

PENTECOSTALISM, CHIEFTAINCY AND TRADITIONAL FESTIVALS IN GHANA: AN ANALYSIS OF ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN PENTECOSTALS AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN CHIEFS AND QUEENS (FCCQ)

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ABSTRACT

This article is an extract from my doctoral dissertation submitted to the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universitat in Frankfurt, Germany in June 2017.² The focus of this study is to give a descriptive analysis of engagement or collaboration between some Pentecostals and the Fellowship of Christian Chiefs and Queens (FCCQ) in Techiman in the Bono East Region of Ghana in West Africa. This engagement comes at a time that some Pentecostals have been castigated for their confrontational attitude towards the adherence of traditional culture in Ghana. The study, therefore, argues that the Pentecostals are in the engagement as ‘spiritual leaders’ who have been motivated by functional, theological and philosophical factors to respond to invitation from the FCCQ for the transformation of chieftaincy in relation to the Christian faith and practices. It concludes by arguing that the collaboration has brought about some appreciable level of transformation among members of the FCCQ in relation to libation, feeding and honouring the ancestors, and the custom of taking a stool wife for a new chief.

Key Words: Chieftaincy, Engagement, Pentecostals, Transformation

INTRODUCTION

Pentecostals in Ghana have been described or presented as people who oppose the re-evaluation of traditional culture.³ Charles H. Kraft has observed that this stance typifies much of Pentecostal ministry worldwide.⁴ For R. A. van Dijk, the chief message of Pentecostalism in Ghana is the contestation of tradition.⁵

However, in Techiman, Ghana, where this research was conducted, there is collaboration or engagement between some Pentecostals and traditional leaders. These traditional leaders and their

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² The title of the dissertation is, “Pentecostalism, Chieftaincy and Festivals in Ghana: Engagement between Pentecostals and the Fellowship of Christian Chiefs and Queens (FCCQ) as a shift in Mission Strategy.”

³ Abraham Akroong, “Traditional Religion and Christianity: Friends or Foes?” in *Trinity Journal of Church and Society* (Jan/July, 2000, Vol. x, No. 1&2), 54

⁴ Charles H. Kraft, “A Third Wave Perspective on Pentecostal Missions,” in *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1991), 308

⁵ Dijk A van Rijk, “Contesting Silence: The ban on drumming and the musical politics of Pentecostalism in Ghana” (African Studies Center, Leiden, the Netherlands, 2001), vol. 4, 31-64. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/9516> on 26/11/13. Dijk made this observation in his study of the tension and or clashes between some Pentecostals and adherents of tradition in parts of Accra over the celebration of a traditional festival called 'Homowo'.

functionaries double as members of the Fellowship of Christian Chiefs and Queen mothers (FCCQ). This engagement is the focus of this study. When and how did this engagement begin? Who are involved in it? What led to or brought about this current engagement? What do the participants in this engagement seek to achieve? The Christian traditional leaders in this engagement view themselves as people who felt marginalized or abandoned by the church due to the perception that they are linked to traditional religious beliefs and practices, even though they profess the Christian faith and are duly registered and recognized as church members. Their conviction is that in spite of their traditional leadership positions or roles they still have a stake in Christian spirituality.

Chieftaincy and Indigenous Religious Rituals in Techiman

There are religious rituals and/or rites associated with chieftaincy in Techiman. These rituals begin from the person's installation or enstoolment and continue till death or destoolment or abdication. The private installation processes of the new chief takes place in the ancestral stool room, where certain religious rituals are performed. These includes making the new chief sit on ancestral stool, libation prayers, animal sacrifices, and swearing of oath to the ancestors. These rituals are expected to serve as a bond between the new chief and the ancestors whom he represents before the people. It is also believed that the chief derives his power from the ancestors to enable him to mediate between the living and the ancestors. From there the chief continues to nourish his relationship with the ancestors and other state deities through libation and animal sacrifices on special occasions like the annual yam festival and other days when the need arises. For George B. N. Ayittey, such sacrifices to the ancestors enable traditional leaders "to obtain their [ancestors] blessings in tribal undertakings (as in war), mediate between them and his people, and to prevent them from punishing the tribe (because of disobedience or non-adherence to traditional customs) with pests, drought, sickness or hunger."⁶ In addition, the *Ɔmanhene* (paramount chief) and the grade 1 (divisional) chiefs are required by custom or tradition to appear before the state deity, *Ta Mensa*, to swear an oath declaring their dependence on the deity for guidance, strength and power. This is the more reason why some people including, Christians perceive chieftaincy in Ghana 'to be in bed' with traditional religious beliefs and practices.

