

**DELIVERANCE PRACTICE IN CONTEMPORARY GHANAIAN
NEO-PROPHETIC CHURCHES**

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ABSTRACT

Exorcism in particular and deliverance in general are known phenomena in many cultures especially in Africa. Exorcism is the attempt to control and cast out or expel evil spirits or demons from a habitat, person, place or item. Deliverance, which is wider in scope than exorcism, is a process of being saved or set free. This is the process of liberating, rescuing or setting free a person, a place, an object from demonic or negative force domination. Because of The African Christian experience in general and the Akan worldview in particular which shall be discussed later in this work, the concept of exorcism becomes relevant as part of an understanding of deliverance within the neo-prophetic churches, hence the attention given to it in this work. This thesis is a study of the practice of deliverance in the church, an examination of The African Christian experience and understanding deliverance in people's real-life situation, and to make a case for The African Christian claim for the need for and the efficacy of deliverance with reference to the neo-prophetic churches in Ghana. The researcher adopted a phenomenological and a historical approach in data collection and analysis. Data were collected from both leaders and patrons of selected neo-prophetic churches in Ghana. This work concludes among others that the neo-prophetic ministries affirm strongly the importance of the ministry of deliverance in the whole ministry of the Christian church.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Dr. I. K. Fokuo of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Exorcism and/or deliverance is a phenomenon that is known in many cultures especially in Africa. Exorcism is the attempt to control and cast out/expel evil spirits/demons from a habitat, person, place or item. The notion and practice of exorcism presupposes a 'belief' in 'demons' and 'demon-possession'. *The New Catholic Encyclopaedia* defines exorcism as "The act of driving out or warding off demons or evil spirits from persons, places, or things that are, or are believed to be possessed or infested by them or are liable to become victims or instruments of their malice."¹ Deliverance, which is wider in scope than exorcism, is a process of being saved or set free. This is the process of liberating, rescuing or setting free a person, a place, an object from demonic or negative force domination. This thesis is a study of the practice of deliverance in the church, an examination of The African Christian experience and understanding deliverance in people's real-life situation, and to make a case for The African Christian claim for the need for and the efficacy of deliverance with reference to the neo-prophetic churches in Ghana. Because of The African Christian experience in general and the Akan worldview in particular which shall be discussed later in this work, the concept of exorcism becomes relevant as part of an understanding of deliverance within the neo-prophetic churches, hence the attention given to it in this work.

In recent times, deliverance has become a widespread practice among Christians in Ghana and other parts of the world. The Ghanaian sees God as a mighty warrior who fights to deliver his people, so He is called "Okofu kese" in Akan, or "Tatse" in Ga, meaning "the lord of war". This is worth mentioning because deliverance is perceived as warfare in which individuals who are in bondage to the devil are set free. This concept of deliverance is deeply embedded in the belief systems of the African. This is the reason why most, if not all indigenous families in towns and villages in Ghana have some form of family gods whom they call upon for deliverance and protection in times of calamity. All fishing family homes in Ghana, especially in Accra, have gods in their family homes; these are for protection and deliverance from the perils at sea. The belief

¹ New Catholic Encyclopedia, (Jack Heraty & Associates, Inc., 1967 (Palatine, III), 748.

in powers beyond human strength causes the African to look for what could be termed “extra *hewale*” (Ga meaning ‘power’, but in this context, “extraordinary power”). It is worth noting that in all the incantations made to the gods in both the Akan and Ga traditional religious practices, they recognize God as supreme. He is mentioned as the head of the hierarchy of powers. This concept of deliverance is depicted in Ghanaian songs especially those sung to the praise of the Almighty God.

“Megyefo kese, me ma wo mo.” meaning, “Well done, my great redeemer and deliverer.”
“Menma mewere emfi nea Ewuradi aye...” meaning, “I will never forget what the Lord has done because of where He delivered me from” (Akan language translation)²

Deliverance has become an essential part of what God, in Christ Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit, is doing in relation to the current revival and renewal in the Christian Church especially among Africans today. Deliverance is the process of casting out demons to set people free from different areas of bondage; such as sickness, failure in marriages, barrenness etc. in the Name of Jesus Christ. Demonized objects and places could also be delivered in the name of Jesus. There are several areas of bondage which include bondage to sin, Satan/demons, occult, certain religious practice, etc. This then means that deliverance covers a wider area than exorcism. The Greek word used for “casting out” demons is *ekballo* which means “throw out with force”, “drive out forcibly”, “expel”, “drive out” or “cast out”. Although, in a sense, deliverance from demonic bondage could be described as some form of Christian exorcism, yet it can be distinguished from magical exorcism which uses symbols, objects and incantations, Deliverance needs to be done within the context of Scripture, taken from the example and promise given by Jesus Himself; these examples were followed by the apostles and other disciples (cf. Acts 16: 16-18; Acts 8:4-7).

The purpose of deliverance is to offer spiritual liberty and/or freedom which translate into the physical realm to those who are in diverse kinds of bondages. The kind of bondage that can be described as possession, oppression, sickness, addiction, depression, etc., can be identified as demonization especially if the cause is apparently demonic. The act of casting out demons or expelling evil spirits is not unique to Christianity. It is practised in several religions but is best

² Both citations are in the Akan language and translated by me.

known in the Christian context³. Almost every religion has preventive techniques which are performed to ward off “evil spirits”. The warding off of “evil spirits” in this way is described generically as exorcism.

The need for deliverance as a result of the presence of demons and their possession is not limited to primitive societies; it is popular in the world today. This is because societies are deeply rooted in their belief systems. Even though it is said that “Africans are notoriously religious,” (Mbiti, 1969, p1) these beliefs are not left within the walls of Africa, but are prevalent in other places, and widely scattered around the globe.

The Bible takes the devil and demons seriously. The scriptures present demons or evil spirits as a living reality. Besides, demonization is also treated by the Bible as a tragic reality (Mk. 1:21-28; 5:1-20; Matt 15:21-28; Lk.13:10-17; Acts 16:16-18: etc.). Therefore, dealing with demons or with demonization is not a superstitious misconception or a phenomenon that can be explicated in contemporary scientific or, even psychological terms. In fact, the deliverance ministry deals with biblical and spiritual rather than scientific reality or truth. The ministry of Jesus of Nazareth and that of His followers affirmed the existence of Satan and his angels (Matt.25:41 cf. Rev 12:7). Both Jesus and His followers dealt uncompromisingly with the devil, knowing that God’s power was far greater than that of Satan. Included in the Johannine theological interpretation of God’s salvific act accomplished through Jesus the Christ is the destruction of the kingdom of Satan: “The reason the son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). The followers of Jesus cast out demons only through the delegated authority of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 10:1; Mk.16:17; Lk.9:1; 10:17-19: cf. Acts 8:7).

Deliverance is a ministry which belongs to the Church. It goes hand in hand with preaching, teaching and healing. The deliverance ministry, like those of preaching, teaching and healing, is embodied in the Great Commission recorded in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt.28:18-20; Mk.16:15-18; cf.Mk.3:14-15). In the Markan version of this commissioning package, the “casting out of demons” is a vital component of what Jesus commanded His followers to do: “And these signs will accompany those who believe; in my name they will cast out demons...” Mark 16:17 (Emphasis added). The plural pronouns, “Those” and “They” in Mark 16:17 suggest that

³ www.religionfacts.com/exorcism

deliverance or casting out demons is not just a ministry for individuals, but for the whole Church, the people of God.

The phenomenon of healing and deliverance has become very common and central to the religious activities of most churches in Ghana. Johnson Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu explains healing and deliverance from a charismatic point of view 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.⁴

From this charismatic Pentecostal perspective, healing and deliverance, is considered to be an avenue as well as the practice which employs certain Christian religious activities with the purpose of responding to the human existential needs. According to Asamoah-Gyadu, "the Pentecostal healing and deliverance ministry has become popular in African contexts such as Ghana because it takes the African worldviews of mystical causality seriously. This Christianity promises Christian alternatives to the search for security that drives people into the courts of other religious functionaries."⁵

The objective of this thesis was to find the relevance of exorcism as an alternate solution to orthodox cure (medical services at the hospitals), especially when there is no cure or where the source of ailment is suspected to be 'spiritual'. It is also to establish the legal grounds or otherwise that demons have to torment people, and examine the practice of neo prophet healer/healing churches.

In Ghana, one strand of Pentecostal Christianity which is characterized by intense healing and deliverance (or exorcism) services is the prophetic healing churches which Omenyo and Atiemo (2006) call the neo-prophetic churches. These churches are mostly led by a prophet, around

⁴ Kwabena, J. Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2005), 165.

⁵ Kwabena J. Asamoah-Gyadu, 'Christ is the Answer': 'What is the Question?' a Ghana Airways Prayer Vigil and its Implications for Religion, evil and Public Space', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 35 (2005), 93.

whom the whole ministry revolves. The leaders possess prophetic charisma, seem to have the ability to 'see' and they project themselves as the ones who have great spiritual power and capable of performing extraordinary feats and are regarded by their clients as people 'who see'.⁶ Omenyo and Atiemo intimate that the teachings and practices of these movements include the use of local language for communication, the practice of *akwankyerɛ* (guidance/leading/direction/ways of tackling or dealing with problem) and engagement in various forms of exorcism and healing. There is the appropriation of the traditional concept of *Ɔtamfo* (human enemy) which seems to include not only evil spirits and witches but also human beings that are suspected of envy or jealousy.

A research visit to most congregations and programs of the neo-prophetic churches reveals the extent to which the practice of healing and deliverance has become part and parcel of the church's life. Almost all meetings of the churches including week day meetings and the Sunday divine service are all used to pray and cast out demons from people. One channel through which they also make those activities known to the public is the use of media such as the television, internet and the radio.

In this study, the researcher examines the practice of deliverance in Ghanaian neo-prophetic churches. The research provides an understanding into the African conception of the human and demonstrates how the human can be restored through an elaborate method and practice of deliverance. The motivation to research on deliverance activities of the neo-prophetic churches was borne out of the realization that in the era in which we live, belief in the existence of God is being relegated to the background and the existence of demons is being denied. It is my intention to prove otherwise especially by examining the practice of exorcism from an African context particularly within the neo-prophetic churches in Ghana. In looking at the prevailing nature of the deliverance ministry among churches in Ghana today, Emmanuel Martey has argued that there is the need for pastors and ministers of the Gospel and, indeed, all Christian leaders, to discuss this ministry and endeavour to establish its biblical and theological bases; and, document its relevance for contemporary society.⁷

⁶ Cephas N. Omenyo, and Abamfo Ofori Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space: The Case of Neo-Prophetism in Ghana", *Ghana Bulletin of Theology*, Vol. 1. No.1 (2006), 55 – 68.

⁷ Emmanuel Martey, "Deliverance Ministry in the Church: A Theological Assessment", *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology* Vol IX. January, (1999), No. 1, 20.

1.2 Demonic possession

This subject of demonic possession has been an issue that has confronted the human race since the Old Testament times. In this age the media, both electronic and print presentations, is punctuated with matters of exorcism, deliverance or spiritual warfare in current Christian discussions. It appears to me that the electronic media in Ghana that broadcast church activities especially those of Pentecostal and Charismatic circles have about half of their broadcast time dominated by the issues of deliverance.

This fact notwithstanding, this is an area that has suffered debates, arguments and disagreements and sometimes total denial, holding that belief in the existence of spirits and demons is a figment of the mind. This unfortunate situation is not only from without the Christian circles but much so from within. Some totally deny the existence of demons while some say engaging in exorcism is like troubling quiet waters or waking up sleeping dogs or sleeping forces. Some have branded exorcism as an unnecessary venture and others believe this exercise carries more negative than positive effects.

Some think these experiences must be empirically proven especially in this age when men are skeptical about the existence of the super natural. Paul Allen rightly puts it this way:

It is now common belief that the discipline of theology has been side-lined [...] First there are the practical effects stemming from the rise of agnosticism and atheism, testimony to a very widespread skepticism concerning the plausibility of God. This 'metaphysical' skepticism is linked to empiricism, the epistemological view that knowledge is that which is known only through the five senses.⁸

The age in which we live queries the objective reality of angels and demons; some treat these as belonging to credulous belief in and reverence for supernatural beings, and ancient thinking. Paul Rhodes Eddy and James K. Beilby affirms that “commonly, Western academics dismiss contemporary belief in angels and demons as an unfortunate idiosyncrasy associated with such questionable belief systems as the New Age movements of religious fundamentalism”⁹ Another

⁸ Paul Allen, *A Guide for the Perplexed*, (T & T Clark International: London, 2012).

⁹ Rhodes Eddy and James K. Beilby, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: MI, 2012) 17.

profound observation was made by William James in reference to the stubbornly, unreceptive stance of those who dismiss the existence of spirits.

The refusal of modern “enlightenment” to treat “possession” as a hypothesis to be spoken of as even a possibility, in spite of the massive human tradition based on concrete experience in its favor, has always seemed to me a curious example of the power of fashion in things scientific. That the demon-theory [...] will have its innings again is to my mind absolutely certain. One has to be “scientific” indeed to be blind and ignorant enough to suspect no such possibility.¹⁰

It is worth emphasizing, at this point, that Deliverance or casting out demons is not a Spiritual gift (it is not a part of the biblical list of gifts for believers). It is therefore not a peculiar ability given only to a few special individuals or extraordinary Christians, but rather, all believers are commanded to do it (Mk. 16; 17)

1.3 Research Questions

- i) Three research questions will guide this study on the practice of deliverance in the neo-prophetic churches in Ghana: What are the various components and basis of a deliverance ministry in Ghanaian neo-prophetic churches? This question focuses on the practice of deliverance.
- ii) What are the impacts of deliverance ministry and or exorcism on the neo-prophetic churches in Ghana? Here the attention is shifted to how the practice contributes or not to spiritual health of the community (and or individual).
- iii) What are the challenges of deliverance and or exorcism in the ministry of neo-prophetic churches in Ghana? Finally, this question intends to focus on identifying problematic issues and recommendations.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

There are three main objectives to this Thesis:

¹⁰ William, James. *Essays in Psychical Research*. Harvard University Press: 1986 pg. 357

- i. To ask and document the various ways and methods used in exorcising demons in Ghanaian neo-prophetic churches,
- ii. to examine the impact of the deliverance ministry on the Ghanaian neo-prophetic churches and to document,
- iii. to investigate and to document the challenges that confront neo-prophetic churches in the practice of exorcism and vice-versa.

1.5 Scope and Focus of the Study

This research is limited to the practice of deliverance in the neo-prophetic churches in Ghana. Currently, the neo-prophetic churches are some of the churches that are receiving a great deal of attention in religious studies in Africa and beyond. They are also popular as a result of the use of the mass media. The movement also attracts a great number of people into their meetings. The researcher can confidently say that a single meeting of the prophetic ministries in Ghana can attract over 5,000 members. The work also places into perspective how the worldview of the African, particularly the Akan, influences the issues of healing and deliverance among Christians in Ghanaian. The Akan make up the largest ethnic group in Ghana and also exists in parts of the Ivory Coast. The researcher is of the view that what is found or discussed about them can in many ways be applicable to other ethnic groups in Ghana.

1.6 Research Methodology

Generally, this is a qualitative study and will employ a phenomenological and a historical approach. A phenomenological study involves the identification of a shared experience and trying to understand the essence of a phenomenon by examining the views of people who have experienced that phenomenon.¹¹ Again, the phenomenological method focuses on the essence or structure of an experience, also forms part of a historical method and uses observation as a tool for data collection. Phenomenology seeks to address the foundational question of, “What is the

¹¹ J. G. Donalek, *Demystifying Nursing Research: Choosing among Qualitative Traditions*. Urol Nurs. Vol. 24 Issue 5, (Oct 2004)

meaning, structure, and essence of lived experience of a phenomenon by an individual or many individuals, and tries to gain access to the individual's life-world (his or her world of experience where consciousness exists)."¹² This approach has helped the researcher to discover the extent to which the phenomenon of exorcism is being practised by the neo-prophetic churches in Ghana.

The historical method is employed in this study for two reasons. In the first place, the researcher examined secondary data consisting of existing literature on the concept and practice of deliverance and or exorcism. These included published, unpublished books, journal and internet articles. This has helped the researcher to understand how the phenomenon of healing and deliverance became part of Christian practices, and why it has continued as an integral part of some Christian activities. Secondly, the historical method was adopted in order to help examine the phenomenon of deliverance and exorcism in the neo-prophetic churches.

The researcher's interest in the area of deliverance and exorcism began as part of his own ministerial experiences from the 1980s. These experiences have helped to understand the extent to which the church has handled the issues of deliverance and or exorcism in the last three decades. The method used involves the examination of reports on exorcism and or deliverance. The method enhances understanding of the history of the neo-prophetic churches as well as the theological perspectives within which deliverance and or exorcism is practised.

1.6.1 Data Collection

The data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The researcher in gathering the data from the primary source employed participant observation, personal interviews and purposive sampling techniques. Appendix I contains the profile of respondents who were interviewed by the researcher, while Appendix II contains the interview guides adopted by the researcher.

The active participant observation method, a more comprehensive method, permits the researcher to be "socially, personally and spatially integrated into the group, which he was at the same time studying."¹³ Thus, the researcher integrated himself into the community and observed,

¹² Michael Tagoe, *A Hand Book for Writing Research Proposals* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 2009), 53.

¹³ Tom K. B. Kumekpor, *Research Methods and Techniques of Social Research: Sections 1 - 3*, (Accra: Ghana, SonLife Press & Services, 2002), 74

participated and recorded deliverance and or exorcism sessions from his own experience from within. The researcher also witnessed various deliverance sessions in churches. This was done in order to keep abreast of the procedure and forms of deliverance and or exorcism ministration.

i. Primary Sources

The researcher employed structured and unstructured interviews to collect data. The personal interviews included having a personal interaction ‘one on one’ with a respondent. Interviews enabled the researcher and respondents to develop a personal friendship and rapport¹⁴ which also created a conducive environment for the researcher to meet the respondents face to face to elicit relevant pieces of primary information. Better still, the researcher by this method interacted and sought further clarification to validate pieces of information already gathered. In such interviews, permissions were sought from the respondents to record relevant parts of the interview. As an essential method of the research, it offers the researcher the opportunity to seek the meaning or clarity on some of the symbols and acts performed during the deliverance and or exorcism. With the use of this approach, a broader perspective was gained about the issues that came under discussion. This enabled the researcher to arrive at findings that represents the views of members across board.

Informal conversations, which in the context of this study took the form of unstructured interviews, although time-consuming, made it convenient to access relevant information otherwise difficult to obtain, in a much more relaxed manner.

ii. Secondary Sources

Considering the focus and scope of the study, the researcher had to consult different secondary sources including books, journals and so many other articles relevant to this work. These were published materials of scholarly work.

¹⁴ Kumekpor (ibid.)

iii. Samples and Sampling Procedure/Techniques

In this study, the researcher employed the purposive sampling technique to select his respondents. In his work, *Research Methods Techniques of Social Research*, Tom K.B. Kumekpor states that in purposive sampling,

“the units of the sample are selected not by a random procedure, but they are intentionally picked for study because they satisfy certain qualities which are not randomly distributed but they are typical or they exhibit most of the characteristics of interest to the study.”¹⁵

The categories of people that were interviewed include; pastors, members of deliverance team, church leaders and members. These respondents were selected on the basis that they possessed relevant information and had opinions that were considered to be essential to the study.

iv. Data Analysis

In evaluating the data that were gathered, a qualitative analysis was employed. This method relies on the quality of the information based on its relevance to the subjects being studied rather than on the quantity of responses to a particular issue.¹⁶ That is, instead of drawing from a large representative sample, the researcher sought to acquire in-depth information from a relatively smaller group of people. This method of data analysis was also employed since the researcher had to dwell largely on interviews which were intended to elicit detailed information from individual respondents.

1.7 Literature Review

Deliverance and or exorcism are the main themes considered essential to this research. These main themes have been reviewed during scholarly discussions in their distinctive categories. For the purpose of this thesis, literature on general and specific areas of deliverance and or exorcism was explored.

¹⁵ Kumekpor, *Research Methods and Techniques of Social Research*, 72.

¹⁶ Barbara M. Wildemuth, ‘Understanding and Evaluating Qualitative Research’, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 63 (1995), 881.

1.7.1 Deliverance or Exorcism in the Church

Although the NT in general, and the Gospel writers in particular, show little interest in demons for their own sake it is clear (eg. from the Beelzebul Controversy (Mk. 3: 22-27 and Mt. 12: 22- 30/Lk. 11: 14-23) that evil spirits/demons are the agents of Satan whose chief role is to cause illness through dominating or possessing individuals.

In *Demons and Deliverance*, H. A. Maxwell Whyte demonstrated that demons were real as one who was engaged in the field of deliverance. He answered questions such as:

- What exactly is a demon?
- How does a person come under demonic influence?
- Can we inherit evil spirits from our ancestors?
- Can a believer be possessed?
- How can Christians resist the powers of darkness?
- Can just anybody cast out a demon?
- Are there any dangers in casting out demons?¹⁷

On the same subject, Dave Miller, in *Exorcism, Demons, Witchcraft and Astrology*, cited many scriptural references to what the Bible says about demons. He argued that they were spirits, unclean, evil and malevolent and were associated with Satan. They were intelligent, conscious and possessed a true knowledge of God and Jesus Christ. They afflicted people with pain and diseases, of which those possessed, showed manifestations. He dismissed the notion that demons had never existed and that it was sheer superstition.¹⁸

He asserts that the death and resurrection of Jesus and the establishment of his kingdom effected the limitation to Satan's influence on humankind and that direct supernatural influence over a human being ended. For that reason, there is no more demon possession of human beings. He refuted claims made in this age of deliverance stating that Jesus did all his deliverances publicly but those who did it in contemporary times did it in hiding, and those done publicly too were

¹⁷ Whyte, Maxwell H. A. *Demons and Deliverance* (New Kensington, PA.: Whitaker House, 1989).

