

**Revisiting Pentecostal Spiritualities with Reference to  
African Traditional Religious Practices and Pentecostal  
Theologies of Prayer in Ghana**

By

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## **DECLARATION**

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines prayer as practiced by Pentecostal churches in Ghana and the fact that new Ghanaian prayer practices are developing as variations of Classical Pentecostal Spirituality. The study focuses on Pentecostal Spirituality and theology of prayer while considering these new developments and situating them within an African Traditional spiritual context. It was established that primal, dualistic and causal ATR worldviews also confront many Africans with ideas of a cosmic struggle. Facing the latter challenge has led to adopting practices similar to, or at least influenced by, ATR practices, especially in neo-prophetic churches. Although admittedly, some Ghanaian Pentecostal spiritualities and practices are discontinuous to or broke with ATR worldviews and practices, it is postulated that some also are not or have not done so, particularly regarding prayer.

Defining Pentecostal Spirituality as a praxis of integrated beliefs, practices, sensibilities and values, it was argued that Pentecostal Spirituality, with the Holy Spirit as its fulcrum, is particularly clear in its praxis and experiences of prayer. It was, furthermore, held that Pentecostal Spirituality can never be understood without reference to Pentecostal theology and vice versa, as ‘two sides of the same coin’. As such, both Pentecostal Spirituality and theology are discussed in detail. In evaluating Pentecostal theology of prayer, it is also shown that there may be many possible motives behind (Ghanaian) Pentecostal prayer, including fear, threat, uncertainty, joy, need and spiritual desire. Some of these drivers, however, have resulted in a shift from the more experiential Classical Pentecostal model of prayer to one of demand-driven causality – one that includes an increasing element of ‘glossolalic abuse’ that also needs careful theological attention. The Ghanaian Pentecostal theology of prayer is therefore conceptualised as transactionally Christological, spontaneously ‘glossolalic’, lyrically doxological, and ontologically authoritative.

An investigation into the emerging neo-prophetic prayer practices revealed that the African worldview of evil and the proponent’s quest for the ‘magicalisation’ of instant results have led to the assimilated neo-prophetic sacramental and transactional ritual prayer evident at the prayer markets via prayer giants who monetise prayer. Refocusing on a theological examination of Pentecostal prayer practices, it was revealed that although the Pentecostal Spirituality of prayer is intended to attract people to and strengthen believers’ relationship with God, emerging prayer practices are mostly driven by fear and uncertainty, resulting in the pursuit of hierarchical, consequential, solution-centred prayers.

In light of the findings, the study proposes a four-fold integrated prayer model (a modification of Horton-Clowney’s model) with the introduction of an African worldview as

the fourth motive for prayer, whilst upholding that African Pentecostals do not pray driven by one motive but a combination of motives. Therefore, a contextual Pentecostal practice of prayer is proposed based on an ‘ACTS Model’, that takes into account African traditional praxis, the Christocentric Full Gospel, Transactional Nomenclature, and Spirit-centrality.

## OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie ondersoek gebed soos beoefen in Pinksterkerke in Ghana en die feit dat nuwe Ghanese gebedspraktyke ontwikkel as variasies op klassieke Pinksterspiritualiteit. Die studie fokus hierdie nuwe ontwikkelings en op Pinksterspiritualiteit en -teologie van gebed binne die konteks van Afrika Tradisionele Religie (ATR). Daar is bevind dat die vroegste dualistiese en kousale ATR-wêreldbeskouings baie Afrikane konfronteer met die idee van ’n kosmiese stryd. Die uitdaging wat hierdie idee stel het gelei tot die aanneem van praktyke soortgelyk aan, of ten minste beïnvloed deur, ATR praktyke, veral in neoprofetiese kerke. Hoewel dit toegegee word daar soms weggebreek is van of dat daar diskontinuiteit bestaan tussen ATR wêreldbeskouings en praktyke en Ghanese Pinksterspiritualiteite en -praktyke, word bevind dat dit nie in alle gevalle geld nie, veral met betrekking tot gebed.

Terwyl Pinksterspiritualiteit gedefinieer word as ’n praxis van geïntegreerde gelowe, praktyke, gevoelens en waardes, word geargumenteer dat Pinksterspiritualiteit, met die Heilige Gees as spilpunt, veral duidelik te sien is in die beoefening en ervarings van gebed daarvan. Omdat Pinksterspiritualiteit nooit verstaan kan word sonder verwysing na Pinksterteologie nie en anders om, word hulle as ‘twee kante van dieselfde munt’ gesien en beide word daarom in detail bespreek. In ’n evaluasie van Pinksterteologie van gebed word getoon dat daar vele moontlike motiewe vir (Ghanese) Pinkstergebed kan bestaan, insluitende vrees, bedreiging, onsekerheid, vreugde, behoefte en geestelike begeerte. Sommige van hierdie dryfvere het egter gelei tot ’n skuif van ’n meer klassieke ervaringsmatige Pinkstermodel van gebed na een van vraagedrewe kousaliteit – een wat ’n toenemende mate van ‘glossolaïese misbruik’ insluit en wat ook versigtige teologiese aandag vereis. Die Ghanese Pinksterteologie van gebed word konseptueel beskryf as transaksioneel Christologies, spontaan ‘glossolaïes’, liries doksologies, en ontologies gesaghebbend.

’n Ondersoek na ontwikkelende neoprofetiese gebedspraktyke toon dat die Afrika-wêreldbeeld van boosheid en die voorstanders daarvan se soeke na magies-onmiddellike resultate gelei het tot die assimilasie van neoprofetiese sakramentele en transaksionele rituele gebed soos gevind word by gebedsmarkte via gebedsreuse wat gebed ’n monetêre karakter gee. Deur opnuut te fokus op die teologiese onderbou van Pinkstergebedspraktyke, word

getoon dat, hoewel Pinkstergebedspiritualiteit ten doel het om mense aan te trek tot en gelowiges se verhouding met God te versterk, nuwerwetse gebedspraktyke eerder die gevolg is van vrees en onsekerheid wat lei tot die beoefening van hiërargiese, gevolgsmatige, oplossing-gesentreerde gebede.

In die lig van die bevindings van die studie word 'n viervoudige geïntegreerde model van gebed voorgestel (geskoei op Horton-Clowney se model) wat 'n Afrika-wêreldbeskouing insluit as vierde motief vir gebed, terwyl dit erkenning gee aan die feit dat vir Afrika-Pinkstergelowiges daar nie net een nie, maar 'n kombinasie van motiewe as dryfvere vir gebed bestaan. Daarom word ook 'n kontekstuele Pinkstergebedspraktyk voorgestel gebaseer op die "ACTS"-model wat Afrika tradisionele praxis, die Christosentriese Volle Evangelie, Transaksionele taal en Gees (Spirit)-sentraliteit in ag neem.

## **DEDICATION**

For the strong support given to me by my family and my church, I dedicate this dissertation to them for standing with me in good and challenging times: specifically, to Grace Buerthey (my wife) and Andronicus Buerthey (my son), Felix and Pearl Atsrim and The Church of Pentecost.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Ac	Acts
AIC	African Initiated Churches
ACI	Action Chapel International
APOSA	Apostolic Students and Associates
AIPC	African Initiated Pentecostal Churches
ATR	African Traditional Religion
CAC	Christ Apostolic Church
CoP	The Church of Pentecost
Col	Colossians
Dan	Daniel
Deut	Deuteronomy
Eph	Ephesians
Est	Esther
Ex	Exodus
Ezk	Ezekiel
Gal	Galatians
Gen	Genesis
GPCC	Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council
Heb	Hebrews
HUM	Home and Urban Missions
ICGC	International Central Gospel Church
Is	Isaiah
Jam	James
Jer	Jeremiah
Jn	John
Jdg	Judges
Lk	Luke
Mat	Matthew
Mk	Mark
MCG	Methodist Church, Ghana

MOPGA	Moment of Prayer and Glory Army
Num	Numbers
PBC	Pentecost Bible College
PENSA	Pentecost Students and Associates
PENTYEM	Pentecost Youth and Evangelistic Movement
PenTV	Pentecost Television
Phil	Philippians
PIWC	Pentecost International Worship Centre
Prov	Proverbs
Ps	Psalms
PU	Pentecost University
PUC	Pentecost University College
Rev	Revelation
Rom	Romans
1 Cor	First Corinthians
1 Jn	First John
1 Pet	First Peter
1 Chron	First Chronicles
1 Tim	First Timothy
1 Thes	First Thessalonians
1 M1D	One Member One Discipled Soul project
1 Kg	First Kings
2 Chron	Second Chronicles
2 Cor	Second Corinthians
2 Kg	Second Kings
2 Sam	Second Samuel
3 Jn	Third John
TAC	The Apostolic Church, Ghana
UG	University of Ghana



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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Introduction

This study investigates the Pentecostal spiritualities of prayer. Many scholars have conducted research on Pentecostal Spirituality, and scholars such as Jack Steve Land (Land, 2010), and Daniel Albrecht (Albrecht, 1999b) have done so extensively. This research, however, focuses on exploring the Pentecostal Spirituality of prayer as practiced specifically by Pentecostals in Ghana. Pentecostalism is one of the primary traditions in Christianity today, and its presence in and impact on Africa are beyond doubt. According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2005b:97), Pentecostalism is the branch of Christianity that believes in, affirms, and actively promotes the presence of the Holy Spirit<sup>1</sup> as an integral part of normal Christian life and worship. Its primal characteristics have been overtly described in terms of its primal speech, primal piety, and primal hope (Cox, 1995:82-83; c.f. Nel, 2020a:4). For most people, Pentecostalism's most distinguishing characteristic is the Holy Spirit baptism, which, according to tradition<sup>2</sup>, must be manifested by "speaking in tongues" (Macchia, 2020:45,49,51). It must be emphasised, however, that even though the Holy Spirit is central to Pentecostal Theology, Pentecostal Spirituality should not be reduced to this element alone (Nel, 2015:15).

In terms of numbers, Pentecostalism is the largest and fastest-growing branch of Christianity in the global south (Anderson, 2016:1; c.f. Straub, 2016:207). What makes Pentecostalism unique is, among other things, its characteristic experiential Spirituality, which at times differs markedly from the mainline churches. Additionally, at the heart of this experiential Spirituality, Goldsworthy (2006:14) claims it is the subject of prayer. Since people's prayerful responses to God in expectation of a divine encounter is the starting point of theology (Barth Karl, 1949:117-19; c.f. Nel, 2020b:4), the prayer of the Pentecostal has the dimension of promoting physical and spiritual wellbeing (Lauricella, 2012:236).

According to Janis (2008:26), Spirituality<sup>3</sup> refers to an individual's approach to connecting with the divine and experiencing realms beyond the physical world. Spirituality cannot, therefore, be discussed without reference to the communicative element of prayer in it (Okediadi, 2008:1).

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<sup>1</sup> Within the Pentecostal circles, the Holy Spirit is literally referred to as the Holy Ghost. It is seen as an unseen Spirit that performs miracles, hence a ghost.

<sup>2</sup> In relation to this research, the Classical Pentecostals.

<sup>3</sup> A working definition of Spirituality for this thesis is stated at the concluding section of part 3.2.

This study's point of departure is that it is impossible to identify one Pentecostal Spirituality and as such, also not one Pentecostal theology of prayer. Pentecostalism has a global reach, and exhibiting different forms and strands, with each of these strands upholding different prayer practices, which reflect differently on their Spirituality. There cannot be only one Pentecostal Spirituality or theology of prayer since different approaches to Pentecostal Spirituality and theology exist. This explains the plural forms in the title. These different approaches to Pentecostal theology of prayer may seemingly result in the review of 'traditionalisation' vis à vis 'de-traditionalised Pentecostal models of prayer'.

Prayer is seen as a means by which Christians commune with God. Poloma and Lee (2012a:296) suggest that prayer also exemplifies the believer's dependence on the Creator. Corroborating what Palmer (1978:5) said earlier, Baesler (2012:208) rightfully asserts that "prayer is evident in every culture within recorded history". Prayer may, therefore, be as old as religion itself, or at least as old as human religious communication (Kelly, 2012:272-274).

From the account of Genesis 4:26<sup>4</sup>, "Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At the time of Enosh, people began to *call on*<sup>5</sup> the name of God" [my italics- JTB]. This "call" in Gen 4:26 implies the practice of prayer, which according to biblical traditions, is almost as old as creation. The concept of prayer from this account in Genesis may thus be postulated as communication between humanity and divinity (Baesler, 2003:202). Even though prayer is a common denominator of all Christianity, the mode, form, method, and practices of prayer converge and diverge between and across traditions and denominations in Christianity.

The most common shared way of praying within Christianity is undoubtedly by reciting the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9–15), and in mainline churches, prayer is often guided by prayer books. The prayer books of the mainline churches have a liturgical arrangement of prayers for all occasions and activities. The selected prayers are read or recited by the officiating minister of the occasion to the congregation, or s(he) leads the congregation to read or recite the appropriate prayers in the prayer book. In mainline churches, prayers must sometimes be carefully written and reflected before they are read. Spontaneous prayers are, therefore, not preferred during congregational worship in mainline churches.

Among Pentecostals, prayer is predominantly spontaneous and seen as inspired, i.e., uttered through the leading of the Holy Spirit. The practice of a Pentecostal Spirituality of prayer is, therefore, also intrinsically experiential, i.e., as the Holy Spirit leads one.

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<sup>4</sup> All the Bible references in this study are from the NIV unless otherwise stated.

<sup>5</sup> This '*call on*' refers to and can be postulated as prayer.

Furthermore, the practice of prayer in a Pentecostal context is primarily evident in speaking in tongues<sup>6</sup> and ‘praying in the Spirit’. It must be reiterated that for the Pentecostal, speaking in tongues alone is known as prayer of the Spirit. This practice of praying in tongues usually results in loud congregational prayers that are also a key feature among Pentecostals. It is also these characteristics that most will think of first when asked about Pentecostal prayer. In this research, prayer is defined<sup>7</sup> *as the various models of fellowshiping, invoking, and communicating in a human-divine loop to satisfy humanity’s innate sensory and spiritual needs.*

Furthermore, this study focuses on Pentecostal Spirituality<sup>8</sup> of prayer as practised by Classical Pentecostals in Ghana by examining their theology of prayer. In Ghana today, The Church of Pentecost (CoP henceforth) is the largest Protestant church<sup>9</sup> with the largest number of congregations throughout the country (The Church of Pentecost, 2021:16-22). In 2021 alone, 818 CoP congregations were established in Ghana (The Church of Pentecost, 2021:20). The CoP is also known to have a consistent, well-established culture of prayer. Importantly, the CoP was selected for this study based on the factors mentioned above. In recent times, however, the Ghanaian Pentecostal landscape has experienced a kind of divergence in prayer Spirituality concurrent with the emergence of new prayer practices by the so-called neo-prophetic churches.<sup>10</sup>

The CoP has existed in a context in which African Traditional Religions (ATRs) have flourished for millennia, and in which rich African Traditional religious spiritualities and practices of prayer still exist. To understand Ghanaian Pentecostal prayer practices and other spiritualities and, in turn, how these reflect their theologies of prayer, therefore, the possible influence of African Traditional religious spiritualities on them cannot be overemphasised. The main proposal of this study is that, although prayer is central to Pentecostal Spirituality and theology, the African Pentecostal understanding and practice of prayer have been influenced by the ATR worldviews, that is, African Pentecostal Spirituality, and hence, theology of prayer may better be appreciated when conceptualised using the cosmological model.

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<sup>6</sup> It is established that speaking in tongues is a form of Pentecostal prayer.

<sup>7</sup> Working definition for prayer by JITB for this study.

<sup>8</sup> For the link between theology and Spirituality see section 1.8.1, and 3.6.

<sup>9</sup> The CoP has 18,240 congregations nationwide.

<sup>10</sup> The various strands of Pentecostal churches are explained in section 1.7 of chapter 1.

## 1.2 Background

According to Albrecht and Howards (2014: 235), Pentecostal Spirituality refers to the Pentecostal's relationship with God shaped by elements such as beliefs, practices, sensibilities, and values. While beliefs condition the Pentecostal's view of God, the practices serve as a vehicle through which God is experienced (Albrecht and Howards, 2014:235,240-241). Put differently, the sensibilities and values of a given Pentecostal community refer to habits that uniquely characterise their relationship and response to the Spirit of God (Albrecht, 1999a:15). Richard Foster also understands Pentecostal Spirituality as a description of a profound relationship with God (Foster, 1998:1), specifically, via an effectual element of prayer. Moreover, Land (1993:122) holds that the Holy Spirit is central and the starting point of Pentecostal worship, while prayer serves as the heart of its Spirituality. Pentecostal Spirituality cannot, therefore, be discussed without reference to the Holy Spirit and prayer. These two elements form the crux of Pentecostal spiritualities. Since Pentecostal spiritualities of prayer are fundamental in this research, the Ghanaian Pentecostal's understanding of the Holy Spirit in relation to prayer will be an important central point to unearth the beliefs, practices, sensibilities, and values of prayer. Due to the complex, multi-faceted nature of Spirituality (Waaajman, 2007:22-5), the understanding of Spirituality with respect to the ever-evolving practices in Pentecostal prayer needs to be explored.

According to Robinson (1994:15), in the book of Acts, twenty-one of the thirty-six references to church growth speak about prayer. Prayer, therefore, clearly featured prominently in the early church's life and Spirituality, which in turn accounted for much of its growth. The CoP also upholds prayer as an integral part of its growth as well as of its Christian worship and Spirituality (Asiedu, 2018:2). In fact, prayer has been ingrained as a core value of CoP Spirituality, with the CoP leadership expecting members to practise prayer habitually (CoP, 2010:10-11) to the extent that, in Ghana, the CoP has been described as a church 'characterised by prayer' (Assabil, 2019:99).

The CoP is not only known for its frequent weekly prayer services, but also for its many daily prayer times/services such as *ahomakye mpaebɔ* (dawn prayers<sup>11</sup>), *anɔpa mpaebɔ* (morning prayers<sup>12</sup>), *awia mpaebɔ* (late afternoon prayers<sup>13</sup>), *anwumere mpaebɔ* (evening prayers<sup>14</sup>), and sometimes *apesire* (all-night prayers<sup>15</sup>). Fridays have for a long time been

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<sup>11</sup> Dawn prayers in the CoP are usually held from 4:30am to 7:00am.

<sup>12</sup> Morning prayers were usually held from 9am to 12noon.

<sup>13</sup> Late afternoon prayers were usually held from 2pm to 4pm.

<sup>14</sup> Evening prayers were usually held from 6:00pm to 9pm.

declared for fasting and for serious painstaking prayer for all members at all levels (Akowuah, 2013:32-33). Friday prayer services are typically long and are used to develop the Spirituality of members through prayer and teaching of the word of God. Markin (2019:18) and Larbi (2001:253-257) also corroborate Leonard's (1989:7) assertion that one of the significant factors for the development of the CoP has been the consistent prayer sessions.<sup>16</sup>

Looking back<sup>17</sup>, the CoP was at one point in its formative stages, characterised by a period of struggle for the church's survival due to internal issues. Growing up with the worldview that Ghanaians were protected by the family and community gods (Wariboko, 2017:10), many Christian converts were afraid to surrender wholly to the Christian God. This resulted in members' thirst for spiritual supernatural power for protection. The desire for the power of the Holy Spirit, therefore, drove some of them to spend long hours in prayer in remote locations, praying for the Spirit's baptism with the evidence of speaking in tongues (Walker, 2010:84).

From its formative years on, there had been a strong practice in both rural and urban CoP communities, that the church organised frequent prayer sessions in schools, classrooms, on football fields, community parks, woodland groves, and farms, which were commonly referred to as '*cocoa ase mpaebɔ*' (meaning, prayer under the cocoa trees). These prayers offered an enabling environment for the corporate group and individual members to deepen their (Pentecostal) Spirituality, while also contributing greatly to the church's sustainability, growth, and expansion. Anytime a new CoP congregation was established in a community, it established prayer and fellowship gatherings in homes or in any available location, with these prayer sessions emphasising discipleship and Spirit baptism (Walker, 2010:41).

As part of their Christian responsibility, CoP members have been encouraged to pray at their homes, workplaces, and/or when confronted with any obstacle and difficult situations of life, or whenever they are about to embark on any endeavour in life (CoP, 2016:10). The

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<sup>15</sup> All night prayers were held from 10pm to 5am.

<sup>16</sup> In the early 1940s, an evangelistic campaign in the Apostolic Church (called the Witness Movement) gave birth to a prayer ministry known as the 'Bombing Group'. This name was derived from World War II bombing raids (Larbi, 2001:183-184). 'Bombing Group' disseminated a 'virus' that prompted people to organise prayers for the destruction of the devil's works and agents (Larbi, 2001:183-184). Prior to engaging in any activity, the bombing group would typically fast and pray, seeking God's prophetic direction, as its primary purpose was to motivate the young for evangelistic outreach. Eventually, similar groups were reproduced throughout Ghana (Markin, 2019:65).

<sup>17</sup> This period in the CoP was characterised by a split in the church over doctrinal issues in 1937 due to opposition to medication – *kyiri bentoa* – followed by other internal wrangling resulting in subsequent future splits.

CoP believes that the individual, therefore, serves as the fulcrum<sup>18</sup> of prayer in this regard. Every CoP member is encouraged to begin and end each day's activity with prayer. They are encouraged to pray first thing in the morning before going to work, church, travelling, and before receiving visitors. Many CoP members have, therefore, been "on fire", with prayer pervading every aspect of their work. Regardless of the number of people attending a service, church members were taught to begin the collective prayer as soon as any member entered the church auditorium/meeting place with two or three members present. This theology is consistent with Matthew 18:19–20 which reads: 'Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them'.

For Pentecostals, prayer is also an intervention tool (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2020:1). Pentecostals believe that through prayer, God intervenes in their life situations regarding unemployment, poverty, sickness, barrenness and so on. Through prayer, therefore, the Pentecostal believes that God is not only experienced, but also, His hand is moved in action on behalf of His children. Prayer has also become the most significant aspect of CoP's Spirituality since the church believes that via prayer, the Pentecostal experiences the immanence of God's presence (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005a:235), which may likely lead to instant responses to their requests. Through the pneumatic action of glossolalia (speaking in tongues), the Pentecostal communes and associates with God in prayer. Furthermore, prayer is used to bring about healing, miracles, deliverance, and the activation of the Holy Spirit's powers (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005:236).

Prayer, according to most Pentecostals, authenticates God's active power in the church. In line with the above, Pentecostal Spirituality, not surprisingly, is typified by the effective functioning of the gifting of the Holy Spirit in the life of an individual. This Spirituality is usually evidenced by the "latter rains" motif<sup>19</sup> (McPherson, 2009:136-141) of

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<sup>18</sup> The term fulcrum here is used to mean the centre of activity.

<sup>19</sup> The Pentecostal story cannot be written without the latter rain motif. It played a crucial role in the establishment of Pentecostalism. The latter rain, which is based on the typical weather cycle of Palestine and the biblical promise that God would provide sufficient rain for a bountiful harvest in Israel, caused the Israelites to remain faithful to their covenant with Jehovah, and this has become a significant contribution to the Pentecostal story. Therefore, Pentecostals reject cessationism in favour of the restoration theory. This belief is also consistent with Joel 2:23 that indicates that God is restoring what the church had lost through the outpouring of His Spirit and a great harvest for the church (Dayton 1987:18-22). Therefore, Pentecostals view the outpouring of the Spirit through the latter rain as a supernatural end-time witnessing power for the four-fold gospel (more on this in Chapter 3, Section 3.8.2 and 3.9.2). To some Pentecostals, regardless of how spiritual you are (saved, sanctified, and healed, you still require the latter rain outpouring as evidence of the fullness of the gospel's liberating power. For Pentecostals, the latter-rain motif is the manifestation of the



gifts, signs, and wonders (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005:237-238). According to Asiedu (2019:11), the church's life centres around the duty of prayer *'baabiara a baanu anaa baasa behyia no, na me wɔ wɔn ntam'* (an Asante<sup>20</sup> Twi hymn that may be translated as “**where** two or three are assembled in my name, I am in their midst” (Matthew 18:19–20)); and it is generally sung by the prayer session leader to inspire the participants to pray.

When Pastor James McKeown (the founder of the CoP, whose story is later discussed in section 2.9.1 below) arrived in Ghana in 1937, he focused on growing the fruit of the Spirit and empowering believers in the Holy Spirit through prayer. As a result, he encouraged all members to pursue the Holy Spirit baptism with the evidence of speaking in tongues. As a result, he guided them through prayer sessions that led to their being baptised in the Holy Spirit. He taught his congregation and field workers (pastors and officials) that, “Prayer is the work, and the work is prayer”, (Gyimah, 2013a:38). The understanding was that the church could never function as a living organism unless it was fueled by prayer. James McKeown also accentuated his belief that, according to the book of Acts, “the church was born via prayer”. In keeping with the foregoing, McKeown believed that prayer is critical to the church's survival and its fervency (Asiedu, 2019:11). As a result, he urged every member of the CoP to cultivate a sensory enthusiasm for prayer. One driving means by which the CoP, some Pentecostal, and even mainline churches, have historically entrenched Spirituality, and provided relief for members has been through the establishment of “sacred spaces” (Yalley, 2015:1-2) and, at least in the case of Ghanaian Pentecostals, prayer centres (Kwadwo, 2012:2-4).

The basic objective of prayer, according to the CoP, is to draw believers to God to receive the Holy Spirit's enablement and to create profound communion relationships with one another. Recognising the importance of prayer in the African environment, the CoP has continued to emphasise prayer as a major component of its teaching over the years (Osei, 2018:2-4). As a result, it has encouraged and involved members in community church prayers while also practising and growing personal Spirituality through personal prayers (Walker, 2010:94). Over the years, the pattern, and practices of prayer activities in the CoP have developed with the generations of church leadership reviewing its ethos to enhance this important spiritual practice. The evolution of the so-called prayer camps and prayer centres

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prophetically foretold eschatological movement that would unite the church and usher in the Second Coming of Christ.

<sup>20</sup> Asante is the largest Twi-speaking community of Akans in Ghana.

which became a rallying point for prayer and an epicentre of Pentecostal Spirituality, is also a key feature of the CoP's historical emphasis on prayer.

Pentecostal Spirituality, according to the CoP, begins with speaking in tongues (Walker, 2017b:99), which is also (according to Walker, 2018b:231-235) the most important aspect of Pentecostal prayer in the CoP. Since Pentecostals believe that prayer must be spontaneously inspired by the Holy Spirit, the CoP is now “asking for a deeper and more radical commitment to prayer than ever before” (Assabil, 2019:99). This appeal is aimed at developing a generation that understands God and can exhibit the power of prayer, resulting in congregations that become more powerful through prayer (Assabil, 2019:100). The CoP's leadership postulates that prayer should be focused on sacrificial intercessory prayers<sup>21</sup> that will establish God's rule on earth and instill Kingdom principles and values in all believers, rather than merely result in existential material wants (Assabil, 2019:101).

The expanding phenomena of prayer conventions, prayer gatherings, “prayer marathons”, and prayer revivals have become prevalent elements in Ghanaian Pentecostalism's spiritual landscape. As with all developments or innovations in Christian Pentecostal Spirituality, a comprehensive and theological evaluation of these prayer innovations from the perspective of Classical Pentecostal Spirituality is required, as much as a critique of their theological underpinnings, especially since many of these innovations come from a Ghanaian socio-spiritual milieu steeped in some Old Testament interpretations and ATR worldviews.

Furthermore, such an evaluation is of essence considering the African Traditional Religion (ATR) background to which the innovations developed when reflecting on their (Ghanaian Pentecostal) theological legitimacy.

This study may, therefore, not only aid in appreciating the similarities and differences in prayer practices, language, gestures, and customs across generations, but also to understand better and perhaps appreciate ATR prayer practices and their influence in the past and present on Pentecostal Spirituality. This research, therefore, seeks to conceptualise a Pentecostal theology of prayer from a Classical Pentecostal perspective vis à vis African Traditional Spirituality.

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<sup>21</sup> The ethos of Pentecostal prayer is discussed in detail in chapter 3.

### 1.3 Problem Statement

The main research problem of this study concerns the development of a Pentecostal Spirituality and theology of prayer amidst the various waves of Pentecostal prayer practices by the neo-prophetic churches in Ghana. These different waves require the review of the theology of prayer using different approaches and different theological lenses. Ten years ago, a former Chairman<sup>22</sup> of the CoP (2008-2018), Opoku Onyinah (2012a:184), noted that his church, and for that matter Ghanaian Pentecostal churches in general, have no systematised theology. Onyinah (2012a), who studied Pentecostal exorcism, also highlighted some prevailing challenges concerning emerging prayer practices in the church. The latter included members lacking appreciation of the motive for prayers found in the ATR concept of *abisa* (divinatory consultation) that was contextualised as a biblical concept of prayer (Amaniampong, 2013:15). Unfortunately, Onyinah's study did not allow space for an in-depth discussion of a Pentecostal Spirituality of prayer (Onyinah, 2012a). This is unfortunate, as it will be shown later in this study that it is becoming increasingly clear that African traditional prayer motives are gradually, increasingly, and sometimes carelessly adopted in the Pentecostal spiritualities of prayer. Furthermore, various scholars, such as Tsekpoe (2019:280), Asamoah-Gyadu (2018:198), and Omenyo (2014:134-136), have also called for research on Pentecostal prayer practices in Ghana, especially those found in neo-prophetic churches whose driving motive for the numerous prayer services is not clear.

Historically, the CoP emerged in the Ghanaian religio-cultural terrain in an era where the missionaries in the mainline churches frowned upon *abisa*.<sup>23</sup> The CoP has, therefore, provided an alternative to this 'religio-cultural' challenge of the time through fervent prayer gatherings that they legitimised theologically. This alternative served as a springboard for the popularity and growth of the church (CoP) that provided answers and religio-cultural alternatives for the local indigenes (Onyinah, 2012c:184). The challenge of the neo-Pentecostal, neo-prophetic, and deliverance ministry in recent times in Ghana in its wake, however, introduced into the church 'strange' prayer practices such as breaking prayers (*bubu*

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<sup>22</sup> The chairman of The Church of Pentecost refers to the topmost ecclesiastical position in the church. He chairs all Executive and ecclesiastical meetings in the church. The incumbent is the overall spiritual and administrative leader who presides over all meetings, church gatherings, and church activities.

<sup>23</sup> *Abisa* is an Akan term for divinatory consultation. This is a practice in which local people seek prophetic advice on poignant issues of life.

*wɔn*), binding prayers (*kyekyere wɔn*), and trampling prayers (*tɪatɪa wɔn so*)<sup>24</sup> (Onyinah, 2012a:197-198). These practices have similarities with the Spirituality of the ATR.

Some of these new prayer practices appear to be variations on the traditional Pentecostal Spirituality of prayer that initially emphasised the lived emotions of the spiritual encounter with the Holy Spirit (Amaniampong, 2008:31-33). Meanwhile, attempts by the leadership of the CoP to rather draw the attention of members to the church's traditional praxis of prayer also have created some tension within the church (Onyinah, 2012:209). The CoP subsequently set up committees to resolve the ensuing issues and, after that, issued circular letters<sup>25</sup> and directives to the church public on the prayer practices<sup>26</sup>. Against the above background and given the historically-ATR context of and the development of new prayer practices in Ghanaian Pentecostalism, this study will critique, evaluate, and theologise such practices from a Classical Ghanaian Pentecostal Spirituality perspective whilst evaluating the practices of the neo-prophetic and propose a cosmological model of Pentecostal prayer. This lack constitutes the problem investigated in this study.

#### 1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to answer the following questions as constituent elements of the problem statement above:

1. What is Spirituality, and what are the characteristics of traditional Ghanaian Pentecostal Spirituality, specifically as found in the CoP?
2. What are key features and characteristic of African Traditional Religious Spirituality, and what is the relationship between these and Ghanaian Pentecostal (CoP) Spirituality?
3. What are the characteristics and basic concepts of Pentecostal theology of prayer found in Classical Pentecostalism in Ghana?
4. What contemporary Pentecostal prayer practices are found in Ghana today, and to what extent do they differ from traditional Pentecostal prayer practices?
5. What are the theological bases offered for these emerging prayer patterns/practices, if any, and how can these be reviewed in relation to the traditional Pentecostalism?

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<sup>24</sup> Full details on these practices are given in Chapter 5 of this study.

<sup>25</sup> This is a term used in the CoP to refer to letters emanating from the CoP headquarters, particularly the chairman's office.

<sup>26</sup> Sections of these acceptable practices are found in the CoP Ministerial Handbook (CoP, 2016:155-161).

## 1.5 Motivation

The Pentecostal movement emphasises the outpouring and activity of the Holy Spirit, believing that God demonstrates His power and presence through this outpouring movement (Land, 1993:21). As indicated in section 1.3, Pentecostals believe that speaking in tongues is a result of pneumatic occurrences. The Spirit's presence is thought to produce prophecies, visions, healing, miracles, signs, and other marvels (Bangura, 2016:1-2). Pentecostal Spirituality, therefore, is full of church practices such as praise, charismatic worship, testimonies, evangelism, Pentecostal fellowship, prayer and deliverance from evil forces, salvation (as the experiential deliverance from poverty now and thereafter), seed sowing/offering as a means of mediating future prosperity, imminent eschatology, and church discipline (Omenyo and Arthur, 2013:52-53).

However, in recent years, prayer in Ghanaian Pentecostalism appears to have been increasingly commercialised, with prayer activities recorded on flash drives, CDs and DVDs, and sold to believers (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013b:36-38) who pray along when they listen to them in their cars or any other places. There is also the extensive proliferation of prayer services. No day passes in Ghana's media without a call for 'seven days of spiritual encounters', '30 days of fasting and prayer', '40 days of supernatural encounters', '60 days of prophetic nights', '90 days of divine access', or '180 days of fasting and prayer', all with the result of achieving some breakthrough! These solicitations are reflected on bumper stickers, banners, and in hypermedia saturation promoting these programmes (Gifford, 2004:21-24). No wonder Ackland (2012:1) asserts that, rather than exposing its members to genuine discipleship and Spirituality, contemporary Pentecostalism increasingly promotes a prosperity and health gospel. Such prosperity theology is proclaimed in charismatic worship services led by prophets and prophetesses who are held in high esteem because of their perceived ability to see the supernatural with their unchallenged supernatural gifts (Nel, 2020c:16-17).

Calls to prayer are, therefore, manifold and the response to them are enthusiastic. In 2010, when the CoP leadership limited continuous congregational prayers with fasting to one week, this elicited diverse reactions. As such, many among the current CoP generation believe that church leadership does not want members to fast and pray for long periods to become firebrands. In 2020, when my church (PIWC-Asokwa) finished its seven-day

“seasons of fasting and prayers”<sup>27</sup>, some church members approached me and expressed their dissatisfaction with the seven days of prayer. Their desire was that the church should extend the fasting and prayer for another week since the seven days of fasting was spiritually inadequate. I then had to communicate the spirit behind the leadership’s directive to limit our fast to only one week, a position they reluctantly accepted.

In 2003, I was called to serve as the national president of the students’ youth wing (Pentecost Students and Associates or PENSA) of the CoP. Since then, and especially currently as a minister of religion in the CoP, I have served in various capacities. I have been curious about Ghana’s emerging Pentecostal Spirituality for both intellectual and religious reasons. In the early 1990s, when a charismatic and neo-prophetic wave swept across Ghana from Nigeria along with an explosion of new African Independent Churches (Gifford, 2004:23), Ghanaians had no idea what awaited them in terms of theology and Spirituality. As a key leader of CoP’s national youth ministry, and later, a key lay leader<sup>28</sup>, I observed these developments with interest, if not a concern, especially the emergence of new prayer practices and new waves of prayer marked by many catchy prayer convocations that drew the attention of both the elite and influential groups in the society along with those more on the margins.

Part of this study is to investigate the motive(s)/goal(s) of emerging prayer practices before assessing their theological consequences for Pentecostal Spirituality. It is crucial to know whether neo-prophetic churches and increasingly spreading practices found in them (also to the CoP) are genuinely seeking their members’ spiritual intimacy with God (through worship, prayer, and fasting programmes), or whether there are other motives at play, and whether these programmes, especially prayer programmes, are not more akin to ATR; and indeed, whether they are at all Pentecostal in nature.

As a result, the study also examines why the neo-prophetic wave has attracted so much attention in Ghana as well as why the attention of believers appears to have shifted away from the traditional (classical) Pentecostal churches. It will be shown that the new wave of charismatic prayer practices and gestures that have emerged in the CoP over the past few years do not sit well with all, especially the older generation. The latter, thus, frequently

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<sup>27</sup> This is an annual prayer organised at the beginning of the year to seek God’s protection, guidance, and favour in the ensuing year. This is usually a 7-day fasting programme. Up to the early 2000s, it used to be a 40-day prayer and fasting.

<sup>28</sup> This position is called the presiding elder in the CoP, a position comparable to that of a deacon in the Anglican Church.

deplore what they call the current generation's undermining of the fabric of the church's Spirituality.

Over time, some CoP leaders have continued to believe that members of the PIWCs<sup>29</sup> and English assemblies in CoP are undermining its Pentecostal character.<sup>30</sup> Apostle Eric Nyamekye<sup>31</sup> is one of those who have lamented over the changing trend of Pentecostal prayer practices which are now tilting from, in his words, 'spiritual depth and divine encounter to demonology'. At a CoP ministers and their wives' retreat in Asokwa Area on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2019, Prophet James Osei Amaniampong<sup>32</sup> stated that there was a seeming departure from what older adherents of Pentecostalism have known, observed, and practised over the past half a century (cf. Amaniampong, 2019b:2). The question one may ask is "Is the apprehension of the older generation as also expressed by Amaniampong, justified?" Since this study investigates the distinctive features and nature of Pentecostal prayer Spirituality and will theologially evaluate/examine new practices of Pentecostal prayer, it may serve to also uncover generational differences in prayer practices and theologies.

## **1.6 Pentecostalism in Contemporary Africa and Ghana: A Short Orientation**

Pentecostalism is a Christian religious movement that claims to be based on the Bible and things of the Spirit (Suurmond, 1995:22-3; c.f. Yong, 2005:19-21; Anderson, 2016:2). Asamoah-Gyadu (2005a:12) defines Pentecostalism as a strand of the Christian movement that honours, confirms, and intentionally promotes the experience of the Spirit based on a so-called continuity theory.<sup>33</sup> Pentecostalism may be described as 'a movement where the emphasis is placed on the ecstatic experience of the Spirit [sic] and the practical practice of spiritual gifts', according to Anderson (2013:8-9). The fundamental praxis of Pentecostalism is an emphasis on the direct relationship with God through the work of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostalism's doctrine is based on baptism and the Holy Spirit's workings, speaking in

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<sup>29</sup> PIWC represents Pentecost International Worship Centre, an English branded church in the CoP for an elitist group of the church. These churches were established at a time when the youth in the CoP were drifting to the charismatic churches.

<sup>30</sup> Those in the traditional vernacular churches believe they are the original custodians of the church's Spirituality. Members and leaders in the traditional vernacular churches believe those in the English churches are compromising and diluting the church's Spirituality as a result of education.

<sup>31</sup> Apostle Eric Nyamekye, at the time of writing this in 2001, chairman/global leader of the COP. He made these comments during a prayer convocation in Asokwa Area in 2019.

<sup>32</sup> Prophet James Osei Amaniampong, at the time of writing this in 2021, was a member of the COP Executive Council and the then area head for Asokwa Area. He had served as a pastor for 41 years by that time.

<sup>33</sup> Those who hold the continuity view believe the manifest gift of the Holy Spirit as poured in Acts chapter 2 has continued to this day through church history with miracles, signs, and wonders and other pneumatic. This view contradicts the 'cessationist' view as described in section 3.8.2 (chapter 3).

tongues, worship spontaneity, healing and exorcism, prayer, and a flexible liturgy (Anderson, 2016:114).

Contrary to a popular belief, global polls suggest that Christianity continues to grow in various parts of the world, though at a slower rate, particularly as it grows in its Pentecostal form. According to a Pew Research Center, over 3.18 billion people worldwide are Christians, with 25% of them being Pentecostals (Anderson, 2016:1; c.f. Straub, 2016:207). Statistically, nearly 40% of the 71% of Ghanaians who claim to be Christians are Pentecostals of various denominations (GSS, 2012:40, T16). In the global south<sup>34</sup>, Pentecostalism now grows at a very high rate with great following (Anderson, 2013:4). The growing rate of Pentecostalism globally calls for an investigation into their theology and practices, which some writers such as Larbi (2001:155-156) have speculated may be due to their prayer and deliverance ministry. Indeed, if that assertion is true, then there are many needs to investigate the praxis of the Pentecostal prayer.

The Pentecostal scholar, Hollenweger (2005:18-19), postulates that the general reasons for Pentecostalism's expansion appear to be its orality, pneumatic<sup>35</sup> liturgy, narrative theology, prayer, and pneumatic features of church life. Other scholars believe that the expansion of Pentecostalism in Africa is due to a focus on "spiritual flexibility" that allows it to adapt quickly to any cultural situation (cf. Todd, Zurlo, Hickman and Crossing, 2018:20-21). Again, Pentecostalism claims to bring power for deliverance from sin, demonic release (Anderson, 2006:118-121), a focus on the health and wealth gospel, ecstatic spontaneity, and social worship participation (Mashau, 2013:85; Nel, c.f. 2020c:16-18). All of the above-stated factors show a correlation between Pentecostal expansion and its Spirituality.

One important fact that cannot be left overlooked is that in Africa, the neo-prophetic wave (see section 1.4.6 below), which is growing at a somewhat faster aggregate rate than conventional Pentecostalism, may be responsible for the growth of Pentecostal Christianity. Gifford (2004:26-28) claims that 'Ghana's new churches' (those within the neo-Pentecostal and neo-prophetic ambit) are proliferating because they promise to solve all their adherents' problems, particularly their financial and spiritual issues, through their prayer (*again!*), and deliverance services. The enormous growth of neo-prophetic churches in Ghana, according to Quayesi-Amakye, as well, may be attributable to widespread spiritual practices such as

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<sup>34</sup> The global south refers to South and Latin America, Asia, and Africa,

<sup>35</sup> Derived from the word *pneuma*, pneumatic is essentially used in the context of the New Testament in relation to the Holy Spirit.



healing, fasting, prophetic services, prayers, and divinity consultation (Quayesi-Amakye, 2015a:43).

Most of these neo-prophetic churches, (according to Omenyo and Arthur, 2013:52-53), have attracted large numbers of members from mainline and traditional Pentecostal churches because their worship services appeal to the Africa-oriented. These neo-prophetic churches abound, 'with one per 100 metres' in all of Ghana's regional capitals in the middle and southern sections of the country. They organise 'prophetic hours', miracle services, prayer marathons, and fasting that last many days (Quayesi-Amakye, 2015b:46). Surprisingly, these neo-prophetic churches are almost non-existent outside city centres and rural areas. As a result, the evolution and growth of neo-Pentecostal churches seem mostly to be a response to the demands of a specific group of black Africans (Anderson, 2005:69-71). Omenyo and Arthur (2013:51, 57-59) argue that the neo-holistic prophetic 'Africanised-theology' of God offered the (urban) masses a concept of divine guidance, provision, healing, and salvation (Gifford, 1998:18-21).

Additionally, some of these neo-prophetic churches offer daily prayer sessions, weekly 'prophetic breakthrough nights', and monthly prayer revival meetings in the name of spiritual growth (Gifford, 2004:23). It is unclear whether this Spirituality is being formed in the lives of the members, or if other factors are at play in this apparent 'spiritual hypnotisation', as it has been dubbed. Most third-wave neo-Pentecostal (see section 1.7.4 below) and neo-prophetic deliverance ministries, according to Bangura (2016:1-2), emphasise Spirituality regarding prayer, divine consultation, divine healing, miracles, exorcism, dreams and their interpretation, prophecy, anointing with oil, territorial powers, and spirit differentiation (Anderson, 2018:122-129). During such prayer services, followers are said to be 'lured' into purchasing mediatorial items such as anointing oil, spiritual water, and blessed food (Omenyo, 2011:30-36) at prices higher than normal at many public markets or private stores. These mediatorial items are believed to bring quick responses to their prayer requests.

Through the prayer centre concept (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.3), some of these neo-prophetic prayer practices have seeped into traditional Pentecostal settings such as the CoP. Such changes in Pentecostal Spirituality of prayer became exceedingly difficult (for the

leadership of CoP) to regulate as a result of expanding institutionalisation<sup>36</sup>, although these emerging prayer practices have been restrained to some extent in the CoP.

## **1.7 Waves/ Strands<sup>37</sup> of Pentecostalism in Ghana**

According to Ali (2015:86-87), ecclesiology, liturgy, and Spirituality are based on various heterogeneous belief systems. This results in variations in Pentecostal practices from one Pentecostal wave to the next. Even though the Holy Spirit is a central theme in Pentecostalism, the various strands of the tradition's practice diverge from the centrality of the Holy Spirit. As a result, depending on where a study of Pentecostalism is conducted, the waves, strands, and typology of Pentecostalism may differ. Furthermore, in Ghana, many forms of the Pentecostal (or Pentecostal-like) phenomenon have spread throughout the country, but in general, the practices of these new strands/waves will be shown in this study to differ from those of traditional Pentecostalism. Categorising and describing all Pentecostal typologies in Ghana are difficult (Omenyo, 1994:175, 2014:133); and scholars such as Larbi (2001:55-87) have identified numerous strands of Pentecostalism in the twentieth century. For the purpose of this study, the nature and characteristics of six strands of Pentecostalism in Ghana are discussed below:

### **1.7.1 African Initiated Pentecostal Churches<sup>38</sup> (AIPCs)**

This is the first strand of Pentecostal churches in Ghana. The African Initiated Pentecostal Churches (AIPCs) are variously called Prophet Healer churches, or Spiritual churches (Ampong, 2004:8; Baeta, 2004:x,1-3; Larbi, 2001:66-67). This strand of Pentecostalism is not restricted to Ghana but is seen as a "stringed religious phenomenon" across Africa (Asamoah-Gyadu, 1998:3-4). African independent or initiated churches are the root of the ever-evolving paradigm of Pentecostalism in Ghana (Meyer, 2004a:447-449).

According to Joshua Yirekyi-Smart (2017:74), this strand of Pentecostalism in Ghana<sup>39</sup> evolved under the inspiration of Liberian Prophet Wade Harris in about 1914. Many

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<sup>36</sup> As the institution of the CoP expands, there was a corresponding increase in neo-prophetic prayer centres in The Church of Pentecost with new practices akin to the neo-propheticism.

<sup>37</sup> Pentecostal waves and strands are used interchangeably in this study.

<sup>38</sup> The above terminology has been contested. Some writers hold the view that African Independent churches and African Initiated Churches, variously called AICs, should not be a strand of Pentecostalism. To avoid any ambiguity, the root of Classical Pentecostalism, African Initiated Pentecostal churches, has been used.

<sup>39</sup> Historically, it has been established that the initiators of the African Independent Churches in Ghana (which originally led to the establishment of spiritual churches) included prophetic figures such as Wade Harris (1860-1929), John Swatson (1855 to 1925) and Sampson Oppong (1884 to 1965) (White 2017:3).

Africans, in pursuit of a solution for their fears and due to their craving for a “higher Spirituality” (White and Niemandt, 2014:476; Yirenkyi-Smart, 2017:74), moved from main European churches and joined the emerging African-initiated churches that had practices similar/closer to their African worldviews. According to the well-known Ghanaian theologian Kwame Bediako (1995), the establishment of AICs are a direct response to the spiritual needs of Africans. These churches represent a broad base of churches (Kalu, 2008:44-46) variously called ‘spirit-type churches’, *sunsum sɔre* (Akan<sup>40</sup>), *Mumu Solemo* (Ga), and *Bobome Tsotsi* (Ewe) (White and Niemandt, 2014:476).

Central to the doctrines of the AICs are those pertaining to the Bible, ecstatic prayers, healing, prophecy, visions and dreams, elaborate rituals, flexible modes of worship and charismatic leadership (Markin 2019:32). These churches appeal to many Africans, based on their belief systems, cosmological worldview, ritualistic lifestyle, and pragmatic approach to life<sup>41</sup> (Markin, 2019:32).

Some writers, such as Walls (1996:149), hold that the AICs evolved following the failure of missionary Christianity to deal with the issues facing the Africans. AICs were mainly formed by the former members of the mainline churches who broke away (White, 2017:2) due to cultural and anthropological issues, and a lack of spiritual satisfaction. A characteristic of their emergence is the need for spiritual fervour through prayer that forms an important focus of this research. The importance of appreciating the characteristics of this strand is that it is generally upheld as constituting the precursor of Classical Pentecostalism. Again, I would argue that the AICs are re-evolving in this dispensation as the neo-prophetic churches in Ghana. One may wonder how the AICs evolved in Ghana into Classical Pentecostal churches and this is addressed in the next section.

### **1.7.2 Classical Pentecostalism**

Classical Pentecostalism constitutes a wave of Pentecostalism with varied global definitions (Anderson, 2013:5-6). In Ghana, this wave has sometimes been referred to as Evangelical Pentecostalism (Ampong, 2004:10-11; cf. Larbi, 2001:67-74) or Traditional Pentecostalism. This movement traces its roots to Western Pentecostal missions. Four Pentecostal denominations are identified as Classical in Ghana. These are: The Church of Pentecost, the

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<sup>40</sup> Akans in Ghana form the Twi speaking communities of Asante, Fante, Akuapem, Bono, etc.

<sup>41</sup> This has been extensively discussed in the thesis especially in Chapter 2, section 2.8 and Chapter 5, section 5.3.

Apostolic Church of Ghana, the Christ Apostolic Church, and the Assemblies of God Church (Anderson, 1993:7; cf White, 2016a:252-253). The first three denominations are offshoots of one root, namely, the Apostolic Church, Bradford, via the work of Rev. Peter Anim, and Rev James McKeown<sup>42</sup> (Anderson, 1993:7-8; c.f. White, 2016a:252). Out of these three Classical Pentecostal churches evolved many other Ghanaian Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations.

The popularity of Classical Pentecostal churches was a result of the ‘depopularity’<sup>43</sup> of the AICs due to its praxis associated with ATR Spirituality. This follows the Classical Pentecostal church’s attempt to ‘tidy-up’ enculturated<sup>44</sup> ‘ATR’ practices and perceived “wrong theology” of the AICs. The practices of the AICs such as sacrifices and offerings, the use of candles and holy water, and ritualistic prayers, were, for example, found to be inconsistent with the New Testament teachings (White, 2016b:477). Classical Pentecostal churches, therefore, positioned themselves as a ‘better option’ to the AICs in providing the spiritual needs of the people. Classical Pentecostal churches were noted for instilling devotion to Bible reading, prayer (White, 2016a:254-8), evangelism, and the manifestation of the Spirit (McKeown, 1939:41). Additionally, they were noted for strict ethical and moral standards, integrity, high standard of pastoral care, liturgical simplicity, and administrative orderliness (Markin, 2019:33).

According to Marius Nel (2020b:2), in Africa, even though Classical Pentecostal churches are expected to be a strong force to reckon with, they have failed to make the necessary socio-political impact, sometimes due to their lack of response to nationalistic issues. With a fundamentalist perspective of a separatist religio-political divide, these churches, though having strong administrative structures and dominance, have failed to be a prophetic voice that would speak out against the vices in the societies and the nation (Nel, 2020b:2-3).

The challenge of the Classical Pentecostal churches to provide ecclesiastical spaces for the growing elites, the rigid liturgies, use of vernacular, unwillingness to vary some church practices, and the rapid growth of urbanisation and development paved way for the emergence and flourishing of the neo-Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Ghana as discussed in the next sections.

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<sup>42</sup> Rev. James McKeown was an Irish missionary from the Apostolic Church, UK, to Ghana.

<sup>43</sup> This word was coined by the author to mean ‘decline in popularity’ or becoming increasingly unpopular.

<sup>44</sup> The term ‘Enculturated’ has been used in this document to mean an assimilation of culture or syncretism into a certain domain, specifically assimilation of ATR culture into Pentecostalism.

### 1.7.3 Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches

This wave of Pentecostalism refers to an offshoot following the various Pentecostal renewals in the 1960s/70s in Ghana (Omenyo and Atiemo, 2006:57). As a local phenomenon with associated international brands, these ministries capitalise on using the English language as the medium of communication during service, using lyrics of imported songs, and engaging structured choirs and technology in worship (Gifford, 2004:27-31) to attract followers. The proliferation and growth of these churches hinge on the propagated socio-economic emancipation gospel associated with the so-called prosperity gospel (Larbi, 2001:86) that is emerging from a new outlook on liberation theology (Larbi, 2001:86) and a global megachurch setting. These churches have predominantly youthful congregations (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005a:98-99) and seemingly respond to the needs of the current generation and appropriate the use of mass media (De Witte, 2005:315-317, 2009:84-85). The terms ‘charismatic’ and ‘neo-Pentecostal’ are used to refer to the same strand of churches. The neo-Pentecostal churches adopted some of the traditional worship styles of Classical Pentecostal churches such as clapping of hands, drumming and dancing (White and Niemandt, 2014:477). These churches are also generally identified through a social organisation that promoted internationalisation, networking and a global orientation that transplants itself multiculturally (Anderson, 2005:2).

Interestingly, many of the practices of the spiritual churches previously condemned by the charismatic and Classical Pentecostal churches as belonging to the occult have been reinvented in contemporary Pentecostal Spirituality (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013: vii). Again, the charismatic churches added innovations that made them more appealing to many (Markin, 2019:33).

As discussed in section 1.7.6, the “modern neo-prophetic ministries<sup>45</sup>” emphasise the use of vernacular language, and charisma where they give *sunsumakwankyere* (spiritual direction) to their proponents. The use of the media is another peculiarity of theirs, and they are all characterised by their urban centeredness (Aryeh, 2020:69–70). Aryeh (2020:75) refers to a neo-Pentecostal television programme in which, the 30-minute-long service is usually divided into four parts: 5 minutes for preaching the Word, 10 minutes for miracles

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<sup>45</sup> This term ‘Modern Neo-prophetic ministries’ is used to refer to the re-branding or repackaging of neo-Pentecostalism/ charismatics today. Some of these ministries are beginning to show similarities to the neo-prophetic ministries by way of their activities.

and prophecies, 10 minutes for testimonies and the last 5 minutes for advertising “anointing oil”, “miracle water” and other prophylactics of the prophet.

#### **1.7.4 Non-Denominational Charismatic Fellowships and Prayer Groups**

The wave of Pentecostalism referred to as ‘para-church organisations’ by Larbi (2001:85-86) constitutes non-denominational Christian groups, prayer, revival groups, and fellowships that emerged on the religious landscape in Ghana in the 1960s. These para-church groups evolved following the perceived spiritual slackness at the time, particularly in the mainline churches. Most of these parachurch groups and fellowships were associated with the Scripture Union (SU), aimed at equipping students with Bible knowledge and encouraging responsible membership in churches. In recent times, however, the activities of the SU have been restricted to the second cycle, and a few tertiary institutions in Ghana. At the tertiary level, the Ghana Fellowship of Evangelical students (GHAFESS) is the largest conservative evangelical movement in Ghana. Other non-denominational associations that are not made up of only students include the Ghana Congress in Evangelism (GHACOE), GHACOE women’s fellowship, and the Full Gospel Businessmen’s Fellowship (FGBMF) (Markin, 2019:37).

The other groups in this category include Town Fellowships, Women’s Aglow Fellowship (WAF), Agbozo’s, and the University Christian Fellowship (UCF). They all swept across the country in the form of revivals (cf. Adubofour, 1994). In the 1960s, the spiral effect of these non-denominational groups resulted in the upsurge of Pentecostal fervour in the country. The influence and impact of these parachurch Christian associations were felt mainly in schools and colleges and university campuses (Markin, 2019:36). These movements strongly emphasised the gifts of the Holy Spirit as spelt out by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 (Markin, 2019:36).

#### **1.7.5 Charismatic Renewal Movements in mainline Churches**

In the early 1970s, a spiritual renewal movement also evolved in Ghanaian mainline churches. This was called the charismatic renewal (Larbi, 2001:78-80). During the period, there evolved many groups in the mainline churches characteristically including the charismatic renewal groups, Bible study groups, prayer groups, singing bands and ministry groups, and healing groups. The activities of these new groups in the mainline churches had features akin to Pentecostalism. These groups usually approached the subject of Spirit baptism and spiritual gifts from a sacramental view, prayed for long hours with the evidence

of speaking in tongues. Depending on the denomination, their theologies of the Spirit, however, appear to differ.

### 1.7.6 Neo-Prophetic Churches

In the 1990s, the Pentecostal landscape in Ghana saw the advent of a new religious phenomenon known as “neo-prophetism” (Omenyo and Wonderful, 2013:50; Omenyo and Atiemo, 2006:55). According to Omenyo and Wonderful (2013:50-51), these neo-prophetic churches are highly hybridised with their practices and beliefs rooted in an African worldview. These churches flourish on the premise that they claim to have solutions to every problem of humankind (de Witte, 2015a:209-211). They uphold their theology and teaching that God’s will for everyone is prosperity and good health; and anything contrary to this goal is from the enemy and needs to be cast out (Omenyo and Atiemo, 2006:63).

Indeed, the beliefs of the Neo-prophetic churches differ slightly from that of the African indigenous churches. Whereas the former highlights issues of prophetic spirituality, the latter emphasises practices similar to ATR beliefs (Kpobi & Swartz, 2018:2). The African Neo-Pentecostal Prophetism (Kgatle, 2022a, b) is a growing force in Africa like generals waging wars against evil forces (Banda, 2022:2-3). They are seen to recycle ATR practices in different contexts through ‘encultured magical<sup>46</sup> prayer activities’ instead of instilling personal devotion and encounter with God (Banda, 2022:3-4) in their adherents.

With the centrality of their sermons and testimonies based on the idea that evil forces are at work to destroy people's lives and cause poverty (Sarfo, Yendork & Kpobi, 2022:148-150), they draw many people with ATR inclination, including people from the mainline churches (Kroesbergen, 2019:9; Mlambo & Clive T. Zimunya, 2021:34). Christian Tsekpoe narrates some bizarre incidences associated with the neo-Prophetic in Nigeria, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ghana (Tsekpoe, 2019:282-284). It is interesting to note that the issue of secularisation has attracted so much skepticism over the so-called prediction of the slow and steady decay of religion (Selorme Gedzi & Jr. Anderson, 2021:58-59).

Neo-prophetic churches are usually built around a single prophetic figure who attracts a large membership to their services purposely for consultations (Omenyo and Wonderful, 2013:51). Interestingly, their leaders promise to solve all the challenges of people, and transform destinies overnight (Quayesi-Amakye, 2015c:170-172). In recent times, the neo-prophetic churches, also called prophet-healing churches, are the fastest-growing strand of

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<sup>46</sup> The term ‘magic’ is used in this thesis to refer to sorcery, enchantment, incantation or witchcraft activities.

Pentecostalism in Ghana. According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2005b:11,13) they use loud music and the mass media to their advantage and promote a theology based on the ATR motif of protection from evil spirits, a gospel of success, health, and wealth. The effectiveness of the neo-prophetic churches in Ghana may be related to their successful linking of ATR elements to the dualistic worldview of the African (Nel, 2020b:2). In relation to the above assertion, my views are not different from Asamoah-Gyadu's (2011a:347; c.f Nel, 2020c:16-18), namely that these prophetic churches succeed because their Christianity is closer to the grain of the ATR. I will, therefore, argue that one of the avenues these neo-prophets use in the commercialisation of their activities is through their praxis of prayer that needs investigation.

### 1.8 Spirituality and Pentecostal Spirituality

The concept of Spirituality is notoriously slippery to define since it is characterised by cross-religious and inter-disciplinary assumptions (Waaijman, 2007:2; Sheldrake, 2013:162). Spirituality is a global meta-disciplinary subject studied across all theological disciplines and sometimes beyond them (Waaijman, 2007:3-4). From a background where 'religious nones' (persons who have limited or no religious affiliations) claim to have some type of 'divine affiliations' and continue to declare to be 'spiritual', the definition of Spirituality has become even more unclear and more complex (Bender and McRoberts, 2012:1).

For some, Spirituality may be defined as the process by which followers 'fulfil their spiritual man [sic] and engage in that experience in a continual cycle' (Stewart, 2012:106). It may, therefore, not be surprising that Maslow (1993:314) sees Spirituality as the centre of human essence and the eccentricity of a building of human nature. Due to its link with new social behaviours and ideas (Vasconcelos, 2017:600), any Classical definition of Spirituality has today shifted into what is characterised as the 'New Age', with an accompanying selective and intra-concentrated focus (Sheldrake, 2013:162). Spirituality, according to Spittler (1988:804), is a collection of deeds and attitudes guided by the ideas and ideals that distinguish a particular religious community.

As Spirituality is a religious phenomenon that can be found in many faiths, including Christianity, Albrecht (1999a:14) holds that Spirituality should neither be viewed as a uniquely Christian trait nor as a combination of teachings put into practice, nor should it be viewed as a counterpoint to ritual. In Christian terms, therefore, Spirituality has been defined as a group of people's conscious relationship with God, their expression of worship, the formulation of their core values, and the discussion of proper lifestyles. Philip Sheldrake, a leading scholar in the field of Spirituality mentions in an essay 'The Study of Spirituality'



(Sheldrake, 1999:162), that Spirituality is the process by which a community of people's views about God are converted into a human-divine interaction.

In the light of the foregoing, Northern Irish theologian Alister McGrath postulates Christian Spirituality as the desire to satisfy a real Christian experience by unifying the fundamentals of Christianity within a specified context of the religion (McGrath, 2015:2). To this aim, the focus should be on the in-born character formation of religious community members in their personal and communal lives in order to accomplish the genuine goals of Christian Spirituality. Marius Nel, a South African Pentecostal scholar, likewise maintains that Spirituality is the way the spiritual qualities of the human being are manifested in distinction from the practice of expressing theological beliefs or participating in ritual performance (Nel, 2015:2; cf. Stewart, 2012:106). From a community-based perspective, therefore, Nel (2015:20) synthesises Spirituality as “the acts and sentiments that are informed by the values and beliefs in a religious community.”

Engaging the above, I, therefore, would argue that the term Spirituality is difficult to conceptualise due to its interdisciplinary character. However, I propose that due to the complex nature, ‘Spirituality’ may be referred to as a belief in, and occasionally a practise of something greater than oneself. It has a metaphysical connection to achieving higher states of awareness. One noticeable phenomenon is the mystical component in Spirituality where the physical relates with the divine, which in the case of Christianity and for that matter Pentecostalism, is prayer.

Pentecostalism, to a greater extent, portrays some similarities and vast differences concerning Spirituality expressed by other religious phenomena (Nel, 2015:2-5). In this vein, Pentecostal Spirituality is conjectured as ‘the integration of beliefs and practices into an affection that depicts the adherent's views’ (Nel 2015:7). True Pentecostal Spirituality, according to Ackland (2012:3), is the consequence of a true experience that impacts the body, mind, and spirit with the yearning for an ‘approaching Parousia’, rather than being based on structures, periodic messages, or traditionalism. This experiential nature of Pentecostalism has resulted in some describing Pentecostals as mystics, for they yearn for the ultimate encounter with God resulting in sublime revelations and divine communication in the language of mystery (Nel, 2020b:5-6).

I, therefore, argue that prayer appears to be a central, if not the most important aspect of this communication, which is the basis of Pentecostal Spirituality. If prayer is essential to the ethos of Pentecostal Spirituality, then prayer in Pentecostalism cannot be discussed without reference to “glossolalia”. The pneumatic activity in a “glossolalic” form allows the

Pentecostal to commune and associate with God through prayer. Through the experience of prayer, the immediate presence of God is manifested in the form of prophecy and revelation, which Asamoah-Gyadu (2005:235) calls a “catalytic response” to Pentecostal prayers. Moreover, I agree with Asamoah-Gyadu (2005:236) that for Pentecostals, through prayer, things such as healing, miracles, deliverance, and the Holy Spirit’s gifts are all dispersed and activated, thus demonstrating that God’s active power is present in His church.

### **1.8.1 Spirituality and Theology in the Pentecostal Tradition**

As indicated earlier (section 1.1), in theory, Pentecostal Spirituality should impact Pentecostal theology and vice versa. Spirituality must always be the core of Pentecostal theology, and vice versa, thus pointing to and reacting to our desire to have communion with God (Land, 2010:16). Since it is difficult to explain Pentecostal theology without a description of the Spirituality, I must emphasise that, as propounded by Cox (2009:39-45) Spirit baptism, emphasising the pneumatic experience, or a slanted focus toward the so-called ‘Full Gospel’ is the foundation of Pentecostal theology. Spirituality, as the heart of Pentecostal theology, thereby, points to and responds to our need for God’s presence (Land, 2010:26). Unfortunately, according to Warrington (2008:313-315), Pentecostals have prioritised the Holy Spirit’s experience, perhaps over the development of their theological formulations.

To this end, justification, sanctification, and Spirit baptism, according to Land, are at the heart of Pentecostal theology, whilst emphasising the four/fivefold<sup>47</sup> Gospel (Land, 2010:6, 14; Warrington, 2008:18).<sup>48</sup> Warrington believes that expounding the theological loci of this subject is the best approach to explaining Pentecostal theology (Warrington, 2008:18). This research however focusses on the four-fold gospel.

Pentecostal theology, as its name implies, is anchored in the day of Pentecost with a deeply entrenched theological symbol on which the theological narrative of the entire gospel (Vondey 2017:1-2) is hinged. As said, Pentecostal theology and Spirituality are inextricably linked (Hollenweger 2015:4-5). Observably, the basis of Pentecostal theology is rooted in contextual spiritualities rather than its propositions. People’s theological essence, beliefs,

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<sup>47</sup> The Pentecostal foursquare/fourfold gospel ‘describes Jesus Christ as the Saviour, Healer, Baptiser by the Holy Spirit and the soon-coming-King’ (Yong 2007). The fivefold gospel adds the element of Christ, the Sanctifier. This would in later sections be referred to as the Full Gospel. This thesis however focusses on the four-fold gospel.

<sup>48</sup> This is discussed in detail in chapter 3 section 3.8.2 and section 3.9.2.

behaviours, experiences, emotions, and habits are expressed as rituals, quantified, measured, analysed and appraised through Spirituality (Cettolin, 2006:9). In Sims's (2013:13) view, Spirituality is the connecting point for theology and praxis; as a result, theological research and discourse must seek to both understand and analyse the established and shifting practices of Pentecostal Spirituality, specifically, prayer (in the context of this study).

Although some sociologists, anthropologists, and historians have studied Pentecostalism as a religious phenomenon, Archer believes that research on Pentecostal theology has been lacking (Archer, 2007:313). Pentecostal theology, according to him (2007:302-304), still needs improvement. Archer also believes that more research is needed, especially with new strands of Pentecostalism emerging (2007:302-304). This study also aspires to contribute to the study of Pentecostal Spirituality, particularly as it pertains to prayer, and Pentecostal theology as a foundation within the emerging strands. It is worth noting that, while prayer is an area of ecumenical convergence, it is also a point of theological diversity in Pentecostal theology and Spirituality, hence this study (and its use of the term 'spiritualities').

### **1.8.2 Pentecostal Prayer Spiritualities (Ghanaian)**

According to the now-famous dictum of Kenyan theologian, John Mbiti, 'the African is notoriously religious' (Mbiti, 1969:1, 1989:4). According to Stanley (2013:1-3), prayer may be regarded as the ultimate form of spiritual contact between the Creator and the creature. As such prayer, too, will be extremely central to African religious thought and practice. For Wariboko, prayer includes oral theology, biblical text reflections, ritual activities, and a heady Spirituality carried by and articulated through the body. In view of this, Wariboko (2017:6) defines the African Pentecostal understanding of prayer as 'the embodiment, exhibition, and articulation of thoughts, hopes, fears, habits, and traditions for spiritual deliverance.'

Writing on African Christian Spirituality in particular, Aylward Shorter (1978:4) claims that a real spiritual encounter involves a person's mental faculties being awakened in an experiential relationship of prayer with one's God. Wariboko (2017:6-7) adds that the 'Pentecostal aesthetic of prayer is an explosion of senses, sensory-motor skills, practical wisdom, and deep emotions for communicating daily needs to the heavens and bridging the visible and invisible realms.' In addition, Wariboko (2017:6-7) feels that Pentecostals' prayers are crucial in shaping an individual's future, and that prayer requires a lot of energy from the African Pentecostal.

When the Classical Pentecostal wave began in Ghana, the infilling experience of the Holy Spirit along with a desire to know God more intimately was the impetus for Pentecostal Christians to pray. According to Tsekpoe (2019:280), however, a brief examination of today's Pentecostal prayer trends in Ghana reveals a shift away from the desire for a personal experience, toward a concentration on the demonic and personal breakthrough. Pentecostal theology of prayer, therefore, according to Asamoah-Gyadu (2013:34-44), is based on 'spontaneity, struggle, and enthusiasm in the name of Jesus, Jesus' blood, and the Holy Spirit's power'.

On the praxis of Pentecostal prayer, Harvey Cox (1995:259) agrees with Dumisani Thabede (2008:259) that the 'Pentecostal impulse of prayer lies in its power to combine its aptitude for language, music, culture artefacts and religious tropes' to bring religiosity to the practical level of its adherents. As stated already, I believe that Ghanaian Pentecostal prayer cannot be described without the unconscious enculturation of some ATR rituals element, loud music, and exuberance. The Ghanaian Pentecostal Spirituality of prayer prescribes prayer as an intersection of the natural and supernatural (Castelo, 2020:3-6). On the ecclesiastical front, leaders' efforts to instil Spirituality in church members have resulted in the organisation of a variety of services, vigils, revivals, consultations, and prophetic nights, all of which serve as spiritual intermediation tactics (Markin, 2019:42-43).

As previously said, one cannot study the origins of classical/evangelical Pentecostalism, or its emphasis on prayer in Ghana without referring to Peter Newman Anim and the Faith Tabernacle Church (see section 1.7.1.2 for more detail) (Onyinah, 2012:123-25). Anim joined the Bradford Apostolic Church in 1931 because he yearned to experience the work of the Holy Spirit in his life (Larbi, 2001:101-105; Yirenkyi-Smart, 2017:90-91). It is also impossible to record the development of Classical Pentecostalism in Ghana (see section 5.2 for further details) without reference to The Church of Pentecost. The CoP is now regarded as Ghana's largest Pentecostal and Protestant church with over 14,000 congregations, and approximately 11% of the country's population as members (Nyamekye, 2019a:5). Many charismatic denominations, neo-Pentecostals, and so-called prayer centres/camps developed from The Church of Pentecost and other evangelical Pentecostal denominations. Most of the leaders who founded new ministries, independent prayer centres, and other African Independent Congregations came from traditional Pentecostal churches such as the CoP.

When the CoP started limiting the number of prayer centres that could open, it shut down a few and disassociated themselves from others that did not follow its set of

regulations<sup>49</sup> with respect to prayer practices (Frempong, 2018:1-4). Due to the neo-prophetic nature of their activities, several of these prayer centres that were separated from the CoP continued to draw increasing numbers to themselves and reasserted themselves as new ministries/churches (Walker, 2010:79; cf. Akowuah, 2013:27). Some Ghanaians are increasingly visiting prayer camps to seek divine turnaround from life's troubles (Daswani, 2011:254), due to a lack of appreciation for suffering. These circumstances, according to Daswani, could be one reason for a growing trend among Pentecostals in the country toward the health and wealth gospel (Daswani, 2011:254-256). Primarily, the neo-prophetic churches emphasise demonisation<sup>50</sup>, and their services, therefore, appeal to the Ghanaian traditional worldview through the use of exorcism, divine consultation and other prayers. Moreover, the pattern of prayer activities at prayer centres has historically evolved from the activities of the AICs, as will be demonstrated later in this study.<sup>51</sup> The growing phenomena of prayer conventions, prayer centres and prayer revivals have also become a feature of Pentecostal Spirituality that needs careful study. Within the scope of this research, a detailed examination of all the aspects of this occurrence<sup>52</sup> is not achievable.

The basic goal of prayer, according to the CoP, is to bring believers closer to God in order to create relationships rather than merely ask for things (Nyamekye, 2019d:2). In its early stages, recognising the power of prayer in African contexts, the CoP focused on prayer as a fundamental element of its teaching, encouraging, and involving members to participate in communal church prayers while also practising and developing personal Spirituality through personal prayers (Walker, 2010:94). The CoP's missiological practice has benefitted greatly from this endeavour. The CoP began prayer and fellowship meetings in homes and other available venues in every community that produced converts, focusing on prayer, fasting, and Holy Spirit baptism (Walker, 2010:41).

As indicated earlier (see section 1.2 of this chapter), when Pentecostalism first arose in Ghana, the longing for spiritual power and Holy Spirit gifts led some Pentecostals to spend time "in the bush" praying for Holy Spirit baptism with the evidence of speaking in tongues and the Pentecostal gift of grace (Walker, 2010:45-46, 84). Prayer also serves as a 'breakthrough for longevity, healing/deliverance, fertility, financial prosperity, and spiritual

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<sup>49</sup> Issues of prayer centre has been discussed extensively in chapter 5, section 5.2.3.

<sup>50</sup> "Demonisation" here means the presence and possessive effect of demons on the Spirituality and physical life of people.

<sup>51</sup> See section 5.2.3 (Page 207-209) on prayer centre activities.

<sup>52</sup> This occurrence refers to the origin, manifestation, and operations of prayer centres, this is partly discussed in section 5.2.3.

power’, according to Wariboko’s understanding of the African Pentecostal notion of prayer. As a result, Daswani’s view that such prayer is prompted by life’s troubles may be valid. Pentecostals also think that, when someone stops praying, truth eludes them and evil descends over them (Walker, 2010:138).

There have been a number of recent changes to Ghana’s prayer customs which I refer to with the terms ‘*Prayer marketplaces*’, ‘*prayer giants*’, ‘*prayer outsourcing*’, and ‘*prayer financierism*’, to name a few examples.<sup>53</sup> The neo-prophetic landscape in Ghana is now more than ever beset by intense prayer for liberation from the devil and oppressive demons, which might be referred to as ‘*prayer demonisation*’. While not uncommon in many Pentecostal churches, deliverance and prayer services now take up a major part of the church services in many Ghanaian neo-prophetic congregations, thus leaving little or no time for biblical preaching (Tsekpoe, 2019:288). Additionally, these behaviours cast doubts on the motivation for such services as to whether they are organised for the spiritual growth of the proponents, or for the establishment of financial prosperity for the leaders.

Indeed, the CoP has come a long way in clarifying its Spirituality and theology. Experiences as far back as 1958, during the time of James McKeown, attest to these facts. Christian Tsekpoe claims that in the CoP, some members of the Church began selling ‘holy water’ for healing, protection, and success. This was already practiced among the AICs, and it is possible that the CoP copied it from them. In answer to the topic of water blessing, McKeown wrote a pastoral letter to the church public to address the issue (Tsekpoe, 2020:117) as follows:

As some people within the church have taken it upon themselves to bless water for the purposes of healing people, ministering spiritual blessing, sprinkling the blessed water on goods in the store that they may sell well, for medication, protection, and n for the purpose of getting money for the people, I have to turn you to the Bible. Perhaps I have said enough in this circular about water. I will follow up with other letters on this matter. In the meantime, I want you all to read your Bibles very well, study the lessons I am bringing more fully, and if you can bring me scriptural authority for blessing water for the purpose of imparting a blessing to the church, I will be grateful to you. But if there be no scripture for such a practice, what then will such a practice be called in the church? (MPL 09/01/1958)

As indicated in the above, McKeown did not state explicitly whether the practice should be discontinued or continued. He rather drew the attention of members to a variety of biblical themes, including the location of the crucifixion and Christian suffering, as well as healing, miracles, and blessings (Tsekpoe, 2020:117). Although the authenticity of this

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<sup>53</sup> These new prayer terminologies are coined by the author- JTIB. Based on their practice, they are the focus for Chapter 5 of this study, section 5.6.

practice of blessing water is currently being questioned in modern Ghanaian Pentecostalism, the CoP does not appear to be facing many difficulties because the problem had been resolved and the Church had adopted its position not to bless water or any prophylactic for spiritual purposes, way back in the 1950s (Tsekpoe, 2020:117-118). Tsekpoe (2020:117-118) claims that McKeown and the CoP's founding leaders had a significant impact on this position.

Other ambitious Pentecostal practices that appear to lack theological meaning/foundations also need to be investigated further. Fridays, for example, have historically been important spiritual milestones for Pentecostals, and for that matter, members of the CoP. As the day on which Christ died for humanity's sins, it is traditionally a day of prayer and fasting. As a result, some Pentecostals believe that God responds benevolently and more quickly to the concerns of those who pray and fast on Fridays (Akowuah, 2013:32-33), and especially on Easter Good Friday. Earlier, Fridays were known as *fiada kɔkɔ* (red Friday, referencing Christ's suffering and blood) and, thus, as prayer days. Fridays are also distinguished by three prayer sessions: *ahomakye sɔre* (dawn), *anɔpa mpaebɔ* (morning prayer services), and *anwumere sɔre* (evening prayer services) (Akowuah, 2013:32-33). On Friday nights, longer prayer services are usually held, while every Friday preceding a communion service is scheduled for an all-night service. As an aside, the CoP also welcomes non-members and non-Christians to their Friday services (Walker, 2010:94-95), as the CoP believes that whenever non-Christians and non-CoP members witness God's power during Friday prayer services, they would consequently convert or become CoP members.

Noticeably, despite the fact that these Friday prayer services were well-attended, their fervour and attendance have recently decreased. Some church members argue that the deterioration of some elements of the church is due to "Pentecostal-Protestantization"<sup>54</sup>, meaning a scenario in which every aspect of church activity including prayer is governed by strict written policy rules (CoP, 2016:109-110). It can be argued that the prayer guidelines of the CoP were made necessary to prevent the CoP from becoming engulfed in a neo-prophetic pattern of activity.

As part of their Christian responsibilities, CoP members are also encouraged to pray in their homes before going to work, church, or embarking on any other endeavour (CoP, 2016b:10). When church members are 'on fire' with prayer, they impact the community and

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<sup>54</sup> This phrase is used here to mean regulating and regularisation of all church practices and liturgies.

the church blossoms. As a result, the church members served as the prayer fulcrum (Larbi, 2001:371-372) to propel the much-needed Spirituality in the community. Markin (2019:18) similarly agrees with Larbi (2001:253-257) that the CoP's expansion has been fuelled in large part by its unwavering stances on discipline, evangelism, and *prayer*.

## **1.9 Potential Value of the Research**

Most recent research on Ghanaian Pentecostalism has concentrated on the evolution of the deliverance ministry and the peculiarities of AICs. In terms of theological examination, the idea of Pentecostal Spirituality emphasising prayer has received little attention. The subject of Pentecostal Spirituality with specific reference to prayer, but also prophetism, healing, deliverance and breakthrough, therefore, remains under-researched in Ghana. This research wishes to provide, or at least add to an academic discourse of Ghanaian Pentecostal prayer practices.

Considering the ever-evolving diversity within the neo-prophetic tradition, this study also seeks to contribute to the generally complex African and global discourse on Pentecostalism. Researchers in Ghana and ecumenical organisations like the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (GPCC) and the Christian Council of Ghana, might find the study useful, as they are wary of some of the neo-prophetic congregations' prayer practices. Some of the concerns may be theologically justified, exaggerated, or not. As a result, gaining a deeper awareness of existing prayer practices may help to foster ecumenical interaction. At the same time, it will seek to explain (at least in part) why traditional Ghanaian Pentecostal churches may be losing members to these new groupings. Finally, the study could point to theologically irresponsible or dubious trends within the Ghanaian Pentecostal tradition for careful reflection by these ecumenical bodies.

## **1.10 Theoretical Framework and Design of Research**

### **1.10.1 Methodology of Study**

This research adopted the conceptual research method within the broader field of systematic theology by drawing on existing knowledge and literature available to enable a re-examination of existing thoughts on the Spirituality of prayer for the study (Kothani, 2004; cf. Muredzi, 2019; Kasera, 2021). The conceptual method of research is related to some abstract idea(s) or theory. It is generally used by philosophers and thinkers to develop new concepts or to reinterpret existing ones' (Kothani, 2004: 4). Conceptual research is a methodology that involves reviewing and analysing material that is already available on a



certain issue, in which case conducting a new field survey may not be relevant. Based on the theory of abstraction, conceptual research is used to interpret theories or models and develop new ones or reframe old ones philosophically. It has to do with ideas or notions that may be abstract (Kothani, 2004: 3; Kasera, 2021:27).

It is intended that this research would generate a model of African Pentecostal theology of prayer that would generate future theological discussion on the broader context of Pentecostal Spirituality in academia. The conceptual method adopted would allow an analysis of relevant literature to examine thoughts about Pentecostal Spirituality in relation to the African context. Using conceptual theology, variables in relation to the factors that describe Pentecostal Spirituality of prayer and therefore, define Pentecostal theology are analysed philosophically in Chapters 3 and 4. These concepts provided an avenue for analysing the emerging Pentecostal prayer practices; hence, theorise a framework for Pentecostal theology of prayer in Chapter 6.

This method was chosen as it allows one to explore the possibilities, explain thoughts, examine views, test possible consistencies, and analyse opinions of the Spirituality of prayer from a cultural and socio-religious background (Dalferth, 2005:305; cf. Kasera, 2021:27). Since Spittler (1988:804) and Albrecht (1999:14) hold that Spirituality is “the lived religious experience of Christian faith”, and integration of deeds and feelings influenced by a religious community’s ideas and ideals to understand the Pentecostal Spirituality, their lived community experience, and praxis of prayer would be examined conceptually and theologically. Spirituality is the primary basis for Pentecostal theology because it deals with the reality of the Pentecostal experience in the context of prayer, worship, and the pneumatic (Stephenson, 2009:47).

The research adopts the perspective of Kees Waaijman of Spirituality as a multifaceted phenomenon that reflects on the various dimensions in which Spirituality has been studied academically that includes an interdisciplinary dimension. Using Waaijman’s (2007) method where applicable, therefore, Spirituality is approached to varying degrees from theological, religious, historical, philosophical, literary, sociological, and anthropological dimensions. Following Waaijman, again, Pentecostal Spirituality may therefore be viewed conceptually from the milieu of words, praxis, cultural dispositions, methods, images, gestures, and existing theories adopted in prayer. To appreciate Spirituality properly, Waaijman (2007:6) holds that one needs a better understanding of knowledge of symbolic systems such as the Christology, Trinity, pneumatology, human nature, the church, the sacraments, and Christian ethics that together form the basis of theoretical Spirituality.

This research, therefore, attempts to incorporate perspectives from some of the disciplines identified by Waaijman (2007:3-4).

In conceptualising a Pentecostal theology of prayer, one needs to re-examine the praxis associated with the Pentecostal experience and review the existing information on Spirituality, which, in this case, is done in conversation with ATR spiritualities. These concepts deduced from literature about Spirituality will inform our understanding of the praxis and theology of prayer (Kasera, 2021:7). As a systematic method of enquiry, the research is, therefore, grounded in content and contextual relevance, with a focus on providing a creative contribution for thinking theology of prayer in the Ghanaian context.

In the light of the above methodological considerations, the research relies on existing information available, but relevant to topics like Pentecostal Spirituality, Pentecostal theology, neo-prophetism, Prayer, Ghanaian Pentecostal demography, ATR, and Ghanaian worldviews as valuable resources in the study. Publications (monographs and journal articles) as well as viewpoints voiced in the popular press, documented CoP material, and records of Classical and neo-Pentecostal/prophetic churches' prayer activities are used as primary sources. The key conversation partners for this research were Nel (2015, 2017, 2020a), Asamoah-Gyadu (2005, 2010, 2013, 2020), Opoku Onyinah (2012), Waaijman (2007), Land (1993), and Hollenweger (2005).

With a theological focus aimed at establishing a cohesive argument on the complex subject of Pentecostal theology, care is taken to ensure that thoughts expressed agree with African Pentecostal views while remaining theological. Using the conceptual method, therefore, a detailed enquiry is made in Chapter two into the characteristic Spirituality of ATR. It is important to note that the nature and belief of ATR have a concomitant effect on their religious practices; therefore, informing their Spirituality. Theological views on the characteristic Spirituality of ATR become the basis of abstracting the conceptual effect of African Spirituality on Pentecostal Spirituality, if any. This, therefore, becomes a basis of inference and discussions in Chapter 5 on the emerging prayer practices in the Ghanaian Pentecostal religious milieu. The key conversation partners in Chapter 2 include Mbiti (1969, 1975, 1991), Bediako (1994, 2000), Kenan (1973), Ampadu (2019), Awolalu (1979), Field (1937), Asamoah-Gyadu (2013a), Shorter (1975), Idowu (1973), Turaki (2000) and Gyekye (1996).

As indicated early on (section 1.8.1), a challenge is how to conjecture Pentecostal Spirituality in relation to Pentecostal theology, especially with the ever-evolving strands. Marius Nel (2015:7) defines Pentecostal Spirituality as the incorporation of ideas and

practices into an affection provoked and shown by these beliefs and actions (section 1.8.1). According to Nel (2015:7-8), Pentecostal Spirituality expresses the spiritual aspects of the human being, and not theological views or participation in ritual activities (cf. Stewart, 2012:106). In no way does this imply that Spirituality lacks a religious dimension; the contrary is the case. Spirituality, therefore, influences elements of orthopathy, thus integrating orthodoxy and orthopraxy<sup>55</sup> (Land, 1993:41-46) to prevent theology from slipping into intellectualism, activism or sentimentality (Stephenson, 2009:47).

The conceptual method, thereby, provides an avenue for discussing the concept of Spirituality and characteristics of Spirituality in the Pentecostal Spirituality of African Pentecostal churches with the aim of conceptualising a distinctive African Pentecostal Spirituality and theology. Key conversation partners in Chapters 3 and 4 include Nel (2015, 2017, 2020a), Land (1993), Hollenweger (2005), Onyiah (2012), Waaijman (2007), Sheldrake (2013), McGrath (2015), Thompson and Williams (2008), Warrington (2008), Asamoah-Gyadu (2005, 2010, 2013a), Quayesi-Amakye, (2017), Yong (2008), and Markin (2019).

As a basis for theologising Pentecostal prayer, the nature and characteristics, the value and importance as well as the perception of Pentecostals in relation to prayer require investigation. Here, the forms of Pentecostal prayer and some peculiar models of prayer are reflected upon as a basis for establishing meaningful discussion concerning the elements of Pentecostal Spirituality, and for that matter, the theology of prayer. Warrington (2008), Land (1993) and Hollenweger (2005) have emphasised the theoretical link between theology and Spirituality (of prayer) that will be employed in this research. The worldview of Pentecostal Spirituality is not merely for edifying (speaking in tongues), but also for ‘thinking in tongues’ (Smith, 2010:1-5; Versteeg, 2012:1-3). As a result, Pentecostalism is more than just a form of worship; it is also a style of thinking that has an impact on their entire worldview (Smith, 2010:26).

If indeed prayer practices are evolving, then there is a need to examine their causes in line with the concept of African Traditional Spirituality as integral in the theological appreciation of the African Pentecostal as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. In line with the above, there was the need to re-engage and dialogue with some theological voices already mentioned in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 to enable a novel theological evaluation of these practices for a meaningful model to be developed.

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<sup>55</sup> See section 4.3 of Chapter 4 for further discussions on these.

### 1.10.2. Theological and Contextual Framework

This research engages an epistemological approach to general concepts of the theology and spiritualities of prayer. In line with the above, the research focuses on reviewing existing knowledge, belief, and truth about Pentecostal Spirituality of prayer. As stated previously<sup>56</sup>, the goal of this research is to examine the nexus between Pentecostal Spirituality and the theology of prayer from an African traditional perspective. The subject of Pentecostal Spirituality of prayer is not just an academic exercise; it is more of Pentecostal experience, belief, thinking, and practice. Pentecostals have been said to be more involved in their experiential life than having to define their theology. Pentecostal theology is simply rooted in their spiritual experience and is very difficult to contextualise. Since no detailed study has been made with respect to the Pentecostal African Spirituality of prayer, the concept of Spirituality of prayer are also borrowed from other Christian traditions.

The research methodology adopts for this study the qualitative investigation done by way of a literature study. The research, therefore, uses secondary data available on themes such as Ghanaian Pentecostal demographics and Ghanaian worldviews. Primary sources including publications (monographs as well as journal articles and publications in the popular media), CoP documentary information like letters, minutes, communiques, reports, handbooks, proceedings from ministers and wives' conferences and November Heads' meetings and records on prayer activities are used. Writings and documentations by other Classical and neo-Pentecostal/prophetic churches in Ghana is also a source of primary information. Online sources and personal experience as a minister of the CoP are also used.

If, according to Spittler (1988:804-809), Spirituality is a set of complex characteristics that originate from the expression and belief of a single or heterogeneous society, then Land (1993:44) will not be wrong when he conjectures Spirituality as a human experience rooted in community encounter. Through that community encounter, experiential testimony keeps developing into theology based on the ever-evolving cycle of beliefs, practices, and emotions (Stephenson, 2009:46).

In short, key questions in the research are: What is Pentecostal Spirituality and what is Pentecostal theology of prayer? How does this Spirituality reflect similarities, dissimilarities, and signs of enculturated African Traditional religious Spirituality? How different are the prayer practices within the Classical Pentecostal denominations as compared to emerging neo-prophetic wave? What is the theological evaluation of these variations in prayer

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<sup>56</sup> See Section 1.4.

practices? To answer these questions from a practical approach, the prayer practices of proponents and the posture of leaders and their beliefs and ethos in relation to these prayer practices need to be examined analytically, and epistemologically to determine the driving motif behind these prayers.

In line with the above, discovering the driving heuristic theological motif of prayer will, therefore, be foundational for analysing, discussing, and testing current prayer practices from a Pentecostal perspective. The study employs the analytical method<sup>57</sup> to abstract existing theories epistemologically in relation to Spirituality and theology of prayer. Using the analytical method, the ontology of prayer is reviewed in dialogue with other existing models theologically to fill the existing knowledge gap.

The theology of prayer adopted for this research is based on a heuristic model of prayer developed by Horton (1955). Horton's model will be adopted as the basis of our theoretical framework in the study and will form the basis of discussing the epistemological and ontological views on prayers. Horton's heuristic model of prayer is based on three ontological prayer motifs (Horton, 1955). The three views or motifs that can be used to describe the conceptual basis of prayer are: a relationship-based perspective, a duty-based obligation, and a transaction-based motif (c.f. Okediadi, 2017:1). The adequacy of the three-fold motif of prayer will be evaluated in relation to the Pentecostal setting (c.f. di Trolio, 2009:41). According to Horton (1955), whilst the relationship-based model is used to draw fellowship to God, the duty-based motif thrives on the reason that one must pray as an obligation and responsibility to worship God. Horton holds that the final motif of prayer is transactional<sup>58</sup>, which is used to petition, intercede, and request for all the needs of man. According to Horton, one of these would be the driving reason for coming to God in prayer. As will be seen, according to Di Trolio (2009:41), there has been a conceptual change from the original theology of prayer, which was once based on friendship and fellowship, and now drifting deeper into a transactional<sup>59</sup> pattern<sup>60</sup>, which is about trading and claiming.

This research, as will become clear later, suggests a theoretical model which includes a fourth motif of prayer (see section 6.5 of Chapter 6) specifically with regard to African

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<sup>57</sup> In analytical research, the researcher has to use facts or information already available and analyze these to make a critical evaluation of the material (Kothani, 2004: 3; Kasera, 2021:27).

<sup>58</sup> Transactional prayer in this thesis is defined as prayers that are mediated for the purpose of interaction with the gods and possibly exchange of one's destiny or turn around a bad omen for a good done.

<sup>59</sup> In other instances, transactional prayers are used to refer to the incidence of people trading prayers with God, where people would promise God something should God respond to their prayer request.

<sup>60</sup> Other times transactional models of prayer refer to where one tends to trade prophylactic items for the purpose of prayer. Any of these three definitions may apply contextually on a case-by-case basis.

Pentecostalism, namely the cosmological motif of prayer. One major driver for emerging Pentecostal prayer is the African cosmological worldview and cultural adaptations in neo-Pentecostalism, and this fourth driving motif may (or is busy too) displace the duty-bound and relationship-bound motifs. It will be shown that this motif is not insignificant as Pentecostal Spirituality is at home in Africa because of the traditional religious ideas, which are believed to have been imported into Pentecostal Spirituality (Adewuya, 2012:253).

While the above worldview affects Pentecostal Spirituality and the way of doing Pentecostal theology; the perception of mystical powers, spirit beings (Turaki, 2000:3), and the cosmological worldview of evil (Wariboko, 2017:8-11) also affect the hermeneutics of prayer (Adewuya 2012: 254). The cultural-traditional motif of prayer, again, has an effect on some of the deviations in prayer practices, which are carryovers from ATR. Importantly, this is not to say that all Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostalism prayer practices are continuities of ATR. There are indeed similarities, but also ruptures, which are discussed later in sections 2.9, 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 of this research.

This research, therefore, attempts to postulate the nature, characteristics, and theological basis of modern Ghanaian Pentecostal prayer practices (described in detail in chapters four and five) with the heuristic devices of prayer focusing on the integrated four-fold motif of prayer. Again, whereas Horton contends that people come to God because of one of these driving motifs, in the African setting, the Pentecostal comes to God because of a number of factors combined at a goal. The conceptual framework proposes that Pentecostals do not only pray because of relationships or because prayer is a duty, but for the purpose of transactions, and because they think, culturally, as Africans. The research, therefore, reviews the ontological motif in the Pentecostal prayer examining the functions, postures, practices, and the role of culture on prayer in the Ghanaian spiritual space.

### **1.10.3 Limitations and Boundaries**

As an academic study, the scope of this investigation will be limited to the evolution of Pentecostalism's ethos and practices, in order to document the emergence of new prayer practices among Pentecostals in Ghana. As mentioned in the methodology and research design sections<sup>61</sup>, the research entails a critical desk study.

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<sup>61</sup> See section 1.10.

The research is about Pentecostal spiritualities and theologies of prayer. It will, however, be impossible to cover all Pentecostal theologies, and spiritualities of prayer; thus, the reason why this research study is limited to Ghana and the Classical Pentecostalism in particular.

Importantly, my many years as a minister in a Classical Pentecostal church and association with neo-prophetic congregations will undoubtedly inform my research, and I am cognizant of this fact as of my own traditional Pentecostal views and assumptions. The research is neither exclusively Biblical nor exclusively comparative; rather, it tries to chronicle the Pentecostal spiritualities and theologies of prayer, to the extent that they exist with some biblical discourse. Given the location of the study, and the existing African Pentecostal discourse, it will also need to examine the impact of African traditional spiritualities on African-initiated Classical Pentecostal and neo-prophetic congregations in Ghana, as was previously alluded to.<sup>62</sup> The discourse on ATR is restricted to the Akan, Ga-Dangbe, and Ewe communities of Ghana. Additionally, the discourse will focus on communal prayer in addition to devotional and individual prayers. While using The Church of Pentecost, an indigenous and now the largest African-initiated Ghanaian Classical Pentecostal church, as a research field, prayer practices will be collected from a variety of proponents of this tradition in Ghana. To comprehend the Spirituality and theology of the more inclusive tradition, references to Pentecostal thinkers from different African contexts will also be made.

### **1.11 Short Overview of the Organisation of Chapters**

The research is presented in six chapters. The current (first) chapter introduces the background and summary, brief literature review, research problem, objectives, summary methodology, and overview of chapters to follow. The second chapter offers an overview of the characteristics of ATR, its Spirituality/ies, and the possible effects of the African Traditional religious Spirituality on Pentecostal Spirituality. The third chapter focuses on the relationship between theology and Spirituality in general. It reviews the historiography of Spirituality, Christian Spirituality and theology, and Ghanaian Pentecostal Spirituality's distinctive characteristics. The latter chapter paves the way toward Chapter 4 of this research which discusses the nature, characteristics, and theological basis of the Pentecostal theology of prayer. The types of prayers, modes of prayer, and the advantages and disadvantages of the various models of prayer shall be discussed. Chapter 5 reviews the historical Pentecostal

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<sup>62</sup> See section 1.7.6.

development and current manifestations of prayer practices, the continuities and discontinuities of prayer in the African Pentecostal setting. The chapter discusses the emerging prayer practices, which are a variation of traditional Pentecostalism, and highlights their implications for Pentecostal Spirituality. The final chapter discusses a theological evaluation of the evolving neo-prophetic changes in prayer practices and provides a summary of and conclusion to the research.