Chieftaincy and festivals are traditions in which the dead, especially those identified and recognized as ancestors in the society, continue to play significant roles and even exert a lot of influence on the practices and observance by the living.

The Pentecostal Players or Participants

The Pentecostal players in this engagement include pastors and elders from the classical and neo-Pentecostal or Charismatic strands or orientations in Ghana. In this study they are simply referred to as Pentecostals. These players are known or called by their offices in relation to their divine calling and/or function: pastor or evangelist or prophet/prophetess.

A number of these church leaders are founders and leaders of various Pentecostal churches in Techiman. These churches are headquartered in Techiman with a few of them having branches elsewhere. Others are not founders but leaders of Pentecostal churches in Techiman with their headquarters outside Techiman.

The FCCQ was founded in 2006 in collaboration with only two Pentecostal players but their number rose to fifteen in 2007/2008. The number of Pentecostal participants in the subsequent years is shown in the table below:

YEAR	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
No.	29	35	32	30	30	30	32	25	23	23

*Table 1: Pentecostal Participants from 2010 to 2016. *No records for 2009.*

⁶ George B. N Ayittey, *Indigenous African Institutions* (USA: Transnational Publications Inc., 1991), 118-119

Genesis of the Engagement

The Pentecostals got involved in the activities of the FCCQ in response to a “Macedonian invitation.”⁷ In other words, they interpret their engagement with the FCCQ as responding to the “Macedonian invitation.” This means that their involvement in the activities of the fellowship was originally not planned, and not considered as part of their mission in Techiman. When the founder and president of the fellowship muted the idea of starting it he first invited two Pentecostals and sold the idea to them in order to solicit their spiritual and moral support. The two subsequently responded to his invitation and accepted the challenge to help him begin the fellowship. Those who joined afterwards also indicated that they accepted the challenge to support the fellowship in response to invitations from either members of the fellowship or their Pentecostal colleagues or players already engaged with the fellowship.

This could be interpreted as an indirect response to Opuni-Frimpong’s admonition to the church to extend its mission to include traditional leaders so as to help *nananom* (chiefs and queens) who want to respond to God’s love through Jesus Christ do so.⁸ The Pentecostals have, however, given a divine interpretation to the engagement as it is seen in their role as representatives of God in the traditional area. For them, it was a divine opportunity which was seriously considered and taken. In his response to the confrontational attitudes of some Pentecostals towards *nananom* and traditional festivals Rev. G. Nana Pesseh asked rhetorically, “Why do we abandon people who have organized themselves and sent out invitation to us for help? Even if they [*nananom*] are not sincere, should we (pastors) not approach or go to them?”⁹ Dickson had earlier called for a serious engagement between the Christian faith and African traditions in a creative way.¹⁰ Though unplanned, the courage to respond to such an invitation for collaboration with Christian traditional leaders who double as custodians of traditions and land is to be credited as a mark of creativity. This creativity could inure to the benefit of both the church and aspects of traditional culture. Theirs is not to espouse any theoretical or philosophical framework but to follow some basic and practically workable methods in achieving results.

Platforms for the Engagement

There are a number of platforms which are creatively been used by the Pentecostal players to engage members of the FCCQ. These include the FCCQ’s meeting times and venues; at the palaces of members of the FCCQ during the Annual Yam Festival, and occasional visitations; and via telephone. The FCCQ meets two times within a month. These meetings take place at two different venues: at the chapel of the Techiman Trinity Congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, and at the Forikrom sanctuary in Techiman. The FCCQ also plans and participates in special programs or meetings which take place at venues outside Techiman. The group meets to pray, sing praises, share experiences or testimonies, exhort one another with the word of God, and give money to finance its activities.

