

**FAITH AND CULTURE: THE PENTECOST INTERNATIONAL WORSHIP CENTRE
AND THE GROWTH PATTERNS OF THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST.**

BY

YAW ASAMOAH AKOWUAH

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DECLARATION

I declare that apart from the sources specifically acknowledged in the thesis, this work constitutes the result of my research in the subject and it has not been submitted in part or whole to any other Seminary or University.

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Yaw Asamoah Akowuah

Student Name

Signature

Date

Student No.

20137511

PG4559610

Certified by:

Very Rev. Dr. Paul K.Boafo

.....

.....

Supervisor(s) Name

Signature

Date

Certified by:

Very Rev.Dr. Nathan Iddrisu Samwini

.....

.....

Head of Dept. Name

Signature

Date

DEDICATION

To the glory of God, I dedicate this work to my parents: Mr. John Akowuah and Mrs. Margaret Akowuah and to my siblings: Dr. Papa Akowuah, Adwoa Sarfoaa Akowuah, Ama Ampomah Akowuah and Adwoa Abrafi Akowuah.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

PIWC- Pentecost International Worship Center

CoP- Church of Pentecost

PENSA- Pentecost Students and Associates

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the causes and content of the discontent among some of the indigenous members of the CoP as a result of the introduction of the PIWCs. The thesis notes that, the Church of Pentecost begun as an indigenous church and as the church grew, there were calls for reforms by some members of the church. These members, predominantly the youth and intellectuals demanded that, reforms be made in the church's traditions and practices to reflect modern trends in worship. The calls have not been welcomed by the older members and leaders of the church who see any reform as a deviation from cherished traditions handed down from the founding fathers of the Church of Pentecost. The thesis also explores what accounted for the many youth and intellectuals leaving the church and it reveals that leadership, content of worship and some of the traditions of the church contributed to the exodus of the youth to other churches. The emergence of the Neo-Pentecostal or Charismatic Movement on the Ghanaian scene also played a major role in the exodus. The research shows that, the PIWCs have contributed immensely to the growth of the church in the areas of finance, human resource development and more importantly, retaining a lot of youth and intellectuals in the church. Further observation by this research indicates that despite their contribution, they have not fared so well in evangelism and discipleship, social responsibility and community church planting. This thesis recommends that to reduce the discontent between the PIWCs and the local assemblies and also help the Church of Pentecost to sustain her growth, leadership training and education should be taken seriously by the church. It also recommends that, evangelism and discipleship and the language policy of the PIWCs should be reviewed. The research acknowledges that, culture is dynamic and change is also inevitable. Yet, the Church of Pentecost should tread cautiously as she introduces changes in her age old traditions and practices so that these cherished values are not sacrificed on the altar of modernity.

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

The Church of Pentecost is a member of the Ghana Pentecostal Council; an umbrella of Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Ghana. James McKeown, the founder of the church arrived in Ghana in 1937. McKeown, a missionary, from the Apostolic Church in Bradford, UK, arrived at the request of the Faith Tabernacle Church in Ghana headed by Apostle Peter Anim. His arrival led to the establishment of the Church of Pentecost in 1962 after series of misunderstanding between McKeown and Anim. The church has branches in all the ten regions of Ghana. The church can also be found in eighty (80) countries outside Ghana.

To ensure accelerated growth and discipline in the church, the founding fathers introduced some traditions and practices to guide the administration and lifestyle of the members in the church. Some of these traditions include:

- i. Strong emphasis on prayer.
- ii. Emphasis on spontaneous worship.
- iii. Emphasis on holiness and discipline.
- iv. Aggressive approach towards evangelism.
- v. Absolute respect and reverence for the word of God.
- vi. Reliance on the Holy Spirit.

- vii. Modesty in dressing (compulsory for women to cover their head during church gatherings, condemning women who wear trousers, prohibiting the use of make-up by women, prohibition of styled hairs, etc.)

Outside these are a number of written and un-written church practices which the leadership of the church believes are not absolutely biblical but vital to the survival of the church. Some of these are:

- i. The segregation of the sexes in the church.
- ii. The Pastors and Elders sitting on the platform, which projects the church's hierarchical structure.

Like all other Pentecostal Churches, the Church of Pentecost believes that the practice of serving and worshipping God is both definitive and dynamic. It is definitive in the sense that the beliefs and practices of the church should be based on correctly interpreted, tried, tested, approved and established sound biblical doctrines. In its dynamism, the Church of Pentecost believes that though the beliefs and the principles are inerrant and inalterable, the Holy Spirit can lead people at specific times in specific situations to apply the principles and beliefs according to God's plan.

The Church of Pentecost (CoP), even though traces its origin to the missionary work of a non-Ghanaian, James McKeown, born in Scotland to an Irish family, is widely known for its strong emphasis on the use of the local language. Even though McKeown did not make any efforts to learn any of the local languages, he made sure he used local interpreters who translated his messages into the local language for the people he ministered to. His inability to speak the local language did not force him to establish an "English Assembly". Instead, he worked extensively

among the natives, propagating the Good News of the Kingdom of God. Undoubtedly, he achieved good results as the church grew at a tremendous rate.

The Church of Pentecost began by using the predominant language of its worshippers as a medium of communication. This condition, which the church believed created an enabling and welcoming environment, attracted people of all walks of life and subsequently led to the rapid growth of the church. With the passage of time, the ever increasing complexities of human society, changes and globalisation led to a new development in which a community could have people with different languages living within it. The cosmopolitan nature of the communities coupled with education left many people including the youth preferring the use of English as a medium of communication.

It is against this background of creating the enabling environment for these individuals to have a meaningful and beneficial service and fellowship with God and brethren that the leadership of the CoP decided to set up the Pentecost International Worship Centers (PIWCs).

The PIWC concept is thus an attempt to set up a Bible-based user-friendly church in order to reach out with the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to the following target groups:

- Professionals and academicians
- The youth of the church who are attracted to churches which adopt English or French as a medium of communication.
- People who cannot communicate or understand the predominant language where the church is situated (such as Diplomats, missionaries, etc.)

The Church is currently, one of the largest Pentecostal denominations in Ghana with its headquarters in La, Accra, Ghana.

1.2. Statement of Research Problem

The Church of Pentecost has been one of the fastest growing Christian denominations in Ghana from the past four to five decades. According to Leonard (1985: 45) by 1977, it was the fastest growing Church in West Africa. The Ghana Evangelism Committee National Survey in 1993 rated the Church of Pentecost as the largest Pentecostal Church in Ghana.

Despite this remarkable growth witnessed by the Church, many people, predominantly younger literate of the Ghanaian Society, do not find some aspects of the Church's traditions or practices such as liturgy and the predominant local languages used by the Church attractive. They are attracted to the Charismatic Churches, mainly because of their characteristic life style (the use of English language in preaching, singing, their fashionable ways of dressing, etc.) These groups of people also consider the CoP as being too traditional in its practices and that the church should adopt "modern" strategies in its worship. The church began losing members, especially the youth and intellectuals to the Charismatic Movements which were being set-up around that period. This led to the creation or establishment of Pentecost International Worship Centres (PIWCs) across the country and even beyond in the early 1980s.

The introduction of PIWCs has built up tension in certain quarters. The old members and some conservatives feel that any attempts to "modernise" the church would amount to ending what has been handed down from the fore fathers. They quote bible passages like "ask for the ancient paths...." (Jeremiah 6:16), and argue that since Jesus' disciples were not formally educated but depended solely on the Holy Spirit for direction while performing their deeds, the church should maintain all its practices by depending on prayer and the Holy Spirit for survival and not submit to the pressures of post-modernism and globalisation.

With these challenges, there is a need for an empirical research to be conducted to ascertain the assumed negative impact or otherwise, of the PIWC initiative of the Church of Pentecost and also what has brought about the tension between the PIWCs and those in the local assemblies. I have therefore chosen to write on this topic to find out whether the establishments of Pentecost International Worship Centres are necessary and the extent to which it has contributed and can contribute to the growth of the Church of Pentecost.

1.3. Aims and Objectives

1. The study seeks, to assess the historical background (i.e. looking at what led to the formation and factors that contributed to their growth) operations of the Church of Pentecost and events leading to the establishments leading to the PIWCs.
2. Also, it seeks to find out whether the PIWC concept is at variance with any of the church traditions, doctrines, tenets or core values.
3. Again, it will also find out whether the PIWC concept has addressed the issue of youth drain and exodus of intellectuals and professionals from the church to other churches.
4. It will also assess the contribution the PIWCs are making towards the growth of the church.
5. The study will also seek to examine the future and relevance of the concept to the growth of the church.

1.4. Research Questions

- a. Why are the youth and intellectuals drifting to other emerging churches?
- b. To what extent has the introduction of the PIWC concept helped reduce the exodus of youth, intellectuals and other professionals to other churches?
- c. What are the traditions, doctrines, tenets or core values of the church that the PIWC concept seems to have flouted or contravened?
- d. To what extent has the PIWC concept contributed to the growth of the Church?
- e. What is the future and relevance of the PIWC to the survival of the Church?
- f. How effective is the use of the English language as a medium of communication at these centres?

1.5. Justification of the Study

The study has been limited to the Asokwa District and Sunyani District of the CoP because of their immense contribution toward the church's growth.

Many of the clergy and members of the church have very little knowledge about the concept of PIWC since there is lack of documented materials on the concept. A good understanding of the PIWC concept will among other things, enlighten the clergy and laity on the origins and the contributions the PIWCs have made to the growth of the church and whether or not it is relevant for the survival of the church today and the future. It will also help address the fears being expressed by some clergy and members as to the way the PIWCs are disregarding the traditions of the church.

This research will also be a very vital document to the leadership of the church especially at a time when the whole idea behind the establishment of the concept is under review. Again, the findings of the study will provide material for future academic and research work on Postmodern challenges to Christianity as well as faith and culture issues.

1.6. Scope of the Study

The study focuses on two (2) (Asokwa District and Sunyani District) out of the fifteen (15) Pentecost International Worship Centers and discusses the contribution it has made to the Church of Pentecost and whether the existence of the Districts are still relevant or not to the growth and survival of the church. Thus, there is room for future research on the topic, using any of the Districts and even other issues related to the concept.

1.7. Study Approach and Methodology

The study employed the qualitative method of research in collecting data. The researcher being a member of the church relied on primary sources such as interviews and participant observation to obtain data. A simple random sampling method was used to select the clergy and other lay leaders to be interviewed. In administering the questionnaire, Nwanna's (2004) formular was applied. He explains that in choosing a sampling size, the formular should be where the population is a few thousand, 10% of the population or more will do. It explains why 100 members each were selected from PENSA, Asokwa and Sunyani. The simple random sampling method was again used to interview some non-CoP members who were hitherto members of the church. The reason was to solicit their response on reasons for leaving the church. This was very

necessary as a very key aspect of this work was to look at why some of the CoP members left for other emerging churches. Relevant information was also sought from documentary sources such as journals, books and articles that have a bearing on the study. All data gathered were carefully examined and evaluated in the light of the study objectives using the descriptive method of statistical analysis.

1.8. Literature Review

Asamoah-Gyadu (2002) discusses Pentecostalism and Missiological Significance of Religious Experience: The Case of Ghana's 'Church of Pentecost'. His work takes a look at the importance of religious experience to the mission of an indigenous church like the Church of Pentecost. He also discusses some of the factors that have contributed to the phenomenal growth of the Church of Pentecost. On this, he mentions the use of the mother-tongue, payment of tithes, holiness ethic of the church, community church planting strategy, the role of women and others. He believes that these factors among many others have contributed in making the Church of Pentecost one of the fastest and largest growing indigenous Pentecostal denominations in the West-African sub-region. His work is useful to this research because it provides very useful information on the factors that have helped the Church of Pentecost to grow; a critical area this research also addresses.

Larbi (2001) indicates that, as the Church of Pentecost grew, there was the need to review some of its cherished traditions in order to make the church relevant in this modern era. This is because, there is a large group of the society who seem to be comfortable with the ethos, liturgy, the programmes and the media of communication as practiced by the Church of Pentecost, even

though they may wish certain things were improved or are changed completely. He is of the view that this situation with the predominantly younger, literate segment of the society, with a taste for the western value system is different. He observes that many people in this group do not find aspects of the ethos, liturgy and the media of communication of the Church of Pentecost attractive. These categories of people are attracted to the Neo-Pentecostal churches, mainly because of their characteristics life style (dressing, music, use of English, etc.). Larbi indicates that this led the church to explore means of addressing this need which eventually led to the creation of “English Assemblies” in the mid-1980s and finally PIWCs in 1993. The information provided by Larbi is very helpful to this work because it provides very good information on some of the factors that led to the introduction of the PIWC concept. However, he does not provide enough information on the challenges the introduction of the concept has faced; neither does he look at the impact of the concept on the church. This work will therefore look at these issues.

Kodua (2004) discusses the beginning of Christianity till today. He looks critically at the effect the relegation of the culture of the African to the background had on the early missionaries and how the church of Pentecost was able to blend the tradition of the people and the gospel to achieve tremendous results. Koduah also discusses the effects of social changes on Ghanaian Christianity. He says that social changes like urbanisation, globalisation, education, impact of modernity and colonisation has had an impact on Ghanaian Christianity of which the Church of Pentecost is not an exception. He indicates that these social changes have brought pressure from the youth and educated elite of the church who have adopted western lifestyles to demand that they be permitted to conduct church services in English and along western patterns. He explains that one of the cardinal reasons why the youth and intellectuals are putting pressure on the

church can be traced to the impact of postmodernity. Thus, the church has no option but to liberalise its position on some of her tried and tested traditions and practices which have brought about a lot of discomfort in the church especially amongst the conservatives who wish things would have remained the way they were. His work provides very good information on the dangers involved in neglecting ones culture in the presentation of the gospel and is of much relevance to this work especially when the issue of Faith and Culture is at the heart of this work. Also, he deals extensively with the impact of social changes and Postmodernity on the Church of Pentecost and his work will help to address how aside the formation of the PIWCs the Church of Pentecost can deal with the effects that postmodernity and social changes brings.

Leonard (1985) discusses how Pentecostalism was planted in Ghana. She provides information especially on what led to McKeown's separation with the Apostolic Church in UK. She indicates that in February 1953 when Dr. Wyatt of the Latter Rain Movement, Poole and Adam McKeown arrived in the Gold Coast, they held successful crusades in Accra. She indicates that the services were very successful, characterised by numerous miracles, healings and conversions. The aftermath of these crusades attracted the displeasure of the Missionary Committee in the U.K. Consequently, a constitutional amendment was made to make it difficult for any Apostolic Church minister to invite outside speakers. According to Leonard, the amendment constitution segregated white Apostles from the Blacks ones stating, "An African could be an Apostle to Blacks; but a white Apostle was an Apostle to the whole church" (Leonard 1985:34).

According to her, McKeown in May 1953 was asked to re-affirm his faith and beliefs in the doctrines and practices of the Apostolic Church. Before the affirmation, McKeown requested for constitutional amendment to change "Some discriminatory clauses" but that was refused. Therefore, when it came to his turn to make the affirmation he said; "I cannot conscientiously

accept this” (1985:34). He and others were dismissed from the Apostolic Church. According to Leonard, this led McKeown and his group taking the name “the Gold Coast Apostolic Church”. I have chosen this book for the work because it gives a clear understanding into the personality and background of the founder as a man who was anti-racist, someone who loves the culture and tradition of the people he ministers to. It is of relevance to this work because it explains why his missionary approach was different from his forebears and why the Church of Pentecost adopted purely indigenous form of worship right from the onset.

Tenobi (1985) focuses at Pentecostalism in Ghana. He indicates that, when the pioneer resident missionary, James McKeown landed in the Gold Coast, he realised that the Anim group held an extreme view on faith healing. They felt taking medication was as sinful as sexual immorality or worship of idols and considered the doctor as the devil, for them, to wear glasses was a sin and use of relievers, preventive medicine and any other kind of medication was not permitted. Even pregnant were told that faith alone was enough to see them through delivery. He explains that, McKeown went down with malaria and his group would not permit any medication so the British District Commission went for him and took him to hospital. When he recovered, the group opposed him and this led to the group splitting into two. The Anim group added the prefix “Christ” with its headquarters at Asamankese, while McKeown group maintained the same name, the Apostolic Church with Akroso, six miles from Asamankese as its headquarters. This material is relevant to this work because like Leonard, Tenobi also gave information on how the Church of Pentecost we see today begun and some of the stages it has gone through. However, it falls short of mentioning some of the factors that led to its growth at such a faster rate after a short period in existence. This work will look at some of these factors.

Bediako and Hans (2000) explain that God speaks into the African context in African idiom and that it is through hearing in African mother tongues the great things that God has done that African theology emerges to edify not only the African church but the church worldwide. They attempt to explain that there is no way the missionary enterprise in any cultural context will succeed if their native language is relegated to the background. The work is very key to the topic under consideration because it shows how important the use of the mother tongue has helped in the growth of the church in Africa. It will therefore help in assessing the impact of the mother-tongue on the growth of the Church of Pentecost and also the relevance of the mother tongue even in a postmodern world like today when the Church of Pentecost is gradually metamorphosing into an English church.

Gonzalez (1984) also looks at the important role new converts classes play in the growth of the church. He explains that, after the persecution of the church, people who are converted were put through a long process of discipline and instruction. The idea behind this was to make sure that these new converts were certain about their new found faith before they were baptized. His work does not capture the content of their convert classes but is still of much relevance to this work because the ineffective nature of the churches New Convert class system is one of the reasons for the exodus of youth from the church and dwindling fortunes of evangelism in the church. This research will go a step further and propose some of the things that can be captured in the new convert manual for members of the church.

Foli (2009) also writes on certain practices that hampers church growth. On this, he writes that self-imposed disciplines that characterize lifestyle of members of a developing church are gradually exchanged for legislative lifestyles. Members are now expected to behave in certain ways which are acceptable to people in the church instead of living by strong Christian

convictions. He admits that though such legislative standards may have advantages, such as defence against strange doctrines or practices, these standards may affect the church adversely if it is not firmly rooted in the word of God. His work is very insightful and of great relevance to this work especially in analysing the relevance of the church's practices, doctrines and tenets which is an integral part of this work.

Gifford (2004) discusses "Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy" like Ghana. He writes on the activities and impact of the Neo-Pentecostals or Charismatic Movements in Ghana. He explains that these churches emerged at a time that the nation was experiencing turbulent economic times and as a result their tailor made service and messages which was a reflection of the trends at the time attracted a lot of youth into their fold. He explains that the mission churches especially suffered greatly because of their un-readiness to open up to change. He however does not bring to light so much the effect this new strand of Christianity had on existing Pentecostal churches like the Church of Pentecost. That notwithstanding, his work will help this research look at the areas that made the Neo-Pentecostal Churches popular and attract so many youth and intellectuals. It will also help this research assess more satisfactorily, the impact of these Neo-Pentecostal churches on the Church of Pentecost leading to the creation of the Pentecost International Worship Centres.

All the above writers have ably covered issues that will help put the topic under research in better perspective.

1.9. Organisation of the Work

This work is divided into five (5) chapters.

