main categories: (i) shamanistic prophets; (ii) cult, temple and classical/ literary prophets; (iii) court prophets; and (iv) freelance prophets.⁴⁶ Shamanistic prophets refer to the prophetic group whose prophetic ministry combined miracle

⁴⁴ Matthews, *The Hebrew Prophets*, 18.

⁴⁵ Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets: An Introduction* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962), x.

⁴⁶ Aryeh, *Biblical, Traditional and Theological Framework*, 84.

working, foretelling and forthtelling with a strange lifestyle or worship life, including Samuel, Elijah and Elisha (1 Sam. 2:18-20; 3:1; 19-20, 1 Kgs.19 – 2 Kgs. 13). The cult, temple and classical/literary prophets are those prophets who operated during the exilic and post-exilic periods and were called to speak against the religious syncretism that was emerging as a result of the formation of the Israeli state.

Court prophets are the prophets who ministered in the courts of the kings as counsellors and delivered unsolicited oracles to the kings during times of crises. Some of them are Nathan, Asaph and Herman (2 Sam. 7:4-17; 12:1-17; 1 Kgs. 1:8, 10, 23-27, 1 Chr. 25:5; 2 Chr. 35:15). Freelance prophets are those prophets who emerged during political and economic struggles in the Ancient Near East and were not affiliated with any temple or court. Examples are Hosea, Amos and Micah.⁴⁷ Aside from the above classification of Old Testament prophets, Aryeh also classifies other persons such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Lot, who experienced visions and revelations and functioned somewhat as prophets but were never acknowledged as such in the classical sense, and others who were recognized as prophets but could not be classified due to the multiplicity of their ministry such as Moses.

Training of prophets in the Old Testament was a very delicate part of prophetism in ancient Israel. Boaheng avers that God decides and determines who will be his spokesperson; therefore, nobody could claim to be a prophet without receiving

⁴⁷ Aryeh, *Biblical, Tradition al and Theological Framework*, 83-86.

God's call. For him, such a divine calling is the foundation of Israelite prophetic ministry in which God invites people to lay a part in and enjoy the benefits of his gracious redemptive purposes.⁴⁸ As such, young people who sensed the calling of Yahweh gathered around senior prophets who lived in colonies⁴⁹ for training (1 Sam. 10:12; 2 Kgs. 2:12; 6:21; 13:14) with the possible motive of receiving the double portion of their master's spirit, as in the case of Elijah and Elisha. Just as other persons anointed for special purposes in the Old Testament, the Spirit of God is known to come upon the prophets and use them to prophesy. As a result, they always started their prophecy with what Aryeh terms as 'the messenger formula: Thus says the Lord' which indicates that the prophets received the information from a higher authority, Yahweh.

Prophecy in the Old Testament is mostly characterized by foretelling; that is, it is involved with predicting future events publicly before they happen. Prophecy is therefore indicative of God's involvement and care for the happenings in the lives of individuals and nations.⁵⁰ Regardless, prophetism in the Old Testament was not without false prophets. There were therefore criteria for testing which prophet was true or false, of which fulfilment of the prophecy was prominent (Deut. 18:21). Even

⁴⁸ Boaheng, "Contemporary Prophetism in Ghana," 35.

⁴⁹ C. Von Orelli, 'Prophecy, and Prophets' in James Orr Ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Volume IV* (Grand Rapids: Michigan, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), 2462.

⁵⁰ Aryeh, *Biblical, Tradition al and Theological Framework*, 88.

though the dreams, prophecies and signs and wonders of the false prophets may come to pass, the source may not be Yahweh but their own imagination or their gods.⁵¹ Aryeh argues that God allowed the rise of false prophets so as to try the faith of the Israelites, and asserts in support that God wants his people to use their intellectual faculties judiciously at all times since not all prophecies are from God.⁵²

The purpose of prophecy in the Old Testament, and thus in Israel, was to ensure the homogeneity of the Israeli society and enforce the commandments and dictates of Yahweh. Consequently, the Old Testament prophets were social reformers who sought to turn the departed hearts of the Israelites back to God. In resemblance to the ancient Near East diviners, the Hebrew prophets occasionally interpreted omens but they were not strictly diviners, and their message was not totally dependent on the examination of physical clues to God's behaviour. "Rather, their role was to challenge the establishment and the social order, to remind the leadership and the people of their obligation to the covenant with Yahweh, and to warn the people of the punishment that would surely ensue if they violated this covenantal agreement."⁵³ Of much importance about them is this role, such that, Boaheng posits that "ancient Israel's prophets were covenant

⁵¹ C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament, The Pentateuch* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989), 363.

⁵² Aryeh, *Biblical, Tradition al and Theological Framework*, 90-91.

⁵³ Matthews, *The Hebrew Prophets*, 19.

enforcing mediators who sought to ensure that the Sinatic Covenant remained the foundation of Israelite religion.”⁵⁴

Old Testament prophecy did not predict exact times of God’s action or move, but focused on the fact that his salvation or judgement was approaching. It was to persuade the community to live lives that would prevent God’s judgement but rather bring God’s blessings. Prophecy was therefore not just information about future events but God’s method of changing human thinking and behaviour through a deeper understanding of his mighty acts in past, present and future. Had the purpose of prophecy been to express great ideas, prophecy would have to be acclaimed as a triumph. Yet, the purpose of prophecy, Heschel advances, is to conquer callousness, to change the inner man as well as to revolutionize history.⁵⁵

Prophetism in the New Testament

Prophetism during the Intertestamental Period

By their recognition of Malachi as the last canonical prophet, the Jews believed that prophecy had ceased, even though they looked forward to its revival during the future messianic age (1 Macc. 4:46; 9:27). For Josephus, the period of the prophets ended about the time of King Artaxerxes of Persia.

Nevertheless, despite the doubt that there was not a total lack of prophetically endowed seers and speakers of God in the closing

⁵⁴ Boaheng, “Contemporary Prophetism in Ghana,” 35.

⁵⁵ Heschel, *The Prophets*, 16-17.

centuries of the pre-Christian era, the general conviction prevailed that the Spirit of God was no longer present during the intertestamental period (1Macc. 14:41). The New Testament's use of the Greek word *prophetes* (which is the translation of the Hebrew word *nabhi*) to refer to contemporary prophets as well as Old Testament prophets gives an indication that the New Testament authors realized a continuity between the two eras of prophecy.

Prophetism in the Gospels

The activities of prophets and prophecy are limited in the Gospels as compared to the Old Testament. This may be due to the general conviction of cessation of prophecy during the intertestamental period, coupled with Jesus, the main character in the Gospels, not presenting himself as a prophet like those of the Old Testament, but as a Messiah whose work encompassed prophetic activities. His reference to John the Baptist as 'more than a prophet' presents the fact that there are greater ministerial gifts beyond that of prophets, who were esteemed and glorified in the Old Testament perception.⁵⁶

The Jews and Jesus himself considered John the Baptist to be a prophet even though John denied it (Matt. 11:9-14; 14:5; Lk. 20:6; Jn. 1:21). On the premise of the miracles he performed, including the healing of the blind man (Jn. 9:17), raising of a man from the dead (Lk. 7:15) and telling the Samaritan woman about

⁵⁶ Aryeh, *Biblical, Tradition al and Theological Framework*, 98-104.

her sinful past (Jn. 4:19), the Palestinians thought of Jesus as a prophet (Matt. 16:14; Mk. 8:27). He was seen as 'the prophet' (Jn. 6:14), the fulfilment of the promise that God would raise another prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:15, 18).

Prophetism in the Early Church

Furthermore, the book of Acts and some Pauline epistles indicate that there were prophetic activities and prophets in the early church. "The Spirit of prophecy that was believed to have ceased during the intertestamental period is believed to have been restored on the 'Day of Pentecost' when the Holy Spirit was poured."⁵⁷ Peter interpreted the disciples' speaking of tongues in recognizable languages as the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy that God would pour out his spirit and sons and daughters would prophecy (Acts 2:17; cf. Joel 2:28).

Several prophets are mentioned from Antioch, including Agabus, who predicted a famine in Jerusalem by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:27; 13:1) and also about Paul's arrest in Jerusalem; Judas and Silas, who encouraged the congregation at Antioch (Acts 15:32); and the four daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9).

Aryeh rightly posits that the sending of prophets by the Jerusalem church to the Antiochian church for the purposes of teaching and exhortation is an indication of the prophets' missionary role and their involvement in providing guidance for

⁵⁷ Aryeh, *Biblical, Traditional and Theological Framework*, 113.

missionaries.⁵⁸ They played significant roles in the establishment and growth of churches in early Christianity. Another evidence of prophecy in the early church is shown by certain disciples in Ephesus who spoke in tongues and prophesied even though they weren't classified as prophets (Acts 19:6).

Moreover, despite that no specific names of prophets are mentioned in Pauline literature, Paul critically dealt with issues relating to prophets and prophecy and their roles in the Christian church community, especially in 1 Corinthians 14, where he lays down rules and regulations that should order prophetic activities in the Church. This is also indicative of prophetism in the Corinthian church. In the chapter, Paul's rule that restricts two or three prophets to speak in a church meeting (v29) suggests that there were many prophets in the Corinthian church and probably an abuse of the prophetic gift. To ensure orderliness in church meetings, he further states that the prophets should prophesy one by one, and that an already-speaking prophet should pave the way for another sitting prophet to whom a new revelation is made to speak.

Theological Purpose of Prophecy

Apparently, for Paul, the purpose of prophecy in the Church is for edification, upbuilding, encouragement and consolation of believers (1 Cor. 14:3). Thus, most prophecies do not require any significant direct response thereof. It involved more than teaching

⁵⁸ Aryeh, *Biblical, Tradition al and Theological Framework*, 107.

God's word, and it is a gift through which God revealed mysteries and knowledge. If prophecy is to be predictive, then it must be a revelation that leads to repentance (1 Cor. 14:24-25).

Prophets were not limited to known traditions and culture because they received insights about the past, present and future. As such, Paul admonishes that prophecy must be subject to judgement so as to avoid false teachings (1 Cor 14:29). Aryeh shares Hill and Grudem's position that "due to the subjection of New Testament prophecy to judgement by other prophets, New Testament prophecy is not as authoritative as their Old Testament counterparts."⁵⁹

New Testament prophecy must be in conformity with the teachings of Jesus and the canonized word of God, which is the Bible. It is not intended to re-canonize Scripture or add to Scripture. Rather, New Testament prophecy is to give personal and specific directions to individuals which do not diverge from Scripture.⁶⁰ The nature of prophetic revelation must therefore not glorify the one who prophesies but must glorify God and lead people to Christ.⁶¹

Aryeh's exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40⁶² brings to bear that every member of the Christian church has within him or her the Spirit that gives revelations just as prophets have. He advances that revelation is therefore not limited to prophets only as the Spirit has the prerogative to give revelation to

⁵⁹ Aryeh, *Biblical, Traditional and Theological Framework*, 109.

⁶⁰ Aryeh, *Biblical, Traditional and Theological Framework*, 112

⁶¹ Aryeh, *Biblical, Traditional and Theological Framework*, 111.

⁶² Aryeh, *Biblical, Traditional and Theological Framework*, 114-137.

whom the Spirit pleases. A person may be referred to as a prophet or prophetess based on his or her development of the prophetic instincts that are available in all Christians. Therefore, he deduces that the prophet's role as a vessel through whom the Spirit makes revelation is functional but not an office; if not, the prophet ceases to be a prophet when the Spirit ceases to reveal to him or her. Prophecy thus comes to confirm what the Holy Spirit may have already revealed to a believer or what is in the heart of the believer.

In resemblance to prophetism in the Old Testament, New Testament prophetism was not devoid of false prophets. In cautioning his disciples about persecutions to expect, Jesus told them to beware of people's positive appraisals, which was typical of how false prophets were treated in the Old Testament (Lk. 6:26). When Paul and Barnabas encountered Bar-Jesus, the Jewish magician on the island of Paphos, Paul, full of the Holy Spirit, discerned that he was a false prophet; a son of the devil; full of deceit and an enemy of righteousness (Acts 13:6-10). Characteristic of false prophets and teachers according to 2 Pet. 2 are: secretly introducing destructive heresies; denying Christ as Master; following sensual desires and pleasure, full of greed; full of arrogant and unseasoned talk; and portraying undisciplined behaviour.

Similarly, though Jude does not delineate them as false prophets, he describes a group who have crept into the church as people who deny Christ, are licentious and immoral, speak arrogantly and flatter people, and cause divisions. Jesus describes false prophets as people who appear in sheep's clothing but

inwardly are ravenous wolves. By this, they may be seen as Christians who are actively involved in working in the name of Christ but do not know him in reality. Some scholars suggest that these people were Gnostics, Pharisees, Zealots or charismatics, but such specific identification seems impossible.⁶³ To prove the genuineness of New Testament prophets, believers are admonished in 1 Jn. 4:1-3 to test people who claim to have prophetic gifts to ascertain if they confess Jesus to have come in the flesh from God. We therefore find Aryeh's definition of a Christian prophet as concise:

A Christian prophet is a trained Christian, who has been called by God to function both within and outside the Church as a charismatic or ecclesiastical leader, occasionally or regularly receiving intelligible and authoritative solicited or unsolicited revelations and messages, which do not contradict the written word of God as recorded in the Bible. And he/she is impelled to deliver the message either publicly or privately, in oral or written form to the individual Christian or non-Christian or to the community without any charges.⁶⁴

Conclusion

Throughout the chapter, the focus has been on unearthing the practice of prophetism in the Bible. It has been evident that

⁶³ David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983), 223.

⁶⁴ Daniel Nii Aboagye Aryeh, "A Study of 'Prophetism' in the Gospels and Ga South Municipal Area: A Way Forward for Prophetic Ministry in Ghana's Christianity," *Journal of Applied Thought* 4.1 (2015): 196-221.

prophetism features so prominently in the Bible. From the practices in the Ancient Near East, the formation and life of the Israeli nation in the Old Testament, the intertestamental period, the Gospels and the early Church in the New Testament, it is realized that prophetism played a key role. Notwithstanding that, it appears there are points of departure in Neo-Prophetism from biblical prophetism, especially with regard to purpose. The next chapter will focus on the contextual place of prophetism among the Ghanaian people.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROPHETISM IN THE CONTEXT OF GHANAIAN CHURCHES

Introduction

The intricate world view of Africans positively is a thriving ground for prophetism in Ghana, which is traced by scholars to 1900-1950. Africans seek spiritual reasons for almost every occurrence as a result of how religion seems to permeate every aspect of African living. As well, the demonization of the traditional worship and activities of Africans by the missionaries deepened the African belief in the potency of demons and witchcraft. Boaheng rightly asserts, “The missionaries introduced a personalized devil and associated traditional gods with demons, a situation which strengthened African belief in witchcraft and demons.”⁶⁵ Christianity was presented as a separation from anything that had to do with African culture and identity, such as singing local songs, dancing, drumming, and partaking in festivals, among others. Typically, this was exemplified by the Basel missionaries’ creation of ‘sailems,’ where their converts were isolated from society to live. The Roman Catholic Church sang in Latin; the Methodist Church, after their inherited British liturgy, sang solemn hymns, anthems

⁶⁵ Boaheng, “Contemporary Prophetism in Ghana,” 37.

and chants, which made no room for spontaneity, while local drums were prohibited from use in worship services.

Meanwhile, the local people had joined the churches with great expectations of their spiritual needs being met. As the churches eventually became foreign to the people with their inability to satisfy their spiritual hunger, it led to the emergence of the African Initiated Churches to cater for the challenges associated with missionary Christianity. Asamoah-Gyadu rightfully avers that “the inability of Western Christianity to integrate charismatic experiences, particularly healing and prophecy, into worship in Africa led in time to the rise of a plethora of independent, indigenous church movements under various local charismatic figures.”⁶⁶ African Christianity, therefore, became syncretic, as primal religious beliefs and practices became fused with Christianity. Obviously, the local converts sought and expected more than they were getting from missionary Christianity. Such grounds became a fertile one for prophetism to emerge and thrive in Ghana. As far as Ghana is concerned, the prophetic ministries of three prophetic figures cannot be overlooked when considering the emergence of prophetism in the country: Prophet William Wade Harris, Prophet John Swatson, and Prophet Sampson Oppong.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu, “Pentecostalism and the Missiological Significance of Religious Experience in Africa Today: The Case for Ghana ‘Church of Pentecost,’” *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*, XII (1&2) (2002):30-57, 7.

⁶⁷ Isaac Boaheng, *From Sebewie to Sebetutu: A Theological and Missiological Analysis of the Life and Ministry of Prophet Sampson Kwame Oppong* (Accra: Noyam Publishers, 2022), 24-29.