Other social and religious programs also serve as platforms for the Pentecostals to collaborate with the FCCQ. These include the celebration of funerals and marriages, out-dooring of a new chief or queen, and church related programs such as annual fundraising or harvest, commissioning, induction and ordination of pastors, and anniversaries. Both the Pentecostals and members of the FCCQ do participate fully in these activities and in addition to the individual donations the FCCQ as a body donates cash to the beneficiaries who are either members of the fellowship or one of the Pentecostals engaged with the fellowship. Sometimes the Pentecostals go the extra mile by officiating at the funeral of a member of the FCCQ.

⁷ I use the phrase ‘Macedonian invitation’ in reference to Paul’s vision in Acts 16:6-10, “. . .”Come over to Macedonia and help us”. . .”

⁸ Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong, *Indigenous Knowledge & Christian Mission: Perspectives of Akan Leadership Formation on Christian Leadership Development* (Accra: Sonlife Press, 2012), 253

⁹ Interviewed on 24/10/2013.

¹⁰ Dickson Kwesi A, *Uncompleted Mission: Christianity and Exclusivism* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2000), 86

The Annual *Bayedie* Festival¹¹ of the people of the Techiman Traditional Area has been creatively used as a platform to engage the FCCQ. The Pentecostal players do visit members of the fellowship at their palaces to participate in the celebrations. They pray with traditional leaders and their people, exhort them with the word of God, donate cash to support the celebrations, and organize and lead evangelistic crusade in collaboration with the FCCQ. They visit the palaces of members of the FCCQ occasionally to pray with them and counsel them. These occasional visitations, according to Prophetess Hannah Cobbina, enable the Pentecostal players to offer spiritual assistance to members of the fellowship or interact with them on a personal, one-on-one, basis.¹² Another platform which they use to engage the FCCQ on an individual basis is the telephone. They do occasionally call members of the fellowship on phone to pray for them and encourage them as and when the need arises.

Functions of the Pentecostal Participants

The Pentecostal players perform one major function in their engagement with the FCCQ: Palace prophets/prophetesses or prophets/prophetesses responsible for the spiritual welfare of these Christian chiefs and queens. This function is akin to that offered by some Israelite prophets who ministered in the palace as reported in the Old Testament. Examples of these prophets are Samuel and Nathan who ministered to kings Saul and David during their reigns in Israel. As palace prophets/prophetesses, they come into this engagement as representatives of God with a special mandate. Interestingly, it is not only the Pentecostal players who understand or interpret their presence as representatives of God, members of the fellowship acknowledge same. They therefore mediate between God and members of the FCCQ at both personal and corporate levels. They mediate the presence and assurance of God as bearers of his authority to help members of the fellowship deal with their personal and corporate aspirations and fears or challenges. As representatives of God, they have a duty to identify and help carry out God's purpose for the individuals and the entire fellowship.

Factors for Pentecostal Discretion

A number of factors contributed to their engagement with members of the FCCQ but only three would be discussed here. These include functional, theological and philosophical. Others not discussed in this article include historical, political, economic, social, and cultural. These factors show how discreet these Pentecostals have been in executing their mission mandate in relation to traditional leadership and festivals of their host society.

Functional

These Pentecostals have chosen to engage with members of the FCCQ on functional factors. The argument is that they find something good in chieftaincy and traditional festivals of their host society hence the engagement. One of the things which normally inform the posture of some Christians towards chieftaincy and traditional festivals in Ghana is the misconception or perception that everything about them is demonic and bad according to their own Christian standard. These two aspects of tradition have come under attack because the attackers have tended to put everything in one basket and labelled as bad. Rev. Nana Pesseh has rightly observed this,

Earlier we (Christians or pastors) put all [traditional culture] in one basket and we gave them one brand but I have seen that this will not help. If we take time to analyze them we will realize that some of the things have good intents.

Rev. Nana Pesseh's observation was in reference to the *Apoɔ*¹³ and *Bayedie* festivals of Techiman in which he and his colleague Pentecostals now find something good to warrant their support and that of the Christian

¹¹ Bayedie literally means "Eating of Yam." The Bayedie or Yam Festival is celebrated every year to thank God, the state deity and the ancestors for a successful farming season, and the harvesting of new yam, which is the staple food for the people of Techiman.

¹² Prophetess Hannah Cobbina is the founder and leader of the 'Mogya bi Akasa' (The Blood Speaks) Ministry in Techiman. She was interviewed on 7/01/2016.