### **1.12 Conclusion**

This chapter provided a summary of the research and served as an introduction. It introduced (though briefly) key topics including Spirituality, Pentecostal prayer, and Pentecostal theology, and set the stage for the research problem to be investigated. Pentecostalism has evolved into a diverse movement that spans all continents, and it is spreading globally despite its questionably non-coherent theology. With Christianity's centre shifting to the Global South, and Africa, the focus of this study is specifically on African Pentecostalism. The fundamental topic of this study is the challenge of the changing nature of prayer in African-founded Pentecostal organisations. As a result, the study aims to examine modern Pentecostal prayer patterns and explain the causes for these changes. The goal of the study is to examine these Pentecostal spiritual expressions in a theologically sound way. To do so, the following chapter first discusses the traits and practices of traditional African religious Spirituality as well as their impact on Ghanaian Pentecostalism's Spirituality.



## CHAPTER TWO

### AFRICAN PENTECOSTAL SPIRITUALITY AND AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

#### 2.1 Introduction

As stated in the previous chapter<sup>63</sup>, with reference to the dictum of renowned African theologian John Mbiti, religion pervades every sector of life of most Africans, thus constituting a basis for moral and ethical conduct. Devotions, prayers, strict compliance to ethical rules, and customs, and following many rites from one generation to the other are some of the distinguishing features of ATR. These practices which are intricately woven around ATR are not explicitly the same in certain other religions (Ampadu, 2019:151). Although all religions may have rites, customs and prayer practices, these practices seemingly vary from one religion to the other. Again, the emergence of postmodernity and globalisation with its distrust of tradition, its variety of choices and distrust of ultimate truths create a mixed, dichotomous worldview for many adherents of ATRs, and thereby resulting in some divided loyalty. When Western education and civilisation seem to water down some of the effects of traditional myths, culturally ingrained practices, and views, this has resulted in a continuous battlefield in the minds of many.

In what has been said thus far, in this study, it should not be surprising that the cultural traditional worldviews can also have an effect on their prayer practices. In line with the objectives of this research, this chapter investigates the key features and practices of ATR, specifically, the nature of ATR and beliefs, some practices of ATR, the Spirituality of ATR, and specifically, prayer practices in it, and its possible effect on the Spirituality of African Pentecostalism. As the heading of the chapter goes, the chapter ends by offering a theological evaluation of the effect of African Traditional religiosity on Pentecostal Spirituality.

#### 2.2 African Traditional Religion

There is a difficulty in attempting to delineate religion from culture. From an African perspective, ATR is a religion of loyal adherents and worshippers. Its rootedness in centuries of indigenous beliefs results in such adherents being unlikely to easily sever ties with it (Awolalu, 1976:6). The concept of ATR also proves to be a complex one. According to Mbiti (1969), ATR can best be described as an indigenous religious belief system involving

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<sup>63</sup> Section 1.8.2 of Chapter 1.

attitudes of the mind that affect people's way of life. As the name goes, ATR seeks to express a belief system that is systematically wholly indigenous but particular to culture and believed to be comparable to Christianity or any other religion (MacGaffey and Goshadze, 2022:1).

Importantly, since religion, to a large extent, is also culturally diversified, the entire African continent cannot be said to have one monolithic religion. Again, all countries surveyed in West Africa by Pew Research Centre on religion and public life have the practice, and a trace of ATR (Lugo, 2010). As a concept, ATR can be defined as a peculiar religion on the African continent to the African people, but then with a huge diversity of and multiple identities within it (Maluleke, 2001:37). On the other hand, Mbiti (1990:1-5) believes that irrespective of the varying religious expressions, the convergent point for ATR is its coherent nature characteristics as described in section 2.3 following.

Even though the expression of thought may differ (Magesa, 2002:17), based on the sufficient number of similar characteristics and generic philosophical underpinning, scholars such as Beyers (2010:8), and Kruger, Lubbe and Steyn (2009:35), hold that it may be unfair to project African religion as pluralistic. Indeed, the lenses through which you view ATR would determine whether it is monotheistic or pluralistic in nature<sup>64</sup>. Similarly, ATR is the religion that arose from the sustaining faith of the ancestors of the current African generation and is currently practised by a large number of people in various forms and intensities (Kehinde, 2022:1), thus it could be described as pluralistic.

Even though it is practised by the minority, adherents continue to live and practise ATR today in various parts of Africa and other parts of the world where they live (Kehinde, 2022:2; MacGaffey and Goshadze, 2022:1). Indeed, ATR can best be described as based on a discussion of its nature, practices, and religious beliefs as engaged in these subsequent sections.

### **2.3 Nature of African Traditional Religion**

Cumpsty (1991:20), considers religion as a quest to realise or maintain a sense of belonging to the ultimate reality. Religion can, therefore, be described as the fibre of everything in the life of the African (Opoku, 1978:2). Mbiti (1969:3; cf. Elorm-Donkor, 2011:3) claims that with its awe-inspiring nature, ATR lacks a clear separation between the secular and the sacred, for the sacred has an effect in the sacred, and vice versa. Religion is therefore indispensable for life and is rooted in the everyday life of most African families, and cultural

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<sup>64</sup> See section 2.4.4 for further discussions on this.

life. This includes drumming, dancing, singing, festivals, and marriages, among others (Bonsu, 2016:109); these are the key features of ATR.

Furthermore, Williamson (1965:139) describes ATR as a nature religion founded on a transcendent awareness of both the physical and spiritual worlds. Its methods aim to improve the vibrancy of people's lives, and the lives of their communities. Elorm-Donkor (2011:35) holds that ATR has no sacred text, divine creeds, or divinely appointed prophets, for the religion is written on the hearts of people. One may however argue that ATR believes that their priests are divinely called and sanctioned in training, hence, giving them community acceptance and divine approval.

Undoubtedly, the foundation of ATR is the African indigenous system and it's inherited its patterns and traditions from the past (Ampadu, 2019:21). ATR sprang from and is anchored in the soil of Africa. It is not exogenic. It sprang from the lives and practices of the indigenous people on the land. ATR is also grounded in the aspirations of the people and in their histories, and the life of their African traditions (Ampadu, 2019:22). Africans are therefore sometimes said to live and practise their religion without any written literature (Awolalu, 1976:2); and their literature is culturally displayed and "written" on the hearts, minds, shrines, and rituals of people.

Although ATR is culturally complex and ethnically diverse, there are several similarities between the different ethnic groups across the continent. These similarities in ATR include ancestral veneration/worship (Kenan, 1997:12), the worship of the/a Supreme Being (Vigbedor, 2017:5), the veneration of lesser gods and the use of religious personages or human intermediaries (Field, 1937:8).

From the African perspective, ATR is about the very fabric, the very nature of life. Everything about the life of Africans, therefore, has some form of religion and worship associated with it (Ampadu, 2019:23). To these Africans, dreams, for example, do not just happen; they are means by which God/gods speak to their children. Dreams, therefore, speak of the past, the present, and the future. Such Africans would therefore go to all lengths to seek interpretations of their dreams, especially when not clear, ambiguous, or purported to be predictive. For example, the following incident was observed during prayer in one devotional service.<sup>65</sup> For the African Traditionalist, the interpretation of dreams has culturally become

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<sup>65</sup> The incident occurred in the presence of the researcher after the close of a devotional service in my church. One lady called Vanessa Osei (not her real name) came to me one Tuesday morning after the close of dawn service to seek an interpretation of a dream she had. She had been distraught because of the distasteful

part of one's beliefs in ATR<sup>66</sup> and in more recent times it has thus been adopted into neo-prophetic Pentecostalism.

ATR is engrained in how, and what one eats, drinks, thinks, and in many seemingly strange observances during one's day<sup>67</sup>. Furthermore, ATR purports that an individual's home is not just a dwelling, but a temple wherein one worships<sup>68</sup> (Ampadu, 2019:23). The home of the African is therefore a temple wherein practical religious functions take place to enable one experience the supernatural.

Admittedly and to a great extent, there are also some manipulative aspects to ATR. This explains the many magico-medical ideas found in it. In Awutu Bawjuase,<sup>69</sup> where I grew up, I witnessed puzzling instances without comprehension as a youth, when these ATR magicians would command money from sky, yet never share these monies; chew blazing fire without being hurt and cut their bodies with knives without blood oozing. As will be seen later, these enchanted concepts have permeated Pentecostalism, and to some extent, found themselves as part of Pentecostal syncretism, and have resulted in certain rituals, medicines,

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nature of her dream wherein she saw a basket of snails handed over to her. As a lover of snails, she removed the snails at the top of the basket only to realise that the snails at the bottom were all dead and corrupt, and the environment in which she found herself smelled very bad (9th March 2021, 7:45 am, PIWC Asokwa Kumasi). This lady was ready to go to all lengths to seek an interpretation of the dream.

<sup>66</sup> As Africans, right from childhood, one's parents would ask every morning, what one dreamt of to share with the family so as to seek counsel.

<sup>67</sup> In the village where I grew up (Wamfie, Bono Region, Ghana), I observed, first without knowing why, that in the compound where we lived, every time the women finished preparing soup, they would pour the first ladle onto the ground before tasting the soup. When the older women finished preparing their traditional fufu (mashed plantain and cassava, or yam, or cocoyam), before anyone would have their share, they threw the first morsel on the ground. Similarly, any time the men drank water or palm wine, or took any other drink, they poured some to the ground first before drinking. Only later did I learn that all these practices were means by which the living purportedly communicated with the ancestors (the 'living-dead'). When we were children, we were told that, when one stumbled three times in sequence, it was a bad omen; the gods were speaking to one to approach the day with caution. When one sneezed, it was a good omen. The more one sneezed, the better the chances of good things happening to them. My grandfather, an African traditionalist, told me that when one saw two birds flying to the top of one's roof whistling in the early morning, it meant that they would receive good news that day. Again, when one saw two chickens or flying birds fighting early in the morning, it meant a visitor would come their way that morning. The significance of all these (what is often called superstitious beliefs) was that the ancestral spirits were speaking to the individual in question.

<sup>68</sup> As I grew up, anytime I visited my hometown, I saw small huts attached to every house. Interestingly, the doors to these huts were closed and I observed that a particular man (dressed in a traditional outfit) entered that hut only three times a year. One day, when I curiously asked my grandmother what the significance of these huts was, I was told they were the abode of the family gods. Each household, thus, had a family god – supposedly, their source of connectivity with the Supreme Being, and believed to offer protection, security, and guidance to the family.

<sup>69</sup> Awutu Bawjiase is a farming community in the central region of Ghana. I stayed with an uncle in Bawjiase during my basic school days.

and the repetition of certain sorcery incantations that are believed to be a centre for solutions for the African.

## **2.4 Beliefs in African Traditional Religion**

As a belief system, ATR is based on a body of customs and beliefs that are coherent, firm and deeply rooted in being African. Every deed and thought in the African world have a religious purpose because of its collective religious culture, rituals, and beliefs (Gyekye, 1996:4). Although Mndende (2009:112; c.f. Mokhoathi, 2016:4) holds that there are three basic beliefs in African Traditions namely belief in the creator, ancestors, and ritual practices, there are some other central common beliefs in ATR and are explained in the following sections.

### **2.4.1 Belief in a Supreme Being**

Even though the African continent is large with many complex cultures, numerous languages, and dialects, the concept of God<sup>70</sup> as the supreme being is one aspect shared by all of these cultures (Ampadu, 2019:39). Mbiti (2012:9-15) holds that Africans believe that there is only one God. This view is however influenced by many anthropological factors such as location, language, culture, et cetera. No language or dialect is therefore without a name for God, for the African inherits a society with knowledge about the Supreme Being (Gyekye, 1996:4). The Supreme Being is known to be above all the other deities and hierarchies of beings (Mndende, 2009:113; c.f. Mokhoathi, 2016:7). Interestingly, even though there is evidence of the existence of the Supreme Being in ATR, the knowability<sup>71</sup> and experience of the Supreme Being is somewhat vague. Asamoah-Gyadu (2013a:58) opines that the Supreme Being may not be directly involved actively in the affairs of men, yet He is revered.

The African traditionalist quintessentially upholds the Spirit Being as God (Agyemang-Baduh, 2002:2) who is philosophically intangible and unrevealed, yet ‘afrocentrically’ compassionate, merciful, generous, loving, faithful, and kind. The Supreme Being, according to African traditionalists, also possesses additional exterior qualities such as self-existence, being first and last, invisible, unfathomable, enigmatic, unchangeable, incomparable, holy, and singular (Kenan, 1997:23; Mokhoathi, 2016:4-6). African traditionalists believe that the belief in the Supreme Being is central to ATR worship. For

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<sup>70</sup> Written with a capital letter, the term ‘God’ is used here generically not necessarily referring to the Christian God.

<sup>71</sup> The Africans have a fair idea about the supreme being as carried from one generation to the other through oral traditions but the extent of knowledge and experience of the supreme being is low.

unto Him (the Supreme Being) prayer and sacrifices are offered, and it is for His sake that sacred spaces, taboos and religious ceremonies are observed (Mbiti, 1975; Mokhoathi, 2016:4-9). The paradox, however, is that Classical Pentecostals believe in worship and prayer directed at their God, but in the ATRs, sacrifices, prayers and offerings are offered to the divinities and ancestral spirits because he cannot be addressed directly since his divine presence would be incomprehensible for human survival (Bae, 2007:50).

Meanwhile, as creator God and the final arbiter in all issues, the provider, sustainer, and the source of all things, the attributes of the Supreme Being are described uniquely in locally assigned names (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:57-58; Ampadu, 2019:44-46). Notwithstanding, the Supreme Being is usually mentioned in prayers, songs, rituals, and religious ceremonies as an appellate being. Steyn (1990:35) characterises the Supreme Being as the God who is superior to the lesser gods, but who does not appear to be directly involved in or concerned with human issues in this world, but rather giving the lower gods His authority to supply their requirements. In other words, the African Supreme Being is cast as a “god”, but one who is not actively involved in transactions and religious practices of the people (Turaki, 2000:2).

As the uncreated creator, the Supreme Being in the African traditional worldview is postulated as the most significant spiritual being, one who possesses life and strength within himself, life-giver, and the fulcrum around which all things rotate (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:56). As such, the names often assigned to God<sup>72</sup> essentially describe (usually) him as a progenitor. The Ewe tribe in Ghana calls him *Mawu* to mean grandfather. *Mawu* is therefore upheld as the source of all creation (White and Niemandt, 2014:747). Although he is far away and beyond reach, he is also supreme, self-existent, and everywhere. Other Ewe names for God like *Mawuga* (Great God) and *Se* (Supreme God) suggest that there are other gods, but the Supreme Being under discussion is more significant than all the others (Mokhoathi, 2016:9).

On the other hand, the Ga tribe in Ghana describes God as a complex spiritual being whose being, and sex are indeterminate. The name: *Ataa Naa Nyohmɔ*, translated as ‘Grandfather, or Grandmother God’ depicts God as the progenitor whose gender is difficult to determine. Interestingly, the Ga word *Nyohmɔ* was borrowed for the Christian God, and

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<sup>72</sup> It is interesting to note that these names assigned to God as the Supreme Being by the local communities are the same names that were adopted when the Christians/ foreign missionaries settled in these communities. In their local dialects therefore, the names of God in the vernacular Bibles are the names cited in these discussions.

originally partly referred to the sky god. Since the sky is the abode of rain, the sky god *Nyonmoo Tsade* was the sky god responsible for abundant rain. The Ga word for rain has, from time immemorial, been *Nyohmɔ*, and *Ataa Nyohmɔ* is the Supreme God in the universe and nature (Field, 1937:44-48). For people like the Gas, nature and the universe are therefore the closest description for the word *Nyohmɔ* (rain – nature – universe).

In Akan traditional Spirituality, one finds a classification of spirit beings whose actions derive their ultimate authority from the Supreme Being (Gyekye, 1987:42-50). Opoku Onyinah (2012b:32-33) says that this being is called *Onyame*, *Onyankopɔn*, *ɔdomankoma* or *Twereduampɔn* (Onyinah, 2012b:32-33), and *ɔbɔadeɛ* (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:58), meaning creator God. The name *Onyame* appears to be the short form of *Onyankopɔn* (Larbi, 2002b:89), meaning ‘one who fills your tummy once you get hold of him’; *wo nya no a, wa me*, meaning “when you get him, you are full”. In addition, the name *Twereduampong* comes from the adage: *dua a wo twere a wo mpɔn*; meaning the big tree that will never let you fall when you lean on it, and this denotes the reliability and dependability of God. The name, *ɔdomankoma*, is the Akan word for the giver of life or progenitor. In African Spirituality, *Onyankopɔn*, the Supreme Being, is revered as the superpower, giver of life and the originator of all created forces (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013b:57, 58).

According to Akan mythology, *Onyankopɔn*, who was hovering in the sky just above humankind withdrew from humankind because an old woman who was pounding *fufu* used her pestle to hit him continuously (Onyinah, 2012b:32-33), thereby causing *Onyame* to withdraw very far from humankind. Humankind could therefore only contact God through other intermediaries and divinities. In some Akan traditional beliefs, next to *Onyame* is *Asase Yaa*<sup>73</sup>, who in some sense is the goddess of fertility, the custodian of morality, social decorum and traditional ethical code (Larbi, 2002b:89).

Because of the fact that the Traditional African does not worship the Supreme Being directly (Turaki, 2000:2), worship and prayers are directed to the ancestors, divinities, and lesser spirits (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:58). It is apparent that the above cosmological view about God being inaccessible but accessed through other deities has an effect on the converted African Pentecostal. Indeed, from this worldview, God is seen far away, and the African Pentecostal, therefore, approaches God only through neo-prophets. Again, prayers in

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<sup>73</sup> In the Akan tradition, *Asase Yaa* is upheld to be the goddess of the earth and responsible for rainfall, fruitfulness, fertility, and increase.

ATR are said to the Supreme Being through songs, rituals, and rites, and this is apparently a similar mode in which the African Pentecostal wishes to approach the living God.

#### **2.4.2 Belief in a Realm of the Spirit**

Apart from the concept of God mentioned above, ATR is firmly rooted in the belief in spirits and other divinities. ATR subscribes to a two-fold physical and metaphysical world with the metaphysical densely populated by spirit beings, the living dead, and the spirits of ancestors (Mbiti, 1975); while the physical world is understood to be controlled by the spiritual world (Larbi, 2002b:89). Although some non-Africans hold the concept of spiritual beings as anthropomorphically conceived, most people born and bred on African soil believe in the existence of such spiritual beings as real. For most Africans, these powers are not abstract, shades of vapour, taking human form as perceived, but a spiritual reality. The converted African<sup>74</sup> sometimes perceives the issues of the spirit as a thin imagination of the human faculty as portrayed by Kenan (1997: 24). Nonetheless, the African traditionalists are of the view that issues of spirit beings are more real than being virtual, a medium through which prayer could be offered (Kamotho, 2022:2). Some African traditionalists even uphold that these spirit beings are omnipresent (Ampadu, 2019:67). Kwame Bediako describes the spirit world as a ‘super sensory realm’, a source of power for protecting vulnerable humans and also a benevolent world of blessing (Bediako, 1995b:94). In addition, Asamoah-Gyadu (2013a:43) mentions that when the spirit world is distressed, the result is unexplained deaths, barrenness, epidemics, disaster, lack of rainfall and disasters.

According to Beyers (2010:4), the African traditional world of spirits is believed to be inhabited by three categories of spirits: ancestors, nature spirits, and deities. Nature spirits are believed to be everywhere on the African continent, roaming the earth, inhabiting trees, buildings, rocks, land, seas, sky, animals, human beings, objects, amulets, and charms (Turaki, 2000:3). The African traditionalist, therefore, believes that persons, animals, birds, and aquatic life may be instruments of possession by all categories of spirits, good or bad, helpful, or vengeful. The preceding account has resulted in ATR being described as animistic as it is based on a worldview that distinguishes between the object and the spirit that dwells in it. The spirit that however dwells in the objects is mobile and is therefore not confined to the physical object in which they reside (Ampadu, 2019:69). Spirits are also heterogeneous in

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<sup>74</sup> The ‘converted African’ here refers to someone who has converted from African Traditional Religion (ATR) either due to enlightenment or an affirmation of the Christian faith.



sexuality (male and female) with specifically assigned duties (Beyers, 2010:4; Turaki, 2000:6).

In traditional African cosmology, the spirit world consists of divinities that stand next to the Supreme Being in terms of the hierarchy of powers. It is believed that some gods are children of the Supreme Being and are, thus, close to the Supreme Being. They also have a greater sphere of influence and activity than others (Beyers, 2010:4). The African traditionalist, however, holds that even though spirits are subordinate to him, they can be employed by him to accomplish his goals because he believes that the Supreme Being created them (Larbi, 2002b:89-91).

In terms of the spirit world, there are many kinds of spirits including the spirit of departed souls who are believed to be living even though dead. In essence, ATR affirms that a person's life does not end with their death.<sup>75</sup> Humans continue to exist as human spirits, and be they spirits of long-dead people (ghosts) or the recently dead people (living dead<sup>76</sup>) (Mbiti, 1989: 81-82), they may choose, even though they are spirits, to reveal themselves to the living from time to time. This implies that the African is believed to live in an environment saturated with spirit beings. The next section discusses the concept of the living dead as a key practice in the ATR.

### **2.4.3 Worship/Veneration of Ancestors as the Living Dead <sup>77</sup>**

ATR has often been identified as such due to its practice of ancestral veneration/worship, which, in some instances, is so-called ancestral worship<sup>78</sup> (Mokhoathi, 2017:4-8). Ancestral worship occupies a central role in ATR (Potgieter and Magezi, 2016), and its belief in the influence of the spirits of the dead on the living is quintessential (Ampadu, 2019:45; Kenan, 1997:26). Since ATR is experiential, communication and communion between the living and the spirits of the dead are always possible (Hackman-Aidoo, 2014:1). As a continuity of life

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<sup>75</sup> According to ATR, the human spirits are eternal. An individual, immediately after death, sublimates to become a living being who continues to live within the vicinity of the family as an unseen spirit, and after a long while becomes a living spirit.

<sup>76</sup> In ATR, people who have died are not classified as dead; they are classified as dead but living. It is believed they continue to live in the family and community for a long time before passing to become ancestors.

<sup>77</sup> ATR recognises the inseparability of the physical from spiritual, and therefore the living and the dead. The dead (ancestors) are therefore called the living dead.

<sup>78</sup> Although Africans venerate the dead, ATR is noted in some places for ancestral worship. This is a key distinct feature of ATR. Using the word venerate does not overlook the controversy about the difference between worship and veneration and their theological implications. For the purpose of this research, the term veneration may be used.

and religion, deceased members of a clan who are within memory are thought to be alive (Abiodun, 2006:26), even to the extent that they require food (Mtukwa, 2014:3) and drink to sustain their spiritual existence (Appiah, 2013:1). Although some African theologians (Bediako, 1994:96-99, 2000:99-100) have attempted to relate Christ's supreme ancestral Christology to His sovereignty over all ancestors and powers, this theology is not far-fetched in Classical Pentecostalism.

Meanwhile, not all dead people in the traditional setting qualify as ancestors (Gyekye, 1997:129). Ancestors are expected to have lived and died within certain approved cultural contexts and requirements<sup>79</sup> (Gehman, 1999:12-13; c.f. Bae, 2007:28). This accounts for libations poured out, and food left at shrines and along pathways during special festivities. Such offerings are also a means by which the living communicate with the dead (Abiodun, 2006:26). Again, according to Mbiti (Mbiti, 1969), there is a clear distinction between the spirits of the people who were once living (ancestors) and the world of spirits who were created by God, as such from the beginning.

As averred above, the living dead are believed to be intermediaries between humanity and the Supreme Being (God) and have the power to influence the life of the living for better or for worse (Kenan, 1997:26; Mtukwa, 2014:3). It is also understood then that the living dead are on the one hand, a direct link to the spirit world, but simultaneously constantly near to the living, thus observing and knowing their needs, and therefore may intervene to see that the needs of the living are met (Ampadu, 2019:47; Kenan, 1997:26-27). They are believed to be guardians of the morality of the community (Phiri, 2009:92), and therefore act as the invisible security to the families and communities (Mbiti, 1989; Mtukwa, 2014).

From the traditional African worldview, the ancestors are not only concerned with individuals, but continue to exist as an integral part of the family, clan, and community. They visit the family from time to time, usually the oldest member of the family, enquire about family affairs, and warn about impending danger (Mbiti, 1989:82; c.f. Mtukwa, 2014:3). The spirits of dead elders, specifically, are believed to be close to humans and serve as their custodians (Turaki, 2000:5). The conviction of the existence of an unending obligation in and

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<sup>79</sup> For one to qualify to be an ancestor, '(s)he should have died at an old age. Apart from people who die in war who are honoured as ancestors for their brevity, others should have died a natural death. Again, one should not have died disgracefully, or from a disgraceful sickness such as epilepsy, leprosy, suicide, childbirth, motor accident. If one dies at old age and does not have a child to perpetuate his memory, he is not considered an adult. Finally, an ancestor should have led and lived a transparently good moral life according to the cultural standard. Thieves, lazy people, drunkards, cowards, adulterers, an extravagant people, etc., are not mentioned when libations are being poured' (Abiodun, 2006:29-31).

toward African society places a burden of responsibility on the dead who are believed to wield more power in their current state to continue to protect and guard the living (Abiodun, 2006:26-27; Ampadu, 2019:47). The concept of ancestral belief is therefore closely linked to the idea of community, and the ancestors must be consulted by the living in all endeavours (Mtukwa, 2014:4).

Some African traditionalists uphold that, although they do not worship the dead (but venerate them), the living seeks their help and intervention in life issues because the living believes the dead can influence the course of their life positively and negatively (Elorm-Donkor, 2011:38). Kofi Asante Opoku (1978:36) describes the relationship as one in which the living dead act as friends at court to intervene between humanity and the Supreme Being, and therefore help the living by ensuring that the response to their prayers and petitions are answered more quickly. In addition to the existence of the Supreme Being and ancestors, ATR as well believes in the existence of other divinities as described in the next section below:

#### **2.4.4 Belief in Divinities<sup>80</sup>**

Although there may be some exceptions to this rule, in certain parts of the African continent, ATR usually subscribes to a pantheon of divinities (Turaki, 2000:5). Due to the difficulty in defining the term ‘divinity’, Mbiti (1975:5) uses it to describe “supernatural acts normally linked with God’s character, natural occurrences, and the appearances of so-called nature spirits” (cf. Kenan, 1997:29). Some African traditional writers have used the term divinity to speak about gods, demigods, nature spirits, and ancestral spirits, among others (Abiodun, 2006:29; Bonsu, 2016:112-117; Kamotho, 2022:1-3). In terms of a hierarchy of powers, ATR teaches that divinities stand next to God, and are believed to derive their powers essentially from God. These divinities are also believed to be usually sent as messengers from God (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:56-58). In traditional African belief, when God distanced Himself from humanity, God essentially appointed intermediaries (the divinities and lesser gods) to deal directly with humans (Kamotho, 2022:3).

In another debate on whether ATR is monotheistic, ‘monotheistically-polytheistic’, or ‘subjectively polytheistic’; Radin (1937; c.f. Kenan, 1997:30) believes monotheism has multiple aspects or stages. According to a recent classification of its history, the development of monotheism can be divided into three stages namely ‘monolatry (i.e., belief in a Supreme

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<sup>80</sup> The difference between divinities, spirits, and ancestors are described in the sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.3.

Being but continued worship of other deities at the same time), implicit monotheism (i.e., belief in a supreme deity but no definite denial of other gods), and explicit monotheism (belief in a supreme deity and denial of the existence of other gods)' (Kenan, 1997:30). If these definitions are anything to go by, then ATR cannot be defined by anything except 'monolatry' according to Idowu (1973:131).

Theologically analytical Africans who argue that African traditionalists do not worship their divinities and ancestors argue that libations, sacrifices, offerings and prayers offered are not directed to the divinities as an end in themselves, but ultimately to God (Turaki, 2000:5). For many ordinary Africans brought up on African soil, it is contentious to believe that divinities and ancestors are not worshipped but venerated. Some African writers do agree with this view on this issue (cf. Mtukwa, 2019:6). The incantations associated with the process of libations and sacrifices are ambiguous to the minds of many Africans bringing to subjectivity the longstanding debate whether divinities and ancestors are worshipped as gods or are venerated as intermediaries and mediators.

In attempting to solve the conundrum, it must be understood that African traditionalists believe in the existence of ancestors as continuity to the life of the community. This suggests that the ancestors are in the spirit realms, and for that reason they know and see better than the living (Mtukwa, 2014:6). It is therefore important that Africans keep a communion of fellowship with the ancestors (Mtukwa, 2014:6). It is therefore believed that prayers offered through the ancestors are a means to seek their direction and guide in the endeavours of life. Ancestors are therefore served as one rendering service to his/her elderly living parents and must not be understood contextually as worship (Setiloane, 1986:18; c.f. Bae, 2007:53). In summary, since African Traditionalists distinguish between the supreme uncreated deity and divinities, it is believed that all other powers are derived from the supreme deity and stand under its unitary theocratic rule, and divinity (Mokhoathi, 2016:8). The divinities are therefore divine, but only due to their relationship with the Supreme Being, and because of the latter's divinity.

Since a plurality of African divinities exists with diverse spheres of influence and control, these divinities are believed to be like ministers, each with its specific "portfolios" in the deity's "monarchical government" (Gehman, 1985:68). This government structure constitutes an "arch divinity" over the pantheon of divinities, which is more closely related in attributes to the divine Supreme Being (Idowu, 1973:141). As said, these divinities act as intermediaries between the deities and the human order regarding functions. In some ATRs, such as the Asante's (in Ghana), it is believed that during special occasions on the calendar of

the Supreme Being, the latter periodically manifests himself via a pantheon of divinities (Kenan, 1997:29-31). These divinities are known as *bosom*<sup>81</sup>, who are said to come from God, and act as his intermediaries (Larbi, 2002b:90).

In summary, in the African cosmological worldview, a pantheon of divinities exists as next to the Supreme Being, and act as intermediaries between the Supreme Being and humans. Minor/ lesser gods also exist, and they are lower in the hierarchy to the divinities and are believed to be present within every environment in Africa (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:56-58). The existence of lesser gods is revealed in the form of community and traditional gods who need no formal proof. Essentially, lesser gods are known by the African, and they have been given many names, or are known by many terms, and the *bosom* (mentioned above), remains one of these (Larbi, 2002b:90-91; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:58-60).

ATR adherents believe that divinities, as spirit beings, never become humans, but sometimes do possess humans and animals, hence must be cast out when so observed. Divinities also do not kill except in cases where their sanctions/laws/prohibitions have been violated. Their power is limited to their functions and areas/territories in which they are active. These divinities are also believed to reveal several secrets about the past, the ongoing hidden present and the future. Finally, the divinities are believed to reveal through dreams or visions, treatment for otherwise incurable diseases or conditions such as cancer and infertility (Ampadu, 2019:68-69), and one's relationship with them is crucial for his/her well-being and survival. ATR belief affects practices and ultimately the way of Spirituality as discussed in the next section.

## 2.5 Practices in African Traditional Religion

The above religious beliefs form the theological basis of the religious system (Turaki, 2000:6). The practice on the other hand also forms the basis of accentuating the religious beliefs in every community. The beliefs in the religious systems therefore determine and result in the evolution of religious practices. The practices are also important since ATR beliefs are orally transmitted, which makes corresponding practices, behaviour, and feelings

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<sup>81</sup> *Bosom* is the generic name given to divinities in the Akan Asante language. Such *bosom* is found in every Ghanaian cultural and traditional society. There may be over ten thousand *abosom* in Ghana. They are revered for their activities. The singular is *bosom* and the plural is *abosom*.

even more important. In short, ATR can be described with reference to indigenous religious beliefs (Awolalu, 1976:1), and its attendant practices (Bonsu, 2016:12).

Although Turaki (2000:6) identifies four foundational practices in ATR that explains its nature, Ampadu (2019:98-99) suggests seven practices. Other scholars, such as Beyers (2010:3-5) and Kenan (1997:32-44), again hold other views. The views of these writers are reviewed, analysed and consolidated below as practices that relate to ATR. Based on the objective of this research, this section seeks to signpost some similarities and enculturated carry over practices from these practices as an influence on Pentecostal Spirituality of prayer.

### **2.5.1 Mystical Powers and Sorcery (Magico-Medical) Ideas/Practices**

These practices in ATR are based on the link and relationship established with the cosmic, spiritual, and mystical powers (Turaki, 2000:6). The rationale behind these practices is regaining cosmic spiritual balance while exerting control over the enchanted world (Bae, 2007:48). These practices are usually found during religious and social ceremonies (Kamotho, 2022:2), and are believed to affect everyone in the African society (Gehman, 1999:50; c.f. Bae, 2007:48). The word '*Nkabrekyere foɔ*' is used in Asante Akan language to refer to African Traditionalists who use sorcery, enchantment, spirit and spiritism for healing, charms and spiritual mediation.

The display of mystical powers and magico-medical incantations characterise ATR (Ampadu, 2019:91), and account for it (ATR) being described by some as 'magico-religious'. It is uncertain whether magical practices evolved before religion, or out of religion (Kenan, 1997:32). It is however widely believed that anytime one is unable to use magic to control natural and terrestrial objects, the Supreme Being becomes the last resort. Magic<sup>82</sup> is, therefore, 'the force in the hands of individual for harmful purposes' (Mbiti, 1975:165) such as sickness and barrenness (Mbiti, 1969:197). Be that as it may, magic and ATR, according to Mbiti, (1969:164-5) are inseparable even though he concludes that religion is not magic, and magic cannot explain religion because religion is supra magic (c.f. Gehman, 1999:58).

Magic has been defined by Idowu (1973:169) as 'an attempt by human beings to tap and control the supernatural resource of the universe for his/her benefit.' From the African traditional perspective, magic is the second cause<sup>83</sup> for human beings who seek to reach their goals, after they have done all that is humanly possible (Bae, 2007:48). Magic therefore

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<sup>82</sup> The term magic is used to refer to sorcery, enchantment, incantation or witchcraft.

<sup>83</sup> The first cause of human action is the divinities and other gods.

serves the human ego<sup>84</sup> as a resort toward super-causation and to prove their spiritual authority by employing spells, mystical forces (Phiri, 2009:101), rites, manipulation, and enforcement of the supernatural to their benefit (Idowu, 1973:169; Kenan, 1997:33-35). In a beneficial sense, magic may be used to treat diseases, counteract misfortune, ward off evil spirits and forces, and protect people. Bad (malevolent) magic, usually called sorcery or divination (Kamotho, 2022), may be used to harm other people (even to the point of tapping and using this power to kill people) or to destroy property (Idowu, 1973:9), or find the reason for an unusual, suspicious, and unfortunate death (Phiri, 2009:103).

In the circle of magicians in ATR, rainmakers are especially important and are believed to bring rain in times of drought (Ampadu, 2019:79). With agriculture constituting the main economic activity of and providing the main form of sustenance for most traditional African communities, long periods of drought are perceived to be caused by inappropriate behaviour of members of the community or the disruptive influence of evil spirits. Rainmakers (especially when trained as priests in communities) are therefore consulted to reveal the reason/s behind droughts, and to pray for remedies for the problem.<sup>85</sup>

Moreover, talismans, amulets, and other objects believed to carry supernatural powers that influence events and physical phenomena by mystical means are also used in magical practices. During the consulting process, magic often employs pieces of cloth, hair, body parts, food, or something the victim uses. The average African considers magic as a supernatural, and therefore a surest means of attaining quick success in life. All classes of people thereby consult magicians. As will be seen later, this background may have a post-conversion effect on people who later become Christians. Again, the neo-prophetic leaders practise prayer in a magical way not so different from these ATR practices. Other practices in ATR are demonstrated through medicine and medicinal practices as discussed below:

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<sup>84</sup> Through magic people manipulate natural events to their favour through superior power dominance.

<sup>85</sup> In 1997, when I was undertaking my national service in Bimbilla, a predominantly farming community in the then Northern region of Ghana, the community suffered from a long period of drought. The rains failed during its regular season of April to June and hence delayed planting of the first batch of yams until mid-July. In the third week of July, community members were notified by the native doctors to sleep early that whole week since the local priests were performing rites for the downpouring of the rains. At 8 pm on the fourth day after the rites, the clouds gathered with tremendous thundering associated with a heavy downpour until morning. The thunderstorms associated with the rains resulted in the death of two people; a thunderbolt struck some trees (dividing them vertically down), and over ten houses fell because of the rains with people displaced from the storm. The following day, my anxiety heightened, and I wanted to know the reason behind the many disasters and destructions following the rains. I was informed that those people who had offended the gods were usually killed by and during such forced rains. So devastating were the disasters because of the anger of the gods, who were forced against their will to pour the rains. It took many days to make good, and for the pools of water to dissipate.

### 2.5.2 Medicine and Medicinal Practices

The African traditionalist believes that unanswered questions concerning the past and future uncertainties regarding one's health that cannot be answered by Western medicine and lack apparent religious meaning, should not be left unanswered. One must find the reason in order to forestall any negative future happenings. In the same vein, the reality surrounding the dominance of evil forces, causality of death, curses and the meaning of dreams must be unravelled at all costs. Medicine wo-/men are referred to in the Asante-Akan language as '*dunsini-foɔ*'. The term '*dunsini*' originates from the Asante Akan word which means the stem of a tree, and the word '*foɔ*' means wo-/man. The term generically means people who specialises in using products from plants and other items for divine mediation and intervention.

For the above, medicine men and women are central, and according to Mbiti (1969:166), are a great gift to the African society. They acquire their knowledge by training, dreams from ancestors, revelations from the gods, natural means (family inheritance), and the spirits of the living dead granting directions, either intuitively or from the gods. Even though some people recognise their knowledge in the use of herbs as a gift from God, others ascribe the influence of their herbal medicines to spirit beings, hence overemphasise the supernatural aspects of the use of herbs (Amanze, 2002:29; cf. Phiri, 2009:100). As people who seek the wellbeing of humans, medicine men/women usually use different forms of plant material, such as herbs, leaves, roots, fruit, bark and grasses, or objects like minerals, powder, dead insects, bones, feathers, shells, eggs, or excreta of animals to facilitate/mediate healing in people (Kenan, 1997:34; Kamotho, 2022:3), and provide a remedy for diseases that affect the community (Mbiti, 1969:170). Medicine men/women are also consulted on the causes of disease and other forms of suffering (Amanze, 2002:29; cf. Phiri, 2009:100). Some, though not all medicine men/women, use magico-religious practices in their performances. Every traditional priest is usually also an herbalist, but not all herbalists are necessarily priests (Ampadu, 2019:77). Considering the above, medicine men/women are often referred to as traditional doctors (Kamotho, 2022:3).

The practice of medicine by native/witch doctors<sup>86</sup>, diviners<sup>87</sup>, and traditional birth attendants<sup>88</sup> in Africa is widespread (Kenan, 1997:33). The African traditionalist believes that

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<sup>86</sup> A native doctor is differently referred to as a witch doctor. He/she uses supernatural powers in curing diseases and controlling nature and spirits.



good health is acquired when one conforms to societal values, traditional norms and beliefs. All illnesses are therefore believed to have some spiritual basis that may be attributed to evil forces which require some spiritual remedy. The practice of medicine is therefore an important source of help to Africans, with medicine men dotted in all villages, towns, and cities. The African traditionalist also wishes to know why some sicknesses are repetitive in their family and will not accept such illnesses as merely genetic or coincidental, but at least, or rather, will call it a spell by the gods and would want that spell cast out by medicine men/women. This practice of illness, health, and medicine also affects the post-conversion practices of people (Gyekye, 1996:4-6; Larbi, 2002b:92-98).

In the emerging neo-prophetic circles, some of the neo-prophets sell various elements to their proponents like anointing oil, cooked food, cloths, anointed water, etc., which are believed to provide therapeutic healing to adherents and ward off evil forces that may be behind any ailment.

### **2.5.3 Rites, Rituals, and Ceremonies**

Several religious rites, social practices, rituals, and ceremonies are performed as a means by which the traditional African communicates with the cosmic mystical and spiritual world (Phiri, 2009:103). All the aforementioned procedures are subject to laws and norms that must be adhered to religiously and strictly. As human practices, sometimes, expectations may not be met. To many ATR adherents, however, when their expectations are not met, then impliedly, something might have gone wrong. Thus, when things do not go right, there must be a reason, which calls for a search for reconciliation, restoration, and making peace (Turaki, 2000:7). It is believed that in ATR, when the taboos are committed, the gods are offended, and this calls for reconciliation. This view has again been imported into the NPCs where in the neo-prophetic churches and prophets tend to blame their congregants when things go wrong in their lives.

According to the African traditionalist, therefore, when one's relationship with the spirit world is strained, one is required to initiate the process of restoring harmony and fellowship. Turaki (2000:7; cf. Steyn, 1990) also opines that when things go contrary to expectation, cosmic and spiritual harmony are restored specifically through sacrifices,

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<sup>87</sup> Diviners are medicine men in communities who provide divine direction and intervene on behalf of others through mediating in the spirit.

<sup>88</sup> Traditional birth attendants are people who have acquired skills of administering services as midwives in local communities through apprenticeship. They assist pregnant women during childbirth.

offerings, rituals, and the observance of taboos performed by a priest on behalf of an individual (Kamotho, 2022:2). For example, the initiation of the Trokosi<sup>89</sup> amongst the Ewes in south-eastern Ghana may be traced to the offering of virgins to deities in return for services rendered, failure of which would spell a bad omen for the society (Dzansi and Biga, 2014:5; Gadri, 2010:3).

Beyers (2010:7), likewise, emphasises the centrality of rituals for humans. According to him, humans are ritualistic beings, and therefore express their understanding of reality in the form of rites. Rituals are therefore also symbolic actions that define the relationship in which humans stand with the divine, the ancestors, other spiritual beings, other humans, and nature (Beyers, 2010:5). Turaki (1999:8) affirms that rituals are the ‘symbolic consummation between the lived world and the spiritual world’ based, and again, on the understanding that there is no division between the profane and sacred world. In short, rituals are actions of the symbolically expressed human unity with the universe, which Beyers (2010:6) says confirms the consubstantiality of humanity and the universe.

Rituals are of course a part of every religion, and Christians also have rites. Some of these rites are called sacraments, ordinances, or conversion rites, amongst others. In ATR, rites provide a multidimensional understanding of the religion as an expression, ordering and arrangement within the society, which gives structure to life (Beyers, 2010:6-8). The driving forces that keep rites alive, and prevent them from becoming obsolete and extinct, are sometimes called myths.

Myths provide a theoretical background to the meaning of rites through the lens of the reality of past events. Myths are vehicles through which rites are transferred from one generation to the other. Rites are also said to be the vehicle through which humans ascend into the framework of the sacred and the invisible worlds. In ATR, rituals complete with rich symbolism, also provide a dogmatic construct that has been ingrained in the people’s hearts, thus making them very religious (Beyers, 2010:6-8). Depending on their use, ritual functions may also be private or communal, ceremonial, seasonal or fixed. They may be performed during festivals, initiation ceremonies, or whenever the need arises (Turaki, 2000:8).

In ATR, special ceremonies exist during which rites are performed for the sake of individuals or communities as a whole. During such communal ceremonies, special sacrifices may be made to reverse the bad consequences of some taboos that were broken by members

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<sup>89</sup> Trokosi is an age-old traditional practice of surrendering virgins to deities in honour of a promise to service rendered. ‘Trokosi’ comes from two Eve names ‘Tro’ meaning deity, and ‘Kosi’ meaning slave.

of the community. Rituals are also performed to appease the gods and divinities. According to Kamotho (2022:3), Africans who convert to other religions are expected to observe their customary and traditional practices in a syncretic way, so they do not suffer at the hands of their ancestors and community gods.

Rituals and rites have become an emerging phenomenon in the neo-prophetic and Pentecostal circles. Some of these rituals, such as bathing people in the church, pouring libations in church, prescribing the avoidance of eating some foods, avoiding speaking to people who may be against one's progress, sprinkling holy water or anointing water in one's office to ward off evil spirits, etc., as would be discussed later in chapter five of this thesis, are prescribed by the neo-prophet and sometimes administered by the neo-prophet.

## **2.6 Prayer in African Traditional Religion**

African traditional prayer, worship and sacrifices are the bedrock of traditional religiosity. They form the basis of ATR Spirituality. Since this research postulates that emerging neo-prophetic prayers are in some ways an inculturation of African traditional practices, this section explores the nature and practice of African traditional prayer and worship.

Worship may be defined as reverence for, or veneration expressed in appropriate acts, rites, or ceremonies (Idowu, 1973:191) toward a supernatural divine being (Kenan, 1997:38). Mbiti (1975:54), also mentions that worship is a means of renewing contact between people and a Supreme Being, the visible and the invisible worlds, to keep alive the contact between the two. As such, worship forms part of every religion, and no religion is without worship.

Since Africans live in a sacramental universe in which the physical is the vehicle for the spiritual, traditional Africans offer prayer to a variety of spirits, and as an obligation to the communal aspect of life (Kamotho, 2022:3). Prayer is a key element of ATR as an expression of life, religion, and faith (Mbiti, 1969:60). As a means of communicating with the spirit world, formal and informal arrangements such as sacrifices, pilgrimages, divinatory rites, ceremonial rituals, and sacred observances are put in place as a means of prayer (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:6).

For the African traditionalist, prayer goes beyond the oral or religious rites of humankind, as it also refers to the essential religious disposition of an individual. Prayer, thereby, extends beyond the verbal, material, and corporal expression of worship to include instrumental and sacramental rites as well as expressive and instructional features (Mbiti, 1969:55-69). One way of explaining expressions of African traditional religious prayer is

with reference to the fact that they fall under certain types of rites and rituals including instrumental rites, sacramental rites, appellations, oral rites and transactional rites and sacrifices<sup>90</sup>. These prayers, rituals, and sacrifices as discussed in the following sections, are bridges through which the spiritual and human worlds are connected (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:56).

As would be discussed later in Chapters 5 and 6 of this research, these prayer and worship practices have a vehicle that is being used by neo-prophetic churches. Again, these prayer practices have similarities with the African Pentecostal prayer. Some aspects of ATR prayer and worship are discussed in sections 2.6.1 to 2.6.7 below:

### **2.6.1 Instrumental Rites**

Systems of rituals, rites, ceremonies, and festivals performed at sacred sites, artefacts, and shrines forms part of the instrumental rites practised in ATR (Mbiti,1991:22-28). ATR is practised through art, music, and dance (according to Mbiti,1991:22-24) and is passed down the generations with the use of proverbs, riddles, wise sayings, myths, tales, beliefs, and conventions.

As indicated earlier<sup>91</sup>, with a certain spiritual fortitude, these ideas and practices have infiltrated most Africans' lives to some extent, if not all of them, for generations, thus earning Mbiti's (1991:1) now familiar dictum: "the Africans are notoriously religious, with religion permeating into all departments of one's life so fully that it is not easy or possible to isolate it." African cultures are also known to be permeated with music and its members are highly appreciative of and responsive to music. Dancing, and the art of loudly playing the drums during festive occasions are part of the cultural disposition of most Africans. So important to this study is that the drums are not just played as entertainment, but as appellations to the gods. The sound of each drumbeat has a distinct meaning and traditionalists can interpret each drumbeat (Mbiti, 1975:55). As such, the sound of drumbeats constitutes a rite of prayer to the gods (Dosty, 2011).<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Sacrifices as prayers deserve special attention and a more detailed discussion of this will be given in section 2.5 below.

<sup>91</sup> Chapter 1, Section 1.9.2

<sup>92</sup> Andy Dosty showed on his Facebook link how African traditional rain makers allegedly stopped the rains during a traditional activity in Kumasi. On 21<sup>st</sup> August 2021, during the funeral of a deceased woman in Kumasi, the rains set in. The traditionalist in the midst of drumming and dancing, decided to stop the rain (Dosty, 2011), which eventually after 20 minutes of drumming and dancing, stopped.

Observably, drumming is directly associated with dancing. Once there are drumbeats (often specially trained), males and females of various ages step out to dance to the tune of these songs as prayer and praise to the gods. Each step of dance and its associated gestures also have significant meanings in relation to rites to the gods. Drumming and dancing are usually associated with festive occasions in the life of the family, community, or shrine according to their traditional calendar.

The activities of the *Ɔkɔmfo*<sup>93</sup> for instance, are deeply influenced by music. They usually require an emotionally conducive atmosphere of music, drumming and dancing for sustaining a ritual occasion and to access the supernatural. Within the Ga community of Accra, Asamoah-Gyadu (2013a:64) states that the nature of the dance of the *wɔyei*<sup>94</sup> would usually inform adherents which deity is at work. Undoubtedly, many divinities like their proponents are deeply affected by music and dance. Ritual music is therefore the most appropriate medium through which the gods descend to the people, possess the priests/priestesses, and transmit the required messages through their mediums. It is therefore not surprising that Johnson Agyemang-Baduh (2021:1-2) postulates that the root of drumming, dancing, and singing in ATR is traceable to traditional fetishism.

Each deity in the traditional African society has a traditional fetish priest or priestess (Ampadu, 2019:72). These priests and priestesses are selected, sometimes by the deities through spiritual possession (Onyinah 2002:207)<sup>95</sup> to oversee the gods. At other times, priests and priestesses may be selected by traditional rulers or other traditional priests to undergo training. Children born to these priests and priestesses also are automatically enrolled for training as a next generation of priests or priestesses. They are trained to lead worship and prayer, to officiate sacrifices and to perform certain rituals such as during sacramental rites (Ampadu, 2019:72-76).

As respected and revered members of the society, traditional priests/priestesses mediate between members of the society and the deities to which they communicate the community's prayers and petitions (Sarpong, 1974:19). These priests and priestesses also receive coded responses from the gods to the prayer requests of the petitioners. These

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<sup>93</sup> The *Ɔkɔmfo* is the medium through which the physical and spiritual worlds communicate. (S)he is believed to be vested so much power for seeing and mediating the spiritual world. the word '*Ɔkɔmfo*' comes from two words: '*Kɔm*' meaning hunger, and '*fo*' meaning person.

<sup>94</sup> See next page. They are mouthpieces of the gods. They are trained traditional priests/priestesses usually possessed by the gods and then deliver messages from the gods.

<sup>95</sup> Spiritual possession is where the human senses and spiritual senses of an individual have been taken over by an unknown spirit (see Onyinah 2002:207).

responses are usually in the form of incomprehensible prophetic utterances<sup>96</sup> accompanied by loud traditional drumming, singing, and dancing.

During these events, the gods possess these priests and priestesses in order to communicate the prayer responses to adherents. In fact, so central is dancing, drumming, and singing, that for the presence of the gods to be felt, the priests and priestesses are possessed via it (singing, dancing, drumming), while the adherents who have gathered will be singing in unison and chorus with the trained priests/priestesses. As a practice, when these priests and priestesses are possessed, the responses they receive by the spirit are audible, but incomprehensible in terms of the languages used, which must, in turn, be interpreted by (another) particular priest of the gods.

In Ga traditional society, priests are also attached to the service of the gods. Usually, these are women known as *agbayei*<sup>97</sup>, *dzranɔyei* and *wɔyei* (singular *Wɔyoo*). The *wɔyei* are the mouthpieces of the gods. They are the mediums who from time to time, are ‘entered into’ (possessed by the gods), and then deliver a message from the gods (Field, 1937:8). In the Ga tradition, the *wɔyei* are passive instruments of the gods who carry no authority except when possessed by the gods. The *Wulomo*, who is the high priest of the gods among the Gas, is the most authoritative person in the Ga tradition, even more so than the community’s chief. Usually, the priest himself is never possessed; only a *wɔyoo* can be possessed by the gods.

According to an exposition given by Rev. Agyemang-Baduh (2021:1-2)<sup>98</sup>, African traditional songs are full of choruses and rhythmic drumming. The songs usually have very short notes with repetitive rhythms and adherents will easily spontaneously jump up into singing and dancing once the drumbeat starts.

In short, ATRs also pray through instrumentation, songs, drumming, and dancing to communicate to the gods and for possession by the deities. Greetings, blessings, salutations, and farewells are also said in the form of prayers. In ATR, just as in Christianity the lesser is blessed by the greater (Heb 7:7). Some people may be petitioned to pray on behalf of somebody. These include priests, rainmakers, chiefs, medicine men and medicine women to whom people usually go for assistance (Ray, 1976:57) since they believe these people are more powerful than they are, and closer to the gods than the adherents are.

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<sup>96</sup> These are utterances that are exclusively understood by only the traditional priest but not to other people present.

<sup>97</sup> Meaning women of the gods.

<sup>98</sup> Rev Johnson Agyemang Baduh is a retired minister of The Church of Pentecost.

As would be discussed later, the role of priests/priestesses as mediators is an African traditional worldview that seems to have permeated African neo-prophetism through the dispensation of neo-prophets. Again, it must be emphasised that singing, drumming, and dancing associated with ATR have been an important aspect of Pentecostal and indeed neo-Pentecostal worship as discussed in section 2.8, and Chapter 5.

### 2.6.2 Sacramental Rites

According to ATR, humans inhabit a cosmological context in which the spiritual directly affects the physical. Consequently, when the protection of the good spirits is lost (usually as a result of a wicked or sacrilegious act committed against them), epidemics, diseases, calamities, famine or at least low agricultural output ensue (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013b:54). Sacramental ceremonies are one of the most traditional ways of reaching the gods through prayer for pacification in such instances.

Moreover, religious events or rituals viewed as sources of receiving goodness or grace from the gods are known as sacramental rites, and are carried out through libation, ritual meals, and sometimes sacramental sacrifices. Libation, though done outwardly, expresses the close communication between humanity and divinity, and humanity and the ancestors. With regard to the latter, through libations, prayers are directed via the ancestors, and thus ultimately to God (Ampadu, 2019:56). In libations, food, various kinds of drinks, water or a whole meal may be used. Since ancestors who were once alive are believed to continue to live the same life in their new world, they require food and drinks to sustain their new (spiritual) state of existence (Ampadu, 2019:56-57). So, these are served the gods and ancestors as libation at individual, family, clan or community level.

Again, during festive occasions, special meals (often with an egg<sup>99</sup>) are prepared and placed at ritual domes<sup>100</sup>, or sometimes along the path to one's house for the ancestors and ultimately, the gods to access. When placing these foods there, the persons involved would pray out to the gods concerning their wish<sup>101</sup> as the food is being placed. During festive occasions, the traditional chief, priest, or priestess may take a drink and pour a libation to the ground and utter or chant a prayer for the peace, health, and wellbeing of the whole community or against a purported evil. During such festivities, when people are about to eat,

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<sup>99</sup> It is believed that the favourite food of the spirits of the dead is eggs. This suggests a reason why eggs are used for curses, as the gods are believed to act faster when eggs are used.

<sup>100</sup> These are specially prepared clay mounds where the local or community gods are kept.

<sup>101</sup> The food is believed to attract the gods and then establish the prayer of the individual.

they may throw the first morsel of food or pour a sip of drink to the ground and say, ‘this is for the gods, for the peace, health, and prosperity of the land’. In short, libations are physical sacramental expressions, mediating spiritual meaning, communicating the intent of adherents to the gods and obtaining their favour.

As indicated in section 2.6.1 above, even though prayer in ATR may be informal, formal prayers are required to reverse calamities, celebrate festivals, and invoke the presence of the ancestors. These prayers must be done during community gatherings and the sacramental rites offered by a speciality. These prayers can only be offered by specialists and trained priests because the realms of the transcendent is accessible to only an exclusive few who have special powers to apprehend the non-sensory world (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a). This undoubtedly has been the reason for the rise of the enculturated prayer giants, prayer outsourcing, and prayer market to be discussed in section 5.6 of this thesis.

As in the case of instrumental rites, sacramental rites too are associated with ceremonies and festivals at specific times/during specific events, notably at childbirth, the naming of children, circumcision and initiation ceremonies, marriage ceremonies, funerals, during harvest periods, when praying for rains, et cetera (Ampadu, 2019:57). These ceremonies, therefore, also mark phases in the lives of individuals or communities, ensuring divine mercies, favour and blessings (Mbiti, 1975:15-20).

### **2.6.3 Oral Rites and Appellation**

In ATR, oral rites may take many forms. They may be expressed through verbal incantations, priestly petitions, congregational prayers, proverbs, riddles, or wise sayings. According to Aylward Shorter (1975:61-62), African traditional oral prayers predominantly fall into two categories: praise poems and litany prayers. It is worth noting that whilst sacramental rites are accompanied by food, sacrifice of an animal or an item, oral rites are usually devoid of these; they are usually appellations that accompany oral prayers.

Praise poems are likewise prayers in the form of recitals and appellations made to the Supreme Being to celebrate and eulogise that being. Notably, African traditionalists believe that praise poems may summon and persuade the Supreme Being or his deities to be present during their worship gatherings, thus accelerating responses to their prayers. Praise poems are eulogies, panegyrics, or hymns about nature. These prayers are lengthy, poetic recitals concerned with thanksgiving, and containing extended invocations with detailed narratives of a set of circumstances that include the invocations or petitions.



The second type of oral appellation in African traditional prayers is litany prayers. Litany prayers in ATR may be typified as ‘call and response prayers’. During these prayers, the leader invokes or intercedes with the community, making a formal request on behalf of the town folks. Sometimes the congregation repeats the invocation after the priest, or the latter may request that some other statements/utterances are made in response. In the Ga traditional religion, for example, the common religious prayer by worshippers is found in Field (1937:13). This is one of the prayers to which the congregation responds, by following the priest, who is reciting it:

Awo! Awo! Awo!  
 Age, Ei  
 Bleku tfo  
 Enam, enam  
 Esu, esu  
 Manɔ manyea  
 Adzban kpɔtɔ.

Translated, this means:

Exalt! Exalt! Exalt!  
 Ho Priestly people!  
 Let Bleku speak [Bleku is the name of a god - JTB]  
 Meat, meat  
 Water, water  
 Let blessings abound!  
 With an abundance of food.

The above litany prayer starts with an appellation to the gods, with the congregation responding ‘Yao’ (an affirmation). This is then followed by a call by the priest in charge of the gods to let the gods speak. The priest then leads the congregation to petition the gods to invoke abundant meat, food, and water, and thereafter bless the masses with food and prosperity.

Another litany prayer in the Ga region is as follows:

Two, Tswa, Tswa, omanyaba!  
 The congregation responds: Yao!

Wogbeikome Ni Sakumaɔ edzo  
The congregation responds: Yao!

Akpitiakɔ edzo!  
Otfiama edzo!  
The congregation responds: Yao

Awudu Sakaraka edzo!  
Ata Nyonmɔ!  
Tfwa Tfwa Tfwa Manye aba!  
Congregation responds Yao!

Translated, this means:

Hail, hail, hail. Let happiness come!  
Response Yes, we claim!

Are our voices one!  
Let the grandfather (Sakuma) give peace!  
Response Yes, we claim!

Let the Akpitiakɔ (name of a local deity) give peace!  
Let Otfiama (name of a local deity) give peace!  
Response Yes, we claim!

Let Awudu (name of a local deity) the almighty give peace!  
Let the father of rain-god give peace!  
Response Yes, we claim!  
Hail, hail, hail. let happiness come! (Field, 1937:14)

As indicated above, in all other Ga litany prayers, the adherents list all their prayers, usually start with appellations to the gods, and then name their prayers one by one, followed by the pouring of libation, drumming and dancing. The prayers are then followed by a call by the leader and a response by the worshippers.

During a typical litany prayer, two types of audience are distinguished, namely the unseen, and the seen worlds. With the power to mediate between the natural and supernatural, eyes to see the unseen world, the traditional chief is usually the one mandated to undertake the prayer of libation on behalf of his community during festivals and times of community crises. As discussed in the sections 2.6.4 and 2.6.5, to apprehend the exact cause of a calamity or disaster, the mediums or *Akɔmfo* have the power to do that (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:64).

#### **2.6.4 Transactional Ritual Prayers**

Whereas sacramental rites are initiated for grace, kindness and favour involving food directly given by the worshipper without the presence of a deity or priest, oral rites are ceremonial activities during community festivals associated with drumming and dancing with the pouring of libation at a community durbar ground or town square. Oral rites are praise poems, especially giving thanks to the gods after a full-year cycle or a harvest or celebrating victory over enemies.

Transactional Ritual prayers in ATR, on the other hand, take the form of invocation, divinatory consultations, and therapeutic rites. These prayers are mediated for the purpose of interaction with the gods and possibly exchange of one's destiny or turn around a bad omen for a good done. These prayers are usually spoken, short in length, and in the form of petitions and accompanying ritual actions (Mbiti, 1969:61-62). Ritual prayers are often restricted to special locations. These locations include sacred places of worship, shrines, sacred groves, hilltops, riversides, rocks, caves, hills, mountains, certain trees, rivers, lakes or streams (Mbiti, 1975:15-20). It is believed that in these places are concentrations of the gods who would listen to one's prayer very quickly. In transactional prayers, religious objects and special religious animals are often used. Transactional rituals are used for atonement, mediations, substitutionary rites, reconciliation, redemption or cleansing (Ampadu, 2019:101).

A typical example of transactional prayer is called purification rites, performed during the installation of traditional rulers. The rite is usually associated with sacrificing an animal without blemish at stool room<sup>102</sup> with the blood smeared over the installed person for

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<sup>102</sup> A stool room is a place where stools belonging to ancestors have been kept. They are stools that were sat on by the people who were previously living but have departed to the dead. These stools are not supposed to be used by anyone else.

cleansing and initiation into their new office. This is often followed by other rituals, singing and prayers to the gods for the traditional ruler. Summarily curtailed, these purification rites are transnational in nature, and are the source of mediation and intercession for the people. Through the sacrifices of the bull, ram, and other animals to the gods and the performance of other rituals, the gods are petitioned to cleanse the ruler for acceptance in the spirit realms, protect the ruler who is being installed and protect the people he is going to rule over with divine favour.

Transactional prayers are also offered during annual religious ceremonies (Field, 1937:43-44) for cleansing purposes to appease the gods and ask for mercy. In the Ga traditional setting, during the *Blɔ ehe dzu* (the washing of white brooms<sup>103</sup>), a special ceremony associated with the corn planting towards the *homowo* festival, transactional rituals are performed as part of the occasion. During this occasion, the *wulomei* (priests) of all the gods gather together with the *woyei*, *amlakui* (military captains), and other religious officials, with pregnant women in the town and proceed to the corn planting fields. The farm is inspected three weeks after the corn has germinated. If the growth is healthy and robust, it means the gods intend the people to prosper.

If the growth is, however, sickly and stunted, then extra sacrifices and prayers must be offered (Field, 1937:42-43). During these festivities associated with the *homowo* festival, the *La Kpa* priest (chief priest) begins by taking a hoe, newly decorated with red strips of cloth and a pair of white strips of cloth, and while dancing, making hoeing movements in the air from the *La Kipa*'s sacred tree to the Osabu tree<sup>104</sup>, and would be chanting: '*Gba yepɔtnepo yo*', a phrase no one understands. This chanting of prayers is associated with hoeing in the air being moved forward and back in a continuous action (Field, 1937:44).

For worshippers in Kpong, three weeks after *homowo* comes the ceremony of Ocado, during which a sheep is sacrificed in the stool house. A big brass pan is also filled with water and herbs, from which everyone in the community must come to take water for bathing. Members of the community who are too sick to go themselves are carried there or have water taken to them. Everyone who comes to scoop the water would also receive a vertical white strip of blessing on the wrist, joints, and forehead. A week after this activity, everyone is expected to go back to the pool again to scoop a handful of mud to be used to smear all windows and door frames in the house whilst saying prayerfully:

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<sup>103</sup> These are whitewashed brooms believed to have power to ward off evil spirits.

<sup>104</sup> Kpone is a community in Accra, part of the Ga-Dangbe community.

*Kedzi fade mi na me* (If it is good luck I am getting now)

*wɔ se afi hu eba nina neke nonn* (May the year overtake me in the same way)

*Gblaa, gblaa ablaa* (Yes, yes, yes)

The sick would say:

*Wɔ se afi eba nina mi ke hewale!*

*(May the following year overtake us with health!)*

It is common during transactional ritual prayers in ATR that the actions of the priest, too, are copied and replicated by the worshippers in rhythmic order. Worshippers therefore mimic the chanting, rituals, prayers, songs, gestures, movements, and activities of prayer together. For example, sometimes during transitional ritual prayers, priests take a broom and sweep the air, symbolising sweeping away the activities of the evil spirits. This action is then repeated by the congregants. At other times after recitals, the priests take a cutlass and swing it through the air, symbolising the destruction of the evil acts of an enemy. During such prayers, the congregants also repeat these actions of the priests in the same sequence.

Looking forward, all or some of the actions, activities, and forms of ATR prayer may potentially have had some effect on Ghanaian Pentecostal Spirituality and practices of prayer and will sound very familiar. This possibility will be discussed in detail in section 2.7 below and again and especially in sections 5.2 and 5.3 of this study.

## **2.7 Sacrifice and Offerings as Prayer in African Traditional Religion**

As observed so far, invocations with loud instrumental rites accompanying them make up the form of worship and liturgical approach in ATR. The above is associated with the pouring of libations and appellations purported to summon the divine being to attend the worship. In ATR, places of worship range from those usually associated with some sort of natural/physical structure or phenomena such as rocks, rivers, and groves of trees to other elaborate structures (Ampadu, 2019:99). Together with libations, sacrifices and offerings are the primary liturgical means of mediating worship, expelling evil and restoring life, health, and wealth to society (Mbiti, 1975:60).

In ATR, offerings are not given under compulsion, but to obtain favour from the gods, while sacrifices are usually a demand to appease the gods and restore fellowship. Sacrifices are the most common acts of worship in ATR. A sacrifice must fulfil some basic requirements regarding the materials to be sacrificed, the method to be used for the sacrifice,

its place, its occasion, the recipient of the sacrifice, and its intention (Kenan, 1997:40). Traditionally, sacrifices may be in the form of cash or material; and the use of a living being may not necessarily be a requirement, unlike in the common understanding of sacrifices that usually demand something living or cash to acquire something living. Ceremonial sacrifices are usually given to spirits and gods with the expectation that they will return the favour by bestowing blessings on the worshipper. Depending on the type of sacrifice, as a practice in ATR, the one bringing the sacrifice may also be required to participate in the consumption of the sacrifice for the purpose of reaffirming communal bonds.

Whereas Valerie (1985:62) attempts to theorise sacrifice from the Platonic gift dimension, other scholars approach sacrifices from a homage perspective. Still, others (Awolalu, 1979:26-28; Abiodun:3-4, 2006; Mokhoathi, 2016:10) understand sacrifice from a so-called abnegation progressive spiritualisation dimension (Kenan, 1997:51). Francis Arinze (1961:31, 83) subscribes to Smith's theory according to which a sacrifice establishes a link between the sacrificed and the 'sacrificer', and thereby establishing or confirming a binding relationship between community members, and a deity to whom the sacrifice is brought. According to Kenan (1997:41), Smith's theory also refers to sacrifice as a totemic practice that incubates ritual killing and eating – sometimes in respect of forbidden animals (Arinze, 1961:83). In comparison, sacrifices involving killing an animal, offering presents, foodstuffs, other items, or live animals as a gift to the deity is understood to be a sign of appreciation or request for prayer. For a sacrifice of petition and thanksgiving, physical defects may make the offering unacceptable. The victim should, therefore, be clean and fit without incision, scratch, break, defective parts, or other physical defects. For most societies, white is the preferred colour as a sign of ritual purity. A pure black animal may however be required for the sacrificial prayer (Kenan, 1997:45).

Moreover, the timing of sacrifices is important and regular sacrifices are timed according to the astronomical calendar or vegetation year; thus, sacrifices may be daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly, and especially during festivals. Along with life's milestones and stages such as delivery, naming, puberty, marriage, and death, sacrifices are frequently made. Other great sacrifices are made by the community at certain times such as during a tragedy, a disaster, a disease, a drought, or other difficult socioeconomic circumstances (Ampadu, 2019:98; Mbiti, 1975:60).

In ATR worldview, it is believed that "humans strive to preserve the 'ontological order' between themselves, the divine, spirit beings, the deceased, and the living" (According to Mbiti 1975:69). Sacrifices are, therefore, a means to restore ontological balance resulting

from misfortune and suffering and to renew contacts between God and humans, between spirits and humans, and between the spirit and the physical worlds; and sacrifices restore and maintain fellowship and communication between these worlds (Kenan, 1997:47-48).

Based on traditional values, sacrifices used as worship concern not only the method of sacrifice, but gestures, actions and expressions used during the process. To mediate on behalf of the one bringing the offering or sacrifice, materials should be poured out if they are fluid, destroyed if they are solid, or killed if they are a living animal. In the case of the animal, the pouring of the blood or bleeding of the victim is the point of mediating on behalf of the offerer.

Sacrifices in ATR are always purposeful. Sacrifices are not offered for just rituality, and there is always some reason/s behind them. This is why they may be brought for praise, thanksgiving, supplication, and expiation (Kenan, 1997:47). It is also because of these four reasons behind sacrifices that they may also be understood as prayer in ATR.

The sacrifice of thanksgiving is also offered when the gods are believed to have delivered an individual or a community from sickness, an epidemic, or evil or malevolent spirits. For the purpose of thanksgiving, the sacrifice is therefore used as an oblation, as a gift to show appreciation to the gods, and to initiate a relationship (Kenan, 1997:47).

Sacrifices of supplication serve as petitions, appeals or for submitting a request. When an individual is barren for instance, or suffers from repetitive miscarriages, or when a couple's children repeatedly die in infancy, or in cases of repetitive misfortune, a sacrifice of supplication serves as prayers for mediatorial or redemptive purposes. In other words, sacrifices may then be brought to the deities as prayers for the gods to mediate and intercede on behalf of a victim for favour and the general good.

Expiation sacrifices are prayers for reconciliation, redemption, cleansing, or salvation of an individual or community. These are used as pacification rites or cleansing rites when an individual or a community commits a taboo, offends the gods, or acts contrary to societal norms. These sacrifices are used to petition the gods for mercy and to ward off any adverse effects, social calamities, and uncontrollable spells, resulting from impurification or transgressions.

Based on the above explications, sacrifices are rites performed as prayers in ATR to communicate with the deities and the Supreme Being. This is understandable, given the definition of prayer as communication. Sacrifices communicate a thought, intent, invocation, or petition from the visible world to the invisible world. In ATR, generally, adherents turn to God during times of trouble with sacrifices as a prayer to restore peace and happiness, but

also restore a sense of security (Kenan, 1997:39-41). During such trouble and distress, adherents believe that life could deteriorate if no sacrificial prayers are offered to restore religious harmony between the visible and invisible worlds.

In sum, sacrifices are therefore religious acts through consecrated victims by the community at large. As a form of prayer, conditions are placed on the materials to be used for the sacrifice.

## **2.8 A Theological Evaluation of African Traditional Religious Spirituality**

According to Mbiti (1980:74), Africans take no occurrence in life for granted since they share a cosmological worldview densely filled with spirit beings, spirits, and the living dead. As a result, most Africans, according to Mbiti (1980b:74), are thought to have a great grasp and insight into ‘spiritual realities’. These Africans continuously connect with the supernatural realm through sacrifices, rituals, and prayer because they are acutely aware of the cosmological omnipresence of the spirits, for it is believed nowhere on earth is unoccupied by spirit beings (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013b:53).

The ancient African belief is that gods, spirits, and other invisible powers, including bad spirits and witches, may act for or against humans (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013b:53). As a result, anything bad could be attributed to the dominant evil forces. According to Ampadu (2019: 131-146), this has resulted in a plethora of what he calls superstitions as individuals face the challenge and terror of the unknown, as well as fatalism’s inevitable effect. As a result, people will go to great lengths to find answers to life’s bad challenges, with some Christians succumbing to some type of syncretism in the process (Ampadu, 2019:131-146) since they fail to appreciate the sovereignty of God.

The latter syncretism is frequently negative, but it can also be a “positive syncretism” in which a happy life, good health, plentiful life, successful childbirth, and long life are viewed as divine blessings. For example, the Akan socio-cultural idea of *Akwankyerε*, spiritual direction, arose from a yearning for favours from the gods. An inquiry, *Abisa*, is also used to enquire about the bad occurrences of life. This concept has crept into the neo-prophetic Christian dimension precisely because people want to know what is causing the tragedies and misfortunes that befall them. As aforementioned, some African Christians are said also to exist in two worlds: during the transitional stages of life (birth, puberty, marriage, or death), the traditional rules apply; however, when evil or misfortune strikes (that are difficult to unravel and thus perceived to be associated with magic or curses), the church is sometimes sought after for intervention.



Since the African Pentecostal also lives or had grown up in a society of spiritual dualisms (Nel, 2019a:1), it is easy for a syncretic worldview to crystallise, where some members of a church may be members only for benefits (Ampadu, 2019:153). Such members may not be fellowshipping for genuine fellowship (Ampadu, 2019:153) but for protection from fear and superficial Spirituality. This may explain why many people in Ghana distrust Christians' sincerity, even though the majority of Ghanaians themselves claim to be Christians. The realities of underdevelopment, frequently owing to corruption and other types of social suffering, appear to paint a different picture. Ghanaian Christians are sometimes seen as and often see themselves as very 'spiritual', as they establish churches, attend Christian-inspired programmes, and some hold high-profile positions in churches. Paradoxically, they are accused of being aggressive, greedy, or corrupt. This is the effect of the dichotomised African worldview of power, affluence, and wealth (cf. Williamson, 1965:158). Pobee (1996:2; see also Ampadu, 2019:151) quotes former Ghanaian Prime Minister (1969-1972) Kofi Abrefa Busia's comments some decades ago that:

As one observes the people's everyday lives and activities, as well as the rites associated with the various stages of life, it is evident that most of the converts' typical routine activities take place outside of Church but in the community.

Asamoah-Gyadu (2013b:52) claims that combining African traditional and Christian worldviews of the experiential reality of spiritual powers has given African Christian initiatives a unique identity (Mbiti, 1990:2). The concept of spiritual powers in Africa has led to the Christian imagination of demons and the devil's cohorts.

It is not strange then, that the *Ɔkɔmfɔ*'s (traditional priest or native doctor) actions, prestige, and roles at Akan traditional shrines are strikingly comparable to those of contemporary neo-prophets (See section 2.6.1 above and 2.9 below). In certain contemporary churches, the latter is also approached for consultation of divinity and spiritual enquiry. Some researchers claim that similar to the dance of fetish priests (*Ɔkɔmfɔ*) at the shrine and to songs inspired by the gods and spirits (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013b:64), the emerging neo-prophets use music and dance as a means of delivering spirit-inspired prophetic declarations and invocations. It is also another characteristic of ATR worship to see priests possessed by the spirit of the gods, thereby giving prophetic declarations (which require a translator) as a means of drawing worshippers and adherents to their services (See section 2.6.1 above); with these services are also associated with the performance of drumming and dancing.

According to scholars such as Adewuya (2012: 253), without a doubt, Pentecostalism has flourished in Ghana and in Africa because its Spirituality is so closely linked to Traditional Spirituality. As will be seen later in this study, this is something that mainline churches and Classical Pentecostal churches seem to recognise today, but that neo-Pentecostals apparently have failed to recognise with some of the newer prayer practices.

According to Wariboko (2017:8), Ghana's Pentecostal message and theological approach are essentially about empowerment based on an African cosmological worldview (Wariboko, 2017:8). These churches claim to be able to provide their adherents the power to defeat evil. Noticeably, Pentecostal churches' actions have had a sublime influence with a focus on the higher power of the Holy Spirit, who can overcome old ideas of demons and demonic forces (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013b:53). Anderson (1991) asserts that it is hard to distinguish between the power of the Holy Spirit and the force of traditional African ideas, citing the challenge of Pentecostals expressing the Holy Spirit as power (c.f. also, Sakupapa, 2012:423). As a traditional Pentecostal, I have attended countless church services where the Holy Spirit is only a 'sloganed' power or a force. During the Holy Spirit's indwelling or prayer for the charismata, some pastors or elders would exclaim, 'Holy Spirit!' and the congregation would answer, "Power, Power, Power!" (For similar experiences see Kalu, 2008:186, c.f. Sakupapa, 2012:423). The Holy Spirit, according to the Classical Pentecostal, is not a force but a being (Walker, 2017:97), and a part of the triune God, necessary for communicating the mind of God to people (Sakupapa, 2012:424).

Through the influence of an appropriated gospel, modified cultural sensibilities and contextualised practices, Wariboko (2017:6) holds that "ATR has made Pentecostalism an African religion that has domesticated the African form of Spirituality". The freedom to own one's well-being as either past or present salvation is from an old African mentality. The African therefore owned their wellbeing as key indicator of their status and acceptance in the society, and everything must be done to preserve and keep this one's affluence and strive for more influence in the society. As a result, some African Pentecostal groups embrace salvation as a means of quickly changing one's fortunes (Mbiti, 1974:113, cf. Sakupapa, 2012:424). One of Pentecostal Christianity's major flaws in Ghana is how it disciples and roots its adherents according to the African idea of religion, thus resulting in 'kwashiorkor'<sup>105</sup> Christians'. The new convert is frequently prayed for in order to acquire Holy Spirit baptism for spiritual strength, after which he or she is introduced to prayer; and the discipleship-based

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<sup>105</sup> 'Kwashiorkor' is the Akan word for malnutrition or unbalanced growth.

model intended to ground the individual in the fruit of the Holy Spirit and spiritual formation fails to continue.

## **2.9 Effect of Traditional African Spirituality on Pentecostal Spirituality**

It is crucial to highlight that the principles of traditional Pentecostalism in Ghana are intricately tied to those of the African Initiated Churches. When Classical Pentecostalism (indigenous perspective) arrived, it “took off on the wheels” of Faith Tabernacle Church (FTC)<sup>106</sup> (Osinulu, 2017:5). Through the local initiative of Peter Anim, he started a prayer group called the Unity Prayer Group as discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.5.11 (Quayesi-Amakye, 2015c:92; White, 2019:2). The characteristics that triggered Classical Pentecostalism’s African initiated root would inevitably have a formative effect on its evolving characteristics and Spirituality, just as the substructure of every building determines the nature of the superstructure, and the root of every tree determines the type of stem, and eventually, the quality of the productivity of the plant.

The Spirituality of Ghanaian Pentecostalism may have been affected both positively and negatively by the followers’ worldviews, the cultural milieu, and their hunger and desire for spiritual things. As stated in the examination of Pentecostalism’s history (cf. Anderson, 2010:3), it is possible that Poirier and Lewis (2006:6) are correct for claiming that the Pentecostals were more preoccupied with religious experience, miraculous and supernatural manifestations of divine involvement than genuine encounter and transformation. This would not be without ramifications. The above as well as other variables are explored below and will present an understanding of how ATR practices to some degree may have influenced Pentecostal Spirituality. The lens through which these consequences are viewed determines whether the syncretism of traditional African culture in Pentecostalism are beneficial or harmful.

### **2.9.1 Belief in a Dual World of Cosmic Powers**

As indicated earlier, many Africans believe that they live in a dual world where things do not happen by chance. Again, for many Africans, distinguishing between the physical and meta-physical is impossible because they live in a spiritually potent environment with a perspective that every physical occurrence has spiritual consequence/s. The black African is said to live

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<sup>106</sup> FTC is a North American church that reached out through correspondence - using their *Sword of the Spirit* magazines to spread their teaching about divine healing without medication.

in a world full of unresolved questions about the future, current crises, the unknown past, tragedies, sickness, unexplained death, business failure, marriage, and family line challenges. The problem for the black African is that Western science and medicine appear to be unable to respond to a never-ending series of failures and improbable events in life (Hiebert, 1985:44-45; Sharma, 2012:84-85). When confronted with such difficulties, calamities and disasters, most individuals instinctively desire to know what is behind these events and may seek divine advice. For most Africans, a sacred encounter and metaphysical contemplation on the possible causes of these events is a necessity. The belief in these evil forces has injected fear in the life of the African. There is a need to be constantly aware of these malevolent spirits and fight against them.

To overcome the effect of evil in this enchanted world, therefore, there is a need for sacrifices and offerings. These sacrifices cannot be performed by anyone but people who have specially been trained and prepared to see the world of the supernatural. Special processes must be passed through, and sacramental rites must be formed. These ideologies have been ‘positivised’ into the African Pentecostal worldview, hence the need for special prayers, and someone who has special supernatural eyes to see into the spirit world and advise in the line of action to take and to perform special sacrifices to ward off evil forces in one’s world.

Walker (2010:131) believes that prayers remain the vehicle through which these divine experiences and enquiries occur. While acknowledging the existence of demonic forces, Classical Pentecostal groups such as the CoP position Christ as the sovereign and conquering Saviour at the centre of a cosmic conflict in which Christ’s strength exceeds all (Akowuah, 2013:32). Prayer plays a crucial role in many of these Ghanaians’ perceptions of the believer’s ‘cosmic fight’ in order for them to comprehend Christ’s importance as the conquering ‘Supreme Saviour’.

## **2.9.2 Quest for the Miraculous and Pro-Instantaneous Results**

In Chapter 1 (1.7.2) of this thesis, the origins of Ghanaian Pentecostalism were traced back to Peter Newman Anim (1890-1984)<sup>107</sup>. After reading an article in the magazine named “Sword of the Spirit”, Anim had a supernatural healing experience (Quayesi-Amakye, 2015a:93-95; White, 2019:92). Anim is said to have received supernatural healing after praying and fasting on his own (Larbi, 2002:97-98; Yirenkyi-Smart, 2017:83). For Anim, this was proof of the

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<sup>107</sup> See section 1.8.2.

supernatural mediating in the affairs of humanity with immediacy. Anim's faith was thus the result of what he read, and his personal healing witness bolstered this. The issue of healing was especially important to other early African Pentecostals. Wade Harris (c.1860-1929), one of the forefathers of African Pentecostalism, advised his followers not to accept the European worldview that illnesses are caused by germs and viruses, but rather that illnesses are caused by spiritual forces that must be dealt with via prayer (Yirenkyi-Smart, 2017:75). Through the teachings of the Faith Tabernacle Church, Anim was also grounded in Paaharm's Pentecostal ethos of no medication (Hollenweger, 2005:21). His faith would not waver after his experience even throughout his contact with McKeown and the latter's 'anti-no-medication syndrome' views (Osinulu, 2017:12).

Anim's miraculous healing narrative also instilled faith in the other members of the group, and thereby, laying a solid, fundamental belief in divine healing. Through this, Pentecostal theology in Ghana would be driven in future by the belief in miraculous healing and the notion of divine healing. Although supernatural healing is no longer a hard and fast dogma, it remains a major belief among Ghana's Pentecostals of all stripes. In terms of prayer and prayer practices in Ghana, denominations such as the CoP, Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), rising neo-prophetic churches, and even some mainline churches established prayer camps where people might experience the divine power through healing (Buertey, 2017:12-20; Larbi, 2002:86). When church members are unwell, they may phone or see their pastors, or go to prayer centres where they believe they can experience divine healing. This demonstrates that Pentecostals valued prayer as a means of bringing a supernatural remedy to life's issues (Ampong, 2004:10).

In addition, traditional African shrines are sites where people go to get immediate healing and, again, answers to their life's problems. There is no gestation time in the African traditional worldview; everyone's needs must be met immediately when they visit. This backdrop necessitated the need by neo-prophets to demonstrate to Ghanaians that they believe in a God who is larger than local gods, who has a solution to every life's problem, who has authority over invisible forces and who acts magically and instantaneously to demonstrate his (God's) powers (Koduah, 2004:15). Indeed, God is sovereign and all-powerful, but the activities of the neo-prophetic miracles portray the impression that they command God to respond to their prayer requests here and now.

Again, the traditional belief in witchcraft and demons requires that Pentecostals demonstrate that Jesus is more powerful (Leonard, 1985:37) than the community gods. As indicated earlier<sup>108</sup>, Ghanaians were raised to think that they were protected by the community gods from the moment they were born (Wariboko, 2017:10). With the arrival of European Christianity, priests of community gods warned Ghanaians that if they accepted the God of the Europeans, they would lose their protection and be slaughtered by bad spirits. Prophet Wade Harris, on the other hand, challenged the community gods to kill his Christian converts. Curiously, the community gods were unable to kill his own converts, resulting in getting a significant followership. It is imperative to note that every religion's ability to overthrow another faith is contingent on the powers displayed (Wariboko, 2017:10-11).

In light of the now familiar, African worldview described above, African traditionalists have been used to power demonstrated by fetish priests and priestesses with immediate turn around. Converts to Christianity with the above worldview expect such powers to be demonstrated. The neo-prophets, in a bid to provide instant turnarounds, have demonstrated prophetic powers over issues of life. This desire for immediate gratification has led many neo-prophets to establish numerous prayer camps and centres for divinity consultation where instant magical results can be obtained. Some visitors to these prayer camps and centres are unconcerned about the method used, or the source of their strength as long as the problem is solved (quickly).

### **2.9.3 The Drive Toward Supernatural Angelic Experiences**

Within the emerging neo-prophetic circle, their key leader's supernatural and sometimes divine experiences have been said to be at home with ATR practices. These refer to situations where the leader experiences a manifestation of the spirit with possession. As one would usually hear the chief priest or priestess saying 'the spirits are now present and that their presence is heavy with the visit of the gods (Kwateng-Yeboah, 2016:22) so do you hear the neo-prophets speak in their services. Prophetic churches are known for experiences such as angelic visitations, supernatural encounters, and spiritual intuitions in the lives of their prophets, which is passed on as initiation rites for pastors from one generation to the other (Baeta, 2004:1-5).

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<sup>108</sup> See section 1.2.

Gilbert Ablor Lawson<sup>109</sup> was thrown into ecstasy in 1953, and again in 1958 as a result of a reported angelic visitation. During the visitation, Lawson said he was directed by the Holy Spirit to establish a divine healing post at Korle Gonno, where those with varied illnesses would be housed until they were healed. This characteristic became linked to his ministry (Larbi, 2001:374). Brother Lawson had been spotted dancing with his congregation under the power of the spirit since 1954, singing a popular tune called ‘*woo ke anunyam sale*’ (“Thou deserve honour and glory”). This song was allegedly written as a battle cry against spiritualities and forces (Larbi, 2001:376). During his intercessions, Lawson was also directed by the angels to use blessed water and a handkerchief for healing purposes, according to his revelation (Larbi, 2001:374-376). Following Brother Lawson’s spiritual experiences and contacts, he initiated the use of sacred objects, including not just holy handkerchiefs but also holy gardens, holy staffs, and so on (Baeta, 2004:14,46,70). Even though these were activities that were associated with the AICs, these practices have re-emerged in the neo-prophetic churches (Omenyo and Arthur, 2013).

During church services, it is claimed that pneumatic, and on rare occasions, angelic visitations cause encounters that produce reflexes connected with vocal, instrumental, and body movements under the profound influence of angelic and spiritual possession. Clapping of hands, speaking in tongues, slaughtering of the spirit, leaping, jumping, prophesying, and other intense religious phenomena are examples of these (Baeta, 2004:1). The foregoing has frequently led to long prayer services, sometimes spanning several days, while participants wait for angelic visitations to supply gifts to those present. These hypnotic services have attracted a large number of people because they are very dynamic, and the use of music and instrumentation entice people into their fold (Obinim, 2022a).

Furthermore, angelic visitation is prevalent in the services of some Pentecostal and neo-prophetic congregations. One of these congregations is the International God’s Way Church led by Bishop Angel Obinim (Obinim, 2022b). During such visits, members are plunged into fits of rage or euphoria. Angelic visits, miracles, signs, and wonders are said to have been associated with his initial period of calling and prophetic ministration (Afful, 2018). Given the intensity of these encounters, it is not surprising that many people are drawn to such churches as a result of such visitations.

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<sup>109</sup> Gilbert Lawson, also known as Brother Lawson, began his ministry in 1958 under the name ‘The Divine Healer’s Temple’, which was later changed to ‘The Lord is There Temple’, and then to ‘The Divine Healer’s Church’ in 1967 when Lawson realised that the organisation had outgrown its temple status. Initially, he was affiliated with Reverend James McKeown’s Apostolic church.

#### 2.9.4 Belief in Prophetic Figures and Highly Polarised Prophetic Services

Neo-prophetic churches often developed in societies with a highly potent dualistic worldview where the physical and spiritual are linked (Kwarteng-Yeboah, 2016:37; Ampadu, 2019:99-100). In the African traditional worldview, the priest can often gaze into the spirit realm and prophesy about future events as well as reveal past secret events. The neo-prophetic religions have also used this alleged power to look into the spirit realm and deliver remedies to the lives of its followers for their benefit (Larbi, 2001:66). These neo-prophetic churches (Koduah, 2004:30) claim that visions and prophecies received via the leader (Ali, 2015:85) are sufficient to solve all of life's problems. Their prophetic figures are sometimes considered to have extraordinarily 'spiritual antennae' to know things intuitively about individuals. As a result, they may begin to divulge secrets about a person's past, present, and predict their future, sometimes even via palm reading.

Akan Traditional Religion, for example, believes in the existence of a multitude of spirits that militate against the well-being of people. The proponents seek advice concerning all events, particularly unpleasant ones in their lives (Kwarteng-Yeboah, 2016:22,36). Also, the fear of death, witches, the devil and ancestral curses not only make some people spiritualise every occurrence in their lives but also draw them to neo-prophetic ministries for divination (Ali, 2015:84). Some neo-prophets even randomly utter curses and blessings over their members (Aryee, 2018).<sup>110</sup> Those who are lucky to obtain favourable prophecies were to see him for a charge for *akwankyerε* to accelerate the manifestation of the prophecy in their lives, while those who received negative prophecies were to wait for him and again at a fee, pay for the reversal of the negative prophecy (Afful, 2018).

Meanwhile, not only would followers seek positive results from a prophet in neo-prophetic churches, but those who got unfavourable blessings would seek the prophet's

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A prophet in Ghana called Prophet OBN has been seen in a recent video where at the close of service, each of the over 500 members of the congregation had to pass by him standing by the door to receive prophecy concerning their lives (Aryee, 2018).

<sup>110</sup> These were some of the prophecies he uttered into the lives of the people one after the other.

*You would receive a visa to go abroad.*

*Your debtors would pay you soon.*

*You would get rich in no time.*

*You would die from a car accident.*

*You would die very soon.*

*You would become a cripple.*

*You would get sick from Hepatitis B*

*You give birth to a child, you would go to the country of the country Togo very soon.*

*You would be infected with a sickness and die.*



prayers to reverse the looming ill portent (Ali, 2015:85). This practice likewise shows how the prophet remains at the centre of the Spirituality of his members, praying for and mediating on behalf of them, just like the priests<sup>111</sup>, prophets<sup>112</sup>, and diviners<sup>113</sup> in the ATR (Ampadu, 2019:75).

Some of these prophets are branded as ‘super spiritual’ in their activities (Atuahene, 2010:23). The problem is however the accompanying activities that are typical of ATR. People believe that their forecasts are received under the supervision of the authority they (the prophets) possess because of the faith they (prophets) have in them. People believe and fear such prophetic characters more than God. They therefore seek to be protected from these neo-prophets for a variety of reasons (Ali, 2015:85). Usually, on the night of every 31<sup>st</sup> December (a night preceding a new year), these prophets would be seen predicting and giving prophecies about deaths, accidents and evil occurrences in the coming year. Again, during the years preceding major presidential elections in Ghana, all these neo-prophets would be seen giving prophecies about the parties that would win in the elections in the ensuing elections. This would usually cause the major political parties to consult these neo-prophets for prophetic direction (Owusu Bempah, 2021). Usually, these politicians would have consulted native doctors, but for the ability of these neo-prophets to display such magico-prophetic powers in a Christian-decorated environment, they seem a better option to the politicians.

### **2.9.5 Positivisation of Culture**

The early missionaries in Ghana intended to disconnect converts from their religio-cultural worldview because all earlier practices were seen as pagan, and thereby looked down upon (Atuahene, 2010:21). Understandably, cutting the umbilical cord of converts from their traditional spiritual history and sentiments was difficult; as a result, one of the repercussions was the search for an African Christian religious identity, which led to the formation of various AICs. Others, on the other hand, argue that the missionaries’ failure to convert and disciple Africans completely has led to a superficiality among believers and a dangerous syncretistic lifestyle. The emergence of AICs has given African religiosity a new meaning for

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<sup>111</sup> In the traditional African society, the priests and priestesses are selected by the deity or members of the shrines or religious group to oversee the gods. After their training, they primarily lead people in worship, perform religious rites, sacraments and perform rituals (Atuahene 2010b: 82-84).

<sup>112</sup> Prophets do consultations between people and the gods. They purportedly understand the language of the gods and serve as spokespersons. They have powers to foretell the future (Ampadu, 2019:75).

<sup>113</sup> Diviners can see the future, cure illness, and mediate/facilitate the physical and spiritual worlds. They protect people and pray that good omen would come their way (Ampadu, 2019:74-75).

some and making it a sincere expression of meaningful devotion to their Creator. As a result, these AICs have successfully adapted (some might say exploited) the positive features of both the African worldview and Christian worship to their benefit. Again, some Pentecostal churches have ‘positivised’<sup>114</sup> African rituals into biblical imagery (Anderson, 2006:5), thereby appealing to the African worldview.

In line with the above, some neo-prophets have incorporated African traditional Spirituality into their worship in order to appeal to the African worldview. This is because, naturally, many Africans have an affinity for traditional African practices. Various churches have rationalised the use of some ATR practices in their worship, such as ritual washing, talismans, and other images (Atuahene, 2010:13). Some African scholars also argue that such syncretic worship is not inherently unbiblical, and that it would be appropriate, if not ideal, for theological institutions to seek a point of convergence between African culture and the Bible in order to make the latter more culturally relevant (Atuahene, 2010:13).

Some of the extreme contrary practices which some AICs include in their worship are ‘ancestral cults and rituals, traditional divination through objects, pronouncing of curses and laying of spells and consultation of all sorts of spirits’ (Atuahene, 2010:13). These are antithetical to the biblical ethos (Atuahene, 2010:13). One concept that crept into some Pentecostal groups to be refined to suit the alleged church context (Omenyo and Atiemo, 2006:62) is the concept of *Ɔtamfo* (enemy) as well as techniques such as *Akwankyerε* (spiritual advice), and *Abisa* (divinatory consultation) (Onyinah, 2012:268-270), and consulting the dead, and finding the reason behind a strange death. Indeed, *Akwankyerε*, which is still practised in ATR has gained widespread acceptance in Pentecostal churches. These consultation services by the neo-prophetic, as in the case of ATR, go with consultation rituals fees which must be paid before the neo-prophet could prophesy about one’s issue and mediate their situation. In order to mediate one’s issue, they may have to procure an *akwankyerε* which may be ritualistic in nature with the use of anointing oil, anointed water, et cetera.

The above adaptations also appeal to a larger number of regular Ghanaians. Through their worship, these AICs and Neo-Prophetic churches have provided real religiosity to many Ghanaians. Moreover, some theologians admit that despite the fact that some of their (AICs

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<sup>114</sup> The term ‘positivisation’ has been used in this research to mean assimilation of some ATR cultural practices that are perceived to have some positive dimension when adopted in prayer. Some of these prayers may have adopted with syncretic modifications.

and Neo- Prophetic churches) methods appear to be questionable, the neo-prophetics have allowed some believers to consult them instead of visiting conventional shrines, resulting in an increase in the number of Christian adherents (Onyinah, 2017). People with an affinity for ATR find themselves in the church because of the appealing nature of neo-prophetic ministries. Opoku Onyinah, facilitating a workshop section at the World Pentecostal Conference in Brazil on one occasion, held that ‘through God’s providence, these searching thorn-prickling Christians may one day find the light of salvation somehow sometime’ (Onyinah, 2017).

