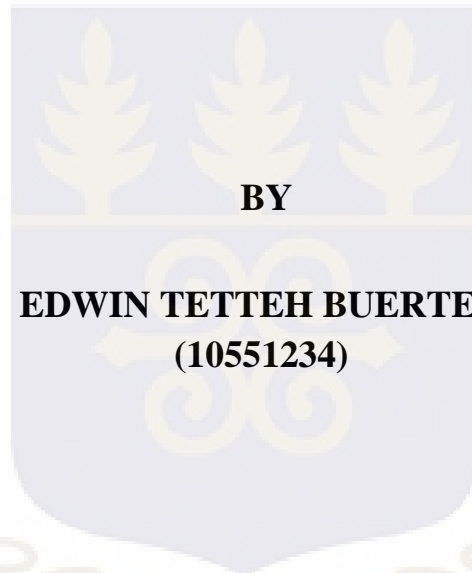


UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

DEPARTMENT FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

**PRAYER CENTRES AS AVENUES OF CONTEMPORARY
SPIRITUAL RENEWAL IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF
GHANA**



BY

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(10551234)**

**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF
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REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF
PHILOSOPHY (M.PHIL) DEGREE IN THE STUDY OF
RELIGIONS**

/

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that this thesis is the result of research undertaken by Edwin Tetteh Buertey for the award of M.Phil Degree in Study of Religions in the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, Legon under the Supervision of Rev. Dr Abraham Nana Opare Kwakye and Rev. Dr Fr. George Ossom-Batsa.

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ABSTRACT

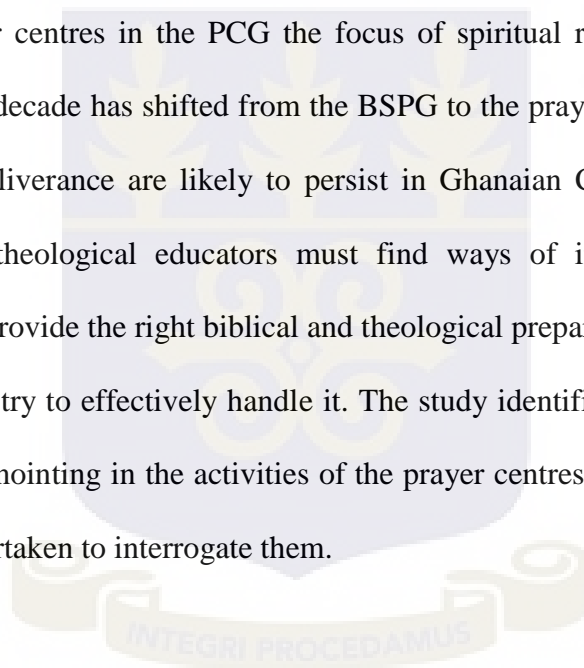
Prayer centres appeared in Ghanaian Christianity in the early parts of the twentieth century and were mainly found within the African Initiated Churches (AICs). They later became prominent in Classical Pentecostal Churches, especially the Church of Pentecost (CoP) with most of them seceding to become independent ministries. The concept of prayer centres gradually emerged in western mission founded denominations including the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG). The PCG over time recognized the prayer centres within its structures and integrated them into its activities where they have become major avenues of spiritual renewal programmes. This study, therefore, investigated the emergence of prayer centres as avenues of contemporary spiritual renewal in the PCG.

The study was grounded on the theory of religious innovation traced to the works of Harold Turner, Everest Rogers and Clair Disbrey and discussed in the Ghanaian context by Elizabeth Amoah. It employed the historical approach to investigate when prayer centres emerged in the PCG as well as the factors that accounted for their emergence and acceptance. Historical documents on the PCG such as reports and minutes of various courts as well as scholarly materials on the Pentecostal renewal in Ghana and globally were also studied. The phenomenological approach was adopted to interrogate the ministry of prayer centres and the extent to which they represent an innovative phenomenon in the PCG.

Among the major findings are that prayer centres in the PCG emerged mainly through the initiative of individual members within the Bible Study and Prayer Group, (BSPG). The prayer centres in the PCG have since institutionalised a kind of spirituality that meets the needs of people who patronise them thereby attracting a large patronage of both Presbyterians and non-Presbyterians. The study argued that prayer centres have impacted

the mission of the PCG and other denominations by building the capacities of people for ministry in various ways. They have also contributed to increasing church attendance and growth of the congregations where they are located, raising the financial resources of local congregations and also forging ecumenical ties. The ministry of prayer centres in the PCG was also found to be associated with some challenges such as tension between those in charge of the centres and regular leadership of congregations.

The study concludes that the emergence of prayer centres in the PCG is basically attributable to the church's openness towards spiritual renewal activities. With the emergence of prayer centres in the PCG the focus of spiritual renewal activities in the church over the last decade has shifted from the BSPG to the prayer centres. Furthermore, practices such as deliverance are likely to persist in Ghanaian Christianity, hence, it is recommended that theological educators must find ways of integrating it into their curriculum so as to provide the right biblical and theological preparations for ministers and persons in that ministry to effectively handle it. The study identified traces of prophetism and the practice of anointing in the activities of the prayer centres and recommends that a further study is undertaken to interrogate them.



DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my dear wife Rose and our children Buernarki and Buernartey.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very much grateful to God for the ability He granted me to undertake my Postgraduate studies at the University of Ghana and to complete this research. Without his abiding grace, I could not have come this far and I am eternally grateful to Him.

I acknowledge with deep gratitude the tremendous support I had from my supervisors; Rev. Dr Abraham Nana Opere Kwakye and Rev. Fr. Dr George Ossom-Batsa who made time out of their busy schedules to painstakingly read my work at every stage and offered useful suggestions and advice. Without their support, I could not have completed this work. May the Lord bless them.

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Also, I wish to thank all the people who graciously welcomed me to interview them for this study especially Rev. Dr K. Opuni-Frimpong, Rev. Dr William K. Ofofu- Addo and Rev. Felix Akresu Anim Danso. Finally, I thank Rev. E. Y. Omenako and Miss Lordena Ampa who edited the final work and offered useful suggestions to help put the material in the right shape.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AICs	-	African Initiated Churches or African Independent Churches
ARS	-	Apostles' Revelation Society
BSPG	-	Bible Study and Prayer Group
CoP	-	Church of Pentecost
ELCT	-	Evangelism and Lay Training Committee
EPC	-	Evangelical Presbyterian Church
GAC	-	General Assembly Council
GET	-	Grace Evangelistic Team
MDCC	-	Musama Disco Christo Church
M&E	-	Mission and Evangelism
PCG	-	Presbyterian Church of Ghana
PCMC	-	Prayer Centre Management Committee
WAR	-	Warriors' Annual Retreat
WCC	-	World Council of Churches

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Pentecostalism though a global Christian phenomenon, has been noted to have different variations that are unique to particular locations or eras.¹ In Ghana, many scholars have identified five main strands of Pentecostalism namely:

- i. African Independent Churches (AICs),
- ii. The Classical Pentecostalism,
- iii. The non-denominational revival movements,
- iv. The independent Neo-Pentecostal Churches or Charismatic Ministries, and
- v. The Charismatic Renewal Groups in the Mainline Churches.²

Beside these strands, two others have been identified namely the Neo-Prophetic Ministries³ and Prayer Camps⁴ (also referred to as Prayer Centres as they will be called in this study). Prayer Centres have been described by Emmanuel Kingsley Larbi as places “where salvation is pursued in most vigorous forms,” and that their activities are mostly organized around some specific individuals who supposedly function as prophets, healers, prophetesses or evangelists.⁵ Prayer Centres, according to Larbi are categorized into either residential or non-residential type. He also described the prayer centres as being important

¹ Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*, (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1997), 1.

² Cephas Narh Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, (Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 2002), 73; E. Kingsley Larbi, *Pentecostalism: Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity* (Accra: Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, 2001), 55-86; J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2005), 19- 28.

³ Cephas Narh Omenyo and Abamfo O. Atiemo, “Claiming Religious Space: The Case of Neo-Propheticism in Ghana,” *Ghana Bulletin of Theology; New Series*, Vol. 1. No. 1, (July, 2006), 55-68.

⁴ Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 55, 86,

⁵ Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 55, 86 and Opoku Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana*, (Dorchester: Deo Publishing, 2012), 147-156.

with respect to healing and come next to the established hospitals and this explains why they are referred to as healing centres.⁶ Their practice of healing is mainly thought to be from spiritual ailments or those that have persisted after regular medical attention has failed.

Prayer centres are believed to have emerged in Ghanaian Christianity within the context of the Pentecostal renewal and within the “Faith Movement” which began in the early decades of the twentieth century. Abamfo O. Atiemo stated that following the outbreak of the Influenza epidemic after the First World War, many prayer groups sprang up spontaneously led by Prophets and Prophetesses who administered healing.⁷ In effect, the places where such prophets and prophetesses operated emerged as healing and prayer centres. The earliest known of such prayer centre is believed to be the “Faith Home” at Winneba.⁸ This was a branch of the Faith Tabernacle Church in Philadelphia, United States of America.⁹ It was established in 1918 by two brothers, Joel Sackey Sam and Josephus Kobina Sam, who reportedly attended to patients who suffered from the influenza pandemic.¹⁰ Many victims of the attack, including people who had previously been to the hospital without success, were brought from the surrounding communities of Winneba to the “Faith Home” be prayed for and healed.¹¹

The phenomenon of prayer centres strongly come to the fore in the country with the onset of Classical Pentecostalism particularly within the ministry of the Apostolic Church of

⁶Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 86-87

⁷ See Abamfo O. Atiemo, *The Rise of the Charismatic Movement in the Mainline Churches in Ghana*, (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1993), 16-17.

⁸ Discussion by the researcher with Rev. Dr Abamfo Atiemo, Senior Lecturer, Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, at the latter’s office, Thursday 20th April, 2017.

⁹ Adam Morhr, *Enchanted Calvinism: Labour Migration, Afflicting Spirits and Christian Therapy in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana*, (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2013), 66-69.

¹⁰Morhr, *Enchanted Calvinism*, 68.

¹¹ Ibid., 68.

Peter Anim and James McKeown.¹² The belief in appropriation of spiritual gifts or blessings such as prophecy and divine healing with exorcism obviously provided “breeding grounds” for prayer centres to emerge at various eras of the ministry of the Apostolic Church. After the Anim-Mckeown split, most of the prayer centres that emerged were associated with the James McKeown group, the Apostolic Church. Again, following the 1953 split in the Apostolic Church the majority of prayer centres that sprang up in the country were still identified with James Mckeown’s faction, the Ghana Apostolic Church which later became the Church of Pentecost (CoP).¹³ The CoP within which the prayer centres often emerged was, however, reluctant to integrate them into its activities for two main reasons. First was the tendency of operators of such centres to secede. Second was their indulgence in practices that the church considered to be unbiblical which it sought to correct in order to maintain its doctrinal purity.¹⁴ Although some healing practices were said to take place in some of the western mission founded churches in at this time, the official position of these denominations against such practices did not lead to the emergence of prayer centres in those churches until later times.

The popularity of prayer centres reportedly waned in the country until the 1970s when they resurfaced and persisted through the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁵ Majority of the prayer centres that emerged during this period were once again within the CoP. It is for this

¹² Peter Anim, who was a former member of the Presbyterian Church, is described as the pioneer of Classical Pentecostalism in Ghana. Through series of correspondence and contacts the group he had formed in Ghana, the Faith Tabernacle (which was later named the Apostolic Faith) eventually got affiliated to the UK Apostolic Church in Bradford which in 1937 sent James McKeown as Missionary to assist them. McKeown’s differences with Anim over the practice of faith healing without any form of medication led to a split between the two in 1939 with further splits occurring later within Mckeown’s group. Three denominations emerged out of this movement and they are the Apostolic Church, Ghana, the Christ Apostolic Church and the Church of Pentecost. See Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 67-69; Opoku Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 123-126; Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 23-26; Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 94-95 and Atiemo, *The Rise of the Charismatic Movement in the Mainline Churches in Ghana*, 20-21.

¹³Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 371-372, 383-3991; Opoku Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 141- 156, 187-191.

¹⁴Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 372.

¹⁵Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 383.

reason that Onyinah described the prayer centres as a “revived” phenomenon in the CoP.¹⁶ Also, the nature and form which the new prayer centres assumed led to their being described as a recent phenomenon,¹⁷ though as stated earlier, they were on the Christian scene in Ghana before this time. The upsurge in the phenomenon during that period was attributed to the Charismatic revival¹⁸ which came along with strong emphasis on demonology, witchcraft and their attendant teaching on deliverance.¹⁹ The Charismatic churches, however, did not promote the establishment of prayer centres because the deliverance ministry which they propagated was integrated into the frame work of their ministries.²⁰ The only known example of a prayer centre within the Charismatic churches is the Solution Centre of the International Central Gospel Church (ICGC).²¹

The resurgence of prayer centres as a new trend in Ghanaian Christianity went beyond the boundaries of mainstream Pentecostalism. The phenomenon has been noticed in some western mission founded churches where they are gaining much attention. Larbi therefore described the re-emergence of prayer centres as “knocking at the iron doors of historic orthodoxy demanding attention.”²² This assertion has been confirmed by Onyinah and Omenyo who separately mentioned some examples of such prayer centres within the historic mission founded churches as follows:

- i. The PCG has two prayer centres: one at Jejemiraja near Berekum in the Brong Ahafo Region and another at Akropong in the Eastern region,

¹⁶Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 383, Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 187 and Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity, Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 86.

¹⁷Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 87.

¹⁸Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 383.

¹⁹Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 383, Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 171- 209, Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*

²⁰Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*. 188.

²¹ Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 383.

²²Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 371.

- ii. The Methodist Church also has two centres at Cape Coast and another one at Kumasi.²³

Omenyo went on to indicate that, discussions in some of the western mission founded churches, on the prayer centres showed generally favourable disposition towards them. He actually affirmed that the leaderships of those churches were being entreated to accept the phenomenon of prayer centres and regularise or integrate those that had emerged within their structures in to their programmes and activities with the explanation that they were helpful for the churches.²⁴ With such disposition, it would be expected that the eventual acceptance of prayer centres in those churches, including the PCG, would only be a matter of time.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Ghana, the manifestation of the Pentecostal phenomenon in the western mission founded churches has mainly been through the activities of charismatic renewal groups.²⁵ These are groups in the western mission founded churches that are dedicated to seeking spiritual renewal in practical or experiential ways as exists in mainstream Pentecostalism. In other words, they encourage their members to seek the empowerment of the Holy Spirit with accompanying gifts and to manifest or use them. In the PCG, the main Charismatic renewal group is the BSPG which was formed in 1966.²⁶ Academic studies on the Pentecostal renewal in the western mission founded churches have largely focused on the activities of such groups.

²³Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 188 and Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 259, 260

²⁴ See Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 259, 260 for discussions on the emergence of prayer centres in the mainline churches and views of the churches on them.

²⁵Atiemo, *The Rise of the Charismatic Movement in the Mainline Churches in Ghana*, 22-66; Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 73; Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 55-86; Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 19- 28.

²⁶Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 140- 149.

Besides the charismatic renewal groups, other forms of pentecostal renewal activities are quite visible in the western mission founded churches.²⁷ Thus, the pentecostal phenomenon in the western mission founded denominations can be described as showing evidence of continuing evolution with changes to its manifestation just as it is in mainstream Pentecostalism. A major change that has been noticed in this respect in recent times is the emergence of prayer centres. These are places where people go either as individuals or groups to pray to seek God's intervention in their problems, for renewal or for fellowship. With respect to the PCG, the number of such prayer centres operating within it has increased quite significantly over the last few years. Further, the prayer centres have become a subject of discussions at the General Assemblies of the church on quite regular basis in recent times. Some of these discussions have been to the effect that prayer centres have become very important in the life and mission of the PCG as the main avenues of spiritual renewal programmes and also the vehicles through which the church's expectations of some of its mission agenda such as membership growth are being fulfilled.²⁸ Such suggestions, coupled with the fact that the prayer centres have not received much academic studies prompted the researcher to undertake this study to critically interrogate the place or role of prayer centres in the contemporary spiritual life and mission of the PCG.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study was to find out the relevance of prayer centres in the PCG.

Specifically, the study sought to:

²⁷ See Atiemo, *The Rise of the Charismatic Movement in the Mainline Churches in Ghana*, and Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism* for a discussion on other forms of charismatic or Pentecostal renewal in the western mission founded churches in Ghana.

²⁸ See Minutes of the 14th General Assembly, 15th to 21st August, 2014, 107, Appendix 'A', Address by the Moderator, Rt. Rev. Prof Emmanuel Martey. Minutes of the 15th General Assembly, 14th to 20th August, 2015, 82, Appendix 'A', Address by the Moderator; Rt. Rev. Prof Emmanuel Martey,

- i) investigate the factors that influenced the establishment of prayer centres in the PCG and the extent to which they have been integrated into the mainstream ministry of the church,
- ii) find out the kind of ministries that prayer centres in the PCG are involved in,
- iii) examine the impact of the ministry of the prayer centres in terms of the benefits derived by people who patronize them as well as their contribution towards the overall mission of the PCG,
- iv) ascertain whether the establishment of the prayer centres has led to a shift in the avenue of spiritual renewal in the PCG.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives set for this study, the following research questions were put forward to guide the study:

- i) What factors necessitated the establishment of Prayer Centres in the PCG?
- ii) What ministry is PCG Prayer Centres involved in and how do such ministrations fit into the general ethos and practices of the PCG?
- iii) To what extent have prayer centres influenced life and mission of the PCG?
- iv) Has the establishment of prayer centres led to a shift in the avenues of spiritual renewal in the PCG?

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the theory of religious innovation. Innovation basically refers to a thing, an idea or way of doing things that is considered to be new to an individual or group of individuals who adopt it.²⁹ Its main focus is to improve on the status of something or to make it meet the needs of the present situation. In relation to religion, innovation implies

²⁹ Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 278.

that religious people find new ways of practising their faith in order for it to meet their present needs. In her discussion of the topic “African Spirituality, Religion and Innovation”, Elizabeth Amoah stated that in the context of religious and cultural pluralism, religions go through a process of innovation which results in aspects of a particular religion being rejected, adapted or modified.³⁰ Clair Disbrey explained that the standard feature of the theory of religious innovation is that the faith of any religious people is the product of their ideas and events in history. In effect, the religious experience is considered to be grounded on things beyond people but which they usually ground on reason and experience.³¹ In effect, as religious people reflect on their circumstances, they discard old and unsuitable aspects of their religious practices and beliefs and take on new ones that reflect their peculiar changing situation. Hence, as Amoah stated, religious innovation ultimately involves “renewing and altering existing systems into something new to suit new conditions.”³² Thus, the process of religious innovation does not imply people discarding all aspects of their religious practices. Rather, it means people making changes to their practices where necessary by replacing old and unsuitable aspects with new ones that they consider helpful to their needs.

The process of religious innovation has certain variants, two of which were found to be relevant to this study; namely borrowing and then combination, adaptation and coalition.³³

In borrowing, a religious group takes on aspects of a religious practice from another group and uses them in ways that are suitable to them but not necessarily in the same way as the original group uses them.³⁴ In this process, the borrowed elements are woven into the

³⁰ Elizabeth Amoah, “African Spirituality, Religion and Innovation,” *British Association for the Study of Religions*, 9th Annual Lecture, (1998): 1-12.

³¹ Clair Disbrey, *Innovation and Tradition in Religion: Towards an Institutional Theory*, cited by Amoah, “African Spirituality, Religion and Innovation.”

³² Amoah, “African Spirituality, Religion and Innovation,” 4.

³³ Amoah, “African Spirituality, Religion and Innovation,” 5.

³⁴ Eugene Nida, *Customs, Cultures and Christianity*, (London: Routledge, 1963), 192-214 cited in Amoah, “African Spirituality, Religion and Innovation,” 5.

existing one in the process of combination, adaptation and coalition to determine which aspects of both the old and new must be used.

In Ghana, religious innovation has been noted to take place among adherents of indigenous religion, Christianity and Islam with aspects of the practices of one or more of these religions finding their way into others.³⁵ With respect to Christianity, the Pentecostal movement or renewal, beginning with the AICs, have been noted to have taken on some elements such as emphasis on practical salvation, mystical causality and oral theology from the indigenous cultural and religious system and integrated them with the charismatic experiences into Christian worship. In other words, the AICs adapted and appropriated indigenous world views in ways that suits the unique needs for their members thereby undergoing the process of innovation.³⁶ These innovative features of the AICs have persisted in successive waves of Pentecostalism with varying emphasis to suit the needs of members in a particular group at a time. Such innovative features have not remained with the initial formulators, the Pentecostals only, but have been taken on by the western mission founded denominations including the PCG which adapted them to their systems and practices so as to remain relevant to their members. This study sought to show how the establishment of prayer centres as places of spiritual succour and renewal can be described as one of such innovative measures employed by the PCG to make its ministry relevant to its members.

In discussing the establishment of prayer centres as an innovation, three characteristics of innovation need to be considered namely relative advantage, compatibility, and

³⁵Amoah, "African Spirituality, Religion and Innovation," 4-5.

³⁶Amoah, "African Spirituality, Religion and Innovation, 8-10, and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, " 'From Prophetism to Pentecostalism': Religious Innovation in African Religious Scholarship," in *African Traditions in the Study of Religions in Africa: Emerging Trends, Indigenous Spirituality and the Interface with other World Religions* eds. Afe Adogame, Ezra Chitando and Bolaji Bateye, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012), 168

observability.³⁷ The relative advantage of an innovation has to do with the extent to which the new idea is considered to offer something higher than the one it is replacing. This determines the ease with which it is accepted. Compatibility of an innovation refers to the ability of the new idea to fit into the existing scheme of doing things and influences the readiness with which it will be adopted by the borrowing group. Finally, observability refers to how recognisable the result of an innovation is to the people concerned. If the results of an innovation are readily visible to the members of a group, its chances of being adopted are higher.³⁸

All the above characteristics can be described as influencing the establishment of prayer centres in the PCG in the following ways. Firstly, the Prayer Centres were considered as suitable avenues not only for spiritual renewal but also to meet other well-intended goals of the PCG such as membership growth. Secondly, the PCG recognised the Prayer Centres as not being at variance with its practices hence readily adopted it. Thirdly, the results of Prayer Centres affiliated to other churches as well as the few early ones in the PCG were very visible. This greatly influenced discussions in favour of their adoption in the PCG.

An innovation spreads from its source through the members of a group for whom it is created in a process called diffusion.³⁹ Diffusion of an innovation takes place through human interaction process by which the new idea or practice is communicated by an individual or group to others who also embrace it. In this process of human interaction for the diffusion of an innovation, the group or population is said to be engaged in a problem-solving situation through which the benefits of the innovation are brought out for other

³⁷Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 278.

³⁸Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 279.

³⁹Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 279.

members to embrace.⁴⁰ In this study, an attempt has been made to show that, the characteristics of Prayer Centres as an innovative phenomenon in the PCG spread through interactions between members in the church in their quest to solve the problems that confront them. In such problem solving interactions, they also sought ways of making the practices of the church function more effectively in response to their needs. It was through these that prayer centres emerged as a means of addressing their problems.

Finally, Harold Turner's proposal cited by Asamoah-Gyadu on the most effective way to study religious groups that are of innovative nature is to focus on their "tendencies and emphasis" instead of looking at them as individual strands.⁴¹ To this end, this study has endeavoured to examine the major issues that the prayer centres in the PCG engage in as part of their ministry in the light of the wider context of Pentecostal Christianity in Ghana.

1.6. Literature Review

In this section, an attempt has been made to bring out relevant information on prayer centres from scholarly data. The literature review has therefore been on explanation of prayer centres, their functions or roles, their emergence on the christian scene particularly in Ghana, whether there are similarities in other jurisdictions among other things.

Scholarly explanations on prayer centres have been largely on their functions. In other words, what prayer centres are is basically explained from what they do. Larbi has given two related explanations of prayer centres as follows. Firstly, he explains prayer centres as places "where salvation is pursued in most vigorous forms"⁴² and secondly as places "where people with various needs go for supernatural succour."⁴³ Larbi goes on to

⁴⁰ Everett Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovation*, (New York: The Free Press, 1962), 312 cited in Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 279-280.

⁴¹ Harold W. Turner, *Religious Innovation in Africa*, (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1979), 80, 82 cited in Asamoah – Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 3.

⁴² Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 86.

⁴³ Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 371.

describe prayer centres as important avenues with respect to health or healing though they attend to several other issues of people mostly existential. In this respect, he considers the prayer centres to share things in common with the traditional new cultic shrines that emerged in Ghana in the early parts of the 20th century. He states that such prayer centres usually rise within specific denominations (with most prayer centres in the country being associated with the CoP). The various denominations, however, have their differences with the operation of these centres because the founders or leaders often secede to operate as independent ministries. Other differences that established denominations have with the prayer centres bother on doctrine, ethos, practices and accountability.⁴⁴ For this reason, Larbi has argued that many churches have been quite sceptical in encouraging the establishment of prayer centres within their structures. This notwithstanding, he affirms that the phenomenon has remained a persistent feature on the Christian scene over the decades.⁴⁵

Larbi's' assessment of prayer centres in Ghanaian Christianity generally is that they are important avenues for meeting practical or existential needs of people with respect to healing, protection, economic issues, among others. He noted also that they are major means of conversion especially for a church like CoP and so, called on the various denominations to properly find ways of integrating them into their structures and also give them the needed assistance so as to enable them meet the needs of the people.⁴⁶ In effect, although prayer centres have very practical challenges for which reason they may be frowned upon, they can be usefulness if properly structured within the denominations where they emerge.

⁴⁴Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 371-383, 408-409.

⁴⁵Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 371-383.

⁴⁶Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 402- 414.

Onyinah's description of a prayer centre is similar to that of Larbi's as he states that a prayer centre is "a place where a person goes with a problem to fast and pray with the aim of meeting God in a special way to answer his or her request."⁴⁷ He also identified two types of prayer centres in Ghana namely residential and non-residential. The residential centres have facilities for clients or patrons to stay in at the prayer centres until their problems are resolved for them to go back home. The non-residential types do not have such facilities so they operate on specific days in the week during which clients visit to be attended to and go back home.⁴⁸ The prayer centres as he suggests specialize in ministering to the spiritual needs of people with respect to deliverance and exorcism, healing, spiritual consultancy or enquiry into one's hidden or spiritual affairs or circumstances (known in Akan as *abisa*).⁴⁹ Onyinah has stated that in principle, the majority of churches in Ghana accept the concept of prayer centres, however, most of them do not practice or encourage it and that it is mainly the CoP that operates them.⁵⁰ Clients at prayer centres as Onyinah has shown are drawn from almost all the Christian denominations in the country. This, as he suggests accounted for the historic mission founded churches such as the PCG to begin encouraging the establishment of prayer centres to cater for the needs of their members.⁵¹

Onyinah again provides some reasons why people visit prayer centres to include the search for healing from diverse ailments or health conditions, miscellaneous problems such as economic challenges, promotion at work, marital problems; meditation and prayer and finally for observation.⁵² For most of the people who visit with problems, such problems are beyond what human agency can address hence the need to resort to 'supernatural

⁴⁷Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 187

⁴⁸Ibid., 187.

⁴⁹Ibid., 188.

⁵⁰Ibid., 180.

⁵¹Ibid., 188, 191

⁵²Ibid., 191, 192.

agency' of prayer. Onyinah has, however, indicated that it is not all the clients at the prayer centres who go there because of a need and that some people go there to seek spiritual renewal in the form of prayer and meditation. Thus, prayer centres can also be said to be places where people go with the aim of encountering the divine for their spiritual renewal or growth.

The concept of prayer centres as they are at present was dominant in the ministry and activities of the AICs as shown in the seminal work of the Ghanaian scholar and theologian, C. G. Baeta "Prophetism in Ghana." Almost all the groups that Baeta surveyed operated places of religious activities that bear all the features or descriptions of prayer centres as provided in later studies except the use of the specific term or concept of prayer centres. With regard to the Twelve Apostles' Church, he stated that their centre of religious activities was called "the Garden." Every Prophet of the church was to have a "Garden" or be attached to one and all religious activities are carried out there "except in emergency or special circumstances." He went further to describe these "Gardens" as "open convent" that was quite isolated from the regular settlements. They had their own residential apartments and other facilities for patients there. Clients who were unable to find accommodation at the "Gardens" stayed in the nearby settlements and came there from time to time to be attended to.⁵³

Baeta's description of the "Garden" (a name most probably referring to the Garden of Eden) of the Twelve Apostles' Church, as can be seen, has almost all the key characteristics of a prayer centre that the definitions that have been surveyed earlier in this work give. That, it is a separated place from other regular human settlements or activities and set apart mainly for religious reasons. It has residential facilities for some of the

⁵³ C. G. Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana*, (London: SCM, 1962), 17-18.

clients or people who patronize the place and it is ultimately a place of supernatural succour.

Apart from the Twelve Apostles Church, the headquarters of other churches in Baeta's work namely the Musama Disco Christo Church (MDCC) at Mozano⁵⁴ and the Apostles Revelation Society (ARS) at Tadzewu⁵⁵ fit into the description of prayer centres as we have already explored. Like the "Gardens" in the Twelve Apostles Church, the headquarters of the ARS and MDCC are separated from other regular communities and are exclusively for the religious activities of the devotees. Members of the churches from other places consider these places as special places to encounter God so they visit there for supplications during special events of the church or for spiritual succour to meet certain needs such as healing or renewal.⁵⁶ Besides the residential religious centres of the groups mentioned above, Baeta also mentioned the venue of religious activity for one group which fits into what may be referred to as non-residential prayer centre. This is the retreat grounds of the Prayer and Healing Group of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) at Etodome in the Volta region.⁵⁷ This group, which was within the EPC, conducted various religious activities such as prayer with fasting and healing at this venue with many rules observed there.⁵⁸ It would be observed that all the founders of all the groups that Baeta studied were former members of the western mission founded churches who were either expelled by their former churches or they moved out themselves. Indeed, the Etodome prayer group was still within the EPC at the time of Baeta's study. These show that the emergence of the kind of prayer centres under discussion started within the western mission churches in Ghana before they became known as AICs.

⁵⁴Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana*, 33, 34, 44, 45, 56.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 72, 77-79.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 83-85.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 89.

⁵⁸See Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana*, pp. 89-104 for detailed discussions on the Etodome Prayer Group at its venue.

From the brief discussions on the venues of religious activities from Baeta's study, it can be deduced that the concept of prayer centres started quite early in Ghanaian Christianity and was prominent in the ministry of the AICs prior to the emergence of Classical Pentecostalism as stated earlier in the background to this study. This researcher is inclined to think that the word 'prayer centre' did not appear in Baeta's work basically because the groups that he studied considered the places where their activities were centred as integral to their entire Christian religious activities. The groups that Baeta studied also emphasized intense prayer and healing as part of their regular activities so they did not consider their venues as special prayer and healing centres thus to be so designated as such.

Asamoah-Gyadu has identified three key features of AICs which need to be examined here for the purpose of giving further understanding to the subject under discussion. Firstly, he described them as showing commitment to aggressive prayer leading to organizing "all-night prayer vigils, retreats to mountain sites and forests and the creation of prayer camps which are locations of prayer rituals for supernatural intervention."⁵⁹ Secondly, they were usually organized around charismatic figures such as prophets who were believed to possess spiritual power. Further, such prophetic figures provided direction in healing by being able to diagnose sicknesses and prescribe appropriate therapies for their redress.⁶⁰ It is based on their emphasis on prophecy and healing that Harold Turner describes the AICs as prophet-healing churches.⁶¹ It is therefore noticeable from Asamoah-Gyadu's discussion, that prayer (camps) centres were first associated with the ministry of the AICs and there is no doubt that the later waves of Christianity such as Classical Pentecostalism adopted the practice from them.

⁵⁹Asmoah –Gyadu, "From Prophetism to Pentecostalism," 166

⁶⁰Ibid., 166.

⁶¹ Harold Turner, *Religious Innovation in Africa: Collected Essays on New Religious Movements* (Boston, MA: G.K. Hall, 1979) cited in Asamoah-Gyadu "From Prophetism to Pentecostalism," 166.