¹⁸ Michael Harper, <http://www.swordofthespirit.net/bulwark/july2011>

unconvincing; concluding that the ability to cast out a demon had ceased. He quoted Mark 16:17 and 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 to support his claim.¹⁹

The work of Whyte and the issues raised therein are helpful to the researcher to address the theme of this thesis. This is because Whyte touches on very crucial issues about what should go into deliverance, preparation and the act of deliverance.

However, the researcher reached a conclusion which was the exact opposite of Miller's, though he has knowledge of what Bible says about demons, their activities have not been thoroughly researched by him.

A counter reaction to Miller's arguments was in Michael Harper's book *Spiritual Warfare* which revealed occultism in the face of the rising interest in it and its practice. He made it emphatically clear that the unseen world, Satan, the supernatural was real and undeniable. He, however, sounded the warning that one must not, for the sake of the fact of the strong existence of the unseen powers of Satan and his cohorts attribute to them more recognition for evil than was their portion. This is profound because, in Africa, especially in Ghana, because of the undue belief in mystical causality, every calamity or tragedy that occurs is blamed on unseen forces. He provided an exposition on how to do warfare. He gave knowledge of defensive and offensive weapons available to the Christian in the combat with Satan.

In his book *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Church*, Graham H. Twelftree tackled the problem of exorcism. He examined the place of exorcism among early Christians, exorcism in the New Testament and he answered the question concerning why the Pauline letters and some earlier writings about Jesus never portrayed Jesus as an exorcist. He also examined the role exorcism played in the life of the early church and the practice of exorcism among them; he then touched on the various forms of attending to exorcism in the New Testament.²⁰

Further, Twelftree examined the ways in which the New Testament revealed the disciples as judiciously imitating Jesus in the practice of exorcism and the differences that were evident. He further related the practice to exorcists who were also on the scene during the time of Jesus; therefore, the question of method of practice was seen in Jesus' role, determining the method for the early Christians.

¹⁹ Dave Miller, <http://www.apologeticspress.org>

²⁰ Graham H., Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007).

Thus, Twelftree helpfully gives leads to earlier references to the practice of exorcism. He explored the field of exorcism to make one aware of the choices the early Christians (who engaged themselves in exorcism) could have made.

Finally, his writing establishes the fact that deliverance is not a new-found phenomenon but one that is older than the church itself.

In *Exorcism and Deliverance Ministry in the Twentieth Century*, James Collins, makes an Analysis of the Practice and Theology of Exorcism in Modern Western Christianity. James made an interesting assertion that exorcism and / or deliverance was driven by enthusiasm. One point of great interest to this topic was his attempt to dichotomize and define the terms exorcism and deliverance. This is very profound because the two have been considered synonymous to each other. Ironically, he finds it necessary at some points to bring them together as exorcism and or deliverance. This research will contend in this work, that this is an interesting point.²¹

Another school of thought on the exposition of exorcism and or deliverance by John Christopher Thomas' book, *The Devil, Disease and Deliverance*, traces the origins of disease in the New Testament thought; he looked at New Testament theology of the devil, disease and the issue of deliverance. He considered the effects of these thoughts and came up with "implications" for Pentecostal theology and ministry.

He embarked on his exploration navigating through New Testament scripture that touched on the subject: the book of James, the Pauline epistles, Johannine literature, the Synoptic gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles.²²

This book was helpful to this research because the connection between the devil and his demons and sicknesses, illnesses, catastrophes, accidents etc., healing and liberation been one of the major theological issues that humankind has been grappling with. The author proffered knowledge of the source of illnesses within the New Testament. This gives one understanding of scriptural sources upon which the claim for deliverance is anchored.

One most profound book on the subject under discussion is Opoku Onyinah's book *Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana*.²³ This book was also a great source

²¹ James Collins, *Exorcism and Deliverance Ministry in the Twentieth Century: An Analysis of the Practice and Theology of Exorcism in Modern Western Christianity* (Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2009).

²² John Christopher Thomas, *the devil, disease and deliverance: origins of illness in New Testament thought*, (Sheffield, Eng: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

²³ Opoku Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana* (Dorset UK: Deo Publishing, 2012).

of information for this thesis since it placed the subject in the African/Ghanaian context. As a Ghanaian theologian the author spoke the African theological language. The researcher chooses to call him a mother tongue theologian. As an Akan he has a large register of vocabulary of the Akan dialect which enables him to analyse terminologies correctly. This work provides an in-depth knowledge of Akan theological understanding and approach to deliverance. The author emphasized the fact that the quest for solutions to predicaments drove the individual to pursue deliverance. The book continued to handle the issue of the conflict that sometimes existed between exorcism as practised by Christians and the culture of the Akan families; a problem which the Gas in Ghana also face.

Further, the author tackled witchcraft as a practice among the Akan and the anti-witchcraft shrines which sought to exorcise or deliver their clients. He broke down the Akan cosmological context into contents which made it easy to comprehend. This work is detailed enough to help with information needed for this research work on the worldview of the main ethnic group in Ghana, the Akan. In addition, the author traced the history of Christianity and exorcism in Ghana; this enables the researcher to put together essential information on the subject of exorcism historically and contextually.

In *Unbroken Curses*, Rebecca Brown and Daniel Yoder identified unbroken curses as one of the sources of the problems that people suffer. Many professing Christians are bedevilled by events that cannot be explained – poverty, calamities, and a variety of adverse circumstances; these can only be solved by breaking the curse through deliverance.²⁴

In another work, *Prepare for War* Brown claims to provide an in-depth knowledge of occultism, demonic activities and influences. The book educates the Christian on how to stand his or her grounds and triumph over the devil. This is needful because it gives insight to how deliverance is practised.²⁵

The researcher found this book interesting because curses are well known by every African, especially an Akan, whether the person is a Christian or an idol worshiper. Their effects amongst the mentioned ethnic tribes were feared and one tries not to fall a victim to a curse.

²⁴ Rebecca Brown and Daniel Yoder, *Unbroken Curses*. (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1995).

²⁵ Rebecca Brown, *Prepare for War*, (New Kensington PA: Whitaker House, 1997).

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study is important because it brings out the principles upon which deliverance in the neo-prophetic churches is premised and would also help look at some claims of the cure one gets when these evil spirits are evicted. This is important because many have denied the existence of the demonic world, and insisted that claims of cure through deliverance are not genuine. A lot of people including theologians and even ministers of the gospel have neglected this field, branding it as a superstitious endeavor without careful consideration.

This thesis asserts that belief in the existence of the supernatural drives individuals to seek spiritual interventions to problems that are sometimes unsolvable by the sophisticated scientific applications. This quest to find the source and solution to problems of sickness and failed business etc. is the basis of exorcism. The deliverance ministry has its agenda, the identification, breaking the powers and the expulsion of demonic forces through the power of God in the name of Jesus the Christ for the liberation or deliverance of victims of demonic influences. It will be revealed that the African traditional religious beliefs have helped in shaping African Christian theology of deliverance. Further, it will be averred that there are claims of the existence of demonic activities, and of the potency of deliverance.

1.9 Organization of the Study

This research work is organized under five broad chapters. Chapter One deals with the introductory issues by giving the background to the study, the statement of the problem, research questions, aims and objectives, scope and focus of the study and the methodology adopted to achieve the objectives of the research as well. The literature on the subject under study would also be examined. This is followed by organization of chapters and significance of the study. The chapter also looks at the various components and basis of the deliverance ministry in Ghanaian Christianity by focusing on the neo-prophetic churches.

Chapter Two focuses on the belief and worldview of Africans and also discusses the worldview of the Akan in particular and examines the various avenues through which the belief in the spirit world might have popularized the deliverance ministry in Ghanaian churches.

In Chapter Three the historical background and the various typologies of Pentecostalism in Ghana are examined. This chapter specifically gives a background to each of the typologies. It further discusses the hermeneutical and theological stands of the neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana. The chapter continues to look at the various ways in which deliverance services are conducted and how spirits are exorcised.

Chapter Four is an analysis of the issues that emerged out of the previous chapters and it is an attempt to discuss the effect of the deliverance ministry or exorcism on the neo-prophetic churches. The chapter again discusses and critiques some of the various methods that the neo-prophetic churches are using to cast evil spirit.

The summary, recommendations and conclusions that emerge from the study are presented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 THE AKAN WORLDVIEW OR COSMOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

In dealing with the African and his theology, he must be understood from his world view, something that eluded the early missionaries who misunderstood what they saw and reported back to ‘arm chair writers’ who only wrote negatively about the African. There was the perception that the African did not know God hence the label “dark continent” given to the continent; this was a grievous misconception. Although indigenous African religions have been grouped to be called African Traditional Religion, one must not be misled to think that they are one and the same; for even within one country there are diversities due to ethnic and cultural positions (Thomson Gale, 2006).

Among the various groups are the Akan which is the dominant ethnic group in Ghana. This chapter examines the Akan’s worldview of God, the supernatural and man’s relation to the supernatural. The issues that are discussed include the historical overview of the Akan, the theology of the Akan, the Ghanaian concept of diseases and what methods are used to counteract misfortunes such as illness in the Akan indigenous system.

2.2 Understanding African Worldview

A lot of scholars have given different perspectives about the concept of the worldview of the African. According to Chibueze C. Udeani, the concept “African Traditional Worldview” is a sort of umbrella-concept for all forms of worldviews which originate from Africa.²⁶ The word “traditional”, however, includes other non-African worldviews also found in Africa, which are now referred to as African worldviews because they have integrated some elements of the African traditional worldviews.²⁷ Examples could be seen in the areas of religion where Islam and Christianity brought their worldviews to Africa. Thus, it is possible to talk of a traditional worldview and also of different traditional worldviews or perspectives. In real life differences

²⁶ Chibueze C. Udeani, “The Search for Meaning in the Traditional African Worldview” <http://www.the-search-for-meaning-in-the-traditional-african-worldview/file> (accessed on 20th June, 2015), 1.

²⁷ Udeani, “The Search for Meaning in the Traditional African Worldview”, 2.

abound, which do not, on the other hand, negate the strong similarities that exist between the basic tenets of these forms. This is why one could talk of “African tradition or view”.

To understand the search for meaning within the traditional African context one has to bear in mind that this is to be found essentially in a way of life, an interpretation of the universe and of the totality of reality. The traditional African view is expressed in every aspect of life of the African “and can in no way be separated from his daily life.”²⁸ The way the African eats, dances, plants grain in the field, celebrates feasts and festivals, manages social contact and illness are all influenced by the African traditional religion. Principally, every action of the African is executed from this background.²⁹ Generally, African traditional religions are characterized through their pragmatic orientation. It is unfortunate that many people are uneasy in their relation to other forms of worldview other than the ones they identify with. It is difficult for these people to observe other forms with an open mind or without prejudice. It is important in such cases to help these people see the logic and depth of such worldviews. The depth and wealth of the African traditional worldview is based on the complex and subtle symbolic structures which give human life practical meaning and relevance.

2.2.1 The African Concept of Universe

The traditional African world-view demonstrates clearly the fact that the human being is always trying to interpret and understand reality as a whole and with a dimension of depth. The traditional African concept of reality is holistic according to Udeani.³⁰ The world and life receive their quality/value and content from their finitude. The meaning of life is interpreted and realized from the fact of its limitedness; also, it emphasizes the transitory nature of the universe and human life.³¹ In Africa, the human being participates in the cosmic forces which manifest themselves in nature. This fact goes a long way to explain the behaviour of Africans towards nature. The African experiences a deep sense of relatedness to nature. This encompasses, among others, not only the organic relatedness to inanimate nature but also the ability to feel empathy for animate nature. Metaphysically, the Africans understand nature also as manifestation of being; they become

²⁸ Udeani, “The Search for Meaning in the Traditional African Worldview”, 3

²⁹ Udeani, “The Search for Meaning in the Traditional African Worldview”, 2

³⁰ Udeani, “The Search for Meaning in the Traditional African Worldview”, 3.

³¹ Udeani, “The Search for Meaning in the Traditional African Worldview”, 3.

something else, but do not stop being themselves. The whole cosmos is herewith the manifestation of being.

2.2.2 African Culture and the Search for Meaning

Africans, like any other people, are confronted with the hard realities or questions of life. They try to find ways of dealing with these realities or answers these questions. On the other hand, the same human beings search for meaning not only in, but also of life. They, at times, succeed in finding meaning in and as well as of life. All these ways, answers and meanings that are found are examined, practised and systematically preserved. They are constantly brought into use, tested, preserved and passed on to later generations, who continue the whole practice. There is a sort of bilateral movement in the posing of questions here; it is not a one-sided venture. Hence the question of meaning cannot then be ignored.

Talking of questions in the plural, shows that they are of different types, have different contents and directions. This does not in any way mean the abolition of their interdependence and 'interwovenness' but that some of these questions are metaphysical in nature, have metaphysical contents and / or orientation. The search for meaning concerns itself with the basic questions of the human being. These include questions about the origin and destination of human beings, what or who is the human being; the search for purpose in and of life. These questions are not restricted only to a particular sphere of life.

Within the world of humans are found men and women who manipulate the spirit forces for evil purposes. These are the *akaberekyerefo* and *adutofo* (charmers, enchanter and sorcerers) and *abayifo* (witches). The activities of these forces are directed against humankind. It is within this context that charms and amulets play their role. The forces of evil are always at work against human beings in order to prevent them from enjoying abundant life, or fulfilling their *nkrabea* (destiny). The central focus of the religious exercises of *Homo sapiens* is, therefore, the harnessing of power inherent in the spirit force to his or her own advantage. To the Akan, just like other African peoples, whatever happens to the human being has a religious interpretation. To them, behind the physical is the spiritual; behind the seen is the unseen. Every event here on earth is traceable to a supernatural source in the spirit realm. From the same source, therefore, lies the

ultimate succour.³² It is the foregoing picture that colours the understanding of how to deal with life situations; they thereby affect counselling processes.

2.3 Who are the Akan?

The Akan Ethnic group includes the following subgroups: the Ashanti, Akwamu, Akyem, Akuapem, Denkyira, Abon, Aowin, Ahanta, Anyi, Baoule, Chokosi, Fante, Kwahu, Sefwi, Ahafo, Assin, Evalue, and Wassa. Predominantly, they are found on the southern part of Ghana and each group has its own dialect. However, almost all members of this group in one way or the other understand the *Twi* language. The Akan culture is one of the most dominant and visible in present-day Ghana.

Some of their most important mythological stories are called Anansesem. *Anansesem* literally means ‘the spider story’, but can in a figurative sense also mean “traveller’s tales”.

From a cultural–linguistic perspective, ‘Akan’ is a useful term, which describes a group of people who belong to the same eight ‘matrilineal clans’³³ and ‘patrilineal sub-groups’³⁴. The only exception to the common matrilineal system of inheritance among the Akan is the Akuapems,³⁵ Guan and Kyerepon settlers and not Akyem dwellers and Akwamu remnants, who practise the patrilineal system of inheritance. Generally, the Akuapem Traditional Area is composed of three broad groups of people; the Guans, the Akan and strangers.³⁶

The core of the religious ideas of the Akan people is equally applicable to various ethnic groups in Ghana, and indeed the fundamentals of the traditional African perception of reality as a whole. The researcher, therefore, uses their traditional religious ideas as a foundation in his attempt to examine how deliverance and or exorcism are affected as a result of some of these worldviews. This will be dealt with in subsequent sections of the research.

What is the Akan primal understanding of the nature of the universe and what do they consider being the highest good of man?

³² Christaller 1933, *Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language*, 277.

³³ The matrilineal clans of the Ashanti are: Ekoana, Asona, Bretuo, Agona, Aboradze, Atwea and Aduana

³⁴ The patrilineal sub-groups are: Bosompra, Bosommuru, Bosomtwe, Nkatia, Afram and Abankwade

³⁵ J.S. Pobee, *Towards an African Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon 1979), 44.

³⁶ David Brokensha. *Akwapim Handbook* (Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1972), 75.

Fundamental to the Akan religious ideas is the belief in the multiplicity of spirits in the universe. The Akan cosmos, like other African peoples, is divided into “two inter-penetrating and inseparable, yet distinguishable, parts”³⁷; namely, the world of spirits and the world of human.

The Akan’s understanding of the spirit world conveniently falls within Parrinder’s four-fold classification of categories within West African religions, namely, the Supreme God, divinities or gods, ancestors, and charms or amulets.³⁸ The Supreme Being is variously referred to as *Onyankopon*, *Onyame* (also spelt, *Nyame*), or *Odomankoma*.³⁹

Onyame implies the basic idea of deity as understood in Christian theology. *Onyankopon* (The One Great Friend) denotes the supremacy of God, the One Greater Nyame. *Odomankoma*, (Infinite Inventor) denotes the Infiniteness of Nyame. Next to Onyame is *Asase Yaa*, the earth goddess, who is responsible for fertility. *Asase Yaa*, in some sense, is also the “custodian of morality and social decorum, the traditional ethical code. The Akan do not confuse the identity of Onyame and the identity of the abosom. The *abosom* can be discarded whereas *Onyame* cannot. Johannes Christaller, who devoted a considerable amount of effort to study the Akan language, had to conclude that the Akan, presumed by outsiders to be polytheists, were “to a great extent rather monotheist [since] they apply the term for *God* only to one Supreme Being.”⁴⁰

Patrick Ryan makes the same important observation in his article on the distinction of God from gods by the Yoruba and the Akan. He concluded that before the advent of the European missionaries, the Akan and Yoruba held to the absolute uniqueness of the Supreme God. He writes:

Finally, it should be noted, in the process of dismantling the category of ‘God and the gods’ in West Africa, that both the Yoruba and Akan populations of West Africa are better equipped linguistically than are Semites, Greeks, Romans and their inheritors to press the absolute uniqueness of God. There is no need for Olodumare (Olorun) or Onyame (Onyankopon) to arise above the “other gods”, as Psalm 82 bids Him. It would seem, in fact, that even before Muslims and Christians arrived in the West African forest zone,

³⁷ Cyril C. Okorochoa, *The Meaning of Religious Conversion in Africa* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1987), 52.

³⁸ Geoffery Parrinder, *West African Religion*, (London: Epworth, 1961) pg. 16

³⁹ The Akan designate the Supreme Being by three distinctive names, *Onyame* (often pronounced *Nyame*), *Onyankopon* (this like the Nyame, has other ways of spelling or pronouncing), and *Odomankoma* (J. B. Danquah, *The Akan Doctrine of God* (London: White Friars Press, 1968), 30, 43.

⁴⁰ Johan G. Christaller, *A Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language Called Tshi (Chwee, Twi)*, with a grammatical introduction and appendices on the Geography of the Gold Coast and other subjects (Basel: Evangelical Missionary Society, 1933), 34. Quoted by Kwame Bediako, *Theology and Identity* (Oxford: Regnum Press, 1992), 29.

speakers of Yoruba and Akan were assured of supremacy of the 'One' whom a modern theologian calls "the incomprehensible term of human transcendence."⁴¹

The ancestral cult is one of the strongholds within the religious universe of the Akan. This has been made possible because of the Akan's understanding of humans and the community. Since survival of humans and their community is dependent upon the help given by the ancestors and the divinities, how humans relate to the spirit force is crucial to his well-being.

The idea of the cosmic struggle is strong in the Akan understanding of the nature of the universe. For one to be able to fulfil his or her aspirations in life, requires the "balance of power" in favour of the supplicant. This "tilting of cosmic power" for one's own benefit or for the benefit of his or her community is what Emmanuel Larbi referred to as "maintaining the cosmological balance".

2.4 Theology of African Indigenous System and the Basis of Akan Theology

The report of the African Commission's Working Group of Experts on Indigenous Populations/Communities submitted in accordance with the "resolution on the rights of indigenous populations/communities in Africa" adopted by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights at its 28th ordinary session, describes the term "indigenous", as a "social groups with a social and cultural identity that is distinct from the dominant groups in a society."⁴²

According to the report, the following list of characteristics may be used to identify indigenous peoples in a particular geographical area. This includes:

Close attachment to ancestral territories and the natural resources in those areas; Presence of customary social and political institutions; Economic systems primarily oriented to subsistence production; An indigenous language, often different from the dominant language; and finally, Self-identification and identification by others as members of a distinct cultural group.⁴³

⁴¹ Patrick J. Ryan, "Arise, O God!" The Problem of 'Gods' in West Africa," *Journal of Religion in Africa* XI, 3 (1980), 169.

⁴² Report of the African Commission's Working group of experts on Indigenous populations/communities submitted in accordance with the "resolution on the rights of indigenous populations/communities in Africa" adopted by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights at its 28th ordinary session (pdf. File accessed on 24th April, 2013), 76.

⁴³ Report of the African commission's working group of experts on Indigenous populations, 76.

An indigenous system in this researcher's opinion refers to the cultural, customs, traditions, and beliefs of a particular group of people that shares a common identity.

The word *theology* which is etymologically derived from two Greek words *theos* -God and *logos* - word (reason), means the study about God or the study about the nature of God. In the view of Olademo, "oftentimes the definition of theology is colored or influenced by the perspective of the religious affiliation of the person defining theology."⁴⁴ For this paper, the researcher will work with a definition of theology as the study of God and of God's relationship with human beings. In the view of Olademo:

the theology of African Indigenous System is the African's way of understanding God, and the dealings of God with him/her. The Theology of African indigenous systems is informed by the history and lived experiences of the Africans from one generation to another. The people's experiences of God influence their understanding of God and the relevance of God to their experiences on a daily basis."⁴⁵

Olademo classifies the contents of the theology of African Indigenous Systems into two broad classifications: they include "the mode of God's revelation of His nature and attributes to human beings" and two "the responses of human beings to the revelations of God"⁴⁶. He further postulates that, "in the first instance, Africans pondered on the mystery of the universe – the smooth seasons, pregnancy, elements of nature and others - and concludes that a super-sensible intelligence must be responsible for the smooth ordering of the universe."⁴⁷ He goes on to say that "African Traditional Religion is a revealed religion without a founder. It is a theology revealed through nature."⁴⁸

Olademo continues to argue that, "addition to observing nature and her elements, Africans developed a theology through their daily experiences including; moments of joy, sadness, death, sickness and some experiences defying the laws of nature", these according to him, "led to the theology of a creator who is all-powerful, all-knowing and all-present".⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Oyeronke Olademo, *Theology of African Traditional Religion*, (Nigeria, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State). A pdf. File accessed on 10th May, 2014), 6.