The first major prophetic activity in Ghana was done by Prophet William Wade Harris, a Liberian who was also known as the “Black Elijah” of West Africa. He preached the word of God around the Nzema area in the southwestern part of Ghana in 1914. Throughout his ministry in Ghana, he wore long white robes, adopted an indigenous way of worship, and carried a cross, a Bible and a bowl for baptism. His ministry was characterized by a strong demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit in preaching, healing, deliverance and a strong opposition towards the tribal gods. His ministry also converted many traditional priests like Grace Tani and John Nackabah, through whom the Twelve Apostles Church was founded.

Prophet John Swatson, a Euro-African mullato, was the second to carry out prophetic activities in Ghana. He was a Methodist who defected to become a disciple of Prophet William Wade Harris after his encounter with the Holy Spirit in 1914 through Harris’ ministry. His appearance and ministry mirrored those of his master, Harris,⁶⁸ and he later became a licensed preacher of the Anglican Church who translated portions of the Lord’s Prayer and some Anglican hymns into the Nzema language.

The third prophetic figure, Prophet Sampson Oppong, was a native Ghanaian traditional priest and magician who later became a preacher of God’s word after receiving his call in a prison in the Ivory Coast and subsequently in his deep-forest-conversion

⁶⁸ Boaheng, *From Sebewie to Sebetutu*, 28.

experience.⁶⁹ His ministry was characterized by visions and prophecies about the fate of sinners who refused to repent. He wore a long robe, black or white, with a large cross in the centre and on the chest. He was antagonistic to fetishism and called for the destruction of native deities, as well as turning away from magic and witchcraft. He also carried a wooden cross and a white stone on which he read the Bible. Prophet Oppong used healing, deliverance and the performance of miracles to deal with many problems of the indigenous people. His ministry contributed greatly towards populating the Methodist Church.

All these prophets identified with the context of the local people, preached powerful sermons and attracted many followers through the demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit in healing, deliverance and performance of miracles. They intensely combated idol worship, which was common in the rural areas. By allowing some elements of African traditional worship style, like clapping of hands, drumming and dancing into their worship, their ministries were accepted by the people to the extent that the resultant African Initiated Churches from their ministries became alternatives to the mission churches. The era of the AICs was followed by the era of Classical Pentecostalism, which was also followed by Charismatic Christianity, in which prophetism has ascended so high once again.

⁶⁹ Boaheng, *From Sebewie to Sebetutu*, 49-57.

Prophetism in African Traditional Religion: A Ghanaian Experience

Conventionally, it has been maintained that the phenomenon of prophetism in Ghana and Africa has its origin in ancient Israel,⁷⁰ probably because prophetism was a practice instituted among the Israelites by Yahweh. It is therefore believed that prophetism was introduced in Ghana as a result of missionary activities. However, Aryeh argues that the prophetic phenomenon is not the preserve of Israelite religion.⁷¹ For him, prophetism exists in many traditional religions in Ghana, which he cites the Akans as having benefited from during difficult times in the past, as well as those who suffered as a result of instructions by traditional ‘prophets.’

Similarly, Anderson posits in agreement with Gideon Tetteh’s stand that prior to the introduction of Christianity in the Gold Coast, prophetism was in existence and was reflected in African Traditional Religion.⁷² Omenyo also avers that the traditional priest or priestess, *ɔkɔmfo*, was expected to serve the community by playing the role as an intermediary between the gods and the entire community; prophesy through divine inspiration,⁷³ predict fortunes and heal the sick. For instance, Aryeh writes about how *ɔkɔmfo* Anokye used his prophetic prowess to

⁷⁰ Hobart E. Freeman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1981), 26.

⁷¹ Aryeh, *Biblical, Traditional and Theological Framework*, 1.

⁷² George Anderson Jr., “Ghana’s Neo-Prophetic Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity: Future Prospects,” *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies* 5.1 (2019): 17.

⁷³ Amakye, *Let the Prophet Speak*, 63-64.

free the Asantes from the Denkyira kingdom.⁷⁴ In comparison to Old Testament prophetism, Aryeh further advances that the establishment of the Asante kingdom through the prophetic prowess of *akomfo* Anokye strikes a similar chord with the use of prophets by Adonai to deliver and rescue Israel from slavery in Egypt and establish them in Canaan.

In the pre-Christian orientation and ritual process characteristic of southern Ghana, reality consists of beings and objects charged with varying degrees of supernatural power. *Onyame* (the Supreme Being) and the *abosom* (lesser deities) are recognized, ancestors are honoured, and knowledge exists of other spirits that dwell in rocks, rivers, animals, trees and other objects. The Akan cosmos is believed to be filled with pantheons of spirit-forces, including *mmoatia* (fairies), *sasabonsam* (the forest monster) and *sasa* (vindictive, revengeful ghosts).⁷⁵ These spirits are seen as having powers which can be dangerous to humans in certain situations.⁷⁶ Onyinah upholds the belief that *Onyankopong* (the Supreme Being) left the administration of the world in the hands of the *abosom* (gods) due to people's constant disturbances. However, these *abosom*, though helpful through their *akomfo* (priests), were considered erratic since they could team up with other spirits, such as *abayifo* (witches), to attack people. For him, Akans see *bayie* (witchcraft) as an inherent potency internalized in

⁷⁴ Aryeh, *Biblical, Traditional and Theological Framework*, 3-10.

⁷⁵ Opoku Onyinah, "Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in the Church of Pentecost" (PhD Dissertation; The University of Birmingham, UK, 2002), 117.

⁷⁶ Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 83.

some human beings as personality, used in projecting their minds to effect something good or evil, although it was mostly used for evil.⁷⁷ Witchcraft is basically meant to harm others or their property, causing problems such as death, sterility, sickness and misfortunes; and can be controlled by or appeased by the pouring of libation, offerings and by any greater spiritual force.⁷⁸ Therefore, the African traditional religion does not separate the physical realm from the spiritual realm but binds them together in one totality. To the African-Ghanaian mind, nothing is purely matter; spirits permeate everything, and changes occur as a result.

Although natural causality is recognized, the African-Ghanaian mind is prone to discerning causality primarily in the spiritual realm. In Akan life and thought, the human being is made up of both spiritual and material components.⁷⁹ Akans believe that a human being is tripartite; consisting of *honam* (body), *sunsum* (spirit), and *ɔkra* (soul). For them, the *honam* (body) derives from the *mogya* (blood) of the mother, and it is that which makes a child a human being. The *sunsum* (spirit) derives from the father, and it is that which bears a person's distinctive personality, character and behavioural attributes. The *ɔkra* (soul) is believed to derive from *Onyame* (God) as the unperishable source of life, and the bearer of a person's *nkrabea* (destiny). *Nkrabea* (destiny or fate) is of

⁷⁷ Onyinah, "Akan Witchcraft," 117-118.

⁷⁸ Isaac Boaheng, "A Contextual Theology of Atonement for the Akan Community of Ghana" (PhD Dissertation; University of the Free State, South Africa, 2021), 197-198.

⁷⁹ Boaheng, "A Contextual Theology of Atonement for the Akan Community of Ghana," 187.

importance as all other kinds of spiritual influences. A person may succeed in business when backed by the right forces or be unsuccessful because their work may be under attack with charms by someone. Every occurrence is interpreted as having spiritual causality. In this worldview, there are actions and counteractions of potent forces and spirits: stronger ones easily destroy weaker ones and humans are seen as weaker or lower beings under the control of stronger spirits.⁸⁰

“For the common man, religion is very largely the means of reinforcing life, of proper precautions against the powers that might destroy him.”⁸¹ As such, deities are consulted to deal with negative influences against individuals. Shrines are also accessed to discover the reason behind certain afflictions and sufferings of individuals and communities, which are usually divined in specific terms and connected to the supernatural.⁸² It must be noted that these consultations and divinations are spearheaded by *akomfo* (traditional priests).

Subsequently, the African-Ghanaian is towed to seeking to ascertain the cause of sickness, death, failure in life and whatever prevents one from attaining the fullness of life as well as obviating it. *Merekɔ abisa* (I am going to seek out the cause) is therefore a common phrase among Akans when they want to determine the

⁸⁰ S. G. Williamson, *Akan Religion and the Christian Faith* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1974), 96-97.

⁸¹ Abamfo Ofori Atiemo, “Mmusuyi and Deliverance: A Study of Conflict and Consensus in the Encounter between African Traditional Religion and Christianity,” MPhil Thesis, University of Ghana Legon, 1995, 29.

⁸² Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 84.

causality of a catastrophe.⁸³ The focus of religious activities among the Akan is *abisa*, divinatory consultation or the desire to know the supernatural causalities of affairs, and it is the central activity of *akɔmfɔ*.⁸⁴ Opoku Onyinah asserts that the Akan queen mother's role as an advisor to the chief is also hinged on her ability to divine and counsel. For him, one's destiny may be known and can be altered through *abisa*.⁸⁵ For instance, anti-witchcraft shrines became popular and grew rapidly during colonial times because of their claim to uproot or take away witchcraft; and their rapid growth and patronage on *abisa da* (days of consultation) was an indication that they served the needs of the people. The practice of consultation, which features strongly in charismatic prophetism under the guise of Christian faith, is based strongly on Akan cosmology.

The practice of going for *abisa* is complemented by the concept of *akwankyerɛ* (showing direction). Omenyo defines *akwankyerɛ* as "the practice of the diviner giving instruction or direction in life to avoid any future mishap."⁸⁶ Therefore, in the primal Akan societies, people go for *abisa* to seek *akwankyerɛ*. Owing to the norms of Akan life, if things are consequently not going well, they resort to their spirituality, going for *abisa*, to get the *akɔmfɔ* or a being to divine and provide answers to problems, questions and perplexities of everyday life. The *akɔmfɔ* is therefore

⁸³ Omenyo, "Man of God," 3.

⁸⁴ Onyinah, "Akan Witchcraft," 115.

⁸⁵ Onyinah, "Akan Witchcraft," 116.

⁸⁶ Omenyo, "Man of God," 32.

the main figure of the worship of gods. The word *ɔkɔmfɔ* derives from the word *kɔm*, “to prophesy,” “to predict,” “to dance.”⁸⁷ Boaheng summarizes Quarcoopome’s discussion of the roles of a *ɔkɔmfɔ* (priest) as follows: “As an intermediary, the priest symbolizes the presence of God and the divinities among the people; thus, he is the mouthpiece of the divinities. In addition, the priest performs ritual sacrifices and offerings on behalf of the community.”⁸⁸

Planting and development of Christianity in Ghana

From its original introduction in the sixteenth century, Christianity in Ghana has developed through its phase of missionary churches in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the lively current state of self-governing churches that even have branches overseas for immigrant Ghanaian communities. Churches in Ghana that were founded by European missionaries include Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Evangelical Presbyterian churches.

The Christian landscape in Ghana also includes the African Independent Churches that often broke away from the historic mission churches due to the desire to worship in ways that appealed to Ghanaian cultural worldviews and issues of autonomy. Notable in contemporary Ghanaian Christianity also are the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches all over the country since the 1980’s but date back to the 1930s. Currently popular in the

⁸⁷ Onyinah, ‘Akan Witchcraft,’ 55.

⁸⁸ Boaheng, “A Contextual Theology of Atonement for the Akan Community of Ghana,” 203.

Ghanaian Christian landscape is the rise of the neo-prophetic churches, which reflects a complex interaction of spiritual, social, and economic factors. These new prophetic churches have uniquely blended prosperity, prophecy, and other engagements that address the needs of Ghanaians. Despite their practices sometimes being questionable with regard to commercialization of faith, widening social inequalities and making religious leaders unaccountable, they provide hope and empowerment to many.

Early Prophetism in the AICs

Consequently, the form of early prophetism that arose in Ghana among the AICs was based on Africanism: the desire to be a Christian prophet without losing the African identity and cultural values.⁸⁹ A cosmological conflict then arises in Ghanaian Christianity over whether to remain allegiant to the Christian God or the ancestral gods. Apparently, there was a seeming indifference on the side of the Christian God towards the existential needs of the people. Owing to the need to find the Ghanaian worldview in religious life, which was different from the western religiosity introduced by the western missionaries, various prayer groups were formed in many denominations of the Ghanaian Christian Church after autonomy was given to the Presbyterian churches.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Aryeh, *Biblical, Tradition al and Theological Framework*, 24.

⁹⁰ Aryeh, *Biblical, Tradition al and Theological Framework*, 24-25.

For Larbi, there is both continuity and discontinuity between Ghanaian Pentecostal Christianity and Akan traditional religious thoughts.⁹¹ That is, a quest for cosmological power balance through a supernatural succourer apart from the believer is prevalent in both, while on the other hand, Pentecostalism presents a *victor Christus* (victorious Christ) who has redeemed the believer from death and the influence of Satan and positioned him/her above malevolent spirits and satanic cohorts that may hunt for his/her life. Thus, Pentecostalism succeeds where traditional religion fails.

The early prophetism of forerunners like Prophet William Wade Harris, Prophet John Swatson, Prophet Sampson Oppong and later, Prophet Joseph William Egyanka Appiah flourished because it was typical of African Christian identity and pneumatic Christianity that changed the face of the already existing western Christianity. Aryeh rightly avers that “the pioneers of the prophetic ministry in Ghana’s Christianity engaged socio-cultural elements as tools for hermeneutics and emphasis on pneumatic experience that resonated with the Ghanaian worldview in Christian worship.”⁹² By virtue of their dressing, ritual objects used and observance of holy days, their prophetic ministry resembled traditional prophetism and Old Testament prophetism, and because it resonated with the African-Ghanaian traditional religions, they made remarkable impacts in Ghanaian Christianity.

⁹¹ E. K. Larbi, *Pentecostalism: Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity* (Accra:CPS,2001), 7-8.

⁹² Aryeh, *Biblical, Tradition al and Theological Framework*, 25.

“With the rise of these prophetic ministries in the country, God, as it were, was announcing to his church the inauguration of a new era of spiritual renewal,”⁹³ despite how ‘peripheral’ some of these prophetic ministries have become today, and the odds that surround some of them. Similarly, the rise of the new form of Neo-Pentecostalism, in which charismatic prophetism is found, over the period between 1980 and 2010, associated with youthful exuberance, charismatic dynamism, supernatural power, possibilities and prosperity, is what Asamoah-Gyadu describes with the title of his professorial inaugural lecture as the act of God ‘raising new champions and taking territories.’⁹⁴

Conclusion

Prophetism is a phenomenon which has long prevailed throughout the centuries, across regions and across cultures. The Ancient Near East culture proves a high hegemony of prophetism. It has also been dominantly evident right from the establishment of the Jewish nation through to the establishment of the monarchy of ancient Israel. The biblical conception of prophetism is rooted in the activities of the ancient Israel prophets.

Even during the intertestamental period when prophetism was thought to have ceased, taints of it still existed while at the

⁹³ Quayesi-Amakye, *Prophetism*, 24.

⁹⁴ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Taking Territories & Raising Champions: Contemporary Pentecostalism and the Changing Face of Christianity in Africa 1980-2010*, Professorial Inaugural Lecture delivered at Trinity Theological Seminary: December 16, 2010. (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2010), 2.

same time, its restoration was being expected. The Gospels reveal the extent to which prophetism characterized the ministry of Jesus, whose coming was unveiled by the preparatory prophetic ministry of John the Baptist. For the Jewish Christians, the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost marked the restoration of the Spirit of prophecy, after which prophetic activities continued throughout the early church age.

The notorious religiosity of the African tradition and culture prepares a fertile ground for prophetism to flourish. This is because the African mind is inquisitive to find out the causality of occurrences. Traditional priests were often consulted in this bid, and were seen as playing prophetic roles in their communities. Thus, western Christianity did not appeal much to Africans, who found the need for a Christianity in their traditional and cultural context. This contributed to the great success of the prophetic ministries of the early prophets of the AICs. It is therefore not surprising that prophetism has ascended once again in Ghanaian Christianity: there is enough biblical, theological and traditional basis for its prevalence.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE DOMINANT AREAS OF INFLUENCE OF NEO-PROPHETIC THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE

Introduction

Charismatic or Neo-prophetic churches stand out distinctly from typical historic mission churches by virtue of their practices and theology. Regardless, their ‘spirituality’ in this sense is not peculiar to them and thus not absolutely unique but rather an aspect of a broader Christian spirituality since it is not new in the history of the Church. Their theological orientations can be discerned through the messages preached, the songs they sing, their rituals and symbolism, and the testimonies of their participants. By broadcasting their activities through television and radio stations and other social media platforms, they are able to reach a wider audience, especially the youth, through social media. This chapter is geared towards investigating the theology and practice of Neo-Prophetic churches.