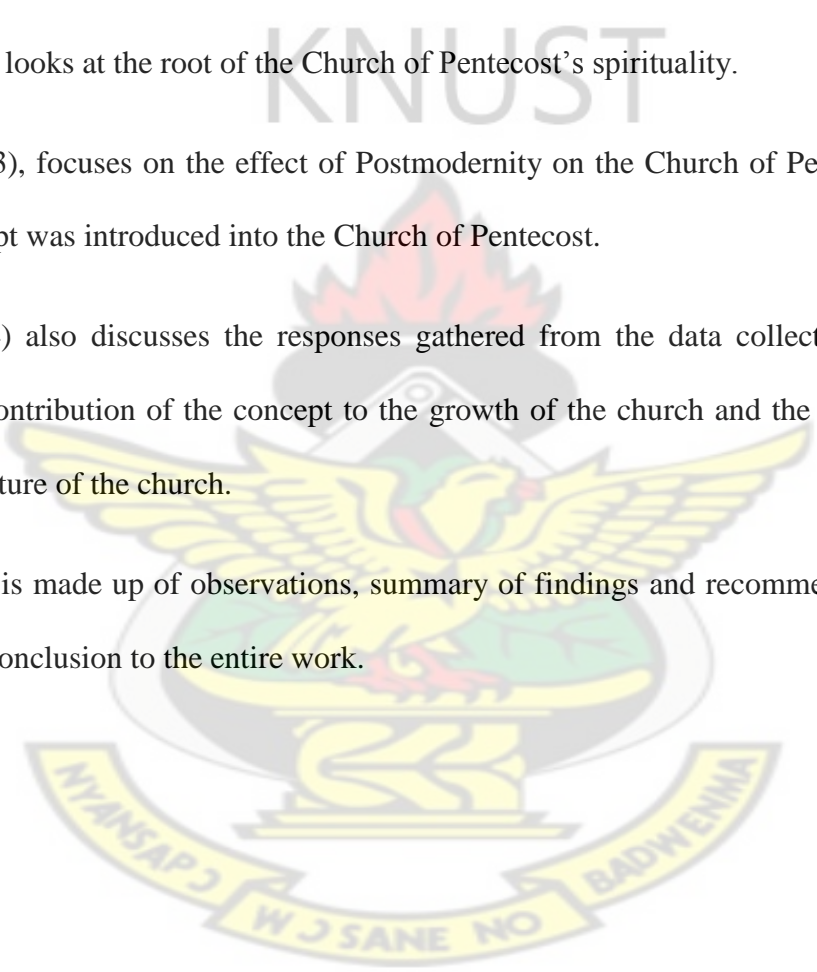
Chapter one (1) consist of the statement of problem, literature review, aims and objectives, significance of the study, research questions, scope of the study, methodology, problems envisaged organization of the work.

Chapter Two (2) looks at the root of the Church of Pentecost's spirituality.

Chapter Three (3), focuses on the effect of Postmodernity on the Church of Pentecost and how the PIWC concept was introduced into the Church of Pentecost.

Chapter four (4) also discusses the responses gathered from the data collected and looks at issues like the contribution of the concept to the growth of the church and the relevance of the concept to the future of the church.

Chapter five (5) is made up of observations, summary of findings and recommendations. It also gives a general conclusion to the entire work.



CHAPTER TWO

ROOTS OF THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST'S SPIRITUALITY

2.1. Introduction

In the introductory chapter, we looked briefly at the Church of Pentecost, some of their practices and traditions and how these have influenced the growth of the Church. The chapter again took a brief look at the kind of difficulties the Church encountered as it witnessed phenomenal growth in its activities. These difficulties which were primarily as a result of the dissatisfaction of the youth and intellectuals in the Church with some of the traditions and practices of the Church led the leadership of the Church to introduce the English Assembly concept which later metamorphosed into the Pentecost International Worship Centre (PIWC) we have today. Though the establishment of the PIWCs was seen as welcome news and a step in the right direction to the then hierarchy of the church, others have condemned the move and are calling for its abolishment. This chapter will seek to examine the roots of the Church of Pentecost's Spirituality looking at it from the context of the religious and world view of the Akan.

2.2. Religious World View of the Akan

Williamson (1965: 159,164) in comparing Christianity and Akan religion argues that the church established by the Western Missionaries made phenomenal gains both in propagating the Christian religion and in acting as a cultural force, yet it was unable to directly address the people in religiously convincing terms. These missionaries therefore failed to satisfy the spiritual need of the Akans. He further explains that the western mission- related church by and large is

still an alien institution because it failed to properly contextualize its worship in the life and institutions of the Akan people in that

the Christian Church denominationally implanted from the west, has substantially retained its original forms and expressed itself in western modes. Missionaries clearly set out to establish not an Akan church, but the church they represented in their homeland. The polity and organization, the liturgies and devotional expressions, the discipline and instruction, the total outlook derives directly from the parent Missionary societies and churches supporting them. The Christianity of the Akan area proves to be the denominational Christianity of the west.

He continues that

by the assault of the missionary enterprise on traditional beliefs and practices, and by the nature and method of its approach, the implanted Christian faith denied the Akan outlook in fierce and abrupt terms, and thus failed to meet the Akan in his personally experienced religious need. The Akan became a Christian by cleaving to the new order introduced by the missionary rather than by working out his salvation within the religious milieu.

Williamson's observation, like that of many other writers, raises several significant issues. Central to all these issues is the relationship between faith and culture. At the center of every culture lies the world view of how people perceive, understand and interpret reality. Though the situation today about the mission churches has changed considerably, it is very easy to still find remnants of the western style of worship in their activities.

Larbi (2001:27) indicates that every culture has within its religious system, certain practices directed towards the achievement of what is considered the highest good. He further explains that, religion, by its nature and purpose, should be holistic: addressing the total needs of the total person: spiritual, physical and emotional, providing authentic answers to the person's everyday quest, fears, and anxieties thus if a particular religious system fails to address what the people

feel that their whole existence and survival hinge on, that system is bound to be rejected and frowned upon when the people are confronted with the real issues of life. Larbi's observation accurately captures the major reason why the Pentecostal churches which came onto the scene several years after these mission churches have firmly rooted themselves in the soil of Ghana were able to grow at such an astronomical rate overtaking some of these mission churches in numbers and church attendance. The reason for such a phenomenal growth is not farfetched; these Pentecostal Churches were able to place themselves as a better alternative to these mission churches.

2.3. Western Missionaries Understanding of African Culture

The missionaries came from a continent with a history of slave trade and colonial imperial expansion and domination. According to Larbi (2001:28), Christianity, which was dubbed the “white man's religion”, was associated with a superior culture. The term “Christian” became synonymous with civilization and development.

Baeta rightly observes that

The fact that the evangelists and their hearers belonged to such glaringly racial types; the fact that their cultural backgrounds were so different; the unfortunate associations of the color black in European superstition; the slave Trade, with European being owners and Africans always the owned; the assumption by the means of a position of superiority vis-à-vis African, which assumption African weakly and unprotestingly accepted; the fact that the majority of missionaries to our parts were connected with the movement known as pietism; these and such-like factors determined the policy, which was adopted by all missions practically without exception, of non-amalgamation with, and aloofness from African culture.

The western missionaries coming from post enlightenment, rationalistic background, approached the missionary task from this ideological frame of mind. For many in the host culture, Christianity was not accepted for its religious value. Rather, it was seen as a religion which

offered material blessings. To learn to read, to learn something of the ability of the European to control his environment and to evolve a superior material culture, factors which to the African were bound with the white man's worship of Christ, operated as strong motives for announcing oneself as a baptismal candidate.

Larbi (2001:29) asserts that, the attitude of the missionaries and their African disciples towards the Akan primal world view and the Akan culture was one of negation, a denial of the validity of supernatural powers. For example, the Gold Coast Christian Council pamphlet on witchcraft postulated a position that the phenomenon of witchcraft was not a reality but a psychological delusion. This denial of the existence of spirit-forces (witches, sorcerers, fetishes, magic, charms and local deities) in the missionary enterprise seriously undermined the work of the missions. As a result of this, they ended up producing "double standard Christians with double allegiance. Asamoah-Gyadu (2002:23) observes:

Anybody who knows African Christians intimately will know that no amount of denial on the part of the church will expel belief in supernatural powers from the minds of the Christian, and he becomes a hypocrite who in official church circles pretends to give the impression that he does not believe in these things, while in his own private life, he resorts to practices which are the results of such beliefs.

Debrunner (1967:320) has observed that "the ordinary man in the street and in the bush expected four things from religion (a)Social fellowship; (b)emotional experiences; (c) healing; (d)security against real or imagined evil forces". His observation actually captures the aspirations of the African on his or her expectations from religion. The western mission related churches seemed to have fairly succeeded in providing some form of social fellowship for its followers through the various societies and associations within the churches. Through their mission hospitals and clinics, part of the healing needs of the people seemed to have been met. The problem however

was that since the Akan understanding of the causality of disease incorporates both natural and supernatural causes and supernatural causes are often regarded as the ultimate cause, the mission hospitals and clinics looking at disease causality from only the non-supernatural perspective, did not completely meet the healing needs of the people.

Morley and Wallis (1978:3) assert that, in the etiological categories of the primal imagination, the immediate causes of disease and the ultimate cause, are equally important for a holistic healing, though much weight is placed on the ultimate cause. They further argue that, the ultimate causalities (the supernatural factors) place the origin of the disease with supersensible forces, malevolent agents or acts which are not directly observable. Thus, explanations such as witchcraft and sorcery, bad medicine, and charm are included in this category. The mission hospitals operated from the perspective of modern western medical science, based wholly on observed cause and effect relationships regardless of the accuracy of the observations made.

Another area of need which the western related mission churches failed to meet was the perceived need for security against evil forces. Perhaps one may also indicate the emotional needs of the people were not fully met. Indications of emotional outbursts or revivals were evident within the churches, especially the Methodist Church, but they were short-lived. Larbi (2001:31) cites Southon as saying that:

One reads of men who went into the bush singly or in groups, to wrestle for hours in prayer..the agony of soul lasting from a period of hours to many months, came from a truly Christian conviction of sins;... men went without water and drink for days , so over burdened with a sense of sin that they were utterly unconscious of physical needs until they found relief for their souls through faith of the Lord Jesus.

Rheenen (1991:277-278) advocates that the missionary must enter the host culture as a learner and compare the people's perceptions to his own culture and that of the Bible. This, he feels, would help the missionary to overcome any "ethnocentric myopia that would distort his understanding" and enable him to adequately contextualize the relevant Christian message but from the above discussions, it can be realized that, most of the early missionaries to Africa and Ghana failed to properly study the culture and only tried to give the Ghanaian a Christianity framework that was accompanied with a theology which did not emphasize the full dimension of the gospel, but sought to eradicate the traditional cultural values, beliefs and practices. Kodua (2004:28) explains that this kind of Christianity couldn't meet the aspirations of Ghanaians and Africans. Explaining further he cites Cabral as saying, "one of the most serious mistakes, if not the most in Africa may have been to ignore or underestimate the cultural strength of the African people".

2.4. Era of African Independent Churches (AICs)

The apparent inability of the early missionaries to properly contextualize the gospel made the people to demand for a more culturally relevant version of Christianity. Appiah- Kubi (1979:188) explains that, in order to inject the African spirit into the "westernized" Churches, some dissatisfied Ghanaian leaders broke away to form African Independent Churches. Barret (1968:161-162) asserts that their independency reflected a rebellion against a Christianity that had become "over westernized"

One common feature of these AICs is their use of the Local language and their emphasis on free form of worship (participatory), stress on the African World view etc. They also permitted each tribe to use her own traditional drums and dancing to worship the Lord. This style of worship by

the AICs was considered by the mission Churches as “crude and uncivilized”. Debrunner, (1967:351) states that, by the late 1930’s, the Presbyterian Church was still singing the hymn and anthems of the European musical tradition. As the masses were uneducated, singing from hymn books appeared too foreign, they were, therefore, naturally attracted to the simpler and livelier form of worship which the AICs had introduced. According to Leonard (1985:69), in this way, some were saved and moved to join the AICs. This is because, these Ghanaians could easily identify themselves with the worship style of these Independent Churches and also felt that in these Churches, their hopes and aspirations would be met. Their emergence was met with stiff challenge from families and society at large. Families and society castigated educated people who fellowshiped with these group of people because they had joined the *abobonsamfo* (The clapping people). The attempt to get the African version of the white man’s Christianity has made them to inject elements of the African primal religion and ethos into Christianity. In the end, the African traditional religions inputs have overshadowed biblical values and principles, this, resulting in serious syncretism. It also made their adherents to remain constantly conscious of a myriad of evil spirits lurking ready to attack them. This made the people to become what Kodua (2004:34) refers to as, “demon-conscious Christians” rather than “Christ-conscious Christians”. Also, common elements in the African Traditional Religion like polygamy and witch finding, appears to be encouraged. Some of the leaders of these “spiritual churches” as they are called, were also accused of giving some women “holy bath” in order to exorcise demons from them and also make them fertile. Adherents of this faith also consulted the Prophets with any problems they consider to have spiritual connotations. This sometimes promotes personality cults since members were interested in putting their faith in these Prophets for solutions to their problem instead of being thought about the God of the Bible who was the

answer to any problem they faced. On the whole, the attempts by the African Independent Churches to make Christianity more relevant to the Ghanaian Cultural milieu to some extent resulted in serious syncretism. Syncretism, which Kato (1975:25) describes as “the fruit cocktail of religions” is a crucial problem in today’s Christianity.

With the foregoing and the setback notwithstanding, it can be said that the ministries of African Independent Churches have helped shift the peoples mind, at least, one step away from idolatry towards the Lord of the Bible. They have also drawn attention to the fact that there was the need to add some African flavor to the over – westernized Christianity. This set the stage for the emergence of classical Pentecostalism of which the church of Pentecost is part off.

2.5. The Church of Pentecost in Focus

2.5.1. Origin and historical overview

The Church of Pentecost traces its origin to the ministry began by the Rev. James McKeown in 1937. James McKeown (1900-1989) whose parents originally came from Antrim, Northern Ireland, was born on 12th September, 1900 in Glenboig, Scotland. Terminating schooling at the age of eleven, McKeown had to help his father on the farm in their local market-town of Ballymena where he later became a train driver. At the age of nineteen, through the ministry of Pastor Robert Mercer, McKeown got converted in the Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance (now Elim Pentecostal Churches) and was greatly influenced by George Jeffrey’s’ "Foursquare gospel" (the Four Square Gospel means: Jesus Christ the Saviour, Sanctifier ,Baptizer in the Holy Spirit and Soon Coming King)

Displaying very great enthusiasm and organizational ability, he soon came to play very active roles in the church, including the supervision of assemblies throughout Ayrshire, Renfrewshire and Lanarkshire. Later in 1935, at an Apostolic Church Convention, somebody prophesied that McKeown and his wife should go as missionaries to West Africa. This happened at the time when a man in the Gold Coast (Ghana) by name Peter Anim, converted to Christ. His conversion was through reading of the "Sword of the Spirit" magazine. Anim later came into contact with the Apostolic Missions headquarters in Bradford and requested that they send down a missionary. The Apostolics, considering this to be the will of God, decided to send McKeown to Ghana as their missionary. McKeown however did not accept the call until after two years, suspecting that the church was "using prophets and prophecies to carry out their own design, the hands being the hands of Esau and the voice being the voice of Jacob". Arriving finally in March 1937, McKeown settled in Asamankese with Anim, the man who had requested for a missionary. After some doctrinal problems (issues which had to do with divine healing) which brought a division between McKeown and Anim, McKeown moved down to Winneba to start a new mission station for the Apostolic Church in June, 1938.

Right from the beginning of the new work, McKeown's determination was to apply what Rufus Anderson calls the "three self-formula," that is, his church would be "self-governing; self-supporting and self-propagating". In this regard, his intention was to build an indigenous church with Ghanaian culture, Ghanaian ministers and finances generated from within the church. He mentioned that "it would be difficult to grow an 'English Oak' in Ghana. A local 'species' at home in its culture should grow, reproduce and spread (where) a church with foreign roots was more likely to struggle". Obviously, McKeown might have arrived at this position as a result of practical observation of the other church missions in Ghana. He was aware that the mainline

churches westernized in their worship and practices and therefore had very little attraction for the ordinary man, McKeown's strategy was therefore to contextualize the gospel into the local situation and developed a mode of worship and practices that would attract even the ordinary person "the local species", who would eventually be able to lead the church.

In his opinion, McKeown believed that Christianity should no longer be branded "the Whiteman's religion" but rather, a universal religion for all, including the black man - literate and illiterate as well: To make the ordinary person come to know Christ and to achieve his aim of indigenisation, McKeown developed the philosophy of "just to evangelize" and make the people know God. His argument was that "once we have a strong church of people who know Jesus and the Holy Spirit, then everything else will follow". This by implication meant that McKeown was not going to provide social services as the other missionaries were doing. Perhaps McKeown had observed how little the missionaries who attempted to evangelize through the provision of social services had achieved and also the high costs of such services which had occasioned the closure of many such social services. It could also be because he did not have the resources to undertake such services since he had arrived in Ghana with only ten pounds.

Ntumu (2000:40) states, his poverty notwithstanding, it may be argued that if the provision of social services was his primary concern, he could have solicited funds from elsewhere. Knowing that the provision of social services was good amounted to a holistic ministry, McKeown anticipated that when the people came to know God, they were ultimately going to build schools, hospitals and serve their country in diverse ways. Initially, growth was quite slow; for example, the first General Convention of the Apostolic Church, which was held in Winneba in June 1939, attracted only 200 people. Perhaps the slow growth may have been due to language and cultural barriers as well as the usual hurdles of starting the new ministry. The church begun to experience

tremendous growth from the mid-1940s with the conversion of some literate and dedicated people who served as his interpreters.

McKeown did not establish schools, by using the services of these "educated" people, he was invariably harvesting from the labours of previous missionaries who had established schools to train those people. It must be noted, however, that it was not just the conversion of these people that mattered so much, but McKeown's strategy of equipping, training and mobilizing them for evangelism that made the difference: As the church grew, apostles, prophets, pastors and overseers were called into full-time ministry to strengthen the work. McKeown and his wife Sophia moved from Winneba to Cape Coast in 1942 and finally to the capital, Accra in 1948.

In 1952, Dr. Thomas Wyatt and his Latter Rain Ministry were invited to the Gold Coast to hold revival meetings in the Apostolic Church. This visit brought in tremendous healings and other manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The aftermath however brought a great controversy in the Apostolic Church headquarters which subsequently led to the amendment of the constitution of the Apostolic Church in the U.K. In May 1953, during the Apostolic Church's General Council meetings, the Church's President, Rev. Hugh Dawson called on all participants to re-affirm or ratify the amended constitution by standing. The amended constitution segregated the white Apostles from the blacks stating, "An African could be an Apostle to Blacks, but a white Apostle was an Apostle to the whole church". McKeown, judging this amendment to be unscriptural and discriminatory, refused to ratify it and was subsequently dismissed from the Apostolic Church. When the Apostolic Church in Gold Coast heard of McKeown's dismissal "on their account", many of them broke away from the home church and renamed themselves "The Gold Coast Apostolic Church". They invited McKeown to return from UK to lead them. The few who did not join McKeown maintained the original name "the Apostolic Church of Gold Coast".

Later in 1957 when the country became independent, both churches substituted "Ghana" for Gold Coast as part of their name. The similarities between the two names brought so much confusion to the ordinary man such that in August 1962, McKeown's church, the Gold Coast Apostolic Church, adopted the name "The Church of Pentecost".

McKeown administered the affairs of the church with the help of an Executive Council until 1982 when he retired and returned home to Northern Ireland. He handed over the chairmanship to Rev. Steve Fred Safo (1932-1987) who headed an entirely indigenous Executive Council and the church's highest body, the General Council. When Safo died in 1987, he was succeeded in 1988 by Rev. Martinson Kwadwo Yeboah who retired in 1998 at the age of 74. He was then succeeded by; Apostle Dr. Michael Ntumy. The Church is currently under the Chairmanship of Apostle Dr. Opoku Onyinah who took over from Apostle Ntumy in 2008.