The rationalisation of drumming, dancing, and clapping of hands has been one adaptation from ATR that has sustained African Pentecostalism. These features appeal to the soul of the Africans and draw them into worship. Also, the power of the mother tongue through the vernacularisation of Pentecostal worship has a significant effect on African Pentecostal worship. This vernacularisation is similar to the services within the African traditional setting where consultation is done in the mother tongue. Pentecostal praise and worship are also expressed through vernacularised songs, which the CoP for example, has been able to utilise (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005:53). The fact that the majority of the songs in the CoP were received through prophetic means gave them easier acceptance. Pentecostalism’s Spirituality similarly evolved out of negro songs and music, according to Walter Hollenweger (2005:32-33); and this is also true for the Spirituality of Ghanaian Pentecostalism.

The Spirit is poured forth for the Church, according to Pentecostals, and God must be heard as the altar is raised to Him. When God is worshipped, God is seen functioning in the midst of His children through signs, miracles, and wonders. So, even though the Christian does not petition in prayer, God is expected to visit his children with some miracles. Some members may fall prostrate, others will deposit money in the offering box as an expression of gratitude to God, thanking or praising God for God’s protection and care on these occasions. Other worshippers may request a chance to speak to the entire congregation in order to praise God and then place their donation in the box in gratitude for what God has done.

### **2.9.6 Prayer Expectations**

There is a very high level of expectancy of the manifestation of the spirits and surety of receiving answers to participants’ requests in all ATR gatherings. The above expectations, too, have found their way into the Pentecostal services. This expectancy is sanctioned by the fact mentioned earlier (2.9.2 and 2.9.3), that Pentecostals believe in the immanency of God during their services (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2009:2-3). Usually, this expectancy is met through

powerful sermons, prophetic utterances (Albrecht and Howards, 2014:233-234) or a supernatural experience (Warrington, 2008:72-73) of God via healing at the altar or in the congregation (Vondey, 2012:16-18). The characteristic prayer nature of Classical Pentecostal churches has credited the church with miracles, healings, and signs of spontaneous happenings (Badu Wood, 2019:245). Sometimes, during prayer services, members fall down at the altar (Vondey, 2017:62-66) under the power of the Holy Spirit and are 'slain in the Spirit' (Albrecht and Howards, 2014:239) as proof of God's therapeutic presence in their midst (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2009:58).

Past experiences drive future expectations; and one may therefore sometimes hear the announcer at the end of one Pentecostal service saying: 'today, God visited us in a special way, and tomorrow is expected to be extraordinary, so endeavour to come with a greater expectation, and that would be met'. Clearly, some supernatural impetus is required for the Pentecostal to demonstrate power over the challenges of existential problems, life challenges, and the repetitive negative cycle of life. This can only be mediated through prayers and divine intervention.

## **2.10 Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed the nature, belief, and characteristics of ATR to appreciate its similarities to and possible influence on African Pentecostalism. In line with the topic of this study, the chapter specifically sought to review prayer practices, sacrifices, and worship of the ATR to identify their possible effect/s on the Spirituality of African Pentecostalism.

It has been established that the key features in African traditional Spirituality are belief in the supernatural, prayer, mediation, sacrifices, offerings, libations, drumming, and dancing. As explained earlier, the belief in the cosmic world has produced fear and affected the worldview, practices, and way of life of every African. Africans, therefore, pray based on the inevitable view that the world consists of a conglomerate of two interrelating spheres of dependent and independent, and natural and supernatural.

The African traditionalist, therefore, prays for basic things for human survival, cultural and social acceptance, and community protection and preservation. They also pray to ask for things related to abundant food, opulence, rain, success in hunting, clothing, long life, abundance, success in marriage, fruitfulness with children, and cultural and social acceptance. Again, they pray against bad omen, illness, frequent mishaps, death and disasters. With a view to community protection and preservation, African traditionalists pray

concerning epidemics, community plagues, sicknesses, aversion to war, success in war, peace, and detection of community evil and against its defeat during war.

It appears that the above worldview has infiltrated neo-Pentecostalism positively as the basis for prayer to instill faith instead of fear. This has seemingly resulted in the surge of numerous prayer activities in the Pentecostal churches in Ghana and which has positively impacted Pentecostal Spirituality and drawn adherents to God. On the other hand, some neo-prophetic churches have taken advantage of the ATR practices and therefore devised many divinatory prayer practices, enculturated around ATR worldview's practices as a way of mediating their lives. This supposedly projects the neo-prophet as a giant with supernatural powers to mediate for their lives.

Secondly, drumming and dancing are central to the Spirituality of African traditional worship as a point of dealing with nature and the mystery of human existence involving feeling, thought and actions (Kenan, 1997:51). In the ATR, people sing and dance to explain religion (their beliefs), recreate social roles, honour a deity, conduct supernatural beneficence, and reveal divinity/divinities (Kenan, 1997:52). Dancing is a multisensory, emotional, and symbolic gesture to construct and communicate a shared sense of belonging. Through the words of music and the movement of dance, deities are praised, divinities are petitioned, and humanity communicates feelings and religious thought with sanctified models (cf. Parrinder, 1961).

There seem to be similarities between ATR and Christianity at first glance, with respect to the monotheistic character, but these similarities are superficial. There are fundamental differences, but this does not mean that some of the elements of ATR may not have crept into African Pentecostal Spirituality. If the view of Mbiti (1975:1) is anything to go by, then ATR strongly affects converts who leave ATR. Mbiti (1975:1-3) also holds that Christian converts cannot appreciate the Christian teachings about God unless they had prior knowledge about God through ATR. The African concept of God is therefore postulated as a conjectured link and continuity with the Christian concept of God (cf. Mbiti, 1980). The 'hypothesising' of the ATR God as monotheistic has been why many consider this knowledge, as a *preparatio Evangelica*<sup>115</sup> (Han and Beyers, 2017; Mbiti, 1970). Today, the

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<sup>115</sup> When describing his work for evangelism, C.S. Lewis used the Latin phrase '*praeparatio evangelica*' to mean 'evangelical preparation' or, more accurately, 'preparation for the Evangel, the Gospel'. The phrase implies that he did not view himself as an evangelist but played a facilitating role. He was the Elijah of the twentieth century, the predecessor to John the Baptist, and he prepared the way for the evangelists—priests, vicars, and curates, to put it simply.

concept of knowing the Supreme Being is fundamental for evangelisation since it served as a preparatory ground for the evangelisation of the gospel in an African domain (Heck, 1987:1-3).

The idea of the African God being monotheistic could be asserted to be understanding if the African God is not said to have delegated his authority and rule to the lower hierarchy of deities. The theorised African monotheistic God may be upheld if the African God has not been philosophised as taking less interest in the affairs of humankind and what happens in the cosmos. The knowledge of belief in ATR in the existence of a Supreme Being cannot be in doubt. It is, however, important to note that according to ATR, prayer as a consequence of one's immediate needs is not channeled to the Supreme Being, but to lesser deities. In short, it may therefore also not be strange that in the view of the ATR, the relationship to the Christian God is described as an abstract response to prayer and that the response is purported to be slow due to the inaccessibility of (the Christian) God.

The link between effect of ATR on African Pentecostal practice and Spirituality (as I have identified it), has not always been proven in all cases. Some scholars, such as Adewuya (2012:258), Wariboko (2017:8-9), and Meyer (2012:90-92) suggest a clear link/influence as sometimes the similarities between the practices are so clear that it suggests a clear link. Some occurrences, such as glossolalia and prophetic manifestation take place not only among African/ATR/African Pentecostals, but occur in all Pentecostal traditions, African and non-African. It does therefore not mean that some of such practices were taken over from ATRs, but perhaps they just have such a close affinity with ATR practices that they were easier to follow by Pentecostals in Africa than elsewhere. When considering the 'Prosperity Gospel' with respect to materialism, a cause-and-effect link with ATRs may be easier to find, an area this research would later delve deeper into<sup>116</sup>.

One may therefore justifiably ask whether the practices and Spirituality of Classical Pentecostals, specifically as found in the CoP, are themselves both biblical and unique. To answer this question, prior to establishing whether new forms of prayer and prayer practices in Pentecostal Ghana are theologically legitimate, the next chapter first asks the important and fundamental question as to the theological basis of Pentecostal Spirituality and practice from a Classical Ghanaian Pentecostal perspective. Part of this question is based, however, on whether one may use this mode of establishing the legitimacy of (Pentecostal) Spirituality, namely by looking for/at its theological bases. The latter also concerns the relationship

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<sup>116</sup> See section 5.6, chapter 5 of this research.

between Spirituality and theology. The next chapter discusses in detail the interplay between Pentecostal Spirituality and Pentecostal theology.

## CHAPTER THREE

### (CLASSICAL) PENTECOSTAL SPIRITUALITY AND PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY: TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN?

#### 3.1 Introduction

As explained in Chapter 1, the concept of Spirituality has often been described as a notoriously slippery one. In Chapter 2, it was argued that the ‘positivisation’ of the culture of ATR has had an effect on the Spirituality of African Pentecostal churches (see par. 2.9.5 above). From the perspective of Spirituality as a whole, this chapter begins with a brief overview of the history, evolution and distinctiveness of Christian Spirituality. The chapter then examines the unique characteristics of Pentecostal Spirituality and *African* Pentecostal Spirituality. In the light of the logical progression of the argument in answer to the research question posed in Chapter 1 (see section 1.4 above), the relationship between Spirituality and theology will then be investigated to show what legitimate Spirituality should be based on.

Once the latter has been established, this chapter continues by reviewing the subject of Pentecostal theology in general and discussing the nature of African Pentecostal theology as the fulcrum for African Pentecostal theology of prayer. Once the innate pneumatic focus and relationship between Pentecostal theology and Pentecostal Spirituality has been elucidated as two sides of the same coin, the focus shifts specifically to Pentecostal theology/-ies of prayer (Chapter 4) in order to ultimately test the legitimate theological bases of new contemporary Pentecostal practices in Ghana (Chapter 5).

#### 3.2 Spirituality

According to renowned Dutch Christian Spirituality scholar, Kees Waaijman (2007:3), the phenomenon of Spirituality is explored in and across a variety of academic disciplines with each discipline projecting the phenomenon from its own perspective. Spirituality is a “dynamic” (Phiri, 2009:1), yet ‘quite ambiguous’ (Schmidt and Little, 2007:222) or “fuzzy” concept (Zinnbauer et al., 2016:846). Due to its ambiguity, Spirituality may therefore be better understood when explained, rather than by attempting to define it (Sheldrake, 2013:3; c.f. Lombaard, 2015:3) because it is a complex phrase that is defined differently by people of different backgrounds (Tzounis, 2017:3). In the light of this complexity in relating Spirituality, in the academic front, Spirituality may be studied from an interdisciplinary perspective with reference to words, things, images, texts, history, processes, and relationships to project its praxis (Waaijman, 2007:1,3).



Many people describe Spirituality by characterising it based on which “half of the elephant they are holding” (Waaïjman, 2007:2), and therefore has been labelled as a variable of holism. Spirituality can therefore be described in relation to one’s ideas, feelings, and dispositions. This is because it entails a sense of interconnectedness with others, nature, and life as a whole. According to Hagberg and Guelich (1995:2), Spirituality is an “inner power” that drives a person to produce an outward result. It is everything from religion to secular, personal to universal, definable to indefinable, material to immaterial and all other things that affect the core of the soul of an individual (Schmidt and Little, 2007:222-223).

From a linguistic perspective, Spittler (1988:140) posits that the term Spirituality is similar in meaning to the Latin or Greek words such as ‘*religio*’ (reverence), or *pietas* and ‘*eusebia*’ (piety). As a word that has an evolving meaning, the term Spirituality may have evolved to describe a mystical relationship between humanity and God (Cettolin, 2006:26). Most scholars have agreed that ‘mysticism’ refers to one form or a subcategory of Spirituality. In early church history, Spirituality was a life following an encounter with the divine or supernatural and was denoted by terminologies such as devotion, piety, and mysticism (Holt, 1993:16).

The term mysticism relates to transcendency, metaphysics, a search for inner fulfilment and purpose in a person’s life, and a desire for self-fulfilment beyond the ordinary (Ashar and Lane-Maher, 2004:253; cf. Chamiec-Case, 2006:21; van Dierendonck, 2012:689; Vasconcelos, 2017:603). Philip Sheldrake (2013:7-8) affirms that the term mysticism has been variously used to describe the knowledge and encounters with God, an absolute, a deity or supernatural encounters like thunder or a superior physical manifestation of power (c.f. Vasconcelos, 2017:602). Due to its contextual interpretation, the use of the word mysticism concerning Christian theology seems deceptive – for some are even derogatory or at least objectionable. Christian Spirituality and mysticism suggest different interpretations (Thompson and Williams, 2008:x) and in contemporary times, there are moves to divorce the two fields with usages of Spirituality that have no religious connection (Waaïjman, 2002:12).

Historically, during the Middle Ages, when theology was primarily practised in monasteries, the practice of Spirituality included self-denial, devotion (Holt, 1993:16), monastic commitment, meditation, and worship (Richards, 1987:14) as a mapping between mortality and transcendence (Bender and McRoberts, 2012:2-3) to achieve the ultimate goal of power, influence, emotional satisfaction, and self-actualisation (Gocer and Ozgan, 2018:59). Vasconcelos, (2017:601-602) and Sheldrake et al. (2012:166) however view Spirituality in terms of the “nativity of humanity” (as old as humanity itself), while Issa and

Pick (2011:47) refer to Spirituality as ‘a demonstration of faith, hope and love through mutual connectivity between a triad of one’s inner human, religio-social group and a deity.’ This connectivity can best be demonstrated as the interface of faith, hope, and love in connection with the soul of a person or the souls of a group and a divine being. Accordingly, without a person, love and a divine being, Spirituality is non-existent. Spirituality, therefore, refers to the satisfaction of the inner person, say Gocer and Ozgan (2018:58).

From the concept of interpolation, Spirituality, according to McGhee and Grant (2017:160), is best explained when examined through the lenses of four themes: elevating one’s inner person to a higher potential (transcendence), interconnections through fellowships and mutuality, achieving self-actualisation in life (meaning), and inner person evolution. From a multifaceted phenomenon, Spirituality reflects 12 disciplines, analyses process, relations, professions, and theories on basis of discovering patterns for interdisciplinary exploration (Waaijman, 2007:1). Emerging Spirituality is not necessarily predicated on a social construct, but it may ‘emphasise inner experience, harmony, introspection, and personal well-being’ (Sheldrake, 2013:4). Spirituality, therefore, according to the quotations above, involves inner self-development, self-exploration, and self-orientation towards self-actualisation. It is an inner experience that produces external satisfaction and meaningful existence (Sheldrake, 2013:5).

From a sociological point of view, Dreyer and Bennett (2006:1) opine that Spirituality is reflective of ideas and values explored to shape one’s internal world. In a more modern sense, therefore, Spirituality is characterised by individualism and cultural pluralism (Giordan, 2008). Spirituality as a phenomenon therefore can be explained from an individualistic point of view where an individual sets his or her values aside the norms, practices, and conjectures of the broader group to which one belongs.

From the religious point of view, the concept of Spirituality is universally applicable to all religions (Phiri, 2009:22; Spittler, 1988:140). Since all religions have a set of beliefs regarding a visible or invisible deity/-ies (Gocer and Ozgan, 2018:58), Spirituality can also be defined in terms of human connection with, and gratification toward a deity. And common characteristics of all religions include their reliance on sacred texts and the prevalence of spiritual practices, sacred spaces, and structures (Sheldrake, 2013:7). Regarding the relationship between religion and Spirituality, a variety of perspectives have developed over time. There is undeniably a positive covariance between the two. While some believe that the disposition of religion can only be viewed through the lens of its Spirituality, others believe

that the religion's tangibility can be observed through the practice of a religion's Spirituality (Gocer and Ozgan, 2018:58).

To make the issue even more complex, Spirituality is intertwined with religion in a deep mythological exchange (Waaïjman, 2007:14; C.f. Brady, 2020). For at the heart of every religion is the broader concept of Spirituality (Waaïjman, 2007: 14-20; c.f. McGrath, 2015:2). While religion refers to a person's own institutionalised system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices, as well as the worship and adoration of God or other deities, Spirituality on the other hand refers to an experience in which people seek and express meaning and purpose in their connection to the holy or the divine (Brandy. 2020:10).

Driving the concept of Spirituality narrower, Christianity Spirituality is also concerned with the individual and the church's communal practices. Therefore, according to South African Marius Nel (2015:7), Spirituality has more to do with how a community of worshippers expresses itself. Haykin (2007:1-3) conjectures that Christian 'Spirituality' is derived from the Latin word 'spiritus', which itself is derived from the word 'spirit'. The term '*spiritualitas*, which refers to all the activities in a believer's life that are motivated and inspired by the Holy Spirit, appears to have been created by Latin-speaking Christians in North Africa in the second century AD. These believers understood correctly that everything that can be properly referred to as Spirituality has the Holy Spirit at its core. The Holy Spirit and his work are therefore inextricably linked to true Spirituality.

Furthermore, Philip Sheldrake (2015:2-3) postulates that Spirituality is best viewed through 'the periscope of a holistic approach to life'. It is the external manifestation of a life philosophy that is internally integrated. Spirituality may therefore be related to the ancient Greek word *holos*, from where the archaic English word *halig*, which means 'whole' or 'complete' was derived, and this word is also related to the concept of 'holy'. Without Spirituality, a person cannot be considered whole or complete. In this sense, the concept of 'wholeness' was intended to make a person spiritually complete. One could only be considered 'holy' if they meet a particular Christian moral standard. Furthermore, the concept of holiness is a crucial component of Pentecostal Spirituality.

Some writers such as Issa and Pick (2011:45-58), and Kosiewicz (2015:43-62), have attempted to categorise Spirituality into superficial or profound Spirituality or Spirituality as aesthetics as opposed to religious Spirituality. The classification, however, seems ambiguous since it does not provide an accurate correlation between the name and its meaning. For example, describing aesthetic Spirituality in terms of honesty, compassion, integrity, and the

corresponding use of prayers, beliefs, and miracles as religious Spirituality seems quite vague.

Importantly, Westerhoff and Eusden (1982:2) prefer to understand Spirituality as referring to “completeness”, a sense where the sacred and secular, material and non-material, body and soul, are integrated to give human fulfilment to life. As such, Spirituality must not only be seen as inborn and inherent, but it should also produce an outward effect on one’s social life and should therefore determine behavioural patterns.

It is imperative to note that an individual’s mystical worldview produces a spiral effect on the physical, which in this case may be dissipated through the aesthetic of prayer. *For this academic study, Spirituality is conceptualised as a means by which a person elevates the inner self through a deeper connection with the divinity, society, fellowship, or group in order to achieve physical and spiritual growth and satisfaction; and discover meaning for life both physically and transcendentally. On a broader perspective, Spirituality may be viewed as a conglomerate of unique features that describes the way of life, the pattern of worship, religious practices and the peculiarity of any sect or religious group towards the fulfilment of inherent spiritual satisfaction. It is postulated as a sacred commutative relationship between the divine and humanity for the wholeness of body, soul, and spirit<sup>117</sup>.*

### 3.3 Christian Spirituality

As a religion that is both experiential and transformational, Christian Spirituality, although for centuries not referred to by this term (e.g., as devoutness, holiness, piousness, religiosity), has been part of the faith since its founding and has developed over centuries. The evolution of Christian Spirituality has taken many forms in history (Albrecht and Howards, 2014:235), sometimes with surprising ones that involved many key figures. Considering the limits of this research, it is impossible to give a detailed overview of the history of Christian Spirituality. As such, a brief overview will be given to the background to this as a central phenomenon in this study. According to the renowned Jesuit scholar, Philip Sheldrake (2013:24), the incarnation of Christ granted humanity the ultimate experience of the divine nature of God (Col 1:15-20) and humanity’s ability to access and partake of the divine nature (*theosis*).

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have

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<sup>117</sup> This working definition for Spirituality shall be adopted in this thesis.

all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross” (Col 1:15-20).

Jesus’ promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father in the person of a Comforter, helper and Advocate in John 14:16-18<sup>118</sup>, 25-26; 16:7, 12-13 and was fulfilled at the latter’s outpouring on the day of Pentecost as seen in Acts 2:1-4;

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you (Jn 14:16-18).

All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you (Jn 14:25-26).

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. (Jn 16:7).

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. (Jn 16:12-13).

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (Ac 2:1-4).

From Acts chapter two, the revelation at Pentecost is the essence of the New Testament that constituted the dawn of a new spiritual era initiated by Christ. Christian Spirituality, according to Sheldrake (2013:25), may therefore be seen as referring to a way of life in which a person is ‘disciplined theistically’; otherwise, it may be expressed in terms of an initiation practice aimed at disciplining into the likeness of Christ. The above description models the way Christ impacted His disciples, and they, in turn, spread the gospel across the world. Accordingly, Sheldrake (2013:26) holds that the “Christological mark of true identity” of the Christian is discipleship and through a walk with the Holy Spirit.

Succinctly, Christian Spirituality can be said to have ‘Christlikeness’ as its centre, a praxis rooted in and developed from the ethos, lifestyle, and teachings of Christ. The focus of Christian Spirituality is to appreciate the nature, soteriological works and divinity of Christ concerning humanity. It is at the point of identification with Christ where a person lives like

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<sup>118</sup> Some of the texts being referred in the foot notes are based on the superficial understanding and application by Pentecostals in relation to the practices of prayer. Some other texts in the main thesis are engaged to give a better explanation to the main body of the thesis.

Christ (imitation) and shares in Christ's work. Christian Spirituality may therefore be explained as both revelation and practice and not necessarily by way of logic, intellectual discourse, or even doctrine. Christian Spirituality involves a longing for, and an expression of a fulfilled, unique Christian experience that also involves a community of believers and an experience of faith within the ambit of Christian fundamentals through an encounter with the divine nature. Following the above account on the nature of Christian Spirituality, the next section attempts to trace the historiography of Christian Spirituality.

### **3.3.1 Overview of Christian Spirituality in the Early Church (Patristic Spirituality)**

Early Christians Spirituality refers to a lived experience of the Christian faith in reference to the intensity of the relationship between the believer and the divine (van der Merwe, 2013:2). Early Christian Spirituality was then based on living a Christ-like life through fellowship (Wilken, 2003:2; c.f. Hardon, 2010:2-5; Tang, 2020:1), devotion, prayer, love for God's creations, and obedience to Christ's commands (Jeffrey, 1998:2; cf. Sheldrake, 2013:34).

Sequel to the destruction of the temple in AD70, the persecution of Christians under the Roman Empire, and the desire for Christians to be distinct from Jews, there was an 'apologetic' desire to develop a distinct Spirituality (Thompson and Williams, 2008:17). The early Christian community, therefore, had to develop a Spirituality distinct from Judaism after abandoning circumcision, Jewish feasts, and other legal observances (Velt, 2007:1-5; cf. Thompson and Williams, 2008:17). The foregoing gave rise to particular Christian practices, liturgies, and sacraments (Baptism and the Eucharist being the universally recognised ones) (Thompson and Williams, 2008:18).

To preserve what had been transmitted to them and to protect the truth, doctrines began to form and evolve. The primary spiritual focus of the early church was "identification with Christ and the development of an intimate relationship with God through Christ" (Najapfour, 2013a:3-4; cf. Sheldrake, 2013:34). Doctrinal disputes emerged in the early church as a result of the early church's Spirituality being closely related to believers' relationship with God via Christ. During the first half of the first millennium, these conflicts centred on Christ's nature, divinity, identity, and relationship with God. This led to the emergence of new ideas or the reinterpretation of others, including deification (*theosis*), *gnosis*, Gnosticism, *logos*, Trinity, and *perichoresis* (Sheldrake, 2013: 34-40). During this period, the centre of Christian Spirituality slowly began a move into the monasteries where the orthodoxy of the religion was for a long time to be preserved (Thompson and Williams, 2008:24). Until then, theological and spiritual writings were more akin to academic battles

against prevailing Greek-Roman philosophical constructs that challenged Christian (theological) ones (Thompson, 2006:16-18).

In this period too, the theological battle between the Eastern and Western parts of the church grew deeper. In their writings, early church fathers such as Irenaeus of Lyons (ca. 130-200), Clement of Alexander (ca. 150- 215), Tertullian (ca. 160-225), Origen of Alexandria (ca. 185- 254), Athanasius (ca. 296-373), and Augustine of Hippo (ca. 354-450), were more inclined towards developing a doctrine on relationships within the Trinity (McGrath, 2015:135-143; 2015:35-39; cf. Thompson and Williams, 2008:18-30). As such, the church councils of Nicaea (325AD) and Chalcedon (451AD) were called to resolve doctrinal differences (Thompson and Williams, 2008:24) as the church headed deep into monasticism. This phase led to the emergence of monasticism with its peculiar Spirituality as discussed below.

### **3.3.2 Christian Spirituality and the Emergence of Monasticism**

The close of the second century saw the emergence of desert and mountaintop hermits, and the beginnings of monasticism in Syria and Egypt (Thompson and Williams, 2008:40; Najafour, 2018). During this time, some Christians withdrew to the desert, and other remote locations in order to avoid worldly distractions and to concentrate on spiritual matters. They believed that these remote locations offered individuals a greater opportunity to be alone with God and become “more spiritual” as a result. It was believed that these monasteries<sup>119</sup> and remote locations helped individuals overcome temptation, escape the corruption of city life, and meet the challenge of growing wealth (Najafour, 2013c; cf. McGrath, 2015:101-104).

For centuries, the emergence of monastic communities served to preserve orthodox Christian Spirituality amid the chaos of the fall of the Roman Empire. At the same time, monks were at the forefront of Christianising the rest of Europe (Sheldrake, 2013:49-52). Other reasons for the emergence of monasteries were the ideal of fostering or building of holy lives as a reaction against growing Christian laxity (Sheldrake, 2013:49-51; cf. Thompson and Williams, 2008:35-37). Some esoteric teachings<sup>120</sup> on ‘secret’ rites (called sacraments) that evolved in Christian mystical traditions (Thompson and Williams, 2008:36) were also transmitted in monasteries. Monastic Spirituality was closely linked to specific

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<sup>119</sup>Monastic life was not unique to Christianity since Buddhism had been practising monasticism much earlier. At the same time, the Essenes of Judaism formed an ascetic community by ca. 150, with many monastic characteristics and with the same objective (Thompson and Williams, 2008:40).

<sup>120</sup> Understood here as the passing on some sacred teaching by word of mouth (Sheldrake, 2013:49-51).

monastic spiritual practices or disciplines, foremost among which was the *lectio divina* (or ‘holy reading’, a form of meditative Scripture reading). This practice comprised a four-stage process namely *lectio* (reading and reciting the texts, quietly and with the eyes open), *meditatio* (meditation and repeating words whilst reflecting on their meaning, sometimes referred to as ‘chewing and digesting’ the words), *oratio* (prayer and a heartfelt offering of oneself to God), and *contemplatio* (an elevated spiritual stage, sometimes called ‘resting in God’, beyond even words or thoughts). The monasteries, therefore, evolved at a critical time of Christian history for conserving Christian Spirituality by sects who were supposedly getting fed up with declining Christian standards. This phase of Spirituality evolved until the emergence of the medieval period as discussed in the section 3.3.3 below:

### 3.3.3 Christian Spirituality during the Medieval Period

The zenith of Western Christian Spirituality occurred during the Middle Ages when Roman Catholicism dominated. During the Middle Ages, Christianity was the state religion and was intimately tied to all aspects of life (political, legal, scientific, cultural, educational, et cetera). Even absolute rulers were believed to be subject to theocratic faith-based rule (Thompson and Williams, 2008:51), ‘Christian mysticism, sometimes called sacramental mysticism, also reached its zenith during this time, as every aspect of a person’s life was to be sacramentally rooted in the nature and divinity of Christ’ (Thompson and Williams, 2008:51).

The Spirituality of the two divisions of the church diverged more and more over the Middle Ages. The Eastern church’s Spirituality also known as “Byzantine Spirituality”, developed in a context that was more unified in terms of theology, doctrine, and practice and was saturated with theological mysticism (explicit Trinitarianism based on the concept of *theosis*<sup>121</sup>), asceticism, repetitive sacramental-liturgy, mystical hesychasm (monastic withdrawal), and repetitive, non-methodical prayer (Foltz, 2011:1; cf. Sheldrake, 1999:70-74).

The Eastern Church was also theologically centralised, but its Spirituality was significantly more influenced by lay theology, the vernacular, and a desire to experience God than that of the Western Church. Indeed, the abstract scholasticism and the lack of spiritual satisfaction during the medieval period is significant in the precipitation of the reformation.

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<sup>121</sup> *Theosis* is a term meaning deification or divinisation. It means to become, through grace, what God is by nature. It was used in the Patristic era to mean becoming a partaker of divine, in what is sometimes called a mystical union (Foltz, 2011:1).



The characteristics of the Eastern Church may somewhat be comparable to the liturgical adaptation of Pentecostalism in Ghana where the vernacular language is used extensively together with the concept of lay leaders. Important to note is the desire for a spiritual experience in the Pentecostal churches.

Again, just as the Western Church used intellectual Greek philosophical categories to make sense of the Christian faith and teaching, so also the Eastern Church used experiential Eastern philosophical categories to make sense of the same faith. In a similar vein, it is apparent that Pentecostalism is responding to dilemmas of the time within the African philosophical conceptual framework with respect to their Christian faith. The ‘spiritual laxity’ during the medieval period was served as a springboard for the reformation.

### **3.3.4 Christian Spirituality during the Reformation to the Modern Era**

The close of the medieval period saw, among others, not only the Reformation, but even prior to that, the rise of the so-called *devotio moderna* (Sheldrake, 2013:113-115) in the 14th century in the Netherlands. It was soon spreading across many, especially northern, parts of Europe. This movement developed partly in reaction to church abuses and abstract scholasticism characterised by ‘pessimism, devotionism, humanism, individualism, and anti-clericalism’ (Wilken, 2003:2-3; c.f. Beeke, 2004:1-3; Thompson and Williams, 2008:66-68). The *devotio moderna* produced in its wake a literary culture with a methodical Spirituality of prayer and Christian humanism, which had a significant influence on the Reformation (Petraica, 2002:3-5; cf. Sheldrake, 2013:114). One could say that, in a sense, the cause of the sixteenth-century Reformation was a result of the ‘crisis of medieval Spirituality’ and the desire for people to return to practical experience Spirituality; to a religion of the heart instead of rituals, ‘works’, and formalised liturgical structures (Najapfour, 2013:1).

The desire to return to ‘heart Spirituality’ was part of the reason why the Augustinian monk, Martin Luther (1483-1546) wished to break with the fear instilled into the society by the Roman Catholic Spirituality, especially its sale of indulgences to prevent eternal damnation and the supreme authority of the papacy on all matters spiritual (Sheldrake, 2013:115-116; cf. Thompson and Williams, 2008:70-74). Luther, having challenged the Spirituality of the day, advocated a reformed Spirituality of salvation based amongst others, on faith alone (*sola fide*), access to God based on grace alone (*sola gratia*), and on the Scriptures (*sola scriptura*). Luther also proclaimed the equality of all believers before God (the priesthood of all believers) (Beeke, 2004:3). The Lutheran (Protestant) Reformation of the sixteenth century saw the advent of what has been called a ‘Lutheran Spirituality’,

characterised by ‘*Christocentricism*’, ‘mystical pietism’ and ‘momentary conversion experience’ (Sheldrake, 2013:114-116; cf. Thompson and Williams, 2008:70-72).

One may conclude that the Protestant Reformation resulted in a characteristic conversion Spirituality based on deep inner conviction, having faith in Christ Jesus, and believing in new life imputed to you as a result of confessing Christ. After breaking away from the structured authoritarianism of Roman Catholicism, the focus of Lutheran Spirituality was to produce what some call a more “heartfelt” Christianity (Beeke, 2004:3-5; Najapfour, 2018:2-2; Robinson, 2018:2-5).

Meanwhile, the reformation set the pace for the emergence of various new Christian spiritual traditions such as the English Reformation,<sup>122</sup> Anglican Spirituality (Hoare, 2013), Puritanism<sup>123</sup> (Curtis, 2022), and ‘pietistic’ Spirituality, the unique Spirituality of the Quakers<sup>124</sup> and eventually the Spirituality of the Counter- or Roman Catholic Reformation<sup>125</sup> (Laven, 2006; c.f. Inside History Newsletter, 2019).

The wake of the Reformation also followed the wave of revivals producing other spiritualities or placing spiritual emphases different from earlier ones such as Methodism, Evangelicalism, and eventually, Pentecostal spiritualities (Sheldrake, 2013:115-126; Thompson and Williams, 2008:73-95). Additionally, part of the post-Reformation era was also that of the Enlightenment, resulting in “detraditionalization”, secularisation, and the slippery road of liberalism, which opened the way for new cultic and mystic groups in

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<sup>122</sup>At the beginning of the 14th century, the English Reformation resulted in the formation of the Protestant church, as a breakaway from the Catholic Church with the king of England assuming the head of the new breakaway church. The protestant church started with a new mode of worship service now in the English language, whilst discontinuing most of the extravagance and rituals associated with Catholic masses and again dissolving monasteries. This new mode of worship was welcoming to the masses, both the wealthy and the commoners (Laven 2006, c.f. History.com, 2009).

<sup>123</sup> In the late 16th century, there evolved a new reform movement in the Church of England called the Puritans, whose worry was that the activities of the Church of England were becoming too familiar with the activities of the Church of Rome. The focus of the Puritans was to brew a new wave of reformation that would let go of non-biblical rituals and practices in the Catholic Church, according to the covenant of God. Following persecution from the church and the crown, the Puritans resettled in the new world and established their new religious order (Curtis, 2002; c.f. History.com, 2009).

<sup>124</sup>In the 17th century, together with some friends, George Fox founded a popular religious group called the Quaker movement which was persecuted for their beliefs. Based on their religious persuasion that God inhabits every believer, and that both men and women had spiritual equality, they had no appointed clergy and they rejected conventional religious ceremonies. Supporting women’s rights and adhering to pacifism, the first Quaker missionaries arrived in America in the 1650s (Diebert, 2018; c.f. History.com, 2009).

<sup>125</sup> The counter-reformation variously referred to as the Catholic revival was prompted as an effort by the catholic to combat the Protestant reformation in the 16th century. Occurring just before Martin Luther nailed the 95 theses at the door of Castle Church in 1517, the Catholic reformation was a form of internal restructuring against the Protestant reformation of Western Christianity in a bid to purify itself of faults and accusations (Laven 2006; c.f. Britanica.com, 2002).

opposition to these developments (Laven, 2006:2-4; cf. Thompson and Williams, 2008:89-90). According to Anderson (2010:3), the root of Pentecostalism is traceable to pietism, Methodism, nineteenth-century evangelicalism, and healing movements. The Holiness Movement, the radicalised ideas of John Wesley and John Fletcher which focused on the personal encounter, and the crises experience of Holiness which was later re-termed as baptism in the Spirit are roots of the Pentecostal movement (Anderson, 2010:4).

The mark of Pentecostalism could be likened to the effect of driving waves of revival during the period. Indeed, through Pentecostalism, the church in Europe is experiencing a reverse mission with migrant missionaries ending the gospel back to these nations (Walker, 2010:195, 231). With the root of Pentecostalism established, the next section discusses the interrelations between religion, Spirituality, and theology.

### **3.4 Religion, Spirituality and Theology**

The study of religion as a phenomenon emerged during the nineteenth century (Hyman, 2004:195-215) and focused on the distinctive feature of all world religions. This was at a time when the existing disciplines failed to isolate issues related to spiritual mystical, experiential, sacred, and sacred revered (Segal and Smart, 2018:1-2). The term 'religion' may have evolved from the Latin vulgate *religare*, meaning 'tied and bound' to something held sacred or powers that rule an individual's destiny (Saunders, 2009:4). Nweke and Okpaleke (2019:247) believe that in contemporary society, the use of religion concerning non-popular sects is being relegated to the fringes due to its purported negative qualities in favour of the use of the terms 'spiritualities'.

The term spiritualities is therefore associated with all world religions as a positive word compatible with progressive worldviews. There is a gradual shift from religion to religious Spirituality and then to a paradigm of so-called genuine Spirituality based on an individual's self-introspection (McGrath, 2015:6-9). Among the myriad of explanations of Spirituality, one may also see it as a person's approach to connecting with the divine and experiencing it in realms beyond the sensory world (Janis, 2008), and as a desire for a fulfilled Christian experience based on fundamental axioms of the Christian faith (McGrath, 2015:2). Accordingly, one cannot divulge the concept of faith out of Spirituality. A person's belief in something would ignite the drive and motivation to animate an individual's life. Beyond the point of faith however, Spirituality also moves into the sphere of practice: demonstrating, practising, and living out what is believed (McGrath, 2015:2; cf. Opas, 2017:82-84).

From a secular perspective, Spirituality is viewed as demonstrating not only a striking familiarity with reason as the essence of humanity, but also a thirst for the meaning of human existence (Saunders, 2009:6). It is about experience, memory, and an instantaneous connection with the mystery of reality, but not in a religious sense. With the addition of idioms, rituals, and imagery, one can explain a spiritual experience from a spiritual perspective (Van den Hoogen, 2014:2-3).

As was seen in Chapter 1 (section 1.8), Sheldrake (1999:162) mentions that in the academy, ‘Spirituality may be a field of study related to dimensions of human experience and behaviour from historical, textual, theological, and other social points of view’. ‘Spirituality Theology, thus, evolved over the years as a dogmatic academic discipline focused on morality, propositions, values, norms, ideas and principles purported to be biased toward prayer and other spiritual exercises’ (Waaïjman, 2002:369-391). Spirituality was however marginalised within the body of theology and sometimes excluded from theology after the 12th century until the process of reintegration under moral and dogmatic theology in the 19th century when theology was under reconstruction (Waaïjman, 2007:5).

In modern times, contextual theologies set the stage for developing Spirituality as a separate area of study with emerging subdivisions, such as feminist Spirituality, liberationist Spirituality, et cetera (De Villiers, 2006:104-106). Essential for this study is Sheldrake’s view that the study of Spirituality has evolved as a new discipline rather than being embraced as a Christian doctrine (Sheldrake, 2013:9). This study of Spirituality embraces interdisciplinary discourse in relation to history, religious studies, psychology and sociology, and some aspects of Christian theology (hermeneutics, systematic theology, et cetera) (Van den Hoogen, 2014:2-3). Biblical theology, on the other hand, examines the manner in which we express aspects of faith found in the Bible and how this leads to Christian transformation (Lombaard, 2015:1-2). Theology examines the human understanding of God, whereas Christian Spirituality examines a lived experience of faith, and ultimately an experience of the divine (God) (Albrecht and Howards, 2014:235).

Moreover, experience and mysticism (in the sense of the supernatural) are components of both theology and Spirituality. Theology is however “founded on a lived, practical, and sustained spiritual experience concerning doctrines” (concerning God: *Theos*) (Van den Hoogen, 2014:3-4; Sheldrake, 2013:9-10). Wolfteich (2009:122) had explained that theology is incomplete when it is delineated separately from faith and experience (Vondey, 2012b:149-150). As said previously, dogma, morality, the Bible, and Spirituality were all intertwined before theology became a separate discipline (Waaïjman, 2007:5-7).

It is important to note that the relationship between theology and Spirituality sets the stage for the need to look at “theology of prayer” as a test for the quality or legitimacy of the new forms of Pentecostal prayer. Spirituality and theology are therefore overlapping interdisciplinary areas.

For the purpose of this study, the relationship between theology and Spirituality is contextualised. It can be upheld that a person’s theology exudes his/her Spirituality and vice versa. Differently stated, theology does not exist in a vacuum, but in relationship with Spirituality. Out of one’s beliefs therefore, emotional affection, and experiences ingrained one’s theology; and out of one’s doctrines and Christian praxis, is one’s theology explained. In sum, while theology is about the theoretical aspect of one’s faith, Spirituality encompasses the experiential, i.e., how someone's religious beliefs are manifested in their daily lives. The next section presents a discourse on the relationship between Christian Spirituality and theology in general.

### 3.5 Christian Spirituality and Theology

It is commonly believed that the term Christian Spirituality derives from the Christian God (Haykin, 2007:1-2; cf. Najapfour, 2013b:2; Robinson, 2018:2-5). Philip Sheldrake (2013:2) notes that the word Spirituality derives from the Latin word *spiritualitas*, which is derived from the spiritualist adjective. The Latin term, however, comes from the New Testament Greek noun *pneuma*, which means “spirit”. Regarding the Old Testament, the term Spirituality is frequently associated with the Hebrew word *ruach*, which originally meant “spirit”, “breath”, and “wind” (McGrath, 2015:2-3), as depicted in Genesis 1:1-2<sup>126</sup> and later, frequently, in the Pauline epistles. According to Sheldrake (1999:162), “Spirituality is mapping a moral standard based on the belief about God to produce a deliberate lifestyle pattern in an effort to relate and worship God.” Similarly, Schmidt and Little (2007:232) assert that the best definition of Christian Spirituality is “the human response to God’s gracious call to a personal relationship.”

McGrath (2015:2-3), referring to Pauline Pneumatology, defines Spirituality from a Christian perspective as “living in the Spirit” or as a “person of the Spirit” as derived from I Corinthians 2:14-15<sup>127</sup>, i.e., a person within whom the spirit of God resides and who lives

<sup>126</sup> ‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.’ (Gen 1:1-2).

<sup>127</sup> ‘The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. The person

under His influence. Contrary to the writings of individuals such as Thomas Aquinas, Spirituality does not refer to the opposite of physical. According to McGrath (2015:2-3), the word was used to describe a 'clerical state' in the thirteenth century (during the time of Aquinas), and during the time of the clergy. McGrath explains further that it was utilised in this manner in Europe until the nineteenth century. In the 1960s, the term reappeared in the terminology of the Second Vatican Council to describe studies on the Christian life.

Christian Spirituality has therefore taken many forms throughout history, including broad categories, such as Roman Catholic Spirituality, Methodist Spirituality, and Reformed Spirituality as well as narrower categories such as monastic Spirituality (and within it, the specific Spirituality of various monastic orders), with some of these communities experiencing God in a way that is relevant to its cultural traditions (Albrecht and Howards, 2014:35). All Christian Spirituality is however dependent on the inspiration and revelation of the Triune God as revealed in Jesus Christ (Dreyer and Bennett, 2006:3-5). The essence of Christian Spirituality is therefore a personal relationship with Christ (Newlands, 1989:159).

Christianity, according to McGrath (2015:3), is based on three main components: a set of sacred beliefs, a set of values, and a way of life. Unquestionably, there are numerous Christian sects with varying doctrinal and hermeneutical differences, but authentic Christianity is characterised by a set of beliefs, doctrines, creeds, ethics, and practices that ultimately point to Christ and should guide the believer's way of life. These values, norms, and practices are all connected to God's moral nature as revealed in Christ Jesus' character and teaching (McGrath, 2015:3). The believer's Spirituality does not only concern their relationship with God via Christ but just as Bechtle (2016:317-319) describes, Christian Spirituality is never complete except when the multi-level complex relationship with one's neighbour is also authenticated by it (Boyd-MacMillan, 2004:63). Just as Spirituality is about the experiential relationship between an individual and the divine, so does theology attempt to describe that dogma of that relationship.

Theology is therefore not only seen as an attempt to describe the literal relationship between man and God, but also a concerted attempt to describe Christian praxis of that relation through an examination of the Spirituality of prayer, liturgy, sacraments, and devotional practices. Through theology, the depths, and heights of the Christian's fulfilled experience (to use McGrath's terminology) of Spirituality are documented (McGhee and

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with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments' (1 Cor 2:14-15).

Grant, 2017:162-165). As a result, Christian Spirituality is concerned with both the internal relationship with humanity and the external relationship with God and can be reframed as a theological expression of one's understanding and communicative experience of God as well as the relationship with one's community. From Mark 12:28-31, Jesus indicated that the second most important commandment was one's relationship with his/her neighbour and therefore community:

“One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these’” (Mk 12:28-31).

Importantly, and as pertained to this study, prayer, according to South African theologian John de Gruchy (2011:29), was understood as a form of Spirituality in and through which the word of God was communicated long before theology became a scientific discipline. For the sake of Christian Spirituality, Christian theology exists to exemplify the Christian identity, experiences, and discipleship to shape its praxis such as the place of prayer (Bechtle, 2016:308-312). Prayer has therefore been understood as the absolute means of theological engagement concerning seeking and knowing God (De Gruchy & Villa- Vicencio, 1994:5).

In Christian Spirituality, therefore, the theology of the sacred relationship with the divine can best be demonstrated through a communication loop called prayer. Since Christian Spirituality exists in many forms, and in this case a narrower context in relation to this thesis is Pentecostal Spirituality, the next section discusses the nature of Pentecostal Spirituality in relation to Pentecostal theology.

### **3.6 Pentecostal Spirituality and Pentecostal Theology: Two Sides of the Same Coin?**

Due to the difficulty in distinguishing between Pentecostal Spirituality and Pentecostal theology, this research proposes in this section a synthesised theology of ‘two sides of the same coin’. The theology of Pentecostalism is thus incomplete without describing it from the sensibilities of its Spirituality, and the practice of Pentecostal Spirituality as an affirmative pointer to Pentecostal theology.

Nel (2015:8) echoes that it is challenging to describe Pentecostal Spirituality because of the many Pentecostal traditions and denominations, and due to the cultural and racial differences in which it is found. Albrecht and Howards (2014:235-237) may therefore be correct in describing Pentecostal Spirituality as the ‘conglomeration’ of thought patterns,

practices and beliefs affectionately expressed in a religious phenomenon as a repository of those practices and beliefs (cf. Nel, 2015:25). According to Land (1993:30; cf. Nel, 2015:11), when Pentecostal Spirituality fails to meet the key criteria of being a conglomeration of actions, beliefs, and affection, it falls into fragments and intellectualism, sentimentalism, or activism. This is so because '[o]rthodoxy, orthopathy and orthopraxy<sup>128</sup> are closely related in Pentecostal Spirituality' (Land,2010:31), because God, who is Spirit, creates a Spirituality that is cognitive, affective, and behavioural all at once, thus 'driving towards a unified epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics' (Land, 1993:31; cf. Nel, 2015, 11).

One thing that is therefore clear for the Pentecostal is that Christian life is living in the Spirit and experiencing the manifestation of the move of the Holy Spirit (Albrecht and Howards, 2014:235; cf. Quinones-Roman, 2015:6). To this end, the foundation of Pentecostal Spirituality can be postulated as the abiding presence of the Spirit in a believer that causes a distinctive evidential effect with a longing for the eschaton (Ackland, 2012:2). Ackland continues by saying that Pentecostalism shares a common constituent in the historical origin of the experience in Holy Spirit Baptism (Ackland, 2012:12). From Land, Nel and Ackland, therefore, the dimension of the spirit is key in understanding Pentecostal Spirituality. Asamoah-Gyadu (2009:5) as well agrees with the above assertion that one key aspect of appreciating Pentecostal Spirituality naturally comes through the issue of the spirit and experience.

As stated earlier in Chapter 1 (section 1.8), Spirituality, even in Pentecostal Spirituality, concerns more than only the Spirit (Nel, 2015:15). Though the experience of the Spirit seems a crucial aspect of, even contained within the term, Spirituality, which Land (1993:30) is also of the view that Spirituality, even Pentecostal Spirituality, concerns more than only the Spirit. Or, in the words of Ackland (2012:1-3) Pentecostal Spirituality should be more than just the experience of the *pneuma*, and the speaking in tongues.

Cotton (1996:66) as well as Albrecht and Howards (2014:235-240) 're-visioned' Pentecostal Spirituality as 'an integration of the beliefs, practices, sensibilities and values'. From an ontological perspective, one may say that one's beliefs affect one's values, and one's values affect one's practices, which ultimately affect one's sensibilities. What is important here is that these four elements (beliefs, values, practices, and sensibilities) also

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<sup>128</sup> Nel (2015:24), thus holds that orthodoxy, orthopathy and orthopraxy are also the foundations of Pentecostal hermeneutics. Pentecostal hermeneutics emphasises the interrelationship between the Holy Spirit, Scripture, and the empowering of the believing community to equip them for community service. Spirit, Scripture, and community are thus essential.



pertain to prayer. Noticeably, Land concurs also that Pentecostal Spirituality is exactly an ‘integration of beliefs, values, practices and affections’ [thus expressly adding an element of feeling or sensibilities (affections) as it is called above] (Land, 2010:124).

Cotton (1996:66-67) furthermore believes that Pentecostal Spirituality would never be complete without acknowledging the interaction between belief and doctrine, authority, corporate life of worship, and the believer. The concept of practices here means the distinctive characteristics of Pentecostals’ worship and lived experience concerning God (individual and corporate devotions). The ‘lived experiences’ here include the rites such as praise, worship, pastoral messages, altar calls, testimonies, fasting, delivering of prophetic utterances, ‘glossolalic’ experiences, dancing in the Spirit, being slain in the Spirit, anointing, healing and deliverance, and of course, prayer.<sup>129</sup> Values and affections, on the other hand, refer to certain habitual predispositions that characterise the Pentecostal relationship (Albrecht and Howards, 2014:240). One can only therefore better understand Pentecostal Spirituality by experiencing these four quadrants of Pentecostal Spirituality: beliefs, practices, sensibilities, and values. African Pentecostal Spirituality can therefore be better understood when one observes their practices, attempts to theologise their beliefs, and thereafter analyse their sensibilities and values.

In reference to Chapter 2 of this study (par. 2.8), from an African Pentecostal perspective, new believers mostly immerse themselves in Scripture and practice based on their previous ontological pre-existing knowledge and worldview. At the point of conversion, people’s previous beliefs and religious ideologies form the diminutive silhouette by which they attempt to interpret Scripture and practise their new religion. Coming from a worldview saturated with demons and fear, 2 Corinthians 10:4<sup>130</sup> will mostly be quoted by many Pentecostals and interpreted contextually as referring to driving and casting out demons who

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<sup>129</sup> I have observed with keen interest the development of Pentecostal Spirituality in a blend of practice with practical meaning to the participants in a genuine association with the theology of prayer in Ghana. When I was twelve years, I remember my father who was an illiterate farmer of many cocoa farms would fast and pray from the 1st to the 7th of every January to seek the favour of God in the ensuing year and seek the divine protection of God for all the family. As a mandatory week of fasting and prayer, my little sister participated fully in this weeklong spiritual exercise as young as six years. During the annual family fasting and prayer, there was no work, no travel and no excuse for any family member. This became a family ritual in which some of my siblings participated even without genuinely understanding it. As such, between 25th and 28th December, we tried to fill our tummies in anticipation of the weeklong fasting ahead. Growing up in an era of deep disciplined Pentecostal Spirituality, I realised the concept of the genuine spiritual encounter was missing, with the divergence of prayer moving from genuine encounter to thwarting the schemes of the enemy and the desire for divine favour.

<sup>130</sup> ‘The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds’ (2 Cor 10:4).

have pervaded their environment. In light of this study's focus on Pentecostal prayer, prayer too may, therefore, be directed by and based on fundamental ideologies and a traditional ontological worldview.

At this point, it may be helpful to consider again the singularity of Pentecostalism when compared to other Christian spiritualities. Although Pentecostalism became a dominant religious phenomenon in the late twentieth century, its Spirituality cannot be separated from the larger concept of Christian Spirituality. A scholar such as Daniel Albrecht (1999a:9-14) believes that over time, Pentecostal Spirituality has become a distinct form of Christian Spirituality describable through its rites. Invariably, Pentecostalism evolved out of the existing stock of Christianity, but with some added unique features. This uniqueness evolves around the emphasis of the glossolalia as an experience. The challenge with Pentecostalism has been the inability of its adherents to descriptively explain its Spirituality, with Harvey Cox (1995:81-122) and Hollenweger (1999a:34-36) postulating it as characterised by primal Spirituality, oral liturgy, and narrative theology. As to Pentecostal theology, it is, as a whole, interwoven with the understanding that the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son (John 14:16-18), and that the Spirit brings the abiding presence of the Father and the Son to humanity. And that through the Spirit, Christians are directed, and the mind of the Father and the Son are made known to the one who walks in the Spirit.

‘And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.’ (Jn 14:16-18)

Pentecostal theology, therefore, seeks to emphasise the unambiguous centrality of the Holy Spirit as the fulcrum of the distinctive Pentecostal approach to theology (Land, 2010:28). Smith (2010:30) somewhat sarcastically holds that from the perspective of Land, Pentecostal Spirituality gives a cursor towards authentic Christianity, which invariably means that to be a Christian is to be Pentecostal because the outpouring of the Spirit symbolically birthed the body of Christ. If the outpouring of the Spirit was for the public outreach of the church, then all churches must be Pentecostal in nature.

Walter Hollenweger (2005:18-19) explains that the origins of Pentecostalism and its theology lie in its oral liturgy, narrative theology, democratic participation, ecstatic encounters, and body-mind experiences, and most significantly for this study, in prayer. According to Land (1993:18-19), Pentecostal Spirituality is an experience in the eschatological and missionary community's lived reality that is (please note) expressed

through prayer and intercession. This experience in other words manifests in prayer, during praise, worship and adoration of God as well as in a persistent longing for the return of the Lord (Land, 1993:22-23).

The link between Pentecostal theology and Spirituality is clear for Archer (2007:302; c.f. Shaull and Cesar, 2000:xiii) whose view of Pentecostal theology means it should be approached from the perspective of its distinctive features and its Spirituality for a better appreciation. 'Pentecostal theology therefore involves re-visioning Pentecostal tradition in the light of the Spirit and word' (Studebaker, 2003:248-305). Archer (2007:305) further states that 'constructive' Pentecostal theology consists of articulating traditions implicit in Pentecostal Spirituality. To this end, Keith Warrington (2008:21; c.f Karkkainen, 2006: 13) believes that Pentecostalism is about knowing God experientially and self-expressing this encounter, which to him, no theological formulation can fully apprehend. Pentecostal theology can only be explained primarily in terms of Spirituality and essentially, as a spiritual experience. Just as for Warrington (2008:21), to whom the centrality of Pentecostal faith and practice lies in its Spirituality of encounter and experience, Karkkainen (2006:13) too believes that meeting the challenge of rightly representing and formulating Pentecostal theology can be best done by conceptualisation via its Spirituality and experience. Karkkainen (2006:13) therefore holds that Pentecostal theology may be explained as readiness to encounter the divine for enlightenment and transformation, as Warrington (2008:21) also affirms by describing Pentecostal theology as an encounter with God, the Bible, and the community.

The same emphasis is found in MacDonald's (2000:63-65) description of the Spirituality of Pentecostals based on a Christ-centred and experience-centred theology, which is accompanied by spontaneous, emotional, heartfelt, life-transforming encounters (cf. Warrington, 2008:22). Warrington (2008:22) therefore states that baptism in the Holy Spirit is not just a distinctive doctrinal feature of Pentecostals, but a central feature that projects the encounter and experience aspects of Pentecostal theology.

Still on the relationship between Pentecostal theology and Spirituality, Vondey's (2017:14) position on Pentecostal theology is that the origin of Pentecostal theology could be linked to the day of Pentecost, and it should be appreciated that it is the Spirituality of the day of Pentecost that marks Pentecostal theology. To this end, Pentecostal theology is grounded in Pentecostal Spirituality, as demonstrated by personal experience, community involvement, and scriptural witness, as reinforced by the pneumatic Christological evidence. Similar to Warrington (2008:18), Vondey (2017:15) holds that Pentecostal theology flows through Jesus

with an emphasis on the spirit of Christ. In short, and in line with the above, Vondey (2017:17) asserts that ‘Pentecostal theology is not dogmatic; rather, it seeks a relationship between Spirituality and doctrine, so that living theology becomes reciprocal between beliefs, passions, and acts on the one hand, and doctrine articulation on the other.’

Pentecostal theology is therefore both pneumatic (as the experience resulting from the encounter with the Spirit), and pneumatological (as a reflection on the experience) in nature (Vondey, 2017:18). Pentecostal theology begins with a personal encounter with the Holy Spirit and progresses to dogma communicated through an oral narrative of testimony, proclamation, prayer, music, dance, prophecy, and tongues (Vondey, 2018:6-8). From another perspective, but making a similar point, Archer (2007:307) mentions that the early Pentecostal way of doing theology involves a description of its Spirituality which includes its testimonies, songs, trances, inspired preaching, and dance.

Walter Hollenweger (1994:201) does not only describe early Pentecostal theology as orally transmitted with a distinct focus on Spirituality but says this orally transmitted theology involved an oral liturgy, narrative theology, prayer, worship, body-mind experiences, liturgical dances, and anointing. Pentecostalism is therefore ‘ambiguously experiential’ (Vondey, 2016:225-227).

It is therefore plausible to postulate from a Pentecostal perspective that the experiential ambiguity can only be explained when one experiences the overtly spiritual experience of the experiential (experience beyond just the glossolalia). In practice, therefore, beliefs affect affections, affections affect practices, practices become the basis of Spirituality, and Spirituality becomes the fibre of Pentecostal theology.

In summarising the relationship between Pentecostal Spirituality and Pentecostal theology, since Pentecostal theology cannot be described in full except by using the affirmative<sup>131</sup> actions of its Spirituality, Pentecostal Spirituality and theology can be referred to as two sides of the same coin. As a single coin showing two sides with different pictorial representations, both surfaces point to the same value of the currency. One cannot be exhaustively explained without reference to the other; both have the common denominator: the experience and manifestation of the Spirit whose praxis is demonstrated by prayer.

Pentecostal theology can therefore be seen as an attempt to systematise the distinctive features of a community whose ubiquitous characteristics point to the experience of the pneumatology, a strong belief in the Christology with a focus on the experiential orality of

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<sup>131</sup> Affirmative here means self-descriptive meanings.

prayer. Specifically relating to prayer, which is the focus of the study, one cannot discuss Pentecostal Spirituality without recounting its affirmative mode of disposition: prayer. For it is through prayer that the experience of the power of the Holy Spirit is demonstrated, for the Spirit is given and experienced through prayer. The Spirituality and theology of the Pentecostal cannot be described without prayer. With the above considerations in mind, and if the discussion up to here focused on Pentecostal Spirituality in general, one may rightly ask, what then is distinctive African Pentecostal Spirituality and theology?

### **3.7 African Pentecostal Spirituality**

Classical Pentecostal churches are known for their cultural adaptability, or as Droogers (2014:196) describes it, ‘flying on the wings of modernisation, globalisation and transnationalisation’. Each Pentecostal community experiences and demonstrates its experience in accordance with its cultural milieu, history, and Christian community’s ethos (Albrecht and Howards, 2014:235).

According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2013a:179), therefore, every aspect of Pentecostal Spirituality derives from how people *feel or are led by* the Holy Spirit as well as from the dramatic experience of Spirit baptism<sup>132</sup> (cf. Cartlegde, 2002:94-98). The spirit-led community determines the nature of Pentecostal ministry and its practices such as tithes and offerings, the interpretation of communion, the emphasis on anointing, and the nature of its prayer. Pneumatic(s) is/are unquestionably the foundation of Pentecostal Spirituality (Asamoah-Gyadu 2013:179-181). As was seen in Sections 1.2 and 3.6 (above), Albrecht and Howards (2014:236-239) assert that Pentecostal Spirituality can be summarised into three broad segments, namely beliefs that condition one’s view of God; practices that serve as a vehicle for one’s relationship with God; and values that predispose one’s response to the Spirit and govern cherished Pentecostal practices and behavioural patterns. Again, it is important to note that through belief, practices and values are the predisposed pillars under which the Full Gospel, rites, worship, testimonies, healing, the use of spiritual gifts for the community’s benefit, supernatural encounters, and of course, prayer and prayer practices fall. The beliefs and values of the African Pentecostal undoubtedly affect their practice of prayer.

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<sup>132</sup> This, however, Asamoah-Gyadu (2013a:180) admits may also be somewhat of a slippery slope, sometimes seen as based very much on a Pentecostal (church) leader’s subjectivity, intuition, and leadership; and because no church is perfect.

Bringing together again Pentecostal Spirituality and traditional worldviews, according to Sampong, (2011:25), Ghanaian Pentecostal Spirituality is ‘cosmological struggle of the continuities of the primal worldview using the realms of the pneumatic supernatural’. Since African traditions are expressed via oral tradition, it is also not surprising that African Pentecostal Spirituality are expressed via dreams, myths, visions, trances, music, song, drumming, and dancing (De Gruchy, 2011:62), but all to the background of the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. Since the basis of Pentecostal Spirituality is the pneumatic (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a), Ghanaian Pentecostal Spirituality therefore has ‘otherworld’ and ‘this-world’ understanding of salvation through the empowering experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Sampong, 2011:31). In the words of Kuwornu-Adjaottor, African Pentecostal Spirituality therefore expresses living in the active presence of God, whose manifest presence is able to overcome disease, fear, demons, spirits, magic, and tainted destinies (Kuwornu-Adjaottor, 2011:121).

To enable us to appreciate better the concept of Ghanaian (or any form of) Classical Pentecostal Spirituality, its key features (beliefs, practices, values, and sensibilities) will be discussed by reviewing their rites, worship, prayer practices, testimonies and healing, use of spiritual gifts for the benefit of the community and supernatural encounters in section 3.8 of this work. The concept of ministry, tithes and offering, the new interpretation of communion<sup>133</sup>, emphasis on the anointing, and any form of interpretation is guided by the spirit-led community.

This research characterises African Pentecostal Spirituality by the Full Gospel, the affirmative spirit experience, and other ecclesiastical factors that are unique to the community based on some cultural adaptation. Importantly, this does not mean that these are exclusively *African* characteristics of Pentecostal Spirituality. Africa naturally shares a lot with the rest of the Pentecostal world, but also has its own emphases. This also does not mean that what is said below is exactly same for all African Pentecostal churches, denominations, or traditions, as degrees of local and regional differences do exist. This is also important, and the reason why the title of this study refers to Pentecostal Spiritualities in plural. Since the scope of this study is limited to Ghana, reviewing the key characteristics, practices, and understanding in Ghana, and sometimes, and specifically within the Classical Pentecostal churches and The Church of Pentecost in particular shall be the focus.

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<sup>133</sup> Communion here refers to the Eucharist.

### 3.8 Conceptualising the Characteristic Spirituality of Ghanaian Classical Pentecostal Churches

It has been shown so far that Pentecostalism in Africa was introduced to the context of the traditional African worldview, which is holistic, and does not allow for a differentiation between spiritual and earthly realities (Suurmond, 1995:7). The latter also leads to differentiated African Pentecostal spiritualities and theological pluralism. Pentecostalism, being only one of many Christian traditions on the continent has also had a significant impact not only on African indigenes but also on other so-called mainline churches. Over time, Pentecostal churches have also, for example, affected the latter's liturgies to the extent that today in Ghana, it may be difficult to differentiate between Pentecostals and mainline churches regarding their services or elements in them (Nadar, 2009:132). As already indicated, the Holy Spirit is the central theme for Pentecostalism.

Although the Holy Spirit is the main focus of Pentecostalism, there are many schools of thought on Spirit baptism and its works in the believer. Some hold the doctrine of subsequence and others hold the doctrine of consequence, i.e., a 'baptism of' and a 'baptism in' the Holy Spirit Menzies, 8;-167 1998:157, 1992:54, Macchia, cf. 91;-1985:87 (Fee, <sup>134</sup> 1994; Elkington, 1998:9-11; Chan, 1999:196-202). Even though most Classical Pentecostals like the CoP and neo-Pentecostals subscribe to the doctrine of initial evidence, this has been problematic for the mainline churches who believe in the doctrine of consequence, that Spirit baptism is consequential to salvation (Chan, 1999:195-205). For most Classical Pentecostals and neo-Pentecostals like the CoP therefore, Spirit baptism is a second step (*supraditum*) in the salvation process/new birth (Chan, 1999:208). Moreover, baptism in the Holy Spirit is subsequent to salvation with a demonstration of speaking in tongues as initial evidence and producing empowerment for the gospel.

The first view of Spirit baptism (subsequence), as indicated earlier, is the traditional Pentecostal understanding. In this view, it is held that believers receive the 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' evidenced by the gift of the Holy Spirit, especially speaking in tongues. The doctrine of subsequence says that the Holy Spirit baptism is subsequent to salvation and produces empowerment. It has the initial evidence of speaking in tongues. Dunn (1984) states that 'the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a second (Pentecostal) experience distinct from and subsequent to conversion which gives the believer power for witness'. In the doctrine of subsequence, therefore, Pentecostals believe that the Holy Spirit is subsequent to salvation;

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<sup>134</sup> The two main schools of thought are the doctrine of subsequence, and the doctrine of consequence.

and Spirit baptism is viewed as an experience in which the Spirit either confers or awakens gifts within the life of the believer. There are several passages that point to this perspective, but it is prevalent in the book of Acts. In Acts, there seems to be a strong tie between the gift of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues (Acts 19:6).

The doctrine of consequence holds that Spirit baptism is consequential to salvation, thus, once an individual has the new birth, they are baptised into Christ and have the Holy Spirit indwelling them. The doctrine of consequence is held, as the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs at conversion; thus, the believer is baptised into the body of Christ. In the second view, baptism happens around the same time as salvation, contrary to the Pentecostal view of baptism happening after salvation.

Macchia (1992:54, 1998:156) moves the initial evidence doctrine a step further with the sacramental view of Spirit baptism, and with a deep connection between the glossolalia and the Spirit baptism. Others like James Dunn (1984) had argued that the theological interpretation of Spirit baptism as conversion-initiation may be called non-sacramental and has been vigorously argued by some Evangelicals.

Along with Spirit baptism, with evidence of the glossolalia<sup>135</sup>, giving, spontaneous worship, holiness, immersion baptism, partaking in the Lord's Supper, miraculous healing, and the Second Coming of Christ, Classical Pentecostals in Ghana also hold these other beliefs. In general, De Gruchy (2011:60-62) characterises African Pentecostal Spirituality as being based on its orality, a fusion of physical with the meta-physical (interconnection of sacred and secular) as effectively epistemological, the continuation of miracles in the church (pneumatologically potent) and having a strong eschatological orientation. Other characteristics noted by de Witte (2018:5) includes worship styles, preaching, prayer, dressing, body movement, and facial expression, among others (De Witte, 2018:5). These characterisations of African Pentecostalism, according to De Gruchy (2011:62), are unique in general. At various points of this dissertation, some or many of the characteristics of the Spirituality of Pentecostals have been touched and will continue to be mentioned for it would be impossible to mention the praxis without the experience.

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<sup>135</sup> Whereas Classical Pentecostals believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is with the evidence of speaking in tongues, some neo-Pentecostals and charismatics do not believe so. The Classical Pentecostal believes that the gift of the Holy Spirit is produced thereafter in the life of the believer after the baptism. The neo-Pentecostal believes that baptism of the Holy Spirit produces indwelling of the Spirit but not necessarily in speaking in tongues. They believe that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit may result in the demonstration of the gift of the Holy Spirit, for example, in healing miracles.



According to Keith Warrington (2008:15), Pentecostals emphasise experiential Christianity over doctrinal confession. For the Pentecostal, therefore, experiences are part of the life of the community of faith. Experiential theology is characterised as praxis-oriented and oral-narrative where life experiences are valid aspects of their hermeneutics and theology as much as conceptual theologising (Warrington, 2008:16). Pentecostal Spirituality is therefore an authentic expression of their religious and spiritual life, and their theology is the sense of God now. So, it is the people's faith and worship that determine how Pentecostalism is perceived, not creeds (Warrington, 2008:21-23). Pentecostalism is dynamic, as viewed through the prism of experience. It is a theology with practical applications that works with experiential elements. Pentecostal theology is thus a theology of encounter and experience. As a result, they seek spontaneous, and experiential knowledge of God. Pentecostals insist that one knows God experientially and not theoretically; as an experience of the encounter itself (Warrington, 2008:21-23).

Althouse & Wilkinson (2014:184,192) more so postulates that the Pentecostal experience of God in varied ways includes the soaking prayers and spiritual laughter during which revelations and dreams are revealed. Pentecostals are marked by an experiential Spirituality that emphasises immediate encounters with God through the Holy Spirit. Pentecostal experience of God is mediated by the Spirit's work through Scripture, the Christian tradition, and the broader cultural context (Waddell & Althouse, 2016:116-118).

Pentecostalism's belief system is contingent on multiple factors due to its heterogeneous diversity. Based on the research focus for the study, this section attempts to examine the nature and characteristics of the Spirituality of Ghanaian Pentecostal churches. Although from a general contextual milieu, there may be differences, moving from one Classical Pentecostal church to the other. The sections below, therefore, attempt to conceptualise the characteristics of Classical Pentecostal Churches.

### **3.8.1 The Full Gospel as the Foursquare Model<sup>136</sup>**

Classical Pentecostals believe in the experience of the four-square gospel<sup>137</sup> (herein after called the Full Gospel) as an important component of their ecclesiology (Nel, 2020a:3). The Pentecostal foursquare gospel are outlined as Christ the saviour, Christ the healer, Christ the

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<sup>136</sup> The foursquare gospel and the four-fold gospel are used interchangeably; they mean the same. Another term for the foursquare gospel is the Full Gospel. For the sake of uniformity, the term Full Gospel would be used forthwith.

<sup>137</sup> This Full Gospel is explained in detail in section 3.9.2 of this chapter.

baptiser and Christ the soon coming King. This forms as the basis of Pentecostal Spirituality and therefore theology. The Pentecostal experience of conversion, healing and Spirit baptism, are a continuous realisation of the promise in the New Testament (Nel, 2020a:3) (see section 3.9) as one awaits Christ's earnest return.

When one accepts De Gruchy's description of Pentecostalism's defining characteristic as orality nature, it is immediately apparent that the Full Gospel is the focal point of Pentecostal preaching. Pentecostals believe that their Spirituality hinges on the tenets of the Full Gospel of Christ the Saviour, Spirit-baptiser, healer, and soon-coming King (Badu Wood, 2019:252).

Following John's account in John 16:8–11, 'When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because people do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned', Pentecostals believe that conversion is the beginning of a person's transformational experience in which the Holy Spirit actively convicts<sup>138</sup> (reproves) the sinner of their sins (Tomberlin, 2019:31). The 'gospel of Christ is the gospel of the Cross, which grants salvation and hope to a person' (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:115). Additionally, Pentecostals hold the evangelical view that the salvation of humanity is the cause of Christ's incarnation, sinless life, crucifixion, atoning death, and resurrection for the restoration of humanity's broken relationship with God (Quayesi-Amakye, 2017:58; Warrington, 2008:32-33). The Pentecostal also believes that salvation is contingent upon confessing Christ's lordship.

As stated in Romans 10:9–10, 'If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved', the Pentecostal is aware that 'assurance of salvation comes through Christ and the power of his Holy Spirit – what Pentecostals refer to as pneumatological-soteriology' as in the words of Amos Yong (2003:86-87). Pentecostals further believe in the instantaneous work of the Holy Spirit in terms of the believer's redemption, justification, and sanctification, thus resulting in a life of freedom in the Spirit and a right relationship with God (Nyamekye, 2017:72-74; cf. Quayesi-Amakye, 2017:59-61).

For Pentecostals, Jesus Christ is a miracle healer-Christ the healer. Pentecostals believe salvation encompasses not only the spirit/soul but also the body; therefore, salvation may

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<sup>138</sup> 'Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?' (John 8:46).

have the effect of divine healing (Tomberlin, 2019:40-41). Pentecostals, therefore, believe that divine healing (miraculous physical healing) is the body's sanctification, which can be completed and accessed through prayer (Tomberlin, 2019:40-41). Healing is a practical demonstration for Pentecostals that Christ is still active in His church and His Spirit is still at work in the body of Christ. During church services, an officiant would thus invite members who are infirm, afflicted by the devil, or otherwise afflicted by the curse of life to come forward for healing. At that point, the church would pause for congregational prayers for the individual(s) followed by a request for their healing testimony<sup>139</sup> (if they have indeed experienced healing).

Concerning Christ, the baptiser, Pentecostals believe Jesus Christ is the baptiser in the Holy Spirit. As discussed earlier (section 3.8), Classical Pentecostals believe in the theory of subsequence, that Spirit baptism occurs after conversion. This baptism is evident with the speaking of new tongues. For some Pentecostals, sanctification is a "primary preparation for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, with evidence of speaking in tongues when the believer is filled with the Holy Spirit" (Tomberlin, 2019:37-38) (compare Ephesians 1:13–14<sup>140</sup>). The expectation of the Spirit-filled '*glossolalic*<sup>141</sup>' life is to produce a new life and be transformed into Christ's image (Robeck and Yong, 2014:18-22). Luke 24:49<sup>142</sup> means to Pentecostals a promise of empowerment to live righteously and to receive the charismata for evangelism and church service (Tomberlin, 2019:39). Classical Pentecostalism holds that charisma edifies the church (Yong, 2007:19), and that 'the fruit of the Spirit enhances the quality of the Christian's life' (Yong, 2008:15).

Lastly, 'Pentecostals believe that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was an eschatological event heralding the Second Coming of Jesus Christ' (Tomberlin, 2019:42-43); as such, it is 'a call to mission to spread the gospel to all nations'. The mission of the

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<sup>139</sup> At the Easter convention of 2018 at Cosmos School Park (Abeka in Accra, Ghana), ministering an altar call, Ps ATN (Not real name) proclaimed: 'Christ does not only save the soul; Christ saves the body. The spiritual birth reflects in the physical. When you are saved, you are healed of any disease or infirmities. The Jesus of Nazareth who went about doing good in the Bible days is still doing good. Come, and you would be healed. Come, and you would be transformed, come, and your life would never remain the same. Come to Jesus for salvation, come to Jesus for a good life, come to Jesus for healing, come to Jesus for prayers, and it shall be well with you, and through you, your entire family shall be saved.'

<sup>140</sup> 'And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory' (Eph 1:13-14).

<sup>141</sup> This word is self-coined by the author (JTIB), as an adjective to the term glossolalia.

<sup>142</sup> 'I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high' (Lk 24:49).

‘Pentecostal is to spread the message ‘Jesus is coming soon; repent of your sins’ before the return of Christ’. The last words of Jesus in Matthew 28:18–20 is their first command.

“Moreover, Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:18–20).

From the CoP’s eighth tenet (CoP, 2010:5), for example, Jesus is coming back for His elect, for the saved, and for those prepared to have eternal life. The eighth tenet of the CoP reads,

we believe in the Second Coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead, both the saved and the unsaved; they that are saved to the resurrection of life and the unsaved to the resurrection of damnation (Dan. 12:2; Mk 13:26; Jn 5:28, 29; Ac. 1:11; 10:4; Rom. 2:7-11; 6:23).

Christ, the soon-coming King is therefore the gospel message to the dying world to restore humanity unto God through Christ. Among Classical Pentecostals, the concept of the eschaton manifests itself in the need to be vigilant. As the return of Christ is uncertain but believed to be closer than ever (Matthew 24:42<sup>143</sup>), Mathew 26:41<sup>144</sup> requires that we keep vigil and pray (Warrington, 2008:313). The eschaton instils a sense of urgency and motivates believers to pray more fervently in order to make it to heaven and avoid falling into the enemy’s traps. The idea of the eschaton, therefore, serves as a warning to stay away from these pitfalls such as temptations and fleshly appetites. In the light of Pentecostals’ conviction that the devil is at work in the final days, it is maintained that without being ‘in the Spirit’ (Gal 5:16<sup>145</sup>), a person may lose their way to heaven due to the diverse, prolific activities of the devil in the present day. Pentecostals believe that ‘Christ will return for his saints or those whose names are written in the book of Life of the Lamb’ (Gyimah, 2017b:161).

### **3.8.2 Experience of the Glossolalia Toward Transformation and Discipleship**

The experience of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is the symbolic representation of what Albrecht and Howards (2014:256-266) refer to as tangible pieces of evidence of conversions, supernatural experiences, and the pneumatic manifestation of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling (demonstrated by glossolalia) (cf. Asamoah-Gyadu, 2010:5). The Pentecostal believes that the account on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) is a repeatable promise for all generations of

<sup>143</sup> ‘Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come’ (Mat 24:42).

<sup>144</sup> ‘Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ (Mat 26:41).

<sup>145</sup> ‘So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh’ (Gal 5:16).

Pentecostals (Mittelstadt, 2013:27; Nel, 2017:1-2). Pentecostal churches emphasise their salvation in Christ as a prerequisite<sup>146</sup> for being filled with the Holy Spirit, with speaking in tongues as evidence (White, 2017:2). A crucial experience of Pentecostalism is that ‘the speaking in tongues as a distinct sign of the restorationist view’<sup>147</sup> (Albrecht and Howards, 2014:246) of the Azusa Street Revival or an interpretation of the continuity view of Acts 2 (Albrecht and Howards, 2014:246; Yong, 2007:2-4).

Some theologians have also labelled the conduct of Pentecostal services as ‘ecstatic with wired demonstration’ (Howard, 2019:161-163). Often referred to as the doctrine of initial evidence, this is a central, fundamental aspect of Classical Pentecostalism (Hollenweger, 2005:222). What defines Pentecostalism is the experience of the Holy Spirit in transformation, radical discipleship, and manifestation of the acts of the Holy Spirit (White and Niemandt, 2014:472). For The Church of Pentecost, Spirit baptism with the evidence of speaking in tongues is the fundamental basis for the development of the fruit of the Holy Spirit for living Christlike lives (White, 2017:4).

For Pentecostals, glossolalia signifies God’s immediate presence among His people (Macchia, 2016:127). ‘Speaking in tongues for the Pentecostal means more than emotionalism but a heightened awareness that God is here and with his people’ (Macchia, 2016:126-127). The Pentecostal would therefore go to great lengths to ensure that the members are baptised in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, short of which ‘total conversion’ is perceived to be incomplete. This is presumably the reason why Pentecostals would still evangelise the Catholic, and mainline churches and would want them to make decisions for Christ. They therefore see people who are not baptised in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues having incomplete conversion or for want of words, unsaved.

In the CoP, the doctrine of initial evidence (sometimes known as the theory of subsequence) has been heavily emphasised (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2010:5). More frequently, during Pentecostal church services, a time is set aside for ‘Holy Spirit baptism, and other times for rekindling or infilling of the Spirit for the believer to be filled with the Spirit once again’ (Walker, 2010:44-46). This is Holy Spirit infilling that goes beyond the doctrine of the

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<sup>146</sup> This means a subscription to the theory of subsequence.

<sup>147</sup> The restorationist view holds that after dormant period following the dark ages, the gifts of the Holy Spirit were restored unto the church following the outpouring of the latter rains (usually attributed to the Azusa Street revival).

initial evidence.<sup>148</sup> Occasionally, lengthy church services are held to impart the Holy Spirit. During such service times, one may hear almost the entire community speaking in tongues, praying in tongues, or ‘laughing in tongues<sup>149</sup>’. As a manifestation of a fuller expression of a Spirit-filled life (Anderson, 1991:14-16), ‘the experience of the infilling of the Holy Spirit is not a one-time event for Classical Pentecostals, like those in the CoP’ (Quayesi-Amakye, 2015c:43-45), but a recurring event throughout the believer’s Christian life<sup>150</sup> (Swoboda, 2011:113-114).

In sum, Classical Pentecostals emphasise pneumatic phenomena (Ampong, 2004:98; Markin, 2019:10) because they adhere to the doctrine of initial evidence and are ‘convinced that Holy Spirit baptism must be followed by the experience of speaking in tongues’ (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2009:3). Members were prayed for ‘continuously until they were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit as evidenced by speaking in tongues’ (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2010:3). Members were also informed that they posed no threat to the devil prior to receiving divine power. Church services gradually lasted a long time because of people’s fervour for supernatural encounters and their hunger and thirst for the things of God (Markin, 2019:34-38).

Pentecostals believe that the charismata are given to the church for service (Warrington, 2008:74-75), and ‘demonstrate God’s power and presence through the gifts of the Holy Spirit’ (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:183). In a typical Pentecostal context therefore, the congregation anticipates that the public manifestation of the Holy Spirit’s gift will include charismata such as healing, prophecy, and miracles (Vondey, 2017:122-130). Furthermore, Pentecostals believe that the Holy Spirit’s role is to bring God charismatically into their services (Constantineanu and Scobie, 2018:7), that His immediate presence would be felt and sometimes literally experienced or seen as a cloud of heaviness in the auditorium where they are having their service.

Whenever the Pentecostal service begins and there is a lack of charismata (spiritual gifts), and *pneumatikoi* (spiritual utterance of discernment<sup>151</sup>), they begin to believe that the zeal of their grace is waning, and that their ‘fire’ is being gradually extinguished

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<sup>148</sup> The Pentecostal theory of subsequence holds that the characteristic feature of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the evidence of speaking in tongues subsequent to the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>149</sup> Laughing in the tongues is a Pentecostal manifestation of the Holy Spirit during which people filled with the Holy Spirit laugh unending as a sign of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>150</sup> This is what I call the doctrine of continuous infilling of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>151</sup> Discerning of Spirits has to do with the spiritual ability to distinguish between the manifestation of good and evil spirits.

(Warrington, 2008:72-83), thereby requiring rekindling. According to Warrington (2008:72), each believer receives the Holy Spirit in order to enhance their life and impact the church in totality. The gifts are not therefore for individual use, but rather for the benefit of the community; therefore, the community should not lack the charismata: prophecy, words of wisdom or words of knowledge, or the ability to discern spirits. In the Pentecostal service, the congregation thus anticipates hearing from God via prophecy or other vocal means in order to confirm that God is still present. In Pentecostal circles, the absence of God's voice is the absence of God's presence (Nyamekye, 2022:12-14).

Pentecostals also believe that one of the key roles of the Spirit is the sanctification of the believer with the evidence of the personal development of the fruit of the Spirit<sup>152</sup>(Warrington, 2008:62-66). One distinguishing characteristic of Pentecostal Spirituality is the effect of the pneumatic taking total control of one's entire life, thus resulting in a transformation of not only one's inner, but also one's outward life (Tomberlin, 2019:22-23; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2008:4). Furthermore, Christian conversion is rooted in a human-divine fellowship of the *imago Dei* via the communion of the Holy Spirit (Cartledge, 2014:260). To a church such as the CoP, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is believed to produce the fruit of the Spirit, resulting in genuine discipleship (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005a:139).

In the CoP, a member was not considered to be in good standing until he or she had been baptised in water and by the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in a new tongue. It is believed that a person's spiritual service can only commence following a transformation brought about by the Holy Spirit (Marshall, 2009:2-3; Tomberlin, 2019:23). Initial evidence is believed to empower Pentecostal believers for mission and discipleship (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2009:4); this is also connected to the Pentecostal belief in the priesthood of all believers. Pentecostals believe that the effect of the initial evidence is empowerment, which prevents the continuation of weak moral life or shallow Spirituality (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2009:4).

According to Marshall (2009:2-3) (cf. Osinulu, 2017:3), the identification of Pentecostal conversion as a 'new birth' was a response to a desire for character renewal, and this pneumatic experience should result in a transformed character (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005:13). According to Miller and Yamamori (2007:164-165), the Pentecostal experience should produce a 'puritan convert' who abhors drugs, alcohol, partying, delinquency, immorality, and wastes no money on unnecessary things (Yong, 2010:24). In summary,

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<sup>152</sup> 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law' (Gal 5:16).

baptism in the Holy Spirit is the beginning of a person's conversion experience for traditional Pentecostals in Ghana. This enables the individual to be in communion with God, to feel God's presence, and to thereafter resist the temptation of the flesh.

### **3.8.3 Pentecostal Pneumato-Liturgical Service and Spiritual Participatory Democracy**

Characteristically, each Pentecostal church service is distinct, except for some elements that are consistent regardless of the type of service. The term 'Pneumato-Liturgical' is coined and used in this research to mean Spirit-driven liturgy in Pentecostal services. Pentecostals believe that for the purpose of liturgy, their services must be directed and driven by the influence of the Holy Spirit instead of pre-planned rigid liturgies. Onyinah (2012c:131) indicates that a fully-fledged Classical Pentecostal service may include testimonies, praise, dancing, designated worship time, preaching, and prayer sessions. It is believed that the CoP arose in response to numerous challenges and difficulties. Consequently, it fostered both the congregational and individual practice of prayer (Badu Wood, 2019:244-245), and therefore CoP services remain replete with prayers, despite the fact that each service is distinct.

Typically, Pentecostals are 'a-liturgical'<sup>153</sup> in their services. This means that, until recently, when some forms of formal liturgies were introduced, Classical Pentecostal and neo-prophetic services were typically without formal liturgies<sup>154</sup> (Vondey, 2012b:149). This was understood to be legitimate since as a people of the Spirit, Pentecostals' projected themselves as primarily depending wholly on the movement and direction of the Spirit for the nature of the service on a day-to-day basis. Pentecostal denominations that guided their services with formal liturgies were said to be limiting the operation and move of the Holy Spirit.

In recent times, even though a more structured order of service may be prepared, the moderators may still set this aside under the direction and inspiration of the Spirit of God and assign new roles during the service. Where liturgies are followed, the order of the programme may differ (say the time reserved for worship may be swapped with time for the sermon), and sometimes a new person, who had not been informed earlier, may be assigned a new role in the midst of the service. These changes are said to be prompted by the leading and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals are also told to guard against overly pre-determined services

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<sup>153</sup> 'A-liturgical' is a term coined by the researcher to refer to the fact that Pentecostals prefer not to follow a structured liturgy in their services. This term is opposed to anti-liturgical where liturgy is outrightly rejected.

<sup>154</sup> Here, the term liturgy (*leitourgia*) refers to a 'work of the people', an activity-based formula for public worship.



as this restricts the direction and move of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, Pentecostals known to follow rigidly set liturgies are sometimes seen as people without the Spirit or people who control the Spirit instead of the Spirit controlling them.<sup>155</sup>

The nature of Pentecostal liturgy may arguably be due to the description of its roots (Hollenweger, 2005:18-22; c.f. Vondey, 2012:163-164). The nature of their services is rooted in their oral roots, maximum participation, and experience of the Spirit. This therefore makes it difficult for services to be structured liturgically. Some may argue that although Pentecostalism is predominantly a-liturgical, it is a movement having its liturgy associated with pneumatological experience and worship rather than doctrines written in strict laid down procedure.

Now concerning Pentecostal participatory democracy as mentioned in par. 3.8.2 above, Pentecostals believe in the priesthood of all believers (Nel, 2019c:5) —every believer has direct access to God, and therefore, a role in the body of Christ (Miller and Yamamori, 2007:33-35). As a result, in traditional Pentecostal settings, ministry is not the sole purview of the clergy, but rather involves all believers in God’s Kingdom. As the church leader is regarded as having discernment, other members are considered to be allowed to use their spiritual abilities for the benefit of the church as a whole (Badu Wood, 2019:251-252). Except for a few official/statutory roles reserved for clergy such as marriage blessings, baptisms, ordinations, and child dedications, all other roles may be performed by any member, even officiating at the Lord’s table (communion).<sup>156</sup>

Again, in Classical Pentecostalism in Ghana, such as in the CoP, it is permissible for the Holy Spirit to minister through an individual to the congregation through a ‘word of wisdom’, ‘a word of knowledge’ or ‘a word of prophecy’ (Nkrumah-Agyemang, 2020:7) as indicated in 1 Corinthians 12:7–10

“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of

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<sup>155</sup>As a minister in a Classical Pentecostal church in Ghana, who has practised as an elder (an elder in a Pentecostal Church is a position comparable to a deacon in the Anglican Church) for nearly 20 years, I have observed that in some cases, people who would like certain portions of activity in the church may not be told. Sometimes, one may arrive at the meeting and then be prompted by the presiding person, leader, or pastor to lead the programme. Pentecostals are told to be prepared in and out of season. I have attended formal big church gatherings with over 1,000 people in attendance, only for the scheduled speaker to be informed that another person of a higher hierarchical order in attendance has been called on to preach. In 2014, as a young minister, I attended a programme with my regional Apostle (a position comparable to a bishop in the Anglican Church). On our way going, my regional Apostle informed me that I would be delivering the sermon at the dedication of a new church building. It was a service with 22 Pastors and 1,500 congregants attending.

<sup>156</sup> Communion here means the Eucharist.

knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between Spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues”.

There are, however, also guidelines for such Holy Spirit ministrations (CoP, 2016:21). The Holy Spirit is permitted to speak as the Spirit wills (Sheldrake, 2013:199-200), but according to Paul’s letters to the church in Corinth (1 Corinthians 12 and 14:26–40), these spiritual gifts must operate based on moderation. This manifestation of the Holy Spirit through individuals (who have not been called by leadership<sup>157</sup> but believed to be used by God) to speak to the entire congregation is what I call *Pentecostal Pneumatic democratisation of grace*.

According to Bruno Reinhardt (2015:411), Pentecostal democratisation of grace<sup>158</sup> is essential to Pentecostal Spirituality. Although Reinhardt (2015:406)<sup>159</sup> ridicules Pentecostalism’s desire to experience the immanent power of God and sees it as fundamentally full of schism potential, the Pentecostal however projects these experiences as real. Unlike in mainline churches, Pentecostals, within the setting of service, allow those with prophetic messages directed by the Holy Spirit to minister to the congregation at large whilst moving to the alter, especially the pulpit (as if delivering a sermon). This utterance sometimes may not necessarily require one to belong to that congregation, but once led and directed by the Holy Spirit, they may be permitted to deliver the prophetic message. In some neo-prophetic and neo-Pentecostal churches, these ‘participatory spiritual ministrations’ may take up to half or even two-thirds of the service (Obinim, 2019),<sup>160</sup> and even to the exclusion of any ministration of the written word of God.

Sometimes the words of prophecy delivered in a church service may cause the preacher to change their sermon and focus on the prophecy as a main message for the day. According to James Osei Amaniampong, one time during a church service in CoP in Kumasi, a prophetic message he delivered on rivers, springs, and fountains welling inside a man,

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<sup>157</sup> This calling in the CoP refers to the confirmation of the ascension gifts (Pastor, evangelist, prophet, or apostle as per Eph 4:11-12) on an individual. Interestingly, in the CoP, ministers are not called to the office of a teacher hence the omission.

<sup>158</sup> This term follows my own coinage.

<sup>159</sup> Bruno Reinhardt wrote on: ‘A Christian plane of immanence? Contrapuntal reflections on the Deleuze and Pentecostal Spirituality’.

<sup>160</sup> Watching neo-prophetic figures on OBTV in Ghana, for instance, from the beginning of the service through to the end, there may be no Word ministration but only a sequence of healing, testimonies or interviews that run the entire length of service. OBTV is a religious television station belonging to Prophet Angel Obinim of International God’s Way Church.

necessitated the founder of the CoP, Pastor James McKeown, to change his sermon to springs of living water after he publicly commented on the prophecy.

Even though in the CoP, there is space for people to practise their prophetic giftings, there is equally guiding rules when ministering in the Spirit to the whole congregation. In the CoP, one of the predominantly Classical Pentecostal churches in Ghana, for example, the following criteria apply to such prophecies:

- Anyone with a prophetic message must approach the pulpit/altar to deliver it.<sup>161</sup> To ensure that a prophecy will be ‘belled-out’,<sup>162</sup> it is against church practice to deliver the message while standing among the congregation. This procedure also prevents confusion in the event that two or more members rise and speak simultaneously (CoP, 2014:51).
- Any individual delivering a prophetic message must be known to the church’s leadership. Moreover, it must be known that the individual possesses the ability to make prophetic statements.
- The individual should be morally upright in society.

Using the guidelines in the CoP ministerial handbook is one way the meeting’s presiding officer<sup>163</sup>, and other leaders evaluate the prophetic message that has been delivered (CoP, 2014:51). These guidelines include:

- The presiding officer may evaluate the prophetic utterance and comment on it based on God’s word (1Jn 4:1–4; 2 Cor 1:17–20).
- Examining the lifestyle of the person who delivered the message to determine if it is consistent with the Bible and then allow or disallow the person to deliver the prophetic message (Matt. 7:15–18).
- The degree of enlightenment, solemnity, or confusion generated by the prophecy (1 Cor 14:3).
- The inner witness<sup>164</sup> of the individual regarding the veracity of the delivered prophecy (I John 2:20).

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<sup>161</sup> An altar is a Pentecostal name for the sanctuary area of the church from where the service is conducted.

<sup>162</sup> There is mostly a bell used to call attention and bring order during service in Classical Pentecostal churches. During long sermons, prophecy or song ministrations, the pastor or priest may ‘bell a person out’, signalling the speaker to end whatever activity he/she is performing. Again, the bell is used to prompt members to sit down during worship or call the attention of members when there is disrupted activity.

<sup>163</sup> This refers to the officiating minister for the service in question.

<sup>164</sup> The inner witness of the Holy Spirit is the gift of discernment to help an individual in making the right decisions.

- The prophecy must bring peace to the congregation and contentment to the church in order for the congregation to cooperate (1 Cor 14:37–40).

The use of spiritual gifts by Pentecostals may be democratic, but their Spirituality should not result in chaos. It is crucial that the community, through its organised leadership, provides directives for spiritually enriching services for its members.

Another critical aspect of Pentecostal Spirituality found in its participatory democratic Spirituality is the role of testimonies (Albrecht and Howards, 2014:238-239), which takes place during praises or before worship. Depending on the type of Pentecostal service and its duration, testimonies may take a shorter duration or very long. The significance of testimonies for Pentecostals can also be seen in the fact that they have historically been published to display the ever-present power of God with His people, in this way serving as motivation to others (Assabil, 2017:13-19). According to Asamoah-Gyadu, (2007a:448), testimonies as such, provide a practical demonstration of God's visitation to humankind and how God transforms people's lives so as to shame the enemy, i.e., the devil (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005:132-134).

Pentecostal testimonies are usually delivered before the preaching of the word of God or worship is ministered to the congregation (Walker, 2010:241,260). Testimonies are crucial in typical Pentecostal settings because they give credibility to a speaker's message and validate God's presence (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:92-93,181). It usually provides a basis for believing in the power of the *Rhema*<sup>165</sup> preaching that is about to be delivered, or a reason to appreciate why one should solemnly worship God. Ghanaian Pentecostals believe in the prophetic word of the Lord that comes from the altar, and administered by the servant of God, but invariably, testimonies drive every aspect of church services with some amount of enthusiasm (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:92-93). Within the Pentecostal circles, when it is time for testimonies, they would usually read Revelation 12:11<sup>166</sup> to justify the relevance of the testimony. On 11<sup>th</sup> April 2020, for example, Ps FAH on PentTV<sup>167</sup>, gave a testimony of his life demonstrating how God had ordered his life in his current ministry (Kwesi Annor, 2020).

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<sup>165</sup> *Rhema* is used to describe God inspired messages to people communicated through the Holy Spirit. This is an extension of the written word of God (the Bible).

<sup>166</sup> 'They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death' (Rev. 12:11).

<sup>167</sup> PentTV is a religious television station belonging to The Church of Pentecost in Ghana.

Before sharing the testimony, the conductor quoted that exact verse (Revelations 12:11) as a justification for the utterance of the testimony.<sup>168</sup>

A typical Pentecostal testimony may last up to 10 minutes, and during certain services, the one who gives the testimony would be prayed for or encouraged depending on the nature of the testimony. This is usually so when someone escapes the attack of the enemy or is saved from death or experiences a miraculous grace. Again, just as in the case of prophecy, sometimes the impact of testimonies is so strong that they may not even be followed by the ministration of the Word, but rather by a time of fervent prayers inspired by the move of the Holy Spirit. Captivating and touching testimonies sometimes inspire congregants to give huge freewill offerings. The reason for the offering is that the givers are tapping into the situation of the person giving the testimony, thus, just as God has done for the utterer, God should do same for the giver of the offering.