⁴⁵ Olademo, *Theology of African Traditional Religion*, 7

⁴⁶ Olademo, *Theology of African Traditional Religion*, 8.

⁴⁷ Olademo, *Theology of African Traditional Religion*, 8.

⁴⁸ Olademo, *Theology of African Traditional Religion*, 8.

⁴⁹ Olademo, *Theology of African Traditional Religion*, 8.

He finally concludes that “the people’s response to how they experience God thus constitutes a second component of the contents of the Theology of African Indigenous System.”⁵⁰ The theology of the African Indigenous system has been described to constitute the following sources which includes myth, liturgies, songs, oracles or divination, proverbs or sayings, symbols or artifacts etc.⁵¹

The Akan also ponders on the mystery of the universe and how God’s mode of revelation and His nature is revealed to the Akan. This, in one way or the other, forms the basis of Akan theology.

The Akan universe has been described as one “full of spirits”.⁵² This may be explained as a belief in spirit beings that populate the cosmos. They include the High God, *Nyame*, the creator, whose power is believed to be manifested through a pantheon of gods, *abosom*. The Akan conception of the spirit world includes lesser spirits which animate trees, animals, and charms, amulets or talisman (*asuman*).

This spiritual world view does not mean that the Akan is not aware of the natural factors that determine natural phenomena. The traditional Akan is aware of the fact that the intense tropical sun causes rain to fall. Similarly, they are aware of the seasons of the year according to which the months of the year have been named. These supernatural forces which are believed to be the ultimate causes of events in life operate in both individual and the national life which also form the basis of theology. The persistence of Akan beliefs and practices is supported by the Akan saying: *Amammre, yento ntwene; amammre yentoto nase*, literally meaning that culture should not be discarded nor dishonored.

2.4.1 The Akan High God (Personality of God)

The early writers on Akan world have stressed the concept of the High God – *Nyame* or *Nyankopon* in Akan belief to the extent that they have attracted a wide range of criticism. However, it is not an over-emphasis to say that *Nyame* is very prominent in Akan cosmology today. The Akan see God as a personal God even though he is transcendent. For instance, the Akan call Him by the Saturday name *Kwame*, (*Nana Nyankopon Kwame*).⁵³ According to Parrinder, *Nyankopon*

⁵⁰ Olademo, *Theology of African Traditional Religion*, 8.

⁵¹ Olademo, *Theology of African Traditional Religion*, 9-11.

⁵² The Akans belief that apart from the High God, they are surrounded by different kinds of Spirit.

⁵³ The use of *Kwame* for *Nyankopon* may be explained in several ways. John Evans has observed that some Akans believe that it was on Saturday that *Nyankopon* was born. Others explain that God completed his work of creation on

is said to mean the *Nyame* who alone is great. Akan gods are worshipped on special days and have their day-name; that of *Nyankopon* is *Kwame*. He is of Saturday, and is addressed in prayer and rite as *Nana Nyankopon Kwame*.⁵⁴

In his work on the Akan universe, Philip Bartle has produced analytically three separate categories of the Akan universe based on colour symbolism.⁵⁵ In his attempt to unify the “red-white-black” universe he has created for the Akan to make a coherent whole, he has adopted the Adinkra symbol (a motif for Akan textile print) called *Gye Nyame*, “except God.”⁵⁶ In his view, it is *Gye Nyame* which represents the unity in parts, creating a super dynamic whole. But Bartle does not explain the reason for this choice of *Gye Nyame* symbol and how *Nyame* is the unifying factor in Akan universe.

The Akan belief in *Nyame* persists in diverse ways: in the use of praise names, proverbs, sayings, folklore, response to greetings, and songs.⁵⁷ For example, the commonest responses to the greeting “How are you?” among the Akan is “*Nyame Adom*” – “by God’s grace”. It emphasizes the same principle as *Gye Nyame*. It is quite clear that this is not Christian innovation that has been adopted by traditional Akan people. In his account of the old Asante cult of *Nyame*, Rattray noted that *Nyame Adom* and *Gye Nyame* were two of the four designations of the priests of *Nyame*.⁵⁸

Saturday, and used to appear to men on that day to receive their worship. With regards to this explanation, some observers like Williamson suspect it is based on reminiscences of the Jewish myth of creation. As to why *Kwame* is used only of God’s name *Nyankopon*, Dickson suggests that *Kwame* with *Nyankopon*, as *Nyankopon Kwame*, is more sonorous and more poetic than *Nyame Kwame*. This explanation leaves much to be desired. See also John Evans, “Akan Doctrine of God” in Edwin Smith (ed.), *African Ideas of God* (1950), (city and publishing house? 247; S.G. Williamson, *Akan Religion and the Christian Faith* (Accra: GUP, 1955), 361; K.A. Dickson, *Introduction to J.B. Danquah* (1944) (complete reference required), *Akan Doctrine of God* (1968 Edition) (complete reference required), xviii. In the view of Adubufour, one may wonder why Akan people prefer to call God as *Nyankopon Kwame* instead of *Kwame Nyankopon*, because in normal Akan usage, day names usually precede surnames; e.g. “Kwame Boafo”, Kofi Asante”, etc. so there is more to be explained in *Nyankopon Kwame* that has been offered.

⁵⁴ E. G. Parrinder, *West African Religion*, (London: Epworth, 1961), 15 ff.

⁵⁵ Philip Bartle, “The Universe Has Three Souls”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 14 (2), 1983, 85 -112.

⁵⁶ J.B. Danquah, *Akan Doctrine of God* (1968 edition), xxxvii Reference above needs to be detailed); Rattray, *Religion and Art in Ashanti* (Oxford: OUP, 1927), 265. Apart from *Gye Nyame* symbol, there are other Adinkra symbols of similar religious significance.

⁵⁷ Robert S. Rattray, *Religion and Art In Ashanti*, 142, Rattray, *Ashanti Proverbs* (Oxford: OUP, 1916), 20-21; K.A. Busia, “The Ashanti”, in Daryll. Forde, ed. *African Worlds*, (London: International African Institute: 1954), 192.

⁵⁸ Rattray, *Religion and Art In Ashanti*, 143.

2.4.2 *Nyamedua* and The Cult of *Nyame*

Regarding the worship of *Nyame*, Rattray has made reference to the shrine of *Nyame: Nyamedua* (tree of God) and the receptacle it holds.⁵⁹ About 30 years later when Busia was describing Akan belief in *Nyame*, he observed the virtual non-existence of such shrines, and the cult of *Nyame* had no priests contrary to what Rattray had noticed.⁶⁰

Today, the cult of *Nyame* in the traditional religion has disappeared but in some traditional compounds, *Nyamedua* stump can be found, however, without the receptacle and the elements it contained.⁶¹ Most Akan people would rather point to the sky when referring to *Nyame* than to *Nyamedua*. Nevertheless, the sacred regard for the *Nyamedua* is maintained, and it reminds the Akan of the presence of the transcendent God,⁶² like what the Ark of God meant to Israel in the ancient times.

According to Adubofour, Benjamin Samuel, in his commentary on the significance of the *Nyamedua* in Akan cosmology, describes it as “cosmic tree and axis mundi”...in the sense that it reveals the essential union and polarity between the sky and the earth.”⁶³ In his interpretation, the *Nyamedua* symbolizes the “union of two transcendental principles of the cosmos: *Nyame* the High God whose abode is in the firmament, and *Asaase Yaa* the earth deity”.⁶⁴ This interpretation can be supported by the fact that whenever reference is made to *Nyame* in any sacrifice or libation, *Asaase Yaa* is mentioned before the ancestors and the gods.

Alex A.Y. Kyerematen has observed that the Asantehene, the (Ashanti King) may also make special use of the *Nyamedua* to restore his own strength by “identifying himself with the axis of the universe which it symbolizes.”⁶⁵ He has observed that when the King is intensely distressed, e.g. when mourning, he uses the *Nyamedua* as his throne. He sits on a blanket at the base of the *Nyamedua*, leans his back against the post and rests his head against the post and rests his hand against one of the outstretched “branches”. In this way, he is said to demonstrate his

⁵⁹ Rattray, *Religion and Art In Ashanti*, 142.

⁶⁰ Busia, *The Ashanti*, 192. See also (Rattray 1923), 141 – 4.

⁶¹ An interview with an Elderly man in Kumasi, Ghana 10th May, 2013

⁶² Kwesi A. Dickson, *Theology in Africa*, (London: DLT, 1983), 143.

⁶³ Samuel B. Adubofour, *Akan Cosmology in Contemporary Perspective*, Unpublished Research Booklet in African Traditional Religion, (Christian Service University College, Kumasi, 2009), 6.

⁶⁴ Adubofour, *Akan Cosmology in Contemporary Perspective*, 7.

⁶⁵ Alex A.Y. Kyerematen, *Panoply of Ghana* (1964), 15.

ultimate dependence on *Nyame/Nyankopon Twereduampong*, the one on whom you lean and will not fall, the dependable one.

In general affirmation of this view, Parrinder has remarked that “even when God is thought to be far away and fearsome, he can be called upon in time of distress because his ears are long.”⁶⁶ Really, the symbolic act of the Asantehene (The Ashanti King) is an example of dire situations when *Nyankopon* becomes the ultimate source of comfort for the Akan.

2.4.3 The Divinities: Mother Earth (*Asaase Yaa*)

The earth deity, *Asaase Yaa*, occupies a prominent position in Akan cosmology as a mother god whose role complements that of *Nyame* as his “consort”.⁶⁷ The earth deity associated with motherhood is called *Yaa* (*Efua* in Fante) as her day is Thursday.⁶⁸ In some traditional communities, Thursday is still observed as a day of rest from tilling the earth in reverence of *Asaase Yaa*. This observance has often brought Christians in rural communities into conflict with the traditional politico-religious authorities.⁶⁹ *Asaase Yaa* has no priests and temples, neither is she consulted for divination. She does not divine. Yet as Parrinder has observed “she is a most potent principle, with powerful taboos.”⁷⁰ Akan people consider sexual intercourse in the bush a serious taboo to observe and maintain the sanctity of the earth.

Asaase Yaa is closely associated with the underworld, home of the ancestral spirits because she is the one who receives the dead. Before graves are dug for burial of the dead, libation is poured to her. Quite often *Asaase Yaa* is never left out in prayers to the ancestors especially in *Adae* and *Odwera* (both are festivals) ceremonies and rituals.

2.4.4 Relationship between the Supreme Being and Lesser Gods (*Abosom*)

In Akan cosmology, *Nyame*, the Supreme Being is still something of a *Deus Otiosus* (idle god- a creator god who largely retires from the world and is no longer involved in its daily

⁶⁶ Parrinder, *Africa's Three Religions* (Penguin: 1976 2nd ed.), 46.

⁶⁷ Parrinder, *West African Religion*, 38-39.

⁶⁸ The day name for female Thursday born in Akan is *Yaa* in Asante.

⁶⁹ Busia, K. A., “The Ashanti”, in Daryll. Forde, ed. *African Worlds*, (London, International African Institute: 1954) observes that “When the Ashanti Confederacy Council of Chiefs ruled that Thursday must be observed, the churches Christian Council appealed to Asantehene and the Chief Commissioner. The matter was shelved. It was hoped that time would solve the problems”.

⁷⁰ Parrinder, *West African Religion*, 42.

operation) even though his presence is not forgotten.⁷¹ As regards human needs and affairs many Akan people believe that the *abosom*, the lesser gods or divinities are the intermediaries between God and man. From this position, Assimeng has commented that the cosmology of the traditional Ghanaian (the Akan in particular) reflects the political organization in the secular realm.⁷² Even though there may not be a strict distinction between the sacred and the secular in traditional Akan world as Assimeng observes, it is a valid claim that the cosmology bears semblance to the political structure. The Akan believe that, like the traditional chief, God cannot be approached directly, but through some of the many spirit intermediaries, the *abosom* who mediate between God and man.

The relationship between *Nyame* and the *abosom* in Akan cosmology can be explained in terms of “Father-son”, or “king-spokesperson”.⁷³ As sons of *Nyame*, the *abosom* are believed to derive their power from *Nyame*. This applies mainly to the great gods that are water bodies: *Tano*, *Bea*, *Bosomtwe* and *Opo*.⁷⁴ Whilst *Tano* and *Bea* are river gods, *Bosomtwe* is a lake, and *Opo* the sea. There are also thousands of localized deities which are descended from four original sons of the Supreme Being.⁷⁵

As the name suggest, the cult of *abosom* has generally been associated with *abo* – (stone), *som* (worship),⁷⁶ which is not necessarily the case. It is necessary to differentiate the stone – like structures of shrines from the spirits that inhabit them. In reality, the Akan believes that it is the spirits of the shrines that are worshipped. No matter the shrine, the Akan believes that the *abosom* are all spirits of the “Great Spirit”, *Nyame*.⁷⁷ Usually, a number of minor gods are created around a major god as his wives and sons.

⁷¹ Max Assimeng, *Social Structure of Ghana*, (Accra & Tema: GPC, 1981), 34.

⁷² Assimeng, *Social Structure of Ghana*, 40.

⁷³ For a detailed exposition of this view, see K.K. Anti, *The Relationship Between the Supreme and the Lesser Gods in Akan Traditional Religion*, M.A. Thesis (University of Ghana – legon, 1978).

⁷⁴ Rattray R. S., *Religion and Art in Ashanti* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927) pp. 143 – 146.

⁷⁵ According to Adubofour, “The numerical strength of the lesser gods in Ashanti traditional religion became evident when according to press report more than 3000 traditional priest and priestesses congregated at Kumasi Cultural Centre and paraded through the principal streets to Manhyia palace grounds, as a prelude to the 1895 Asante *Odwera*.

⁷⁶ J. G. Christaller, *Dictionary of Asante and Fante Language*, (1896), 43, indicates that *abosom* is derived from *obo* (stone) and *som* (to worship).

⁷⁷ Parrinder, *West African Religion*, 48, notes that origin of the minor gods from *Nyame* is a priestly of sophisticated explanation, an effort to reconcile and grade different cults, and it is not reflected in the rituals performed at various shrines.

The *abosom* are also spokespersons of *Nyame* in the sense that they mediate between men and *Nyame* as the *Okyeame* (just as the linguist of an Akan chief), liaises between the subjects and the chief. In public meetings the chief does not speak directly to the people except through his *Okyeame* who communicates the thoughts of the chief to the people. Similarly, appeals to the chief go through the *Okyeame*.

2.5 Dualistic Worldview and Life (Nkwa)

The Akan have a dual view of the world; the physical and the spiritual, but they are intricately linked. This dualistic worldview is also common across most West African countries. Okorochoa in writing about Igbo cosmos, divides the world into two inter-penetrating and inseparable, though distinguishable parts: that is, the world of men, the existential here and now; and the world of spirits ‘from above’, which are usually the major divinities including the Supreme Being, the Almighty Creator, and *Ala*, the Earth Goddess, the custodian of morality and social decorum, the traditional ethical code.⁷⁸ It is within this religious setting, that Max Assimeng argues that ‘until the sphere of the African’s conception of spiritual “darkness” is reckoned with, one cannot claim that one is studying the religious consciousness of the traditional peoples of West Africa.’⁷⁹

Among the Akan, more emphasis is put on the supernatural in every sphere of life than explaining event from any scientific point of view. It is virtually impossible to turn in any direction and say of any matter that the gods and spirits-ancestors and malicious *asuman* (amulets or talisman) have no hand in it.⁸⁰ Such belief makes the services of diviners and traditional priests as well as other functionaries who claim to have the power to protect people spiritually become essential. Diviners, for instance, are revered for their supernatural power and ability to diagnose diseases, misfortunes and other maladies that are believed to have been orchestrated by the evil spirits.⁸¹

It is the belief in the supernatural and the fear that evil spirits impede the individual from enjoying of *nkwa*, life, to the fullest that instigate people to move from place to place in search of

⁷⁸ Okorochoa, *The Meaning of Religious Conversion in Africa*, 52.

⁷⁹ Max Assimeng, *Religion and Social Change in West Africa* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1989), 64-45.

⁸⁰ S.G Williamson, *Akan Religion and the Christian faith: A Comparative Study of the Impact of Two Religions* (Accra, Ghana Universities Press, 1965), 97.

⁸¹ Assimeng, *Religion and Social Change in West Africa*, 64

succour. To the Akan, though reference is often made to the transcendence of God, life is existential. Life embodies enjoyment of a long life in vitality, vigour and good health; it means life in happiness and felicity.⁸² Life also means *ahonyade* (possessions or properties of all forms), wealth, riches, and substance.⁸³ For the purpose of inheritance and continuity of the family and others in the traditional life procreation is also central in the life of both men and women even though the latter put premium on children in life. Life also includes *asomdwei* (peace of mind and tranquillity), and life devoid of perturbation.⁸⁴

These aspects of life dominate prayer requests of the Akans during festivals and other religious rituals and practices. According to Busia, one example each of the prayers offered by Chiefs of Akyem in the celebration of Odwira, the annual festival and Aday, the annual festival by the Ashanti's will shed more light on the scope of life for the Akans. Busia, writing on the prayers of the Akyem, offered to the ancestors' translated into English from the Twi states:

Aduane nie, nananom nsamanfo
mommEgye wei nni
Afe ano ahya bio. EnnE yErehyE fa.
Momfa nhyira mmrE
YEn hene a Ote mo akonnwa so
Omanfo nnya apomden, Momma mmaa now mma.
Momma deE wOreyE biara nkO yie.
YEn nyinaa yEn nkwa so. YEda moa se ne nnObaeE papa.
YEda moa se ne mo akyiginapa.
Nyira, nyira, nyira.

Translated thus:

Here is food; all you ancestors receive this and eat; the year has come around again; today we celebrate it; bring us blessing to the chief who sits on your stool; health to the people; let women bear children; let men prosper in their undertakings; life to all; we thank you for the good harvest; for standing behind us well (i.e. guarding and protecting us); Blessing, blessing, blessing.⁸⁵

⁸² Christaller, *Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language called Tshi (Twi)*, 277.

⁸³ Christaller, *Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language called Tshi (Twi)*, 186.

⁸⁴ Christaller, *Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language called Tshi (Twi)*, 468.

⁸⁵ K.A Busia, *African Worlds: Studies in the Cosmological Ideas and Social Values of African Peoples* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for IAI, 1954), 193.

Another instance from the prayers of an Ashanti chief at an annual festival (*Adae Kese*) also envelops other dimensions of life in Akan society. Rattray writes:

Afe ano ahyia
Mebo mpae ma nkwankyere
Ɔman yi nni yie
Mmaa now mma
Abofoo nkum nam
Yen a yetu sika kokoo
Na ma mennya bi mfa nhwe
M'abusuafoo

Translation

The edges of the years have met, I pray for life.
May the nation prosper.
May the women bear children
May the hunters kill meat.
We, who dig for gold, let us get gold to dig, and grant that I get some for the upkeep of my kingship.⁸⁶

Blessings in Akan

Twereanpong mma wo ahondze
Onhyira wo, Ɔma wo Kwando ndwe
Onhyira wedzi fir ani wo mbae mo
Onhyira bibiara edzi wonnsa beka
Onhyira awo na wo mba
Onpata wok o na ongyi mbo no bo.

Translation

God should give you rest

⁸⁶ R.S. Rattray, *Religion and Art in Ashanti* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 23.

He should bless you, He should bless your path
He should bless your going out and coming in
He should bless whatever your hands find to do
He should bless you and your children
He should intervene and take over all your battles

The discussion on the Akan religion in this fits into what S.G Williamson succinctly documents in his work *Akan Religion and the Christian Faith*:

In the first place, there is the Akan's firm belief that his life is dominated by the presence of 'spirits' activity at every level. Out of this belief issue, secondly, beliefs and practices which have a life-affirming quality and direction: the concern of the Akan is so to manage his world of spirit-powers that vital forces will increase and not diminish. Thirdly, this belief in 'spirit' activity and its wise management has the end of providing practical benefits of this-worldly kind, the desirable minimum (money, children, good crops, etc.) for the maintenance of traditional society. This basic minimum is however, conceived as within the power of spirit-ancestors and gods to grant or to withhold. It can suffer at the hands of witches and evil spirits. Finally, the society within which such beliefs are held and such ends sought is characterized by corporateness, a feature of Akan life which requires no extensive illustration.⁸⁷

The search for every avenue among the Akan to have a life full of joy does go beyond seeking assistance from within the traditional religions. Religion, it is believed must be capable of providing spiritual and practical needs of the adherents. People do not hesitate to consult other spiritual powers irrespective of their faith provided they can bring practical solution to their existential problems. This has been affirmed by the "historical studies of African primal religions, which far from being 'passive traditional cosmologies' have in fact been dynamic institutions, able to adapt and respond to new situations and human needs in society."⁸⁸ Akan Traditional Religion and other indigenous religions in Ghana also fall into this category of primal religions, which are very accommodating, adaptable and highly dynamic.

⁸⁷ Williamson, *Akan Religion and the Christian faith*, 110-11.

⁸⁸ Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 212.

2.6 The Ghanaian Concept of Disease

Disease with its retinue of suffering, has posed a problem to man at all times. The solution to this problem depended on his conception of the world in which he lived, and of the various forces operating in it. In Africa, disease is commonly looked upon as a scourge brought about by evil spirits or by the gods, angered by some cultural failing. To effect a cure, one needs to make use of exorcism designed to expel the evil spirit, or if the gods were believed to be involved, forgiveness was sought through supplications and sacrifices.