¹³ *Apoɔ* means 'to renounce'. It is celebrated annually in March or April amidst drumming, singing and dancing. The purpose is to renounce sin and reconcile with one another.

community. He finds this functional argument “better than a total condemnation of the whole festival and/or withdrawing from participating in it.” Rev. Sikayena also argued that the chieftaincy institution has something positive to contribute to Christianity and therefore the need to support it.¹⁴ Bishop Thomas Yeboah Afari and Apostle Rockson also expressed similar sentiments or arguments in favor of their engagement with the FCCQ. These observations were made in reference to the socio-cultural and ‘political’ functions of chieftaincy and traditional festivals. They referred to the functions of chieftaincy and traditional festivals in the maintenance of social control and cohesion, and cultural identity of the traditional society. They also praised the chieftaincy institution for its role in maintaining law and order in the society through its judicial function. Again, they acknowledged the lobbyist role of the chieftaincy institution in Techiman. This has made it possible for the area to see appreciable level of development. They maintain that things have changed, and Christianity in Ghana has entered a new era in relation to its mission towards adherents and custodians of traditions. The era of putting everything about traditional festivals and chieftaincy into one basket and given one bad label belongs to the past. Their perception and understanding about chieftaincy and traditional festivals have changed. This has led to the realization that these two aspects of culture have something good in them hence the shift towards engagement.

In relation to cultural elements in a society, Peter K. Sarpong identifies three groups namely those that are good, those that are neutral or indifferent, and those that are downright evil.¹⁵ He encouraged the church to identify, appreciate and adopt the good ones for its worship and evangelization. On its part, the World Council of Churches (WCC) views the interpretation of culture ‘as a result of God's grace and as an expression of human creativity.’¹⁶ In relation to its goodness or otherwise, the WCC has this to say, “In any actual context, it must be stressed that culture is intrinsically neither good nor bad, but has the potential for both – and is thus ambiguous.”¹⁷ For Kwame Bediako, the good and bad aspects of our culture could be identified by making it pass through the prism of scripture just as light passes through a prism for it to be separated into the various colours.¹⁸

Theological

The change in attitude towards chieftaincy and traditional festivals was also informed by some theological factors. The study identifies these factors as the ordination, worship or service, grace, eternal or heaven and mission dictums. These were made known through their teachings or admonition to members of the FCCQ, and interviews.

For the Pentecostals, kingship and for that matter chieftaincy was ordained by God. Chiefs and queens in Ghana occupy stools or thrones which have been established by God. The biblical Israelite kingship is often quoted to buttress their stance. For them, God did not only ordain kingship, but he also gives the occupants of stools or thrones wisdom to lead their subjects and bring about progress and wellbeing. They also propound the same arguments in favour of traditional festivals. Examples of biblical festivals in the Bible are often brought to bear on the need to accept and participate in the traditional *Apoɔ* and *Bayedie* festivals. For example, the biblical feast of harvest¹⁹ is viewed as a semblance of the traditional yam festival which is celebrated at the end of the year to commemorate a successful farming season. The Pentecostals also view the traditional *Bayedie* festival as an occasion to thank God for good harvest through

¹⁴ Interview with Rev. Oti Sikayena on 21/12/15.

¹⁵ Peter K. Sarpong, *Peoples Differ (An Approach to Inculturation in Evangelism)* (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2002). Quoted in Samuel Ofori, *Relating to Our Cultures and Traditions as Christian Converts: Some Historical, Biblical and Theological Perspectives*. Paper presented at the Royals in Worship Conference (2014).

¹⁶ WCC, *Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today*. Preparatory Paper No. 1 at <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/mission-and-evangelism/cwme-world-conference-athens-2005/preparatory-paper-n-1-mission-and-evangelism-in-unity-today.html>

¹⁷ Ibid; See also Lausanne Movement, “The Lausanne Covenant, Evangelism and Culture” at <https://www.lausanne.org/content/covenant/lausanne-covenant>, 01 Aug. 1974 (Retrieved on 31/01/2017).

¹⁸ Kwame Bediako, *Jesus in African Christianity: a Ghanaian Perspective* (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1990). Quoted in Ofori, *Relating to Our Cultures and Traditions as Christian Converts*:

¹⁹ See Exodus 23:16; 34:22.

the provision of rains, sunshine and air for the crops, and strength for the numerous farmers to work on their farms.