Neo-Prophetic Theology of Salvation

“The renewal of Christianity in Ghana advocated by the charismatic ministries is as much about putting the right emphasis on salvation as it is about the normalization of pneumatic experience in worship.”⁹⁵ For charismatics, salvation is the bedrock of

⁹⁵ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 132.

Christianity and must be mediated in a more relevant manner for present Christians in their own worldview. It is considered something that has to be experienced and must therefore lead to deliverance, transformation, empowerment, success and prosperity in the life of the believer.

Asamoah-Gyadu avers that for charismatic ministries, “renewal comes in the form of salvation from sin and, in true African understanding, from one’s spiritual enemies, that is the devil, evil spirits, witchcraft and other such inimical forces who are only out to ‘steal, kill and destroy’ the children of God (John 10:10).”⁹⁶ For him, the overall picture emerging from observing Charismatic Christianity suggests two fundamental emphases in their soteriology. The first emphasis is on the acceptance of Jesus Christ as one’s Lord and personal Saviour and the assurance of God’s forgiveness thereof. The second emphasis is that this salvation is a stepping stone to being empowered by the Holy Spirit. To wit, the believer is enabled to bear the fruit of the Spirit and receive the gifts of the Spirit, thereby actively experiencing the Spirit of God, arousing in them a passion for God’s Kingdom.⁹⁷

E. K. Larbi, on the understanding of salvation by Pentecostals (both classical and neo-Pentecostals) wrote:

...By their practices, they are reaching out to things that go beyond the ‘born again’ experience to an experience that permeates their life here and now and promises them of a better tomorrow in the hereafter. Evidence available indicates that suppliants attend

⁹⁶ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 134.

⁹⁷ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 135.

Pentecostal prayer camps primarily in search of salvation that relate to the here and now. Supplicants' concerns include the need for healing; financial and economic problems; problems related to marriages, children, employment and family needs. Some go there because of lawsuits. Others go there because they are struggling with drunkenness and they want to overcome it. Some go there because of educational issues; they go there because of accommodation needs: a place to lay their heads. Some go there because of the problem of bad or frightful dreams; some have problems with demonic and witchcraft attacks. Others go there because of social expectations, particularly the need to provide for their families... Some supplicants in addition to their material needs, seek spiritual "spiritual upliftment." This category of supplicants seek prayer so that they can move beyond experience of nominal Christianity to a devoted and more committed Christian life.⁹⁸

These undoubtedly characterize believers in neo-Prophetic Christianity, and are undeniably the everyday needs of real people who pray to God to be saved from the atrocities of life. The 'Saviour' for them, thus does not only save them from the curse of sin and death but also helps them with their existential needs of everyday life. Likewise, Quayesi-Amakye avers that prophetic ministries understand salvation to include *awoo* (child bearing), *nkunimdie* (victory), *yiedie* (prosperity and success), *akwantuo*

⁹⁸ Emmanuel Kingsley Larbi, "The Nature of Continuity and Discontinuity of Ghanaian Pentecostal Concept of Salvation in African Cosmology," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 5.1 (2002): 96-97.

(foreign travels), *ɔpagya* (promotions), *ahonya* (wealth) and *ayaresa* (healing) which *ɔdomfoɔ Yesu Kristo* (benevolent Jesus Christ) avails to those who put their trust and confidence in him.⁹⁹ The stress on holistic salvation by neo-Prophetic churches apparently informs their practices. Neo-Prophetic charismatic Christianity places emphasis on theological concepts such as *ɔtamfo* (enemy), *akwankyerɛ* (spiritual guidance), *ngosra* (anointing), *yiedie* (prosperity) and *ayaresa* (healing and exorcism).¹⁰⁰

Concept of Enemy

By perception, *ɔtamfo* is a physical or spiritual being in one's family or outside of it who causes harm and misfortune to people. For Stiles-Ocran, the enemy, *ɔtamfo*, could be the devil, a close friend, a relative or even a neighbour.¹⁰¹ It is, therefore, a major concern of Neo-Prophetic believers and prophets to do everything possible to thwart the operations of such beings in their lives owing to their understanding of salvation as deliverance from evil. It is therefore not uncommon to hear Neo-prophetic Christians praying all kinds of imprecatory prayers dramatically and loudly, decreeing and declaring war and vengeance upon some perceived or declared enemy. Again, this is rooted in the African-Ghanaian worldview of *ɔtamfo*.

⁹⁹ Quayesi-Amakye, *Prophetism in Ghana*, 114.

¹⁰⁰ Anderson, "Ghana's Neo-Prophetic Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity," 21

¹⁰¹ David B. Stiles-Ocran, *Prophetism in Ghana: A Case Study of Some Charismatic Churches*, (2004), 93.

Fred M. Amevenku and Isaac Boaheng posit that one reason for the use of imprecatory prayers in the African church is the current trend of prophetic and healing ministry.¹⁰² Furthermore, they rightfully explain why the superstitious African conception of enemy, which features clearly in traditional prayers during libation, acts as a reason for the constant rise of imprecatory prayers in the African church. Due to African belief in spiritual causality, the *ɔtamfo* is associated with every misfortune that happens to a person. The sudden death of an individual who appeared perfectly healthy is attributed to the work of a brotherhood of soul eaters; failure of a clever child at school or at an exam is considered the work of a jealous co-wife, or uncle who has stolen the child's chances. Their belief also has it that witches have night meetings in the forests and seas where they meet and agree on how to hurt people.¹⁰³ It is therefore not surprising that the Akans of Ghana reserve the concluding part of libation for the pronouncement of curses and the declaration of obscenities on evil forces and agents of chaos, who are seen as enemies. With the import of African traditional concepts and practices into Christianity, which started with the AICs and now manits strongly in the new prophetic churches, the prevalence of imprecatory prayers in these churches is informed by "the African Christians' understanding of how to

¹⁰² Fred Mawusi Amevenku and Isaac Boaheng, "Use of Imprecatory Prayers in Contemporary African Christianity: A Critique," *Research Gate* (2015): 95.

¹⁰³ Amevenku and Boaheng, "Use of Imprecatory Prayers," 95.

deal with their enemies: to pay evil with evil; to pay enemies back in their own coin.”¹⁰⁴

Concept and Practice of Akwankyerε (Spiritual Guidance)

Akwankyerε is depicted as the practice whereby a prophet gives spiritual information and directives to a person, which provides the explanation and solution to the person’s problem.¹⁰⁵ This information is given either in a private meeting with the prophet after a client has gone to the prophet to recount his/her problems to him and seek guidance, or is given during a general church service where the prophet declares to have received a spiritual direction from God, which may induce further pursuit of the prophet on an individual basis.

In a study of Prophetism in the Ga South Municipality, Aryeh found that monies are sometimes taken from clients for *akwankyerε* and substances or relics of the prophet sold to them, which could be equated to ‘remunerating the prophet for his undisguised gift.’¹⁰⁶ Similar to the African traditional concept of causality, Neo-Prophetism holds that ‘there is both physical and spiritual dimensions to mishaps which necessitate *akwankyerε* to deal with them.’¹⁰⁷ Believers are expected to meticulously follow the stipulated steps laid down by the Prophet to get rid of the mishap. This includes the purchase and use of some consecrated

¹⁰⁴ Amevenku and Boaheng, “Use of Imprecatory Prayers,” 96.

¹⁰⁵ Anderson, “Ghana’s Neo-Prophetic Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity,” 22.

¹⁰⁶ Aryeh, “A Study of Prophetism,” 215.

¹⁰⁷ Anderson, “Ghana’s Neo-Prophetic Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity,” 22.

religious items such as handkerchiefs, headgears, holy water, anointing oil, stickers, eggs, salt, honey, camphor, candles and many others. These are meant to mediate the divine, which serve as points of contact believed to be spiritual assistance for believers' breakthrough, deliverance, prosperity, success and victory.¹⁰⁸ For Neo-Prophetic Christianity, prayer alone may not be sufficient: *akwankyerε* supplements the solution. Thus, it is held that anyone who ignores does so at his/her own peril because of its benefits.¹⁰⁹

Practice of Healing and Deliverance

Another thing that characterizes Neo-Propheticism is the practice of healing and deliverance. Asamoah-Gyadu offers an informed definition of 'healing and deliverance' in Ghana neo-Pentecostalism as:

The deployment of divine resources, that is, power and authority in the Name or Blood of Jesus—perceived in pneumatological terms as the intervention of the Holy Spirit—to provide release for demon-possessed, demon-oppressed, broken, disturbed and troubled persons, in order that victims may be restored to 'proper functioning order,' that is, to 'health and wholeness;' and, being thus freed from demonic influence and curses, they may enjoy God's fullness of life understood to be available in Christ.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Washington, "An Analysis of the Practice of Akwankyerε," 553.

¹⁰⁹ Washington, "An Analysis of the Practice of Akwankyerε," 552.

¹¹⁰ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 165.

By this, he stresses the view of how neo-Prophetic Christianity holds important the meaning of salvation as incorporating both spiritual and physical well-being, such that suffering is seen as evil, and thus the need to deal with it and ward off the influence of evil spirits (*honhom fi*) from the believer using the Christian ministry. For him, healing and deliverance are employed as a form of pastoral care since they target restoring disturbed persons to proper functioning order.¹¹¹

Atiemo classifies healing and deliverance into two: mass and individual,¹¹² and led by a deliverance team or prayer warriors, with the prophet at the forefront, officiating the practice. Healing and deliverance may take place in the church or at special programmes such as revivals and crusades. During such, the sick and demon-possessed/oppressed are prayed for and exorcised by the healing and deliverance team and are accompanied by some form of touch, laying on of hands or anointing with oil.

Ghanaian proponents of the practice of healing and deliverance believe in a causal relationship between sin, the work of demons and sickness, which is the reason why healing is tied to deliverance, understood as freeing people from bondage to sin and Satan.¹¹³ Individual deliverance involves a one-on-one meeting with the prophet, which is usually preceded by a 'counselling session' to help the prophet get abreast with the cause of the

¹¹¹ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 166.

¹¹² Atiemo, "Mmusuyi and Deliverance," 103.

¹¹³ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 167.

client's problems.¹¹⁴ Here again, the sale and use of consecrated religious items of the prophet is prevalent, and they are used as a medium for healing and deliverance of those who seek it.

Concept and Practice of Anointing

One other practice that is common in neo-Prophetic Christianity is *ngosra* (anointing). It forms a core part of neo-Prophetism such that a whole service can be dedicated to the anointing of believers. It involves the application of anointing oil on the forehead, palms or sick part of the bodies of believers by a prophet. It is done for the purpose of blessing or healing. Biblically, anointing is done to facilitate the empowerment of a person for a divinely assigned task or for the consecration of objects for worship. For instance, Israelite priests and kings in the Old Testament were anointed to commence their kingship, while the tabernacle, the altar and its utensils were consecrated for the worship of Yahweh.

Likewise, in neo-Prophetic Christianity, the practice of anointing is believed to pave the way for the impartation of spiritual gifts to enable the believer to realize wealth, obtain healing and see visions.¹¹⁵ It is believed to invoke the power and presence of God upon the believer. According to Asamoah-Gyadu, "the impression one gets is that 'anointing' is used in reference to 'the power of God in action' through his Spirit."¹¹⁶ For him, the power of God, in the context of charismatic ministries, is received

¹¹⁴ Anderson, "Ghana's Neo-Prophetic Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity," 23.

¹¹⁵ David B. Stiles-Ocran, *Prophetism in Ghana*, 96.

¹¹⁶ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 155.

as given, in accordance with the promise of Jesus to the disciples in Acts 1:8 to receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them to become effective and influential. It is believed among charismatics that the anointing could be on an individual who can impart it to others or could come through previously blessed olive oil, which is used as a medium for empowerment or healing.

Concept of Prosperity

Moreover, the concept of *yiedie* (prosperity) is one which has gained prominence in Neo-Prophetism. It is rooted in the belief that prosperity is 'a must' for every Christian who must therefore flourish in all aspects of life, including physical, spiritual and material. Boaheng upholds Gifford's thought and defines prosperity theology as "the belief that God has met all the needs of human beings in the suffering and death of Christ and every Christian should now share in the victory of Christ over sin, sickness and poverty, and that one can have access to these blessings through a positive confession of faith."¹¹⁷ Asamoah-Gyadu posits that "theologically, the 'gospel of prosperity' reflects the belief that the 'blessings of Abraham' has been willed by God to believers as beneficiaries of the new covenant mediated by Christ."¹¹⁸ Dwelling on Kuma's exposition on *yiedie* theology, Boaheng mentions her reference to Christ as *kwaee kесеe* (a big forest)- a source of

¹¹⁷ Isaac Boaheng, "A Contextual Political Theology for the Ghanaian Society and its Implications for Human Flourishing" (PhD Dissertation; University of Pretoria, South Africa, 2023), 163-164.

¹¹⁸ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 211.

livelihood, where water, food, game and medicine are found in abundance for human survival; thereby suggesting that Jesus has made economic provisions for those who abide in him to ensure their wellbeing.¹¹⁹ For him, Jesus is extremely generous in providing to cover all aspects of the needs of believers. In neo-Prophetic Christianity, every Christian is obliged to be prosperous. They accentuate the theology of affluence. “There are testimonies of transformation, empowerment and deliverance among the people of God that underscore a strong connection between ‘being in Christ’ and ‘prosperity in life’. Material prosperity is good because it affirms the dignity of the human person as created in the image of God. There is no dignity in poverty and deprivation.”¹²⁰ Thus, poverty, pauperism, destitution and any unpleasantness are interpreted as either God’s chastisement or attack from *honhom atamfo* (spiritual enemies).

Obviously, this Neo-prophetic concept of prosperity also draws on African traditional spirituality. “The African religious worldview considers God as the source of all blessings, including money, good health, progeny, plentiful harvests and peace.”¹²¹ It is, however, stressed that these blessings won in Christ’s death can be activated through financial contributions to the church’s prophets or leaders and affirmation of a person’s faith. Biblical

¹¹⁹ Boaheng, “A Contextual Theology of Atonement,” 265.

¹²⁰ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit: Ghanaian Perspectives on Pentecostalism and Renewal in Africa*, Regnum Studies in Mission and Trends in African Christianity (Oxford: Regnum Books Int., 2015), 172-173.

¹²¹ Boaheng, “A Contextual Political Theology,” 164.

passages from which Neo-prophetic preachers derive their teaching on prosperity include, but are not limited to, Jn. 10:10, where Jesus promises abundant life; 3 Jn. 2, where John prays for physical wellbeing for Gaius even as he flourished spiritually; and 2 Cor. 8:9, where Paul asserts that Jesus became poor so that his followers become rich. Neo-prophetic theology upholds that “the economic relief that the atonement brings is evident in Isa. 53:5, where the suffering of YHWH’s servant, Jesus, is said to have brought peace, which embraces not only the enjoyment of good health and longevity but also material prosperity.”¹²² This view is supported by Boaheng’s thought that the needs of a believer, which Christ promises that God will take care of after seeking the kingdom of heaven and his righteousness, include financial needs because Jesus showed concern towards the economic life of many people.¹²³

Seemingly, this teaching is an obvious departure from the pre-occupation of some mainline churches that regarded material wealth as a possible impediment in the path of the Christian’s journey towards heaven.¹²⁴ They dispute the views of holiness movements and mainline Christians that it is worldly or carnal to have wealth or to drive the latest cars or to wear expensive clothes, or to build the best houses. Consequently, a good number of neo-

¹²² Boaheng, “A Contextual Theology of Atonement,” 265.

¹²³ Boaheng, “A Contextual Theology of Atonement,” 265.

¹²⁴ Deji Ayegboyin, “New Pentecostal Churches and Prosperity Theology in Nigeria,” in *Who is Afraid of The Holy Ghost? Pentecostalism and Globalization in Africa and Beyond*, ed., Afe Adogame (New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2011), 155.

Prophetic ministers exhibit flamboyance and high social taste as they drive exotic cars and possess assets in and outside the country.¹²⁵

On this, Asamoah Gyadu writes: “Ghanaian pastors of charismatic ministries carry mobile phones, put on tuxedos or three-piece traditional *agbada* (an expensive traditional West African flowing gown) to preach, drive Mercedes-Benz cars or others in that price range, often gift from a member, or as it is expressed ‘a seed sown in the life of the man/woman of God’, obviously in anticipation of the sower’s own blessing.”¹²⁶ Apparently, pastors of neo-Prophetic churches teach adherents, as a principle for prosperity, the generous giving of their substance in order to ‘reap a bountiful harvest.’¹²⁷ In the thought of Boaheng, proponents of Neo-prophetic leaders are motivated to give huge sums of money to their churches with the aim of having multiple folds of their donations because they have been taught to believe that the act of giving money and other gifts to church leaders sows seeds in their ministry, which would later be reaped in abundant folds.¹²⁸ Asamoah-Gyadu avers: “Giving is a biblical mandate, and must be done as part of our total response to God in worship... God must also be worshipped with our substance.”¹²⁹ He advances that prosperity giving presents a wrong rationale for giving; biblical

¹²⁵ Deji Ayegboyin, “New Pentecostal Churches,” 159.