In our part of Africa, the following are the agents responsible for disease:

GOD

God, of course, does no evil. He cannot commit evil and even if he is thought to have sent a disease directly to a man, this is believed to be a punishment for some crime, hidden or known, committed by the person. God is the cause of all diseases, since other agents act either on His behalf or at least with his permission. Usually it is diseases of tribal or communal significance, for example, pestilences, epidemics, or plagues that are attributed to God's direct intervention. However, dreaded or dreadful diseases, for example, leprosy, epilepsy, or small pox may also be attributed to the direct action of God even when they attack individuals, especially when they strike unexpectedly.

SPIRITS

The non-human spirits may be the direct cause of an illness. Here, an important distinction must be made. Good spirits cause illnesses as punishment for sins or evil committed; for example, for breaking an oath, failing to fulfil a promise, causing spiritual or bodily harm to the spirit's protégé or breaking the spirit's rules or laws while being its protégé. Evil spirits appear to cause diseases senselessly. They delight in wickedness.

ANCESTORS

Ancestors too are supposed to be disease causing agents. But like the good spirits they cause diseases as punishment for a man's misdeeds, especially with regard to the veneration due to them.

DESTINY

Every person, before being born into this world may have a particular or specific time and mode of his death. These may also have been determined for him by God. Among the Akan this forms part of the person's "*Hyebea*" or "*Nkrabea*" (destiny). It is an extremely difficult task trying to alter a person's destiny, especially if the illnesses happen to be part of the person's destiny.

HUMAN AGENT

- a. The witch: An essentially evil person who delights in causing havoc is believed to cause illness and death out of greed or jealousy.
- b. The sorcerer: Like the witch is also an evil person but uses physical objects to achieve nefarious aim while the witch uses psychical techniques.
- c. Other human beings: Through cursing and physical poisoning.

ONESELF

A person may cause his own illness, wittingly or unconsciously, for example, by breaking a taboo with or without deliberation.

NATURAL

Some diseases (a few though) may be attributed to none of the causes enumerated above. This is the case especially when the disease attacks a very old person, who usually is supposed to be a wizard/witch himself/herself.

From the above, it is clear that in the thought of the Akan people, diseases have mythical causes or origin and must be counteracted mythically.

In the English language, the word "medicine" simply means the 'art of restoring and preserving health...' but to the Ghanaian the word medicine has several meanings. The Akan word for medicine is *aduro*, for example, which covers natural healing agencies, herbs, barks and roots of trees, and magical or spiritual influences which are used to restore the body to wholeness. Medicine, in traditional society, therefore, has both natural and spiritual significance. Just as there

is *aduro* for curative and preventive purposes, there is also *aduro* that can be used to protect oneself from witches and other evil forces.

Traditionally, the Ghanaian believes in a spiritual causation of diseases. It needs to be said, however, that there are illnesses such as malaria, headaches and other such minor ailments which are thought to fall within the category of natural causes for which patients would first consult a doctor or apply traditional medicine, the preparation of which is done without the accompaniment of a religious ritual. But sometimes even when it is clear that a person became sick because he was bitten by a mosquito, and that the mosquito introduced malaria parasites into his blood, the problem is not yet solved, for it still remains to decide why the mosquito bit him and not someone else.

So long as the answer is not given to the question why some people are bitten by snakes or others develop cancerous cells, some have ruptured uterus, etc., faith in traditional healing will remain.

In such cases, help would be sought from a traditional healer only where the cure is not imminent and / or when a family member is suspected to be the spiritual cause. With a chronic illness, such as mental disorders, however, the cause is usually traced to a spiritual origin. Therefore, in almost all cases there is a possibility of supernatural forces lurking underneath. In a survey conducted by Robert Wyllie on the Ghanaian spiritual and traditional healer's explanations of illness, he observed that

“Despite the healer’s general aversion to a fixed system of illness classification in terms of *Sumsumtodobi* (spiritually caused diseases) and *Nkratodobi* (naturally caused diseases), spiritual causation seemed to be perceived as a fairly distinct possibility for most of the illness.”⁸⁹

Behind the Ghanaian’s concept of disease causation and of medicine is his understanding of the world in which he lives and functions. It is a world full of supernatural realities. Individuals may not be cleared of all responsibilities related to the illness if it is thought to be supernaturally caused. The Ghanaian’s concept of illness is not only cosmic, but also individualistic. Sickness may also be caused by an individual acting inappropriately by violating, for example, personal or

⁸⁹ Robert W. Wyllie, Ghanaian Spiritual and Traditional Healers' Explanations of Illness: A Preliminary Survey. *Journal of Religion In Africa* Vol. 14, FASC. 1 (1983), pp. 46-57

family taboos thereby incurring the anger of the gods or his ancestors. Disease or death may befall the person concerned as a result.

2.7 The Ghanaian Worldview and Traditional Healing

“Wherever the African is”, writes J.S. Mbiti, “there is his religion: he takes it to the fields where he is sowing seeds or harvesting a new crop; he takes it with him to a beer party or to a funeral ceremony, and if he is educated, he takes religion to the examination room at school, the university and even if he a politician, he takes it to the house of Parliament.”⁹⁰

As a result, there is hardly any aspect of life that is not influenced one way or the other by religion. The Ghanaian’s religion helps him on his journey through life, a journey fraught with many hazards, such as sickness, sorcery, witchcraft, and others. All of these have to be counteracted and the African counteracts them through the provisions laid down by his religion. To the African then, “a religion which does not help one out of an existential difficulty is of no use.”⁹¹ It is certain, therefore, that to understand his attitude in times of illness, one needs to understand his religious beliefs and practices, especially those religious practices that deal with the prolongation of life.

The Ghanaian, like any other African, attaches great value to life and for this reason, most prayers offered to the Supreme Being (God), the spirits and the ancestors have to do with life. Prayers for obtaining life, for the preservation of life or for recovery from sickness and such like abound.

Father Temple was right then in pointing out that ‘Life’ is very vital in the African religious conception and social life and in writing about the Bantu he said:

The Bantu say, “in respect of a number of strange practices in which we neither see rhyme nor reason that their purpose is to acquire LIFE, STRENGTH, OR VITAL FORCE, or to live strongly, that they are to make life stronger, or to assure that life shall remain perpetually in one’s prosperity.

⁹⁰ John S. Mbiti, *Africa Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1969), 51.

⁹¹ Mbiti, *Africa Religions and Philosophy*, 52.

The high premium placed on life explains why anything that can be used as a means of preserving life or saving it when threatened for example by sickness is of great importance to the Ghanaian. One of the means of preserving or saving life is healing and this in the traditional society involves a number of stages to which we now turn our attention.

2.8 Healing Methods in Akan Indigenous Religion

In mythical healing, one relies mostly on words and incantations to diagnose the cause. Divination and / or oracles play very important part in this. Within Akan traditional practices, oracular means are many: killing chickens, throwing down cowry shells and observing their positions, ordeals or duels, looking into pots, etc. Remedies may have no rational connection with the disease. These include wearing amulets and talismans in order to cure childlessness, wearing rabbit ears to cure night blindness, not talking at particular times in the day, washing one's face so many times a day with special concoctions, scarifications on the body, etc. Most of the traditional mythical healing practices are preventive aimed at neutralizing the effects of the disease-carrying agents, particularly the evil ones.

However, physical healing employs leaves, barks, roots, oil or heat to cure diseases. The medicine is physically applied to the patient and the healing upon the patient and the natural medicinal properties of the objects used.

Corresponding to the various types of healing, we have the various kinds of healers. Traditional mythical healers are such men as traditional priests, *jujumen* or medicine-men and others. Physical healers are normally referred to as herbalists. Many herbalists operate entirely in the natural sphere. Many, however, surround their practice with an aura of mystery. One is often at a loss to know if they do this only to create an impression that their process is supported by a divine authority.

2.9 Traditional Healing and the African Christian

It is a fact that many Christians resort to both types of healing – native medicine in both its physical and mythical sense. Theoretically, there should not be much of a problem with physical healing from the Christian viewpoint. Medicine-men have developed a startling ability to diagnose a number of diseases and have devised or inherited from the past an impressive list of effective

remedies. It is all to their credit, and no one should be begrudged the privilege if they wish to make use of that empirical knowledge.

The problem of mythical healing is plainly more complex, not just on account of the worldview it implies, but because of the ritual use that is made of forces and powers that are believed to operate in such a world. The claim to domesticate these hidden forces in view of an infallible result can hardly fall short of magic or of superstition and it is hard to see how such use of non-existent forces could possibly be endorsed by Christianity.

Yet the temptation is very great for the African Christian to resort to mythical healing whenever he is in serious trouble. He is a “good” Christian as long as all is well with him. But should he or someone he loves fall seriously ill, he may easily revert to the traditional methods. Christianity has not relieved his fear of the hostile forces, people, and this world, nor has it altered his anthropocentric conception of religion.

Christianity cannot totally understand the mythical and superstitious man completely. However, I think that one of the missionary works of the church is to educate the African through the healing ministry to rely on God’s concern for their good.

Both medical science and African people consider sickness as a problem for which there must be a cause. What thought categories are used by African people? Like the first century Jews, Africans believe that the realms of man and nature do not stand in opposition to each other but are united by invisible spiritual beings, and so they can use the same mode of cognition to apprehend events in the two realms. Thus, natural phenomena are conceived in terms of human experience and thunder and lightning are supposed to be caused by supernatural beings. Human experiences, for example, of illnesses are accordingly explained as cosmic events, i.e., they are caused by angry deities. The phenomenal world is a “Thou”, a living presence over against an “I”. We thus have the “I-Thou relationship” between man and the external world of objects and sickness. Thus, the earth is called “yaa asase” in Twi.

The scientist, on the other hand, regards the phenomenal world not as “Thou” but as “It” with universal laws. Thus, each presence has an individual will which cannot be generalized and is not understood by rational thought but by revelation of it in happenings like illnesses or the falling of a dead branch of a tree. The best that man can do is to seek to know the mind of the Thou of the phenomenal world through the help of *Okomfos* (Fetish Priests). It is only through this that man will be able to keep a good relationship with the cosmic life-force of which his life is a part.

Health then depends upon being in harmony with or forming an integral part of the life-force. On the other hand, illness is a lack of harmony brought about by one's own wrong deeds or by the malicious deeds of those who hate him. The state of your I-Thous relationship both on the human and spiritual levels is essential to your health and healing.

This is a psycho-religious understanding of health, sickness and healing and of life as a whole. It is because of this belief whenever people are sick they ask such questions as:

- i. "What have I done or not done?"
- ii. "Who has caused this illness or death?"
- iii. "How can I counteract the evil power sent against me?"

Among the Ewes (Another tribe in Ghana), the last question is answered by a special *juju* called "*amexedzo*" which means "life insurances juju" or "protecting juju".

According to this view, healing of organic illnesses is not in terms of chemistry but in the power and skill used in counteracting an evil supernatural power or evil magic that is believed to cause the patient's sickness. A doctor interviewed reported cases of patients who were told by the *okomfo* (Fetish priest) to go to hospital with their physical illnesses, such as, pneumonia. The patient agreed to go but insisted that the primary vulnerability of patients to disease is of supernatural origin and until redemptive ritual has been performed the hospital efforts are futile. It is mainly on the basis of his belief that many patients today consult the medicine man and the medical practitioners at the same time. Those African herbalists who are clever to claim the ability to heal both in the African and Western fashions are very popular with African people. In Ghana, most of them advertise their services in the media by putting up billboards on major streets in the towns and cities they operate in.

A typical example on the Accra-Nsawam road is one such noticeable billboard of the enigmatic priest Nana Kwaku Bonsam. His billboard stands defiantly on the road, describing him as a "powerful spiritual man" and "the great authentic man". He has two pictures, one of the spiritualist in his priestly regalia and in a trance; the second one shows him in a black smock sitting on a black horse, and on the side his litany of services which have been listed include seeking vengeance, solutions to ailments, stalled promotions, debts, madness, spiritual attack, marriage problems, poverty and impotence.

The question of the church's ministry of healing has engaged the attention of Christians throughout the ages. Accounts of divine healing fill men with an ever-growing preoccupation with this ministry, and the growth in modern times of bodies which profess to possess and practise the healing virtue often compel loyal members of the older churches to wonder why the ministry of healing has not been a strong point of the older churches. In this regard, the critics confine their conception of the church's ministry of healing to healing which is miraculous, generally instantaneous, permanent and complete, healing effected by prayer alone, prayers accompanied by a touch and / or by anointing with non-medical oil, or with nothing.

There is no doubt that now and again, ailing members of the churches, disappointed with the little progress they make from scientific medical treatment, had looked to the church for healing and when they found none, had drifted to one or other of these groups. This occasional movement out of the church members is not confined to Christians who may be regarded as uncertain; in a few cases, even ordained ministers, who had felt devastated sought healing from the sects, or from some individuals who held themselves out as divine healers.

In our own generation, there certainly are more people, who are treated in the hospitals, clinics and by herbalist including quacks than those who receive miraculous healing. Day in day out we bury hundreds of people including some who, at some time or the other, had been subjected to the efforts of miraculous healing practitioners. Therefore, society in general does not expect divine healing, or more correctly, miraculous healing as the normal means of healing. To society, miraculous healing is decidedly the exception not the rule.

God made man with a body, mind and spirit. These were integrated into this personality, with none dominating the other. It is important to observe that according to the Bible, he was made like God, and thus if God could not be sick, then man was not created to be sick. It was Adams deliberate choice to disobey God that severed his right relations with God, starved the spiritual make-up of man, and thus produced a spiritually malnourished personality. The body-mind-spirit harmony thus disturbed, established man's proneness to debility. Today, it appears that the bad spiritual relationship with God could also cause physical disease. In any case, the imbalance of the body-mind-spirit equilibrium is bound to have perceptible physical or mental repercussions. The treatment of all such conditions could only be to put right the relations with God. Any other scientific or medical ministration are bound to effect just symptomatic treatment. Conversely, infections of the body or mind may affect the spiritual component. The point is that all treatment

must aim at treating the whole body-mind-spirit complex of a man, if he is to have life, and have it abundantly (John 10:10)

The so called uncivilized populations who live closer to nature than the civilized races appreciate the importance of spiritual culpability in the causation of disease. But their approach is an empirical one, so do not recognize that a wrong relationship with God could constitute the root cause. Civilization, on the other hand, has a tendency to subdue, the inner spiritual component, and this blinds the eye of faith so that it becomes more difficult to comprehend the role of spiritual or divine healing. All we can accept from the superstitious code and credulity of the uncivilized man is that man has essentially a body and a soul, and that these physical and spiritual components are closely interrelated and indivisible, forming the wholeness of the whole man.

The next step is that the wholeness depends on man's relationship with God. Man can be completely healthy when he enjoys fellowship with God, for which God created him. Complete health can only be restored by God, for "I am the Lord your healer" (Ex. 15: 26) Christians believe that Jesus and the father are one. So, Jesus is the healer of a Christian. Although all illnesses are not due to immediate sin, yet the distant dislocation of communication with God through the original sin, and the fact of the interaction of the physical and spiritual components of man provides room for a nonspecific spiritual contribution to healing the whole man.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the worldview of the Akan. It has also offered a background to the cultural and belief practices of the Akan. This chapter has touched on very important issues that explain the basic fundamental views that underlie Akan beliefs and practices. The chapter has significantly highlighted certain aspects of the Akan beliefs in ancestors, the Supreme Being, and the *abosom*, among many others. Significantly, the chapter highlights the point that it is that Akan belief in the unseen world that influences his or her view on the issues of life. Considering the issues discussed, the need for contextualization when it comes to studying people and their theology cannot be overruled. This negligence was and is the basis of all the misconceptions writers have about the African and their approach to theology. The issues that are discussed in this chapter will go a long way to help analyse the main issues that confront the researcher in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

DELIVERANCE IN GHANAIAN NEO-PROHETIC CHURCHES

3.1 Introduction

This chapter basically deals with the historical background of Pentecostalism in Ghana and the practice of deliverance in Ghanaian neo-prophetic churches. The chapter accounts for the various typology of Pentecostals in Ghana. In order to situate the work within its proper historical context this chapter also brings into perspective the various methods and practice of deliverance and in Ghana. The aim of the researcher in examining these issues is to throw more light on the subject under discussion.

3.2 Pentecostalism in Ghana

Notwithstanding the assertion that not all the upsurge of the phenomena of Pentecostal renewal globally may be linked to the North American initiatives,⁹² it will, however, be appropriate to place Pentecostalism or Charismatics, as they are popularly referred to in Ghana, within context in order to have a closer look at how the phenomenon emerged within Ghanaian Christianity. Pentecostalism or Charismatics in Ghana is part of the broad global phenomenon of Pentecostalism. In this study, the researcher adopts an intercultural definition of Pentecostalism. The intercultural definition is applied because it offers a general overview which helps to depart from approaches to the study of Pentecostalism that presents “African participants as mere clones, consumers or imitators of innovations that originated outside their context.”⁹³ The researcher agrees with other foremost scholars that Pentecostal phenomena in Ghana and elsewhere in Africa emerged strongly out of indigenous initiatives.⁹⁴ According to Asamoah-Gyadu, the intercultural perspective has implications for what it means to be Pentecostal because it calls for a broader, more inclusive definition of Pentecostalism than one finds in the thought of some Western

⁹² Mathews Ojo, “The Growth of Charismatic Movements in Northern Nigeria”, *Ogbomosho Journal of Theology* Vol. XIII (2), (2008), 88 – 95.

⁹³ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 12.

⁹⁴ Some of these scholars include, Ozgbu Kalu, Kwame Bediako, Cephas Omenyo, Asamoah-Gyadu, and Mathews Ojo among many others.

authors.⁹⁵ Asamoah-Gyadu gives a working definition of Pentecostalism in his book *African Charismatics*. According to him:

Pentecostalism refers to Christian groups which emphasize salvation in Christ as a transformative experience wrought by the Holy Spirit and in which pneumatic phenomena including ‘speaking in tongues’, prophecies, visions, healing and miracles in general, perceived as standing in historic continuity with the experience of the early church as found especially in the Acts of the Apostles, are sought, accepted, valued, and consciously encouraged among members as signifying the presence of God and experiences of his Spirit.⁹⁶

Pentecostalism, as it manifested in Ghana, is broadly defined to embrace the African Independent Churches (AICs), the Evangelical Pentecostal Movement also known as the Classical Pentecostals and a third strand which is the “Charismatic Renewal movement or the neo-Pentecostal movement.”⁹⁷ These three strands of Pentecostal manifestation will be examined below to show how they were influenced with the advancement of media technology and how this media revolution has been mainstreamed into Ghanaian Christianity in recent times.

3.2.1 The African Independent Churches (AIC)

The African Independent Churches (AICs), the first strand of Pentecostalism in Ghana was a phenomenon, not restricted to Ghana but is seen as part of a continental religious stirring. The emergence of African Instituted Churches (AICs) on the religious terrain of Africa and other parts of the world has attracted a lot of attention from scholars and this is evinced by the sheer number of research works and publications on the AICs both in and outside of Africa.⁹⁸

These churches were designated variously in different parts of Africa. Scholars interpret the abbreviation differently as “African Instituted Churches”, “African Initiated Churches” or “African Indigenous Churches”. In the last decade, Pobee and Ositelu added to the list “African

⁹⁵ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 12.

⁹⁶ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 12.

⁹⁷ Emmanuel K. Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, (Accra: Blessed Publication, 2001), 57.

⁹⁸ J.K Asamoah-Gyadu, “Pentecostalism in Context: An Intercultural Perspective on 20th Century ‘Waves of Renewal’ within West African Christianity”, In *African Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, Vol. 1, Dec. 2002, 4 – 33. See also Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 21. See Andrew Walls, “The Evangelical Revival, The Missionary Movement, and Africa”, In Mark Noll et al (eds.) *Evangelism: Comparative studies of popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700 – 1990* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994), 319. Some of the scholars who have also looked at African Initiatives in Christianity includes, Kwame Bediako, Baeta, Jacob Olupona, Cephas Omenyo among many others.

Initiatives in Christianity.”⁹⁹ The AICs were also initially labelled as “sects”, “nativistic”, “messianic”, “separatist”, “schismatic”, and “syncretistic” movements.¹⁰⁰ Some scholars have also categorized them into, “African/Ethiopian Churches”, “Zionist”, “Pentecostal”, “Spiritual”, “Prophet-healing Churches”¹⁰¹, “Charismatic”, “Evangelical”, “Revivalist”¹⁰², etc.

According to Omenyo and Atiemo, the difficulty is further exacerbated by attempts at delineating clearly the major strands of African Instituted Churches. According to them, this is mainly due to a variety of origin, leadership style, theology and organizational ethos.¹⁰³ The leaders and members of AICs were always bent on doing theology the African way. The phenomenon of prophecy and healing were a trademark of the AICs. Gerrie ter Haar attests to the fact that “these churches are characterized by their prophetic leadership and, particularly, their emphasis on healing, thus obeying the injunction of the Bible to heal by prayer and anointing.”¹⁰⁴

The name as it is designated in Ghana is of historical significance in the sense that the churches defined by the terminology maintained historical and theological connections with Western mission bodies. They were often seen as distinguishing themselves by their African indigenous origin as they expressed themselves in their rituals and doctrines. Asamoah-Gyadu argued that the AICs “led an African reformation by emphasizing the non-rational aspects of religion and the pursuit of an interventionist theology in a context in which religion was essentially a survival strategy.”¹⁰⁵ According to him, their stress on practical salvation, the ability to work with indigenous worldview of mystical causality, integration of charismatic experiences into Christian worship, the use of oral theological discourses, and the innovative ways in which the spiritual gifts of women were recognized and used undoubtedly saved Christianity from suffering a moribund fate in Africa.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁹ John S. Pobee and Ositelu Gabriel II., *African Initiatives in Christianity: The Growth, Gifts and Diversities of Indigenous African Churches*, (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1998), 3–4.

¹⁰⁰ Allan Anderson, *African Reformation*, (Asmara: African World Press, 2001), 10.