The worship or service view upheld by these Pentecostals indicates that one can be a traditional leader and still worship or serve God in that capacity. The study has indicated earlier some Ghanaian Christians' position that chieftaincy is intermingled with idolatry and for that matter no one can be a chief or queen and at the same time worship or serve the Christian God sincerely or faithfully. But the Pentecostals in this engagement think otherwise. Again, they refer to biblical characters like King David and Queen Esther to augment the point that one can double as a traditional leader and faithful Christian. In other words, one can profess as a sincere Christian and still occupy traditional leadership position.

Another theological view the Pentecostals use in favor of their engagement with the FCCQ is the grace dictum, which they have explained to mean that God extends his gifts of grace to cover all manner of people including traditional leaders. According to Rev. Andrews Ankrah of the Christian Mission Church in Techiman, he once came across one *Okyeame*, spokesperson of *Omanhene* (paramount chief) who exhibited tremendous knowledge of the bible.²⁰ Bishop Thomas Yeboah Afari also gave an account of how, a former late *Omanhene* of the Techiman Traditional Area, Nana Kwakye Ameyaw, once shook hands with him as a child and charged the leadership of his former church, the Saint Francis Catholic Church at Krobo, near Techiman, to take good care of him because God was going to use him mightily in future.²¹ According to him, this happened after he had sung beautifully to the admiration of the audience during the dedication of the Saint Francis Catholic Chapel at Krobo. These examples have been interpreted as God's grace in the form of gifts working in the lives of the traditional leaders hence the need to collaborate with them for the good of both chieftaincy and the church. These serve to augment the theological view that gifts of grace do occur outside the church. Jean-Jacques Suurmond²² observes that theologians like Calvin²³, Hollenwenger²⁴ (within the Charismatic renewal) and the Lutheran Arnold Bittlinger²⁵ share a similar view. This gift of grace or charisma has been interpreted as the grace or ability that enables one to do something or perform an act even though the person might not have believed in Christ nor have a personal relationship with him. It is therefore, different from saving grace which is linked to salvation. It is different from grace that works in non-Christians to make them "anonymous Christians" in relation to salvation.²⁶

In the eternal or heaven dictum, the Pentecostals argue or posit that kings and queens could also be part of the kingdom of God or heaven. Particularly, those who have believed in Christ Jesus for salvation. This position is based on Revelation 21:22-24:

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.
And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God give it light,
and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, *and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it*²⁷ (ESV).

Above all, the Pentecostals in this engagement view it as a mission strategy. They take a cue from Pauline missionary strategy towards some aspects of traditional culture vis-à-vis his profound statement in 1 Corinthians 9:22,23:

²⁰ Interviewed on 26/11/13.

²¹ Interviewed on 04/02/14.

²² Jean-Jacques Suurmond, *Word and Spirit at Play: Towards a Charismatic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 198.

²³ See W. Krusche, *Das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nach Calvin* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957), 122-124.

²⁴ See W. J. Hollenwenger, "All Creatures Great and Small: Towards a Pneumatology of Life," in *Strange Gifts? A Guide to Charismatic Renewal* (Oxford: Blackwell), 41-53.

²⁵ A. Bittlinger, "A Charismatic Approach to the Theme," in *The Ecumenical Review*, 42, (1990), 107-113.

²⁶ Conway Eamonn, *The Anonymous Christian: A Relativised Christianity: An Evaluation of Hans Urs von Balthasar's Criticism of Karl Rahner's dictum of Anonymous Christian* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang GmbH Publishing, 1993); George Vass, *Pattern of Doctrines: The Atonement and Mankind's Salvation (Understanding Karl Rahner)* (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 1998), vol.4

²⁷ My emphasis. This scriptural reference is incidentally one of the biblical bases and more importantly the creed of the FCCQ.

To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings (ESV).

They argue further that Jesus did come to minister to sinners and not the righteous and for that matter Jesus' example compels them to seek and engage with all manner of people including traditional leaders. For them, engagement with the FCCQ gives them a divine opportunity to minister to members of the FCCQ and if possible win them for Christ, to learn and help members of the FCCQ undertake the necessary transformation regarding religious and cultural aspects of chieftaincy and traditional festivals.