When the dust of the break with the Apostolic Church and its aftermath had settled in 1962 and the church had taken the new name (The Church of Pentecost), membership stood at 20,000. The two decades which followed until McKeown retired in 1982, saw the church experiencing growth in geometric progression to over 170,000. 1982 and thereafter did not only mark the beginning of indigenous church leadership for The Church of Pentecost but also a point of testing of McKeown's missionary success. The church's growth, spread and stability over the years since McKeown's retirement could be said to be genuine indicators of the quality of his missionary accomplishments. In less than three decades, the church has over one million members with an international network comprising over fifty branches. The Church, completely self - supporting, sends and supports missionaries from Africa to other countries.

The account of the spread of The Church of Pentecost to other countries is a very interesting one. This is because for most of the cases, there were no officially organized evangelistic efforts. Churches were planted in some of these countries without even the headquarters of the church knowing about it. Fishermen, farm labourers, traders, artisans, students and diplomats are among the categories of people who were unconsciously used to plant branches of the church in foreign lands. As members of the church travel or migrate from Ghana, they would share their faith with their host and with time, organize regular prayer meetings with other colleagues and also those won through their witnessing. This became the nucleus of a young church. After some time, requests are sent to the home church in Ghana to send in visiting pastors who would provide pastoral care, the financially self-supporting mission country (besides paying the salaries of the missionary and administrative and other costs) also contributes a quota to the international missionary fund to support missionary efforts in countries which are financially weak. The increase in the number of countries so reached by the church necessitated the creation of an International Missions Board in 1991 to administer the affairs of the church in the external branches. At the moment, the Church has spread to forty other nations besides Ghana and operates on all continents but South America. The composition of the Church's membership is also very interesting. Whereas in the various African countries, membership is almost entirely nationals of those countries, membership in Europe, North America and Asia is predominantly Ghanaian or other Africans. Although the leadership of the Church sees this as ministering to all peoples (including the Africans) they believe that the present African majority in the churches outside Africa serves as the spring-board to reach out to the nationals of the respective countries.

2.6. The Growth of the Church of Pentecost: Growth Factors

The Church of Pentecost has witnessed phenomenal growth in its activities ever since it was established some fifty-nine years ago. This growth has come as a result of several factors and some of the key factors will be considered in the subsequent paragraphs.

2.6.1. Evangelism and Church Planting Activities

One unique feature of the Church of Pentecost which has contributed significantly to its growth is its strategies of presenting the gospel of Jesus. The importance the Church attaches to this can be found in the Church's constitution which states that:

The Church of Pentecost exists primarily to evangelize plant and nurture churches. To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to scripture; and that as the reigning Lord He now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the spirit to all who believe and repent. (Constitution – Preamble ii)

From the very beginning, Pastor James McKeown wanted the church to be indigenous. His philosophy according to Amoah et al (2005:51) was “just to evangelize and the people to know God.” According to Amoah, McKeown believed that, “once we have a strong church of people who really know Jesus and the Holy Spirit, everything else will follow.” Thus, McKeown's strategy was to preach and get converts, and thereafter, set their hearts on fire, these hearts set on fire would do the work. McKeown is reported by Amoah to have said that “Ghanaians could do without the help of the Whiteman or other evangelist, for the greater one was in them”

In the Church's evangelistic activities, they were influenced by the Four-Square gospel and that determined the content of the salvation message. They presented Jesus Christ to the African as

nkwagyefo (the one who saves). The main Twi term for salvation is *nkwagye*. It is made up of two words: *nkwa* and *gye*. *Nkwa* means vital life, vitality, vigour, health, happiness and felicity. In short, *nkwa* means abundant life, that is, “life in all its fullness” According to Larbi (2001:12-13), *Gye* has several meanings but when used in salvific terms, it means to rescue, retake, recapture, redeem, ransom, buy out of servitude or penalty; it also means to release, to free, to deliver, to liberate, to save. It could also mean; to lead, to conduct, to guide, to take along with; or to protect, to defend; or to preserve. Larbi explains therefore that, the term *nkwagye* among other things means “the liberation or preservation of abundant life” or the “saving of abundant life”. The *nkwagyefo* (the one who saves) therefore is the one who saves and preserves one’s life. He posits further by saying in a situation where the timely intervention of a person prevented a catastrophe or something favourable from happening, that person could be said to have become *ogyefo* or *agyenkwa* in that particular instance.

The term *agyenkwa* and its cognates, therefore, convey concrete realities. The *agyenkwa* is a powerful one; otherwise he cannot rescue and protect one from the powerful malevolent spirit beings: the *abayifo*, *akaberekyerfo*, *adutofo* and *awudifo* (wicked ones). The *agyenkwa* saves us from danger and all perilous conditions. The *agyenkwa* places one in the “realm of the protected ones” and offers *banbo* (security). Thus, the content of the salvation message of the church provided answers to the fears, hopes and aspirations of the African and he could easily identify himself with the message being preached to him.

Ntumy (2000:57), states that, whereas the other churches missiological approach in this was the “school as the nucleus of the church” concept, the methodology adapted by the Church of Pentecost was to organize open-air crusades and house-to-house campaign (sending the gospel to every home so as to have personal or one - on- one contact with the people). According to

Ntuny (2000:57) the obvious advantage of this evangelistic strategy of the Church of Pentecost over the others was that while it could take up to ten years (a whole elementary School career) to produce Christians under the method of evangelizing through schools, a single message in a crusade setting could get hundreds saved. This strategy, to him, has greatly accelerated the growth of the Church.

Another methodology adopted by the church was its church planting activities, thus after every crusade or evangelistic campaign when souls have been won, the church would open an assembly for these souls, nurture them and also send them out to “fish” for souls. This accounts for the massive presence of the Church of Pentecost across the length and breadth of the country and beyond. The church targeted towns and villages where Evangelistic crusades or rallies were held and the predominant local language of the people within that town or village used as the medium of communication.

Asamoah-Gyadu (2002:44) explains that, the CoP encourages people to fellowship in their communities and this is a far cry from the situation where certain historic mission church organizations have acquired elitist characters because it is the place for the learned theologian to serve as Pastor to the rich, powerful and famous. He explains that, in the city of Takoradi in the Western Region, the Methodist Church was established in the late 1920s, until about 1992-1993, everybody had to worship at the same location in a city that is now about ten times its size when the Methodist Church first came in. He goes further to say that the CoP established their first Assembly in the city more than two decades after the Methodists. They responded quickly to the demands of the geographic and demographic changes in Takoradi by establishing assemblies in all the suburbs. At the last count, the Methodist church had less than ten societies in Takoradi and its immediate environs whereas the CoP had about eighteen assemblies within the same

geographical area, making their congregations, not only accessible to people, but also fostering stronger communal bonds as members were likely to be staying shorter distances from each other.

In an interview with Elder Fiifi Ackon (a retired Elder of the Church who was baptized by McKeown and worked closely with him) he sees that contextualizing the content of the gospel within the Ghanaian cultural setting and the aggressive methodology adopted by the church has greatly helped the church to grow. He recounts that, in those days, the most common slogan for these evangelistic campaigns was: “*Yesu a oyewiase agyenkwa*” (Jesus, the saviour of the world).

2.6.2. Prayers

Larbi (2001:8) explains that, when one examines the prayers of the Akan in the traditional religious setting, one cannot help but come to the conclusion that the overriding concern is the enjoyment of *nkwa* (life), the religious person is well aware that much as he or she works hard to experience *nkwa* in its full manifestations, there comes an overwhelming realization of the fact that there are powerful forces who are fighting against the individual in his community. Abundant life can only become available to him or her through the mediation of the spirit beings – divinities and the ancestors. Unto these beings, therefore, the supplicant constantly lifts up his eyes in an expectation of divine aid. The following sample of a traditional prayer, normally said by the head of family during certain festivals and occasions as observed by Larbi is illustrative of this motif:

Almighty God here is drink: Earth god here is drink; Great ancestors come and have a drink; we are not calling you because of some evil tidings. The year has come again and you did not allow evil to be fall us. We are

offering you drink; beseeching that the coming year will be prosperous. Don't allow any evil to come near our habitation-bless us with rain, food, children, health and prosperity.

This prayer, like many other prayers found among the various ethnic groups of Ghana, illustrate the concerns of the Akan and the need for vital power which subsists in the Supreme Being and the non-human spirit entities. As talked about earlier, the attitude of the missionaries and their African disciples towards the Akan primal world view and the Akan culture was one of negation, a denial of the validity of super natural powers. The Church of Pentecost, which came on the scene several years later, adopted a different approach. They placed the traditional understanding of the cosmic struggle in the realm of the Christian belief. While recognizing the existence of evil forces, they placed Jesus at the center of the cosmic warfare as the supreme and conquering Saviour whose power surpasses all.

To tackle the fears of the Ghanaian concerning the existence of malevolent spirits which work against their health, finances, family and every facet of their lives, the CoP introduced dawn prayer sessions for its members and also met every Friday to pray (they dubbed this Friday meetings "*fiada Kookoo*" meaning "red Friday"). All night and half-night prayer sessions were also introduced and seriously attended by members of the church and even non-members. These meetings were characterized with intensive prayers, deliverance, and Holy Spirit baptism. According to Ntummy (2005:136), it was at one of these Friday prayer meetings that him and many others got converted and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He further adds that many of these people who were at the prayer meetings returned to their homes and brought back their idols to be burnt because they could testify that they had met a greater force that could address their spiritual and every other need. Some of these individuals even had to bring some of their family members along to such meetings and through that they were also converted and

became members of the church all because they also realized the potency in the “Pentecostal Prayers” .Through these prayers, the numerical strength of the church increased.

In addition to the above the leadership of the church and members were amply convinced that there are a host of evil powers which work to frustrate the activities of the church. For example, it is believed these malevolent spirits cause vehicular accidents during conventions, place impediments in the preaching of the gospel, prevent the unconverted from surrendering to Christ, cause the church leaders to commit grievous sins and causing electricity failures and malfunctioning of convention and crusade equipment. Intensive prayer sessions are therefore arranged some days prior to every evangelistic campaign to evoke the presence of God against all malevolent forces who will want to thwart the evangelistic activities of the church. These prayer activities proved effective as it created a conducive atmosphere for the church to hold successful and impactful evangelistic activities. Thus, any individual who wanted to stand in the way of the church and try to prevent it from having effective evangelistic campaigns was met with stiff resistance due to the effective prayers of the saints. To buttress the efficacy of these prayers, Bredwa (2004:48-49) cites the following examples. He cites a particular example in the Volta Region which had been perceived to be a stronghold of occultism. For instance, voodoo cults had strong following and could be found in many places in the southern parts of that region, extending to Togo and Benin. The Protestant Evangelical Churches like Methodist and Presbyterian had succeeded in planting churches in several major towns in the region. However, on the whole, the region was a difficult spiritual terrain, dominated by the evil powers of juju or voodoo cults and witchcraft. He explains further that, the Pentecostal fire torched the Volta Region in the 1950s through pioneer workers, like Pastor C.C. Hushie and Evangelist R.O. Hayford. The work in the region was met with great resistance, physically and spiritually,

organized and executed by the leaders and members of the cults. At open- air rallies and crusades, the cult followers hooted and jeered, threw stones and rotten eggs to disrupt the meetings. Sorcery and witchcraft were employed to cast spells on the members of the church to disrupt their efforts or cause them spiritual harm. For instance at an open-air crusade at Kedzi in the Keta District, a voodoo man from a village of Alakple set out to make the members of the Church present mad by smoking his black magic pipe. In an attempt, he rather became mad and had to walk home naked. Later, at a prayer session held by the church in the town, this man was healed and became a member of the church. His conversion and healing surprised so many people that some of them abandoned their idols and charms and gave their lives to Christ. At another rally, the Yewe cult priests who seized benches of the saints to their shrine began to speak in some strange language on the way and fought among themselves with knives. They came back at day break on their knees seeking freedom from the grip of the Holy Spirit. This was after the saints had lifted prayers to God to intervene; these priests returned the benches and got converted. It is on record that some of these Yewe cult priests later held lay leadership positions in the church and their testimony about the experience they went through after the prayers of the members of the church drew a lot of people into the church's fold. Similarly, during the 1963 convention at Tsitso, where many evil spirits were cast out, the Holy Spirit threw a demon- possessed man into the air dropping him at a distance of some 15 yards without harm. Surprised at the power that was at work, A.K. Asem a Cambridge University graduate accepted Christ.

The Church of Pentecost also adopted the operating of prayer camps and this also contributed immensely to its growth. These camps became “solution centers” to many people who were faced with several difficulties.

Larbi (2001:187), reports that, in Akim Oda, one Mercy Agyapomaa died at the Oda Government Hospital. At the Auntie Dede Prayer Camp which was under the supervision of the church, Auntie Dede asked that the family of Mercy should not bury her until a five day prayer for her resuscitation was over. The family bought the coffin and the shroud required for the burial but Auntie Dede and her followers would not allow the burial to take place claiming she would come back to life. The bereaved family in frustration left the corpse in the hands of the church, but contrary to the skeptical expectations of Mary's family, she was resuscitated on the fifth day. Mercy is said to have testified of her experience during a convention at Asamankese. She exhibited the shroud with which she was clothed for burial. This miracle at the prayer camp is said to have attracted a lot of people into the church and wherever she gave her testimony, people surrounded their live to Christ. Again, Edumfa Prayer camp in the Central Region which until May 2011 was under the oversight responsibility of the church alone is said to have won into the Church about 10,000 souls due to the signs and wonders that have taken place and the solutions that people have had to the problems they sent to the center. The center was established in 1962.

2.6.3. Leadership

From the outset, the CoP relied extensively on the evangelistic passion of its local members. James Mckeown consistently paid glorious tribute to the passion and commitment of the indigenous personnel he worked with and attributed the growth and expansion of the CoP to the hard work of the African agents of the Church.

In McKeown's own words as quoted by Leonard (1985:64) "this has been our aim in allowing the work in Africa to retain its native characteristics and it has resulted in producing some of the finest Christians I have met".

Amoah et al (2005: 40) also indicates that, Pastor James McKeown's aim and vision was to plant on Gold Coast soil an indigenous African or Gold Coast Apostolic Church to be neither European nor anything similar to the UK Apostolic Church. He always wanted the work in Africa to retain its native characteristics. In pursuit of this objective, McKeown made men for the ministry out of local converts. His aim was to mould men of vision out of the youth who would go back to their towns and villages to evangelize. Thus, he could easily discern the leadership potentials in men like J.S. Gyimah of Asamankese, R.S. Asomani of Akroso, J.A.C Anaman of Abura Dunkwa, J.C. Quaye of Winneba and R.A. Hayford of Saltpond. Ntuny (2000:33) states that, for McKeown and his Church of Pentecost, they do not consider lack of formal education as a hindrance because they believe that where the Holy Spirit is at work, he is the Great Teacher, who can teach and even use illiterates, once they have come to a personal knowledge of Christ and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This view may have been as a result of his poor education background and that of the people he worked with at the early stages of his ministry, he probably might have been so amazed at the way and manner God was working through these uneducated men and women and thought that though education is important, it should not be the major yardstick in determining who serves the Lord and who does not. Thus in their ministry in Ghana and abroad, the CoP has not relied on theologically sophisticated clergy and lay leaders. Their leaders are often simple, ordinary Christians, who having received a calling into ministry, have mostly been trained on the job. They consider theological education as very important, but over the years this has not been allowed to determine the choice of people for ministry. These

were the men Mckeown used and to a large extent the Church has relied on and has achieved tremendous results in its activities. They were men and women the indigenous people could freely identify with because they ate with them, slept amongst them and understood their fears and problems. With such a caliber of personnel, it was not difficult to identify leaders for the numerous fledging churches. Leadership was therefore not a serious challenge for them since they did not believe in any vigorous theological training for their personnel but the only requirement was someone who was saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit.

2.6.4. Holiness Ethic (Church Discipline)

Stark (1996:137) states that in order to grow, religious movements among other things must offer a religious culture that sets them apart from the general secular culture. According to him, this means movements must be distinctive and impose strict moral standards. For Stark, such strictness makes religious groups strong by screening out those he refers to as “free-riders”. Free-riders are those who want to share in the benefits of the movement without contributing to the collective enterprise. When these “free-riders” are excluded, the average level of commitment increases, and according to Stark, this in turn greatly increases the credibility of the religious culture.

Asamoah-Gyadu (2002:47) states that, the Ghanaian public image of the CoP is that of a Church which is making up for some of the failures and weakness-particularly in the area of morality-which have come to be associated with the African Independent Churches. The CoP maintains a very conservative outlook that sets the church apart as an organization that refuses to be drawn into worldliness. On the relation of such strictness to Church life and growth, Leonard

(1985:110) observes that the CoP is particularly strict in dealing with matters of marital infidelity and, even more so, when this occurs among Church Elders or Pastors Ilogu (1974:63-64) explains that, in African Traditional Religion, the maintenance of high moral standards in response to prescriptions by the gods is well known. Religion functions as a means of social control.

Asamoah-Gyadu states that after nearly two centuries of existence in Ghana and with the benefit of the translated scriptures, traditional communities are by no means oblivious of standards required by the God of the Bible. If their own deities which are discounted by the Christian Church as powerless and inferior, expect such high moral standards, then converts have good reason to expect the Christian God to demand even higher standards issuing in a more venerable and passionate commitment on the part of worshippers. Against this background, and as compared to what has come to be generally regarded as the dubious ways of African Prophets, the CoP's serious and strict approach to the gospel helped to endear it to potential members and admirers. The official greeting of the CoP women, "*ye kronkron ma Ewurade*", (be holy unto the Lord) underlies its strong holiness ethic.

Thus, for the Church of Pentecost, the following deviations attract sanctions: going to questionable places (such as, visiting the shrine as some Christians do to supplement their faith), falling into sins such as adultery, fornication alcoholism, divorce, embracing false doctrines, or not keeping the Lord's Day holy, may all attract sanctions from Church authority. The disciplinary sanctions include suspension from full membership for ordinary members, demotion (with or without suspension) for those in leadership and outright dismissal for Pastors. A member on suspension may attend Church services, but is not allowed to preach or give testimony in Church. He or she is also not allowed to join the congregation in "open-floor"

dancing and when in Church, must sit at the back. Suspended members do not receive the Holy Communion.

2.6.5. The Use of the Mother-Tongue

Sanneh (1989:188-189), draws attention to a primary affinity between the mother-tongue and the gospel, and how by carrying the gospel in its mother-tongue into their communities, Africans have helped the church to grow.