Closely linked to testimonies are Pentecostal public Bible reading/recitals. Members are encouraged to read or recite portions of Scripture to the congregation to purportedly stimulate the desire of congregants to also read and study the Bible in their closets or homes. The practice of public Bible readings and recitals are based on 2 Timothy 3:14–16, where

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<sup>168</sup> The full content of an example of such a testimony is provided here: ‘This testimony is given to attest to God's sovereignty in our lives and the roles He plays in our lives. In any circumstance, you would trust in the Lord's sovereignty to the extent that He forms you to walk in His place. To avoid wasting your time, I will condense my testimony considerably. I aspired to become a meteorologist or a weather forecaster as a young child when I began school. In elementary school, I would occasionally use sand to create cumulonimbus, nimbostratus, and cumulus clouds. These words are still fresh in my mind; and sometimes, I feel like a disappointed meteorologist, despite the fact that I am now a pastor. At the time I applied for a university degree, I desired to become a meteorologist, so I filled out university the forms applying for a course in geography and meteorology. I had waited a long time for a response to my application after filling out and submitting the forms, while other friends had received their admission letters. So, I visited the University of Ghana (UG) campus one day to inquire about the status of my application. As I walked across campus, by the grace of God, I encountered a stranger who, upon hearing my dilemma, informed me that the undergraduate level does not offer the course I wished to pursue. The man asked me if I was not interested in pursuing a career in music; out of frustration, I responded in the affirmative because I could not afford to have all my friends abandon me; I would become a laughingstock in society. The man advised me to pursue music because it would benefit me in the future. The man then led us inside, where he selected a new form, filled it out (at a time when admission had closed), took me inside for an interview, and granted me admission. He demonstrated his office and the work he performs. When we were about to begin the course in my first year, my parents decided to purchase a token of appreciation for the man (Ghanaian culture). When I went to his office and asked if they knew him, they all said they did not; we searched the entire faculty and university, but he was never identified. I completed four years of undergraduate study and have never met the individual in question. To date, I have neither heard of him nor met him. I can attest, however, that the man's advice was beneficial to me. His advice has brought me this far. If you are observing from home or elsewhere, within the Covid-19 period, things probably appear bleak. I pray you see the hand of the all-powerful and all-knowing God in every circumstance of life. I am certain that when we leave Covid 19, we will all be better people. If you are watching television, put your faith in the name of the living God who can provide salvation’ (Kwesi Annor, 2020)

Timothy was encouraged by Paul to practise public Scripture reading and teach the scriptures diligently<sup>169</sup>.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:14–16).

During outdoor public activities such as campaigns, crusades, and rallies, members are encouraged to memorise portions of the Scripture to be recited to the entire congregation. During the recitals, members may also give freewill offerings as appreciation to God for granting the person the wisdom to give such recitals and may pray that their children also get the ability to recite the Bible in the same manner in future. Sometimes people may also present gifts<sup>170</sup> to those who did such recitals themselves.

Finally, members also have the right to demand accountability and may question decisions made by the leaders, and they have the right to know how and to what ends the church's funds are used. The CoP, for instance, follows a presbytery system of government with the clergy being accountable to the presbytery and council<sup>171</sup> at all levels. The presbytery and council are accountable to the larger congregation.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Usually, members who are able to recite extensive portions of the Bible without looking at the text are said to be very spiritual.

<sup>170</sup> In April 2019, at PIWC-Asokwa, an 18-year-old student recited the whole of Ephesians to the congregation. One gentleman, touched by the recital, donated a new laptop computer to the student for his university studies.

<sup>171</sup> The CoP has two higher level councils: the executive council, and the general council. The general council is above the executive council as the highest decision-making body of the Church. Interestingly, the executive council is episcopal in nature and the general council is presbyterian in nature.

<sup>172</sup> Three types of Pentecostal leadership are observed (amongst Pentecostal churches in general): Episcopal-Pentecostal, Presbytery and Congregational types. In the Episcopal (version of Pentecostal church governance), Pentecostal leadership is theocratic. Decisions are taken by the apostles, prophets and those at the highest authority of governance (especially with congregations that have 'sole heads'), without much consultation. Usually, it is based on his intuition and direction from the Holy Spirit. This system is usually also evident in the neo-prophetic churches, new-Pentecostal churches and neo-Pentecostal churches. In the Presbytery system of Pentecostal leadership, authority vests in the presbytery for decision making, and for direction of the Church. Even though there may be a pastor or leader, he/she is subject to the decisions of the presbytery. He/she may only act on or implement decisions of the presbytery. In the presbytery system, leaders are called by the top leadership and ordained into leadership. There is usually a statutory retirement age for service as a presbytery member. It must be noted that in this system, the presbytery is not directly accountable to the church (as a whole but to the higher authority). This is usually the case in Classical Pentecostal churches in Ghana, such as the CoP. The Congregational system is followed where members are permitted to stand for positions in the church; they are elected and serve as leaders for several years before reverting to their old membership status. In the congregational system, the leadership is accountable to the church. This form of governance is found mostly in evangelical structures, such as Baptist churches.

### 3.8.4 Outreaches/Crusades as a Result of the Eschatological Narrative

Core to Pentecostal Spirituality is the conviction that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a sign of the end times. According to Pentecostal theology, the church was given power when the Holy Spirit was poured out to a tongue narrative<sup>173</sup> (speak in tongues) in preparation for its eschatological redemption (Smith, 2010:45). The Spirit was poured on the church in the last days (Constantineanu and Scobie, 2018:9-10) to empower believers earnestly to proclaim the gospel in order to accelerate the Second Coming of Christ (Yong, 2002:178). In anticipation of Christ's second coming (Gyimah, 2017b:160-170), Pentecostals engage in crusades, rallies, house-to-house evangelism, and external missions to proclaim the word of God to all (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2006:364-369).

As stated previously, Classical Pentecostal movement in Ghana has had evangelism as its driving mandate, which has helped Pentecostalism here to flourish (Larbi, 2001:247-249; Markin, 2019: 148-149; Noble-Atsu, 2019:60). Evangelism is a core value of the code of practice for the CoP (CoP, 2016:14), and all assemblies in the CoP are required to conduct monthly outreach efforts and report on them monthly. Based on the CoP's vision 2023 (Nyamekye, 2018a:2-5), the month of November is declared as a month of evangelism dubbed: *one member one disciplined soul* (1M1D). This is an activity intended to motivate every member to convert and disciple at least one member to be retained in the church. Evangelism/outreach/soul-winning are also crucial aspects of a minister's performance evaluation. During evangelising efforts, altar calls are sometimes preceded by the testimonies of individuals who attest to being saved by Christ<sup>174</sup> and are now living transformed lives (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005a).

The latter is not unique to the CoP, as Pentecostals are notoriously aggressive in their evangelism. Pentecostals view themselves as the end-time agents tasked with bringing the gospel to all nations with the eschatological motif of accelerating the return of Christ. As a crucial characteristic of the militant church (Kopah, 2018:84), these Pentecostal evangelism

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<sup>173</sup> The 'tongue narrative' implies that the Spirit has poured with evidence of speaking in tongues to enable those who receive to share the gospel of Christ orally with the unsaved world. In 1989, when my father, Emmanuel Boye Buertey was struck by a strange illness that left him bedridden for over three months and was at the point of death, he testified that he saw in a vision an angel of the Lord who visited him three times, instructing him to visit the Bethel Prayer Camp at Asafo to be healed. As the caretaker of the family gods, my father was requested to hand over all his family gods to be burnt so he could be saved. Unable to walk, he was assisted to walk back to his cottage to surrender all his gods. The gods were then burnt near a flowing stream, following which my father claimed he was healed.

<sup>174</sup> People would usually declare their past wayward lives and how they were saved by the gospel under a similar situation.

campaigns are frequently fuelled by the testimonies<sup>175</sup> of converted sinners in order to influence the unsaved to surrender their lives, along with all evil objects and charms (if any), to Christ (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2015:392; cf. Kumi-Larbi, 2019:216-218). Their testimonies demonstrate to the world that they have triumphed through the blood of Christ over the schemes of the enemy. These testimonies, when delivered at rallies, crusades, and outreaches, inspire people to want to experience God's healing for themselves, often resulting in mass conversions.

In addition to the corporate evangelism activity of the Church, individual members must also be driven by evangelism. Individual lay members have been known to establish numerous local congregations, some in their homes and others in new locations when they relocate. Elders D.K. Berko of Bomso, Okyere of Bompata, Dadzie of Adiebeba, and S.K. Awere of Atonsu (all of blessed memory) are examples of lay leaders in the Ashanti Region of Ghana in the CoP whose initiatives resulted in the formation of congregations; each of them provided private funds to launch these congregations. In turn, all new churches engage in serious external missionary efforts (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2011:90,98) and even reverse migrant mission back to Europe (Krabill and Norton, 2015:448).

In outreach and evangelism programmes, Ghanaian Classical Pentecostals emphasise the experience of signs and wonders (Markin, 2019:98-102). Their rallies, crusades, camp meetings, and revivals are explosively marked by unique signs and wonders followed by instantaneous testimonies (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2015:392), which bring many to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ (Yirenkyi-Smart, 2017:135). Due to their effectiveness, the aforementioned phenomena have been adopted by other churches for their outreach programmes as well as responses to the Great Commission and for people to experience the grace of God through the supernatural hand of God (Larbi, 2001:181-183).

The origins of the CoP's evangelism drive and mission philosophy lie in past prophecies and God's covenant with the church (Larbi, 2001:252). Pentecostals are known for, and expected to preach the gospel to all men and women, their families and church members, and members of other churches, as well as those who are allegedly living questionable lives (Karkkainen, 2018:36). Since 1940, various structures have been established for evangelism outreach, including the establishment of *Mbrantsie kuw* (Young

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<sup>175</sup> These testimonies usually speak about how a person converted to Christ. They usually speak about a person's past life and his new life in Christ.



Men Fellowship) in 1940, the Bombing Group and Witness movement in 1945, PENSA<sup>176</sup> in the 1970s, PENTYEM<sup>177</sup> in the 1980s, and the Evangelism Ministry in recent years (CoP, 2019:32-41). Easter conventions, Christmas conventions, August conventions, evangelism conventions, youth outreaches, outreaches to the Home and Urban Missions (HUM), all serve the Great Commission's objectives (Nyamekye, 2018a:1-6, 36). The traditional<sup>178</sup> and non-traditional<sup>179</sup> ministries and new ministries in the CoP have also played a crucial role in evangelism (Markin, 2019:63-90), with organisations such as PENSA and APOSA<sup>180</sup> being instrumental in campus evangelism, urban, rural, and specialised evangelism. The establishment of the Pentecost Bible College (PBC) for training ministers which was transformed into the Pentecost University College (PUC) and then Pentecost University (PU) were key in fulfilling some aspects of the strategic evangelistic model of the CoP.

### **3.8.5 Biblical Literalism/ Hermeneutics<sup>181</sup>**

Pentecostals uphold the Scriptures as the authoritative word of God, and God's self-revelation to humanity (Duffield and Van Cleave, 1983:16-18). Contemporary scholars have called the interpretive method of Pentecostals as either literalistic hermeneutics, 'pietistic', or 'ahistoric', though this could also be seen as derogatory (Torrey, 2009: 87-88; Constantineanu and Scobie, 2018:4) In this view, to the Pentecostal, the Bible must be read literally (Sheldrake, 2013:199), rather than with an eye of systematic theological interpretation (Nel, 2015:26).

What is unquestionable is that Pentecostals mostly want to read the Bible from a 'Pentecostal worldview', bringing their own experiences into the meeting between the biblical text and community, thereby producing a dielectric encounter between the biblical text and the reader (Culler, 2009:94). The Pentecostal would read Scripture to develop their own praxis theology based on the insight they receive from the Holy Spirit to provide a form of Spirituality (Nel, 2021:2-4). According to Culler (2009:125), Pentecostals primarily place biblical stories into cohesive Pentecostal narrative traditions by allowing biblical stories to

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<sup>176</sup> PENSA is an acronym for Pentecost Students and Associates, a students' wing of The Church of Pentecost.

<sup>177</sup> PENTYEM is an acronym for Pentecost Youth Evangelistic Movement. It was an evangelistic wing that included all students and young men and ladies poised for evangelism.

<sup>178</sup> The traditional ministries are the Children, Men, Women, Evangelism and Youth Ministries.

<sup>179</sup> The non-traditional ministries include the Home and Urban Missions (HUM), Chaplaincy Ministry and the Ministry to Persons with Disability (MPWD).

<sup>180</sup> APOSA is an acronym for Apostolic Students and Associates, a students' wing of the Apostolic Church of Ghana.

<sup>181</sup> This is further discussed in section 3.9.4 of this chapter.

challenge and reshape their traditions. For some Pentecostals, biblical interpretation is subjective and speculative (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005:132), with the text interpreted based on the reader's worldview and experience (Israel, Albrecht and McNally, 1993:143) which usually results in eisegesis as opposed to exegesis.

According to Amos Yong (2002:17-18), Pentecostals have developed a hermeneutical strategy following the sequence of Word-Spirit-community. As in everything, so too in reading and interpreting the Bible – the Spirit is, after all, central in Pentecostal communities as they see themselves as Spirit-driven, Spirit-led, Spirit-empowered, Spirit-governed, Spirit-supported and Spirit-propagated communities, according to Rance (2009:15). To this end, it is seen that the community of Pentecostals do their exegesis with their social location and theological formation in mind, and do not simply employ the so-called scientific exegetical method of interpretation.

According to Constantineanu and Scobie (2018:4), early Pentecostals used an exegetical style that consisted of reading the Bible without attempting to construct systematic theology or exegetical commentary, and with a focus derived from the books of Luke -Acts, they were more concerned with simply living the Christian life. Furthermore, the full gospel focusing on Jesus as the source of salvation, sanctification, healing, and Spirit baptism influenced the Pentecostal interpretation of the Bible (Culler, 2009:100). The early Pentecostal Bible reading method was therefore rather “commonsensical”, relying on inductive and deductive interpretive reasoning skills, contrary to the deductive system of the traditional, more scholastic Protestant Christianity (Archer, 2004:40-41).

The Pentecostal means of interpreting the Bible, juxtaposing their past and present in the Bible stories often resulted in the Pentecostal preaching out of the context of the writer's original perspective (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005:132).

### **3.8.6 Experiential Pentecostal Praise, Thanksgiving and Worship**

Given its experiential nature, Pentecostal churches are known to have very exuberant services, and to outsiders, seemingly noisy, full of ecstasy, and even a bit chaotic. According to Nel (2014a:300), worship service is the most distinctive Pentecostal characteristic through which the experience of people could be replaced just as it was in Bible times. According to Gifford (2004:27-30), neo-Pentecostals and Pentecostals alike enjoy a three-part service consisting of praise and worship, an offering, and a sermon. The portion of the service that appears to be the most enjoyable and well-received is the time of praise and worship (thanksgiving). This session is accompanied by the loud playing of electrical instruments,

members' participation in dancing, and exuberant handclapping (Gifford, 2004:27-30). This does not seem strange, given that as Christopher Ampadu (2019:100) comments, the real root of the African is his or her culture of singing and drumming as one of the activities that 'magnetise the soul'. Pentecostal worship is characteristically not only spirit-guided but also a spontaneous event (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005:54) of which much takes place in ecstatic moments of praise and thanksgiving (Onyinah, 2013:67-71). Praise and worship and a song ministration may take up to one-third of the time allotted for the whole service (Gifford, 2004:27-28).

Even though the activities in a typical service may vary, in the CoP, praise time, which is characterised by congregational joy, happiness, jumping, shouting and other ecstatic moments, usually comes before worship. As a Pentecostal since infancy, I am tempted to believe that during praise time, people also dance and jump to their personal entertainment and not necessarily only to God, and that God may take delight in what we do, but that congregants also seemingly enjoy the praises by the praise team.

During the praise part of the service, some members of the congregation would be heard shouting loudly, phrases such as 'rejoice, sing and dance your problem off until Satan is embarrassed'. Another may say, 'I have no opportunity of going to the discotheque or bar, I need to dance out in church'. Pentecostal praise and worship are usually expressed in the vernacular among typical Pentecostals in Ghana. Even in churches (especially the neo-Pentecostal, and the charismatic-like) that use English as the main medium of communication in Ghana, at least 30% of their songs during a particular service may be in vernacular.

For the Pentecostal, God must be seen continuously working through His children via miracles, signs, and wonders, but this also applies when God's children sing to Him. When the Pentecostal comes to God in praise and thanksgiving, God is expected to work, even when the believer does not ask for anything specific from Him. During the period of praise and thanksgiving, some members may also express thanks by dropping money into the offering boxes as a sign of appreciation to God for His protection and care. Some congregants may request an opportunity to address the whole congregation in which they thank God – often after they have given their offering. Finally, praise time is also an opportunity for the choristers and singers to display their gifting in public service to God (Gifford, 2004:27-28).

In contrast to praise, worship is rather solemn, reflective and focused on the divinity of God and less on the joy it gives humankind, thus, worship is rather heavenward in nature. Pentecostal worship is of course highly experiential, for it is through worship that the Full

Gospel of God is manifested through His Son and experienced through the Spirit (Nel, 2014a:301). According to Hollenweger (2005:18), Pentecostalism is characterised by an oral liturgy unique to Black [sic] people. This orality, in African Pentecostalism, is described in terms of its messages, narrative theology, prayer and worship (De Gruchy, 2011). Most Pentecostal services, especially in the CoP, have a particular time set aside during the service called 'worship' (Albrecht and Howards, 2014:237-238). To the Pentecostal, worship is an 'oral liturgy', but also an activity that touches the heart and permeates the soul with an overflowing joy believed to be flowing from the throne of grace (Albrecht, 1997:5).

Pentecostal worship is (as it is usually expected to be) 'pneumatologically' expressed (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:26-27, 30) as a means of experiencing God. In other words, Pentecostals meet God in prayer and worship through the power of the Holy Spirit. When worship is acceptable to the King of kings, God's manifest presence is most likely to be felt, according to the Pentecostal. Worship is thus critical in the Pentecostal order of service as it is a means of encounter with the divinity of God (Quayesi-Amakye, 2015c:254-256). Typically, the time of worship is scheduled for when the majority of the congregants have arrived and are seated in church (as is the case for taking communion). Pentecostal worship is therefore much more than a time of singing and giving thanks (Onyinah, 2013:66-67).

In the Pentecostal service, songs of exaltation and thanksgiving hymns are sung to the King of kings throughout the worship period (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:21), and this can be highly ecstatic (Tomberlin, 2019:26) and emotional, with congregants lying on the floor, weeping, kneeling, jumping and occasionally crying or laughing in the Spirit and usually speaking in the Spirit (Miller and Yamamori, 2007:130-134). All of these may be described as experiences and reflections of the immediate presence of God (Albrecht 1997:6). It should also not be strange that Pentecostal worship is associated with an openness to the unexpected and miraculous (Smith, 2010:39), where the Spirit falls on the worshipper for the worshipper to be lifted into the heavenly realms to see visions, revelations, and prophecies (Tomberlin, 2019:26-27).

As has now been seen already, central to Pentecostal worship is the 'democratisation of pneumatic', which allows God to be heard, and God to potentially work through the manifestation of God's Spirit in any of the participants (Smith, 2010:38). God is primarily heard by Pentecostals when He is exalted in a profoundly spirit-filled state. When people's hearts are touched, their souls, and spirits become receptive to hearing from God and drinking from 'the brook of the Holy One'. All these observations again demonstrate that Pentecostal worship is unabashedly experiential and assumes the total agency of God and His

Spirit throughout the service (Smith, 2010:76). Pentecostals think that when a worship altar is raised, God must be heard because the Holy Spirit is poured forth for the church. In the CoP, the majority of the songs sung during their prayer meetings are believed to be of Spirit origin, as they were received through prophetic revelations.

As indicated, one may already surmise that one key element of Pentecostal Spirituality is a strong emphasis on God's presence in the midst of a worshipping community during a Pentecostal service (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2009:93). Pentecostals claim to experience the ever-saturated pneumatic presence of God in their activities when they meet as a group (Ellington, 2001:245). Indeed, they expect to experience the heavy, powerful, immediate presence of God displayed during their services. This expected presence is said to be demonstrated through their song ministration, worship sessions, prayer sessions, prophetic utterances, and times for healing or slaying and the ministration of the Word. In other words, for Pentecostals, the immanence of God may be experienced through the prophetic message, delivered either during the sermon period or the charismatically delivered as word of prophecy, knowledge or wisdom, depending on who preached and how it was preached. According to Albrecht and Howards (2014:239), it is difficult to isolate the corporate and personal, since a more significant part of what individuals receive is transmitted to corporate life.

Furthermore, as the Spirituality of a Pentecostal service is measured by the powerful, Spirit-filled, Holy-Ghost inspired worship, songs and prayers (Warrington, 2008:88), these are understood to, or expected to, touch the hearts of members, leading them to give freewill offerings during the service. The experiences at a church service also have the tendency to have a carryover effect on the members and influence their attendance and participation in the subsequent weeks' activities of the church (Amaniampong, 2019a). It is therefore often said, a very spiritual Sunday service results in a very productive, high morale week, and a low-spirited service results in a low morale week of the members. When members leave a Pentecostal service having heard 'a message from God transmitted in the voice of men [sic]' (prophecy), during the worship, sermon, or any part of the service, they leave the service happy and fulfilled and one may hear declarations such as 'today God visited us in a special way, and we heard from Him'.

Ghanaian Classical Pentecostals reject cessationism,<sup>182</sup> and maintain that the gifts continue to this day (Warrington, 2008:70-71). When church services become monotonous, and Pentecostals do not receive prophecies or experience healings in multiple services, they begin to say, ‘We need a revival to reignite the power of the Holy Spirit because the church is becoming lukewarm’. In Ghana, this may occasionally result in members breaking out in song, imploring God for His everlasting presence. One such song goes as follows (Agyemang Baduh, 2016:328):

Tarry for the spirit, He shall come in showers

Energising wholly

All your ransomed powers

Signs shall follow service

In the Holy Ghost

Then the Church of Jesus

Prove a mighty host

*On then, Church of Jesus.*

*Claim your Pentecost*

*God shall now baptise thee*

*In the Holy Ghost*

The song above is a call to wait on God for His energising strength during church services that might have become dull when the presence of God is amiss. For the Pentecostal, it is the immediate presence of God experienced during service, especially worship, that would bring the required enthusiasm, signs, wonders; and the power of the Holy Spirit is effective when members tarry for him.

### **3.8.7 Pentecostal Holiness, Church Discipline, and Ministry Excellence**

Pentecostals believe in the “intrinsic role of the Holy Spirit in the sanctification of the believer” (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2010:4-5; cf. Nyamekye, 2017:77-80). Classical Pentecostals in Ghana hold the same view as Reformed Christians (Vondey, 2017:68) regarding sanctification as a progressive process throughout the believer’s entire life (Nyamekye,

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<sup>182</sup> The Cessation theory holds that after the first century, the gifts and manifestation of the Spirit ceased to operate after the apostolic age.

2019a: 169-171). This continues even after justification by grace (Romans 3:20<sup>183</sup>) and imputation of God's righteousness (2 Cor 5:21<sup>184</sup>) to an individual (Nyamekye, 2017:75). Consequently, the CoP holds that sanctification could be described as past (occurring at "new birth"), present (throughout the entire Christian life), and future (at the *eschatos*) (cf. Nyamekye, 2017:81).

Given the importance of the concept of sanctification, the concept of holiness is fundamental to Pentecostals (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2015:396). Pentecostals across the divide, however, hold varied views on what fundamentally constitutes holiness (Anderson, 2013:53-55; Vondey, 2017:64-68; Yong, 2005:164-166). Amongst some Pentecostals, holiness includes, but is not limited to abstinence from drinking, smoking, visiting the cinema, visiting sports stadiums, gambling, fornication, et cetera. Other Pentecostals may ignore some of the latter, though not all, treating them as trivial issues. But all Pentecostals believe that the process of Spirit baptism establishes a union between the believer and the divine, and as such, the ability for the latter to overcome the desires of the flesh. In the CoP, holiness is more than an act; it should be reflected in one's thought, deeds, conscience, and general way of life (Walker, 2020:28-29).

To some Pentecostals in Ghana, maintaining one's holiness dictates which occupations one cannot pursue, such as working in the alcohol, tobacco, cinema, and gambling industries. This may also be a relic of the early Pentecostals' belief that the church was a separate entity from the socio-political community in which it existed. In other words, they proclaimed their separation from the world in which they reside (Nel, 2015:76). Pentecostals are in this sense more 'upward-looking than downward-looking', and therefore believe Christians should live lives that make them 'rapturable<sup>185</sup>' (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17) in light of the impending eschaton.

According to Miller and Yamamori (2007:164-165), Pentecostals once led strict Puritan lifestyles (avoidance of alcohol, drugs, partying, and other social vices), which allowed for additional funds to support Kingdom business. Since Pentecostal business men and women were expected to be honest and fair in all transactions, the aforementioned codes of conduct were also viewed as having a substantial reputational benefit for Pentecostal

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<sup>183</sup> 'Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin' (Rom 3:20).

<sup>184</sup> 'God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.' (2 Cor 5:21).

<sup>185</sup> A term coined by author (JTIB) to mean 'ready to be raptured at all times'.

business activities. The above are all examples of earlier or current views of the Classical Pentecostal in Ghana, which not only emphasises a new birth but also personal holiness as a new lifestyle (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2015:396).

During the formative ages of the Apostolic Church of Gold Coast, which has produced three Classical Pentecostal churches in Ghana (CoP, CAC, TAC), holiness as a lifestyle was its hallmark. Reverend James McKeown was said to have preached on the topic of holiness throughout the country using one of his favourite Scripture verses, Hebrews 12:14b.<sup>186</sup> Up until now, holiness was and is projected as an important aspect of church (the CoP) life that brought beauty and glory to the church (Walker, 2020:24). Members were encouraged to live holy and blameless lifestyles, thus resulting for example in the Women's Movement's<sup>187</sup> motto of '*Kronkron: ma Awurade*' (Holiness: Unto the Lord) in 1945.

In addition, Pentecostals believe that an individual's holiness not only affects his or her own life, but also the beauty of the church as a whole (Yong, 2010:20-24), and in the past, members and officers who disregarded the church's holiness standard were promptly disciplined (Walker, 2020:18-22). Some of these disciplinary codes were also deemed inappropriate. For example, children born outside of marriage were stigmatised by the church and society, and were not dedicated (Walker, 2020:24). In more recent times, the practice of holiness in Classical Pentecostalism has become a cover for the snare<sup>188</sup> of neo-prophetic and even some mainline churches today, giving hope that all is not lost concerning Christian morality (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2000:262). In recent times, the disparaging moral decadence of the neo-prophetic churches, and the concomitant adulterous activities of some leaders of neo-prophetic churches have become a worry to many. The strict discipline within the Classical Pentecostal churches has thus given hope to the nation that Christian morality has not been completely lost.

James McKeown was known for applying a very strict code of discipline to Christians and it has persisted. The General Council meeting of the CoP in 1968, for example, decided that members who participated in gambling, lotteries, football pools, and raffles would be suspended with the same sanction given to fornication (Walker, 2020:23-25). Over time, the

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<sup>186</sup> 'Without holiness no one will see the Lord' (Heb 12:14b).

<sup>187</sup> The Women's movement as it was called (at the formation stage) is the fellowship of all women and ladies in the CoP.

<sup>188</sup> In the recent past, the reported immoral activities of the neo-prophetic pastors have been a disgrace for the church. The strict ministerial discipline of the CoP has been used as the ray of hope for the church in Ghana.



level of discipline in the Code of Conduct was increased, and the following were enshrined in the constitution of the CoP as violations warranting disciplinary action (CoP, 2016:44).

- Frequenting questionable locations such as bars, brothels, et cetera.
- Falling into ‘open sin’, such as intoxication, adultery, fornication, theft, cursing others, and public conflict
- Accepting the propagation of false doctrine
- Separating from one’s wife or husband
- Having multiple wives or husbands
- A sister marrying a man who is already wed
- Any level of disobedience or disrespect toward church authority
- Engaging in any form of immorality, promoting homosexuality, or engaging in any sexually perverse behaviour.

In 2020, the CoP revisited the Church’s stance on church discipline and treated it as part of its national agenda. In June 2021, the issue of church discipline reappeared in the Asokwa Area of the CoP, thus resulting in the suspension of nearly 30 church lay leaders<sup>189</sup> who were found to have engaged in adultery, preaching false doctrine, and/or some of the above-mentioned forms of misconduct. This indicates that the aspect of holiness and church discipline remains a cardinal aspect of church ministry excellence.

Other hallmarks of Classical Pentecostalism furthermore include ministry excellence, the outward public beauty of the Church (projecting a positive image of the church), and community fellowship (CoP, 2016:14-16). To earn society’s respect, the church is expected to uphold the highest Christian standards, as its mission is to glorify God. The CoP has therefore put in good administrative structures and excellent church-state systems that enhances a good image of the church. A very good para-church relationship has also been established to foster ecumenism and enhance the CoP’s leadership role in Ghana.

Finally, it is worrying to note the recent abysmal dressing of the youth today, with some churchgoers attending services dressed immodestly. This has become an emerging act, which is alien to Ghanaian culture. Decent dressing is part of Pentecostal discipline as discussed below:

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<sup>189</sup> In the CoP, lay leaders include deacons, deaconesses, and elders.

### 3.8.8 Pentecostal Spirituality Concerning Dressing and Head Covering.

As it was suggested earlier regarding the contemporary dress of youths in the previous section, directly related to holiness is the issue of dress. Some Pentecostals almost invariably link holiness with one's physical dress. Indeed, to date, there is an extent to which Pentecostals relate Spirituality to dressing and head covering as well (Larbi, 2001:245). As a minister in a Classical Pentecostal church in Ghana, who has grown through the ranks as an elder, presiding elder, pastor and now an apostle, I have come to observe that in the local churches<sup>190</sup>, ladies who dress 'Pentecostal' (the typical Pentecostal dressing<sup>191</sup> is *Kaba*<sup>192</sup> with a long slit and a piece of head covering) are considered somewhat more spiritual than those who dress in modern, readymade, or Western dress style.

In the sunny and hot African weather, some male Pentecostals would wear complex multilayer outfits (with three-piece suit) with the opinion that the nature of one's dressing projects their Spirituality. In the CoP, for instance, until the release of a communique (Onyinah, 2010:1-4)<sup>193</sup> by church leaders in 2010 on dressing and head covering (Nyamaah, 2013:156-158), it was a taboo for a lady to wear a pair of trousers or jeans to church (Osabutey, 200:4-6)<sup>194</sup>. It used to be a serious offense for a woman to enter a Pentecostal service without head covering (Koduah, 2010:3-5). After over 10 years of the release of this communique, church members still have divergent views concerning the issue of dressing, head covering, and its spiritual significance.

Apart from the CoP which has attempted to redefine dressing as an element of Pentecostal Spirituality without great success, all other Classical Pentecostals still hold a strong view on its significance. Particularly, the culture of head covering had been infused into Pentecostalism and had nearly become a doctrinal issue (Koduah, 2010:11-22). According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2015:396), this is due to the literal interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:3-5<sup>195</sup> as an eternal and universal practice. The practice of head covering may however be related to cultural tradition (Koduah, 2010:27-32), as many communities in

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<sup>190</sup> A local church is a community-based congregation as discussed in section 3.8.11.

<sup>191</sup> A local church is a congregation that is located within communities that speak a local dialect.

<sup>192</sup> *Kaba* is a specially made African costumed top made from African fabric or cloth.

<sup>193</sup> The communique addressed the issue of dressing and head covering stating that these are not necessary marks of Pentecostal Spirituality.

<sup>194</sup> It also was against church practice to enter any auditorium with dreadlocks (cf. Osabutey, 2002).

<sup>195</sup> 'But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved' (1 Cor 11:3-5).

Ghana, which are not necessarily Christian-dominated, traditionally endorse and practice the use of *duku* (Akan word for headgear) for fashion, for hair protection, and sometimes to cover unkempt hair<sup>196</sup> (Nyamaah, 2013:156).

### 3.8.9 Tithing, Offering, and Prosperity

Pentecostals view tithing and offering as fundamental to their Spirituality. According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2013a:106-108), the belief in giving is also ingrained in Africans in general, thus reflecting and contributing to the flamboyant theology of prosperity that is spreading across the continent. Giving has been linked to one's breakthrough and prosperity in emerging Charismatic and contemporary Christianity (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005:211-213). For many, the Pentecostal theology of tithing and offering therefore serves as a springboard to wealth and success (Adjaloo, 2020:164-167), and is often depicted or phrased as sowing a seed and harvesting its fruit or 'no tithing, no financial breakthrough' (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:211-213). Luke 6:38<sup>197</sup> is one verse of Scripture used by Pentecostals to motivate (or perhaps coerce) their members towards giving an offering.

On the subject of tithing, however, Classical Pentecostal churches such as The Church of Pentecost (CoP, 2010:2-3), the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC, 2011:5,7,23), and the Apostolic Church of Ghana, all see tithing and giving as a basic tenet of their faith and Spirituality, a type of covenant between oneself and God. It has been said that one of the cardinal factors for the growth of the CoP has been its insistence on tithing<sup>198</sup> (Koduah, 2019:151; Noble-Atsu, 2019:60). For the CoP, tithing is a member's corporate contribution to the Kingdom of God and ultimately enjoying God's blessing (Adjaloo, 2020:94-1697-99, 164-167). Members are therefore encouraged to give as partners with God, although deep

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<sup>196</sup> During my studies at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, as student leaders (even as elites in the Church), we considered women who wore scarfs to church to be very spiritual, and we used to say that they shall be the wives of pastors in future. I observed with interest that those of the student leaders who had the ambition of being called into full-time ministry were more interested in cloth-scarfed women. Interestingly, as students, we had a criterion of grading Spirituality through the nature of one's head covering. Those who covered their heads totally without any portion of their hair showing were considered *very* spiritual. Secondly, those who covered their heads and left some part of the hair showing in the front (*twe bε tε'*, an Akan phrase which means 'pull some hair out') were classified as spiritual, but fashionable ladies. Thirdly, ladies who used to put on hats were called post-modern Pentecostal ladies. Finally, those ladies who did not cover their heads were regarded as unspiritual ladies. Dressing and head covering is therefore a significant measure of (proper) Ghanaian Pentecostal Spirituality.

<sup>197</sup> 'Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you' (Lk 6:38).

<sup>198</sup> The CoP heavily depended on tithes for its activities. Nationally and internationally tithes are collected to enable evangelisation. Part of the proceeds are also used to acquire properties for the Church, to fund development projects and to pay ministers' monthly stipends.

biblical teachings from the book of Malachi are followed periodically to warn members of serious consequences of failure to pay tithes.

“Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’” In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse —your whole nation—because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,” says the LORD Almighty.” (Mal 3:8-11)

Apart from giving tithes, which members of the Pentecostal churches deem a command, church members make numerous types of offerings and contributions such as first fruits, end of year offerings, project offerings, thanksgiving offerings, covenant offerings, only to mention a few. In some Pentecostal services, as many as four distinct offerings may be made during one church<sup>199</sup> service! Pentecostals believe in the mystical effect of giving to ‘God’ in relation to prosperity with Pentecostals analysing spiritual dimensions of prosperity (Yong, 2010:20). This is further discussed in section 3.9.2.1 of this chapter and Chapters 5 (section 5.6.4) and 6 (section 6.2.6) of this research.

### **3.8.10 Prayer, Fasting, Healing, and Deliverance**

Prayer of all sorts is a vital aspect of Pentecostal Spirituality (Albrecht and Howards, 2014:238). According to Alan Anderson (in Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a: xv), this is due to the Pentecostal perception that God has a special relationship with everyone as their Father, Creator and God, and thus every sphere of life is transformed into a subject for a potential prayer. Undoubtedly, the prayer life of some Classical Pentecostal churches such as the CoP (Noble-Atsu, 2019:58-60), is one reason for its phenomenal growth in members (Markin, 2019:64-65). Prayer times in the churches have been given catchy names such as ‘Dunamis Hour’ (sometimes called ‘Power Hour’) (at PIWC Kaneshie), *Anakhazo* (force/compel) (at Shalom Worship Centre), ‘Jericho Hour’ (at Israel Local, CoP), ‘*Adom bre*<sup>200</sup>’ (At Kaase District, Asokwa) and ‘Destiny Hour’ (at PIWC Asokwa); Kratos Prayer (Strength Prayer) (at PIWC Kaneshie and PIWC Atomic), and ‘Damascus Encounter’ (at PIWC Asokwa),

<sup>199</sup> In 2017, we went for a burial service with my church members in one neo-prophetic church. To my surprise in that single service, the officiating minister took four offerings namely offering for the church, offering for the casket, offering to support the family of the deceased to pay their debt, and finally an offering for the dead man to use as transport to the next world (this is direct importation of ATR)! This was contrary to the practices of my church, which takes only one offering during burial services to be given to the family of the deceased to help offset some of the costs incurred due to the burial service/ceremony.

<sup>200</sup> A Twi wording for ‘Hour of Grace’.

*Kohinta*<sup>201</sup> amongst others. These terms by themselves arouse the desire for prayer by the members to seek God's favour, breakthrough and visitation in marriage, business, employment, to obtain visas for travel, easy childbirth, success in examinations, et cetera (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:54).

The constitution of the Christ Apostolic Church Ghana (TCAC, 2011:22,33,47,50,51), contains much on the how, where and when of ministries of prayer. Likewise in the CoP, prayer is a central part of church life and falls under its core practices. Adjei-Kwarteng (2019:2) holds that Pentecostals need to keep the fervency of prayer, lay hold of it, minister to God, draw lessons from God, and stop focusing on the devil. For Pentecostals, prayer is the heart of a successful and fruitful ministry (Assabil, 2019:99), and as Albrecht and Howards (2014:239) curtly state, Pentecostals would pray about everything. For Steve Jack Land (2010:24), the importunity of Pentecostal prayer lies in the fact that Pentecostals believe that "it is impossible to know God and the things of God without prayer", and that it is only through prayer that one's 'spirit mind' is opened to the things of God, and to receive from God. In reality, it is impossible to understand and practise Pentecostal theology and its Spirituality without personally conforming to the requirement of meeting and knowing God in a unique sense.

The practice of Pentecostal Spirituality is also made practical through the practice of prayer for the sublime effect of God's power to be experienced in the life of the one that prays. Pentecostal prayer for healing is usually associated with deliverance and the laying on of hands, as some Africans believe that every illness has demonic roots (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005:166). As such, deliverance ministry increasingly flourishes in Ghanaian Pentecostalism, which is linked to the mindset of most of Ghanaian society that ministers should engage in spiritual warfare to break any demonic oppression and strongholds that hold people back (Tsekpoe, 2019:284). According to Rev. Eric Nyamekye (In Annor, 2022), the reason why God wants us to pray (even though He knows our needs) is a mystery. The Pentecostal would even pray in the Spirit even when s/he does not know what to pray about, ambivalently based on Romans 8:26–27<sup>202</sup>.

As a spiritual exercise designed to draw the worshipper closer to his or her object of worship, fasting is usually added to prayer believing that it has a quicker effect on one's

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<sup>201</sup> A Twi word for prayer hideout.

<sup>202</sup> 'In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.' (Rom 8:26-27).

prayer. Fasting, which is the deliberate refusal of food (solid or liquid) could be ‘normal’ (without food but with water, cf. Matthew 4:1-2<sup>203</sup>), partial (eating light fruit, cf. Daniel 10:2-3<sup>204</sup>), or absolute (without food and water as in Esther 4:12) (Ali, 2009:48). The Pentecostal Spirituality of fasting has typically been associated with prayer and stands out as a distinctive aspect of the Pentecostal identity, indicating that although fasting characterises much Christianity, Pentecostals have their own unique approach to it (Albrecht and Howards, 2014:240).

Long periods of food restriction in accordance with Old Testament practices are viewed by Pentecostals as a means of appealing to God for miracles, healing, and restoration of life (Albrecht and Howards, 2014:240). Additionally, Pentecostals use fasting to pursue God in order to satisfy their desires and to seek more of God’s presence. Moreover, fasting is an indispensable tool for humbling the believer and for strengthening his or her faith. Ghanaian Pentecostalism is characterised by marking these fasting models. Typically, fasting is observed at the beginning of the year, during specific seasons, and during times of revival in the CoP.

### **3.8.11 Community, Fellowship, and the Communion (Eucharist)**

On the basis of the early church’s example of fellowship, communal worship, prayer, a common focus, and shared generosity, Classical Pentecostalism in Ghana thrives as a community rather than on individualism. Today, many Pentecostal churches emphasise that they are people of God indwelt by the Holy Spirit, guided by the apostles’ teaching, and living in accordance with Acts 2:42–47 (Constantineanu and Scobie, 2018:8).

The success of Pentecostal churches in Ghana is largely attributable to the fact that they are themselves communities that reach out to the larger communities in which they are situated (Badu Wood, 2019:246). Classical Pentecostal churches are associated with establishing community-based congregations to enable community members fellowship together (Badu Wood, 2019:248). This also strengthens communal identity, brotherly and sisterly love, and mutual support. A further advantage of the community-based congregation is that it promotes cultural adaptations and indigenisation, facilitating the assimilation of new

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<sup>203</sup> ‘Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry’ (Mat 12:20-21).

<sup>204</sup> ‘At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over’ (Dan 10:2-3).

members, and enabling the identification and tracking of relocated members (Markin, 2019:99-102).

These local churches believe they are obligated to saturate their local communities with the gospel and reach out to them through community engagements and social services (CoP, 2018:18). On the basis of the concept of the local community, converts are discipled and prepared to impact society with their changed lives (Warrington, 2008:113-114). To promote community and fellowship, these churches are founded on the principle of indigeneity and use local languages (the vernacular) for service and to foster fellowship among believers (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2010:6). Prior to the establishment of English churches and PIWCs (Tsekpoe, 2020:246) in the early 1980s, as a result of PENSA's activities, the CoP was primarily a vernacular-speaking church (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005b:91). The strength of the CoP is derived from the grassroot activity of the local church (Nyamekye, 2022:1-5).

The local church shares everything in common, as did the early Christian church. They celebrate the birth of a child with other members and mourn the death of a member's relative. After church services, one can frequently observe members engaging in clusters conversations about community life issues. There are also numerous 'microcosms' (such as the prayer force, women's wing, and the young women's wing) within the church macrocosm. Out of the community flows the fellowship and the practice of spiritual ordinances. In the community are the family system and Home Cell system (Antwi, 2022:60-82).

Classical Pentecostals, such as the CoP, prefer the term ordinance over the term sacrament (Tomberlin, 2019:74). According to Pentecostals, sacraments as defined by Roman Catholics are signs and means by which Christ's grace is administered to believers/church members (Tomberlin, 2019:74-75). To Pentecostals, however, an ordinance is 'a Christian rite ordained by Christ as a visible sign of redemptive grace' (Tomberlin, 2019:75-76) as well as of salvation, the forgiveness of sin, and regeneration (Kopah, 2018:83). An ordinance is thus a ritual activity or action that expresses one's faith in a given circumstance.

In Ghana, Classical Pentecostals like the CoP are known to have two so-called ordinances:<sup>205</sup> water baptism and Communion. As a church practice in the CoP, water baptism is a prerogative for one's participation in the communion. These two ordinances are likewise, tied strictly to a person's Spirituality. Notably, Pentecostals in Ghana do not follow

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<sup>205</sup> Pentecostals prefer to use the term 'ordinances' because it is believed that these practices neither affect your salvation nor necessarily mediate grace as the Roman Catholics, for example, believe.

infant baptism and baptism takes place only once a ‘conscious age’ (in the case of the CoP, usually approximately 13 years and above) has been reached, and after following a series of teachings and ‘disciplining of the soul’,<sup>206</sup> if the latter was won during an outreach. Classical Pentecostals in Ghana believe in, and practise baptism by immersion using the Trinitarian formulae of baptism (Kopah, 2018:85; TCAC, 2011:6, 7, 20).

In the CoP, like all other Classical Pentecostal churches, the process of partaking in communion is preceded with a ‘right hand of fellowship’.<sup>207</sup> During the formative stage of Pentecostalism in Ghana, baptism was done in full view of the whole community to serve as scrutiny of one’s Christian life and prevent one from living a wayward life thereafter. It was also intended to deter the person being baptised from going back to their old life. The whole community thus became witnesses,<sup>208</sup> safeguarding a person from forsaking the new and holy way of life.

Classical Pentecostals believe that grace is received directly from God and not through the elements of the communion or the initiation of baptism (Tomberlin, 2019:76). According to the sixth statement of faith of the CoP, communion bread represents the body of Christ symbolically, just as wine represents the blood of Christ symbolically.

Classical Pentecostals, such as the CoP, therefore, do not subscribe to transubstantiation in the Roman Catholic sense (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:156; cf. Kopah, 2018:92). Many Pentecostals however hold a ‘mystical sacramental view’ of the communion as the elements constitute ‘miracle food’ (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:153-158), and therefore approach communion in a distinctive manner, dressed in white with traditional *Kaba*<sup>209</sup> or *slit*<sup>210</sup> with a white scarf; others will not eat anything before eating the ‘sacred food’ on the day of communion. In Pentecostal circles, people also believe in the healing effects of

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<sup>206</sup> A ‘soul’ is a Pentecostal term used to refer to an adult convert won during an outreach.

<sup>207</sup> The right of fellowship is a process by which a church leader helps a new member in the affirmation of the church’s doctrine and practices in public. This process occurs before a person is allowed to partake the communion.

<sup>208</sup> In 2019, PIWC Asokwa (Pentecost International Worship Centre located at Asokwa is an English ministry of the Church of Pentecost) undertook a four-day evangelisation outreach to the Bolga Area. During one of the evening outreaches, we evangelised a man in one of the communities in Zoe to accept Christ as his Lord and saviour. His response to us was as follows: ‘I cannot attend a church where all people will be watching me. I cannot steal, I cannot flirt with other women, I cannot drink alcohol. Please give me some time to work on myself since I know I cannot make it.’

<sup>209</sup> ‘*Kaba*’ is the Akan terminology for a female top part of a dress which is sewn with an African design and depicts modesty and beauty.

<sup>210</sup> A *slit* is a long skirt also sewn with an African design to depict modesty and beauty. In practice, the *kaba* and *slit* should be sewn from the same material, otherwise, it fails to be *kaba* and *slit*.



communion elements, but that one must approach it in faith to access its healing powers.<sup>211</sup> This belief of some is reflected, for example, in some of the songs sung during communion, such as the following one sung in Akan:

*Di me honam, Na nom me mogya no bi.... 2x*

*Di ooo di oo na wo be nya nkwa ... 2x*

*Daakye wo be hu ma nim*

In translation:

Eat My flesh and drink part of his blood .... 2x

Eat, eat, and you will have life ..... 2x

One day, you will see My face

This song is drawn from John 6: 51, 54–65, ‘<sup>51</sup>I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world...<sup>54</sup>Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them’ seems to suggest that, at communion, one partakes of the flesh and the blood of Christ, similar to what is proposed in the doctrine of transubstantiation, and that it is only when people ‘eat the flesh and drink the blood’ of Christ that they will ‘see the face of Christ’ at the day of resurrection. Due to the lack of cohesive theology of the Pentecostals, it is clear that they are unable to explicitly practise what they believe at the grassroots level using the example of the communion above in question.

### **3.8.12 Classical Pentecostal Ghanaian Church Culture, Practices, and Governance**

Classical Pentecostal churches have a structured church governance and leadership structure that does not revolve around individual leaders (Markin, 2019:102-104) (see the following paragraph for more of this). This does not mean certain individuals do not have certain important tasks. Classical Pentecostals have a high respect for leadership and authority, especially toward the presiding official. Even though Pentecostals generally subscribe to and support democracy, theocracy still over-rules democracy. Moreover, even though central

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<sup>211</sup> I am aware of a woman in the Eastern Region of Ghana, who had a swollen thyroid gland and testified that it ‘melted’ after taking communion wine. According to another lady, she had fibroids which melted when she took the communion.

administration trickles down to the grassroots (Markin, 2019:106), the deciding ballot usually resides with the person presiding after lengthy deliberations over an issue. Once the presiding person speaks, a significant proportion of those present who oppose the view will reverse their positions to align with the leader. It is believed that, as a spirit-filled group, God speaks through the leader, who must be heard. In Pentecostalism, the voice of the people does not necessarily represent the voice of God, but the voice of the leader almost invariably represents the voice of God. The theology of Pentecostal decision-making may be seen as reflecting the verdict from the first Church Council at Jerusalem; 'For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and us' (Acts 15: 28). Amongst Ghanaian Pentecostals, casting votes is rare, and limited to issues relating to constitutionality or controversy.

Meanwhile, bureaucratic rules apply in Ghanaian Classical Pentecostal administrative governance with structured powers vested in groups, committees, councils, boards, and presbyteries rather than an individual. Moreover, unlike the neo-Pentecostals and neo-prophetic churches where these churches are owned by individuals, Classical Pentecostals are corporately owned by the members in general. As such, constitutional provisions and structures have been made for elections and changes in leadership. Though these changes may be marked with some seemingly chaotic incidents, most are resolved through the intervention of bodies such as the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council. Changes in leadership also often bring in their wake rapid developments and new ideas for church growth, among others. Based on the conceptual characteristic description of Pentecostal Spirituality, the next session now discusses the concept of Pentecostal theology.

### **3.9 Conceptualising a Distinctive (African) Pentecostal Theology**

Identifying a distinctive uniform theology of Pentecostalism is a challenge (Straub, 2016:209). The ambiguity and challenge in explaining, defining, and consolidating what Pentecostalism is and what Pentecostal theology is about, as also expressed by Warrington (2008:17), and Hollenweger (2005:135). Archer (2007:302), and Jacobson (2003:355), corroborate this by stating that, although Pentecostalism has a rich Spirituality, it has not produced an enduring theology. One reason for this is that Pentecostal theology has been challenged to consolidate due to the varied and evolving nature of the beliefs of this movement/tradition. The above ambiguity also challenges the construction of a pragmatic, universally accepted theology.

One example of the above is that some churches believe in the ‘second blessing’<sup>212</sup> and others believe in the ‘oneness view’ of the Godhead (Nel, 2015:51-52), whilst others support Trinitarianism. What is however identical is that Pentecostal theology/-ies customarily hinge on the day of Pentecost as the symbolic root of their initiation (Vondey, 2017:15). Beginning discussion of the subject, Vondey (2017:11) explains that Pentecostal theology’s core theological symbol is Pentecost.

Pentecostal theology seeks clarity on the relationship between Spirituality and doctrine, such that living Pentecostal theology reflects the reciprocal interaction between beliefs and emotions on the one hand, and teaching on the other (Vondey, 2017:17). Amongst some African Pentecostals, beliefs are fundamental for describing and formulating their theology. These beliefs are driven by an interplay between their experience with God and an encounter with the Holy Spirit.

Despite the close relationship between Pentecostal theology and Spirituality and even though the root of Pentecostal theology is its Spirituality, they are not synonymous (Vondey, 2017:17-19). They are also both deeply grounded in Christian mystic traditions, according to Albrecht and Howards (2014:235-53). The above statement also explains the importance of experiential Spirituality in relation to Pentecostal theology (Vondey, 2017:15). Glossolalia, for example, is a significant dimension that cannot be removed from Pentecostal theology (Nel, 2015:45). For that reason, and due to the varied doctrinal Pentecostal positions concerning issues related to Spirit baptism, Karkkainen (2007:1-14), and Warrington (2008:2021) hold that it is fundamental to explain the Pentecostal experience as an encounter with the spirit of God.

According to Yong (2005:30), four features characterise the distinctive Pentecostal Theology. These are: a) its biblical roots in the Luke-Acts accounts, b) the four-square gospel motif of Jesus Christ, c) its core orientation toward pneumatology, and d) the centrality on the confessional praxis of an experience of the Holy Spirit. Whereas c) speaks to the Pentecostal belief in the things of the Spirit, d) speaks about the confessional practices of the Holy Spirit. To Yong (2005:27-30), the description of a distinctive Pentecostal theological approach

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<sup>212</sup> Many Holiness, Pentecostal, and charismatic churches use the term ‘second blessing’. It refers to the belief that a believer's life is divided into two or more spiritual phases (blessings). The person's statement of faith, when he or she becomes spiritually ‘born again’, is commonly considered the first stage. The ‘baptism of the Holy Spirit’ is the second stage, or benediction. It is commonly considered to refer to the manifestation of spiritual talents in a believer's life, particularly speaking in other tongues, as well as the use of spiritual gifts like prophecy, healing, singing in the Spirit, and other gifts referenced in 1 Cor 12 and Rom 12.

would also consist of three dimensions: “[i] highlighting a Lukan hermetical approach, [ii] a pneumatological framework and orientation and [iii] an experience-based life.”

In addition, orality has been expounded by scholars such as Cox (1995:82-84), Warrington (2008:16; cf, John 1983:87), and Hollenweger (2005:18) as a critical feature of the Pentecostal theology evident via its Spirituality. The orality of Pentecostalism bridges the promise and the actualities, and it links prayer and theology through elements such as worship life and practices (Yong, 2005:29). To Pentecostals, the experience of the Holy Spirit must make evident the charismata that produces and provides unlimited resources for the community (Constantineanu and Scobie, 2018:8). It is imperative for Pentecostal theology to be formulated based on its rich spiritual tradition of the third article of the Godhead (the Holy Spirit), in other words, on pneumatology (Archer, 2007:302; c.f. Dabney 2001:141-146). As phrased by Straub (2016:211), ‘the heartbeat’ of Pentecostalism is the uniqueness of the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

To summarise, Pentecostal Spirituality, as a distinct Christian Spirituality coincides with an evolving theological reality, with pneumatic experience as its theological tradition (Archer, 2007:302; c.f Dabney, 2001:141-146). The theology of Pentecostalism can therefore only be understood by appreciating its unique tradition, which is different from the current traditions of Christianity, even Evangelicalism (Shaull and Cesar, 2000:xiii), which seems so close in its disposition.

For Archer (2007:306), Pentecostal theology involves diligently re-visioning tradition in the light of Spirit and Word. The above position goes beyond re-visioning historiography. Pentecostalism is an effective-experiential theological tradition with an early Pentecostal way of doing theology expressed through testimonies, songs, trances, inspired preaching, and dance (Archer, 2007:302).

It has been said several times in this study that the traditional background of African Pentecostalism is believed to be situated in an environment saturated with cosmological views which significantly influences its perspective (Nel, 2019:1). To most Africans, nothing happens by chance, for the physical is indicative of the spiritual. Everything that happens physically is believed to have been pollinated spiritually. For this reason, any adverse happenings in the life of an individual can only be reversed through prayer, petitions, declarations, and sometimes curses. The asymptotic relationship between the sacred and the secular in the African worldview has resulted in the argument that pneumatic Christianity is synonymous with the fibre of the African culture (Nel, 2019:1-3).

Some Pentecostals thus assert that the reason Pentecostalism thrives in Africa is the African inclination to their traditional worldview and an affinity to the things of the Spirit. Whereas some Westerners sees the issue of demons in terms of an abstract ontological view (Gatumu, 2009:168-208 cf. Nel, 2019:1-3), the African cosmological worldview believes in the importunity of witches, demons, and evil forces, with African Pentecostal churches demonstrating their ability to combat these evil forces (Newell, 2007:461). As such, African Pentecostalism has actively pursued '[o]ral theology that is congruent with African traditional religiosity and extreme receptivity to the supernatural', according to Asamoah-Gyadu (2015b:406).

African Pentecostalism's theology can be defined as a) transformative theology, b) empowerment theology, and c) healing, deliverance, and breakthrough theology, according to Asamoah-Gyadu (2015a:406-408), and Olumide (2017:9). I would add pneumatic theology as the fourth dimension because of its prevalence in Africa. In contrast to transformation theology, empowerment theology emphasises pneumatology, whereas healing and deliverance theologies emphasise spiritual warfare. Each of these will be examined in greater depth.

In characterising Pentecostal theology as *transformative* (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2010:1-2, 2015a:406), the focus is the in-character formation, morality, and ethics that follow an encounter with God via Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2015a:406). Characteristic of the Holy Spirit's action in assisting this transition is the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit in the true disciple (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2010:11-3). As an experience with the Holy Spirit, the subsequent portions of this chapter will emphasise the transformational aspect of African Pentecostal theology.

African Pentecostal Theology is regarded as empowerment, as well as healing, deliverance, and breakthrough (prosperity) (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2010:407-409; Olumide, 2017:7-8). Empowerment theology is about the strength obtained through Christ's atoning sacrifice to overcome the desires of the flesh and live as a child of God with access to all of the Father's benefits. Pentecostal empowerment theology results in prayer centred on granting the believer strength over demonic powers, spirits, and dominant cosmological forces. Pentecostals believe this theology of empowerment offers God's children freedom from sickness, failure, disasters, and healing as illustrated in Ephesians 6:12-13:

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand" (Eph 6:12-13).

The above theological worldview has contributed to the Pentecostal emphasis on spiritual warfare and deliverance in Ghana (Adewuya, 2012:14-18). Due to the frequency of pneumatological experience, African Pentecostal theology may be classified as *pneumatic* (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2010). African Pentecostal Spirituality too is a predominantly expressive as pneumatic Spirituality and is largely articulated orally (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005a) with the Holy Spirit serving as the impetus for all religious activities. All aspects of the Pentecostal lifestyle revolve around the Holy Spirit, power, and prayer. For Pentecostals, every aspect of life is centred on the omniscient presence of the Holy Spirit.

Concerning prayer specifically, the Pentecostal will take hold of their future through prayer and authoritatively employ prayer as a means ostensibly to correct any conspicuous misfortunes (Wariboko, 2017:7). With this perspective in mind, it is not surprising that over 95 percent of all Ghanaian Christians (serious, casual, and nominal) attend church every year on the evening of December 31<sup>st</sup> of every year. The night of December 31<sup>st</sup> precedes the New Year, and is a time to pray for safety, for God's direction, for well-being, and for fruitfulness in the next year. According to Sakupapa (2012:424), the African worldview of prayer has caught up with the African Pentecostal, and via prayer, concepts are articulated, hope is expressed in God, anxieties are alluded to, and burdens are shared (Wariboko, 2017:7). Pentecostals believe that the ever-present Holy Spirit would convey their prayer request to God through Christ for mediation and the realisation of a beautiful and prosperous future by means of this profound emotion of gratitude.

The following section follows from a Trinitarian African Pentecostal perspective. A brief discussion is given of the Trinity in Pentecostal theology presented as an alternative way to explain three major constituent elements of Pentecostal theology and the Bible, namely a Pentecostal theology of God, of Christ (that is, Pentecostal Christology of Christ as Saviour, Healer, Baptiser, Sanctifier, and Soon-coming-King), and Pneumatology.

### **3.9.1 Pentecostal Theology of God**

Using the CoP as a point of reflection, Pentecostal theology is Trinitarian driven. God is represented by three distinct persons: Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit within one essence represented as the Trinity (Anim, 2019:107). The three-in-one nature of God is demonstrated by God's fellowship, coequality, co-eternality as revealed in the work of creation, redemption, and sanctification. The Pentecostal theology of God may therefore be explored from a Trinitarian perspective. Since encounter and experience are critical for the Pentecostal, God is not abstract but truly experiential (Warrington, 2008:24). Pentecostals

believe in the existence of God, who possesses unique non-communicable attributes but shares other communicable attributes with humankind (Warrington, 2008:28). The second statement of faith of the CoP reads:

We believe in the existence of the one true God, Elohim, Maker of the whole universe; indefinable, but revealed as triune Godhead- Father, Son and Holy Spirit- One in nature, essence and attributes- Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent (Gen 1:1; Matt 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14) (Anim, 2019:95).

According to the CoP, the existence of the God from the Old Testament account is presumed and self-evident. The revelation of God is made manifest through the names of God (Anim, 2019:96). Although the names of God reveal God's character and, to some extent, God's involvement in the affairs of humankind; Pentecostals in most instances prefer to use the names of God that evolved because of God's miraculous intervention in the lives of people (Tomberlin, 2019:6-20). The latter include "*Jehovah Jireh* (The Lord is my provider), *Jehovah-Nissi* (The Lord is my banner), *Jehovah-Shalom* (The Lord Is Peace), *Jehovah-Shammah* (The Lord is there) and *Jehovah-Tsebaóth* (The Lord of Hosts)" (Anim, 2019:95). To the Pentecostal, a personal relation with and experience of God is therefore the fundamental theological drive (Warrington, 2008:33).

In other words, the Pentecostal believes that God is a 'person' who actively participates in the lives of His creation and the church. And now, God is still at work in the lives of Pentecostals just as He did when He performed miracles in the Bible. The Bible is therefore not viewed by Pentecostals as a history book but rather as a holy book that conveys the self-revelational divine character of God who continues to reveal Godself to people.

### **3.9.2 Pentecostal Theology of Christ (Christology)**

Pentecostals, though "*theo-centrally Trinitarian*", may be perceived to be more Christocentric in their proclamatory theology (Warrington, 2008:34). In other words, Pentecostalism, although Spirit-centred in experience, is Christocentric in theology. Without a doubt, Pentecostals may also be described as "pneumatologically Christocentric" with a theology leaning towards the humanity of Jesus, rather than His divinity. The CoP believes in "Christ's deity, sinless life, atoning death, resurrection, ascension, abiding intercession and soon-coming-to-judge the living and the dead" (Quayesi-Amakye, 2019:137-164). This belief is ingrained in the statement of faith/creeds/affirmations of most Pentecostals (Quayesi-Amakye, 2019:137-164; cf. Tomberlin, 2019:31-46). Even though some Pentecostal-

Christological beliefs, such as the incarnated eternal existence of Christ with body marks have been questioned,<sup>213</sup> nevertheless, Pentecostals hold this belief as biblically substantiated. The reason many Pentecostals are inclined to emphasise the humanity of Christ is due to their belief that, Christ is in a better position to understand the situation of humankind and intercede for humankind because of His own humanity (Warrington, 2008:34).

Since Pentecostal theology is not complete without the totality of the work of Christ, His life and work are explained by Pentecostals with reference to the so-called Full Gospel (Foursquare Gospel). Land (2010:82-98, 117-119, 196-205) suggests that when the core subjects of justification, sanctification and Spirit baptism are discussed in detail with respect to the Full Gospel, the subject of Pentecostal theology is fully covered (Warrington, 2008:18; cf Dayton, 1987:21-22). From the above, it is clear that Pentecostal theology hinges on the (Christological) Full Gospel (Nel, 2019c:2) characterised by the distinctive baptism of the Spirit with the associated endowment of the charismata. Even scholars such as Studebaker (2010:262-270) who maintain that pneumatology is the distinguishing feature of Pentecostal theology reminds one that pneumatology is not only necessary for the experience or for a methodological procedure, but as a synthesis with Christology in the redemptive soteriology of the *ordo salutis*.

According to Cox (2009:37:37), the influence of the Full Gospel on Pentecostalism is phenomenal and myriad and associated with evidence of signs and wonders and is a fundamental mark of the Spirituality of Classical Pentecostals. To the Pentecostal this constitutes a pietistic Spirituality based on Jesus of Nazareth as God incarnate (Manohar, n.d.:1), the crucified Lord, the risen Lord, and the soon-coming King (Cox, 2009:39) (more on this in par. 3.9.2.1 ff below). Moreover, numerous Pentecostals believe that Jesus Christ fulfilled humanity's need for a saviour (Quayesi-Amakye, 2019:136-145) as attested by the New Testament and predicted in the Old Testament.

Christ's virgin birth, blameless life, atoning death, resurrection, continuing intercession, and second coming, all demonstrate the plausibility of His salvific grace. Jesus is viewed by African Pentecostals as a miracle-worker who gives remedy during difficult and chaotic times. Christ is projected as the source of faith, experience, and hope from the Pentecostal perspective, and belief in Christ juxtaposes the three aspects of religion: faith,

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<sup>213</sup> Some Pentecostals believe that the wounds of resurrected body of Christ (Jn 20:24-28) will be a feature we shall all behold at the resurrection of the saints to give a clear conviction of our salvation.



belief, and experience (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2006:12). On the basis of the Christology, the following thematic inferences are made about the persona of Jesus Christ within the Trinity.

### **3.9.2.1 Christ the Saviour in a Quest for Salvific Prosperity**

From the perspective of the CoP, the person of Jesus Christ as the Saviour is expressly included in their statement of faith (Quayesi-Amakye, 2019:137). The Pentecostal appreciates the role of Jesus as the Saviour of humankind from a salvific worldview and as a changer of destiny. The Pentecostal believes, according to the Full Gospel, that we are saved by grace and through no other means than the atoning work of Christ Jesus (Manohar, n.d.). The Full Gospel is therefore soteriological in all dimensions (Vondey, 2017:37). The soteriological dimension of the Pentecostal Full Gospel further shows that salvation is not only for the soul, but salvation also for the spirit, and for the body to make us whole from all sicknesses. Pentecostals also ‘view the saving work of Christ from the perspective of the Spirit’ (Vondey, 2017:54). Pentecostals thus believe that salvation begins with a conviction of one's heart by the spirit of God (Tomberlin, 2019:31). This ‘pneumatological Christological soteriology’ is evident in the incarnation of Jesus and is also expounded in Acts 10:38<sup>214</sup>.

The CoP therefore believes that ‘salvation cannot be found in any person, religion, belief, or creed outside of the person of Jesus Christ’ (Quayesi-Amakye, 2019:141). The redeeming work of Christ is explained as an act of restoring the broken relationship between humanity and God. The success of Pentecostalism in Ghana lies in its ability to culturally fit into the African worldview to meet the needs of the people (Quayesi-Amakye, 2014b:260). It may appear to some that Ghanaian Pentecostals disregard the pervasiveness of suffering in our world and therefore sometimes preach the health and wealth gospel (more on this later in this section). Pentecostals believe that Christian salvation must be brimming with divine life that manifests as protection, victory, and success (Quayesi-Amakye, 2014b:259-260).

As indicated already, the African believes that humans are frail and prone to victimisation by evil forces perceived to be stronger ‘spiritually’ than they are, thus resulting in a discordant life of sickness, struggle, and poverty, and therefore, the need to be freed from these (Quayesi-Amakye, 2015a:112). Since life is seen as a contradiction between good and evil, liberation is needed from any forces that inhibit one’s success, greatness, respect, and

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<sup>214</sup> ‘How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him’ (Ac 10:38).

good wealth. A good life is therefore critical in the African worldview (Quayesi-Amakye, 2015a).

The Twi word for salvation is derived from two words ‘*nkwa-gye*’; ‘*nkwa*’ (life) and ‘*gye*’ (rescue, retake, deliver, recapture, et cetera) (Larbi, 2002b:94). Salvation in the Akan language portrays the multiple views of ‘preservation of an abundant life’, ‘liberation’, or wellbeing. Similarly, the Akan word *nkwa* means enjoyment, wealth, riches, and substance including children. It also encompasses peace and tranquillity (Larbi, 2002b:92). Salvation in the Akan traditional view is their rescue from poverty to wellbeing, prosperity, good life and success. Salvation as a redemption process is meant to deliver an individual from the gripping power of the enemy (*ɔtamfo*) in order for one to enjoy good life.

This redemption, for the Pentecostal, is exemplified by both physical/material and spiritual blessing rather than only spiritual salvation (Larbi, 2002b:91-96). Salvation is therefore oriented not only eschatologically (in the future) but very much to life now and in the past. Salvation is retrospective, progressive, and ultimate. Ali (2017:57) also states that, to the Pentecostal, salvation means we were saved, we are saved, and we shall be saved. The Pentecostal, primarily reflecting on his or her background, family lineage, and cultural experience believes that Christ has saved him/her from a tortuous life of poverty, darkness, and hopelessness, and has the potential of lifting him/her to higher heights.

From the neo-Pentecostal, and neo-prophetic view, poverty is invariably seen as a pointer to family distortions, disorders, and curses. An individual’s ability to break the yoke of poverty and overcome this burden to become visibly rich and socially influential is therefore a sign of total salvation. Like in the Akan traditional worldview, neo-prophetic also holds that salvation must necessarily be associated with material blessing and prosperity (Larbi, 2002b:92-96), which is extrapolated from the Full Gospel to mean the salvation of the soul from wrath, the salvation of the spirit from sickness, and the salvation of the body from poverty.

The Classical Pentecostals like the CoP, however, teach the true meaning of salvation in Christ as simply redemption from sin and the wrath of God and the promise of eternal life through Christ Jesus. The above also presents a challenge to the Pentecostal regarding the way the gospel is presented to and understood by the unbeliever during outreaches and evangelisation. During evangelisation outreaches, converts are often left with the conviction that the primary work of Christ in salvation is to change one’s life and destiny, saving him/her from an unruly family lineage, misfortune, and poverty. Indeed, salvation does bring about transformation, but the Christian life is not without suffering and pain. As a result,

when Christians begin to experience suffering, frustrations, and challenges in life, their faith becomes distorted, and they begin questioning God's sovereignty.

As discussed in section 3.9.2.1, the Pentecostal gospel of salvation is frequently presented in parallel with Akan's traditional belief of good health, riches, power, and success (Nel, 2020c:15-19). This philosophy holds that Christian salvation entails a whole package of health, wealth, and the absence of pain as a necessary aspect of the Christian life (Quayesi-Amakye, 2011a:29). In Ghana, neo-Pentecostal pastors and neo-prophets have reduced prosperity to humanistic ideals of self-effort and self-achievement, with poverty and failure interpreted as the result of a lack of faith and the outcome of sin (Larbi, 2002b:92-96).

Whilst most preachers use 3 John 1:2<sup>215</sup> as their key text, they place a strong focus on prosperity and blessing as a result of Christian salvation, which according to Pastor Mensah Otabil <sup>216</sup> means the believer's 'financial prosperity, material prosperity, and spiritual prosperity' (Asamoah-Gyedu, 2005c:8-14; 2005a:205). This is consistent with the teachings of another neo-Pentecostal, Archbishop Duncan Williams according to whom 'God wants his children to be happy, eat the best food, at the most expensive restaurants, to be in the best houses and to appear in the best clothes because Jesus himself rode on the most expensive means of transport in his day' (Asamoah Gyedu, 2005:205) and wore a seamless undergarment (John 19:23), which was very expensive in his day. Prosperity preachers in Ghana emphasise that when members are financial difficulties, that it is exactly when the believer must give, believing in the power of all his/her effort, based on the principle of sowing, and reaping as in Galatians 6:8-9<sup>217</sup> (Asamoah Gyedu, 2005:207).

Paul Gifford postulates that, 'the Ghanaian faith gospel holds that God has met all the needs of the human being in the suffering and death of Christ and that every believer should now share in the victory of Christ over sin, sickness, and poverty' (Gifford, 1998:62). In the view of Ghanaian neo-Pentecostals, the three main principles in keeping with prosperity are hard work, prayer and giving, to help one receive favour from God (Kwarteng-Yeboah, 2016:61-62). Yet an emerging fourth dimension in keeping with the prosperity gospel is faith through positive declaration, where one declares prosperity by faith and claims the unseen by

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<sup>215</sup> 'Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well' (3 Jn 1:2).

<sup>216</sup> Pastor Mensah Otabil is the head pastor for International Central Gospel Church (ICGC), a leading neo-Pentecostal church in Ghana.

<sup>217</sup> 'Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up' (Gal 6:8-9).

faith. The concept of giving is exemplified through seed sowing that is believed to activate breakthroughs in the life of an individual. Typical biblical examples used by these neo-Pentecostals include the Shunammite woman and Elisha in 2 Kings 4:8–18, the widow of Zarephath and prophet Elijah in 1 Kings 17:7–17, Elijah serving Elisha in 2 Kings 2:3–5; 3:11; Mary Magdalene and Jesus (Mark 14:3-9; John 11:2-4) and Jesus sitting beside the offering bowl to see how much each person puts in the bowl Mark 12:41 (Opoku- Kwarteng: 2016, 67-69).

In terms of the spiritual realm, the Pentecostal neo-prophet contends that one's fear of 'otanfo's' (Akan for "the wicked fellow") capacity to frustrate and wreck one's life necessitates prophetic bargaining in order to foil their evil schemes. Through a prophesied confrontation between God and the forces of darkness, these prophetic discussions flourish on combat on the side of the proponent by the neo-prophet (Quayesi-Amakye, 2011a:297). Different materials are used in these rituals to mediate and serve as a point of touch for the prosperity, success, and victory of the proponent. These materials required for the ritual are a positivisation of the sacramental sacrifices and transactional rituals of African traditional worldview as discussed in section 2.6.2 and 2.6.2 of this research.

Monetary payments are required to enhance the speedy release of superhuman solutions for clients. Not all donations to the prophet will nonetheless allow and attract prophetic attention unless at least GhC 500 (about 45.5 USD) or more was paid as consultation fee to gain the attention of the prophet promptly. Prosperity teaching in Ghana has resulted even in the change of marriage vows from 'for better for worse, for richer for poorer' to 'for better for better and for richer for richer' (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:110), and the use of the accolade: 'sowing time, blessing time'.

### **3.9.2.2 Christ the Healer**

As earlier discussed, salvation for the Pentecostal does not end with saving and transforming the soul but includes healing bodies (Vondey, 2017:40). The salvation of an individual must produce a resultant physical manifestation in the body as an interplay between the soul and the spirit. Divine healing is therefore critical to the Pentecostal believer as a mark of the sanctification of the body, which accounts for the many testimonies of divine healing and miracles during Pentecostal service (Tomberlin, 2019:40-41). The Pentecostal believes in the power of divine healing based on accounts of healing miracles in Scripture, both Old and New Testaments (Onyinah, 2019:287).

Whilst the Old Testament presents God as the Healer, the New Testament presents Jesus Christ as the Messiah, Saviour and Healer of people (Warrington, 2008:). Healing in the 'name of Jesus is a prerogative authority of the believer, demonstrated by declaring one's faith vocally' (Vondey, 2017:109-100). Even though the CoP believes that 'healing of sickness is provided for God's people via the atoning death of Jesus Christ, the CoP does not oppose those who solicit medical assistance' (Onyinah, 2019:287). Even though physical healing is essential for the believer, that is not the ultimate aim of his/her salvation (Warrington, 2008:269). Furthermore, although the Pentecostal believes in the unambiguous theology of healing in the atonement (Warrington, 2008:270-272), healing is the prerogative of the sovereign God, and not all believers may be healed of their diseases (Onyinah, 2019:287).

According to Goffe (2005:15), Pentecostal Christianity thrives in the most poverty-stricken places on earth, such as many parts of Africa and Asia due to fear, poverty, and disease. African societies sometimes face mysterious, deadly diseases, unexplained deaths, and misfortune, with a subsequent quest for a deliverer, healer, or breakthrough. In the Full Gospel, Christ the healer represents the gospel of hope proclaimed by the Pentecostal, the belief in God through Jesus Christ as a solution to all manner of misfortunes, including illness and disease. Some African Pentecostals also believe that certain illnesses, curses, early deaths, and strange spiritual occurrences are part of their family lineage and occur as cyclical events in families. It is however believed that all these cycles may be broken by the greater supernatural power of Christ.

From the above narration, it is clear that, to the Pentecostal, healing in Christ means comprehensive healing from physical, spiritual, and even financial illnesses. Within the larger Pentecostal fraternity, healing is believed to be appropriated through faith, through application of oil and sometimes through other modes (Onyinah, 2017:81-84). In some cases, instead of seeking orthodox medication, some believers would rather only move from prayer camp to revival centre to seek divine consultation for spiritual attention, when their condition also requires medical attention.

Although the belief in Jesus Christ as Healer is a belief in the vicarious death of Jesus, and also in the potency in the blood of Jesus to cure all illnesses, some Pentecostals do not seem to appreciate the sovereignty of God concerning healing. Some address all sicknesses by casting out demons in the sicknesses, for they believe behind every sickness is a demon responsible for the sickness. For Pentecostals, the name of Jesus, the blood of Jesus, the power of Jesus and the fire of the Holy Spirit are the means by which demons are cast out,

but not intrinsically in the name of God. As such, this Pentecostal belief in the power of the blood of Jesus has, upon occasion, been associated with mystic African belief in the atoning power of the blood, as used in traditional African sacrifices. Finally, according to Ghanaian Pentecostal theologian Opoku Onyinah, the healing of the body, soul, and spirit will be complete only at the resurrection of glorious bodies, and at the second coming of Christ when our salvation will be perfected (Onyinah, 2017:86-87).

### 3.9.2.3 Christ, the Baptiser

Baptism in the Holy Spirit plays a vital role in the salvific process of the Pentecostal. The Pentecostal thus believes that salvation is also not complete until a person is Spirit baptised following the process of sanctification (Walker, 2019b:236). For the Pentecostal, Spirit baptism is the ultimate evidence of the confirmation of one's salvation (Tomberlin, 2019:39). For most Classical Pentecostals, therefore, baptism in the Holy Spirit is a sine-qua-none of the Christian experience, and an essential element of the conversion process (White 2014:2-4).

The Pentecostal's belief that it is Christ who baptises in the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Mathew 3:11-12, John 14:26), and that 'the presence of Jesus Christ in the life of church continues through the work of the Holy Spirit' (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013b:4). Pentecostals believe similarly that Jesus baptises in the Holy Spirit for the newness of life in the Spirit (John 7:38-39<sup>218</sup>), for the empowerment of service for Christ (Acts 1:8<sup>219</sup>; John 15:26). If Jesus is baptising people in the Spirit, it indicates that the Holy Spirit will not carry out His redeeming work independently of Jesus. Everyone will be able to receive the Spirit via Jesus. Whatever work of salvation the Spirit performs, He does so in Jesus' name. The Spirit moves for and with Jesus everywhere He goes (Piper, 2018).

Classical Pentecostals, such as those in the CoP, believe that conversion begins with the work of the Holy Spirit convicting a person to accept Jesus as his/her personal Saviour (Walker, 2017a:22-24). Some Pentecostals therefore believe that Spirit baptism is the fulcrum of experiencing the other graces of the Full Gospel (Vondey, 2017:83). Meanwhile, through the Spirit, we encounter God, experience God, and are impacted by God. Upon baptism of the

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<sup>218</sup> 'Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.' By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified' (Jn 7:38-39).

<sup>219</sup> 'But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth' (Ac 1:8).

Holy Spirit, the latter indwells, teaches, guides, and empowers the Pentecostal for Christian service and righteous living (Walker, 2017a:34). Vodney (2017:84) puts it differently that the Holy Spirit helps the believer overcome the schemes of the evil one and provides inner strength to overcome the lust of the flesh, and schemes of the evil one. For this reason, Pentecostals sometimes affectionately call the Holy Spirit believers' 'helper to get to heaven'. Some Pentecostal preachers also assert that one cannot enter heaven without the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Although this may be questioned, the understanding behind this view is that the Holy Spirit, as our helper, provides the power to live right and overcome the temptations of this world.

From the above narrative, it may seem that Pentecostals overemphasise charisma over character. Pentecostals rather believe that the pneumatic experience influences one's life since the experience marks a genuine conversion (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2010:4). The Pentecostals believes that the born-again experience with the evidence of speaking in tongues is all that the believer needs to be empowered for the Christian journey. Once the Pentecostal is baptised in the Holy Spirit and continues in prayer to seek the infilling of the Spirit, it is believed that these prayers would automatically produce a desire for righteous living. Pentecostals usually believe that the indwelling of the Spirit therefore grants one the power for holy living. In some cases, however, character development according to Christ-like patterns may be a challenge for some Pentecostals because there may be an overemphasis on the infilling at the expense of the deliberate effort towards developing the fruit of the Spirit.

In summary, baptism in the Holy Spirit is initiated by Christ as an experience of being immersed by the Triune God. Through God's third person, Spirit baptism produces godliness and makes one seated in the heavenly places with Christ. It is a cherished initiation that the Pentecostal believes and makes him/her potentially become like Christ and eventually heavenly bound. It may sometimes be challenged by the issue of genuine character development.

Pentecostals who uphold the four-square gospel do not believe that sanctification is a different ethos of the Christology, but as a process initiated by the Holy Spirit following conversion and Spirit Baptism. Thus, sanctification is upheld a process initiated by the Holy Spirit aimed at regenerating the hearts and minds of believers into the image of God through Christ is ultimately producing a 'new nature' through the gracious act of the Holy Spirit (Nyamekye, 2017:65). As a judicial act by God, sanctification is when one is declared to be holy on the basis of accepting Christ as one's Saviour (Kuyper, 2004:1-3). For it is Christ who sanctifies the believer, enabling him to experience the richness of our new life in the

Spirit (Grimes, 2002:2). For as John 17:15–19 and 1 Peter 1:2<sup>220</sup> puts it, we are sanctified by Christ through word and by His Spirit. From the account in John 1:29<sup>221</sup>, the writer of the gospel was describing sanctification as one of the gracious acts of Christ that would qualify the church to be united to God. Christian salvation would have been incomplete without the sanctification process of Christ through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit (Kuyper, 2004).

Through the work of Christ on the cross and our faith in Him, therefore, we are justified and declared innocent and righteous through the atonement after confessing Jesus (Vondey, 2017:34-35). Even though sanctification is the work of God, it requires human cooperation to transform the inner man/woman (Tomberlin, 2019:34-37). The result of sanctification is therefore a transformation of the body, soul, and spirit in pursuit of holiness.

As a distinct work of grace, Vondey (2017:60) contends that sanctification is the most contested teaching amongst Pentecostals. For instance, even though the CoP believes in the believer's sanctification by the Holy Spirit (Nyamekye, 2019b:165), the CoP does not believe sanctification should account for the fifth element of the Full Gospel. Pentecostals believe in the instantaneous sanctification of the believer as a work of the Holy Spirit following conversion, and yet they also believe in the ongoing transformation work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer through his/her Christian life journey as well (Nyamekye, 2019b:185). It may therefore be more accurate to say that Pentecostals believe that sanctification is initiated at conversion and seen to be progressive, in the past, present, and future until the believer is conformed into the likeness of Christ ultimately at redemption (Nyamekye, 2019b:186).

Pentecostals believe and declare their faith viz we were saved the day we declared Christ as Lord and personal saviour; we are saved progressively through the Christian journey, and we shall ultimately be saved the day we see God in glory. This is the reason for the Pentecostal tune 764 by Eunice Johnson: (Agyemang Badu, 2016: 404).

Yebese no, se Yesu  
 Kristo Nyame Ba no ba a,  
 Yene No bese  
 Yebese No, se Yesu Kristo  
 Nyame Ba no ba a

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<sup>220</sup> 'Who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood' (1 Pet 1:2).

<sup>221</sup> 'The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'' (Jn 1:29).



Yene No bese  
 Saa bere yi oresiesie yen Saa bere yi,  
 Ode N'as ampa no reyen yen kra  
 Yebese No se Yesu  
 Kristo  
 Nyame Ba no ba a  
 Yene No bese

Translated as:

We would become like him, at the return of Christ,  
 the son of God  
 we shall become like him  
 We would become like him, at the return of Christ,  
 the son of God  
 we shall become like him  
 At this stage he is remodelling us, he is reframing us with his word  
 We would become like him, at the return of Christ,  
 the son of God  
 we shall become like him

This Pentecostal song projects the Pentecostal theology that sanctification is progressive until one leaves this world or at the return of Christ.

### **3.9.2.4 Christ, the Soon-Coming King**

Pentecostals hold the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as an eschatological event (Tomberlin, 2019:42). The recurring theme of the eschaton reminds the Pentecostal of the need to reflect on the other elements of the Full Gospel with the assurance of salvation of the individual in the right relationship with the church (Vondey, 2017:132-135). The early Pentecostals had a misconception about apocalyptic eschatology as they understood baptism in the Spirit and speaking in tongues as empowerment for mission work that would hasten the return of the Messiah (Tomberlin, 2019:42-43). Every believer is therefore empowered to be a witness of Christ with passion (Land, 2010:91), and should act accordingly in a very direct manner. In modern Pentecostalism, witnessing takes many forms including active evangelism, tract evangelism, video evangelism, lifestyle evangelism, crusades, rallies (Aboah, 2020:2-3), and recently televangelism (White, 2016b:1-3).

The early indigenous Pentecostal churches were established with a strong eschatological hope of an imminent Messianic return. The expectant physical return of Jesus to earth remains a crucial element of Pentecostal Spirituality affecting their service/witnessing (Warrington, 2008:313). For Pentecostals like most Christians, the *Parousia*, is a more than near event; it is an expectation of hope for an ultimate salvation

(Marius, 2014:372). Due to the urgency of the imminent return of Christ, some churches in their early years of establishment were hesitant even to erect permanent and decent church buildings and would not even formally train their ministers. In the past, the CoP in Ghana too, was noted for worshipping in temporary buildings, under shelters with palm branch roofs and in members' houses. In urban and peri-urban centres, the CoP hardly bought lands at strategic, accessible places. Their church buildings were located near cemeteries, public toilets and at the outskirts of the towns in which they were located. The CoP, until recently, held the philosophy that churches should not invest so much in physical structures, but should rather pray and evangelise to win souls for the Kingdom of God so as to hasten the return of the Lord (Walker, 2019a:225-226).

Based on this strong eschatological motive, a common slogan was: *Maranatha – Come, Jesus, come*. The CoP's initial conviction of the soon-coming Jesus seems to have dwindled in the last two decades following the realisation that the hermeneutics on 'the-soon-coming-king' is figurative, rather than literal. As a common phenomenon, members of these churches, therefore, may greet each other and announce at the close of church service: '*se Yesu amma a....*' Translated to English as 'if Jesus tarries', they will meet on a specific date for such and such activity. These greetings also seem to become less frequent in the CoP recently. Notwithstanding, the Pentecostal still believes that Christ will return to take the saved to heaven and to judge the unsaved with eternal punishment. The eschatological motive contributed to holiness becoming a watchword for early Pentecostals, who were preparing and looking heavenward toward the eternal Kingdom as a place where there would be no pain or sorrow. The eschatological motive of the early Pentecostals, together with the interpretation of Matthew 19:23–24<sup>222</sup>, also often played out in a misconceived worldview that wealth was evil and that the rich had a much stronger potential for ending up in hell. Over time, however, this worldview has changed, and the Pentecostal preaches salvation as a composite message of hope, transformation, and material abundance. This has recently become the driving theological motive of the neo-Pentecostal.

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<sup>222</sup> 'Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God'' (Matt 19:23-24).

### 3.9.3 Pentecostal Theology of the Spirit (Pneumatology)

As discussed in sections 3.2.9 and 3.8.2, the Pentecostal theology of the Spirit (Pneumatology) is the central theme of Pentecostalism, hence some thoughts of these are seen to be running through various discussions in this thesis. Pentecostal theology of the Spirit is premised on the understanding that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Triune God (Mat 3:16; 2 Cor 13:14) (Walker, 2019a:226) and that the work of the Holy Spirit is described in the biblical narratives as being very active even in creation (Yong, 2003:36).

Pentecostal theology is based on the premise of a God who baptises with the Spirit for the purpose of salvation, sanctification, and empowerment towards transformation (Vondey, 2017:267-269). From reading John 14:6<sup>223</sup>, it may be proposed that the Holy Spirit unites the Father and the Son, who together with the Spirit abides with and in the believer (Land, 2010:20). The emphasis on pneumatology is also related to the experiential nature of Pentecostal faith. Pentecostals claim to experience (Fee, 2000:37) God's divine presence all the way through their process of justification and sanctification (Nyamekye, 2019b:165).

The Pentecostal theology of the Spirit starts with the theology of 'Baptism of the Spirit'.<sup>224</sup> It then progresses to the theology of 'Baptism in the Spirit'<sup>225</sup> according to Luke-Acts accounts as well as theology of 'empowerment of the Spirit'. Whereas 'Baptism of the Spirit' connotes conversion and initiation into the body of Christ, 'Baptism in the Spirit' describes 'a coming upon', infilling or 'outpouring' of the Spirit upon a believer to produce a transformed dwelling place for God's presence (Vondey, 2017:267).

Except the account in Acts 10:44-48<sup>226</sup>, baptism of the Spirit precedes baptism in the Spirit. The Pentecostal concept of Spirit baptism denotes an incarnation of the Spirit in humanity, the Spirit 'enfleshing' in human beings, and God's coming into the tabernacle and His dwelling in man (Tomberlin, 2019:67). The Pentecostal idea of Spirit baptism is also sacramental in nature as the redeemed humans now partake of the divine nature (Tomberlin, 2019:). The Spirit-baptised believer is furthermore empowered to witness to 'God with us' and 'God in us' to the ends of the world (Tomberlin, 2019:68). Regarding Pentecostal

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<sup>223</sup> 'Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.' Jn 14:6).

<sup>224</sup> The Pentecostal believes that baptism of the Spirit is a conversion process by the Holy Spirit that makes an individual a member of the body of Christ (Jn 14:6).

<sup>225</sup> baptism in the Holy Spirit however results in the initiation of the speaking in tongues.

<sup>226</sup> 'While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.' (As 10:44-46).

worship, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on believers constitutes the starting point and centrality of Pentecostal worship. Through the Holy Spirit, therefore, believers sigh, groan, praise, petition and pray to God (Land, 2010:24).

Meanwhile, true Pentecostalism is about opening up to God, to know the movement of the Spirit and to appreciate what God as Spirit is doing new among the believers (Smith, 2010:33). Even though the disciples had been charged in Acts 1:8<sup>227</sup>, and Luke 24:49<sup>228</sup>, to go and wait for the promise of the Father (Smith, 2010:34), an analytical mind would ask: ‘How sure were the disciples that this chaotic move was from God?’ Why did they not run away amid the chaotic occurrence of the sound of the wind and tongues of fire in Acts 2:1–4?

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup>Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup>They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup>All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” (Ac 2:1-4).

Was it their openness and receptivity to receive from God that produced the possibility of the experience or something else? If Peter was able to appreciate the move of God in Acts 2:2–16, to realise that God was indeed at work, then Peter knew for sure in the Spirit that God was at work. Neither Peter nor members of Christ’s inner circle (James and John), had ever experienced such dramatically chaotic events. This was neither similar to their experience of the transfiguration of Christ nor of any of their prayer sessions with Christ. Such an incident never occurred when they were being disciplined by Christ during His latter days as a man on earth. Their journey with Christ was solemn, and probably the only and closest scene they had ever experienced with Christ was when he upturned the tables of the merchants and money lenders in the temple. So how was Peter able to appreciate that this event, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, was an act of God? It was the prompting of the Spirit.

Indeed, Smith (2010:40) holds that this was due to Peter’s openness to the things of God, and Pentecost; therefore, such actions are required of believers too to change the status quo and radically open their spirit mind to the things of God, who works beyond the imagination of their expectations. Pentecostal distinctiveness includes such openness, being in tune with and having discerning spirits. The Pentecostal therefore believes that the Spirit moves in a simple heart and simple mind that believes and does not doubt. This results in the

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<sup>227</sup> ‘But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth’ (Ac 1:8).

<sup>228</sup> ‘I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.’ (Lk 24:49).

outpouring of the Spirit, with the capability of catching one into the prophetic with readiness to receive and impart to the community.

According to Reformed theologian, Karl Barth, the prayer of the one who prays depends on God's grace for prayer itself (Cocksworth, 2014:9). This dependence on the grace of God is gleaned through the Spirit. The Pentecostal believes in the diverse working of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. The Holy Spirit helps the believer in self-edification, as the teacher, counsellor, advocate, giver of the gift of the Spirit, one who convicts of sin and is a helper in time of prayer (Gyimah, 2013b:2).

For some time now, the questions being asked by some non-Pentecostals are: Are modern Pentecostals open to the things of the Spirit? Are they in tune with the Spirit? Are they receptive to Spirituality? The answer must be positive, depending on the Pentecostal's inclination to the things of the Spirit. Even though Pentecostals are sometimes perceived to be chaotic following the move of the Spirit, they are also believed to reason according to the leadings of the Spirit. The ruling of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 is a typical example quoted by most Pentecostals in their decision making<sup>229</sup>. Pentecostals are, therefore, accustomed to a theology that "it pleases the Holy Spirit and us". Once Pentecostals believe that they have prayed about an issue and have inner peace, their perception is that: their decision is one from the Holy Spirit. The focus of this research is not to determine whether these accounts are indeed the will of God or not, but rather in matters of prayer, how they convey the Pentecostal's total dependence on the things of the Spirit.

#### **3.9.4 Pentecostal Theology of the Bible (Bibliology)**

As discussed earlier, Pentecostals uphold Scripture as inspired by God, and the Bible as the sacred book of God (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:168-172). The pneumatic inspiration of authors of the Bible is a strong faith in Pentecostal belief (Warrington, 2008:181), and Pentecostals also believe that the Spirit illuminates the readers when they read to interpret the Bible (Nel, 2020a:5). The Bible is also regarded as the infallible record of God's self-revelation and His will to His people as well as to the early apostles and prophets of the church through His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit (Asante, 2019:17). The CoP's statement of faith, believers' code of conduct, church practices and liturgies are developed based on the Bible. The CoP

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<sup>229</sup> During critical and sometimes difficult and controversial decisions making processes, Pentecostal leaders after prayerful reflection on issues are seen to be quoting the first part of Ac 15:18, '*It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us*' and then continue with their decision or verdict. In this way, the congregations or groups are usually quietened as it is perceived to be a ruling from the Holy Spirit.

and true Pentecostals derive their Spirituality from the Bible as well. The CoP, for instance, has ‘the Bible’ as its first tenet, and reads:

We believe in the divine inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures that the Bible is infallible in its declaration, final in its authority, comprehensive and all-sufficient in its provisions (2Tim. 3:16, 17; 2Pt. 1:20, 21) (Asante, 2019:17).

The Pentecostal believes that, through the incarnation of the Logos, people received grace (Tomberlin, 2019:86) in the person of Jesus Christ. Following John 1:1ff<sup>230</sup>, Christ is therefore upheld as the Word of God. Pentecostals also hold that while one reads the Bible, the spirit of God is visibly present (Tomberlin, 2019:96). Moreover, against the background of the close relationship between the Bible, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, one may say that God’s word act through the Spirit in what I term a ‘*pneumato-bibilio-christology*’ in that the Spirit endows and guides the believer and the community as a whole in their interactions with the Scriptures. Pentecostals believe that the believer can best interpret Scriptures when the Holy Spirit fully subdues them. The words of the Bible that are ‘alive and active’, ‘[s]harper than any double-edged sword, ... [that] penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints, and marrow; ... [and that] judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart’ (Hebrews 4:12) thereby only become alive and active through the effect of the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit, these words would have been like any other. Pentecostals thus agree with Calvin and Luther that ‘the Bible is of little value without the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit’ (Nel, 2015:10-11); it is of little significance apart from the activity of the Spirit, and the community plays an important role when it listens to the word of God (Nel, 2015:11) not just as listeners, but efficiently as gatekeepers of biblical interpretation. The Bible serves as a record of covenants, promises, pledges and commitments between God and humans, which must be declared and claimed in the name of Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:).

In line with what has been said above with reference to John 14:26<sup>231</sup>, Nel (2015:10) holds that the Spirit does not merely repeat to the believer what the Bible states, but it also directs the church in those areas or on those topics not expressly covered by Jesus’ teachings. Nel (2015) rightly acknowledges that the risk of claiming insight into the Holy Spirit’s

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<sup>230</sup> ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made’ (Jn 1:1-3).

<sup>231</sup> ‘But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you’ (Jn 14:26).

revelation may at times lead the community into subjectivism, fanaticism, and sometimes even heresy. Pentecostals therefore need to be careful when formulating and sharing revelations. Nel suggests that in the Pentecostal fraternity, the three authorities (Word, Spirit, and Community) complement and provide gatekeeping for each other: ‘the Spirit inspires the Word and builds the community’ (Nel, 2015:11).

Some Pentecostals also believe in the ‘mystery’ (magical nature) of the Bible and attach a metaphysical dimension to it as the word of God<sup>232</sup>. Due to the above ideology, some Pentecostals place their Bibles under their pillows when sleeping so that they will not have bad dreams or suffer an attack by demons. Under attack, ‘the fire in the Bible’ would shine at the attacker thereby paralysing them.<sup>233</sup> In the African Pentecostal cosmological view, the Bible is not just a book, but a ritual symbol used in healing and casting out demons (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:17) whose activities are deactivated through the active power of the Holy Spirit actively present in God’s word. In these ways, Pentecostals believe in the Bible as the sacred Scripture, and that the scriptures are brought alive and into effect by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Some scholars however note a theological flaw when it comes to Pentecostal understandings of the authority of Scripture. Pentecostal hermeneutics are fundamentally rooted in the Bible’s historicity, and to a great extent, as a continuation of the Wesleyan holiness tradition. (Torrey, 2009:47). Atkinson (2003:49) holds that Pentecostals sometimes merely use parts of the Bible as a ‘proof-text and have no regard for context, hence is rated par the authority of scriptures and the authority of experience, creating tension between what Scripture [sic] says and what is experienced’ (Torrey, 2009:86-87). In these situations, Pentecostals are accused of bias towards experience at the cost of the authority of Scripture (Atkinson, 2003:49-50). Furthermore, for a majority of the Pentecostals who mount the pulpit to preach, every text in the Bible is read in relation to how it applies to the life of the preacher

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<sup>232</sup> In 2016, a CoP mission house at Tantra Hills got completely burnt down. This included all its contents, except for a copy of the Bible. Recently, a friend sent me a photograph of a similar occurrence in a private house, gutted by fire, with only Bibles in it untouched by the flames. Pentecostals interpret these acts as communicating the sacred nature of the text.