Philosophical

The view among them is that a nation or society can know peace and be prosperous only when the righteous or godly people rule or are in leadership positions. This righteous or godly person, in their view, is none other than the Christian. In relation to traditional society, Pastor Roland states, "Righteousness exalts a nation and if the righteous in the royal setting are given a role to rule then the whole [traditional] state is blessed."²⁸ It is significant to note that Pastor Roland's observation is based on Proverbs 14:34, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (ESV).²⁹ Rev. Andrews Ankrah's, "own philosophy is that only Christians are to rule [as chiefs and or queens] so that they could rule in the fear of God."³⁰ This quality of the "fear of God", for the Pentecostals, has to do with respect and reverence for God out of which one acquires knowledge about God and the world, and wisdom. These have a practical implication on one's life and/or actions in relation to God and the social world. This means that the person who lives and/or acts in the fear of God pleases God and at the same time makes positive impact in society. Warren Baker & Eugene Carpenter take up the dictum of the "fear of God" and explain it as shown below:

The Hebrew verb *yare* can mean "to fear, to respect, to revere" (sic) and the Hebrew noun *yirah* "usually refers to the fear of God and is viewed as a positive quality. This fear acknowledges God's good intentions (Ex. 20:20). ... This fear is produced by God's Word (Psalm 119:38; Proverbs 2:5) and makes a person receptive to wisdom and knowledge (Prov. 1:7; 9:10)."³¹

From the New Testament's perspective, W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger & William White explain the "fear of God" as follows:

The Greek noun *phobos* can mean "reverential fear" of God, "not a mere 'fear' of His power and righteous retribution, but a wholesome dread of displeasing Him."³²

The view that godliness or righteousness translates into godly leadership and societal wellbeing has earlier been shared by a Ghanaian Pentecostal, Evangelist Paul OwusuTabiri, founder and leader of the Bethel Prayer Ministry International, in relation to the national leadership of Ghana as he observed, "Ghana will not experience the glory of God until the leader becomes a Christian. I have asked the Lord to intervene to give us (in the next election) his own choice."³³ The Pentecostals are in this engagement to help raise and/or nurture such righteous or godly traditional leaders who will in turn lead their subjects into prosperity and bring about transformation in chieftaincy and traditional festivals. A renowned Ghanaian Protestant theologian, Aboagye-Mensah envisaged a good society as a result of "more and more people living good

²⁸ Interview with Pastor Roland on 15/10/13.

²⁹ Interestingly Proverbs 14:34 is one of the scriptural basis of the FCCQ.

³⁰ Interview with Rev. Andrews Ankrah on 26/11/13.

³¹ Warren, Baker and Eugene, Carpenter (eds). *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* (AMG Publishers, 2003), 470-71. Quoted in Mike Bennett, *Fear of the Lord: What Does it mean?* <http://lifehopeandtruth.com/god/who-is-god/fear-of-the-lord> (Retrieved on 13/03/2017).

³² Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, William Jr. (eds). *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (1985). Quoted in Mike Bennett, *Fear of the Lord: What Does it mean?* <http://lifehopeandtruth.com/god/who-is-god/fear-of-the-lord> (Retrieved on 13/03/2017).

³³ Cited in Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1998), 85-86.

Christian lives”, or social transformation as a result of the “inward transformation of the individual.”³⁴ The church’s mission, according to him, has direct or indirect impact on the individual’s inward transformation.

To achieve the above, the Pentecostals have taken it upon themselves to encourage their members who are royals not only to accept traditional leadership positions but also to join the FCCQ in order to benefit from its programs.

The above reminds one of Plato’s philosophical ideas or theory of the ideal and just state which to him could be realized when the wise are in charge as rulers. This is otherwise referred to as the rule of the wise who Plato identified to be philosophers.³⁵ Plato’s theory is based on philosophical reflections. The Pentecostal view is in reference to religious people who are deemed to be righteous and therefore, morally qualified and appropriate to rule in order to have a just state or society. The Pentecostals believe that, “Morally righteous behavior has far-reaching effects – especially in the administration of justice and compassionate care of people. Both the moral behavior and the wellbeing of the people are exalted.”³⁶ For the Pentecostal participants, they have a duty to help raise such righteous leaders for both the spiritual and material wellbeing of the traditional society hence their resolve to engage with the FCCQ.