¹⁰¹ Anderson, *African Reformation*, 15–21.

¹⁰² Cephas Omenyo and Abamfo O. Atiemo, “Claiming Religious Space: The Case of Neo-Prophetism in Ghana”, *Ghana Bulletin of Theology*, Vol. No. 1 (2006), 56. See “Allan Anderson, “African Independent Churches and Pentecostalism: Historical Connections and Common Identities”, *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology*, Vol. XIII (I) (2008), 22–42. See also B.G.M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

¹⁰³ Omenyo and Atiemo, *Claiming Religious Space*, 56.

¹⁰⁴ Gerrie ter Haar, “Standing up for Jesus: A Survey of New Developments in Christianity in Ghana”, In *Exchange*, Vol. 23:3, Dec.: 1994, 221–240.

¹⁰⁵ J.K. Asamoah Gyadu, “Spirit of Elijah: Reinvention of the Prophetism in African Initiated Christianity”, *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology*, Vol. XIII (1), (2008), 44.

¹⁰⁶ Asamoah Gyadu, *Spirit of Elijah*, 44.

From this background, it can be argued that the AICs offered Christianity a cutting edge by giving emphasis to vital components that were central to African religiosity. These include healing and prophecy. On how they managed to present healing, for instance, as an integral element of Christian salvation building on the indigenous worldviews, Andrew F. Walls has noted that:

In traditional Africa, healing was usually performed in a religious context; the time and manner in which medical missions developed prevented (in most areas) a smooth transition from the old religion of healing to the new. It was the independents who made the logical connection: if the Christian was to trust Christ for all the things for which he once entreated the Powers? what the independents have done time and again is to challenge the half-Christian who goes to church respectably, but then in secret, and with guilty feelings, goes off to the diviner to seek the cause of sickness and the way of healing. The earthiness of African life demands that African salvation shall be as solidly material as biblical salvation.¹⁰⁷

In Ghana, the AICs are also called “Spiritual Churches (*Sunsum sore*).”¹⁰⁸ They are of the same phenomenological types as “*Aladura*” (“praying churches”) in Nigeria and Zionist churches in South Africa.¹⁰⁹ William Wade Harris, a Liberian and acclaimed Prophet of God, is said to be the “progenitor of the spiritual church movement.”¹¹⁰ Harris is said to have made very significant inroads in mission work because he had a God-given ability to operate in the realm of the supernatural. Larbi lists a number of spiritual gifts that Harris had or possessed. Harris’ emphasis on the supernatural was not at the expense of the traditional forms of doing things. For instance, he did not discourage the use of traditional herbal medicine, which the earlier European missionaries had completely condemned and discarded as animism. He, however, “placed its potency in the context of prayer to the High God.”¹¹¹ He used the liturgical forms of the people which were familiar in their traditional worship but insisted on a radical turn away from fetishism.¹¹² One can argue that Harris, in addition to being well acclaimed for his genuine efforts at the conversion of the people, played a part in the blend of Christianity and the traditional worldview that emerged in Ghana, especially in the AICs.

¹⁰⁷ Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 117.

¹⁰⁸ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Pentecostalism in Context*, 4 – 33.

¹⁰⁹ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 21. See Walls, *The Evangelical Revival, The Missionary Movement, and Africa*, 319.

¹¹⁰ Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 58.

¹¹¹ Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 61.

¹¹² Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 62.

Against this backdrop, Dovlo rightly described the AICs as churches that bridged the gap between the African Traditional worldview and Christianity by using the Gospel to make suitable responses to the needs of adherents and clients.¹¹³ Attesting to Harris' prophetic calling, Walls cited Shanks as saying that Harris was a prophet of modern times who was convinced of his prophetic call.¹¹⁴ He was said to have pointed people to the God of the scriptures, baptized with water and, by prayer and exorcism, triumphed over the spirits.¹¹⁵ The influence of Harris' work prevailed in Ghanaian Christianity and served as a precursor to the formation of some spiritual churches. The AICs, despite their decline, had left an indelible theological imprint on other mainstream churches and African Christianity in general.

3.2.2 Charismatic Renewal Groups within the Mainline Churches

They proliferated between the 1930s and the 1940s and this was the era of the 'great depression' preceding the Second World War. This period led to the springing up of many prayer groups, particularly in the Historic mission churches.¹¹⁶ Examples of these groups include the Bible Study and Prayer Group in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG) and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Group.

3.2.3 Classical Pentecostal Churches (CPCs)

They emerged within the 1930s and 1940s. Peter Anim¹¹⁷ and James Mcknown¹¹⁸ were instrumental in the establishment of three of these CPCs in Ghana.¹¹⁹ These are the Church of

¹¹³ Elom Dovlo, "New Religious Movements in Ghana", *Journal of Religion and Theology in Namibia*, Vol.4, 2002, 1 – 34.

¹¹⁴ Walls, *The Evangelical Revival, The Missionary Movement, and Africa*, 319. Walls recalls how Harris read the Bible in a way quite different from the missionaries but could make it intelligible within his own frame of reference. He called people to repentance and persuaded many to abandon their traditional African religious practice. The researcher can attest to the influence of Harris on Ghanaian Pentecostal Christianity by the number of Churches in the Central and Western region of Ghana that bear his name; Harris church.

¹¹⁵ Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 62.

¹¹⁶ Omenyo, "The Charismatic Renewal Movement in Ghana," 170–1. See also Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism: A Study of the Development of Charismatic Renewal in the Mainline Church in Ghana*. and Omenyo, "The Charismatic Renewal Movement in Ghana."

¹¹⁷ Anim who is regarded as the father of Pentecostalism in Ghana.

¹¹⁸ McKeown was dismissed from the Apostolic Church Ghana over his refusal to accept some constitutional changes by the UK-affiliated Apostolic Church and his decision to associate with another church in the United States. See Kwabena J. Darkwa Amanor, "Pentecostalism in Ghana: An African Reformation," *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research*, accessed April 10, 2014, <http://www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj13/amanor.html>.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. See also the history of the beginnings of the Assemblies of God in a lecture was given by Asamoah-Gyedu and published in a book edited by Asempa Publishers- *The Rise of Independent Churches in Ghana*, 1990: Asempa Publishers (eds), Accra, Asempa Publishers, Christian Council of Ghana, 9. Asamoah-Gyedu, 1998: "The Church in

Pentecost, Christ Apostolic Church and Apostolic Church-Ghana. Other CPCs are the Four-Square Gospel Church and the Assemblies of God Church—which was started by American missionaries in the Northern part of Ghana in 1931.

3.2.4 Non-denominational Charismatic Groups

They proliferated around the 1960s and 1970s. These groups are not churches but non-denominational charismatic groups. Examples are Ghana Evangelical Society, Scripture Unions, National Evangelism Association, Youth Ambassadors for Christ Associations, Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship (FGBMF) and Women's Aglow.¹²⁰

3.2.5 Neo-Pentecostal Churches

They emerged in the latter part of the 1970s and early 1980s also known as Charismatic Churches. Some of these churches emerged from the non-denominational groups. Examples include International Central Gospel Church (ICGC), Action Chapel International (ACI) also known as Christian Action Faith Ministries International, Lighthouse Chapel International (LCL), World Miracle Church (WMC), Royal House Chapel International (RHCL) and Victory Bible Church International (VBCL). The centrality of this strand of Pentecostals is health and wealth gospel, which has expression in the African traditional belief in fertility, health and abundance.¹²¹ The acceptability of this theology despite its Western import, seem to have gained acceptance because of the “underlining orientation of Africa's pre-Christian religion which is centered on this worldly realities like fertility, abundance and long life.”¹²² They are also noted for their televangelism, and the celebrity lifestyles which most of their leaders without doubt adopted from Northern American prosperity gospel preachers.¹²³

the African State – The Pentecostal/Charismatic Experience in Ghana”, *Journal of African Christian Thought* Vol. 1, No. 2, 51-57.

¹²⁰Abamfo Ofori Atiemo, *The Rise of Charismatic Movements in the MCs in Ghana* (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1993), 30. See also Abamfo Ofori Atiemo, “The Evangelical Christian Fellowship and the Charismatization of Ghanaian Christianity,” *Ghana Bulletin of Theology* 2, no. 1 (2007): 43–45.

¹²¹Paul Gifford, “Some Recent Developments in African Christianity,” *African Affairs* 93, no. 373 (1994): 516. See also Paul Gifford, *Encyclopedia of New Religious Movements*, ed. Clarke Peter (New York: Taylor and Francis Group, 2006), 6. See a detail discussion below.

¹²²Gifford, “Encyclopedia of New Religious Movements,” 6.

¹²³ Gifford, “Some Recent Developments in African Christianity,” 516.

3.2.6 Neo-Prophetic Churches

The neo-Pentecostal churches are the most recent expression of Pentecostalism in Ghana. They came to the scene in the latter part of the 1990s. These churches employed both the belief systems and elements of African Independent Churches and Charismatic groups.¹²⁴

In discussing the theological and hermeneutical stands of neo-prophetic churches in Ghana, Omenyo and Arthur, argued that the exertion of physical force was essential for the receipt of answers to prayers in neo-prophetic churches. So, their prayer sessions were often quite deafening, boisterous and very physical. Their work revealed a number of observations that were made during visits to neo-prophetic churches in Ghana. Some of the findings included the observation that clapping of hands, stamping of feet, shouting and pacing to and fro within a wide radius were characteristic of their prayer sessions. Members had the liberty to move onto verandas and forecourts of the chapels. There, one observed them energetically pacing up and down randomly in what were called ‘army’ or ‘military’ prayers. Again, the neo-prophetic churches believed that whatsoever the mouth uttered shall come to pass. Hence, one hears an oral shooting (mimicking the sound of a gun to symbolize a spiritual gunning down) of the enemy in the prayers and at most of the prayer sessions all in the hope that ‘it shall come to pass.’¹²⁵

Imprecatory prayers are the kind that demands divine retribution, vengeance or evil against one’s enemies. They were well known in African traditional religions, particularly in the curses that accompany libation. Dwelling often on texts in the Book of Psalms, neo-prophetic preachers teach that one’s enemy did not deserve to live, let alone prosper. A prototype declaration which leaders of prayer sessions often led members to utter as a prelude to congregational prayers was:

*Awurade, efiri ene Eek-o yi,
Atamfo a womma me ho nnto me no,
Sɛ wofiri me fie o, m’abusua mu o, m’adwuma mu o, anaa babiara,
Ewo Yesu din mu (stressed with vigour), se mebo me nsa mu bo mpae a,
Aprannaa nte mfiri soro emegu wonnom so . . .!*

¹²⁴Omenyo Cephas and AtiemoAbamfoOfori, “Claiming Religious Space: The Case of Neo-Prophetism in Ghana,” *Ghana Bulletin of Theology*, New Series, 1, no. 1 (2006): 55–68. See also OgbuKalu, “Pentecostal and Charismatic Reshaping of the African Religious Landscape in the 1990s,” *Mission Studies* 20, no. 1–39 (2003): 85; Cephas Omenyo, “Man of God Prophesy Unto Me: The Prophetic Phenomenon in African Christianity,” *Studies in World Christianity* 17, no. 1 (2011): 40.

¹²⁵Cephas N. Omenyo and Wonderful Adjei Arthur, “The Bible Says! Neo-Prophetic Hermeneutics in Africa,” *Studies in World Christianity*, 19.1 (2013): 50–70

Translated:

Lord, from today,
Enemies who are responsible for my woes,
Whether they are from my household or my family or my workplace or wherever,
In the name of Jesus, if I clap my hands and pray,
May lightning from above strike them . . . !

This is normally followed by loud, spontaneous, cacophonous praying and clapping by members. Examples of texts which are believed to support this teaching are Psalm 35: 1–4, Ps. 109: 1–2, 5–10 and Ps. 109: 1–2, 5–10.

The specific theological emphases of neo-prophetic churches ‘include the concept of *atamfo* (human enemy), the practice of *akwankyere* (guidance), anointing (*ngosra*) and the various forms of exorcism and healing’.¹²⁶ Neo-prophetic churches did not view *atamfo* (human enemy) only in terms of human beings that their members had cause to suspect of carrying out malicious activities against them, including undermining their ‘health, wealth, honor or general well-being through witchcraft, evil, juju, or the spread of malicious gossip’; they also include the actual spiritual beings that were perceived to be agents of Satan and from whom the human enemies derived their power and to whom they were allied.¹²⁷ According to Omenyo and Atiemo it was believed among the Akans that a witch or wizard could attack and harm one only if she or he was from one’s family or connives with a member of one’s family. This was a cause of mistrust, suspicion and tension among family members. This fact is further explained by the fact that the Akan belief is from the maxim which says: “*se aboa bi beka woa, na ɔfiri wo ntoma mu*” (the animal that will bite you is hidden in your cloth) meaning that your enemy cannot harm you except he or she is aided by someone from the family.¹²⁸ Their hermeneutical undertakings therefore betray a propensity to want to deal with these *atamfo* (human enemy) and thereby show Christ’s victory over the devil and all his agents.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Omenyo and Arthur, “The Bible Says! Neo-Prophetic Hermeneutics in Africa”, 55.

¹²⁷ Omenyo and Arthur, “The Bible Says! Neo-Prophetic Hermeneutics in Africa”, 55.

¹²⁸ Omenyo and Arthur, “The Bible Says! Neo-Prophetic Hermeneutics in Africa”, 56.

¹²⁹ Omenyo and Arthur, “The Bible Says! Neo-Prophetic Hermeneutics in Africa”, 56.

Akwankyere or prophetic guidance expects the prophet leader to give ‘information that is supposed to explain a person’s situation and also prescribe solutions’.¹³⁰ Sometimes this is done openly in the setting of public worship, but mostly it is done on a one-on-one basis.¹³¹ Anointing is seen as synonymous with unction with authority, bringing the power of God to bear upon the life of an individual. The anointing service, in which, mainly, oil is used on members, is a very popular activity among neo-prophetic churches in Ghana. They believe that there is a spiritual anointing in which the sovereign God acts with no visible elements ‘but you see the unction at work’, as in Acts 13: 1–4, where no oil was used. However, the most popular type among neo-prophetic churches in Ghana is the tangible one in which oil is administered by a pastor or church leader on the congregation. They view the anointing service as a time of ‘impartation’ of spiritual gifts to empower the clients to realize wealth, obtain healing and see visions, among other things.¹³²

From researcher’s observation in ministry, if the family member could not harm one or help others to harm one, he or she could sell one to the assailants, or contract them to harm one. This concept is supported by Micah 7:5,6 which says “... a man’s enemies are members of his household.” The exclusive focus on the enemy has given rise to the novel ritual forms of dealing with them, protecting oneself or countering the enemy’s diabolical activities.

Some of such means is the practice of whipping the enemy in prayer, representing the enemies with sticks and tying them with climbing twines to trees while praying over them (from researcher’s experience and observation at Atwea Mountains in the Ashanti Region). All these ritual ways of dealing with the enemy might have been from the Old Testament background where God authorized the people of Israel to deal physically with their enemies by going to war with them or totally eliminating the enemies, such as Prophet Samuel telling Saul in 1 Samuel 15:3 that God had sent him (Samuel) to tell him Saul to go and destroy all the Amalekites for what they did to the Israelites some time earlier.

¹³⁰ Omenyo and Arthur, “The Bible Says! Neo-Prophetic Hermeneutics in Africa”, 57.

¹³¹ Omenyo and Arthur, “The Bible Says! Neo-Prophetic Hermeneutics in Africa”, 57.

¹³² Omenyo and Arthur, “The Bible Says! Neo-Prophetic Hermeneutics in Africa”, 57.

3.3 Deliverance and Christianity in Ghana

The Gospel writers usually present Jesus of Nazareth as having power over Satan and show this by depicting Jesus casting out demons. Jesus did this through His own authority rather than by the invocation of God's Name and help (cf. Mk. 1:21-28). This is what made Jesus' casting out of evil spirits unique and different from other exorcisms.

Christians in both early and later periods also exorcised; but Christian exorcism (with its different nuances) was done in the Name of Jesus and sometimes in the Name of God- *kata tou Theou*; claiming that the invocation of these holy names made their exorcism religious rather than magical. The present Roman Catholic practice of pre-baptismal exorcism, together with exorcising demons with objects like oil, water, salt originated from early times of the church's history. Today, only the priest in Roman Catholic Church is officially allowed or permitted to exorcise. This is also at variance with the deliverance ministry practised in most Christian churches today where most ministering the deliverance are done by lay people.

In Ghana, the upsurge of African Independent Churches otherwise known as the *Sumsum Sɔré* in the 1920s saw the emergence of some Ghanaians with strong personalities, who claimed to have received calls from God either through dreams and visions or some special awareness, broke away from the mainline churches and established their own independent churches. The group that claims to be the first of these churches recorded in Ghana is the Twelve Apostles Church of Ghana, started by two former *akomfoɔ* (traditional priests), Grace Harris Tani and John Nackabah, whom Harris baptized during his ministry in Ghana. Others include the Africa Faith Tabernacle Church, Musama Disco Christo Church, the Church of the Lord (Aladura Group), Saviour Church of Ghana and Apostles Revelation Society.¹³³

The main attractions of these churches were the prophetic phenomenon that they displayed. They were also able to blend the traditional beliefs and practices with their Christian faith. Associated with the prophetic phenomenon was the *abisa* (divinatory-consultation) which came into focus before, after or during exorcism and healing. Healing and exorcism were the central attractions of prophetism. The practice of exorcism almost characterized all the ministries of the

¹³³ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 10 -25

Sumsum soré. Almost all of them established healing camps which were also called gardens or centres.¹³⁴

Onyinah has posited that the ritualistic procedures for exorcism in these indigenous churches were of two main types: those that followed the Twelve Apostles' pattern, and then all others. One such practice of exorcising spirit was the carrying of water which was more prevalent in the Twelve Apostles church. The second form of exorcising spirits from people was in the form of ritualistic prayer which was mainly found in the other spiritual churches. All these practices took place on Fridays at the garden, camp or chapels with elaborate prayers and rituals which included fasting sometimes depending on the direction from the prophets.¹³⁵

Even though these churches have witnessed a remarkable decline in their numbers, there is no doubt that their practices have left an indelible mark on the practice of Christianity today in Ghana especially among the Pentecostal movement, which is the fourth epoch of the history of Christianity in Ghana. The practices associated with healing and deliverance among Pentecostals today in Ghana seem to draw a lot of inspiration from what took place during the heyday of the spiritual churches.

3.4 Demonic Activity, Types and Categories

Deliverance ministries grouped demonic activity into various types and categories. There was the belief that just as there was a hierarchy in the kingdom of the devil, demonic activity also varied in accordance with what type of demonic power was responsible for the activity. This was one area where a lot of diversity prevailed among the Ghanaian deliverance ministries. This was mainly due to the fact that most of the ministers depended solely on their experiences to categorise the various demonic activities.

¹³⁴ Opoku Oyindah, *Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana* (Dorset, UK: Deo Publishing, 2012).

¹³⁵ Oyindah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 110-113.

There was no clear, scholarly defined hierarchy but it was generally portrayed that witchcraft was the most treacherous of all the demonic activities.¹³⁶

3.4.1 Demon Contamination, Demonization, Demon-Possession or Witchcraft

These are terminologies that are used to describe various forms and degrees of demonic activity. From the observation of this researcher, the use of these terminologies is so fluid and sometimes so subjective that it becomes very difficult to understand what is actually meant by their use.¹³⁷

Onyinah asserted that the terms ‘witch’ and ‘witchcraft’ were used synonymously with the terms ‘demon,’ ‘demonology’ and ‘evil spirit.’ Demon possession was described as when a demon came to take an abode in someone without the person’s consent. It was considered a covenant of soul and spirit without someone’s permission. Witchcraft was considered an advanced form of spirit possession.¹³⁸

From the researcher’s interaction with deliverance ministries in Ghana, it was realised that some of the ministers made a distinction between demonization and witchcraft. In a case of witchcraft, the person involved was said to have control over the spirit and could wilfully manipulate the spirit to any end, mostly evil. In the case of demonization however, the person involved is said to have no control over the spirit. So, in this case the spirit uses the person involuntarily while in the case of witchcraft the person’s will has been totally taken over and so subdued that the person acts voluntarily in line with the evil spirit’s wishes, which have become the wish of the possessed. In some instances, witchcraft is even believed to be passed on to loved

¹³⁶ Opoku Onyinah, “Exorcism as a Way of Confronting Witchcraft in Modern Africa: Ghana as a Case History.” *Paper Presented to the Themes in Modern History Seminar at Harris Manchester College, the University of Oxford*, Oxford, April 30 2001, 5.

¹³⁷ Normanyo, one of the deliverance ministers in Ghana teaches that a Christian cannot be possessed by a demon but can be oppressed or demonized. See Larbi, 2001:304. He is one of the few who can actually make some distinction between demon-possession and demonization. For the majority of the deliverance ministers it is not likely, in the view of this researcher. Such distinctions can be made due to the lack of any credible theological education. Many of them also lack the very basic education that can enable them even to read and understand some of the literature that are circulating on the topic. It must be emphasized that there are some who are very well educated and have very credible testimonies about their approach to the whole phenomenon. It is however obvious, from what is heard on the airwaves and what ordinary Ghanaians often say about the deliverance phenomenon that many of those who are catching on now are those who make the most noise but have very little substance. This is a general observation of this researcher, which might be wrong.

¹³⁸ Onyinah, “Exorcism as a Way of Confronting Witchcraft in Modern Africa, 6.

ones as an inheritance by a dying relative or through food and other gifts by people possessed by the witchcraft spirit.

What this implies is that a person could be possessed by a demon or an evil spirit and that is what is mostly referred to by many traditional Ghanaians as witchcraft. For most of the ministers, a clear distinction is not made between the various demonic activities. Most of the cases are attributed to witchcraft. The culprits are therefore said to be witches or simply “possessed”.