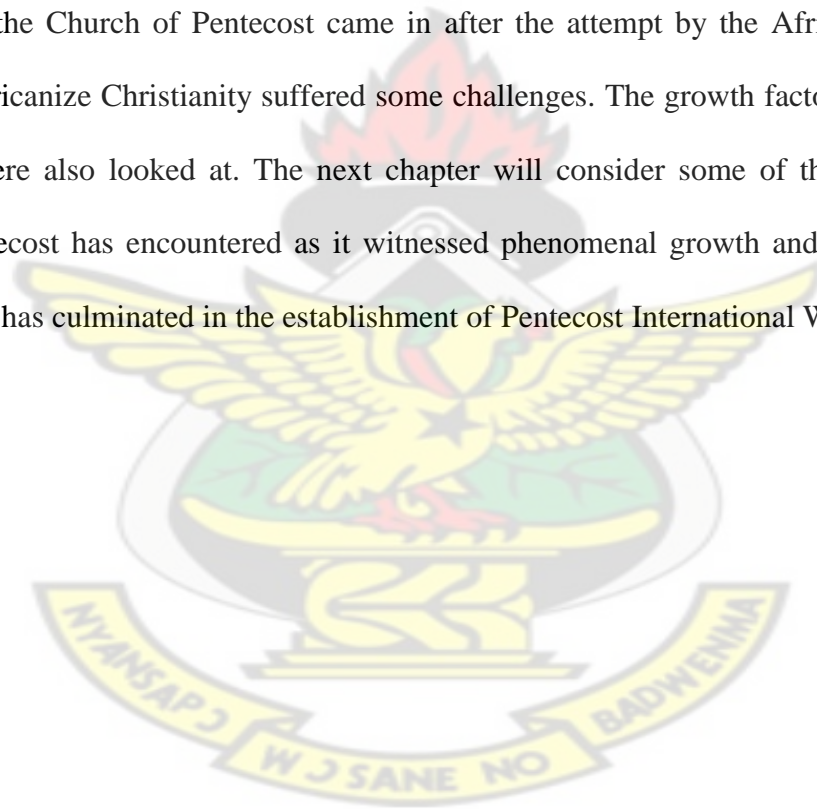
Leonard (1989:68) opines that McKeown wanted the Church to be indigenous with the Ghanaian and African culture. He quoted what McKeown said in reference to indigenizing the Ghanaian church as follows; "It would be difficult to grow an English Oak in Ghana ... A local 'species' at home in its culture, should grow, reproduce and spread: a church with foreign cultural roots was more likely to struggle". Putting this thought into practice the Church of Pentecost embraced the mother-tongue and as a result there was continuous significant numerical growth in membership. The mainline churches were by then westernized in their worship and practices. His concern was to sow what he called "the local species to produce an indigenous church." To this end, he encouraged the use of the mother-tongue to preach in areas where the church had been fully established. The predominant local language in the area of the established church was used for church service. Thus, the narration of personal testimonies, public scripture reading, and the preaching of sermons, helps give the CoP a certain appealing simplicity found neither in other classical Pentecostal Churches like the assemblies of God nor the traditional mission churches. Though the Church of Pentecost was not the first to use the local language as a medium of worship, the mission churches especially the Basel Missionaries had being at the

fore-front of this because they believed that at all cost, the African was to hear the gospel, read the Bible, worship and be taught in his own language. Thus, they translated the Bible into some of the local languages and mention can be made of Christaller who translated the Bible into Twi. However, what sets the Church of Pentecost apart is that, right from the onset, the Church conducted all its service in the predominant language of the local assembly. The communication barrier was therefore broken and people could easily relate and identify with the message of the church. Thus, while the mission churches were singing hymns in English; the Church of Pentecost was doing theirs in Twi, Ewe and other local languages.

The mother-tongue also featured prominently in the church's evangelistic activities, thus during one of the Christmas conventions of the church, it happened that Afua Kuma, the mother-in-law of one of the then Apostles of the Church of Pentecost, Apostle A.T. Nartey, claiming to be moved by the spirit, came forward and applied the names used in praise of a Chief to the praise of God. McKeown's interpreter struggled to find words to explain. Yet, McKeown thought that such rich words as *Nyansabuakwa* (custodian of wisdom) and *obaatampa* (Capable mother) had some parallels in the Psalms. He encouraged this. This action by McKeown which surprised many due to earlier positions or stance taken by other missionaries against such acts, as carried out by the woman, made a lot of people especially the local folks to identify themselves with the Church of Pentecost. This led to a significant growth as many felt at home with the use of mother-tongue in the church. Afua Kuma was often called during conventions to praise God in her mother's tongue using appellations which were usually used in addressing local chiefs. This won many converts to the church who were amazed as to the way the church could communicate using imageries in their culture to proclaim the gospel.

2.7. Conclusion

This Chapter has been looking so far at the religious world view into which Christianity was born in Ghana as well as the history and growth of the Church of Pentecost. The Chapter has so far looked at some of the difficulties the early missionaries faced. These western missionaries were handicapped with regards to their understanding of the culture of the Ghanaian and their contextualization of the gospel into the Ghanaian cultural world view. Chapter two has also looked at how the Church of Pentecost came in after the attempt by the African Independent Churches to Africanize Christianity suffered some challenges. The growth factors of the Church of Pentecost were also looked at. The next chapter will consider some of the challenges the Church of Pentecost has encountered as it witnessed phenomenal growth and expansion in its activities which has culminated in the establishment of Pentecost International Worship Centers.



CHAPTER THREE

THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST IN A POSTMODERN SOCIETY

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the environment within which the church was born into and how the environment influenced the church in the shaping of its spirituality. This environment helped the church to develop practices which contributed immensely towards its growth. These practices enjoyed widespread acceptance among Ghanaians desiring the liberating power of the Pentecostal experience especially from a Christianity that had been so over westernised.

However, with the rapid socio-economic changes, the effects of postmodernity with its attendant effect of globalisation and the influence of Western culture on the Ghanaian society, the once fascinating and unquestionable church traditions and practices of the church has come under scrutiny. This chapter will consider the challenges posed by postmodernity with its attendant effects of globalisation, socio-economic changes and influence of western culture on the Church of Pentecost and the effects these challenges has had on the church. Most importantly, the chapter will consider how these challenges informed the decision of the church leadership in introducing the English and PIWC concept.

3.2. Postmodernism

Post modernity is a difficult term to define because of the many cultural and intellectual paradigms from which people view it. However, for the purpose of this work the definition of McKim (1996:214) will be adopted and he defines postmodernism as “the description of a contemporary intellectual and cultural climate beyond modernity introduced by the

enlightenment.” He further adds that “this stage is marked by the rejection of objective truth, the powers of reason and claims of universality.

McKim looks at the contemporary intellectual state the world finds itself in and this work will also look extensively at how the growing or ever increasing intellectual base in the church is affecting the Church of Pentecost. The work is looking at the role culture plays in evangelization and church growth. McKim’s work looks at the contemporary cultural climate and helps throw more light on modern trends in culture which will help in juxtaposing the culture with which the Church of Pentecost was born into as against the cultural environment she finds herself in today and how this can affect her growth. Some of the characteristics of postmodernity are highlighted below.

Postmodernity states that because we live in a pluralistic society, and work in a global economy, we must develop what Veith (1994:174) calls a “multicultural awareness”. Although many scholars disagree among themselves as to what postmodernity actually involves, they concede the phenomenon marks the end of a single worldview. The postmodern ethos, therefore resists unified, all – encompassing and universally valid explanations. It replaces those with a respect for difference and a celebration of the local and particular cultures at the expense of the universal. The postmodern ethos arises from the assumption that there is no unified whole that can be called “reality”.

Postmodern thinkers have therefore given up the search for universal and ultimate truth because they are convinced there is nothing more to find than a host of conflicting interpretations or infinity of linguistically created words. This situation promotes acceptance of the culture of others without question as any attempt to do that would constitute arrogance or label one as being ethnocentric. Postmodernity therefore believes that although truth can be found, no one

religion has monopoly over the truth. It therefore rejects the category of truth altogether, culminating in the springing up of New Age Religions, syncretism and moral chaos.

In a postmodern society, people do not accept the same authorities, methodologies or criteria. Persuasion therefore becomes impossible, as everyone exist in a self-contained world, speaking a language incomprehensible to outsiders. This obviously makes communicating the gospel in contemporary society very difficult. The general philosophy now is “that may be true for you, but it isn’t truth for me”. Postmodernity thus values diversity and rejects authority. Consequently, postmodernity assumes that there is no objective truth, so moral values are relative and reality is socially constructed by a host of diverse communities.

Under the postmodernist way of thinking, the principle of cultural diversity means that every like-minded group constitutes a culture that must be considered as good as any other culture. In a postmodern context, things that are considered sinful are being “judgmental”, “narrow minded” and “trying to force your values on another person”.

Postmodernity does not reject religion but embraces and promotes all religions and it has helped brought to the fore the activities of Christian groups like the Neo-Pentecostals or Charismatics. It has thus positively helped these hitherto marginalised strands of Christianity to be accepted.

3.2.1. Postmodern challenges to the Church of Pentecost

The rejection of authority is one of the challenges the church has had to grapple with. Postmodernity creates a situation where people no longer accept the same authorities, methodologies or criteria. The situation is not different from the Church of Pentecost. Most of the youth and intellectuals have had cause to reject the authority of leadership in the church especially, the elderly due to their entrenched positions on some practices of the church which

have existed over the years or which have been part of the church ever since her inception. They also do not understand why the means or methods the church adopted in carrying out her activities should continue to be applicable today especially when the society is undergoing several changes with its attendant consequences on the church. This has created a serious tension between the youth and mostly uneducated ones on the other side with both sides seeing themselves as being in the best position to protect the church from grinding to a halt. The situation has forced many young people to leave the church and they have found a welcoming home with the charismatic or Neo-Pentecostal churches.

Postmodernity also encourages and embraces diversity in values. The Church of Pentecost which has, as part of her core values of building a truly indigenous church and has guarded against any form of changing the status quo is now hit with the reality of incorporating western traditions and practices into its worship in order to stay in the business of winning and discipling souls for Christ. The church is thus faced with the challenge of diversifying her traditions and practices in order to retain the numerous youth who were leaving the church and also not alienating the conservatives of the church who would not want to see any change in the way the church is being administered.

Another postmodern challenge to the Church of Pentecost is the belief in the relativity of sin which frowns on being judgmental of others actions. Some of the charismatic and Neo-Pentecostal churches have been widely accused of preaching more on prosperity and success and less or not at all on sin or holiness. The general perception which is also turning out to be a reality is that, churches which preach prosperity turn out to have a lot of following especially from the youth who are not comfortable with the preaching on sin. In order to stay in business, some of these emerging churches instead of condemning sin rather keep silent on them and

create an impression that they support such wrongdoings. Such environments have attracted most of the church's youth. Postmodernity with its tendency of existentialism protest that every individual exists for him or herself, the church, and for that matter, nobody has the right to condemn what clothes one wears, what lifestyle one lives and what one does with one's body. The liberal environment created by Neo-Pentecostals have attracted many youth from the Church of Pentecost who were getting fed-up with the strict dress code especially for women in the church. The liberal atmosphere created by these churches most definitely suited the youth who were leaving the Church of Pentecost. It is therefore not surprising that all the PIWCs created by the church have a relaxed and liberal posture on dressing and lifestyle in general unlike the local assemblies of the same church where strict regulations concerning dressing are still religiously enforced.

One other postmodern challenge facing the church is globalization. Nsibambi (2001:8) defines globalization as “a process of advancement and increased interaction among the world's countries and peoples facilitated by impressive technological changes in locomotion, communication, political and military power, knowledge and skills as well as interfacing of cultural values, systems and practices.”

As a globalized religion, the Church of Pentecost has been influenced by some characteristics of globalization especially the breaking down of geographical boundaries which has made culture a transferable commodity, the mobility of labour, information technology and the culture of consumerism.

The culture of consumerism has created a situation where church members especially the youth desire quick fix solutions to their emotional and sometimes frivolous cravings; this has made these members deviate from the accepted doctrinal practices for sensationalism and

emotionalism. As a result, books, conferences and tapes on “Ancestral Curses”, demonology, spiritual warfare and other sensational topics have impacted negatively on the Church of Pentecost such that members of the church sometimes attribute persistent personal problems to an “ancestral curse” or demonic influence. This phenomenon can be very much associated with the Neo-Pentecostal churches or Charismatic churches and very attractive to the youth in the society with the church of Pentecost’s youth not being an exception. The Church of Pentecost is therefore faced with the challenge of organizing herself like the charismatics not with the intention of following the teachings of these Neo-Pentecostals but to reduce the rate at which these youth were leaving for the emerging churches. It however seems like though their intention was not also to go along with the teachings of the other Neo-Pentecostals or charismatic’s on “ancestral curses”, the PIWCs are being tempted to follow the footsteps of these emerging churches. For example, the PIWC in Asokwa is on record to have invited a renowned Nigerian Pastor, Abraham Chigbundu who is also a proponent of this “ancestral curse” and demonic influence teaching who ministered at one of her revival meetings in 2002. It therefore goes to say that though the church was only creating a centre to absorb her youth whom she assumed were being misled so as to feed them with the “right kind” of gospel, these centre’s are most likely being tempted or influenced by the dictates of the youth to resort to the teachings on “ancestral curses”.

Information Technology coupled with the extensive use of the media is another globalization challenge the church has had to deal with. The extensive use of information technology like the website, social networks (like Facebook, twitter etc.) have been explored by the Neo-Pentecostal churches to their advantage. Through these means, they have been able to reach a lot of people and attracted lots of followers especially younger generation of the society. Their televangelism

and radio ministry coupled with their enticing and sustained advertising activities have positioned them as viable option for many younger people who think their churches are being too “traditional” and not opening up to change. The Church of Pentecost is faced with a situation where some of her conservative leaders are not even comfortable with the use of projectors; they see the use of the media like television and radio for the propagation of the gospel as a waste of resources. Attempts in recent years to see the church taking full advantage of using the internet and other social networks as a tool for propagating the gospel has received a lot of backlash from certain peoples in the church. They see the move as costly and an avenue to give members of the church the opportunity to use the internet which they presume to be a tool for corrupting good morals. Myopic and trivial as some of these arguments are, it has really affected the rate at which the church is taking advantage of information technology to spread the gospel and bring leadership closer to the membership of the church. On the other hand, these Neo-Pentecostal churches have not only used the boom in information technology to spread the gospel but also used it as a means of bringing leadership closer to their members where the top echelons of the church interact directly with members via the available social networks. The unwillingness and feet dragging of the local assemblies to take advantage of ICT did not go down well with members of the church, especially the youth. The creation of PIWCs was therefore seen as an attempt to give room for the church to fully take advantage of the use of information technology. Also; these centres were going to be seen as the institutions which were going to spearhead the church’s vision to fully utilize information technology in her activities.

3.3. Emergence of the Neo Pentecostals or Charismatic Churches and their impact on the Church of Pentecost

Postmodernity also promotes religious plurality by not rejecting any religion and this has brought to the fore the activities hitherto marginalized Christian groups like the Pentecostals and more recently the Neo-Pentecostals or Charismatics. The Neo-Pentecostals or Charismatics have had a serious impact on the Church of Pentecost and their existence is one of the main reasons for the establishment of the Pentecost International Worship Centres (PIWCs). Gifford (2004:27) puts their arrival on the Ghanaian scene around 1979. He puts them into four categories namely: the faith/prosperity/health-and-wealth and deliverance wave led by Nicholas Duncan Williams of the Christian Action Faith Ministries International, teaching wave led by Mensah Otabil of the International Central Gospel Church, Miracle/Healing wave exemplified by Charles Agyin-Asare of the World Miracle Church International and the Prophetic wave led by Elisha Salifu Amoako. Their arrival on the scene shook the foundation of the existing mission related and Pentecostal churches with the Church of Pentecost losing most of its members to them. Most of their lay leaders and even key figures were at one point in time members of the Church of Pentecost who left for these Neo-Pentecostal churches.

Larbi (2001:307) also identifies two strands of Neo-Pentecostalism in Ghana. Firstly, those who place undue emphasis on “the prosperity gospel”, “the abundant life” or the material or physical well-being of the believer. Secondly, those who in addition to the above have a great deal of concern for deliverance of people from demonic oppression place emphasis on marital, barrenness, poverty, sickness and visa acquisition problems. Such churches are locally referred to as “Deliverance Ministries”. Whether there are four strands as posited by Gifford or two as

said by Larbi one thing that runs through their ministry is that their activities are dominated by the “prosperity gospel” and “deliverance or healing ministry”.

Their activities appeal so much to the youth and the intellectuals who seem to have been so much influenced by the global culture of consumerism which has in turn, seriously impacted the content of worship of these Neo-Pentecostals. Their emphasis on “deliverance”, “prophetic messages” and “anointing” normally pull crowds, with some of the Church of Pentecost members, especially the youth.

Similarly, Benny Hinn’s “slaying” and “anointing” phenomenon appears to have caught up with many of the Neo-Pentecostal Ministries. Currently, ministers who are capable of making people “fall under the power of the anointing” are classified as powerful men of God, while those who fall during prayer meetings claim to have been “anointed”. Some ministers, who do not believe that these sensational events must take place in every service are looked down upon as not being “spiritual” or “anointed” enough by the youth of the church. They are thus attracted to these Neo-Pentecostal figures whom they consider to be “anointed” and “powerful”. It is a common practice in the church now to hear most youth and other members complain that the Church of Pentecost ministers lack the “dynamism” and “anointing” that other Neo-Pentecostal Ministers epitomize. It is a common practice in the church to see most of the youth attending the programmes organized by these so-called anointed ministers of God and thus expect the church of Pentecost to organize herself along the lines of these charismatic churches and also expect their Pastors to tow the line of ministration of these ministers of God from these charismatic churches.. Others also hold the view that the Church of Pentecost Ministers are too “dull” and do not possess the “charisma” to “pull the youth along when preaching or leading prayer sessions. They even believe most of the Church of Pentecost ministers they have listened to “lack enough

revelation of the word and thus preach straight-forward and boring messages”. To these youth, whenever they listen to people like Mensah Otabil of ICGC and Eastwood Anaba, they feel challenged but that cannot be said of the COP ministers. Debatable as these assertions or observations may be, it has, from every indication proved to be one of the factors that push the youth outside the church.

Unlike the classical Pentecostals who have centered their message on the Four-Square gospel (Jesus the savior, healer, baptizer in the Holy Spirit and soon coming king), the Neo-Pentecostals have gone a step further to concentrate their message on hope and deliverance from poverty. Their “prosperity” messages deliver people from ignorance, inferiority complex and mental slavery. Their emergence on the Ghanaian scene in the early 1980’s when the nation was going through serious economic challenges may have informed the content of their messages and since the level of poverty coupled with unemployment was very high, their message seems to have caught up well with many people who identified themselves with the Neo-Pentecostals. Thus while the Neo-Pentecostals had “deliberately” fashioned their message to attract the youth at the time, the COP was still stuck with their “four square gospel” (i.e. Jesus the saviour, the healer, baptizer in the Holy Spirit and soon coming king).

Again, while the Church of Pentecost adheres to a strict dress code for women, especially the use of head coverings, the Neo-Pentecostals are more relaxed on the issue. There is liberty at these Neo-Pentecostal churches. It is therefore not surprising that, many of the COP youth who were embarrassed by some leaders for their allegedly “ungodly” dressing found themselves in the fold of these Neo-Pentecostals who were ready to accommodate them.

Language use by these Neo-Pentecostals also attracted the elite and youth from the church of Pentecost because the use of English as a medium of communication was appealing to them. The

COP's use of the predominant local language within her catchment area attracted the low and the middle class of the society who felt much at home with the local dialect.

Whereas the Church of Pentecost remains rigid and traditional in the calling of ministers and lay-officers, by adopting the on-the-job leadership training or leadership-by-association system, the Neo-Pentecostals have been more liberal. For them, the key factor for entry into ministry is the "call of God on a person's life". It is therefore not surprising to see most of their leadership being in the youthful bracket who are filled with exuberance and desire to do God's work. However, in the Church of Pentecost, even if you have the "call of God upon your life" you will have to join the "queue" to be properly groomed. Thus, many of the youngsters who returned from school or after their conversion and were bubbling with zeal to do God's work were "disappointed" when they were told to hold on. Most of these people left to join or form their own ministries. One of such individuals is Nicholas Duncan Williams of the CAFMI. The position of COP seems to have been relaxed lately, though premium is placed on training, a lot more young people are being called into full time ministry and lay leadership. It is a common phenomenon to see young men and women as young as 20 years being made leaders in the church. Something that was not common some years back. It must however be stated that this practice is predominant in the PIWCs or PENSA (student wing of the church on the various campuses which runs along the lines of the PIWCs.) Very likely the leadership of the church realizes the threat these Neo-Pentecostals pose to her in terms of "poaching" her youth and thus has modified her stance on leadership appointments.