<sup>233</sup> In 2016, a brother gave a testimony in church that at dawn one day, he was returning from an all-night service. Suddenly, he saw a sudden flash of light going up and down in front of him. It was like a match lit on the ground and bursting up into a fire. Remembering that he was holding a Bible, the gentleman threw his Bible into the fire and the fire died off immediately and never rekindled. The following day, he was informed that an older woman in a nearby house said he (the narrator) had butchered her with a cutlass, resulting in a deep abdominal wound. Asamoah-Gyedu (2013a:168-169) also tells of how a woman buried a Bible in the foundations of her house as a means of protecting her house. This was contextualised as the burying of power under the building instead of charms and local gods.

(Nel, 2018:555); and the audience and the world around them (the preacher and the audience); and not how the text speaks about and to itself (Israel, Albrecht, and McNally, 1993:143). This may be dangerous and questionable by biblical scholars as an irresponsible use of the Bible. But on the other hand, Pentecostals are always conscious of the need for, and to read Scripture to develop, praxis theology, placing the biblical stories into cohesive Pentecostal narrative traditions by the transaction between the biblical text and community, thereby producing a dielectric encounter between the biblical text and the reader.

Waddell & Althouse (2016:116) postulated that:

Pentecostalism was a distinct expression of Christianity, distinct from Evangelicalism. This group sought to articulate a hermeneutic that was appropriate for their tradition. They focused on the final form of the biblical text and gave special attention to its narrative features. The group also held a deep commitment to the spiritual experience of reading Scripture with an expectation of encountering God in and through the text. For them, the sacred text was no mere historical artefact; rather, it was a place in which the Spirit would meet its readers and transform them into the image of Christ.

Dempster likewise (1993:132) shares the belief that Pentecostal interpreters inevitably bring the particularities of their location and experiences with them into the interpretative act of understanding texts, whether the texts are biblical, behavioural, historical or performative. Interestingly, while not dismissing the utilisation of historical-critical and literary criticism, it is acknowledged that the traditional methods of Pentecostal interpretation emphasised multiple meanings and applications of a text in continuity with postmodern modes of interpretation rather than the critical-historical methodology (Arrington, 1994). Pentecostal hermeneutics centers on the priority of encountering God through the biblical text.

As indicated, many Pentecostals, despite critique, prioritise experience over the hermeneutical authority of the word of God. By reading an article from the magazine *Sword of the Spirit*, Peter Newman Anim<sup>234</sup> (referred to above) believed that healing was divinely mediated and upheld the universal doctrine of *kyiri bentoa* (anti-medicine, doctrine of no medication with belief in miraculous healing) mainly because he experienced it; and that ‘it worked for him’. Since Anim experienced healing upon reading the magazine, nothing could convince him to look at the contents of other parts of the Bible that may cast doubt on his conviction; one may call this a hermeneutical flaw as Anim’s experience clearly emphasised

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<sup>234</sup> See section 2.9 of chapter two, section 5.4 of chapter 5.



the experiential above the hermeneutical authority of the Word. Eventually, this belief (*kyiri bentoa*) became a non-negotiable doctrine that eventually split the first indigenous Classical Pentecost Church in the then Gold Coast. Based on the teaching of Wade Harris that spiritual forces were behind every misfortune and all instances of ill health in a person's life (Yirenkyi-Smart, 2017:73), Pentecostals operated on the hermeneutical flaw that uprooting the devil through prayer (in everything related to one's life) is the only possible way to address such situations irrespective of their nature. Pentecostals therefore do not necessarily seek hermeneutical exegesis of the meaning of the Bible but pray out the literal words of the Bible.

### 3.10 Conclusion

Chapter two of this study concluded that African Traditional Spirituality pervades and informs all aspects of African human life; therefore, African religion cannot be separated from the mundane (Chiorazzi, 2015:12-14). This chapter (three) discussed the historiography of Spirituality and the key characteristics of Pentecostal Spirituality and theology which is shown to be closely knitted as two sides of the same coin. It has been established that Pentecostal Spirituality and theology are mutually complementary but also commutatively reciprocal in nature; for one cannot be described without referring to the other. This chapter sought to establish the meaning of Spirituality and specifically (African and Ghanaian) Pentecostal Spirituality and theology and the relationship between the two. The focus now narrows from Pentecostal spiritualities to the distinctive African Pentecostal theologies. This chapter defined *as a means by which a person elevates the inner self through a deeper connection with the divinity, society, fellowship, or group in order to achieve physical and spiritual growth and satisfaction; and discover meaning for life both physically and transcendentally.*

An understanding has been set out on the key characteristics of Classical Pentecostals in Ghana together with the distinctive nature of African Pentecostal theology. African Pentecostalism is observed to be oral in nature with a pronounced inclination towards the pneumatic and subjective intuition of the Holy Spirit (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:179) who is experienced through prayer. For the Pentecostal, salvation is pneumatologically Christological. Even though salvation is rooted in the Christological 4-square gospel, Pentecostals believe the conviction process starts with the Holy Spirit with a subsequential belief in baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues principally as an empowerment for the eschatological motif. From an African worldview of abundance,

salvation, '*nkwa*' is upheld to mean abundance of health, wealth and long-life, an ambivalent theory behind the propagation of the health and wealth theology.

Still, with the spirit-driven motif, Ghanaian Pentecostal Spirituality is described as pneumato-liturgical, pneumato-biblical and theocratic. The Spirit again drives Pentecostal praise and worship, resulting in Pentecostal democracy and an experience of God's immediate presence. Pentecostals believe that at conversion, the Holy Spirit initiates the sanctification process so speaking in tongues should necessarily result in a life of holiness which affects one's dressing, ministry excellence, and discipline towards the things of God. Finally, the Pentecostal is found in a community of fellowship that respects church culture and governance. Participating in communion after water baptism is an act that checks one's Spirituality and grants him the heavenward focus of dining with the Lord one day. The spirit-directed believer in the community appreciates the spiritual dimension of tithing and free will offering and giving to support the Kingdom work as a partner.

This chapter proposes that Pentecostal theology is four-fold in nature, and this nature was discussed through the lenses of the Trinitarian Theology (God), the Christocentric Full Gospel, the Spirit experience, and the Bible. The Pentecostal's knowledge and understanding of God are the basics for appreciating the other elements of the Pentecostal theology (the pneumatic, the Christology and the Bible).

Pentecostalism is driven by an encounter and experience of the Spirit, with their Spirituality shaped expressively through prayer. With prayer as the primary theological activity of Pentecostals, there is seemingly a high level of subjectivity in contextualising their theology. Since Pentecostals believe that the Spirit leads them into all truth, knowledge is gained and retained through prayer. This could lead them into the slipper road of spiritual assumption and speculation, hence the need for a careful theological reflection. The praxis of praying in the Spirit for an encounter and experience is the driving force for all Pentecostal activities. Consequently, the believer must always be filled, so as to gain divine direction. The challenge, however, is how one could determine whether they are full of the Spirit or not. The subject of the 'spirit and us', as shown in Acts 15:28, 'It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements', has the precursor amongst Pentecostals that after prayer and much prayer, the Spirit would direct God's people. There is therefore the need for careful balance between issues of Spirituality, experience and personal knowledge.

Having established in this chapter that Pentecostal theology and Spirituality are two sides of the same coin, it is clear that Pentecostal theology only attempts to describe

Spirituality which is driven by an effective element of the Spirit, brought into experience through prayer. With the complexity of Pentecostals in expressing their theology, one may then enquire how the theologies of the Pentecostal prayer can be described. This is presented in Chapter 4 below. In line with the research objective of this study, the focus now moves to the nature, characteristics, and theological bases of Pentecostal theology/theologies of prayer in order to serve as criteria or benchmark for the legitimacy of new and current Pentecostal prayer practices in Ghana.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **CONCEPTUALISING THE NATURE, CHARACTERISTICS AND THEOLOGICAL BASES OF GHANAIAN PENTECOSTAL PRAYER**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In Chapter 2 (section 2.9 above) on African Traditional religious practices, it was shown how an African primal and cosmological worldview affects or are also reflected in the African Pentecostal Spirituality. Chapter three focused on the relationship between Pentecostal Spirituality and Pentecostal theology. The chapter showed that the starting point of Pentecostal Spirituality is the characteristic experience of the Holy Spirit and its primal characteristics. The chapter concluded with an overview of the distinctive African Pentecostal theology, which is supposedly founded on Christology, pneumatology, and Bibliology, but is tilted toward the Full Gospel and Spirit experience. In an African society perceived as spiritually potent, highly polarised and saturated with malevolent spirits and prayers as discussed under African Pentecostal theology, were seen as constituting a source of power for performing miracles, signs and wonders to counter malevolent spirits in the African cosmology.

The current chapter focuses specifically and in detail on the subject of prayer as a key feature in every religion, particularly in Pentecostalism. This chapter further analyses the foundations of a Ghanaian Pentecostal theology of prayer against the backdrop of what may be understood as the constituent elements of Classical Pentecostal prayer. These constituent elements form the basis of an attempt to theorise on the theology of prayer. Following a critical analysis of the primary constituent elements of Classical Pentecostal Spirituality, the divergence and emergence of new prayer practices then may be theologically evaluated in the subsequent chapter, Chapter 5.

The discussion below focuses on conceptualising the dogma of prayer, modes, models, types and functions of Pentecostal Prayer and will reveal some factors behind the surge in the Pentecostal affinity for prayer. It will also highlight some possible misconceptions about prayer. The locus of Christian prayer is discussed as a communication loop between humankind and the divine as the source of a genuinely God-initiated relationship (Torrey, 2012:161). As a two-way communication channel, the expected response to Pentecostal prayers is also explicated in the tension between God's sovereignty and humankind's prevailing faith. In prayer, therefore, the wish of the Pentecostal is that the will of man, not necessarily God will be accomplished.

## 4.2 Historical Development of Concepts Related of Prayer

During the Patristic period of Christianity, prayer was seen in its strictest definition as a request to God. According to St. Basil, prayer is construed as a pious person's petition to God for good things (St. Basil, n.d.:244). To St. Augustine, 'prayer is a conversation and unity between God and humankind' (st. Basil, n.d.:246). Differently stated, St. John Damascene held that, 'to pray is to ask -becoming like God'. Raising the thoughts to God is therefore a broad definition of prayer. Gregory of Nyssa postulated that prayer in its fullest sense is 'speaking with God' (de Guibert, 1953:173).

During the Scholastic Age, the views of the early fathers were reflected upon and reviewed. In 17 articles of his *Summa Theologica*, St. Thomas defines prayer (*oratio*) as 'supplication', and quoting Augustine and John, he also supports the broader definition that 'prayer in the literal sense is a plea to God' (Aquinas, n.d.:2a.2.2e).

In the modern era, the views of prayer have been refocussing and less limited to petition. By the 17th century, prayer was postulated to encompass concentration and varying degrees of reflection such as 'conversation with God' (Aquinas, n.d.). This broadened focus of prayer encompassed all types of prayer while also emphasising that 'prayer is a dialogue in which man responds to God who has spoken first through His word, particularly through the Word made flesh' (Hamman, 1963:116).

One theologian who has extensively written and researched prayer in the twentieth century is Karl Barth (Migliore, 2002:95). For Barth, 'Christians partake in divine action through one of these three activities: faith, obedience, and prayer' (Cocksworth, 2014:12). Barth however insists that prayer overrules the rest. Prayer is therefore a means by which faith is expressed, and obedience is activated for a person's will to fall in line with the Creator's will. Barth holds that prayer can be grouped into praise, adoration, thanksgiving, confession, penitence, intercession, and petition (prayer being the vital element of petition) (Cocksworth, 2014). 'Petitive-prayer' is then likened to an invitation that gives voice to the needs of an individual (Duncan, 2004:1). Should one agree with Barth's view, this suggests that at the heart of Christian prayer is the prayer of petition. According to Karl Barth, therefore, the core of petition is transaction, where man implores the divine to get things that are imaginary into reality (Cocksworth, 2015:61).

Others also still relate prayer to 'refocusing and elevation of the mind' and also 'the ascension of the mind to God' through meditation (Aquinas, n.d.). When one is studying the Word, for example, one thinks about God, but does one not pray? As a result, 'the elevation

of the mind is qualified as an effective as well as a noetic act of lifting our emotions to God to praise, thank, or ask for something from Him' (Aquinas, n.d.:2a.2a.2e.; c.f. Encyclopedia.com., 2019).

Agyemang Baduh (2002:1) affirms that prayer is an indispensable factor in any viable religion. Prayer reveals God's indispensability to humanity, i.e., the creature's dependence on the Creator (cf. Palmer, 1978:5). At Creation, God spoke, and things came into being. Just as the Creator spoke for all things to come into being at Creation, orality is critical as a communication tool between God and God's Creation (Goldsworthy, 2006:15). One may therefore postulate that prayer in a way is a reversed order of the creation account where humans now communicate with the Creator, amongst others, for things to happen in the creature's life.

John Wesley holds that 'it seems God is limited by our prayer life – that God can do nothing for humanity unless someone asks him (Hagin, 2010:4).' One question that immediately comes to mind following the above quotation is: Does this mean God only initiates some things at the request of a human? Can God not decide on God's own or take God's own decisions, action or initiate things on God's own accord without prayer? If this is true, then it suggests that even God's own will concerning humanity can only come to pass after humanity has prayed for it to happen (cf. Paintsil, 2020:1). Is God therefore limited concerning his creation and creatures unless a pray-er prays? Certainly not. The above dictum however should be seen from the angle that, through prayer, the 'created' is moved into favour with the Creator, with miracles happening and the unexpected becoming a reality.

### **4.3 Theology of Prayer**

Prayer appears to be a universal phenomenon that pervades all cultures and faiths; it is a phenomenon that encompasses all civilisations and religions (Goldsworthy, 2006:14). In the literal definition, prayer (*proseuche* in Greek and in Latin, *preces*, but most commonly, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century onward, *oratio* meaning petition, request, pleading) is the filial expression of one's wants for self and others to the heavenly Father from whom all good things, natural and supernatural, emanate (Aquinas, n.d., Suma Theologica 2.2.2a). Prayer is, 'in a broader sense, the ascension of the mind to God, and it is, in the broadest meaning, communication with God' (Aquinas, n.d.: Sum a Theologica 2.2.2a). Scott also postulates that prayers are rituals by which humans symbolise their communication with God or a deity (Scott, 2003). Defining prayer as communication with our heavenly Father, Eastman (1985) confirms prayer as the 'slender nerves of power and mystery behind the cloud of God's omnipotence' (Akin, n.d.).

The famous Swiss Reformed theologian, Karl Barth, also believes that prayer and theology are integrally related to the entire project of Christian theology, which undergirded by the practice of prayer he calls a 'kneeling theology' (Cocksworth, 2015:1). Barth insists that prayer is the attitude without which there can be no dogmatic theology. Barth holds that the task of knowing and speaking to God is impossible without prayer (Cocksworth, 2015:3).

Writing on the subject of biblical theology of prayer, Clowney (1990:137) states that prayer is a response of humanity to God's self-revelation and will. To Clowney (1990:137), one could never call on the name of God if God does not reveal Godself through God's creation, deeds and words to an individual, and if that entity does not recognise God's deity. It is therefore through God's self-revelation that one can commune with Him. This view of prayer is also similar to Duncan's (2004:1) who sees prayer as an invitation to enter God's presence and God's throne room. In line with the preceding, Barth (1993:268) further asserts that we are friends of God, called to God's side and ruling with God through prayer. Through prayer, therefore, Barth affirms that 'the hands of God are put into action' (Barth, 1993:268). Nevertheless, the question is not whether we are called to rule on the side of God through prayer or whether we have been given power as God's children, but that through prayer, thoughts are brought into reality.

In the Christian experience, prayer has a fundamental place in respect of the fellowship of humans and God. Prayer is the primary description of faith in action and as such, it is essential to all-knowing and doing for Christians (Langford, 1961:253). Prayer is therefore a call to both communion and communication from and with God. Prayer is a fellowship of a personal experience, a conversation, and an intimate connection with our heavenly Father (Okediadi, 2008:741). This research postulates the theology of Christian prayer as based on the premise that prayer is a conversation with the *Theos* through a structured channel with an expected response and feedback from the parties involved. Through prayer, believers thus come boldly to God for fellowship and conversation, during which burdens are surrendered, yokes are lifted, and rest is assured according to Langford (1961:255-257).

Again, Langford (1961:255) emphasises that theology and prayer are inseparable. Theology is an attempt to explain the Christian praxis, and prayer is the fulcrum of this praxis. Theology is said to be dependent on community actualised in prayer because the Christian life is rooted in a community with God (Langford, 1961). According to Wells (1986:85), it has been very strange that in modern theology, references or discussions of prayer should be omitted. The theology of prayer therefore may be construed as concerning

the reflections, reviews, and interpretations of the theological themes of prayer (Wells, 1986:85). Relatedly, it is about seeking a cognitive understanding of the meaning of prayer (Goldsworthy, 2006:17).

Given the above, the working definition of the theology of prayer in this research is therefore *‘the interpretation of religious beliefs, faith, practices, experiences and theories of theological themes, motives and values developed in a systematic order’*. Theology of prayer concerns seeking a cognitive understanding of the meaning of prayer and exploring the epistemology of prayer, methods, opinions, and beliefs of prayer. It also is about appreciating the ontology of prayer whilst attempting to understand the nature, concepts, and types of prayer. Finally, it is about appreciating the praxis of prayer using affirmative practices and Christian experiences in prayer. Theology of prayer, therefore, embraces the fundamentals, theory, concepts, and practice of prayer by reviewing the: what, how, when, and why of prayer; the biblical views of prayer, models of prayer, and beliefs of prayer.

#### **4.4 Pentecostal Theology of Prayer**

Chapter three (section 3.2) referred to Cettolin’s assertion (2006:66-67) that Pentecostal Spirituality would never be complete without acknowledging the interaction between belief and doctrine, authority, corporate life of worship, and the believer. This is not surprising if one accepts the view that prayer lies at the heart of every Spirituality and religion (Baesler, 2012b:209) irrespective of the nature or type of religion (Goldsworthy, 2006:14).

According to Nel (2015:17), Pentecostal theology originates from people’s prayerful response to God, and prayer thus forms the primary basis for theological work. The subject of Pentecostal theology can therefore never be discussed without reference to the subject of prayer. Land (2010:24-30) holds that theology begins with a personal response of humanity to God, and goes on to say that for ‘Pentecostals, therefore, it is impossible to know God and the nature and mind of God without prayer’. Taking his cue from Barth (1963:160-164), Land (2010:25) also states that prayer is the essential work of theology as a means of acknowledging God’s grace. Land (2010:31-37) thus proposes that Spirituality, a basis of Pentecostal theology, must be approached from a matrix of orthodoxy<sup>235</sup>, orthopathy<sup>236</sup>, and

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<sup>235</sup> Orthodoxy refers to doctrines, beliefs, tradition and conventions in a religion.

<sup>236</sup> Orthopathy refers to right emotion and/or affections.



orthopraxy<sup>237</sup> (Vacek, 2013:227-231; Butner, 2016:91-97). A careful analysis and integration of these three distinctive (the three ortho's) features may help in formulating the theology of prayer.

Di Trolio (2009b) postulates his Pentecostal theology of prayer on four pillars, namely functionality, ontology, praxis, and stance. According to him (2009b:36), the ideal function of prayer is as a communication function whereby prayer becomes a focal point of the relationship between humanity and divinity (cf. also Menzies, 1993:200). Assabil (2016:1) also asserts that whilst prayer is communicating with God and includes worship, thanksgiving, intercession, and praise, prayer is not just presenting a 'shopping list' or 'request list', but, more importantly, expressions of requests intended to establish God's will or purposes on earth (Matthew 6:10<sup>238</sup>). Pentecostals believe that God wants to be involved in the affairs of humankind, which can only be achieved through prayer as the model of communication (Cotton, 1996:100) with the Holy Spirit playing a vital role (Di Trolio, 2009b:40).

From the ontological perspective, Di Trolio (2009b:43), following Benson, (2005:218), holds that through prayer, one communicates with God, who is transcendent, yet intimately involved in one's existence. Ontology, therefore, projects the pray-er<sup>239</sup> relationship with God (Horton, 1955:8) through engaging the spiritual (Di Trolio, 2009b:44). The third and fourth dimension of the Pentecostal theology of prayer, according to Di Trolio (2009b:45), engages the practice of prayer as 'an engine of achieving innate human satisfaction, propelling human piety and unearthing the experiential knowledge of God'. God can therefore never be known until one prays to God and He reveals Himself to the person. According to Di Trolio (2009b:47-49), this revelation cannot be achieved until prayer is practised in the right "stance" of humility, submission, and courageous faith.

Relating Pentecostal Spirituality to theology, Dawes (2013:86-90; c.f. Foster 1992) on the other hand, provides a framework for three 'prayer movements': an inward, upward and outward matrix. The inward framework/movement of Pentecostal theology of prayer projects a spiral effect of prayer that results in transformation (Dawes, 2013:87). This has the

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<sup>237</sup> Orthopraxy is defined as the correctness of action, practice, or behaviour. Orthopraxy is frequently perceived as a form of Christianity that places a strong emphasis on right practice and conduct, while ignoring dogma. Orthopraxis can also refer to the proper execution of prescribed rituals, which is crucial in various forms of Christianity and other religions. In many religions, it does not matter what one thinks as long as one performs the proper works and rituals (Vacek, 2013:227-231; Butner, 2016:91-97).

<sup>238</sup> Your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Mat 6:10).

<sup>239</sup> The term pray-er is used in this these to refer to the one who prays.

harmonious effect of drawing one's heart closer towards God and in response to an invitation to be with God (Dawes, 2013:87). Foster's upward framework/movement of prayer suggests an intimacy with God whilst projecting the believer's safety and security (Dawes, 2013:89). This is where one desires continuous fellowship with God, ultimately cultivating a relationship and a friendship metaphorically. Foster's outward prayer framework/movement moves prayer beyond self, thus positioning prayer as the fulcrum of spiritual life and human activities. From the outward model, prayer must therefore not be upheld as something that happens to an individual in private life, but something that prepares one for the work of God (*opus Dei*) and the world (Dawes, 2013:89-90). According to Foster, prayer's inward, upward, and outward rhythms provide one with a broader definition of Pentecostal prayer.

*For the basis of this research, Pentecostal theology of prayer is therefore postulated as an ontological description of man's inner response and submission to God through the lived Pentecostal experience. It is hypothesised as a Pentecostal praxis that attempts to characterise the theological model of communication between people and God through the experience of the Spirit as practised by a community. Pentecostal theology of prayer therefore annotates the initiation of experience of the Spirit and the exercise of conferred authority as a communication model through the power of the Holy Spirit.*

The above concepts may form the starting point for contextualising and positing a Pentecostal theology of prayer. The following sections of this chapter discuss these concepts alongside other views from which a theology of prayer, with reference to Ghanaian examples, will emerge.

#### **4.5 Towards a Ghanaian Pentecostal Theology of Prayer**

One cannot reflect on the foundations of a Pentecostal theology of prayer without reviewing the characteristic Pentecostal matrices of forms, models, elements, and purpose of prayer. According to Assabil (2016:1-2), Pentecostal prayer is delivered in line with God's will and purpose inspired by the Holy Spirit and is therefore likely to elicit a response from God. Deeply ingrained in a Pentecostal theology is the Pentecostal's posture concerning the expected responses to/outcomes of prayer. Attempting to theorise on Pentecostal prayer from a Ghanaian perspective too will require a deeper reflection on these matrices.

For the Pentecostal, prayer is experiential. In order to access prayer spiritually, one must be in God's presence. Sensational prayers cannot simply be learnt or recognised (Meyer, 2011:29-32). It is experienced when the transcendent penetrates the bodies of the pray-ers,

and it is efficacious (Daswani, 2015:81). Notably, effective Pentecostal prayer is about effectively knowing how to pray. Girish Daswani gave his encounter in Ghana during his studies. He participated in a number of CoP church services, observed their prayer service, and learned how to pray the Pentecostal way of prayer but could not pray ‘Pentecostally’ because he had not encountered Pentecostal Spirituality of prayer (Daswani, 2015:79-82).

As has now been clearly established, since Pentecostal theology is indispensable to its Spirituality, attempting to theologise Ghanaian Pentecostal prayer would require discussions around Spirituality. Pentecostal Spirituality is rooted in deep spiritual immanence, and the Spirit is said to operate within the created order (Smith, 2010:40). The Pentecostal mentality that everything physical is wound up in the Spirit affects the nature and practice of the Pentecostal’s Spirituality, especially his/her perspective on prayer (Smith, 2010). The Pentecostal’s belief is that God spoke, and by God’s breath, the Spirit brought all things into being. The Spirit also has control over all things, and the Spirit therefore makes the Pentecostal exercise faith to claim all things by prayer. Pentecostals, thus, tend to name and claim the unseen, believing that the Spirit would bring things that are not into being (Hebrews 11:3<sup>240</sup>; Psalm 33:6<sup>241</sup>). Filled with the spirit of God, Pentecostals therefore want to ‘invoke things into being’. In other words, the experience of the Spirit makes them even call things into being and create things supernaturally. This possibly has brought about the ‘name it, claim it, grab it’ theology of Pentecostals, which Peter White and Rachel Aikins (2021:1) disagree with its generalisation as the prosperity gospel<sup>242</sup>.

African Pentecostal Spirituality is characterised by the belief that the world is filled with other spirits and that these spirits possibly destroy the plans of people and bring confusion into their lives (Elorm-Donkor, 2011:13). Some Ghanaian Pentecostals also believe that all vices in an individual’s life are the results of spiritual and demonic orchestration. For example, poverty, sickness, barrenness, failure in examinations, misfortunes and defeat are all believed to be the schemes of the evil spirit(s) who do not seek the wellbeing of men. These mishaps and vices must therefore be nullified by God who created all things *ex nihilo* (Nel, 2020b:6), and holds creation in a state of equilibrium, and is above all cosmic powers through the power of the Holy Spirit (through deliverance). This

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<sup>240</sup> ‘By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.’ (Heb 11:3).

<sup>241</sup> ‘By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and their starry host by the breath of his mouth.’ (Ps 33:6).

<sup>242</sup> This theology would further be discussed in chapters 5, and 6 of this research.

notion has resulted in the neo-prophetic prayer pattern of spiritual warfare as well as demonic release and deliverance services (Smith, 2010:40). These emerging neo-prophetic prayer practices are wrought by the Third Wave Pentecostal movement whose prayer, praises, and worship services belabour the concepts of a struggle against demonic oppression, rulers and cosmic powers (Ephesians 6:12<sup>243</sup>). Prayer therefore remains the means by which the Pentecostal can survive spiritually in the context of such warfare with the power of darkness (Agyemang Badu, 2002:9).

Everywhere today, where primal religion upholds the belief in multiple gods, demons, and spiritual powers, some amount of fear is found in worldviews concerning the works of these malevolent spirits, thereby significantly affecting their theology and mode of prayer (Agyemang-Badu, 2002:9). Classical Pentecostals in Ghana proclaim the Full Gospel<sup>244</sup> as evidence that Christ is victorious over all forces. This victory is referred to and may be seen in their praise, worship, and prayer posture. With regards to the spirit world, as found in traditional African religions, people seek protection from the deities through the sacrifices of the priests, but the CoP sets the whole cosmic struggle under the supremacy of Christ (Larbi, 2002: 102-3). Through prayer and the power of the gospel, therefore, the church is able to counteract all spiritual warfare.<sup>245</sup> Again, prayer is believed to have other tangible effects on church life.

According to Agyemang Baduh (2002:10), Rev. Mike Johnson<sup>246</sup> saw his church grow from zero to 2100 in nine years, and states that: ‘the first key to church growth is prayer’. This phenomenon is not different from that of the CoP, since the CoP has grown in members and congregations over the years through the effective fervency of the Spirituality of prayer. Due to poverty in Ghana, it seems logical that members of the CoP should rely heavily on God’s divine providence, and this reliance is to find expression in people’s hope of receiving their daily miracles for survival through prayer (Agyemang Baduh, 2002:11). To the mature Classical Pentecostal, whether they receive answers to their prayers or not, the fact that they can freely declare their frustrations to God provides them some kind of relief and solace (Foster, 1972:27-28) that one day they would receive responses. To the Pentecostal, therefore, prayer is not only about receiving an immediate response to needs, but

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<sup>243</sup> ‘For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms’ (Eph 6:12).

<sup>244</sup> The Full Gospel has been discussed in detail in Chapter three, section 3.8.1.

<sup>245</sup> This is usually done by quoting Eph 6:10-18 where prayer is used as both a defensive and offensive armour in battle for spiritual warfare.

<sup>246</sup> Rev Mike Johnson was an Assemblies of God minister of Calvary Temple, Springfield, Illinois.

in the hope that someone cares for them and would surely provide divine providence and change the hearts of people in line with God's will. The above, amongst others, are amongst the legitimate Pentecostal belief and practices in prayer.

Pentecostals hold varied beliefs and practices concerning prayer, all of which are seen as somewhat legitimate. Pentecostal prayers may, for example, be communal or solitary (individual), meditational or vocal in nature (Hoshikawa and Staudigl, 2017:545-548). While the original primary focus of the Pentecostal practice of prayer was with a view to relationship building between humans and the divine (Nyamekye, 2018:2-3), today, many emerging Pentecostal prayer practices show that the prayer patterns are changing focus. The changing focus is from experiential to extempore, commercialisation, and transactions. The reflective and contemplative nature of prayer and intercession on behalf of others are gradually phasing out (see section 4.7 of this chapter on 'the emerging prayer models').

One also cannot speak about Pentecostal prayer without reference to fasting as discussed briefly in section 3.8.10. Pentecostals believe that fasting drive one's prayer request and accelerate the response with importunity. Through fasting, adherents receive spirit-filled, directed and purposeful revelations and responses from God. The next sections of this chapter review the forms of Pentecostal prayer.

#### **4.6 Conceptualising Ghanaian Pentecostal Prayer Forms**

Whereas Palmer (1978:11) holds that the seven divisions of prayer are identifiable as adoration, praise, confession, supplication, petition, thanksgiving and intercession, Karl Barth urges that the essence of theology lies in the liturgical act of adoration, thanksgiving, and petition (Cocksworth, 2015:2). Barth however also adds additional forms of prayer such as contemplation and invocation. Barth also suggests that one of the most politically charged prayers is the prayer set for Pentecost, which links prayer, politics, and the Holy Spirit (pneumatology)! The theology of prayer is therefore discussed by considering some of these prayer forms that are also familiar to the Pentecostal and have unique Pentecostal dispositions.

Pentecostals use prayer jargons that may look different from that of the mainline churches. Words such as penitence, contemplation, invocation, and supplication may therefore not be familiar to the Pentecostal. Although these practices may exist in another form in the Pentecostal liturgy, these have been 'Pentecostalised'. Common to the Pentecostals are prayer forms such as praise, thanksgiving, confession, worship, intercession, petition, spiritual deepening, and warfare. From the premise that prayer is oral

communication between humanity and the divine, the next section discusses the forms of Pentecostal prayer together with their theological underpinnings.

#### 4.6.1 Pentecostal Prayer of Praise

Palmer (1978:11) holds that praise arises from a reflected awareness of the joy experienced in divine contemplation and is focused on the deity's outer manifestation in its works. Praise, runs through the Bible like a golden thread from beginning to end (Prince, 1985:3). He also states that praise comes from above, with humanity inheriting that character from the 'angelic Host'. According to Palmer (1978:11-12), the Pentecostal theology of praise 'spring forth from reflected consciousness of the delight felt in the divine contemplation'. Praise is singing enthusiastically of God's outward manifestation of His deity in his works.

Additionally, praise is eternal because it comes from an unbroken line of communication with God, thus resulting in an unbroken outpouring of gladness to the Lord. Praise is seen theologically as the way we relate to God as King on His throne for Psalm 22:3 holds 'Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the one Israel praises', speaking forth and outpouring of appellations before God. Praise is associated with humanity since the dawn of time. God examined Job in Job 38:4-7 asking:

Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone - while the morning stars sang together, and all the angels shouted for joy?

From these Scriptures, praise is seen as an expressive activity often accompanied by celebration, musical instruments, and singing in appellation to God. Typical examples are found in Psalms 33:2<sup>247</sup>; 144:9<sup>248</sup>, and 96:1-4<sup>249</sup>. Sometimes praising is also expressed in conversation with others when one wants to communicate the goodness or mercies of God through other people. In Genesis 24:26-27, the servant of Abraham expresses the goodness of God revealed in the life of Abraham and declare:

Then the man bowed down and worshipped the LORD, saying: "Praise be to the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master. As for me, the LORD has led me on the journey to the house of my master's relatives".

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<sup>247</sup> 'Praise the LORD with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre' (Ps 33:2).

<sup>248</sup> 'I will sing a new song to you, my God; on the ten-stringed lyre I will make music to you' (Ps 144:9)

<sup>249</sup> 'Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth. Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples. For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods' (Ps 96:1-4).

In Genesis 9:26, Noah says, ‘Praise be to the LORD, the God of Shem! May Canaan be the slave of Shem.’ In Genesis 29:35, Leah saw that she was not loved as does Rachel so when she gave birth to her fourth male child, she called him Judah saying, ‘This time I will praise the LORD<sup>250</sup>.’ Other examples are found in Exodus 18:10 and Deuteronomy 8:10.

He said, ‘Praise be to the LORD, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians’ (Exod 18:10).

‘When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.’ (Deut 8:10).

The Pentecostal prayer of praise is usually seen as an essential aspect of Pentecostal liturgy. Pentecostal praise is about using songs to eulogise God in a joyful, even ecstatic, and exuberant prayerful mood. Pentecostal praise is therefore often associated with Pentecostal dancing, and dancing to the glory of God. The prayer of praise relates to the believer’s current status, appreciating God (Suchocki, 1981:35), who has been faithful to His people, has become a blessing to them, and continues to provide healing and material blessings to them. During praises, short choruses (short songs with repetitive lyrics) are sung to the glory of God. Typical of such praise is the example found in Exodus 15:1–2<sup>251</sup> when Moses and Miriam sang a song of praise to God after He delivered the Israelites from the hands of Pharaoh.

Classical Pentecostal praises are Trinitarian in nature<sup>252</sup>, with a tilted orientation towards the Father and the Son. Some of these songs manifest God’s grace, and praise Christ for: His salvation, healing, transformation of destinies of people, and giving hope to the hopeless; thus, reflecting the Full Gospel.

In some ambivalent cases, some Pentecostal praises, although a form of communication between humans and God, are not regarded as prayer in their true sense. This is because to them, Pentecostal prayer must be uttered in a solemn or serious, and more contemplative spiritual mood. This is so because, quintessentially, Pentecostal praise may sometimes be loud, full of shouting, dancing, and exuberance, which may make one wonder whether this can be for the glory of God or for the enjoyment of people. Again, some statements by some conductors during church service such as: “because you are a Christian

<sup>250</sup> Emphasis mine – JTB. Emphasis usually via italisation.

<sup>251</sup> ‘When Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD: ‘I will sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea. The LORD is my strength and my defence; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father’s God, and I will exalt him’’ (Exod 15:1-2).

<sup>252</sup> This research focusses on classical Pentecostal who are Trinitarian in nature. The Oneness Pentecostals are therefore not a focus.

you cannot go to the cinema and discotheque; this is the only time in life to make yourself happy – enjoy yourself”, give credence to the above perception.

Noticeably, Pentecostal time of praise is also associated with dancing and giving freewill offerings as a thanksgiving appellation to God. In 2 Samuel 6:13–14<sup>253</sup>, David celebrates God at the return on the Ark of God with a sacrifice associated with it in verse 13. It was seen as a period during which there was praise, thanksgiving, dancing, and sacrifice to God. For Pentecostals, this is a typical Pentecostal mood of praise; to them, this may therefore be regarded as a Pentecostal Davidic dance period. This dimension needs to be revisited theologically since it has continuity and discontinuity, convergence, and divergence with the African Traditional Region.

As discussed in Chapter 2<sup>254</sup>, convergence in praise with respect to African Pentecostal services and ATR is shown in the form of drumming, dancing, using short choruses and shouting during praises. Points of divergence include that praise is limited to a short period in the Pentecostal service, but that drumming, and dancing may take the whole service in an ATR service. Furthermore, and logically in African Pentecostalism, praises are based on the Christian God; whilst in the ATR, they are based on the names of the deities. Finally, whilst services in the ATR may run into uncontrollable sequence of ecstatic services, the Pentecostal service is subject to the spirit of the prophet, ‘The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace —as in all the congregations of the Lord’s people (1 Cor 14:32–33).

#### **4.6.2 Thanksgiving from the Pentecostal Perspective**

Pentecostal thanksgiving is usually the shortest part of Pentecostal prayer services. However, the latter usually begins with a prayer of thanksgiving. The process of thanksgiving involves thanking God for what He has done in the life of an individual, a family, an organisation, a church, or a nation. Thanksgiving is mostly connected with grace, and a thankful person within the domain of God’s grace is thanking God for His grace upon his/her life (Prince, 1985:5). Relatedly, Palmer (1978:15) mentions that the theology of thanksgiving is based on the creature’s gratefulness for mercies bestowed by the creator, and it is a response of gratitude for the favour and goodness bestowed.

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<sup>253</sup> ‘When those who were carrying the ark of the LORD had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the LORD with all his might’ (2 Sam 6:13-14).

<sup>254</sup> See section 2.6.1 above.



As discussed in section 3.8.6, thanksgiving prayer also involves thanking God for God's protection of the lives of the individual, thanking God for 'travelling mercies', for bringing together the church as a body of fellowship and thanking God for peace in the land and/or in the world. From 1 Chronicles 16:33–35<sup>255</sup>, after David brought the ark and set it in the tent, burnt and fellowship offerings were ministered, and those present thanked the name of the Lord for His kindness. Thanksgiving may also be associated with the sound of music, but the music may be solemn, as shown in 1 Chronicles 16:41–42.

“With them were Heman and Jeduthun and the rest of those chosen and designated by name to give thanks to the LORD, ‘for his love endures forever’. Heman and Jeduthun were responsible for the sounding of the trumpets and cymbals and for the playing of the other instruments for sacred song. The sons of Jeduthun were stationed at the gate” (1 Chron 16:41-42).

The account in Daniel 6:10<sup>256</sup> tells that Daniel knelt in prayer and gave thanks to God. In Ephesians 1:15–17<sup>257</sup>, Paul declares that he continues to give thanks to God for the church in Ephesus for holding on to the seal of salvation. Paul, in Colossians 1:9–12 states that when he learnt of the love in the spirit of the church in Colossae, he never stopped giving joyful thanks to God. It is also worth noting that in the Old Testament, thanksgiving and praise are at times intertwined as depicted in Psalm 100:4.<sup>258</sup>

From Psalm 95:2–5<sup>259</sup>, the psalmist's thanksgiving is depicted as a way that brings one into the presence of God. This can be interpreted as coming into the presence of God not with shouting, but with a heart full of gratitude, for the Psalmist says, ‘Come into His presence with thanksgiving’. In 2 Chronicles 20:21, Psalm 106:1, and Psalm 107:1, thanksgiving is offered in appreciation of the loving kindness of God. The psalmist however positions Psalm 106:47 as conditional thanksgiving-petition, and this is very typical of Pentecostals, who would be offering thanks, but expecting more grace and favour in return.

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<sup>255</sup> ‘Let the trees of the forest sing, let them sing for joy before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. Cry out, ‘Save us, God our Savior; gather us and deliver us from the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name, and glory in your praise’ (1 Chron 16:33-35).

<sup>256</sup> ‘Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before’ (Dan 6:10).

<sup>257</sup> ‘For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers’ (Eph 1:15-17).

<sup>258</sup> ‘Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name’ (Ps 100:4).

<sup>259</sup> ‘Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land’ (Ps 95:2-5).

During Pentecostal thanksgiving, Pentecostals pray to thank God for the things God has done as well as in anticipation of what God is yet to do. Pentecostals believe in faith that as one thanks God, God may be compelled by such eulogy, or in some other ways, and be more gracious once again. On one occasion in 2021, one Ghanaian Pentecostal pastor<sup>260</sup> who had been called upon to give thanks to God for the blessing of favour receiving, eulogised God in anticipation of greater happenings, and a plea for more in disguise. To the Pentecostal, therefore, as a person thanks God, he/she indirectly petitions for more. This is an African traditional worldview. When a lesser is thanking a greater in Akan, he would say '*me da ase, ma ebi mbra bio*' meaning 'thank you; may more gracious opportunities as such come my way from you'.

One morbid part of Pentecostal thanksgiving involves thanking God that, although one was involved in an accident, one did not die like others who did not survive. The problem is that this position sometimes tends to project the thanksgiver as a more righteous person compared to the persons who have died. Even if nobody died in the accident in which the person was, a congregant might have had a relative dying in a similar accident, thus regarding the person who died as less righteous than the surviving one. Indeed, some of these unforeseen events in a believer's life may correctly be understood as due to the sovereignty of a merciful God, but it does pose a theological challenge, especially when this conclusion is drawn from it. This is an African cosmological worldview that seems to project the deities as dealing with the wicked and bad ones in isolation from the good. Again, this theology is partly borrowed from Exodus 14:29–31 as a historical view, when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea safely, but the sea swept away the Egyptians, their chariots, and the army of Pharaoh. Just like the Egyptian army that was pursuing the Jews, the impression created is that people who die in disasters are people who are sinners, wicked, and probably children of the devil.

#### **4.6.3 Prayer of Confession from the Pentecostal Perspective**

Karl Barth holds that the fifth petition of the Lord's prayer involves two suppositions that are irrevocably part of traditional Calvinism, namely a request for pardon, and the condition for mercy (Hardon, 1953:445). According to Palmer (1978:17), the term used to represent

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<sup>260</sup> Aps Davidson Edzie said this at the Ashanti Regional Apostles and Heads' meeting at Asokwa, Kumasi, Ghana on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2021. Aps Davidson Edzie is a senior minister of the Church of Pentecost at Ofinso Area. An area in the CoP is equivalent to a diocese in the Anglican Church. It has 15 pastors headed by a regional apostle.

confession in Latin (*confiteri*), Greek (*homologeō*) and English literally means speaking together or agreeing; where God and man unite in declaration regards to sin. The Bible, from 1 John 1:8–10 and Romans 3:23–25 makes one understand that humanity is fallible and sinful in nature, while God on the other hand is merciful and full of grace to forgive one's sins. The prayer of confession of sin is therefore what unites us with God, harmoniously (Kreps, 2012:254).

From a biblical perspective, the concept of forgiveness is a two-way affair: divine, and interpersonal. Imperatively, prayer requesting for the forgiveness of sin must connect both the interpersonal level, and the divine level. According to Kelly (2012:274), early Christian writing extended divine human forgiveness to relationships between people, and so Jesus, in Luke 17:4<sup>261</sup>, was heard adjuring His disciples to forgive one another up to seven times a day if others offended them. In the Matthew account (18:21-22<sup>262</sup>), Jesus implored His disciples to forgive seven times seventy times. This implies as many times as someone would sin against us, since we also request for forgiveness of sin from God too uncountable times.

When we ask for the forgiveness of sin, we imply that our trespass is not yet remitted and our prayers are key contributors to the remission; and in prayer, when we say 'as we forgive those who trespass against us', we request the forgiveness of sin for those who have trespassed against us; and the implication is that our own practice of charity determines the degree of mercy we obtain from God (Cocksworth, 2015:242). Karl Barth however disagrees and holds that neither one's offence nor oneself as a sinner can hinder God from forgiving one's sin; and that before we even pray, God has already granted us pardon (Cocksworth, 2015:445). Well, although literally, Barth's position may look debatable, if one accepts Cocksworth's position as true, then to some extent, Barth's position is also true. For according to Cocksworth (2015:242), once we forgive other people's sins, God has forgiven us already, and God does not hold one accountable for the same sin anymore. Meanwhile, what then happens to other sins that others have not forgiven us yet? One needs to pick that up with God and still confess.

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<sup>261</sup> So, watch yourselves. 'If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive them' (Lk 17:4).

<sup>262</sup> 'Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times' (Mat 18:21-22).

The prayer of confession helps the believers reflect on their past words, actions, or thoughts (Suchocki, 1981:41), and to repent for the remission of sins. The prayer of confession is one dimension of a prayer of petition, a decision to request for forgiveness of sins, transgressions, and/or iniquities. Pentecostals are 'a-theological'<sup>263</sup> when it comes to the prayer of confession. One could be in a Pentecostal service for weeks without observing the clergy, presiding officer or leader leading members into the prayer of confession for the forgiveness of sin, unlike the mainline churches that hold that as part of daily liturgy. Pentecostals are again sometimes confused when it comes to the prayer of confession because they sometimes do not know how to pray for forgiveness. This is a failure on the part of the clergy to teach the members what the process of confession entails and how it should be done. The leaders would only say, 'pray for the forgiveness of sin' without teaching how to pray for the forgiveness of sin. Nevertheless, Pentecostals understand in their own language what the prayer for the forgiveness of sin involves.<sup>264</sup>

Amongst Pentecostals, the prayer of confession is usually emphasised during Communion week<sup>265</sup> (Lord's table) preparation. This is in line with Pauline exhortation to the Corinth church for members to examine themselves before coming to the table (1 Cor 11:27–29).<sup>266</sup> The Communion week prayer among Pentecostals in Ghana is usually a weeklong activity of preparing members to be in the right fellowship and stand with God to prevent them from eating the communion unworthily, and to become spiritually weak and sick according to 1 Corinthians 11:30.<sup>267</sup> During the Communion week, members listen to messages related to the work of Christ on the cross, sin, repentance, death, or messages on eschatology and lead members to pray for repentance and confess their sins. During this period, leaders will urge members to 'look heavenwards', and be more 'eschatological' in focus. Although the understanding of prayers of confession may be correct in most

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<sup>263</sup> Pentecostals do not deliberately include confession of sins in their liturgy during church service.

<sup>264</sup> In 2017, when I was in Accra as a minister of the CoP, a Methodist minister visited one of our local congregations. During the opening sessions of the prayer, the CoP pastor leading the prayer session requested the congregants to ask for the forgiveness of sin. After the service, the Methodist minister remarked that the one who led the service was theologically inclined. His reason was because he has noticed that Pentecostals are deficient in the prayer of confession.

<sup>265</sup> The Communion week is usually the last week of the month reserved by the CoP as a preparation period towards the Lord's table. It is a week of intensive prayer, fasting, and confession.

<sup>266</sup> 'So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves' (1 Cor 11:27-29).

<sup>267</sup> "hat is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep" (1 Cor 11:30).

Pentecostal churches, the little attention accorded it during communal prayer services poses the risk of relegating it to a position of lesser importance in the prayer life of the individual Pentecostal.<sup>268</sup>

One factor that may contribute to the absence of or infrequency of prayers of confession in the Pentecostal liturgy may be Pentecostals' belief that as a person inhabited by the power of the Holy Spirit, they are less prone to sin. Put differently, as the Pentecostal believes that in the progressive sanctification of the believer, the power of the Holy Spirit makes one very sensitive to sin, and based on the promptings of the Holy Spirit, one may desist from sinning much easier (Walker, 2019b:2). In other words, as a spirit-filled believer, one is less inclined to sin and therefore very conscious of not sinning. He is also continually sanctified by the Spirit.

This theology is gleaned from Galatians 5:16–18 and Galatians 5:24–25, and from Romans 8:5–6. Some Pentecostals also believe that when an individual sins, the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer would prompt him/her immediately to seek forgiveness of sin to prevent them from losing God's presence, grace, and fellowship (Walker, 2019b:237). Sin should not therefore be a regular part of a Pentecostal Christian's life.

#### **4.6.4 Pentecostal Prayer of Commitment**

A prayer of commitment is when one casts one's burdens and cares upon the Lord. In commitment, one reassigns the responsibilities that are weighing them down, the burdens of life and excess load unto the Lord. Gleaning from Matthew 11:28–30, one commits his/her ways unto the Lord, trusting Him to grant us success. During Pentecostal prayer, Matthew 11:28–30 is interpreted as coming to the Lord in prayer and humility, coming to Him to commit the cares of life to Him for relief and comfort. Prayer of commitment may either be personal or corporate in nature. The theology of commitment is based on an acknowledgement of the creature's dependence on the creator (Palmer, 1978:16).

In the corporate service, during a CoP service, a prayer of commitment is usually the concise part of the church service when one or the community casts their cares upon the Lord (Daswani, 2015). It is prayer that the Holy Spirit should take control and inspire the service. This usually forms part of the opening prayer of a typical CoP service (Daswani, 2015:80).

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<sup>268</sup> During prayers in their home, small groups and in family devotions, I have observed that the element of prayer of confession is usually missing.

Prayer of commitment involves an individual or the community committing some critical part/s of their life into the hands of God, particularly those parts of life one has no control over. It is a prayer in which an individual or group confess their helplessness in light of the burdens of life before the Lord (Hagin, 2010:4). In 1 Peter 4:19<sup>269</sup>, the Bible speaks of those suffering according to God's will to commit their lives into the hands of the Creator. An example of this may be when a Pentecostal who has been suffering from a particular ailment or a bad or dangerous habit or addiction over which he/she has no control commits their situation to the care of God.

The prayer of commitment is seen as a prayer of dedication, a prayer of devotion, allegiance, assurance, and guarantee in which one surrenders one's life unto the Lord in the form of submitting one's will unto the Lord. At other times, it may be a particular unfaithfulness or shortcoming in a person's spiritual life that is committed into the hand of God for God to take control over. David in Psalm 31:5 declared in prayer thus, 'into your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, Lord, my faithful God'. In Acts 20:32, Paul, in prayer for the church in Ephesus, prays that 'now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.'

At the commencement of communal Pentecostal services, prayers of commitment are also offered to commit the service itself into the hand of God. This short prayer usually immediately follows prayers of thanksgiving and/or confession and commits all aspects of the service/liturgy to God<sup>270</sup>. Individual prayers of commitment are most often said at the beginning of the day. As one does not know what lies ahead, one commits the day into the hands of God. Similarly, at the beginning of a journey, the Pentecostal would undertake a prayer of commitment, putting the impending trip into the hands of God. An example of an Akan song sung as a prayer of commitment referring to a journey is:

*Di yen kan* (Go ahead of us Sovereign God)

*Okwan kyere fo Nyame* (Lord, master of the journey)

*Di yen kan na kyere yen kwan* (Go ahead of us and show us the way)

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<sup>269</sup> 'So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good' (1 Pet 4:19).

<sup>270</sup> A Pentecostal example of such a prayer of commitment usually recited in church is: 'Lord, please, if someone has forgotten to come to church, God, please remind the person to come to church. Those on the way coming, please carry them on eagle's wings into the church. The word that would be preached today, Lord, please let it fall onto fertile soils. Lord, we commit the speaker into Your hands, every part of the programme, those leading any part of the service activity this.'

To conclude, Pentecostal prayers of commitment are linked to uncertainties and attempt to cast one's fears, the unknown, and unexpected unto the Omniscient God.

#### **4.6.5 Pentecostal Prayer of Worship**

The word 'worship' is used by Pentecostals, whereas 'adoration' is often used by mainline denominations. As discussed in section 3.8.6, worship or adoration occurs when one prostrates one's spirit before God, paying tribute in direct vision of God's majesty, blessings, and splendour, eliciting feelings of veneration and awe in the soul (Palmer, 1978:11). In Chapter 3 (section 3.8.6), it was seen that Pentecostal thanksgiving and worship refer to different Pentecostal thoughts and prayer models. For the Pentecostal, thanksgiving cannot replace worship, and the two prayer activities (prayers of worship, and prayers of thanksgiving) are intrinsically different.

Even though the entire service before the Lord may be termed 'worship', to the Pentecostal, 'actual worship' of the King of kings takes place during a specific part of the church service. Interestingly, however, Palmer (1978:16) notes that whilst worship is expressive integration of adoration and praise, the creaturely dependence on God is acknowledged in thanksgiving and petition. This view may not be expressive from a typical Pentecostal perspective, but from an evangelical perspective.

Worship is the total prostration of one's spirit before God, based on one's understanding of God's divine nature, majesty and sanctity (Prince, 1985:25). Worship is when we become aware of, come into contact with, or experience revelation of God's holiness and we express the titles of Jehovah (Palmer, 1978:7,12).

Worship, according to Goll (2007:4), is the act of offering ourselves completely to God with our bodies, souls, and spirits. A Pentecostal service is not considered complete until a portion of the service is earmarked to emphasise God's unique essence and veneration thereof. Worship is the heart of Pentecostal Spirituality (Nel, 2016:1). According to Nel (2016:1-2), the beauty of Pentecostal worship is also critical for its phenomenal growth, especially in the Global South.

Pentecostals affirm the power of worship, as it marks and affirms the presence of the Triune God through the experience of the Spirit (Nel, 2016:1). Pincombe (1996:10) describes Pentecostal worship as a humble, adoring and life-encompassing declaration of God's attributes (Pincombe, 1996:9-11). For Pentecostals, the worship of God is the ultimate

purpose of the redeemed church because the church has been called to manifest the glory of God (Nyamekye, 2019c:15-18). This is seen in 1 Chronicles 29:11–13<sup>271</sup> and Daniel 2:37<sup>272</sup>, for example. At the core of worship is the lifting up of holy voices in worship to the King of kings, recalling the appellations of God (Buerter, 2020:22). In line with the above, worship ascribes glory, honour, power, majesty, dominion, excellence, and pre-eminence to the omnipotent God (Okediadi, 2008:746).

Pentecostal worship also demonstrates believers' humble, reverent service to God in a spirit-filled environment through the experience of the Holy Spirit (Nel, 2016:2) during which the attributes of God are activated and released to those present. During worship, songs are sung repetitively to the glory of God. As an especially experiential section of the service, Pentecostals do not downplay the worship section of their service. This section sometimes takes an equivalent amount of time as does their sermon delivery and is usually led by people who have been well prepared in the practice of liturgical prayer for a considerable time. Through worship, we surrender allegiance to God as God's people, and we declare God ruler over our lives as indicated in Psalm 95:6–7.

During a typical CoP worship session, the church's main entrance doors may occasionally be locked to prevent members caught in deep worship from being disturbed by latecomers. All those arriving late may have to wait behind outdoors until the worship session is over before the doors would be opened. This is because it is believed that when an individual is accessing the throne of God, where God's manifested presence exists, they must concentrate on the worship without obstructions especially because one may catch a revelation or prophecy during the worship period. The purpose of closing doors is to prevent or limit the movement of people through the footsteps which may cause external disturbances to heavenward focus. In Pentecostal worship, tongues-based prayer is practised. After concluding the worship service by thanking the Holy Spirit for being present, the main entrance doors to the auditorium would be opened (Daswani, 2015:80).

Given the experiential nature of Pentecostal worship, a 'stunted' worship service will usually solicit comments by the attendees that such a service was 'boring', i.e., not experiential. In more prominent, and larger Pentecostal churches, worship is usually

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<sup>271</sup>Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head overall. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.' (1 Chron 29:11-13).

<sup>272</sup> 'Your Majesty, you are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory;' (Dan 2:37).



supported by a team of choir members usually robed in nicely sewn African attire. The team and the instrumentalists would have usually prepared with the leader for days ahead of the worship. Sometimes, such services are associated with loud music, wailing and cries of congregants to show how their hearts have been touched. Many very emotional congregants may burst into tears with others rolling on the ground to show how unworthy they are but have been purchased by the redeeming blood of Christ and brought into the fold of Christ as Gentiles from faraway nations. During such worship services, one may also hear the leader of the service declare, ‘I was an idol worshipper, I was a prostitute, my father was a fetish priest, my mother was the tenth wife, and Christ has counted me worthy to be called His son/daughter.’ All these declarations serve to show how the grace of God has brought the sinner into the fold of Christ.

Similar to the account in Acts 13:1–3<sup>273</sup>, during worship sessions, people filled with the spirit of God will sequentially burst out in prophecy, or prophetic songs<sup>274</sup>. Following the worship, the whole congregation will be taught the prophetic song that was received. To Pentecostals, the receiving of a prophetic message or prophetic song is an assurance to the congregation that God is still active in His church and has not abandoned them. These worship sessions are sometimes so ‘electrifying’ that church leaders are unable to bring to closure the worship session. As such, instead of using fifteen minutes for worship, the worship session may last twice as long, or even longer. Usually, after such a worship service, one may hear the conductor state that the presence of God was remarkable in that day’s service.

Succinctly, the Pentecostal theology of worship has to do ‘with expressing the titles of Jehovah. His names are employed to extol his majesty and holiness’ (Palmer, 1978:5-7). Through worship, ‘homage is rendered to God in the immediate view of His majesty, blessedness and glory’ (Palmer, 197:8–10). The Pentecostal theology of worship is essentially driven by one’s grandeur view of God as one wrapped in His divine glory nature to render opulent homage verbally to the King of kings.

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<sup>273</sup> ‘Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off’ (Ac 13:1-3).

<sup>274</sup> Prophetic songs are words of prophecy received and transmitted in the form of songs during the period of worship.

As discussed in Chapter 2<sup>275</sup>, African Pentecostal worship has some convergence, and divergence with ATR. Pentecostal convergence with African traditional worship includes the use of drumming, emotional nature of the worship period associated with crying, weeping, and manifest presence of the Spirit during prophecy. Departures include the use of the biblical names in eulogising God, and such Pentecostal worship is subject to control, unlike in the case of the ATR, which is uncontrollable.

#### **4.6.6 Pentecostal Prayer of Intercession**

The focus of the Pentecostal prayer of intercession is usually not for self-prayer but ‘other persons-focused’ (Okediadi, 2008:741-5). To the Pentecostal, intercession means coming before God on behalf of others; an act of pleading before God to obtain mercy for someone in need (Wagner, 1992:27). As social beings, the theology of intercession is based on bearing the burden of others. According to Palmer (1978:20), it is based on the second law of the Creator— ‘love your neighbour as yourself’, and therefore standing in the gap for others. It is based on the principle of trusteeship that we are each other’s keeper for which we have the responsibility of praying for them (Palmer, 1978:20).

Intercessory prayer could be on behalf of someone who may be present or absent from the prayer service. Intercession can be individual or communal in nature – i.e., when an individual or group agrees to pray to God to help a person. As Donkor (2016:15) explains, intercession means forcefully ‘coming in between’ or mediating a cause on behalf of another/others with much force. Intercession may involve, for instance, praying for all people who are sick and in hospital, and for all people looking for ‘fruit in the womb’ (cf. Buerthey, 2020:2). To Duncan, intercessors are the most powerful people on earth today for they are appointed to bring God’s purpose into the affairs of people (Duncan, 2004:11-13).

From Romans 15:30–31, ‘I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. Pray that I may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea and that the contribution I take to Jerusalem may be favorably received by the Lord’s people there’, the example is taken of Paul who petitions the church in Rome to intercede for him for his safety from the hands of some unbelievers. Paul also recounts how he continues to pray for the church in Ephesus as shown in Ephesians 1:16–18, that they may mature in the faith and be enlightened, that the eyes of their hearts would be enlightened to know the hope to which they have been called.

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<sup>275</sup> Section 2.9, above.

Prayers of intercession may mean standing in the gap' as in Ezekiel 22:30, 'I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one', to mediate and avert judgement upon the life of somebody, or to reverse an evil brought upon an individual or group (Hagin, 2010:4). This is again depicted in the case of Abraham in Genesis 18:22–26.

The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? (Gen 18:22-24).

The latter also shows that for the Pentecostal, the principle of intercession is purely biblical in nature. To the Pentecostal, the greatest intercessor on behalf of humanity is our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:34<sup>276</sup>) who stood in their stead against God's wrath towards them and who continues to intercede on behalf of believers. According to Goll, (2007:4), intercession is also a means by which believers remind God of God's promises and appointments yet to be fulfilled as depicted in 3 John 1:2<sup>277</sup>, or to plead for healing of others as in the case of Abraham in Genesis 20:17–18<sup>278</sup>. In the Bible, Jesus interceded for His disciples and the church as indicated in John 17, while Moses interceded for Israel on Mount Horeb as recorded in Exodus 27.

In more recent Pentecostal parlance in Ghana's neo-Pentecostal circles, one finds the concept of 'spiritual abasement'. This refers to when people pray to 'lay siege around the life of people' to avert possible disaster, and to seek God's protection for the life of the one being interceded for. During intercession, 'the petitioner then becomes almost like a secretary, keeping the calendar of his employer'. During intercessory prayer therefore, one prays and watches his watch or calendar expecting his/her prayer to be fulfilled in due course. This is gleaned from Isaiah 62:6-7.<sup>279</sup> The intercessors 'keep watch on the walls' day and night and never keep silent. A good intercessor is therefore one who keeps vigil and keeps his lips open all day and night without getting weary. Although some Pentecostal intercession may be

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<sup>276</sup> 'Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died —more than that, who was raised to life —is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us' (Rom 8:34).

<sup>277</sup> 'Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well' (3 Jn 1:2).

<sup>278</sup> 'Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelek, his wife and his female slaves so they could have children again, for the LORD had kept all the women in Abimelek's household from conceiving because of Abraham's wife Sarah.' (Gen 20:17-18).

<sup>279</sup> 'I have posted watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the LORD, give yourselves no rest, and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth.' (Is 62:6-7).

solemn with people groaning on their knees, other times people are seen wrestling with all forms of praying ‘gymnastics’ and spiritual gimmicks as depicted in Chapter 5, section 5.2.3, and section 5.2.5 (below).

The abovementioned enthusiasm is often based on James 5:16b: the Pentecostal would say the effective, fervent prayer is one in which energy is exerted, strength is brought to bear, and zeal and enthusiasm experienced. Some Pentecostals therefore pray with much strength, activity, energy and sound. Again, this may sometimes be justified by referring to Isaiah 66:7–8<sup>280</sup>, namely that there is the need for travailing in prayer as though one is with birth pangs to give birth to their breakthrough. In other instances, Mathew 11:12<sup>281</sup> is quoted that the pray-ers would sometimes claim that effective intercession is only effective through ‘spiritual violence’. Nevertheless, an interesting point to note is that intercessors do not manipulate God for something God has decided not to change (Wagner, 1992:27). Some Pentecostal times of intercession on a single topic may amount to hours of prayer, but things may not change irrespective of the level of intensity of intercession made. Still, Pentecostals believe (with reference to Exodus 32:11–14<sup>282</sup>, and Numbers 14:20<sup>283</sup>) that just as Moses prayed to God to change God’s mind, so can the Pentecostal pray for God’s mind to be changed because no condition or situation is permanent. This Pentecostal perceptions and concept is further discussed in section 4.9.

#### **4.6.7 Pentecostal Prayer of Petition**

Prayer of petitions are prayers of appeal, request, entreaty, supplication, and invocation, praying to God for help in times of need by the pray-er. Kreps (2012:237) mentions that through petitions, humanity communicates their heartfelt needs unto God. The theology of petition is based on pleading the wanting things that do not yet exist and is lifting a heartfelt

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<sup>280</sup> ‘Before she goes into labor, she gives birth; before the pains come upon her, she delivers a son. Who has ever heard of such things? Who has ever seen things like this? Can a country be born in a day, or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children’ (Is 66:7-8).

<sup>281</sup> ‘From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and violent people have been raiding it’ (Mat 11:12).

<sup>282</sup> ‘But Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God. ‘LORD’, he said, ‘why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth’? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people. Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: ‘I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.’ Then the LORD relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened’. (Exod 32:11-14).

<sup>283</sup> ‘The LORD replied, ‘I have forgiven them, as you asked’’ (Num 14:20).

voice seeking the blessing of the creator (Palmer, 1978:15) ‘who is able to supply all the needs of his children through the glorious riches of Christ Jesus’ (Phil 1:19).

Duncan (2004:8) writes that through petitions we communicate with God to bring the heavenly decrees, revelatory purposes, and written judgement of the Kingdom of God into the realms of earth and override the kingdom of the devil. Petitions also mean pleadings, as shown in Jeremiah 27:18<sup>284</sup>, which shows pleading as an act of humility. In Psalm 119:49 – 50<sup>285</sup>, the psalmist is pleading with God and also petitioning God in humility to remember God’s promise that gives hope to the pray-er. From Psalm 119:58<sup>286</sup>, one sees the psalmist ‘seeking the face of God’ to access the grace of God. Seeking the face of God in this case may be likened to petitioning.

Many Pentecostals, however, believe that prayer of petition has more to do with summons. According to Wagner (1992:27), the petition of a person may determine the actions of the Almighty God and the Son of God. In this sense, Pentecostal petitions are like injunctions brought before a court of law. Pentecostal petitions thus sometimes come in the form of commands, declarations, and decrees ordering heavens to move in favour of a person or cause. During the prayer of petition, Pentecostals sometimes command ‘the heavenly host’ and ‘the gate of the enemy’ to lose its hold on somebody. Taking their cue from Matthew 16:19<sup>287</sup>, Pentecostals hold that God has given authority unto humanity, and dominion to exercise and invoke divinity to act on behalf of humankind.

The above makes it appear that with prayers of petition, Pentecostals focus on a change in a situation as if this is dependent on a person(s) rather than the sovereignty of God. How is this possible? or how should this then be understood? Duncan Williams, a leading charismatic teacher in Ghana in his book, *Prayer moves God*, holds that it is only prayer that moves God. In Chapter 13, Williams (2004:13) suggests that prayer moves God to enforce God’s words to come to pass in life (2004:13). Duncan (Williams, 2004:13) suggests that two prayer keys are fundamental in the life of the Christian: one is prayer ‘to decree’, and the other, prayer ‘to declare’. Whereas declaring means ‘to make known’ or ‘to set forth an account’, decreeing means ‘to pronounce judgement from an authoritative figure’ (Williams,

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<sup>284</sup> ‘If they are prophets and have the word of the LORD, let them plead with the LORD Almighty that the articles remaining in the house of the LORD and in the palace of the king of Judah and in Jerusalem not be taken to Babylon.’ (Jer 27:18).

<sup>285</sup> ‘Remember your word to your servant, for you have given me hope. My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life.’ (Ps 119:49-50).

<sup>286</sup> ‘I have sought your face with all my heart; be gracious to me according to your promise’ (Ps 119:58).

<sup>287</sup> ‘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’ (Matt 16:19).

2004:13). As a child of God, therefore, one's prayers can overturn, for example, satanic dominions or verdicts.

As Christians, we enforce our dominion mandate using declarations and decrees under the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. In recent times, such petitions in the forms of decrees and declarations have been noted among Classical Pentecostals, charismatics, and neo-Pentecostals in Ghana. From James 5:17–18, Pentecostals believe that just as Elijah prayed to close the heavens and thereafter prayed to open the heavens for rains, so must we pray with authority and power and believe that our prayer may be realised.

Again, a practical Pentecostal example of such a prayer decree is when following the depreciation of the Ghanaian cedi (the currency in Ghana) in 2014, Archbishop Williams<sup>288</sup> decreed the falling cedi to 'spiritually' rise<sup>289</sup> (BBC-News, 2014).

#### **4.6.8 Pentecostal Prayer of Enquiry**

A prayer of enquiry serves typically to help an individual know the will of God concerning life issues. It is a means of seeking God's counsel to know God's purposes, and to seek guidance regarding life (Sherwin, 2017:1). Additionally, enquiring of God helps one to unravel the dilemmas of life. Humans naturally seek immediate answers to life problems as they progress on the journey of life. When the Pentecostal is plagued by life issues, problems, and seemingly inexplicable circumstances, and does not have answers to it, he/she may resort to enquiry from whichever quarters they deem fit. The Pentecostal prayer of enquiry is therefore used to seek the face of God concerning any unanswered issue of life. The *why*, the *what*, the *when*, the *who* and the *how* are issues that make humans nervous and unsure, and thereby require divine revelation. A prayer of enquiry is the humble pursuit of God's direction concerning the myriad issues of life especially regarding the future and especially crucial issues affecting the destiny of a person (Lewis, 2021:3).

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<sup>288</sup> Archbishop Nicholas Dunchan Williams is one of the forerunners of the charismatic movement in Ghana, and he started it some 25 years ago. He is the general overseer and presiding archbishop of the Action Chapel International (ACI) ministry, with its headquarters in Accra, Ghana.

<sup>289</sup> During a church service, the archbishop prayed petitioning heavens, declaring a rise in the Ghanaian Cedi and decreeing a boost in the Ghanaian economy as follows: "...I hold up the cedi with prayer, and I command the cedi to recover, and I declare the cedi will not fall; it will not fall any further. I command the cedi to climb. I command the resurrection of the cedi. I command and release a miracle for the economy.....In the name of Jesus, say Satan take your hands off the President; take your hands off the central bank and the finance minister. Say we release innovation for the President, my God, the Governor of the Bank of Ghana, Central Bank, in the name of Jesus Christ the son of God, the finance minister. Say we command new ideas, breakthroughs, and a miracle for the economy. Let the cedi rise in Jesus' name' (c.f. Ghana web, 2014).

In 2 Samuel 21:1–22:19, an account of a severe famine in Israel that lasted for three years was narrated. It was clear to the author that the famine was caused by God, but the Jews had no clue of the reason behind this. David therefore sought the face of the Lord and the Lord responded. Seeking the face of God is an enquiry into the situation of life affecting the Jews at the time. In 2 Samuel 2 again, after the death of Saul, David was waiting to be anointed as king. He therefore enquired of the Lord if he could go to any of the cities. The Lord then affirmed this following which he was to be anointed king. The period of David's life in the wilderness also saw him seeking guidance from the Lord. In 1 Samuel 30:7–8<sup>290</sup>, David was distressed when his wives were taken away in a raid by the Amalekites. His only hope was 'seeking the face of God' to recapture his lost wives and property. David, after enquiring of the Lord, was assured of victory and asked to proceed, for the Lord would be with him. David is known to have enquired of the Lord nine times in the book of first and second Samuel (Bassali, 2021:1).

In Daniel 2:18<sup>291</sup>, Daniel enquired of the Lord regarding the mysterious dream of Nebuchadnezzar. Both 2 Chronicles 18:6–7<sup>292</sup> and Acts 1:24–26<sup>293</sup> also serve as examples of prayers of enquiry both in the Old and New Testament. In the Old Testament, the Ephod (Exodus 28:15<sup>294</sup>, 1 Samuel 23:9–11<sup>295</sup>), Urim, and Thummim (Exodus 28:30<sup>296</sup>); and the prophets (1 Samuel 28:6<sup>297</sup>) were ways of enquiring of the Lord for quick responses. In Acts

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<sup>290</sup> 'Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelek, 'Bring me the ephod.' Abiathar brought it to him, and David inquired of the LORD, 'Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?' 'Pursue them,' he answered. 'You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue.'" (1 Sam 30:7–8).

<sup>291</sup> 'He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon' (Dan 2:18).

<sup>292</sup> 'But Jehoshaphat asked, 'Is there no longer a prophet of the LORD here whom we can inquire of?' The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, 'There is still one prophet through whom we can inquire of the LORD, but I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad. He is Micaiah son of Imlah'" (2 Chron 18:6–7).

<sup>293</sup> 'Then they prayed, 'Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.' Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles' (Acts 1:24–26).

<sup>294</sup> 'Fashion a breastpiece for making decisions—the work of skilled hands. Make it like the ephod: of gold, and of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen' (Exod 28:15).

<sup>295</sup> 'When David learned that Saul was plotting against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, 'Bring the ephod.' 'David said, 'LORD, God of Israel, your servant has heard definitely that Saul plans to come to Keilah and destroy the town on account of me. Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me to him? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? LORD, God of Israel, tell your servant.' And the LORD said, 'He will'" (1 Sam 23:9–11).

<sup>296</sup> 'Also put the Urim and the Thummim in the breast piece, so they may be over Aaron's heart whenever he enters the presence of the LORD. Thus, Aaron will always bear the means of making decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the LORD' (Exod 28:30).

<sup>297</sup> 'He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets' (1 Sam 28:6).

chapter 1 verse 24, after the morbid exit of Judas Iscariot, Peter prayed the Lord enquiring of who shall replace the betrayer. They thereafter cast lots and the lot fell on Mattias.

For the Pentecostal, certain decisions cannot be made ‘with the coffee in your hand’<sup>298</sup> for they live in a world full of uncertainties (Osei-Owusu, 2022) (where it is believed the spiritual affects the physical and nothing happens within the physical domain unless it also lies concealed in the metaphysical realm). All decisions must therefore be prayerfully reflected upon before they are made, and they do not take things by chance. African Pentecostals who are typical Africans in their first principles therefore believe in a cause for early death, successive miscarriages, some mishaps, accidents, etc. they believe that misfortunes must have an underlying cause, and therefore must be investigated.

‘Pentecostally’, enquiries about the above are sought through prayers and direction from God, with Pentecostals hoping that God will speak to them through dreams, revelations prophets, or through His word. In recent times, some African Pentecostals seek answers via neo-prophetic directions called ‘*abisa*’ and ‘*akwankyere*’<sup>299</sup>, an enculturation of African traditional enquiry at the shrines. These African Pentecostals are of the view that God takes time in answering their prayers, so they rather enquire from prophets and neo-prophets of our time (Daswani, 2015:16). It is noteworthy and interesting that the way prophets and neo-prophets operate as objects of enquiries in the African Pentecostal setting are reminiscent of ATR (Daswani, 2015:16) as will be discussed in chapter 5 and 6 of this research.

#### 4.6.9 Pentecostal Prayer of Warfare

The term ‘warfare’ refers to the concept of warring against demons, spiritual powers and principalities that inhabit cities, communities, and territories (Johns, 2016:236-238). Many have been proponents of this strategic level warfare, but Peter Wagner<sup>300</sup> has been key driver of this concept (Twibell, 2020:88). Warfare prayers are sometimes also categorised as those aimed at either ground-level or strategic-level warfare (Onyinah, 2012c:11-13). Ground-level warfare are battles against the family or ancestral spirit, and the occult spirit of ordinary demons, which are believed to wage battle against the believer. Third Wave Pentecostals

<sup>298</sup> Sermon notes by Rev. Daniel Osei Owusu on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2022 at PIWC Asokwa during Hour of Grace prayers. Rev. Daniel Osei Owusu is a CoP Pastor stationed at Bicheretanga.

<sup>299</sup> Akan word for Divine direction, See again sections 2.8.0 and 2.9.4 of chapter 2.

<sup>300</sup> Peter Wagner is a social and political theorist from Germany. His work combines comparative historical sociology of contemporary communities in Europe, Latin America, and southern Africa with social and political philosophy and theory. In the late 1980s, he became a leader of the New Apostolic Reformation movement, initiating and advancing spiritual prayer and strategic ‘warfare’.



claim that these spirits inhabit the life of the believer and must be exposed and cast out as demons (Onyinah, 2012c:11-12).

Strategic-level spiritual warfare is defined as ‘praying against territorial spirits, attempting to ‘map’ their strategies (“spiritual mapping” – see below) in specific places by understanding their names and the methods they employ to keep people enslaved, and then to bind them so that evangelism can proceed without interruption’ (Fanning, 2009:8). Strategic level warfare is linked to at least five types of spirits that must be cast out of a believer. These include ‘territorial spirits, institutional spirits, supervising functional spirits<sup>301</sup>, community spirits (assigned to buildings, tools, instruments, and non-material entities), and ancestral spirits that rule over families’ (Onyinah, 2012b:12-14). The relationship between ground-level spirits, and strategic-level spirits is that the former is assigned to people by the latter who supervise the former’s activities (Onyinah, 2012c:12-13).

Warfare prayers are partly attributable to the changing pattern of Pentecostal prayers. These prayers are characteristically associated with most Pentecostals but especially the neo-prophetic (Daswani, 2015:15-22), and particularly with neo-Pentecostal movement. Although warfare prayers are not reflected in the same proportional dimension with the Classical Pentecostal, these prayers are evident at their prayer centres. The Pentecostal prayers of warfare are therefore serious prayers of battle. For Pentecostals, Jesus was involved in warfare (with reference to Hebrews 5:7<sup>302</sup>), so they too must be (Amaniampong, 2013:3). These prayers were characteristically not associated with Classical Pentecostalism, at least not until the emergence of prayer centres and neo-prophetic and charismatic Pentecostals in Ghana. The ‘battles’ referred to are of course not physical but spiritual battles. They refer to a spiritual fight against opposition in spiritual realms and declaring victory over the enemy. Pentecostals are mostly noted for using Ephesians 6:10–12, and 2 Corinthians 10:3–4 as basis for warfare prayers against principalities, forces of darkness, and power as dark places (Addae, 2020a:1-2). These quotations with words such as power, armour, might, schemes of the enemy and weapons of warfare make it very easy for them to relate to it as spiritual warfare.

In the neo-prophetic church setting, these prayers are also associated with almost all all-night and Friday prayer meetings. They are particularly prayed at night because the

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<sup>301</sup> These are spirits assigned to oversee activities.

<sup>302</sup> ‘During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission’ (Heb 5:7).

Pentecostal, from an African worldview, believes that the evil forces and demons move at night, and therefore prayer must be chanted at night to stop their activities. During warfare too, the prayer warriors are also involved in spiritual warfare. In the Pentecostal circles, spiritual warfare involves moving from waging pitched battles to waging wars against the enemy. Prayer of warfare is also extensively done in the language of the Holy Spirit to confuse the host of the enemy (see 4.5.10 below) (Daswani, 2015:82-3).

For the above reasons, during prayer services, long periods of time are also assigned to casting out these demons to stop their progress in communities, and from inhabiting cities and preventing Christian groups from reaching such communities and cities during evangelism and outreaches. In the neo-Pentecostal circles, today, prayer activities such as spiritual mapping, ground-level warfare, cosmic-level warfare and evicting rulers of cities are used to cast out these demons<sup>303</sup>. These demons are also classified according to the vices and disorders they promote, such as sexual immorality, addiction, mental disorders, occultic activities, pornography and gambling; and as such, they must be cast out of an individual's life (Baxter and Lowery, 2006b:60-63). Moreover, it has been shown that 'Spiritual mapping is one component of this procedure that involves investigating an area and identifying the spirit(s) in charge so that 'smart bomb'<sup>304</sup> praying can release their grip on the people, allowing them to turn freely to Christ' (Baxter and Lowery, 2006:60-63; Fanning, 2009:10-11). The technique of finding the exact location of the demon's territory is known as spiritual mapping (Fanning, 2009:10). Classical Pentecostals like those in the CoP are however of the view that strategic warfare has a theological flaw – this will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.<sup>305</sup>

#### **4.6.10 Pentecostal Prayer of Healing and Deliverance<sup>306</sup>**

As discussed in section 3.8.11, Pentecostals believe in the power of the blood of the lamb to heal. One key element of the Pentecostal four square gospel is Christ, the healer, with the belief that one of the reasons for the humanity of Christ is to atone for their infirmities and appropriate healing for them. For Isaiah puts in chapter 53:5, thus: 'But he was pierced for

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<sup>303</sup> These are used to map physical cities and towns and cast demons believed to be ruling and dominating these towns, or cities.

<sup>304</sup> This is a term used by those who mapping to describe a means of destroying the world of the enemy.

<sup>305</sup> Chapter 5, section 5.3.1, and 5.7.2; and Chapter 6, section 6.2.5.

<sup>306</sup> The terms exorcism and deliverance are used to mean the same activity, casting out demons from an individual.

our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by *his wounds we are healed*<sup>307</sup>.

Pentecostals, therefore, believe that healing is a bonus after salvation. Through this belief, the prayer of healing is appropriated and invoked. Pentecostals practise healing usually in the name of Jesus Christ, the blood of Jesus, or the power of the Holy Spirit or the fire of the Holy Spirit. These healing sessions usually occur during Friday evening or all-night prayer meetings and follow after a whole day's fasting. Unfortunately, some Pentecostals believe that behind every illness there is a corresponding spiritual force, and during every healing process, demons associated with the illness must be cast out of the person to set them free.

Similarly, healing and deliverance sessions can also last many hours and may concentrate on a single or few individuals. Sometimes, these healing sessions are preceded by teachings on faith, healing, or the blood of Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit. Members with varying degrees of ailments may be called to the altar for prayer and deliverance. Healing is sometimes performed by the leaders while moving through the congregation, laying hands on the members, or calling specific people to move to the altar according to the direction of the Holy Spirit for special prayers.

Pentecostal deliverance is a reflection of Markan theology (Mark 9:25-27), which is projecting Jesus' ministry as a superpower to the agencies of the world, so as to birth deliverance of an individual from the shackles of the enemy (Nel, 2014:350). Living in an African cosmological world of tension, the submission by Marius Nel (2014:350) on Markan (Mark 9:17-20<sup>308</sup>) theology is consistent with Ghanaian Pentecostal theology. Nel Postulates that Mark holds a worldview that the world is a battleground between good, and evil; righteous elect, and the unrighteous uninitiated; between God, and Satan; and based on that, this world needs liberation. During prayers of healing for the sick, therefore, demons will thus be cast out for every sickness, resulting in an exorcism and deliverance service. Reading the parallel text in Matthew 17:14–19, some Pentecostals misinterpret these texts to mean that for *every* sickness, a corresponding demon needs to be exorcised. That may however not

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<sup>307</sup> Emphasis mine (JITB).

<sup>308</sup> A man in the crowd answered, 'Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.' 'You unbelieving generation,' Jesus replied, 'how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.' So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth' (Mk 9:17-20).

be true; the fact that those cases of healing were demon related, does not make all issues of sickness demon related.

Some might generally interpret the account of Acts 10:38 to mean that all those healed by Jesus had a demon associated with their ailment (Onyinah, 2019:300-305). Pentecostals also organise special services called deliverance services. These are usually meant to deliver people from the supposed effect of demons, and sometimes ancestral spirits and same cast from people's spiritual lives. It is sometimes believed that demons or spirits may or may not necessarily be behind a sickness. These deliverance services could be deliverance from the power of death, from repetitive miscarriages, from curses in the family, or from the power of poverty. These practices, which are based on Mark 1:23–25, and Mark 9:17–20, though very common within the neo-prophetic landscape, can also be found in the prayer centres of the Classical Pentecostal churches.

Pentecostal prayer of deliverance, healing and exorcism are usually done with the assistance of prayer force members, sometimes called 'prayer warriors', or 'engine room group'. The group is usually made up of young men and women, baptised in the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues, who routinely fast, and take spiritual warfare seriously; for the demons are usually cast out by speaking in tongues. It is believed that the language of the Spirit is a sacramental language the devil and his cohorts cannot comprehend and are bewildered at the hearing of and therefore, get expelled easily. Speaking in tongues is therefore critical for exorcism (Daswani, 2015:82-83).

Other practices, sometimes including a long period of fasting (14, 30, or even 60 days), repetitive prayers that involve reciting parts of Scripture (Baxter and Lowery, 2006b:56), and confessions are part of this warfare" (Onyinah, 2012c:14-16). Classical Pentecostals like the CoP are of the view that it is very important for the people to be examined very well before jumping into a conclusion that they may be suffering from demons since depression, schizophrenia, fits, and other diseases may manifest as people who are demon infested. Care must therefore be taken when neo-prophetics want to exorcise demons out of situations of life.

#### **4.6.11 Pentecostal Prayer in the Holy Spirit (Speaking in Tongues)**

As discussed at various sections of this research, there are diverse views about the baptism in the Holy Spirit, as Classical Pentecostals believe that the Spirit of baptism is evidenced by an experience of the glossolalia and speaking in tongues, and in the use of tongues as a prayer mode (Porta, 2015:). This results in Pentecostals being identified as people of the Spirit

(Anderson, 2016:181; Constantineanu and Scobie, 2018:6; Hollenweger, 1999:167; Vondey, 2017:87). Generally, in prayer services, Pentecostals mention Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit much more than the name of God the Father in their prayers. They also engage the Holy Spirit more during prayer-related battles. The Pentecostal holds and claims that the Spirit imparts gifts for solution to all aspects of life.

The Pentecostal prayer in the Holy Spirit is clearly an experiential prayer. This is a prayer of either edification or prayer in tongues given to one by the Spirit. It is again a prayer of empowerment for grace and strength. According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2013:51), (speaking in) tongues is a source of empowerment for Spirit-filled believers and is used in at least three ways: for private prayer, prophecy, or exorcism. A fourth way in which tongues may be used in prayer is for worship as a sign of an experience of the presence of God. Pentecostals, however, differentiate between glossolalia from xenolalia. Whereas glossolalia is speaking in unknown tongues for edification, xenolalia is speaking in foreign language unknown to the author/speaker, but which others can hear and probably interpret.

From the account, in Romans 8:14–16<sup>309</sup>, Pentecostals hold the peculiar view that Spirit baptism is a key requirement for sonship and those having the spirit of God are the children of God. Again, from Romans 26 - 27<sup>310</sup>, Pentecostals hold that sometimes when they are unable to pray by themselves and for long periods, they must resort to the spirit in prayer and pray in the Holy Spirit as they are directed. Generally, therefore, Pentecostal prayer sessions have been seen to be associated with praying for Spirit-related activities. Pentecostal prayer in the Holy Spirit coincides with long periods of praying in thunderous tongues concerning any aspect of prayer by the believer. These views are theologically evaluated in section 6.2.1 of this research. Pentecostals can therefore pray in tongues during petition, healing, worship, or even during the prayer of confession.

Characteristically, both Classical Pentecostal Churches such as the CoP and the neo-prophetic churches uphold the doctrine of initial evidence that Spirit baptism is subsequent to salvation evidence of speaking in tongues. Although neo-prophetic churches do not emphasise so much on the need for their members to be Spirit baptised after conversion, the

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<sup>309</sup> 'For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children' (Rom 8:14-16).

<sup>310</sup> 'In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God' (Rom 8:26-27).

CoP and other Classical Pentecostal churches place so much emphasis on the need for spirit baptism with the evidence of speaking in tongues just after conversion.

They believe in the power of the Holy Spirit to effect supernatural healings in the church (Ampong, 2004:10; cf. Markin, 2019:9-10). This root of Pentecostalism displays a Spirituality of praying in the Spirit, with the Spirit, for the Spirit, to the Spirit, and all kinds of spiritual prayers as directed by the leader of the service. After his conversion experience<sup>311</sup>, Peter Newman Anim (see section 1.7.1) read an article that emphasised the need to be baptised in the Holy Spirit, with evidence of speaking in a new tongue providing an individual power to overcome evil (Quayesi-Amakye, 2015b:95-97). Anim, seeking this experience, even dissociated himself from the Faith Tabernacle Church and thereafter associated with the Apostolic Church (Yirenkyi-Smart, 2017:90-91). Anim, like all Pentecostals, following baptism in the Holy Spirit, placed much more emphasis on the pneumatic experience (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2009:58), which is believed to result in outward transformation (Vondey, 2017:83-85).

At the formative stages of Ghanaian Pentecostalism, this drive for the Spirit resulted in some walking for days seeking the Spirit or hiding in the remote places for an experience of the presence and baptism of the Holy Spirit. This characteristic still lingers on today. Some Pentecostals believe that baptism in the Holy Spirit completes one's salvation, without which one's conversion cannot be complete as depicted in the second blessing teaching.<sup>312</sup> From the initial Pentecostal concept of prayer, where the Holy Spirit is experiential, the emerging Pentecostal prayer is the use of tongues for all forms of prayer associated with loud noise as discussed in section 5.7.

#### **4.6.12 Pentecostal Prayer of Meditation and Contemplation**

Contemplative prayer, by design, focuses on having a mystical experience with God. It is the practice of the presence of God (Foster, 1992:14). Contemplative prayer is consequently not a

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<sup>311</sup> Anim was said to have suffered from a stomach ulcer and guinea worm infestation (Quayesi-Amakye, 2015c:95). Particularly significant for this study is that the prayer group Anim formed was called the Unity Prayer Group. It was started when members of the local community, who also read the *Sword of the Spirit*, decided also to engage in prevailing fervent faith prayers. Later the group evangelised the community and won many converts. The group's outreaches were said to be marked by many miraculous healings and experiences (Quayesi-Amakye, 2015c:94).

<sup>312</sup> The term 'second blessing' is commonly attributed to John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement. He taught that the second blessing was a divine act in which a believer was delivered from both internal and external sin. Christians interpret the term 'second blessing' in two ways: one in connection to Holy Spirit baptism, and another in reference to sanctification.

string of petitions and requests where one begs God for favours, confess our sins, produce a list of failings, or even share our joys. It is experienced in a silent environment, and about being with the One who loves you, and enjoying His presence (Holgate, n.d:2.). At some time, that awareness of God's presence will start to permeate other aspects of our lives. Contemplative prayer is conducted purely out of a yearning, however weak, for God and Him alone (Bruun, 2019). It is not done in anticipation of any feelings or experiences, but in anticipation of revelations of any type (Anglican fellowship of prayer, 2017:2). It is about a meeting between a person and God, during which God speaks to the person personally. Contemplative prayer relieves us of our current burden, reduces anxiety and promotes our heavenly focus on our creator (Bartkowski, Acevedo & van Loggerenberg, 2017:3-4).

The aim of contemplation is the rehearsal of an inner zeal that enables one to turn to God with undivided attention as a means of encountering God (Bruun, 2019:2). Separation from the world can only be achieved via prayer. Seclusion of the mind and possibly the body from worldly sin and division strengthens the need for the undivided attention that a jealous God demands, and this can practically be achieved through the act of contemplation (Bruun, 2019:4-5). Paul observes in 1 Cor 14:14–15:

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also.

Paul highlighted that when one prays in tongues and the language of the Holy Spirit, it is unfruitful since he does not know what he prays about. Therefore, contemplative prayer is not praying out the mind but praying in reflective mood and thinking soberly and not of mind experience.

Closely related to contemplation is meditation. Meditative Prayer is a prayer that comprises pondering over and fleshing out things to think about. During this prayer, you fill your mind with Scriptures and reflect on them as you pray through, journaling and listening to God speak to you (Foster, 1992). Christian meditation, sometimes referred to as contemplative prayer, is an investigation into the infinite mysteries of God and is a form of centring prayer that involves 'silent gazing on God.' By doing so, you immerse yourself in unity with God as you sit in stillness and think about God. This is the most disciplined kind of prayer because all you do is wait for God to speak to you supernaturally while remaining silent. In meditative prayer, connection with God is facilitated by the contemplative quality of meditation (Jonas, 2006:2-3).

In this kind of prayer, one reflects on the depth on a particular verse or portion of Scripture. You may even break up the session, meditate for a long time before concluding with a prayer. Christian meditation entails calming or stilling the body and concentrating the intellect while giving deep thought to the Scriptures, God's attributes, or contemplating spiritual goals. Since, God sent us His Word so that we might rely on it as the foundation for our lives and faith (2 Timothy 3:16-17), our understanding of God is grounded on truth; relying on personal experience instead of the Bible would mean deviating from the Bible's standard. During meditation, therefore, the focus is on deepening one's commitment to obeying God's will and following His methods, while also becoming closer to Him via a deeper grasp of His written Word. Christian meditation aims to achieve inner transformation as well as improved biblical perspective, clarity, and balance.

During Pentecostal prayers, especially worship, members are encouraged to keep their silence and reflect on God. This is to give them the opportunity to receive revelations or words of prophecy from God. In some instances, the purpose of contemplation during Pentecostal prayers is to afford members the opportunity to take their minds off the burdens and fancies of this world so that they could focus on the greatness of God. Be it individual or corporate, apart from the short periods of contemplation during worship, during some instances, Pentecostals devote long periods of waiting, meditating and contemplating on prayer services.

#### **4.6.13 Pentecostal Prayer of Blessings**

The prayer of blessing is a distinct Pentecostal blessing during Pentecostal services. For Pentecostals, blessing is an important part of their ecclesiology. Pentecostals would want to be blessed before they leave the church premises for their respective houses. Pentecostals also believe that the blessing invoked in the life of an individual by one mandated to bless (according to Numbers 6:22–23) is crucial to transforming their lives spiritually, and physically. The theology of blessing for wealth, health, and prosperity of the Pentecostal is based on Numbers 6:24–27, and 2 Corinthians 13:14.

'The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.' So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them. (Num 6:24–27).

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Cor 13:14).



Furthermore, for the Pentecostal to declare God's blessing according to Numbers 6:24–27 is to invoke a seven-fold 'package' of blessing that includes the health, wealth, blessing on one's descendants, blessing one's work, one's extended family, travelling mercies, grace and favour. The Pauline doxology of 2 Corinthians 13:14 which invokes the Trinity package of divine blessing upon the life of the individual is usually used at the close of services. This package includes the grace of God that yields mercy in one's life to continue to run the race of faith as a believer, love that would result in extraordinary favour and excellence, and fellowship of the Spirit that would grant one the opportunity to be a recipient of this divine package of blessings.

It is noteworthy that Classical Pentecostal prayer of blessing is not necessarily related to the prosperity gospel. It is important to note that not all Pentecostal prayer of blessings declare health, wealth, and prosperity. For instance, one finds the following blessings referred to and prescribed in the CoP ministerial manual from 1 Thessalonians 5:23<sup>313</sup>, Ephesians 3:20–21<sup>314</sup>, and 1 Peter 5:10–11<sup>315</sup>. These are blessings meant to refocus the believer heavenward and praying for an individual to be strengthened in the faith to continue the Christian race with diligence to attain the crown in heaven one day. These prayers of blessing are declarations of the power and authority of God through Christ Jesus to transform and empower believers.

Usually in a service, the prayer of blessing is the last 'package' that is taken home from church, and it must be very powerful. For Pentecostals, it is better one had not come to church than leave for the house without receiving the blessing of one's Father in heaven (God). The above discussions have shown that Pentecostals strongly believe in the power of blessing. Even though Hebrew 7:7<sup>316</sup> holds that the lesser is blessed by the greater, Pentecostals believe that when it comes to blessing, anyone can be used by God to bless once the person mounts the podium during the service but usually one of higher authority does the blessing. Usually in the Classical Pentecostal churches, women are usually not ordained as full-time ministers, and the highest ranks attainable by women are deaconesses, and pastors'

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<sup>313</sup> 'May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Thes 5:23).

<sup>314</sup> 'Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.' (Eph 3:20-21).

<sup>315</sup> 'And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.' (1 Pet 5:10-11).

<sup>316</sup> 'And without doubt the lesser is blessed by the greater.' (Heb 7:7).

wives. In that case, in a congregation of men and women, women may not be permitted to bless. Amongst the neo-Pentecostal and neo-prophetic churches where women are ordained as pastors, they then have the authority to bless a congregation of both women and men. Congregational benedictions declaring blessing must usually be pronounced by the person presiding during the service or someone appointed by him/her.

The Pentecostal prayers of blessing are also not limited to the formal assembling of the congregation. These blessings may also be pronounced when a leader visits a member at home, at school, or at the workplace, in which case the blessing is understood to be pronounced by the greater on the lesser. In other cases, for example, when the greater is sick and is visited by a lesser, the lesser may request the permission of the greater to pray and bless the greater. As said above, Pentecostals believe the benediction or prayer of blessing is one's 'take-home package', and it is regarded as a very important element of prayer. It is further believed that a blessing may change the course of one's life and destiny.

In the neo-Pentecostal church setting however, the prayer of blessing is usually tied to the prosperity gospel with members compelled to put substances/ money in envelopes for the pastors/ leader to bless these envelopes and invoke God's blessing upon their lives. These monies usually called seed monies are believed to invoke blessing when the man of God blesses same. This tilted orientation of the prosperity gospel is not a practice of the CoP and the Classical Pentecostal churches but a practice of the neo-prophetic churches. These have been discussed further in section 6.2.6.

#### **4.7 Unique Pentecostal Models of Prayer**

Some other models of prayer are unique to Pentecostals and worth mentioning while discussing the theology of Pentecostal prayer. These are discussed below as Pentecostals' model of the Lord's prayer and PUSSE and PULL prayers.