Platform for Transformation

The purpose for which the Pentecostals have chosen to engage members of the FCCQ is to help bring about transformation at both personal and corporate levels or ‘personal and land transformation’, and also to help bring about the necessary transformation in aspects of chieftaincy and traditional festivals in conformity with Christian ideals or principles and practices. In other words, the Pentecostals intend to use the engagement as a platform to facilitate personal and corporate or ‘land’ transformation, and transformation of aspects of traditional culture. One might view the purpose of this engagement as an indirect response to the clarion call by Nene Mate Kole, a past king of Ga-Adangme in Ghana, to the church to “act to purge the deep-rooted chieftaincy institution with the light of the Christian spirit.”³⁷ The Pentecostals have therefore, identified the chieftaincy institution as a new frontier for cultural evangelism hence the need to collaborate with the FCCQ.

Members of the FCCQ in collaboration with the Pentecostal players have attested to some form of transformation which has taken place in relation to some aspects of chieftaincy and traditional festivals in their areas. These include libation, *akondwa yere* (stool wife) and feeding and honoring the ancestors. As a result of the influence of the Pentecostal players, members of the FCCQ do not offer libation at any occasion not even the festive occasions. They rather offer Christian prayers in line with their religious faith and practice although libation is very central to the roles of the traditional leader with particular reference to their position as the priest of the people.³⁸ There is also no offering of libation during a meeting of the traditional leaders and their elders. Christian prayers are offered before and after the meetings. On her part, Nana Yaa Fosuaa³⁹ observed that she and her council of elders have a program where the council members and youth of the community offer Christian prayers for the protection and prosperity of the community. Nana Daniel Kwain⁴⁰ and his council have gone further to appoint one of his elders as a palace chaplain who is in charge of the religious programs, particularly prayers at the palace. In Ghana, chiefs and queens are obliged to perform libation to their ancestors occasionally and on festive days. They do so particularly to solicit the blessings and support of the ancestors to deal with certain challenges affecting them and the communities as a whole. The libation is performed in the stool room or ancestral shrine on special or festive occasions. But on ordinary days the libation could be performed anywhere in the palace. This does not

³⁴ Cited in Gifford, *African Christianity*, 72.

³⁵ For detailed discussions of Plato’s theory of the Republic or just state see Plato, *The Republic*. (transl. Benjamin Jowett) (South Bend, IN: Infomotions Inc., 1994)

³⁶ The ESV Bible’s commentary on Proverbs 14:34.

³⁷ Cited in Opuni-Frimpong, *Indigenous Knowledge and Christian Mission*, 88.

³⁸ K. A. Busia, *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1951)

³⁹ Interviewed on 24/02/2016

⁴⁰ Interviewed on 30/12/2015

mean that chiefs and queens have the preserve to offer libation. Other traditional religious functionaries such as priests, family heads, and traditionalists do perform libation as tradition and the occasion demand.

Another area of transformation which members of the FCCQ have achieved in relation to the traditional *Bayedie* festival is the feeding of the living instead of the dead. The norm among the people of Techiman during their annual *Bayedie* festival is the feeding of ancestors with portions of the new yam (cooked and mashed) and some fresh meat of the sacrificed animal. This practice, together with the performance of libation has been identified as either ancestral veneration or worship. In reference to whether the ancestors are venerated or worshipped, the FCCQ does not seem to care about the play of words in the debate. Members of the fellowship do recognize the contributions of their ancestors in time past and that they do not oppose their commemoration. For them, the dead, and for that matter, the ancestors have no religious part to play in the festival. It is the living who needs food and hence they are to be fed. Nana Asa Akompanin observes, "Feeding the dead or ancestors is out of place since they do not exist and, therefore, cannot eat. It is the living who need food to survive and gain strength to go about their duties and so must be fed."⁴¹ A visit to Krobo, where majority of the members of the FCCQ live and function as traditional leaders, during the Annual *Bayedie* Festival indicates that theirs is a feast enjoyed by the living. For instance, I observed that anyone who visited the palace had something to eat. A number of pastors who visited the place made sure they offered some prayers for the traditional leaders and community before leaving. The scene was more of a Christian festival. The above means that the religious connotation of the *Bayedie* festival which paid much attention to the ancestors and deities in these communities and has also been a stumbling block to many a Christian in respect of chieftaincy and traditional festivals, has given way to Christian prayer as far as members of the FCCQ are concerned.