Apart from the concept of prayer camps (centres), the other two features of the AICs as discussed by Asamoah-Gyadu are identifiable with the spirituality and practices of the prayer centres that were established by the Classical Pentecostal denominations and later by the western mission founded churches. They are places of vigorous prayer and aggressive search for God's intervention in the needs or affairs of people.⁶² Also, Onyinah's explanation of the functions of the leaders or people who operate the centres shows a similarity with that of the leaders of the AICs that have been discussed earlier. That is that prayer camps:

centred around a prophet/ healer who becomes a spiritual consultant" and that they are usually people "with strong personalities who believed themselves and are believed by others to have 'spiritual gifts' to reveal hidden things, predict the future, heal the sick, break ancestral curses, exorcise witches and offer abisa (spiritual consultations).⁶³

What Onyinah describes concerns prayer centres operated by members of the CoP which became popular in the 1950s but waned and came up again in the 1970s through the 1990s. This explanation is very much the same as what Larbi has provided as already stated in the background to this study.⁶⁴ It would be realized that although the prayer camps of the AICs and those that were to emerge later are separated by a reasonably long time, the major features of the former have persisted in the latter. It can be argued that the founders of the latter prayer camps took on the elements of the earlier types and integrated it into their ministries.

Omenyo has also mentioned that most of the AICs established healing centres or camps where patients were kept for as long as they needed to be there until they were healed. In their camps, the AICs also "exorcise evils spirits and cure confessed witches."⁶⁵ He went further to show that the religious practices of the AICs were in many respects traced to

⁶²Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 187.

⁶³Ibid., 187-188.

⁶⁴Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, pp. 86, 371.

⁶⁵Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, p 74.

indigenous African Religious practices. Subsequently, he stated that the operation of prayer and healing camps was patterned along the lines of indigenous religious practice in Ghana where sick persons were kept in the care of traditional priests and herbalists for periods that could run into years for succour and treatment and healing. This he reasons was taken on by the Classical Pentecostal Churches and then later by the western mission founded churches such as the PCG.⁶⁶ In effect, prayer centres in Ghanaian Christianity was a concept borrowed from indigenous religions in Ghana by the AICs and Classical Pentecostalism and other denominations.

Larbi gives further evidence of the connection between prayer centres and indigenous religious practices based on the issues or problems that are dealt with at the prayer centre by stating that like the “traditional neo cultic shrines”⁶⁷ the prayer centres deal with all kinds of problems although they are important with respect to the search for healing or health.⁶⁸ That prayer centres emphasize healing or health is also observable from the fact that they are sometimes referred to as healing centres in a number of the literature in which they are cited. For instance, Larbi used the terms healing centre and prayer centre synonymously or at different times.

The idea of a secluded place of religious activities in indigenous African religion is affirmed by John D. K. Ekem in his description of the functions of traditional priests in the Akan traditional religion. Ekem mentions that there are shrines with *Akɔmfo* (traditional priests) in charge where groups and individuals usually flock to during festive periods, in times of calamities or ordinary days and on special occasions to seek the help of the

⁶⁶Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 259.

⁶⁷ The cultic shrines referred to here are the tigare and other religious cults that emerged in Ghana in the 1920s with claims of being able to protect people against evil spiritual forces such as witchcraft. See Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 65- 66 for some discussions on them.

⁶⁸Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 87.

deities.⁶⁹ Thus, the shrines are places of ‘refuge’ for the community and it is the *Akɔmfo* and their attendants or assistants who mediate between the people and the spiritual realm at these shrines. Ekem identifies one of the functions of the *Akɔmfo* at the shrines as healing which he describes as a “holistic healing ministry” because they are experts in herbal medicine and use their stock of knowledge to prescribe treatment for various illnesses that are brought to them.⁷⁰ The other reason for describing the healing practices of the *Akɔmfo* as holistic is seen from Kofi Asare Opoku’s assertion that it is to address both the organic and spiritual cause of a disease.⁷¹ In effect, the shrines in indigenous religion were the centres of religious activities where priests and their attendants mediated between the community and the deities to meet the needs of members of the community. And one of the needs of the community or people that are addressed at these shrines is their health needs.

In adopting the phenomenon of prayer camps from the indigenous religious system, the AICs also fashioned their ministry especially healing in line with some of its practices. It is for this reason that Philomena Mwauru described the healing ministry of the AICs as meeting African Christians at the point of their needs.⁷² Mwauru states further that, ‘the approach to healing offered by the AICs is complex and digs into the social, spiritual and mystical roots of illnesses seeking to address issues such as fear of witchcraft, magic, and others rooted in the African worldview.’⁷³ This is corroborated by Asamoah-Gyadu who asserts that the AICs (‘Sunsum Sɔre’ as he refers to the AICs) distinguished themselves as churches whose spirituality is relevant to the needs of the indigenous context in ways such

⁶⁹John D. K. Ekem, *Priesthood in Context: A Study of Priesthood in some Christian and Primal Communities of Ghana and its Relevance for Mother-Tongues Biblical Interpretation*, (Accra: SonLife, 2008), 53.

⁷⁰Ekem, *Priesthood in Context*, 53.

⁷¹Kofi Asare Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion*, (Singapore: FEP International Private Limited, 1978), 149-151.

⁷²Philomena Mwaura, “New Religious Movements: A Challenge to Doing Theology in Africa” *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*, 13, no. 3, (July, 2003):1 – 19.

⁷³Philomena Mwaura, “New Religious Movements” 1 – 19.

as healing.⁷⁴ Through that, they had an urge over the western mission founded churches and attracted many people out of them into their fold.⁷⁵ The adoption of prayer camps as a venue for the appropriation of divine healing by Classical Pentecostal denominations and later western mission founded churches, in particular, can be said to be an attempt to make their ministries responsive to their African context and offset the losses to the AICs.

There is some literature to show that the concept of prayer centres has existed in other Christians jurisdictions. An example of this is what has been called healing homes in Europe and America in the nineteenth century which came through the teachings of proponents of divine healing gospel.⁷⁶ Among the early advocates or practitioners of divine healing in Europe were Edward Irvin in England, Dorothea Trudel in Switzerland, Johann Christoph Blumhardt in Germany, and Otto Stockmayer in Switzerland. These European practitioners of divine healing inspired the movement in America. One of the earliest persons to propagate the concept of divine healing in America was George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends (the Quakers). Having moved from England to America in the mid-seventeenth century with his group, he articulated divine healing during his preaching tours in 1672. During his preaching tours, George Fox reportedly prayed for the sick by laying his hands on them for healing. Other advocates of the practice of divine healing included John Alexander Dowie, Ethan O. Allen and Charles Cullis a medical doctor from Boston who established and operated a healing home where he ran a comprehensive healing programme.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 42.

⁷⁵ J. Kwabena Asamoah –Gyadu, “Pentecostalism and the Missiological Significance of Religious Experience: The Case of Ghana’s ‘Church of Pentecost,’” *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*, 12, nos. 1 & 2, (July/Dec. 2002), 30- 57.

⁷⁶ See Paul Chapell, “Healing Movements” in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, eds. Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 350-374 for detailed discussion on the subject of divine healing.

⁷⁷ See Paul Chapell, “Healing Movements,” 350-374 for detailed discussion on the subject of divine healing and healing homes in Europe and America.

The concept of prayer centres as has been surveyed so far reveals an understanding of a special place where Christians who go there hope to encounter God and have their needs addressed. Onyinah's explanation of a prayer centre as already stated above can be a basis for arguing that prayer centres are sacred spaces. The idea of a sacred space where one can encounter the divine is said to be common with all groups of people and for that matter all religions. Indeed Mircea Eliade has argued that men have traditionally lived in two realms, namely sacred and profane.⁷⁸ He observes that the sacred realm is that in which men are confronted with objects and forces over which they have no control and so only respond with "awe and wonder."⁷⁹ Thus, based on the spectacular spiritual encounter or experience of people at the prayer centres, they may be described as sacred places.

The phenomenon of prayer centres in Ghanaian Christianity has been the subject of some academic studies. Larbi's work, "Pentecostalism: Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity" discusses prayer centres as found within mainstream Pentecostalism and the focus of their ministry. Also, Onyinah's work, "Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana" discusses the ministry of prayer centres in the context of deliverance ministry in the CoP. There are other studies that have specifically focused on particular prayer centres in the country. For instance, Dan Nyampong Asihene's Master of Arts dissertation; "Edumfa Prayer Camp:⁸⁰ A City of Refuge" discusses how the Edumfa Prayer Camp in the Central Region developed to become a reputed avenue for people seeking intervention in various problems confronting them. Also, Ernest Gyimah Agyemang's work, the "Contribution of the Mount Horeb Prayer Centre, Mamfe towards Mental Health Care in

⁷⁸Mircea Eliade, *Religion as the Structure and Archetype; The Sacred and the Profane*, in *Phenomenology of Religion; Eight Modern Descriptions of Religion*, ed. Joseph Dabney Bettis, (London: SCM, 1969), 200.

⁷⁹Mircea Eliade, *Religion as the Structure and Archetype*, 200.

⁸⁰ The Edumfa Prayer Centre located at Edumfa in the Central Region of Ghana was one of the popular prayer centres affiliated to the Church of Pentecost, (COP). It was well known for its effectiveness in administering divine healing to people who went there with various health problems and also assisting people find solutions to other problems they went there with. It must be noted that the CoP has severed relations with the centre for about six years now.

Ghana” basically examined the role of the mount Horeb prayer centre towards mental health care. It did not discuss other issues that the prayer centre deals with neither did it discuss the ministry of other prayer centres.

Again, Philip Kwadwo Okyere’s M.Phil thesis “Reconstructing Sacred Space: the Place and Relevance of Abasua Prayer Mountain in Contemporary Ghanaian Christianity” examined how the Abasua Prayer Mountain which had been noted for spiritual renewal for Christians in Ghana has gone beyond renewal to meeting other needs of its patrons and people from the surrounding community. Finally, Doris Ekua Yalley’s work “Sacred Site Visitation and Renewal Programme in the Methodist Church, Ghana” examined how the organized visits or pilgrimage by the Methodist Church, Ghana (MCG) to its prayer centres contribute to the renewal efforts of the MCG. Okyere and Yalley thus place prayer centres within the framework of sacred sites which as has been noted earlier basically refer to places where an individual or group of people come into contact with the divine being. The focus of the present study is not whether a prayer centre is a sacred place or not. It basically deals with the emergence of prayer centres in the PCG as places or avenues of contemporary spiritual renewal in the PCG.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it is an additional material on the manifestation of the Pentecostal phenomenon in Ghana. It will, therefore, be a reference material for students and researchers on Pentecostalism as well as any other area of religious or theological study. It has also made recommendations on new or emerging issues pertaining to the Pentecostal renewal activities that need to be further interrogated by scholars and researchers. Again, it provides some insight into some practical issues in Ghanaian Christianity that must engage the attention of theological educators in the formulation of

curriculum for theological education and ministerial training in order to make Christian leaders respond appropriately to the practical needs of their members.

Secondly, with respect to the PCG, the study is of benefit as it brings out relevant information about prayer centres operating within its structures. It provides knowledge on the ministries, programmes and activities of prayer centres, as well as their role and impact on the contemporary spiritual renewal and mission of the church. It also brings out any lapses or challenges associated with the ministry of the prayer centres and steps that the church needs to take to correct them. All this information will guide the PCG in its policy directions for the prayer centres within its structures. The study will also benefit other Christian denominations that operate prayer centres to be informed about them from a related context and measures to take to improve on their ministries.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The PCG currently has about twenty-four (24) prayer centres located across the country and the study was primarily focused on all of them. This is because the researcher gathered information on the prayer centres from reports of Presbytery Sessions and General Assemblies. Also, the researcher obtained general information on all the prayer centres affiliated to the PCG from directors of prayer centres at their annual retreat and training workshop at Akropong in May 2017. Information gathered from them included history of the various prayer centres, their locations, their management and operations, highlights of programmes and activities, facilities they have among others. Such data helped the researcher to make broad generalisation on prayer centres in the PCG.

The above notwithstanding, actual field study and observations for the purpose of gathering specific data was carried out at two of the prayer centres. These were, the Grace Prayer Centre at Akropong Akuapem located in the Akuapem Presbytery and in the

Eastern Region and the Mount Moriah Prayer Centre located at Danfa in the Greater Region and within the Ga Presbytery. The Grace Prayer centre is operated by the Grace Evangelistic Team (GET) a semi-autonomous group⁸¹ in the Grace Congregation of the PCG at Akropong Akuapem. The centre was selected for this study because it has become the leading prayer centre of the PCG with its activities highly patronised by many Presbyterians and non-Presbyterians. The vibrant ministry at this centre makes it suitable for a study of such nature. Also, Mount Moriah Prayer Centre at Danfa was also selected for this study because it is the first prayer centre in the Ga Presbytery and has grown quite rapidly over its few years of operation. It is also highly patronised by both Presbyterians and non-Presbyterians. The choice of these two centres was also because of their proximity and accessibility by the researcher.

1.9 Limitations

The first limitation encountered during the study was that there is little historical material on the evolution of prayer centres in the PCG. This made it difficult to obtain data on issues such as the factors accountable for the emergence of prayer centres as well as the people who initiated their establishment. However, the researcher was able to get reasonable volume of data from the general historical records of the church and also from the narratives of some individuals who were involved in the process of their evolution. This proved generally helpful for the purpose. Also, scholarly materials on the Pentecostal renewal in Ghana and globally were consulted and they served as useful sources of data for this study.

⁸¹The GET is described as semi-autonomous group because it not under the control of any Congregation in the PCG as provided in Article 14 of its Constitution though the same article states that it will seek to promote the interest of the entire PCG. As such, unlike other groups in the congregation, the GET does not submit to the control and scrutiny of the Congregational. Other issues related to this will be discussed in detail in Chapter four of this study.

Another limitation had to do with the researcher's background as a Christian minister who is abreast or quite informed about the practices at the prayer centres which had the tendency of influencing his performing epoche. Nevertheless, he kept most of his inclinations under control and approached the study objectively. Also, the phenomena that were studied were spiritual practices which did not always follow a consistent pattern, however, the researcher was able to take note of the dominant issues for description and analysis.

1.10 Methodology and Methods of Data Collection

To effectively undertake a study of this nature, a multi-disciplinary approach involving a combination of the historical and phenomenological methods was employed.

The historical approach was mainly employed in chapter two which dealt with the history of the emergence of prayer centres in the PCG. The historical approach is basically about probing past events so as to understand and forecast into the future.⁸² To this end, the researcher conducted a search into the general history of the PCG in order to find out the evolution of prayer centres. Data was obtained predominantly from primary sources such as oral interviews and study of records of the church. Some leaders of the PCG were also interviewed to gather information on the factors that led to the emergence of the prayer centres in the PCG, by way of investigating the factors accountable for the establishment of prayer centres. The researcher consulted historical documents or materials such as reports and minutes of meetings of various courts of the PCG namely Synods and General Assemblies, Presbytery Sessions, District Sessions and Congregational Session to find out the discussions and decisions that were taken on renewal activities in the Church in general and the evolution of prayer centres in particular. The chronicles of the Grace

⁸² Jacob Kehinde Ayantayo, *Rudiments of Research and Research in Religious Studies*, (Lagos: Jay Kay Ayam Publications, 2015), 196-199.

Congregation of the PCG, as well as the Mount Moriah Congregation where the prayer centres that were studied are located, were consulted for information on issues relating to the establishment of prayer centres at those congregations. Other historical materials such as anniversary brochures and other publications on those congregations were also studied to gather data for the study. Also, published and unpublished academic studies on the Pentecostal renewal in general and on prayer centres, in particular, both within the Ghana and elsewhere were consulted in gathering data on the evolution of the phenomenon of prayer centres in Ghanaian Christianity.

The phenomenological approach was employed to study the ministry of the prayer centres in terms of their programmes, activities, practices and spirituality. The phenomenological approach operates within some principles namely; epoche, performing empathetic interpolation, maintaining epoche, describing the phenomena, naming the phenomena, describing relationships and processes, constructing the paradigmatic model, performing eidetic intuition, understanding the meaning of religion and testing the intuition.⁸³

The data was collected primarily through participant observation which basically involves finding a means to get into the group as an actor and a spectator to observe and record the activities or proceedings.⁸⁴ In using this method of data collection for this study, the researcher visited the prayer centres selected for the study on a number of occasions to observe different programmes, practices and activities and take note of issues of interest to the study for discussion. The record of visits to the centres is as shown in appendix c.

Apart from the methods described above, interview and questionnaire were also used to gather data. The researcher interviewed 15 people for the study. Such people were selected

⁸³ James Cox, *Expressing the Sacred: An Introduction to the phenomenology of Religion*, 26-41.

⁸⁴ Tom K. B. Kumekpor, *Research Techniques of Social Sciences*, (Accra: SonLife Press and Services, 1999), 79.

either because of their association with the evolution of prayer centres or their current involvement in the ministry of prayer centres in the PCG. Focus Group discussions were also held by the researcher with the team members at the Danfa prayer centre and cross-section of members of the Grace Evangelistic Team. Interview guide that contained open-ended items was used for the interviews, (find a copy in appendix B).

Also, 30 set of questionnaire were administered to patrons at each of the prayer centres to find out their views on the ministry of the prayer centres and the benefits they have either received or are receiving from the centres. Out of the total of 60 questionnaires 55 were received. The questionnaire was made up of 16 close and open-ended items (a copy is attached in Appendix A).

1.11 Organisation of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One is a general introduction and deals with the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, scope of the study, methodology and methods of data collection, limitations and significance of the study.

In Chapter Two, the researcher discusses the emergence of prayer centres in the PCG. Specific issues that are addressed include the history of renewal efforts in the PCG, factors accountable for the emergence of prayer centres in the PCG, the integration of prayer centres into the life and ministry of the PCG as well as some of the issues of concern about the establishment and administration of prayer centres.

Chapter Three examines the ministry of prayer centres in the PCG. It interrogates the spirituality that is manifested at prayer centres in terms of their programs, practices, and activities and finds out the extent to which these fit into the general ethos and practices of the PCG.

In Chapter Four, the discussion focuses on the impact of Prayer Centres on the life and mission of the PCG. The researcher will discuss how the ministries of the prayer centres have been found to be of benefit to the members of the PCG as well as clients and patrons of the centres. The discussions will also address how the prayer centres are contributing to the overall mission and ministry of the PCG with respect to renewal, church growth, innovation in ministry, mobilization of financial resources among others.

Chapter Five is the summary of the study, the major findings or conclusions drawn from the study and some recommendations based on the findings.



CHAPTER TWO

EMERGENCE OF PRAYER CENTRES IN THE PCG

2.1. Introduction

Prayer centres have become the main avenues of renewal in the PCG in the last two decades. This chapter examines the historical origins of prayer centres in the PCG. To give a clearer understanding of the discussion, the chapter begins with a brief analysis of renewal attempts in the PCG prior to the emergence of prayer centres. We will then examine how prayer centres came to be the means of renewal, who takes the initiative to establish prayer centres and factors that necessitated the establishment of prayer centres in the PCG. The chapter will also bring out the extent to which the PCG has integrated prayer centres into its ministry. This will include the examining the mechanisms that have been put in place to ensure their effective administration and operation. Finally, the chapter will give brief history of the two prayer centres selected for this study.

It will be argued that Prayer Centres are part of the innovative mechanisms adopted by the PCG to meet the contemporary needs of its members in order to have relevant ministry.

2.2 Brief History of Renewal Efforts in the PCG

The establishment of prayer centres in the PCG is integral to the quest for spiritual renewal which began in the early decades of the twentieth century not in that church, but also in other churches in existence in Ghana at the time. Abamfo Ofori Atiemo has stated that between 1914 and 1937, there were deep yearnings by Christians for higher spirituality than what the existing denominations provided.⁸⁵ This spiritual yearning resulted from anxieties over existential needs, which were created by some socio-economic occurrences

⁸⁵Abamfo O. Atiemo, *The Rise of the Charismatic Movement in the Mainline Churches in Ghana*, (Accra: Asempra Publishers, 1993), 20.

in the Gold Coast, one of them being economic prosperity.⁸⁶ The economic prosperity at the time led to improvements in the living conditions of many people. However, it also resulted in more affluent lifestyles, indulgences, and increase in immorality. Many Christians were found to be involved in the immoral and irregular lifestyles that emerged.

Apart from the moral issues, many people became insecure as there were threats of spiritual attacks on them. Many young, educated and well to do people were said to be targets of attack by their neighbours.⁸⁷ One of the main sources of the economic prosperity at the time was cocoa cultivation which had emerged as a flourishing agricultural industry.⁸⁸ For those involved in the new agricultural business of cocoa cultivation, it was believed that spiritual powers were employed either to boost one's crop yield or destroy a neighbour's farm. These alleged spiritual attacks led to many witchcraft allegations. It then led to an influx of what has been described as the anti-witchcraft shrines where many people resorted to in their bid to find out the causes or people responsible for their misfortunes. There were reported cases of mysterious deaths of alleged witches who dragged to such cults and could not prove their innocence.⁸⁹

The PCG, in particular, came under strong distress from these occurrences since it was predominant in the cocoa growing areas at the time. Such areas also happened to be places where many of the anti-witchcraft shrines emerged.⁹⁰ Many members of the church were found to be involved in patronizing the anti-witchcraft shrines because the leaders did not

⁸⁶ James Annorbah-Sakyi, "The Rise of Prophetism – A Socio-Political Explanation" in *The Rise of Independent Churches in Ghana*, (Asempa Publishers, 1990), 28.

⁸⁷ Annorbah-Sakyi, "The Rise of Prophetism," 28.

⁸⁸ Adam Mohr, *Enchanted Calvinism: Labor Migration, Afflicting Spirits, and Christian Therapy in the Presbyterian church of Ghana*, (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2013), 53-62 and Atiemo, *The Rise of the Charismatic Movement in the Mainline Churches in Ghana*, 16-20.

⁸⁹ Michael Albert Kwamena –Poh, *Vision and Achievement: 1828-1978, A Hundred and Fifty Years of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana*, (Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 2011), 246- 251, Mohr, *Enchanted Calvinism*, 53-55 and James Anonorbah-Sakyi, "The Rise of Prophetism - A Socio-Political Explanation" in *The Rise of Independent Churches in Ghana*, (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1990): 27-33.

⁹⁰ Annorbah-Sakyi, "The Rise of Prophetism," 28

officially believe in witchcraft and the need to give assurance to their members against it. Thus, the PCG was described as being “disenchanted” at this time as its official stance on African spiritual realities such as witchcraft, was in sharp contrast to that of its African members who were confronted with it.⁹¹As such, it was incapable of addressing such problems of its members by way of neutralizing the threats of witchcraft.⁹²

The second occurrence was the influenza epidemic which occurred around 1918/19 and claimed many lives. The medical facilities at the time were said not to be able to contain the situation by not being able to treat people affected by it. People, therefore, sought divine or spiritual means of redress which they did not find in their churches, the historic mission founded churches. It was in response to the influenza epidemic that the Faith Tabernacle teaching of divine healing flourished in the Gold Coast as stated in chapter one.⁹³

The two situations described above created a lot of tensions for people who looked up to their churches to assist them in addressing their fears because for the African, religion is said to be “effective and emotionally satisfying”⁹⁴to the extent that it must meet existential needs. However, as already indicated, these churches could not do so. Whilst some members of the western mission founded churches consulted the neo-cultic shrines to meet their needs, others did not. The second group then constituted themselves into prayer groups to seek the power of the Christian God to meet their needs. This situation led to what Omenyo describes as an “unprecedented springing up of prayer groups led by self-designated prophets and prophetesses within the western mission founded churches”

⁹¹Mohr, *Enchanted Calvinism*, 53-62.

⁹²Mohr, *Enchanted Calvinism*, 53-62.

⁹³Abamfo Ofori Atiemo, *Mmusuyi and Deliverance*, (MPhil Thesis, University of Ghana, Legon, 1994), 83 and Cephas N. Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, (Uitgeverij: BoekencentrumZoetermeer, 2002), 65.

⁹⁴Johns S. Pobee and Gabriel Ositelu II, *African Initiatives in Christianity: The Growth, Gifts and Diversifications of Indigenous African Churches; a Challenge to the Ecumenical Movement*, (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1998), 40.

including the PCG.⁹⁵ Members of these prayer groups or sects were noted for making claims of the Holy Spirit's possession and enablement to perform extraordinary acts or feats.⁹⁶ Such claims were, however, considered by their churches to be at variance with established tradition and so were not tolerated. This led to many of such people leaving their churches to operate independently. Thus, Atiemo described the Pentecostal renewal in Ghana as originating in the western mission founded churches but became an independent movement with splinter churches because it did not find space to operate in these churches.⁹⁷

Even though some members of the PCG went along with the AICs, others maintained their membership in the church and continued with their spiritual renewal activities,⁹⁸ such that the number of prayer groups in the church continued to grow up to the 1930s and beyond.⁹⁹ These groups did not have the official approval of the church, and so operated largely on the periphery.¹⁰⁰ They largely employed many of the practices of the AICs in their activities and were among other things noted for divine healing.¹⁰¹ As will be seen subsequently in this study, the appropriation of divine healing continued to be a dominant issue that resulted in the establishment of prayer centres in the PCG.

When Classical Pentecostalism emerged, members of the western mission founded churches including the PCG were also influenced by their activities. Thus, other prayer groups were formed in the PCG. These groups also began applying some of the practices of the Classical Pentecostals in their activities. Thus, prayer groups that were akin to either

⁹⁵Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 66-67.

⁹⁶Atiemo, *The Rise of Charismatic Movement in the Mainline Churches in Ghana*,

⁹⁷Atiemo, *The Rise of Charismatic Movement in the Mainline Churches in Ghana*, 21.

⁹⁸Atiemo, *The Rise of Charismatic Movement in the Mainline Churches in Ghana*, 22

⁹⁹Atiemo, *The Rise of Charismatic Movement in the Mainline Churches in Ghana*, 24

¹⁰⁰Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 66-67.

¹⁰¹Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 131- 134.

the AICs or Classical Pentecostalism were operating simultaneously in the PCG.¹⁰² A third group or category was identified to be those that were influenced by the renewal seminars organized by Rev. T. A. Kumi, a minister of the church who was then warden of the Ramseyer Training Centre at Abetifi, Kwahu.¹⁰³ It was through the efforts of such independent prayer groups that the BSPG eventually emerged as the main renewal body of the PCG.¹⁰⁴ The BSPG set out its aims and objectives as commitment to reading and studying the Bible, deeper and higher sense of prayer as a means of meeting spiritual needs, seeking closer fellowship with the Holy Spirit as essential part of Christian life, inspiring and awakening spiritual life and need for holiness in church members, to promoting the growth and expansion of the church through its evangelistic activities.¹⁰⁵

In line with these aims, the group was largely credited as being successful with respect to bringing about spiritual renewal in the PCG and also promoting the expansion and numerical growth of the church in tremendous ways.¹⁰⁶ The formation of the BSPG can, therefore, be considered as a watershed in the quest for renewal in the PCG as the group's successes served as the basis for further spiritual renewal efforts in the PCG. The period and events up to the formation of the BSPG can therefore be described as the early attempts at spiritual renewal in the PCG. On the other hand, the period and events after the formation of the BSPG can be described as the latter attempts at renewal activities. It is within this period that the establishment of prayer centres falls as will be shown in the subsequent discussions.

¹⁰²Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 134-137.

¹⁰³Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 138-141.

¹⁰⁴ See Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 140- 146 for detailed discussions on the emergence of the BSPG in the PCG.

¹⁰⁵Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 142.

¹⁰⁶ See Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 146-153, 261-265 for discussions on the contributions of the BSPG in the PCG.

2.3 Evolution of Prayer Centres in the PCG

The establishment of prayer centres in the PCG is predominantly the initiative of individual lay members who were involved in the spiritual renewal activities in the church particularly within the BSPG. Through the meetings or activities of the BSPG, such persons, believed to be endowed with spiritual gifts by which they can minister to the needs of people with respect to healing, deliverance, unravel spiritual problems and also predict the future emerged. During the meetings of the BSPG, such gifted members ministered to the needs of people. It was found out that some of the needs could not be effectively addressed within the short time of the meetings hence additional meetings were scheduled to deal with the specific cases that came up at the general group meetings.¹⁰⁷ Some people were also specifically referred to the leaders of the BSPG for assistance in various areas. As the activities of the group expanded, decisions were taken to institutionalize regular prayer times outside those of BSPG to deal with these special cases. The gifted members, around whom the ministrations of healing and deliverance revolved, emerged as the leaders of such meetings or programmes though they operated under the main leadership of the BSPG. With time, the venues of such meetings became designated as prayer centres and were officially known to be owned by the BSPG. The first prayer centre to be established this way is the Gethsemane prayer centre at Jejemiraja near Berekum in the Brong Ahafo region. It was established in 1976 under the leadership of Daniel Ansu, a member of the BSPG.¹⁰⁸ Mr Daniel Ansu is reported as nurturing other people with gifts of the Holy Spirit to also later open prayer centres in other parts of the Brong Ahafo region. Among these are the Meremano, Abirikasu and Yaamansu centres. Thus, the initial prayer centres to emerge in the PCG were predominantly in the Brong

¹⁰⁷ Rev. Dr. K. Opuni –Frimpong, interview, 3rd June, 2017 and Rev. Dr. W. K. Ofofu-Addo, interview, 25th November, 2016

¹⁰⁸ Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Gethsemane Prayer Camp, Jejemiraja, 40th Anniversary Brochure, 49-56. Rev. Felix Akresu Anim Danso, Interview, 13th November, 2016, PCG Head office.

Ahafo region. It can also be stated that Daniel Ansu is the originator of the prayer centre concept in the PCG

In the late 1980s, the then Synod Committee of the PCG reportedly decided to establish a prayer (healing) centre at Atibie in the Eastern region.¹⁰⁹ This was the PCG's first official attempt to institutionalize the establishment of prayer centres as places where the spiritual needs of its members would be addressed by ministers and lay members who possessed the gifts of the Holy Spirit to minister in those areas.¹¹⁰ The establishment and operation of this centre turned out to be rather slow. This is because at the 67th Synod, held from 24th to 29th August, 1996 the workshop group that discussed the report of the ELTC recommended that the Synod Committee should implement guidelines that were outlined for running the centre.¹¹¹ This recommendation did not seem to have yielded any result as the issue came up again at the 69th Synod held from 22nd to 28th August, 1998 where the workshop group that discussed the ELTC report asked the church to take immediate action to save the centre from collapsing.¹¹² The actions that were taken in line with this recommendation will be discussed later in this chapter.

Meanwhile, the renewal activities of the BSPG as discussed above intensified leading to the emergence of more prayer centres under its auspices in other parts of the country.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ This information was provided to this researcher by the Rev. Nana Ntim Gyakari, First Director of the PCG Prayer Centre at Atibie, Kwahu, in an interview on Monday 13th February, 2017. I have however, not been able to cite the official record of the decision and when, where and the decision making body in the church that took such a decision as it does not appear in any of the Synod Minutes or any of the reports presented to Synods between 1970 to 2000. Rev. Ntim Gyakari, intimates that the decision was taken during the first four year term of the Late Rt. Rev. D. A. Koranteng as Moderator which was from 1986 to 1990. The Rev. Dr Opuni-Frimpong, the current General Secretary of the Christian of Ghana also suggests that the decision to establish the Atibie Prayer Centre was during the tenure of the Rev. D. A. Koranteng though he was certain of the exact time.

¹¹⁰ Rev. Ntim Gyakari, former director of the PCG Prayer Centre at Atibie, Kwahu, interview, Monday 13th February, 2017.

¹¹¹ PCG, Minutes of the 67th Synod, 1996, 128.

¹¹² Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Minutes of the 69th Synod held at Akropong Akuapem, 22nd to 28th August, 1998, 150.

¹¹³ See Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 145-149, 261-266 for detailed discussion on the successes of the BSPG as well as the recognition and special concessions it received from the leadership of PCG.