Music is also one area that the Neo-Pentecostals have used to influence the youth and thus attracted them into their fold. The changing patterns in fashion have brought about a situation where young people would want to enjoy "reggae", "rap" and "rock" music in church. These

Neo-Pentecostals have thus introduced some of these songs into their praise and worship activities, these songs are well rehearsed and ministered by choristers who lead the congregation in song ministration.

Gifford (2004:27) states that about 60% of these songs are in English while about 40% are in Twi. Most of these songs are mainly from the United States of America. The Church of Pentecost on the other hand is blessed with so many songs which many describe as “Holy Spirit inspired” and therefore finds it difficult to understand why the youth will want to fall in love with “foreign songs”. For these individuals, they find it difficult to believe why the youth will frown on the church’s spirit filled songs. Koduah (2004:111) also describes COP songs as “inspirational and soul-moving that could cause die-hard sinners to break down and surrender to Jesus”. He further adds, “These are songs that gave hope to the hopeless, faith to the faithless and made no-bodies to feel like some-bodies”. He is of the view that the generational gap syndrome in the church which has made it difficult for the founders of the church to pass onto the younger generation how some of these songs came about and their meanings account for the low patronage of the COP songs by the youth. The influence of the Neo-Pentecostal choice of songs on the church is so overwhelming that, the Executive Council of the church has advised that the PIWCs and PENSA should as a matter of necessity sing 70% of their songs in English and 30% in Twi. This directive by the church has not been welcomed by many because they are of the opinion that the decision is likely to further worsen the issue of the younger generation losing interest in the COP songs and embracing “foreign songs”. They rather advocate that a conscious effort is made by the church to teach the younger generation the church’s songs. Concerned members contend that “if our songs were difficult and boring as the younger ones want us to believe, why is almost every gospel musician in Ghana today singing our songs and making huge

profits out of them?” They insist that the younger ones should be made to “feel proud” of our “God-given” songs.

Furthermore, these Neo-Pentecostals, unlike the Church of Pentecost address the pre-occupations of the youth. Cardinal amongst these issues is relationship/courtship, marriage, employment issues, investment and many others that are very paramount to the survival of the youth.

These characteristics associated with the Neo-Pentecostals have had a serious impact on the fortunes of the Church of Pentecost. It must however be noted that, these factors have directly or indirectly influenced the Church of Pentecost to take a look at her missiological principles and this second look is what informed the decision of the leadership to introduce the Pentecost International Worship Centers.

3.4. Effect of Socio-Economic Changes in Ghana on the Church of Pentecost

The socio-economic changes that has impacted the church and also informed the church in creating the PIWCs are education and difficult economic conditions which led to the loss of jobs creating serious unemployment crisis and forcing a lot of people outside the country to seek greener pastures or better living conditions.

Socially, the improved level of education as a result of the expansion of educational facilities by the government and many of the church’s members acquiring education has affected the Church of Pentecost. Nukunya (1992:154,200) also posits, “Education has created a social stratification, into which the elite group is becoming more and more difficult to enter.”

The Church of Pentecost began with as predominantly illiterate or uneducated crop of members and even within her leadership. They believe that although education is important, it is not a prerequisite for church growth, rather the Holy Spirit should be the driving force behind the

growth of every church. With the passage of time, the improved levels of education in the country with its impact on the Church of Pentecost has helped the church to have more educated people in leadership who are using their knowledge to assist the church in her activities.

The acquisition of education has also brought a lot of pressure from the educated individuals who are predominantly youth on the leadership of the church. The improved levels and over reliance on western education has created a distorted value system. English language fluency has been mistaken for intelligence and acquiring formal education becomes a passport for gaining prestige. The case for local languages, the most efficient medium of education sadly became outmoded because of displacement. Literacy as a human development tool was made subordinate to literacy for prestige. Human development then became valuable only when it was acquired in the colonial powers language. It is lamentable that most of the younger ones in the Church of Pentecost from the elite background and those who are privileged to have been educated cannot or hardly communicate in the local language. Even at home, most parents of certain linguistic background do not consider it expedient to communicate with their children in their mother tongues which should be the first language (L1). It is quite obvious that such children learn English language from their parents and peers.

The prestige that is associated with the acquisition of education and speaking of the English language also creates a situation where the educated want to associate with “likeminded” people or people of their status even at church, a place where one would have expected something of that sought not to happen. The situation is also compounded by the Neo-Pentecostals or charismatic churches who emerged on the Ghanaian scene and adopted the use of English language as their medium of communication. They were able to attract the elite and educated people into their fold who were comfortable with the language factor. The Church of Pentecost is

thus faced with a situation where these improved levels of education is “forcing” her to review her hitherto strict indigenous language policy.

These individuals have not only received education at various levels but have also adapted Western lifestyles to demand that they be permitted to conduct church services in English and along Western patterns.

Again, these youth and professionals are of the opinion that the church has become too traditional and need to be “modernized”. They want to understand why the church is not running along the lines of the Neo-Pentecostals (Charismatic). They (especially the youth) question why they are not allowed to sing “Reggae”, “Rap” and “Hip-Life” type of gospel songs as it is practiced in some of the Neo-Pentecostal churches. These group of people also do not understand why they are discouraged from dating and courting as practiced in the Western world and in most Neo-Pentecostal churches, and why the sisters are not permitted to wear pair of trousers. It is the view of the church that, to avoid pre-marital sexual relationship, the opposite sexes, especially, a prospective couple must not be too close, although contacts and communication are permitted. These and many other “un-codified” regulations were some of the measures the church took to ensure what some leaders refer to as the “healthy growth and spiritual sanity of the church”.

Although Ghana is a nation blessed with enormous natural resources which when properly managed can accelerate the nations development, Pobee (1988:27-28) explains that years of economic mismanagement by corrupt government, political instability culminating in five military coup d'états, the fall in the price of primary commodities on the world markets and population has reduced Ghana to a nation that still depends on donor support to carry out most of her developmental activities.

In 1983, the government was compelled by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to introduce an Economic Recovery Programme, which according to Okyere (2000:33-34) removed subsidies on several commodities and education. This resulted in the high school dropout rate. Even though tuition fees in government-run Basic schools are still very minimal, most parents are unable to pay fees, thus leading to high number of school drop outs. These drop-outs were left with little or no skill and therefore made them unemployable thereby creating a serious unemployment deficit. According to Okyere (2000:274), the Economic Recovery Programme compelled government to retrench 38,000 workers. This led to a lot of people losing their jobs including members of the Church of Pentecost. Though records were not readily available to indicate the number of church members who lost their jobs, some leaders explain that the numbers were very high. The harsh economic conditions forced many of the church members outside the country to search for jobs to support themselves and their families. This situation coupled with the global culture of mobility of labour has forced many Ghanaians outside the country. Ghana's former President, John Agyekum Kufuor (2002:1-3) lamented, "Ghana finds itself in a painful paradox of being a poor country that is producing doctors for rich nations". Though he mentioned only doctors, it cuts across all the other professions and even for the unskilled.

Fortunately for the church, her members who left the shores of the country to seek greener pastures in countries like USA, UK, Germany and other European countries took the gospel with them and established branches of the church in their respective countries. This explains why the church has such wide visibility in many countries outside Ghana. However, most of the members got used to the lifestyle of their host counties; song, dressing, language, etc. and back home, found it difficult fitting into the very church they love and cherish. Many of those who could not

fit into the system back home left to join the emerging Neo-Pentecostal churches whose doors were wide open to accommodate some of these dissatisfied members. Therefore, the PIWCs were created to absorb some of these individuals who were complaining of the “unfair” treatment being metered out to them by some of the leaders of the church because their alleged “new lifestyle” did not conform to what exist in the local assemblies.

These challenges set the stage for the leadership to review the church’s missiological strategy which had not undergone any major changes since its inception. The review of the strategy gave birth to the Pentecost International Worship Centre’s (PIWCs), a decision that has not gone down well with some leaders and members of the church who are of the view that the church is deviating from her cherished values or traditions and embracing the “world” while relegating issues of the holy Spirit to the background. Some also believe that the Church of Pentecost (CoP) is a “unique” church with a special covenant with the Lord and so there is no need for the church to allow the emerging strand of Christianity to dictate how CoP is runned.

There are others who also support the decision of the leadership to create these centre’s and believe that, these centre’s aside being the “new face” of the church in the 21st century also holds the key to reducing to the bearest minimum the issue of youth and intellectual drain in the church.

3.5. Historical Background to the PIWC Concept

3.5.1. Definition

Pentecost International Worship Centre is a special ministry of the Church of Pentecost existing to provide a well-organized cross-cultural church for people of non-Ghanaian cultural background as well as our Ghanaian brothers and sisters who for one reason or other prefer and

indeed feel free to worship in the English Language. A PIWC is an assembly/church that has been granted a district status by the Executive Council and assigned a full time pastor. *(Culled from the final report of committee commissioned by the Executive council to come out with modalities that will enhance the efficient running of the centers, as well as the various English Assemblies)*

As most cities in Ghana, became increasingly cosmopolitan, the Church of Pentecost was confronted with the challenge of reaching out to and offering effective fellowship to the broad spectrum of the people. For effectiveness, the spread of the Gospel by the church was expected to be done in a way that people of different nationalities, traditions and cultures would be comfortable with in fellowship.

The Church of Pentecost by 1992 had become an International church with branches in over 30 countries in Asia, Europe, Africa and the Americas. This raised another challenge of giving effective and comfortable fellowship to the Ghanaian members of the external branches when they were on holidays in Ghana so that they could feel at home and worship like they do out there.

3.6. English Assemblies

The English Assembly concept was part of the church's response to the concerns of the teeming number of students, graduates and professionals who no longer seemed content with the "traditional" Church of Pentecost programmes and activities. Most of these young men and women, very committed to their faith but "who did not fit in", began to leave the church in their hundreds not only to provide the membership of emerging characteristics churches but also supplied the core of leadership. To arrest this trend, the then leadership of PENSA prevailed

upon the leadership of the church to consider opening English churches at the district levels to contain this new breed of church members. The vision as with PENSEA itself was met, with stiff opposition from sections of both the clergy and eldership of the church. Apostle. F. S. Sarfo (then Chairman of the church) and Apostle D.K. Arnan (General Secretary.) pushed the vision through to its implementation. English assemblies were thus formed in Kokomlemle, Dansoman, Cantonments, Kumasi and Takoradi. Having worked for some time, the then International Missions Director of the Church, Apostle Dr. OpokuOnyinah met with the leadership of the various English Assemblies and suggested the idea of the PIWC to them.

Analyzing his address, it becomes clear that he, unlike some of his colleagues identifies the challenge the emerging Neo-Pentecostal churches posed to the Church of Pentecost and thus sees the creation of a similar set-up to counter the effect of these emerging churches on the Church of Pentecost's growth is a step in the right direction. Their content of worship especially which deals with their sermon, praise and worship and many others were very attractive to the youth. He particularly is impressed with the International Central Gospel Church whom he believes are reaching the younger generation better than other churches including the Church of Pentecost. It appears that he is particularly enthused about the missiological strategy of the two Charismatic churches he visited and their effective way of reaching the youth and elite in the society.

It also emerges that he realizes the unhealthy friction between the younger generation and elderly in the church which has pushed many of the younger ones outside the church into the Neo-Pentecostal churches. He believes that the entrenched position taken by the elderly and some leaders is not the best way to go especially when the demands being made by this younger generation does not contradict any portion of scripture. Most importantly, he comes to appreciate that, the that the younger generation is a product of a postmodern world where rejection of

authority and methodology is a common phenomenon and therefore will not easily submit to authorities especially when they are very much aware that the demands they are making are valid and possible to be met.

He saw that there was the need to draw a line of distinction between the practices of the church which were not helpful to the survival of the church in the current dispensation and those that are helpful. It clearly shows that, he admits that some of the practices of the church with the passage of time and the impact of postmodernity need to be reviewed if the church will continue to stay in the business of soul winning. He realizes that since culture is dynamic, practices of the church which were instituted years back and “made sense” then cannot continue to be made to exist especially when the society within which such cultural practices themselves evolved are changing.

The statement also acknowledges that, the Church of Pentecost has been a church that has always met the demands and expectations of the uneducated due to the membership base she started with. But with the passage of time, her largely uneducated membership is undergoing a major transformation with more educated people coming in which calls for a review of the church’s missiological strategy to attract and satisfy these group of people.

In all these, one thing that stands out clearly is that, the PIWCs were created primarily due to the enormous influence the emerging Charismatic Churches were having on the Church of Pentecost.

3.7. Brief History of Asokwa PIWC

The idea of planting an urban based English church which meets the needs of the youth in contemporary times in the Kumasi metropolis was planted in the heart of Apostle A. T. Nartey. This idea saw the light of day in January 1986, when the late Apostle Nartey shared his vision with the regional presbytery (the group of ministers and lay-leaders who see to the successful running of the church in a particular geographical or administrative region). According to him the youth were caught between a cultural mix of both Ghanaian and western. In a response to this cultural mix, he argued that it was expedient for the Church of Pentecost to have a cross-cultural church which would be conducted in such a way as to meet the spiritual needs of the urban professionals, foreign national and students without compromising the traditional social Christian principles, primarily, his vision was to create an accommodative environment in the church for the youth who were leaving the church for other emerging charismatic churches at the time.

Even though his idea was received with mixed feelings, primarily because Kumasi is a city where the local dialect is spoken and understood by all, he did not abandon the idea. On Sunday of 27th May 1986, the then Kumasi English assembly (often referred to as English church) was inaugurated in a classroom of Yaa Achiiaa Girls School. The inaugural service was performed by Rev. G. Osei Bonsu. The inaugural service was attended by over 50 people from various assemblies of the Church of Pentecost in Kumasi.

Four Elders: Peter Ohene Kyei (Presiding Elder) Prince Mac Obiri Mainoo, Micheal Kwadwo Adjalo and Dr. Ken Aboah were charged with the responsibility of overseeing this new born assembly. Later on, Dr. Enoch Frimpong who arrived from Britain, Lawrence Adu Kusi, transferred from Sunyani and Captain Mike Boampong from Accra joined the Eldership. The

initial membership was about 20 and now has a membership of 1600 adults and 520 children. In 1993 Apostle Dr, Opoku Onyinah proposed that the English assemblies be upgraded to International Worship Center. A year after this in 1994, IWC was change to PIWC by the Executive Council of the Church of Pentecost to make the centre more effective and truly resemble a church that accommodates nationalities from various cultural background.

With growth in membership, the leadership of the of the English church in Kumasi made several appeal s to the then Executive Council of the Church of Pentecost to send pastors to shepherd the church, it was against this background that the first Resident pastor, Rev. Paul Jerry Adzah was sent. He served from 1995 to October, 1997. He was followed by Rev. Amos Jimmy Markin who served from October 1997 to September 2004, then Rev. David Alex Adwere from September 2004 to 2006. He was followed by Apostle Samuel Yaw Antwi who served from September 2006 to September 2009 the center are currently under the leadership of Rev. Lawrence Otu-Nyarko who has been in charged since September 2009.

3.8. Brief History of Sunyani PIWC.

In accordance with the vision of the fathers of the church in Brong Ahafo Region A, in the early 1990's to create an assembly to cater for the needs of non-twi speaking members of the church, the English Assembly was inaugurated on the 7th January, 1992 by Apostle Robert Acquah (Regional Head) with the assistance of Rev. Francis Ofori Yeboah (Sunyani District Pastor).

English speaking members were selected from all the local assemblies in the Sunyani Municipality to form the nucleus of this assembly. The assembly thus begun with 28 co-opted members.

Apart from the reverend ministers who helped in the establishment of the center, the following Elders also played a very instrumental role; Adu Amankwaa, Oppong Asare-Dua, Agyeman Dua, E. P. Arko, Fiifi Yankson, Armstrong Aidoo and Sefa Tweneboah. Other lay leaders whose contribution to the formation cannot be overlooked are Deconesses Rose Anoma, Mabel Yankson, Margaret Ferka and Juliana Tweneboah. They were ably supported by Deacons Felix Ferka, Atta Boamah, Justice Amoako, Ampraku Nimako and others. The assembly initially worshipped at the transit quarters of the regional office of the church in Sunyani, they later relocated to a Twene Amanfo Secondary School using one of the school classroom as her meeting place. The church now worships in her own auditorium, with expansion work underway. Sunyani PIWC was granted a district status in August 2002 and a Resident Pastor was also appointed for the district that same year. Ministers who have served in the district include Rev. Francis Ofori Yeboah, Jacob Narh Affum, F.K. Andoh, Oppong Peprah, Nana Yaw Agyei, Patrick Bremensu and currently Ayisi Mensah.

3.9. Conclusion

This chapter has brought to the fore the challenges postmodernity has brought upon the church causing it to review some of her most cherished traditions especially with the use of the local language. The chapter also discusses the impact of the emergence of Neo-Pentecostal churches on the church of Pentecost and it emerges that, this new strand of Christianity is the major reason why the church has had to review and relax some of her age old traditions in order not to lose it members who were trooping to the emerging Neo-Pentecostal churches in their numbers.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

In Chapter three, we discussed the factors that led to the establishment of the Pentecost International Worship Centres. It came out that, education, globalisation, mobility of labour and more significantly, the emergence of the Neo Pentecostal Churches and their style of worship has directly or indirectly contributed significantly to the establishment of the PIWC. It also came to light that this decision by the church has not gone down well with some members in the church and some of her leaders as well. This has created a lot of concern among those who are in support of the concept and those who are against it. It is against this background that the researcher is conducting a study into the activities of two of the centres in Kumasi and Sunyani to ascertain their impact on the churches growth and whether their existence have some relevance to the continuous growth and survival of the Church.

4.2. Methodology

The study employed the qualitative method of research in collecting data. The researcher being a member of the church relied on primary sources such as interviews and participant observation to obtain data. A simple random sampling method was used to select the clergy and other lay leaders to be interviewed. In administering the questionnaire, Nwanna's (2004) formular was applied. He explains that in choosing a sampling size, the formular should be where the population is a few thousand, 10% of the population or more will do. It explains why 100 members each were selected from PENSA, Asokwa and Sunyani. The simple random sampling

method was again used to interview some non-CoP members who were hitherto members of the church. The reason was to solicit their response on reasons for leaving the church. This was very necessary as a very key aspect of this work was to look at why some of the CoP members left for other emerging churches. Relevant information was also sought from documentary sources such as journals, books and articles that have a bearing on the study. All data gathered were carefully examined and evaluated in the light of the study objectives using the descriptive method of statistical analysis.

4.3. Research Questions

The following questions were used as the benchmark by which information was sought from our respondents:

- a. Why are the youth and intellectuals drifting to other emerging churches?
- b. To what extent has the introduction of the PIWC concept helped reduce the exodus of youth and intellectuals from the church to other churches?
- c. What are the traditions, doctrines, tenets or core values of the church that the PIWC concept seems to have flouted or contravened?
- d. To what extent has the PIWC concept contributed to the growth of the Church?
- e. What is the future and relevance of the PIWC to the survival of the church?
- f. How effective is the use of the English language as a medium of communication at these centers?

4.4. Research Findings

4.4.1. Youth Drain

Under the youth drain, two main issues were looked at. These are: why some youth and intellectuals left for the emerging Neo-Pentecostal churches and why will the youth and some intellectuals abandon the local assemblies for the PIWCs.