Demon contamination is said to be a milder form of demonic activity. Larbi called it “demonic infection”.¹³⁹ This was where a person meddled, consciously or unconsciously, in activities that had links with some demonic powers or got into contact with any demonic object. It could be reading a book on occultism, listening to music dedicated to a demon, eating food offered to a god, watching a movie that was either dedicated to a demon or promoted demonic approval. It could even be partaking in some traditional festivals without the covering of the blood of Jesus.¹⁴⁰

Indigenous churches that used some types of incense and blessed water (normally called Holy Water) for various rituals were also considered demonic. People who attended these churches, therefore, got contaminated, as they were believed to come into contact with demons.¹⁴¹ This was how contamination occurred and by that demons were said to have access to meddle in the person’s life or anything related to him/her, mostly to hinder his/her progress in life, or prevent him/her from enjoying the fullness of life that God has offered to humanity.

3.4.2 Ancestral Curses

An ancestral curse is a new type of demonic activity that has emerged with the charismatic theology of deliverance. Traditionally, the Ghanaian, if not all indigenous Africans who believe in the ancestor cult, sees the ancestors as the ones who watch over the land and the community. They

¹³⁹ Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 305.

¹⁴⁰ Larbi, recounting the thoughts of Normanyo and other deliverance ministers writes that these pre-Christian infections can survive conversion and become agents of demonic bondage which must be thoroughly investigated and exorcised before the Christian can enjoy *abundant life*. See Larbi, 2001:305. Also see appendix 3 for some of the links to demonic contamination or infection.

¹⁴¹ In Ghana churches that are noted for the use of the blessed water (holy water), like the AICs are normally called the ‘spiritual churches’, see Asamoah-Gyadu, 2002. One of the effects of the Pentecostal churches generally and the Charismatic deliverance ministries particularly, on these churches has been their decline. The evidence of this is seen in a survey of the Ghana Evangelism Committee (GEC) conducted over a period of time. See Ghana National Evangelism Committee, 1993. *Facing the unfinished task of the church in Ghana: national church survey update*. Accra: Ghana Evangelism Committee.

are regarded as custodians of all the values of the community or clan. They are believed to bestow blessings and good wishes. Qualification for ancestorship, therefore, is a life lived in productivity, bravery, and good conduct and of any other virtues worthy of emulation by posterity. The traditional ancestor, to them, is therefore not a demon.

With this concept of “ancestral curses”, however, even though the basis is tradition, its emphasis is on curses and not on blessings. The belief is that the consequences of the sins committed by the ancestors recur in their family lines. Some of the consequences are believed to be chronic diseases or hereditary diseases, emotional excesses, allergies, repeated miscarriages, repeated tragic or untimely deaths such as in suicides and accidents, and other recurrent misfortunes or undesirable situations.¹⁴²

The whole ancestor cult of the African had been demonized by deliverance ministries because to them the ancestors worshipped the Supreme Being through created objects like trees, rivers, stones, which became the abode of fallen angels. Any allegiance to anything linked to the ancestors, therefore, placed one under a curse. Theologically, *Exodus 20: 5* is referred to in substantiating the point that people inherit the curses of ancestors up to the third and fourth generations.¹⁴³

This accounts for why most charismatics, if not all, advised abstention of their members and clients from most, if not all traditional festivals and practices. Christians, they believe, should be taken through deliverance so that they could break with the past by denouncing and breaking all traditional links with their unchristian ancestors. By that, it was believed that one was delivered from all ancestral curses. The demonization of the ancestral and most of the traditional practices raised a lot of sociological concerns, which portrayed Pentecostals generally in Ghana as anti-tradition.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Onyinah, “Exorcism as a Way of Confronting Witchcraft in Modern Africa, 8.

¹⁴³ Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role* (London: Hurst & Company, 1998).

¹⁴⁴ There are instances where some Pentecostals have blatantly defied some traditional taboos by eating fish from certain streams considered sacred shrines and therefore forbidden to be eaten. Others have had clashes with traditional authorities when they beat drums and used musical instruments on occasions that are supposed to be observed as silent moments.

3.5 Various Methods of Deliverance Ministration in Pentecostal Ministries

The Pentecostal and Charismatic ministries that were mostly associated with deliverance ministration in Ghana operated as independent ministries. Generally, oversight of the activities of Pentecostal and charismatic ministries in Ghana was not very strict if there was any at all. The Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council, which embraced some of the classical Pentecostal churches and ministries, was not even a legally mandated body with control over the activities of its member bodies. It was the acknowledged and recognised mouthpiece when it came to dealings with the government just as the Christian Council of Ghana was for the mainline member churches.

With the neo-prophetic ministries, as of the time of this research, no national council or committee embodied them. Each maintained total independence in its existence and operation. This was reflected in their deliverance ministries most of which, if not all, operated as absolute independent bodies. Their understanding and approach to deliverance therefore varied widely. There were, however, some general principles and approaches that ran through.

3.5.1 Initial Investigation

To ascertain the actual causes of the problems of their clients, the neo-prophetic churches have adopted various means of making the right diagnosis. The people are grouped according to their needs and in some places interviewed extensively. Gifford cited one deliverance ministry where the people were grouped into those with problems of marriage, sickness, general (normally financial) constraints, or deliverance.¹⁴⁵ With the ministries growing, most of them had adopted the use of questionnaires that solicited detailed information about their past associations with churches, fetish priests, card readers, dwarf worship or witch doctors among others. They were asked whether they had been given any rings, amulets or some concoctions to drink, gone through ritual baths, gone through any traditional rites like puberty rites, participated in any traditional festivals and many others.

Enquiries about people's tribal or clan backgrounds featured prominently in the questionnaires as a result of the belief that the single most crucial factor that caused demonic afflictions in the lives of most people in Ghana, and probably Africa, was ancestral. This notion is highly debatable, but, in any case, that is the popular belief among most deliverance ministries. The comprehensive probe into the traditional linkages and involvement in their questionnaires

¹⁴⁵ Paul, Gifford, *New Dimensions in Africa Christianity* (Lbadan: Sefer Books, 1993).

gave a fair view of this notion. In instances where the information given could not give convincing clues to the cause of the problem, the minister had to rely on discernment to find out the cause. One clue, which made out a witch, was that "they feel uneasy in the presence of a "spiritual person".

3.5.2 Manifestations of Demonic Activities or "Symptoms"

Generally, the deliverance ministries believed that anything that prevented anybody from enjoying the abundant life that Christ offered humankind was attributable to a demonic activity. Vuha, cited in Gifford's book listed some of the manifestations, which were referred to in this work as 'symptoms'. Among them were: phobias, complexes, allergies, chronic diseases, repeated hospitalization, repeated miscarriages, non-achievement in life, emotional excesses and strikingly odd behaviour. Others were spiritual marriages resulting in unhappy marriage relationships, prevention from marriage, childlessness, and even killing of rivals of these spiritual spouses and others.¹⁴⁶ Some even attributed drowsiness in church during ministration of the word of God to demons.

Apparently, any unusual occurrence was attributed to demonic causes especially among those groups whose leaders had not gone through any appreciable level of either secular or theological education but depended mostly on charisma and their experiences. With the more enlightened leadership, some of the problems were attributed to human responsibility, purely economic or medical reasons for which appropriate counsel was given. In some cases, though the distinction was made, the two strands were combined and treatment is backed by faith.¹⁴⁷

3.6 The Dynamics of Deliverance in Ghanaian Neo-prophetic churches

This section looks at the actual process of getting people freed from whatever problems they encountered after having gone through the various processes of diagnostic tests, and the cause or causes were ascertained. It marked the climax of the deliverance ministration.

¹⁴⁶ Gifford, *African Christianity*, 97.

¹⁴⁷ Gifford, *African Christianity*, 105.

This is where the people were freed from whatever evil forces that had been the cause of their not attaining the abundance of life that they were supposed to attain in Christ. Various means and strategies were adopted some of which are examined below.

3.6.1 The Deliverance Minister

One characteristic of prayer camps of the classical Pentecostals that preceded the Charismatic and independent deliverance ministries was that they were centred on one dominant person who was seen as the prophet/healer. Prophet Mintah of *Okantah*, Prophetess Grace Adu of *Edumfa*, Prophet Sampson Adum of *Suhum* and Elder Joseph Yaw Boahen of *Sepe-Buokrom* are just a few examples.¹⁴⁸

There has not been any significant change in this trend. Most of the prophetic or charismatic deliverance ministries are also centred on some dominant personalities who are said to have special gifts of deliverance. For instance, Larbi writes: “Breaking takes place every month except when Tabiri is away from the country.”¹⁴⁹ Gifford cites another Ghanaian deliverance minister, Addae-Mensah, as saying that, it often takes a special man of God to diagnose and then bind and cast out this demon.¹⁵⁰

This placed some emphasis on the special role that deliverance ministers played in the whole phenomenon. They were seen, or they portrayed themselves as special people of God with special God-given abilities to ‘deliver’ people from their problems. With the increases in attendance though, many of the leaders trained special teams of assistants who played various supplementary roles such as analysis of questionnaires, counselling, restraining people who got violent during ministration and others.¹⁵¹ These were all done under the instructions and directions of the dominant deliverance minister.

¹⁴⁸ Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 380, 383, 385.

¹⁴⁹ Tabiri is the leader of a deliverance ministry in Ghana and the dominant figure at his Bethel prayer Camp. He does most of the preaching and teaching. There are some activities like his “breaking” that do not go on without him. See Larbi, 2001, 393.

¹⁵⁰ Gifford, *African Christianity*, 97.

¹⁵¹ Gifford, *African Christianity*, 99.

3.6.2 Exorcism (Casting out Evil Spirits)

The whole practice of deliverance, as it was done in the prophetic churches' deliverance ministries, seemed to be centred on exorcism. This probably stemmed from the traditional African belief that every problem had spiritual consequences.¹⁵²

There were two types of deliverance offered, collective and personal. A deliverance minister and his team in a service often administered the mass deliverance service. Deliverance could also be administered to an individual, or the person could be given specific instructions and guidance to administer self-deliverance. Self-deliverance mostly happened in situations where the client was enlightened and was not a non-believer or a recent convert. Gifford also echoed the position of many other deliverance ministers in Ghana on the fact that one could expel or exorcise demons oneself or another could cast them out.¹⁵³ In such situations, the persons were either given verbal directions to follow on their own or given some printed instructions to follow. Most of the deliverance ministries, however, for obvious reasons, would want their clients to be in a service for them to be 'delivered'.

Deliverance in such situations mostly took place on special days set apart for deliverance service. A typical deliverance service began like a normal Pentecostal type of service. Onyinah, a typical Pentecostal minister, recounted that the focus was on testimonies and some preaching about the works of demons and how God's power could set people free from them.¹⁵⁴ Before the service, people due for deliverance might have been taken through the initial processes of filling in a questionnaire¹⁵⁵ or going through counselling to ascertain the causes of whatever problem(s) might have been presented. Various deliverance ministers might have different approaches to dealing with the people, but for most of them the people were called to the front of the congregation. Amidst mostly, loud music and frantic dancing and clapping of hands, specific instructions were given to the people in front to pray.¹⁵⁶

Onyinah recounted that following Tabiri's innovation of 'breaking', instructions were given to participants to write down the names of some specific relations for the 'breaking ritual'.

¹⁵² Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 8.

¹⁵³ Gifford, *African Christianity*, 98.

¹⁵⁴ See Onyinah (2001) for a detailed description of a typical Ghanaian charismatic deliverance service.

¹⁵⁵ See appendix 3 for a sample questionnaire of a typical Ghanaian deliverance ministry.

¹⁵⁶ From Larbi's account of Normanyo's deliverance service, he writes: "The deliverance service which takes a long time, is done mainly through prayer and the laying on of hands either by the deliverance minister or by the client himself/herself in case of certain sensitive areas. Signs of its efficacy may include vomiting, spitting, unconsciousness, screaming, weeping, loud cries, jumping and other extreme motor reactions". (Larbi, 2001: 306).

Following the instructions of the leader, prayer was often said "repeatedly with gestures to 'break' (*bubu*), 'bind' (*kyekyere*), 'bomb', trample on them (*tiatia wonso*), 'whip with canes', 'burn with fire of God', 'strike with the axe of God', 'cast out demons' bind diseases and 'break' curses. In the course of the prayer, which was mostly very aggressive, people, in bombing or shooting or caning the demons literally fashion the hands into the various weapons that were supposedly being used and with their mouths produce the sounds that those weapons are supposed to make. One could therefore hear sounds like *poo, poo, poo, pee, pee, pee* supposedly, the sounds of fired rifles and bombs being hurled at the demons or whatever spirits that were believed to be behind various problems.¹⁵⁷

Gifford remarked that: "these sessions could be quite physical, with women speaking in the name of some demon and rushing around in the open space, sometimes pursued by a team of about twenty fit men who physically restrained them."¹⁵⁸ In some cases, as the prayer went on, the minister and his team moved among the people and laid hands on them individually. The phrase 'blood of Jesus' and 'the name of Jesus' was repeatedly to rebuke the spirits responsible for the various problems. "People begin to sob, groan, shout, roar, fall down and struggle on the ground."¹⁵⁹ This was how Onyinah captured a typical deliverance scene.¹⁶⁰

Gifford also gave another dimension of the process, which did not seem to be all violent as depicted above. In describing Vuha's approach, a procedure for casting out evil spirits might involve exhaling slowly. Yawning, coughing, spitting, vomiting or convulsions might sometimes accompany it.¹⁶¹ This is a vivid description of a typical Ghanaian charismatic deliverance service. For a typical deliverance ministry, that was the main focus of their establishment so all their services were for the purpose of deliverance. All the people who attended also did so for one purpose only, to seek deliverance from one problem or the other or to have access to a need or some blessing which had supposedly been hindered by demonic forces.

For the ministries that were not solely for deliverance but only incorporate deliverance into their ministry, special days were set apart for that purpose. These services attracted people from

¹⁵⁷ Onyinah, "Exorcism as a Way of Confronting Witchcraft in Modern Africa, 8.

¹⁵⁸ Gifford, *African Christianity*, 99.

¹⁵⁹ Gifford, *African Christianity*, 99.

¹⁶⁰ Onyinah, "Exorcism as a Way of Confronting Witchcraft in Modern Africa, 9.

¹⁶¹ Gifford, *African Christianity*, 98.

various churches especially from the mainline churches that did not have deliverance services or did not believe in it at all. Some of them were given very wide and attractive publicity in the news media, both print and electronic. Gifford gave some statistics of attendance of one of such deliverance ministries - Macedonia. It began in March 1993, and by mid-1995 it held four days of revival near the beginning of each month, which about ten thousand (10,000) people attended. (1998:99). Currently, the prayer and deliverance service organized by the Moment of Glory Prayer Army Ministry popularly known as MOGPA in Ghana attracted over 40,000 participants.

This is just for one of the numerous deliverance ministries that have sprung up independently. The enormity of their challenge is better appreciated when one imagines that there are deliverance services going on in almost all the prophetic churches across Ghana. The impact is, therefore, overwhelming. After this general description, some of the specific issues involved in a deliverance ministration will be picked out and closely outlined.

3.6.3 Binding and Loosing

This practice, which is one of the most frequently used phraseologies, is based literally on Jesus' word to the Apostle Peter in the Gospel of Matthew that *"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven"* (Matthew 16:19) NIV

There is a similar Scripture in *Matthew 18:18* which was addressed to the disciples in relation to Jesus' teaching on forgiveness and reconciliation. These Scriptures were quoted, often literally interpreted, and used as the basis for the practice of binding evil forces that had anything to do with the problems that confronted supplicants. The actual originator of the use of these terminologies is not very clearly determined in Ghanaian deliverance history. It is, however, common to hear people attributing a lot of things to themselves. 'Binding' for instance, is one of the principles, which Tabiri claimed was a revelation from God to him as a potent strategy of warfare.¹⁶² It is believed that the forces were rendered immobile and helpless when bound. Good things that had been withheld by the forces were then loosed.

In the researcher's personal observation, another Scripture that was often cited to support "binding and loosing" is *Mark 3: 27* and its parallels, *in fact, no one can enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his*

¹⁶² Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 387.

house (NIV). 'Binding and loosing' is, therefore, one of the commonest concepts and terminologies in Ghanaian charismatic deliverance ministries.

3.6.4 Breaking

This was the prayer, which was prayed to literally break all demonic objects or weapons used by the devil and his demons to wage war against people. Like many other practices characteristic of most of the deliverance ministries, "breaking" was said to be another of the spiritual revelations, which Tabiri, who had been cited in this work as one of the foremost deliverance ministers in Ghana, was said to have received from God. Tabiri claimed it was the most important strategy, which, as he put it, is yielding results.¹⁶³

Larbi recounts that "breaking" is done only with Tabiri's direction; thus, no "breaking" took place when he travelled. A week of "breaking" normally took place once a month and went with prescribed days of fasting for participants and series of teaching and preaching done mostly by the leader.¹⁶⁴

Apart from Tabiri's use of "breaking" as a special terminology, which he claimed to have received by revelation, deliverance ministers and others generally used "breaking". Most of the people who used the phrase believed in the practice as severing the links that made one susceptible to demonic interferences or attacks. An example of such a link was the twin fetish called "*abamo*". Larbi cites Ansong, then the Administrator of the SU in the Ashanti Region of Ghana as saying that many problems associated with twins had been traced to this "*abamo*" and for such "we pray and break the connection...".¹⁶⁵

Emphasis here is on the use of the terminology "breaking", which is not restricted to Tabiri's special sessions only but has become a general terminology used by deliverance ministers generally for specific deliverance practices. Its use, however, seemed to have been popularised by Tabiri's special emphasis on it and a special time set apart for that practice of "breaking".

3.6.5 Bombing

Like the "breaking", it was believed that in deliverance prayer, one could fashion the hand into any weapon and wage war with it against the evil forces that were responsible for whatever

¹⁶³ Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 393.

¹⁶⁴ Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 393.

¹⁶⁵ Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 304.

problems that one was facing. In the same way, the mouth could be used to decree anything and the Lord would cause it to work.

This researcher had the opportunity of witnessing some young deliverance ministers explaining the biblical basis of the fashioning of the hand into weapons of war based on *Psalms 18: 34*: “He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze” (NIV). Based on this Scripture, these young men, who had obviously not been through any formal theological training, were confidently and aggressively praying with hands fashioned into various weapons and tools with the belief that evil forces could be bombed, hammered, chiselled, shot at or caned. They believed evil forces could also be sprayed with acid or pepper spiritually in order to immobilise them or destroy their works. It was very interesting observing how the intentions of the people praying were enacted as the prayer went on aggressively.¹⁶⁶

This shows the sort of interpretation that goes on in some of these deliverance ministries. Larbi cited Tabiri as claiming that “binding”, “breaking”, and “bombing” were three strategies that the Lord revealed to him. Tabiri claimed that “binding” and “breaking”, “bombing” were the exercises that “completely destroyed the force that was against the victim or the supplicant.”¹⁶⁷

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the background history of Pentecostalism in Ghana. It has also discussed the various ways and methods deliverance ministers use to exorcise spirit. In looking at the various issues raised in this chapter, this research concludes that deliverance has much to do with the spiritual realm. It is taking authority in the name of God/Jesus Christ to command a demonic force to leave a being, an object or a place. Since these demonic entities are smart, intelligent and strong, it calls for warfare. It will also be relevant to indicate that spiritual issues are discerned spiritually so it will be difficult to subject spiritual observations to empirical test.

¹⁶⁶ It is interesting to note that aggression is one thing that is emphasized by most deliverance ministers in their deliverance prayers. Onyinah’s description of Tabiri’s deliverance session also comments about the aggression with which the supplicants are supposed to pray and with physical gestures to match various intentions. These interesting interpretations that some of these preachers have given to such Scriptures as *Psalms 18: 34* is what has resulted in the various gestures with the hands as deliverance prayer goes on and the use of such expressions as *poo, poo, poo* and *pee, pee, pee*. These are supposedly the sounds of various weapons that are shot at the devil and his demons or whatever evil spirits are believed to be the cause of the various problems presented by the supplicants. Some even believe that the devil and other evil spirits can be literally whipped with canes.

¹⁶⁷ Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 393.

Demons are spiritual entities; they are present and their activities or influences on human persons and affairs are real.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN ASSESSMENT OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE/EXORCISM IN NEO-PROPHETIC CHURCHES

4.1 Introduction

Evidently, the practice of healing and deliverance has been on the increase among churches in Ghana especially those within the Pentecostal spectrum. It has become one of the attractions of Pentecostal Christianity in Ghana because it provides a ritual context for dealing with issues that affect human life. An evil or demonic activity, to the African, is dangerous to the survival of human life and must therefore be exorcised. The belief in evil spirits and their influences on the lives of people is so pervasive in Africa that it defines their worldview. The evil spirit beings are mostly associated with problems such as infertility, poor performance in school, barrenness, failure in one's businesses, poverty and the inability to achieve any good thing in life. The existence of these evil forces sometimes cause fear among believers.

In Ghana, despite the attractiveness of this practice to people, there have been concerns about the various methods and processes people undergo in healing and deliverance. Both reported and unreported cases indicate that individuals especially women and children have been abused under the guise of healing and deliverance. This chapter is an attempt to discuss some of the perceived impacts of healing and deliverance on the neo-prophetic churches in Ghana. The discussion in this chapter focuses on issues such as the needs that send people to the deliverance centers and the impact that the deliverance service has on the neo-prophetic churches. This research also critiques some of the methods that are adopted by the neo-prophetic churches in the process of healing and deliverance.

4.2 The Needs that Send People to Deliverance Centers

In Ghana, there are various circumstances and / or problems that send people to the deliverance centers. Generally, people associate any tragic incidence in life as being instigated by the devil and such problems that are believed to emanate from the activities of these evil forces drive many to seek healing and deliverance in churches and prayer camps. These can be listed as worries of not prospering, protection against specific or imagined danger, safe delivery of babies, protection against miscarriage, help in business, children's education and protection, complaints

of impotence and venereal diseases, eye trouble and fits, law suits and litigation, evil dreams, the search for husbands, drunkenness, encounters with doubtful ghosts and dangerous snakes, and above all, childlessness.