By the late 1990s, the number of such prayer centres had become probably large enough to get the attention of the church. Subsequently, at the 69th Synod held in 1998, the workshop group that discussed the report of the ELTC reported to the plenary session on the “growing awareness, importance and need for the healing camps that were emerging in the church” and recommended that the ELTC:

- i. take oversight of the establishment and running of the healing camps,
- ii. work with the health services unit of the church to explore how to run such centres alongside the existing hospitals of the church and also the possibility of putting up health facilities such as clinics at such healing camps,
- iii. see to it that the appointment of hospital chaplains took into consideration pastors with the gifts of healing,
- iv. the need for the church to ensure proper supervision of such centres to avoid their hijacking by individuals and as already stated above,
- v. pay immediate attention to the collapsing Atobie healing centre.¹¹⁴

It can be deduced from the recommendations stated above that the PCG had by this time realized the importance of prayer centres in its ministry and was exploring means of integrating them into its mainstream ministry. The Church also seemed conscious of the need to prevent secessions from its ranks through the activities of the prayer centres as it sought to prevent their being hijacked by their founders hence the attempt to ensure their proper supervision. It is not clear what immediate steps the PCG took in line with its oversight responsibility for the prayer centres as recommended by the workshop group and stated above. Perhaps, the first step was what the Clerk of Synod and General Assembly at the time, Rev. Dr Charles Gyan Duah, mentioned that the church was compiling a list of

¹¹⁴ Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Minutes of the 69th Synod held at Akropong, 22nd – 28th August, 1998, 150-151

the prayer centres within it and that centres were needed since they could prove useful for the growth of the church.¹¹⁵

Some respondents for this study suggested that in 1999, the Synod of the PCG mandated the Kwahu Presbytery to see to the development of the Atibie prayer centre¹¹⁶ possibly in line with the recommendations of the 1998 Synod workshop report on the ELTC. As a result, the Rev. Nana Ntim Gyakari was posted to Mpraeso Kwahu as the District Minister in the year 2000, with the additional responsibility of developing the prayer centre at Atibie¹¹⁷ to become operational. Some basic infrastructure that include, residence for the director and a pavilion for holding prayer sessions were provided to enable the centre to start operating in the year 2003 with the Rev. Nana Ntim Gyakari as the Director.¹¹⁸

Although the Atibie prayer centre is said to have begun operations in 2003, it did not have the full complement of infrastructure and its activities did not also seem to have been formalized by the church. This is because the Department of Mission and Evangelism (M&E) in its 2006 report to the 7th General Assembly of the PCG in 2007 stated that the centre was inaugurated on 21st January, 2006. The report also requested the Kwahu Presbytery and the General Assembly office to assist the centre to construct chalets to provide accommodation for people who visit there for personal meditation or in need of prayer assistance.¹¹⁹ It further mentioned other prayer centres in operation as Grace prayer centre at Akropong, Abasua prayer centre, Jejemiraja prayer centre, Meremanoo prayer centre and Gilga prayer centre. The report went to state that the BSPG Leadership Training Centre at Chirapatre near Kumasi was being converted into a prayer centre.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 260.

¹¹⁶ Rev. Nana Ntim Gyakari, interview, Monday 13th February, 2017

¹¹⁷ Rev. Nana Ntim Gyakari, interview, Monday 13th February, 2017.

¹¹⁸ Rev. Nana Ntim Gyakari, interview, Monday 13th February, 2017.

¹¹⁹ PCG, 2006 Reports from the Presbyteries and Departments submitted to the 7th General Assembly, 2007, 404.

¹²⁰ PCG, Report of the Presbyteries and Departments for 2006 submitted to the 2007 General Assembly, 405.

The department finally noted that “General Assembly requires that all Presbyteries develop prayer centres to help members who will stand in need.”¹²¹ The workshop group that discussed the report recommended to the plenary session of the General Assembly that:

- i. prayer centres that were already in existence should be encouraged to continue with their good works,
- ii. members (of the church) should be educated to patronize these centres and
- iii. Presbyteries are advised to set up more of these centres and support them financially.¹²²

From its recommendations, the workshop group seemed to endorse the views of the department on prayer centres. The minutes of the Assembly did not also show any contrary views on the recommendations of the workshop group thus implying that the church had come to recognize prayer centres as relevant in its ministry and thus giving them space to operate within its structures. It was at this point that the development of prayer centres as avenues of renewal in the PCG can be described as becoming progressive and gaining greater space in the discussions in the church at all levels. Subsequently, various Presbyteries began taking decisions to establish prayer centres as places of renewal within their jurisdictions. Others that were in existence but had slowed down in their activities were rejuvenated. Among the prayer centres that emerged from this time are:

- i. Kusi Prayer Centre near Kade under the Akyem Abuakwa Presbytery, in the Eastern region, in the year 2004,

¹²¹ PCG, Report of the Presbyteries and Departments for 2006 submitted to the 2007 General Assembly, 405. The present writer has not sighted the said decision by the General Assembly that all Presbyteries must develop prayer centres. It may be a recommendation by the General Assembly Council (GAC) or the Department was suggesting it for the first time for the consideration of the General Assembly.

¹²² PCG, Minutes of the 7th General Assembly, 2007, 157.

- ii. Adweso near Koforidua in the Akuapem Presbytery also in the Eastern region, in the year 2013, and
- iii. Mount Moriah Prayer Centre at Danfa near Accra in the Ga Presbytery in the year 2014.

This study found out that currently there are 24 prayer centres affiliated to the PCG. They were either been established by the various courts of the church or by individual members of the church, (find the list in Appendix C).

The discussion so far has shown that prayer centres in the PCG evolved mainly through the initiative of individual members in the church thus supporting the assertion that renewal is predominantly the outcome of “individual members who spontaneously find the need for it and are committed to it.”¹²³ It is important to note that the BSPG, itself had by this time decided to institutionalise the establishment of prayer centres with the conversion of its training facility at Cherepatre into a prayer centre. Whether the group was aware of it or not, this decision can be described as what helped it keep itself within the renewal programmes of the PCG. This is because with the emergence of prayer centres, the focus of spiritual renewal activities in the PCG has shifted from the BSPG to the former as will be seen in chapters three and four. Having surveyed the evolution of prayer centres, the discussion will move on to focus on factors that accounted for their emergence in the next section.

2.4 Factors Accountable for the Establishment of Prayer Centres in the PCG

Basically, prayer centres were established as a result of the quest for spiritual renewal in the PCG.¹²⁴ This quest for renewal manifested in some specific ways or influenced some specific areas of the PCG’s life and mission. Thus, the quest for renewal can be said to

¹²³Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, p. 153.

¹²⁴ Rev. Dr. William K. Ofosu Addo, Interview, Friday 25th November, 2016.

have some variable factors that were quite closely connected with each other. In other words, each factor influenced the others. These factors were

- i. healing and deliverance,
- ii. church growth,
- iii. prayer centres of other denominations or Christian groups.

These will be discussed separately whilst showing their interconnectedness or relations to one another.

2.4.1 Healing and Deliverance

The quest for the appropriation of divine healing is perhaps the dominant factor that triggered the quest for spiritual renewal in the PCG and eventually influenced the establishment of prayer centres. This explains why the church's first prayer centre at Atibie was initially called healing centre as pertains in the wider Ghanaian Christianity.¹²⁵ Some members of the PCG were said to exercise the gifts of healing which they applied prior to the emergence of the BSPG.¹²⁶ In 1963, the PCG set up a consultation to study the World Council of Churches' (WCC) New Delhi and Ibadan reports as part of measures to help restore its spiritual vitality. The consultation's report included a recommendation for the church to embrace divine healing and integrate it into its ministry as follows:

1. the need to restore the New Testament ministry of healing through prayer restored within congregations of the Church,

¹²⁵ See E. Kingsley Larbi, *Pentecostalism: Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, (Accra: Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, 2001), 55-86.

¹²⁶ See Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 131-136, Mohr, *Enchanted Calvinism*, 86-87, and Anthony A. Beeko, *The trail Blazers: Fruits of 175 of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (1828 – 2003)*, (Accra: Afram Publications Ltd., 2004), 47-51 for detailed discussions on early cases of divine healing in the PCG.

2. “the ministry of healing through prayer should never be isolated from other healing ministries, especially medical treatment, but also the visits and care of other Christians. God can use all these means to give healing.”¹²⁷

Measures that were initiated to implement the above recommendations in addition to others were said not to have lasted for a long time.¹²⁸ However, it seemed that the PCG thereafter became more open towards renewal activities including the practice of divine healing at least as shown in the acceptance of the BSPG. It also seems that healing activities in the church became a bit visible in the PCG. This suggestion is based on James Anquandah’s statement to the effect that though western mission churches generally did not allow the operation of the Charismata in their midst, there was an exceptional case of the PCG allowing a member to operate a healing ministry outside the church for members.¹²⁹ It is not known who Anquandah’s example referred to, but it suggests that though such a person was tolerated, his ministry was not fully regularized or integrated into the church. Notwithstanding what Anquandah mentioned, there was another instance of the practice of divine healing in the PCG by an ordained minister; Rev. E.N. Anim. Rev. Anim was the minister at Obomeng Kwahu and later Nsawam. Reports by the Kwahu Presbytery to successive Synods on Rev. Anim’s healing ministry that were cited during this study showed that the leadership of the PCG had a favourable disposition towards his ministry and was ready to integrate it into the church although no pragmatic steps were taken in that regard.

In the 1984 annual report submitted to the 56th Synod held in August 1985, the Kwahu Presbytery stated that “having examined the report of Rev. E.N. Anim on his healing

¹²⁷Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 130.

¹²⁸Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 131.

¹²⁹ James Anquandah, “The Ghana Independent/ Pentecostal Movement” in *The Rise of Independent Churches in Ghana*, (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1990), 22- 26.

ministry at Obomeng, a more serious effort should be made by Synod to sustain the idea and practice of divine healing in the church.”¹³⁰ The Presbytery called for the need for pastors and interested agents to be given exposure to this aspect of Ministry and the need to consider Rev. Anim’s appeal for a second minister in order for him to devote much attention to healing. One Rev. Osei was posted to Obomeng as second minister to assist Rev. Anim.¹³¹ There was, however, no indication from the minutes of the Synod for that year or later years regarding what was done in connection with the suggestion to expose other pastors and agents to Rev. Anim’s healing practices and for them to learn from him. Again, the 1987 report of the Kwahu Presbytery to Synod described Rev. Anim’s healing ministry at Obomeng as having progressed and attracting large numbers of people, a situation the Presbytery considered to be commendable.¹³²

Rev. Anim’s healing ministry at Obomeng was, however, terminated abruptly as he was reportedly seconded to the Presbyterian Church of Liberia and his assistant, Rev. Osei, was also transferred to Techiman. This led to a decline in the influx of people to Obomeng for healing as stated in the Kwahu Presbytery’s report for 1988.¹³³ Indeed, the Kwahu Presbytery did not take kindly to this situation as it posed a hypothetical question of whether the Head Office of the church deliberately intended to collapse the healing ministry at Obomeng.¹³⁴ The workshop group that considered the reports of the ELTC, Mission Fields and Presbyteries at the said Synod recommended that “a pastor should be sent to Obomeng to revive the healing ministry.”¹³⁵ There is no record as to whether a Pastor was indeed sent to Obomeng and the extent to which that pastor was able to revive the healing ministry there since nothing was reported on that subject again. Thus,

¹³⁰ PCG, 1984 Reports from the Presbyteries submitted to the 56th Synod, 1985, 29.

¹³¹ PCG 1987 Reports from the Presbyteries submitted to the 59th Synod, 1988, 33.

¹³² PCG, 1987 Reports from the Presbyteries submitted to the 59th Synod 1988, 33.

¹³³ PCG, Reports from the Presbyteries submitted to the 60th Synod, 26th to 31st August, 1989, 45.

¹³⁴ PCG, 1987 Reports from the Presbyteries submitted to the 60th Synod, 1989, 45.

¹³⁵ PCG, Minutes of 1989 Synod, 134.

Obomeng could not emerge as a healing or prayer centre in the PCG. The PCG's handling of Rev. Anim's healing ministry at Obomeng can be described as lack of understanding and appreciation for specialized ministries such as healing. If the church appreciated Rev. Anim's healing ministry, it would have found a suitable successor for him before transferring him. Perhaps the church assumed wrongly that healing could be undertaken by any pastor or minister instead of people who are specially gifted by the Holy Spirit to do so. Rev. Anim later became the pastor at Nsawam where his healing ministry was reported to have continued until he retired. It is suggested that the PCG's attempt to revive and institutionalize the defunct healing ministry at Obomeng led to the initiative in the late 1980s to establish the Atibie Prayer Centre, which has already been referred to in this chapter.¹³⁶

Rev. Anim's healing ministry was almost concurrent to the period when the BSPG can be described as being at its peak in spearheading spiritual renewal activities in the PCG. Rev. Anim reportedly used salt in mediating his healing activities and this was said to have attracted criticism from members of the BSPG who described the practice as unbiblical.¹³⁷ The BSPG criticism of Rev. Anim's healing method was because it was considered it to be similar to the practice of the AICs that used similar elements and were also condemned. These condemnations were also because the use of such elements was considered to be similar to practices in African Indigenous Religions which were considered as evil for Christians to engage in.¹³⁸ Through its large numbers and renewal programmes such as revivals, conventions, retreats and crusades, the BSPG was able to popularize its mode of healing without the use of elements among members of the church. Also, many members of the BSPG became ordained ministers and so they were able to influence the members of

¹³⁶ Rev. Dr Kwabena Opuni – Frimpong, interview, Saturday 3rd June, 2017.

¹³⁷ Rev. Dr Kwabena Opuni – Frimpong, interview, Saturday 3rd June, 2017

¹³⁸ Rev. Dr Kwabena Opuni – Frimpong, interview, Saturday 3rd June, 2017

their congregations and indeed leaders of the PCG at the time to accept its mode of healing and deliverance. Thus, after the exit of Rev. Anim, his healing method could not survive.

Around this time, the Charismatic churches had emerged with their strong teaching on deliverance.¹³⁹ The practice of deliverance was taken on by many churches as being cognate with healing. This was because, apart from purely organic causes, spiritual causes were also attributed to some illnesses. As such to effectively heal people of such illnesses, the spiritual causes must be addressed through the process of deliverance. Once a person has been delivered, healing was deemed to be easy. Hence the two terms were used together and began to be referred to as healing and deliverance ministry. The BSPG's involvement in healing and deliverance activities led to the formation of deliverance teams in many congregations that promoted the phenomenon. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the emergence of such deliverance teams and gifted persons who began running healing and deliverance activities within the structures of the BSPG led to the emergence of prayer centres. Although, the BSPG promoted healing and deliverance, the phenomenon was not accepted or regularized immediately in the church. It took the quest for numerical growth of the church to bring about discussions for its acceptance and with it the establishment of prayer centres as will be discussed in the next section.

2.4.2 Church Growth as influencing Healing and Deliverance and Establishment of Prayer centres

It has been mentioned earlier in this chapter that the renewal activities of the BSPG which included evangelism resulted in the growth and expansion of the PCG for which the church was very satisfied.¹⁴⁰ However, the PCG realized later that its numerical growth

¹³⁹ See Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 164-200; Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 188-189; Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 389 and Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity, Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 86

¹⁴⁰ See Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 261-265 for detailed discussion on this.

was not that satisfactory especially when compared with those of the AICs and other Pentecostal denominations. This was after the Ghana Evangelism Committee (GEC) published the results of its national church survey between 1987 and 1989. The survey showed the statistics of the various denominations or churches in Ghana and their performance with respect to evangelism.¹⁴¹

The leadership of the PCG expressed grave concern about the results of the survey which showed that majority of its members were nominal Christians. That is, they were not regular in attending church services on Sundays and that it was not doing well with respect to church growth.¹⁴² The PCG decided to carefully study the report and take the necessary actions to remedy the situation.¹⁴³ The church reportedly conducted its own survey to ascertain its numerical strength. The result of this survey reportedly showed an even lower figure than what was contained in the GEC's survey report.¹⁴⁴

The church through the ELTC then instituted what it called Evangelism Consultation which aimed at evaluating the church's evangelism strategies and to draw plans and programmes to step up its evangelism activities. The first of such consultations was held from 1st to 4th March 1994. Among the recommendations from the consultation was that deliverance had become a reality and that a committee should be appointed to study it and recommend how to promote it in the church.¹⁴⁵ Subsequently, at the 67th Synod held from 24th to 29th August 1996, the workshop group that discussed the report of the ELTC reported to the plenary session in these words: "since deliverance is fast becoming part of the church's evangelistic efforts, we urge the ELTC to expedite action in drawing

¹⁴¹ The GEC's church survey report was published in two parts in 1987 and 1989.

¹⁴² PCG, Minutes of 59th Synod, August, 1988, 161.

¹⁴³ PCG, Minutes of 60th Synod, August, 1989, 135.

¹⁴⁴ Rev. Dr W.K. Ofofu Addo, interview, Friday, November, 2016.

¹⁴⁵ Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Report for 1994 presented to the 66th Synod held at Takoradi from 19th to 25th August, 1995, 290-292, Evangelism and Lay Training Committee, Annual Report for 1994

guidelines for this ministry.”¹⁴⁶ This statement suggested that the church had come to accept deliverance as part of its activities especially with regard to evangelism and growth.

In line with this recommendation, the third Evangelism Consultation held in 1997 focused exclusively on the practice of healing and deliverance in relation to church growth with the following objectives:

- i. making both a Biblical and theological case for it in the light of the fact that it had become increasingly part of church life.
- ii. to encourage the Bible Study and Prayer Groups to continue with this phenomenon
- iii. to encourage church leaders; both ordained and lay ministers, not only to embrace such ministry but also participate in it
- iv. to eliminate nominalism and promote church growth.¹⁴⁷

This was followed by a workshop on healing and deliverance in the same year at the Ramseyer Training Centre, Abetifi, where topics covered, included an explanation of healing and deliverance and its relevance to church growth. This workshop was said to aim at reducing excesses and abuses in the deliverance ministry to the barest minimum if not eliminate them completely and also promote a holistic ministry in the church.¹⁴⁸ The focus of the said workshop as stated above suggests that the practice of healing and deliverance was already being widely practised in the PCG and only needed to be formalized. The workshop seemed to have attained its intended purpose as the ELT reported to the Synod the following year that as a result of it, “the threefold ministry of

¹⁴⁶ Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Minutes of the 67th Synod held at Kyebi, 24th to 29th August, 1996, 45, 129.

¹⁴⁷ Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Department of Mission and Evangelism, “Evangelism Consultation History,” (2014): 3.

¹⁴⁸ PCG, Report for 1997 presented to the 69th Synod held from 22nd – 28th August, 1998, 338-339

preaching, healing and deliverance is now in full operation in the church.”¹⁴⁹ The report further stated that there were deliverance teams operating in many congregations and some individuals endowed with the gifts of healing were operating healing centres in some Presbyteries. The Jejimiraja centre near Berekum and Grace centre at Akropong were cited as those that had been reported on.

It can be noted from the emerging issues that the PCG’s search for numerical growth compelled it to consciously seek ways of integrating healing and deliverance into its ministry. The PCG seemed to have realized that the non-inclusion of healing and deliverance in its ministry was making the preaching of the gospel ineffective and was not winning souls as it expected. That was even keeping members already in the church away from Sunday. Therefore it became expedient to find ways of addressing the shortfall. In this wise, the emerging prayer centres which seemed to be the avenues through which healing and deliverance were ministered for the church to realize its desired goal of numerical growth were encouraged.

Respondents in the interviews for this study gave strong reasons for the church to accept the phenomenon by suggesting that preaching; healing and deliverance constitute holistic ministry.¹⁵⁰ They argued that the three address all the three components of the human person; the soul, the body and the spirit. Preaching ministers to the soul thereby leading the person to salvation. Healing frees the body from the impediments of ailments to make it sound and complete for living. Deliverance liberates a person’s spirit from any spiritual bondage or imprisonment to forces that are stronger than what human power can handle. The threefold ministry is therefore required to enable the church minister assure the

¹⁴⁹ PCG, Report for 1998 presented to the 70th Synod held from 21st – 27th August, 1999, 230.

¹⁵⁰ Rev. Nana Ntim Gyakari, Interview, Monday 6th February, 2017, Rev. Felix Akresu Anim Danso, interview, 30th November, 2016.

fullness of life as promised in the scriptures (John 10:10 and 3 John verse 1) to its members otherwise its ministry would be incomplete.¹⁵¹

The proponents of healing and deliverance always point to the Bible as a reference which they insist to be consistent with the African practice and traditional culture as well. John S. Pobee and Gabriel Oshitelu II describe as unfortunate the relegation of healing and exorcism (deliverance) to the domain of medical practice by the historic churches (such as the PCG).¹⁵² They further asserted that “in Africa ministry will be judged deficient if it does not treat healing as a function of religion.” They argue that the seriousness with which the AICs have embraced healing has made their brand of Christianity appealing to Africans including members of the historic churches (such as the PCG).¹⁵³ It can, therefore, be concluded that in its attempts to institutionalize healing and deliverance, the PCG was seeking to make its ministry efficient and effective in its African context so as to attract people into the church. Thus, the quest for church growth can be described as a motivating factor in promoting healing and deliverance and subsequently the establishment of prayer centres in the PCG. The motive of church growth still informs the activities of the prayer centres as seen from the topics discussed at the 2010 retreat for leaders of the various prayer centres which were:

- i. Repositioning the Church for Growth: The role of the Prayer Centres,
- ii. The Theological Significance of Prayer Ministry in contemporary Evangelistic Missions,
- iii. They Strengthen their Hands for Good Work I&II and
- iv. Fulfilling the Great Commission and Ensuring consistent Church Growth.

¹⁵¹ Rev. Nana Ntim Gyakari, Interview, Monday 6th February, 2017, Rev. Felix Akresu Anim Danso, interview, 30th November, 2016.

¹⁵² John S. Pobee and Gabriel Oshitelu II, *African Initiatives in Christianity: The Growth, Gifts and Diversities of Indigenous African Churches, a Challenge to the Ecumenical Movement*, (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1998), 49.

¹⁵³ Pobee and Oshitelu, *African Initiatives in Christianity*, 49.

The extent to which the objective of church growth has been realised through the prayer centre will be examined in chapter four.

2.4.3 Disposition of Leadership and the emergence and acceptance of Prayer Centres in the PCG

Omenyo has asserted that the acceptance of renewal phenomenon or charismatic groups in the western mission founded churches in Ghana was possible through two key means. First, it took the intense pressure and persistence of the groups to be recognised in their various denominations. Secondly, the eventual acceptance and recognition of such groups depended to a large extent on some leaders of these denominations who at specific times were sympathetic to such occurrences.¹⁵⁴ This suggestion can be said to be true with regard to the PCG's systematic acceptance of healing and deliverance practices in its ministry and eventual emergence of prayer centres. The disposition of some key leaders of the PCG towards the healing and deliverance ministry and the prayer centres went a long way to promote the phenomenon. Some specific instances of this scenario will be discussed briefly. It must be noted, however, that, this does not negate other factors already mentioned.

The late Very Rev. D. A. Koranteng who was Moderator of the PCG from 1986 to 1994 was said to be generally well disposed towards the healing practices of the Rev. Anim to the extent of issuing a query to some members of the BSPG who openly criticised him. It was during his tenure as Moderator that the PCG officially took the initiative to establish a prayer centre at Atibie as already noted. Also, the late Very Rev. A. A. Beeko who was the Moderator from 1994 to 1998 was said to be very open to the BSPG. His sympathies for the group were based on a personal account of what he described as an embarrassing event

¹⁵⁴Cephas N. Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, (Uitgeverij: BoekencentrumZoetermeer, 2002), 282-284.

in his ministry from which the BSPG saved him from. He is reported as consistently narrating the account of being approached by a traditional priestess at Kyebi who desired to be exorcised to become a Christian and how it took the timely intervention of the BSPG to deal with the case.¹⁵⁵ Subsequently, he was said to openly declare support for the BSPG. He encouraged the group to confidently pursue their healing and deliverance practices in the church. It came as no surprise that as the church discussed its growth during his tenure as Moderator and the question of healing and deliverance came up it was not objected to.

Beyond these two Moderators, later ones such as Very Rev. Dr. Yaw Frimpong-Manso who was said to be one of the originators of the Sekyedumasi prayer centre of the SU and the Very Rev. Emmanuel Martey were said to be equally well disposed to the concept of prayer centres. These two, were regular patrons at the prayer retreats of the various centres, especially at Abasua. It was during the tenure of Rt. Rev. Yaw Frimpong-Manso for instance that the dates for the prayer retreats at Abasua began to be put on the PCG's annual almanac and letters written to all congregations informing them of the event and urging them to organise their members to attend. Even though this was explained as a move to halt the seeming attempts by the then director of the centre from "personalizing" the facility,¹⁵⁶ it nonetheless did a lot to promote it in the church and encourage other ones to be established. In 2017, the date for the prayer retreat at the BSPG prayer centre at Cherapatre also appeared on the almanac. Besides, the leadership at the national level, various Presbytery Chairpersons and other ministers as already noted, being products of the BSPG supported this concept. Others who were not direct products of the BSPG felt pressured to support it to meet the needs of their members. In effect, the disposition of the

¹⁵⁵Rev. Dr. Opuni-Frimpong, interview, 3rd June, 2017 and also see Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 199 for the narration of this incident.

¹⁵⁶Rev. Felix Akersu Anim Danso, telephone discussions on reasons for the publicity given to Abasua and Cherapatre, 8th July, 2017.

leaders of the PCG generally contributed to the popularity that prayer centres gained in the church in the last decade.

The factors that have been discussed so far as influencing the establishment of prayer centres in the PCG were in relation to issues or events within the church. Besides them, there were some external factors that influenced the PCG quest to establish prayer centres. Such factors will, therefore, be examined briefly in the next section to give completeness and understanding to the issues being considered.

2.4.4 Prayer Centres in the PCG as an influence from other churches and religious groups

As has been noted in Chapter One, prayer centres emerged quite early in Ghanaian Christianity and were associated with the AICs and later Classical Pentecostal churches especially the CoP. The prayer centres of both streams of Christianity influenced the PCG's decision to establish prayer centres which will now be discussed in the ensuing paragraphs.

To begin with, even though the prayer centres of the AICs proved helpful and were initially attractive to many people, with time, people began to raise suspicions and doubts about them in the course of time. These doubts and suspicions centred on their ritual practices especially their modes of administering healing.¹⁵⁷ Their ritual practices were found to be similar with practices in African Indigenous Religion which is considered by many Christians as evil or demonic and so were rejected.¹⁵⁸ People who patronized AICs and their prayer camps were said to contract more spiritual problems. The PCG found out that, the way out of keeping its members from visiting the prayer of the AICs and thereby

¹⁵⁷ See Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 80-95 for detailed discussions on the ritual practices of the AICs and public responses them.

¹⁵⁸ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 40.

not getting complicated spiritual problems was to establish its prayer centres to provide more credible avenues of succour and assistance for its members.¹⁵⁹

The second external influence came from the prayer camps of the Classical Pentecostal Churches specifically the CoP. The CoP's Prayer Camps became very popular in Ghana because their practices were considered by many people to be biblically sound and devoid of the excesses associated with the centres of the AICs. Besides, the CoP put measures in place to ensure effective administrative control and supervision of the prayer centres established by its members. This gave the CoP's centres credibility so they attracted people from diverse denominational backgrounds who patronized them. As a result, the prayer centres of the CoP were found to have contributed significantly to its ministry especially with respect to the church's growth.¹⁶⁰ The benefits the CoP derived from its prayer centres, therefore, motivated the PCG in its decision to establish prayer centres where the gifts of healing by its members could be utilized for the benefit of church members generally and to enhance the PCG's ministry and growth efforts.¹⁶¹

The third external influence came from the Scripture Union (SU) Ghana's prayer ministry programme. Mr Edward Okyere, a Presbyterian who was a staff of the SU, initially formed a personal ministry support prayer team which grew to become a recognized body in the SU called the Prayer Warriors.¹⁶² Mr Okyere is said to have invited members of the Sekyeredumasi town fellowship of the SU to join his team to pray at a cave near Sekyeredumasi in 1974. With time, this gathering became known as the "Warriors"

¹⁵⁹ Rev. Dr W. K. Ofori Addo, Interview, Friday 25th November, 2016; Rev. Ayim, Interview, Wednesday 25th January, 2017, Danfa; Rev. Dr. K. Opuni-Frimpong, interview, Saturday 3rd June, 2017.

¹⁶⁰ Asamoah –Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 91-92 and Asamoah-Gyadu, "Pentecostalism and the Missiological Significance of Religious Experience: The Case of Ghana's 'Church of Pentecost,'" *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*, 12, nos. 1 & 2, (July/Dec. 2002), 30- 57; Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 187- 212 and Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 371-414.

¹⁶¹ Rev. Nana Ntina Gyakari, Interview, Monday 6th February, 2017, Ablekuma near Accra and Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 188.

¹⁶² See Edward Okyere, *His Treasure in Earthen Vessel*, (Accra: SonLife Press, 2012), 28-34 and Mohr, *Enchanted Calvinism*, 91 for further discussion on the SU prayer warrior's ministry and how it influenced the practice of deliverance in the PCG.

Annual Retreat” (WAR) under the SU and it attracted Christians from different denominational backgrounds. At each year’s event, there were testimonies of miracles relating to healings, barren women conceiving and having children among others.¹⁶³ The SU added deliverance workshops aimed at providing training for people in the healing and deliverance ministry to its WAR programme. Members of PCG’s BSPG; both lay and ordained who benefited from the SU’s WAR and deliverance workshops promoted the concept of healing and deliverance in the PCG by discussing it at the relevant forums and also actually practising it.¹⁶⁴ Some of such people brought the skills they gained in handling and administering prayer centres they learnt from the SU prayer centre at Sekyeredumasi to bear on how to organize the ministry of prayer centre.

Products of the para-church organisations such as the SU have been known to contribute to the formation and running of the renewal groups such as the PCG’s BSPG. They helped to check some excesses in the prayer ministrations of the charismatic groups.¹⁶⁵ The contribution of the para-church group towards renewal efforts in the PCG comes up again in the establishment of prayer centres.

It would be realized that the combination of the shortfalls in the operation of prayer centres in one stream of Christianity; the AICs and the relative advantage of the same phenomenon in a Classical Pentecostal Church as well as the experiences acquired from participation in the activities of a para-church organisation influenced the PCG to establish prayer centres anticipation of maximizing the benefits of it. The extent to which the church has been able to do so will be discussed in later chapters of this study. Having examined the history of the evolution of prayer centres in the PCG, the discussion will now focus on giving brief histories on the prayer centres where observations for this study were conducted.

¹⁶³ Mohr, *Enchanted Calvinism*, 91.

¹⁶⁴ Rev. Dr K. Opuni-Frimpong, interview, Saturday 3rd June, 2017

¹⁶⁵ Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 209.

2.5 Brief History of Grace Prayer Centre, Akropong Akuapem

Grace prayer centre at Akropong is a product of both individual initiative and a decision of a court of the church. These were the efforts of Mr Ebenezer Abboa-Offei and a decision of the Session of Christ Presbyterian Church, Akropong.¹⁶⁶ In 1986, Mr Abboah-Offei was said to have resigned from his position as Manager of Okumaning State Palm Plantation Farm under what is described as divine direction and relocated with his family to Akropong Akuapem where he took up an appointment as an Agricultural Science teacher at the Okuapemman School, Akropong.¹⁶⁷ Being Presbyterians, the family joined the Christ Presbyterian Church at Akropong and then the BSPG of which he subsequently became the President. Mrs. Faustina Abboah-Offei formed a prayer cell and invited her husband to join of which he became the leader. The group grew over time to become a prayer warriors and deliverance team¹⁶⁸ that held prayer sessions for healing and deliverance at the Riss Hall¹⁶⁹ of the Christ Church on Saturdays. The then second minister at Christ Church, Rev. Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong, involved the group in the Congregation's Thursday all night prayer sessions which was under his supervision.¹⁷⁰ It has been suggested that some leaders and members of Christ Church were not comfortable with some of the activities of the BSPG and by extension to the deliverance team¹⁷¹ though this was fairly managed. Such tension was, however, not peculiar to Christ Church

¹⁶⁶ The Christ Church is the first congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana established in 1835 by the Missionary Andreas Riss. To show its special place in the PCG, it is referred to as 'Church' instead of 'Congregation' thus being different from all other congregations in the PCG.