¹²⁶ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 208-209.

¹²⁷ Deji Ayegboyin, “New Pentecostal Churches,” 157.

¹²⁸ Boaheng, “A Contextual Political Theology,” 164.

¹²⁹ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit*, 173.

giving must be seen as integral to worship.¹³⁰ However, in his thoughts, though there is biblical prosperity, it is never materialistic in orientation. For him, there is a difference between being prosperous in Christ and being materialistic.¹³¹ Similarly, Boaheng argues that though material blessing is important, it is worth noting that economic benefit is not the primary aim for the death of Christ. He furthers that though beauty, power, influence, prosperity, fame and success may be part of the Christian experience, these are not the ultimate reason for which Christ died on the cross.¹³²

Furthermore, there is a stress on foreign travels as a depiction of prosperity, which, according to Quayesi-Amakye,¹³³ emanates from the traditional Ghanaian belief that one's prosperity is effectively defined within the context of Western economic prosperity. He observes further that Africans generally tie economic emancipation and individual and national economic definition to Western connectedness. For him, it is against this socio-economic and political interpretation of life by Africans that Ghanaian neo-Propheticism can be understood.

"Neo-Prophetic Prophetic Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians hold the belief that prosperity, *yiedie* is only actualized when one has successfully dealt with one's enemies, *atamfo* and has meticulously pursued his/her spiritual guidance, *akwankyerε*

¹³⁰ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 226.

¹³¹ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit*, 175.

¹³² Boaheng, "A Contextual Theology of Atonement," 266.

¹³³ Quayesi-Amakye, "Prophetism in Ghana's New Prophetic Churches," 114-115.

without any fiasco.”¹³⁴ This is because mishaps such as poverty are believed to be caused by *atamfo*; and *akwankyerε* is seen as God’s express direction for the here and now, to deal with and address an individual’s problems and concerns at any particular moment.¹³⁵ For Anderson, this explains why desperate Ghanaian religious consumers patronize any religious products and service capable of affecting their success.

The Place of Music

The place of music in neo-Prophetic Christianity cannot be overemphasized. Neo-Prophetic churches make wide use of music in their worship services and therefore engage the services of gifted worshippers and talented musicians (including singers and instrumentalists). Quayesi-Amakye asserts: “New Prophetic church services employ gifted worshippers to ‘prepare the ground and charge the spiritual atmosphere’ with ‘powerful’ worship songs for the prophets who insist they cannot ‘flow’ (that is, bring the word of God) in an atmosphere devoid of worship. To ‘flow’ requires the ‘activation’ of the Spirit’s presence through anointed music.”¹³⁶

The continuous presence and importance of music (especially contemporary gospel music) strongly underlined in neo-Prophetic churches comes from their conscious effort to employ good soul-inspiring and spirit-captivating music aimed at releasing

¹³⁴ Anderson, “Ghana’s Neo-Prophetic Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity,” 23.

¹³⁵ Washington, “An Analysis of the Practice of Akwankyerε,” 552.

¹³⁶ Quayesi-Amakye, “Prophetism in Ghana’s New Prophetic Churches,” 165.

the active presence of the Holy Spirit to the faith community.¹³⁷ As such, singing in neo-Prophetic churches is always backed by good instrumentation made up of jazz drums, congas, organ/keyboard, bass guitar, lead guitar, tambourines, etc. Their livelier, spirit-filled and empowering worship revitalizes and revolutionizes Christianity.¹³⁸

This strikes a chord with prophetism in the Old Testament, where prophets could prophesy in ecstasy after skilful music was rendered by a musician. The use of music in neo-Prophetic churches to some extent appeals to the prophetic ministries of Elisha and David, whose employment of music led to the manifestation of the Spirit of God in resolving existential problems of people (1 Sam. 16:14-23; 2 Kgs. 3:14-20). Unlike the historic mission church services, a typical neo-Prophetic church service is approached with a sense of liberty as worshippers fully participate with all their energies in a kind of prophetic ecstasy.¹³⁹ Just as Israelite prophets contextualized the neighbouring Canaanite ecstatic prophetism into their worship of Yahweh, neo-Prophetic churches do not ban the so-called 'worldly dance' in their services but give freedom for 'all to dance with all.' Pastors sometimes join the dancing squads with their dramatic moves. Their praises and

¹³⁷ Quayesi-Amakye, *Prophetism in Ghana Today*, 104.

¹³⁸ Rosalind I. J. Hackett, "Charismatic/Pentecostal Appropriation of Media Technologies in Nigeria and Ghana," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, XXVII.3 (1998): 260.

¹³⁹ Quayesi-Amakye, *Prophetism in Ghana Today*, 106.

worship are characterized by a participative opportunity for new seekers/visitors.¹⁴⁰

As well, the content of gospel music used in neo-Prophetic churches is expressive of their soteriological concept and inclination, projecting Jesus Christ as a *victor Christus*, who alone has power to save; triumph over and destroy their enemies; benevolent enough to provide both their this-worldly needs and other-worldly needs; and empower them for ministry.¹⁴¹ In a visit to Prophet Andoh's Down Town Revival Centre, Quayesi-Amakye notes: "The congregational singing of some local choruses was expressive of congregants' own expectations and belief in God's victorious intervention, deliverances and assurances."¹⁴²

Symbolism and Ritualism

In the thoughts of Michael Mollay, in all religions, including Christianity, religious symbolisms play a very significant role in entrenching the belief of the faithful in the *Unknown* and the unknown life.¹⁴³ As such, prophetic symbolism may not be out of place since symbolism is significant in Christianity and, for that matter, biblical interpretation. In his study of prophetism in the new prophetic churches, Quayesi-Amakye noted that since their theology is not clearly articulated in precise language, it demands

¹⁴⁰ Quayesi-Amakye, "Prophetism in Ghana Today, 166.

¹⁴¹ Quayesi-Amakye, *Prophetism in Ghana Today*, 110-113.

¹⁴² Quayesi-Amakye, *Prophetism in Ghana Today*, 68.

¹⁴³ Michael Molloy, *Experiencing the World's Religions, Traditions, Challenge and Change* (California: Mayfield Publishing Co., 2002), 9-10.

that the various rituals, symbolisms, songs, prayers and actions of both prophets and their clients be carefully and logically analyzed.¹⁴⁴ Symbols portray the qualities or efficacy of something else; they are assigned meanings in neo-Prophetism to appeal to the audience.

According to him, the theology of neo-Prophetic churches could be distilled by analyzing their prophetic advertisements in obvious locations in the form of posters and billboards, in which the faith and confidence of the prophet in the potency of prayer, the power of God and in their peculiar calling are exhibited.¹⁴⁵ “A typical example is the reading of inscriptions on the billboard in front of Prophet Isaac Anto’s Conquerors Chapel International. It reads as follows: Conquerors Chapel Int., Power House. *Believe in God and you shall stand firm, believe in his prophets and you shall prosper* (2 Chron. 20:20b). Host: Prophet Isaac Anto.”¹⁴⁶ By this, the prophets prepare the minds of clients or seekers to expect a turnaround in life, and victory over their enemies and forces of darkness. Apparently, members and seekers are encouraged to believe in God’s prophets since their prosperity is tied to how they relate to these prophets and their ministries. Clearly, there is an emphasis on the person of the prophet in neo-Prophetism. In Ghana, such churches are mostly referred to as “one man

¹⁴⁴ Quayesi-Amakye, “Prophetism in Ghana’s New Prophetic Churches,” 167.

¹⁴⁵ Quayesi-Amakye, “Prophetism in Ghana’s New Prophetic Churches,” 167.

¹⁴⁶ Quayesi-Amakye, *Prophetism in Ghana Today*, 103.

church(es)” due to the overwhelming influence of the founder/leader over the ministry, especially in decision-making.¹⁴⁷

There is a stress on the potency of symbolic prophylactics, such as anointing oil, holy water, *Nyame Ahyiraso*, etc, which are believed to counter and neutralize demonic orchestrations and work for the good of clients. Thus, to meet the soteriological needs of clients, the prophets engage clients in a number of ritualistic activities such as foot washing, anointing of chapel floors and stepping into them with bare feet, and anointing of vantage points in the homes of clients, usually accompanied by declarations.¹⁴⁸

In a visit to counselling sessions at Prophet Atsu Manasseh’s Watered Garden Church in Dansoman, Quayesi-Amakye observed:

The Resident Pastor anointed the feet, palms and face of a lady client with olive oil (anointing oil) as he prayed for her. Pastor James Osei led a lady client to confess some scriptures of healing with her and then prayed a prayer of healing for her. The Resident Pastor at one point took a lady client outside to wash her feet. This ritual was performed alongside confessions of victory and prosperity and prayer.¹⁴⁹

Rituals are held in high esteem in the space of neo-Prophetism because they are ascribed to what they refer to as

¹⁴⁷ Aryeh, “A Study of Prophetism,” 208.

¹⁴⁸ Quayesi-Amakye, “Prophetism in Ghana’s New Prophetic Churches,” 167-168.

¹⁴⁹ Quayesi-Amakye, *Prophetism in Ghana Today*, 99.

‘divine directives’ and also resonate with the African-Ghanaian religious worldview.

Neo-Prophetism and the Media

As well observed by Asamoah-Gyadu, the significant role played by the news media in the ministries of neo-Pentecostal preachers cannot be overemphasized.¹⁵⁰ For him, the media democratizes access to spirituality, and it has helped neo-Pentecostal spirituality influence other forms of Christianity. Quayesi-Amakye observes that neo-Prophetic churches fully utilize the current proliferation of the electronic media in Ghana to their advantage, which has made them more or less the pacesetters in media communication of the Christian evangelion.¹⁵¹

The researchers have observed that it is very common these days to see prophetic services being broadcast on live television. Apparently, most of these neo-Prophetic ministries have their own television stations used to broadcast their services and the teachings of their leading prophet. “For them, modern media technologies are evangelistic facilitators, weapons for spiritual warfare and have ‘ontological relevance’.”¹⁵² Though Asamoah-Gyadu advances that “by seizing the opportunities offered by the media, the new Pentecostal-charismatic churches have been able to take control and exercise the power of religion in public

¹⁵⁰ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Renewal within African Christianity*, 45.

¹⁵¹ Quayesi-Amakye, *Prophetism in Ghana Today*, 117-119.

¹⁵² Hackett, “Charismatic/Pentecostal Appropriation of Media Technologies in Nigeria and Ghana,” 258-267.

space,”¹⁵³ Gifford accuses neo-Prophetic churches of their media-mania, their insensitivity to education and development projects and the non-extension of their prophetic voice to national issues.¹⁵⁴

While walking through the streets of Accra, it is not uncommon to see a lot of posters that seek to advertise some prophetic programme that promises an end to clients’ problems. By an extensive use of both electronic and print media, it is notable that prophets usually ardently advertise themselves to their would-be clients as the ‘last stops’ to the clients’ problems. They seem to be the current sensation in town with their ‘fast track’ solutions to clients’ quests and worries.¹⁵⁵

Television and radio adverts that promote the person and programmes of prophets are very rampant. It is not surprising, thus, that in his speech at the 1st National Prophetic Leadership Conference at Christian Action Faith Ministries in 2006, Rev. Steve Mensah of Charismatic Evangelistic Ministries, Legon-Accra, ascribed the media-mania of Ghanaian neo-Prophetic preachers to their greed for popularity, desire for political recognition and love for money.¹⁵⁶ Thus, unlike the mainline churches, the neo-Prophetic churches make extensive use of the media.

¹⁵³ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Taking Territories*, 35.

¹⁵⁴ Gifford, *Ghana’s New Christianity*, 33.

¹⁵⁵ Quayesi-Amakye, *Prophetism in Ghana Today*, 119.

¹⁵⁶ Quayesi-Amakye, *Prophetism in Ghana Today*, 117.

Neo-Prophetism and the Youth

Neo-Prophetism, with its theology and practices, has gained prominence in contemporary Christianity. It tends to revitalize and revive the biblical and traditional practice of prophetism. It is undeniable that the youth are the ones mostly attracted to neo-Prophetic theology and practices. For young people seeking deeper meaning and connection, neo-Prophetism provides a sense of purpose and ignites passion for faith. By virtue of their exhibition of charisma, neo-Prophetic leaders easily attract the youth, who themselves yearn to operate with their charisma and youthful exuberance unrestricted. As well, the normalization of speaking in tongues, miracles, healing and deliverance, signs and wonders, and other supernatural manifestations excite and appeal to the youth who are prone to seeking tangible evidence of God's presence in their lives. Youth ministries must transform into dynamic and holistic prophetic youth ministries addressing the spiritual, personal and social needs of the youth.¹⁵⁷

In accounting for the growth of charismatic churches, Gifford opines that Ghana's youth are attracted to these churches because they lack the money to visit nightclubs, concerts or discos for entertainment. Gifford's claim presupposes that charismatic churches thrive in Ghana due to their ability to provide an alternative source of entertainment to address the preoccupations of the youth.¹⁵⁸ However, Asamoah-Gyadu disagrees with Gifford's

¹⁵⁷ Arzola Jr., *Toward a Prophetic Youth Ministry*, 186.

¹⁵⁸ Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: It's Public Role* (London: Hurst and Co.), 90.

thought and refers to it as a reductionist analysis, simplistic and not adequately informed since it fails to recognize the spiritual experience of the membership of charismatic churches, as well as their educational and social backgrounds and their level of monetary contribution,¹⁵⁹ which appeals much to the researchers as appropriate.

Contrary to Giffords's thought, Asamoah-Gyadu rather sees the result of something more profound as the accounting factor for the growth of charismatic ministries in Ghana; that is, "the emphasis on the need for making personal choices concerning one's salvation, a theology that does not receive the same level of attention in the traditional western mission churches."¹⁶⁰ For him, the youth are enthusiastic about their involvement in charismatic ministries because it provides an easy avenue for their spirituality to be defined solely in terms of the uncontrollable experience of the Holy Spirit. In his own words: "Such exuberant phenomena as speaking in tongues, prophecy, dancing and shouting in the Spirit, including the attention given to healing, deliverance and prosperity, are definitely central to the Christianity of the charismatic ministries."¹⁶¹

Conclusion

Some peculiar theological orientations and practices in neo-Prophetic churches make them stand out among other forms of

¹⁵⁹ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 139-140.

¹⁶⁰ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 140.

¹⁶¹ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 140-141.

Christianity. They stress on a holistic salvation that encompasses all aspects of the believer's life. Their conception of enemy, prosperity, concept and practice of anointing, healing and deliverance, spiritual guidance, and dynamic use of music in worship services are indicative of their theological orientation and stress on holistic salvation. Neo-Prophetic rituals and symbolism elevate and place emphasis on the person and ministry of their leading prophets. Coupled with their extensive use of the media, they project these prophets and reach a wide range of audience with their services, theology and practice. Neo-Prophetism presents a youth-friendly environment on the premise of their theology and practice, which attracts the youth to their churches.

CHAPTER SIX

THE INFLUENCE OF CHARISMATIC PROPHETISM ON METHODIST YOUTH: EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

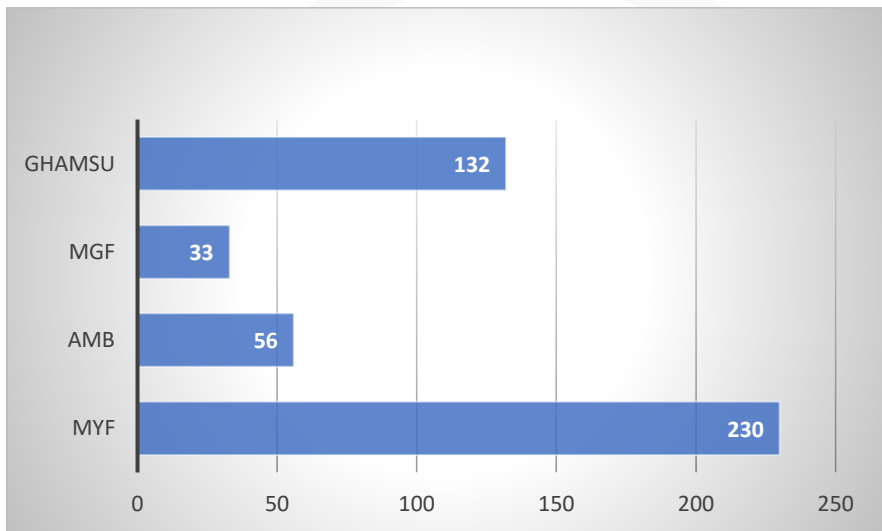
In carrying out the research, a field study was conducted to gather data to test the hypotheses of the research. This chapter focuses on the description of the various procedures followed in collecting data for the research. It also covers the analysis of the data collected and the discussion of the results thereof. As such, the chapter encompasses the sampling procedure, instrument, data collection, data presentation and analysis, and discussion of results.