Another norm or custom or tradition which has been part of chieftaincy is "*akondwa yere*" (stool wife) with its attendant polygamous challenges. The custom or tradition in Ghana is that some chiefs upon assuming their stools are obliged to take an additional wife known as "*akondwa yere*." Asante has observed that this tradition-cultural practice has made it difficult for the church in Ghana to accommodate the chieftaincy institution because for the church it promotes polygamy.⁴² With Christian beliefs and principles at the back of their minds, the male members of the FCCQ have stuck only to one wife as against the prevailing tradition or custom. None of them has "*akondwa yere*" as tradition demands.

Besides the theological argument against the practice, some have also argued against it from historical, moral and gender perspectives. Commenting on the need for the chieftaincy institution to take a second look at the issue of polygamy in relation to the National House of Chiefs' national Code of ethics for all chiefs, G. P. Hagan has this to say: "It should challenge chieftaincy to take a stand on whether polygamy has not outlived its usefulness as an instrument of power, and of security for stool occupants. And this should be the basis for getting our traditional leadership to promote gender equality in cultural practices and abolish degrading ritual practices."⁴³

CONCLUSION

The article has so far discussed the collaboration between some Pentecostals and the Fellowship of Christian Chiefs and Queens in Techiman. It gave an overview of the traditional religious background of chieftaincy in the Techiman Traditional Area for one to appreciate the relationship between chieftaincy and indigenous religion in the area. The article also considered the Pentecostal players in the engagement and the genesis of the engagement. It noted that the Pentecostal players are made up of pastors, prophets, prophetesses, elders and members of some Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Techiman and that they are in the engagement in response to what is termed the "Macedonian Invitation" from members of the FCCQ to help them transform the religious and cultural aspects of chieftaincy and festivals in their jurisdiction. The

⁴¹ Interviewed on 26/08/2014. Nana Asa Akompanin is the Kyidomhene (Rearguard chief) of the Techiman Traditional Area. He also double as the founder and President of the FCCQ.

⁴² Emmanuel Asante, "The Relationship between the Chieftaincy Institution and Christianity in Ghana," in *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development* (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2006), 241.

⁴³ G. P. Hagan, "Epilogue: The Way Forward-New Wines and Broken Bottles," in Odotei K. Irene & Awedoba, Albert K., eds., *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development* (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2006), 668.

Pentecostals were motivated by what the study identified as functional, theological, and philosophical factors in accepting the invitation for the engagement. It then concluded with some level transformation which had been achieved in the areas of libation, feeding and honoring the ancestors and the traditional custom of taking a stool wife by chiefs in the area. Members of the FCCQ have succeeded in replacing such traditional religious practices and customs with Christian practices. The article noted that this was as a result of the influence of the Pentecostal players in the engagement. It is important to note that this kind of engagement has good prospects for both chieftaincy and Christianity in Ghana. This could be taken up for study in future.

The Pentecostal view that religious people who are deemed to be righteous and therefore, morally qualified and appropriate to rule in order to have a just state or society could also be taken up for further study.

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INTERVIEWEES

1. Rev. Gaddiel Nana Pesseh (Pastor, Family Life Chapel International, Techiman)
2. Prophetess Haanah Cobbinah (Founder and leader of 'Mogya bi Akasa' (The Blood Speaks) Ministry in Techiman)
3. Rev. Oti Sikayena (Trinity Foundation Church, Techiman)
4. Bishop Thomas Yeboah Afari (Founder and leader of "Nyame Tease Church", Techiman)
5. Apostle Isaac Rockson (Founder and leader of "I Am Evangelical Ministry", Techiman)
6. Rev. Andrews Ankra (Pastor, Christian Mission, Techiman)
7. Rev. Roland Okai (Pastor, Revival Outreach Church International, Techiman)
8. Nana Yaa Fosuaa (Queenmother of Nsuta in the Techiman Traditional Area)
9. Nana Daniel Kwain (Chief of Aboabo in the Techiman Traditional Area, and vice President of the FCCQ)
10. Nana Asa Akompanin (Chief of Krobo and Kyidomhene of Techiman Traditional Area, and also Founder and President of the FCCQ)