¹⁶⁷Foreword to the Brochure for the Dedication of Grace Chapel, by Evangelist Dr. Ebenezer A. Abboa-Offei, 13.

¹⁶⁸ Among the early members of the prayer group were Mr S. A. Asare and the wife Mrs. Agnes Adwoo Asare, Mr. Edward Amadi Sampson and the wife, Mr George Opape Kwapong, Mad. Edith OsafoAffum, Rev. F. M. Teyegaga, his wife and daughter Dorothy

¹⁶⁹Riss Hall is a meeting room of the Christ Church where the Session and other special or business meetings of the church are held. It is also used for prayer meetings and retreats involving relatively small group of people. It named after the Rev. Andreas Riss, the pioneer Basel Missionary who reached Akropong in 1835 and through whose evangelistic work at the Akropong the Church was founded.

¹⁷⁰ "Grace Team at a Glance" in Brochure for Dedication of Grace Chapel, April, 2014, p 35, Rev. Dr. K. Opuni-Frimpong, interview Saturday 3rd June, 2017.

¹⁷¹ The History of Grace in Brochure for Dedication of Chapel, April, 2014, 18.

but rather quite common in many congregations of the PCG and indeed other western mission founded churches as indicated in preceding paragraphs of this chapter.

There were reports of healings and deliverance from demonic attacks and other visible signs of the manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit. This therefore attracted more people to each prayer session of the group such that the Riss Hall became too small for their meetings. Other activities at Christ Church such as weddings and burial services did not make it possible for the group to use the chapel for its meetings hence the need to relocate to a more conducive place became obvious. Such relocation came through a decision to establish new branches of the Presbyterian Church in Akropong.

2.5.1 Establishment of Christ Church Annex and Emergence of a Prayer Centre

On 7th March, 1996, the Session of Christ Church decided to open what they called two ‘annexes’ of the congregation in Akropong. Three persons namely “Messrs Abboah Offei, S. A. Asare and Sampson”,¹⁷² were “mandated to establish one of these ‘annexe’ congregations at the Presbyterian Junior Secondary School where the Grace Prayer centre is located currently.¹⁷³ The decision by the Christ Church Session to open the two new congregations was in line with the PCG’s evangelism strategy at the time codenamed “operation 2-1-2.”¹⁷⁴ “Operation 2-1-2” was explained as every member of the PCG must win two new souls each year and every congregation must plant two new churches each year until the year 2000AD. This strategy was adopted by the ELTC after its second evangelism consultation held in 1996 which congregations began to operationslise.¹⁷⁵ This

¹⁷² Messrs Abboah Offei and S. A. Asare were at the time Presbyters at Christ Church and for that matter, members of the Session whereas Mr. Sampson was a member of the BSPG at Christ Church.

¹⁷³ Presbyterian Christ Church, Session Decisions, 7th March, 1996.

¹⁷⁴ Discussions with Rev. I. D. Asare, District Minister Akropong, Tuesday 28th March, 2017. Rev. I. D. Asare was Youth Minister at Akropong Christ Church in 1996 when the decision to open the two new congregations was taken by Christ Church Session.

¹⁷⁵ Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Mission and Evangelism Department, Evangelism Consultation History, 3.

strategy featured in discussions at the 67th and 68th Synods of 1996 and 1997 respectively that the church must be fully educated on it, possibly to promote its effectiveness.¹⁷⁶

The first service for the Grace Congregation was held on Sunday 24th March, 1996. Prior to Christ Church Session's decision to open the Grace Congregation at its current premises, some Presbyterian families living within that vicinity were said to meet for morning devotions in the home of one of them.¹⁷⁷ Such morning devotion group was said to have "created fertile grounds for the new congregation to germinate."¹⁷⁸ The deliverance team under the leadership of Mr. Abboah-Offei continued to hold its meetings at the Riss Hall until it became unsuitable due to the large numbers that were attracted to each meeting and other reasons as stated earlier. A pavilion was therefore constructed at the premises of the new congregation for that purpose and this became the meeting place for both the deliverance team and the new congregation.

With the same people leading both the new congregation and the deliverance team, it was not difficult to integrate the prayer, healing and deliverance activities into the life of the congregation. Reports of healings and other miracles that took place attracted more people to the congregation. The congregation was named Grace, explained that the grace of God was at work to make all things possible for the good of the congregation as well as the prayer team. The deliverance team was then named after the congregation as Grace Deliverance Team. With his educational and professional pedigree as well as his background in the SU, Mr. Aboah-Offei was able to give what can be described as sound theological and biblical basis for the healing and deliverance ministry in the PCG. Soon the congregation emerged as a unique place of prayer and renewal as well as healing and

¹⁷⁶ PCG, Minutes of 67th Synod, 24th – 29th August, 1996, pp. 46, 129; PCG, Minutes of the 68th Synod, 23rd -29th August, 1997, 177-178.

¹⁷⁷ These groups of Presbyterian families were Ahwireng, Amankwa, Osei Frimpong, Koranteng Awere and Kwapong families. See Grace Congregation, Brochure for Dedication of Chapel and Manse, 13, 18.

¹⁷⁸ Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Grace Congregation, Akropong Akuapem, Brochure for Dedication of Chapel and Manse, 24th April, 2014, 13.

deliverance in the PCG under the auspices of the Grace Deliverance Team led by Mr Abboah-Offei. It of the key activities of the Grace Deliverance Team namely, prayer, renewal and healing and deliverance which form the core of prayer centre activities that Grace Congregation is classified as prayer centre in the PCG. Details of their ministry and its impact will be discussed in chapters three and four of the study.

Membership in the deliverance team was open to Presbyterians from other congregation who did not have to move their membership to Grace but only came to work with the team during the programmes. Thus, Grace became the major point of attraction for many Presbyterians who wanted avenues to be engaged in ministry to join the team for that purpose. Many of these people maintained their membership in their regular congregations where they sometimes held leadership positions or were members of prayer and deliverance teams. Such people applied the knowledge and skills they acquired at Grace at their various congregations and when they encountered problems they referred such cases to Grace for assistance. The prayer ministry has therefore been described as the reason for the rapid growth and dynamism of the congregation.¹⁷⁹ Grace, therefore, became what the leader, Mr. Abboah-Offei described as ‘the bringing together of all the fires of revival lit by the BSPG across the country into a real bonfire.’¹⁸⁰ Later events in relation to renewal activities in the PCG would show that by his statement, Mr. Abboah-Offei was predicting a shift in the spiritual renewal activities from the BSPG to the context of prayer centres. The name of the team was changed from Grace Deliverance Team to Grace Evangelistic Team (GET) in 2004.¹⁸¹ The change of name was to cater for other aspects of the group’s

¹⁷⁹In the interview with Mr Abboah-Offei on Tuesday 14th February, 2017, Mr S. A. Asare the Assistant to Mr Abboah-Offei came in for a brief discussion with him. The former directed a question the researcher had asked him on the role of the prayer ministry to the life of the Congregation to Mr Asare who replied as follows “the prayer ministry is the incubator that brought forth the congregation.” This can be described as the summary of the impact of the prayer ministry on the congregation.

¹⁸⁰ Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Grace Congregation, Akropong Akuapem, Brochure for Dedication of Chapel and Manse, 24th April, 2014, 18.

¹⁸¹ Grace Team at Glance in Brochure for Dedication of Grace Chapel, April, 2014, 35.

programmes and activities such as conducting revivals, crusades and other evangelistic activities for both Presbyterian congregations and other denominations in Ghana, as well as other countries in Africa and outside the continent. It also trains people in handling deliverance cases and assisting deliverance teams to establish prayer centres.

The GET does not operate as a residential prayer centre. However, in 2002 Mr. Abboah Offei began the construction of a personal prayer and retreat centre on his own acquired land. This centre became operational in 2010 with the name Patmos Prayer and Retreat Centre. Even though this is a private facility, it is operated in collaboration with the mainstream activities of the GET at the main church premises in that almost the same team members or personnel handle cases at both places. Besides, people who visit the team at the chapel and have to be admitted into residence are booked to the Patmos Retreat and Prayer Centre where Mr. Abboah Offei and the team continue to minister to them till their issues are completely addressed.

There have been suggestions that the Christ Church sent Mr Abboah Offei to oversee the new congregation, thus the Grace Congregation as a way of getting him and his deliverance team out of Christ Church in order to ensure stability in the latter congregation.¹⁸² Indeed, as stated above there was some level of tension in the Christ Church on account of Mr. Abboah Offei and his deliverance team's activities but this was managed. Also, the suggestion to open new congregations of the Presbyterian Church at Akropong had been on the agenda of the Christ Church Session for a long time.¹⁸³ However, this researcher gathered that the Session of Christ Church at the time was not inclined to the idea opening new congregations of the PCG in Akropong because such idea

¹⁸² See Mohr, *Enchanted Calvinism*, 96 for a discussion on this view.

¹⁸³ Mr. Abboah Offei mentioned to this researcher that as far back as the late 1980s and early 1990s the ELTC of Christ Church of which he was the chairman made proposals for the opening of new congregations in the town but these were not accepted and suggests that the proposals were rejected because of the Session's aversion towards him and his team's activities.

was considered as “breaking up” the church and undermining its growth as against the wishes of some leaders at the time to keep the traditions of the church intact.¹⁸⁴ As such the Session accepted the proposal to open the new congregations basically because it was endorsed by the highest court of the church. Indeed, as stated above even after opening the Grace Congregation the deliverance team continued to hold its meetings at the Riss Hall until sometime later when they moved it to the current premises and integrated it into the new congregation. This researcher is therefore of the view that the establishment of the Grace Congregation in 1996 was not entirely a move to get Mr Abboah-Offei and his deliverance team out of Christ Church in order to ensure church stability. The deliverance team can be described to have left Christ Church under many related factors that need to be discussed collectively.

It can be concluded that the emergence of Grace as a prayer centre in the PCG is a combination of individual initiatives and decisions of a court or courts of the PCG. The individual initiative is evident in the commitment of a group of Christians seeking renewal of their faith through prayer and manifestation of what they believed to be the power of the Holy Spirit to meet the deep-seated needs of people. This individual initiative was aided by a decision of a court of the church to establish new branches in fulfilment of its growth agenda. The group pursuing the renewal agenda took advantage of the decision of the Christ Church Session to establish a new congregation to give shape, form and stature to the ministry they sought to establish. In the light of Omenyo’s assertion on the contributions of individuals in bringing about renewal in churches,¹⁸⁵ the initiative, drive,

¹⁸⁴ Discussions with Rev. I.D. Asare, current District Minister for Akropong on Tuesday 28th March, 2017, in connection with this study. Rev. I. D. Asare was the Warden in Charge of the Christ Presbyterian Youth Centre at Akropong from September, 1996 to 1998. The Late Rev. Major (Rtd) S. S. Addi’s who was the District Minister for Akropong in 1996 made this statement in his Good Will Message to the Peace Congregation, Akropong, the sister Congregation of Grace Congregation which established in the same year, 1996 on the occasion of Peace Congregation’s 20th Anniversary celebration. See Peace Congregation’s 20th Anniversary Brochure, 18

¹⁸⁵Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 153

vision and ingenuity Mr. Abboah-Offei and his team to pursue the prayer and renewal agenda thereby bringing centre and of course the congregation to where it is now needs to be commended. The Session of Christ Church and indeed the entire PCG needs to be credited for providing the institutional framework for such renewal programmes to grow.

2.6 Brief History of the Mount Moriah Prayer Centre, Danfa

The Basel Missionaries who were stationed at Abokobi bought a piece of land at Danfa in 1881 to establish a mission station in that community.¹⁸⁶ The site which is a hilly and rocky part of the town was said to be the sacred grove of the community's deity called *Ogbo Kofi*¹⁸⁷ where all rituals of the community were performed and it was believed that people who entered the grove at unapproved times died in there. Therefore, the traditional priests and leaders of the community at the time were said to have deliberately sold the grove to the missionaries thinking they would die upon entering so that they would get their land back.¹⁸⁸ The missionaries did not immediately put up a mission station on the land though they used it as meeting grounds for their outstation activities whenever they visited the community from their base at Abokobi. Miraculously, the missionaries together with their converts who entered the grove for their mission activities did not die. The Missionaries, therefore, named the site Mount Moriah in view of its seemingly higher elevation in consonance with Mount Moriah in the Bible where Abraham was to sacrifice his son Isaac and encountered the provision of God in the form of a lamb for his sacrifice. The land was properly registered by the mission.

Following the deportation of the Basel Missionaries from the Gold Coast in 1917, the land was left unattended to as the missionary activities in the community ceased. The

¹⁸⁶Chronicle of Mount Moriah Congregation.

¹⁸⁷Nii Afutu Blempong II, Chief of Danfah, Interview by the author, Wednesday 8th March, 2017.

¹⁸⁸Nii Afutu Blempong II, Chief of Danfa, Interview by the author, Wednesday 8th March, 2017

community members, therefore, went back to use the site for their rituals and other religious activities.

In 1997, a group of Presbyterians who had relocated to the Danfa community organized themselves to form a congregation of the PCG after they had been assisted by members of the BSPG from Madina to undertake outreach in the community and its environs.¹⁸⁹ Later, members of the new congregation felt the need to secure land to put up a chapel and other infrastructural projects. They approached the chief of Danfa for land for their intended purpose. The chief then told them they did not have to buy any parcel of land since they already had one in the community.¹⁹⁰ He then directed them to the site and explained to them how it was acquired by the Basel Missionaries.

The members of the new church contacted the Ga Presbytery Office and subsequently the Head Office of the PCG to find out the facts about the land. A search of the archives confirmed the chief's story. The new congregation then put up a small structure on it to use for their services. Due to its conducive nature in view of the shady trees, members of the BSPG in the Ga Presbytery began using the place as a prayer and retreat grounds. In order to secure the land from further encroachment, the Ga Presbytery brainstormed what to use it for. An initial view was that, it should be used as recreational or retreats centre the children service. However, it was later realised that the rocky nature would not make it feasible to be used as such. In view of the PCG's vision of each Presbytery developing a prayer centre, the Ga Presbytery eventually decided to use it for a Presbytery prayer centre.

¹⁸⁹ Chronicle of Mount Moriah Congregation, Danfa

¹⁹⁰ Chronicle of Mount Moriah Congregation, Danfa and Nii Afutu Blempong, Interview, Wednesday 8th March, 2017

A team of volunteers led by the current director, Rev. Daniel Ayim (then a Catechist at one of the Congregations in the Presbytery) began conducting prayer activities at the venue from 2010. The name Mount Moriah which had been given by the Missionaries was retained. The Presbytery put up a residence for the director and also sunk a borehole to supply water to the centre. The centre's activities were therefore formalized with its inauguration in 2012 by the Presbytery Chairperson, Rev. Dr. Godwin Nii Noi Odonkor. The Rev. Daniel Ayim who was commissioned into the ordained ministry of the church in 2013 was posted to take charge as the substantive Director of the Centre and also Minister-in-Charge of the Congregation that same year. With the commencement of the prayer activities, the congregation grew quite fast and it was able to put up a chapel within a matter of two years for use for both congregational and prayer activities. The Presbytery Office provided a standby power plant for the centre.

2.7 Administration and Operation of Prayer Centres in the PCG

Having dealt with the subject of how prayer centres emerged in the PCG, we will now briefly turn our attention to how the PCG has sought to integrate them into its ministry.

As has already been noted in the preceding chapters, as far back as 1998, the Synod of the PCG called for the then ELTC to take over the supervision and coordination of prayer centres in the church. This has remained so and the Department of Mission and Evangelism (which replaced the ELTC) supervises the prayer centres. The department has since 2010, been organising annual training workshops for directors and team members of the various prayer centres to build their capacities in administering the centres.

Another step taken by the PCG in supervising prayer centres is the drawing of a policy guideline for prayer centres which was adopted by the General Assembly Council (GAC)

in June 2016.¹⁹¹ The guideline makes provision for a wide range of issues, such as the composition of management committees for each prayer centre, submission of reports to the courts of the church, financial management and accountability, restrictions or prohibitions at the centres, as well as the provision of basic logistics or infrastructure.

Omenyo anticipated the emergence of prayer centres in the mainline churches such as the PCG when he observed that the regular meeting times of the charismatic renewal groups within them were not enough in addressing the increasing healing, deliverance and counselling needs of their members. Hence, such centres would emerge to fill the gap. He, therefore, cautioned the churches concerned to avoid the earlier mistakes they committed to resisting the emergence of the Pentecostal renewal in their midst to their disadvantage and rather put necessary measures in place to accommodate such centres and derive benefits they would come up with.¹⁹² The measures the PCG put in place to regulate the activities of its prayer centres can, therefore, be described as heeding this timely caution. Omenyo's prediction could also suggest an anticipation of a possible shift from the charismatic renewal groups to the prayer centres as the avenues of spiritual renewal activities in the western mission founded churches. This possibility will be examined in the light of the ministry and the impact of the prayer centres as will be discussed in chapters three and four respectively.

2.8 Proliferation of Prayer Centres- An Issue to Watch

Even though the policy on the prayer centres can be said to be exhaustive in addressing a wide range of issues, there are certain issues that need to be critically examined in relation

¹⁹¹ Rev Nana Ntim Gyakari, interview with author on Monday 13th February, 2017 mentioned that the preparation of this policy started in late 1990s on the recommendations of workshop groups that discussed the ELTC reports at the 1996 and 1998 Synods. A draft policy was possibly prepared but did not seem to have come out for use, see Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 257 where he makes reference to this policy. The GAC acting through the Department of Mission and Evangelism set up a new committee that worked to bring out the current guideline.

¹⁹²Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 261.

to the prayer centres in the church. First, is that there is no provision in the guidelines on the procedure for establishing of a prayer centre in the church. This is in sharp contrast to what was proposed as far back as the 69th Synod in 1998.¹⁹³ This seems to have resulted in a trend of unplanned and uncoordinated establishment of prayer centres resulting in their proliferation in the church. Many of these prayer centres are virtually non-functional or ineffective.¹⁹⁴ It also seems that some individual members of the PCG establish prayer centres and the status of such centres is unclear.¹⁹⁵ All these issues relating to the establishment of prayer centres must be properly planned, coordinated and supervised to ensure that the centres are not just established but achieve the expected results and are also sustainable. This will make the PCG avoid the situation of its prayer centres being categorized as part of those that do not survive because they did not achieve their expected results.¹⁹⁶

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter of the study has demonstrated that the emergence of Prayer Centres in the PCG is can be said to be integral to the spiritual renewal efforts of the church over the years. In effect, the spiritual renewal phenomenon in the PCG has not been static but has rather shown evidence of continuing evolution with the emergence of prayer centres is an aspect of such evolution. Factors that influenced the emergence of prayer centres in the

¹⁹³ PCG, Minutes of the 69th Synod, 1998, 150-151.

¹⁹⁴ The Mile 50 prayer centre near Koforidua which was established by the Akuapem Presbytery in 2012 has become virtually non-functional. Also the Sekyere Presbytery in its report for the year 2012 submitted to the 13th General Assembly, 2013 stated that two out of its five prayer centres had folded up during the year due to lack of effective leadership.

¹⁹⁵ During interactions between the researcher and prayer centre directors on Thursday 6th July, 2017 at their annual training workshop and retreat this researcher gathered that there is one prayer centre owned by a member of the church at Nuaso near Odumase Krobo in the Eastern region. There is another such centre at Nyinahin which was started by an individual member of the church on a church premises but now operating on the leader's private premises but categorised as belonging to the church. There is yet another centre at Aplaku in the Greater region which is said to be operating on a private premises yet owned by the church. Finally, this researcher is personally aware of a prayer centre that was started by a Catechist of the PCG on the private premises of another church member at Kitase in 2010. This centre was aid to belong to the PCG and its sign board bore the name of the church. This centre has however, ceased to be in operation since 2015. These pocket opening of prayer centres need to be checked before it gets out of hands.

¹⁹⁶ See Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 88.

PCG were the search for healing and deliverance, the quest for numerical growth of the church and influence from prayer centres operated by other churches such as the AICs and the CoP and then the activities of the SU. The PCG showed its readiness to integrate prayer centres into activities by coming out with a guideline for their administration, and other interventions were put in place to ensure that they are properly supervised. What seemed to be emerging was that the prayer centres which emerged out of the BSPG were gradually taking centre stage in the PCG's discussions on appropriation of spiritual renewal as will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.



CHAPTER THREE

MINISTRY OF PCG PRAYER CENTRES

3.1. Introduction

This chapter of the study focuses on the ministry of prayer centres in the PCG. The discussion will show that the prayer centres in the PCG have brought innovation into the ministry of the church through their programmes, activities and practices. The range of programmes, activities and practices that are organised by the prayer centres emphasize a kind of spirituality that is considered attractive to many Presbyterians and non-Presbyterians who patronize the prayer centres. As a result, the prayer centres can be described as the avenues for contemporary renewal in the PCG.

3.2 Programmes and Activities of the Prayer Centres

The prayer centres in the PCG have institutionalized various programmes, activities and practices that are unique in the sense that they are not readily found in the regular congregations of the PCG. Data gathered at the two prayer centres where the field observations were conducted for this study showed that the programmes, activities and practices at the various prayer centres, are generally similar with few variations. The programmes and activities at the prayer centres are weekly, monthly, or seasonal. The seasonal programmes refer to those that are held at some specific times or seasons on the Christian calendar. Some of the programmes and activities are also held only rarely in other words, they hardly occur on the calendar of the centres.

The nature and form of the various programmes as observed at the two prayer centres will be discussed briefly with the view of bringing out how they reflect an innovation in their ministries. Some examples will be cited from other Prayer Centres of the PCG where necessary to buttress the points made.

3.2. 1 Weekly Prayer Services

The most regular programme observed at the prayer centre is the special half-day prayer services which are held weekly. At the Grace Centre at Akropong, this service codenamed 'Restoration' comes off twice a week on Wednesdays and Saturdays from about 1pm to 5pm. The name for this service is interpreted as getting back whatever one has lost through any means, be it spiritual or by natural occurrences.¹⁹⁷ At the Mount Moriah centre, Danfa, the prayer service is held on Wednesdays from 9am to 1pm called *mpaebɔ kɛsɛ*¹⁹⁸ (literally meaning big prayer service). This name is informed by the fact that it is the central event of the centre for each week and comes off in the middle of the week.

3.2.2 Commanding the Month

Commanding the month is the beginning of month prayer service that comes off on the first day of every month from 4am to 6am at the two prayer centres studied. The rationale behind this programme is that, each month has special promises and blessings for every Christian but they will not come to a person automatically unless he/she prays to activate them. In the same way, there may be possible dangers in the coming month that the Christian must pray to avert them.¹⁹⁹ The key issue then is to expect "breakthroughs"²⁰⁰ or God's intervention in their affairs. Commanding the month attracts wide patronage including children already dressed in their school uniforms. Entire families come for this service after which they proceed to their various places of engagement for the day (adults to work and children to school). Congregational morning devotions which used to be part of the regular life and practice of the PCG have virtually "died out" in almost all congregations. Even though there has not been any study to establish why the morning

¹⁹⁷ Catechist Sampson Amadi, Interview,

¹⁹⁸ Rev. Daniel Ayim, Interview, Wednesday

¹⁹⁹ Rev. Daniel Ayim, interview, Wednesday 1st March, 2017

²⁰⁰ In Ghanaian Christianity, breakthroughs basically refer to getting opportunities to do something that one expects or has been hoping for. See Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 81.

devotions have “died out” and reasonable guess may that members of the church do not find it fulfilling any longer as it used to be. In that sense the large patronage of commanding the month may reasonably imply that, it is meeting the needs its patrons hence, they will travel from far and near to attend.

3.2.3 Holiday Prayer Retreats

At both Grace and Mount Moriah Prayer Centres, special prayer retreats are held on all public holidays. At the Grace prayer centre Akropong, the holiday prayer retreats are held in the wood lots belonging to the leader, Catechist Abboah Offei near his residence which is about 2.5km from the church premises. Hence, the programme is called “In the Woods Experience.” At Mount Moriah, the holiday prayer retreat is also held outside the chapel in the woodlots on the compound. The name for each holiday retreat is different from the other. For instance on the 2017 programme line-up for the centre, the expression “Prayer Bazaar” was used for the 1st May, 2017 holiday retreat whilst that of 1st July, 2017 as titled “Prayer Retreat.” Despite the differences in name, there was no difference in the form and nature of these two programmes even in comparison with the regular weekday or beginning of month prayers. The change in the names of the programmes as well as the venue as explained by Rev. Daniel Ayim, Director of the centre is basically a way of giving the participants what he called “holiday mind set.”²⁰¹ This idea is virtually the same as what pertains at Grace where participants for such programmes are served fruits around mid-day and cereal at the close of the programme at about 3pm.²⁰² He explained further

²⁰¹ Rev. Daniel Ayim, Discussions with the author on Monday 1st May, 2017 at Danfa

²⁰² Serving of free meals is a regular feature of programmes and activities at Grace and its collaborative centre, the Patmos Retreat centre. For instance during major programmes such as “Divine Exchange” which will be explained soon, cereal porridge is served free of charge in the evenings for participants who come into residence and lunch for all others who may want it during the Saturday. Persons who go on retreat at the Patmos Centre are also served cereal porridge free of charge in the evenings. In separate discussions with Rev. Kwadwo Osei Bonsu, former Minister in Charge of the Grace Congregation on Friday 28th April, 2017 and Catechist Abboah Offei, leader of the Grace Evangelistic Team (GET) on Wednesday 31st May, 2017 they explained that they do not ascribe any sacramental values to such meals though sometimes some of the participants act in ways to suggest otherwise. This is seen from the situation where some of the participants

that the reason for holding such holiday programmes in addition to the regular weekly programmes is to help the participants draw near to God rather than being left to be tempted to engage in some of the holiday activities which may not be helpful for them as Christians. Such explanation is about the same as what Asamoah-Gyadu refers to as the practice of “encapsulation” which is practised by the Pentecostal denominations such as the CoP and the Charismatic ministries to limit the contact of their members with the outside world in order to keep their religious purity.²⁰³

3.2.4 Seasonal or occasional programmes

There are programmes designed for special times or seasons on the Christian calendar such as the periods of Lent and/or Easter and Advent. Each of these seasons on the Christian calendar is believed to have a special focus and benefits to Christians if properly understood and appropriately utilized. For this reason, such special programmes are designed with the goal of helping people who participate in them receive the full benefits of the season. Some of these programmes will be in the subsequent paragraphs.

3.2.4(i) 21 Days at Grace/ Divine Exchange

This is a 21 days programme that is organised by the GET at Akropong from the 19th day of lent each year and ends on Holy Saturday. It is fasting and prayer accompanied with sermons or exhortations for each day. Participants are expected to fast and pray on their own during the day but come together for congregational prayers in the afternoons from 12 noon to 1:00pm and in the evening from 6:30pm to about 8:00pm.

The last three days of the programme is named “Divine Exchange.” It begins on Maundy Thursday and ends on Holy Saturday. It has three sessions each day; dawn prayer session,

instead of taking the porridge at the programme and return the cups take it away home apparently to eat with someone who may be sick or expecting some blessings in other ways.

²⁰³ See Asamoah-Gyadu, “Pentecostalism and Missiological Significance of Religious Experience in Africa Today, 30-54.

daytime session and evening session. The central focus of this programme is the message of the cross and its significance for Christians and indeed all humanity. This is clearly stressed or emphasized in the themes for each year's event. For instance, the 2017 edition had as its theme "The Seven Dimensions of the Cross." Participation in this programme is quite high as indicated in the daily attendance for the 2017 edition presented as follows: Thursday- 930 participants, Friday 1212 participants and Saturday- 2031 participants. A total of 521 participants made up of 211 males and 310 females came to reside at the centre from Thursday to Saturday.

Among the worshippers on the last day (Saturday) were the Rev. Dr Charles Gyan-Duah, a former Clerk of the General Assembly of the PCG, the Rev. Paa Owusu Bawuah Bonsafo, a former Chairperson of the Kwahu Presbytery of the PCG and many other ministers of the PCG, Apostle Jude Hamah, former General Director of the Scripture Union Ghana and Mr. Edward Okyere, a former Director of Ministries of the Scripture Union, Ghana and the pioneer of the Prayer Warriors Ministry. As will be shown later in this chapter, other leading members of the church attend programmes at the prayer centres quite often not necessarily because of their positions but also for their personal spiritual renewal. The attraction of such leading members of the church and those of other denominations to programmes of the prayer centres gives an indication of a high level of their acceptance within the church.

3.2.4 (ii) Lent Prayer Retreats for Districts at Mount Moriah.

The equivalence of the 21 days programme at the Grace Prayer Centre at Akropong is the lent retreats for Districts at Mount Moriah Centre, Danfa. This is a programme that invites Districts in the Ga Presbytery to have prayer retreats at the centre during the period of Lent. The centre draws a timetable that is circulated to all the Districts in the Ga Presbytery through the Presbytery Office to organize their members for Prayer Retreat at

the centre throughout the period of Lent. Each District in the Presbytery is given a day from Monday to Friday on which they were to visit the centre for the retreat.

From the records of participation obtained at the centre, the districts in the Presbytery respond favourably to this programme.²⁰⁴ The programme ends with the Presbytery Prayer Rally on Holy Saturday. At the 2017 rally, the Presbytery Chairperson, Rev Victor Okoe Abbey was the speaker with the Clerk of Presbytery, Rev Quaye, and about twelve other ministers in the Presbytery in attendance. The number of participants was estimated at 1,400 adults.²⁰⁵ To have such large numbers of participants at such a programme gives indication that the centre is the place of attraction for Presbyterians and non-Presbyterians in their search for spiritual renewal. Also, in the PCG, Programmes that are attended by both a Presbytery Chairperson and Clerk of Presbytery are usually what will be considered as high profile or important ones in the Presbytery. Thus, for the two officers in the Presbytery together with such high number of ministers to be at the programme gives an indication of the prominence the Presbytery attaches not just to the programme but the centre itself as a place of spiritual renewal.

3.2.4 (iii) Seven days at Grace

This is a special seven-day prayer retreat that is held from the second Sunday of December to the third Saturday of December each year. The last Day of this programme also attracts very large participation with an anointing service.

²⁰⁴As at Tuesday 28th March, 2017, only three districts in the Presbytery had not attended the programme. On that day, I met about 250 members from the Teshie District led by the District Minister, Rev. Col. (Rtd) Adotey Asare and other ministers in the district at the centre for the retreat. The Rev. Col. Adotey Asare later explained to me that the centre is very conducive for prayer and as Lent is a time of prayer, reflection and renewal he sees it to be very important that members of the church in the various districts have the church to pray at the centre at least once during the Lent period.

²⁰⁵There was no registration of participants so it was not possible to obtain the exact number of people who participated. However, the team of organizers informed this researcher that a total of 1012 chairs were rented in addition to the centre's own 450 chairs for adults. In effect there were about 1,462 adults. Children who came to the programme were taken care of at a place separated from their parents.

3.2.4. (iv) Specially Arranged Retreats

Besides these standard programmes, each prayer centre serves as avenues for groups, congregations or individuals to go for retreats on their own. For instance on Saturday 11th February, 2017, this researcher met members of the Young Adults Fellowship (YAF)²⁰⁶ from the entire Ga Presbytery as well as members of the Grace Congregation of the PCG, Maamobi led by their minister, the Rev. Samuel Akwei Adotey on a day's retreat at the Mount Moriah Centre.

In a discussion with the President and Organizer, of the Ga Presbytery YAF at the centre after their retreat, they informed the researcher that they organize their members for the retreat at the centre twice in the year. They added that they choose that place for their prayer retreat because it is conducive to prayer. The group, therefore, has plans to construct a 3,000 capacity auditorium for the centre so as to hold large numbers of people for prayer activities. They explained that they recognise prayer as very important in the life of the church and for Christians hence, their decision to support the centre with such a facility where members would come and pray. They were hopeful that the centre's programmes and activities will halt the movement of members of the PCG to other churches to seek prayer support in addressing their problems which often lead to some of those people joining the churches they visit.²⁰⁷ Thus, for the YAF executives, the prayer centre is not only an avenue for spiritual renewal for Presbyterians but also a means of halting the drift of members of the church to other churches.