Data Collection

The youth ministry of the Methodist Church Ghana is made up of four organizations in the church. It comprises the Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF), Methodist Girls' Fellowship (MGF), Association of Methodist Brigades (AMB) and Ghana Methodist Students' Union (GHAMSU), which is the campus ministry of the church. Collectively, they are referred to as the Youth Development Ministry (YDM). The YDM is structured at all levels of the church from the connexion to society, with a director (ordained minister) at the connexional level and organizers at the diocesan (ordained minister), circuit (lay member) and society (lay member) levels. As

well, the four organizations making up the YDM are structured likewise but under the supervision of the YDM at every level.

A total sample of 321 was drawn from the membership of the YDM across the connexion. This includes members of MYF, MGF, AMB and GHAMSU from all dioceses of the church in Ghana, as shown graphically below. For GHAMSU, samples were taken from the major locals and other tertiary locals.



YDM Organizations of Respondents

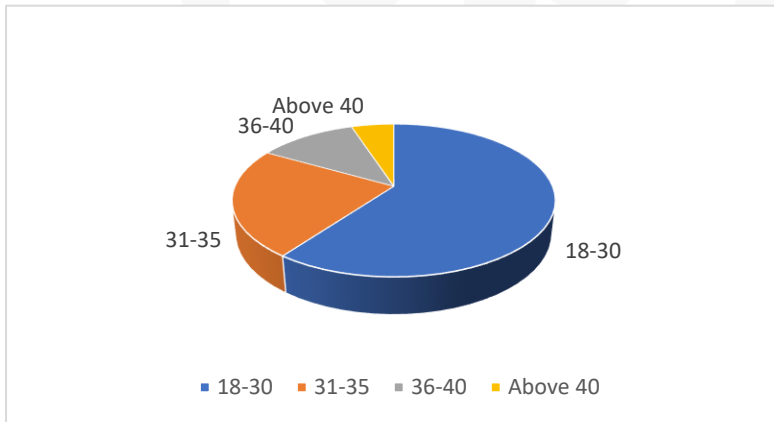
Source: Field Study – March, 2024

Sampling Procedure

Respondents were randomly selected from the target groups. The sample is made up of 321 people. Out of the 321 respondents, 230 representing 71.1% were MYF members; 132 representing 41.1%

were GHAMSU members; 56 representing 17.4% were AMB members and 33 representing 10.3% were MGF members. An additional 130 representing 40.5% is realized above the sample because these people hold double or multiple memberships the youth groups.

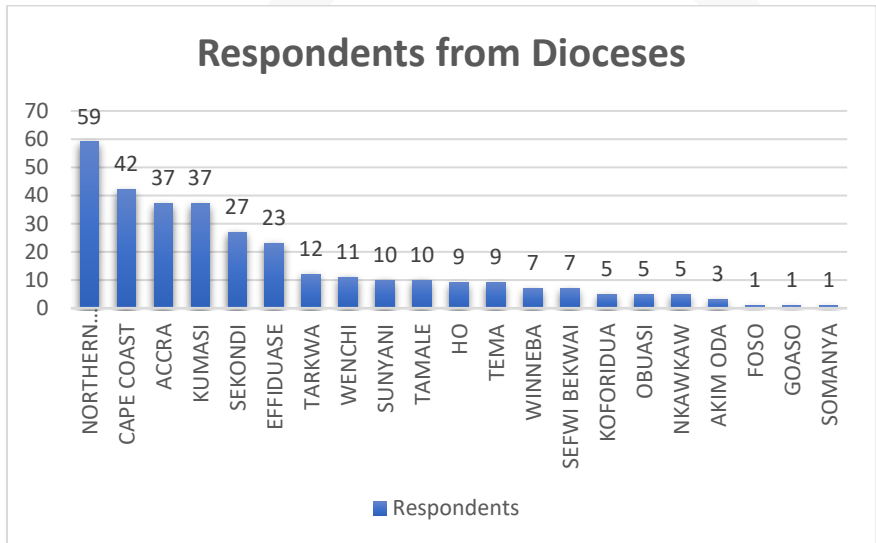
Out of the 321 respondents, 203 (63.2%) were males, while 118 (36.8%) were females. As well, 5 (1.6%) are below 18 years; 190 (59.2%) are 18-30 years; 73 (22.7%) are 31-35 years; 37 (11.5%) are 36-40 years; and 16 (5%) are above 40 years. Those below 18 years and those above 40 years sum up to 6.6% of the total respondents, while those from 18 years to 40 years sum up to 93.4% of the total respondents. This reveals the youthfulness of the respondents in terms of age, as represented in below.



Ages of Respondents

Source: Field Study – March, 2024.

These respondents were also selected from all the dioceses of the church in Ghana, including Northern Accra Diocese, Accra Diocese, Cape Coast Diocese, Kumasi Diocese, Sekondi Diocese, Effiduase Diocese, Tarkwa Diocese, Wenchi Diocese, Sunyani Diocese, Tamale Diocese, Ho Diocese, Tema Diocese, Winneba Diocese, Sefwi Bekwai Diocese, Koforidua Diocese, Obuasi Diocese, Nkawkaw Diocese, Akim Oda Diocese, Foso Diocese, Goaso Diocese and Somanya Diocese as graphically shown below.

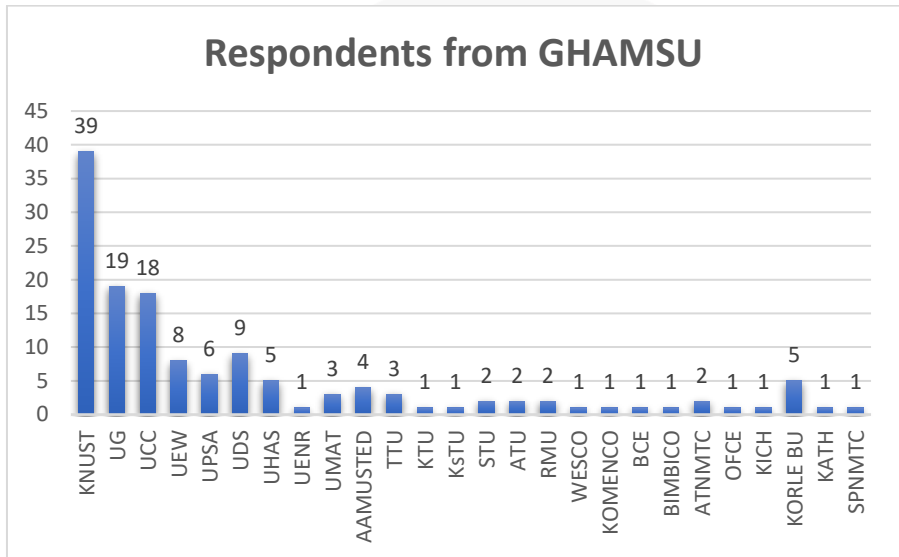


Respondents from Various Dioceses

Source: Field Study – March, 2024.

Moreover, the respondents from GHAMSU were from the major locals and other tertiary locals such as KNUST Local, UG

Local, UCC Local, UEW Local, UPSA Local, UDS Local, UHAS Local, UENR Local, UMAT Local, AAMUSTED Local, TTU Local, KTU Local, KsTU Local, STU Local, ATU Local, RMU Local, WESCO Local, KOMENCO Local, BCE Local, BIMBICO Local, OFCE Local, ATNMTC Local, KICH Local, KORLE BU Local, KATH Local and SPNMTC Local as graphically shown below.



Respondents from GHAMSU Locals

Source: Field Study – March, 2024

Instrument

The main instrument used for data collection was online questionnaires, which were grouped into categories. This includes personal beliefs, dominant areas of influence of charismatic prophetism on the youth, and desires/preferences among the

youth on campus. The rationale behind using an online questionnaire is that the target groups are educated people who are prone to social media and can read and write. As well, the online questionnaire was used so as to reach out to more respondents whose reach would have been difficult with regard to distance.

Method

The researchers distributed the link to the online questionnaire (prepared with Google Forms) via mail and social media platforms to the targeted groups. After two (2) weeks, three hundred and twenty-one (321) responses were retrieved. The retrieved data was edited, coded and organized with Microsoft Excel. The organized data was then analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, pie charts and bar charts. The researcher got involved in participant observation in GHAMSU UG Local activities and in a charismatic church founded by a former GHAMSU President. The researchers also interviewed some leaders of charismatic churches and prayer fellowships who were formerly in the Methodist YDM.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

As shown below, 84.4% of the total respondents have been leaders of their organizations before, while 15.6% have not.

Respondents who have held leadership positions before

Have you held any leadership position(s) in your organization before?	Frequency	Percentage
YES	271	84.4
NO	50	15.6

Source: Field Study – March, 2024

When asked about the spiritual gifts and graces possessed, the following are some of the answers of respondents: Prophecy, teaching, healing, singing, evangelism, tongues speaking, exhortation, administration, hospitality, word of wisdom, word of knowledge, discernment of spirits, act of serving, music gift, counselling, encouragement, giving, seeing visions, leadership, and helping. However, the gifts that were mostly mentioned were teaching, prophecy, healing and evangelism.

Furthermore, respondents were asked whether they see the mother church as restrictive of their full operation of their spiritual gifts, especially the prophetic gift. 26% responded YES, 49% responded NO, and 25% are not sure of their position as represented below.



Respondents who see their mother churches as restrictive of the operation of their gifts

Source: Field Study – March, 2024

Interestingly, 54% of those who answered YES are GHAMSU members, while 46% are non-GHAMSU members. As well, 62% of those who answered NO are non-GHAMSU members, while 38% of them are GHAMSU members. This reveals that majority of those who have been in GHAMSU see the church as restrictive when it comes to full operation with spiritual gifts in the church.

Moreover, when asked whether respondents have attended prophetic meetings or services outside their churches before, 238 representing 74% of the total respondents responded YES, while 83 of them representing 26% answered NO, as shown below.



*Respondents who have attended prophetic meetings
outside their churches*

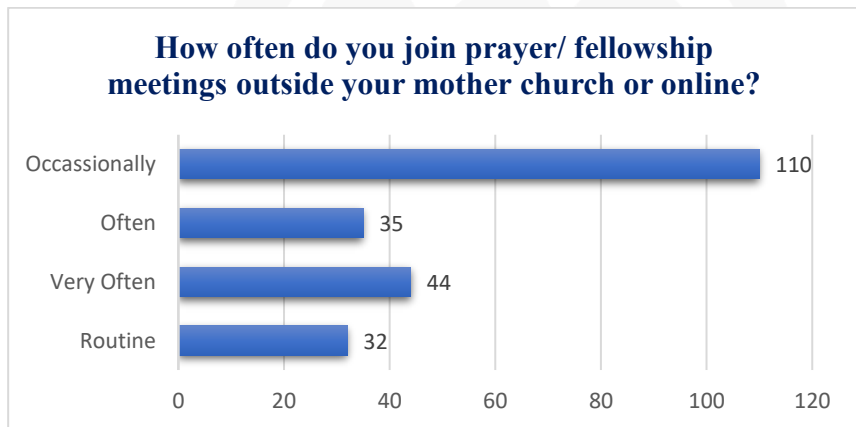
Source: Field Study – March, 2024

From the data collected as shown in Table 4.2 below, 221 out of the total respondents of 321 are members of other fellowships and prayer groups outside their churches and attend prayer meetings in person or join online prayer meetings. 100 do not join any prayer group outside the church. When asked to rank their frequency of attendance of such fellowship or prayer meetings, 49.8% of those who are members of those fellowships and prayer groups attend meetings occasionally, 15.8% of them attend often, 19.9% attend very often, and 14.5% are routine attenders of such prayer meetings outside the church, as shown in Figure 4.7 below. Virtually, almost half of the respondents occasionally attend fellowship and prayer group meetings outside the church, while half also do that more often than not.

Respondents who attend Prayer Fellowships outside their churches

Do you join a Fellowship or Prayer Group or attend prayer meetings outside your mother church or online?	Frequency	Percentage
YES	221	68.8
NO	100	31.2

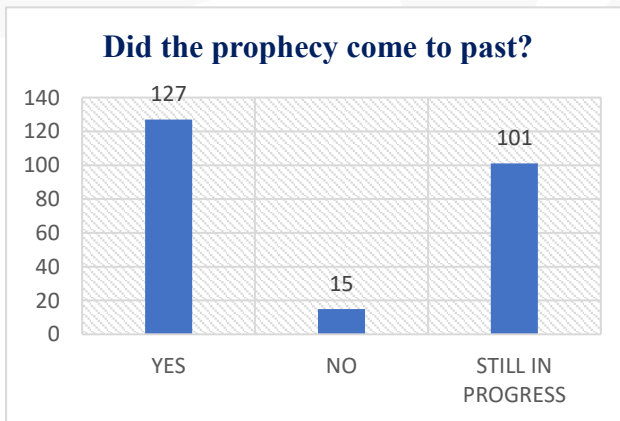
Source: Field Study – March, 2024



Respondents' ranking of attendance at fellowship meetings outside their churches. Source: Field Study – March, 2024

About whether respondents have been prophesied to in any of the prophetic services and prayer/fellowship meetings attended, 243 of them representing 76% answered YES, while 78 of them representing 24% answered NO. Out of the 243 who

answered YES, 127 (52.2%) indicated that the prophecy had come to pass, 101 (41.6%) indicated that they found the fulfilment of the prophecy in process, while 15 (6.2%) indicated that the prophecy did not come to pass. This is presented below.



Fulfilment of prophecy. Source: Field Study – March, 2024

Respondents were also asked whether or not they believed in *akwankyerε* (spiritual direction). From their responses as shown below, 279 respondents representing 87% believe in *akwankyerε*, while 42 respondents representing 13% do not believe in *akwankyerε*.



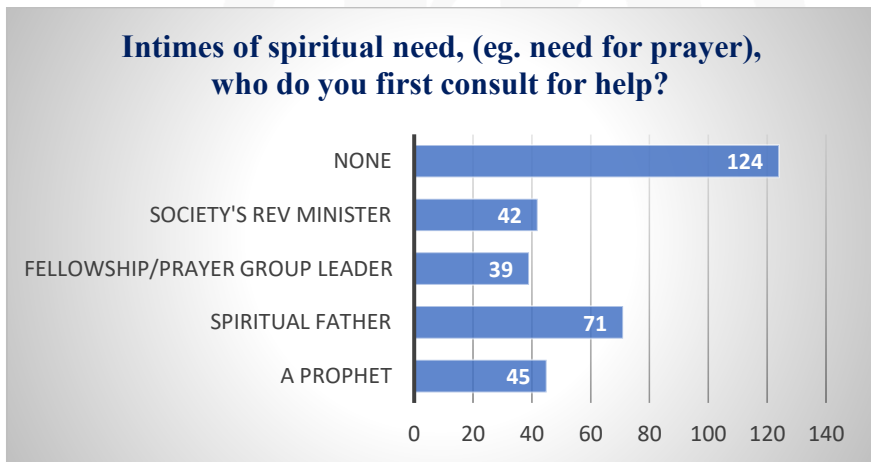
*Respondents who believe in *akwankyerε**

Source: Field Study – March, 2024

As well, 177 representing 55.1% of the total respondents have been given *akwankyerε* by prophets before, while 144 representing 44.9% have not received any kind of *akwankyerε*. Out of the 177 who have been given *akwankyerε* before, 126 (71.2%) testified that it worked for them, 12 (6.8%) stated that it did not work for them, and 39 (22%) could not categorically state whether the *akwankyerε* worked for them or not.

In a subsequent question about respondents' conviction and patronage of religious items such as anointing oil, water, ointments and other prophylactics from prophets and pastors, the following responses were given: 195 (60.75%) of them said they patronize such religious items; 124 (38.63%) of them said they do not patronize those religious items; and 2 (0.62%) said they sometimes patronize those religious items.

Moreover, respondents were asked about their first point of contact for consultation, help or prayer request in times of spiritual need or emergency. Below shows their responses.