Why some youth and intellectuals left for the emerging Neo-Pentecostal churches

According to Danso, an Elder of the Church, before he became an ordained officer of the church, he had a very tough time with some clergy and lay leaders of the church in his local assembly. He explained that because most of these leaders were uneducated, they felt threatened by the educational background of young men and women who were climbing higher on the educational ladder. Okae Anti, a youth leader of the church also shared in the response of Danso and he added that as a Pastor's son, he always heard his father and some of the leaders of the church saying the youth who were busily pursuing academic laurels were going to use their qualifications to push them aside and take over the church. As a result of that, most of these leaders developed an antagonistic attitude toward them and condemned almost everything that they did, even things that they as youth thought should not attract condemnation like the way they dance, their choice of music and clothing and mingling with the opposite sex. He further adds that, the leadership of the local assemblies were of the opinion that the younger ones were inexperienced and could not be entrusted with any responsibility or allowed to handle activities in the Church. These leaders to him, had a complete monopoly over church activities much to the displeasure of the youth who were bubbling with zeal from school and especially when some of them had occupied various challenging positions on campus and thought they should be given

the room to put their expertise at the disposal of the Church. Their zeal was however cut short by what he calls the “selfish” ambition of these leaders and they had to find themselves at places that will receive them.

The two respondents explained that such “unfriendly or unwelcome” attitude developed by the leadership pushed many of their colleague youth out of the church to other emerging Pentecostal and Charismatic churches which were being established at the time and had adopted a more youth-friendly approach or way of worship. Danso particularly cites one Isaac Mensah, one time Youth leader of the church and currently the General Overseer of Dove Revival Ministries in Elmina, who left the church because he had been publicly rebuked in front of the whole congregation for dancing in an “ungodly” manner. He explains that Mensah felt so embarrassed that he left the church despite persistent appeals from some members for him to stay. For Danso and Okae Anti, the PIWC concept is the best decision that the church has ever taken to stop the exodus of youth and professionals from the church.

In an interview with Dwomoh, a former member of the Church he explained that while at home, he organised a youth singing group because according to him, “he believes that is the best way he can serve God”. To his surprise, his local presbytery, led by the Presiding Elder, called him to their meeting and rebuked him for establishing such a group because according to them, “he was teaching them un-Pentecostal songs and using the group as breeding grounds for ungodly relationships”. Much as he tried to make them understand what he was doing, they were not ready to see eye to eye with him. He left the church and now fellowships with Love Chapel International, Asamankese Branch where he serves as the music director. Back on campus, he fellowships with PENSA because there is no branch of his church on campus. For him, and many

others, he sees some of the practices of the church and the views of some of the leaders as “backward”. Effraim, a former member of the church on the other hand said he was humiliated by one Elder of the Church who saw him holding hands with a lady after close of evening service. He was so embarrassed by what the Elder did especially when he overheard the Elder telling another colleague officer that “he suspects the two are engaging themselves in immoral activities”. He fellowships with the Lighthouse Chapel International branch in Twifo Praso where he serves as the outreach coordinator.

Why some youth and intellectuals abandon the local assemblies for the PIWCs

From PENZA, respondents were asked what informed their decisions to join the PIWCs. Sixty-eight (68) respondents cited four main issues namely: Leadership, some practices of the Church, the use of the English language and the Content of Worship. Eighteen (18) of the respondents however gave varying reasons which includes influence from parents, proximity to residence and the large number of youth and elite in the PIWC.

From Sunyani, sixty-nine (69) out of the eighty-three (83) respondents gave the following reasons: leadership, practices like the scarfing of the hair, wearing of trousers, courtship or dating, segregation of the sexes in the church and the use of the local language. Another fourteen (14) responded that the style of worship they are used to on their various campuses and the membership base of these centres attracted them to the PIWCs.

From Asokwa, fifty-six (56) respondents out of 65 indicated that, issues with leadership, use of the local language and some practices of the church made them leave the local assemblies for the

PIWCs. The other nine (9) stated that the presence of a predominantly youthful and elite background, quality of worship and Bible study lifestyle made them join the PIWC.

From the responses gathered, leadership seems to have been and continues to be one of the major issues that accounts for the exodus or youth drain in the church whether to the emerging Neo-Pentecostal churches or the PIWCs. It is a fact that whereas the leadership of Neo Pentecostal churches are youth oriented, that of the Church of Pentecost is correspondingly older. In the Church of Pentecost, leadership positions are the preserve of the older generation, who cling to them and try to keep the youth in the background. On the other hand, the Neo Pentecostal churches can be seen as the young creating their own space where they can exercise some responsibility. Though an attempt has been made by the church to incorporate more youth into leadership positions in the church both from the clergy to lay officers, this decision has not been welcomed by most of the older generation of leaders who think these young ones will use their education and youthful exuberance to “stifle” the work of the Holy Spirit. Some of the youthful leaders who were chosen and ordained on campus by Apostles of the church have been denied the opportunity to perform their required functions as leaders in their assemblies. Even some of the young ministers have had challenges with their local presbytery when they were posted to their stations. The only reason given by the local presbytery is the perception that these young leaders are “inexperienced”. Unable to contain the uncooperative attitude of these leaders, most of these young ones left for the emerging Neo Pentecostal churches some of whom were immediately given positions to engage them. Also, the youthful exuberance these young ones carry which makes them impatient especially with their choice of words in the face of the opposition adds to the difficulties within the church. Owusu, a retired lay leader of the Church, recounts words like “archaic”, “backward” and a host of others which have been used on them

by the younger generation. It therefore suffices to say that some of the older leaders would have genuinely given the youth the chance but their attitude towards them made them take an entrenched position against their demands. It stands to reason that, no elderly person will open his arms for a young man or woman who has lost his cultural values of respect for the elderly. It also appears that, the youth or younger ones have failed to understand that the Church of Pentecost encourages on the job training for training leaders.

The other issues that the respondents brought up have to do with the liturgy and the content of worship. The liturgical formats of all the assemblies of the Church of Pentecost are the same: there is an official *Ministerial Manual* with prescribed liturgical formats for formal worship services, as well as special programmes. Observations made from the local assemblies indicate that they adopt new activities which prolong their service unnecessarily. This makes the youth who are predominantly students uncomfortable with their service. On campus, they have about two and half hours for service; they are therefore used to unprolonged services. It is therefore an inconvenience to them when they come home and spend about three to four hours in a single service characterised with what some refer to as “irrelevant” things like uncoordinated announcements which can take almost an hour. The PIWCs however, are extremely time conscious primarily because some of them like the Asokwa Centre organize two services almost every Sunday with the exception of special Sundays where special programmes are held.

Under the Content of Worship, one thing which attracts the youth is the Praise and Worship of these centres. Most of the songs ministered at these centers are western or western influenced. Some of these are in the Ghanaian languages. Their choice of songs is those that are widely

played on the radio, television, and internet and sold on the markets. As a matter of fact, they are songs that have a wide and mass appeal, especially amongst the youth. This is a remarkable social and cultural phenomenon which the PIWCs have been able to incorporate in their worship to make their worship activities livelier and participatory. PIWC Sunyani for example is not only providing a cross cultural environment for her members but a cross denominational environment as well through their frequent use of hymns which are commonly sung in the mission related churches. Yarquah and Gordon who were until recently fellowshipping with the Presbyterian Church but now with the PIWC Sunyani branch confirmed how they “felt at home with the singing of hymns”. To further enrich their worship activities, the PIWCs have also invested so much in sound equipments which enhance their worship activities by helping them to churn out good and quality music. The non-patronage of some of the traditional songs by these centres and over concentration on contemporary songs has given cause for some of the leaders like Mireku and Addison to complain as to why the PIWCs shy away from learning and singing the spirit filled songs of the church.

Another aspect of worship that attracts the youth is the sermon preached at these centres. Badu Woode (2007:28) explains that for a long time, the emphasis of the Church has been on the salvation message. This may probably have been as a result of the period within which the church was born into. However, the emergence of the Neo Pentecostals in the early 1980s at a time that the nation was going through serious economic crisis may have influenced their “prosperity” gospel message which aims at motivating the Ghanaian to explore avenues of wealth creation since it is within their power to do so. This message caught up so well with the youth, many of whom were jobless and looking for ways to find job and maximize their profit or

wealth portfolio. It however appears that the message has caught up with the youth in the Church of Pentecost as well. Though the PIWCs are better exponents of this kind of message than the local assemblies, they seem to do it with caution probably because of the misgivings some leaders express about it. The PIWCs also teach on other topical issues which directly affect the youth such as relationship and courtship, marriage, sex education, employment opportunities, investment and others. These are messages that receive little or no attention in the local assemblies because they are considered to be “unspiritual”.

Ayisi and Otu-Nyarko, resident Pastors of Sunyani and Asokwa PIWC respectively also believe that the demographic and occupational background could also be a pull factor into the PIWCs. They stated that, majority of their membership falls between the youth bracket whose ages range from 15-45 with few of them above 45 years. From PENSA, eighty (80) of the respondents fall between the ages of 16 to 30 whiles the other six (6) are between 30 and 40. Also, sixty-four (64) respondents from Sunyani fell between 15 to 40, twenty (20) fell between 40 and 45 and two (2) fell between 45 to 55. Also, fifty-two (52) respondents from Asokwa fell between 15 to 40, ten (10) between 40 to 45 and three (3) between 45 and 55. The minimum educational qualification from both centres is the Higher National Diploma from the Polytechnics and the maximum is the doctorate level from the Universities. Occupational wise, majority of them are engaged in very lucrative and respectable professions like medicine, pharmacy, teaching, nursing, security services, lecturing, banking, private businesses and others. The data on the age group of the PIWCs indicates that the centre is predominantly a youthful church whiles educational wise they have a lot of qualified people within their fold. It confirms what Gifford (1998:89) says about the

Neo Pentecostal Churches that “...these new Charismatic churches are youth churches...these churches address the preoccupations of the youth.”

On the same issue of why the youth will prefer the PIWCs to the local assemblies, Opoku Mensah and Manu, past executive members of PENSEA said the more liberal environment that exists in the PIWCs with regards to some of the practices of the church is most likely to be a major factor. Essel, a former President of PENSEA KNUST also believes that the church was too traditional and not taking into consideration the changes that was going on in the world. He was particularly concerned about how rigid the church has become when it comes to relaxing her stance on some of her cherished practices and values. This to him explains why many young people and intellectuals will decide to fellowship with the PIWCs.

Adzraku, an Elder of the church on the other hand thinks differently; he believes that the reason for the youth and intellectuals leaving for the PIWCs goes beyond leadership and content of worship. He personally believes that the church is not or has not become too “traditional” and “backward” as the youth and intellectuals want everyone to believe. For him, whatever traditions and practices that the church introduced in the past were inspired by the Holy Spirit and their implementation is what has ensured the success and phenomenal growth of the church. He further explains that, these intellectuals and youth lack an understanding of what the church stands for and also, they have been influenced by their education to relegate issues of the Holy Spirit to the background, to embracing the rationalization of issues. These individuals according to him “will not be given the chance to destroy the cherished traditions and practices of the church with their so-called education”.

Boham and Annan, elders of the Church in support of Adzraku explain that the exodus of the youth “is divine and expected”. They explained that God has a covenant with the church dating back to a prophecy in 1948 in which God states “he will from time to time prune the church of elements that disturb its peace and healthy growth”. To these leaders, the youth and educated elite can be categorized into the group that God is “pruning” in order to ensure a healthy and peaceful church. They therefore believe that the PIWC is a complete deviation from the covenant God has with the church. They condemned the trend of fashionable dresses in the PIWC’s stating that “the carnally-minded exposure of the body is disturbing and some dresses and make-ups at church services make no difference between one going to church service and one going to the disco”. They further, condemned “immoral dressing” and “ungodly dancing” in the house of God, pointing out that “these blunt our attentiveness to the promptings of the Holy Spirit”. For Boham and Annan, it becomes doctrinally wrong for the leadership of the church to create an avenue for such individuals. They therefore called for an immediate abolishment of the concept and revert to the original way of worship and church order bequeathed the church by the founding fathers.

Ackon, a retired Elder of the Church is of the view that in the attempt by the church to “modernise”, they should not lose sight of the biblical passage “...ask of the ancient paths...” (Jer 6:16). He believes that much as it is necessary for the leadership to introduce new pro-western worship lifestyles and relaxation of existing strict church rules, the church should be careful that it does not deviate from “what has been handed down from their forefathers”. He however believes the PIWC concept is one of the surest ways to stem the tide of youth and intellectual drain from the church but he holds the view that the overly liberal posture of the church is disturbing and the leadership should take a critical look at it. The views of those

interviewed brings to light the divided opinions held by both leadership and member on the church on the way the church should manage the youth drain and also conduct herself in a postmodern era like today.

4.4.2. Core Values, Tenets, Culture and Practices of the Church

Knowledge of the Core Values, Tenets, Culture and Practices of the Church

From PENSA, twenty-nine (29) out of the eighty-six (86) respondents were able to state what these are; fifty-five (55) could state them partially and two (2) did not write anything at all. At Sunyani, thirty-one (31) were able to state what they are, thirty-seven (37) could state them partially and fifteen (15) did not write anything at all. The respondents from Asokwa also indicate that twenty-seven (27) could state them, twenty-six (26) could partially state them and twelve (12) did not write anything.

The responses gathered indicate that eighty-seven (87) respondents were abreast with the tenets, values and practices of the church; whereas one-hundred and seventeen (117) were partially aware of these, twenty-seven (27) knew absolutely nothing about the issue under discussion. It exposes the church's weak structures when it comes to discipling her members. It gives the impression that the church is only interested in "soul winning" and not "soul weaning" (i.e. is teaching the new soul the rudiments of the new faith and denomination and getting rid of the things that will make the soul go back into sin). Matthew 28:19 tells how Jesus admonishes his disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations". Unfortunately, the Church has unduly placed more emphasis on "winning souls" without corresponding emphasis on the main command in the Great Commission, which is to "make disciples".

Which of the Values, Practices should be changed and those that should be maintained

From PENSAs, seventy-nine (79) respondents were of the opinion that the praying culture, evangelism, discipline, emphasis and teaching on holiness, community church planting strategy, tithing and the use of the local language should be maintained. However, they were totally against the strict dressing code, segregation of the sexes at church, the position of the church on courting or relationship and the issues of songs. Seven (7) were of the view that none of these values, practices and traditions should be changed.

From Sunyani,(78) were of the view that the community church planting strategy of the church, praying culture, evangelistic lifestyle, church discipline and tithing should not change. The same seventy-eight (78) were of the opinion that the strict dress code of the church especially for women should be changed and there should be a review of the church language policy. Eight (8) were of the view that nothing should be changed.

In Asokwa, fifty-eight (58) indicated that they wish that the evangelism and community church planting strategy, mission activities, praying culture, teaching on holiness and church discipline will not change. They were also of the opinion that, primarily, issues concerning the prescription of strict dress codes in the church should be changed, and that the church should review her policy on courtship and the segregation of sexes at church. Five (5) respondents however did not see why the practices should change.

The responses gathered from the centres indicate that majority of them believe that the Prayer lifestyle of the church, discipline, community church planting activities, use of the local

language, self-financing policy(especially through tithing) and evangelism should be maintained. It is very likely that they realize that these are the ingredients that have ensured the successful and phenomenal growth of the church. Visiting and worshipping with these centres indicate that with the exception of evangelism and community church planting, they have held on tenaciously to these growth pillars. Also, it emerges that majority are not happy with the practices of the church that has to do with courtship, dressing and seating arrangement.

1. Segregation of Sexes in the Church

The seating arrangement in the church is an issue that has caused a lot of discomfort and embarrassment to many members of the church and even visitors who fellowshiped with the church at one point in time or the other. Ammissah Sam, an Anglican who attended a wedding at the church with the wife and sat at the same place with the wife and kids describes the humiliation he went through at the hands of one usher who asked him to vacate his seat and sit among the males. His insistence to sit with the wife was met with fierce resistance from this usher, who will probably not allow the man to disregard a cherished church practice. Boi-Annang, formerly of PENSA UDS in an interview explains that this practice of the church is hypocritical because she finds it difficult to understand why husbands can sit with their wives in the same sofa but cannot sit with them at church. Anyan, a youth leader of the Church also believes that this practice is outmoded and a complete infringement on the right of worshippers.

2. Strict dress code for women

The Church of Pentecost has always maintained a strict dress code for her members especially women. It is common to see their women both young and old dressed in what is referred to as the

“kaba and slit” in the Ghanaian society. Under dressing, the respondents mentioned specific challenges such as wearing of trousers and scarfing of the hair by women. Those who wear trousers to church are considered morally wrong and sinners.

An observation was made in the course of this research when a Deaconess of the church Augustina Ahu of the Ebenezer Assembly, Elmina District, preaching on “Discipling others for Christ” on a Sunday morning stated that ladies and women in the church wearing trousers and other outfit were “ungodly”. She further stated that, “any woman who wears trousers does not have the Holy Spirit dwelling in her”. This statement represents the voice of many women leaders and even ministers of the church. Jonathan Amihere, a retired minister of the church in a sermon on the 2012 Easter Friday service also said, “men who wear Lacoste and jeans trousers to church do not have the Holy Spirit in them and can be demon possessed”.

However, one of the individual respondents, Manu, is of the view that, there is nothing wrong with the wearing of trousers by women to church and since the Bible does not speak against it, it should not be forced on the members, especially the women. Opoku Mensah is also of the opinion that, instead of prescribing attire for members, the Church of Pentecost should be seen to be preaching more on modesty and decency. Boi-Annang believes that this issue of prescribing costume for church members and to some extent applying this rule on visitors has led to many of these visitors leaving embarrassed and the church loosing prospective souls. For her, the church should desist from clinging onto prescribing costumes but should rather seek to turn hearts around and win souls rather than turn hearts out and loose souls.

3. Scarfing of the Hair

Animah-Ohene and Owusu Ansah of PENSA KNUST and PIWC Asokwa respectively, are of the view that the issue of head covering should not be imposed on church members or visitors to the church's worship services. Tetteh, an Elder of the Church also shares in the views expressed above and believes that the decision to use or not to use the scarf should be made optional and leadership of the church should stop using the pulpit to condemn women who are not in scarf and creating the impression that they were sinners, immoral or lost.

The controversy surrounding the issue of dress code in the church will continue to linger on for a long time to come. This can be seen in a communique issued by the Chairman of the church in 2010. In the communique, he entreated the members of the church to be accommodative of people whose dress code do not conform to the standards set by the church. While his message was welcomed by most members in the church, especially those in the PIWCs, those in the local assemblies condemned such a move.

Which of the Values, Tenets or Practices of the church have been flouted?

Two schools of thoughts emerged from the responses gathered from the discussion above: those who believe that some practices have been flouted and those who do not see it that way.

In an interview, Ayisi and Otu-Nyarko, resident Pastors of Sunyani and Asokwa PIWCs respectively, believe that, no aspect of the church's core values or tenets has been violated. They have only liberalized their stance on some of the practices and traditions and that is to ensure that the centre becomes not only attractive to the youth or intellectuals but to make it attractive for others as well. Adjaloo of Asokwa PIWC explains that "we as a centre have liberalized our stance on aspects of our traditions like our position on music, dance, dressing and language so

that we can present ourselves as a viable option for youth and professionals from other churches who will love to fellowship with our church but are reluctant to do so because of our rigid position on some of our traditions and practices.”

On the contrary, Wiredu, a retired minister of the church believes that the PIWCs have disregarded the cherished practices of the church especially when it comes to dressing. He is worried when he sees the non-conventional way most of the young ladies dress to church which does not depict the modesty and decency that has always been associated with the Church of Pentecost. Amihere also shares a similar view with Wiredu. He thinks the exposure of certain sensitive parts of the body by the youth in the PIWCs is very unfortunate. He blames this style of dressing creeping into the church on the liberalized environment at the PIWCs.