²⁰⁶ The Young Adults Fellowship (YAF) is a generational group of members of the church who are within the ages of 30 and 40 years.

²⁰⁷ Mr Emmanuel Osei Kumi, Ga Presbytery YAF President and Mr Ekow Gaison, Ga Presbytery YAF Organiser, discussions with the researcher, Saturday 11th February, 2017 at Danfa

3.2.5 Deliverance Training Workshop: A Human Resource Training Programme for Churches.

Besides the renewal programmes organized by the GET at its centre at Akropong, it also runs a school of deliverance programme for people who intend to or are engaged in the deliverance ministry in their respective churches. This is a two-year programme that is organized in four blocks or modules of 5 months (February to June and July to November each year). Participants for the residential programme report on Friday evening at 3:00pm and go through the training session up to 6:30pm on Saturday. Charismatic renewal groups in the western mission founded churches such as PCG's BSPG have been described by Omenyo as contributing to empowering lay people for ministry or service in the church through their operation of teams for many ministries.²⁰⁸ The training of deliverance team members by the GET centre can be described as a continuation of what the charismatic renewal groups in the western mission founded churches had begun by way of developing the capacities of people for service in the church.

Participants for the training programme are to be members of recognized churches including non-Presbyterian denominations and must be introduced by their ministers or pastors in writing. They are also to be in groups of not less than six because the deliverance ministry is to be a team ministry.²⁰⁹ The content of the training programme includes basics of deliverance, qualifications of a deliverance worker, how demons enter a person or demonic doorways, demonic manifestations, altars, prayer warfare, counselling. Upon completion of the training, participants are graduated and given a certificate as a team and not individually²¹⁰ to operate as deliverance ministers or practitioners in their congregations. The Pentecostal renewal in general and the operation of prayer centres with

²⁰⁸ See Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 261-268.

²⁰⁹ Catechist Sampson Amadi, interview, 11th May, 2017.

²¹⁰ Find a copy of the certificate in appendix h.

the gifts of healing, in particular, has been noted to be a major cause of secessions from churches as Larbi and other scholars have affirmed and have been discussed in Chapter one.²¹¹ Therefore, the training of people for the deliverance ministry and their subsequent certification in teams can be seen as a measure to prevent situations where some people, after going through the training and been certified would break away from the team or their churches to operate independent ministries. Thus, the operators of the programme have in mind the need to keep the healing and deliverance ministry within the institutional church structures probably to prevent charlatans from taking advantage of it as has happened in earlier times.²¹²

Admission into the deliverance training programme requires only a disposition and inner conviction of a call by God into service rather than academic qualifications. The programme package itself may not meet the stringent requirements of formal academic or theological education as found in many mainline or established denominations. Nevertheless, it shows an innovative or creative attempt by its designers to meet the practical needs of African Christians in an area where the church, and of course, formal theological education has not provided for. It, however, seems to meet Allan Anderson's description of the nature and form of Pentecostal education and training for ministry as basically requiring evidence of zeal or the Holy Spirit's enablement to serve.²¹³ Perhaps formal theological educators in Africa may begin to look at this critical area and consider how to integrate it into their curriculum. In the process of such incorporation, there is the need to ensure balance between disposition or evidence of a person being endowed for

²¹¹ See Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 371-393 and Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 209-214 for discussions on secessions and controversies surrounding prayer centres in the Pentecostal denominations especially the CoP.

²¹² Asamoah-Gyadu, "Pentecostalism and the Missiological Significance of Experience," 30-54

²¹³ Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004),

such ministry and some basic education such as numeracy and literacy skills before admission into the training.

3.2.6 Nature and Form of Prayer Services at PCG Prayer Centres

At the two centres where observations were conducted for this study, the pattern or order followed for various programmes and activities was almost the same. Each programme has an order that is peculiar to it, though there is not much difference between them. The only difference that was noticed in the order was that the time allocated for various activities varied based on the entire duration of each programme. There were no printed programmes as happens for services or programmes in the regular congregations of the PCG except on few occasions such as the Presbytery Prayer Rally at the Mount Moriah Centre.

The order of service used is simple, flexible, and easily memorized and followed by those who participate. It lends itself to orality which is identified as a main feature of Pentecostalism.²¹⁴ This did not, however, imply a situation of disorganization or chaos. Rather, one observes an orderliness and smooth flow of events or activities as if they have been well rehearsed; this is in line with Atiemo's description of the order of programmes followed by the earlier Charismatic groups in the mainline churches such as the BSPG.²¹⁵

The services or programmes usually begin with opening prayers which involve many prayer topics that are mentioned one after the other by the leader for the worshippers to pray on. This section is usually accompanied by the singing various local and Pentecostal praise and adoration songs sang in lowly whilst being interspersed with the prayers. The section is followed by the singing of praise songs and choruses in celebrative style or

²¹⁴ Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism, Origins and Developments Worldwide*, (Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 22.

²¹⁵ See Atiemo, *The Rise of Charismatic Movement in the Mainline Churches in Ghana*, p 32 and Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 203.

mood accompanied by clapping of hands and dancing. It is followed by what is described as “worship and adoration.” Here the songs are slowly sung with an emotional touch. People lift up their hands, others kneel whilst others lie prostrate on the floor. A choir or an individual then sings a song after which there is intercessory prayer followed by another song ministration. Most of the songs that are sang during the services are contemporary Pentecostal praise and worship songs which are simple, easy to sing and expressive. If the hymns of the mainline churches are sung they are in the form and style of Pentecostal rhythm instead of being in the form used in the regular congregations which have been criticized by John S. Pobee as musical nonsense because it forces African words into European verse matrix.²¹⁶ The involvement of the worshippers at these prayer services and their expressions reveal a strong emotional appeal for them as African Christians whose worship is described as “participatory, sensual and moving” with “strong sense of family.”²¹⁷

The preacher for the service then moves in to take over and deliver the sermon or teaching for the day. If the preacher for the day is a regular team member of the centre, he moves in straight away to start with the preaching. However, if he is a guest preacher then he is officially introduced by the leader of the Centre and received with loud cheers and applause typical of what happens in Charismatic denominations.

The sermon is followed by series of prayers that begin with thanking God for his word and the truth it reveals and then the confession of any sins they have committed especially in the light of the revelation they have received from the message. People who have not accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour are asked to do so by saying the sinners’

²¹⁶ John S. Pobee, *Skenosis: Christian Faith in an African Context* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1992), 119 cited in Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 2002, 64.

²¹⁷ Felix Muchimba, *Liberating the African Soul: Comparing African and Western Christian Music and Worship Styles*, (Authentic, 2008), 56.

prayer.²¹⁸ Since the prayer centres focus on divine healing, it can be reasoned that the practice of asking congregants to pray for forgiveness is in line with the teachings of early proponents of the doctrine of divine healing such as Johann Blumhardt who suggest that sin can be a cause of sickness.²¹⁹ Asking those who have not accepted Jesus as saviour to say the “sinners” prayers can, however, be seen as a borrowed concept from Pentecostalism since in a typical Presbyterian Congregation there is usually no altar call for people to accept Jesus as their saviour. However, what happens at the prayer centres falls short of the process of receiving and integrating new members into a typical Pentecostal church. For instance in the Pentecostal church service new people who intend to make a commitment to Jesus are invited forward to lift up their hands as a sign of surrendering to Christ and say the sinners’ prayer. After service, such people are met by a team where some basic information such as name and name and telephone number and place of residence are taken. Such data helps in following up on the new members and disciples for full integration into the church. At the prayer centres of the PCG, however, the new members remain at the places where they sat or stood within the congregation to say the supposed sinners prayers and confessions. Also, after the service, there was no effort to get the people who accepted Jesus to be followed up on. Thus even though the prayer centres can be said to have emulated the practice of people making a commitment to Jesus during their services, the way they currently go about it does not show a commitment to recruit new members. The leaders of the prayer centres will therefore need

²¹⁸ In an interview with the Rev. Nana Ntim Gyakari, Interview Monday 13th February, 2017 he told this researcher that unless a person is “born again” he/she cannot have healing or deliverance. He stressed that the biblical injunction is that “one must believe in the heart that Jesus is Lord and confess with the mouth that God raised him the dead and one would be saved” (Rom. 10: 9) He explained further that since healing and deliverance are part of the salvation package this requirement must be met otherwise the prayers would not be effective. He said that prayer for healing and deliverance are not magical performances but blessings that must issue out of faith in Jesus Christ and dependent of forgiveness of sins (James 5:14, 15).

²¹⁹ See Paul Chapell, Healing Movements in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, eds. Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 350-374 and Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 3rd ed. (Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 115- 129 for discussion on the sin and divine healing.

to revise their mode of going about it if they intend to use the centres as avenues of winning new people into the PCG.

The sinner's prayer is usually followed by what is termed aggressive or appropriation prayers where the worshippers claim the truth and blessings in the sermon they heard. Here, the worshippers are asked to pray on specific needs and make some emphatic statements in line with their expectations. The prayers then move into the session known as "ministration" which involves healing and deliverance, which will be the subject of further discussion in later sections of this chapter.

The services at the prayer centres have much in common with the pattern of the Pentecostal type of worship than a typical Presbyterian worship service. The historic mission churches (including the PCG) are said to have been compelled to undertake liturgical reforms in order to be relevant²²⁰ and it can be argued that such reforms and more importantly their relevance is most noticeable at the prayer centres. Also, the range of programmes and activities at the prayer centres as has been surveyed and others that will be discussed subsequently to mark the prayer centres out as a Pentecostalist brand of ministry that deliberately creates what Asamoah –Gyadu describes as "ritual spaces for supernatural attention."²²¹

3.2.7 The Place of the Bible in the Ministry of Prayer Centres

One of the issues that have so far emerged in this study is that prayer centres were established in the PCG as part of efforts to reverse the loss of members to other denominations. Indeed, one of the issues that have been identified as accounting for the drift of young people from the western mission founded churches into the Charismatic

²²⁰ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretation from an African Context*, (Oxford, Regnum Books International: 2013), 25.

²²¹ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 36.

denominations from the 1980s is the place of the Bible in the ministry of the former as compared to the latter. Specifically, the young people saw the newer churches as applying scripture more forcefully to contemporary situations.²²² Subsequently, as a ministry that is aimed at reversing the drift of members to other churches, this study examined the use of scripture at the prayer centres of the PCG to find out the extent to which the leaders engaged the Bible in an attempt to meet the church's objective. This section of the chapter will analyze this based on the sermons that were preached during the period of observations at the centres. It is therefore not an attempt to come out with any systematic body of teaching or theology propounded by or at the prayer centres. In fact, it must be stated that like earlier renewal phenomenon in the western mission founded churches, the prayer centres do not hold any teachings contrary to that of their denominations.²²³

In a sermon on Saturday 15th December, 2015²²⁴ at the Grace centre titled "arise, and shine for your light has come" based on Isaiah 60:1, 2, Mr. Abboah-Offei said that God called on the nation of Israel to rise and shine because of the new light that had come upon it. The same call is thrown to Christians to rise and shine by doing something different in their time for God's glory to be seen. He employed some scientific characteristics of light such as brightness, intensity, polychromatic, continuous and wavelength. He then told the congregation to work hard to be visible, dispel any darkness or anything unpleasant around them so that God's glory would be seen through them. He said such glory would be seen through their influencing of many areas of life in society and leaving legacies that

²²² J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "Taking Territories & Raising Champions: Contemporary Pentecostalism and the Changing Face of Christianity in Africa, 1980 – 2010," (Inaugural Lecture in Commemoration of Promotion to Full Professor, *Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon*, Thursday 16th December, 2010), 10

²²³ See *Omenyo, Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, p. 288. For instance what the GET at Akropong has stated as its doctrinal bases in its constitution is a verbatim reproduction of the major beliefs of the Reformed Tradition which they belong.

²²⁴ This was the researcher's first visit to the Grace Centre for initial observations to examine the main issues at the prayer centre in writing the proposal for this research.

will run into several generations after them. He ended the sermon with an encouragement to the church that those who work hard and trust God to transform their situations see the result.

In another sermon preached by Mr. Abboah-Offei on Wednesday 1st March, 2017, during commanding the month prayer service he again took the text from Isaiah 60:1, 2 with the theme “arise, shine.” His emphasis this time was that the words “arise, and shine” refer to need for transformation, leaving an old state and moving into a new one, the urgency to act because of an undesirable condition that the Christian must get out of. He mentioned things like fear, sickness, bad dreams, behavioural problems of children, troubled family life, business downturn and many others which he said were attacks from the enemy that the Christian has to act with urgency to put an end to. He described the call as a command from God which must be acted on because God honours his word for those who do so.

Just before Mr. Abboah-Offei began to preach he asked all who had cleared their lands in preparation for sowing to come forward for maize seed to go and sow. He added that those who have not yet cleared their lands must not come forward for the seed because they are not ready for the season and will waste the seed. He told those who received the seed “go and sow it, it will bear abundantly for you.” Mr. Abboah-Offei’s protestant orientation of work producing prosperity or economic wellbeing is clearly noticed as he situates his sermons on well-being within the context of work or making an effort and not automatic blessings.

An almost similar style of handling the Bible was noticed in a sermon by Rev. Daniel Ayim at the Mount Moriah Prayer Centre on Saturday 11th February, 2017, on the theme “When the Holy Spirit Moves”²²⁵ taken from Genesis 1:1-2. He said the biblical

²²⁵ When the Holy Spirit Moves was the PCG’s theme for the year 2017.

commentary on creation from the beginning was that of chaos, disorder or stagnation which needed to be put right. As God moved, the chaos was corrected and things took their proper form. In the same way, the Christian must seek the move of the Holy Spirit to bring order into their careers, finances, marriage, and any other areas where there may be disorder. He went on to say that God created human beings from the soil which contains mineral wealth and seeds of all kinds of plants that are useful to humanity. Therefore, every human being has a deposit of good things that must come out for the benefit of others. It would be realized that as he preached to an upwardly mobile group, Rev. Ayim sought to touch on their areas of life such as career, marriage, finances, and others that will be of concern to them. However, it will require the power of the Holy Spirit for one to realize what he or she is made up of or for his or her work to be successful. The Christian, therefore, needs to “wrestle with” God as it were to obtain his or her needs or to excel. Thus, as already noted, the dominant issue is attaining existential needs.

Both Mr. Abboah-Offei and Rev. Ayim seemed to carefully avoid the promise of automatic success. Instead, they seem to strongly suggest the need for a person to put in effort and then be blessed with success. The themes they chose were simple and directly located within the texts. This is unlike the case in the regular congregations where the readings and themes as provided on the ecumenical almanac have no bearing with each other as observed by Asamoah-Gyadu.²²⁶ Their approach to preaching adopted by the two leaders may not meet the standard of technicalities required in biblical hermeneutics yet the response they elicited from the congregations were ample demonstrations that the sermons met the needs of their audiences and showed consistency with what pertains with

²²⁶Asamoah-Gyadu, “Taking Territories and Raising Champions,” 11.

intervention ministries just as the charismatic denominations.²²⁷ In effect, the prayer centres seek to use the Bible and its message in practical ways that will make for easy application by people and useful for the purposes of prayer. Having explored the various programmes of the prayer centres, some key practices and activities which were identified to be dominant in all programmes at the two prayer centres will be examined in the next section.

3.3.3 Some Practices of the Prayer Centres

The major practices as surveyed at the two prayer centres of the study are;

- i. Prayer
- ii. Healing and Deliverance and
- iii. Counselling/ Consultation

These four activities are undertaken at all the centres on regular basis and they seem to be central in defining the spirituality of the prayer centres. Even though these activities are clearly distinguished from each other, there is a strong interconnection between them with each impacting on the others. Thus, they are pursued in a holistic manner at all the centres. We will, however, discuss how each is undertaken to help bring out their uniqueness as well as show how they relate to others.

3.3.3 (i) Prayer

As discussed in Chapter two, one of the motivating factors for the establishment of Prayer Centres in the PCG was to create avenues for members of the church to prayer. As a result, the guideline for prayer centres has a provision in relation to the conduct of prayer services as follows “...ninety per cent of the time should be devoted to prayer. As much as

²²⁷ See Asamoah-Gydau, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 161-178, for his discussions and critique of the use of the Bible in the Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity which share some similarities with the current discussion.

possible, all prayer should be extempore and corporate. People should feel free to pray in any language.”²²⁸ Prayer in the PCG had traditionally been formal and regularized in that it took the form of written prayers in the liturgy and service book which was read by service leaders with worshipers repeating after them. This kind of prayer had little place for members to be involved in prayers at church. When they happen to be involved, it takes the form of silent prayers, which is considered to be ‘weak and ineffective.’ The PCG’s attempt to correct this shortfall in its prayer life accounts for the statement captured in the guideline that prayer must be extempore and corporate meaning that people must be allowed to pray on their own and the whole congregation must pray at the same time instead of prayers being read from prayer or liturgy books by one person on behalf of the whole church or for members to repeat after the leader. This position brings prayer at the prayer centres close to the Pentecostal type of prayer which is described as “positive, bold and decisive to be effective, with the power to stir the supernatural by decimating the powers of evil and releasing the anointing of the Spirit.”²²⁹ The focus of prayer at the prayer centres, therefore, is to give worshipers the opportunity for direct communication with the Spirit. For instance, at one of the prayer sessions at Mount Moriah, where the researcher was present, the leaders admonished, the congregation, “you are not at a ‘pray for me church,’ ”²³⁰ you are at a prayer centre so pray for yourselves.” These were meant to let the people know that it takes their enduring prayer to receive what they expected and not just assume that the prayer team at the centre will pray for them.

At the prayer centres, prayers are believed to be effective when based on scripture and offered by faith. To this end, all the topics that are mentioned for the congregations to pray

²²⁸ Presbyterian Church of Ghana, *Guidelines for Prayer / Retreat Centres*, 31.

²²⁹ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 35.

²³⁰ “Pray for me” refers to the practice of people engaging the services of other people who may be described as ‘prayer contractors’ to pray for them as was reportedly common in some of the independent prophetic churches.

on are always anchored on the content of the sermon for the day. Such prayers are either to challenge or correct what the operators of the centres consider “negatives” in the lives of the worshipers, to bring the promises contained in the message true for them or for the Holy Spirit to grant power to overcome anything limiting or inhibiting them from their promises. The prayers also request for power to do the extraordinary. The participants at the prayer centres are taught to believe that whatever he/she utters by faith will be accomplished hence time is given for what is referred to as “declarations”²³¹ during prayer services.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the idea of spiritual warfare is inherent in the activities of the prayer centres. The prayers, therefore, show an aggressive posture of war or what Asamoah-Gyadu described as a religious struggle²³² which they resolve to win. Such spiritual warfare is against all kinds of inhibitions, spiritual strongholds, institutional strongholds, family or ancestral bondages or even personal habits that stand in the individual’s way to progress. This gives rise to imprecatory prayers at the prayer centres. These are prayers that “demand divine retribution and vengeance on one’s enemies.”²³³ The popularity of this kind of prayers in African Christianity is believed to be informed by prayers found in African Indigenous Religions. More importantly, biblical support is found for it from the Psalms.²³⁴ The enemy who creates all problems for the Christian is the devil, who has agents such as witches and demons. Some of the problems may be human beings who may be one’s relatives.²³⁵ In the hermeneutics of the prayer centres, these can create any imaginable problems such as ill health or sickness, poverty,

²³¹ “Declarations” are prayers offered by supplicants with the focus calling for something or what a person wishes for him/herself, a group or someone into being with force and the entire congregation responding with shouts of “amen, amen, amen” to indicate affirmation of what is being said on their behalf.

²³²Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 37.

²³³Cephas N. Omenyo and Wonderful Adjei Arthur, “The Bible Says! Neo-Prophetic Hermeneutics in Africa,” *Studies in World Christianity*, 19.1 (2013):50-70

²³⁴Omenyo and Arthur, “The Bible Says!” 50-70.

²³⁵Cephas N. Omenyo and Abamfo O. Atiemo, “Claiming Religious Space: The Case of Neo-Propheticism in Ghana,” *Ghana Bulletin of Theology*, Vol. 1, No. 1 July, 2006, pp. 55-68.

stagnation in career, failure in business, bad dreams, bad habits or sin and other supposed negative occurrences. To effectively address these problems, the evil powers that caused them must first be dealt with. To this end, prayers are purposely targeted at such real or perceived enemies in ways such as destroying the forces or enemies that have caused the problems for the individual or nullify their plans or schemes against the individual. The normal pattern is for the leader to say the words of the prayer for the congregants to repeat after him or her. An example is as follows:

Awurade, εωϞ Yesu din mu biribiara a emma men hyeren senea wope, anaa se empe me nkoso, na ope me animguasee, se eye tumi biara, honhom biara, se eye bayie, anaa demon biara, se eye suban biara a me de meho ako hyem, se eye apam biara, se efim'abusua mu, ana baabiara, se me bo men sam bo mpae a, me see nenyinaa, na ma hyeren, εωϞ Yesu din mu.²³⁶

After repeating these words, the congregants pray clapping their hands, stamping their feet and performing other vigorous actions. These prayers are popular in Neo-Prophetic and Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity and have been criticized as lacking sound biblical interpretation.²³⁷ There is a provision in the guidelines for prayer centres in the PCG on how prayer should be conducted stating that "...some gestures like shooting, canning (whipping), bombing, beating etc. of Satan should be avoided. Scripture does not approve of most of these practices."²³⁸ The PCG would, therefore, need to evaluate the prevalence of imprecatory prayers at its centres and offer the proper guidance for its leaders and members.

²³⁶Recorded at Grace Prayer Centre on Saturday 15th December, 2015.

²³⁷ See Omenyo and Arthur, "The Bible Says," 50-70; Omenyo and Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space," 55-68 and Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 52-54 for discussions on imprecatory prayers in contemporary Pentecostal Christianity.

²³⁸ PCG, Guidelines for Prayer/Retreat Centres, 21.

3.3.3 (ii) Healing and Deliverance

Prayer centres in Ghanaian Christianity have been described as mediums for addressing the deliverance needs of Christians.²³⁹ For the PCG, as discussed in Chapter two, the need to integrate the ministry of healing and deliverance as a normal practice in the church was one factor that led to the establishment of prayer centres. For that reason, healing and deliverance feature prominently in the activities of prayer centres in the PCG.

The practice of deliverance is grounded in the belief that there are spiritual blockages in an individual's attempt at attaining what is good for him or her in life. Because the spiritual forces causing these blockages are stronger than what human capacity can handle, there is resort to spiritual means to address them. In effect, subsequent to salvation, the Christians must be freed of militating spiritual forces obstructing his/her full benefits promised in Scripture to make his salvation complete.²⁴⁰ These ideas are alive in African cosmology where causality is strongly emphasized.²⁴¹

One area where Ghanaian Christians believe that evil spiritual forces can create problems for people just as in African Indigenous Religions is with respect to health or causing sickness, although natural factors are known to be responsible for it.²⁴² For this reason, healing and deliverance are often mentioned together as two sides of the same coin. The difference between them is explained to be that deliverance encompasses healing. Healing can take place without a person having to go through deliverance. However, when sickness has defied ordinary healing prayer or the medication required for its treatment then the spiritual powers behind the sickness must be addressed through deliverance after

²³⁹Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 86, Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 187-201.

²⁴⁰Atiemo, Mmusuyi and Deliverance, 89.

²⁴¹Kwame Gyekye, *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987): 76-79, 119-123; S. G. Williamson, *Akan Religion and the Christian Faith* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1974), 96-97 cited in Abamfo Ofori Atiemo, Mmusuyi and Deliverance, unpublished M.Phil Thesis, University of Ghana,

²⁴²Asamoah –Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 166-167 and Kofi Asare Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion*, 149.

which the sickness will respond to normal medical treatment leading to restoration of health.²⁴³ Other problems or situations such as poverty, delayed promotions at work, difficulty in childbearing, not getting suitors for marriage, abnormal or irregular behaviours (such as drunkenness, anger, immorality or promiscuity), nightmares, and other such things that individuals go through are not “normal” and one needs to be delivered from them.

Deliverance may be undertaken in a mass session or in a group and also for on individual base or for only one person. The mass deliverance session usually takes place during the prayer services and often involves many people being exorcised at the same time whereas the individual session usually takes place during the counselling and consultation session in involves one person at a time. The procedure followed in carrying out deliverance is, however, the same in both cases. People who are exorcised of evil spirits during the mass deliverance sessions exhibit actions such shaking, falling, screaming, crying or weeping during the “ministration” time of the prayer service either spontaneously or after having been touched by the leader. They are then brought forward to be prayed for.

The process often involves verbal exchanges between the person undertaking the deliverance and the spirit believed to be tormenting the person. The person undertaking the deliverance often issues commands such as “get out of him/her,” “leave,” “pack out.” Sometimes the person being delivered or exorcised vomits or spits during the exercise which is interpreted as signs of the exit of the evil spirit. Other signs of the spirit leaving the person undergoing deliverance or exorcism include screaming, weeping, laughter or simply lying down quietly as if asleep. When the person is freed of the spirit, the leaders smear his/her forehead with anointing oil which is described as “touch,” believed to seal the process of deliverance. Some of the cases take quite a short time to be dealt with whilst

²⁴³Atiemo, Mmusuyi and Deliverance, 92.

others go on for quite a long time such that they are continued after the service. The people who go through the deliverance process during the mass sessions are usually invited to meet the team members after the service for discussions and further instructions on how to live to overcome any future cases of possession or oppression.

People, and for that matter Christians are said to respond to problems in at least four ways. Deliverance has been identified as one of the ways African Christians respond to problems they are confronted with from their cultural and religious background.²⁴⁴ Much as deliverance may be said to be a useful practical response to problems by African Christians, there are issues such as how many times a person may have to go through deliverance, how to determine persons who must go through deliverance or exorcised of a spirit and standard procedure for undertaking deliverance need to be critically examined in order to preserve the image of the deliverance ministry.²⁴⁵

3.3.3 (iii) Counselling/ Consultation

Counselling is an integral aspect of the ministry of the prayer centres used for this study and indeed the ministry of prayer centres in Ghana generally.²⁴⁶ This is a special arrangement where people with various needs meet the leaders at the prayer centres for diagnosis of their problems and to be offered the needed assistance. This system seems to have quite a broad spectrum in terms of what it does and can be described as a kind of spiritual consultancy designed to give guidance to people in tackling their concerns. It operates like *abisa*²⁴⁷ in Akan Indigenous Religion or *akwankyere*²⁴⁸ in neo-Pentecostal

²⁴⁴See Atiemo, Mmusuyi, 89 for discussions on the ways in which Christians respond to problems.

²⁴⁵Asamoah –Gyadu, “Taking Territories and Raising Champions,” 31.

²⁴⁶ Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 147-151, 187-198,

²⁴⁷*abisa* is a practice in Akan traditional religion where people with problems visit the traditional priest to seek advice on issues confronting them or reasons for certain occurrences in their lives as well as guidance dealing with them.

²⁴⁸*Akwankyere* is neo-Pentecostal creation or version of the Akan traditional religious practice of *abisa* as explained above.

denominations.²⁴⁹ People who report at the centres for this service complete a form in which they provide information that includes bio data, complaints or reasons for which the person is reporting at the centre, the onset of the problems and what remedies have been sought. People are also to provide information on their personal as well as spiritual or cultural profile such as the religious groups the person or a family member especially parents may have been part of or ever joined. The questions here weigh heavily towards the AICs and transcendental religious groups among others. This shows that attacks on the AICs as demonic doorways continue to persist among Christians of other denominations. Other information sought include whether there is an altar or shrine in the person's family house, the person's family name and its meaning, position in the family line among others. The exhaustive nature of the questions to be answered leaves little doubt if any Ghanaian Christian will escape the need for deliverance.

After completing the form, the person then goes with it to meet a senior member of the team, the counselling (who may also be described as the "specialist" or "consultant") for his/her problem to be diagnosed. Usually, some member of the team described as intercessors lead the people waiting in the queues to see the counsellor or "consultant" for discussions through prayers for God's intervention in their needs for them. When one meets the counsellor, he/she is asked several questions in relation to the issues stated on the form and then writes down the results of the "investigations" or "diagnosis." The visitor is then taken through prayers including the process of deliverance where that is necessary. The deliverance process in this case follows the same pattern as discussed for the mass deliverance session above. Persons who come with sicknesses are referred to the

²⁴⁹Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 187 and Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 41 and Cephas N. Omenyo, "Man of God Prophecy unto Me: The Prophetic Phenomenon in African Christianity," *Studies in World Religion*, 17. 1 (2011): 30-49.

hospitals for treatment²⁵⁰ and continue coming for follow-ups or monitoring till their issues are completely resolved. When it becomes necessary, some visitors who call on the GET at Akropong are admitted into residence at the Patmos Retreat Centre for further monitoring and assistance. Mount Moriah is a non-residential centre hence no one is admitted into residence there. It will be noted that the procedure in place for the counselling services at the prayer centres comes close to what happens at the regular hospitals.

Patronage of the counselling services at the prayer centres is quite high as shown in the data obtained from the two prayer centres used for this study. At the Mount Moriah Prayer Centre at Danfa, a total of 161 people were registered for the counselling service in the last quarter of 2016 (October – December). Out of this 103, were Presbyterians with 62 being non Presbyterians from various denominations with 4 people who did not indicate their denominations. At the Grace Centre, Akropong, 408 people were received for the first quarter of 2017 (January – March 2017) Out of that number 268 were Presbyterians with 149 being non-Presbyterian including 2 Muslims.

Besides the two centres used for this study, other prayer centres also attract high patronage by both the laity and ordained. For instance, in 2013 it was reported that 3,406 people participated in the August prayer retreat at Abasua held from 12th to 19th August, 2013. Out of this number 1,200 were attending for the first time. Also, there were 77 ministers of the church in attendance including the Moderator, Rt. Rev. Prof. Emmanuel Martey, together with the current Clerk of General Assembly, Rev. Dr Samuel Ayete-

²⁵⁰Catechist Sampson Amadi, informed me that, the Grace centre works in close collaboration with the Tetteh Quarshie Memorial Hospital at Mampong, Akuapem by referring those who come with various sicknesses there. The hospital is also said to refer patients whose conditions they consider to be beyond physical causes to the centre

Nyampong.²⁵¹ For such large number of people including the ordained to be drawn to the prayer centre is ample demonstration of the status it has acquired as avenue of spiritual renewal in the church. The retreats at Abasua have consistently been recorded and telecast on the PCG's television ministry programme "Channel of Hope" on GTV Life, the national television station.

Members of the historic mission founded churches (including Presbyterians) were noted as visiting other churches or prayer centres to seek assistance in addressing their needs as they were not finding such assistance in their own denominations.²⁵² As discussed in Chapter two, it was on account of that that the PCG accepted the establishment of prayer centres within its structures as part of measures to address this situation. Based on the high number of people who visit prayer centres of the PCG in search of solutions to their needs, it can be argued that such prayer centres have proved successful in helping the PCG realize its objective of halting the movement of its members to other churches²⁵³ and possibly reversing it as non-Presbyterians now patronise the PCG in search of their spiritual needs.

The counselling sessions at the prayer centres show that there is a real pastoral need for people for which the centres are faithfully filling the gap. The needs or problems presented at the counselling sessions include search for marriage partners, jobs or employment

²⁵¹ PCG, Reports for 2013 presented to the 14th General Assembly, 14th to 21st August, 2014, 538 Abasua Prayer Centre, August, 2013 prayer retreat brochure.

²⁵² Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*, (Regnum Africa, 2014), ; Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 39 and Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 188.

²⁵³ The Rev. Dr Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong is a Presbyterian Minister and the current General Secretary of the Christian Council of Ghana. His roles in the PCG include serving as onetime General Youth Secretary of the PCG and a former Presbytery Chairperson of the Asante Presbytery. He was very active in the activities of the BSPG and promoting deliverance ministry in the PCG out of which Prayer centres emerged. The present writer interviewed him for this work on Saturday 4th June, 2017 at Aburi and he intimated that but for the fact that the PCG accepted renewal activities such as prayer centres the PCG would have been left with virtually no members by now.