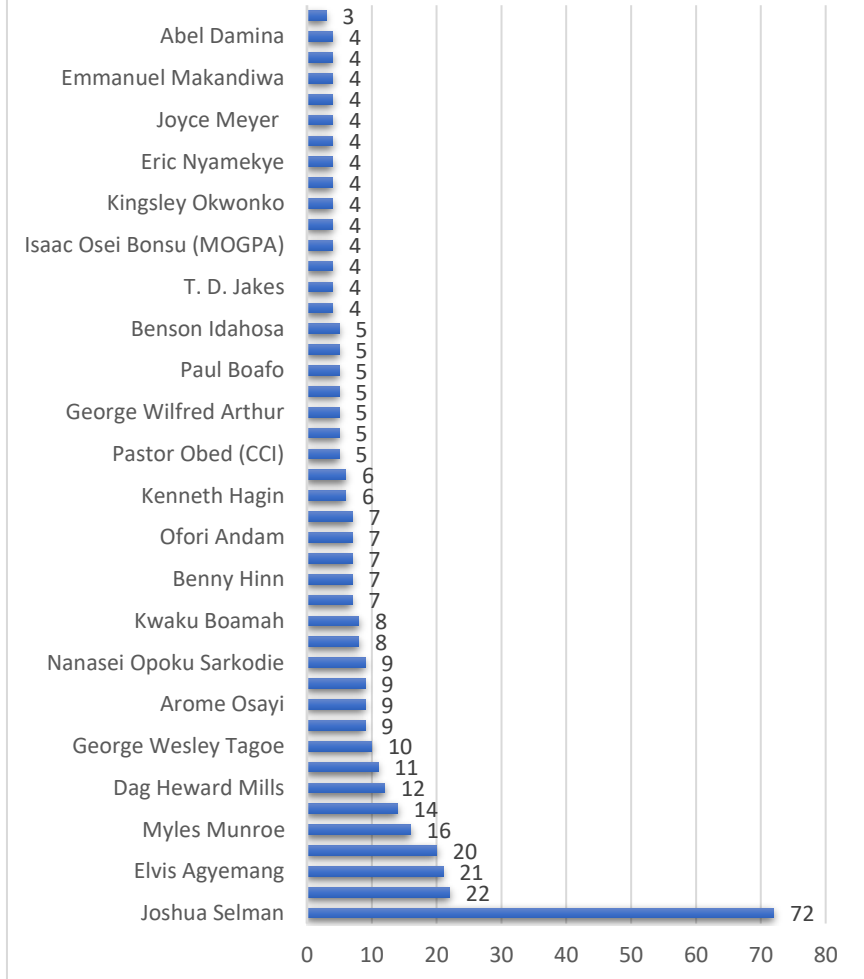
*Respondents' first point of contact for help in
times of spiritual need*

Source: Field Study – March, 2024

From the chart, 45 representing 14% of them consult a known prophet for help, 71 representing 22% consult their spiritual fathers, 39 representing 12% consult their fellowship or prayer group leaders, 42 representing 13% consult their society's minister-in-charge, and 124 representing 39% consult no one. Virtually, 48% of the total respondents, which is also 79% of those who consult for help in times of spiritual need or emergency, reach out to other people rather than the ministers-in-charge of their societies.

In seeking to explore the preferences and desires of the youth in the church and on campus, respondents were asked to mention the names of ministers they mostly follow. In other words, they were asked to enlist their favourite ministers whom they yearn always to listen to or read their books. In response, many names of ministers, including Methodist ministers, were mentioned. Names and frequency of ministers mentioned more than twice are presented below.

Who is your favourite preacher/ minister you listen to, read or simply follow?



Respondents' Favourite Preachers/ Ministers

Source: Field Study – March, 2024

In the quest to investigate their desires in line with the topic, respondents, especially GHAMSU members and alumni, were asked about the ways in which campus ministry differs from the mother church, the possible causes of youth drift from the mother church, especially after leaving university campuses, and the possible solutions from their perspective to that effect. 242 responses were retrieved from that section. The responses were different in wording but similar in concept and pointed to the same issues. A few of them (20) are presented in the table below.

GHAMSU Respondents' Views on Youth Drift

In what way(s) is campus ministry different from the mother church?	What do you think are the possible causes of graduates leaving the Church after their tertiary education?	What do you think can be done in the mother church to retain graduates in the church even after leaving campus?
Campus ministry is less conservative than the mother Church since members come from different Church traditions.	They find a discontinuity from the campus with the mother Church; hence, they join churches that have the Campus ministry orientation.	Empower the Youth Services and allow for innovation.
With campus ministry, we don't restrict the members from exercising their giftings, but we see to it that everyone does what's right.		They should not limit them or restrict them, but rather guide them to do the right thing. Most of the advice I have received from other men of God and even some of the Methodist ministers is that Methodists will restrict you with the kind of gift and fire I carry, so they think I can't manifest fully over there.

The atmosphere and set-up.	The Church does not help in their adaptation to the mother church system.	The Church should identify their needs.
Youth centered	In practical terms, the church does not patronize them.	Prioritize them, not only in words and slogans.
Their enthusiastic way of service.	Some are not recognized by the mother church.	Accept them as they are and teach them.
Campus ministry allows the young people to showcase their talents and gifts.	Because of the kind of teaching they get from other churches.	The mother church should include young people in its activities and also take their needs into consideration.
A free spirit to worship in GHAMSU, a restricted and sometimes boring service in the mother church.	No flexibility in the order of service.	Organize weekly youth services to meet the needs of the youth.
People with various spiritual gifts are given the chance to portray them more in campus ministry than mother church.	Lack of help from the church to find jobs.	Engage them in church activities and provide them with jobs if available.

Campus ministry entails a lot. We vibe more because it's basically about the youth.	Our mother churches don't normally engage the youth in most of the church activities. They only entreat us to be parking chairs and canopies.	Most of our churches should engage the youth in various activities for them to also know that they are part of the church.
Various ways, but I see this to be dependent on your society. For example, the free will to outburst in giving ideas without being looked down upon. Also, a system to check up on ambassadors, but not at home. Adding the youth to planning committees.	They feel the presence of the church in the form of checkups, and others think they're being hindered (personally, I don't agree with them). Others think they have a lot of ideas to help grow the church, but they're not involved because they're not leaders or rich or popular. The attitude of church	Firstly, gathering their data and checking up. Secondly, involving them in church activities like liturgy, special program MCs, and being part of committees. Thirdly, the church should try and place them in places where they can work so as to clear the idea that the church is not helping.

	leaders and some resident ministers, too, is a problem.	
Way of prayer	They normally don't feel the charisma.	Give room for the young people to exercise their giftings.
The blend of Pentecostal service	Because the mother church does not give them leadership opportunities.	Encourage them to take on leadership opportunities.
Youthful and vibrant atmosphere	Not allowing them to use their gifts to the fullest.	To bring a youthful and vibrant atmosphere to the church.
The involvement of the media in campus ministry. Campus ministry is a bit charismatic, mixed with Methodism.	The way of worship in the church. The strict Methodist ways of doing things. No plan by the church to help the youth in many aspects, including their financial wellbeing and not just their spiritual life.	There must be a plan by our mother church to assist the graduates in acquiring a job, giving us a role to play in the church, for us to realize that we belong to a family.

The order of service and the style of worship.	The difference in the way we worship on campus. The strictness in the way things are done in the mother church makes no room for dynamism.	The mother church should give room for some charismatic ways of doing things, like prayers and adapting programs that attract young people to church. The church should also be more welcoming and rebuke people in love and in a less embarrassing way.
The enthusiasm and energy are more in campus ministry.	Little or no opportunity is given to the youth.	Allow the free expression of gifts and graces.
Every aspect, style of liturgy, dressing, the use of Pentecostal songs, the operation of spiritual gifts during meetings, and allowing youth to participate fully in service.	The mother church is not ready to evolve to the modern way of worship. They are used to the old system, strict liturgy, using hymns for praises, no tongue speaking in church, no dancing during church service, no fervent prayers on Sundays, aside from the	The style of GHAMSU for services on campus follows a Pentecostal suite; hence, it is either that GHAMSU services are tweaked to reflect the home church, so that the graduates don't feel the difference when they return home. But most importantly, the church needs to evolve and accept change once they are living in the society, especially those in "village" societies.

	normal prayer for Ghana, the poor and afflicted, the church. At worst, my society does not encourage the use of other songs for praises aside from hymns; they think it is too Pentecostal, so they do not invest in the musical growth of the church. I completed KNUST 2022, and currently I join Charismatic Evangelistic Ministry for every other Sunday service, and go to my church on first Sundays to do the "rituals".	Also, MIWC should be made more available if the church wishes to preserve its traditions, so that the graduates can attend services at MIWC, to still keep them in the church. I came from a far society, with a lot of youth. I'd encourage that the Ministers who have aged should not constantly be sent to the villages; they are a major driving force to the youth leaving the church, as their activities are found to be slow. I have a lot to say, but let me end here. All the best.
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There aren't any clear-cut differences. I have held leadership positions in both spaces, and the issues they deal with are very peculiar, and the decisions made are due to the options available. I used to have issues with Campus ministry as a member, but having the opportunity to take up leadership roles, these issues seem quite subtle. Campus ministry more or less looks like the wilderness experience, where the believer practices, but the mother church looks like the main gig. There's a difference between preparatory grounds and	Lack of proper understanding and communication between the vision of the mother church and the zeal of the young. There should be a mid-point where deliberations are made, where egos are massaged and where fathers take care of the young as sons.	Proper Mentoring Create adequate structures to encourage the young to hone and sharpen their gifts and graces. Be abreast with the Charismatic and Pentecostal move of the Holy Spirit. Set up activities that stir up the flame of witnessing in the young. Appreciate rather than criticize.
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performatory grounds. The best are often given the opportunity in the mother church.		
No strict adherence to liturgy.	Lack of good sound equipment and investment in music.	A lot of investment should be made into the technical and musical aspect of the church.
1. Because members are in redefined area or campus, they could either choose to attend programmes in their numbers or not, unlike the mother church, where members reside in residential 2. We get the opportunity to attend or visit different denominational programmes, unlike the mother church 3. Members pay their	1. Not giving the opportunity to explore their giftings and what they have learnt 2. Incentives and welfare available outside the mother church 3. To look for prophecy 4. A very short way of gaining fame (pastor, elders), unlike the mother	1. Allowing them to explore their giftings and what they have learnt. 2. Providing incentives and a good welfare system or structure. 3. To lessen or reduce the number of years needed to become an elder or a Rev minister.

contributions, especially in the resuming week. 4. Always an opportunity to learn from different people because of the differences in ethnicity.	church, it takes quite number of years.	
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Source: Field Study – March, 2024

Discussion

From the results of this study, there is an indication of a strong presence of charismatic prophetism among the youth of the Methodist Church Ghana at home and most especially on campuses, and an improper appreciation of the adaptive capacity of the youth who have been on campus into the mother church, as well as an improper understanding of their true desires especially in the area of worship. Gleaning from the responses of the study, the researchers highlight the need to appreciate the following:

1. There is an awakening awareness of the possession of spiritual gifts and graces among the youth, which they feel must be used efficiently by the church.
2. Though the youth generally recognize the church's accommodation of their operation of spiritual gifts and graces, the campus youth or those who have been to universities before, see the mother church as restrictive towards the full operation of their gifts and graces.
3. The youth ministry of The Methodist Church Ghana has dominantly been influenced by the theology and practices of charismatic prophetism.
4. There is a discontinuity of campus ministry in the mother church for the youth.
5. There is an undeniable attraction of the youth to charismatic prophetism and thus their craving for it outside the mother church.

6. The youth of The Methodist Church Ghana admire and follow ministers who operate in the prophetic.

An Awakening Awareness of the Possession of Spiritual Gifts and Graces Among the Youth

The results and analysis of the study reveal the self-awareness of the possession of spiritual gifts and graces among the youth, which they feel must be made operational or useful in the church. In other words, they feel they must be given the opportunity to exhibit their gifts and graces in the church. 267 representing 83% of the sample clearly stated their gifts and graces, while 54 representing 17% either did not know their gifts or simply ignored the question. In a participant observation at GHAMSU UG Local, it was observed that, as a matter of the recognition of the diverse gifts and graces of members, GHAMSU members had been grouped into wings according to which they minister; be it singing, prayer, dancing, oratory, ushering, shepherding, hospitality and others. Getting Methodist youth to mention categorically teaching, prophecy, healing, speaking and interpretation of tongues, word of knowledge, word of wisdom, administration, discernment of spirits, counselling, etc., as their gifts and graces is indicative of a rising awareness of the possession of spiritual gifts and graces among members of the Methodist Youth Ministry.

Young People on University Campuses See the Mother Church as Restrictive of the full Operation of their Gifts and Graces.

Responses to the question of whether or not the youth see the mother church as restrictive of their full operation of their spiritual gifts and graces show that the youth recognize the room given by the mother church for them to use their gifts, as attested by 49% of the respondents. 26% do not agree to that, while 25% are not too sure of whether or not the mother church accommodates the operation of spiritual gifts and graces by the youth. However, it is interesting to note that the 26% who see the mother church as restrictive in terms of the full operation of the youth in their gifts and graces were either students on campus or had been members of campus ministry before. This is because campus ministry emphasizes the priesthood of all believers by virtue of the ease with which wings are created to give members the opportunity to minister with their different gifts.

The existence of ministering wings in GHAMSU helps nurture and bring out the diverse gifts and abilities in the young people on campus for ministry, as compared to the traditional youth fellowship in the mother church. Thus, a greater sense of fulfilment in the use of spiritual gifts and graces is realized by the youth in campus ministry than in the mother church. Going through the responses of GHAMSU members on the reasons that account for their leaving the church after tertiary education, one answer that ran through was about the church not giving them the opportunity to explore their gifts, and their innovative ideas not being accepted. They suggested that the mother church give more

room for the exercising and exploration of their gifts, create structures for the honing and nurturing of their gifts rather than limiting them, and also guide them in doing the right things in the right way.

The Youth Ministry of the Methodist Church Ghana has dominantly been influenced by the theology and practices of Charismatic Prophetism.

The study reveals how fast charismatic prophetism has crept into the youth ministry of the Methodist Church with its theology and practices. It is therefore not surprising to find the practices of neo-Prophetism in a typical GHAMSU service or MYF programme. The neo-prophetic concept of salvation reflects so much among the youth that the Christian message has been repackaged and reinterpreted to suit the context of the upwardly mobile youth who find themselves in tertiary educational campuses and in the church after their education. The youth ministry hermeneutics has become dynamic such that there is less emphasis on the cost of discipleship and suffering in the Christian Walk but more stress on empowerment of the Holy Spirit for success, breakthrough, prosperity, successful marriage, personal advancement and so on.

Salvation is embraced by young people as that which goes beyond deliverance from sin and its consequences but includes satisfaction from the provision of existential needs. It was observed during GHAMSU services and youth programmes attended during the study that preachers who prophetically declare prosperity, divine helpers, victory, good marriage, success, divine upliftment,

etc., during their ministrations appeal most to the young people. Many of them move forward in faith to drop money on the altar as seeds being sown into the prophetic words declared by the preacher. Some also stand up in the course of the ministration, fold their arms and speak unceasingly in tongues to claim the declarations, while others simply raise their hand(s) to receive the declarations. During prayer sessions, one would hardly be heard praying in a known language. Even though prayer topics are announced in a known language, these young people pray in tongues throughout the prayer time.

Furthermore, the study reveals a feature of the neo-Prophetic concept of enemy, healing and deliverance in the theology and practice of young people in the youth ministry of The Methodist Church Ghana. One flyer of Kpeehe Circuit MYF in the Northern Accra Diocese reads: “The Methodist Church Ghana; The Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF) – Kpeehe Circuit; Presents; A 3 Day Prayer Summit Dubbed; Prayer, Healing & Deliverance; Theme: The Hand of God; Isaiah 41:13-14...” One other flyer of GHAMSU UG Local reads: “The Methodist Church Ghana; Youth Development Ministry; Ghana Methodist Students’ Union – UG Local; Monday Prayer Meeting; TEFILLAH HOUR; Theme: Breaking Evil Altars; Venue: Sarbah Field...” A connexional GHAMSU flyer read: “Ghana Methodist Students Union; The Connexional Secretariat Presents; THE MIDNIGHT CRY; Theme: I Will Not Die Before My Time (Ecclesiastes 7:17); Time: 12 AM...” Other themes on the Monday Prayer Meeting (TEFILLAH HOUR) flyers include: “Is There Not a God in Israel?”, “Streams of Healing”, “The Church of

God Must Rise and Pray”, “Prayer Cafe”, “Recovering the Lost”, “The Praying Ambassador”, “Affliction Shall Not Rise the Second Time”, “The Power of Words”, “Dry Bones Shall Live Again”, etc.