Boham also holds the view that the PIWCs have deviated from the Church of Pentecost's community church planting strategy by not expanding into the communities to give more people the opportunity to fellowship with them and ensure growth. He believes this single core value of the church is what has ensured the phenomenal growth of the Church of Pentecost. He also believes that the PIWCs have relaxed on evangelistic activities and only feed on the local assemblies for souls. This to him is unpentecostal, since the Church of Pentecost is an evangelistically minded church.

Annan also is of the view that the PIWCs relaxed view on courtship is a complete deviation from the practice of the church which forbade prospective couples from courting. He sees it as a recipe for immorality in the church.

4.5. Contribution to the growth of the Church

The responses gathered shows that there are five main areas that the PIWCs seem to have contributed to the growth of the church. These areas are: boosting church finances, human capital contribution, attracting foreigners, providing a conducive or enabling environment for non-traditional Church of Pentecost members, a good environment for worship for Ghanaians living outside the country and reducing the exodus of the youth and intellectuals from the church.

1. Boosting church finances

The PIWCs are currently one of the major and leading contributors to the church's annual income. Both centres in their respective areas (administrative jurisdiction) are in the lead when it comes to supporting the church's activities financially. Two areas that they have been of immense blessing to the church is in the payments of tithes and missionary offerings. The tithes are used in the church to pay ministers, other administrative workers and carry out various developmental activities in the church whereas the missionary offerings are used to support the church's mission and evangelistic activities both within and outside Ghana. The PIWCs are major contributors towards mission activities of the church. What explains their financial capacity is not far-fetched; their professional background accounts for this. Most of them find themselves working in sectors of the Ghanaian economy where the conditions of service can be described as good. Their level of education also allows for a better understanding of tithing in the church for missions.

2. Human Capital

An area that has been a viable source of skilled resource mobilization is the PIWCs. Though it can be realized that skilled personnel in the church are found in every assembly across the nations; the PIWCs have the highest concentration. It follows that the PIWCs hold part of the key for the mobilization of these resources in the church. The lawyers, engineers, lecturers, bankers, doctors, teachers and other professionals have put their expertise at the disposal of the church. Thus, works that previously the church had to hire or contract people from outside to do at exorbitant fees are being carried out by members of the church at little or no fee.

3. Attracting foreigners or non-Ghanaians and Ghanaians living outside the country

The centres are also helping the church to attract Christians from non-Ghanaian cultural background which was not the case previously. Adeyemi and Elochukwu from the PIWC Asokwa who are Nigerians have been fellowshiping with the centre for two years. In Nigeria, they used to fellowship with the Lord's Pentecostal church but after their association with the Asokwa centre, they always fellowship with the branch of the church in Lagos. Although they talk of having a refreshing time with the centre, they are sometimes not comfortable with the too many Ghanaian songs or English songs sung. They wish they will also have some of their songs sung at church.

Thomas Bawditch and wife, Sherry are American investors who also fellowship with the PIWC Asokwa District anytime they are in the Kumasi Metropolis. Though they are not Church of Pentecost members (they attend Good Life Baptist Church in Ohio) they enjoy the content of

their worship and at the time of this interview, they had visited the centre on three different occasions.

Though information from some of the leaders interviewed indicates that there are more foreigners worshipping with both centers, the centers are at least giving the vision of the leadership of the church to provide a truly cross cultural church a major boost.

The centre has also provided an avenue of worship for some Ghanaians living in the Diaspora. Many of the church's members who travelled outside and stayed there for long came back having imbibed the lifestyle of their host countries. Though, they wanted to come back, they were received with a hostile attitude because of what Peprah says "an accusation that we are lost due to the way we dress and make up". For some of these reasons and others like their kids not able to speak and understand the local language they decided to worship with the PIWCs which provides a more welcoming environment for them when they are home.

4. Attracting non-traditional Church of Pentecost members

One other contribution that the centre has made to the growth of the church is the ability to attract "non-traditional" church members into her fold. By non-traditional, reference is being made to believers from other denominations who were not born into the church and have never been part of the church but only joined when the PIWC concept was introduced. Aboagye, once a Catholic and Kumatia, a Presbyterian who now fellowship with the Sunyani Centre and Yeboah, also a Catholic who now fellowships with the Asokwa centre admired the church but could not be part of her because of some of her practices. Kumatia particularly talks about the prayer life and evangelism lifestyle of the church as one of the things she admired the most but

could never be part of the church due to some of her practices which was “outmoded” to her. She has been part of the Sunyani branch for seven (7 years).

Yarquah, formerly of the Presbyterian Church but now worshipping with the Sunyani centre also talks of how the church is really meeting his expectations after joining them especially in the areas of hymns. From personal observation, the Sunyani centre is very strong in the singing of hymns something which is uncommon in the church. Kumatia also confirmed her likeness for that especially coming from the Presbyterian background. The impression therefore is that, the Sunyani centre is not only providing a cross cultural environment but a cross denominational one as well. The PIWCs have therefore become formidable force rubbing her shoulders with the Neo Pentecostal movements to attract members.

5. Reducing the exodus of youth and intellectuals

Another area the PIWCs have contributed to the growth of the church is helping to reduce the exodus of the youth and intellectuals into the emerging Neo-Pentecostal churches. The membership base of the centres as compared to the local assemblies reveals that the PIWCs have a youthful and intellectual base. This has to some extent enhanced the image of the church.

Not only has it reduced the exodus, it has also created an environment for the youth to be motivated and inspired. Adum-Attah, a member of the Asokwa centre recounts how Jimmy Markin, a one-time resident minister of the Asokwa centre used to inspire and motivate the youth in the church to aspire to greater heights in their academic life and professional lives using the presence of some members in the church as an example. She belongs to the Asokwa centre and readily recollects how men like William Ellis (Vice Chancellor of KNUST), Ken Aboah

(renowned Urologist) and others were used to inspire them. It could possibly be one of the reasons why the Asokwa centre has a lot of members who are professionals and pursuing further studies. Again, the PIWC Asokwa in particular has provided employment opportunities for seven members of the church; this has to an extent helped reduced the unemployment situation in the church. They also have a very vibrant Credit Union system in place which gives start up capital to members to start and enlarge their businesses thus, going a long way to boost the economic life of members in the church.

The Sunyani PIWCs engagement in the specialized ministry to the Prisons has led to the opening of a Christian Fellowship in the Prisons where many inmates have been led to accept Christ. Some of these inmates who have been released have been integrated into assemblies of the church back home. The Prisons Evangelism Coordinator could readily recollect four of such individuals he still has contacts with who are playing active roles in the church back home.

4.6. Future and survival of the Church

On the future and survival of the church, Onyinah, the Chairman of the Church in an interview had this to say, “PIWC is the future of the church, I see that in some few years to come, the entire church will have to organize itself like they do.” Ayisi, the Resident Pastor of the Sunyani centre also expresses the same sentiments when he says, “with almost all the youth patronizing the PIWCs and with the youth being the future of the church, it will not be out of place to say the PIWCs are the future of the Church”.

Looking at the future and survival of the church, Otu-Nyarko, Resident Pastor of the Asokwa centre explained that looking at the financial strength of the PIWCs, “it will be suicidal for any group of people to think that the centre has no relevance to the survival of the church.”

Despite the positive comments expressed by some of the clergy interviewed concerning the future and relevance of the concept to the survival of the church, Nyarko and Amihere thinks otherwise. They believe that it is the gospel that brings conversion and not cultural adaptation. In other words, there is no need to adapt contemporary needs of society in order to reach them. They believe that, the church grew without compromising on its traditions and practices which was appealing to the majority of Ghanaians, especially, the illiterates. Amihere further argues that if the church continues to move at a faster rate in adopting pro-western style of worship as it is doing, it will make the church alien to the larger Ghanaian public who are largely illiterate. For Amihere, the way the current leadership of the church is pushing the PIWC agenda is a “recipe for disaster” and it will finally get to a time when the local assemblies will become “empty” because the youth who will have to take up after the elderly have left for the PIWCs.

Observations made while gathering data for this research suggests that the PIWCs by their contribution and membership base are most likely to be the “new face” of the church in the coming years. This observation corroborates Onyinah’s position. What accounts for this is not farfetched. Firstly, their financial contribution to the church makes them an indispensable asset to the church. As a church that is expanding at a faster rate, administrative and other expenses are bound to increase. Therefore, every door that will bring about the needed funds to support the church’s expansion will have to be kept wide open not shut, such doors includes the PIWCs which contribute about 40% of the church’s total income.

Secondly, their human resource base is greatly needed by the church for growth and expansion. Such human resource base as stated earlier reduce the church's operational cost and also helps run most of the churches institutions like schools, hospitals and the provision of other social amenities. These human resources also give the church a good image in the society since most of them are contributing their quota in the various sectors of the economy. Their presence in the church gives the society a good image about the church which is not only engaged in spiritual activities but also training people for the various sectors of the Ghanaian economy. This is an image the church cannot relegate to the background if she wants to grow.

Thirdly, the growing number of educated people in the society who have all come to embrace the use of the English language in every aspects of their daily lives is also another reason why the PIWCs relevance in the future dealings of the church cannot be swept under the carpet.

Also, urbanisation is one of the reasons why the PIWCs become relevant to the church's survival. The rural urban migration is not only a problem for the nation but for the church as well. For example in 2011 (according to the end of year church report prepared by the General Secretary) 39,465 members of the church transferred out of the rural congregation. Most of these members are the youth who come to the cities to find non existing jobs and are either not properly educated or uneducated at all. As the research indicated, some of the members of these centres cannot speak or understand the English language, but only worship with these centres for the sake of prestige, business connections and other reasons. The likelihood that many of these people worship with the centre is possible. Though it is unfortunate that some of these people fellowship with the centres when they should have been with the local assemblies where they

would have really benefitted from their worship, still does not take away the fact that the centres provide a more welcoming environment for all.

All the other reasons enumerated as the contributions of the centres to the church are some of the reasons why the church cannot do away with the PIWCs if she wants to grow. The PIWCs therefore becomes an unavoidable partner in the churches growth efforts regardless of what perception and reservations people have about them. Despite all these reasons, relegating the local assemblies to the background will also not help the course of the church. There are most of the church's members in the local assemblies who continue to contribute to the growth of the church. The church will still need the rich experience of the leaders in the local assemblies in running her affairs. A proactive approach will therefore have to be made by the leadership of the church to address the dwindling fortunes of the once vibrant and lively local assemblies.

4.7. The Effective Use of the English language

On the use of the English language as the medium of communication, Frimpong, a member of the Asokwa centre had this to say: "it is not as if we in PIWCs don't understand any of the local languages, but since most of us are professionals, we mostly use the English language often at our work places and even in our homes; that explains why we feel comfortable with the use of the language at church".

Osafo Asirifi, a Deacon at the Sunyani centre shares in his opinion and explains that "most Ghanaian homes today communicate in English; the kids speak the language in school and thus, are more familiar with it that is why it's most appropriate to use it than the local languages".

Danso and Otu-Nyarko believe the use of the language is one of the contributing factors to the

fast growth of the centre as well as its ability to attract the youth and professionals into their fold. They believe that since the youth of today are attracted to the use of English language in organizing church service, they don't see anything wrong with it provided its use does not push the church to compromise on the preaching of the gospel. However, they are of the view that using the language interchangeably will defeat the purpose of creating an English speaking only church.

Two of the respondents from the Asokwa District presented another dimension to this whole language issue. They are wealthy business men who could not speak or understand the English language. Asked why they will want to sit in a church where they find it difficult understanding the language and songs sung when there are other vibrant local assemblies around? One responded “*wo be nyanawone* Dr. Aboah, Prof. Frimpong *ne* Ellis *akoasorebaako*” meaning “wouldn't you be happy to attend the same church with Dr. Aboah, Profs. Frimpong and Ellis”? At the Sunyani PIWC also, there was an instance when after a Bible study lesson, the Pastor gave the microphone to a woman to summarize the study. The struggle the woman went through to communicate was representative of the challenge many semi-literates and illiterate in the PIWCs face.

The Evangelism Director of the Sunyani PIWC also expresses his worry about their evangelistic activities which draw a lot of souls into the church. He was however worried that majority of the souls won were not able to stay due to the use of the English language. He adds that, plans are far advanced by the centre to open a local assembly whose first service for such individuals will be in the local language and who can later be groomed and integrated into the English church.

From PENSA seventy-four (74) members were not in support of a dual language being used and twelve (12) were in support of that practice. From Sunyani, sixty-one (61) respondents were against the dual language whiles twenty-two (22) were in support of that system. At Asokwa, fifty-eight (58) were against that practice and seven (7) supported it.

As many as one-hundred and ninety-three (193) members supported the English only policy of these centre. This is likely because the centre provides a common understanding in dealing with residents and visitors, especially in a cosmopolitan environment like Kumasi and Sunyani. Most probably, these individuals also see the dual language as defeating the purpose for which the centre was established and thus will want the centre to maintain the English language whiles those who are not comfortable with it join the local assemblies. They probably think such a move will derail gains that have been made.

Again, many of the people in this category can either speak one or more local languages and so it is quite difficult to come to terms with why they reject the use of another local language in addition to the English language. Could it be that they are protecting their own interest especially when there are quite a number of people who cannot speak the English language but are also not ready to leave because of the dynamism the centres provide? If it is about those who cannot speak the local language, those arguing for a dual language are not asking for a break with the English language but just an introduction of a local language so why can't this request be met?

On the other hand, forty-one (41) people responded that a dual language policy should be adopted. This school of thought may be arguing this way for two reasons. The first is on members who cannot speak the English language, or who do not comprehend it. To this reason,

those belonging to the only English language usage may ask or pose the question, what businesses have they, staying in a service rendered in a foreign language that they could not understand? This is a problem the vision bearers of the PIWC concept probably never envisaged. The second reason is that visitors, who could be potential members, but lack comprehension of the English language may be lost if they want to join the PIWCs. For these individuals, they prefer the English assemblies to the local assemblies because of the liberal environment it provides and the prestige associated with the centre.

Another issue worth noting from the centres has to do with the Sunday school children. Interacting with them, majority of the kids could not speak the local language or understand it properly. These are the same children who will manage the affairs of the church in the coming years and how will they be able to effectively present the gospel to their own people in the rural areas since they cannot speak the local language. It came to light that these kids speak the English language at home with their parents and friends when playing and it is also the language for instruction in our schools. Though the challenge is not the creation of the church, she has also worsened it and will most likely suffer from it.

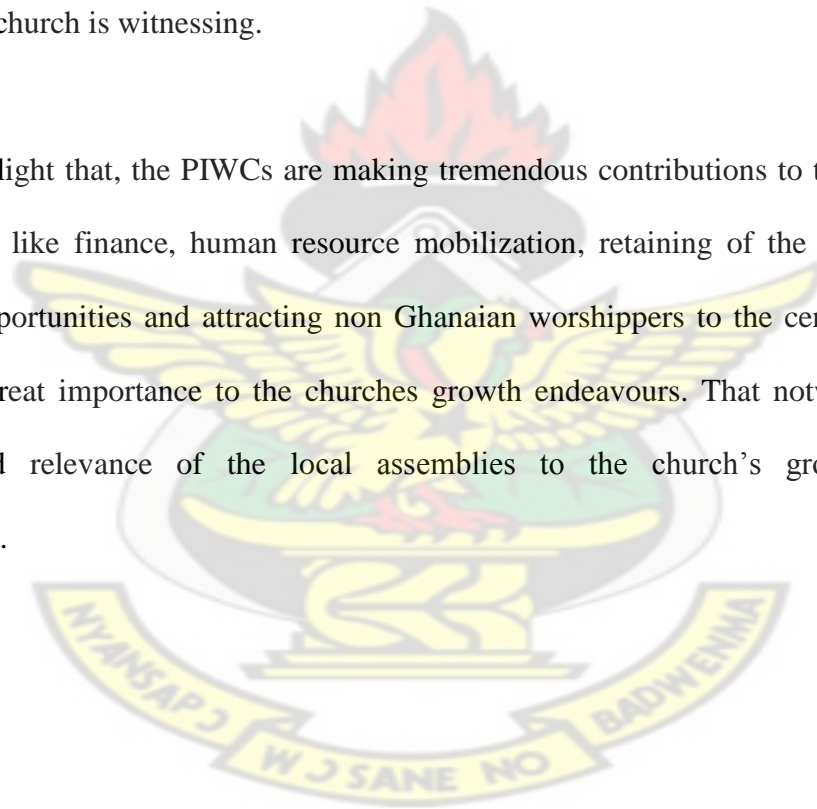
The study also shows that the number of people in favour of the mother-tongue blending cannot be overlooked. The real challenge will be in areas where two or more dialects predominate. In such instances, which language to be used or dropped assumes a dialectical tribal tension for an institution like the church which is required to promote unity and spiritual progress. For now it appears the English language to a large extent has been very effective in communicating the

gospel to the youth and intellectuals. The challenge though is the issue of members who cannot speak or understand English.

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the responses of various respondents and it emerges that, though the church is experiencing phenomenal growth, some of her practices are posing a threat to this growth that the church is witnessing.

It also came to light that, the PIWCs are making tremendous contributions to the growth of the church in areas like finance, human resource mobilization, retaining of the youth, providing employment opportunities and attracting non Ghanaian worshippers to the centre. Again, their survival is of great importance to the churches growth endeavours. That notwithstanding, the importance and relevance of the local assemblies to the church's growth cannot be overemphasized.



CHAPTER 5

Summary OF FINDINGS, ISSUES EMERGING OUT OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter concludes the study. It deals with the summary of findings of the study, issues emerging out of it and some recommendations.

5.2. Summary of Findings

The study commenced on the following questions: How were the PIWCs formed? What traditions, doctrines or tenets and core values of the Church of Pentecost has the Pentecost International Worship Centre concept flouted or contravened? Why are the youth and intellectuals drifting to other emerging churches? To what extent has the introduction of the concept helped reduce the exodus of youth and elite to other churches? What is the future and relevance of the PIWC to the survival of the church? How effective is the use of the English Language as a medium of communication of these centres?

Based on the research questions and other secondary materials consulted, the researcher came out with the following findings.

Before the Church of Pentecost and other Pentecostal churches came onto the scene, the Christianity that had been introduced by the mission related churches was too “westernized”. Their inability to properly contextualize the gospel message in Ghana made the people see Christianity as a foreign religion. This form of Christianity produced many Christians with “dual allegiance” that is, a Christianity that had one foot deeply rooted in African Traditional Religion and some of its practices and the other foot in the church.

Furthermore, prayers (especially amongst the Roman Catholics) which were said in foreign languages did not make much meaning to the local people. The participatory, noisy, exuberant African way of worship, amid clapping and dancing was obviously absent as the missionaries sang from hymn books with selected choristers, while the congregation virtually enjoyed the music as spectators. With a lot of discontent and dissatisfaction with this style of worship introduced by the early missionaries, there was a craving for a strand of Christianity that will come and meet the zeal and aspirations of the Ghanaian worshipper. The longing of the people for an authentic brand of African Christianity was largely satisfied with the arrival of the Apostolic Church which after some initial struggles became widely known and accepted within a short period of existence. The struggles finally gave birth to the Church of Pentecost which grew phenomenally to overtake some of the mission related churches in church attendance. One of the major reasons which accounted for this phenomenal growth was the indigenous nature of the church. However, as the church grew, it became increasingly clear that there was a large segment of the membership who seem to be comfortable with the ethos (life style), liturgy (mode of worship), the programmes, the media of communication as practised by the Church of Pentecost, but wished certain traditions were reformed or changed completely. The situation was with the predominantly younger, literate segment of the church; whose taste for the western value system is different. Some of the traditions that needed reform were for example, dress code especially for the women, content of worship and seating arrangements. The church began to explore ways and means of addressing this need. This led to the creation of “English Assemblies” in the mid-1980s which later became known as the Pentecost International Worship Centers (PIWCs). Though it was established to cater for the concerns of the earlier group mentioned, its scope was later expanded to be a centre which will provide a well-organized, cross-cultural church for

people of non-Ghanaian cultural background who want a place to worship as well as for Ghanaians who prefer to worship in the English language.