The same views were expressed by a group of young people who are introduced themselves to me as prayer warriors from Kasoa who came for a three days retreat at the Mount Moriah Centre at Danfa who I held discussions with on Wednesday 1st March, 2017 where they told me that but for the ministry of the prayer centres they would have left the PCG long ago.

needs, healing or health issues, childbirth which includes women being able to conceive, have safe delivery or prevent a miscarriage, deliverance from various spiritual conditions or fears, success in exams, for breakthroughs or opportunities to be opened for the individual, protection and any other need that the individual feels he/she must take there. The persistence of these problems shows that prayer centres are likely to endure in Ghanaian Christianity for as long as one can imagine as suggested by Larbi and Onyinah.²⁵⁴ This is contrary to the view held by Gifford that many prayer centres in Ghana ceased to operate after a short time, basically because the issues they sought to address were no more relevant. This researcher thinks that prayer centres fall out of operation primarily due to other factors rather than not just having issues to address.

In African cosmology, where religion is to respond to every situation of life, these patrons honestly need the church to give them spiritual and emotional assurance of safety even when they trust that the medical system and the job market will take care of their needs. John D. K. Ekem has observed that priests in the traditional Akan society offered such services for the well-being of the people. He describes the MDCC as creatively integrating such practice into its ministry to take care of the needs of its members.²⁵⁵ It will, therefore, be helpful for the PCG to put systems in place at the various congregations to meet the counselling needs of its members who may stand in need of it. This will go a long way to complement the efforts of the prayer centres in this sensitive area.

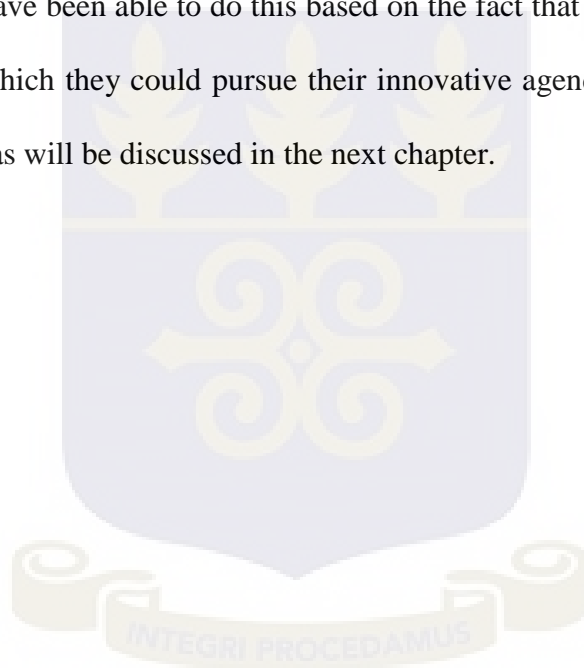
3.4 Conclusion

The discussion so far has shown that prayer centres in the PCG have institutionalized various innovative programmes through which they can be described as avenues of

²⁵⁴Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 191-192; Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 402-406 and Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 86

²⁵⁵ John D. K. Ekem, *Priesthood in Context: A Study of Priesthood in Some Christian and Primal Communities of Ghana and its Relevance for Mother-Tongue Biblical Interpretation*, (Accra: SonLife Press, 2008), 123.

contemporary spiritual renewal and solution centres not only for Presbyterians but also non-Presbyterians including non-Christians. The programmes and activities being undertaken by the prayer centres were previously undertaken by the BSPG²⁵⁶ to a large extent. The difference, however, is that there have been additions to the activities that were earlier undertaken with larger patronage. The diversity of the programmes and activities of the prayer centres can also be said to be largely the influence of other Christian denominations. They can therefore be described as attempts to ‘level up’ with other the denominations as Baeta had discussed in relation to the activities of the AICs in Ghana.²⁵⁷ The prayer centres have been able to do this based on the fact that they secured space²⁵⁸ in the PCG based on which they could pursue their innovative agenda and contribute to the mission of the PCG as will be discussed in the next chapter.



²⁵⁶See Cephas N. Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 198- 273 for discussions on the practices of Charismatic renewal groups in the western mission founded churches including the BSPG in the PCG.

²⁵⁷Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana*, 123.

²⁵⁸Cephas N. Omenyo and Abamfo O. Atiemo, “Claiming Religious Space: The Case of Neo-Prophetism in Ghana” *Ghana Bulltin of Theology*, 1, no. 1 (July, 2006): 55 -68.

CHAPTER FOUR

IMPACT OF PRAYER CENTRES

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the impact of the ministry of the PCG's prayer centres on its mission is examined. The discussion will bring out the extent to which the ministry of the prayer centres has benefited individuals or people who patronize them. It will also assess whether the prayer centres have contributed in any way towards the entire mission and life of the PCG. In other words, we will interrogate whether the prayer centres have proved successful in terms of reasons for which the PCG accepted their establishment or not. The final discussion in the chapter will deal with some issues of concern with regard to the ministry of the prayer centres that came up during the study.

4.2 Prayer centres as avenues for meeting the needs of people

In the survey for this study, it came out that the most basic function or benefit of prayer centres in the PCG is that of meeting various needs of people. In response to the question as to how the prayer centres have been of help to people, four related answers pertaining to people having solutions to needs were selected more often than other issues in the following order:

- i. that that they received solutions to their problems,
- ii. that there was improvement in their problems and they hoped it would be resolved completely,
- iii. that they received answers to needs or blessings other than what they brought to the centres,
- iv. that they received counsel, advice or ideas on how to handle the problem(s).

Thus, these four related views on needs being met at the prayer centres were the dominant benefits that their people who visit them obtain there. This proves that the prayer centres are “solution centres” for people’s needs and that perhaps their absence would have created a vacuum for people. It is insightful to note that some people were convinced that they had advice, counsel or ideas on how to handle their problems which means that the prayer centres are proving to be important avenues of discussion for people to get their problems solved. Thus, as already stated in Chapter three, it will be important for the PCG to consider deploying trained personnel in various areas of specialization to the counselling teams at the prayer centres to enhance the ministries there.

Related to the benefit derived from the prayer centres was the question of the reasons why people visited the centres. In other words, the study found out what needs were brought to the centres. Here, the search for health or healing was the choice selected most often among the responses suggested in the questionnaire for this study. Another option which related to health was the quest for childbirth which involved women being able to conceive, to have stable pregnancy and/or safe delivery, all of which can be said to border on maternal and reproductive health. The search for salvation and liberation in Africa has been described as basically having to do with health and wholeness and its absence leads to African Christians moving from church to church or even to the traditional healer to appropriate it.²⁵⁹ In this regard, in his work on the AICs in Ghana, Christian G. Baeta noted in connection with the Twelve Apostles Church that the request for divine healing or health was the most recurring theme in the prayers at their “garden” or healing and about the MDCC, he asserted that, healing was priority in their ministry.²⁶⁰ It has been discussed earlier in Chapter two that the PCG’s quest to integrate healing into its mainstream

²⁵⁹ Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Hearing and Knowing: Theological Reflections on Christianity in Africa*, (Accra: Sam-Woode Ltd, 2000), 44.

²⁶⁰ C. G. Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana: A Study of Some ‘Spiritual’ Churches*, (SCM, 1962), 18, 50.

ministry necessitated the establishment of prayer centres. Therefore, the result from this study confirms the fact that the search for divine healing persists among Christians and for that matter Presbyterians, and they are appropriating it through the prayer centres.

The sicknesses brought to the prayer centres as sampled from the records at the two centres include headaches, heart problems, stomach and/or abdominal pains or problems, stroke, bleeding, accident cases and mental illnesses. Their durations range from few days to several years. Reports on the activities of other prayer centres obtained for this study showed a similar trend of high cases of health-related problems being addressed. For instance, the West Brong Presbytery stated in its 2013 report submitted to the 2014 General Assembly, that “7,200 souls were reached, healed and counselled” at the Jejernireja prayer centre. The report again stated that “60 out of 65 insane were healed” at the same centre during the year. In that same Presbytery’s report, it was stated that at the Miremano prayer centre, 3,200 souls were reached, healed and counselled during that year.²⁶¹

It is not clear what the Presbytery exactly meant by the expression “reached, healed and counselled.” This may be the number of people who visited with various problems and were attended to. Perhaps, there were many health-related issues which in Africa will include spiritual/demonic attacks, bad/strange dreams and curses which are described as spiritual issues from which people need deliverance making the two terms (healing and deliverance cognates). At the two centres used for this study such problems as stated above were selected by a dominant number of people as the reasons why they visited the centre. In effect, the prayer centres in the PCG, are contributing tremendously towards the provision of holistic healing for many Ghanaians. This buttresses the fact already alluded

²⁶¹ Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Reports for 2013 presented to 14th General Assembly, 2014, (15th – 21st August, 2014), 339, 340.

to in Chapter three that the prayer centres in the PCG have reversed the trend of people moving from the PCG to other churches in search of solutions to their existential needs.

Other needs for which people visit the prayer centres are related to marital or family issues. These include the search for stable marriages or for husbands who have abandoned their families or wives under circumstances that can be described as not natural but spiritual or mystical to return. One prayer request puts it as “for God to bring my husband back.” People who are looking for suitors for marriage also call at the prayer centres with some making specific requests of the type of men they desired. One of such requests read “to marry a white man.” Also, people preparing to get married also visit the prayer centres to pray in order to have successful and stable marriages. Whilst some of the needs of the patrons at the prayer centres can be described as genuine concerns for family stability, others such as the search or desire “to marry a white-man” can also be said to be frivolous.

Issues relating to economic wellbeing such as financial problems or indebtedness, to gain employment, to have promotion at work, to be successful in business or to avert a business downturn and desire to travel overseas were also common at the centres. These concerns border on the livelihood of people which the African takes seriously. Academic concerns such as being able to pass examinations or intelligence at school were also provided among the needs or the problems for which people visit the prayer centres. There were also cases of people involved in legal or court cases.

C. G. Baeta catalogued prayer requests that were presented at Tigare shrines drawing a parallel between them and the prayer needs at the AICs he studied and noted that there were no distinctions or differences in both cases as the requests related mainly to meeting existential needs.²⁶² It can be observed that the issues outlined above as the requests of

²⁶²C. G. Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana*, (London: SCM, 1962): 128-132.

patrons of the prayer centres also deal with meeting the same existential needs. The same trend of requests was also identified as constituting the needs of patrons at the prayer centres associated with the CoP.²⁶³ This shows that, irrespective of their denominations, the main concerns of Ghanaian Christians are virtually the same, which is basically to meet existential needs. This agrees with the Akan primal thought of salvation which is described as “encompassing all that reinforce life in the here-and-now” and “includes good mental and physical health, ability to bear children to perpetuate the family line, abundant food harvest, success in one’s daily occupation and deliverance from the adverse influence of “abayifo,” “sasabonsam” and premature death.”²⁶⁴ This cannot be limited to African primal religiosity alone because it is argued by Paul E. Johnson that all prayer is ultimately driven by a need.²⁶⁵ In other words, people pray basically for their object of worship to assist them meet a need.

The analysis of the composition of respondents who answered the questionnaire for this study showed that, the majority of them were educated up to the tertiary level followed by those who had up to secondary education. Those who had basic education or not educated at all were in the minority. It may be that those who were not highly educated or not educated at all did not come up to receive the questionnaire to answer because they could not read or write. If that was even the case, the fact that the highly educated among the congregants offered to answer the questionnaire shows the level of confidence that the middle and upper-class sections in society have in the prayer centres as places of succour and spiritual renewal and that they are not shy to be identified as visiting the prayer centres. This is important for the public image of the PCG’s prayer centres because people

²⁶³Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 202-405 and Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 191.

²⁶⁴ John D. K. Ekem, *Priesthood in Context: A Study of Priesthood in some Christian and Primal Communities of Ghana and its relevance for Mother-Tongue Biblical Interpretation*, (Accra: SonLife Press, 2008), 39.

²⁶⁵Paul E. Johnson, *Psychology of Religion*, 2nd ed. (Whitmore and Stone, 1945), 130-135.

of such status will usually be circumspect in their choices of prayer centres to patronize in the light of some of the unhealthy practices reported at some prayer centres. For that reason the leaders of the prayer centres can be commended for doing things in a manner that such category of people in the society find to be credible and so patronise them. It is also important to note that many of the respondents for this study indicated that they had advice or ideas on handling the problems they came to the centres with. In effect, the counselling services at the prayer centres can be described as proving useful as already mentioned in Chapter three.

4.3 Prayer centres as avenues for spiritual renewal and empowerment for ministry

Besides meeting the existential needs of their patrons, the prayer centres have come to be recognized as the avenues of spiritual renewal and empowerment for ministry. The two related issues were the second highest response to the question of the reasons why people visit the prayer centres. In effect, some people visit the prayer centres not because they have any problems or to be prayed for but simply to seek spiritual renewal or to receive gifts for ministry. Their desire is to encounter the divine and they believe that the centres provide ideal avenues for such encounter. This quest for renewal indicates the desire by church members to grow spiritually which will normally translate into a more spiritually active church. The PCG had struggled with spiritual renewal for a long time until the activities of the BSPG brought a wave of revival into the church. Therefore, for members of the PCG to be seeking spiritual renewal through the prayer centres is a demonstration of the fact that they have realized the need for their spiritual vitality, empowerment and reception of gifts of the Holy Spirit for service or ministry in the church. It also shows that

it is not always the case that Africans make religion a means of meeting their needs²⁶⁶ but they also seek spiritual development as well as offering themselves for service.

4.5 Prayer Centres as Avenues of Church Growth

Substantial number of respondents affirmed that prayer centres in the PCG are contributing to the numerical growth of the church. They noted that some of the non-Presbyterians who visit the centres and get their needs met enlist as members of the church.²⁶⁷ The main proof of this suggestion is that the numerical strength of Congregations where the prayer centres are located is relatively higher compared to others around them or those they are of the same age with. For instance, the Mount Moriah Congregation at Danfa experienced significant growth with the addition of the prayer centre activities to it in 2013. Prior to that, the Congregation's adult membership was about 45 but it is currently over 350 adults.²⁶⁸ This means that within the space of four years, the congregation had a cumulative growth of 677.8%. This gives it an average annual growth rate of 169.8% which is almost seventeen times higher than the PCG's growth target of 10% per annum for each Congregation.²⁶⁹ The growth in the Congregation's membership is attributed mainly to the activities of the prayer centre. It was argued that due to the activities of the prayer centre many Presbyterians and non-Presbyterians who settled around the Danfa community over the last few years transferred their membership from their previous congregations or denomination to the Mount Moriah

²⁶⁶Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 232-233.

²⁶⁷ Rev. Dr. William K. Ofosu Addo, Former Director, Mission and Evangelism of the PCG, now Presbytery Chairperson, Brong Ahafo Presbytery, interviewed by the researcher on Friday 25th November, 2016 and Rev. Felix AkresuAnimDanso, Director, Mission and Evangelism, PCG, interviewed by the researcher on 30th November, 2016 both mentioned that the Prayer centres have become key avenues of numerical growth in the PCG. Their views have been corroborated in one way or the other by Rev. Daniel K. Ayim, Director, Mount Moriah Prayer Centre, who is also the Minister in charge of the Mount Moriah Congregation, Danfa and the Rev. K. B. Asante, Minister in Charge of the Grace Congregation at Akropong.

²⁶⁸ Rev. Daniel K. Ayim, interview, Wednesday 7th June, 2017.

²⁶⁹ In 2005 the General Assembly of the PCG adopted a mission and evangelism agenda for every Congregation to grow at 10% per annum which will translate into the same growth for the church nationally. Most congregations have however not been able to achieve this target.

Congregation.²⁷⁰ Some of the new members of the congregation are said to be either entirely new converts or lapsed/backslidden Christians who upon coming into contact with the ministry of the prayer centres and the congregation rededicated themselves to God or renewed their faith and joined it.²⁷¹

Similarly, the membership of the Grace Congregation at Akropong where the GET operates which is 1,186²⁷² will further help in discussing the view that prayer centres are contributing to the numerical growth of the PCG. The Grace Congregation was established alongside Peace Congregation also in Akropong about the same time.²⁷³ After twenty years of existence in the same locality with the same socio-economic and religious factors, the Peace Congregation currently has a membership of 725²⁷⁴ as compared to that of Grace as stated earlier. Thus, Grace is 38.9% more in membership than Peace. The congregation is said to attract more people to join it basically because of the prayer ministry. Since this study is not focused on church growth and it is not a comparative study it will not be able to examine whether there are other factors accountable for the variations in the growth of Grace and Peace Congregations. It may therefore be useful for another study to be conducted for that purpose.

²⁷⁰ Among the Presbyterians who settled in the Danfa Community and joined the new congregation is Mr. Newman a retired Lecturer at the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana. Mr. Newman was for a long time a member of the Emmanuel Congregation of the PCG at Madina where he lived before relocating to Danfa after his retirement. He has since been appointed as the Chairman of the Prayer Centre's Management Board by the Ga Presbytery. The present writer interviewed him for this work on Wednesday 30th May, 2017 at Danfa. He informed the present writer that there were a number of the new settlers who were non Presbyterians but have since joined the Mount Moriah Congregation largely due to the prayer activities.

²⁷¹ The Session Clerk, Mount Moriah Congregation, Danfa, Interview, Wednesday 7th June, 2017.

²⁷² PCG, Akuapem Presbytery, Reports of Districts for 2015 presented to the 2016 Presbytery Session, p 117.

²⁷³ Grace Congregation and Peace Congregation are located at two opposite ends of the Akropong Township called Nyaabasaah and AdamiAtifi respectively. They were all started in the same year as "annexes" of Christ Church. Grace was started on 24th March, 1996 whilst Peace Congregation was started in April, 1996. See appendix E, Decisions of Christ Church Session meeting on 7th March, 1996. Also, see Grace Congregation 20th anniversary brochure, p 11 and Peace Congregation 20th anniversary brochure, 21.

²⁷⁴ Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Akuapem Presbytery, 2014 Report presented to the 2015 Presbytery Session, 117.

The growth of the two congregations as discussed above can be said to be in line with two essential factors of church growth namely prayer and eventful worship which are visible at the prayer centres.²⁷⁵ These two factors are more or less connected to each other. Through the prayer centres, the spiritual needs of people are met by the manifestation of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit thereby attracting them to the church. Constant corporate and personal prayer is identified as being integral to the ministry of Jesus and that of the early church. This is said to produce the effect of miracles and signs of the Holy Spirit which in turn accounted for large numbers of people being attracted to the early church. This, therefore, leads to the other factor, eventful worship which Foli said is characterized by the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the largeness or bigness of the church, expressive services with members participation and giving room for motion or movements as well as vibrant music and preaching all of which together serve as conduit for growth.

The demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit with respect to healing, speaking in tongues, prophecy among others is said to give worshippers the hope that God would act and speak in their midst hence they are attracted to the services of churches. This then makes the services to be big or large as more and more people are attracted each time to the worship services. These worshippers, it is argued have the opportunity to participate in the services with various bodily movements and the open and spontaneous prayers are said to encourage even timid members to get involved and pray. In such services, the music is said to be vibrant with assorted instruments and preachers touch on the needs of the people through appealing to the heart in simple but effective means more than the mind.²⁷⁶ These elements are identified to be associated with Pentecostal churches thereby accounting for their comparatively higher growth than other denominations.

²⁷⁵ Richard Foli, *Christianity in Ghana, A Comparative Church Growth*, (Accra: Trust Publications, 2006), 135.

²⁷⁶Foli, *Christianity in Ghana*, 135-140.

In Africa, the preaching of the indigenous prophets was said to share such characteristics and produced phenomenal results of conversions as compared to that of western missionaries. For instance, William Wade Harris is reported to make as many as 120,000 adult converts in two years as against that the western trained missionary Philip Quaque who had only 52 converts after preaching the same gospel for nine years.²⁷⁷ What made Wade Harris and other prophets like him that successful in terms of response to their preaching was the extraordinary characteristics they portrayed as powerful men of God who were able to “diagnose ailments, trace their sources or causes as well as deliver their victims from their dismal situations.”²⁷⁸ In effect, whenever there is a display of extraordinary power that meets the existential needs of accompanying the preaching of the gospel, positive response is elicited with people joining that church. In Ghana, such characteristics have been noted with respect to the various streams of Pentecostalism and the CoP, for instance, is noted as having experienced much growth this way particularly through the ministry of the prayer or healing camps associated with it.²⁷⁹ It is thus suggested that, the prayer centres in the PCG seem to be adapting such factors into their activities as well as those of the congregations where they are located to their advantage. An illustration of such adaptation is provided as follows:

At Mount Moriah, every first Sunday of the month when the Lord’s Supper is celebrated, it is observed as prayer service. At this congregational prayer service, there is a slight departure from the regular Presbyterian form of worship in that, instead of the sermon there is a brief exhortation touching on very practical issues that call for expectancy and prayer. Members are urged that in the celebration of the Eucharist there will be a

²⁷⁷ Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*, (Regnum Africa, 2014), 91.

²⁷⁸ Cephias N. Omenyo, “Man of God Prophecy unto Me: The Prophetic Phenomenon in African Christianity” *Studies in World Christianity*, 17, no. 1, 2011: 30-49.

²⁷⁹ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “Pentecostalism and the Missiological Significance of Experience: The Case of Ghana’s Church of Pentecost” *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*, 12, nos. 1&2, (July/December), 2002, 30-54.

demonstration of the power of God in areas of their lives where they seek such to happen so they are urged to pray earnestly. Time is also allowed for testimonies contrary to the practice in the church where such testimonies by people take the form simple information called voluntary thanks offerings which are given during the announcements.²⁸⁰

A similar trend is followed at the Grace Congregation Akropong where on some occasions the communion services are set aside as healing services accompanied by anointing. During such services, children in the congregation are also anointed to make them inclusive of the activities in the church. Times for testimonies are also allowed during the worship services and more space is given for prayer for personal and other needs apart from the usual intercessory prayer on the PCG's order of service which is much formalized. To give church members the opportunity for constant prayer, the chapel is opened all days throughout the week for members who desire to pray to walk in to do so, a practice that is not seen in any congregation of the PCG so far.²⁸¹ There is a musical group that ministers contemporary Pentecostal songs during services. The Grace chapel is also decorated with billboards bearing a lot of scriptural quotations on various subjects such as grace, faith, love, spiritual growth among others. Such notices give the visual and mental impression to worshippers on the expectation of an encounter with God at the church. It would be realized that leaders of the prayer centres in the PCG have not only been innovative in terms of programmes and activities they ran for their centres but have also integrated such innovations into the activities of the congregations where they are located making them vibrant and dynamic thereby attracting more people into them as compared to other congregations in the PCG or other denominations around them. It is for this reason that prayer centres have been suggested as contributing to the growth of the PCG.

²⁸⁰ Discussion with Rev. the Daniel K. Ayim after a visit by the present writer to the Mount Moriah Congregation during forenoon service on Sunday 7th May, 2017.

²⁸¹ Interview with the Rev. Kwadwo Osei-Bonsu, former Minister in Charge, Grace Congregation, Friday 28th April, 2017.

This study attempted to find out the exact figures of new members in the congregations where the two prayer centres used for this study are located in terms of Presbyterians who moved from other congregations to join them or persons who moved from churches other than congregations of the PCG to join them and non-Christians who were converted into them but these were not available as the leaders explained that they do not keep such details.²⁸² The absence of such figures will make it difficult to assess the extent to which the prayer centres are performing by way of winning new converts into the church. This is important because the prayer centres of the CoP, for instance, have been noted for their contribution to its growth.²⁸³ Hence, the PCG also needs to be sure of such performance from its prayer centres since church growth was an important factor that influenced their acceptance. The absence of such figures is also not helpful for the nurturing ministry of the congregations therefore serious thought has to be given to it. Finally, such records will help to properly address emerging concerns that the membership of the PCG is dwindling despite upsurge in spiritual or renewal activities which obviously include the ministry or activities of the prayer centres.²⁸⁴

That notwithstanding, it can be argued that by focusing their ministries on the needs of the people, the prayer centres have attracted more people to be attending service at the congregations where they are located. This is an important development for the PCG in view of the fact that it has been noted as recording low attendance to church service by its members.²⁸⁵ Indeed high attendance to church service is itself good for a church as it is considered as one of the signs of a healthy church and for that matter a variant of church growth just like transfer growth, internal growth, spiritual growth and functional growth

²⁸² Rev. Daniel Ayim, Discussions with the researcher on Wednesday 11th February, 2017 and Rev. K. B. Asante, interview with the author on Thursday 2nd May, 2017

²⁸³ Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 408 and Asamoah-Gyadu, "Pentecostal and Missiological Experience.

²⁸⁴ Rev. Dr Benzies Adu-Okore West Akyem Presbytery Chairperson of the PCG is the most recent person who publicly made such a remark at his Induction Service. See *The Christian Messenger*, Vol. 31. No. 2, March, 2017, p 3

²⁸⁵ Foli, *Christianity in Ghana*, p 187.

among others.²⁸⁶ Even though these may not lead immediately to increase in the actual numbers of a church with national coverage such as the PCG they are equally important because if they are sustained they can in the course of time lead to increase in the numbers itself.²⁸⁷

4.6. Prayer Centres as Avenues for Mobilising Financial Resources for the Mission of the Church

Another contribution of prayer centres to the life and mission of the PCG is with respect to fundraising and subsequently physical and infrastructural development. The regular means of raising funds at the prayer centres are offerings taken during programmes and services. These are used for the routine administrative activities such as paying bills, and allowances to the team members and volunteers. Money raised from this source is usually not enough to take care of all the needs of the centres. As such funds are raised through other means to support their ministry which also benefits the congregations where they are located.

The centres sometimes request people who visit there to make voluntary contributions towards their projects. These requests have been observed to yield favourably response from the patrons of the centres. Some of them make regular contributions such as on yearly or monthly basis to the centres. Others sponsor specific projects or activities at the centres and congregations where the centres are located. Also, people who patronise the centres' activities are invited often to fundraising programmes of the congregations. Such people are noted to respond favourably and also willingly give to support the congregations and the centres.²⁸⁸ For instance, the majority of people who attend

²⁸⁶Ibid., 119- 124.

²⁸⁷Ibid., 187.

²⁸⁸ The Rev. Kwadwo Osei-Bonsu, Former Minister in Charge of Grace Congregation, Akropong, interview Friday 28th April, 2017. Rev. K. B. Asante, Current, Minister in Charge of Grace Congregation, Akropong,

fundraising services at Grace, Akropong and give reasonable sums of money do so based on their relationship with the leader of the prayer ministry, Catechist Abboah-Offei and his ministry.²⁸⁹

Another means of fundraising through the prayer centres is tithes. Tithe, as a means of raising funds for Christian mission, was popularized in Ghana generally by the Pentecostal denominations.²⁹⁰ It has since become a major source of fundraising in almost all denominations including the PCG. In the PCG, tithes are to be received from the regular congregations hence the prayer centres do not have tithe earnings as part of their regular income. However, prayer centres augment tithes earnings of the congregations where they are located as some patrons of the centres pay tithe to the congregations there. This increases the income of such congregations beyond what would have come from the regular members only. For instance, at the Grace Centre, Akropong some members of the Grace Family²⁹¹ pay their tithes to the Congregation even though that is not their regular congregation. As a result, there has been a consistent increase in the tithe earnings of the Grace Congregation between 2012 and 2015.²⁹² Together with regular offerings and voluntary thanks offering, the Congregation had a total assessable income²⁹³ of GH¢980,618.44 for the four year period making it the fourth highest income earning congregation

interview, Thursday 1st June, 2017. Both of them mentioned to this researcher that a number of people who are not members of the Congregation but patrons of the prayer activities pay tithes at the Congregation.

²⁸⁹ Catechist Abboah-Offei told this researcher that people do not necessarily give money to an institution, but rather to a credible individual to be given to the institution.

²⁹⁰ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 79-103 and Asamoah-Gyadu, "Pentecostal and Missiological Significance of Religious Experience," 30-54.

²⁹¹ The Ministry at Grace brings several groups of people into a special relationship. These groups are members of the regular Grace Congregation, members of the GET who belong to other congregations of the PCG or other church denominations, patrons of the prayer centre's activities from various denominations. All these groups that unified at Grace are together called 'The Grace Family.'

²⁹² Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Akuapem Presbytery, Assessable Income Data of Congregations and Districts from 2012 – 2015, 15.

²⁹³ In the PCG, assessable income refers to tithes, offering taken during Sunday church service and voluntary thanks offerings. These incomes are the basic reference points for determining the financial strength of each Congregation and it is based on these that congregations are allocated amounts to transfer to the higher courts in the church to support the administration and mission of the church at those levels.

in the Akuapem Presbytery for that period.²⁹⁴ Even though this is not a comparative study, it will be helpful to state that the Grace Congregation's income as indicated above is far above that of other congregations with higher membership such as Christ Church, the first Congregation of the PCG also in Akropong which has a membership that is about twice that of Grace.²⁹⁵ In effect, tithe receipts from people who are not regular members of the Grace Congregation have contributed tremendously to the income of the church on the basis of the activities of the GET. Such people pay their tithe to the Grace Congregation on account of their relationship with the prayer ministry.

Due to the above fundraising scenarios, the centres are able to raise a lot of money for their own activities and also in support of the congregations where they are located. The prayer ministry at Grace, for instance, is said to contribute about 92% of the total income of the funds for the congregation's programmes and activities.²⁹⁶ Grace Congregation has a chapel with a sitting capacity of 3000; the largest chapel in the PCG. The Congregation is currently embarking on a number of infrastructural projects to enhance its ministry. But for the prayer centre activities which positively influence the congregation's income, it would have been difficult if not impossible for it to embark on such projects. In the same way, the Mount Moriah Centre was able to construct a wall around the PCG's land on which it is located with about 60% of the funds being provided by someone who is a member of the congregation but a beneficiary of the centre's ministry.²⁹⁷ Therefore, it can

²⁹⁴ Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Akuapem Presbytery, Assessable Income Data of Congregations and Districts from 2012 – 2015, 46.

²⁹⁵ The numerical strength of Grace Congregation as at 2015 was 1,186 whilst that of Christ Church for the same period was 3,469. See PCG Akuapem Presbytery, 2015 Annual Reports presented to the 2016 Presbytery Session, p. 117. The tithe earnings for the Grace Congregation from 2012 to 2015 were as follows: 2012- GHs120, 872.45; 2013 – GHs141, 236.00; 2014 – GHs200, 829.90; 2015 – GHs298, 611.75 whilst those of Christ Church were: 2012 – GHs122, 669.80; 2013 – GHs118, 200.65; 2014 – GHs175, 789.25; 2015 – GHs237, 347.10. See Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Akuapem Presbytery, Assessable Income Data of Congregations and Districts from 2012 – 2015, 15.

²⁹⁶ Catechist Abbaoh Offei, interview, Wednesday 30th May, 2017.

²⁹⁷ Rev. Daniel Ayim, Interview, Saturday 11th February, 2017 and Mr. Newman, interview, Wednesday 7th June, 2017

be argued that the ministry of the prayer centre has become major avenues for funds mobilization for various physical or infrastructural development projects such as the building of chapels and other aspects of mission in the church.

4.7 Prayer Centres as avenues for forging Ecumenical Ties

Pentecostalism has been described as a movement that began with an ecumenical orientation.²⁹⁸ This ecumenical orientation of Pentecostalism was identified to be associated with the ministry of the Charismatic renewal groups in the western mission founded churches such as PCG's BSPG.²⁹⁹ This ecumenical orientation is equally present in the ministry of the prayer centres in the PCG. As was discussed in Chapter two, the development of the prayer centres in the PCG had ecumenical influences as many of the initiators were products of the SU's prayer Warriors' Ministry and deliverance workshops and retreats. Also, as earlier discussed in this chapter, patrons at the prayer centres come from diverse denominational and religious backgrounds. This shows that the centres just like the BSPG and charismatic renewal groups in the western mission founded churches are welcome everyone who seeks solutions to their needs through the power of Christ.³⁰⁰

Another evidence of ecumenism in the ministry of the prayer centres is seen with the GET at Akropong where Christian leaders and theologians from various denominational backgrounds are said to have contributed to shaping the theological focus and direction of the ministry.³⁰¹ Also, ministers of other denominations and countries are often invited to

²⁹⁸Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 335.