These clearly echo the neo-Prophetic emphasis on the existence of evil and enemies which cause harm and misfortunes to people, and the need to strive to outwit their operation in prayer by virtue of the understanding of salvation as deliverance from evil. Fasting and prayer programmes are organized in rebuttal of demonic orchestrations and also for spiritual warfare. Evidently, a two-day prayer programme organized for GHAMSU UG Local at Ebenezer Methodist Cathedral in Madina was dubbed “Prophetic Night” with the theme “Spiritual Warfare”. Another flyer for a Connexional online prayer meeting dubbed “Destiny Hour” bore the theme “Back to the Sender (Prov. 26:27)”. The neo-Prophetic interventionist approach to prayer is clearly seen to have greatly influenced the theology of these young people. In a Kpeehe Circuit MYF all-night programme, it was observed that the minister applied oil on some who fell under the anointing in the course of prayer, and commanded manifesting spirits to break and loose hold of the victims. Others were referred to a standby prayer and deliverance team, who prayed for such people until they came out of ecstasy.

Moreover, the study revealed that 55.1% of the total respondents have been given *akwankyerε* by prophets before, which is typical of charismatic prophetism, while 44.9% have not received such. As well, 86.9% of the respondents affirmed their personal belief in *akwankyerε*, while 13.1% do not believe in that

act of spiritual direction. Not only that, but also, 71.2% of those who have adhered to *akwankyerε* testified to its potency to produce results. Surprisingly, 60.75% of the respondents do patronize religious items such as anointing oil, holy water, ointments and other religious items from “prophets.” This data from typical Methodist young people undoubtedly indicates the strong influence of charismatic prophetism on the youth ministry of the Methodist Church Ghana. The practice of *akwankyerε*, healing and deliverance is prevalent in GHAMSU. This makes the prayer secretaries (nicknamed *prayer papas and mamas*) very important among the executives and in the eyes of GHAMSU members.

To add to the above, another practice that has gained prominence in the youth ministry, connoting a charismatic renewal, is the practice of *ngosra* (anointing). In most of the revival programmes organized by the MYF and GHAMSU, the guest ministers use anointing oil during prayer, deliverance and impartation sessions. This is not normative in the worship service of the mother church, even though the church has a liturgy for healing and anointing services. Since it seems abandoned, the youth have copied that of neo-prophetic churches and incorporated it into their worship. During the last day of a three-day “Peristera Summit” organized by Nyanyano Circuit MYF in the Winneba Diocese, the researchers observed that the speaker asked for a bottle of anointing oil, asked the congregation to stretch their hands towards it and prayed to invoke the presence and power of the Holy Spirit upon it. After prayers, he poured the anointing oil in

a bowl and asked that they dip their hands in the oil and anoint themselves individually, while he also anointed some of them and prayed for the impartation of spiritual gifts and power in them for ministry.

In an interview with one GHAMSU KNUST alumnus who was a former executive, it was revealed that there is a special anointing service held on the last midweek service of every semester where GHAMSU members form queues to be anointed by executives wearing their symbols of office (sashes). Afterwards, members are permitted to walk to any executive whose gifts they desire, so that they may be imparted by them. In so doing, we find charismatic prophetism at play in the ministry of these young Methodists.

Another way in which charismatic prophetism has influenced the Methodist youth ministry is seen in the media presence of these Methodist youth groups. Currently, there is no programme that is organized in GHAMSU or MYF without a flyer or a short video prepared for publicity on social media. While surveying the programme flyers of these groups, it was realized that flyers are constantly created by the media teams for prayer meetings, midweek services, Sunday services, wing meetings, and special programmes. As well, most of these services, especially Sunday services and special programmes are streamed live on Facebook. Others are recorded and uploaded on YouTube. This was realized to be practiced also in the Mt. Zion Methodist Youth Service at Dome. In addition, the Connexional Prayer Board of GHAMSU, hosted at KNUST, organizes an online prayer meeting dubbed “Midnight Cry” via Google Meet to allow other GHAMSU

members from other locals across the connexion to join. Monthly crossover prayers are also done in this same manner. It was observed in the MYF branch at The Methodist Church of the Resurrection – Kpeehe, that an online weekly prayer meeting dubbed “Friday Special Midnight Prayers” was held on the Podbean app from 10:30pm – 12:30pm for easy access by members. With the use of media technology, these young people do not necessarily gather physically always for programmes in which they may be limited by distance or time.

The Discontinuity from Campus Ministry to the Mother Church for the Youth

The results of the research disclose some sort of discontinuity in ministry from campus to the mother church. This is evidenced by the following: strict adherence to liturgy in the mother church as against liberal and dynamic liturgy on campus; the strict use of hymns and choral songs in the mother church as against the blend of hymns and contemporary Pentecostal songs on campus; and the so called dull and boring services in the mother church as against exuberant and spontaneous worship services on campus. From respondents’ views on how campus ministry differs from that of the mother church and factors that lead to their discomfort in the mother church and eventual exit, it can be deduced that there is a disjoint between campus ministry and the mother church.

From participant observations, campus services do not follow the strict liturgy of the mother church. Liturgical prayers as found in the mother church liturgy are mostly not said; canticles

are sung, but not always; liturgy is simply dynamic as it sometimes creates room for theatrical performances and choreography. Congregational prayers are not led by the liturgist but by members of the prayer wing, accompanied by inspirational music. Sometimes at services, members are seen exuberantly praying in rhythmic monosyllabic tongues.

Also, campus ministry makes an effort to preserve the Methodist identity by the ministry of wings like GHAMSU Choir in KNUST Local and Aldersgate Voices in UG Local. These are replicas of the church choirs in the mother church and are into the singing of hymns, choral songs, and the performance of anthems and classicals. As well, other contemporary choirs like Victory Vocals in UG Local and Pearls of Praise (POP) Choir in KUST exist in GHAMSU to focus on the ministration of contemporary Pentecostal music, which is mostly used in campus worship. This portrays charismatic prophetic influence on the youth as it confirms Omenyo's position that "Charismatics in the mainline churches form 'praise and worship teams' who are believed to be gifted with leading the groups in singing to praise God."¹⁶² In campus ministry, youthful exuberance is manifested in all ways of doing things.

In participant observations at Sunday GHAMSU UG Local services, it was seen that during for the time for praises, members usually move forward in groups to dance with similar moves. Singing and dancing are very energetic, as found in charismatic prophetic churches. During adoration, members freely express their emotions in worship with hands raised, kneel down and

¹⁶² Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism*, 210.

sometimes tears flow down some cheeks, while others walk around singing and praying. Simply put, their meetings are conducted in a typical charismatic form – the singing of Pentecostal songs with quality instrumentation, rhythmic dancing and clapping, loud preaching, evoking yells of hallelujah, praying in tongues, healing and deliverance. As a result of this liberty in worship, they find the seemingly strictly regulated worship in the mother church as restrictive, dull and boring.

Attraction of the Youth to Charismatic Prophetism and their craving for it outside the Church

Gleaning from the results of the study, it cannot be overemphasized that the young people of the Methodist Church are attracted to charismatic prophetism. As such, the research revealed that most programmes of the youth ministry are packaged to look like those of neo-Prophetic ministries. While surveying their programme flyers, it was seen that some programmes were captioned as follows: Week of Fasting and Prayers (MYF), 5 Days Power Packed Fasting and Prayers (GHAMSU), Prophetic Night (GHAMSU), Encounter (GHAMSU), Mega All-night Service (MYF), Divine Access (MYF), Journey to the Mountain (MYF), Prayer, Healing and Deliverance Night (MYF), Horn of the Altar (MYF), The Midnight Cry (GHAMSU), Prophetic Encounter (GHAMSU), Prophetic Night (GHAMSU), Destiny Hour (GHAMSU), Touch the Hem (GHAMSU), Hour of Travail (GHAMSU), Women at the Altar (GHAMSU), Fire Rally (GHAMSU), Praise

Revolution (GHAMSU), Shout (GHAMSU), School of the Word (GHAMSU), and many others.

Most of these programmes are prophetic and prayer services, often accompanied by fasting. As a matter of fact, they yearn for programmes like these even when they are no longer on campus. Consequently, they join fellowships and prayer groups outside the church or move out of their mother churches to join other charismatic churches in which they can satisfy their hunger for charismatic prophetism. According to the study, 68.8% of the respondents are members of fellowships and prayer groups outside the mother church and also join their online prayer meetings. Below was an answer given by one GHAMSU alumnus to the question, “What do you think are the possible causes of graduates leaving the church after they graduate from universities?”

The mother church is not ready to evolve to the modern way of worship. They are used to the old system: strict liturgy, using hymns for praises, no tongue speaking in church, no dancing during church service, no fervent prayers on Sundays, aside from the normal prayers for Ghana, the poor and afflicted, and the church. At worst, my society does not encourage the use of other songs for praises aside from hymns. They think it is too Pentecostal, so they do not invest in the musical growth of the church. I completed KNUST 2022, and currently I join Charismatic Evangelistic Ministry for every other Sunday service, and go to my mother church on first Sundays to do the "rituals".¹⁶³

¹⁶³ Source: Field Study, March, 2024.

Some of these young people who are gifted and prone to using their gifts in ministry either start fellowships within or outside the church, which gradually evolve to become independent churches or exit the mother church and join other charismatic churches. It is even disturbing when they move out with many other young people from the church to start those independent churches. As advanced by Omenyo, Kudadjie, in explaining the emergence of charismatic prayer groups in the Methodist Church Ghana asserts:

Some sincere Methodists, concerned to revitalize the spiritual life of the Church, and realizing the central place that prayer, evangelism and Pentecostalism occupied in the life of the early Methodists, started prayer groups and healing services. These groups soon came to be described as 'prayer fellowships.' Some of them operated within the Methodist Church, but others operated independently of the Church.¹⁶⁴

This characterizes most young people who encounter charismatic prophetism on campus. In the survey, only 12.2% of the total respondents indicated that they do not join fellowships outside the church or join online prayer meetings, which is an indication of the involvement of a lot more Methodist young people in charismatic prophetic services outside the church.

Campus is flooded with programmes that are prophetic in nature, especially by the mega charismatic ministries on campus, which are attended by most campus youth. Prophetic figures are

¹⁶⁴ Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism*, 156.

invited from both the country and outside the country as main speakers of such programmes. Room is also made for such prophetic services in GHAMSU programmes with guest speakers who are prophets. Consequently, campus youth become accustomed to charismatic prophetism to an extent that they yearn for it outside their mother churches after their education on campus. At worst, those young people who have the prophetic gift but feel restricted in operation move out to start their own churches with other young people who thirst for charismatic prophetism.

Most of these gifted young people who break out of the church do complain about restrictions from church leaders and reverend ministers. In a prior charismatic renewal in the Methodist Church in 1979, Omenyo similarly identifies that the Methodist Prayer Fellowship in Accra was not vibrant because they were not actively supported by many influential ministers and lay leaders of the Church.¹⁶⁵ This fellowship started with a group of Methodist students who studied at the Maranatha Bible College but felt the need to meet on the second Saturdays of the month to pray and deliberate on their concern for revival in the Methodist Church, which has also been the intent of some of these young people for the church after they come home from campuses.

¹⁶⁵ Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism*, 157.

1) The Case of CAFAN, Kumasi and Global Prayer Family, Cape Coast Temple

CAFAN is the abbreviation for Christ Academy For All Nations: a vibrant ministry founded by a former Prayer Secretary of GHAMSU KNUST Local. In an interview with one past member, who is also the founder of Global Prayer Family, Cape Coast Temple, he stated that the founder of CAFAN was a Methodist in the youth ministry and also a Brigade Officer. The founder of CAFAN studied Architecture at KNUST and thus stayed on campus a little longer than the usual four years for a bachelor's degree. He was the Prayer Secretary for GHAMSU KNUST Local (head of the Prayer Wing) for one academic year and aspired to be president of the union in the following academic year, but was not successful. While he was Prayer Secretary, he started a non-denominational campus fellowship which was basically composed of the Prayer Wing members and other GHAMSU members, who met weekly at Ayeduase Primary School near KNUST. Most of the fellowship members later became GHAMSU executives and thus the resultant ascendancy of CAFAN in GHAMSU. Somewhere around 2016, they secured a meeting place at Asafo in Kumasi, where they started Sunday church services as a denomination. They still had a cell on the KNUST campus whose members were being transported from campus to Asafo for church services and back. Eventually, many other GHAMSU members joined CAFAN as church members after school. As such, the early leadership and membership of CAFAN were predominantly GHAMSU KNUST members and executives.

The church is now doing very well as a vibrant prophetic ministry in Kumasi.

Additionally, the interviewee, who is also a former Prayer Secretary of GHAMSU KNUST Local and the founder of Global Prayer Family asserted his observation that, as a result of the drift of GHAMSU members to CAFAN and other prophetic churches, the Methodist Church and the leaders of the youth ministry became vigilant with regards to the kind of speakers, especially prophets, invited for GHAMSU programmes. They made sure afterwards that invited speakers were well known to them, especially as Methodists, so as to reduce the influential drift resulting from charismatic prophetism. Probably, that accounted for the stationing of ordained ministers as campus coordinators at universities with major GHAMSU locals. He mentioned that as a result of charismatic prophetism, the youth fellowship invite prophets to their programmes even more than the mother church does, and indicated that the taste of the youth ministry, especially in GHAMSU and MYF, has shifted towards the prophetic, miraculous signs and wonders. These, they pursue outside the Methodist church and return if they want to stay in the church. Making reference to the campus setting and the prophetic wave around it, he asserted that prophetism is not fully upheld by the Methodist Church, and that accounts for the youth drift to prophetic churches. He further disclosed that about 90% of the members of his Global Prayer Family are Methodists, with 40% of their total population as Methodist youth who desire to pray more.

2) *The Case of Christ Assembly Worldwide*

A break-away, similar to that of CAFAN, happened in GHAMSU UG-Local, in which a former President, now Pastor Julius, started a church with some GHAMSU members after he left campus. The church, called Christ Assembly Worldwide, is now a vibrant charismatic ministry in East Legon, Accra. It is referred to as the “Home of Perfection, Miracles and Prosperity.” The church, led by Pastor Julius, is known for its prophetic and healing services, crusades, teaching services, manifestations of the Holy Spirit, and its Herald of Glory devotional, among others.

Prophetic Ministers are Highly Admired and Followed by Methodist Youth

The result of the survey indicates that young people in the youth ministry of the Methodist Church Ghana admire and follow ministers who operate in the prophetic. Among the top 15 names collated as the favourite ministers of respondents, only four are Methodist ministers who appeared 8th, 9th, 10th, and 15th. The rest are leaders of charismatic and prophetic ministries in and outside Ghana. The first, whose name was mentioned seventy-two times, is Apostle Joshua Selman, the Nigerian founder and leader of Eternity Network International (ENI), who runs the popular teaching and prophetic programme called “Koinonia.” Following him in the ranking are Rev Eastwood Anaba (founder of Fountain Gate Chapel), Pastor Elvis Agyemang (founder of Grace Mountain Ministry and leader of the popular “Alpha Hour” online midnight prayers), Pastor Dr Mensa Otobil (founder of International Central

Gospel Church – ICGC), the Late Dr. Myles Munroe (founder of the Bahamas Faith Ministries International – Caribbean), Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams (founder of Action Chapel International), Evangelist Dag Heward Mills (founder of Lighthouse Chapel International/ United Denominations Originating from Lighthouse Group of Churches), Rev Stephen Obeng Amoako (an ordained minister of the Methodist Church Ghana), Very Rev George Wesley Tagoe (an ordained minister of the Methodist Church Ghana), Very Rev Prof. J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (an ordained minister of the Methodist Church Ghana and president of Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon) and many others in order.

It was realized that the few Methodist ministers whose names appeared in the ranking of the survey either operate in the prophetic ministry or have something to do with Pentecostalism. Notably, Methodist Ministers such as Rev Stephen Obeng Amoako, Very Rev George Wesley Tagoe, Very Rev Samuel Ofori Andam and Rev Hosea Osei are well known for their prophetic gifts and have been instrumental as speakers at GHAMSU and MYF programmes. Others mentioned are Very Rev Prof. J. Kwabena Asamoah Gyadu (a theologian and professor of Pentecostalism and African Christianity), Rev Dr. Kwaku Boamah (the campus coordinator for Accra, Northern Accra, Tema and Somanya Dioceses of GHAMSU), Very Rev Eric Gyan (the director for the Youth Development Ministry of the Methodist Church Ghana), Most Rev Dr. Paul K. Bofo (the presiding bishop of the Methodist Church Ghana), Rt. Rev Osei Safo Kantanka (a former bishop of Kumasi Diocese), Rev

Solomon Nortey (a circuit minister in Takoradi Circuit), and Rev Ebenezer Kusi Appiah (a former chaplain to schools and colleges).