As part of the attempt to find out some of the reasons that send people to the prayer centers, the researcher developed a questionnaire for participants at some deliverance services to respond to. The researcher particularly selected 3 different churches where deliverance services were organized and had become a mainstream activity of the church on a weekly basis. In all, the researcher sent out 250 questionnaires of which 232 were received and analyzed for the study. The responses of the respondents are represented in the table below:

Table 4.1: Reasons for going to deliverance centers

	Statement/Reasons for going to deliverance centers	YES	NO
1	To pray against witches and wizards	145	87
2	To seek deliverance from demonic bondages	121	111
3	To pray for job	201	31
4	To pray for a husband or a wife	27	205
5	To protect myself from the fear of demonic influences and bondages especially diseases and sickness.	207	25
6	To pray and secure a travelling visa	47	185
7	For business expansion and growth	189	43
8	For childbirth	52	180
9	To protect family and children	211	21
10	To pray for the country Ghana	197	35

Source: fieldwork 2017.

The responses as found in the table above reflect the views of respondents pertaining to the reasons why or the various needs that sends them to the deliverance services organized by the neo-prophetic churches. According to the table, in a question asking whether or not they went to the deliverance centers to pray against witches and wizards, 145 of the respondents representing 62.5% indicated yes while 87 representing 37.5% said no. The study also sought to find out if respondents were going to the deliverance services to pray against demonic bondages, 121 of the respondents representing 52.2% said yes while 111 of the respondents representing 47.8% said no. The study also tried to find out if responding were going to the deliverance services for the purposes of

praying to secure jobs. In a response to this question, 201 of the respondents representing 86.6% said yes while 31 representing 13.4 said no.

Again, in Ghana, it widely perceived that some of the people that usually go for healing and deliverance services normally do so in order to pray to God for him to grant them a life partner. As part of this study, the researcher sought to find out whether this assertion is true. In a question to the respondents regarding whether they were at the deliverance services to pray to secure life partners for marriage, 27 of the respondents representing 11.6% said yes while 205 of the respondents representing 88.4% indicated no. The study also sought to find out whether or not respondents were going to the deliverance centers to pray against the influence of demonic bondages that were usually perceived to be preventing people's progress in life. In a response to this question, 207 respondents representing 89.2% said yes while 25 respondents representing 10.8% said no.

Due to Africa's economic woes as a result of bad leadership and mismanagement of resources by political leaders, citizens of various countries always try to secure travelling visas to travel overseas with the aim of going to secure greener pastures. It is evident, however, that apart from the consulate embassies that are mandated to grant visas to individuals wanting to travel outside the countries for their dream opportunities, one group of people that are widely known to be helping the process are prophets. It is believed that through their prayers, God can divinely intervene and "touch the heart" of the people at the embassies to grant visas without the slightest hesitation. In another question, the study sought to find out how many respondents were going to the deliverance services for the purpose of praying to secure a visa to travel. 47 of the respondents representing 20.3% said yes while 185 representing 79.7% said no. The study also sought to find if individuals were going to the deliverance services for the purposes of praying to expand the growth of their business. 189 of the respondents representing 81.5% said yes while 43 respondents representing 18.5 said no. This question was relevant because, in Ghana, it is believed witchcraft spirit can fight against the progress of one's business. As a result of that people usually attribute retrogression of their businesses, after everything has been made to promote its growth, to the influence of evil forces.

Barrenness is a big issue in marriages in Africa. The inability of a couple to give birth after a period of marriage can sometimes lead to divorce or one partner committing adultery. In Africa

particularly, to be married is one thing, and having or not having children is another. Marriage in African societies is mostly seen as “incomplete” unless there are children in the marriage. In some cultures, the woman must give evidence of her fertility by the birth of a child before the marriage is socially recognized. If she proves to be barren, she would be unable to fulfill an important function of the marriage.¹⁶⁸ Thus, she may either be sent back to her family or the husband may be permitted to take another wife. Mbiti posits that “without procreation marriage is incomplete”.¹⁶⁹ Marriage and procreation are seen as “a unity”.¹⁷⁰ It is always a great joy, to hear the news of new born baby to a couple. As a result of this, a couple for whom childbirth becomes elusive mostly turns to prayer centers or deliverance centers in seeking solution to their problems. In a question to find out if respondents were at the centers for the purpose of praying to seek solution to childbirth problems, 52 of them representing 22.4% indicated yes while 180 representing 77.6% said no. The study also sought to find out if respondents were going to the deliverance centers to pray for their families and children. In a response, 211 of the respondents representing 90.9% said yes while 21 representing 9.1% said no. The high number of respondents indicating yes can be attributed to the fact that in Ghana, people turns to be much concern about the wellbeing of their family members and hence, in a least opportunity would want to pray and support them. The study also attempted to find out if individuals who were going to the deliverance do pray for their country. In a response to this question, 197 of the respondents representing 84.9% said yes while 35 of the respondents representing 15.1% said no. The number of respondents indicating yes can be attributed to the fact that in Ghana, most people especially Christians believe that without help of God, the nation cannot progress. This belief is pervasive even among political leaders who mostly or usually visit prophets with the aim of going to secure God blessings to protect and guide them in the ruling of the nation.

The statistics shows that in Ghana, there are various circumstances and / or problems that send people to the deliverance centers. Generally, people associate any tragic incident in life as an event instigated by the devil and such problems that are believed to emanate from the activities of these evil forces drive many to seek healing and deliverance in churches and prayer camps. These can be listed as worries of not prospering, protection against specific or imagined danger; safe

¹⁶⁸ Nii Amoo and Margaret Amoo-Darku, *Biblical Marriage in an African Context* (Accra: SonLife Printing Press, 2005), 13.

¹⁶⁹ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1980), 133.

¹⁷⁰ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 133.

delivery of babies; protection against miscarriage; help in business, children's education and protection, complaints of impotence and venereal diseases, eye trouble and fits; law suits and litigation; evil dreams; the search for husbands; drunkenness; encounters with doubtful ghosts and dangerous snakes; and above all, childlessness.

The spirit behind these occurrences is usually called witchcraft (*bayie*). Below is Asamoah-Gyadu argument: -

The Twi peoples of Ghana understand *bayie*, which Westerners have translated as witchcraft, as the ability to cause harm to others by use of supernatural powers either alone or in league with other persons of similar orientation. Witches, it is believed, fly in the night and engage in mystical cannibalism. They besiege homes and spiritually suck the blood of victims, which results in the onset of diseases. Witches make people poor by spiritually "eating" their wealth, which means that certain types of poverty are believed to be inflicted supernaturally. Family ties and those on whom one intimately depends are depicted as potential sources of evil, generating apprehensiveness. Sickness and troubles are attributed to envy on the part of relatives and their spiritually powerful allies. In parts of West Africa, witchcraft is popularly referred to as "African electronics," an indication of its ubiquity.¹⁷¹

However, from the interviews conducted, it was found out that one major reason that drove people to the deliverance centers is fear. Without cause, many apparently believed that the enemy was at all times fighting them even if that was not the case. Because of the traditional worldview of the Ghanaian, there is the general belief in mystical causality. In recent years, questions about fear and anxiety had been raised relative to a wide range of issues: the 'ascendancy of risk consciousness',¹⁷² 'fear of the urban environment',¹⁷³ 'fear of crime',¹⁷⁴ 'fear of the other',¹⁷⁵ 'the amplification of fear through the media', 'fear as a distinct discourse',¹⁷⁶ the impact of fear on

¹⁷¹ J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu, 'Witchcraft Accusations and Christianity in Africa' *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* Vol. 39, No. 1 (January 2015), 23.

¹⁷² Slovic, P. (1987) "Perception of Risk", *Science*, No.236.

¹⁷³ Ellin, N. (2001) "Thresholds of Fear: Embracing the Urban Shadow", *Urban Studies*, Vol.38, Nos 5-6.

¹⁷⁴ Garland, D. (2001) *The Culture of Control; Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford).

¹⁷⁵ Renata Salecl, *On Anxiety*, London: Routledge 2004,

¹⁷⁶ Grupp, S. (2003) *Political Implications of a Discourse of Fear; The Mass Mediated Discourse of Fear in the Aftermath of 9/11*, (unpublished paper: Berlin).

law¹⁷⁷, ‘the relationship between fear and politics’,¹⁷⁸ ‘fear as a ‘culture’,¹⁷⁹ and the question of whether fear constitutes a ‘distinctive cultural form’.¹⁸⁰

One other by-product of fear is religion which is influenced by one’s idea of the unseen and divine and their tendency to cause harm or pain. Among Africans, there is a strong belief in the existence of evil and the power of the evil forces to cause harm or pain to individuals. Generally, Africans believe that the realms of man and nature do not stand in opposition to each other but are united by invisible spiritual beings, and so they can use the same mode of cognition to apprehend events in the two realms. Thus, natural phenomena are conceived in terms of human experience. Human experiences, e.g., illnesses, death, misfortune, etc., are accordingly explained as cosmic events; that is, they are caused by angry deities. This psycho-religious understanding of health, sickness and healing and of life as a whole leads people to find out the source of their suffering or misfortune. There is also the belief that wicked people can work maliciously against innocent people and this creates a source of fear and anxiety among people. Fear is natural and pervasive. It is present through every person on this planet; however, there is a huge difference in the ways in which people deal with fear. Fear, no matter how small it is, can be nurtured to become very threatening and dangerous to one’s life.¹⁸¹

In Ghana, as in other parts of Africa, people believe that most of life’s tragedies are caused by external influences like malicious magic or juju and witchcraft administered by those who envy and hate them, or by offended deities, ghost and ancestors who were not pacified. Another source of fear is the bad conscience – a sense of guilt, which is the result of sins and the ill will that one has towards one’s neighbors.

The African understanding of the universe and life which forms the worldview of many people in African societies seem to make sense of experiences through the narrative of fear. Fear

¹⁷⁷ Guzelian, C. P. (2004) *Liability and Fear*, (Stanford Public Law and Legal Theory Working Paper Series: Stanford Law School, Stanford, Cal.).

¹⁷⁸ Furedi, F. (2006) *The Politics of Fear; Beyond Left and Right*, (Continuum Press: London); Robin, C. (2004) *Fear: The History of a Political Idea*, (Oxford University Press: New York).

¹⁷⁹ Furedi, F. (1997) *The Culture of Fear; Risk Taking and The Morality Of Low Expectations*, (Cassell : London); Glassner, B. (1999) *The Culture of Fear; Why Americans Are Afraid Of The Wrong Things*, (Basic Books: New York).

¹⁸⁰ Tudor, A., “A (Macro) Sociology of Fear?”, *Sociological Review*, Volume 51 Issue 2 Page 238 - May 2003

¹⁸¹ Daniel Gardner, *The Science of Fear: How the Culture of Fear Manipulates Your Brain* (Plume; Reprint edition, 2009).

is not simply concomitant with high-profile catastrophic threats such as death, terrorist attack, armed robbery attacks, sickness, failure in life, AIDS or an unexpected tragedy; rather, as many academics have pointed out, there are also the 'quiet fears' of everyday life. According to Phil Hubbard, ambient fear 'saturates the social spaces of everyday life'.¹⁸² Brian Massumi echoes this view with his concept of 'low-grade fear'.¹⁸³

As part of the researcher's own experience in handling deliverance cases in Ghana as well as counseling services, it is not surprising for one to argue that people's subconscious cognitive processes are responsible for their beliefs and actions. People construct rational-sounding reasons to back up the beliefs they have, and simply don't have the acumen to defend them.

According to the psychologist Justin Barrett, this feature of our psychological functioning is fundamental to understanding concepts of gods and spirits:

Because people detect traces of supernatural agents' presence in many circumstances [... Even] in many contexts where other interpretations are equally plausible. It is part of our constant, everyday humdrum cognitive functioning that we interpret all sorts of cues in our environment, not just events but also the way things are, as the result of some agent's actions.¹⁸⁴

The content of the unconscious mind is unknown to consciousness except in so far as it affects it when approaching the threshold of consciousness either directly or in one of the many indirect methods by which our underlying psychic life affects our conscious existence. Consequently, for each of us, when looked at from our specific conscious point of view, this content is as non-existent or unknown as some objective fact which is not before us. If such an objective thing be a menace to our safety or comfort, its approach will cause some anxiety and in extreme cases this will become a pronounced fear. In other words, our warning reaction is one of fear or anxiety. This is

¹⁸² P. Hubbard, P., 'Fear and Loathing at the Multiplex: Everyday Anxiety in the Post-Industrial City', *Capital & Class*, no.80.

¹⁸³ Massumi, B. (ed.) *The Politics of Everyday Fear*, (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 2003).

¹⁸⁴ Justin, Barrett, L. "Exploring the natural foundations of religion", *Trends in Cognitive Science*, 4(1) (2000), 29-34.

always the way in which danger appears to us. When we turn to the content of the unconscious mind, we find that consciousness is related to it in an analogous manner and that, consequently, fear and anxiety have the same significance in regard to purely subjective dangers.

4.3 A Critique of Some of the Methods

In Ghana, the neo-prophetic movements which are most characterized by the practice of healing and deliverance maintains that, in both the Old and New Testaments, the Lord guides his people by means of spiritual revelations. In special situations, He speaks through prophets, visions and dreams in order to encourage, console, warn and help them. It has been observed that one noteworthy aspect of neo-prophetic prophecy is the whole practice of *akwankyere*, an Akan concept roughly equivalent to ‘spiritual directions’. *Akwankyere* (directions) is seen as God’s express direction for the here and now, to deal with and address the individual’s problem and concern for a particular moment.

To many Ghanaian neo-prophetic Christians, God’s express instructions are necessary for the Christian today. Neo-Prophets see this as very consistent with the apostolic experiences narrated in the prophetic ministry of the Old and New Testaments. For example, in 2 Kings 13: 14–19, when King Joash of Israel was confronted with the prospect of war with Syria, he went to the Man of God for help. Elisha did not just pray; he gave directions. So *akwankyere* is good for the individual and for groups as well, and anyone ignores it at his or her peril. Prayer alone may not be adequate: *akwankyere* complements the solution. The keen desire for *akwankyere* is often a direct result of the desire for *yiedie* (success and well-being).

In most situations, healing and deliverance services, have in one way or other turned into *akwankyere* (guidance) where advice is given to people concerning various issues confronting their lives. In some situation, after some were delivered they were told that it was either mother or father or a relative who was behind their trials. Through the *akwankyere* (guidance) some were also made to believe that there was witchcraft spirit tormenting their lives. In both reported and unreported cases, sometimes people were abused during such meetings in the name of deliverance. Some of these directions and / or counsel given by these pastor-prophets to members who sought their assistance at such meetings had gone a long way to affect family relationships and even led to

divorce. These and many other unethical manipulations and practices that were taking place in the name of healing and deliverance with so many men of God who called themselves prophets and healers but played on the emotions and ignorance of the people to extort money from them under the guise of solving their problems has become a matter of concern. This includes the charging of consultation fee by some men of God before their supposed client could see them. For instance, on Fire TV, a man of God popularly known as Osofo Kyiri Abosom, announces the increment of the Consultation fee from 200 Ghana cedis to 300 cedis. I had keen interest and decided to watch that channel. It was announced that if one wanted to receive his or her "number" early, one had to send his or her money (Consultation fee of 300 Ghana cedis) via mobile money. This number is what the client uses to queue to see the man of God. If the client wants a special appointment with the pastor, that could be arranged at an undisclosed amount. This man of God also advertised various types of anointing oil. There was the covenant breaking oil, destiny oil, protection oil, healing water, and breakthrough oil.

In a workshop on gender-based violence for media practitioners on the theme, “Let’s Challenge Militarism and End Gender-Based Violence”, held at the National Secretariat of the Domestic Violence and Victims’ Support Unit (DOVVSU) in Accra, the administrator of DOVVSU ASP Lydia Osei Agyeman, noted as worrying the degree to which religious abuse is fast growing in the Ghanaian religious landscape.¹⁸⁵

Most importantly, one issue that caught the attention of the researcher during this study was the broadcasting of healing and deliverance on Ghanaian television. In Ghana, most of the neo-prophetic ministries that engaged in healing and deliverance broadcast their service on TV for public consumption. It was found out from some respondents that, in most cases, the members or adherents are not informed about the broadcasting of the service on TV or the internet. This, to some extent, is against their fundamental human right. This is because, some of the acts that went on during the deliverance service revealed information which were sometimes private and confidential. For instance, in the process of healing and deliverance, the prophets sometimes openly disclose the cause of the individual’s problems or what might have caused the person’s ailment. By so doing, the names or the identity of individuals who were suspected to be cause of

¹⁸⁵ Jonas Nyabor, ‘DOVVSU Identifies Religious Abuse A Fast Growing Trend’ <https://www.newsghana.com.gh/dovvsu-identifies-religious-abuse-fast-growing-trend/> (accessed on 15th June, 2016).

the problems are mentioned publicly. This situation created a kind of disunity among family members and even led to the disassociation with some people in their communities. In an interview, a woman disclosed that a lady who was pregnant and couldn't give birth within the period of nine months was informed by a prophet that her mother was behind her ordeal. According to the woman, this resulted in a conflict between the woman and her daughter and later created a kind of disunity not only between them but also some members of the extended family.

In another interview, a woman narrated to me that she had been in a relationship with four different men. Every time she would introduce a man to her parents, the relationship did not work out afterwards. She suspected that it was the witches in her family that were counteracting her marriage plans. According to her, the suspicion was later confirmed by a 'man of God' that it was her auntie who was behind her situation. This resulted in an extreme conflict between herself her mother and auntie.

Again, in Ghana, both reported and unreported cases indicate that, during healing and deliverance, some people were sometimes abused. For instance, an informant reported that, in some cases, women who were anxious to have babies were abused by some pastors sexually under the pretence of sleeping with them to exorcise the demons that were preventing them from giving birth. This and many other practices such as extortion of money from people had come under serious criticism in the country from both the media and the individual's view. One Ghanaian Pentecostal theologian, Opoku Onyinah, wrote "Deliverance as a way of Confronting Witchcraft in Modern Africa: Ghana as a Case History". In this article, Onyinah critiqued a number of issues that emerged out of the healing and deliverance ministry in Ghana. He said; first, the accusations of witchcraft relinquished people from acknowledging the responsibility for their wrongdoing, their sins and their inadequacies, by shifting them onto someone else, often a poor person, who became the enemy of the whole community. Yet Pentecostals claimed to support the oppressed and the poor in society.¹⁸⁶

He again argues that, teachings on witchcraft and demons, coupled with testimonies from 'exorcised witches' subject the congregant to pressures quite disproportionate to the phenomena described. Thus, people are psychologically led to confess antisocial and nocturnal behaviours

¹⁸⁶ Onyinah, 'Deliverance as a way of Confronting Witchcraft in Modern Africa, 7

which baffle their understanding, and these are interpreted as witchcraft activities. These confessions could attract stigmatisation from other members of society, and thus instead of the deliverance and healing leading to liberation, the physical and psychological conditions of such people worsened, and in extreme cases led to death.¹⁸⁷

Commented [M1]: Not clear

He also asserted that the socio-economic conditions in Africa caused many people to begin prayer centers just as an economic venture. Since it did not need any training, certificate, or formal recognition from a body of Christians to begin a prayer center, charlatans and the unemployed who had strong personalities could easily claim spiritual encounters and begin centers with the profit motive. Linked with this socio-economic factor were the deliverance teachings at the centers, which consider health and wholeness as the result of obedience to biblical principles on blessing, at the neglect of biblical principle of suffering (e.g. 2 Cor. 12:7-12; Lk. 13:1-5; Rom. 8: 35-39). These teachings caused people to strive after modern riches at their own peril.¹⁸⁸

According to him, the uncritical approach adopted by both proponents and adherents of this ministry encouraged dubious people to deceive others with their exaggerated or fabricated testimonies. People who attempted to challenge some of the testimonies were branded as sceptics. Besides, it was assumed that theologians could not understand 'spiritual things,' and by implication could not teach such people. The problem that arose out of this situation was that such exorcists and/or deliverance ministers could lead genuine people to their doom, just like the massacre of over 780 members of the Church of the Ten Commandments in Uganda in the year AD 2000. Other cult-inspired deaths have been reported elsewhere in the world.¹⁸⁹

4.4 The Impact of Healing and Deliverance on Neo-Prophetic Churches

The issue of anointing has greatly influenced the ministry of the Charismatic and Pentecostal churches. In the context of the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, as is evident in the findings, to speak of the 'anointing' in practical Christianity or what is considered theologically relevant, is to speak of a God whose power is unsurpassed and who practically manifests his presence in the experience of his people through the empowerment of the anointing. These

¹⁸⁷ Onyinah, 'Deliverance as a way of Confronting Witchcraft in Modern Africa, 7

¹⁸⁸ Onyinah, 'Deliverance as a way of Confronting Witchcraft in Modern Africa, 7.

¹⁸⁹ Onyinah, 'Deliverance as a way of Confronting Witchcraft in Modern Africa, 7.

experiences through the anointing, according to Asamoah-Gyadu, is meant to serve as proof of God's viability and distinguish his people from all other people on the face of the earth, and these are evident in personal transformation, healings, deliverance from evil forces which opens the door to the realization of life, longevity and prosperity.