The study also reveals that the COP like any other church has church practices which were introduced at the inception of the church to regulate the life and conduct of her members. These practices were also to help the effective administering of the church. It emerged that the PIWCs believe they have not flouted or contravened any of these doctrines, or practices. They believe that they have only liberalized their stance when it comes to issues like the dress code for women, seating arrangements and language so that the church can become not only be attractive to the youth and intellectuals but non-COP members. On the contrary, there are others who do not share in the view of the PIWCs that nothing has been flouted. The view held by these two school of thoughts has created some tension between the PIWCs on one side and the local assemblies on the other side. There were calls from many of the local assembly leaders interviewed for the abolishment of the PIWC concept or better still prevail on them to re-visit the practices of the church which was bequeathed to her by her forefathers. It however appears that this demand will not be met especially when the PIWCs have the “financial muscles” needed by the church to carry out her expansion activities and meet her increasing operational cost as a result of her phenomenal growth annually.

The study also identified four main pull-factors that brought about youth and intellectual drain in the church. The antagonistic attitude leaders of the local assemblies developed against the intellectuals caused many of these members to leave for the PIWCs or Neo-Pentecostal churches. Other traditions and practices of the church like head covering, prohibition on wearing trousers by women, segregation of the sexes in the church and many others were a form of “irritation” and to some extent embarrassment to some members who left. The use of the local language did

not appeal to most of the members especially the youth who felt at home with the English language. Finally, the content of worship of the PIWCs and Neo-Pentecostal churches seem to be attractive and met the expectation of the youth more than the local assemblies.

The issue of youth and intellectual drain has also reduced considerably since the PIWC concept was introduced. Though there are some few individuals who have left, the situation is not as alarming as before. The research shows that majority of the members at the Sunyani and Asokwa centres are in the youth bracket are professionals.

The centres contribution is also seen in her ability to retain experienced human resources who are contributing to the building of the church in diverse ways. They have also helped reduce the youth and intellectual drain in the church, provided a conducive and welcoming environment for expatriate Pentecostal believers and CoP members who have been living outside the country for years. Their strong financial base has helped the church to meet most of her needs; their success story over the years has helped the church to review some of the age old practices which became a “stumbling block” in the way of many people who loved to worship with the church but could not do so due to these practices.

The research work also brings to light the fact that most of the members in the church are still found in the local assemblies. However, with the increasing rate at which the centres are growing, especially the attraction they have for the youth and intellectuals, it points to the fact that the centre may sooner or later become the face of the Church of Pentecost. Thus, the “international” dimension of the church will “eclipse” the indigenous appeal of the church giving the Church of Pentecost a new image of an elitist and urban centered church.

The study also brought out the fact that despite the English language being one of the attractive features of the PIWCs, there are still a lot of people who are not conversant with the language.

It also emerges from the study that the Pentecost Students and Associates (PENSA) seems to be the major “supplier” of members to the PIWCs with most of them fellowshipping with the centers after school rather than going back to their local assemblies.

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5.3. Issues Emerging out of the Study

Firstly, the study shows that there are a handful of individual who cannot speak the English language, or who do not comprehend it. These individuals find themselves with the PIWCs because of the prestige, dynamism and ambience associated with these centers. Both Sunyani and Asokwa centres have these individuals within their fold. It is therefore clear that, they are not benefitting from the “spiritual food” that is being dished out from the pulpit to the members. Their entire spiritual growth is therefore under serious threat. The research also came across visitors who could be potential members but have little comprehension of the English language. The research also revealed that the children’s Sunday school used English as a medium of communication. Majority of these school children could not express themselves fluently in any local language since they used English in their homes as well. This phenomenon has a long term effect on the PIWC/ CoP. These children who will grow up and occupy leadership positions in the church will be very handicapped to evangelize in the rural areas. This situation is likely to take the Church of Pentecost back to the days of the early missionaries who could not effectively share the gospel because of the language barrier. It will also lead to the situation of raising up children who do not have any regard for the Ghanaian culture.

Furthermore, the PIWCs are engaged in the “recycling of souls”. What this means is that most of their members were not won through their own evangelistic efforts. They “feed” on the local assemblies whose youth and intellectuals are not satisfied with the way these local assemblies are being ran. This has created a situation where the leadership of the local assemblies are suspicious of the PIWCs because they see them as “lazy” members who reap where they have not sown.

The existence of the PIWCs is weakening the local assemblies and denying them of the rich human resource who can bring their expertise to bear on the running of these assemblies to make them attractive and strong. This situation has come about as a result of the many youth who leave the local assemblies for the PIWCs after tertiary education or after school. Rather than going back to the assemblies which have nurtured them from childhood and giving back, they prefer fellowshiping with the PIWCs.

Again, the practices of the church like head covering, seating arrangement and strict dress code for women came under scrutiny. It emerged that, there is no official church document which prescribed dress code for women in the church or sought to arrange members in a particular way at church.

Evangelism and discipleship at these centres are not given a major priority as it is done in the local assemblies. The PIWCs have not done much to reach their target group of professionals in the society. However, the emphasis on specialized evangelistic ministries like prison visitation and evangelization is very strong at Sunyani PIWC and the success story as witnessed by the researcher is overwhelming. Many are also engaged in hospital visitation and evangelization. The dwindling nature of their evangelistic activities defeats the mission mindedness of the church and makes the PIWCs “inward looking” or individualistic.

The study also shows that, the PIWCs have failed to adopt the community church planting strategy of the Church of Pentecost which has been one of the main reasons for her growth. With their capacity, one would have expected them to open more branches especially when in the church's administrative structure; they have attained a District status and have the mandate to open assemblies and manage them. However, this core strategy of the CoP is not seen among the PIWCs.

The research also revealed that women were the most affected in the unfavourable traditions of the church. This situation forced some of them out of the church. The establishment of the PIWCs therefore is a good and bold attempt which will help draw such individuals into the church's fold and invariably increase the church's membership.

5.4 Recommendations

From the study, there are seven areas the leadership of the Church of Pentecost need to take a look at in order to strengthen the PIWCs and the church as a whole. These areas are; leadership, evangelism, discipleship, language, social responsibility, content of worship and PENSEA. The following recommendations are hereby made.

5.4.1. Leadership Training / Education

From the field work, it is evidently clear that, one of the major reasons that pushed people out of the local churches and making the local assemblies unpopular today is leadership. The Church of Pentecost has moved from only being indigenous in membership to becoming highly sophisticated in terms of its appeal to professionals and students. Unless the church becomes proactive in building her own human resource capacity, she will soon realize that she has not adequately

prepared to meet contemporary challenges. This calls for a review in the training or education curriculum of the leadership of the church (both full-time ministers and lay leaders). The training should be expanded to include the PIWC concept in the light of the challenges of post modernity. Ministers who go through the ministerial training at the church's seminary should have their course content reviewed to reflect studies in cross-cultural studies and other Gospel and Cultural studies. This can also help reduce the tension between the locals and the PIWC leadership and membership.

5.4.2. Evangelism

One of the strengths of the Church of Pentecost is her evangelistic drive. Beginning from Chairman Mckeown to Chairman Onyinah, the slogans may be different but the aim is the same “to win as many people as possible into the glorious kingdom of God”. However, with the responses received from both centers, none of them could state that they were won into the church after an evangelistic activity of these centers. In most cases, they joined the centers from the adjoining local assemblies. Even the responses generated from the questionnaires indicates that majority of the respondents were not happy with the evangelistic activities of the PIWCs. The concept of Evangelism Team members which is entering the PIWCs should be looked at critically since it has the tendency to bring about apathy or laziness in the area of soul-winning. This is because everyone will expect that only the members of the “Evangelism Team” should be concerned with soul winning. A bold and conscious step should be made by the church to discourage this “Evangelism Team” concept and revisit the days where every member was encouraged to be a “witness” for Christ. The system where individual members of the church were encouraged to reach out and bring a soul to church should be intensified in the PIWCs. Also, the PIWCS should be seen organizing evangelistic activities that target their specific

targets group like the youth, professionals, academicians and those in the corporate world. The breakfast meeting style of evangelism adopted by the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International can be used.

5.4.3. Discipleship

In addition to the soul winning, the PIWCs must be engaged in serious discipleship activities. A good discipleship strategy should be put in place to properly and adequately nurture souls that are won in order for members to be good ambassadors of Christ and the church. A well-structured discipleship class teaching members the core values, tenets, doctrines and practices of the church will generate understanding amongst the membership. It will also help the members stand firm even in the face of storms from other denominations. It will invariably, help reduce the exodus of youth and others from the church. A very effective and good discipleship class will also prepare members into effective and bold witnesses for Christ. Lay-leaders can be specially trained for this exercise and specific days set aside where new converts could be taught and other church members also taken through this class. Sunday mornings is most likely going to be an ideal time for this exercise since it's easy to get most members on this day than weekends.

5.4.4. Language

The language policy of the PIWCs should be reviewed to include most widely spoken local dialect in a given catchment area. This is to help those individuals who cannot speak English but are not willing to join the local assemblies. Separate services can be organized to cater for the needs of those who cannot speak or understand the English language but still feel like worshipping with the PIWCs. In order not to defeat the purpose of the English-only principle in the PIWCs, their service can precede or come immediately after the English service. Also, looking at the professional background of the PIWC membership especially with the number of

teachers within their fold, it wouldn't be out of place to introduce adult education class for these individuals especially on how to communicate in the English language. Such individuals can later be fully integrated in the English service where they can derive the maximum benefit from the service.

5.4.5. Social Responsibility

The PIWCs are in a very good position to offer social service not only to the church but to the larger public or society within their respective catchment areas. They are in a good position for two main reasons; firstly, they have the financial strengths to sponsor such activities and secondly, within their fold are members with varying professional backgrounds. The PIWCs can focus on priority areas like education and health. They can adopt a particular village where their members could visit for a period of time and offer vacation classes for the less privileged who cannot afford to attend vacation classes like their colleagues in the cities. They can also organize sensitization programmes on issues like family planning, productivity, HIV/AIDS, civic education, job creation and others. If the PIWCs are able to incorporate these things into her outreach programmes, it will render a great service to the society at large and it will also accelerate its own evangelistic mission. If this is properly done, the social and spiritual impact of the centres on the society will be enormous. This bold initiative can be taken by the leadership of the church and can also be a very good avenue for evangelistic activities.

5.4.6. Content of Worship

Under content of worship, three main areas should be considered; sermon, praise and worship; time management. The Church of Pentecost in a postmodern context should review her “four-square Gospel” (Jesus Christ the Saviour, Healer, Baptizer in the Holy Spirit and Soon coming King) to a “pentagonal gospel” (Jesus Christ the Saviour, Healer, Baptizer in the Holy Spirit,

Soon coming King and answer to poverty and wealth creation). This will equip members in avenues of wealth creation. Jesus did not only promise salvation from the captivating power of sin, healing from the body and power in the Holy Spirit. His anointing was foremost to preach to the poor (Luke 4:18). The “Jesus- answer to poverty and wealth creation” messages should touch on issues like marriage, courtship, employment and other social issues. Those are some of the cardinal issues affecting the youth and the lack of attention given to them can cause them to drift to avenues that will help them get answers to these questions. The church should review her position of not using their pulpit to teach issues like sex education, drug abuse, relationship and courtship because these are the pertinent contemporary issues the youth are grappling with in postmodernity.

5.4.7. PENZA

The Pentecost Students and Associates (PENSA) should be given serious attention by the church leaders. There should be campus Pastors attached to these groups on the campuses to help nurture them in the traditions, tenets, core values and teachings of the CoP. This is because from the field work, they are the number one source that feeds the PIWCs with its membership. If they are properly nurtured, they will also help make the PIWC concept not only effective but successful.

5.4.8. Others

Aside the major recommendations that have been outlined above, the following should also be looked at;

- (a) Ministers posted to the PIWCs should among other qualities have a good teaching and prayer ministry. They should be youth friendly since the centre is predominantly made up

of the youth and they must have a good command over the English language. Their educational background and qualifications should be looked at very carefully for the reason of acceptance especially looking at the background of the people they will be shepherding.

- (b) PIWC ministers should be given periodic cross-cultural and cross-denominational orientation relevant to this specialized ministry. This is to enable them address the needs of the various cultural groups as well as members from varying denominations excellently.

5.5. General Conclusion

There is little doubt that Christianity would never have moved beyond its Palestinian confines if the early church had not taken up the challenge of the relationship of faith to culture in a positive way. Likewise, Christianity in Ghana would not have made so much impact today if the Christian community, especially the Pentecostal churches had not properly contextualized the gospel within the culture of the Ghanaian. It has been recognised from the discussion that regardless of the role of culture in the success of preaching the gospel in any community, culture is so dynamic and a transferrable commodity. The dynamic nature of culture makes it extremely difficult for the Church of Pentecost to continue to hold on tenaciously to some of her cherished traditions and practices and expect to achieve phenomenal growth in contemporary times. The church cannot continue to think that they can use yesterday's methods to solve today's problems and still remain active. The Church of Pentecost as it exists in a cultural milieu must be conversant with the cultural changes that come along with it.

It must therefore guard against its Christ-centered message but move with the changes of time. The church must tread cautiously as she introduces changes in her age old traditions and practices so that these cherished values are not sacrificed on the altar of modernity. As the PIWCs become the future face of the church and as an indispensable growth factor of the church, the necessary structures must therefore be put in place by the leadership of the church to contain them effectively.



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Adum Attah, Ruth	PIWC, Asokwa	14 th May, 2012
Adwoa Yarquah, Mabel	Member, PIWC Sunyani	5 th April, 2012
Adzraku, Sampson (Eld.)	Executive Mem., CoP, Asokwa	29 th December, 2011
Ammisah Sam, Kobina	St. Nicholas Anglican Church,	16 th January, 2012
Anieto, Clement Elochukwu	PIWC Asokwa	11 th May, 2012
AnimahOhene,Adwoa	PENSA KNUST	4 th January, 2012
Annan, Napoleon (Eld.)	Executive Member, CoP, Elmina	28 th December, 2011
Anyan, Samuel Kwame	Youth Leader, CoP, Asokwa	19 th June, 2012
Bawditch, Sherry	PIWC, Asokwa	13 th May, 2012
Bawditch, Thomas	PIWC, Asokwa	13 th May, 2012
Boham, Samuel Michael (Eld.)	Executive Member, CoP, Elmina	28 th December, 2011
Boi-Annang, Adjeley	PENSA UDS- WA Secretary	3 rd January, 2012
Danso, Alexander (Eld.)	Elder, CoP, Cape Coast	6 th January, 201
Dwomoh Ernest	Music Director, Love Chapel,	6 th January, 2012
Effraim, Kofi Kakra	Outreach Coordinator,	4 th January, 2012
Gordon, Adella	Member, PIWC Sunyani	5 th April, 2012
Kumatia Celestine	PIWC Sunyani	6 th April, 2012

Manu, Prince Emmanuel (Eld.)	Vice President, PENSA UCC	6 th January, 2012
Mensah,Ayisi (Rev.)	Resident Pastor, PIWC – Sunyani	9 th April, 2012
Mireku,Kwesi (Eld.)	Music Leader. CoP, Koforidua	24 th May, 2012
Okae-Anti Andy	Youth Leader, CoP, Agormanya	6 th January, 2012
Opoku, Mensah Emmanuel (Eld.)	Evangelism Director, PENSA UCC	6 th January, 2012
Opoku,Onyinah (Aps. Dr.)	Chairman, CoP	26 th June, 2012
OsafoAsirifi, Frank (Deacon)	PIWC Sunyani	6 th April, 2012
Otu-Nyarko, Lawrence (Rev.)	Resident Pastor, PIWC- Asokwa	13 th May, 2012
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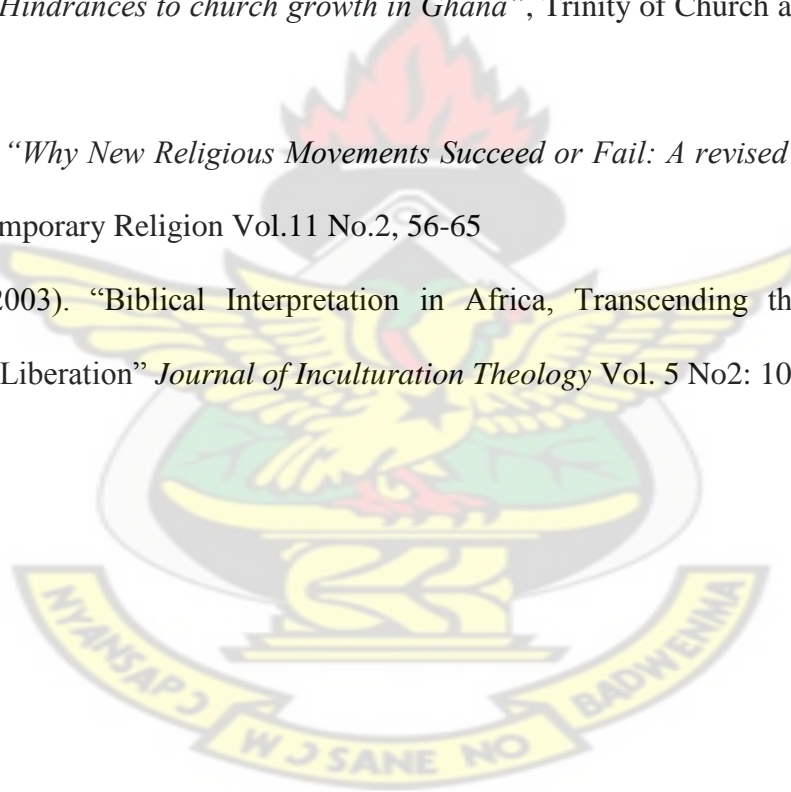
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APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

Name:

Age: 15-25 [], 26-35 [], 36-45[], 46-55[], 55-Above [] Please tick where appropriate

Languages Spoken:

Marital Status:

Educational Level:

- a. Primary School
- b. Junior High
- c. Senior High
- d. Tertiary

(Please tick where appropriate)

Occupation:

Position in the Church:

1. What informed your decision to join the PIWC?
2. Why do you think majority of the youth prefer worshipping with English Assemblies or PIWCs after school or the moment they enter the tertiary institution?
3. What will make you live the Church of Pentecost?
4. Where would you fellowship assuming you find yourself in a community without an English assembly or PIWC and why?
5. Mention the core values, tenets/doctrines and practices of the Church?

- 6a. Which practices or traditions of the Church do you think should be maintained?
- 6 b. Which ones do you think should be abolished? Please give explanations to your answer.
7. Would you prefer the use of Twi or any other local language in addition to the English language being used at the PIWC?

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Interview Guide

Name

Occupation

Position in the Church

1. Why was the PIWC concept introduced?
2. Has the PIWC concept lived up to its expectation?
3. What were some of the factors that lead to the issue of youth and intellectual drain in the Church?
4. Have the PIWCs violated or flouted any of the Church's practices, values or tenets?
 - b. If yes, mention them
5. How effective is the use of the English Language as a medium of communication in the PIWCs?
6. What contributions have the centres made to the growth of the CoP?
7. What is the relevance of the PIWCs to the future of an indigenous church like the Church of Pentecost?

8. What are your views on the practices of the church like scarfing of the hair, segregation of males and females in the church, courtship and strict dress code for women?

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