##### **4.7.1 The Pentecostal Model of the Lord's Prayer**

Interestingly enough, it seems as if the Lord's Prayer is not often (or not at all) prayed by Pentecostals at public gatherings to mention the least.<sup>317</sup> This does not however mean that the

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<sup>317</sup> I have not heard the Lord's Prayer in any Pentecostal service for the past thirty years. I have never been in a Pentecostal service during which the direction or an instruction was given to recite the Lord's Prayer. It seems that when the words of the Lord's Prayer are heard in a Pentecostal setting, they are being read from the Bible for the purpose of an exhortation. As a Pentecostal, I only have the privilege of reciting the Lord's

Lord's Prayer does not serve as a model prayer and a guideline for prayer in all these instances. For the Pentecostal, therefore, each phrase or sentence presents another typology of prayer the Pentecostal should pray about. According to Agyin-Asare, (2001:27), when Jesus taught the Lord's Prayer, he was not teaching a prayer to be recited in two minutes. Instead, he was teaching the pattern of prayer. Agyin-Asare (2002:27) maintains that if Jesus could rise early to pray and expect His disciples to pray all night, he definitely may not be expecting the disciples to recite the Lord's prayer over and over because they would get weary and bored.

According to Kumi-Larbi (2013:5-9), the Lord's Prayer serves as a model of prayer containing seven major topics or foci, with each representing a basic human need. These focus areas also are referred to by Nyantakyi-Bonsra (2020:35). According to the latter, Paul's comment in writing to the church in Ephesians (Ephesians 6:18a) to pray on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests, are in consonance with the Lord's Prayer reiterated by Jesus.

Some Pentecostals refer to the first part of the Lord's Prayer, 'Our Father who art in heaven', as a prayer of relationship, fellowship, intimacy, companionship, and trust. As such, it is a prayer in which the believer, through Christ Jesus, reminds the Father of their status as adopted heirs, and children of the Father (Kumi-Larbi, 2013:3; cf. Nyantakyi-Bonsra, 2020:50-55). The second part of the prayer, refers to hallowed be Thy name', is a prayer of praise, worship, adoration, and honour, proclaiming the authority of God (Kumi-Larbi, 2013:5; Nyantakyi-Bonsra, 2020:50-55). The section of the Lord's Prayer, 'Thy kingdom come', is understood by some Pentecostals as a prayer requesting the experiential presence of God and God's sovereignty amongst God's children (Nyantakyi-Bonsra, 2020:61-69). This includes the experience of God's signs, wonders, and miracles (Nyantakyi-Bonsra, 2020:67-69).

The section of the Lord's Prayer asking that 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven', is understood to be a reference to God's godliness, God's communicable and non-communicable attributes that prevent evil, and this also is a request for God's holiness, peace and joy to be displayed, and seen in the lives of believers (Nyantakyi-Bonsra, 2020:61-65). 'Give us this day our daily bread' is a prayer of faith and expresses total reliance on God as a supplier of human needs, but is done with contentment and not covetousness: contentment so

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Prayer when I visit a mainline church. I have however heard Pentecostals preach on the Lord's Prayer on several occasions.

that one does not become greedy or covetous of one's neighbour, and not think too much about tomorrow but to rather express trust in God for providing for one's life and needs (Nyantakyi-Bonsra, 2020:63-65). Importantly, Kumi-Larbi (2013:6) asserts that this part of the Lord's Prayer refers to God providing for the needs of people, not their wants, as the latter are insatiable.

'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us', refers to the prayer of confession because of the depravity of humankind (Nyantakyi-Bonsra, 2020:80-84). This section prays that God gives one a heart that is not vindictive and that accommodates the shortfalls of others and forgives them (Kumi-Larbi, 2013:7-8). The section in the Lord's Prayer, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil', reflects a kind of prayer whereby the child of God seeks God's protection and guidance (Nyantakyi-Bonsra, 2020:80-92).

Finally, when Pentecostals end the Lord's Prayer with, 'for Thine is the kingdom, forever and ever. Amen', it signals an exposition of what prayer should be, followed by a final round of adoration and thanksgiving to honour the King of kings. The Lord's prayer, for the Pentecostal, is therefore more than a literal liturgical prayer to be recited, but rather an example to be theorised. This is therefore prayed for many hours in various forms as they are led.

#### **4.7.2 Pentecostal Prayer of Fervency: PUSSE AND PULL Prayers**

It comes as no surprise, given what has been said about Pentecostal prayer up till now that Pentecostals believe in the need for fervency of prayers. Many Pentecostals believe that the longer one remains in prayer, the more likely and quicker a response can be expected. Goll (2007:91) mentions that Pentecostals take the posture of Anna who waited on God in the temple until she saw the birth and dedication of the Messiah (Luke 2:36-38). To the Pentecostal, the fact that Anna never left the temple but waited in the temple represents a lifestyle of prayer until one sees the promises of God fulfilled.

These prayers are what Pentecostals call PUSSE prayers. The PUSSE prayer is a strategic intercession prayer move to get the Pentecostal to pray more intensely and to remain invigorated during intercession. The acronym PUSSE stands for 'Praying Until Something Spectacular Happens'. The PUSSE prayer is used especially when Pentecostals are interceding for those in danger, beset by illness or any other critical circumstances, or those especially in need of divine favour. It is believed that the effective, fervent prayer of the righteous person accomplishes much (James 5:16). Since prayer brings results, people will

engage in many hours of continuous prayers until their spirits testify that things have changed. For the Pentecostal, prayer must be fervent, and is an energy-consuming work (cf. Donkor, 2016) that requires strength, great activity, and vitality<sup>318</sup>.

PULL prayers come from the Pentecostal prayer acronym ‘Pray Until Let Loose’. Many Pentecostals believe, based on the principle of the prayer of Daniel as recorded in Daniel 10:12–14 that the answer to our prayers is often blocked by demonic forces which is why we do not receive answers to our prayers on time. Since it took Daniel some twenty-one days to see the result to his prayers, one ought to pray until whatever is holding back their results lets them loose. This requires steadfast, diligent fasting for days and many hours of prayer, and sometimes over several days. This explains why some Pentecostals launch fourteen, twenty-one and forty days of congregational PUSSE AND PULL fasting and prayers, believing that the results of some prayers do not lie in only ten minutes of prayer or three days fasting.

The PULL prayers, thus, represent many days of consistent, continuous, unceasing, unrelenting, constant prayers and fasting to release any strongholds suspending people’s response to their prayers (Donkor, 2016:1-2). Again, some Pentecostals use Jesus’ interaction with His disciples in Luke 18:1<sup>319</sup> that they ought to pray without ceasing as the basis for their prayers. PULL prayers therefore cause people to pray with intense vigour without losing hope.

It must be noted that the ‘PUSH’ and ‘PULL’ prayers are not connected to the prayer of deliverance. These are prayers branded by zeal, fervency, enthusiasm. The leader uses prayer points developed based on Scriptures or experience to drive the prayers. These prayers are transactional prayer of faith and intercession to claim one’s biblical and prophetic promises.

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On one occasion at the CoP, a lady, Marion Djabbletey Deila who was looking for a job testified that she joined an intensive PUSSE. After <sup>318</sup> days of the prayer, she submitted her application to a company for the position of junior rank storekeeper. After the interview, she was told she deserves to be a senior manager and she was there given the appointment of a senior staff rather than a storekeeper. During another PUSSE prayer, an elder of the CoP (Elder Daniel Boafo) led the church to intercede for a woman who had been barren for years. Apparently, the woman underwent an abortion during her teenage years during which her womb was removed. The PUSSE prayers had been going on for days. To the amazement of all, a month later, she came to testify that she had conceived. The child of this woman without a womb was delivered safely after nine months to the amazement of all. Such testimonies shared by people motivate and encourage others to hold on fast to intense PUSSE prayer to receive evidence of God’s testimony.

<sup>319</sup> ‘And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart’ (Luke 18:1).

## 4.8 Conceptualising Ghanaian Pentecostal Theology of Prayer

Following the above exposition of the forms of prayer and the models of Pentecostal prayer, the next section proceeds to theologise on the constituent elements of Pentecostal prayer. Based on the reviews, the research attempts to theologise the constituent elements of Pentecostal prayer. This section therefore attempts to conceptualise the theological nature of Classical Pentecostal theology of prayer.

### 4.8.1 Pentecostal Prayer is “Transactionally Trinitarian”

The CoP is Trinitarian in its theology, and this affects its theological approach and all missiological praxes (White and Niemandt, 2015:2-3). Pentecostal prayers are not uttered in a ‘oneness mode’; they are not ‘unitarian utterances’. Pentecostal prayers are offered in Trinitarian mode, i.e., addressing all the three persons of the Godhead. The Pentecostal belief in the Triune God is clearly expressed in the statement of faith of the CoP. The latter’s second tenet affirms a belief in God who is one yet three in nature and thus reads:

We believe in the existence of the One True God, Elohim, Maker of the whole universe; indefinable, but revealed as Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – One in nature, essence and attributes; Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent (Gen 1:1; 2 Cor 13:14, Mat 3:16-17).

Pentecostals usually know what type of prayer is ascribed to any of the three persons of the Godhead. Doxologically, worship is directed toward God the Father, ascribing to God power, might, and authority. The Son is usually petitioned to intercede on believers’ behalf, and the Spirit is called on to take control and activate power toward service and transformation. Sometimes, specific prayers reeled out at once, or in a single period seem to be addressed to some specific persons of the Trinity. Again, all petitions and requests are prayed to the Father.

Even though Pentecostal prayers are pneumatically focused, hardly will any Pentecostal prayer be uttered and concluded in the name of the Holy Spirit, as prayers are normally concluded in the name of Jesus. Praying in the name of Jesus follows the account of Mark 16:17, John 14:13–14, and John 16:23–26.

Pentecostals see Jesus Christ as their intercessor who receives their prayers and submits them to the Father, and as Christians, our faith in Jesus is primarily expressed through prayer (Goldsworthy, 2006:15-17). In prayer, therefore, Jesus is confessed as Lord

and personal Saviour. In the so-called 'decision-making prayer'<sup>320</sup>, Pentecostals confess Jesus as the mediator between God and humanity, the propitiator of humanity's sins (I Timothy 2:5; I John 2:1–3), and intercessor (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 9:24) for life.

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (I Tim 2:5).

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this we know that we have come to know him if we keep his commandments (I Jn 2:1–3).

Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us (Rom 8:34).

For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf (Heb 9:24).

Seeing Christ as the mediator, the Pentecostal prays through Christ Jesus to God using phrases such as: 'in the name of Jesus Christ' or 'through Jesus Christ our Lord' or "'for the sake of Jesus', and these phrases are found often also in Pentecostal prayer (Goldsworthy, 2006:16). From John 16:23–24<sup>321</sup>, Christ promised the pray-er that if asked in his (Christ's) name, whatever is asked for shall be received. The authority to ask in the name of Jesus is therefore rooted in this promise of Jesus. With this mindset, Pentecostals may sometimes want to hold Christ accountable for His words by seeking almost to compel Him to do whatever they ask. Pentecostals also keep reminding Christ of their historical accounts of prayers said previously, trusting him for a response.

For the Pentecostal, the intercessory role of Jesus includes Him being seen as and called mediator, high priest, advocate, counsellor and the one who prays for Christians (Hagin, 2010:5). The Pentecostal believes that the mandate of Jesus Christ to intercede for humankind is because Jesus himself was once a man, continues to be a man and therefore feels or can identify with weakness, pains, and other human challenges. Therefore, Christ is in the best position, as part of the Triune God, to understand humans better and that praying through Jesus, thus, gives the assurance that God hears their petitions.

Again, Pentecostals pray the prayer of warfare in the name and authority of Jesus and the blood of Jesus. As the God incarnate who did wonders on earth and says we should pray

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<sup>320</sup>The prayer said at the point of confessing one's faith as a sinner, and it is what Pentecostals call the prayer of decision – accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

<sup>321</sup> 'In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.' (Jn 16:23-24).

in His name by virtue of the authority vested in us, problems and difficulties in life would be addressed to Jesus so that He would bring these problems before the Father to be solved. Generally, for Pentecostals, exorcism (casting out of demons) is done in the name of Jesus as well. Theologically, this is based, first in the testimony of the seventy-two. In Luke 10:17<sup>322</sup>, although the disciples had not been expressly told by Christ to cast out demons in His name, they returned with the testimony that at the mention of the name Jesus, demons were subject to them. Secondly, this follows from the Markan account of the Great Commission. In Mark 16:17<sup>323</sup>, the believers are assured that when they cast out demons in the name of Jesus, it shall happen. In Acts 16:18b, Paul casts out a deceptive spirit from a slave girl in the name of Jesus by saying, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.’ And it came out that very hour. It looks apparent that these accounts form the basis for the Pentecostal theology of exorcism, that demons may be exorcised in the name of Christ or in the power of the Holy Spirit. By this account and others mentioned in the gospels, Pentecostals exercise the authority to exorcise in the name of Christ. As has been seen earlier (Chapter 3, section 3.8.10), the casting out of demons in the name of Jesus is a frequent occurrence in Pentecostalism, especially in Ghana.

For the Pentecostal, healing is likewise mediated in the name of Jesus. Based on Acts 3:6–7<sup>324</sup>, and Acts 10:38<sup>325</sup>, Pentecostals believe the prayer of healing must be practised and mediated in the name of Jesus at a command or ‘a word’ during prayer (Onyinah, 2019:303). Pentecostals often use the phrase ‘the blood of Jesus’, during prayer for healing and to cast out demons and overcome evil spirits. The example of this practice in the Bible is based on Revelation 12:11, which reads, ‘And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death’. It is thus, by the power of Lamb’s blood that demons are cast out and things such as food items, clothing and suspicious gifts are sanctified. People are very suspicious of the demonic possession/occupancy of such items, especially when received as gifts from a person

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<sup>322</sup> "The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!’ (Lk 10:17).

<sup>323</sup> ‘And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues’ (Mk 16:17).

<sup>324</sup> ‘But Peter said, ‘I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!’ And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong’ (Ac 3:6-7).

<sup>325</sup> ‘How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him’ (Ac 10:38).



suspected of wishing one misfortune. Common prayers of this kind amongst Ghanaian Pentecostals include:

*Nea wo ade ama yen ene da yi*

*Ye tew ho, hyira so*

*Wo Yesu Kristo mogya mu*

Translated as:

For what you have given us this day

We sanctify and bless

In the blood of Jesus Christ

Usually, when a Pentecostal is faced with complex opposition or is confronted by something that is believed to originate from the devil, the Pentecostal may shout this phrase prayerfully: *Me de Yesu mogya ka wo anim!* (I condemn you by the blood of Jesus!).

Finally, the Pentecostal mostly claims good things like well-being and prosperity in the name of Jesus. The material side to salvation in some contexts of African Christianity has been referred to earlier in this study (see Chapter 3, section 3.9.2.1). This refers to material or physical things such as good living, wealth, a long life, and good health. From an African worldview, a life of challenges, difficulties, sickness, and stress is often seen as the result of the enemy who must be cast out so that one's situation may be transactionally altered. The prayer to change the physical and materialistic destinies of people by faith is likewise done in the name of Jesus.

Moreover, the Pentecostal prayer of power is transacted in the name and power of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals use the terminology, 'Holy Ghost' instead of the Holy Spirit. Power and strength for Pentecostal service is derived from the Holy Spirit. During prayer sessions, one would hear the shout of the 'Holy Spirit!', with a response, 'Power!' For the Pentecostal, to be empowered by grace and authority means to be endowed with power from the Holy Spirit. This Pentecostal 'hunger' for power is derived from the accounts of Acts 1:8 (Ye shall receive power when the Spirit comes upon you), Luke 24:48–49 (I am sending you the primers of the father... stay until you are clothed with power from on high) and Acts 2:1–4. From Acts 1:8, the Pentecostal believes quite literally that out of the Father and the Son proceeds the power of the Holy Spirit. Since one of the ways to appreciate and access the theology (and Spirituality) of Pentecostals is through their songs, the song below describes this understanding of the source of the Pentecostal power.

*Nyame home gu me mu*  
*hye me mu nkwa foforo*  
*Na ma ye nea wo pe*  
*Na ma do nea wo do*

In translation, this means:

Breathe on me, breath of God  
Fill me with new life  
That I may love what You love  
And do what you do

Another Pentecostal song which words the Trinitarian position of Pentecostals is Pentecost song number 515 (PHB, CoP: 330), which reads as follows:

*Ye'ani agyina*  
*Wo mpofrim mmae n'*  
*Bɔ wura yen mu.*  
*So 'gya wɔ yen kra mu bio*  
*Nyame Agya, Nyame ɔba,*  
*Honhom Kronkron di yen kan daa*

In translation this means:

We yearn your coming.  
Your unexpected coming  
Abide in us  
Kindle your fire in us  
God the Father, God the Son,  
Holy Spirit, lead us thy way

The above songs not only show the Pentecostal Trinitarian understanding of God, but also a desire for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the one praying. On some occasions, Pentecostals cast out demons by the power of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes the terminology of the 'fire of the Holy Spirit' is used to destroy the works of the devil. The Holy Spirit is

prayed for with a view to unction, empowerment, and sanctification. During times of prayer, the desire for empowerment is reflected in songs such as PH 515<sup>326</sup> (Agyemang Baduh, 2016:3330). Again, the Pentecostals usually quote 2 Corinthians 13:14 during the prayer of the benediction to invoke the blessing of the Triune God on the believer.

In summary, the above section has shown how Classical Pentecostal prayer is both transactional<sup>327</sup> and Trinitarian in nature. The Father is prayed to in worship and thereafter prayed all petitioned and request. The Son is prayed to according to the four-square gospel for salvation, healing, transformation, and changes in the destinies of people. As the Holy Spirit is prayed to, the view is to harness power and authority over the works of the enemy and secure grace for exploits. Nonetheless, these thoughts are not rigidly written dogma as sometimes, the Holy spirit is worshipped; and sometimes, the Son is also worshipped. Sometimes, the Father is prayed to for power; and sometimes, He is prayed to for healing and breakthrough.

#### **4.8.2 Pentecostal Prayer is ‘Spontaneously Glossolalic’**

This thesis describes Pentecostal prayer as spontaneously glossolalic. Pentecostalism is a movement of prayer that originated from prayer, with its distinguishing feature demonstrated in ‘glossolalic’ prayer (prayer through the speaking of tongues) according to Asamoah-Gyadu (2013:37). But what is the theological basis of this distinctive form of prayer? According to the doctrine of initial evidence, the Pentecostal believes that baptism in the Holy Spirit must be associated with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues, which can only be demonstrated through prayer. The Pentecostal prayer is therefore ‘glossolalic’ in nature, and it is understood to be praying in the Holy Spirit. It is an experience of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:38).

Based on Ephesians 5:18<sup>328</sup>, Pentecostals hold that believers should continually be filled with the Holy Spirit as a key requirement for the Pentecostal walk. Again, Pentecostals believe there is one baptism in the Holy Spirit but many infilling experiences. The infilling experience here is understood as referring to prayer in the language of the Holy Spirit (glossolalia) for more of Him. Pentecostals believe that life’s challenges cause their spiritual level and measure of the Holy Spirit within an individual to drop or decrease, and just as one

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<sup>326</sup> PH 515 stands for Pentecost Hymn number 515.

<sup>327</sup> See definition of transactional on page 35.

<sup>328</sup> ‘And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit’ (Eph 5:18).

may fill up a vehicle at a filling station with fuel, a believer too must, from time to time, be ‘filled up’ again with the Holy Spirit (this is however metaphoric).<sup>329</sup>

Within the Classical Pentecostals in Ghana, prayer for infilling of the Holy Spirit is a usual phenomenon. As discussed above, long tarry services are held for the purpose of the infilling experience. Pastors and church leaders usually leads new members of the congregations during such services to pray for baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. The pastors also pray for old members for the infilling experience known as the ‘filling station’ as discussed below.

The above-mentioned ‘language of the Holy Spirit’, of course, refers to glossolalia. This may occur at any point in a service – in worship, in praise, in intercession, or whatever prayer. This may even occur during the delivery of the sermon when the preacher or a member of the congregation would speak in tongues. This is in line with the characteristic of Pentecostal prayer sessions being both expressively exuberant and spontaneous (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:38-39). It is exactly because of their experience of (or because of) hearing the language of the Spirit that worshippers become overwhelmed with the presence of God, and exude spiritual joy, and some may join in prayer, also in the language of the Spirit (Droogers, 1994:33-49).

According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2013:39), in African Pentecostalism in particular, speaking in tongues is believed to be very powerful in dealing with all manner of crises. When a Pentecostal is therefore caught up in a life challenge, spontaneous prayer in tongues is believed to avert the crisis. Through tongues, the pray-ers pour out their sorrows, their pains, and their wants before God through the language of the Spirit, and God is held to be prompt in attending to them because God understands God’s language.

It was held that James McKeown, the Irish missionary and founder of the CoP, referred to extensively in Chapter 1 of this study<sup>330</sup>, taught CoP members to use spontaneous ‘prayers from their heart’ (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:40).<sup>331</sup> These spontaneous prayers (mostly in tongues) became and remain a congregational phenomenon in the CoP today. James

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<sup>329</sup> This metaphor can be seen, for example, in a programme advertisement: ‘Filling Station’ by PIWC Kotei and PIWC Michele Camp. The filling station is a programme designed for the infilling of the Holy Spirit. The metaphor of filling station is based on the idea that fuel dump is a place where vehicles that run of fuel stop for a top-up. In the Christian journey therefore as we walk the walk of life various activities of life causes our spiritual oil to run dry and have lower levels. The Pentecostal would therefore need periodically to do a stopover during periods of Holy Spirit infilling sessions for a top up of the oil of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>330</sup> Chapter 1, section 1.8.2.

<sup>331</sup> According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2013:40) these views were expressed during an interaction with Aps Michael Kwabena Ntummy, a former Chairman of the CoP.

McKeown asserted that since Jesus, in His days on earth, prayed vehemently, often in ‘crying aloud and weeping’ (Hebrews 5:7,)<sup>332</sup>, so the believer should imitate Christ (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:40-1).

According to Macchia (2008:13-28), humans are limited by words to express emotions that are sometimes too deep for words. For this reason, for Pentecostals, our shortcomings in prayer are augmented by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit through praying in tongues. This power and this language of the Spirit also enables sustained fervour in prayer. The Spirit, therefore, helps the believer in prayer as expressly stated in Romans 8:26–27.<sup>333</sup> Despite what has been said above, one may rightly wonder whether Pentecostal prayer is not sometimes the object of what I may call ‘*glossolalic abuse*’. During prayer, the one leading would be saying, “is that the loudest you can shout? do it the more, catch the attention of God! shout in tongues”. Pentecostals are sometimes made to believe that unless they shout the more and make more noise, their prayer may not be heard by God. Meaning that, the more you shout and scream, the more likely your prayer would be heard. More will be said about this in Chapter 6 (section 6.2.1), where the theological illegitimacy of an understanding of prayer that lies behind such abuse will also be discussed. To say Pentecostal prayers are *spontaneously glossollalic* means they start praying in the Holy Spirit immediately about everything and all their prayers are usually full of prayer in the Holy Spirit, and noise irrespective of what they are praying about—an emerging pattern which is a variation of Classical Pentecostal prayers.

### 4.8.3 Pentecostal Prayer is ‘Heuristically Experiential’

This thesis describes Pentecostal prayer theologically as heuristically experiential. During a sermon in Kumasi on Pentecostal prayer, Aps. Eric Nyamekye<sup>334</sup> highlighted some aspects of the experiential nature of Pentecostal prayer. He indicated that the purpose of Pentecostal prayer is for an experience in the presence of the Holy Spirit. During prayer, Pentecostals should therefore not be in a hurry to leave the Lord’s presence but tarry and be ‘soaked deep

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<sup>332</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu reports this based on an interview with Michael Kwabena Ntumy, a former Chairman of The Church of Pentecost. This, according to Ntumy, was based by Rev. James McKeown on Hebrews 5:7. During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.

<sup>333</sup> ‘In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.’ (Rom 8:26-27).

<sup>334</sup> Aps. Eric Nyamekye is currently the leader (a position the CoP calls chairman) for the CoP from 2018 to date.

in the Spirit' to tap into the supernatural to gain spiritual dividends and access heavenly gifts. According to Nyamekye, for this reason, early CoP prayer services were even known as 'TARRY prayer services' and 'TARRY nights' (Nyamekye, 2019c:2). In God's presence, therefore, one should also not hurry to change or switch between the topics of one's prayer, and one should not be in a hurry to start intercession but should subtly soak in God's presence. Nyamekye asserts that God's miracles cannot be experienced when one does not experience Him in 'soaked tarry prayers'.

Furthermore, the experiential nature of Pentecostal services is understood to mean that during services, there should be no disruptions, but that they must allow for life-giving times of prayer in the Holy Spirit in which the glory of the Spirit and the innate and immanent presence of God is experienced. Pentecostal prayers were experiential in worship, and experiential in the power of the Holy Spirit through prayers in the Spirit. Pentecostal prayer, furthermore, is an expression of fellowship with the Holy Spirit as is said in 2 Corinthians 13:14 (Nyamekye, 2019c:4). For it is only through prayer in the Holy Spirit that God can be encountered and experienced.

The above concerns more than supplicating for material blessings, but a desire for encountering Spirit-filled empowerment when the Holy Spirit has literally incarnated one. In addition, for the Pentecostal to experience God, there must also be periods of social isolation called fasting. According to Ankra-Badu (2004:22-3), for one to experience God in a typical Pentecostal prayer, one should expound God's praise, worship, and prayer in the Holy Spirit for 90% of the prayer time, and limit supplication, if any, to only 10%. The result will naturally be an experience of the supernatural. The experiential comes when one thirsts for God daily through the active enabling power of the Holy Spirit with a desire to commune with God through prayer. Prayer therefore brings satisfaction, following the experience.

#### **4.8.4 Pentecostal Prayer is 'Lyrically Doxological'**

This thesis describes Pentecostal prayer theologically as lyrically doxological. One characteristic mode of Pentecostal prayer is through the use of music. Every religion seeks to value the role that music plays in communication, invocation, and intercession (Samuel et al., 2019:491-92). In the CoP, 90% of songs are prophetic songs in the sense that they are either received through prophecy, revelation, dreams, or prayerful meditation. Interestingly in Ghana, the CoP is the leading provider of Pentecostal songs to both the Pentecostal and Protestant traditions in the country (Nketia, 1988:54-56). Some of

these songs are even sung in other mainline churches such as the Roman Catholic Church, especially during offertory times (Nketia, 1988:54-56).

The import of music in Christian worship has been highlighted by academics as a vital component of divine liturgies, particularly during prayer exercises (Afolabi, 2000: 154-158; Loko, 2011; Prince, 2015: 48-52). Music is featured in various aspects of prayer (Baquedano-López, 1999:197), especially during thanksgiving and adoration, desire for the Holy Spirit experience, spiritual warfare and breakthrough (Samuel et al., 2019). In the CoP, songs received via prophecy are also sung during prayer sessions and one finds much of the theology of Classical Pentecostalism embedded in these songs (Quayesi-Amakye, 2013:132-135). Pentecostal songs therefore convey the theological thoughts of Pentecostals. As a result, their songs are a reflection of their theological beliefs. As it is to be expected, Pentecostal songs are Holy Spirit inspired, unlearned, and spontaneous. They edify, encourage, comfort, and empower believers (Quayesi-Amakye, 2013:132).

Similarly, Pentecostal prayer is known for creating an engaging atmosphere when charged by music, noise and other expressive activities (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:42). These songs convey the desires of the heart, cries for help, and the burdens of believers who sing. In fact, for the Pentecostal, the songs themselves are prayers, and they are sung prayerfully. In every typical Ghanaian Pentecostal service, at least a quarter of prayer time consists of prayers in the form of song. Some themes conveyed by Pentecostal songs include hope and grace in the Lord, faith in Christ and the unfailing love of God. When sung, these songs also assure worshippers that God has heard their pleas or petitions.

On some occasions, issues of the day or the topic of a prayer determines the songs to be sung in prayer. One example of this was on 11th April 2020 at 8:45 am on Pent TV<sup>335</sup> during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in Ghana, the former chairman of the CoP (Aps. Prof. Opoku Onyinah) sung an old Pentecostal song as a prayer with the following lyrics in Twi (language) (Kwesi Annor, 2020).

*Obɔadeɛ Nyankopɔn ne Wo*

*Wo ma deɛ aseɛ nyinaa nso ye yie*

*Wo mma firi y'ehokyere m'' su fre Wo*

*Tie yen mpaebɔ ne nkotosr ' ɛi*

*Na ma ɔgyee soronko nso yen so.*

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<sup>335</sup> PentTv is a private television network belonging to the CoP.

*Obi ntumi nye, gye Wo Awurade nko*

*Obi ntumi nye, gye Wo Awurade nko*

Translated, the song means:

You are the Creator, Lord God

You have the power to transform into good all things that have gone bad

Your children, through struggle, cry unto You!

Let remarkable deliverance be our portion!

Listen to our prayers and petition!

No one can grant our requests, except you!

The song starts by extolling the name of God, and confessing trust in God as the Sovereign One, the Omnipotent, and Omnipresent. The song then continues by associating humanity with God as God's children and heirs who are in trouble and need help. This song conveyed helplessness in the midst of the global pandemic. It calls on God to cast His eyes unto His children in the midst of these struggles and difficulties and to grant them deliverance. It petitions God for mercy in the midst of this helplessness due to the weakness of humanity and its own incapability to change its circumstances. This can be done as God is the deliverer and has delivered His children before. The song was sung prayerfully and sorrowfully; and the link between prayer and fasting was again made as the above event coincided with a declaration by the chairman of the CoP of a weeklong fast by all ministers and wives.<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> Another song that is sang during prayers is

*ɔbe kasa ama me, ɔbe di ama me,*

*Me Jesus be kasa*

*ɔbe Kasa ama me, obedi ama me*

*Me Jesus be kasa*

In translation:

He will speak on my behalf; he will intercede on my behalf

My Jesus would speak for me, he would intercede on my behalf

A prayer of worship in the Twi Akan is experiential from the content of the songs below.

*Yehova ne wo din kese*

*Ateasefo Nyame ne wo,*

*Wo ne me Nyamkopon ene da yi*

*Me de me ho nyinaa ma wo*

In translation:

*Great is your name, God*

*The God of the living*

*You are a Great living God*

*We surrender ourselves to you and ascribe unto you all glory and honour*



Another song that is sung during prayers is:

*Obe kasa ama me, Obe di ama me,  
Me Jesus be kasa  
Obe kasa ama me, obe di ama me  
Me Jesus be kasa*

In translation:

He will speak on my behalf; My Jesus will intercede for me

#### 4.8.5 Pentecostal Prayer is ‘Ontologically Authoritative’

The research theologically proposes the fifth characteristic of Pentecostal theology of prayer as authoritatively results-oriented. The Pentecostal believes that prayer produces results and must therefore be authoritative in nature. At one prayer meeting in the CoP, a pastor stood up to pray and used these words in Akan Asante language thus:

*Awurade, ye hye wo se fa nniema nyinaa nnomum  
Ma yen hunu wo keseɛ ye wo yen tam<sup>337</sup>*

In translation:

Sovereign Lord, we know you are in your seat  
Father, we command you to take control  
Let us see your greatness in our midst.

The Pentecostal believes that the more one prays, the more one is powered spiritually. As Jesus prayed with confidence, power and authority, so too one must pray, using Him as role model (Amaniampong, 2013:4). Pentecostals claim Jesus gave commands in His prayers so followers must also give commands. Examples of these are the accounts of deliverance and

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Another prayer that projects the majesty of Christ is:

*Me koto sɔre wo, me wura,  
Anuonyam hene Kristo,  
Anuonyam adware wo,  
Awura mu Awurade  
Me koto sɔre wo oo daa*

In translation:

I bow before you and exalt you  
Glorious Lord  
Glory and beauty have clothed you  
King of kings, I bow before you

<sup>337</sup> This was at a CoP Ministers and wives prayer meeting at Kumasi.

exorcism performed by Jesus, and also when He raised Lazarus from the tomb (John 11:41–43). Pentecostals similarly believe that as Jesus’ followers, they exude the same authority<sup>338</sup>.

According to Pentecostal interpretation of the account in Acts 12, when Peter was in prison, and he was earnestly prayed for, vividly reflects the transactional nature of Pentecostal prayer. As prayer caused the angel of the Lord to come to the aid of Peter to shine light in the darkness of prison, to make the invisible made visible, to break the chains around Peter, and to open the prison gate for him, so too must believers’ prayers be made. Prayer is the power to liberate and make the invisible visible, and the impossible possible.

The experience of the Spirit gives the believer this power and authority to pray and rise above any situation, and other powers (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:42). In other words, Pentecostal prayer is associated with charismatic authority, usually by way of the command to cancel the effect of evil forces. Asamoah-Gyadu, (2013:42) links this to ‘Pentecostal interventionist theology’, where God is not only experienced in emotions, but in acts. It is believed that God is actively involved in the world of the Pentecostal with an irresistible power to cause effects (Goldingay, 1996:181).

Pentecostal prayer must therefore be authoritative, for in prayer, authority and power come together (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:43). The authority with which Pentecostals pray is derived from the authority God has given us as His representatives (cf. Matthew 28:16-20). Quoting Matthew 28:18, Pentecostals believe that the transferred authority from Christ to the disciples is not authority to only preach but to be exercised in all issues of life. Through this derived authority, Pentecostals believe they are to exercise power and dominion as God’s representatives. Prayer must also be uttered with confidence, such as confidence in the power and ability of prayer to transform, and confidence that whatever is asked of the Father through the Son in the power of the Spirit will be done.

#### **4.8.6 Pentecostal Prayer is ‘Biblically Consequential’**

Finally, Pentecostal prayer is effective when backed by the word of God, and God is reminded of His own promises in the Word. They therefore pray, citing biblical examples of what God has done in the Old and New Testaments for which reason the Pentecostal expects

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<sup>338</sup> At a prayer meeting called the Hour of Grace at PIWC Asokwa on 12th August 2022, Rev. Daniel Osei Owusu, whilst encouraging and motivating the members, held that as Pentecostals, we need to disturb heavens with our prayers, provoke heavens to arise on our behalf, and shake the heavens authoritatively. This is the only way we can produce fruitful results from our prayer. Rev Daniel Osei Owusu is a church of Pentecost pastor stationed at Bicheretanga in the Northern region of Ghana.

God to repeat same miracle or open doors in their days. They would usually recall historical miracles in the days of their Patriarchs or then cite Habakkuk 3:2 and Psalm 44:1 as their references.

LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, LORD. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy (Hab 3:2).

We have heard it with our ears, O God; our ancestors have told us what you did in their days, in days long ago (Ps 44:1).

Again, through the study of God's word, Pentecostals find justification for the experience of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as a basis for their Spirituality (Tomberlin, 2019:86-98). As earlier explicated, speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of Holy Spirit baptism is found to be biblically based on the Acts chapter two account. The church, therefore, must be a spirit-renewed church based on the biblical reflection on life, doctrine, and ecclesiology. For Pentecostals, therefore, searching the Scriptures is also an encounter with the Holy Spirit (Tomberlin, 2019:86-92) and a source of new revelation and directions from the Spirit. Since Pentecostal theology is more than credal confession, but verbally expressed Spirit-filled, Spirit-inspired, and Spirit-directed prophetic declarations of God's words, so is prayer (Tomberlin, 2019:88-90).

Since the Bible is the authoritative written revelation of God, some Pentecostals pray by 'reading back to God' parts of the Bible in their prayers. They would sometimes claim that 'God knows nothing but His own words'. For effective results in prayer, therefore, they believe that prayer must be based on the word of God, and so they literally recite the words of the Bible to God (Oduro, 2021:1).

Based on the well-known text of John 1:1-4<sup>339</sup>, Pentecostals claim that the Logos is Christ, and from the Logos, people receive testimonies that inspire them to do the work of God. These testimonies are the products of reflective encounters of the believer with the Word and the Spirit (Tomberlin, 2019). For such testimonies, it is therefore imperative that one reflects on the word of God and produce the words of God back to the source.

To conclude, in practice, the biblically based character of Pentecostal prayers is found in two ways of interacting with Scripture. Firstly, biblical prayers are sometimes based on

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<sup>339</sup> 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.' (Jn 1:1-4).

reading a portion of Scripture that serves as the basis of a topic for prayer; or as a basis for speaking to God concerning a need<sup>340</sup>.

#### **4.9 The Value and Importance of Prayer Practices for Pentecostals**

From what has been said in this chapter, it is clear that prayer and the Spirituality of prayer is of the utmost importance to the Pentecostals. This is closely linked to the Pentecostal's understanding of the value of prayer as discussed below.

##### **4.9.1 Prayer as Experience: A Cornerstone of Pentecostal Spiritual Growth**

Prayer is a basis for and serves to develop a person's devotional life. Through prayer, the pray-er experiences the presence of God (Immink, 2016:1). The act of praying involves the heart, the mind, the spirit, and the body; and these parts experience the divine during prayer. The Pentecostal believes that God is present during a person's devotional time of prayer as well as in every service they attend. Especially in moments of prayer, God is seen to be alive, and present; God is also felt, and is more active (Immink, 2016:1). The accounts of Acts 4:24, 31 and Acts 13:1–3 is a basis for Pentecostal belief that in prayer, God is present and active.

During church services, God is met through His word (during the time of exhortation), but equally so through His Spirit during times for and of prayer and through prophecy (Tomberlin, 2019:96). Given the experiential nature of their Pentecostal services, Pentecostals also claim that no two prayer or worship services are the same but are distinct in their experience. The often-heard testimony of Pentecostals after a service is that, 'it was great because we had a wonderful prayer time or a touching time of worship', or 'we had a Spirit-filled and Spirit-led time of intercession', or 'we had a great word ministration'.

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<sup>340</sup> 'In the other instance, Pentecostal prayer may be biblically enunciated by reading a portion of Scripture to God verbally and prayerfully. For instance, when a person is going through difficulty and awaiting the manifestation of God's powerful deliverance, the person could read prayerfully and repeatedly, for example, Psalm 20 to Psalm 30. Sometimes, during congregational prayers, one may see such people opening their Bibles and reading and reciting portions out loud in prayer to God.

Destiny Hour prayer at PIWC Asokwa are prayer sessions organised every Tuesday by the resident minister. On Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 for instance, during the prayer meeting, the leader quoted 2 Cor 1:18-22. Attempting to develop a prayer point for the congregation as a basis for prayer, he informed the house that everybody must claim his (the leader's) promises in God through Christ Jesus, which is yes. For in Christ Jesus, every one of the promises God has given us are yea and amen. He then led the congregation to recite portions of Scripture after him, which are the basis for claiming people's inheritance (as promised). All the congregants had to pray for God's promises concerning their lives to be accelerated by reciting the following words of the leader: *'For all the promises of God find their Yes in him (Christ). That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory and claim my inheritance in Jesus's name.'*

Also, for the Pentecostal, the more one prays, the more spiritual one becomes. It is not uncommon to hear people declare that the strength of one's Spirituality is actually measured by one's ability to lead a long period of prayers, quoting Bible verses from memory, or to have the posture of 'a praying giant'. In short, prayer is not only a cornerstone of Spirituality, but it also develops Spirituality; and the more one prays, the more one is on fire, and the more one experiences the divine. Prayer is therefore a basis for Pentecostal experience, and for growing intimately with the Lord.

#### **4.9.2 Prayer Promotes Personal Holiness and Spiritual Beauty**

The Pentecostal believes that prayer promotes personal piety. Through prayer, believers are drawn closer to their Creator; and through prayer, the desire to commune with God through His written word is created. According to Torrey (2012:167), the more the Pentecostals pray, the more they love their Saviour and become like Him. The Pentecostal therefore believes that prayer makes one more and more a reflection of the image of God, and as such, they 'shine', and radiate glorious beauty. In Pentecostal circles, Luke 9:29<sup>341</sup> is often quoted as meaning that prayer produces spiritual beauty and 'spiritual glamour'.

From the above quotation, just as Jesus radiated with beauty through prayer, the Pentecostal believes that prayer would produce a similar effect on one's life and yield spiritual beauty. It is therefore presumed also that through prayer, one glitters inward, and is therefore manifested outward for people to see. So, Pentecostals believe that people who pray have a heavy countenance and radiate with the glory and beauty of God. In the Pentecostal circles, therefore, prayerful people are said to carry the unapproachable glory of God around them (kabowd). In short, the more one prays, the more personal intimacy with God is developed. This intimacy is again directed to the reading of God's word, and the development of a more pious life akin to the things of God.

There is an old orally transmitted Pentecostal adage that: a 'praying man [sic] stops sinning and a sinning [man] has stopped praying'" (source unknown). The presumption here is that, as one keeps praying and having fellowship with God, the more their desire for things of the world will dwindle. In other words, prayer focuses one's affection on the things of God rather than on the world. A person's relationship with God is strained by affection for things of the world, and such a person cannot draw closer to God, especially through prayer. As a

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<sup>341</sup> 'As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.' (Lk 9:29).

person keeps praying, therefore, the more he/she increases in appetite for spiritual things while growing more into the image of Christ. From 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul holds through his letter to the Corinth church that as one keeps the Lord in focus, through contemplation, the Lord's glory becomes manifest and transferred upon the individual in focus. The Pentecostal therefore believes that prayer produces spiritual beauty.

#### **4.9.3 Prayer Promotes Restoration**

Through prayer, one seeks restoration of one's relationship with one's Maker. Through the confession of sins, the created is restored to the Creator. Confession is a prayer of submission and humility to God for the forgiveness of sins and for restored relationships (Nyantakyi-Bonsra, 2020:). Romans 5:8 is often quoted to show *how*, i.e., 'whilst we were yet sinners, Christ died for our sins', so that our sins were and are propitiated by Christ through His death on the cross. Romans 10:13 declares that for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.", and therefore, if one confesses one's sins, the Lord is faithful and just to forgive one's sins and unrighteousness (1 John 1:8–9<sup>342</sup>). According to Joe-Andah (2018:8), this 'call' in Romans 10:13 refers precisely to the prayer of the sinner. Meanwhile, it is through prayers that humankind is restored unto God through Christ. Salvation and spiritual re-connecting with God, our Maker, therefore happens via the critical communication in prayer. According to Kelley (2012:255), from Jesus' model, the prayer of forgiveness is also the starting point for forgiving others. Restoration is therefore a two-way movement: being restored unto God leads to one's neighbour being restored unto them.

#### **4.9.4 Prayer Dispenses God's Power at Work**

Pentecostals claim that prayer is the preeminent way that the hand of God is seen at work in the life of people. Prayer is a way by which God's miracles are dispensed. 'So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists' (Ac. 12:5–7). From the accounts in Mark 9:25–29, for example, the disciples were confronted with a woman who brought her child to the disciples

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<sup>342</sup>If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.' (1 Jn 1:8-9).

suffering from seizures and a mute spirit. After a lengthy battle, the disciples failed to heal the child. After an enquiry from Jesus, he declared that ‘This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer’ (Mark 9:29). This account in the Gospel of Mark is interpreted to mean that some things may never change unless people pray. Some circumstances in life would remain permanent unless you pray for the power of God to change the situation. It will not be surprising that the CoP published a three-volume series of books titled: *God’s Power at Work* (CoP, 2017). The purpose of this series is to share the testimonies of people who have experienced God’s miracles through prayer. Since Pentecostalism is associated with healings and miracles, these testimonies are presented as examples of the result of the power of prayers to encourage others to seek God in times of need.

In line with the above, Torrey (2012:171) suggests that the phrase in Isaiah 40:31<sup>343</sup>, ‘waiting for the Lord’, refers to a time of praying in God’s presence and that this waiting results in the believer receiving spiritual strength and power. This strength received through prayer helps one to overcome the challenges of the Christian journey and this power is dispensed in the work of God and in our daily lives. Similarly, the account in Luke 24:49 speaks of ‘staying’ to suggest a time of focused and continued prayer in the presence of God. The result of the ‘staying’, too, is the clothing of power from on high. Prayer, therefore, produces God’s miracles and wrought great things.

#### **4.9.5 Prayer Produces Faith and Confidence**

According to Immink (2016:2), ‘a praying person believes that the vicissitudes of life are within the control of God’. As an individual continues to grow to develop the habit of praying, therefore, it reflects their understanding that God is in control, and they develop robust faith that God will never forsake them, thereby producing an anchorage in God. Meanwhile, increased prayer activity produces increased and strengthened faith, especially during difficult times on the Christian journey, thus turning impossibilities into possibilities.

From the account in Acts 4:31<sup>344</sup>, after Peter and John had been freed by the Jerusalem Council and warned not to proclaim the name of Jesus, it took a prayer of faith for them to be filled with the Spirit and power. Indeed, after they had received courage in Acts 4:31, grace through the infilling of the Holy Spirit granted Peter and John the ability to defy

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<sup>343</sup> ‘But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint’ (Is 40:31).

<sup>344</sup> ‘After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly’ (Ac 4:31).

the threats of the Council. An account in 1 John 5:15<sup>345</sup> states that ‘And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him’. How does one ‘know’? One knows through faith in Christ; one has that conviction, and that conviction confirms in them that in Christ, once they ask, Christ will do it for them.

Also, Pentecostals believe that when they pray, irrespective of how controversial the request may be, God must hear them and respond to their plea. Leonard (1985:45) holds that in the CoP, when a topic is announced, and the leader just says ‘let us pray’, it means literal, and members burst into thunderous prayers in unison, believing God would hear their prayer. Rev Joseph Egyir Paintsil<sup>346</sup> states that if you want to pray, pray in faith until you receive your miracle (Ntummy, 2000). Richard Foster (1972:27-28), and Hollenweger (1972) describe charismatic movement as a religion belonging to the proud poor; it seems logically consequential to rely on the divine providence of God through prayer. That through prayer, adherents speak to God, air their frustrations, challenges, difficulties, and trust in God that He would certainly respond one day.

Importantly, in 1 John 5:14, there is however a conditional clause in the statement: ‘if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us’. Not only should one ask, but one’s request should be according to the will of the Father. This aspect of prayer and the will of the Father will be discussed further in section 4.9 of this chapter and again in Chapter 6.<sup>347</sup>

Pentecostals believe that once an individual prays continuously, his or her level of faith increases, and this increase in faith produces many results irrespective of the will-factor of God. With increased faith, sometimes, people are tempted to irrationally do the unimaginable; and they are under the illusion that they can do all things. Doing such unimaginable things, however, may be deceptive. From an account of Graphic Daily (2010:6), two pastors travelling from Hohoe to Dambai got drowned at Kparekpare stream when it had overflowed its banks. Following a heavy downpour in the morning, the stream had overflowed its banks and all cars plying that route parked waiting for the water to subside. The senior pastor, full of faith, however, directed their driver (whom he described as a man of little faith) to move through the stream. Midway through the stream, their engine stalled and the water swept the car away resulting in the death of the two pastors. Interestingly, the driver who was described as a man of little faith was rather saved. Prayer is said to produce faith to

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<sup>345</sup> ‘And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him’ (1 John 5:15).

<sup>346</sup> Rev. Joseph Egyir Paintsil was the first General Secretary of the CoP.

<sup>347</sup> Chapter six, section 6.2.3.



do the impossible, but one must also consider the thin line (existing sometimes) between faith and reasonableness so one treads cautiously and reflectively through the spirit of discernment.

#### **4.9.6 Prayer Results in Divine Salvific Deliverance**

Usually when Pentecostals come together in preparation for outreaches and crusades, many prayers are said for lost souls. They pray for the lost to come to the saving knowledge of Christ. It is believed that when prayers are offered for the souls of those who are lost, the Lord, through his Spirit, will prepare the hearts of those souls to be saved. Although the will of humankind is left into his/her own hands, Pentecostals also believe that the devil has seared people's conscience, hence they are unable to take their own decisions following the bondage of sin. There can be a release of the souls of such people only when they are prayed for. Sometimes, intercessions and petitions are made for the souls of such people to be saved from the depravity of this world<sup>348</sup>.

Usually in Ghana, serious Pentecostals will never undertake evangelism or outreach without extensive prayer sessions for the devil to lose his grip on the souls of people who will be ministered to. It is therefore not unusual to attend a Pentecostal service and hear the one leading the prayer saying the congregants should pray for their family members, office colleagues, school mates and friends who are not saved so that the spirit of God would work on them towards salvation.

Torrey (2012:179-180) refers to 1 John 5:16<sup>349</sup>, when stating that our prayers have the potency to save the souls of people who are doomed to condemnation so that God will grant such people eternal life. This view also needs to be nuanced. The above-mentioned text does not presuppose that physical effort may not be necessary to save the souls of people. It, instead, indicates that people's physical efforts are limited. It takes the spirit of God to bring

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<sup>348</sup>Recently, Eld. Dr. Ken Aboah, during the preparation for an evangelisation outreach by the PIWC Asokwa Church to the Francophone community in Kumasi on 12th August 2020, said that the devil has bound the souls of people, and until we pray for their freedom, they would continue to be under the bondage of the devil (Aboah, 2020:2-3). At the same occasion Eld Ken Aboah called sin a virus and added that this virus can only be mitigated by the blood of Jesus when believers pray. This perception will be familiar to many Pentecostals and will be behind long periods of prayer, fasting and petitions which are lifted for the souls of people who are to be evangelised. Eld. Dr Ken Aboah is a lay leader and a member of the Evangelism Committee and the International Missions Board of the CoP. He is currently the Presiding Elder for the PIWC Asokwa French Assembly.

<sup>349</sup> 'If you see any brother or sister commit a sin that does not lead to death, you should pray and God will give them life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that you should pray about that' (1 Jn 5:16).

people to conversion. Daniel Walker (2019b:228), referring to Gyimah (2017:3), suggests that the Holy Spirit is indispensably involved in a person's salvation. Moreover, this salvation may sometimes manifest, following other people interceding for such people. Through prayers, therefore, salvation is dispensed to the hearts of people who may be going wayward.

#### **4.9.7 Prayer Results in Protection and Physical Deliverance**

Torrey (2012:181-182), based on Luke 22:31-32<sup>350</sup>, holds that sometimes our prayers may bring people to life or from danger following being snatched or nearly snatched by the devil. If Jesus indicated that He prayed for Simon because the devil wanted to sift him (Luke 22:31-32), then the lives of our loved ones (be they Christian or not) can only be saved following our intercession for them when God reveals something concerning their lives. The power to save people from straying from the path of faith lies in the hands of other believers who pray for them. This prayer will also prevent the faith of people from failing and straying as believers. Our prayer therefore forms a hedge around our fellow-believers and loved ones.

Amaniampong (2019:1), during one prayer session with a prayer team, used the metaphor of an army to describe the work and responsibility of members in prayer teams or any community. He indicated that whereas a warrior has an armour to protect his/her front and side, no armor or shield protects the soldier's back because the fellow soldiers behind him/her (being a co-military member) have the primarily responsibility to protect one's rear side. This he illustrated to mean that the co-military soldiers at the back of one's side provide intercession for an individual just as exist during prayer. In the forefront of a battle, however, no one protects the warrior because the enemy is in front, and one must advance to battle themselves. To Amaniampong, the protection for a warrior's back is therefore the prayer of fellow believers (2019a:1-2). Based on Ephesians 6:13,18<sup>351</sup>, Amaniampong (2019a:2) had indicated that Paul listed the breastplate for the frontage, the shoes for the feet, the shield for the frontage, the helmet for the head and the sword for offence; but never provided protection or weapon for the warrior's back.

Prayer also brings deliverance to people who may suffer from certain critical conditions. In May 1990, Apostle Michael Kwabena Ntummy was captured and kept at the

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<sup>350</sup> <sup>31</sup>Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. <sup>32</sup>But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers' (Lk 22:31-32).

<sup>351</sup> <sup>13</sup>Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand....<sup>18</sup>And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people' (Eph 6:13, 18).

‘Flamingo Camp<sup>352</sup>’ during the civil war in Liberia. It took a divine intervention for him to come out of this deadly camp untouched (Ntomy, 2015:106-1). The missionary gave an account of continuous daily prayer in the camp and in Ghana. Although they were at times close to the point of death, God miraculously delivered those in the camp. Pentecostals believe in the miraculous emanating from the power of prayer. God listens to prayer and delivers His people from their difficulties.

On 7th October 2017, Onyinah and Ntomy (2017:13-15) report that a major gas explosion in Madina, a suburb of Accra, threw the whole city into a pandemonium. The pastors, members, and leaders of CoP in Madina gathered at the Sychar prayer centre to pray for God to avert the imminent disaster that would ensue as lives were being lost, cars were being burnt, and properties were being lost. Reading from Psalm 46:1<sup>353</sup>, Apostle Anthony Ahalivor (the Area Head or Senior Pastor) led people to pray to ask God to send rain. The members lifted their voices in thunderous prayer, and that was accompanied by lifted hands with others rolling on the ground. Within twenty minutes of the prayer, the clouds gathered, and heavy rains began to pour down to quench the fire miraculously. The congregation then lifted a voice of thanksgiving to God for His quick intervention<sup>354</sup> (Onyinah and Ntomy, 2017:15-16).

In short, in times of difficulty, challenge, critical illness, and bondage, Pentecostals believe that prayer works to bring deliverance and salvation even from death.

#### **4.9.8 Prayer Releases God’s Blessing**

Prayers are testified to produce potent results in the lives of believers. People expecting various breakthroughs in their lives pray and experience God’s visitation. Hannah, in 1 Samuel 1:10–11,19–20<sup>355</sup> was burdened as a result of her barrenness. Hannah prayed to the

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<sup>352</sup> The flamingo camp is a military camp where hostages are kept during the Liberian civil war. These hostages were believed to be spies or aides to the rebels.

<sup>353</sup> Ps 46:1. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

<sup>354</sup> Yet another example is that of James of Accra who tells of his experience of divine deliverance for his son. He felt the urge to pray at 11pm without a cause. He did not know what to pray about. He prayed in the language of the spirit for three hours. He was later called by his son who had been kidnapped by armed robbers who took him to a deep forest. At the time when they were set to kill him however, confusion set in their midst, and they released him. From analysis of the time, the confusion set in at the time when he started praying for his son.

<sup>355</sup> <sup>10</sup>In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the LORD, weeping bitterly. <sup>11</sup>And she made a vow, saying, ‘LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.’.....<sup>19</sup>Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah made love to his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. <sup>20</sup>So in the course of

Lord in her distress, pain, and anguish, and the Lord heard her prayer. To the Pentecostal, therefore, Samuel was received as a son to the nation of Israel *through prayer*. Torrey (2012:187-189) holds that God is ready to perform a miracle or do something great in the life of an individual and His church, but that must be linked to prayer. In Jeremiah 33:3<sup>356</sup>, prophet Jeremiah pronounces God's invitation to humanity to call unto Him, and that He will give them rest. So, the word 'call' is seen as an invitation to prayer to enable one receive from God His blessings and grace.

Notably, Pentecostals record many blessings that have been birthed out of prayer (Assabil, 2017; CoP, 2017; Gakpetor, 2017), specifically in the CoP.

#### **4.10 Pentecostal Perceptions of Responses to Prayers**

If prayer is indeed dialogical rather than monological communication (Poloma, 1989:11-12; c.f. Poloma and Lee, 2012b:234), there should be feedback following conversation, ritual, petitionary and mediatory prayers (Paloma, 1989:12). According to Poloma and Lee (2012:284), this is what is understood to be 'prophetic prayers' in Pentecostal terms: 'two-way interactions between God and the pray-er in which the pray-er hears from God and responds to the divine ultimate.'

It follows that Pentecostals should pray such 'prophetic prayers'; they should speak to God and wait in expectancy of a feedback loop from God. It will however appear as if when most Pentecostals communicate to God through prayer, they are unable to wait for God to speak to them. According to Gyimah (2016:5-9), Pentecostals usually seem too busy to wait on God for their responses after prayer. They spend many hours praying but fail to wait for God to speak to them or direct them immediately after their prayer. Gyimah (2016:9-11) cautions that one should not be in a hurry to pour one's heart out to God in prayer without also remembering to make time to solemnly wait on God for His response. The latter would make the communication a monologue with the prayer loop incomplete and making prayer therefore a one-way communication. But how then does God respond to one; and what forms do these responses take? Does God always give one a 'yes', if indeed He will answer at all, and should it necessarily be an immediate answer? This, in a very real sense, has to do with

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time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, 'Because I asked the LORD for him' (1 Sam 1:10-11, 19-20).

<sup>356</sup> 'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know' (Jer 33:3).

Pentecostals' understanding of the sovereignty of God. This issue of the sovereignty of God is further discussed in section 4.9.4 (below).

#### **4.10.1 God's Responses: Ankra-Badu's<sup>357</sup> Three Possibilities**

If prayer is a method of communication, and communication is a two-way process between a source and a recipient, then there must be a feedback when one prays. What types of responses do Pentecostals expect to receive from God? During an exposition on the nature of God's responses to prayer, Ankra-Badu (2004:1-6) indicates that God always responds to our prayer in one of the three ways. To explain these ways, Ankra-Badu uses the metaphor of a traffic light. By this, he means that God may respond to an individual/group 'in red, amber or green'.

When we pray and our prayer falls in the will and timing of God, our answer would be a rapid 'yes'. This is also what we learn from I John 5:14–15<sup>358</sup> where we infer that such will be God's response to our prayers that are 'according to his'.<sup>359</sup> An example of yes is when Hezekiah prayed to God for healing, and as shown in 2 Kings 20:2–6. After Hezekiah had prayed, he received an immediate answer of 'yes' through the prophet Isaiah. The word of the Lord came through Prophet Isaiah who was returning after delivering the non-recovery notice to Hezekiah to go back to Hezekiah now with a message of hope of recovery. Pentecostals do quote Hezekiah's method of prayer by referring to his faithfulness and service to God as a means of imploring God's favour.

The response to some prayers could therefore be 'yes' without requiring effort or patience, and other times, the response could be 'yes' but with effort and some patience required. While Esther and the Jews fasted in the book of Esther 4:15–16, the response to

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<sup>357</sup> Aps Ankra Badu is a senior minister of The Church of Pentecost. At the time of writing, he was the Area Head for Tema. As an Area Head, his position is equivalent to a diocesan bishop. He oversees and supervises some 19 pastors in his area.

<sup>358</sup> 'This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.' (1 Jn 5:14-15).

<sup>359</sup> An example of such a response can be found in an account of Mary Paintsil, during an interaction on prayer held at the ministers and wives conference in Asokwa Zone of the CoP. According to Mrs Paintsil, God sometimes answers her prayer very quickly (Paintsil, 2020). She gave a testimony of going to do some business in an office on a particular day. Upon her arrival, she was told that there was no way the transaction could go through. She then went home, closed the door behind her and begun to pray PUSSH prayers. Four hours later, she received a phone call from the same office apologising, saying her transaction had been successful (Paintsil, 2020). The testimony of Mrs Paintsil is that God answers prayer very quickly. It is however possible that the prayer fell within God's sovereign will and timing, but that Mrs Paintsil was denied access to her transaction by mistake. It is also possible that God wanted to test her faith in such a circumstance. That is why Pentecostals pray under all circumstances.

their prayers was yes but with effort. That is why sometimes, some Pentecostals would say God would not act until people backed with some PUSSEH prayers.<sup>360</sup>

The response to one's prayer could, however, also be similar to an 'amber' light, which according to Ankra-Badu, (2004:4-6), may mean one will have to wait for some time to receive a positive response. The prayer topic, for example, may be according to the will of God, but the *timing* of God may not be within His will. This may not result in an immediate response. In line with the above, one may then have to wait for the appropriate timing of God. We may PUSSEH and PULL (see Chapter 4, section 4.6.2) for days, or even years until the timing of God is right. In 1 Samuel 1:2–7, Hannah went to offer sacrifices and prayed for many years, but God had deliberately closed her womb until God's appointed timing. Hannah prayed annually at Shiloh without response. It took years of prayer and waiting on God until her appointed time of visitation. So, in 1 Samuel 1:19–20, the Bible says '... and the Lord remembered Hannah and now opened the womb for her to conceive at the appointed time.'

Finally, God's response to the issue of prayer could be dead silence for years without fulfilment, or at times, never. In line with the above, it does not matter the effort one puts in— the prayer, the PUSSEH, the PULL and the fasting—the position of God will not change. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 12:7–10 speaks of a thorn in his flesh; the more he prayed, the more grace was made available to continue. Paul was therefore encouraged by the spirit of God to go through the hardship since the answer was an absolute 'No' for Paul.

The length of fasting and prayer may not change the position of God. Unfortunately, some Christians do not appreciate this sovereign position of God, and others may not be ready to receive a 'No' for an answer so will continue to push forcibly for a 'Yes'. But could one forcibility cause a favourable answer without the timings of God? 'Pentecostally', yes, but that again is because of God's sovereignty. Further discussion of this dimension is seen in section 4.9.4 below.

Indeed, it has been established that three or even four answers to Pentecostal prayers are available, and they are: 'Yes', 'No', 'Wait 'and 'Yes, conditionally'. It is apparent that the Pentecostal is predisposed to a favourable answer (Yes) as response, and that when God gives a 'No' answer, they may be tempted to believe that God has not responded, thus tying

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<sup>360</sup> Pastor Abraham Bonsu (a senior Minister of the CoP) testified that he prayed for many days on a pressing issue concerning his life and ministry at his first station, Apowa. For years he prayed on the issue without response. The response to the prayer came years after they had been transferred from Apowa in the central region of Ghana to Aworowa in the eastern region of Ghana. Some prayer could indeed take time for one to receive his or her response. (Pastor Abraham, at the time of writing this thesis, was the district pastor for CoP Asokwa (Bonsu, 2020).

this worldview to the African cosmological view that anytime one goes to their divinities, they must necessarily have all they want. Nonetheless, the sovereignty of God must be respected as Pentecostals. See more of this in section 4.9.4 below.

Finally, it is worth noting that God does not always answer the prayers of people since He uses the unanswered prayer as a tool to change human dispositions. In other words, prayer is not just about receiving from God, or changing God's mind, but about how human beings are changed and transformed through prayer without receiving specific responses or benefits. And this results in the transformation of man and the development of the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

#### **4.10.2 Means by which God Responds to Prayer**

When one speaks to God in prayer, God indeed responds, but God may speak in a variety of ways as response to one's prayer. Foremost among these is through His word. The word of God offers answers to many of our problems (Baidoo, 2016:67-71). Sometimes, one may petition God concerning an issue; the answer to that prayer may be received during meditation or reflections while reading portions of the Scriptures during devotion. Again, as one reads through the Bible, one may stumble upon a passage that reflects a response to one's own situation that challenges and provides an answer to the problem at hand. Through His word, God reveals Himself to us and speaks to our fears, pains, troubles, and challenges and as such, the Bible also reveals and illuminates our understanding and provides possible solutions to our problems (Baidoo, 2016:67).

In addition, God's response to our prayers may also be via God's creation, through nature, or even by supernatural means (Baidoo, 2016:67-69). In fact, God sometimes communicates His will and response to humankind through creation or cosmological means. In Psalm 19:1–2<sup>361</sup>, and Psalm 97:6<sup>362</sup>, one discovers that the general revelation of God and His will may also be found in the handiwork of God. Panda (2022), based on an exposition on Psalm 19, affirms that God speaks through His creation, and God continues to speak today. At other times, one may stumble upon a situation in life that itself may be speaking to the prayer request or the heart of a burning issue in one's life. That could be the response to a

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<sup>361</sup> 'The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. <sup>2</sup>Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge' (Ps 19:1-2).

<sup>362</sup> 'The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all peoples see his glory' (Ps 97:6).

prayer one has been praying about. It is somebody's situation in life that therefore gives one God's answer and reveals God's will concerning an issue.

Sometimes, it is in and through our experiences of or with other people that one finds God's response to one's prayer (Baidoo, 2016:67). For instance, God may speak to one by way of the counsel of others. Relatedly, God may direct God's response to a prayer through what is said during the ministration of His word, or through a sermon that may be delivered in church<sup>363</sup> (Baidoo, 2016:69). In some instances, the Holy Spirit ministers to people directly, sometimes prophets in the Old Testament, to bring the pray-er the response to their prayers as in the case of Hezekiah in 2 Kings 20:2–6.

When Hezekiah received the message concerning his imminent death, he turned his face to the wall to pray, and thereafter, God sent Isaiah back to him to tell him that he had received mercy for an extension of his life. Thus, that the power of God may reveal the thoughts of God to his prophets, or sometimes to other wo/-men to respond to the prayer request of the pray-er (Baidoo, 2016:72). God may even use someone else's experience in life to answer another's prayer.

Through the inward voice and peace in one's heart, God also speaks to humans. This is what some people call one's conscience or 'inner urge' (Baidoo, 2016:70-71). The indwelling Holy Spirit speaks to and communicates with us. According to Baidoo (2016:78-79), this is the most convincing experience of the believer since the Holy Spirit, through one's inner person, would deal with one's thoughts and 'drop ideas into one's spirit'. In the story of Paul's shipwreck in Acts 27:21–24, Paul states that he was ministered to by an angel of the Lord, following his waiting on the Lord. This is figurative of the Holy Spirit.

God may also communicate His response to our prayers via prophecy (Amaniampong, 2016:165-170). In 2 Chronicles 20:13–17, in prayer as Israel prepared to fight the Moabites and Ammonites who were far stronger than them, the Lord spoke through Jahaziel as a response to their prayer and assured them of their victory.

Again, Pentecostals believe that God often responds to people's prayers through prophecies delivered generally/publicly during church service or personally to an individual during a private encounter. During a Pentecostal church service, sometimes, especially when a prophecy is delivered, one hears people saying that the prophecy was directed specifically

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<sup>363</sup> On 9th October 2022, after the close of service at PIWC Asokwa (my church), one lady named Eliane Baidoo approached me and indicated that she had prayed about an issue and waiting on God for an answer. She stated further that she had the answer as I preached that day. She had her prophetic response to her issue in the ministration.



at them. In other instances, God reveals Himself or gives a response to one in a dream, revelations, trances, or other personal encounters. These dreams or revelations may be so vivid that they cannot be forgotten and are observed to be the direct response to the individual's prayer. In another instance, a person could be in a state of meditation or reflection and receive a vision or fall into a trance, and in this way, receive a revelation in relation to a prayer request<sup>364</sup> (Amaniampong, 2016:165-170). It has been noted also that other times, God remains silent. In this case, silence is God's response to the request and means saying 'no' or 'wait'.

#### **4.10.3 Factors Affecting the Delivery of Prayer Responses**

As discussed earlier in section 4.9, even in God's silence, He is still communicating to His creatures. The question, however, is, 'do some factors affect the delivery of the response the Pentecostal expects?' Assabil (2016:2-5) believes that lack of spiritual focus, receptivity, lack of passion for the things of God, inability to yield to the Spirit, the sin of prayerlessness, and the effect of evil forces may hinder a person from hearing from God.

Starting from the last phenomenon mentioned above and based on the accounts in Daniel 10:12–14, Pentecostals believe that territorial spirits exist that may hinder the believer from receiving responses from God. Daniel had prayed to the Lord, and he was waiting for a response, but after waiting for a while without response, Daniel had to fast and pray for 21 days before receiving a response to his prayer. So, the Pentecostal believes that sometimes, it takes faith and persistence to receive one's response to prayer, whether these prayers have been held by the territorial spirits as in Daniel's case or not.

According to Nyantakyi-Bonsra (2020:108-110), and drawing on Matthew 16:17–19<sup>365</sup>, once God has given us the keys of the kingdom of heaven, the keys are in our possession. When the believer therefore prays 'thy Kingdom come', as a child of God, one

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<sup>364</sup> At his first station in Aworowa in the Central region of Ghana in 2000, Pastor Bonsu prayed concerning the weak tithing and low financial strength of his church. Since this was one of the many ways of assessing his pastoral grace, he did his best at teaching the members how to tithe faithfully and demonstrated the importance of tithing to the members, but all these yielded no dividend. One Saturday prior to the Lord's Supper Sunday during a personal all-night prayer from about 12:30 am to 3 am, Ps Bonsu indicates that he fell into a trance and saw a man collecting tithes in a tithe jacket. Upon waking up, he told his wife, 'Today, God will visit us in our tithing and offering during the communion service for he has given me the answer to my heart burning prayer request'. According to Pastor Bonsu, true to the revelation and response from God, that Sunday saw the highest tithe offered in the church, and that was their point of breakthrough (Bonsu, 2020).

<sup>365</sup> <sup>17</sup>Jesus replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup>And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. <sup>19</sup>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'' (Matt 16:17-19).

invokes the power of God to one's favour and 'whatever we bind is bound, and whatever we loose is loosed'. To Nyantakyi-Bonsra (2020:109-111), therefore, when one maintains a good relationship with the Father (eschewing sin and leading a holy life and in tune with the spirit of God), prays in faith, and according to the will of God, the person is bound to receive a favourable response to their prayers. The question however is 'how do we pray according to *the will of the Father?*'

Many Pentecostals believe that to receive a response from God, one's 'connectivity with God' needs to be maintained. Disconnection from God may be experienced, because sin may bar an individual from receiving a response to their prayer. Sin disconnects a believer from God and spoils our relationship with Him. Due to sin, therefore, one's prayers may not get to God, let alone receive a response from Him (Isaiah 59:1–2<sup>366</sup>). The fervency, zeal, and enthusiasm one exerts in prayer matters, as when one's soul is contaminated with sin, one's prayer may never be answered (Nyantakyi-Bonsra, 2020:18). On a series of occasions, the children of Israel sinned against God as recorded in the book of Judges (Judges 3:9<sup>367</sup>, Judges 6:6–8<sup>368</sup>), and they were disconnected from God, and therefore placed under the yoke of the enemy. Again, if God does not listen to the prayers of sinners, how then did their prayers get to Him? It may be understood that, despite or perhaps because of their sin, their cry to the Lord was *a cry of repentance and salvation* to which the Lord would respond. Sin may therefore be a reason for not receiving results to prayers, but a cry of repentance for salvation may turn God's face to a person once more.

Other Pentecostals believe that a believer does not receive a response to their prayer because he or she is 'out of coverage area' but not necessarily because of sin. According to Asamoah (2012:1), God's responses sometimes may be available, but the responses will not reach the recipient because he/she may be too busy to hear, or he or she may be 'out of coverage area'. One may not receive a response from God because of inactive prayer life or poor devotional life through the strain, pressures, or tensions of life and family that bring about a disconnection with God. In some cases, too, one may never receive one's response

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<sup>366</sup> 'Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear' (Is h 59:1-2).

<sup>367</sup> 'But when they cried out to the LORD, he raised up for them a deliverer, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, who saved them' (Jdg 3:9).

<sup>368</sup> 'Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the LORD for help. <sup>7</sup>When the Israelites cried out to the LORD because of Midian, <sup>8</sup>he sent them a prophet, who said, 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery'' (Jdg 6:6-8).

from God because of ignorance or when one has a perceived predetermined answer (Onyinah, 2016:44-48).

As said above, it has been observed that Pentecostals practise ‘monological’ prayers, i.e., spending many hours in prayer talking to God, and the challenge is that they fail to spend some time waiting on God to speak *to them*. Just after prayer, they move into other activities that engage them outside of the focal area of God. According to Gyimah (2017:2), it may be precisely that Pentecostals spend so many hours in prayers but fail to wait on God for His response, and thereby seems as if that they do not receive responses to their prayers. This is because they fail to acknowledge that God’s response is not always yes but may sometimes be directed towards another direction. Pentecostals seemingly refuse to understand ‘No’ or ‘Wait’ as answer to a prayer.

According to Assabil, (2016:2-5), a believer may not receive a response from God if one prays ostentatiously (cf. Matthew 6:1-6), or if one lacks the hunger and thirst for the things of God (John 7:37; Matthew 5:6). One other related reason noted is the lack of importunity and desperation. The Pentecostal believes that God often answers importunate and desperate prayers (Luke 18:1-7). Prayers lacking in zeal and importunity are therefore regarded as prayers without expectation. Ofori-Yeboah (2013:10-12) corroborates Assabil’s (2016:2-5) assertion that an individual’s *motive* for the prayer may determine whether God should answer the prayer at all. Prayers based on selfish interests, unwarranted expectations, the desire for fame and power for selfish gains may be prayers that may not be answered. These may be exactly those prayers that may not be according to the will of God for the individual and that may therefore not be expedient for the Spirituality of the pray-er. These factors may hold, but can response to prayer be treated without reviewing the overarching theme of God’s sovereign will? The above discussions therefore lead to the next section of God’s responses based on His sovereign will.

#### **4.10.4 God’s Response to Prayer Based on His Sovereignty and Attributes**

A miracle may be described as an event caused by divine intervention in which God operates with or without human intervention, and baffling the human reason (Gakpetor, 2017:10). God has the sovereign will to let the miraculous occur whether someone prays or not. Our faith may play a vital role in the activation of the miraculous, but it cannot turn the hand of God (Gakpetor, 2017:9-11). Sometimes, when Pentecostals pray, especially for the sick or for breakthrough, they seem to hold their wish up against the sovereignty of God (Kimberly, 2006:112-113). As discussed earlier (see Chapter 4, section 4.7.5), Pentecostals pray with

power and authority to command the heavens to move into immediate action to cause their prayers to be heard and answered immediately. Sometimes, Christians believe that the answer to their prayer is based on faith and their authoritative prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. This may not be altogether true (Onyinah, 2019:299-300). Usually quoting Matthew 17:20–21, Pentecostals think their prayers can move all things on earth and even in the heavens in their favour. This account causes Pentecostals to move all things by faith since they believe that they cause the impossibility to be possible through prayer.

Ultimately, the answer to the prayers of the believer depends on the sovereign will of God. This sovereign will of God teaches us that all things are subject to the power, dominion, and control of God, and nothing happens without God's permission or direction (Gakpetor, 2017:9). According to Onyinah (2019:299), God sometimes allows a miracle to occur even when there is little or no faith to prove His sovereignty to humankind and to let the unsaved world believe in His Son, Jesus Christ. Some miracles in some cases even occur when people doubt, yet God still works and wrought miracles and the unexpected.

So, against His will, God could permit a favourable response to our prayers to prove His sovereignty and to glorify the name of His son, Jesus. These usually happen during crusades and gospel outreaches when God permits healings and miracles to glorify His son, Jesus. The prayers may not be according to His will, the vessels praying may not necessarily be acceptable or within coverage area, but for the sake of the gospel, he allows a favourable answer because of his salvific grace.

Using another dimension, the sovereignty of God was displayed when the people of Israel prayed for a King (1 Sam 8:4–7<sup>369</sup>, 19–20<sup>370</sup>); it was not within God's timing for them to have a king, but after a persistent push, God activated what I call '*His sovereign attributes: love and kindness*' toward His children and therefore gave a 'yes' response to Israel when in fact God's answer ordinarily was 'wait' until the appointed time. Hosea 13:10–11<sup>371</sup> indicates that their request was against the will of God, but God gave them their wish against His will.

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<sup>369</sup> 'So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have." But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.'" (1 Sam 8:4-7).

<sup>370</sup> 'But the people refused to listen to Samuel. "No!" they said. "We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles." When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the LORD. The LORD answered, "Listen to them and give them a king." Then Samuel said to the Israelites, "Everyone go back to your own town.'" (1 Sam 8:19-22).

<sup>371</sup> 'Where is your king, that he may save you? Where are your rulers in all your towns, of whom you said, 'Give me a king and princes'? So in my anger I gave you a king, and in my wrath I took him away.' (Hos 13:10-11).

God may therefore unwillingly respond favourably to our *Pentecostal assertive transactional prayer* (see sections 5.7.4 and 6.2.7) following persistent push for some things, but that may sometimes not end well for an individual.

#### 4.11 Conclusion

This chapter, whilst attempting to contemplate Pentecostal theology, reviewed the historical development of the concept of prayer and discussed the concept of the theology of prayer as *‘seeking a cognitive understanding of the meaning of prayer and exploring the epistemology of prayer, methods, opinions, and beliefs of prayer. It also is about appreciating the ontology of prayer whilst attempting to understand the nature, concepts, and types of prayer; and finally, it is about appreciating the praxis of prayer using affirmative practices and Christian experiences in prayer’*.

Prayer is seen as a communication loop between humanity and divinity. Even though forms of prayers in the mainline churches are classified in a particular way, the chapter upheld that characteristically, the foundation of Pentecostal prayer includes praise, thanksgiving, confession, worship, intercession, petition, enquiry, warfare, healing and exorcism, blessing and prayer in the Holy Spirit as the oral means by which Pentecostals communicate their various aspirations to God.

Although the Lord’s Prayer is comprehensive and very concise, the Pentecostal believes it says few things in many words (Joe-Andah, 2018:11), hence it must not be regarded as a simple prayer, but a compound metaphoric prayer. Two other Pentecostal prayer models described in this chapter are the trawling PUSSE and PULL prayers which are believed to birth miracles and invoke divinities in favour of humanity.

On the constituent element of Ghanaian Pentecostal prayer, the chapter discussed Pentecostal prayer as *transactionally Trinitarian* in nature, *heuristically experiential*, *lyrically doxological*, *biblically consequential* and *spontaneously glossolalic*. Pentecostal prayers are usually prayed in experiential proportions of the Holy Spirit expressed in noise, shouts, and accompanied by drums and music. Pentecostals thereby believe many people are praying and one needs to shout the more to attract God’s attention. The Pentecostal believes that God is experienced through prayer, so prayer must not be practised in a lukewarm lazy mode but filled with vibrancy and energy. As would be seen in Chapter 5, African Pentecostal prayer is a serious energy-engaging ritualistic activity involving not only an articulation of one’s needs, but also an embodiment of an outburst of deep emotions expressed through the body

and involves biblical texts. African Pentecostalism prayer is also expressed as a manifestation of thoughts, hopes, fears, habits, and traditions.

Again, Duffield and van Cleave (1983:16) assert that, through the Bible, Pentecostals have the conviction that their authority is derived from God through God's self-revelation in the Holy Scriptures (Constantineanu and Scobie, 2018:7-11), so Pentecostals pray *ontologically authoritative in the name of Jesus Christ*. Previously<sup>372</sup> stated by Smith (2010:77), Pentecostal prayers are focused on an *interplay between the will of God and the desire of the pray-er*. Today, Pentecostal Spirituality of prayer, especially in Ghana, seems to be focused more on *demand-driven needs than the factors that result in the causality*.

Ghanaian Pentecostal Spirituality and theology is also profoundly demonstrated and revealed in their songs (Quayesi-Amakye, 2015c:133-135). Through Pentecostal songs, prayer, too, is poured out to God. On the value of prayer, the chapter has revealed that Pentecostals pray for the purpose of spiritual growth, promoting holiness, enhancing restoration, dispensing God's power and producing deliverance and miracles. On the issue of God's answer to prayer, Pentecostal theology of God, answering *all* prayers, sometimes immediately based on one's faith, righteousness, and authority, may be seen as a Pentecostal theological flaw. God answers our prayer based on His sovereign will, or as a result of God's intention to glorify Himself through His son. When God therefore answers our prayer, it is the activation of one of His divine attributes towards humanity and not a result of fervency, zeal, or faith.

Theologically, it is maintained that Pentecostal prayer is expressed in three ways: with words understood, without words and with words not understood (Land, 2010:170). To Pentecostals, the last two modes however have a high propensity of being driven by the Holy Spirit. Moving from contemplation/ meditation to glossolalia, Pentecostal prayer is driven by the Spirit motif. Thus, even though Warrington (2008:21) describes Pentecostal theology as a theology of encounter with God, the Bible and the Community, these encounters are significantly subjective to the move of the Holy Spirit, one's encounter and experience. It is therefore proposed that for the Pentecostals, a mediated view of the experience of God may be the way to forge a more mature Pentecostal theology.

Given the above and the broader theological discussion of (Ghanaian) Pentecostal prayer in this chapter, the next chapter shall evaluate ontologically the emerging prayer

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<sup>372</sup> See section 4.4 of chapter 4 of this thesis.

methods, patterns, and methods of prayer in the modern Ghanaian Pentecostal practices of prayer.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONTEMPORARY GHANAIAN PENTECOSTAL PRAYER PRACTICES: CARRYOVERS, ‘ENCULTURATED POSITIVISATION’ /OR RUPTURES FROM ATR?

#### 5.1 Introduction

Chapter four focused on the characteristics of the African Pentecostal Prayer; that was then discussed as a basis for a theology of Pentecostal prayer. This chapter reviews the *emerging* features of contemporary Pentecostal prayer with an emphasis on the situation in Ghana and the extent to which these emerging features of prayer differ from Classical Pentecostal prayer practices. These contemporary Ghanaian Pentecostal prayer practices are largely seen as practised by the neo-Pentecostal and neo-prophetic churches in Ghana being rooted in transpositions from ATR and perceived biblical interpretations from the Old Testament.

The chapter begins by reviewing prayer as the historic springboard for the development of AIC or better still African-Initiated Pentecostal Churches (hereinafter called AIPC) in Ghana (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2015:394). Although the origin of many prayer practices that will be often referred to in this chapter cannot be separated from the AIC, they have evolved and proliferated as a result of the prophetically saturated prayer activities of the neo-prophets and the Pentecostal prayer centres and camps. Contemporary Ghanaian Pentecostal prayer practices are reviewed therefore, first, as continuities of, similarity to, discontinuities of, and as examples of enculturated positivism<sup>373</sup> of ATR. Finally, the emerging Pentecostal prayer practices which are a variation of the classic Pentecost prayer practices are reviewed. The chapter continues to discuss some contemporary prayer practices that seem to have metaphors from ATR, and that serve as springboard for the commercialisation of prayer. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the emerging Pentecostal prayer which may be characteristically diverse from Classical Pentecostal prayer. Following the above discussions, the stage will thus be set for a theological reflection of Pentecostal prayer practices in the last chapter.

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<sup>373</sup> The term ‘Enculturated Positivism’ has been used in this research to mean assimilation of some ATR cultural practices that are perceived to have some positive dimension when adopted in prayer. Some of these prayers may have adopted with syncretic modifications.



## **5.2 Contemporary Prayer Practices as Continuities from African Traditional Religion**

This research proceeds from the view that contemporary Pentecostal prayers on the one hand have some carry overs<sup>374</sup>, which are metaphorically consistent with ATR practices of prayer. To justify this claim, Pentecostal prayers shall be reviewed as continuities from ATR Rites, belief systems, and worship styles that resemble and are sometimes perceived as an enculturation from ATR (Agyemang-Baduh, 2002:2; cf Ecke, 2015:44). According to Allan Anderson (2018b:4-9), what sometimes may be classified as continuities may rather be described as experiential discontinuity. One religious group that provides an example of a duality of African tradition and Christianity in Ghana is the Africana Missions<sup>375</sup> (De Witte, 2018:5). Discussion of continuities with respect to prayer will focus on prayer trajectories such as the African duality of evil and suspicion, transactional prayers, litany prayers, and ritual carryovers.

### **5.2.1 Ecstatic Spontaneous Noisemaking, Rhythmic Clapping of Hands, Drumming, and Dancing**

According to Ghanaian researcher, Christopher Ampadu (2019:100), culture is the true foundation of Africa. Cultural expressions such as singing, and drumming are therefore two activities that attract the soul. Pentecostal worship is characterised by spontaneous, spirit-led activities (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005:54) during which worshippers experience and express euphoric praises and thankfulness (Onyinah, 2013:67-71). It is important to emphasise the distinction between worship, which is designated for God's enjoyment, and praise which is apparently packaged for seemingly, and in some circles, 'human enjoyment'. Although praises are ultimately aimed at the glory of God, the packaging of praise in the Pentecostal setting is tilted towards human satisfaction than divine glorification. During praise, therefore, the adherents jump, shout out, and claim for themselves all the delight of the activity and the accompanying ecstasy.

Part of the reason for this is that, as part of the African cultures, drumming is culturally associated with clapping of hands, nodding of heads, and tapping of feet which ultimately results in dancing which was perceived by the early missionaries as fetish in nature. Understandably, the introduction of dancing into the African Pentecostal services

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<sup>374</sup> Carry overs in this research refers to practices in ATR that have been imported to Pentecostalism.

<sup>375</sup> This is a church that integrates African traditional religious practices in their worship.

attracted high numbers. As said, closely associated with drumming and dancing is the practice of clapping hands. Unfortunately, this was for long associated with the traditional fetish priest assemblies (who were hypnotised under the influence of the spirits during the drumming session), ignoring the fact that black Africans are noted for a lot of music and noisemaking as means of expressing and celebrating joy (White, 2017:6).

Early missionaries, however, looked down on the culture of drumming and dancing despite the African affinity for it. Not surprising, most mainline churches initially struggled to attract the same numbers as Pentecostal churches in Ghana due to their strict adherence to solemn liturgies and hymns. The mainline churches prefer the European use of church organs while Ghanaians often find these boring as they prefer to clap their hands, dance, and jump while singing. Interestingly, after close to a century, the mainline churches are gradually introducing ecstatic praise and worship into their services (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:31-33).

According to Nkurunziza (2013:62-64), African Spirituality primarily is expressed via oral traditions. Characteristically and not surprisingly, therefore, in ATR, prayer too is activity associated with drumming, clapping of hands, and rhythmic dancing. In recent times, these practices have crept in many ways into neo-prophetic fellowships, particularly during prayer sessions. From the African worldview, ‘nature and Spirituality generate hope’ (Mukaria, 2021:2-4). Africans, hence, believe that greater faith is inspired when prayers are transmitted ritually through acts such as clapping, drumming, and dancing. Just as ATR is noted for prayer and chanting with the clapping of hands during prayers, Pentecostals have adopted the same practices. Agyemang-Baduh (2002:8) expresses that the nature of Pentecostal choruses and rhythm is similar to the ATR. Although the words of the songs have changed, the nature and characteristics are seemingly carryovers from the primal religion.

The act of clapping of hands and shouting in Pentecostal services have however been theologically justified by Pentecostals with reference to the Bible (for example, with reference to Psalm 47:1: ‘Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!’) as a very necessary aspect of Pentecostal liturgical doxology. During a Pentecostal service on health, Dr Ken<sup>376</sup> Aboah (2022a), a medical doctor, told the congregants that the reason why the Chinese live longer is because they clap their hands and rub their hands together frequently, thereby activating the cells in their palms! The congregation was told:

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<sup>376</sup> Dr Ken Aboah is a Pentecostal lay Leader in the CoP, and he is a senior urologist in Ghana.

*‘for each clapping of hands, you are extending your life by one second, the louder you clap, the longer you live, and this activated more noise through clapping*<sup>377</sup> (Aboah, 2022a:12).

During prayers, Pentecostals would be heard habitually clapping their hands throughout an entire prayer service with strength and energy. Spontaneously or sometimes upon the instruction of the leader, the entire congregation may clap their hands to thunderous effect. For Pentecostals, as is referred to in the passage above, hand clapping is also important because it is believed to cause confusion in the camp of the enemy and release any possession in the camp of the enemy that belongs to the one praying.

More so, others believe that hand clapping results in ‘slapping the face of the enemies’, to render them impotent and powerless. So, the leaders may be heard shouting, ‘clap the more, render them powerless, slap them, dazzle them’. At a prayer meeting at the Salvation Prayer Centre<sup>378</sup>, devotees were heard clapping their hands whenever a prayer topic was raised. These prayer practices were introductions to the CoP prayer camps by Evangelist Owusu Tabiri (Daswani, 2015:100-102), who said he had a revelation on these prayer modes. These practices have henceforth been copied by most neo-prophetic churches (Goshdze, 2019:196), also sometimes called neo-charismatics<sup>379</sup> (Adeleke, 2010:7) even though the CoP now frowns at them.

As indicated earlier in the last chapter (section 4.7.2), there even is a belief among some Pentecostals that God listens to loud prayers more than to quiet ones (Omenyo, 1994:172). This means that the louder the noise one makes, the higher the possibility that their prayers would be heard by God. At a prayer meeting, a church leader was heard telling the members, ‘Sometimes, there is traffic in heaven, in terms of prayer queue; thus, the louder your noise and the more energetic your posture to assume, the more likely your prayer would get to God for you to receive a response’ (Boafo, 2017). Some Pentecostal pastors are heard mostly telling their congregations to ‘lift a shout’ to confuse the enemy and break ‘every wall of Jericho’ in one’s life (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:37-41). For most Pentecostals, just as the walls of Jericho came crumbling down in Joshua 6 due to loud shouts of prayer

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<sup>377</sup> This was a sermon delivered by Eld Dr Ken Aboah on Thursday, 16 June 2022 at PIWC Asokwa at the Men’s ministry service.

<sup>378</sup> The Salvation Prayer centre is one of the prayer centres initially belonged to the CoP, but the CoP dissociated from them two decades ago following practices that are tagged non-biblical.

<sup>379</sup> Neo-charismatic is a continuation of Pentecostalism and charismaticism in terms of power giftings and the manifestation and workings of the Holy Spirit in their churches. They are cessation from the Classical Pentecostal, neo-Pentecostal and charismatic churches, with some of them evolving from the prayer camps.

and praise, so shall it be, the more the pray-er shouts and claps during prayer (Goshdze, 2019:192-194).

Again, Pentecostal prayer services are not spared the associated drumming and noisemaking during church services and all-night sessions (De Witte, 2008:699-701) to the extent that during prayers, the drummers and instrumentalists will not be heard praying but will rather be engrossed with the loud sounds of the instruments (de Witte, 2016:16). In ATR, it is believed that the more drumming and dancing that occurs during a prayer activity, the quicker the people become possessed by the gods. It has also been observed that once the music ceases, the vivacity and agility of the attendees of the prayer session also decline.

Another feature associated with the recent Pentecostal and ATR prayer practices is rhythmic dancing. During the serious prayer session, with the outflow of the drumming, people would be seen dancing rhythmically, jumping, and moving with high energy according to a pattern. This is also somewhat associated with neo-prophetic prayers, which are associated with various human postures and gestures.

To many Pentecostals, sound plays a vital role in the sacralization of space in evoking the presence of the Holy Spirit (De Witte, 2008:700). Invariably, all activities of the Pentecostal-charismatic<sup>380</sup> are full of noise from the beginning to the end of the service (De Witte, 2016:16). Pentecostal praise and worship, sermons, deliverance, healing, and declaration sessions are all associated with the passionate sound of loud music, and sometimes people can be heard screaming under divine inspiration. Pentecostal prayer times, especially prayer in the Holy Spirit, are accompanied by loud speaking in tongues with a cacophony of voices (De Witte, 2008:699-700). The sound during the evening and all-night prayer sessions is even louder, and the prayer sessions are full of energy and passion since it is believed that demons, witches, and other evil forces operate in full force deep in the night when humans are asleep and their souls are unprotected (De Witte, 2016:16-17). Probably, one positive reason for clapping hands, noise making, jumping and shouting is that it activates energy and dynamism in the prayer activity of an individual. Again, this is seemingly a continuity from ATR. The next session looks at the effect of a saturated worldview of evil on the concept on the nature of Pentecostal prayer.

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<sup>380</sup> The term Penteco-Charismatic is coined here to mean the Pentecostal-Charismatic strands.

### 5.2.2 Suspicion and Evil in Pentecostal Prayer

Due to the ATR world of evil, the African believes (s)/he lives in an enchanted populated world of evil. According to Asamoah-Gyadu, (2007a:440-441), AIC is ingrained by traditional thoughts with the culturally assimilated idea that evil supernatural powers act as the vehicle for the misfortune which compels us to engage in an affirmative ritual context and sacred space to intervene on behalf of an individual.

In the Akan Traditional African worldview, as in others, it is believed that the *atanfo* (evil ones, or enemies) do not seek the well-being of humans which results in misfortunes, ill health, and other vices caused by his agents (Ampadu, 2019:99; cf. Kwateng-Yeboah, 2016:41-43). This therefore results in ‘unanswered questions concerning uncertainties of the future, crises in the present, the unknown past and misfortunes. For example, sicknesses and unexplained deaths that cannot be explained by Western medicine, as well as failures in life and business and a continuum of failed marriages in a family line’ (Hiebert, 1985:45-50). These unexplained calamities also lack theological meaning to the Africans (Sharma, 2012:4). In the Akan traditional view, evil should not befall anyone, so one should attempt to discover the root cause of the evil for the purpose of treating such problems, most probably through exorcism (Anderson, 2018b:15). In addition, these *atanfo* must be dealt with when one has the opportunity, and especially through prayer.

Neo-Pentecostals use the word *atanfo* (enemies) (Omenyo and Arthur, 2013:55) for two categories of enemies: the physical human being and spiritual entities. For the neo-Pentecostal, *atanfo* is used to represent any human being who is against the progress of another individual. *Atanfo*, thus, refers to any member of one’s family or anyone or group of people whose activities are maliciously suspicious, and inimical to the prosperity of the individual (Omenyo and Wonderful, 2013:54-56). *Atanfo* may also represent ‘malicious spiritual activities undermining an individual’s health, wealth, honour or general wellbeing through witchcraft, juju or spread of malicious gossip’ (Omenyo and Wonderful, 2013:55), and anything connected to activities beyond the sensory world (Meyer, 2009:55). These beliefs have been carried over into Pentecostal prayer practices.

In the neo-Pentecostal view, since the devil entered Judas, who eventually betrayed Jesus (Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, ‘What you are going to do, do quickly (John 13:27)’<sup>381</sup>), the devil can be blamed for entering anyone who may act as an agent to destroy an individual’s prosperity or progress. The human

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<sup>381</sup> John 13:27.

dimension of an *atanfo* (singular for *atanfo*) is therefore seen in this regard. The devil in the African context is perceived to be omnipresent and responsible for all the evil and vices in the world (Ampadu, 2019:68), and it inhibits people's prosperity (Kwarteng-Yeboah, 2016:41). Since Africans believe that the world around an individual is 'sacramental' (i.e., full of physical things that may act as vehicles for the spiritual) (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2007a:440), this perceived worldview of evil has significantly influenced the prayer lives and patterns of Pentecostals.

In recent times, all prayers of the Pentecostal are in some way linked to *atanfo* and *obonsam* (the devil). As such, majority of the Pentecostal's prayer is geared toward disarming and destroying the schemes, activities, and vices of the *atanfo*. The emerging Pentecostal, neo-Pentecostal and charismatics can easily spend 80% of their prayer time fighting the *atanfo*. Sometimes, even when prayer topics are given, and these do not focus on the enemy, adherents will start disarming the *atanfo*.

As a recent carryover, the emerging trend in African Pentecostalism is that people should endeavour to find the root cause of every misfortune that happens in life. Instead of praying to seek God's counsel and direction, they seek *akwankyerε* (spiritual guidance) and *abisa* (divinatory consultation). It apparent that the African Pentecostal have little time to pray and patiently wait to discover God's will. This has therefore resulted in the Pentecostals resorting to *abisa* via Pentecostal prophets and neo-prophets. In the case of a misfortune or an unusual occurrence in life, some African Pentecostals will therefore look for a powerful prophet who would pray on their behalf to find out the reason behind the misfortune. Even though the term *abisa* is not commonly used in the church, the practice is very prevalent. Following the *abisa*, the powerful (wo)/man of God will then give the individual direction on how to overcome evil. This is what is popularly called *akwankyerε* (spiritual guidance). *Akwankyerε* too, has become a very popular trend in Pentecostalism with people seeking to find out the source or root of certain unexplained occurrences in life.

Pentecostals and neo-Pentecostals have theologically justified *akwankyerε* through the biblical narratives of Saul's enquiry in I Samuel 9:6<sup>382</sup> when he went to prophet Samuel when he badly needed one. Again, in 2 Kings 3:11–13, Jehoshaphat was directed to Elisha when he was asking if there was no prophet in Israel from whom the word of the Lord would be sought through enquiry. Another account where divine enquiry was sought is in Daniel 2:2–3,

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<sup>382</sup> 'And he said to him, "Look now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honorable man; all that he says surely comes to pass. So let us go there; perhaps he can show us the way that we should go." (1 Sam 9:6).

in the case of Nebuchadnezzar when he had dreamt but forgotten the dream and yet needed someone to recall the dream and interpret it—an activity that brought Daniel into the limelight.

Since the African traditionalist believes that good or abundant life, good health, safe childbirth and long life, in general, are blessings from the gods, the desire for blessings from the gods also leads to *abisa*, and therefore to *akwankyerε*. Onyinah (2002:184-192) holds the view that prayer today is an offshoot of the African traditional shrines where mediums are consulted for *akwankyerε*, and rituals are performed with a view to do *mmusuoyie* (reversal of curses), *mpata* (pacification), and *banbo* (divine guidance against evil and protection from an enemy). Since people sometimes feel unable to pray any longer on their own, they feel the need to go for specialised prayers at specific places and are led by specific people who emphasise breakthroughs from demonic and evil oppression. This is what Daswani (2015:92-5) refers to when he says that contemporary Ghanaians often seek help from prophets in times of suffering, sickness and need.