One benefit of the fame which the practice of exorcism has gained is that it speaks meaningfully to Ghanaians as far as religion is concerned. Max Assimeng underscores this when he writes: "I believe that central focus of religious activity in African traditional societies seems to be the warding off of what the Akan call *homhom fi* (evil spirit) from the affairs of men. This preoccupation of the traditional believer appears to be the central basis of traditional religiousness."¹⁹⁰ Birgit Meyer concluded, after a research among Ewe Christians that without the belief in the existence of the devil and evil spirit-beings, the people's faith in God "would be devoid of any basis."¹⁹¹ She also believes that these account for the success of Pentecostal Churches in the country and the growth of charismatic groups within the mainline churches. Thus, the teaching on deliverance and what it stands for is for most Ghanaians, an answer to the traditional fears of the African and provides the hope to achieve his aspirations by successfully warding-off "*honhom fi*" (evil spirit).¹⁹²

Also, the association of non-Christian religions with Satan and evil spirits seems to put them in the tradition of some biblical writers and in the company of some "Christian missionaries and teachers over the years. In Leviticus 17:2, Israel is warned to desist from sacrificing to goat-demons (cf. 2 Kings 28:8). In the New Testament reference is made to Beelzebub in Mathew 12:24 who is described as "prince of the devil", and who has subordinate angels (Matthew 25:41). Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 10:20, that "the sacrifices of the heathen are offered to demons and not God", clinches the argument for most charismatics. An early Christian writer, Justin Martyr wrote: "in fact what mankind came to call "god" and gave specific names were evil demons",¹⁹³ Most of the Protestant missionaries who came to Ghana in the 19th century practised Pietisms. They saw

¹⁹⁰ Max Assimeng, *Religion and Social Change in Africa* (Accra: Ghana University Press, 1989), 60.

¹⁹¹ Birgit Meyer, (Art) "'If You Are a Devil, You Are a Witch, and If You Are a Witch You are a Devil'. The Integration of 'Pagan' Ideas into the Conceptual Universe of Ewe Christian in Southeastern Ghana". *Journal of Religion in Africa* XXII 2 (1992), 108.

¹⁹² Meyer, (Art) 'If You Are a Devil, You Are a Witch, and If You Are a Witch You are a Devil', 108.

¹⁹³ Justin Martyr, "The First Apology of Justin" in *Early Church Fathers*, Cyril Richardson (ed.) New York: Macmillan Publishing 1970), 224.

their missions as a battle of Truth against Falsehood: God against the Devil who has the real power behind the religion of the “heathen”. However, the official theology of the mission churches came to regard African religions as superstition.¹⁹⁴

It seems that the fortunes of Christianity in Africa have been better, in terms of winning converts, when its teaching has recognized and addressed the existence and activity of evil spirits than when it has not. This has been the case even when the people’s own traditional religion has been associated with the devil. This point is not only supported by the pervasive popularity of the contemporary charismatic churches but also by the popularity of the ministries of Garrick Braide and Joseph Babalola in Nigeria; Wade Harris and Samson Opong in the Gold Coast. Opong was nicknamed *Sebtutu* (destroyer of charms). These preachers attacked idol worship and called upon hearers to surrender their gods to be burnt. Their ministries yielded “bumper harvest” where the work of the missionaries had previously yielded little.¹⁹⁵

Perhaps such an approach meshes well with the traditional understanding of religion. Religion, in the traditional context, is more a matter of personal and social well-being than ecclesiastical structures and creedal formulations. ‘Deliverance’ seeks to attack and destroy all conditions – mainly caused by supra-mundane factors- which make the attainment of the total wellbeing of the person difficult. J.N. Kudadjie stated that the goal of worship in African traditional religion was the wellbeing of the people, which came by ensuring the “increased positive activity of the god or the reduced activity of evil forces or both.”¹⁹⁶ Thus it promised a better and a more effective way of achieving the African ideal of salvation. Salvation, in this context, was seen as the basic function of religion.¹⁹⁷ Thus, Wilson noted that “the explicit and manifest function of religion” was to offer humankind the prospect of salvation and provide appropriate guidance on how to attain it.¹⁹⁸ The mission of the Charismatic churches was more about salvation and how to mediate it in a more relevant manner for their generation.

In *An Interpretation of Religion*, John Hick used the term salvation/liberation in reference to “the transformation of our human situation from a state of alienation from the true structure of

¹⁹⁴ S. G Williamson, *Akan Religion and the Christian Faith* (Accra: Ghana University Press, 1970), 55.

¹⁹⁵ F. L Bartels, *Roots of Ghana Methodism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 175.

¹⁹⁶ J. N. Kudadjie, “Aspects of Religion and Morality in Ghanaian Traditional Society with Particular Reference to Ga-Adangme” *Conch*, Vol. vii No. 1&2, (1975)

¹⁹⁷ John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent* (London: Macmillan, 1989), 14.

¹⁹⁸ Bryan R. Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 27.

reality to a radically better state in harmony with reality.”¹⁹⁹ Asamoah-Gyadu argued that, “what constitutes ‘alienation’ and ‘transformation’ depended not only on the theological presuppositions of the religions concerned, but also on the religio-cultural contexts of religious practitioners and devotees.”²⁰⁰ For instance, in African Pentecostalism, the indigenous worldviews and cultures loomed large in the understanding of salvation, and the goal and strategy of mission just as the surging intensity of secularism determined the conception and practice of mission in the western world. In the Christianity of Charismatic ministries, salvation was seen as something to be experienced. Their key ‘soteriological goals’ therefore included the realization of ‘transformation and empowerment’, ‘healing and deliverance’, ‘prosperity and success’ in the lives of believers.²⁰¹ Looking at the concept of mission in the charismatic churches, this thesis looked at how as a result of the use of the mass media, the charismatic churches in Ghana had been able to achieve their missionary agenda or impacted believers through the practice of mediation.

Some criticism must, however, be made of the approach of neo-Prophetic churches to deliverance and / or exorcism. The manner in which teaching on deliverance was offered could be dangerous. In most cases they were guilty of a terrible dualism. A dualism which created a devil who seemed to be equal in power and majesty with God himself. Such a teaching could produce a form of bondage²⁰² instead of deliverance.

Secondly, teaching and preaching about deliverance seemed to be superseding traditional charismatic themes like salvation, repentance, holiness, consecration, etc. Other great Christian themes like the “love of God and the sacrifice of Christ” as the basis of conversion were also undermined. It seemed that some Christians ran to God primarily because of the fear of the devil and not because they responded in repentance and faith to the love of God revealed in Christ.

Also, the individual’s responsibility in his sinful state, which is important as the basis for repentance was ignored most of the time. All the blame was shifted to the devil and his cohorts. People, therefore, came to see themselves mainly as helpless victims of supernatural forces whose

¹⁹⁹ Hicks, Interpretation, 10.

²⁰⁰ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 133.

²⁰¹ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 133.

²⁰² A bondage in the senses that individual Christians becomes more afraid of the devil and constantly seek for avenues to destroy their works.

only need was to “go through deliverance”. This could divest the Christian of any motivation to “work out his own salvation” out of a weakness (Philippians 2:12).

A twisted teaching and practice of deliverance could produce weak, wavering, and dependent Christians whose growth might be stifled. This phenomenon which may be termed “dependency syndrome” is already occurring. Some people go from place to place seeking deliverance, always unsure of themselves. They have become dependent on certain pastors or churches; for fear that they might become vulnerable without them.

Deliverance and / or exorcism have created among Christians a sense of ubiquitous presence of Satan and evil spirits seeking to attack. Some car stickers one sees in town are revealing; “Holy Spirit Zone-Keep off”; “Covered by the Blood of Jesus”; “Jesus is on my side-I fear No-One”; Jesus’ Power-Mighty Power”; “Angels on Guard-Keep Off”, etc. The popularity of Diana Akinwumi’s song “Jesus Go Win-Satan Go Lose” also attests to the acute and pervasive consciousness of Ghanaian Christians about the on-going spiritual battle around them. This development in itself is neither unscriptural nor unchristian if it does not result in a morbid dualism which subtly exalts the power of Satan to a level that violates faith.

4.5 Impact on the Growth of the Neo-Prophetic Churches

Generally, growth is used in reference to an increase in size, number and significance. When used in reference to the church, scholars have identified several dimensions with which the idea of church growth can be envisaged. According to J. B. Leonard, the Christian church is a community founded on the teachings of Jesus Christ as it bears witness to Christ's gospel in its worship and faith, work and memory. Theologically, the church is a spiritual communion of the whole people of God. It is rooted in the ancient covenant with Israel and the divine promise to deliver God's people. Alluding to the imagery of Apostle Paul, the church is the body of Christ, and Christ is the head of his body. Without Christ there is no church. The church, therefore, is defined as an incarnate community of those who receive the word of God, believe in Jesus Christ and seek to express that word in their own lives through the power of the Holy Spirit.²⁰³

According to Gbordzoe, the church can be defined as ‘the bringing of people, into a personal relationship and fellowship with Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit and

²⁰³ J. B. Leonard, *Church in Dictionary of Christianity in America* (Intervarsity Press, 1990), Electronic Copy.

into responsible church membership, such that the membership of the local congregation will increase in faith, holiness and other spiritual and material qualities while at the same time increasing in number, and also opening and multiplying other branches.²⁰⁴ The British Church Growth Association also defines church growth as having to do with an investigation of the nature, function, structure, health and multiplication of Christian churches as they relate to the effective implementation of Christ's commission to go then to all peoples everywhere and make them His disciples (Matt 28:19-20).²⁰⁵ The question which comes to mind is what are the dimensions in which the growth of the church can be measured?

The practice of deliverance in the neo-prophetic churches has gradually become an integral part of those churches' doctrinal stance. In Ghana, deliverance or exorcism is a major activity that goes on in every neo-prophetic church. This, according to most of the respondents, is due to the significant role they think the practice of healing and deliverance plays in the lives of individual members of the church, and the entire church as a religious institution.

To begin with, the practice, which has been part of the neo-prophetic churches can be said to have brought about some form of transformation to the church. This is because, in its absence, some Christians resort to other forms of non-Christian worship in attempt to solving their human existential problems, particularly when the church seemed to have no solution to the problem in question. This shift from dual allegiance to keeping faith with the church does not only help members to be stable in the church but it also keeps them in the church and further strengthens their faith.

The practice of healing and deliverance also has become an evangelistic tool being used to win many people to the Christian faith. The practice of healing and deliverance has served as a form of intervention to relieve a lot of people who go to the prophetic churches in Ghana from different forms of bondages that confronts them in life. According to some of the respondents interviewed, the only form of hope they had to deal with their problems and challenges was the kind of prayers and deliverance they had from the churches. When asked whether they would like to leave the church in the near future, they responded affirmatively but they did not know of the situation that might confront them when they leave the church. Evidently, one can say that the

²⁰⁴ E. K. Gbordzoe, *Prayer and Church Growth: A Practical Model*, (Accra: GEC Press, 2010), 63.

²⁰⁵ Roy Pointer, *How Do Churches Grow?* (Basingstoke, Hants: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1984), 17.

deliverance service organized by the neo-prophetic churches in Ghana has attracted a lot of people into the church. A deliverance meeting of a neo-prophetic church can attract more than 1500 people to a meeting. An example of this can be seen in a television broadcast of such meetings. In an interview, a prophet indicated that the healing and deliverance ministry is a pragmatic and effective evangelistic tool which allows them to draw more members into the church. In Ghana, the inability of the historic mission churches to introduce such worship styles is to be seen in the number of people that left those churches to the Pentecostal and Charismatic ministries. For instance, in *Translating the Devil*, based on ethnographic data on the Peki-Ewe of Ghana, Birgit Meyer notes how the inability of the historic mission churches to take the experience of the Holy Spirit seriously, to 'ward off or cast out evil spirits' and to offer people 'protection and healing' in his power, is a cause of drifts into Pentecostal churches and movements.²⁰⁶ The implication is that more effective evangelism might counteract this trend and translate into church growth, or as Tom S. Rainer puts it 'true evangelism results in true church growth'. Hence, in the case of one of the congregations, new members have continued to be added to the church since the healing and deliverance practice has assured them of overcoming any challenge that might confront them as Christians without having to resort to other religious faith.²⁰⁷ This demonstrates that Christians are not being converted only for the salvation of their souls, but they also seek for salvation from present life situations. This resonates well with the understanding of salvation among Pentecostals. Again, it is also important to the African because, as Asamoah-Gyadu argues, the ministries of healing and deliverance and exorcism are important hallmarks of Pentecostal/Charismatic evangelistic activity because it fits into the African interpretation of mystical causality.²⁰⁸

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the practice of healing and deliverance in Ghanaian neo-prophetic churches. The major issues that were of concern to the researcher in this chapter have to do with how the practice of healing and deliverance impact the neo-prophetic churches. This

²⁰⁶ Birgit Meyer, *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1999), xviii.

²⁰⁷ See Abamfo Atiemo, "Deliverance in the Charismatic Churches in Ghana", *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*, Vol. IV, (Dec. 1994), 39-48.

²⁰⁸ Asamoah-Gyadu J.K., *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit: Ghanaian Perspectives on Pentecostalism and Renewal in Africa (Regnum Studies in Mission)*. (Pasadena: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 152

research argues that these practices raise a lot of concerns, such as the abuse of human rights. The chapter also highlights how the activities of healing and deliverance are contributing to the growth of the neo-prophetic churches in Ghana. The ministry of deliverance in particular constitutes within the context of evangelism a response to the reality of evil, a non-negotiable element in the religious consciousness of all Christians who are alive to the world of the Bible. Demonization and exorcism have become a significant feature of Christianity especially among the neo-prophetic churches in Ghana or Africa because evangelism must take place within the context of preaching the word and casting out demons of affliction. Ogbu Kalu has noted that Pentecostal conception and theology of mission privileges the experience of the Holy Spirit as the driving force for evangelism.²⁰⁹ Grant McClung also concurs that Pentecostal missiology is grounded upon the Word (exegesis) and the Spirit (experience). It is Christ-centered, Spirit-driven, and pre-eminently apocalyptic in its sense of urgency. This internal soul of Pentecostalism, says McClung, reaches outward in continual prioritized evangelism, and across in ecumenical cooperation with those who are the true Body of Christ within every Christian communion. It reaches up in a constant eschatological expectation of Christ's return while at the same time reaching down in prophetic social activism and change, and in responsible care of earth's resources until the day of the new heavens and new earth.²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ Ogbu U. Kalu, "The Big Man of the Big God: Popular Culture, Media and African Pentecostal Missionary Strategy" In Wilhelmina J. Kalu, Nimi Wariboko, and Toyin Falola (eds.), *Christian Missions in Africa: Success, Ferment and Trauma Vol. 2*, (Asmara: African World Press, 2010), 373.

²¹⁰ Grant McClung, "Try to Get People Saved", Revisiting the Paradigm of an Urgent Pentecostal Missiology" In Murray Dempster, Byron Klaus, Douglas Peterson (eds.), *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1999), 47.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

Generally, this study has looked at the practice of healing and deliverance in prophetic churches in Ghana. The study employed the qualitative approach as a method in analysing the issues that were at stake. The first part of this study looked at the background issues and related literature of the subject under study.

In dealing with the African and his theology, one must understand him from his world view, something that eluded the early missionaries. This study has looked at the background of the Ghanaian particularly the Akan of Ghana in general and discussed their various theological concepts which are underpinned in their understanding or causes of diseases and negative events and the various methods that are employed to counteract misfortunes such as illness within Christianity.

Again, the study also looked at the historical background of Pentecostalism in Ghana and the practice of deliverance in Ghanaian neo-prophetic churches. The study also recounted some of the various typologies of Pentecostals in Ghana. In an attempt to place the work within its proper historical context, the study also brought into perspective the various methods and practice of deliverance in Ghana. The study has also discussed some of the reasons that send people to deliverance centres in Ghana. The researcher argued that the tendency of many African Christians to ascribe every occurrence in their life to the enemy or evil influence has created a kind of fear and anxiety which mostly affect and causes individual Christians to be dependent on pastor-prophets or recourse to spiritual means to deal with their problems. The inability of the mainline churches to address such issues has caused a great number of their members to drift and or seek solace in the camp of the prophets whose ministries are notable for solving such occurrences.

5.2 Conclusion

The neo-prophetic ministries affirm strongly the importance of the ministry of deliverance in the whole ministry of the Christian church. Arguably, they claim to be doing what Jesus Christ

and the Apostles did. In Ghana, they seem to frown upon or attack anyone who seems not to accept this position. In the early church the ministry of exorcism or casting out of demons played an important part in the Christian initiation. Like recent neo-prophetic churches, the early Christians believed that the devil ruled the non-Christian world and that through his activities all people, prior to becoming Christian, had to be especially delivered from corruption. Through healing, exorcism and deliverance, the neo-prophetic churches have distinguished themselves as a religion of the Bible that relives the ministry of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Themes of overcoming, conquering, dominating or defeating evil powers and prevailing over debilitating afflictions are seen reflecting in the activities of the neo-prophetic churches. The researcher can argue that the ministry of deliverance is an important hallmark of the neo-prophetic churches evangelistic activities because it fits into the African interpretation of mystical causality. The traditional African lives in an intentional world in which things do not happen by chance. Even when problems are naturally caused, evil spirits are able to quickly get in and exploit the situation to the disadvantage of the victim. The general belief is that 'events have causes' and so when Paul speaks about wrestling with 'principalities and powers' or an 'agent of Satan' in his body, he speaks in categories and idioms that are not alien to African cosmological ideas. In the African context, the spirits of the ancestors and traditional deities have all survived in the Christian imagination as demons that must be resisted. The activity of prayer and deliverance is seen as one means through which these demons are exorcised.

Again, the primary motivation of the neo-prophetic churches as far as the ministry of healing is concerned is to be biblical. This is because, as a Pentecostal movement, they speak of a different kind of 'apostolic succession' that puts emphasis not only on ecclesiastical authority and inheritance but also on the power of God that was evident then and now.

However, the resurgence of dualism in the neo-prophetic churches that intensifies the demonization of African culture, helps to accentuate the belief in, and fear of, the spiritual agents of traditional religion, the end result is that the devil becomes more important, highly visible and dominates the lives of many people. Clearly, one has a very strong demonic force to fight against, the moment everything traditional is regarded as demonic.

This research emphasized that theology needs to be understood in the sociocultural context where people express and validate their theological horizon. Its purpose is to give an overview of what deliverance is and not to provide a complete manual for the deliverance ministry.

5.3 Recommendations

The researcher makes the following recommendations:

- i. The reality and nature of the situation demands strategies and methods that can be used to counteract any activity of demonic influence. As Christians, one must understand that they have been empowered by the Spirit of God to fight demons through prayers and with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- ii. The neo-prophetic churches must take the ministries of healing and exorcism seriously and teach people how to pray and wait upon the Lord. It is a very challenging ministry that calls for transparency, commitment, prayer and fasting, because dealing with evil spirits can be a dangerous venture for those who take it lightly. The story of the 'sons of Sceva' in Acts 19 is there as an example of the fact that God's grace in evangelism should not be taken for granted.
- iii. The members of the neo-prophetic churches should be taught to learn and study the Bible to apply to themselves biblical understanding of issues and not to ascribe everything to the devil.
- iv. Christians should be taught to put their faith in God in all matters of life. That the demonization of everything in their lives is very detrimental to building people's faith in Christ.
- v. Finally, it is also recommended that Christians should be made to understand that the effectiveness of a person's faith and enhanced spirituality in dealing with life's issues which are believed to be influenced by the devil is only achieved through fasting, Bible study and prayer.

APPENDICES - DATA COLLECTION

APPENDIX I – PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS INTERVIEWED

1. PROPHET JOSHUA ADJEI – Founder and General Overseer of BREAD OF LIFE EVANGELISTIC MINISTRY
2. BISHOP DANIEL KWADWO OBINIM-ANGEL – Founder and General Overseer of INTERNATIONAL GOD’S WAY CHURCH

This prophet had been in the news after claims of having spiritual powers to change into any form of animal to execute his plans. He claims to have attained “angelhood” so he has the rank of an angel

3. PROPHET EBENEZER ADARKWA YIADOM – Founder and General Overseer of EBENEZER MIRACLE WORSHIP CENTER
4. REV. CHRISTIAN KWABENA ANDREWS (OSOFO KYIRI ABOSOM) – Founder and General Overseer of LIFE ASSEMBLY WORSHIP CENTER

APPENDIX II – INTERVIEW GUIDE AND SOME NOTABLE RESPONSES

The following are the major questions and thematic areas which guided the researcher in the course of the interviews:

1. What are the modes of presentation and operation used by the respondents?
2. What are the reasons that drive people to access the prophetic services of the respondents?

The modes of presentation and operation used by the respondents

All prophets and churches witnessed had similar mode of presentation and operations for their deliverance sessions. The prophets use two main tools - *Nkomhye* - telling the client what they the Prophets are seeing in the spiritual realm or pronouncing prophecies which were *pari passu* with *akwankyere* (showing the way), given direction.

Some respondents sometimes call people to come forth to experience the breaking of curses upon their lives, quote scriptures to support the claim that it was biblical for people to look for prophet, and often promised all to come and have solution to any kind of problems they were facing, be they spiritual or physical.

Members are asked to stretch their hand in a ready to receive position. The prophet then shouts *gye Yesu mogya* (receive the blood of Jesus) and follows with enumerating problems and disease that people are suffering from. He continues this for some time some members of the congregation then manifest by vomiting, a sign claimed to be evidence of deliverance or healing.

Sometimes water is also drawn from a well which a respondent claims God showed him a particular spot to dig. This water is given to members as solution to their problems. At other times, oil and egg is also sold for as much as 500 Ghana Cedis to be used in a particular direction for the solution of problems.

The factors that attract people to prophetic ministry were also similarly enumerated by the respondents as follows:

- Poverty
- Lack
- Failure in life
- Demonic influences
- Feelings of God giving directions
- Some look for spiritual leadership and covering
- Fear of witches and ghost hunting

Definition of Terms

DELIVERANCE

The process of liberating, rescuing or setting free a person, a place, an object from demonic or negative force domination.

EXORCISM

Exorcism is the process of driving away demons from a person or an item or a place.

PRIMAL SOCIETIES

Original Societies

DELIVERANCE MINISTRIES

Ministries engaged in deliverance definition above.

BONDAGE

Bondage is the state of being under the control or domination of another force or person.

PROPHETIC HEALING CHURCHES

Prophetic Healing Churches are led by prophets and having prophecy as the main characteristics.

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TABLE

Table 1: Reasons for going to deliverance centres

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