²⁹⁹Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 269-271.

³⁰⁰ Samuel Adubofour, "Para-Church Movements in Ghanaian Christianity", PhD Thesis (Edinburgh, 1994), p. 440.

³⁰¹ Catechist Abboah Offei, leader of the centre mentioned to the present writer that theologians and church leaders such as the Most Rev. Justice Offei Akrofi former Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Accra and of the Province of the Church in West Africa, Apostle Jude Hama, former General Director of the Scripture Union, Ghana, Rev. Fr. Oko Ankrh of the Anglican Church helped to shape and develop the ministry of the team and the centre. Among the Christian leaders who speak at the various programmes of the centre are; the former Prelate of the Presbyterian Church in Eastern Nigeria, Pastor Peter Sakyi Hyde, a Baptist Pastor. Others such as Pastor OdumaWembe, an Anglican Pastor from Nigeria, Pastor Pimpong, a Baptist pastor, Pastor Ink, from Duke Town Presbyterian Church, Canada and Apostle Amoani, an independent Pentecostal church pastor in Ghana.

preach during some of the major events of the centre. This is however said to be done with circumspection as a safeguard against teachings that are contrary the Bible being preached on The PCG'S platforms and also to prevent "sheep stealing."³⁰²

4.8 The Ministry of Prayer Centres: Issues of Concern

In spite of the many contributions of prayer centres to the mission of the PCG, there are some aspects of the ministry of the prayer centres that seem to be of concern to some members and leaders of the PCG which will need to be examined as follows:

4.8.1 Charisma vrs Authority; Tensions in the Prayer centre ministry

Charismatic renewal has been noted to be a potential source of conflicts and schisms in churches.³⁰³ As discussed earlier, the ministry of prayer centres in Ghanaian Christianity have also been noted to be characterised by secessions.³⁰⁴ This arises mainly as a result of tensions over having a balance between the use of the Charismatic gifts and compliance with church procedure, a situation that can be referred to as tension between charisma and authority. Traces of such tensions have been found in the ministry of the prayer centres in the PCG and the Congregations where they are located and perhaps the entire PCG. Some of the few instances of such tensions as found out in this study are briefly discussed below.

In line with the guidelines for prayer centres and deliverance ministry in the PCG, each centre is to have a management committee called the Prayer Centre Management Committee, (PCMC). This PCMC is supposed to see to the administration of the centre and submit reports at least twice each year to the District Coordinator of M&E for onward

³⁰² Sheep Stealing is a situation where Christian leaders who get access to the members of another congregation or fellowship manage to draw them to his or her congregation or fellowship without the knowledge of the leadership. It is considered as a negative practice that shows breach of trust

³⁰³Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 284-285.

³⁰⁴Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 371-382 and Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 209-214.

submission to the Presbytery and National Directors of M&E.³⁰⁵ This was found to be in place at Mount Moriah, Danfa but it was not so with the GET at Akropong. In place of the PCMC, there is an Executive Committee of the GET which is supposed to be responsible for the administration of the team's activities in line with the team's constitution. The constitution states that the ministry of "the team shall be autonomous of any Presbyterian Congregation but will seek to serve the largest interest of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana."³⁰⁶ The GET may have deemed it important to insulate itself from the control of the Session of the Grace Congregation or any other Congregation of the PCG based on previous experiences of seeming struggle between leaders of congregations where such renewal activities started and the people leading such renewal activities. However, this step by the GET in itself violates the PCG's constitution which provides that every group in the Congregation is to be under the supervision of the Congregational Session.³⁰⁷ Therefore, though the GET may be serving "the larger interest" of the PCG, it is seen to be unchecked thereby violating the rules of the PCG.

Beside the absence of the PCMC, this researcher did not cite any report on the GET's activities at any level of the church except those on the early years of its ministry. This is contrary to the guidelines for prayer centres and deliverance ministries and indeed all other groups or entities in the church. When asked why there are no reports on the GET's activities, both the leadership of the GET and that of the Session (the past and current ministers) pointed to the other as the cause for that. The GET leadership suggested that the group is in the Congregation as such if there are no reports on its activities then it is because the leadership of the Congregation is not interested in reporting on the entire life

³⁰⁵ PCG, M&E Department, Guidelines for the Prayer/ Retreat Centres and Deliverance Ministries in the Church, 24.

³⁰⁶ Grace Evangelistic Team, Akropong, Constitution, article 14.

³⁰⁷ Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Constitution, Article 9 (4) (1), 20.

of the Congregation.³⁰⁸ This implies that, as far as the leadership of the GET is concerned, the Congregational Session deliberately chooses not to capture the team's activities in the Congregation's annual report as a way of covering up what the team does. This will further mean that the leadership of the GET views the leadership of the Session to be deliberately sabotaging or stifling its ministry. On their part, both a former and the current Minister in Charge of the Congregation argued that each time the GET was asked to submit report to the Session as required of all groups in the church, those responsible for that did not comply. They also alleged that, the GET wants to do things its own way without being checked in line with the practices and procedures of the church.³⁰⁹ They suggest that in the light of the GET's constitutional provision on its autonomy, it does not consider itself to be under the control and supervision of the Session and attempts by the Session or the Minister to correct anything found to be 'inappropriate' is met with resistance. This view seems to be confirmed from a point by the leader of the GET that trying to apply undue procedures to prevent the charismata from operating the way it should in the church is not helpful.³¹⁰ Indeed, with the view that the congregation has gained fame on account of the prayer ministry, the clergy and some other members of the Congregation who are not members of the GET seem to suggest that there are always attempts by the GET to control of the congregation, a situation that the clergy have difficulty in handling.

Such cases of tensions of charisma and authority been noted not to be limited to be between the leadership of the prayer centres and the Congregations where they are located

³⁰⁸ Catechist Abbaoh Offei, interview, Wednesday 30th May, 2017

³⁰⁹ Rev. Kwadwo Osei Bonsu, immediate former Minister in Charge of Grace Congregation, interview, Friday 28th April, 2017 and Rev. K. B. Asante, Current, Minister in Charge of Grace Congregation, Akropong, interview, Thursday 1st June, 2017

³¹⁰ The leader at the Grace Centre, Catechist Abbaoh Offei mentioned to the present writer that the church has breaks but an individual especially those with apostolic and prophetic callings do not have breaks and so move fast and if the church tries to be an impediment in their way they would be compelled to go ahead of the church.

only but extending to include leadership of the entire PCG. Some directors of the prayer centres reportedly do not avail themselves for meetings and training workshops organised by the department for them. These concerns were expressed by both the former and the present directors of M&E.³¹¹

Apart from the issues of administrative supervision and oversight of the prayer centres, there are issues such as conformity to the teachings and/or practices of the church. These concerns were expressed by the immediate past Moderator in his address to the General Assembly in 2015.³¹² There are also suggestions that directors and teams members at some of the prayer centres engage in practices that are contrary to the practices in the church.³¹³ This situation is directly influencing the conduct of prayer ministries in the various congregation of the PCG since depending on which prayer centre members or leaders of a congregation patronize, they apply the practices or some of the teachings learnt there. This seems to be a source of worry for some leaders of the church who would want to see uniformity prevailing in all aspects of the church's life.³¹⁴

It would be realized that though the charismatic gifts of individual members of the church are good for the mission of the church, their management needs to be carefully considered by the PCG to ensure that they do not degenerate into a situation of chaos and disorder. Omenyo has cautioned that it is not helpful to meet charismatic groups with negative restrictions.³¹⁵ This is not only because it will go against the church by and large, the charismatic individuals wish the best for the church.³¹⁶ It is for this reason that the PCG

³¹¹ Rev. Dr. W. K. Ofose-Addo, interview Friday 25th November, 2016 and Rev. Felix Akresu Anim Danso, interview 30th November, 2016.

³¹² Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Minutes of the 15th General Assembly, 14th to 20th August, 2015.

³¹³ The late leader of the Abasau Prayer Centres was mentioned as using the title of Odeefo (Prophet), using a vestment made of a special white gown and head turban and a staff, plucking herbs for participants at the annual retreats on the mountain, practices that are considered to be at variance with those of the PCG.

³¹⁴ Rev. Dr. K. Opuni Frimpong, interview, Saturday 3rd June, 2017.

³¹⁵ Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 289.

³¹⁶ Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 285-289.

needs to carefully examine the issues raised here to ensure a reasonable balance between the charisma of individual especially those in charge of the prayer centres and the authority of the church.

4.8.2 Infrastructural Challenges

Inadequate infrastructure has been noted to be a major problem associated with prayer centres in Ghana generally.³¹⁷ The prayer centres of the PCG, also suffer from the same problem as noted from the responses to the question of challenges faced by the centres. For instance, Mount Moriah needs a bigger auditorium for its prayer activities in view of the increasing numbers that keep going there. At the last two visits by the researcher to the centre in the first and second weeks of June, 2017, it was realized that the prayer sessions were held outside in the woods and the explanation offered was that the chapel had become quite constraining for the service. There are other problems such as charlets and hostels for patrons who visit the centres to lodge. There is also the challenge of office space for the staff at Mount Moriah. All these infrastructural challenges pertain to the other centres as gathered from my interviews with the directors on their retreat in the first week of July 2017. The centres need means of transport in line with the provision of the guideline for their operations as “rescue mission.”³¹⁸

4.9 Conclusion

The main argument in this chapter was that prayer centres in the PCG have impacted the mission of the church in many positive ways. The discussion has demonstrated that the prayer centres have proved important with respect to meeting various existential needs of both Presbyterians and non-Presbyterians. The prayer centres are also important with respect to the renewal and empowerment of people for ministry in the church. Again, the

³¹⁷ Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 408.

³¹⁸ Presbyterian Church of Ghana, *Guideline for Prayer/Retreat Centres & Deliverance Ministries in the Church*, 23.

prayer centres contributed to the growth of the congregations where they are located, thus they are contributing to church's growth. Prayer centres have also been found to be important with respect to mobilising financial resources for supporting the mission of the church. They are also avenues for promoting ecumenical ties. It also came out that activities of the prayer centres have resulted in a shift in the avenues of spiritual renewal activities in the PCG during the last decade. Certain issues of concern with regard to the ministry of prayer centres which bother on the tension between the charisma of leaders of the prayer centres and leadership of the congregations where they are located and indeed the entire church also came out of in the discussion



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study was conducted on prayer centres as avenues of contemporary spiritual renewal in the PCG. The study basically examined factors that influenced emergence of prayer centres in the PCG, the ministries they are involved in, their impact on the PCG in terms of the benefits to those who patronise them, how they are affecting the overall mission of the church and finally the extent to which prayer centres represent a shift in avenue of spiritual renewal activities in the PCG. The study was organised into five chapters. This chapter gives the summary of the study, conclusions and the recommendations based on the major findings.

5.2 Summary

The study was grounded on the theory of religious innovation originated by Clair Disbrey, Everest Rogers and Harold Turner, and articulated in relation to the Ghanaian context by Elizabeth Amoah. A Multi-disciplinary approach made up of historical and phenomenological methods was used for the study. Literature on Pentecostal renewal generally both globally and in Ghana as well as those that pertain to prayer centres, in particular, were reviewed in order to put the study within the right academic perspective.

In Chapter two the evolution of prayer centres in the PCG was discussed. History of renewal efforts in the PCG was examined in order to trace the various stages through which prayer centres evolved to and factors that influenced the acceptance of prayer centres in the PCG. The chapter also examined issues such as who takes the initiative for establishing prayer centres in the PCG among others.

Data for the chapter was gathered mainly through primary sources such as interviews with some leaders of the PCG, people who were involved in the renewal efforts of the PCG and for that matter the evolution of prayer centres as well as current leaders of some prayer centres. Written sources such historical records of the PCG and also scholarly materials of Pentecostal renewal in Ghana and the mainline churches including the PCG were also studied. It was found out that even though prayer activities begun quite early in the PCG, the institution of prayer centres as they are presently evolved out of the activities of the BSPG. The prayer centres emerged as initiatives of individual members or groups of members under the auspices of the BSPG. The first of such individually initiated prayer centre was the Gethsemane prayer centre at Jejemeraja in the Brong Ahafo region established in 1974 under the leadership of Daniel Ansu. In the course of time, the PCG accepted prayer centres as part of its structures with the Synod Committee approving the establishment of prayer and healing centre at Atobie Kwahu in the Eastern region. This was started in the late 1980s but the centre became operational in 2006. Since 2007 the PCG has been encouraging Presbyteries to establish prayer centres as places of renewal for members and non-members. Currently, there are 24 prayer centres affiliated to the PCG all over the country. Two of the prayer centres are the Grace Centre Akropong operated by the Grace Evangelistic Team and the Mount Moriah prayer centre at Danfa. The immediate factors that influenced the establishment of prayer centres in the PCG included having an avenue for meeting the existential needs of members of the church particularly with respect to divine healing. The PCG considered the meeting of such needs as crucial for reversing the drift of members to the newer churches and more so attracting new people into the church. Prayer centres were therefore considered as important avenues for church growth and subsequently the influence of the prayer centres of other denominations and Christian groups informed their adoption in the PCG. In effect, the PCG's desire to

improve its numerical growth compelled it to accept healing and deliverance to be integrated into its mainstream activities hereby leading to the establishment of prayer centres. Finally, the activities of prayer centres of the AICs, and also those affiliated to the CoP as well as the SU influenced the PCG's decision to accept the concept of prayer centres within its structures.

The discussions were in line with the position of Clair Disbrey that religious people alter and renew their religion by discarding unsuitable aspects and taking on new and workable elements from other religions which they integrate into their system in order to attain their desired objectives. It also reflects the view of Elizabeth Amoah that in Ghana, all the religious groups are constantly going through the process of innovations by taking on elements from others and adapting them to their specific situations. It further highlighted that the PCG considered prayer centres to be of relative advantage, compatible to its system and its usefulness was observable hence it was adopted. Also, these characteristics of prayer centres were spread in the PCG through interactions between its members.

Having accepted the concept of prayer centres, the PCG has taken steps to ensure their proper integration into the life of the church. The centres have been placed under the department of M&E with a policy guideline designed to regulate their activities. The M&E department also builds the capacity of personnel in charge of the prayer centres through organizing annual training workshops and retreats for directors and their team members with the view of enhancing their capacities.³¹⁹

In Chapter three, the ministry of prayer centres in terms of their programs, practices, activities and their spirituality in general and how these fit into the ethos of the PCG was interrogated. Data for this was gathered largely through participant observation,

³¹⁹ See pp. 66-67 for discussions

interviews, focus group discussions and administration of questionnaire. The activities that were observed at the prayer centres were related to other contexts in order to find out how they fit into the category of innovation as proposed by Harold Turner that innovative religious groups must be studied on their broad tendencies rather than their peculiarities. Just like prayer centres in other streams of Christianity in Ghana, the main emphasis in the ministry of the prayer centres in the PCG are prayer, healing, deliverance and spiritual consultation. The major issues presented at the prayer centres for redress are the search for health and healing, economic wellbeing, spiritual problems such as demonic attacks, breaking of curses and other spiritual ties. Marriage and family stability, search for childbirth, spiritual renewal and being empowered for ministry are also among the reasons why people visit the prayer centres in the PCG.³²⁰

It was established that prayer centres in the PCG attract large patronage from both Presbyterians and non-Presbyterians. The non-Presbyterians who patronize the PCG's prayer centres are drawn from various Christian denominations namely Roman Catholic, Mainline Protestant, Classical Pentecostal, Charismatic and others such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventist, Salvation Army as well as Muslims and traditional believers. The large patronage of the PCG's prayer centres is consistent with what has already been established concerning prayer centres of other denominations such as the CoP.³²¹ Finally, the chapter established that among the patrons of prayer centres are the clergy of the PCG including those in higher leadership positions such as Presbytery officers and/or officers of the General Assembly who either go there to officiate programmes such as preaching or to take part in the programmes for their own spiritual renewal and growth.

³²⁰ See Chapter three for discussions

³²¹ See Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 188-189.

Chapter Four of the study dealt with the impact of prayer centres on the life and mission of the PCG. It examined the extent to which prayer centres have proved to be beneficial to their patrons and thereby promoted the mission of the PCG. From the views of respondents, the chapter concluded that the prayer centres in the PCG have proved to be effective places where various spiritual and existential needs of people are met. They also serve as places for people to have spiritual renewal. The prayer centres are also contributing to building the capacities of personnel for ministry in the church as many people go there basically with the expectation of being empowered or receiving gifts for ministry or service in their churches. The GET, at Akropong in particular equips people for ministry through the deliverance training programme it runs. Besides these, the prayer centres have also been noted as major avenues of resource mobilization in the PCG. Through this, the centres are able to undertake many developmental and infrastructural projects in support of the mission of the congregations where they are located.³²² The prayer centres in the PCG were also found to have contributed to the numerical growth of the congregations where they are located. The study could not, however, prove the extent to which prayer centres have positively impacted on the overall numerical growth of the PCG.

Renewal activities have generally been noted to have ecumenical underpinnings or to promote ecumenism.³²³ To this end, prayer centres in the PCG were found to be avenues for forging ecumenical ties through the heterogeneous composition of their patrons. Also, ministers from other denominational backgrounds are invited to minister at the PCG's prayer centres such as Grace at Akropong. Programmes and activities of various churches or denominations are easily adopted and applied at various prayer centres from where they

³²² See pp. 105-108 for discussions.

³²³Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 335, Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 269-271 and Samuel Adubofour, "Para-Church Movements in Ghanaian Christianity", PhD Thesis (Edinburgh, 1994), 440 and chapter 4, 109-110 for discussions.

find their way into other congregations. Besides that, the establishment of prayer centres also had ecumenical influence as it was motivated by what other churches and the SU practised. Thus, as with the renewal phenomena everywhere, prayer centres in the PCG are both the products of ecumenism and actively promoting it both consciously and unconsciously.

The study also noted some issues of concern with regard to prayer centres in the PCG that need attention. These include the seemingly uncoordinated manner in which prayer centres are established in the PCG which is leading to the springing up of many prayer centres that do not seem sustainable. The prayer centres also lack the requisite infrastructure that is hindering their operations. There is some level of tension between the leadership of prayer centres and that of the congregations where they are located which has been described as the problem of charisma versus authority. The GET at Akropong, for instance, has insulated itself from control by the congregational leadership and by that breaching some basic rules of the PCG by not submitting reports on its activities to any level of the church. Yet, the Session cannot correct this because any attempt to do so will be taken as attempting to control the team and so will be resisted. There is seeming suspicion by both the sides against each other. This tension between charisma and authority is evident at other centres where the directors do not respond to invitations to attend training workshops organised for them by the Church. Finally, the issue of some practices that are viewed as alien to the Presbyterian practice was also raised in the study.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concludes that prayer centres stand in historic continuity to earlier Pentecostal renewal activities in Ghana in and the PCG in particular. As far as the PCG is concerned, it can be said that prayer centres are part of the continuing evolution of the charismatic renewal in the church over the years. The gradual movement of prayer centres from the

periphery to the centre of renewal activities in the PCG can be attributed to the church's openness towards spiritual renewal activities in general. Standing in continuity to earlier Pentecostal renewal activities in the country as a whole and the PCG in particular, the study can conclude that prayer centres in the PCG share a lot of the theological and phenomenological characteristics of the earlier forms of renewal activities in the PCG and indeed other forms of Pentecostal activities in the country as a whole. Some of these characteristics will be highlighted briefly as follows:

Prayer centres in the PCG are largely spontaneous in that their emergence did not follow any systematically planned programme but rather through the on-going renewal activities in the church. Thus, as has been noted the initial prayer centres were established through the initiative of individual members or groups of individuals in the church. The trend of spontaneity can be said to persist up to the present time where prayer centres can be described as having been institutionalised in the church. They can be said to show signs of a religious movement even though the PCG has managed to put some measures in place to regulate their activities and get them to conform to institutional arrangements.

Besides, the fact that the establishment of prayer centres was a spontaneous event, their ministries in terms of programmes and activities also show much spontaneity. This is seen in the oral and flexible liturgy they employ, their use of the vernacular in worship as well as mass participation in the prayers and other activities. They also emphasise causal explanations for problems, reliance on supernatural mediums such as dreams, visions, prophecies and other similar modes for interrogating issues or seeking explanations to problems among others. These traits are not static or systematised according to any fixed rules or procedures. These traits which have been noted to be integral to Pentecostal spirituality, in general, are also very akin to traditional African spirituality and culture.

Also, from the analysis of the data for this study, it can be concluded that prayer centres in the PCG are basically “need driven”. The emergence and acceptance of prayer centres in the PCG was informed by certain peculiar needs at the time. These needs can be seen at two levels namely the individual level and the corporate level of the church. The individual level bordered on meetings the needs of people such as divine healing, deliverance and other spiritual and existential needs. Such needs have been seen to be part of the salvation package for the Africans who as has been noted emphasise a wholeness soteriology. In other words, salvation must come along with all that revitalises life in the here and now. Therefore, the host of programmes and activities that have been designed and ran by the prayer centres are specifically geared towards meeting the needs of their patrons. They are thus, practical responses of the church to the African realities and can be said to ultimately project the Christian God revealed in Jesus Christ as powerful and victorious over all the problems that confront the people. Kwame Bediako has argued from his discussions of the songs and appellations of Afua Kumah,³²⁴ that this idea of Jesus as powerful and victorious over the problems that Africans are confronted with is strong in the understanding of African Christians.³²⁵ It is reasoned that through their programmes and activities, prayer centres seek to urge their patrons to appropriate such victory for themselves. This does not, however, imply that the prayer centres de-emphasise the place of personal salvation. The data collected for this study shows that, to a very large extent salvation of the soul as well as holiness are important in the theology of the prayer centres just as the meeting of existential needs. For instance, before the start of prayer

³²⁴Afua Kumah is the affectionate name of Christiana Afua Gyan, who hailed from Obo Kwahu in the Eastern region of Ghana. She was a traditional midwife and farmer and she expressed her faith and understanding of Jesus through appellations and songs using the primal religious experience of benevolent and malevolent spiritual forces, cultural ideas and idioms and her personal encounters perhaps in the forests. The songs and appellations were first recorded and later transcribed into a booklet which serves as an important reading material on oral or indigenous theology.

³²⁵Kwame Bediako, *Jesus in Africa: The Christian Gospel in African History and Experience*, (Akropong – Akuapem, Regnum Africa, 2000), pp. 8-15.

sessions at almost every programme, worshippers are invited to make personal commitment to Jesus Christ and also confess their sins and ask for forgiveness with the assurance that it takes one who has committed his or her life to Jesus Christ and whose sins are forgiven to receive the blessings they expect.

The above notwithstanding, the study also noted that many of the clients at the prayer centres do not present any existential needs but basically seek renewal or empowerment to be in ministry or in the service of the church. Thus, it is not entirely the case that Africans use religion for utilitarian purposes only.³²⁶

At the corporate level of the PCG, it can be concluded that the church accepted prayer centres as part of its mission strategy of making its ministry practical and relevant to its members so as not to only avert the drift of the members to newer churches but also to attract members into the church. Thus, the need for ensuring membership stability and church growth accounted for the acceptance of prayer centres in the PCG.

Furthermore, it can be concluded that with the emergence of prayer centres, the focus of spiritual renewal activities in the PCG over the last decade has shifted from the BSPG which had spearheaded such renewal programmes to the prayer centres. A study of the reports on spiritual renewal activities in the PCG over the last decade has shown a deafening silence on the BSPG with increasing focus on the prayer centre activities. The significance of the prayer centres as avenues of spiritual renewal is likely to persist as the need for issues such as search for healing and deliverance, places for personal and corporate retreats are still important for many Christians for their spiritual renewal and growth. This shift can be explained as an expression of the BSPG's own desire that the

³²⁶ See Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, pp. and chapter 4 pp. 101 -102 for discussions

entire PCG will one day be fully revived.³²⁷ Indeed, in line with the BSPG'S own expectations, other forms of spiritual renewal activities such as revival meetings and all nights (vigils), among others, have become common in the PCG and run parallel to the prayer centres. A study of the reports from the Districts presented to the 2017 Akuapem Presbytery Session shows a high level of spiritual renewal activities such as youth prayer rallies, revivals and all-night prayers (vigils), district prayer conferences, crusades, among others at the districts and congregations which were patronised.³²⁸ This trend of increased spiritual renewal activities at the Districts and Congregations has come about as a result of many more leaders, both ordained and lay, not just becoming exposed to the spiritual renewal or charismatic phenomenon but also having the charisma for conducting such activities. It means that Bediako's argument that mainline denominations in Ghana have taken on more and more of the Pentecostal features thereby showing virtually no distinction between the two streams of Christianity in Ghana is true as far as the PCG is concerned.³²⁹ This trend of increased spiritual renewal activities at the Congregations and Districts which Omenyo refers to as "Charismatisation of the Mainline Churches in Ghana" is likely to increase with time. This charismatisation process is however not likely to diminish the significance of the prayer centres as already stated above. It will only show the level of fluidity of the charismatic or spiritual renewal phenomenon in general and in the PCG in particular. The PCG will however, need to prepare itself to manage the fast emerging trend of spiritual renewal activities in order to avoid any excesses.

³²⁷See Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 287

³²⁸Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Akuapem Presbytery, 2016 reports presented to the 2017 Presbytery Session, 72, 157, 170, 198, 263-264

³²⁹Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*, 2nd Ed. (Akropong – Akuapem: Regnum Africa, 2014), 66

5.4 Recommendations

In the light of the foregoing issues raised from the study, the following recommendations have been suggested with respect to the ministry of the prayer centres in the PCG.

The study found traces of prophetism and anointing in the practices of the prayer centres but these could not be covered within the scope and period of the study. It is therefore suggested that further study is undertaken on these two practices to find out their prevalence in the ministry of the prayer centres.

The study also concluded that the appropriation of divine healing and deliverance will continue to be with the church for a long time. It will, therefore, be important for theological educators to explore means of integrating it into the education and training of ministers and personnel for the service in the church. This will help equip church leaders and members to address such need which is a real need for African Christians.

It is further recommended that pending the introduction of a formal means of training in deliverance ministry by theological institutions, the PCG takes steps to give a more indepth training for people in charge of its prayer centres beside the annual training workshops for the directors of prayer centres and their team members. Even though the deliverance ministry can be described as being mainly determined by charismatic gifts or personal disposition of individuals, training in the area will enable people with such personal disposition to be equipped with sound biblical and theological understanding for such ministry and thus be effective. It will also go a long way to eliminate some of the excesses and unacceptable practices that have persistently characterised the healing and deliverance ministry in Ghana. The deliverance training workshop organised by the GET at Akropong can be a starting point for both theological institutions and the church to

initiate steps to give formal training in the healing and deliverance ministry to persons involved in such ministry.

In the light of the fact that the quest for numerical growth was key factor for the PCG accepting to establish prayer centres within its structures, it will be necessary for another study to be conducted to specifically find out the extent to which the prayer centres have contributed to the overall membership of the church. This will add to the body of knowledge on the various modes of evangelism and church growth in general and also help the PCG to examine the effectiveness or otherwise of its evangelistic efforts and how to make it effective.

The study found out that there is an uncoordinated establishment of prayer centres in the PCG with a number of them not being effectively operated. This was an issue that Paul Gifford has observed about prayer centres in Ghana generally.³³⁰ The study therefore recommends that PCG must regulate the establishment of prayer centres within its structures. The church must be concerned with the effectiveness and efficiency of the prayer centres and not just the numbers. At best there should be a limit to the number of prayer centres that each Presbytery must have. Any intention to open new centres must be backed by stated reasons such as the need for it as well as the availability of the personnel to manage it. This will go a long way to ensure that there is no duplication of efforts and resources are effectively utilized.

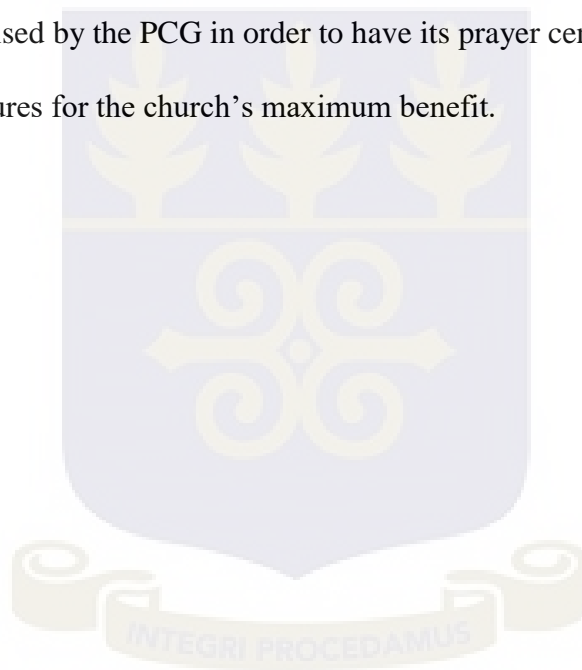
As shown in Chapter four, prayer centres in Ghana usually suffer from inadequate infrastructure³³¹ and the prayer centres in the PCG are no exception to this. It is therefore recommended that the PCG must, as a matter of necessity put plans in place to provide the requisite infrastructure for the prayer centres to facilitate their ministry. Presbyteries that

³³⁰ Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 88. Also, see pp. 63-64 under chapter two.

³³¹ Larbi, *Pentecostalism*,

establish prayer centres must make budgetary allocations for providing infrastructural facilities for them. The national head office must also budget for the centres especially Atibie, Abasua, and Cherepatre which were established through direct decisions of the Synod or GAC

Beside the benefits, there are issues regarding the activities of the prayer centres that the PCG needs to carefully take note of and seek to address seriously to ensure their effectiveness and maximum benefits. These relate to the supervision and control of prayer centres as well as the infrastructural needs of the centres. These issues as was noted need to be critically appraised by the PCG in order to have its prayer centres operate in line with its laid down procedures for the church's maximum benefit.



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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire for Clients of the Prayer Centres

NB: For items that give you options to choose from you may tick as many options as apply to you.

1. Gender: (please tick (√) Male Female
2. Educational background: please tick (√) Tertiary....., secondary
....., basic , not educated
3. Religious background: please tick (√): Christian..... denomination
Other religion (specify).....
4. How did you know about this centre? Please tick (√)
 - (i) through the testimonies of others ()
 - (ii) through radio/TV announcements/ bill boards/ posters etc ()
 - (iii) through announcement(s) in your church ()
 - (iv) through the recommendation of your pastor or elder ()
 - (v) other (s) () please state briefly
5. For how long have you been visiting this centre? Please tick (√)
 - (i) a week ago ()
 - (ii) a month ()
 - (iii) three to six months ()
 - (iv) six months to one year ()
 - (v) one to two years ()
 - (vi) over two years ()
6. How often do you visit this centre? Please tick (√)
 - (i) this is my first visit ()
 - (ii) every week ()
 - (iii) monthly ()
 - (iv) quarterly ()
 - (v) half yearly ()
 - (vi) yearly ()
 - (vii) once a while or when I have any problems ()
7. For what reason(s) do you come to this centre?
 - (i) health/healing ()

- (ii) family/marital problems, family stability ()
 - (iii) to pray to get a marriage partner ()
 - (iv) child birth ie to conceive/ have stable pregnancy/safe delivery ()
 - (v) financial problems/indebtedness ()
 - (vi) employment, promotion, success in business/ avert a business downturn ()
 - (vii) spiritual problems, eg demonic attacks, strange dreams, curses etc ()
 - (viii) to travel overseas ()
 - (ix) involved in a legal/court case/ to get a property back ()
 - (x) academic success, pass examinations/ for intelligence ()
 - (xi) for spiritual renewal/ empowerment for ministry ()
 - (xii) any other reason (s) () please state briefly.....
8. In what ways has this centre been of help to you? Please tick (√)
- (i) solution to the problem(s) I brought ()
 - (ii) improvement in my problem and I am hopeful it would be resolved completely ()
 - (iii) spiritual renewal ()
 - (iv) received blessings or answers to needs aside the issues I brought here for ()
 - (v) received spiritual gifts/ empowered for ministry ()
 - (vi) received counsel, advice or ideas on how to handle my problems or issues()
 - (vii) networked for business, career and other opportunities ()
9. In your opinion in what ways is this centre of benefit to the PCG specifically and the Christian community in general? Please tick (√)
- (i) addressing the spiritual problems of members ()
 - (ii) spiritual renewal/empowering people for ministry ()
 - (iii) contributing to church growth ()
 - (iv) contributing to improvement in church finances ()
 - (v) any other(s) () please state briefly
10. Are you aware of any challenges the centre faces? Please tick (√) Yes.....
No.....
12. If yes, please state briefly
13. Are there any practices/activities at this centre that you consider to be undesirable and hence should be corrected? Please tick (√) Yes
No.....
14. If yes please state briefly

15. What do you suggest can be done to improve the ministry at this centre?

.....