It is remarkable to note also that the young people are exposed to the ministries of the prophetic figures in the ranking via the media, even though most of them are also invited as guest speakers of campus programmes. Audios and videos of their ministrations are readily made available on the internet and social media. Their books (both softcopy and hardcopy) are also not difficult to get. As well, their church services are streamed live online, which allows most of these young people to join virtually.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the results of the field study of the research, a critical analysis and a discussion of it. It brought to bear that charismatic prophetism has highly influenced the youth ministry of the Methodist Church Ghana. It has become attractive and appealing to them more than the traditional Methodist ways of doing things. Thus, they replicate charismatic prophetism in their worship in the church or move outside the church in pursuit of charismatic prophetism in the case of suppression of their operation in spiritual gifts and graces.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Summary

The research was conducted to assess the impact of charismatic prophetism on the youth of the historic mission churches with attention to the youth ministry of the Methodist Church Ghana. The main objectives of the study were:

1. To identify the conceptual, biblical, theological and traditional place of prophetism: The research work found the prevalence of prophetism over the centuries across regions and cultures, as proved through the Bible. As well, it was found that the African traditional setting with its culture, priesthood and causality mentality sets a basis for prophetism. This largely influences African Christian theology and contributes to the flourishing of prophetic churches in Ghana and Africa at large.
2. To study the dominant areas of influence of neo-Prophetic practices and theology on the youth in the Methodist Church: The research found that neo-Prophetism presents a youth-friendly environment with their theology and practice, such as their concept of enemy, prosperity, anointing, healing and deliverance, spiritual guidance, dynamic use of music in worship and extensive use of media.
3. To assess the appreciation and use of spiritual gifts and graces in the church: The research brought to light that though the use of spiritual gifts and graces is appreciated and allowed, a section of the youth, especially those who have been in campus

ministry before, see the church as restrictive of the full operation of their spiritual gifts.

4. To identify the emerging approaches to youth ministry in the Methodist Church, both at home and on campus: The research realized that the youth find a discontinuity from campus with the mother church because of the highly charismatic style adopted on campus. It therefore makes recommendations to the Youth Development Ministry of The Methodist Church Ghana pragmatic ways through which the Church and the youth can effectively respond to the undeniable influence of charismatic prophetism on the youth and the Church at large, especially the Wesleyan International Societies (WIS) approach adopted by the Church.

Questionnaires were administered online in collecting data from members of the various organization under the Youth Development Ministry of the Methodist Church – MYF, GHAMSU, AMB and MGF. The study employed random and stratified sampling techniques to select respondents for the survey. Participant observations and interviews were also conducted in the survey. Data collected were coded and edited with Microsoft Excel and analyzed using frequency and percentage distribution table, bar chart and pie chart.

Gleaning from the results of the survey, it can be said that charismatic prophetism has had impact on the youth of the Methodist Church Ghana mainly in the following ways: They have been influenced by the theology and practices of charismatic

prophetism; their taste has been shifted towards the prophetic; most of campus youth see the mother Church as conservative and restrictive of their spiritual gifts as a result of their exposure to the dynamics of campus ministry; and the youth go whatever extent to satisfy their hunger for charismatic renewal even if it means fellowshipping outside the church or completely breaking out of the church to join charismatic ministries or establish new ones. As a result of the influence of charismatic prophetism on the youth, they yearn for:

- i) Freedom to operate in their spiritual gifts, especially the prophetic
- ii) Creativity and dynamism in worship
- iii) Increased time for prayer and expository teaching of the word of God
- iv) Contemporary music in church worship
- v) Involvement in leadership roles in the Church

Recommendations for the Church

Based on the findings of the survey, the following would be recommended:

Managing Youth Charisma and Spiritual Expression in the Church

First, The Methodist Church Ghana must put in effort to accommodate and manage the charisma and exuberance of its youth. With the rise of prophetism, and for that matter Pentecostalism, which Gifford refers to as Ghana's new Christianity, its attractiveness to the upward mobile youth of the

church is undeniable. As a matter of urgency, the church must be keen in managing the charisma and youthful exuberance in this case, where there is an awakening awareness of the youth's possession and operation of spiritual gifts. This requires a delicate balance between encouraging their energy and enthusiasm while providing wisdom and guidance. Many a time, the youthful exuberance in which young people desire to manifest their gifts and graces is mistaken for pride and repelled thereof by church leaders, which most times leads to the exit of the youth from the church. Some church leaders and ministers sometimes think of the prophetic and other operations of the Spirit as something new in the church, so that they raise their brows at seeing its manifestation, especially among the youth. Instead of being extremely strict on the youth, the church can provide proper mentorship by pairing the youth with experienced leaders who can offer support, guidance and wisdom in mentoring and discipling them to help them grow in discipline and character, in addition to their gifts.

Promoting Intergenerational Engagement and Teaching on Prophecy

Secondly, the youth must be exposed to intergenerational connections in the church so as to promote understanding, respect and learning even in their exuberant operation of gifts. This will shape their self-awareness and cause them to recognize the impact of their charisma and its effects on others. They will empathetically connect with others and understand their perspectives. As the

young people are taught to learn in humility, they would learn to acknowledge the source of their charisma and the responsibility that comes with it. Prophetism, as proved by the study, is valid biblically and traditionally and even resonates more with the African worldview. As such, the Church must deliberately teach members about the phenomenon of prophecy to be fully accepted so that it may not be seen as “foreign” in the church. This can be tackled through the Weekly Bible Lessons (WBL) booklet, which is used for Bible studies in the Methodist societies. As well, the teaching services on the last Sundays of the month can be used to teach the subject of prophecy. Methodism itself emerged as a renewal movement with charismatic features in the eighteenth century under John Wesley, and Pentecostalism is believed to be an indirect product of Methodism.¹⁶⁶ Therefore, the youth must not be restricted in the operation of their spiritual gifts but rather be guided and managed. A ministry to young adults should respect their freedom to undertake and structure their search for reality in their own way.¹⁶⁷ Freedom to differ and to come to one’s own conclusions requires patience and less defensiveness by church leaders, parents and friends.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism*, 154.

¹⁶⁷ Clifford V. Anderson, “The Nature and Needs of Young Adults” in *Adult Education in the Church* eds. Roy B. Zuck and Gene A. Getz (Chicago: Moody Press, 1970), 38-42.

¹⁶⁸ John R. Jamison, “Freedom within the Church,” *Report from the Capitol* 22.1 (1976): 4-5.

Establishing a Recognized Prophetic Ministry within the Church

Moreover, it is recommended that The Methodist Church Ghana establish an order that recognizes prophets in the church, just as it has done for evangelists. Better still, a prophetic order can be merged with the evangelist order just to give recognition to those who are called to minister through prophecy. Methodists with prophetic gifts must be identified, selected and given proper training like the evangelists. When this is done, Methodists who possess the prophetic gifts would stay in the church and still operate with their gifts. This would eventually address the issue of inviting prophets from outside the church who come in to “infiltrate” the members and even influence some to join their churches. There are ordained Methodist ministers in the likes of those whose names appeared in the survey as favourite ministers of the youth, who are widely known for their prophetic gifts. However, not all people would pass through the seemingly long and highly competitive process, as described by some of the respondents, to become ordained ministers. Therefore, establishing an order to recognize trained prophets would help retain, especially the young ones with prophetic gifts, in the church. The survey revealed that some of these youth who exited the church are doing very well in ministry. It is also undeniable that others exit but later regret or find themselves in a mess. The Church has the mandate to protect this biblical and apostolic heritage of prophecy.

Encouraging Innovation and Dynamism in Worship Practices

Further still, there is a need for dynamism and innovation in the mother church's worship. It has been observed that at most times the Church is bent towards honouring tradition and heritage, even in its worship life, which is not out of place. However, while honouring tradition and heritage, attention must be given to dynamism and innovation, especially in worship, so as to allow the church to be responsive to changing times. There must be creativity in liturgy and liturgical prayers. The young people who have experienced the charismatic and dynamic nature of campus ministry become uncomfortable with the weekly monotonous word-by-word reading of liturgical prayers and the strict order of worship in the mother churches. This contributes to their exiting to charismatic churches where their dynamic and expressive worship needs are met. Using fresh language, flexible order of service and imagery in worship makes it more interactive and relatable to both young and old people. Participatory and inclusive worship as found on campuses makes the congregation feel part of the service and become responsive to it thereof.

Integrating Technology and Expanding Youth-Focused Worship Spaces

In addition, incorporating multimedia and technology into worship by the use of leveraging videos, projections and other digital tools would enhance the worship experience and help reach a wider audience. Worship must be intergenerationally planned to engage people of all ages. The research reveals a discontinuity in campus

youth ministry with the mother church. To curb this, the church must put in much more effort in seeing to the creation of youth services at more societies, especially in the urban areas, to allow the young people who are somewhat uncomfortable with the strict liturgy of the mother church to worship there. This would also help the church maintain an atmosphere for those conservative Methodists who feel uncomfortable with too much dynamism. The Pentecost International Worship Centre (PIWC), which was carved from the traditional Church of Pentecost assemblies to cater for the needs of the youth, foreign nationals and diplomats who want to use English as their medium of communication at worship and others who desire something different from classical Pentecostal worship style, has really kept up with youth retention and is emulative for other churches who yearn to curb youth drift from their churches to others. At this point, the Methodist Church Ghana needs to be commended for launching the Wesleyan International Societies, which will be tackled later.

Enhancing Youth-Focused Programmes in Prayer, Teaching, and Evangelism

Again, here is a need for increased time for prayer, teaching of the word and evangelism. From the survey of youth programmes both in the mother churches and on campuses as well as their programme flyers, it was realized that the youth are very interested in word, prayer and evangelism programmes. These are programmes which are organized in a specific routine such as weekly, monthly, annually and on a semester basis. The pursuit of

word and prayer from charismatic prophetic ministries indicates the longing of the youth for more of these. Favourite ministers of the youth, as discovered in the survey, are all fond of leading long expositional teachings, sometimes in series, and prayer ministrations. Thus, more of such should be organized in the church with the youth in focus. This will also give room for those youth with prophetic and other spiritual gifts to operate with their gifts. The hermeneutics and homiletics in a youthful context should also be given serious attention.

Incorporating Contemporary Music into Worship While Preserving Tradition

More so, the Methodist Church Ghana must allow for contemporary music to be incorporated into worship. From the results of the research, there is a desire for contemporary Pentecostal music in worship, which is a common trend among today's youth. This is because contemporary music resonates relevantly with their generation and makes worship feel more relatable by virtue of the energy, passion and enthusiasm that characterizes contemporary Pentecostal music which aligns with the youth's desire for vibrant and expressive worship. This in no way suggests the abolition or reduction of the use of hymns and canticles in worship. Rather, it suggests that more room be created for the incorporation of contemporary music into church worship especially with the youth in focus. It is rather unfortunate that the actions of some ministers and church leaders confirm what Hollenweger identified as a problem confronting mainline

churches in Europe, in which they considered Pentecostal songs as “cheap and inferior musical noises among Christians.”¹⁶⁹

Sometimes, the reactions of some ministers and church leaders make it look as if only hymns are allowed for Methodist worship services. One respondent complained about his society’s minister-in-charge’s insistence on the use of hymns for even praises and adoration, so to suggest that the use of Pentecostal songs gradually causes the loss of the Methodist identity. Nonetheless, hymns can be given contemporary renditions to suit the youth. As intimated by Omenyo, the insistence of mainline church leaders for charismatics to use their traditional hymnbooks has caused people to engage themselves giving new melodies to their traditional missionary hymns so that they can be appropriate for dancing.¹⁷⁰ Young people, especially those who have been exposed to vibrant charismatic ministry on campuses, would definitely quit the church just to enjoy good worship music in charismatic churches if met with such insistence of strict use of hymns in worship in their mother churches. Agordo noted that contemporary songs of praise and music in general constitute 75% of the total time of charismatic worship, while mainline churches devote 20.4% of their worship time to music.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 1997), 277.

¹⁷⁰ Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism*, 211.

¹⁷¹ A. A. Agordo, “Music in Christian Worship: A Comparative Study of the Musical Traditions of the Older Mission Churches and the New Churches in Ghana” PhD Thesis (University of Ghana, 1998), 99.

Investing in Modern Worship Resources and Developing Youth Worship Leaders

In addition, in creating dynamic and engaging worship atmospheres, Methodist societies must be committed to investing in modern musical instruments and technology. Some of these things attract the youth to charismatic churches. There are a lot of good worship leaders among the youth in the Methodist Church. These ones can be identified and charged with the duty of incorporating contemporary Pentecostal music into worship. This will also mean hiring good worship leaders and instrumentalists, in the absence of any in a particular society, to lead and also train other young people towards this bid.

Involvement of the Youth in Church Leadership

The youth must be actively involved in church leadership. Already, the Methodist Church Ghana's Constitution makes provision for conscious efforts to be made towards having at least 30% of the members of the Leaders' Meeting (the highest decision-making body in a society) as youth (i.e., 18-35 years).¹⁷² Many societies have taken this up and are doing well with its implementation. However, there is more room for improvement on the part of many other societies. Many Leaders' Meetings are still dominated by aged people who are not ready to step down or consider opinions from the youth at Leaders Meeting.

Due to their training with the campus GHAMSU system, most of the youth who had been leaders of huge numbers of

¹⁷² The Constitution of The Methodist Church Ghana 2023 Revised Edition, S.O 721 (5).

people in the universities feel redundant when not engaged in church and leadership. They are convinced that they have more to offer which are untapped by the mother church. When they consider their youthful colleagues being actively engaged in other charismatic churches, they feel they can do better, and this leads to their breaking away either to join such charismatic churches or form new churches which they can lead. To solve this, the capable and willing youth should be identified by church leadership, trained and handed over with certain duties in the church to handle. A ministry to young adults must be piloted by young adults. These are people who want to work through their problems in their own ways and to seek elderly advice of older adults when they feel the need to do so.¹⁷³ Appointing young adults to serve on committees of the Church and the willingness to take their views into consideration are signs of a church that cares for them in a mature way. Ministers to young people need to adopt a non-authoritarian approach without compromising the absolutes of the Bible. Taking the youth seriously means to take their problems, questions and viewpoints seriously, and hearing them out to work together with them for solutions.

The Case of Wesleyan International Societies (WIS) serves as a good example. The leadership of the Methodist Church Ghana must be commended for launching the WIS with the notion of creating a contemporary worship style that is appealing to the young people, professionals, non-Methodist and people of other nationalities, as enshrined in the 2023 revised edition of the

¹⁷³ Anderson, "The Nature and Needs of Young Adults" 42.

Methodist Church Ghana.¹⁷⁴ The preamble of the WIS Policy document reads: “The Church as a living organism gives room for the dynamism that becomes conducive to its members. The dynamism and worship styles have given rise to a worship model that appeals to young people, professionals, and non-Ghanaian nationals. This has made some Ghanaian churches establish model Churches to retain their young people and professionals who are often enthused by this dynamism and worship style.”¹⁷⁵ The content of the policy, if strictly adhered to in operation, would help address the challenging impact identified by this survey as posed by charismatic prophetism and address the needs of these upwardly mobile youth in the Methodist Church. However, it is recommended that appropriate youth-friendly and dynamic ministers be stationed at such special societies so as not to run back to the same old story. As well, since prophetism is widely accepted by the youth, it must be incorporated strongly into the WIS to revitalize their interests.

Final Words

In this book, the impact of charismatic prophetism on the youth ministry of the Methodist Church Ghana has been considered from both practical and conceptual approaches. Results from the survey indicate that the young people of the Methodist Church Ghana, and for that matter its youth ministry, have been highly influenced by the theology and practices of charismatic prophetism. It cannot

¹⁷⁴ The Constitution of The Methodist Church Ghana 2023 Revised Edition, S.O 701 (4).

¹⁷⁵ “Preamble” to Policy on The Wesleyan International Societies of The Methodist Church Ghana, 1.

be overemphasized that the young people are actively being influenced by Pentecostal charisma, spontaneity, creativity, and dynamism in worship. They are moved by the charismatic relational dimension that have proven to be the charm of its appeal. These young people; liberated, sceptical and searching, seek to know what lies ahead of them and so are attracted to prophetism. In their exuberance with diverse gifts, they crave for innovation and a greater involvement in the holistic ministry of the church. If the church would come to grips with this truth, wounds would be healed and the church would be made more attractive and worth craving for the youth. For the achievement of this bid, campus youth ministry must be given more interaction and attention towards discipling and transforming the youth into reasonable and stable members of the Methodist Church Ghana at home, during school and after school.

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