In short, the African Pentecostal, like the traditional African, may seek meaning in the happenings in life through the practice of *akwankyerε* as opposed to seeking pastoral counselling or spiritual direction. This would be discussed further in section 5.6. below.

### **5.2.3. Encampment at Prayer Centres in Ghanaian Pentecostalism**

As discussed in section 5.2.2 above, in the African religious setting, sickness and misfortune are perceived to be a result of an activity of the devil. The sick are therefore often sent to the shrines of medicine men for spiritual attention. When the cure of the sick is delayed, the sick remains at these shrines until they have fully recovered. It is therefore believed that when the sick is retained at these shrines, they receive spiritual protection from the gods which prevents further attacks by the malevolent spirits.

At their emergence, AICs, prayer camps, and neo-prophetic centres adopted a similar concept, where the sick were often sent to so-called prayer camps and kept there until they are healed. Specially constructed spiritual bays within the churches were also set up where special prayers were conducted for such people in order for them to recover. Opoku Onyinah (2012:2-6), a scholar of Pentecostal exorcism, witchcraft, and demonology in Ghana, notes that the African concept of divinity consultations had been the drive behind these establishments. The concept of intercessory prayer, divinatory consultation and renewal centres have therefore been predominantly associated with prayer camps, neo-prophetic churches, and charismatic churches in Ghana (Ali, 2015:80-82). The concept of prayer camps

and the deliverance movement has likewise become a significant strand in Ghanaian Pentecostalism.

Prayer camps have been associated with Ghanaian Pentecostalism since its inception. The Anim group (see section 2.9) formed the first prayer group that met on the peripheries of their communities (Quayesi-Amakye, 2015c:94). In May 1958, Brother Gilbert Ablorh Lawson<sup>383</sup>, then a member of the then Apostolic Church was purported to have had a revelation to set up a healing post where he was using ‘blessed water’ and ‘blessed handkerchiefs’ in his activities. After discussing his vision with Pastor James McKeown on three different occasions, McKeown still did not consent to it. This led to Brother Lawson starting his parallel ministry on the fringes of the healing camp, which eventually became the Divine Healers camp in 1958 (Larbi, 2001:376).

In Ghana, the initiators of the African Independent Churches and neo-prophetic churches exhibited power and miracles in their deeds and could foretell the future (Ali, 2015:79-81; cf. Onyinah, 2012:108). The prophetic ministries of AICs characteristically followed practices similar to Akan traditional religious practices. Out of these ‘spiritual churches’ have the growing neo-prophetic deliverance ministries and prayer camps evolved. Omenyo and Arthur hypothesise that these deliverance ministries are proliferating because of religious pragmatism, a tendency to schism, and hypnotisation (Omenyo and Arthur, 2013:51). Contrary to the development of solution-centred Spirituality with a communal ethos, neo-prophetic churches encourage solution-centred Spirituality. Since the early 2000s, many people have been drifting toward seeker-centred neo-prophetic ministries.

Onyinah (2012:187-191) who studied the patrons and clientele of prayer camps in several churches found that people from all walks of life, even from other religions or without any religious affiliation such as Muslims, atheists, and traditionalists, attend CoP prayer camps. In all, in Onyinah’s study, 54.5% of patrons of the CoP prayer camps were non-CoP members. In another survey, Onyinah (2012:190-192) found that 71% of the CoP members he sampled indicated that they had visited a prayer camp. This demonstrates the enormous popularity of these prayer camps and the deliverance ministries conducted there among the church masses.

Prayer camps are purported to provide an avenue to enhance individuals’ Spirituality, which would ultimately have a concomitant effect on society or corporate entities. According to Onyinah (2012:190-192), prayer camps provide opportunities for people to pray

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<sup>383</sup> See section 2.9.3 of chapter 2.



and seek spiritual healing, deliverance, and direction in life (Onyinah, 2012:191-192). Larbi (2001:371-372) similarly reiterates that prayer and renewal camps are places in Ghana where various forms of salvation are pursued. He thus notes that prayer camps are places where people go for supernatural succour, healing, and deliverance (2001:410-412). Healing in particular, when offered at these prayer camps, is believed to prevail over persistent spiritual ailments that secular medication has failed to cure (Larbi, 2001:404-405).

Buertey (2017:8-10) had also showed that people attend these prayer camps with problems ranging from sicknesses, protection and deliverance from demonic attacks, marital problems, childbirth problems, business failures, unemployment, desire for promotion, desire for marriages, financial difficulty, acquisition of travel visas (for greener pastures), financial breakthrough (including building a house and/or buying a car), security, ensuring the future of children, et cetera (cf. also Larbi, 2001:391).

As would be discussed later in this chapter, these prayer camps usually revolve around a specific individual (the prayer camp leader), who functions as a prophet(ess), healer, evangelist, leader, or consultant. These leaders purport to have answers to all issues of life and contend to exhibit the power of God in the prophetic realms to exercise divine healing and cast out demons. Prayer camps in Ghana and the deliverance ministries therein have a variety of characteristics, which continuously seem to change according to the leadings of the neo-prophetic leader.

Some scholars, such as Ben Ali (2015:119), indicate that the neo-prophetic prayer centres are enjoying higher patronage than traditional local churches due to the prophetically saturated nature of their activities and the similarity of their practices to those found in the traditional Ghanaian worldview. Omenyo and Arthur (2013:51) corroborate the above view that neo-prophetic spiritual churches have received an upsurge in their activities and have experienced rapid growth because of religious pragmatism and compatibility of their practices with the Ghanaian worldview with which most sections of the people are conversant (Omenyo and Wonderful, 2013:51-52). Today, this effect of neo-Pentecostalism has been promoted by the euphoric effect of postmodern technologies<sup>384</sup>, thus resulting in the saturation of Pentecostalism everywhere in the world (Nadar, 2009:133).

Quayesi-Amakye (2015a:15) concurred with the view that the emergence of the neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana may be attributed to the African's affinity with divinity consultation as found in ATR. The emerging surge in neo-prophetic deliverance ministries

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<sup>384</sup> These technologies refer to the mobile phones, internet, and social media handles.

indeed seems to be the result of prayer centres, camps, and deliverance ministries that often develop into full churches after operating for a while. Although the neo-prophetic churches have become fully established churches, most of these ministries maintain prayer camps where guests visit to wait upon the Lord and to seek spiritual direction.

These churches mainly have their theology centred around the full gospel of Jesus Christ namely salvation and reconciliation, justification and righteousness, divine healing, deliverance, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, material prosperity and financial blessing, divine judgement, and eternal heaven (Larbi, 2001:393). In a different sense, the prayer practices at these prayer camps are centred around seven 'spiritual weapons': the name of Jesus, the blood of Jesus, the power of the Holy Spirit, prayer and fasting, worship and praises, and testimonies (Larbi, 2001:394). These practices are not different from those found in most neo-prophetic churches today and all of these can be understood to represent some form of continuity of the deliverance practice activities found in ATR circles.

In summary, just as traditional shrines retain people believed to be suffering from demonic attacks, various ailments, problems of life and others who seek the divine directions of the deities and therefore stay at these shrines until they are delivered, so have these been carried over into African neo-prophetic/Pentecostalism as retentions in prayer camps and deliverance ministries.

### **5.3 Conceptualising Contemporary Prayer Practices as 'Enculturated Positivation' of African Pentecostal Religion**

Due to the culturally ingrained ATR practices in the lives of converts, usually, traditional religious practices resonate in their spirit. The ATR nomenclature and practices appeal to the souls of many Africans with most of them demonstrating a high sub-conscious affinity for their practices. This has resulted in the neo-Pentecostal churches adapting some of their prayer practices though with some modifications. These ATR practices that have been adapted by the neo-prophetic churches with great appeal is what has been variously called 'enculturated positivised' in this thesis. These prayer practices tend to result in additional zeal and enthusiasm in Pentecostal prayer practices. These are discussed in section 5.3.1 to 5.3.4.

### 5.3.1 Sacramental<sup>385</sup>-Vindictive Ritual Remnant

As discussed in section 2.6.2, ATR is known to have many characteristic rituals including one called sacramental prayer. Due to their continued practice, it is not difficult for an African to identify a practice as associated with ATR. As discussed earlier, some characteristic elements carried over from ATR practices that have been assimilated as emerging Pentecostal practices include clapping, jumping, and rhythmic dancing as has already been referred to in section 5.2.1 above, but it may also include acts such as ‘shooting’, ‘cutting’ and ‘whipping’ amongst other sacramental practices which started on a small scale in the early 2000s, according to Larbi (2001:396-397). I have described these practices in this research as *sacramental prayers* because they are physical ritualistic gestures or practices that are believed to have a spiritual impetus. As indicated earlier, these sacramental prayer practices were introduced into the Ghanaian prayer landscape by Evangelist Owusu Tabiri (Daswani, 2015:1102), as discussed below.

One of the recently enculturated prayer practices from ATR is what may be called ‘*shooting prayers*’, which in the local Akan dialect is called ‘*bɔ ne tuo*’. Adherents would be told to shoot their enemy whilst praying. The prayer time would include people aiming into the air and shouting ‘toooo<sup>386</sup>!’ or ‘poooo!’ meaning they have shot their enemy. Others would be seen practising the act of ‘cutting prayers’, which in the local Akan language is called ‘*twitwa wɔn*’. During this prayer, adherents would position themselves as if holding knives or cutlasses, cutting the air with the impression that they are shredding and slicing their enemies into pieces, signifying that they are killing them. People displaying such prayer postures and actions may be heard uttering words in prayer in the vernacular Akan Twi language such as:

*Wo, m’atanfo,*  
*ene, me kura sekan keseɛ, eye chain saw sekan*  
*enyɛ sekan ketewa, na mmom kese paaa*  
*Mi twitwa, we twetwa wo*  
*Chew, chew, chew*  
*Wo Yesu din mu.*

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<sup>385</sup> The sacramental is chosen to reflect the African traditional prayer practices related to the above.

<sup>386</sup> This is the sound of a local gun.

Translated as:

You my enemy

Today I hold a big cutlass, I hold a mechanical chain saw machine

Not a small one, I hold a big one

And I cut you, I cut you

Chew, chew, chew, chew (a sound which means the person is cutting the enemy)

In the name of Jesus.

This practice of shooting prayers and cutting payers may continue for hours non-stop until the pray-er feels satisfied with the feeling of having been able to cut and destroy the enemy spiritually and totally to pieces or to have killed the enemy by shooting them. In some cases, people send cutlasses, swords, or machetes to the church for the spiritual activity. In 2020, Archbishop Nicholas Duncan Williams, a very popular and renowned charismatic leader entered his church carrying a sword (Mawuli, 2020). He came to fight the enemy with the sword and render him impotent. At that moment he prayed thus:

Let the sword of vengeance be appointed

Against the wicked in this nation

Let the sword of the vengeance of God enter their chambers

Wherever they are hiding, wherever they gather

To make plans and to take decisions against your people, against the innocent,

Let the sword of the Lord scatter them, strike them,

On every side in the name of Jesus (Mawuli, 2020).

And then Archbishop Nicholas Duncan Williams charged the congregation to pray. Another carry-over that has emerged in recent times in Ghanaian Pentecostalism is the practice of ‘whipping prayers’. In this type of prayer, the prayer leader sells a cane to all who have come to pray. These canes are used to ‘whip the devil’ as a means of punishment for the many calamities and evil that have befallen an individual. The more one whips into the air, the more the pray-er is believed to have whipped their enemies, tortured them, and confused them. Whipping prayers have become a predominant feature in Ghanaian Pentecostalism (Dampsey, 2019). Sometimes, the adherents may be compelled to buy special canes at special prices from the leaders of the prayer teams as a means of using them to cane the enemy (Onyinah, 2012:198).

Other emerging sacramental prayer practices in Ghana are what I call ‘*bubu wɔn*’ (breaking prayers), ‘*kyekyere wɔn*’ (binding prayers), and ‘*tɪatɪa wɔn*’ (trampling prayers). During these prayers, people are told to break their enemies into pieces. The ‘*bubu wɔn*’ prayer practice, which is an act of breaking, is accompanied by folding the wrist and moving both hands side by side in a continuous mode; sometimes people use folding handkerchiefs or papers as a symbolic representation. It is believed that, by the end of the prayer, one’s enemies would have been broken into pieces. The ‘*kyekyere wɔn*’ prayers are accompanied by continuous movement of the fist in a clockwise cyclical threading motion. As one prays and moves one’s hands, the enemy/devil is believed to be tied and bound, thereby rendering them inactive and impotent and not in a position to harm one. The ‘*tɪatɪa wɔn*’ prayer (Onyinah, 2012:197-198) is demonstrated by people angrily jumping and stepping on the ground. It is believed that the more one steps on the ground, the more one steps on one’s enemies and the more and higher one jumps, the more one causes pain and destroys the schemes of the enemy. As adherents pray in such an angry mode, they are believed to exert as much energy as is proportional to the damage done the works of the devil<sup>387</sup>.

One other example of a sacramental carry-over prayer is discussed by Daswani (2015:58-60). He tells of a Classical Pentecostal English congregation whose congregants were once told to bring sand to church one Sunday for prayer. The sand was to be used to raise a special altar and was intended to sever all malevolent spiritual connections and continued witchcraft presence in the life of the believers. The visiting Pastor Abraham Chigbundu also told church members that the sand in their palms was a connection to their ancestral lands, and he therefore prayed for the severance of all ties and relationships to their ancestral hometowns and the witchcraft spirit preventing them from achieving their destinies (Daswani, 2015:58-60).

Other sacramental activities related to this type of prayer may include the sale of holy water, ashes, oil and other hierophantic materials which, when bought, an individual is supposed to position or sprinkle in a room to activate the presence of angels in that space for protection, favour, and grace (Omenyo and Wonderful, 2013:55,64). Sacramentally, some neo-prophets have drilled boreholes or have water sources on their compounds. This water,

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<sup>387</sup> One question is what happens in the wake of these prayers, since the same people will return to repeat the same acts and prayers all over again in a next prayer session. If indeed the devil was killed, stoned, trampled, and swanned, why would this be necessary?

called Nhyira Nsuo<sup>388</sup> (blessed water) is sold at very high prices to proponents. The water is believed to have miraculous capacities like the Jordan river and pool of Bethesda (John 5). These materials/items are sold by the leader of the prayer team to the adherents and are believed, usually, to scare the enemy and activate God's presence in one's environment. Traders and market women, for example, may acquire such items from churches to catch the attention of customers and thus boost their sales. Again, these neo-prophets believe that in prayer, the elements of the communion, the bread and the wine, sacramentally turn into the actual body and blood of Jesus and thus administer it to their followers believing it to actualise miracles as discussed in section 3.8.11.

I have described the above sacramental prayer as vindictive because Pentecostals hold the perception that these prayer practices are believed to inflict pain to the enemy. Again, the elements sold to the adherents for prayer are believed to carry the presence of the Holy Spirit or God Himself and hence mediate for the one who buys these elements for sacramental initiation rites. These are discussed as enculturated positivisations of neo-prophetic prayer. They may not be seen in same manner described here in ATR, but again, the motive and concept of evil world affects people's prayer posture. Unfortunately, this misconception is related to warfare prayers, which may need careful theological reflection by Pentecostals as indicated in section 4.5.9 of this study, which space may not provide in this research. What is especially problematic is the idea that the devil is an enemy of progress and the accompanying perception among some Pentecostals that it is only through prayer that they can and must vent their anger on him/her for all the mishaps and bad omens he is the source of. Again, these practices during prayers are an assimilated and enculturated ATR practise. This is because the good positive part is that they engage the Pentecostal to pray more through these adopted modes and practices of prayer even though their sacramental activities may not necessarily have a corresponding effect of the devil and his spiritual co-host.

### **5.3.2 Extrapolating Litany Prayers**

One recent emerging prayer in Ghanaian Pentecostalism is what I call *neo-prophetic litany prayer*, which Asamoah-Gyadu, (2007b:311) calls 'military prayers'. Omenyo and Arthur (2013:53) call these 'imprecatory' prayers. These are usually call-and-response-prayer. During this type of typical prayer ritual, the church prayer leader recites a prayer and requests the congregation to respond after him (Omenyo and Wonderful, 2013:54). These types of

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<sup>388</sup> This is a common practice by the neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana.

prayer usually implore divine vengeance on one's enemies (*atanfo*). Usually, this is done by dwelling on the book of Psalms, and after several recitals by following the prayer leader, the whole congregation would burst into loud, spontaneous prayer. These prayers are a very typical reflection of the prayer ritual practice in ATR (Omenyo and Wonderful, 2013:53-54). Based on Matthew 11:12<sup>389</sup>, the Pentecostal is made aware that the Kingdom of God is suffering violence and we need to take it by force and through prayer.

The following is an example of how such an imprecatory prayer was conducted by Elder Donkor (2021) at the Hebron Prayer Centre on 24th August 2021. The leader of the Hebron Prayer Centre<sup>390</sup> read from Psalm 11:6, and then shouted out to the congregation, 'By faith, in the next few minutes, whatever I tell you to do, do same and today you would go home with favour and protection'. The congregation joined in a thunderous response: 'Amen!' Reading out loud Psalm 11:6 (Let him rain coals on the wicked; fire and sulphur and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup), the leader then led the congregation through a series of litany prayers in the local language thus:

Prayer leader recites: *Onyame be ma ogya srana afiri soro ahye wo atanfo, gye so Amen*

Congregants' response – Amen

Prayer leader recites: *Ogya a eye sulphur a ehye a endum, gye so Amen*

Congregants' response – Amen

Prayer leader recites: *Efiri se Onyame ye Ogya a ere hyew, gye so Ogya*

Congregants' response – Ogya

Prayer leader recites: Ogya

Congregants' response – Ogya

Prayer leader recites: Ogya

Congregants' response – Ogya

Prayer leader: *Bo mpae fa ogya gu won so*

Prayer leader: God would let the fire burn your enemies and fire and sulphur would be part to cause pain to your enemies.

Congregants' response: Amen.

Prayer leader: The sulphur in the fire would let the fire burn without quenching.

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<sup>389</sup> 'From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and violent people have been raiding it' (Mat 11:12).

<sup>390</sup> This prayer centre was a CoP prayer centre until 2015 when the CoP dissociated from them due to using strange prayer practices. The centre is manned by a neo-prophet.

Congregants' response: Amen.

Prayer Leader: For our God is a consuming fire; shout 'fire'.

Congregants' response: Fire.

Prayer Leader: Shout 'fire'.

Congregants' response: Fire

Prayer Leader: Begin to rain fire on your enemies.

Congregants then begin a thunderous prayer with various actions with zeal, enthusiasm, and energy to rain fire on their enemies.

The leader during the same prayer session shouted to the people<sup>391</sup>:

*Ene wo tanfo no*

*Se ofa chense na obe didi mu aa,*

*ogya endew wo mu*

*ofa kuruwa a, nsuo no nyinaa ndane ogya*

*Obi tan wo aa, Ogya nhye no.*

*Jesus... me a me gyina wo anim.*

*Se obi tan me aa*

*Ogya ne sulphre, enta ta no se Sodom ne Gomorrah*

*Jesus eeii me a gyina wo anim,*

*tumi biara a wagye me ho tumi*

*Jesus aeae, Tumi bia ara, Wa gye me ho paa*

*Ope se okum me, Epe me aseii me*

*Ogya ne apranaa, enku no*

*otanfo biara otan me*

*ofa copoo se obe num nsuo aaa*

*ogya enfi*

*ofa ata re se obe hye aa, ogya nhye no*

*obibara odo wo ako aduro so, ogyae no*

*ofa ne nsa se ode be so ada mu a, ogya nhye no*

*se ofa we kwan nam so aa, ogya nhye no*

*Jesus eeee*

*Ye de yen man ghana hye wo nsa,*

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<sup>391</sup> This is an Akan Twi language.



*Tumi biaiar e ko tia yen man ghana*  
*Ogya en hyew no*  
*Jesus eeeiii, Abusia me tie mo, Ofie a me tie mu,*  
*Obiara otaa taaa me*  
*Obi a wo wagye wo ho contract*  
*Aprade enbo won, Ogya nhye won*  
*Wo yesu din mu, Ogya no enbo no.*

Translation of prayer based on Ps 11:6

“Today, your enemy, when they take a bowl to eat in it,  
May their bowls burn with sulphur.  
If your enemies take a cup to drink in it, may it burn with fire.  
Anyone who hates you, may they burn with fire.  
In the name of Jesus, anyone who hates me, they burn with fire.  
May fire and brimstone chase after the person like Sodom and Gomorrah  
Jesus, I am standing before you,  
Any supernatural evil powers, that do not seek my well-being.  
Any supernatural evil powers, that have taken my strength.  
Any supernatural evil powers, that have been contracted to do evil to me.  
Any supernatural evil powers, that want to kill me.  
May fire and brimstone kill them.  
If they take the cup to drink in it, may fire fall from above and consume them?  
We bring our nation Ghana before you.  
Any powers that seek our downfall, and do not seek our well-being,  
May your fire consume them.  
In the name of Jesus, my family is before you.  
The family I hail from, the home I come from  
Any evil forces that seek after us, may your fire consume them.  
Anyone who has been contracted to do us evil.  
May your fire consume them may thunder strike them.  
In the name of Jesus, may your fire, the fire of the Holy Spirit burn them (sic).”

The prayer leaders then continue thus:

“Prayer for release of the destiny of your life.

Pray for the release of the destiny of your children.

Mention your destiny day, anyone who has sent you to anywhere, everywhere in the world, anywhere your soul has been tied, I pray for the release of your soul.

Send forth your word, pray for a release.”

One other type of imprecatory prayer is the use of the name of Jesus, *Yesu din mu*, and the blood of Jesus, *Yesu Mogyá* (Onyinah, 2012:198). In ATR, blood is understood to be very powerful, especially as an effective and powerful means of atoning, and as a mediating force. Just as blood is used in ATR for ritual (Fofie-Nimoh 2014: 7-9), pacification, purification, and mediation (Ampadu, 2019:101), so is the blood of Jesus ‘applied’ in Pentecostal prayer. The blood of Jesus is applied spiritually during prayer as a covering, over people’s lives, work, families, for protection, on doorposts, on family and children to render the works of the enemy futile. This theology is borrowed from Exodus chapter 12 where the blood was used as covering over the Jews which metaphorically has been transposed as the blood of Jesus.

The Pentecostal believes that the devil, usually called ‘the enemy’, sets traps for people and does not seek the well-being of others who because of the blood of Jesus are alive (Daswani, 2015:22). During Pentecostal prayer, one may often hear the phrase: *wo Yesu mogyá mu* (in the blood of Jesus). Adherents will be told to shout ‘In the blood of Jesus’ and then ‘apply the blood over their lives’ to render the enemy impotent and pray for the blood to cover the pray-er.

Succinctly, Pentecostals spend a lot of energy praying generally to gain the blessings of long life, healing/deliverance, fertility, material prosperity, and spiritual gifts. Wariboko (2017:4–7) claims that African Pentecostals attend church for a combination of religious experiences and outcomes rather than only engaging in spiritual combat. One may take their prayer fervency and rituals for granted until one appreciates their primal worldview. Pentecostals therefore adopt all sorts of prayer practices provided some biblical concordances could be drawn from these practices, hence the use of what I call military prayers.

### **5.3.3 The Locational-Occasionality of Prayers**

From a Ghanaian ATR worldview, prayer using libations may be uttered be in homes, at family gathering and shrines (usually accessible by family heads or trained family priest), except that some particular prayers are uttered at some specific locations, and at specific times (Fofie-Nimoh, 2014:66). Some purposely acceptable prayer can therefore only be offered, for example, at a shrine, on rocky groves, and along rivers that serve as points of

communication between humans and the spirit world (Ampadu, 2019: 99). Shrines are specially built at sacred locations and are believed to be the abode of the spirits. Specific worship and rituals are also restricted to some specific shrines. Since the shrines are manned by special people called priest(ess)s or diviners, they have access to these shrines.

The above phenomenon has gradually become a carryover prevalent in African Pentecostalism with the use of special and sacred grounds (Ghana Web, 2017). These include appealing prayer mountains, sacred grooves and special locations that have made people have high interest to pray in these locations. As an emerging practice, people now rather visit prayer grounds and certain centres to make prayers for, or on behalf of others. Indeed, it may be suggested that the reason for joining communal prayers may be the zeal and fervour associated with them. This practice has however clearly resulted in the association of prayer locations with sacred sites.

The study of sacred spaces is sometimes called hierotopy (Lidov, 2006:30-32) and among the elements of this field is the idea and practice of concentrating prayer at specific places. This practice is of course found in most religions of the world. According to Lidov (2006:32), hierotopy refers to a natural or recreated sacred space to communicate with the creator. This concept also speaks to emerging prayer practices in neo-prophetism. Reviewing the phenomenology and theology of places of worship, Harold Turner (1979:16-18) explains that 'sacred or revered sites are places connected with natural features such as hills, mountains, caves, groves, places of historic traditional events like memorial grounds and places set aside because of hierophanies occurring there' (Turner, 1979:16-18). According to Yalley (2015:2), hierophanies are apparent sacred supernatural appearances, distinguishing them from the immediate geographical surroundings or cosmic milieu.

In recent times, many Pentecostals seem to have the view that certain prayer grounds are 'sacred sites' with accompanying supernatural, angelic visitations. For this reason, they believe that their prayers will be heard more easily and will be responded to more quickly. As would be discussed later, other Pentecostals even believe that the prayer leader or him/herself has supernatural powers and can work mystically to ensure a quick and favourable response to prayers. These prayer venues, centres, and places therefore have become flooded with people (Omenyo, 2014:141-142).

The establishment of such heirotopical sites is believed to provide an avenue to enhance an individual's Spirituality, which would ultimately have a concomitant effect on the church body. It is also in this vein that Onyinah (2012:187) states that such heirotopies are known to provide an avenue for people to pray, seek spiritual healing and deliverance and

also seek direction for life (see also Larbi, 2001:371-372). Again, healing as dispensed in these prayer camps is understood to prevail over persistent spiritual ailments, which secular medication has failed to cure.

In her study of sacred site visitation and the renewal programmes in the Methodist Church of Ghana (MCG), Yalley showed that sacred site visitation is a means of spiritual renewal in the MCG (2015:183). According to her, it provides church members the opportunity to enhance their prayer lives, satisfy physical, spiritual, and emotional needs, and helps the church itself to construct a firm and non-negotiable image of the Wesleyan tradition (Yalley, 2015:4).

Some Pentecostals draw parallels from Mark 1:35, and Luke 5:16 where Jesus went to solitarily pray, and again from the Matthew account where Jesus went to a mountain top for prayer (Matthew 14:23), as the basis for an individual to pray in a desolate place or on top of a mountain. In Ghana, ‘mountain top prayers’ have become a national phenomenon (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:52). The typical mountains where people pray are the Atwea, Aburi, and Abono Mountains (Nuetei, 2021). Every year sees tens of thousands of Christians (and non-Christians!) in Ghana visit these mountains to pray. As said, this is based on Matthew 14:23, but the idea of praying on a mountain or at other special places is not limited to the New Testament. In Exodus 23:14–17, and Deuteronomy 16:16 and 34:23, the Jews for example, were to appear before the Lord *in Jerusalem* at least three times in a year. As in ATR, prayers are offered by streams, grooves, sacred ground, and at the sites of the gods, so is this culture carried over into neo-Pentecostalism, creating the impression that prayers at these sites are quickly heard; indeed, the only advantage provided is the zeal and enthusiasm created in prayers due to large numbers seen and people’s seriousness and commitment to prayer.

#### **5.3.4 Oral Appellation Prayers**

When it comes to praise and worship, traditional African prayers are full of oral appellations. The oral appellation here means chanting traditional attributes or proverbs of a deity, and in this case, God, in vernacular language. These appellations have somewhat been translated into English. In ATR worship, verbal incantations, and proverbs (see Chapter 2 section 2.6.3) are used predominantly during prayers (Shorter, 1975:61-62).

The practice has been enculturated within Classical and neo-Pentecostals during dedicated praise and worship times of services. These styles of worship are not found in the mainline churches, but somewhat in the Pentecostal tradition. In a study by Kuma (1980:3), it

was reported how Afua Kuma, originally christened as Christiana Afua Gyan, a native of Obo-Kwahu in Ghana who was a member of the Church of Pentecost, specifically used African customs and proverbs as found in traditional African worship, but now translated into Christianity to praise Jesus. Interestingly, most of these applications were originally used in the praise, magnifying, or worshipping of African traditional deities or chieftaincy. Afua Kuma therefore used her native Akan Akuapem language and prior African traditional knowledge as an experiential transposition in worshipping and praising God. Afua, for example, projects Jesus as a warrior in her appellation below (Kuma, 1980a:5-6):

*Obirempong Yesu a wadi aninsem*  
*Ono na yefre no okatakyi*  
*Ewiase amansan mu okokuroko*  
*Opanten a yemmo wo mma*  
*Asempatupon a yenno suko.*

John Kirby translates the above prayer (in Kuma, 1980:5) as:

All-powerful Jesus  
 Who engages in marvelous deeds  
 He is the one called hero- *Okatakyi*  
 Of all the earthly dominions, he is the master  
 The python not overcomes with mere sticks  
 The big boat which cannot be sunk.

In this appellation, which would have ordinarily been sung for an African deity, has been enculturated into Christianity with the deity now changed to Jesus. Jesus is portrayed as an all-conquering hero who is able to conquer the kingdom of hell and overcome the deeds of Satan. In the African traditional settings, the authority and dominions of gods and kings are hierarchical in nature. In this appellation therefore, Afua Kuma upholds Jesus as the King above all kings, master above all masters, and throne above all thrones.

Again, in the African worldview, apart from the lion, the python is the most feared of animals in the forest, yet the python can be killed by a stick. Kuma says Jesus is a big python who cannot be killed by using a stick. The challenge however is comparing Jesus to a python, even though she compares Jesus to the powerful python that cannot be killed by a stick! Again, Afua Kuma compares Jesus to a big boat that always remains afloat on rivers and seas. Boats in the African setting are manufactured with timber. In earlier times, due to

limited technology, African boats were mostly small in size to prevent them from sinking as would happen to bigger boats. Also, in time, the wood becomes weak, and water would seep into the boats, and they would begin to sink. Afua Kuma therefore compares Jesus to a huge boat and one that will remain afloat – something that traditionally would have been beyond people’s imagination. In sum, some of these appellations may be sung in honour of God, but a theological reflection may reveal flaws in some of their composition.

In recent times, during many Pentecostal services, such African traditional-like appellations have been used extensively in many worship services. Adjei (2022), for example, tells that during a thanksgiving service called Hallal ’22 at PIWC Asokwa on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2022, Esther Ewurama Adjei used an African origin mother tongue appellations in worshipping God (Adjei, 2022). According to Awurama, it is believed that singing the appellation of God in a foreign language does not accurately communicate one’s original intent as African languages and African traditional proverbs are believed to be more expressive and communicative.<sup>392</sup> According to Quayesi-Amakye (2013:133), African Pentecostal worship is ‘distilled’ through the African’s theological understanding of God. Even though African Pentecostals use composed appellations to honour God during worship, some of these applications, to them, are unable to truly reflect and project the nature and beauty of God. As such, given this limitation, it is accepted that a pray-er may use whatever they are used to in order to portray the nature of God, hence the use of African customs and proverbs in praise and worship of God cannot be solely attributed as a carryover from ATR.

#### **5.4 Preliminary Conclusion: Similarities (and a Caveat), Carry Over, Continuities and Dissimilarities of Pentecostal Prayer from ATR Prayers**

Given what has been said thus far in this chapter on African Traditional prayers and Ghanaian Pentecostal prayer, this is an opportune point to summarise the similarities, assumed enculturated positivisations, and dissimilarities between the two broad kinds of prayer before moving on to the emerging practices in Pentecostal prayer in the following sections in this chapter. Some characteristics and associated activities found in Pentecostalism, such as the working of the (Holy) Spirit, speaking in tongues and prophesying are not foreign to ATR practices. Again, they are also not foreign to the larger Pentecostal family. They are found in the larger Pentecostal wave as a distinct feature and cannot be solely counted as carry over from ATR.

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<sup>392</sup> Interactions with Esther Ewurama Adjei on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at PIWC Asokwa auditorium.

Again, some characteristics shared by the Pentecostal prayer, and ATR are coincidental. Some of these characteristics are purely parallels and not because they are remnants of ATR prayer practices. For example, the use of music, singing and dancing are found in all traces of Pentecostalism globally. Even though, it may be plausible to indicate that the African Pentecostal and neo-prophetic do it in greater measure, they are a global phenomenon of Pentecostalism.

This does not mean that, in some cases, despite its complete break with ATR, Pentecostalism does not only exhibit striking similarities with ATR; but that there may be some causal link between them, including some encultured remnants where the similarities are too apparent and unique that it will be difficult to prove the opposite. It must also be remembered that although some characteristics of Pentecostal prayer may be similar to those of ATR, the two religions also share some characteristics with Christian traditions (and other religions) in general as prayer itself is a characteristic of almost all religions, and to some extent prayer will therefore be similar (cf. De Witte, 2018:4).

#### **5.4.1 Similarities: Manifestation and Activities of the Pneumatic**

In the light of what has been said in the preceding paragraph, there are some similarities between ATR and Pentecostal prayer that may be highlighted for the purposes of this study. When traditional priests are possessed by spirits in the ATR environment, they are thrown into an ecstatic state of frenzy, sobbing, and clapping as previously stated in sections 2.6.1. People who have been possessed by ATR divinities have been known to be hurled to the ground. These acts are occasionally accompanied by the traditional priest speaking in unknown language, which must be translated by another priest, as previously stated in section 2.6.1. These activities are strikingly similar to Pentecostal manifestations of the Holy Spirit such as prophecy and speaking in unknown languages, but only be described as ecstatic parallels. The above possession would be one of the similarities that would assist the traditional adherent in comprehending the Holy Spirit's dispensational action and the pneumatic work so greatly emphasised in Pentecostalism.

Prior to the arrival of Pentecostal missionaries<sup>393</sup> in Ghana, some Ghanaian indigenes, in fact, were witnessed to have experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit (White, 2016:252). A classic example is the experience of Anim and his group within the period Atiemo

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<sup>393</sup> Missionaries from the main line churches were already in the country before the Pentecostal missionaries arrived in Ghana. This discourse is about the Pentecostal movement.

(1993:20-21) refers to as the ‘dispensation of the Holy Spirit in Ghana’. History also records the pneumatic experience of Kweku Gyimah.<sup>394</sup> In 1932, prior to the arrival of James McKeown, Gyimah was said to be the first to be baptised in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. As a pianist at the Akroso Presbyterian Church, Gyimah’s glossolalia outburst was misinterpreted as insanity and was forced to leave the church. Gyimah’s ‘new birth’, however, also brought about a major transformation in his life, much to the dismay of many others (Yirenkyi-Smart, 2017:93).

As far back as 1958, Christian Baeta (2004:1) held that, according to the Ghana Apostolic Church, many sub-conscious signs descriptive of Spirit baptism were experienced in the then Gold Coast. These were described to include, ‘rhythmic swaying of the body, usually stamping (to repetitious music: both vocal and instrumental), handclapping, ejaculations, poignant cries and prayers, dancing, leaping, intense religious emotions, prophesying and speaking in tongues, falling into trances, relating dreams and visions, and recounting a miraculous redemption experience’ (Baeta, 2004:1). At the time and to this day, these actions are also recounted as activities with similarity to the African Initiated Churches (believed to have been ‘Pentecostally-transplanted’ African traditional religious churches).

Indeed, there also is a primal resonance between the activities of the traditional *Akɔmfo* and African Pentecostal worship. Since the traditional priest(ess) speaks in ‘spirit language’, some people have therefore described Ghanaian Pentecostalism as rooted in ATR. Even though the traditional priest(ess) speaks in spirit language (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013b:68), it may be inappropriate to describe Ghanaian Pentecostalism as primarily rooted in ATR.

In other words, it is characteristic of the ATR worship to see priests possessed by the spirit of the gods, thereby uttering prophetic declarations (which require a translator) as a means of drawing worshippers and adherents to their services. Although ATR practices include prophetic dancing, falling into trance, and speaking in an unknown language which is interpreted by a prophet similar to Pentecostal prophecy (see Chapter 2, section 2.6.1), it may be unfair to describe tongue-speaking and Spirit baptism as a continuity of ATR. Just as in Pentecostal worship, in African traditional worship, adherents are sometimes seen to be taken over by the Spirit and ‘hypnotised’ for hours (Field, 1937:42-44). Similarly, people believed to be taken over by an evil spirit are exorcised in ATR. As was seen in most Pentecostal

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<sup>394</sup> Kweku Gyimah was a member of the Anim’s group but had his Spirit baptism before Peter Anim.



services, especially those of the neo-prophetic kind, a lot of time is set aside for such deliverance and healing.

The examples above can be described as parallels between ATR and Pentecostalism. From its inception, Pentecostalism subscribed to speaking in tongues (Hollenweger, 2005:19). Whether one believes its roots to be Azusa or Acts 2, speaking in tongues during prayer is a Pentecostal characteristic. It would therefore be spurious to believe that speaking in tongues is a continuity from ATR. Furthermore, Pentecostalism is more than and cannot be reduced to just speaking in tongues (Hollenweger, 2005:20). All the other signs and orality of Pentecostalism such as vision, a powerful demonstration of miracles, and healing were associated with Pentecostalism before it arrived on African soil.

Another area of similarity is the area of prophetism and the use of prophetic figures. ATR has prophetism associated with it since time immemorial, particularly via mediums, priests, and diviners (Quayesi-Amakye, 2015e:7). Both ATR and African Pentecostalism believe in the existence of a populated world of powers and spirits (Adewuya, 2012:253). Ghanaian Pentecostals believe that the human condition involves an ongoing struggle (Quayesi-Amakye, 2014a:258-261). Due to humanity's frail nature, a supernatural effort is needed to reverse the works of the devil (Quayesi-Amakye, 2015f:48-49). The Pentecostal finds biblical and theological proof for the saturated world of evil as indicated in Ephesians 6:10–13. Even though the focus of Ephesians 6:10–18 is about equipping Christians holistically, mentally and spiritual and not necessary for warfare, the Pentecostal postulates that words such as 'struggle', 'stronghold', 'power', 'weapons of warfare', 'authorities', 'dark world', 'heavenly realms', 'day of evil', are suggestive of spiritual battle against the enemy (the devil). The cosmological hierarchy of forces in the Pauline Epistle to the Ephesians which speaks of rulers, authorities, powers of darkness, and spiritual forces seems to further give credence to the Pentecostal view which is also similar to the hierarchy of spirits and gods in ATR. If indeed Paul suggests a hierarchy of powers in Ephesians 6:10–13, then, it must be observed that the issue of spiritual forces and demons is not an importation from ATR.

Noticeably, early patriarchs and matriarchs preached a victorious Jesus to their Satan-fearing congregations. They realised that according to tradition, there is a cosmic conflict between God and satanic forces and at stake were people's lives (Quayesi-Amakye, 2014a:260). The success of Pentecostalism in Ghana is dependent in part, and on its capacity to locate this conflict within the realm of Christian belief. As will be seen below, however, the modern neo-prophetic preaches a gospel that is nonetheless more centred on themselves.

This has resulted in people running to the neo-prophet for solutions to the problems of life confronting them.

### **5.5 Pentecostal Discontinuities of African Traditional Prayer**

While continuities and similarities exist between ATR and Pentecostalism, it is very difficult to determine discontinuities or ruptures between them. Practices that have been deliberately truncated in Pentecostal worship may not be obvious. Just as Pentecostal churches attempt to detach their practices completely from ATR practices, so do most Classical Pentecostal churches request their members to break away completely from their past pre-conversion convictions and practices (Meyer, 1998:319). Classical Pentecostal churches in Ghana have endeavored to navigate discontinuities in respect of ATR and their indigenous religious practices alongside renewal emphases. One of such discontinuities includes invoking the spirit world for consultation and enquiries (Anderson, 2018). Classical Pentecostals have for a long time barred the consultation of mediums and spirit beings. Another area of discontinuity in Africa Pentecostalism is the use of sacrifices using animal blood, meat, meal, totems and so on during Pentecostal services or in association with their activities. These have been discontinued in Pentecostalism because they are perceived to have spiritual inclinations and undertones. The use of meal sacrifices is believed to invoke the spirit of the cosmological world into spiritual participation in the meal which is therefore discouraged by pentecostals.

Two other areas of perceived discontinuity are the practices of ancestral worship manifested as praying through them and the performance of some rituals in churches as manifested in African traditions. Pentecostals reject ancestral worship (Anderson, 2018b:106) and prayer through ancestors. Ancestral worship such as worship of a parent or a forebear is rejected as worship of an evil spirit (Anderson, 2018b:117). Because Pentecostals regard ancestral worship as evil (Meyer, 1998:224-226), people usually feel the need to be delivered from any ancestral curses and evil forces that controlled their pre-conversion lives (Ecke, 2015:46).

Yet, some theologians believe Jesus is the greatest ancestor who continues to intercede for believers, and some African theologians (Bediako, 1994:96-99, 2000:99-100) have attempted to relate Christ's supreme ancestral Christology. In the light of the above, some believe that praying through Jesus Christ is therefore seen as some form of ancestral worship in Christianity. Yet, as indicated in section 2.4.3, for Classical Pentecostals, this theology is spurious.

Classical Pentecostals have been successful in discontinuing African traditional rites related to birth and death but have not been very successful when it comes to puberty and marriage rites. Classical Pentecostal churches have successfully made the rites of child naming and burial services simply Pentecostal. They have successfully truncated the consultant of the spirit of the dead or mediums to unravel the purpose of one's death. All associated traditional rituals and practices associated with these phases of life have been 'Christianised'. Whereas in ATR, alcohol and water are used for pouring libation and prayer during child dedications, Classical Pentecostals avoid the use of any of these, and the associated sacramental objects.

Thus far said, the emerging neo-prophetic and neo-Pentecostal prayers are associated with similarities, continuities, and ruptures from ATR. Other emerging prayer practices have however emerged from the commercialisation of prayer. Indeed Onyinah (2012:197-198, 209) posits that by nature, some Ghanaians would go to any length for divinity consultation from people noted to be prayerful and powerful solution providers. Gifford (2004:18-21) speculates that people flock to the neo-prophets because of the spiritual powers they exhibit, not to form communities with other believers. The next section explores the use of prayer intermediaries who pray on behalf of people and provide prayer consultation for financial gains.

## **5.6 Contemporary Prayer Practices: Commercialisation of Prayer**

To the Pentecostal, salvation must be holistic (as indicated in 3.9.2.1). From the traditional African perspective, poverty and suffering are evil and a sign that a person probably has sinned against gods or has family trace of curses. It is believed that although malevolent activities of evil spirits exist, they are only effective when one's protection is broken down as a result of his/her violation of a social or religious norm, which the deities are there to sanction. They therefore interpret or want someone to interpret suffering, ill health, misfortunes, death, accidents, barrenness, unemployment, et cetera as failures in the world due to an attack by the devil when the gods are offended and that may be reversed through sacrifices (Quayesi-Amakye, 2016b:79-81).

Suffering is hardly ever accepted as an inevitable or normal part of human life in African Pentecostal circles. One must therefore also quickly pray to overturn the evil whenever these occur. Since Africans are not ready to accept pain, evil, and negative dimensions of life; some African Christians may live in or between 'two worlds' whereby

during transitions in life (birth, marriage, and death), traditional customs are followed; but when evil, negative, magic and curses are invoked, the church is sought to bring relief.

This view has resulted in so many Pentecostals practising the ‘name it and claim it’ type of prayer. The Pentecostal prosperity preaching on health and wealth is also based on a reading of Scripture like 2 Corinthians 8:9, ‘For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake, he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich’; and 3 John 2, ‘I wish you prosper and be in good health as your soul prospers’. This has resulted in a large enterprise in the commercialisation of the gospel. Meanwhile, one emerging characteristic of the prayer dynamic in Pentecostal circles is the increasing commercialisation of prayer in various ways. The commercialisation of prayer via the media in particular, has increased (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013b). This commercialisation agenda is subtly taking one of the forms discussed below:

### **5.6.1 Prayer Markets<sup>395</sup>**

The emergence of neo-prophetism in Ghana resulted in a shift to spiritual marketisation<sup>396</sup> (Shipley, 2009:523-524) with many members from the older traditional mainline and Pentecostal churches drifting to neo-Pentecostal churches (Meyer, 2004:479-481). These gatherings became popular for their promise of an economic turnaround, and spiritual breakthrough through prayer (Shipley, 2009:525-527). On a different perspective, African Spirituality is partly rooted in a sense of moral and mystical life and of belonging to a larger family and culture, hence, may partly be attributable for some people’s affinity for such large prophetic and prayer gatherings.

A typical example is the Moment of Prayer and Glory Army (MOGPA<sup>397</sup>) prayer grounds, and the so-called Agya Revival centre. MOGPA prayer grounds initially started at

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<sup>395</sup> Prayer market is a term coined by the author (JTIB) for this research.

<sup>396</sup> The difference between Prayer markets and Locational-Occasionality of Prayers is as follows: prayer markets use modern commercial activities to attract people to these prayer grounds where commercial items are sold for prayers. In the Locational-Occasionality of Prayers centres, these are quiet places that have been marketed as sacred grounds for payers. Individuals go there because they trust the nature of the site, thus resulting in therapeutic results and spiritual satisfaction.

<sup>397</sup> The Moments of Glory Prayer Army (MOGPA) is a neo-Pentecostal movement under the leadership of Rev. Isaac Osei-Bonsu ardently called Rev O.B. It started as a radio broadcast on Kessben FM dubbed ‘moments of glory’ in April 2011, with the aim of ‘winning souls into the Kingdom of God, fostering unity among believers, establishing them in the word and in prayer, equipping the saints for the work of the ministry, helping the needy in society, as well as helping believers to unlock their imprisoned potentials.’ As the radio broadcast was ongoing, God mandated his servant to start the Saturday prayer meeting. The first meeting was held at the Dufie conference hall, Adum – Kumasi on the 24th of September 2011 with 240 believers. The 2nd and 3rd meetings were held at the same venue with the number overwhelmingly increasing. Subsequent meetings

Abrankese, and later moved to Kuntense (all in Kumasi, Ghana). It recently turned out to be one site where buses used to travel from all over the country on Friday mornings for the MOPGA prayers nights. The site was flooded with tens of thousands of people coming to Kumasi from as far as Accra (230km), Cape Coast (210 Km), Tamale (280Km), and Bolga (560Km). Their adherents prayed at these sites from Friday nights through Saturdays to Sundays, and finally returned home after service on Sundays. These prayer grounds had seen continued monthly prayer activity until recently when they moved to their permanent prayer site along the Kumasi-Sunyani Road.

One other site that receives thousands of visitors for weekly Monday prayer services is the Agya Prayer Centre along the Kumasi-Konongo<sup>398</sup> road. People believe that miraculous powers are present at this site, and therefore troop there to pray every Tuesday for their regular encounter for a miraculous visitation. Some of these prayer venues, however, have features which mimic the traditional cultic shrines and dealing with all sorts of issues in addition to healing. Prayer altars, for example, have been erected at some of these centres where people come in to pray. Due to the crowds at such centres, people bring in their chairs (from their homes) to sit sometimes outside the prayer canopy just to partake in the prayers<sup>399</sup>.

In recent times, these venues and prayer grounds have become increasingly popular in Ghanaian Pentecostal circles, which I have come to term them “*Prayer Markets*”. Since markets are places where trading activities take place, prayer markets are also designated as the service centres for solving all problems in the life of an individual. In recent times therefore, individuals and churches have developed prayer grounds into “one-stop-shops” for all problems in the world. These venues are advertised on the airwaves and on social media as prayer venues with promised instantaneous miraculous visitation. It is believed that for prayers to be efficacious, they must be prescribed with the assistance of neo-prophets at these prayer markets (Omenyo, 2014:142). In these prayer markets, one is taught how to pray, and sometimes made to prayer mimicking the prayer pattern of the leader. Similar to the account

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were held at Prempeh College, Apatakesease, and then at the Jubilee Park in Kumasi due to the increasing number of believers in attendance at the meetings. The ministry’s first office was located on the first floor of ‘the house of prayer’ building adjacent to Aseda house, Adum – Kumasi, where believers trooped to register as members of this growing ministry. The office was moved to a nearby building before finally settling at MOGPA city at Mfensi (MOGPA, 2022).

<sup>398</sup> In Ghana.

<sup>399</sup> The prayer ground is unable to provide enough chairs for the adherents.

of the pool of Bethesda<sup>400</sup> (John 5-9), sometimes at such prayer markets, proponents are told to be very alert since the angels are moving round distributing gifts to proponents who are very keen to receive one.

Since the works of the Holy Spirit in the neo-prophetic and charismatic contexts are not restricted to a material space, any venue can be turned into a prayer ground or used for a church service (de Witte, 2008:699-701). In Ghana, according to Ezebuio (2018), apart from the MOGPA, Hebron, Abusua, and Bethel Prayer grounds likewise attract thousands of people during their prayer gatherings.

Prayer markets are scattered across cities and major towns and are saturated with prayer consultations and trading of prayers. As such, people pay money for prayer to be said on their behalf. Based on the challenges or needs of the individual, the person is charged, and prayer is said on their behalf. Pastors and leaders who claim to be anointed organise meetings at the prayer markets and trade prayers. According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2007a:438-439), the search for health, wealth, and physical well-being come first in rank at these venues I call prayer markets, followed by the quest for fertility/offspring.

One symbolic activity associated with what I call the prayer markets is the trade in commercialised religious products and services in these religious spaces (Adjei et al., 2019:99). The prayer markets therefore commercialise mediatorial elements for their prayer activities. That is, they trade and sell items purportedly believed to have power and efficacy in bringing results. None of these elements is for free; they are sold, often at huge costs, to attendees during such prayer services. People are encouraged to buy all sorts of products that may be applied or used in a particular way that would magically address their problems, a phenomenon Yong (2010:20) calls a form of ‘sanctified consumerism’. Products range from food items to pieces of clothing, ornaments, cosmetics, oils of all kinds and other consumables. Typical amongst the prayer-mediating items are ‘soaps, car stickers, apples, eggs, powder, anointing oil, kenkey, perfumes, bottled water, creams, porridge, canes, pieces of cloth, just to mention but a few’ (Adjei et al., 2019:101). Others pray over traditional medicines and pharmaceutical products for their clients to be used—an act which is believed to mediate an accelerated healing effect (Krause, 2014:224-225).

Historically, some neo-prophetic practices have been, praying whilst facing the east, blessing food and water, and chanting with the use of a cross and crucifix for followers

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<sup>400</sup> Where Jesus met a man who had been lying paralysed for 38 years by the pool but indicated his helplessness in entering the pool whenever angels stirred the water (ref Jn 5:1-9).

(Tsekpoe, 2019:282), an act that has since been banned in the CoP since it contradicts the church's practices. These practices in some Pentecostal and neo-prophetic churches are based on subjective hermeneutical prayer practices as a means of amassing wealth by commercial prophets (Adjei, Oduro-Kwarteng and Frimpong, 2019:99-101).

### 5.6.2 Neo-Prophetic Prayer Giants<sup>401</sup> and Prayer Consultation

In Pentecostal circles, Christian leaders who are deemed very powerful and are believed to wield supernatural power in prayer, are those I have classified as '*prayer giants*'. Prayer giants are key public and popular Pentecostal, Charismatic or neo-prophetic prayer figures. A prayer giant is thus any prophetic or charismatic figure who has carved a name for himself or herself, and whose prayers are believed to mediate the supernatural and bring quick results. According to Omenyo and Wonderful (2013:51), and Adjei et al. (2019:96), these so-called prayer giants have peculiar nicknames that reflect their chosen status—such as Nicholas Osei Kumchacha<sup>402</sup> (Heaven's gate Ministries), Chris Asante Abruksu Abruksu (Crown of Glory Assembly), Arch Angel<sup>403</sup> Daniel Obinim (International Godsway Church), Linda Boakye Agradaa<sup>404</sup> (Heavens way Church), Kweku Agyei Antwi - Asanteman Obofour<sup>405</sup> (Anointed Palace Church), and Ebenezer Adarkwa Yaidom Opambuo<sup>406</sup> - Nation's Prophet (Ebenezer Miracle Worship centre) and Bishop Kwabena Asiamah of the Universal Outreach/Society (Ajagurajah movement)<sup>407</sup>.

Additionally, prayer giants are believed to be men or women of extraordinarily strong faith, to the extent that they possess special supernatural powers to sometimes summon heavens in prayer. Because they are believed to have such powers and grace, long queues of believers will often wait to consult these prayer giants (Quayesi-Amakye, 2011:298-299). People with peculiar challenges and problems of life book days in advance to consult them or just to see them for a word of prayer in their lives. There are also walk-in prayer meetings in which people come in to pray, get anointed, and are given the assurance that the anointing

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<sup>401</sup> The term prayer giant was coined by the researcher (JTIB) for this research.

<sup>402</sup> Kumchacha is believed to be a Latin word which means anointed and powerful.

<sup>403</sup> He gave that name to himself because he commands the heavenly angels and holds that he frequently visits heaven to chat with the heavenly hosts.

<sup>404</sup> The Agrada means Thunder – thus her name resonates as someone who commands thunder to act.

<sup>405</sup> Obofour is an Akan word meaning good angel. His name presupposes that he does good miracles.

<sup>406</sup> The name Opambuo means one who can mend stones and rocks and even sow broken rocks. Thus, his name means someone who wields miracles.

<sup>407</sup> He calls himself as the man of the people. He is a priest known for feeding all his members at every meeting with his members. He usually feeds them with ritual meals (communion) such as fufu and plant soup with unknown source of meat.

activates God's presence to take control of all circumstances in their lives (Omenyo, 2014:142). Based on their miraculous power, people are ready to spend huge amounts of money to secure a consultation with prayer giants. Adherents just yearn to hear their prophetic declarations in their lives, believing that those declarations would come to pass (Adjei et al., 2019:96-98).

Sometimes, people also want to be touched by these prayer giants or receive a touch from them to have joy in their spirits. On 13<sup>th</sup> June 2021, after boarding a local flight from Kumasi to Accra, my travel companions and I encountered one such prayer giant in Ghana. To my surprise, many people on the flight went to kneel before him for his prayers and for him to just touch them. Others quickly put money in envelopes and gave these envelopes to him to receive special favour and prophetic prayer. Similar to my experience, MacTavish (2014:142-142) also describes another such manifestation in his life. MacTavish, (2014:142-142) holds that Pastor Adeboye<sup>408</sup> is projected as a demigod in his church. MacTavish, (2014:142-142) indicated that after service, many of his church members would be struggling just to catch him eyeball to eyeball or see him, speak to him, or hear a personal word of prophecy from him or to just experience a touch them<sup>409</sup>.

These prayer giants are similar to prophetic figures in ATR. As Kalu (2007:186) puts it, some African Christian leaders, especially in the neo-Pentecostal and Penteco-Charismatic churches, see themselves as major intercessors in Africa who have been raised to overturn the activities of malevolent spirits in Africa (cf. Kwarteng-Yeboah, 2016:7). Furthermore, the activities of the African Pentecostal prayer giants are advertised, and broadcast on media platforms across Ghana. It is no wonder as Girish Daswani (2015:5) puts it, that 'many Ghanaians seek help from these so-called prophetic figures in times of need, difficulty and misfortune' to help them access divine assistance.

By virtue of their widely advertised and highly commercialised activities and their purported ability to reveal secret things and to mediate on behalf of others, these popular

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<sup>408</sup> The Redeemed Christian Church of God.

<sup>409</sup> On 11<sup>th</sup> August 2020, Rev Budu Tawia (Rev. Budu Tawia is the Area Head for Kwadaso Area at the time of writing) cited an incident where a prayer giant in his church gave commands by faith for healing to be manifested. He indicated that the prayer giant had been gifted with the power of healing and miracles. Once someone approaches him and shared what his or her trouble was, the prayer giant claim that such a person is healed only in 'Jesus' name,' and be that person would be told 'the next time you come over, come and give a testimony to the glory of God'. He indicated that recently a young man with goitre problems came to consult him for prayers. The prayer giant only watched the goitre and said in the Akan language: *Gye wo ayare sa wo Yesu din mu* (translated as: 'Receive your healing in Jesus' name'). The next time the young man came to give testimony the goitre was gone l'dicating that he did not embark on surgery.



prophets draw masses of people to their gatherings or what I call ‘prayer markets’ (Anderson, 2019:17-19). Clearly, these ministries are usually centred around the personality of the founder (the giant) and located in many and only major cities.

Some people hold the ambivalent view that it is practically impossible to enjoy a successful Christian ministry in Africa without taking cognisance of issues of the spiritual world such as those mentioned above (Tsekpoe, 2019:283). Indeed, Kuwornu-Adjaottor (2011:109-111) postulates that the ‘culturality’ of issues related to the spirit realms in African Christianity is so important that the expression of the Christian faith should have ‘credible answers’ regarding these issues to satisfy the local populace. Since these neo-prophetic prayer giants display their readiness to provide such answers, they are held in such high esteem by many.

It therefore seems as if prayer consultancy has come to stay in the Ghanaian neo-prophetic and Penteco-charismatic<sup>410</sup> circles. While it initially evolved from the idea of counselling where individuals sought advice from people of higher status than themselves, (usually men or women of faith), over time, it has developed into a standard practice where prophets/pastors designated specific times of the day and week for counselling. Eventually, the practice became tied with prayer times and with prophetic figures and ministers devoting special times after prayer sessions for *spiritual consultation* when the man/woman of God is believed to be able to impart words of wisdom and knowledge (often regarding the past of a person) as a basis for giving therapeutic advice to the counsellee. Sometimes, the prayer giant who is seen as a *spiritual consultant* would prescribe fasting for the individual or an *Akwankyerε* (direction) for the course of life to help overcome specific difficulties. This spiritual direction may sometimes also involve acquiring a sacred item such as anointing oil, a handkerchief, and anointed water for application as a means of spiritual mediating (Anderson, 2019:18). In spiritual consultation, therefore, one pays for the prayer giant to pray for or on behalf of the client. Relatedly, prayer giants and other proponents need the services of other intercessors for their prayer activities, which has been described as prayer outsourcing as discussed in the next section below.

### 5.6.3 Prayer Outsourcing

Section 5.6.2 above discussed the emergence of prayer giants as the single personality who is the fulcrum of prayer activities in the prayer centre and market. In recent times, a growing

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<sup>410</sup> The term Penteco-Charismatic is coined here to mean the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement.

phenomenon in Ghanaian Pentecostalism is the concept I term in research as ‘*prayer outsourcing*<sup>411</sup>’. This is a phenomenon where a group of young men and or women (not popular prayer figures) who have formed prayer teams will bring to an end all their professional vocational activities or employment and be enrolled as intercessors for individuals and companies for financial compensation. As intercessors, their function is to pray all day and all night for the person or institution who/which has employed them to do so. Such a person is usually a high-ranking public figure, a pastor, a leader, a political figure, or sometimes a prayer giant or neo-prophet. These intercessors therefore devote their time to prayer in return for monthly salaries.

The reason for profiling these prayer intercessors as a means of outsourcing the prayer is because the financier would not have enough time to pray (for) himself or herself! The busy schedules of the person also call for the outsourcing of his/her daily prayers. Every week, the personality or institution being prayed or interceded for will submit a list of prayer topics or points to the intercessors to pray on. There is also the perception that once they are paying the intercessor(s) they do not need to mingle with them. In some instances, accommodation and feeding are provided for the intercessors to keep them close at a particular location so that they do not waste time commuting but could have adequate time to focus on the outsourced prayer they are engaged in.

Prayer outsourcing also often involves fasting, interceding, and spiritual mediating all on behalf of the person in return for financial remuneration. Some of these prayers are done by commercialised ‘prayer warriors’ who pray for many hours, especially into the night, a time believed to be dominated by demons and evil forces (Krause, 2014:222-245). For the latter reason, these prayer teams may also sleep during the day and pray actively at night to thwart any spiritual attack against the person for whom they intercede.

The traditional concept of prayer warriors developed in congregations where certain members would devote themselves to intercede for other members and the activities of the church (Kuwornu-Adjaottor, 2011:109) without any economic gain. In prayer outsourcing nonetheless, this group of people engage in no other economic activity but prayer, and then for monetary gain.

Additionally, those engaged in prayer outsourcing are often specially gifted, and grace-filled men and women. These young men and women may previously have been part of a prayer warrior team in a church and showed zeal and stamina for prayers (Kwarteng-

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<sup>411</sup> This is a coinage by the researcher- JTIB for the purpose of this research.

Yeboah, 2016:6-9). They are mostly also believed to be people filled with the Holy Spirit and manifest diverse spiritual and prophetic gifts and therefore able to see visions, have dreams, experience trances, and hear the voice of God. They must possess such gifts in order to keep the devil and his adversaries at bay.

#### **5.6.4 Prayer Monetisation**

Kingsley Larbi (2001:55-57), in his '*Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*', explores the development of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity with particular emphasis on salvation. He emphasises that the primal worldview of salvation integrates well-being, family, and community. Similarly, the Ghanaian Christian holds salvation as a triad concept of the soul being saved, the spirit being liberated, and the body extricated from poverty.

Pentecostals have different beliefs when it comes to money. When Pentecostalism began in Ghana, The Church of Pentecost, for instance and until recently, held the view that money was evil, and that the acquisition of wealth was a recipe for damnation. Like Yong's (2010:20) concept of Pentecostal conservatism, the CoP encouraged its members to live simple and very modest lives. The church was expecting the imminent return of the Messiah, and therefore failed to acquire good church buildings or buildings in more affluent areas. Most of its church buildings were close to cemeteries or garbage dumps.

Of course, the church also needs money and Pentecostals, depending on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, will give as many free-will offerings as possible in a single service. During the service, when moved by someone's testimony, Pentecostals will also make freewill offerings. This may likewise happen when moved by someone's public Bible reading or recital, by the sermon, or during a worship session. The adherents believe that giving freewill offerings serves as a point of mediating blessing for one's life. Freewill offerings given during testimonies are therefore sometimes also understood as a means of prayer, i.e., to translate other people's testimonies into one's own life. In other words, these offerings are both expressions of appreciation for the goodness of God, and for some, equal to prayer such as, 'God, please may I be the next person to give such a testimony'. Today on the neo-prophetic landscape, I describe an emerging overindulgence in various monetary activities related to prayer I call *prayer monetisation*.

The concept of sacrifices was also part of the biblical culture; it is inherent in African traditional culture as well—thus, ties directly with the many rituals and sacrifices that were found for example, in the Akan cultural worship (Ampadu, 2019:99). The spread of the prosperity gospel however often acknowledged as the bane of Pentecostal and prophetic

ministries (Lindardt, 2015) made this even more of a challenge. Pentecostal preachers may be heard saying that the will of God for every one of God's children is prosperity as this is also against the will of the enemy. Furthermore, believers are told that this negative effect of the enemy can only be reversed by 'sowing a seed' (giving money) in one's life (Omenyo and Atiemo, 2006:57-59).

Some Pentecostals believe the gospel is necessarily soteriological-materialistic. This implies further that once God saves an individual, they *must* necessarily be saved from any financial difficulties and poverty. When some Pentecostals have problems in their businesses, or lose a contract, or a contract is cancelled due to poor performance, they attribute this to evil spirits and demons. Not only do they fast and pray, but sometimes also go for spiritual consultation. In other instances, they may be accused of failing to pay their tithes or failing to pay the right amount, and this is seen as the cause of financial misfortune.

For such reasons, many contemporary Pentecostals in Ghana are '*monetising prayer*' (as I have termed it in this research) during prayer programmes and services. People are seen giving/offering, believing that the offering would mediate grace for them. Based on Psalm 20:3-4 (May he remember all your offerings, and regard with favour your burnt sacrifices! Selah, may he grant you your heart's desire and fulfil all your plans!), people will pray over an offering and then put the offering in the collection bowl or give it to the person leading the offering believing that God *through the offering* would visit or respond to him/her. Some Pentecostals also believe an offering, is likewise a mediating prayer. During offering times, people may even be told to pick money, pray over it, make a declaration, and deposit it into the offering bowl. In some instances, the leader of the service will receive everybody's money, creating the impression that there are some mystical powers in his/her hand that can multiply the money, increase it, and bring favourable returns of blessings, which Pentecostals usually call breakthrough<sup>412</sup>.

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<sup>412</sup> Another emerging Pentecostal prayer practice is covenantal monetised prayers, but then sealed with money as a promise. In September 2020, one member of my church by the name Nash (not her real name) brought me an offering telling me that her grandson at the age of 12 has been paralysed. She had been praying for the miraculous healing of the child and had been moved by her spirit to sow a seed towards the healing of her grandson. She then brought the offering to the church (not for me) and requested that I do special prayers for her grandchild. I therefore prayed with her. Six months later, Mrs Nash came over to me again that her grandson is gradually recovering though not healed but wanted to sow a seed again towards the health of the grandchild. I again prayed with her and encouraged her rather to have faith in God to complete the healing process. I believe in the miraculously healing of the sick, but one must not be seen to be propagating the idea that it is through our money God would be gracious to an individual.

The International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) is a major charismatic church in Ghana, and it is known for organising annual prayer convocations for its members at the Independence Square in Accra, with the express aim of building members' Spirituality and getting them closer to God. In 2017 however, most Ghanaians were shocked when the ICGC's annual Greater Works Conference was characterised by bizarre fundraising (Byte, 2017). As a yearly international prayer programme mostly honoured by Bishop T. D. Jakes of Potter's House, USA, the minimum offering that was required to draw a person closer to God and for a so-called breakthrough was US\$ 70.00, and it was called 'the seed of perfection'! In that year's international prayer programme, members were encouraged to give US\$ 240.00 for a 24-hour miracle, US\$ 520.00 for a 'seed of completion', US\$ 1,000.00 for a 'seed of one thousand times blessing', or to 'sow' US\$ 5,000.00 for an immediate millionaire's status (Latse, 2017:1)!

Examples like the above make it increasingly clear that the main purpose of some prayer programmes, events, and services is to amass wealth for their organisers. As a member of the CoP, a Classical Pentecostal church in Ghana, since childhood, I, too became increasingly suspicious of such prayer programmes that claim to be 'for building Spirituality' but may also simply be for ecclesiastical financial gain. Today, in Ghana, a day does not pass in the media without hearing of seven days of spiritual encounters, 30 days of fasting and prayer, 40 days of supernatural encounters, 60 days of prophetic nights, 90 days of divine access, or 180 days of fasting and prayer all for financial breakthrough! As an evolving trend, these programmes are preceded by car bumper stickers, banners and hyper-media saturation promoting them (Gifford, 2004:23-24).

Clearly, Pentecostalism in some parts of the world is driving more towards a health and wealth gospel rather than exposing members to genuine discipleship and true Pentecostal Spirituality (Ackland, 2012:1-2). Pentecostals should remember that the gospel was also (if not in the first place) meant for the poor, and must be propagated genuinely as such (Satyavrata, 2016:47-49).

## **5.7 Contemporary and Emerging Pentecostal Prayer Practices as Shifts from Classical Pentecostalism**

As indicated in sections 4.5.9 and 4.5.11 of this document, this research has suggested that Pentecostal prayer has changed significantly over the period. Contemporary, and especially emerging prayer practices, as discussed in the previous section, seem to be at odds with, or at

the very least to indicate a shift in the nature and understanding of prayer from what has been in Classical Pentecostalism. As said, some of these prayer practices are enculturated with others being syncretic and positivisation of ATR practices. This section focuses on the major shifts found in new contemporary and emerging Pentecostal prayer practices in Ghana.

### 5.7.1 From ‘Seeker-Centred’ to ‘Solution-Centred’ Prayer

In new contemporary and emerging Pentecostal prayer, practices have first resulted in the classic Pentecostal practice of prayer evolving from what I call a *seeker-centred* approach to a *solution-centred* approach. In Classical Pentecostalism in Ghana, members with challenges, needs, and difficulties were taught to approach the Throne of Grace themselves in times of need with their challenges. The bearers of such burdens therefore sought the face of God with their challenge to find solutions for or an understanding of these burdens. Believers, since they believed themselves to have access to God through the atoning death of Christ on the cross, approached God in prayer by faith in the hope of receiving mercy in time of need (Romans 5:2<sup>413</sup>; Ephesians 2:18<sup>414</sup>; 3:12<sup>415</sup>).

According to Rev. John Obeng-Akese<sup>416</sup>, the believer must cease to be a ‘*pray-for-me Christian*’ but mature to become a *seeker-centred Christian* (Obeng-Akese, 2022:1-3). Some modern-day neo-Pentecostals, however, are more driven toward being solution-centred than seeker-centred (i.e., approaching God themselves). Solution-centred Christians tend to roam from one prayer market to the next with their burdens, or from one prayer giant to the next, thereby seeking help and a solution to their problems via the prayers of others. Of course, one cannot biblically, theologically, or historically discount the importance of intercessory prayer, but what is at stake here is the subtle fact that a focus on the solution takes away the responsibility or the ability of the seeker, now the ‘*pray-for-me-Christian*’, to rather abandon the privilege and need to approach God him or herself in faith and prayer.

In light of the above, it is deducible that today, as never before, Pentecostal believers are accused of mostly wanting a ‘quick fix’ for their challenges and are unable to patiently and faithfully wait for the timing and visitation of God. The waiting time for them simply seems to be too long (Gifford, 2004:77). They thereby seem to live by the Akan adage: *ɛ*

<sup>413</sup> ‘Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God’ (Rom 5:2).

<sup>414</sup> ‘For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit’ (Eph 2:18).

<sup>415</sup> ‘In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence’. (Eph 3:12).

<sup>416</sup> Sermon of John Obeng Akese on the Topic, the Gospel of salvation, at PIWC Asokwa on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022 during the Apostolisation of leaders of the Church.

*Nyame fa ne boɔ a ɛkyere ansa na wa to* (literally meaning: ‘when God takes His stone, He takes a long a long time to throw at the target’) and rely on some or other supernatural means of causing ‘the hand of God to throw His stone quickly’ thereby enabling them to achieve their objective as soon as possible.

From the outset, Pentecostalism in Ghana has been inspired by the example of Peter Newman Anim who was said to have been healed of a number of diseases after he prayed and exercised faith (Yirenkyi-Smart, 2017: 83-84). Classic Pentecostalism evolved from prayer and through much self-sustaining prayer themselves. One core value of Classical Pentecostalism is the ability of members to make time for themselves to pray, and thereby growing in the Lord to become self-reliant Christians, and not dependent Christians.

Again, such seeker-centred prayer, and solution-centred prayer are also seen as a reflex continuity of ATR conviction where people feel they are not capable of approaching the deity themselves unless they do so through an intermediary (priest/-ess) praying on their behalf. In short, prayer is therefore moving from self-administered to mediatorial.

### **5.7.2 From ‘Experiential’ to ‘Extemporative’**

The original concept of Pentecostal prayers was a relationship-based concept with a relational motive. From Chapter 1, section 1.10.2 (above), it was seen that the relationship-based motive is based on the premise that people spend hours in prayer not to transact with God or even simply put place their burdens before God, but first and foremost to build a deep intimate relationship with God through prayer. Pentecostals spend long hours of prayer to experience the presence of God. The basis of such prayer was (and is) to draw one to the source, the spiritual brook to quench the person’s thirst for God.

This experiential nature of prayers is what was called spiritual deepening. Psalm 42:7a, ‘deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls’, is read and interpreted by the Pentecostal to mean a time spent deep in prayer, reflection, communion, and fellowship with God. The psalm is given the Pentecostal interpretation that it is only when you are deep in prayer, deep in your relationship with God, deep in fellowship with God that you can encounter the power of God. This experiential motive is also derived from the final portions of 2 Corinthians 13:14. The fellowship of the Holy Spirit is hereby regarded as an extensive time spent in prayer not as part of a transaction, but for relationship building.

The experiential nature of Pentecostal prayer, therefore, made Pentecostals spend long hours experiencing the presence of the Holy Spirit. This made their prayer also more ‘glossolalic’ in nature, being a period during which their spirit man communicated with the

Spirit of God. They therefore spend long hours ministering in songs, praying in the Spirit, desiring an infilling, and a touch of the Holy Spirit. Experiential prayers were usually full of meekness and modesty. The sessions were planned, organised, and soberly reflective in nature. These modes were initiated and constructed in ways conducive to receiving revelations and communication from God (Gyimah, 2016:3-5).

Recent Pentecostal prayers have moved from the periodic reflective, sober, ‘tarry’ mode to the extreme spontaneous extemporaneous mode. The new model of Pentecostalism is associated with noisemaking and shouting with numerous associated gestures. Noticeably, the humble and meek nature which used to be associated with some sessions of classic Pentecostal prayer is almost lost. There is seemingly no session during church service when silence is observed, and where members are requested to reflect on the nature of God and undertake a self-communication with God through their inner person. Almost all Pentecostal services are full of ecstatic exuberance. Asamoah-Gyadu (2013:41) therefore holds that mass spontaneous prayers are characteristic of Pentecostalism everywhere. Being usually associated with loud noise, these prayers are extemporaneous, expressive, hyper-emotional and sensational (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:42). For some Pentecostal prayers, the noise level is deliberately increased through the leaders shouting into the microphones or increasing the decibel levels of the instruments.

To some people, the basis of the recent Pentecostal loud ecstatic prayers is said to be deduced from the life of Jesus Christ who is described in Hebrews 5:7<sup>417</sup> as making loud cries and tears when He was praying, and God heard Him. The Pentecostal therefore believes that until you cry out loud with a posture of getting to the point of groaning, your prayers may not be heard. Indeed, there is nothing wrong with the exuberance in many Pentecostal prayer rituals and gestures since they provide zeal, energy and love for Pentecostal prayer as indicated already. This must not however come at the expense of an equally important tradition of sometimes quiet, humble meditative prayer of which there also is a tradition of in Pentecostalism, and which seems to have been forgotten.

### **5.7.3 From ‘Devotional’ to ‘Demonisational’**

In the recent past, Pentecostal prayers have quickly moved from the devotional mode of reflection to tracing and casting out demons in every aspect of prayer. Members of classic

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<sup>417</sup> ‘In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence’ (Heb 5:7).



Pentecostal communities practised a lifestyle of devotional prayer at home before moving out into the day. The devotional life mostly had God in focus as the master of all situations and circumstances of life. As the first rule of conduct required for members of The CoP, all members are expected to set aside daily personal quiet time in prayer and meditation on the Word before stepping into the day (CoP, 2010:10). All members are to encounter God personally in the confines of their homes before stepping out. The houses of members are called ‘houses of prayer’, and their devotion to duty and personal life were to be an example to the world.

Members were then sensitized to contemplative prayer. These prayers were meditative in nature where members undertake introspection and self-examination of their status or progress in the Christian race with a focus on God. Prayer sessions where this would happen were typical during weeks preceding Communion (Eucharist) Sundays. The entire period was a time of devotion, for reflection, and was heaven focused. These were also periods when pray-ers reflected on the eschaton to enable them to reposition themselves for the certainty of the ‘upward call’. These prayers had a duty-driven motive, and were solitary in nature (see again, chapter 1 section 1.10.2).

Furthermore, the above modes of prayer can be found in the lives of some key prophets in the Old Testament such as Moses, Elijah, and Daniel. In the New Testament, Christ taught His disciples solitary prayers and practised solemn prayer. In Matthew 6:6<sup>418</sup>, Christ, for example, expressly instructs pray-ers to enter their rooms privately and secretly to communicate with their God. Clearly, the burden of prayer lies on the shoulders, and in the heart of the individual. Luke 5:16<sup>419</sup> refers to Jesus’ habit of withdrawing into a solemn place whilst it is yet day to pray for His ministry and concentrate on God and relate to Him. A similar account is given in Matthew 14:23<sup>420</sup> where Jesus withdraws to the mountain or a solemn place to pray alone. Even during His period of agony and pain, Jesus specially sought the Father in prayer for strength (Luke 22:41<sup>421</sup>).

Differently stated, some prayers must be between an individual and his/her creator, but others must be offered as a communion of believers. Corporate or communal prayers are no less important modes of prayer. The Lord’s Prayer was pluralised by Christ as: ‘*Our*

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<sup>418</sup> “But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (Mat 6:6).

<sup>419</sup> “But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed” (Lk 5:16).

<sup>420</sup> “After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone” (Matt 14:23).

<sup>421</sup> “He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed” (Lk 22:41).

Father', 'give *us*', 'forgive *us*', 'lead *us*', etc. Nonetheless, Pentecostal congregational prayers do not necessarily need to be always noisy; there must also be time for congregational/communal contemplation.

It is true that corporate or communal prayer sometimes energises the Pentecostal to pray for longer hours and grants the ability to intercede for peculiar needs. Nonetheless, members must be reminded of the necessity also to build their individual Christian spiritual lives. The period of lockdown during the Covid-19 pandemic taught the church that, when the devotional lives of members are not well developed, with lost connectivity/community, they are often much more exposed to 'the traps of the enemy'. Truly, devotional Christian lives are therefore central to being a Christian. It is apparent that due to the busy socio-economic lifestyle schedule of Pentecostals, there seems to be less and less time and space in the lives of many believers to enable observe intentional devotional life. Recently, in the congregation in which I serve, a survey was conducted to determine what proportion of the members were involved in personal devotions, and the results showed that less than 15% of the congregation of over a thousand members were able to uphold such a practice. The value of these devotional prayers cannot be overemphasised as they develop and sustain the personal Spirituality of believers as a key element in their Christian growth and spiritual experiences.

The evolution of the neo-prophetic landscape in Ghana has infiltrated the ecclesiastical landscape with prayer moving from a contemplative devotional style to prayer focused solely on deliverance from the devil and oppressive demons, a state I call, 'prayer demonisation'. It implies that members overemphasise the effect of demons and witches as the cause of all undesirable issues in their lives. The sovereignty of God in all situations is thus being lost. Again, while deliverance is not foreign to Pentecostals or illegitimate to Pentecostal theology, the challenge is that some neo-prophetic services have been turned into full deliverance services with no time allotted for even biblical exhortation (Tsekpoe, 2019:286). Likewise, as seen in section 5.6 (above), the background of these practices once more lies in the question: are the motives for such services the spiritual development of proponents, or the economic benefit of church leaders?

Finally, since music is a central spiritual and theological focus of Pentecostal worship, (De Witte, 2008:691-692), the selection of songs for Pentecostal services is critical. The drive towards exorcism and deliverance has resulted in a decline in more contemplative Pentecostal songs that inspire people towards solemn reflective prayer in favour of songs that reflect the drive towards exorcising demons and evil. As a result, prayer has moved from what is called

‘worship’ mode to what I term ‘warship’ mode. Furthermore, the casting out of demons takes place virtually in every service and the name of the devil is mentioned in virtually every Pentecostal prayer. In the light of what has been repeatedly said regarding the traditional African worldview, this seems again to result in many believers magnifying the devil in every sphere of life, even in prayer.

#### **5.7.4 From ‘Transformational’ to ‘Transactional’**

One of the original intents of Pentecostal prayer is that through the power of the Holy Spirit, people would be moulded and transformed to become like Christ. Pentecostal prayers are therefore periods during which members open up for the infilling of the Holy Spirit to make them more spirit-led toward the full development of the fruit of the Spirit in them. For the Pentecostal, conversion happens through the power of the Holy Spirit and Christian growth is possible only through the enabling presence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is therefore seen as the ‘agent of God’ who enables one to be like Christ through sanctification and His indwelling presence and power. Some Pentecostal songs rendered during such prayer sessions, and which reflect this include the following:

*Holy Spirit move me now*

*And make my life whole again*

*Spirit move over me, Spirit move over me*

*Break me, melt me, mould me and use me*

*Spirit brood over me, Spirit brood over me.*

The Pentecostal believes Holy Spirit is the agency that transforms Christians to become like Christ. Galatians 5:16<sup>422</sup>, and 5:25<sup>423</sup> reflect a fuller picture of the Pentecostal perspective of the transformative work of the Holy Spirit. To walk by the Spirit, to the Pentecostal, means to be driven by the dictates of the Spirit, and to let the Holy Spirit direct one’s live or lead, while one follows. Through this effort, we produce the desires of the Spirit and Christian virtues as indicated in 2 Peter 1:3–9. Peter indicates here that God has granted Christians divine power through Christ who has called us to godliness. Christians therefore have a role to play towards their transformational agenda. This is not an automatic activity of the Holy Spirit as most Pentecostals believe.

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<sup>422</sup> ‘But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh’ (Gal 5:16).

<sup>423</sup> ‘If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit’ (Gal 5:25).

Meanwhile, the emerging face and form of Pentecostal prayer has moved from a desire for the transformative works of the Holy Spirit to the transactional mode. Even though prayer is expected to be a balanced integration of the relationship-based motive, the duty-driven motive, and the transactional motive (see section 1.10.2), Pentecostal prayer is now tilted predominantly towards a transactional motive. Through the transactional motive, people seek to ‘trade with God’ and seek His favour and blessings. During these prayer sessions, people make invocations, incantations, and declarations concerning their lives through which they believe their destinies would be changed for the better (Omenyo, 2014:142).

The transactional motive of prayer is the reason behind the sale of mediatorial items for prayer in the emerging Pentecostal churches. The transactional motive makes people perceive blessings as being able to be traded. People give big offerings in the church, seeking God’s blessing in return. It is apparent that there is financial blessing in return for giving, but this does not necessarily follow an automatic rule as people are made to believe. In Luke 6:38,<sup>424</sup> Jesus did say, ‘give and it shall be given back to you’, but the context of giving in return may not be (as if often expected) money, but other dimensions of God’s blessings and favour. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 8, exhorted the church in Corinth to imitate the virtue of the church in Macedonia that gave out of their scarcity, not expecting something in return, but as an act of stewardship. The church today is however made to believe that the reason some people are poor is because they fail to give! On the contrary, as a faithful ‘tither’<sup>425</sup>, I believe that one should not be made to pay tithes under compulsion as a source of expecting direct (monetary) reward. Tithe should be paid with understanding and conviction and as personal support for the Kingdom expansion and a witness to personal stewardship. One should be taught the essence of giving and the blessing in giving.

It appears Pentecostal prayers have become more transactional in nature because they have failed to acknowledge the role of the sovereignty of God in the affairs of God’s children. Some Pentecostals demand healing as a right, but forget healing is based on the sovereignty of God. Prayer for healing is sometimes demanded ontologically authoritatively as discussed in section 4.6.5 rather than appropriating it as an entitlement.

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<sup>424</sup> ‘Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure, you use it will be measured back to you.’ (Lk 6:38).

<sup>425</sup> A ‘tither’ is a Pentecostal term used to describe a person who faithfully pays their tithes every month.

Furthermore, as prayer has moved from being transformational to transactional, so people are quick to just petition and request on behalf of themselves whilst failing to intercede on behalf of others. As such, the passion for intercessory prayers has dwindled, thus giving way to invocations and prayers focused on the self. People are unable to stand in the place (gap) of and on behalf of others as indicated in Ezekiel 22:30.<sup>426</sup> ‘Standing in the gap’ for Pentecostals refers to people gifted with the passion to pray on behalf of others, intervening, entreating, and appealing on their behalf. These transactional prayers are claimed with force, strength, and power based on the name of Jesus, the blood of Jesus, and the fire of the Holy Spirit. An example of such transactional prayers is seen in the ‘prayer targets’<sup>427</sup>, posted by MOGPA for its followers on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2022 (MOGPA, 2022).

### 5.7.5 From ‘Testaments’ to ‘Testimonies’

I postulate that emerging Pentecostal prayers are moving from the Testaments (biblical consequential mode, see section 4.7.6) mode of basing prayer on God’s words in the Old and New Testaments to testimonies of people. Testimonies are a very important aspect of Pentecostal liturgy. According to Samuel Gakpetor, testimonies attest to, and give credibility to the power and the presence of God amongst His people (in Onyinah and Ntummy, 2017:11). Through testimonies, Pentecostals continue to elucidate the power of God to the world (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005:132-134). Testimonies are however, actualised through God’s sovereignty, and through prayer. When testimonies are shared, they also ignite people’s passion for prayer, according to Assabil (2017:13). As such, testimonies and witnesses are very central to Pentecostal Spirituality. Relatedly, testimonies also have a long history in Ghanaian Pentecostalism, and Peter Newman Anim already drew masses of believers to his church when he testified about his miracles of healing (Walker, 2010:81).

For Pentecostals, once Christ has done a miracle for a brother or sister, there is the need to claim and appropriate the same promise of such miracles for themselves. The concept

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<sup>426</sup> ‘I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one’ (Ezk 22:30)

<sup>427</sup> MOGPA Prayer Targets for Today Monday 11th April 2022:

1. *Thank You Father for the gift of life this day in the name of Jesus.*
2. *I plead the blood of Jesus over every area of my life afresh in the name of Jesus.*
3. *By fire by force, as I open my mouth to pray now, my Father and my God let the anointing of rest, fall on me now in the name of Jesus.*
4. *By fire by force, as I open my mouth to pray now, the rain of joy I ask of you in the name of Jesus.*
5. *By fire by force, as I open my mouth to pray now, angels of God scatter all those plotting evil against my life and destiny in the name of Jesus.*

of testimonies provides a framework for the Pentecostal to overcome struggles by faith through prayers, and claim to be a victor (Smith, 2010). During prayer, the Pentecostal may for example, be heard quoting Revelation 12:11<sup>428</sup>, and appropriating the text to their life situations. Furthermore, testimony plays an important role in Pentecostal Spirituality because it connects a Pentecostal's identity with Christ's identity. Hollenweger (2005:18-19) includes testimonies in what he describes as 'oral Pentecostal Spirituality' and they are avenues to deep Pentecostal prayer, either to smash the devil or claim what belongs to one.

With 'oral Pentecostal Spirituality', and testimonies in mind, it is also important to note that the Pentecostal best transmits knowledge through storytelling. Walker (2010:200) holds that the early Pentecostals spent adequate time of their worship on storytelling, sharing experiences and stories of their salvation or Christian life as a basis of motivating the members. These testimonies in turn would also motivate the believers to give offerings to God. This is not too different from what is found in the life situation of neo-Pentecostal and neo-prophetic churches today.

Irrespective of the popularity and inspirational nature of testimonies, they cannot replace the word of God in the church, and which should serve as a fulcrum for prayer. In the Pentecostal circles, an emerging trend for the basis for prayer has been tilted toward testimonies away from biblical narratives. As such, the Old and New Testaments (the word of God) which should be the basis of prayer have been relegated to the background; and prayer is now often based on personal *testimonies instead of testaments*.

It thus seems that, invariably, Pentecostals are becoming more excited and ignited by people's testimonies than by biblical narratives. However, 1 John 5:14–15<sup>429</sup> teaches that communication with God should be according to God's will, for God hears us. Moreover, the sure will of God is first and foremost deduced from God's word. In Psalm 119:49<sup>430</sup>, the psalmist also declares that the word of God to His people gives hope to God's people and not in the first place, the testimonies of others.

In summary, Smith (2010:18) asserts that Christians mostly want to weave their stories into the story of the false accusation of Christ, His crucifixion, but also into that of His glorious resurrection and the promise of Pentecost fulfilled. This suggests that irrespective of

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<sup>428</sup> 'They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death' (Rev 12:11).

<sup>429</sup> 'This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him' (1 John 5:14-14).

<sup>430</sup> 'Remember your word to your servant, for you have given me hope' (Ps 119:49).

the challenges endured, one is assured that one will be and is indeed victorious. Such testimonies are shared to become a live wire, and a source of hope and encouragement to other people with similar problems. God is in constant relationship with humanity to actualise His intentions. This does not however mean that God necessarily needs humanity to perfect what God intends to do. Following this, it must be an indicator to Pentecostals to respect the position and status of the word of God, using testimonies to encourage and spur believers, but not to replace the word of God with their testimonies. Testimonies may drive and motivate people; but they must be shared in reasonable proportion to the Scriptures. During some services, the preacher for the day, after quoting the Scriptures, only stream into a mode of testimonies to encourage the adherents without touching on the word of truth to exhort or nourish them to grow spiritually or even leading them in prayer with the exhortation. This is a variance that needs careful reflection in order not to downplay the importance of testimonies in Pentecostal worship since that cannot be taken away from the ethos of Pentecostal Spirituality.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

In Chapter 4 of this study, the nature and characteristics of the theology of prayer of African Pentecostalism was conceptualised. It was established that the background of the African makes them have an affinity for transactions, rites, and rituals which affect their Spirituality and grant them a drive for the neo-prophetic churches instead of the regulated Classical Pentecostal churches. The neo-prophetic, therefore, ‘positivises’<sup>431</sup> African Traditional worldviews into Pentecostal services. Pentecostal prayer is prayers characterised as being spontaneously glossolalic, lyrically doxological, and ontologically authoritative in the name of Jesus.

This chapter discussed the contemporary Pentecostal prayer practices, the continuities from ATR, similarities, enculturated carry over and discontinuities. It has been established in this chapter that the root of Ghanaian Pentecostalism is prayer, and this evolved from the AICs and some Classical Pentecostals who established prayer centres which have evolved in various forms to date. Some Pentecostal practices which are continuities or carry over from ATR are clapping, dancing, drumming, noise making, suspicion of evil and encampment at

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<sup>431</sup> The term ‘positivise’ or ‘Positivisation’ has been used in this research to mean assimilation practices that are perceived to have some positive dimension when adopted in prayer. Some of these prayers may have adopted with syncretic modifications.

prayer centres. It has been established that the African is culturally sensitive to sound, and therefore responds involuntarily to music with clapping and dancing. This is however not unique to African Pentecostalism since everywhere Pentecostalism exists globally, music is a key part of the feature, although the African may do it out of proportion with loud noise. It must be noted however that even though Pentecostalism exists in Ghana with the evidence of the prophetic manifestation of tongues, which is similar to the priest at the ATR shrines, it would be unfair to classify this as a carryover since glossolalia, and prophetism have been associated with Pentecostalism even before it emerged on the African continent.

As pertained to suspicion of evil, it is apparent that the African cosmological view of evil has a significant effect on the nature of Pentecostal prayer. Since evil is traceable in every aspect of life, this has brought about the emergence of *akwankyere* (medium consultants), *mpata* (pacification), and *banbo* (divine guidance and protection). In its wake, this also brought about the emergence of neo-prophets who have become ‘prayer giants’ and who in turn have developed prayer markets, the evolution of prayer outsourcing, and monetisation. This also has resulted in people believing in the locationality and occasionality of prayers, meaning that prayers should be said at particular times, and at particular locations to ensure a favourable response.

Due to the belief of Pentecostals that one must follow what their Lord and Master, Jesus Christ did, most of the theology of prayer of the Pentecostal is grounded biblically and Christologically (Amaniampong, 2013). So, just as Christ once prayed at some secluded places such as mountain tops, and in remote areas, so must they practice; once Jesus prayed in agony, and earnestly, so must Pentecostals pray likewise (Luke 22:44<sup>432</sup>). The Pentecostal holds that at one time in prayer, Christ sweated profusely, and His sweat was like thick drops of blood (Luke 22:44); so must we pray in sweat to show we have really prayed. Once Jesus commanded a demon to leave a person (Lk 4:35<sup>433</sup>; Mk 9:25<sup>434</sup>); they must practise same. One time, Jesus asked the name of a demon (Mark 5:7–8<sup>435</sup>), and another time, He put his hands into someone’s ears and touched the tongue (Mk 7:32-35); so, they should do same

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<sup>432</sup> ‘And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground’ (Lk 22:44).

<sup>433</sup> “Be quiet!’ Jesus said sternly. ‘Come out of him!’ Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him” (Lk 4:35).

<sup>434</sup> ‘When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. ‘You deaf and mute spirit,’ he said, ‘I command you, come out of him and never enter him again” (Mk 9:25).

<sup>435</sup> ‘He shouted at the top of his voice, ‘What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God’s name don’t torture me!’ For Jesus had said to him, ‘Come out of this man, you impure spirit!’ (Mk 5:7-8).



when moved by the Spirit. Again, as Jesus once prayed in a loud voice in groanings, so must they pray.

The research has revealed that some prayer practices in African Pentecostalism are an enculturation of ATR, such as the use of sacramental vindictive prayer, assimilated transactional prayers, litany prayers, and oral appellations. These prayers show sacramental and ritual carryovers and ecstatic imprecatory prayers. It must however be noted that there are discontinuities like ancestral worship and rites during child naming in Pentecostalism. It has been established that there are contemporary Ghanaian prayer practices which are an embodiment of the commercialisation of prayer such as prayer markets, prayer giants, prayer outsourcing, and prayer monetisation. Key to note is the factor of the neo-prophetic giants which Nel says has their works akin to the witch doctor (Nel, 2020c:22). The prayer giant or prophet is seen as a key interlocutor when people's prayers are being hindered by 'sin or witchcraft' (as they are made to believe) (Daswani, 2015:89). Many Ghanaians therefore turn to these neo-prophets for guidance when they experience peculiar ailments, encounter blocked paths to success in life, or feel that witchcraft or ancestral spirits may have prevented them from moving forward (Daswani, 2015:16). These neo-prophetic prayer giants have become a fulcrum of prayer activities and commercialisation of prayer in Ghana.

The research also reviewed some emerging prayer practices that are a variation of traditional Pentecostal prayer. It has been established that prayer has moved from seeker-centred to solution-centred, with people moving from one church to the other with the motive of 'pray for me' instead of them praying for themselves concerning their burdens of life. Again, prayer has moved from experiential to 'extemporative', and from devotional to 'demonisational'. Another way in which original Pentecostal prayer has changed is that it was once to derive strength and power from on high (Asiedu, 2019) in order to act in God's service, but today, many Pentecostals' practices of prayer have become more transactional and vindictive (Asiedu, 2019). Finally, Pentecostal prayer has been based on people's testimonies rather than on the word of God. Even though Christology has been a focal point of African theology (Vahakangas, 2002:72), the basis of prayer has been declarations in relation to the cross, the blood, and the name of Jesus (in casting out demons), rather than an appreciation of the finished work of Christ.

Even though one must not forget that there will always and rightly be individual needs of Christians to be addressed in prayer, the theological foundations and the theological implications of prayer must not be lost. If so, the essence of individual, private devotional, and experiential prayers is gradually waning. The experiential essence of the Holy Spirit in

transformation is being lost, and communal prayer has taken over individual private prayer. In the light of the above, it is noteworthy that prayer as a core value of the CoP is ‘therefore not just presenting God with a long list of items you want him to do but entering his presence to experience the power of the Holy Spirit and rest through what he says through His spirit’ (Daswani, 2015:79).

With an overview of the emerging prayer practices in Ghanaian Pentecostalism, the next chapter will undertake a theological reflection on the basis of these emerging prayer practices. It has been established from section 4.7.1 of this research that Pentecostal prayer is Trinitarian in nature, with a tilted orientation towards the Pneumatology and Christology affirmation whilst being Transactionally Ontological. Together with the findings in chapters five and six, chapter (six) now turns to theologically evaluate the Pentecostal prayer practices driven by an African cosmological motif and a silhouette of African Traditional practices. The final chapter will also seek to propose a Pentecostal theology of prayer based on the ACTS model, and therefore lead to the conclusion of the study.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF EMERGING PENTECOSTAL PRAYER PRACTICES AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 6.1 Introduction

Given the centrality of prayer in Pentecostal Spirituality, this research firstly focused on an exploration of the similarities and dissimilarities and the possible influence of African traditional religious spiritualities on Pentecostal Spirituality. The research evaluated the Spirituality of the ATR in Chapter 2, a conceptualisation of the Pentecostal Spirituality in Chapter 3, and a theologisation of Pentecostal prayer in Chapter 4. Thereafter, Chapter 5 examined the contemporary prayer practices and established that there has been a significant change in perspective on and the practice of prayer in neo-propheticism and to some extent in Classical Ghanaian Pentecostalism. It has been established that the presence of the traditional cultural universe in Africa and the cultural adaptability of Pentecostalism has resulted in the latter emphasising great cosmological struggle (Anderson, 2006:118). For the neo-prophetic, therefore, prayer has been rooted and grounded in an African cosmological worldview of evil and fear, hence the commercialisation of prayers. The pressing needs of adherents, which ultimately compels them to be result-driven, more and more determine the extent to which they revert to transactional prayers aimed at results, and this is a characteristic of African traditional religious spiritualities. In terms of Classical Pentecostals, the motif for the Spirituality of prayer is drifting towards transactions than fellowship and relationship-based motif, which used to be the reason for their 'tarry nights'. This concluding chapter critically engages the theological bases/legitimacy offered for Pentecostal theology of prayer and some emerging Ghanaian Pentecostal prayer practices, thus concluding the study. The chapter also recalls the summary of the various chapters and provides a possible trajectory for future works.