16. Any other comments you may have

.....



Appendix B: Interview Guide on the Evolution of Prayer Centres and the Administration of Prayer Centres in the PCG

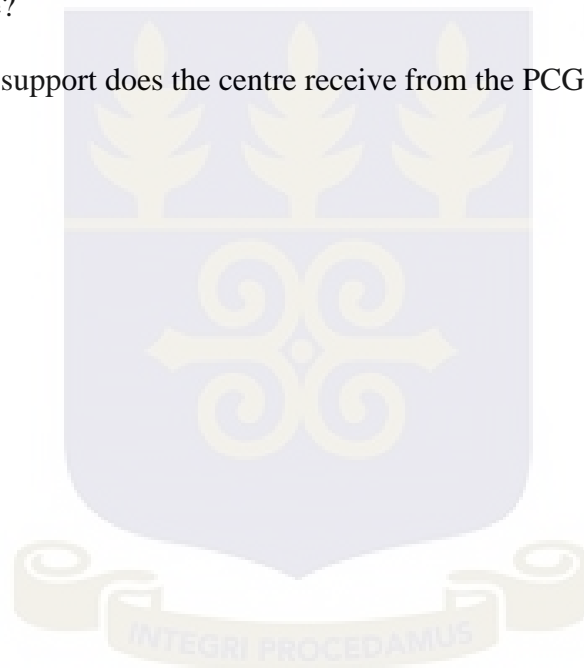
a. Interview Guide for leaders in the church?

1. Sir/Madam, please what is your name?
2. What necessitated the establishment of prayer centres in the PCG?
3. Who initiates the establishment of Prayer Centres or how are the Prayer Centres established in the PCG?
4. How are the Prayer Centres administered in terms of supervision, control etc?
5. What kind of ministries are the Prayer Centres involved in or what are the issues the Prayer Centres deal with?
6. How do the activities, ethos and praxis of the Prayer Centres fit into the general ethos and praxis of the PCG?
7. How different are the ministries of Prayer Centres from other forms of renewal activities in the PCG?
8. In what ways are Prayer Centres of benefit to individuals or people who patronize them and also the PCG as a whole?
9. What does the PCG expect of its Prayer Centres?
10. Do the Prayer the Prayer Centres pose any challenge to the PCG and if so in what ways or how?
11. What is the future of Prayer Centres in the PCG?

b: Interview Guide for Leaders of Prayer Centres

1. Please what is your name?
2. What is/are your(s) role in the activities of this prayer centre?
3. Please how did this prayer centre come about, I mean when was it established, what accounted for its establishment, who established it etc

4. What is the governance and administrative structure of this Prayer Centre?
5. What kind of ministries or programmes and activities is the centre involved in?
6. How do the activities of this centre fit into the praxis and ethos of the PCG?
7. Dose this centre and others like it have any impact on the PCG, if so how?
8. Does this centre and others like it have any assistance from the PCG, if so how?
9. What are challenges confronting the ministry or operations of this prayer centre?
10. What support does the centre receive from the PCG?



Appendix C: Record of visits to Prayer Centres for Observation and Data collection

a. Grace Prayer Centre, Akropong (operated by the Grace Evangelistic Team):

Saturday 15th December, 2015, - First visit to observe activities and to write proposal for this study. It was the climax of the seven days at Grace programme for that year

Tuesday 14th February, 2017 - Visit to observe counselling session and to interview Mr. Abboah-Offei, Leader of the Grace Evangelistic Team

Wednesday 1st March, 2017 - to observe “Commanding the Month”

Monday 6th March, 2017 - to observe holiday prayer retreat, “In the Woods” prayer retreat”

Friday 14th April and Saturday 15th April, 2017 - to observe “Divine Exchange and Holy Saturday Restoration Hour”

Tuesday 18th April, 2017 - to follow up observations on counselling programme

b. Mount Moriah Prayer Centre Danfa:

Saturday 11th February, 2017 - first visit to interact with the Director of the centre

Wednesday 1st March, 2017 - to observe the all-day prayer retreat, “Mpaebɔ kɛsɛ”

Tuesday 28th March, 2017 - to observe Counselling session and lent prayer retreats by districts

Saturday 15th April, 2017 - to observe Holy Saturday Presbytery Prayer Rally and

Monday 1st May, 2017 - to observe holiday prayer retreat, “prayer bazaar”

Appendix D List of Persons Interviewed

Rev. Dr. W. K. Ofofu-Addo, Former Director, Mission and Evangelism, PCG.

Rev. Felix Akresu Anim Danso, Current Director, Mission and Evangelism, PCG.

Rev. Daniel Ayim, Director, Mount Moriah Prayer Centre, Danfah.

Mr. Emmanuel Osei Kumi, Ga Presbytery YAF President.

Mr. Ekow Gaison, Ga Presbytery YAF Organiser.

Rev. Nana Ntim Gyakari, Former Director, Atibie Prayer Centre, Eastern Region.

Catechist E. Abboah-Offei, Leader, Grace Evangelistic Team, Akropong

Nii Afutu Blempong II, Chief of Danfah.

Rev. (Col Rtd) Adotey Asare, District Minister, Teshie.

Rev. I. D. Asare, District Minister, Akropong Akuapem.

Rev. Kwadwo Osei Bonsu, Former Minister in Charge, Grace Congregation, Akropong.

Rev. K. B. Asante, Minister in Charge, Grace Congregation, Akropong.

Catechist Sampson Amadi, Grace Congregation, and A member of the Grace Evangelistic Team.

Rev. Daniel Ofori -Appiah, Akuapem Presbytery Director of Mission and Evangelism.

Mr. Newman, Chairman, Management Committee, Mount Moriah Prayer Centre, Danfa.

Rev. Dr. K. Opuni-Frimpong, Second Minister at Christ Church, Akropong from 1991-1993,

Former Presbytery Chairperson, Asante Presbytery and General Secretary, Christian Council of Ghana, 2013-2017

Focus Group Discussion with Cross Section of Grace Evangelistic Team.

Focus Discussion with Team Members of Mount Moriah Prayer Centre.



Appendix E: List of Prayer Centres in the PCG

1	PCG prayer centre -	Ningo, D/Tongu Presbytery
2	Macedonia	Nkrankwanta – W/B Presbytery
3	Kusi prayer centre	Kusi – A/Abuakwa Presbytery
4	Bethel prayer centre	Ada-Foah – D/Tongu Presbytery
5	P.R.P.C	Mowire – Asante Presbytery
6	Mount Zion prayer centre	Nyinahin – Asante Presbytery
7	Christ the King	Ansuotaa – Western Presbytery
8	Hope Prayer centre	Pomaakrom -
9	Ebenezer prayer centre	Chiraa – B/A Presbytery
10	Resurrection Camp	Wasa Ankonsia Western Presbytery
11	Gilgal prayer centre	Bomaa – W/ Brong Presbytery
12	Emmanuel prayer Camp	Miremano – W/Brong Prebsytery
13	Gethsemane	Jenjemireja – W/Brong Presbytery
14	GET (Grace Centre)	Akropong, Akuapem Presbytery
15	Adweso	Koforidua, Akuapem Presbytery
16	Cherepatre	Kumasi, Asante Presbytery
17	Bethel prayer centre	Sekyere, Sekyere Presbytery
18	Nnobem	Sekyere Presbytery
19	Abirakasu	Sekyere presbytery
20	Yaamansu	Sekyere Presbytery
21	Christian seekers	Nuaso – D/Tongu
22	Ropheeka	Aplaku – Ga West
23	Atibie	Kwahu – Atibie, Kwahu Presbytery
24	Mount Moriah	Danfa, Ga Presbytery

Appendix F: Presbyterian Christ Church, Session Decisions – 7TH March, 1996

PRESBYTERIAN CHRIST CHURCH - AKROPONG

SESSION DECISIONS - 7TH MARCH 1996

1. Rev. Michael Awuah-Frimpong, together with Worship Committee, shall make contact with all Church Groups and P.T.C. in a search for volunteer-teachers for Children's Service.
2. Pastors shall suggest a convenient date to meet Rev. T.A. Osei for a lecture on Christ Church property in Akropong town.
3. Property, Education and Youth Committees, together with the Assemblyman representing Adami-Atifi, shall seek for funds amounting to ₵21,457 m. from the District Assembly and other probable sources to get the main block of Presby. Primary School roofed within the shortest possible time.
4. Akenkansu property shall be so named as to reflect the memory of the donor, Papa Kwasi Ninsin.
5. Session awaits Nicholas Akuffo/Welfare Committee's advice on how best to minister to the poor in Christ Church.
6. The Senior Presbyter is taxed to prepare a fresh rota for serving at Holy Communion.
7. Suggestions for a send-off in respect of Rev. and Mrs. Omenyo shall be solicited from Session members at next sitting.
8. Terms of service for the Organist shall be thrashed out between him and the Senior Presbyter.
9. Pastors shall work on revised Session Committees as presented to Session by Rev. Anoa-Kumah.
10. To realize the ₵100 m target for Christ Church Foundation, Church members shall contribute ₵2,000.00 annually, with effect from 1996.
11. Financial requests from Church Groups shall be routed through their respective Presbyter-heads.
12. As soon as possible, Foreign accounts shall be opened for Session - Dollar, Sterling and Deutschmark.
13. The Senior Presbyter, Chairman of Finance Committee and the Treasurer shall find out from Presbytery sources why retired Church Agents and Widows often receive their pensions so late.
14. One question of irregular payment of pensions to retired Church Agents and widows shall be made known to Synod Committee by the Senior Presbyter through Presbytery for a solution.
15. When funds permit, Session may grant loans to Pastors, Agent-pensioners and widows in the event of late-payment.
- ✓ 16. Messrs Abboa Offei, S.A. Asare and Saason are mandated to establish Christ Church Annexa at Presby J.S.S. with immediate effect.
Both Pastors shall act as co-ordinators.
- ✓ 17. Similar activity as above shall apply at Adami-Atifi, Messrs Sakyi-Addo and S.R. Asante being interim care-takers who may co-opt

18. Members of Northern outreach programme are permitted to travel to Accra to mount a Rally on March 10.

19. With immediate effect, daily allowance for workers at 'Speaking' as well as Communion Servers in town shall be stepped up to ₵1,000.00.

Attendance: 17/28

Ebenezer Sakyi-Addo
Session Clerk



Have they any connection with a church where all the members wear the same dress (e.g. aladura).
Name them.....
Have your parents made any visit(s) to native doctor(s).....
Were there any incisions (i.e. cuts) made to rub black powder (mmoto) into their bodies.....
Did they offer any sacrifice?.....
State the nature of the sacrifice(s).....
Do your parents belong to transcendental medication groups e.g. lodges, eckanker etc.....
Which group(s)?.....
Have your parents any ancestral shrine(s) or god(s).....
Name of god or shrine.....
What does the shrine/god dislike/taboo(s)?.....
Have your parents any ancestral stools? Fathers' line..... mothers' line.....
Do you know of any covenant or curse on you or your family?.....
State it.....

SELF

Are you twin born.....
Your church or religion.....
Do you have connection with a church where they wear the same dress?.....
Do you have connection with some other prayer houses?.....
Name them.....
Have you made any visits to native doctors?.....
Have any incisions (cuts) been made on any part of your body?.....
Have you ever offered any sacrifice(s) to any god(s)?.....
Have you any contacts with dwarfs.....
Have you ever made any visit(s) to a mallam?.....
What happened?.....
Have you ever taken any black powder (mmoto)?.....
Have you taken any concoction by drinking it?.....
Have you taken any concoction bathing?.....
Have you used any concoction or talisman for (a) trading..... (b) travelling.....
(c) For boys/girls..... (d) Stealing..... (e) protection.....
Have you used any concoction/talisman/charms for any other purpose other than those stated above?..
Give details?.....
Do you know any contributory story told you by your parents or relatives in relation to your birth and childhood
Give details if any.....
Who did you stay with as a child?.....
Do you have any history of rejection in childhood?:.....
Give details if any.....
Were you (a) convulsive..... (b) sickly..... during childhood?

PERSONAL STRANGE PHENOMENA

Do you "see" (hallucinations) things, which are not really there?.....
Do you "hear" (auditory voices) strange voices when nothing is around?.....
Do you "smell" (olfactory - smell) things, which are not present?.....
Do you know things before they happen?.....

Do you have additional money or other items you do not know they came about?
Do you loose your money or other items often?
Have you worn any rings/clothes/bangles you never knew how they came?
Have you lost your wedding/engagement ring mysteriously?
Do you discus with strange voices from within you?
Do you have a feeling of invisible presence when you are alone?
How do you feel when you hear traditional drum music?

PERSONAL STRANGE CHARACTERISTICS

Do you have excessive (too much)(a) anger (b) hatred..... (c) Fear of snakes
(d) fear of water (sea, river, ponds etc)..... (e) easily scared
Do you have sex with anybody who wants to (more than one sexual partner/indiscriminate sex)?
Do you do any of the following sexual perversion i.e. abnormal sexual behaviours?
Masturbation homosexuality (i.e. sexually attracted to people of your own sex - man to man or
woman to woman)..... Sex with animals (bestiality).....
Do you indulge in any other sexual perversions apart from those referred above?
Do you have suicide thoughts (i.e. do you sometimes think of killing yourself)?
Do you like weeping always?
Are you not serious over situations considered serious by others and laugh unnecessarily?
Do you want something and at the same time you feel you don't need it?
Are you very stubborn? Do you enjoy seeing others suffer?
Are you restless?
Do you like too much of these that you cannot do without them? (a) Alcohol..... (b) Drugs.....
(c) Sleep (d) food..... (d) chewing gum..... (e) any other thing.....
Are you quarrelsome? Do you experience procrastination?
Do you feel unnatural heat movement in your body?
Do you experience terrible menstrual period (females only).....
Do you experience any of the following? (a) Sleepless night..... (b) biting of fingernails.....
(e) Scratching or fidgeting your body unnaturally
Do you experience laziness? Do you experience dizziness?
Do you experience failure in your life endeavours?
Do you get sad and moody/depressed without cause?
Are you easily irritated/become angry or annoyed?
Do you get forget easily i.e. memory loss?
Are you afraid of mixing with people, hence you want to be alone?
Do you have a negative self-image, i.e., think of yourself as a failure or never do well?

PECULIAR DREAM STATE

Concerning your dreams, do the following happens to you in the dreams?

Do you forget your dreams?.....
Do you see yourself picking mushrooms or snails?.....
Do you have nightmares, e.g. that you are being chased by masquerades (people or things wearing mas
that you cannot see their faces) or animals or do you find yourself falling off cliffs or mountain into de
ditch or pit etc?.....

- Do you find yourself always in your childhood house, wearing old clothes (school uniform) or at former work place or school?
- Do you see yourself being burgled, trying to locate lost property, your goods being auctioned?
- Do you see yourself handling huge sums of money?
- Lock up in a room unable to come out or handcuffed, chained or imprisoned?
- Do you have sexual affair with somebody in your dream?
- Do have a feeling of being pressed down and unable to talk?
- Do you attend any regular parties or meetings?
- Doing menial jobs far below your status in real life?
- Do you fight?
- Do you take part in a wedding/marriage ceremony of yourself?
- Do you see the following before your menstrual period? (Females only) red oilripe fruitsfresh meat with bloodsexual intercoursedo you see yourself pregnantgiving birth.....
- Carrying babies.....before your period before it actually comes?
- Do you swim in water (sea, lake, river etc)?.....play with age mates in waterstand by a river bank or shore or a river, seaalways crossing with a canoe
- Crossing a bridge which breaks midway, falling headlong in into the river?.....
- Large rivers you cannot cross?.....
- Climbing staircases and missing your steps or ladders with missing steps?
- A big gutter or trench you cannot cross or a situation where you cannot go forward?
- Do you see or play with snakes?
- Do you find yourself wandering in the forest i.e. walking around without any clear purpose or direction?
- Do you see yourself flying (levitation)?.....
- Do you go to specific market?
- Do you see yourself at a rubbish dump?.....
- Do you find yourself eating?
- Do you see, talk with dead friends/relatives (necromancy).....
- Climbing a mountain or hill and never getting to the top?
- Do you see strange animals like cats, ants, mice dogs etc?
- Is there any information that the questionnaire did not ask but which you feel might be of some help that you wish to give? Please state them below. You may continue on another page

WHEN IS DELIVERANCE NEEDED?

WHEN POSSESSED: loses of control of normal faculties and will e.g. uncontrolled gestures, speaking in a voice, trance, unlearned kunfu manifestations etc

WHEN OPPRESSED: living in spiritual gloom

1. Beset by fear of being possessed, mediums, of demonised people, of death
2. Seeing things, shadows, hearing of voices, nightmares of corpses and demons
3. Fear of spiritual/demonic retribution
4. Depression
5. Some sicknesses

WHEN POSSESSED: caught in a trap and addicted

1. Sexual sins
2. Addiction e.g. drugs, smoking and drinking
3. Excessive cleanliness and dirtiness
4. Paranoia
5. Guilt including unforgiveness
6. Hopelessness – through failures and inferiority complex
7. Controlled by emotions – ruled by emotions

COVENANTS AND CURSES

HOW PEOPLE COME UNDER CURSES

1. Ancestral past (family tree curses) inherited from our ancestors. Lam 5:7; Exodus 20:5, 34:7
2. Not listening to the voice of God. Duet 28: 15-16 (see list of curses in Deuteronomy 28:15)
3. Breaking moral/spiritual laws of God. Genesis 2:16-17; Ecclesiastes 7:13
4. Breaking promises made to God. Malachi 1:14; Eccl 5:4-5; Deuteronomy 23:24; Numbers 30:2
5. Breaking promises made to other men/people. Exo 23:23-33; Eph 5:22; Malachi 2:16; Lev 19:12
6. Worship of other gods i.e. if a man makes a covenant with a devil or his agent (other gods) by calling names or “power”, we immediately come under God’s curse. Exodus 20:3-4; Deuteronomy 4:15-19
7. Curse spoken by one person on another especially by a person on a child, wife, husband etc. read Jo and 1 Kings 16:34
8. Curse spoken by one person upon himself e.g. “I swear by.....”
9. Wrong type of worship Colossians 2:20-23; Galatians 4:8-11
10. Murder. Genesis 9:6 Numbers 35:33
11. Bitterness: refusal to forgive a fellow human being 1 John 3:15
12. Sexual sins – pre marital and extra marital. 1 Corinthians 6:18
13. Contaminated objects – having in ones possession something that glorifies Satan e.g. image of a go 19:19; Deuteronomy 7:25 – 26 12: 2 – 3
14. Dishonouring parents exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6: 2 – 3
15. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Mathew 12:31; Hebrews 10:26 – 27

STEPS TO DELIVERANCE FROM CURSES

1. Repent with a deep sorrow from your sins
2. Plead the blood of Jesus for cleansing and forgiveness
3. Denounce the known sins and promise not to repeat them again
4. Destroy if possible burn all occultic objects in your possession e.g. books, rings, regalia, stools, alt certificates etc
5. Break friends with occultic friends. Make new friends with true Christians 2 Corinthians 6:14-18
6. Surrender yourself fully to the Lord Jesus Christ. Serve him with all your heart
7. Go to a deliverance worker for help.

HELPS TO DELIVERANCE

Come to Jesus

1. Discuss your problem and need for Jesus
2. Surrender the situation to Jesus
3. Receive Jesus as your Lord and saviour
4. Think about Jesus alone; focus on him on the cross 1 John 3:8; Col 1:13-14, 2:15; Phil 2:9-
5. Call on the name of Jesus

Forsake sins

1. Pride James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:6; John 13:1-30
2. Unforgiveness: be forgiving. Matthew 18:15-35; Mark 11:24-26
3. Specific sins. Be honest 1 John 1:8-9

Renounce the devil

1. Avoid Satan or demon worship

Dedication to gods

1. Offering of healing
2. Writing the spirit's name on the child's back/ shirt
3. Recording of the child's name in the temple

Idol worship

1. Idol worship is forsaking God e.g. drinking "Fu Shu". Deuteronomy 32:15-18
2. Idol worship involves fellowship with demons e.g. eating food offered to idols. 1 Cor 10:17
3. Idol worship is a curse. Exodus 20:5

Witchcraft /occult

1. Bible example Leviticus 6:27; 19:21 Deuteronomy 18:10-14
2. Modern day examples horoscope, clairvoyance, fortune telling, spirit of the coin, astrology, palmistry, consulting mediums, bomoh, initiation into secret societies, lodge, freemason

Psychic experience

1. Transcendental meditation(TM). Yoga and other forms of non-Christian meditation where the mind is left blank. Demons then enter this void.
2. ESP, mind over matter
3. Drugs – mind altering drugs e.g. hallucinogens

Habitual sins

1. Sexual Sins Exodus 22:7; Acts 15: 20
2. Addiction/lust Ephesians 2:3, 1 Timothy 6:9
3. Unforgiveness Matthew 6:12 – 15; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:12 – 15
4. Stubbornness and unrepentant spirit, pride, greed. Proverbs 16:18, Ephesians 4:19, Duet

Uncontrolled emotions

1. Fright and fears. Deuteronomy 1:17, 31:6; Psalm 27:1-3, 118:6
2. Anger, jealousy and hatred. James 3:1, 16

Wrong teachings

1. Wrong understanding of the Lord. Acts 8: 18 – 24
2. Deceived by doctrines of demons 1 Timothy 4:1-3

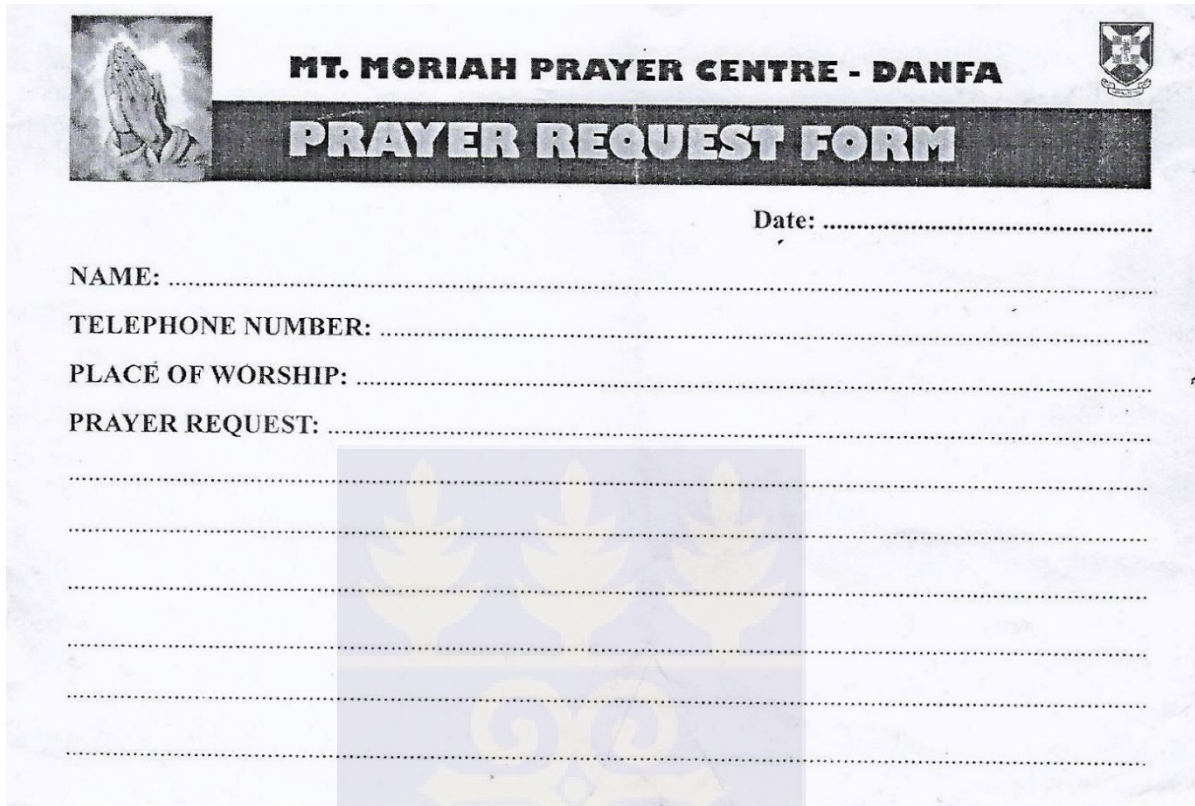
Submit to authority

1. Jesus Philippians 2:10, John 20:31
2. The word Joshua 1:8, Jeremiah 15:16, 1 Peter 2:12
3. God's ministers 1 Corinthians 3:5, 2 Corinthians 3:1-6
4. Your counsellor (trust him/her) psalm 118:8, Isaiah 50:10
5. Confide in your counsellor. Psalm 16:7
6. Obey your counsellor and co-operate with him/her. Proverbs 11:14, 12:15

Check your attitude

1. True repentance. Ezekiel 18:31; 33:11-12, Acts 3:19, 8:22
2. Real desire to be free. Isaiah 58:6; Romans 6:15 – 23

Appendix H: Mount Moriah Prayer Centre- Danfa, Prayer Request Form



The form is titled "MT. MORIAH PRAYER CENTRE - DANFA" and "PRAYER REQUEST FORM". It includes a small image of a person praying on the left and a crest on the right. The form contains several fields for personal information and a large section for the prayer request, all with dotted lines for text entry.

MT. MORIAH PRAYER CENTRE - DANFA

PRAYER REQUEST FORM

Date:

NAME:

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

PLACE OF WORSHIP:

PRAYER REQUEST:

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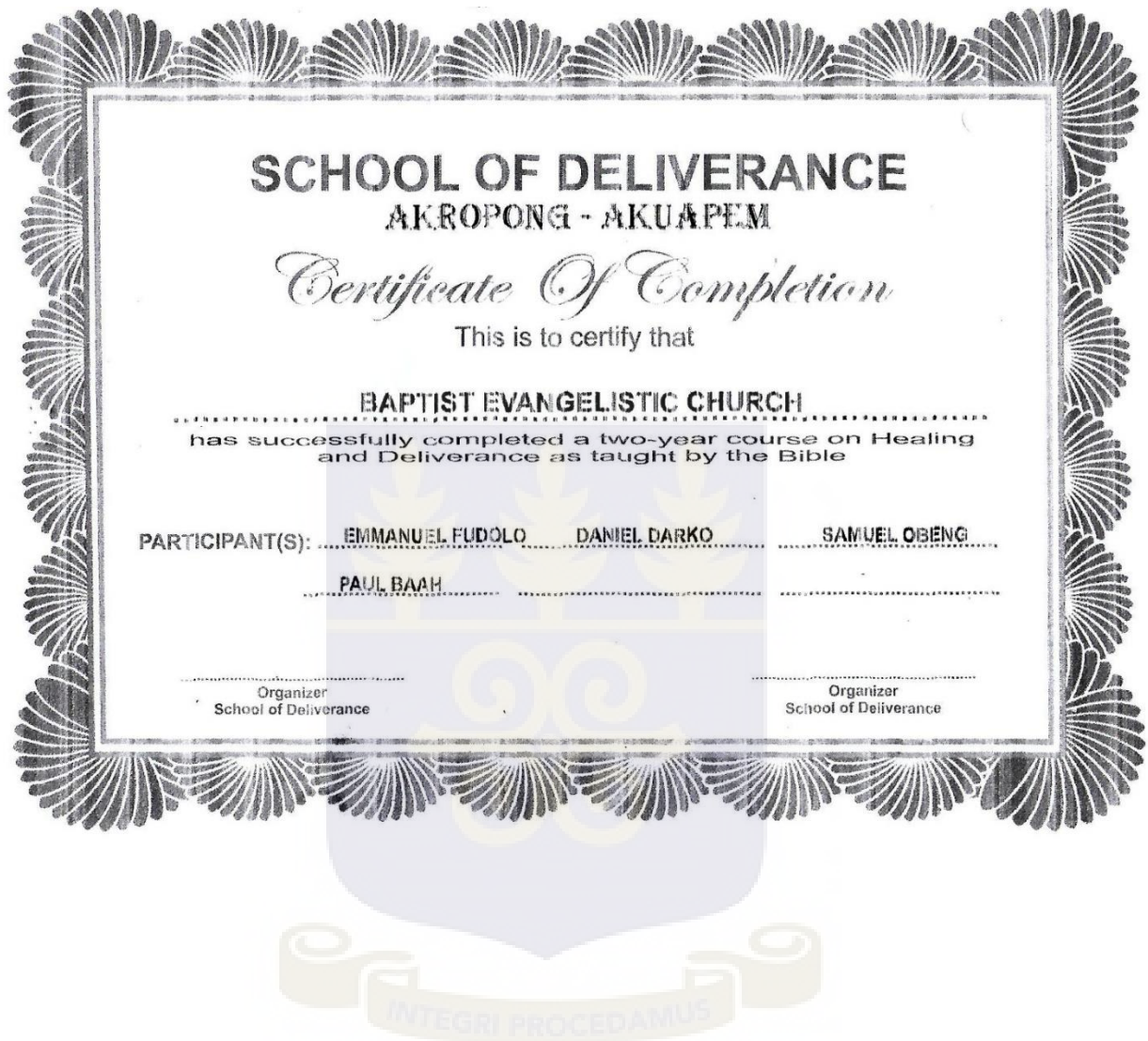
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Appendix I: School of Deliverance, Akropong Akuapem, Certificate of Completion



Appendix J: Clerk of GA's Letter for Abasua Prayer Retreat

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GHANA

MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY:
RT. REV. PROF. EMMANUEL MARTEY *PhD, D.D.*
E-Mail: moderator@pcgonline.org



CLERK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY:
REV. DR. SAMUEL AYETE-NYAMPONG *PhD*
E-mail: clerk@pcgonline.org

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OFFICE, MISSION STREET, KUKUHILL, OSU, P. O. BOX GP 1800, ACCRA. Tel: 233 0302 662511/664761
Fax: 233 0302 665594 • E-mail: info@pcgonline.org • Website: www.pcgonline.org

Our Ref: _____

Date: 13th December, 2016

ALL PRESBYTERY CHAIRPERSONS
PCG

Dear Beloved,

ABASUA PRAYER RETREAT (ATWEA MOUNTAINS)

Another opportunity for "waiting in His Presence" is drawing close. The first session of 2017 Abasua Prayer Retreat is schedules as follows:

- Date** : 14th – 20th February, 2017
- Theme** : "I know your sorrows: says the Lord" Exodus 3:7
- Guest Speaker** : Rev. Ernest Odame Asare, (Chairperson, Sekyere Presbytery)
- Venue** : Abasua Prayer Centre

The experience on Abasua Mountain is always refreshing and those who have been there never get tired of such retreats. The retreat is an opportunity to grace His presence for edified spiritual life and empowered for fruitful service. Make a date for the upcoming programm for the Lord will surely meet you at the point of your need and have a living testimony to share.

Please pray for the Interim Management Team who are planning for the Retreat. Kindly forward to all Districts and Congregations and encourage members to attend.

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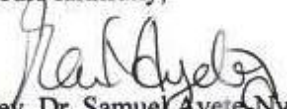
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Our Vision: To be a Christ Centered, Self-Sustaining and Growing Church.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,


Rev. Dr. Samuel Ayete Nyampong
(Clerk of General Assembly)

Cc: Moderator
Director, Mission and Evangelism