#### 6.2 A Theological Evaluation of Pentecostal Spirituality and Emerging Pentecostal Prayer Practices

As proponents of a theology of praxis, Pentecostals exercise their faith as a lived experience in a bid to rise against the oppression of the enemy, demons, and other forms of spiritual bondage (Prosen, 2003:13). A variety of reasons may be offered for why Pentecostal practices have this character and why they adopt certain methods or ways of praying. One important reason identified in this study has been the peculiar cultural disposition of the African. Their beliefs therefore determine their affection, and their affection in turn

influences their practices, and their practices influence their way of life. In other words, the practices of the Pentecostal determine the nature of their experiences, and their experiences determine their Spirituality. There is a need however to evaluate the contemporary Pentecostal prayer practices from a theological and biblical perspective to justify their praxes.

### **6.2.1 Theological Evaluation of the African Pentecostal Pneumatology**

Pentecostal Spirituality is characterised, among other things, by its oral nature and then, especially through its prayer practices, and foremost praying ‘in the Holy Spirit’. As already mentioned in sections 3.8.10 and 4.5.11, Pentecostal Spirituality is a sign of deep affection, and Pentecostals characteristically also pray in the Holy Spirit concerning all things (Agyemang-Baduh, 2002:2-6). Prayer in the Holy Spirit (tongues), therefore, is one of the ways by which Classical Pentecostal believers pray more often, and practise their prayer as already mentioned in sections 4.5.11 and 4.7.2. Again, as already asserted in sections 3.8.10 and 4.5.11, Classical Pentecostals believe that baptism in the Holy Spirit is subsequent to salvation with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

Sourcing from Romans 8:14–16<sup>436</sup>, Pentecostals believe that if one is filled with the spirit of God (believed to be the indwelling of the Holy Spirit following Spirit baptism with the evidence of speaking in tongues), they are led by the spirit of God. Some Pentecostals, therefore, have the sublime perception that Spirit baptism is the key characteristic for adoption and ‘childship’, which makes those who speak in tongues purportedly perceive themselves as more spiritual than those who do not speak in tongues and can therefore pray better than they do. This is however theologically deceptive since the key requirement of sonship is believing in the Lord Jesus according to John 1:12–13<sup>437</sup>, Romans 10:10<sup>438</sup>, and John 20:31.<sup>439</sup> Again, in terms of being devout, even though Cornelius (Acts 10) had not been baptised in the Holy Spirit, it was testified of him as being devout and religious, and he caught revelations from the Lord (Walker, 2022:54-56). It, therefore, takes more than Spirit

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<sup>436</sup> ‘Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.’

<sup>437</sup> ‘Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God — children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.’ (Jn 1:12-13).

<sup>438</sup> ‘For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved’ (Rm 10:10).

<sup>439</sup> ‘But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name’ (Jn 20:31).

baptism to be devout as purported in 3.8.2 and 3.8.7, but rather growing the fruit of the Spirit and self-disciplining based on Galatians 5:22–23, and 2 Peter 1:5–7.

Indeed, the Pentecostal belief in Spirit baptism with the evidence of speaking in tongues is not being contested. According to Kelsey (1981:16), one cannot deny the existence of the glossolalia, despite the difficulty in distinguishing between artistic, devised, and emotionally motivated speech (Kelsey, 1981:16). The real challenge, at least for Pentecostals, is not proving the reality of glossolalia, but more challenges include the perceived theories behind it, and in this study also, the abuse thereof in certain prayer practices.

Pentecostals believe that whilst baptism in the Holy Spirit is a one-time event (Acts 2:4)<sup>440</sup>, the infilling of the Holy Spirit is a multiple trajectory event (Acts 4:31<sup>441</sup>, Acts 13:52<sup>442</sup>) in the life of the believer. This results in the Pentecostal desiring the pneumatic experience to enable the ‘birthing of spiritual giftings’<sup>443</sup> whilst drawing adherents into fellowship with God (2 Cor 13:14<sup>444</sup>). The theological challenge, however, is when Pentecostals measure one’s Spirituality and prayer life in relation to a graduating measure of the Holy Spirit. As indicated in section 4.7.2, periodically, Pentecostals come to a ‘filling station experience’ to get more of the Holy Spirit. I however believe that we need periodic infilling of the Spirit not for ‘topping up the Holy Spirit and increase one’s measure of Him’, but for the Holy Spirit to get more of the believer’s life, regulate, and control it, for the believer to walk according to the directions of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Galatians 5:16–17, Romans 8:4, and Galatians 5:25. In relation to the Holy Spirit, one either has Him or does not have Him. It is a theological flaw to see oneself as running dry and unlubricated, because a low measure of the Holy Spirit leads to lack of prayer. Indeed, the Pentecostal representation of the Holy Spirit as emblems (metaphorically) as oil (Zachariah 1:14, Exodus 27:20–21, Leviticus 24:1–2), water (John 4:14; 7:37–38), and dew (Psalm 133:3) is the cause of this Pentecostal perception.

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<sup>440</sup> ‘All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them’ (Ac 2:4).

<sup>441</sup> ‘After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly’ (Ac 4:31).

<sup>442</sup> ‘And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit’ (Ac 13:52).

<sup>443</sup> The term ‘birthing of gifting’ here is used to mean the receiving the giftings of the Holy Spirit into one’s life

<sup>444</sup> ‘May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all’ (2 Cor 13:14).

Again, based on Romans 8:26–27<sup>445</sup>, Pentecostals believe that the Holy Spirit is a key enabler and helper in prayer as indicated in section 3.8.10 and 4.5.1. Pentecostals are, therefore, known for long noisy cacophonous prayer in tongues purportedly sustained by the Spirit because they pray as the Spirit enables them, as indicated in section 4.7.2. This has resulted in some Pentecostals praying ‘out of their minds’ and praying in tongues concerning all things. It may not be wrong to pray in such a way for long hours without understanding, but one must be careful we do not practise what I have termed in this research as ‘glossolalic abuse’. In a Pentecostal church setting also in Ghana, and even more frequent in emerging Ghanaian Pentecostal prayer practices, once a prayer topic is put forward before the congregation, all members immediately join in thunderous prayer in tongues without due recourse to the reason behind the prayer. Interestingly, even Pentecostal prayers of confession are sometimes prayed in tongues. One may therefore ask whether congregants *know* what they are praying about in such prayers, or, are such prayers ‘fruitful’?

The question, however, is whether Romans 8:26–27 enjoins us to pray in tongues concerning all things; or rather whether the spirit-filled believer is quickened by the Holy Spirit to pray and, therefore, is led and directed by the Holy Spirit on how to pray, what to pray about, and whether the Spirit helps in intercession even when you have no clue of the prayer direction. The wording in verse 26, ‘interceding for us with groanings too deep for words’ is the reason for the glossolalic abuse. Nonetheless, it must be observed that the same Paul, in 1 Corinthians 14:14–15<sup>446</sup> encourages the church sometimes to pray in tongues as much as one’s spirit prays. He however warns that in such prayers, one’s mind is ‘unfruitful’. Pauline Pneumatology, from 1 Corinthians 14:3<sup>447</sup>, thus, holds that praying in tongues builds up one’s Spirituality and edifies oneself. Praying in tongues thereby results in the Spirit’s control over the prayers, but the mind remains unfruitful. There is, therefore, a need for a balanced prayer of praying in tongues, and the use of one’s senses in prayer. Indeed, the Spirit helps an individual in their groaning and prayer, and helps us to pray longer, but this type of prayer must necessarily be fruitful prayer.

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<sup>445</sup> ‘In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.’ (Rom 8:26-27).

<sup>446</sup> ‘For if I pray in a tongue, my Spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. What am I to do? I will pray with my Spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my Spirit, but I will sing with my mind also’ (1 Cor 14:14-15).

<sup>447</sup> ‘But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church.’ (1 Cor 14:3-4).

In the light of the above, it is interesting to note that, in 2019, the CoP leadership issued a directive that, unless otherwise directed by the one leading them in prayer, congregants should not simply burst into tongues at the beginning of prayers (Nyamekye, 2019:3-5).<sup>448</sup> The purpose of this direction was that, during prayers, the congregants should pray with ‘understanding of the mind in one accord as a church’, which brings cognition to the pray-er. The leadership furthermore indicated that congregants might pray in tongues, but in a known language specifically when they are praying for confession of sins and in making intercession. For the church leadership, issues of the petition may be sometimes prayed in tongues; however, one must sometimes speak fruitfully in plain language to God.

This directive, again, raises yet another question that many Pentecostals will immediately ask: does this not limit the work of the Holy Spirit in assisting the individual during prayer as indicated in Romans 8:26–27? On the one hand, one may say that the positive dimension of this directive is that it provides for fruitful cognitive prayer time, however, it may also limit people’s desire to pray freely as a congregation.<sup>449</sup> This critique and rebuttal does not apply to only the recent forms of Pentecostal prayer but also theologically review some practices that are almost engrained.

In addition, section 3.8.6 established that Pentecostals believe that the deeper the church goes into prayer, the more they experience the immediate presence of God and receive the things of the Spirit which they encounter through prophecy, visions, dreams, and other forms of revelation (Albrecht and Howards, 2014:238). Pentecostal prayer was initially described as experiential (see section 5.7.2) since believers hold tarry services and pray in the Spirit, desiring an experience of the Spirit of God. Pentecostal prayer is, however, drifting more towards extemporised postures with loud noise and vibrations. The devotionality and solemnity of prayer even during group prayer sessions are being lost (see section 5.7.3). It is

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<sup>448</sup> Proceedings of the Ministers and Wives’ meeting at PCC, Gomoa Fetteh, Ksoa, Ghana (Nyamekye 2019:3-5).

This in no way diminishes the belief of CoP members in the power of the language of the Spirit that saved Aps Michel Ntomy<sup>449</sup> from assailants when he was attacked one evening in front of his house (Asamaoh-Gyadu 2013:50). Some assailants with machete attacked Aps Michael Ntomy. One of them lifted the machete to cut his head, and he spontaneously started to speak in tongues. The assailants were confused, and the machete hit a mobile phone that Aps Michel Ntomy was holding, and this sparked fire. Out of fear, the assailants run away when he, Aps Michael Ntomy, fell into a gutter. In some extreme cases therefore, it may be acceptable to utter tongues as the best mode of prayer when lost for words. There is however, a need to reflect on the standard practice of praying in tongues in other cases. In some cases, based on Rom 8:26-27, when a person is asked to pray without any lead or without knowing what to pray about, they may run through prayer in the language of the Spirit, which may be acceptable for the Bible says we do not know what to pray about.

important to note that sometimes, solemnity is desirous to enable one receive feedback from God.

Pentecostal prayer in the Holy Spirit may lead to some becoming spiritually hypnotised, ‘slain in the Spirit’, ‘dancing in the Spirit’, ‘jumping in the Spirit’, and ‘shouting in the Spirit’ (Albrecht and Howards, 2014:239) as well as occasional emotional gestures such as weeping, ‘crying or laughing in the Spirit’ and usually speaking in the Spirit (Miller and Yamamori, 2007:13-134) as indicated in section 3.8.6, and 5.2.1. The challenge here is in the neo-prophetic service, once people are taken over by the Spirit, it is believed that there is little control over the activities of the body; hence, the nature and direction of prayer may change during the service. Since most Africans are sensitive to issues of the Spirit, and their sensibilities are open to the things of the Spirit, they yield to the things of things of the Spirit so that they are not seen as being carnal (Baudena and Gichuhi, 2002:12-16).

Scripture, however, enjoins the believer that the individual is subject to the control of the Spirit and must therefore expected to do all things orderly even during Spirit-directed prayer (1 Corinthians 14:32-33, 14:40). To this end, the acknowledgement of the statement by Amaniampong (2019b:1-3), and the added caveat of Frempong (2018:14-16) may be important for reflection (even if it may not be popular, especially among new Pentecostal groupings), —that although the Pentecostal believes that through prayer God reveals God’s mysteries in the form of prophecies, dreams, and revelations, that these dimensions must be conducted and managed very well with accompanying decorum to prevent abuse (1 Corinthians 14:40).

Meanwhile, the Pentecostal perception that glossolalia is more than experience but *evidence* of the presence of God may be a questionable inference (Macchia, 2016:127-129). An exclusive sacramental view of the glossolalia may, therefore, be questionable. The latter means that while one cannot deny the fact that when one prays in the language of the Spirit, God’s presence may be immanent. However, is it not possible for one to pray in the glossolalia without God being present? In a contrary sense, the pray-er’s position in God is very critical, and one’s knowledge base of God through His Word is critical (Heb 4:12, 2 Cor 10:3–6) since charisma does not necessarily signify one’s acceptability. One other challenge in neo-prophetic prayer is the use of the glossolalia as a magical tool as discussed in the section below.



## 6.2.2 Theological Evaluation of Pentecostal Healing, Deliverance and Warfare

Pentecostal prayer, although with glossolalia as a key feature, is sometimes devotional in nature with contemplation and some measure of quietness as discussed in section 6.2.1 above. However there has been a gradual tilt towards ‘*demonisational prayers*’ (see section 5.7.3). Whilst Pentecostals believe that praying in the Spirit is a means of communicating with God (Romans 8:26-27<sup>450</sup>), some also believe it is a language the devil cannot comprehend (Daswani, 2015:82-84), hence it is a sign of confusing the devil and rendering him impotent (see section 4.5.9 and 4.5.10) (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:49). According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2013:56-58), the belief in the constant presence of malevolent spirits in African cosmology has made it necessary for contemporary Ghanaian Pentecostals, drawing on this background, to use tongues as an almost quasi-magical ‘tool of the Spirit’. The language of the Holy Spirit then becomes encrypted communication with the Spirit to confuse the spirit world so that principalities and powers would not know what one is praying about. The tongues are used magically to chant, claim, and restrict spiritual powers. This Pentecostal theology is picked from 1 Corinthians 14:14a where Paul says praying in tongues is praying the Spirit to God. To make prayer unintelligible for the physical and spiritual, they pray in tongues and cast out demons in tongues. This, therefore, causes Pentecostal praying for the casting out of demons to pray in tongues purportedly to confuse the demons to cast them out. Does this also mean that if one is not baptised in the Holy Spirit, they cannot pray to overcome and cast out demons? Nonetheless, Pentecostals forget the second part of 1 Corinthians 14:14 and 1 Corinthians 14:15 where Paul indicates that he prays with his mind as well.

Even though it may not be wrong to pray in tongues to cast out demons, it must be emphasised that this stance is in contrast with the practice of Jesus when He was casting out demons (reference to Mark 7, Mark 9, and Mark 8). Jesus did not use a strange or foreign language but an intelligible language (Lk 8:30<sup>451</sup>), and in some instances, He did not even interact with the demons (Mark 1:34<sup>452</sup>, Luke 4:41<sup>453</sup>, Mark 16:17, John 14:13, John 16:23–

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<sup>450</sup> ‘In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God’ (Rom 8:26-27).

<sup>451</sup> ‘Jesus asked him, ‘What is your name?’ ‘Legion,’ he replied, because many demons had gone into him. And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.’ (Lk 8:30).

<sup>452</sup> ‘... and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was’ (Mk 1:34).

<sup>453</sup> ‘Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, ‘You are the Son of God!’ But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Messiah.’ (Lk 4:41).

26). The Pentecostal insistent practice of casting out demons in tongues, thus, seems contrary to biblical tradition. The key emphasis rather is doing this in the name of Jesus (Mark 16:17, John 15:16, and John 16:23, 26).

Again, from section 5.3.2 and 5.74, Pentecostal prayer is mediated in the name of Jesus, the blood of Jesus, and the fire of the Holy Spirit, be it healing, deliverance or warfare. Healing in the New Testament is a manifestation of the Messianic Age (Luke 4:18–19<sup>454</sup>). Even though faith is very critical when it comes to appropriating healing (cf. Matthew 15:28<sup>455</sup>, Luke 8:50<sup>456</sup>, Acts 3:16<sup>457</sup> and 14:9–10<sup>458</sup>), the sovereignty of God remains primary. In John 5:1–9, at the pool of Bethesda, when Jesus healed the man who had been bedridden for 38 years, the Bible does not record any other healing at the pool.

After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, ‘Do you want to be healed?’ The sick man answered him, ‘Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Get up, take up your bed, and walk.’ And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath. (Jn 5:1–9)

This brings to the fore the subject of God’s’ sovereignty when it comes to healing. Christ could have healed all the sick people at the pool, but he went there purposely to heal one man. Again, therefore, even though the individual’s position in Christ is also important during the prayer of healing, the sovereignty of God remains critical. Notably, miracles occur in the lives of unbelievers to prove the greatness of God, which again emphasises the issue of the sovereignty of God. It must be understood that it is not only a matter of faith levels, shouting, screaming, and authoritative prayer that activates the healing grace of God. In short, it must be noted that even though faith is a key ingredient in healing, the sovereignty of God is a critical driver (Rom 9).

Another paradoxical prayer practice concerning demon possession comes from sections 4.5.9 and 4.5.10. It is believed that a born-again believer in right standing with God

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<sup>454</sup> ‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.’ (Lk 4:18-19).

<sup>455</sup> ‘Then Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.’ And her daughter was healed at that moment’ (Mat 15:28).

<sup>456</sup> ‘Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, ‘Don’t be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.’ (Lk 8:50)

<sup>457</sup> ‘By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see’ (Ac 3:16).

<sup>458</sup> ‘He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and called out, ‘Stand up on your feet!’ At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.’ (Ac 14:9-10).

cannot be inhabited by a demon (Onyiah, 2019:185-195). There are no records in the Bible of born-again believers being inhabited by demons. Rather, the Bible projects people who have not been saved (Matthew 8:28–33 and Luke 4:40–41).

When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. ‘What do you want with us, Son of God?’ they shouted. ‘Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?’ Some distance from them a large herd of pigs was feeding. The demons begged Jesus, ‘If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs.’ He said to them, ‘Go!’ So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water. Those tending the pigs ran off, went into the town and reported all this, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men.” (Mat 8:28-33)

At sunset, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, ‘You are the Son of God!’ But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Messiah.” (Lk 4:40-41)

Why then the excessive emphasis and practice for casting out demons in new Pentecostal prayer practices? Invariably, the teachings and practices on demon possession continue to appeal to Pentecostals as a remnant African worldview. Even though a major Pentecostal church such as the CoP has rejected these prayer practices on theological grounds, its absolute implementation continues to be a challenge.

When praying for the sick, some Pentecostals mostly command a demon to leave the person, believing that the sickness would automatically disappear when the person is exorcised of the demons as demonstrated by Jesus in Mark 5:7–8.<sup>459</sup> Must every sickness, or any sickness at all, be associated with demons? This too is a theologically incorrect understanding of prayer. I personally recall one occasion when a Pentecostal was praying for a sick person in the following words:

*You spirit of sickness, you spirit of headache, you have ears, you have a name, you are a spirit. I command you to come out of our sister in Jesus’ name.*

Indeed, one cannot dispute the fact that through prayer, many Christians have been healed of many diseases and experienced the manifestation of miracles as recorded in the CoP book of testimonies entitled ‘God’s power at work’ (CoP, 2017). The exorcising of demons is, however, usually associated with new converts or people who are not in right standing with God. The above discussion again feeds into the African cosmological worldview as discussed in the next section.

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<sup>459</sup> ‘He shouted at the top of his voice, ‘What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God’s name don’t torture me!’ For Jesus had said to him, ‘Come out of this man, you impure spirit!’” (Mark 5:7-8).

### 6.2.3 Theological Evaluation of the Effect of African Cosmological Worldview on Prayer

African societies are believed to be characterised by cosmologies of evil spirits who do not necessarily seek the well-being of humans. The belief in a cosmologically saturated environment replete with witches, demons, wicked gods, territorial spirits, and ancestral curses has dominated the prayer patterns of many African churches and, therefore, affects the nature of Pentecostal and neo-prophetic prayer (Quayesi-Amakye, 2016:3). It is also not strange that, due to the causal nature of the African traditional worldview (Sakupapa, 2012:424), Pentecostal churches that can place traditional understanding of the cosmic realms in the Christian belief achieve much success (Larbi, 2002:143). In a dualistic spirit-centred world, where everything physical is translated to have a spiritual impetus (Ampadu, 2020:65), prayer has become the key to frustrating the activities of the dark world (Dorny, 2018:18-21). With this African worldview filled with the malevolent activities of the *otanfo* (refer to section 2.9.5, 3.9.2.1 and 5.2.2), it is understandable that for many Pentecostals, the *otanfo* can only be rendered impotent through the activated power of the Holy Spirit. It also follows that during prayer sessions, the Holy Spirit is activated as the super-power to overcome all cosmic reality in the life of the believer (Sakupapa, 2012:423).

Spiritual warfare thrives on the belief that the cosmic powers frustrate human existence and must, therefore, be displaced and disengaged through force (Quayesi-Amakye, 2016:1). Consequently, prayer is seen as a vital defence against the schemes of the enemies and an offensive weapon to ‘attack the corridors of the enemy’ to help win the battle in the spiritual realms (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:42-43). As said earlier, this exemplifies the pattern of prayer and other practices in most neo-Pentecostal churches as discussed in sections 5.2.1, and 5.3. Prayer times in these churches are, therefore, not taken lightly. Prayer is an act of energy, zeal and importunity (Wariboko 2017:12). Prayer must be handled seriously, for the results you receive from prayer are directly proportional to the energy you dispense during prayer.

Again, as was seen, the belief in demons has resulted in a change in the pattern of our prayers as discussed in section 4.5.9, 4.5.10, and 5.3.1. Since demons do not seek the well-being of people, they must be treated harshly in spiritual realms with vindictive prayers. This resonates with the resound of the emerging prayer pattern of *twitwa wɔn* (cut them), *tiatia*

*wɔn* (trample over them), *bɔ wɔn tuo* (shoot them)<sup>460</sup>, as described in sections 5.3.1, 5.3.2, and 5.3.4. Prayer times are the only times Pentecostals mete out their anger and fury on the demons in retaliation for their wicked deeds in the life of the pray-er or that of a loved one. This results in a compelling situation where the focus of prayers and the prayer disposition of adherents is to discipline Satan and his cohorts, demons, *ɔtanfo*, *abayifo*, et cetera. This has resulted usually in the mentioned of the name of Satan and his cohorts, demons, *ɔtanfo*, *abayifo*, et cetera many more times in a single prayer than rather focussing on the greatness and sovereignty of God. One obvious point of (theological) critique against the overemphasis of such prayers is that it invariably seems to ‘or may reduce’ the greatness and power of God in the minds of believers, since the name of the devil is mentioned more than the name of God.

Emerging prayer practices are, therefore, vindictive in nature. The Pentecostal vindictive prayers as discussed in sections 5.3.1, 5.3.2, and 5.3.4 are mostly based on Ephesians 6:10–12<sup>461</sup>, and 2 Corinthians 10:4–5<sup>462</sup> as a basis for warfare prayers against principalities and forces of darkness. The theological issue here is that the Pentecostal fails to acknowledge that the issues of spiritual warfare are spiritual than physical. They unfortunately spend many hours in prayer mmetaphorically killing the enemy with gunshots or slicing them with chain saw, only to return to the same actions the following day. The many hours used for the killing of the *ɔtanfo* could have been used for other more profitable spiritual exercises. This has also resulted in their prayer sessions marked by many ritualistic and sacramental activities as discussed in the next section.

#### **6.2.4 Theological Evaluation of Sacramental Carryovers**

Sacramental prayers have been described in section 5.3.1 as prayers with associated physical ritualistic gestures or practices that are believed to have spiritual impetus. Even though Classical Pentecostals reflexively oppose ritualistic activities, rituals play a crucial part in

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<sup>460</sup> This video of 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019 shows members seriously beating the devil during a church service on Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/frank.ayim.dampitey/videos/2515665081834735/> (Date accessed 15 May 2022).

<sup>461</sup> ‘Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms’ (Eph 6:10-12).

<sup>462</sup> ‘The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds’ (2 Cor 10:4).

their spiritual lives (Daswani, 2015:82-84), which is partly why neo-Pentecostalism has been so successful. While it is believed that rituals give proponents a sense of shared purpose, ritual acts and symbols are crucial (Daswani, 2015:82-84). The neo-prophetic churches hold that the fundamental role of rituals needs to be appreciated in the social life of a community (Robbins, 2009:56), hence the ritual contextual adaptations. Pentecostals have therefore cultivated ritual practices to relate the supernatural (transcendentally) during prayer (Daswani, 2015:8). Girish Daswani refers to the ritual act of praying as an Aristotelian model of prayer augmented with platonically inspired motions, words, palms pointing upward, loud prayers, walking up and down, and hands motioning in a condition of attacking and reprimanding the enemy. During such prayer, therefore, Pentecostals do not just pray ‘with gestures’; all their gestures have meaning including their posture and tone of prayer. All these are important aspects of their prayer language.

The character of prayer of the Pentecostal is also parallel to the African traditional Spirituality in the sense that both recognise a transcendental experiential dimension<sup>463</sup> of life (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:44). This explains the nature of deliverance, prayer, and prophetic negotiations, which are full of rituals during Pentecostal prayer services (Quayesi-Amakye, 2016:2). These ritual practices themselves are believed to enable patrons to come to terms with their problems with hope inspired to receive psychological relief (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:43-44). Sometimes, after people have prayed for long hours using some sacramental rituals, proponents leave the prayer services with the assurance that they have dealt mercilessly with their enemy or have some hope inspired that they are close to receiving responses to their prayers.

Proponents of neo-Pentecostalism have adopted litany prayers that are typical litany prayers in ATR. Litany prayers (see section 5.3.2) are military call-and-response prayers. Because of their unique nature, adherents are conversant with responses to utter when the leader shouts. For example, when the leader shouts ‘in the name of...’, the response is ‘Jesus’; when the leader shouts ‘Holy Spirit’, the adherents would shout ‘Fire’; when the leader shouts ‘*chooboi!*’, the response is ‘*yey!*’ all with some associated ritualistic gestures. During other sessions, the leader prays in a particular manner such as jumping, running, clapping and requests the followers to pray in the same manner (as described in section 5.3.1). Other rituals associated with sacramental prayers are the use of canes for caning the devil, machetes for slicing the devil, and stones for stoning the devil to mete out punishment

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<sup>463</sup> Supernatural but experiential dimension of life.

to him. Again, other sacramental prayers occur in the form of ‘running around your wall of Jericho’ to bring it down; anointing people’s doorposts; the use of *Nhyira Nsuo*<sup>464</sup> for a breakthrough in people’s lives; and sometimes bringing sand from one’s home to be prayed over because of demonic infestation.

It is important to note that although faith is crucial in getting results for our prayers, it is not the zeal, energy and ritualistic gestures that bring the responses to prayer; but as discussed in sections 4.9.3, and 4.9.4; the result to prayer is precipitated by praying according to the will of God and based on the sovereign grace of God. Again, it is important to note that the position of an individual in relation to Christ is critical. The story of Acts 19:13–16 should be noted to the effect that it is not all who mention the name of Jesus who shall be saved, but those who are in right standing with God.

Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, ‘In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out. ‘Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, ‘Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you? ‘Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding (Ac 19:13–16).

Finally, modern-day neo-prophets assume that the invocative prayer in the name and blood of Jesus should at all costs do all their miracles. People who come to pray, therefore, are required to shout the name of Jesus with perceived magical ascriptions (Quayesi-Amakye, 2015e:18) believed to be effective in combating cosmic spirits (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:52). The inadvertent practice of rituals has led to the upsurge of rituals in the Pentecostal community.

Sacramentally, during communion services (see section 3.8.11), Pentecostals uphold the elements of communion as a miracle food and believes that when prayers are said, it activates the presence of the Lord in the elements of the communion – that the wine would be turned spiritually into the blood of the Lord and the bread would be turned into the actual body of the Lord. When taken, these elements, activate miracles, signs, and wonders and mediate healing in the life of the believer. It must be recalled that the purpose of communion in itself is a remembrance service as indicated in Matthew 26:20–30 and 1 Corinthians 11:23–25 and a reflection on a charge to propagate the gospel any time we eat. This is not to

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<sup>464</sup> *Nhyira Nsuo* is an Akan term for blessed water. These waters are drawn from wells dug at the prayer ground with their water blessed like the water of Jordan. They are sometimes called Jordan water purportedly believed to produce breakthrough such as childbirth for barren women, and financial breakthrough when sprinkled over one’s business.

say one is disputing the possible miraculous occurrence during communion. We must, however, understand that it is not the transformation of the bread to the body, and the wine to the blood of Jesus that brought about the healing, but the activation of God's grace of healing during the communion service.

### 6.2.5 Theological Evaluation of the Mediatorial Role of the Neo-Prophet

ATR evolved from the point of departure that some people have direct access to the gods and can offer ritual cleansing, propitiation, and restoration on behalf of others (Omenyo, 2014:141). ATR, therefore, believes that people cannot directly approach a deity, but some need the assistance of intermediaries to help them. In the traditional Akan and other cultural settings, one cannot speak directly to the chief. A visitor, for example, needs to pass all messages through the *ɔkyeame*. When the *ɔkyeame*<sup>465</sup> is not available, one must wait until he is present before communication can commence. As discussed in section 5.7.1, this practice has been adopted into Pentecostalism with prayer moving from the seeker-centred (prayer offered by the one in need) to solution-centred (seeking prayer help from others). Religious functionaries (neo-prophets), who claim to receive prophetic messages from God (Onyinah, 2022:55-71), therefore, pose as solution centres for people, acting on behalf of others, speaking to God on their behalf, and seeking special favour for them (Omenyo, 2014:141).

The above African traditional nomenclature of the '*hierarchy of prayers*' and '*hierarchy of pray-ers*' has resulted in the evolution of spiritual or prayer giants. People, therefore, are unable to pray themselves but resort to spiritual intermediaries to pray on their behalf. Some of these neo-prophetic prayer giants, through the use of prayer markets, prayer consultations, and prayer outsourcing, also capitalise on people's ignorance and inject them with fear so they would come flocking to them for prayer (see section 5.6). Moreover, Pentecostal neo-prophets who are a seeming re-emergence of the traditional witch doctors use many sacred objects to perform sacramental prayer, and purposively use the Holy Spirit as the revealing Spirit, and re-enacting Spirit to perform the wonders. Indeed, though not all people may achieve their goals, Pentecostal prayers provide hope to proponents that they would surely overcome their challenges one day.

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<sup>465</sup> An *ɔkyeame* is an Akan word for a linguist, someone who is skilled in many languages, but in this instance repeats information from the chief to the people or from the people to the chief. People are not allowed to speak to the chief directly. This is because the *ɔkyeame* is responsible for reframing sentences that are not linguistically acceptable in the particular culture.



Just like the traditional consultation at the traditional fetish grounds, these neo-prophetic prayer giants prophesy about the lives of their proponents with information such as their telephone numbers, and the name of one family member, or a friend just to make proponents believe in the consultant, and to give them hope that they are at the right place. This prayer giant<sup>466</sup> then predicts the future (Owusu Bempah, 2021), and directs them on how to go about certain aspects of their lives so their future predictions (prophecy) could become a reality. Some directives include the avoidance of some foods, applying caution when associating with some family members or friends, or when travelling to one's hometown. In other instances, to inspire faith in adherents, the neo-prophetic would give petitioners some spiritual items such as food, olive oil, holy water, a cloth, an apron, a hand band, or a necklace. They are told to either sprinkle or place these items in their homes or hold them when praying daily as indicated in section 5.3.2. These practices are based on Acts 19:12 where handkerchiefs and aprons that touched the skin of Paul were carried away and put on the sick and their diseases left them. This account was a single reported account in the book of Acts, nonetheless, and it was not a directive from the apostle to use such aprons, but the crowd had that intuition, practised it, and had breakthrough.

A theology of Pentecostal sacramentalism should not always be deduced from this, and other similar events such as the account of Jesus healing a blind man with spittle at Bethsaida as reported in John 9:1–7, and Mark 8:22–26. It must be understood that in Pentecostalism, there is what I call the '*theology of occasionality*' where leaders are led and directed occasionally by the Spirit to do something, which must not be repeated in subsequent times—this is what Jesus did in the case of the healing of the blind man. This was a rare practice of Jesus using a specific mediatorial item in healing, which was never repeated by Jesus. As a Pentecostal pastor, when I occasionally lead prayer sessions or pray for a sick person for healing, I may be directed by the Spirit in a particular way (for example to pray on the water to be given to the person to drink, which is the true meaning of Roman 8:14, and Galatians 5:25) and, provided the person gets healed, I do not draw theologies out of this, and I do not repeat this all the time in prayer. Pentecostals believe that God moves in a unique way, and God's move today may not be the same as yesterday. Furthermore, even in the two cases above (Paul and Jesus), these practices were never commercialised as would be discussed in section 6.2.6 below. It must be emphasised that since in the African Pentecostal worldview, prayer has a clear causal effect (Sakupapa, 2012:424), it may be seen purely as a

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<sup>466</sup> As discussed in section 5.6.2.

means to achieve an end and hence, prayer must never be used as a means of exploiting people commercially.

Based on the African Traditional worldview, people desire to have immediate results concerning the things of life especially when they pray as discussed in section 2.9.2, and 4.8. This quest for immediacy, therefore, results in people seeking spiritual help from such powerful men and women who are believed to have solutions to all problems of life. The transactional nature (see section 5.7.4) of Pentecostal prayer is on the increase because these neo-prophets promise to provide immediate solution to the needs of people (Omenyo and Atiemo, 2006:58). This has led many to blindly affiliate with them (Goshdze, 2019:193). This '*theology of immediacy*' (the belief in and search for immediate solutions to their problems and answers to prayer) as I call it, has resulted in adherents going to all lengths, and visiting specific places in search of results to their problems and are ready to pay any price associated with it as discussed in section 6.2.6 below.

In addition, proponents are seemingly less concerned about how or where the results come from; their primary concern is the results. The long queues during advertised neo-prophetic counselling sessions for prayer consultation (as discussed in section 5.6.2) depict the abject needs of the people (Omenyo and Arthur, 2013:58). Those who consult such intermediaries clearly lack a full appreciation of the extent of Christian salvation, the sovereignty of God (section 4.9.4), and the patience during the gestation period of prayer (section 4.9.2). This theology of immediacy seems the surest solution to the problem of delay as people are unable to wait for a God who keeps so long in responding to issues (Gifford, 2004:77); so, if there is a way for supplicants to force God to act, then they use that medium which is in concordance with the African worldview, albeit mediated now by neo-prophets and not witch doctors.

These Christians fail to appreciate that the death of Christ gave them full access to the throne of grace (Romans 5:2, Ephesians 2:18 and Ephesians 3:11–12) to obtain mercy in time of need<sup>467</sup> (cf. Hebrews 4:16). The seeming fear of the unknown and desire to inquire about their destinies leads such people into *akwankyerε* (see sections 2.9.5, 4.5.8, 5.2.2, and 5.6.2). The challenge is that proponents fail to acknowledge their position as believers in the household of God, and as heirs of God (Romans 8:16–17; Galatians 3:28–29; Titus 3:6–7),

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<sup>467</sup> 'Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need' (Heb 4:16).

for which reason the neo-prophets have taken advantage of their ignorance and continue to exploit them.

### 6.2.6 Theological Evaluation of the Prayer in light of the Prosperity Gospel

Pentecostal prayer was modelled as one focusing on the transformation of the lifestyle of the individual into the nature of Christ, and it, therefore, dwelt on the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Pentecostal prayer was thus characterised as transformational in nature as discussed in section 4.7.5, and 4.4.9. However, currently there seems to be a drift towards a transactional mode from section 5.7.4. Many factors could account for this drift, although not all the factors may be theologically legitimate.

At the core of every religion is the quest for salvation. This salvation must however not be an abstract phenomenon; it must be evident in the life of the adherents. In traditional culture, longevity, wealth, and fulfilment are key indicators of successful living (Omenyo and Arthur, 2013:60). During traditional religious festivals, libation is poured, and prayer is said for community well-being. Chiefs and community leaders also dress in opulence to display wealth and authority.

The above view and actions have resulted in the preaching of abundant life on the airwaves and media outlets that teach that the abundance in John 10:10<sup>468</sup> must be the portion of the believer (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:108). This gospel has resulted in proponents using all means to acquire wealth and material gains for themselves. This has also resulted in a theology that tilted toward a *theologia gloriae* (theology of glory and power) (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:110) rather than *theologia crucis* (theology of the cross/suffering) (Karkkainen, 2002). To many adherents of the so-called prosperity gospel, the desire for quick-fix solutions to their financial problems are foremost; and for church leaders, it is a means of amassing wealth from church members.

As discussed in section 3.8.1, during gospel outreaches and crusades, Jesus is not only presented as a healer and saviour, but a great provider of everything good (Omenyo, 2014:141). People, therefore, convert with a transpositional<sup>469</sup> mindset the four-square gospel: 1) Jesus the saviour saves you from disgrace; 2) Jesus the healer heals you of poverty; 3) Jesus the baptiser baptises you with wealth and affluence, and 4) Jesus the soon-coming-

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<sup>468</sup> 'The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly' (Jn 10:10).

<sup>469</sup> The term 'Transpositional' here has been used to mean importing and adopting views in other religions into Christianity.

King prepares a glorious future for you (Aboah, 2022b:66). This interpretation then easily dictates the nature of many emerging Pentecostal prayers.

Reading Philippians 4:19<sup>470</sup>, neo-Pentecostals and neo-prophets preach a gospel of great supply and great provision. They demonstrate the promise of Christ to supply every need; hence, it requires every believer to tap into this promise. During prayer sessions therefore, it is not strange to hear people shouting, ‘I receive in Jesus’ name!’ Some leaders even go to the extent of encouraging their members to ‘be smart, work smart and think smart<sup>471</sup>’ to access the promises of God.

The prosperity gospel has been the topic of much research and critique by many scholars (cf. Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005, 2013; Quayesi-Amakye, 2011a, 2015a; Nel, 2020; White and Aikins, 2021); and discussing this in detail falls beyond the scope of this study. It is however a very popular teaching (MacTavish, 2014:12) that material things and well-being are sure indicators of God’s favour, a feature that may breed greed and materialism (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:107). With regard to prayer, proponents are made to believe that it takes special prayer and intercession to access breakthroughs and prosperity in the life of an individual.

The complex duality (good and bad side) of the prosperity gospel in the life of proponents and church leaders explains the characteristic nature of some emerging Pentecostal practices of prayer. When one goes to many major market centres, and even along the busy roads in the major cities in Ghana, one can see a number of mini-evangelists who have positioned their posts declaring the African gospel of salvation usually of well-being and health to their hearers who in turn give freely to these people, not under compulsion (De Witte, 2008:699-701, 2016:15-18). Once people hear of blessings and good omens, they wish to respond with a token of money. The giving of money to the neo-prophetic may, therefore, not necessarily be under compulsion, but because proponents feel these neo-prophets are representatives of God who could declare blessings and favour on their behalf. Such feeling or belief is an enculturated ATR view of the *hierarchy of prayer* (cf. Mark 9:41, Mathew 10:41-42)! Furthermore, many Africans see giving, and for that matter sacrifices, as means of mediating the supernatural world to access favour and blessing especially due to their belief in a hierarchy of *pray-ers*. Again, since Pentecostals believe in

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<sup>470</sup> ‘And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus’ (Phil 4:19).

<sup>471</sup> The word ‘smart’ here means one must endeavour to use every opportunity irrespective of the form it takes, purportedly good or bad to acquire or reach their results.

the power of giving, giving is believed to result in a corresponding physical blessing (Luke 6:38) and mysterious divine blessing (Hebrew 7:5-10) (Adjaloo, 2022:44-47). It seems apparent that, even when not under compulsion or cohesion, many will, and one must be careful not to blame them for being exploited.

Undoubtedly, the prosperity gospel marks most of these prayer programmes, prayer festivals, and prayer activities in Ghana as a form of ‘trans-positioning’ the leaders from their current modest means to a status of wealth and opulence. Some of these prayer programmes are even given names that depict a prosperity objective; for example, ‘breakthrough prayers’, ‘destiny-changing prayers’, and ‘financial summits’. During such programmes, special offerings are collected, and special prayers are offered for those who give larger amounts (Quayesi-Amakye, 2011:298). This entices people to give a higher amount to receive special prayers and blessings – sometimes from higher authorities in the church.<sup>472</sup>

It has been said that African Pentecostal theology is based on Christology and Pneumatology. While Christology here implies that Christ is preached as the answer to all challenges, Pneumatology means that the Holy Spirit is the empowering force. The Holy Spirit, just as the spirit(s) in the ATR, is key in helping the prophets transcend local problems. Powerful as they are, the leaders are able to tap into the Holy Spirit and convert desires into possible realities by faith (Daswani, 2015: 90). In order to influence their followers’ worldview, and again ensure their success, these prophets pray over handkerchiefs, banknotes, and advise individuals to keep such banknotes in their wallets, purses and pockets and not use them (Daswani, 2015: 90) since the power of the Holy Spirit is at work in these currencies to mediate on their behalf. These prophets claim that the objects they pray over transform into holy, combat-like objects that mediate for the supporters, using the power of the Holy Spirit. Just like another gospel Paul spoke about (cf. Galatians 1:6-7), grace may abound undoubtedly, but proponents must be encouraged to work hard and genuinely as Paul indicated in 1 Corinthians 15:10–11.

Christologically, Pentecostals preach a gospel of Jesus who can do all things and change people’s destinies, which is, of course, theologically correct. Some however find

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<sup>472</sup> During one festival, those who gave an equivalent of US\$ 10,000 were prayed for by the archbishop himself; those who gave US\$ 5,000 were prayed for by a bishop, those who gave US\$1,000 were prayed for by the pastor, those who gave US\$500 were prayed for by the deacon and all who gave less than that amount were prayed for, but in a very lukewarm manner. In another programme, the leader picked an amount equivalent to US\$1 and after praying over it, told the members that whoever gets the money should not spend but keep it in his/her purse forever as it would pull a million times the deposit into the account. The members then began to scramble for the US\$1 money because they had been made to believe that the single note would change their destiny (Daswani, 2015:77).

pleasure and a need to practise the sale of material ‘special’ objects, requesting huge consultation fees to see believers, and requesting payment of fees for special prayers all in a bid to get rich themselves. This theology has created an economic boom for these neo-prophets. It does, therefore, not come as a surprise that Adjei, Oduro-Kwarteng, and Frimpong (2019:103), tell that in the last quarter of 2019, one of Ghana’s leading neo-prophets purchased a custom made 2020 Rolls Royce at the cost of 920,000.00 USD. Given the wealth of such a prophet, it is also not strange that some people believe that the richer and more influential a leader is, the more likely their followers would be to also attain the same.

The prosperity gospel has brought in its wake, what may be called a ‘*theology of the point of contact*’. Proponents have been made to believe that Satan is using poverty to win people into his kingdom (Potency et al., 2017:47) so they need some special prayer items acquired at a cost, and *as a point of contact* to protect them, and change their fortunes. The quest for prosperity and breakthrough is the reason for all the items (anointing oil, holy water, and other sacred items) sold at the Prayer markets (see section 5.6.1) for transactional and sacramental prayers (as discussed in section 5.3.1 and 5.7.4). Prayers are now full of petitions and summoning spirits who are believed to be the source of poverty and people’s downfall. In short, prayer giants and neo-prophets instil fear in the lives of adherents instead of growing faith in them and helping them develop the Spirituality of praying to God about their own needs.

3 John 1:2 holds that it should be well with believers’ bodies, souls and spirits, so the prosperity gospel may not altogether be bad (cf. White and Aikins, 2021:1-3), yet its mode of application and teaching may be critical to the breeding of corruption in an age where 79% of Ghanaians are Christian, but corruption is endemic to the country. To its proponents, the prosperity gospel is defended as a means by which Pentecostals may be inspired to work hard and go the extra mile. Others believe that it is a practical way of encouraging members to *save* money to start a new business and break the bonds of poverty (Miller and Yamamori, 2007:28-30). Yet, it remains a sad reality that the greatest beneficiaries of the prosperity gospel are the preachers and founders of such churches. It is not a wonder then that the prosperity gospel faces many calls for theological rethinking!

### **6.2.7 Theological Evaluation of the Authoritative Transactional Nature of Pentecostal Prayer**

The prayer of Pentecostals, neo-Pentecostals, and neo-prophetics are characterised by times of dispensing authority and power as discussed in sections 4.7.5, and 5.7.2. During times of

such prayers, heavens and God are usually commanded to move, and the angels are commanded to services, while demons are cast out with force. According to Asamoah Gyadu (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013a:56), Pentecostals are authoritative in their prayer disposition, with a seemingly lack of submission and humility. Asamoah-Gyadu (2013:56) also maintains that Pentecostals pray with that much of authority because they hold that Jesus cast out demons with a voice of authority, and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit grants the believer power and authority, especially over demons. The perception that demonic spirits are powerful gives the impression that Pentecostals must pray with a counter power; hence, Pentecostal prayer is contextualised as ‘transactionally authoritative’ as discussed in section 5.7.4.

Meanwhile, this authority is what Duncan Williams (2004:6) theologises as the ‘dominion mandate’. For Williams, God has ceded the authority over everything on earth to humanity. The latter, therefore, has a mandate of dominion over creation, and has been given power to command situations and circumstances in their favour. Quoting Genesis 1:26–28<sup>473</sup>, Williams holds that the *creation* mandate meant God has given humanity all the authority in creation without interference or limit.

Other texts sometimes used in respect of prayer of authority are Matthew 28:18–20<sup>474</sup>, and 16:19<sup>475</sup>, from which Pentecostals draw their conferred authority from Christ. It is believed that Matthew 28:18 holds that ‘all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to them’ (transferred from Christ unto them in this case) to exercise control over all situations and specifically through prayer. The power to bind and loose (as found in Mathew 16:18, and 18:18) too is, therefore, conferred on Pentecostals through the name of Jesus.

Again, this emphasis on the authoritative nature of Pentecostal prayer is more understandable to the background of the traditional African worldview where it is believed that due to the dominance of evil, one must exercise the power of Christ conferred on us

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<sup>473</sup> ‘Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground’ (Gen 1:26-28).

<sup>474</sup> ‘Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’” (Mat 28:18-20).

<sup>475</sup> ‘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” (Mat 16:19).

against forces of darkness, principalities, and powers. In 2019, I recounted the story of how my own son, Andronicus, then eleven, was asked to lead us through a devotional prayer one Saturday. He quoted Ps 27:1ff and said in prayer:

*God, please protect us from evildoers and the devil that want to eat our flesh*

*God, please help us not to stumble and fall on the way.*

I wondered how my child learned about evildoers in a house where demons, evil forces, principalities, and powers are hardly spoken of. Interestingly, this was the second time he had prayed such a prayer. Asked how he learned about it, he responded that he learned it from a schoolteacher at the age of eight! Similarly, at a joint extended family prayer devotions at Sowutuom on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020, Vania Addai, who was eight years old at the time, was asked to pray after the devotions.<sup>476</sup> She prayed as follows:

*Father, we thank you for a day like this. As we are going to sleep, we commit our sleep into your care. We come against any evil plan of the enemy against our lives. Please let their plans fail in Jesus' name.*

What interests me was not only how these young people have been wrapped up so early in the African worldview, but also how they have come to understand that prayer exercises transactional authority to stop every scheme of the enemy as Pentecostals. These prayers raise the question of how one could command God to take control over issues if our theology teaches that God is already in control. This authoritative nature of Pentecostal prayers affects the relationship with the Triune. This practice of prayer seems to rely rather strongly on an ATR worldview in which prayer is exercised in the authority of the gods when a local priest is praying. These prayers are therefore parallel to those in ATR, which are expressly based on the African traditional worldview.

The authoritative nature of prayer seems to affect all modes or types of prayer, be it petitions and intercession, and even worship. Even though we read from Hebrews 4:16 that 'Let us approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need', one must learn to be humble when approaching the throne of grace as written in Psalm 55:19, Psalm 147:6, and Psalm 149:4. The Bible had recorded many instances of prayers of petition in humble posture usually associated with fasting mode such as in Ezra 10:6–9, by Esther in Esther 4:16, and Hannah in 1 Samuel 1:12–15 for which reasons God responded favourably to their pleas. It is worth noting that God rewards the humble and inclines to the petition of the humble.

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<sup>476</sup> Vania Addai is the third born of Ps Kingsley Addai, a minister of The Church of Pentecost in Ghana.



## 6.2.8 Theological Review of ‘Biblical Consequential’ and ‘Pneumato-Biblical’ Prayer

Due to the strong orality of African Pentecostalism and the weak hermeneutical appreciation of Scripture, the content of the Bible is often read and preached without proper exegetical understanding (see section 3.8.5). This has led to all sorts of prayers directly inferred from the Bible without proper theological reflection (see section 4.7.6). These prayers are read from the Bible with a biblical consequential mindset (section 4.7.6) into contemporary contexts, and practice. Other practices are wrongly applied without resort to application. For the Pentecostal, the Bible was written under the guided inspiration of the Holy Spirit and therefore one does not need the strictest of hermeneutics to interpret the Bible, what I call ‘*Pneumato-Biblical*’ (section 3.8.5). This implies that all the contents in the Bible are the words of God, and they are therefore applicable to all situations.

Most neo-prophets read and interpreted the Bible based on their worldview and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It was said in section 5.7.5 that Pentecostal prayer seems to drift from Testaments to testimonies. This is a situation where people’s prayers are based on their experiences and not necessarily on the Bible narratives. It is typical for a quotation to be read during prayer, but the leader may say nothing about the quotation and then use his/her practical testimonies to motivate people to pray. The testimonial-based prayers are a re-reading of Revelations 12:11, but the role of the word of God must be clear as in the prayer interaction between Jesus and the devil in Matthew 4. Jesus quoted Scriptures in all His endeavours to overcome the enemy. In the same way, Psalm 19:7–9, 119:105, 138:2; Hebrews 4:12–13; and 1 Thessalonians 2:13–17 emphasise the role of the word of God in the lives of believers, and, hence, in their communication with God.

Even though some level of adaptation of the word of God is key in African Pentecostal theology (Prosen, 2003:11), care must be taken regarding the extent to which it is done. In recent times, two Pentecostal leaders in Ghana have poured libation on the ground using alcohol<sup>477</sup> during prayer times during church service (Kofi Tv, 2019). Other Pentecostal prayer leaders are noted for pouring oil on the ground (as in the process of libation) whilst making decrees and declarations (Omenyo, 2014:142) during prayer. These leaders are led by what I call the ‘*transpositional content*’ of Genesis 35:14<sup>478</sup>, and 2 Sam 23:15–16<sup>479</sup> as the

<sup>477</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bU\\_5klaYWAK](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bU_5klaYWAK) (Video showing Pastor pouring libation in church).

<sup>478</sup> ‘And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone. He poured out a drink offering on it and poured oil on it’ (Gen 35:14).

reason for such libation. The neo-prophets do not see anything wrong with the pouring of libation, and uncritically justifying the act as a biblical practice, but libations are not a Pentecostal practice; it is an African Traditional practice, which has now been appropriated into prayer.

For the Pentecostal, once an act is cited in the Bible even once, it seems there is many grounds to repeat the same. Since Saul is seen in I Samuel 28, for example, to have consulted a medium at En-dor, this act too, has been the reason for prayer by some Pentecostals to call the spirit of the dead for consultation regarding current events in their lives. On some occasions, during church services, the neo-prophets have been heard calling the spirit of a dead person in prayer to enquire about them or the cause of their death.

In Mark 5:41<sup>480</sup>, Jesus picked up the unconscious girl in His arms when praying for her, and in Mark 5:28–29<sup>481</sup>, the woman with the issue of blood touched Jesus and got healed. In John 9:6–7<sup>482</sup>, Jesus spat saliva on the ground, mixed it with clay, and applied it to the eyes of a blind man, and directed him to wash at the Pool of Siloam. Some prayer leaders therefore want to touch people irrespective of their body parts when praying with them as a point of healing. From the account of John 9:6,7, Mark 7:33–35, and Mark 8:22–25, when Jesus used some unusual methods of healing, these have become the usual trend of prayer of healing for people. In recent times, some very derogatory practices have been witnessed in the neo-prophetic landscape in Ghana, most of which are misinterpretations of the accounts of Peter's shadow falling on the sick in Act 5:15, and Act 19:12; and when the handkerchiefs and aprons that Paul touched were used for mediating healing of the sick (Onyinah, 2019:303).

Some neo-prophets and neo-Pentecostals seem to read and understand the gospel from a different perspective. From the perspective of the full gospel, Christ is the healer. The Pentecostal believes that when they are ill, God must at all costs heal them. The belief that someone must be healed at all costs results in Pentecostal syncretism. From a worldview that accepts all sicknesses and oppressions as primarily caused by demons, Pentecostal

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<sup>479</sup> 'And David said longingly, 'Oh, that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem that is by the gate!' Then the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate and carried and brought it to David. But he would not drink of it. He poured it out to the LORD' (2 Sam 23:15-16).

<sup>480</sup> 'He took her by the hand and said to her, 'Talitha koum!' (which means 'Little girl, I say to you, get up!')' (Mk 5:41).

<sup>481</sup> 'because she thought, 'If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.' Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering' (Mk 5:28-29).

<sup>482</sup> 'After saying this, he spits on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. 'Go,' he told him, wash in the Pool of Siloam' (this word means 'Sent'). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing' (Jn 9:6-7).

Spirituality propagates the concept of total wholeness by the spirit of God (Smith, 2010:9-12). According to the African worldview, if orthodox medicine and prayer cannot heal sickness, and deliverance is failing to heal, then it is obviously from the devil. Again, these Pentecostals do not seem to appreciate the sovereignty of God in the affairs of humans. God, who is sovereign, can do all things, but according to God's will. The concept of theodicy, thus, seems to remain an illusion in the dictionary of many Pentecostals, especially in Africa.

Fridays are very important days in the life of the Pentecostal (see 1.2 and 1.8.2 above). Since Christ died to redeem humanity on Friday, Christ will more compassionately listen to, and answer prayers perhaps more quickly on a Friday. Fridays were and are therefore set aside for prayer meetings, and such meetings attract a large following including those who are not members of the church. Prayer meetings are also held at the local chapels during the early hours of the day from Monday to Thursday. In the rural and peri-urban areas, the dawn prayer meetings or *ahomakye sore* were also highly attended by the members, but now with dwindled attendance in the cities due to the commercial nature of their professional work. At these meetings, strength and guidance are received for the day. People went to such meetings before they set out to the farm or other workplaces. The question is, 'does the Bible draw any parallel between the death of Christ on Friday and the Christian's breakthrough; or the time of prayer and the responses one received; or the location where one prays and its effect on our responses?' Certainly not because of praying early morning, at a desolate place alone (Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16,) and on top of a mountain (Mathew 14:23) should all prayers be in that model, but one should pray contextually (Matthew 6:5-15).

Again, even though Pentecostals practise biblically consequential prayer (section 4.7.4) where people recite the words of the Bible in prayer especially reminding God of His promises, these prayers must be carefully reflected on. It must be emphasised that the single way one reads the Bible and wishes to practise same literally in prayers must be carefully watched since portions are in metaphors, euphemism, hyperbole, et cetera. Again, the Bible does not only consist of the words of God, but also the words of prophets, and even words of the devil, sometimes. One should remember Paul saying in 1 Corinthians 7:6,10 that 'this is from me not from God'. To explain the above assertion, therefore, care must be taken while reading and literally applying portions of the Bible without hermeneutical reflections. It is important that the Pentecostal's beliefs, affections, and practices of corporate worship such as singing, preaching, testifying, altar calls, prayer practices, and practice of the manifestations of the Spirit be tested as being rooted in, and mediated by the word of God. Evidently, the nature of Pentecostal prayer influences one's prayer response as discussed in the next section.

### 6.2.9 Theological Evaluation of Pentecostal Perception of God's Response to Prayer

Pentecostals believe in prophetic prayer as a two-way interaction between the pray-er and God, wherein it is believed that there is a constant communication between the two where God hears the prayers of the pray-er and, in an alternative model (section 4.9), the pray-er waits in quietness to receive from God (Antwi, 2022:37) and decodes the prayer response from God (Poloma and Lee, 2012:271). With believers having a direct interpersonal relationship with God, prayer moves from just a normal communication to an interpersonal relationship (Ladd et al., 2012:297).

During a prayer retreat organised for pastors and wives in the CoP Asokwa<sup>483</sup> Area, pastors took their turn to discuss the topic, 'God's response to the Christian's Prayer'. One pastor was of the view that since in the Old Testament (referring specifically to Deuteronomy 7:1–5, and Psalm 68:1) God was *told to* arise on behalf of humans, and God indeed arose, and impliedly today, when we pray to God to arise, God will arise *provided we believe in God*. In relation to the above assertion, it is possible for one to base the reason for the response as faith in God. Some Pentecostals believe that God would listen to humankind no matter what and respond to our prayer in the affirmative irrespective of the situation. This has become a theological flaw in the understanding of the nature and responses to one's prayer. The above requires Pentecostals to reflect in a more nuanced way on the appropriateness of the *Pentecostal-authoritative-assertive-transactional mode of prayer* (see section 4.9.4). Pentecostals must (again) understand that God works according to God's sovereignty and will. God answers as God wills according to His timing or to glorify the name of His Son, to glorify Himself, and bring people unto His saving knowledge.

Nonetheless, the response to the prayers of Esther (Esther 4:15–17), Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:1–11), and Hannah (1 Samuel 1:10–16) were based on humility in the prayer which is usually associated with fasting. For some Pentecostals, whereas prayer is the vehicle to bring the responses to our petitions, fasting is believed to put our prayer in a higher gear to accelerate the response process (Okediadi, 2008:741). The book of Acts records many historical accounts of miracles in the lives of the early disciples such as healing at the beautiful gate (Acts 3:1–10), death of Ananias and Saphira (Acts 5:1–12), Aeneas healed (in

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<sup>483</sup> The CoP Asokwa Area is made up of twenty-four ministers, including ten senior ministers. The discussions followed a prayer organised by the leadership of the CoP nationwide. The said retreat took place on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at James McKeown auditorium, Asokwa, Kumasi.

Acts 9:32–35), Dorcas restored to life (in Acts 9:36–42) and many others (Acts 5:12–17, Acts 12:1–11). As discussed in section 4.9.1, God responds in three ways to our prayer, and again based on some factors as discussed in section 4.9.3. Yet, based on section 4.9.4, even though God’s response is based on His will and timing, God may permit a favourable response to our prayers to prove His sovereignty and to glorify the name of His Son, Jesus, as in the above instances.

In line with the above, I propose that, God responds when He (God) graciously activates one of His communicable attributes (such as of love, mercy, peace, self-control, justice, patience, et cetera) in our favour. It does not come as a surprise that in a recent prayer exposition, a minister of the gospel in Ghana indicated that ‘Christians can change God’s mind through prayer’. As can be seen, I disagree! People cannot change the mind/will of God. People often quote Moses’ intercession for God’s people in Exodus 33:12–17, and Numbers 14:13–20 to mean Moses changed the mind of God. In actual fact, Moses did not change the mind of God, but I believe God activated His communicable attribute of love and mercy to pardon the people. Similarly, in the case of Esther (Esther 4:15–17), God activated kindness and mercy, and again, God activated kindness and love in the case of Hannah (1 Samuel 1:10–16). The Bible, especially the Old Testament, is replete with examples of the above. In the case of Hezekiah’s sickness (2 Kings 20:1–6), God sends a message concerning the death of Hezekiah through Isaiah. The change in the position of God was not because the prayer of Hezekiah changed the mind of God. I see that God only activated His attribute of mercy towards Hezekiah. The Lord looks at the heart of Hezekiah and has mercy on him.<sup>484</sup>

An interesting phenomenon is sometimes found when a Pentecostal prays for the forgiveness of sins. Many Pentecostals believe that once one’s adoration and worship ascend to the King of kings, and He accepts it, only then can one request the forgiveness of one’s sin. Sins committed are to be reflected upon, wrongdoing is to be brought into remembrance, hearts are supposed to be broken in remorse, and these sins will be brought before God for remission. Instead, sometimes, some Pentecostals, reflect on their past wrongdoings and instead of mentioning these sins committed before their Maker for forgiveness, interestingly

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<sup>484</sup> Recently, I experienced a devout member of the CoP whose child was suffering from a terminal disease. The recovery of the child would certainly be a miracle. Should God activate His attribute of love dispensed through Christ, the child would certainly recover. When a child of God is being cheated by someone, God may then choose to listen to a person because of the activation of God’s attribute of justice by Godself. The critical point is that prayer is a two-way communication. When we pray, God may choose to respond immediately provided it falls within God’s sovereign timing, or God may decide to respond to the prayer to glorify God’s name to draw people to Godself or by activating an attribute which is identifiable with the nature of God.

will be speaking in tongues. This leads to the perception that, when some Pentecostals are making prayers of confession to God, they do not want to pray in their languages for other people to hear and know the wrongs they have committed.

From this section, it is established that the sovereignty of God is supreme (Romans 9:11–22) over all situations. God wills and does what He likes as written in Exodus 33:19, that the Lord has mercy on whom God has mercy and is gracious to whom He is gracious. The prayers of the Pentecostal should therefore implore God to activate God's attributes when they do not align with God's timing and will, instead of chanting and commanding the heavens, and should not hastily attribute the delay of the results to demons who have held it up.

### **6.3 The Challenge of a Consolidated Pentecostal Theology**

According to Mark Cartledge (2014:258-262), history, culture and traditions have largely shaped the theology of Pentecostalism. (From this research, it was shown that this is also true with regard to *Ghanaian* Pentecostal theology.) In fact, one may say that Pentecostal theology is based on a continuum of praxis: church, community, and cultural adaptations. To some extent, therefore, some dimensions of the theology of Pentecostals continue to evolve progressively based on the cultural milieu.

According to Hollenweger (2005:2-5), Pentecostalism has five-fold roots, being black oral, Catholic, evangelical, critical, and ecumenical (cf. also Anderson, 2013:43-50). These roots may be shared by Pentecostalism in general, but this study has shown that these are not the only ones in African Pentecostalism (or elsewhere for that matter) where the origins of some churches may be traceable to other factors. It goes without saying that the offshoots of William Seymour's Azusa Street revival in the form of independent Pentecostal movements in China, India, and Africa (Anderson, 2013:43), for example, will all have traces of practices of Azusa Spirituality and theology. According to Jacobson (2003; c.f. Cartledge, 2014:2), early American Pentecostal theology itself was contextualised based on the belief of its forebears. Numerous writers on topics such as Trinity, eschatology, Christology, pneumatology, soteriology, and the 4/5-fold gospel, premise the inexhaustible debate of Pentecostal theology on inconclusive divergent discussions. The contextualisation of Pentecostal theology is therefore reflected in the diversity of opinions on, sometimes, key theological concepts in Pentecostalism.

Moving from history and context specific theological traditions, culture and society are two other influencing factors in Pentecostal theology (Cartledge, 2014:260-263). As

Miller and Yamamori (2007:31-34) put it, Pentecostalism is progressive in nature. Based on its locational orientation, Pentecostalism is seen to adapt elements of the contemporary cultural heritage. Where Pentecostalism is rooted in societies that uphold the so-called social deprivation theory, the theology and praxis of this movement may be different from those that evolve in a world where health and wealth are a fulcrum of their belief that prosperity is a sign of God's favour (Anderson, 2013:44-46).

The above features have been the challenge for consolidating a universal theology of Pentecostalism. As Miller and Yamamori (2007:30) put it, there are Pentecostal typologies that have been described as 'routinised Pentecostal' because they have shed their sectarian heritage and embraced elements of contemporary culture. This may seem dangerous for Pentecostal offshoots that will embrace and rationalise so much of the domestic culture and religion (Yong, 2014:313-315), lest they develop into other cults. Again, the lack of consolidated and cohesive Pentecostal theology eccentric to the full gospel is gradually resulting in what I perceived as 'Pentecostal syncretic schism', where evolving and breakaway Pentecostal waves would be promoting a false theology, wrong biblical interpretation, and other questionable practices.

#### **6.4 Contribution to Knowledge: Frameworks for Pentecostal Prayer**

This research has contributed to knowledge in varied ways. In the study, the concept of Spirituality generally describes the relationship between humanity and divinity as expressed in the attitudes, beliefs, practices, and mystic inclinations in the life of animate people (see section 3.3). Pentecostal Spirituality is described through its praxis experience of the Holy Spirit, and its affirmative integration of beliefs, practices, sensibilities, and values. It has been established that one's beliefs affect values, with values affecting practices and ultimately one's sensibilities and values (section 3.6).

It must be established that this research fills a knowledge gap by providing scholarly research and literature into Pentecostal Spirituality of prayer, which was little researched if any in the Ghanaian context. This study therefore fills the gap by conceptualising and theorising a Pentecostal theology of prayer, particularly with reference to Ghanaian Pentecostalism. The research established that people's theology cannot be described without elucidating their Spirituality; and in particular, this is true of Ghanaian Pentecostalism with regard to its orality and the primacy of the Holy Spirit in their theology and practice. A key contribution of this research to the Pentecostal discourse is that the perspective of Spirituality (experience and practice) and theology are defined as almost two sides of the Pentecostal

discourse. The characteristics of Pentecostal theology are thereby ingrained in its Spirituality (section 3.6).

One key area of contribution to knowledge of this research is the development of a Pentecostal cosmological model of prayer. Considering the practice of African Pentecostal prayer, it is both theologically, and in many cases, culturally rooted, stemming from a background that its praxis is affected by the reality of their dualistic worldview. This makes people pray in a particular way. The African Pentecostal understanding, and ways of prayer are however not necessarily theologically biblical. From this background, the bane of ATR is invariably the effect of this African Pentecostalism typology of prayer. In addition, the rich cultural practices and values of ATR have subconsciously been genetically ingrained in the hearts, minds, and lives of the many Pentecostals that cause them to respond to these cultures even in church. The myths and beliefs associated with ATR are not consciously learned, but sub-consciously assimilated from childhood through community and cultural engagement. The practice of mystical powers, medicine, rites, and rituals has been the vehicle for the continuity of the ATR in various dimensions in the lives of people. In other words, understanding the ATR or its prayer (including its mode(s) of doing it) has influenced Pentecostals' understanding and practice of prayer, and the way they do prayer. There is therefore an affinity between Pentecostalism and ATR; except for example, for the Pentecostal emphasis on the Holy Spirit (section 2.8, and 2.9).

From an African cosmological worldview where everything physical has a spiritual underpinning, African Pentecostal practice of prayer is evidently rooted in physical rituals that are believed to have spiritual impetus. Some African Pentecostals, therefore, in a sense, pray by translating the physical into spiritual. Their prayer practices of aiming sacramentally at the devil with guns, cutting the devil with a physical cutlass, and sawing the devil with a saw blade are believed to translate suffering and pains to the spirit world (sections 5.3.1).

Although it would be unfair and one should be careful not to describe all the practices of African Pentecostalism as rooted in the practices of ATR, it has been established that some practices of African Pentecostalism are seen as continuities of ATR with other practices emerging, following the new worldview adopted by African Pentecostals. In some cases, the similarities between African Pentecostalism and ATR are so clear that it suggests that their practices suggest a carryover (sections 5.4, and 5.4.1).

One important example of the contrary is that, although the culture and some practices of ATR are spiritually rationalised, it would be incorrect to describe the Pentecostal practice of speaking in an unknown tongue, miraculous manifestations, and the prophetic



nature of Pentecostals as carryovers from ATR. These practices have not been associated with the African Pentecostalism but are characteristic of the broader Pentecostal tradition. Interestingly, according to de Witte (2012a:173-173, 2018), ATR is itself evolving into neo-African Traditional Religion to appeal to its people since it seems to be losing members. The form and nature of ATR is therefore gradually evolving itself. So, one may say that, at least in Africa, specifically in Ghana, the influence is sometimes reciprocal.

All beliefs, affections, and practices of corporate worship such as singing, preaching, testifying, altar calls, prayer practices, and practice of the manifestations of the Spirit of Pentecostals need to be tested as being rooted in and mediated by the word of God (section 6.2.8). The activities of African Pentecostals have captured the minds of people in the *sunsum sore*<sup>485</sup> with the evolution and proliferation of prayer, or prayer-directed activities. These activities became charismatic in their use of signs of authenticating miracles, healings, and prophetic manifestations (cf. Onyinah, 2012a:135-140).

Pentecostals say that Pentecostalism originated in the Bible, specifically in the book of Acts following the act of prayer, so Pentecostals base much of their theology on the records of prayer in Acts. In Acts, 21 of the 36 references to church growth speak of prayer (Robinson 1994 in Asiedu 2018:4). In contributing to the body of knowledge therefore, this research has proposed that the Pentecostal theology of prayer be modelled according to the Acts theory as shown in Figure 6.1 and discussed below (section 5.8). It is proposed, first, that although not all African Pentecostal prayers can be described as rooted in ATR, some traits are related to African traditional nomenclature. A number of these dominant carryover factors have been discussed earlier (Chapter 5 section 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, and 5.6). These factors are beginning to show as dominant ecclesiological practices in most of these neo-Pentecostal churches in Ghana.

Secondly, African Pentecostals confess to be Trinitarian in nature, but most of their prayers focus on the Christology and Pneumatology inheritance for the purpose of their immediate needs (sections 3.9.1, 3.9.2, and 4.7.1). Whereas God is worshipped as the Godhead and His name is prayed during petitions, Pentecostals usually pray authoritatively in the name, the blood, and the cross of Jesus. These heuristic prayer characteristics are an inherited generational legacy from the Pentecostal heritage.

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<sup>485</sup> This is the local name given to African Initiated Churches that commenced on the soil of Africa. The word *sunsum* means spiritual manifestation. These churches are highly charged with prophetic and angelic visitations. These *sunsum sore* were there before the commencement of the neo-prophetic regimes.

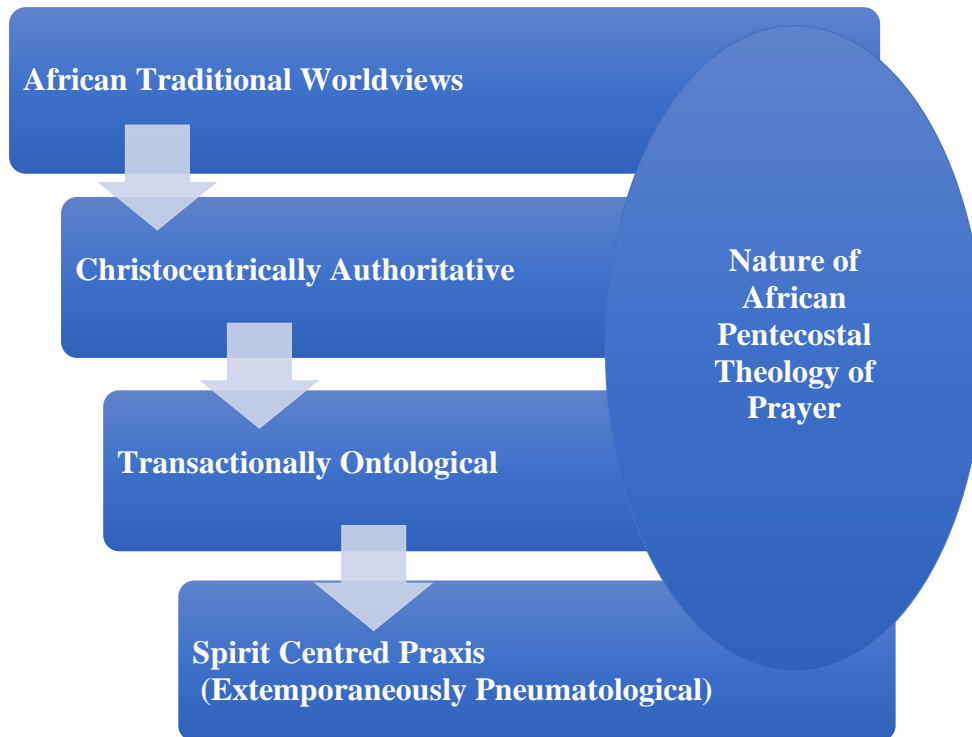


Fig 6.1 Proposed Framework on Pentecostal Theology of Prayer

Thirdly, ontologically, Pentecostal prayers are transactional in nature (sections 4.7.1 and 5.7.4). This is evident, for example, in the number of hours Ghanaian Pentecostals pray with a view to get their needs met. A significant number of the prayer sessions, prayer convocations, prayer marathons and specially branded programmes in Pentecostal circles are tailored to meet the seemingly unending needs of Pentecostals. These prayers may last for hours and even days, and purportedly aim at providing breakthrough for the need of the suppliants. The desire for financial breakthroughs, promotions, recovery from sickness, overcoming the schemes of the enemy, childbirths, and external travel for greener pastures resulted in the emerging transactional prayer modes, and prayer intermediaries for the purpose of *akwankyere* and *abisa*.

Noticeably, the nature of African Pentecostal theology of prayer is extemporaneously rooted in Spirit-centred activities. Since the Spirituality of Pentecostalism is rooted in the experience of the Spirit, beliefs, and sensibilities, values are affected by the move of the Spirit. Moreover, Pentecostal prayer can thereby be described as both ‘glossolally spontaneous’ and extemporaneous (see section 4.7.2 and 5.7.2). As indicated earlier, these prayers are full of song and characterised by many hours of prayer in the language of the Spirit to experience the power and the presence of the divine. To the Pentecostal, God’s

immediate presence should be felt in all services through the move of the Spirit with a practical demonstration of Pentecostal democracy (see section 3.8.3). Through the moving and experience of the Spirit, prophetic manifestations are possible, and the practice of healing is made visible with the outflow of testimonies in the lives of people (section 3.8.3).

Finally, this research has also contributed to the body of knowledge by discussing and analysing some existing motifs of prayer and developing a Pentecostal motif of prayer. Based on the Horton (1955) and Clowney (1990) models of prayer, the motif of prayer is based on a triad of: relationship based, duty-based, and transactional (see section 1.10.2). Indeed, according to theoretical frameworks of this thesis, Clowney (1990:136-138) holds that the first motif for prayer is relationship. And the goal of relational prayer is to strengthen bonds of friendship. The objective of prayer, according to this motif is to foster closeness and fellowship; and it aids the development of a relationship with God and the church (Clowney, 1990:138). Goldsworthy (2006:2) explains this by citing Mark 1:35 in which Jesus gets up quite early to pray while it is still dark to go to a solemn place to pray to maintain his relationship with the Father. Since Christ, despite being omnipotent and omnipresent sought to communicate divinely with His Father, the focus of his prayer then is purportedly for maintaining a relationship. As discussed at various sections of this thesis (ref to section 5.7.2 and 6.2.9), Classical Pentecostals' understanding of prayer, according to Horton (1955:8), is built on relationships and fellowship through the Holy Spirit's communion (c.f. di Trolio, 2009:41).

The second motif of prayer is the duty-driven motif in which Christians pray because prayer is viewed as their mandatory obligation, rather than for some transactional reason (Okediadi, 2017:741). This purpose of prayer is based on Old Testament law, where it was mandatory for the Jews to appear before God thrice a year for ritual prayers and sacrifices (Exodus 23:14,17, 34:23–24; Deuteronomy 16:16). Again, as recorded in 1 Samuel 1:3, Elkanah and his family worshipped the Lord at Shiloh every year when the tabernacle (tent of meeting) was present (cf. Clowney, 1990:146). The Jewish requirement of appearing before the Lord thrice in a year was mandatory and non-excusable. It was improbable that the Jews would come before God without worship, prayer offerings, and sacrifices; thus, this request for appearance was made for duty-based communication.

Invariably, the third motif seems to be a primary motif in recent times. The transactional motif is where people pray on the basis of bringing their needs and the needs of others before God. Pregnant in the transactional motif is the prayer claiming one's needs, praying for their goals and petitioning about their aspirations, and casting out demons.

Interestingly, it is apparent that recent prayers are dominantly transactional in nature. Prayer has become a visible tool for gaining power and claiming promises (Torrey, 2012:170-174). While some people use prayer to fight spiritual battles, break strongholds, and claim God's delayed blessing (Baxter and Lowery, 2006:19-21), others utilise it to start revivals (Ravenhill, 1987:149-153).

This research proposes that whilst Pentecostals pray because of the above three motifs, the effect of the duality of the socio-cultural, traditional, and cosmological views cannot be overlooked. The above thereby leads us to the reframed model that is based on the four-fold motif as indicated in Figure 6.2 below.

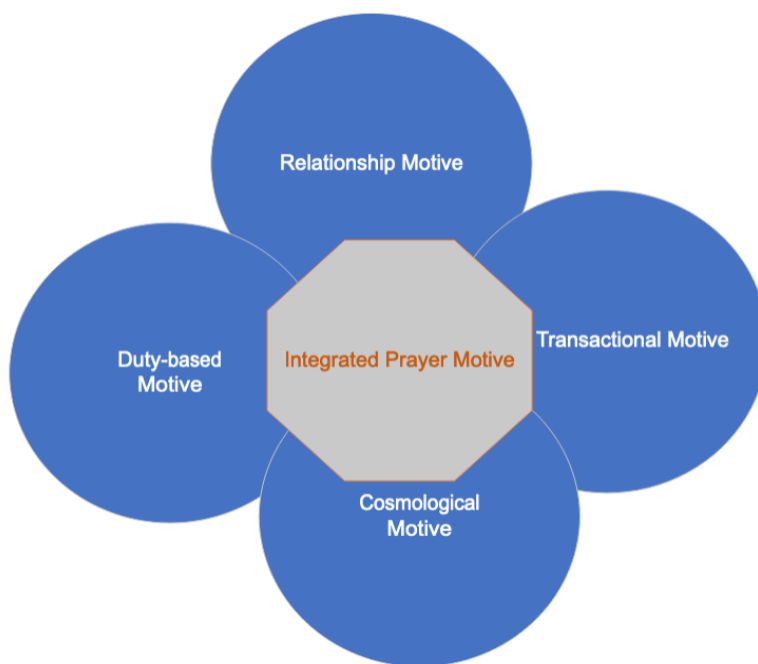


Fig 6.2 Proposed Framework for Pentecostal Theology of Prayer

In the revised model, the relationship-based motif in Pentecostal Spirituality of prayer is reframed to include the experiential basis<sup>486</sup> of the pneumatic demonstrated as fellowship and communion with the Holy Spirit. This forms an important aspect of Pentecostal Spirituality. The purpose of this motif for prayer is to connect with the things of the Spirit to receive revelations. One key aspect of the relationship-based motif is worship that places the

<sup>486</sup> See sections 3.8 for definition of experiential. See sections 4.8.3 and 5.7.2 for discussions on the experiential dimension of the pneumatic/ Holy Spirit.

believer ‘in the household’ of the Triune God. To the Pentecostal, one benefit of the relationship motif is an experience of the presence and power of the supernatural.

Holding the original concept of the duty-based motif as maintaining relationship with God as Father and Creator, I, in addition, propose that the duty-based motif encloses the forgiveness of sin; and the duty-based motif results in believers putting their trust in the things of God, and not of humans and a prayer of commitment to enable believers look heavenward at the Pentecostal eschatological motif. This prayer is not transactional, but with a view to continual infilling of the Spirit, deepening of the things of the Spirit and spiritual and physical transformation. Through the duty-based motif, favour and impartation of grace and giftings for ministry and life are released.

In relation to the transactional motif, I propose the inclusion of petitions, intercession, the prayer of blessing, and requesting for the needs of life, challenges, and problems before God. The transactional-based motif sometimes causes people to make vows and trade on promises as indicated in 1 Samuel 1:11.<sup>487</sup> Transactional prayers from the African worldview are to attain status, fame, wealth, and influence (see section 5.7.4).

It has further been demonstrated that, based on the African cosmological worldview, one dimension of prayer, whilst not relational, duty-bound nor transactional in nature, situates Africans in a cosmic struggle to overcome the fear of their world. This is related, as was shown to the Africans coming from a cultural milieu where every physical aspect of life has a spiritual underpinning (be it business, economy, health, politics, education, et cetera). The African Pentecostal, therefore, mostly seeks not only to unravel the will of God concerning their lives, but also to know the reason *behind* mishaps, misfortunes, and strange occurrences in people’s lives. Additionally, this has resulted in the *abisa* and *akwankyerε* of our day with people trooping to neo-prophets for answers to life situations (Gibellini 1994:18). African Spirituality is full of rituals and religious practices ingrained in the totality of the community and in a culturalist lifestyle. People affiliate with religious beliefs and rituals in the hope of turning their situations around (Kwarteng-Yeboah, 2016:9). This therefore further elucidates the nature and characteristics of the saturated prayer activity in the Pentecostal circles in Ghana.

On the question of how this framework can be adopted to influence and transform

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<sup>487</sup> ‘And she made a vow, saying, ‘LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head’’ (1 Sam 1:11).

African Pentecostal theology of prayer, this research proposes that the four motifs for prayer in the African Pentecostal worldview should not be held in isolation but integrated. Whereas the Horton model indicates that the reason for prayer may either be relationship, duty, or transaction motif, this model postulates that Pentecostal pray based on a complex matrix of factors, thus the Pentecostal hardly pray because of a single driving motive. Thus, Pentecostal motif of prayer developed above, holds that a Pentecostal prayer motif is not made up of independent driving factors, but an integrated web of motives. In a single African prayer, all these four motifs may likely be present. The above reinforces that prayer in the African context is a causality based on a number of factors.

Pentecostal prayer should be approached in reverence for the purpose of building relationship and as a Christian responsibility. This duty should not be approached parochially, but from the perspective that time spent in praising, worshipping or experiencing Him, yields much spiritual dividends. The Pentecostal must understand that responses to one's prayer request (transactions) is not based on the duration spent in prayer, but how qualitative the time spent is.

Finally, the research observes that the element of fear of the unknown and perception that evil forces and demons can change one's destiny have resulted in some Pentecostals magnifying the devil even sometimes above the power of God, stemming from the cosmological motive. That makes people spend so much time binding and losing the devil. This model proposes that people should approach prayer believing in the sovereignty of God over demons.

African Spirituality is rooted in a sense of moral and mystical life and belonging to a larger family and culture. This explains why people want to associate with churches with large crowds, and testimonies about the manifestation of the prophetic dimensions. To many Africans, the individual and community's ability to pray hinges on being aware of an ever-conscious struggle against the menace of evil and the struggle for assistance from the invisible world. In the traditional African view, therefore, Spirituality is neither competitive nor dependent on the individual alone but is about the mystic relationship of the corporate community (Gibellini, 1994). African Spirituality is therefore about mystic reverence, contemplation, and self-surrender to the deities who are believed to provide protection, survival, and wealth for the self and community.

Based on various arguments made so far in this study, one may also say in other words, that the concept of Pentecostal Spirituality of prayer in Ghana has been overstretched. This is because when it comes to prayer and deliverance, prophetic negotiations and rituals

have become a major practice in many Pentecostal prayer services (Quayesi-Amakye, 2016:2). The commercialisation of prayer and the monetisation of prayer-related activities of these neo-prophetic churches such as the blessing of water, handkerchiefs, and anointing oil (Tsekpoe, 2019:286) are believed to be erroneous scriptural applications from the book of Acts (see section 6.2.8).

## 6.5 Recommendations

This research has shown that the Pentecostal Spirituality of prayer is an important fulcrum of Pentecostal theology. For without Spirituality, the theological formulations would be impossible or incomplete. Classical Pentecostalism with its theology of prayer in the form of healing, deliverance, and manifestation of the things of the Spirit however continues to exist next to neo-Pentecostalism (with the latter having its own theologies and practices close to or different from classic Pentecostalism). The difference between the two is the excesses one finds in the neo-prophetic circles. Out of these challenges during its formative years, Classical Pentecostalism has developed a more structured systematic theology. One key responsibility of Ghanaian classic Pentecostal churches is to mentor and provide leadership for these neo-prophetic churches to help address the excesses of the neo-prophetic.

Again, but unfortunately, there seems to be an unhealthy competition between ‘neo-prophetic giants’ who are the ‘owners’ of these neo-prophetic churches that are being run as business enterprises, hence, driven by the surge in ‘prayer commercialisation and monetisation’, and which in turn is a factor in the popularity of the prosperity gospel. People starting ministry must have the evangelistic mindset and practice ‘barefoot ministry’<sup>488</sup> until such a time when the ministry grows to a stage when one could then be blessed from the toil of labour while managing the gains from the gospel enterprise for evangelistic strides rather than for opulence and glamour. Some of these neo-prophets take advantage of the media to enhance their popularity (Christian Vibes, 2022)!<sup>489</sup> Again, this research could trigger further discussions on the responsibility of Classical Pentecostal churches in providing mentoring leadership and guidance to neo-prophetic church leaders who often have very little or no formal theological training.

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<sup>488</sup> Bare foot ministry is when itinerant preachers are sent on bare foot to neighbouring cities to preach the gospel without financially exploiting the receivers of the gospel.

<sup>489</sup> <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=HGkLR8nt9lg> (accessed 10 March 2022).

Due to a lack of proper discipleship and training, some members of the classic Pentecostal churches and mainline churches continue to seek prayer help and consultation from these neo-prophetics. Interesting to note is Onyinah's (2012b:35) view that African Pentecostal prayer today may be an offshoot of the African Traditional shrines where mediums are consulted for *akwankyerε* (divinity consultation); rituals are performed for *mmusuyie* (reversal of curses), *mpata* (pacification), and *banbɔ* (divine guidance against evil and protection from the enemy). Like in ATR, the African Pentecostal would seek meaning in the happenings of life through the practice of *akwankyerε* (divinity consultation) and as part of (Christian) pastoral counselling, and directions in life. Unfortunately, the African Pentecostal is mostly in a haste and seems not to be patient to wait for the period between putting the food on fire until the food is set on their tables. They are akin to the magicalisation of results with immediacy (see 2.9.1 and 2.9.5 above). It is therefore recommended that the well-established mainline and Pentecostal churches undertake discipleship training and modelling of members to prevent them from continually falling back to negative syncretism when confronted with the challenges of life.

Since the total package of Christological salvation has been redirected from its eschatological motive to a theology of immediate experience, Classical Pentecostals and mainline churches have a role to play in redirecting and refocusing prayer, specifically, targeting the immediate needs of their members to attract them to their prayer meetings and provide some spiritual counselling sessions for them after service. These changes may be needed because of the lack of discipleship and grounding of the believers in the act of prayer.

Contrary to the early days of Pentecostalism in Ghana when members spent time in the bush praying to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues as a sign of empowerment to preach the gospel, most members have now turned to Prayer Centres to seek immediate turnaround from their economic plight, and lack of prosperity. The above issue nowadays has resulted in people abandoning their work and spending many days at these prayer grounds and retreat centres, thereby making some financially worse off. It is important that ecumenical bodies in Ghana come together to work toward proposing a framework to reverse these acts.

In Ghana today, the loud media freedom is catastrophic to the spiritual landscape. Anybody who has money to pay can acquire an air space for programmes, or for any activity without the scrutiny of content or personality. There is a need for proper regulation concerning issues relating to media freedom including those airing religious programmes saturated with all sorts of prayer and monetised activities from dawn to dusk. The Ghana



Media Commission may have to engage these ecumenical bodies for a way out. The challenge is that there is no political will for this since these politicians all consult these neo-prophets during political campaign seasons (section 2.9.4).

Finally, the concept of giving to support the Kingdom of God has become an important ethos of Pentecostal life (Larbi, 2001). The concept of giving is incorporated into some churches' statements of beliefs, values, tenets, and practices (CoP, 2016:13,17). Some churches however capitalise on the ignorance of members and out of their nefarious desires, are propounding the prosperity gospel to extort money from people. It is important that systematic teachings be made to demystify some element of Spirituality attached to the concept of giving (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013:79-80). The state, the ecumenical bodies, and the nation have key roles to play to achieve that.

## **6.6 Theological Implications and Future Trajectory of the Changing Models of Pentecostal Spirituality**

In Ghana, in particular, Pentecostalism seems to have affected the ecclesiology of other strands of the Christian faith. In the mainline churches today (Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and Methodist Churches), their offering times are associated with singing and playing African drums. Pentecostal praises and worship are therefore associated with drumming, and dancing. The singing groups and bands who adopt Pentecostal worship tunes and lyrics have been given time to minister in many mainline churches. The Pentecostal missionary approaches have been adopted by these churches to sustain their churches and curb the drift of the youth to Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal churches. The rise in Pentecostal Spirituality is also affecting the nature of mainline church services which are thus becoming 'pneumatological' in nature. Times are set aside in these churches for the experience of the power of the Spirit. Considering the rate at which Pentecostalism is affecting the mainline churches in Ghana, the future of Ghanaian Christianity may evolve into 'Pentecostal-Charismatism', where all churches are either Pentecostal or charismatic in services. Should the above be the case, the major question one would need to ask is: What would be the fate of the Pentecostal wave? Yet their distinguishability would be their ecclesiology.

Even though Pentecostalism is concerned with God's active presence in His church and what He is doing now (Berrett, 1992:18), Pentecostalism must not be reduced to sensationalism and human emotions. Sensationalism and emotionalism have been the bane for driving the Spirit to the periphery, a reason for the 'magicalization' of miracles when the

divine spirit of God is missing. A re-emphasis on the pneumatic is critical to ensure sustained Pentecostal growth. The recent monetisation of the Pentecostal prayer services and issues of the prosperity gospel, which is termed ‘GOSPERITY’ should be managed with so much care. The sale of anointing oil, anointed water, canes, handkerchiefs, and miracle foods to people is a slippery way of focussing attention on man instead of a belief in the sovereignty of God. Adherents are made to believe that prayer said over these items by the neo-prophet has the power to give the much-needed breakthrough and deliverance. The future of the Pentecostal enterprise may be bleak should the focus not be redirected to God instead.

Noticeably, when the Pentecostal wave started, it was moving with a missiological motive directed with a zeal for evangelism and kingdom-mindedness. The drive was ‘other-worldly’—focusing on the eschatological motif. In this recent dispensation, however, the focus is ‘this-worldly’. The power of the Holy Spirit is no longer desired for experiential purposes, but it is redirected with the driving motif of casting out demons, overcoming one’s enemies and deliverance purposes. This has marginally affected the evangelistic growth of the Pentecostal wave. In recent times, considering the many questions around the moral life and conduct of the third-wave Pentecostal leaders, and their craving for wealth, women, and fame, this has the potential of stigmatising the Pentecostal strand as the hope of Christianity.

One may also say that the Pentecostal would not only focus on the ‘other-worldliness’ but ‘this-worldliness’ with the view that the church is a society and family with individual needs. In as much as spiritual needs are provided for its members, immediate social and welfare needs should be considered. The daily physical and spiritual struggles of their members need to be revisited and carefully examined with the mindset that the church is a social organism that commutatively feeds on its members and vice versa.

## **6.7 Conclusion: Short Summary, Limitations of and Suggestions for Future Study**

This study examined prayer as practised by Pentecostal churches in Ghana and the fact that new Ghanaian prayer practices are developing as variations of Classical Pentecostal Spirituality. The study, thus, focuses on Pentecostal Spirituality and theology of prayer while considering these new developments and by situating them within an African Traditional spiritual context. Given the above, Chapter One gives the background to, motivation for, and clarifications of central concepts in this study.

Chapter Two shows that primal, dualistic, causal ART worldviews also confront many Africans with ideas of cosmic struggle. Facing the latter challenge have led to the adoption of practices similar to, or at least influenced by, ATR practices, especially in neo-

prophetic churches. Although, admittedly, some Ghanaian Pentecostal spiritualities and practices are discontinuous to or broke with ATR worldviews and practices, it is postulated that some also are not or have not done so, particularly regarding prayer. Defining Pentecostal Spirituality as a praxis of integrated beliefs, practices, sensibilities and values, Chapter Three argues that Pentecostal Spirituality, with the Holy Spirit as its fulcrum, is particularly clear in its praxis and experiences of prayer. It, furthermore, is held that Pentecostal Spirituality can never be understood without reference to Pentecostal theology and vice versa, as ‘two sides of the same coin’. As such, both Pentecostal Spirituality and theology are discussed in detail.

Chapter Four describes the usual character of Pentecostal prayer as transactionally Christological, spontaneously ‘glossolalic’, lyrically doxological, and ontologically authoritative. In this chapter, in evaluating Pentecostal theology of prayer, it is also shown that there may be many possible motives behind (Ghanaian) Pentecostal prayer, including fear, threat, uncertainty, joy, need and spiritual desire. Some of these drivers, however, have resulted in a shift from a more Classical experiential Pentecostal model of prayer to one of demand-driven causality—one that includes an increasing element of ‘glossolalic abuse’ that also needs careful theological attention.

In Chapter Five of the study, an investigation into emerging Ghanaian neo-prophetic prayer practices reveals, among other things, that the African worldview of all-pervasive evil forces and quests for the ‘magicalisation’ of (instant) results have led to the assimilation of neo-prophetic, sacramental, and transactional ritual prayer, evident at ‘prayer markets’ via ‘prayer giants’ who monetise prayer.

Chapter Six returns to the theological examination of Pentecostal prayer practices. It is explained that, although Pentecostal Spirituality of prayer is intended to attract people to and to strengthen believers’ relationship with God, emerging prayer practices are mostly driven by fear and uncertainty resulting in the pursuance of hierarchical, consequential, solution-centred prayers. In light of the findings, the study proposes a four-fold integrated prayer model (a modification of Clowney’s model) with the introduction of an African worldview as the fourth motive for prayer, whilst upholding that African Pentecostals do not pray driven by one motif but a combination of motifs. Consequently, a contextual Pentecostal practice of prayer is proposed based as the ‘*Comsological ACTS Model*’ that takes into account African traditional praxis, the Christocentric Full Gospel, Transactional Nomenclature, and Spirit-centrality. This research, therefore, could contribute to the development of a global contextual theology. Since the research could not adequately create

space for that, this could be considered for future theological research engagement.

Since the study was conceptual rather than comparative in nature<sup>490</sup>, one limitation of the study- which also constituted a clear gap in knowledge, was the fact that little scholarly research, if any, exists in the area of Pentecostal spiritualities of prayer specifically in the Ghanaian context.

In recent years, prior to the emergence of the covid-19 pandemic, there evolved at a slow pace the subject of online prayers, televised prayers, and recorded prayers. The onset of the covid-19 pandemic moved these prayers into the social media landscape with high frequency and saturation. This research could not provide space to cover the Spirituality and driving motif behind these modes of prayer. Since these prayers are able to mobilise thousands of people online, the effect of these prayers on the physical presence in the church auditoria may require future examination. Again, since online and social media prayers are an emerging phenomenon, there is the need for adequate time to enable a constructively critical review.

To address these limitations, future studies may compare the Spirituality of ATR and Pentecostalism with direct reference to prayer beyond Ghana. With this research in the form of a literature study now forming a point of reference, such studies may also employ additional (empirical) data collection methods such as observation and interviews of believers to review the individual methods of prayer by these two, and to compare the lived experiences of adherents.

Prayer centres in general have been a fulcrum of prayer and a hub for the syncretism of various prayer practices. The ethos of these prayer centres and a detailed investigation and description of the practices at these centres, and their development as a hub for the spiritual vitalisation of Christians, may be an important area to explore further. The gains and bane of these prayer centres across the various divides may also provide further meaningful contributions to the academic discourse.

Finally, the need for a consolidated Pentecostal theology has been mentioned in various sections of this thesis, but it fell outside the scope of this study. This study may offer important points of departure and insights that are informed both by Pentecostal spiritualities of prayer as well as by an awareness of contextual social and cultural elements. Even though it has been acknowledged that Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal churches are moved by the freedom of the Spirit, and legitimately so, it sometimes coincides with subjective

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<sup>490</sup> See section 1.10.3- limitation of study.

interpretations that are often questionable. A Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal theological emphasis on the full gospel remains vital. There is a need for a theological re-evaluation of the core motif of their Spirituality with a focus on the full gospel to discover a balance between the ‘this-worldly’, and the ‘other-worldly’ is therefore critical. This would help provide a better appreciation of the social orientation, the missiological praxis, and the eschatological motif of these churches. Despite the above limitations, it is believed that this research has made some original, significant, and fruitful contributions to discourse on (Ghanaian) Pentecostal theology, and Spirituality of prayer.

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